Toni Morrison's *Paradise:* A Critique of Patriarchy

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Toni Morrison's *Paradise*: A Critique of Patriarchy** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Toni Morrison's *Paradise*: A Critique of Patriarchy** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Abiya Mercy. P during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

Toni Morrison is one of the great African American writers and an inspiration for many writers and artists. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. Her experience as a black woman and as a daughter of an enslaved family allowed her to write about various subjects concerning society in the past. The project entitled ***Paradise:* A Critique Patriarchy** explores male domination which results in female oppression and dichotomies.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the African American Literature and the significance of Toni Morrison as an effective writer, her achievements and her famous works. It also deals with the Contemporary writers during that period.

The second chapter **Silenced Voices** analyses the troubled lives of the oppressed women who lost their voices. It explores how women in the town undergo discriminations and they are poorly treated by their men.

The third chapter **Contrasting Identities** shows two groups of men, who based on the fundamental aspect of their identity and their ability to fulfil the responsibility to provide for and protect their women and children, refuse to allow the entry of outsiders.

The fourth chapter **Dichotomy** deals with the men in Ruby as they are very much concerned about preserving the purity of their race. It discusses how the men's lack of ability to put everything under control and particularly growth in intellectual and skilful activities of the Convent women make them insecure.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a group of work of art made up of words. Most are written but some are passed on by word of mouth. Literature usually means work of poetry and prose that are especially well written. There are many different kinds of literature, such as poetry,plays or novel. They can also be put into groups through their language, historical period, origin, genre and subject. Literature is a forum to express and pour out the thoughts and feelings of our self. It is the criticism and interpretation of life through characters which evokes our sense of feelings. Sometimes it reflects oneself by means of literary characters. It picturizes society and gives the pleasure for mind.

African American literature was produced in the United States by writers of African descent, beginning with the works of Philip Wheatley. Before the high point of slave narratives, African American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives. In the 19th century, a genre known as slave narratives were the accounts by people who had generally escaped from slavery and about their journeys towards freedom and the way they claimed their lives.

The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920 was a great period of flowering in literature and the arts, influenced both by writers who came from the North during the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands . African American writers have been recognized by the highest awards including the Nobel Prize given to Toni Morrison in 1993. Among the themes and issues explored in this literature, are the role of African Americans within the larger American society, African American culture like racism, slavery and social equality. African American

writings have tended to incorporate oral forms such as spirituals, sermons, gospel, music, blues and jazz.

African Americans' literature in American society has changed over the centuries, so has the focus of African American literature. Before, the American civil war, the literature primarily consisted of memoirs by people who escaped from slavery. The genre of slave narratives included accounts of life under slavery and the path of Justice and redemption to freedom. There was an early distinction between the literature of freed slaves and the literature of freed Africans. The freed literature born in North Africa expressed their oppression in a different narrative form. People of Africa in the North often spoke out against slavery and racial injustices by using the spiritual narratives.These addressed many of the same themes of slave narratives, but have been largely ignored in current scholarly conversation.

In the early 20th century, non- fiction works by authors such as W.E.B Dubois and Booker T. Washington debated on how to confront racism in the United States. During the Civil Rights Movement, authors like Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about issues of racial segregation and Black Nationalism. African American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature with books suchas *Root: The Saga of an American Family* by Alex Harley, *The Color Purple* in1982 by Alice Walker, which won the Pulitzer prize and *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison achieving both the best selling and award winning status.

As Princeton University Professor Albert J. Roboteau has said, all African American studies "speaks to the deeper meaning of the African American presence in this nation. This presence has always been a test case of the nation's claims to freedom, democracy, equality, the inclusiveness of all" (4).

The history of contemporary writing began after the Great Migration to the North, between 1910-1930. The contemporary writers pushed African American society for an end of segregation which confronted the issue of racism and helped to shape a sense of pride and independence in the African American community. This sense of pride continued into the 1970s but also expanded into Main stream literature. Black writers began to earn a high place in American writing and were recognized through many awards, achievements and bestselling novels.

African American writers continue to address many of the same societal concerns but are accepted outside of their community, as well. James Baldwin, a Civil Rights activist, writer and essayist began to write. At the age of seventeen, in 1953, Baldwin wrote *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1953), a semi Auto biographical novel about growing up in Harlem, and then he wrote a short story *Sonny's Blues* (1957). In 1957, Baldwin became active in the Civil Rights movement. Before his death in 1987, Baldwin continued to write novels and be a voice for the Black community. Throughout his writings, he explored not just his life experiences but also the experiences of racism prevalent in America.

Another great contemporary writer is Alice Walker who was born on February 9, 1944. She is an American novelist, short story writer, poet and social activist. Her novel

The Color Purple (1982) won the National Book Award for hard cover fiction, and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. She also wrote some other novels such as *Meridian* in 1976 and *The Third life of Grange Copeland* in 1970.

Maya Angelo born on April 4, 1928 was an American poet, singer and Civil Rights activist. She published seven autobiographical works and numerous books. Her first work was *I Know Why the Caged BirdSings* in 1969. Her books centre on themes such as racism, identity, family and travel.

Zora Neale Hurston born on January 7, 1891 and died on January 28, 1960 is an influential author of African American literature, anthropologist, and film maker, who portrays racial struggles in the early twentieth century American South and published research on *HaitianVodoll.* The most popular of her four novels is *Their Eyes were Watching God* published in 1937. She also wrote more than fifty short stories, plays and essays.Hurston's works concern both the African Americans and their struggles as a woman. Alice Walker published an article named *In Search of Zora Neale Hurston (1975).*

Toni Morrison was a great American writer. She was an inspiration for many writers, artists and readers. By the time when the Nobel Prize for literature was awarded to her in 1993, she had already published the six novels. Morrison, then sixty two years of age captured the attention of the critics and scholars throughout the world and her works were translated into more than twenty different languages. The Nobel committee of the Swedish Academy called Morrison, "a literary artist of finest work," who "gives

life to an essential aspect of American reality" (Lisa R. Rhodes 8). Alice Walker, another great African American writer, when Morrison was given the Nobel Prize said that,

> No one writes more beautifully than Toni Morrison. She has consistently explored issues of true complexity and terror and love in the lives of blacks. Harsh criticism has not dissuaded her. Prizes have not trapped her. She is a writer who deserves this honor. (14)

Toni Morrison, a Nobel Prize winning author, was born on February 18, 1931in Lorain, Ohio, USA. Her original name is Chloe Ardelia Wofford, but for the world she is known as Toni Morrison. She was the second oldest of four children born to George and Ramah Wofford.

Morrison had Southern roots even though she was born in Ohio. Her father's origins are from Georgia, and her mother's family was from Alabama. She was born during the Great Depression in the United States. Her father worked in different jobs just to provide his family's needs. Chloe's mother was a strong woman who was against injustice. Though Chloe's childhood's times had been hard she had a joyful infancy, their house was full of music, her mother and grandfather loved singing, and this love was due to their life under the legacy of slave culture. As Barbara Kramer cited in her book *Toni Morrison: A Biography of a Nobel Prize Winning Writer:*

> Although times were hard, Chloe's childhood was not bleak. The Wofford home was filled with music. Ramah Wofford was in the church choir, and she was always singing around the house- Jazz, Blues, Gospel music, and Opera. Chloe's grandfather, John Solomon Willis, played the violin and for a while had supported his family with his music. (11)

Morrison lived in a multicultural environment; she used to go to school with Greek, Italian, German, Irish, and African-American children. She had also another education rather than the one she got at school. Her parents transmitted to her the African-American cultural education through folklore and myths. These formed her childhood, so one can say that it also built her personality. The family lived in the Midwest of America so it possessed a great appreciation and love for black culture. Her father's parents had died before her birth, she never knew them. Wofford's family is so close, each one of them is told to be responsible for his acts; it is maybe due to the legacy of slavery which separates families and makes each one of them responsible for only himself. Her career as a writer was a direct consequence of her family's influence, as Carmen Gillespie states in her book *Critical Companion to Toni Morrison: A Literary Reference to Her Life and Work:* "Toni Morrison's family had a profound influence on her development as a writer. Morrison spent a great deal of time with her extended family, particularly with her maternal grandparents" (3). The influence of her grandparents is seen through her novels. Morrison did not experience slavery, but she lives it through the stories of slaves told by her grandparents. They helped her to know more about the past.

When she was twelve years old, Morrison started working to help her family. She wanted to prove that she can be responsible. At the age of thirteen she worked for a white family, she used to clean their house, it was an after-school job. She studied in Lorain High School where she was guided to the National Honor Society. Chloe loved reading "By then she was reading all the great Russian and French novels as well as novels by

English writers Jane Austen and American novelists Ernest Hemingway, Willa Cather, and William Faulkner" (Kramer 16-17). She liked those books because she loved the way they were written. It is clear that she was dreaming to become famous like them. In 1949 she graduated from high school, and pursued her studies at Howard University in Washington, D.C. After high school, Morrison attended Howard University, where she studied English and classic literature in preparation for becoming a teacher. Chloe was the first woman in her family who went to college: she breaks the old traditions. Her mother did her best to help her to follow her studies: she even worked as a ladie's room attendant. In 1953

Toni Morrison started her academic career teaching English at Texas Southern University in Houston. A year and half later she came back to Howard University where she taught English. In 1958 she got married with an architect from Jamaica called Harold Morrison. Then she became known as Toni Morrison, and in 1961 they had their first son Harold Ford.

During the fifties Morrison was not considered just as a novelist. She lived in the Percival rights era. So she can also be seen as a historian as John Duvall states in his book *The Identifying Fictions of Toni Morrison: Modernist Authenticity and Postmodern Blackness*

> What I attempt to do in this study is to see Morrison not only as a novelist who has written about history, but also as a historical figure in her own right. From this perspective, I argue that it does matter to her work that she

> grew up in Percival rights America, just as it matters that she became a writer in post-civil rights America. (46)

Morrison's life during the Civil Rights movement was a positive point for her. She was present there and she experienced the racial segregation of black population, that's why she was able to narrate all the history of that period. She was also suffering from racism as any other black citizen. She expresses her feelings through her words.

Morrison had never thought that one day she would become a writer. She reads to know more about different cultures, or maybe it was just a continuation of what her family taught her. In 1962, she became a member of a group of writers on campus."Morrison had not thought about becoming a writer, but she did like to read. It was that interest that drew her to a writer's group on campus in 1962" (Kramer 22). It was a group of ten writers, who used to meet each month to read and study their works, and each one must bring a written work, it is understandable that for Morrison it is a kind of challenge to herself.

Morrison resigned from Howard University; she was expecting her second child "Pregnant, Morrison traveled to Europe in 1964 and lived there briefly before traveling back to the States to divorce her husband and to return temporarily to her parents' home in Lorain Ohio" (Gillespie 6). Here it is a sort of sacrifice that Morrison did: she made her family a priority over her job. She gave the image of an ideal mother. From here one may understand that in her novel *Beloved* she compares her offering to the one of Sethe. Both of them can do anything for the benefits of their children. Morrison's family went to Europe and it is there that Toni and her husband separate, and later they divorce.

Morrison did not give much information about her private life with her husband, perhaps she thinks that there are things that should be kept for oneself. After her divorce Morrison remains with no job, knowing that she has two babies to feed. She didn't have the choice, she returns to her family's home in Lorain, Ohio, where her second son was born. Though her family helped her in raising her children, Morrison wanted to do it by her own. She was a responsible girl from her childhood.

Later, in 1965 she traveled to Syracuse with her sons, where she began thinking seriously about writing. "Morrison and her sons moved to Syracuse in 1965, and it was there that she began to get serious about writing" (Kramer 24). Possibly she thought that it was time for her to start narrating all what she had collected since she was so young. Morrison worked as a textbook editor at Random House in Syracuse, New York. Even raising her sons as a single mother and working at the same time was not an easy task; she also continued working on her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*. She had the power to overpass any obstacle. Her love for her children offers her the force to fight. Later she was promoted as senior editor and relocated to New York City: with this she was the first African-American woman to hold this position, and at the same time she resumed her teaching career. The position she acquired in her work can tell that even black people are able to obtain high positions. Subsequently she started practicing her profession of teaching her domain. "In 1971, she began teaching literature and creative writing at the State University of New York at purchase as an associate professor" (Gillespie 7)

Morrison followed the footsteps of her parents. She worked at different jobs, she worked at Yale University as a visiting lectureship, then she traveled from state to state like NewYork, New Haven and Connecticut, so that she will replenish her responsibilities

as a professor and an editor. With her black skin and with all the discrimination existing in the society she succeeded to demonstrate her existence as a black woman.

Using both her black experience and the narratives told by her family Toni Morrison has written many novels which made her well known around the world. *The Bluest Eye* (1970) was a beginning to a young and skillful novelist. *Sula* (1973) provided Morrison a nomination for the National Book Award. It narrates a black female experience from childhood to womanhood. In 1977, Morrison gained the National Book Critics Circle Award for her book *Song of Solomon(1977), Tar Baby* (1981), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998), *Beloved* which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988. Morrison also wrote also other novels like, *Love* (2002), *A Mercy (*2008), *Home* (2011), and *God Help the Child* (2014).

Morrison is an amazing writer, she knows exactly how to place her special words so that the reader will get the ideas transmitted through the novels. Her experience as a black woman and as a daughter of an enslaved family allowed her to write about various subjects concerning society in the past. This of course is helping in the spread of African American story around the world.

Toni Morrison always focuses on political genre for her writing. Morrison's seventh novel, *Paradise*, published in 1997, is no different. Jami L. Carlacio maintains that Morrison's work has been an ongoing commitment to redefine (African American) personhood with the intention of ultimately producing a new consciousness regarding race (xv). Beyond racial consciousness, Morrison's writing is indeed "a catalyst, a vibrant intellectual site, for interrogating some of the most pressing concerns and contradictions

of our world today" (Peterson 261-2). In *Playing in the Dark* (1992) Morrison discredits the view that "canonical American literature is free of, uninformed, and unshaped by the four-hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African Americans in the United States" (5). Morrison then makes visible the invisible Africanpresence in literature of the United States. Morrison argues that since the literature she analyzes was not written by or for African Americans "the fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive, an extraordinary meditation on the self, a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the [white] writerly conscious" (16-17). While *Paradise* addresses specific issues of race, gender, and history, Morrison's text reveals the invisible presence of the other in the formation of self.

Paradise functions to re-member the historical past for both African Americans and America as a whole. Comparing *Paradise* to *Beloved* and *Jazz*, Davidson is correct to argue that the latter depicts the role of narrative in reconstitution process of the individual while *Paradise* assesses the role of narrative in the community (355-6). Similarly, Patricia Storace is correct to observe that *Paradise* evokes images of the white founding fathers of the United States, making *Paradise* a provocative allegory of nationhood (Davidson 371).

The story opens with the massacre of a group of women living in a place called the Convent. The murderers are all men of the nearby town of Ruby, named for Ruby Best who was the first of the town's inhabitants to die. Ruby, the town was founded by a group of black families who were seeking to create something of a utopian society. The elder man creates Ruby town to protect their people especially black people. The system of the town is based on a traditional and patriarchal ideology. The Ruby men believe in

their ideology andhistory.

In the beginning, Mavis leaves her house and family because of the mistreatment that she is suffering with, she runs away and arrives at the Convent, she meets Connie who lives alone in Convent. Eventually. Mavis lives in the Convent with Connie. Then, Gigi also comes to the Convent. Connie always helps every women she meets. At the end, there are five women who lives in the Convent namely Connie, Mavis, Gigi, Seneca, and Pallas.Convent women live separately from men, they work and make money by themselves.

Ruby men thinks that convent women are a threat for their town. Ruby men consider convent women as a witch because they do not need men to live with them. Ruby men think that Convent women are wrong, they must follow Ruby's rule. To straighten the Convent women, Ruby men choose to massacre convent women. At the end, Connie is killed but the other women escape successfully. The other women start their life in a different place and livehappily.

Paradise is a book which shows the gender discrimination and the oppression of woman. Morrison depicts a portrayal of woman who lives in the Convent in the town Ruby. Throughout the novel the treatment of the woman is noticed which portrays patriarchal society that they live in, disturbing their own freedom and choices.

Chapter Two

Silenced Voices

The difference of gender as male and female brings problems in social life. The female characters in the novel seem to be described as a weak and unpowered person. The main female characters are oppressed by the men. They try to survive from their misery by making community whose members are only female and they make their own shelter. The female characters, tries to find their own living place despite the oppression towards them. From this circle they find their own potential and they have their own thinking. The free thinking of women is a threat to the men because it can stand in the way of men. In this novel, Morrison's development of the female characters is similar in a way most of black female writers. Through this Morrison shows the concern of oppression and patriarchy.

Ruby as the main town in the story has a strong patriarchal culture. Thus, women in Ruby are regulated by culture and religion. They have to obey the rules that exist in that town. Ruby as a patriarchal town gives less of freedom to women who live inside the town, women have to serve and obey their husband. Patriarchal practices in the story are shown by the experiences of the women characters.

In the beginning from building the town, the foundation of the town is based on racism and patriarchal ideologies. Ruby's history and its personal experiences of racism lead to an all black town. Ruling families in Ruby would not consider light black people as pure as themselves. They exclude others, whether they are light black or they are women. This case prevents Ruby from becoming a paradise.

Religion is used as a tool to dominate women rather and it is one aspect of patriarchal. Kate Millet's *Theory of Sexual Politics*, concludes that religion is one aspect of the patriarchal society.

> According to the classical tale of Pandora's Box and the Biblical story of the fall, woman was the cause of all chaos in the world. When Pandora opened the box, the creature inside the box came out and spread the sadness, sufferings and insanity to the world. Adam and Eve fell into their first sin right after they ate the forbidden fruit, and it was Eve who offered Adam that fruit. At that time, they started to feel pain and illness. From these two myths, people believe that woman isthe one who is responsible and deserved to get punishment. (318-319)

Kate Millet's ideology of Ruby people is also a part of their religion because ideology in patriarchy is that "aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility… and ineffectuality in the female" (292). The ideology brings the Ruby society into a judgment that men are always better than women, because each sex is attached with those attributes. Religion in this case can be defined in a broad sense as any set of believes or ideology. The commoners believe that people of Ruby are derived directly from their church and the Bible, as they are very religious, and a part of it that roots back to their past, their customs and traditions. The broad definition of religion and their respect toward an Oven, located at the centre of the town, as a strong traditional belief, which is sincerely respected and praised.

Oven is a sigh of identity and unity landmark of the town they are respecting it. It is because they do know the Oven's value that they want to give it new life. Everyone in the town values the Oven as it holds an unchangeable histories. It also stands as an embodiment of protecting women from unrestrained sexuality of whites and there was no need for any black women to work under the whites.

In the past, women in Ruby used the Oven to cook, but all through these years, its practical function has changed to a patriarchal one. Women no longer met near Oven but it is now the men who meet about the Oven. Oven is no more a common Oven, it becomes a symbol of Ruby's primary goals and is interpreted to justify Ruby's patriarchy. The holiness of the Oven represents Ruby's dogmatism toward their ideologies, women, and their situation. Men of Ruby cannot bear any change in their ideologies, or any freedom for women. The mind of Ruby men is preoccupied with the concepts of protecting women, their sexuality and their freedom. They care more about their women because their awareness for women is to limit women action. The patriarchal way to protect is to have their women under control. They have named their town Ruby to immortalize Ruby Morgan, sister of Deacon and Steward, who died because of white people. White people refused to accept the black patient and sent for a veterinarian but she died meanwhile. This means, Ruby men should take a turn to bring about a change in the town. The men in town should be responsible for their native and the women Ruby.

The Oven was once useful to keep their town as the foundation of townspeople. The women in Ruby logically should have helped in the foundation of the town, but now the cold bricks of Oven have no function anymore. It should therefore be praised, and it is

only a bricked Oven which had the value of their history. No one can change anything about it. Deacon Morgan threats the new generation by saying that "You all listen to me. Real close. Nobody, I mean nobody is going to change the Oven or call it something strange. Nobody is going to mess with a thing our grandfathers built" (85).

The other element in Ruby is the church. The function of the church is always to support patriarchal system of people. The preacher always tells the people of Ruby to follow their lesson. They believe that God is what they need to live. Consolata in her early age always follow the church lesson. "For thirty years Consolata worked hard to become and remain Mary Magna's pride, one of her singular accomplishment in a life teaching, nurturing, and tending in places with names the nun's own parents had never heard of (224). She follows and does what Mary Magna told her. She offers her body and her soul to God's Son and His Mother as completely as if she had taken the veil herself (225). People in Ruby are religious and they obey the church principles. When the men in the novel go with authority of their own God, they argue that something needs to be done about the women living in a former convent seventeen miles away from the town. They state that the women are concerned because "They don't need men and they don't need God" (276). Men and 'God' are placed on balance terms within the structure of this sentence and it suggests that the men see their authority as one that is supreme of this sentence and should not be challenged.

The story makes it clear that women's oppression occurs historically integral to Christianity. Another character in the novel is Gigi, who discovers the painting of the Roman Catholic Saint Catherine of Siena. The painting depicts "A woman. On her knees, A knocked down look, cast-up-begging eyes, arms outstretched holding up her

present on a platter to a lord" (74). Gigi leans close to see the woman with the "I-give-up-face" (74), who is Saint Catherine of Siena. In this view, a woman is granted sainthood and considered to be valuable only if she completely acts like a slave and disowns her sexuality.

St. Paul in the New Testament, says: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (I Timothy 2: 11-14). These beliefs had rooted and build stereotypes and the perception in the society that female are less valued than male.

The one of the Reverends in Ruby is an enlightened man, but the other one and the function of church are always to support and masculine strong. This is a tool in the hands of leaders to suppress women and make them passive. The reverend preaches of God's love, or comments on people's traditions and ideology.

Church traditionally separates women into Good Woman or Bad Woman categories in which the sacrificial Virgin Mary reigns over the sinful Eve. Men in the town of Ruby convince that God is at their side and label the convent women "Bodacious Black Eves unredeemed by Mary and take aim for Ruby" (18). This act of protection is an exhibition of power that proclaims the consequences of challenging male authority. This action of patriarchal control defines who and what is good and evil, which women compare with Mary and Eve. It suggests that patriarchal system is predicated on these

divisions of church. Church has big influence on the patriarchal system and it has the control over of Ruby townspeople which make them follow all the rules of the Church.

Deacon Morgan and Steward Morgan are the twins of Rector Morgan. They are the leaders of Ruby. Men of Ruby like to live in and remember their past. They cannot bear any change to their life styles and ideas. That is why they treat women as an object. Arnold Fleetwood, one of the leaders in Ruby plays an important role in Ruby. He also has the right to decide or control town, or its people.

Ruby men's viewpoint of women is even worse than racism in Ruby. Within the families of the society, the object or subject relation is dominant. It is clearly in the notion that masculinity is considered subject, and femininity is defined as the object. Women in Ruby are considered as an object and inferior.

Patriarchal system and the ruling men of Ruby who make this situation are not the only problems. Ruby women's mind, which is preoccupied with patriarchal ideology and men's superiority are also the fault of this situation. Women are responsible for their passiveness because women suppress themselves and willing to live under patriarchy. Women in Ruby are passive and never think about their situation. They accept everything that comes from their husband or father and it is clear that, in general men needs to control women's life and freedom.

It is shown from the action of men toward women in Ruby. In the case of Mavis, her life is controlled by her husband. She does not know anyone except her family because Frank her husband always prevents her for having friends.

> . . . she realized she had no idea of what to do next. She drove toward Peg's; she didn't know the woman all that well, but her tears at the funeral impressed Mavis. She had always wanted to know her better, but Frank found ways to prevent acquaintance from becoming friendship. (27)

It can be seen that Frank as husband has controlled Mavis life without she realizing it. Mavis's characteristics strengthen the patriarchal system in Ruby. She accepts everything which is decided by her husband. She is a coward and, she did not have any will to get what she wants. After she escaped from her house, she arrives at the convent which change her way of thinking.

Mavis' fear toward his men is a proof of patriarchal system in Ruby. She is always afraid of her husband; she does not have any courage to ask him about anything. She always does what her husband tells, that is the patriarchal system. Women's characteristics in Ruby support this system and they do not have any courage to change. Women think that it is common to obey their husband.

Different case comes from Seneca, one of the convent women, who is really passive and her boyfriend already controls her life. Her passive character is shown in the story before she comes to the Convent. She wants to follow other people wants and always tries to please other people. She has nothing to do if other people do not like her. She tries her best to change herself and wants to be accepted in the society. It makes Seneca to obey her boyfriend and does anything for him.

> They didn't like each other at all, so Seneca had equalized her smiles and agreeableness. If one cursed and joked nastily about the other, Seneca

> laughed. When the other rolled her eyes in disgust, Seneca shot her an understanding look. Always the peacemaker. The one who said yes or I don't mind or I'll go. Otherwise-what? They might not like her. Might cry. Might leave. So she had done her best to please. (131)

Eddie Turtle, her boyfriend always settles in what she does, where she will go, everything in her life. Her mean boyfriend always orders Seneca to do anything for him and she would do it. "He was angry, of course; so much that it dimmed his pleasure in the extravagant black and white running shoes."Can't you get anything right? Just a small Bible! Not a goddamn encyclopedia!" (131).

She already brought him a Bible and he was angry because the Bible is not fit for him. There are other actions which Seneca did to please him but still it does not make Eddie happy.

> . . . and told her to leave it and the shoes at the desk with his name and his number. Made her write it down as though she might have trouble remembering five numbers in a row. She had brought ham sandwiches too (his letter said they could have a picnic type lunch in the visitors' quarter) but he was too nervous and irritated to eat. (132)

It can be seen that Seneca followed all of Eddie's order. She only wants Eddie happy and wants to like her. She does not complain about prejudices, bu keeps silent because that is what a woman should do. She would do anything and she does not think about herself. She believes all of Eddie's words and is willing to visit Eddie's mother.

Eddie gives Seneca the feeling that she is incompetent and worthless, no matter how hard she tries to please.

> She left Eddie Turtle in the visitors' hall promising him four things. To send pictures of the dogs. To sell the stereo. To get his mother to cash the savings bonds. To call lawyer. Send, sell, get. That's how she would remember. (132)

After her boyfriend is gone, she does not have any purpose or place. She is confused of what she should do after her boyfriend left her since she does not know anyone except her boyfriend.

> Eddie Turtle had been settled life to her for six months, and now he was gone. Or should she just move on? … But like a pet you wanted to play with for a while- but not keep. Not love. Not name it. Just feed it, play with it, then return it to its own habitat. She had five hundred dollars, and other than Eddie, no one knew where she was. Maybe she ought to keep it that way. (138)

Seneca's passiveness before she comes to the Convent is a real evidence of their women's own fault. Women are considered inferior to men and they are forced to believe it from the beginning of their life. It is obvious that they will be ignored if they ask any question, and they never even try to ask or insist to ask. They are passive and do not think of a change in their actions. They cannot imagine their life if they change or act differently. They think that they are doomed and they passively accept this situation.

Even they know the convent women behave and live differently than Ruby people, they cannot imagine it for themselves.

All women's obligation is to satisfy their husband. They need to do anything for their husband. They worry about their husband's need, "What would she fix for supper tomorrow?" (81). As women, they need to serve meal and satisfy their husband's stomach. Mavis feels insecure and says "I don't expect he'll be satisfied at the table" (82).

The silence of these women in Ruby is another major issue which is very difficult for a woman even to response to any question for what men ask for. Even sometimes they don't understand what their women are trying to convey through their actions:"I don't understand, Deek." "I do." He smiled up at her. "You don't need to." (107). All female characters are showing their doubtful existence of being exploited by men, women are created for serving their husband. Being obedient and submissive are the typical women structure. Their silence and passiveness make men be more superior. The whole portrayal of women is depicted in that way, they are obedient and silent. It has effective images of women and their exploitation in the society.

As their father, women in families did not have more power and authority in her family. Arnnete is pregnant because she had sex with Kentucky Derby. Her father already makes a plan for her. She should go outside the town to finish her study but her pregnancy is an obstacle for Arnnete. Arnnete's father will fight against every obstacle to make sure that his plan is going to work. "Well," Steward answered. "August's a long

way off. This here is May. She might change her mind. Decide to stay on." "I'm her father. I'll arrange her mind." "Right," said Steward (61).

This is the representation of father as authority. Arnette as her daughter does not have authority to get what she wants. Even when she is pregnant, she cannot keep her child, because her father already makes a plan for her future. As a daughter, Arnette should obey all orders from her father. She has no authority to against her father. Arnold Fleetwood changes her daughter's mind successfully. She is trying to abort the child but it fails. Then she gives birth to child in the Convent, but the baby dies when she refuses to give motherly care. After that she leaves Ruby to go to college in Langston as her father told.

Another issue that happened was to Pallas, she left her house to live with her boyfriend but pathetically she was betrayed by her boyfriend. Pallas always cries after her boyfriend cheated her and everyone in Convent embraced her. Pallas likes everyone in Convent, because convent women care about her, and she is feeling safe in Convent. "She just stretched out her hand and Pallas went to her, sat on her lap, talk crying at first, then just crying, while Connie said, " Drink a little of this" .(173)

> She would have cried again for her lost junior year, but Connie nudged her roughly. "Get up. You breaking my lap. Pallas stood and wobbled a bit from the rocking and the wine. "Thanks. But. I better call my father. I guess". (176)

Her weak character is described from her reaction. She runs away from her mother's house and meets her boyfriend. She is crying and run away without purpose, she

cannot think of anything except his betrayal. Her dependency towards her father is shown when she says she needs to call her father. Then she ends up in convent and lives there for a while. She always says that she needs to call her father. It is shown that father has authority to know everything about his children.

> Call the police Pallas. Make them come get you, you hear? Okay, Daddy. Then call me from the station. Okay. You got that? You're not hurt or anything? No, Daddy. Good. Okay, now. I'll be right here or Jo Anne will if I go out. Boy what you put me through. But everything's going to be okay now. We'll talk about that asshole when you get back. Okay, now? Call me. We have to talk. Love you, baby (253).

Pallas calls her father, and tells him to pick her up "Will you come and get me Daddy?" (253). Pallas as a daughter needs her father to support her life. She cannot do anything alone because her father already supports her need. It can be seen from the conversation that her father tells her what to do and Pallas reply with "Okay". She will do what her father tells to her.

In *Paradise*, silence covers up all the women; bad treatment is practiced by the town men. Most importantly the women characters in *Paradise* are all mute-figures, unable to speak out about their needs. Morrison is unable to give a chance to these women to criticize as they are not allowed to open up themselves even to their own townsmen.

Chapter Three

Contrasting Identities

The contradictory norms proposed by both the Old and New Father's in the novel represent male dominance. The founding fathers' name itself suggests the power of male dominance and it is clear that men are the rule makers, rulers, administrators and 'Protectors'. The arrival of New Fathers by overthrowing the Old Fathers to bring in a reformative way but both the founders ended up by committing the same folly. The old rule drawn out literally the life out of women by burdening them with hard works. The New Fathers who considered themselves as reformers also ended up slaughtering every women because they feel threatened by the development among women.

The Oven at the centre of the town carries the towns motto, "Be aware the Furrow of His Brow" (86). The Old Fathers are seeing the Oven as a permanent fixture in the ground, that testifies them as a freedman surviving the ordeals they are facing prior to successfully founding Haven. They triumph over the humiliation and poverty of being routed out of offices held during reconstruction and subsequently being reduced to field labour because nobody gives them jobs that required mental labour. They survive the natural elements, which they encounter during their trek towards West.

The Oven testifies to their virility to conquer difficulties and establish permanence. Most of all, the Oven is an attestation to the role their women are playing in their identities. For the Old Fathers, the true test of their triumph and achievement is laying in the fact that none of their women is ever working in a white man's kitchen. The Oven, as a kind of communal kitchen, is in stark contrast to the white's kitchen where the rape of their women is a" distinct possibility" (99). The thought of this danger to their

women is too much for the men to even consider. It is then most probably for this reason that the men choose to believe that the blackness of their skin is testifying them as a pure, "untampered" race.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff observes in "*'Margaret Garner': A Cincinnati Story*" (1991), that the slave woman's voice had not been written in American culture until 1851. She argues that people who cared about the issues of abolition have heard of mothers being separated from their children, "the shocking unresolvable dilemma of the slave MOTHER had never been dissected" and thrust into American consciousness until the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (438). Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) confronts with the slave mother's moral behaviour in the light of the act that she did not owning her own body, nor that of her own children.

Beloved presents Sethe who is tormented by the indignities of enslavement, who reasoned that murdering her children would be more compassionate than allowing them to endure slavery. Sethe thought "No. No. Nono. Nonono"(155). She is found grabbing her children and takes them to a place "where no one could hurt them," "where they would be safe" (155). As with Sethe, the value of keeping their wife and children safe dominates the lives of the 8-rock men. *Beloved* not only presents us with the mother's desire to protect, but the father and husband's desire as well.

It is Halle's (Sethe's husband) experience that is closer to that of the 8-rock men. It broke Halle to see Teacher's nephews "take Sethe's milk" (64-66). Halle's inability to protect his wife makes him lose his mind. For the 8- rock men it is similarly their ability to provide safety from such "kitchen" dangers that makes them value the Oven to a significant degree that the women could not understand. "It was the shame of seeing

one's pregnant wife or sister or daughter refused shelter that had rocked them, and changed them for all time. The humiliation did more than rankle; it threatened to crack open their bones" (95). It was thus the shame that rocks them, own impotence that comes close to crack their bones. *In Quiet as It's kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison.* J. Brooks Bouson points out that "in classic shame defense, the people respond to Fairly's dismissal with reactive pride for they became prouder and stiffer subsequent to this rejection" (196). This humiliation is "seared in the memories of the Old Fathers and has a formative influence on the collective Ruby memory and group identity" (196). Paul D, in *Beloved*, perhaps best explains this bone-threatening shame.

Paul D listens to Sethe's "recount of murdering her daughter and he recalls his time in Alfred, Georgia where he did not have the right or permission to enjoy or love anything because it all belonged to the men with the guns" (154). To survive the danger of loving he picks the tiniest things to love, because loving a real person "could split you wide open"(154). Sethe's story causes him to conclude that her love for her children "could cleave the bone" (156). Paul D's understanding that the bone can be split when love cannot be protected, resonates with the views of the 8-rock men in Ruby. For the men feel their own identities are threatened when their women are threatened and they cannot protect them against such adversity.

It is not only protection that informs the men's attitude towards their women but also their pride and joy, as well as the determination and willingness to sacrifice for their women. An example of such depiction is the labour and secret savings for two harvests to buy a winter coat for a wife. Steward's memory of seeing "the light in his mother's eyes" (8) seems slightly idealized and fits his views regarding male and female roles.

Also, the men spend their earnings from the first harvest from the herd to buy their women blue dresses and bonnets. Without suggesting that their women are thought of as Gods, this imagery suggests an almost Biblical devotion with the idea of first fruits, or a tenth of the first yield being offered to God. When the men thus decide on an Oven in Haven, it symbolizes provision as well as an absence of white kitchen jobs and resultant children testify racial tampering. The Oven symbolizes the triumph of their manhood, their perseverance and their triumph of having made it being able to protect and provide for their women.

Ruby is founded after the disintegration of Haven. One of the reasons for this new beginning is to avoid contact with the "Out There" and keep it from seeping into a dwindling Haven. Out There is described as "where your children were sport, your women quarry, and where your very person could be annulled" (16). "Out there" remains a serious consideration for the people of Ruby, when there is nothing to harm them for ninety miles around. Gauthier points out that the Morgan twins construct female identity on idealized images of women and they reciprocally not only construct their own identity and sense of masculinity as protectors of such women. This idealized vision is moreover in addition to the values portrayed in the stories they grew up on.

Like the Old Fathers, the New Fathers also determined to a fundamental aspect of their identity on their ability to fulfill the responsibility they feel to provide for and protect their women and children. They therefore vigilantly guard against outside intrusion that could disturb the tranquility of their hard-won community. When a group of strangers screech into town and intimidate Ruby women with sexual gestures, the townsmen would come out from wherever they are and intimidate such men right back

out of town with their loosely held guns. According to Tally this obsession and obligation to keep Ruby safe from outside intrusion leads the men attack the Convent. This reacts where men would leave their jobs and not care that all business would literally come to a standstill is akin to the Old Fathers' response to white kitchen work. They refuse to have their women exposed to sexual violations of white men.

The men found pride over themselves on the fact that the people of Ruby were free and protected so that a sleepless woman could go for a walk in the middle of the night and know that she was not a prey for ninety miles around. During the attack on the Convent, in a long stream of consciousness, an unidentified man is imagines about the above mentioned sleepless woman's night walk. Twice he thinks how she can walk without light and without fear; twice he mentions that nothing thinks she is a prey for ninety miles around. This imagery of absolute safety and protection is further emphasized by the image of moonlight being the only source of light and the assurance that the woman would remain completely at ease anywhere at anytime.

His description gives the impression that these women are never exposed to anything remotely threatening, thereby showing how good a job the men have done of keeping Ruby a safe haven. Missing the irony of situation this man note the safety of this Ruby women being whilst he feels justified attacking the convent women. As a perfect example of the Symbolic order, it is understood that Steward and Deek grew up on the stories of the past forty years, thus shaping them by the language and values of their elders.

Steward remembers the stories he heard of blue dresses and bonnets men bought for the women with their first earning. This joy and pride the men feel in being able to

provide their women with pretty things is also experienced in Steward's life. While this is not about a father providing for a daughter but it's about the principles and attitudes of the Old Fathers have been reproduced in Deek and Steward when they were young.

Deek and Steward felt very proud of themselves for having thrown a surprise birthday party for their only sister, Ruby. It was their first step in seeing a woman happiness and exposing that they care for her. Moreover, when Deek thinks of his sister, he thinks of how he and Steward had protected her all their lives. Steward similarly "relives" the Fairly rejection and imagines the humiliation and this thought threatens to crack his bones as well. Simply recalling the level of helplessness of the Old Fathers' Fairly experience makes Steward feel like he wants to shoot somebody.

Not only does he identify so completely with his elders that he feels the threat to his own person disintegrating, for the image of bones cracking suggests that the supporting structure, the deepest part, and possibly the strongest part of his identity became so vulnerable that it could split apart. This threat to the supporting structure of his life sees him want to take a life in retaliation. The 8-rock men experience their responsibility as both the backbone of their identity, but also the thing that renders them most vulnerable and most dangerous when threatened.

The New Fathers unfortunately take their responsibility to the extent that they define and determine the role of women and children. In the description of the sleepless woman, her possible thoughts are described as her thinking of "… food preparations, war, or family things, or lift her eyes to stars and think of nothing at all" (8). While these are legitimate things to think about, they suggest that beyond domestic concerns and who was away at war the man believes the woman probably has nothing else she could think

about. From time to time the men indeed treat the women as if their only cares are domestic and as if being good is the only moral possibility for women.

This unidentified man's thoughts continue to compare the Convent women to the Ruby women, which gives the reader the insight into what he regards as the proper role and place of women. He is disgusted to find that these women do not abide by the schedule and sense of order men consider appropriate to womanhood: "Slack, they think. August just around the corner and these women have not sorted, let alone washed, the jars" (5). In contrast to this assessment "there wasn't a slack or sloven woman anywhere in town" (8). Instead, the "proper" role of women is portrayed by: "Quiet white and yellow houses full of industry; and in them were elegant black women at useful tasks, orderly cupboards minus surfeit or miserliness; linen laundered and ironed to perfection; good meat seasoned and ready for roasting" (111).

Indeed Deek thinks of Soane as "a good woman" who keeps a "good home" and does "good works" (112). This image seems to be both the expectations of the men as well as their preferred view of women. For the men, women who differ from these standards, like the Convent women, do not deserve their protection. Soane, moreover, "worked thread like a prisoner: daily, methodically, for free, producing more lace than could ever be practical" (53). Restricted to being good and monotonously producing unneeded lace testify to the confines the Ruby women live by. The emphasis on protection and provision in combination with the above descriptions reveals a very strong patriarchal worldview in which both genders have their assigned roles. As such it becomes easy to usurp the power of another as men on occasion think for women.

The stream of consciousness moves from the singular to the plural, which indicate either Morgan twinned thoughts or that other men, besides the man who thinks about the sleepless woman, share this view of the Convent women as slack as portrayed by Arnold Fleetwood saying he will "arrange" his daughter's mind for her or when Deek tells Soane "you don't have to [understand], I do" (107). The abilities and work of women are moreover easily taken for granted, as is illustrated when Soane thinks to herself that Deek will bring home quail, saying "This ought to take care of supper"(100) as he did her a favor and as if there was nothing more to it.

The time and effort Soane would need to put in to prepare the quail does not seem to cross Deek's mind. Similarly the fact that she must clean up after him seems to simply be part of her job description as a woman. The domesticity of the kitchen scene in which Deek throws his wet hunting clothes on the floor and urges Soane to bring him a cup of coffee is indicative of the status quo of male-female relations. From the reader's perspective Soane feels a certain amount of discontentment toward Deek's attitude regarding the quail, his response to the young people wanting to change the words of the Oven, his view of an unknown girl in high heels, and his attitude toward friends' money problems. The measure of frustration she feels is probably related to the fact that she knows she can do little to change Deek's mind about these matters, for he does not budge to consent to her views, but instead dismisses them playfully or changes the angle of the subject. The Other of the symbolic order seems reflected here in that the unconscious organization of their society seems to "restrict" Soane to a role which she seems frustrated by, but is seemingly unable to alter. While not exactly a New Father, because he dies before the founding of Ruby, Deek and Steward's older brother Elder's

experience demonstrates the 8-rock instilled value of responsibility for women. Steward recalls how he and his brothers were "honed," with no slack being cut, to understand their history and their future purpose and the responsibility it brought with it.

The day Elder returned from fighting overseas he saw two white men beat up a black woman, who seemed to be a prostitute. He in turn beat them up, but ran away in order not to be jailed. His could not forgive himself for having run away and having abandoned the woman there. It is thus not his cowardice – as some may judge his running away as – but his failure to protect an unknown woman that Elder deplored in himself. "Whatever he felt about her trade, he thought about her, prayed for her till the end of his life" (94).

His wife had mended the torn uniform, but he told her "to remove the stitches, to let the jacket pocket flap, the shirt collar stay ripped, the buttons hang or remain missing" (94). His dying wish was to be buried in the uniform with its rips on display. Instead of forgetting about this incident, he kept its memory alive. The implied statement made by his uniform was louder than the words on his tombstone. It is by this failure that he judged his self-image. Elder's response reveals three things in contrast to Steward's reaction to this story.

Steward only sees that the woman was a streetwalker and he even imagines the man's fist as his own. In Steward's view such women deserve no protection, just like the Convent women, whom he views as prostitutes. Elder's reaction reveals that he can identify with that woman as an African American, sympathize with her as the weak, but most of all, that he sees himself as her protector, irrespective of her moral standing. In

having failed this assaulted woman, Elder felt he failed himself – his view of himself, as he was taught – to be a protector of women. Steward, on the other hand, does not easily identify with the plight of the weak or with women whom he judges to have loose morals.

Elder's attitude suggests that he would have condemned the way his brothers dealt with the Convent women. Elder seems like the type of man whom the Old Fathers recommended – the type who would not judge, rout or destroy the needy, the defenseless, the different. In many ways the men, especially the Morgan twins, see Ruby as a reflection of their own identity.

Chapter Four

Discourse of Dichotomy

The binary oppositions presented in the novel, were under attack from critics from all side. Reviewers criticized the rigid and legalistic male-female dichotomy and the unconvincing logic of its war between men and women which results in a formulaic and contrived book. A deeper analysis can prove the dichotomies as false. It is not a simple gender dichotomy of male against female. It is not a simple racial dichotomy of black against white. Furthermore, it is not a simple religious dichotomy of African religion against Christianity. "The Imaginary is the psychic realm where the child experiences the idea of a "self" in the face of a mirror image. The mirror stage cements a self/other dichotomy" (Bailly 37).

Paradise portrays the philosophy of infinite thinking in numerous ways. The structure is polyphonic, with nine chapters named after nine women and yet these nine chapters are filled with the voices of women. Most evident of infinity thinking is the openness of both the ending, and also numerous inexplicable events within the novel from the open door or window that could give a glimpse into another realm.

Life is about the healing affected in the Convent as a result of which the relationships open to the spiritual and shared identities with others. The openness of *Paradise* offers worldview, towards the other and otherness. Toni Morrison maintains the perception of the self in other and it creates common ground for new possibilities of self-knowledge and healing. *Paradise* shows a rejection of difference in group level results, in destroying itself by losing its paradisical nature. People are totalized the consequences

that followed such totalization are not examples of doubleness, they are examples of mirrors or projections.

Ron David argues that *Paradise* challenges the re-evaluation of history and how it is viewed in each other's humanity. The war-paradise is a dichotomy, which shows totalizing always and leads to war and war is the misrecognition of both the transcendence of the other person as well as an individual's dependence on the other person.

Menu, a light-skinned girl is named through prejudices derived from the racial re-evaluation. Other than Patricia and Lone, who simply and neutrally call her as "sandy haired girl" or "pretty redbone girl" (195, 278), the rest of the people think that she acts so, on a racial basis. Anna thinks of Menu as a "prostitute" (119). Steward calls her "the dung we left behind," and one of the Convent attackers thought of her as a "fast woman" (278).

People are totalized and judged through the symbolism of these values to fit a mold of the rejected or the accepted. This concept about her shows how deeply entrenched her motto of "reject those who rejected us". One such person is Anna, who has been living in Detroit for a number of years, until she returns home to take over her father's business.

Anna's hair receives a great deal of attention. Her hair is not straightened and seems to be an Afro-American, judged by the fact that it has to be shaped. To the people like Ruby it speaks of another world, a world that young people want to embrace, for they admired it, while Reverend Pulliam's rejection expresses itself in a whole sermon preached on it. The fact that people's reaction to her hair enables her to identify who her

true friends are. She describes the reactions she receives as measurable on a Geiger counter, registering "tranquility" in some and "the intensity of a rumbling, deep-down disorder" in others (119). This affair is an excellent portrayal of the impact of identities on the self .

The most totalizing and destructive affair in *Paradise* takes place in the way the New Fathers reflect their own fear and failures onto the Convent women. They connect everything that has gone wrong in Ruby to the Convent and find their evidence and confirmation for their suspicions in numerous ways. In this way they reduce the Convent women to fit the image of threat. For Billie Delia, the "war" was between the Stallions (102), in terms of who controlled the mares and their foal. In other words it was about disobedience, meaning who disagreed with the New Fathers and the way they see the world. Patricia comes to the same conclusion, that for racial purity it is the women who worry about the men the most were controlled by the law that "the generations had to be not only racially untampered with but free of adultery too" (217). This law will guarantee "unadulterated and unadulteried 8-rock blood" (217) serves to control the women, but the men as well. In totalizing others, they in turn totalize themselves. And this mark of their identity is ultimately the motivating factor for totalizing and murdering the women with their loose ways who seem to threaten this identity.

Billie-Delia says men see the mutiny of the mares and get rid of the women. Indeed, the Convent women are uncontrolled, unmanned-over, unconfined and undefined. Their presence has threatened the Morgan lineage twice, through the affairs of Deek and Connie and that of KD and Gigi. Deek's affair could have seen the end of the mission to find Ruby, and both KD's affairs could have resulted in adulterated and

adulteried 8-rock blood. Steward can neither tolerate nor forgive them for "sullying his personal history with their streetwalkers' clothes and whores' appetites; mocking and desecrating the vision that carried him and his brother through a war" (279) and enable them to find a town. The New Fathers mold their identity on their women and children, it is clear that the mares are indeed well under control. Their foals are, considered to be out of control, which is demonstrated by their "cut me some slack" attitude and their desire to change the words and motto of the Oven. Men like Steward cannot shoot their own foals and therefore "vented their anger on the Convent women whom they blamed for the behavior of their children" (85, 277).

Wisdom Poole blames them for his lack of control over his siblings and the Fleetwoods blamed them for Jeff's broken children. During the attack, the men's totalization of the women is portrayed in the manner they interpret the things they see. The women are described as detritus, thought of as up to devilish things that their rooms are described as not normal rooms and the cellar is even described as the "devil's bedroom, his bathroom, and his nasty playpen" (17). The Convent is thought of as diseased, and the certain things they see are imagined to be used for the "torture of children" (8), or to be ritual offerings and the women are thought of as belonging to some or other cult.

The letter the men see is described as "a letter written in blood so smeary its satanic message cannot be deciphered" (7), is really the letter written by young Seneca fought over in foster homes, because it is the only thing she had left from her sister and mother who abandoned her before she had even learned to read. Deek thinks of the Convent as brothel. The convent is blamed for the death of family nearby convent.

Steward could easily have made with the lost white family, who had needed gas and directions on a day when a blizzard had threatened. Outrages of things going wrong in Ruby take the form of evidence against the Convent.

The convent is blamed for it, everything that and considered not natural that had been happening in and around Ruby, is described to the Convent and they are believed to be witches with powers. These totalizing things culminate in an attack to exterminate the Convent women. Subsequent to this act, the Ruby inhabitants see themselves and the New Fathers in a new light. They see themselves as, having become what they thought they had left behind. The attack emphasizes the fact that they themselves have become the disallowers, whose object is to totalize others. The verbal war is used in different contexts in *Paradise*, to deliver a paradoxical and emphasized impact. War can be regarded as the opposite of *paradise*, war is a hell, the opposite of paradise, which would be assumed to be the absence of the horrors of war, and the novel's title stresses this idea. War is totalization of the other and the ultimate result is rejection or destruction. *Paradise* is an interrogation of "why paradise necessitates exclusion" (Bouson 192).

Morrison's interest is to explore the tragic state of those who were excluded from being rejected by the "come prepared or not at all". African American homesteads that were founded after Reconstruction ended (Bouson 192). *Paradise* is built on exclusion and the objectification of a whole community. War is the centre of three concentric arguments, which begin with Billie-Delia's view of the underlying politics in Ruby as a war between the Stallions. The argument then extends to portray Soane's view that her sons would be safer in the Vietnam War than in the United States. Reverend Misner's experience of war overlaps with that of Soane, but it also extends beyond it. Billie Delia's

view of the war between the Stallions, in terms of who controlled the mares and their foals, is specific to the community of Ruby. This stance reveals the fact that, despite the apparent absence of "Out There" in Ruby, the people are nonetheless not living in *Paradise*, because "In Here" operates on strict controls, meant to negate "Out There" realities, which, in effect, disables "In Here" from creating its own reality not contingent on Out There. Allegorically this scenario inverts both the outside-inside dichotomy and the black-white dichotomy. Outside and inside, like self and other, can be made applicable to any individual and group, based on race, class, language, place and more.

Moreover the danger, of rejecting the outside or the other, secures the possibility of ultimately rejecting the self, totalizing and damaging an individual as a white. Soane thinks that her sons would be safer in the war in Vietnam, than in the United States, where they ran the risk of being lynched and imprisoned for no reason, other than the fact that they were African American.

Paradise comments on two relations through this impression. The greatest indictment is leveled at a country where a mother had reason to believe the battlefields of foreign countries offer a safer place for her sons than their own country. Although Soane based her assumption of the relative safety of war, on the fact that other men have returned from war, Morrison employs war as a metaphor to juxtapose the general notion of war, as a situation of horrors against Soane's notion of war as safety in comparison to the situation of supposed peace in the country of the free. Thus, if the horrors of war look like peace in comparison to the situation for young black men in the USA, then the situation in the USA must have been exceptionally horrific.

Paradise cautions one to recognize the safety which is not only the absence of bombs or lynchings but also the imprisonments from others. There can be no *Paradise* despite the absence of such evils, when totalizing thought is accepted against infinite thought. Reverend Misner considers totalizing others is a war and he tries to bring out the image of the other clergy during the Civil Rights movement as being involved in b war.

The opposition they experience, not only comes from the US government and racist Americans, but also they experience it in hostility from local communities such as Ruby. Patricia calls Reverend Misner's Civil Rights class a 'war class' and he understands that Reverend Pulliam's love sermon is really a declaration of war on his work, because his teaching saw children questioning, criticizing, and defying the identity of the elders and their history, in all three cases of doubleness and thus the identity is relevant. The Stallions build their identity in response to their responsibility for the mare and foals and they totalize them instead of allowing their infinity to enrich the community and even the identity of the stallions. A similar misrecognition of the whole of American identity is portrayed.

When black Americans are not recognized as the twin of white Americans, despite having fought as one for one motherland in foreign wars, the white people do not recognize black people as their double. The people of Ruby neither recognized their identity and role in white America nor their shared identity with other black people, who happened not to be of 8-rock stock. In all these three cases misrecognition is spelt to be lost and potentially destructed. *Paradise* is considered to be War, which would have indicated the gender opposition and religious factionalism.

The war in the novel seems obvious at first glance, which demonstrates itself in a series of binary oppositions: the Convent and Ruby, Ruby and Haven, female and male, Reverend Misner's and Reverend Pulliam's versions of Christianity. The two sets of Morgan twins Deacon and Steward and their grandfather, sisters and sisters-in-law, Soane and Dovey, Soane's and Deek's two dead sons, four women who enter the Convent are the murdering mother and the abandoned daughter, the sexual exploiter and the sexually exploited.

Critics like Geoffrey Bent often see *Paradise* as a simplistic critique of patriarchy in which all the women are bad and all the men are good. Bent suggests that "one of *Paradise's* shortcomings as a concept is that it's too schematic, a place that's all of this and none of that Morrison's new novel falls prey to this same exclusivity. Virtue and vice seem to have been rigorously sorted along the convenient divide of gender; all the women are good, all the men bad" (Geoffrey, 149). It is not a simple racial dichotomy of black African. In Zia Jaffrey's 1998 interview for Salon magazine, Morrison responded to the issues of "patriarchy" and "matriarchy" involved in *Paradise*: "In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed … I think it's off-putting to some readers, who may feel that I'm involved in writing some kind of feminist tract. I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. It's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things".

Morrison resists such labels as feminine and masculine altogether. It is not Morrison's intention to create a *Paradise* where material, spiritual, and familial qualities can be found and serve the answer to all the problems. In fact, it is her intention to bring

out the dangers of this utopian desire. Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1992) offers a compelling account of what blackness and black characters have been made to symbolize within white literary culture, saying that "illicit sexuality, chaos, madness, impropriety, anarchy, strangeness, and helpless, hapless desire" (80– 81). Critics have defined the race of the women in this novel. Blackness continues to carry its usual label of otherness, unsanctioned passion, and authentic suffering. Morrison repeatedly emphasizes that knowing someone's race provides no real information, stating:

> It was important to me to demonstrate that concept in *Paradise*, by withholding racial markers from a group of black women, among whom was one white woman... And if I could enforce that response in literature, it was a way of saying that race is the least important piece of information we have about another person. Forcing people to react racially to another person is to miss the whole point of humanity. (Timehost Chat 102)

Morrison plays with her desire in terms of race and then undermines it. She attempts to find clues that would determine the race of the women at the Convent. Those desires become subverted when one is forced to question themselves as well as the narrative. By employing a liberal perspective of individualism, one can then deny the barriers of racial difference in order to identify with black characters.

In *Paradise* a nun named Consolata, apparently Christian, whose mysterious powers link her to a non-Christian world. She is bestowed to have the power of "stepping in" to raise the dead. In the novel, Morrison describes how Consolata uses her gift, her ability to step inside other people—to prolong the life of Mary Magna: "Stepping in to find the pinpoint of light. Manipulating it, widening it, strengthening it. Reviving, even

raising, her from time to time" (247). But Connie never reveals her stepping in to Mother, knowing that Mother would be appareled by the knowledge that her life was being prolonged by evil, as Connie calls it. The reason why Consolata feels guilty of performing stepping-in is that it is quite against what she has been taught by normative Christian principles. Critics like Therese E. Higgins points out that Consolata assumes the role of the Spanish woman God named Black Virgin of Monserrat (132-33). Consolata's method of raising the dead and healing the women is not in line with the Christian belief, but it is also unsafe to say that Morrison offers an alternative of the African religion to criticize the Christian religion.

Morrison thinks highly of Christian virtues. There is a division between an Old and New Testament about God. The founding fathers of Ruby seem to follow the Old Testament of God's prophecy, one who is arbitrary, who sets the rules to be followed. But in Richard Misner's version, intention and action are central and people are responsible for themselves. What the Convent women have learnt at last is to love oneself and to love one another, what Reverend Misner is trying to preach: "God loved the way humans loved one another; loved the way humans loved themselves" (146). Most critics agree on the point that Morrison creates the character Richard Misner to express her own stance. Another character Morrison identifies with is Lone DuPres, "the most beloved, endearing character created by Morrison since Pilate Dead in Song of Solomon" (137).

Morrison writes of Lone: "She knew what neither memory nor history can say or record: the 'trick' of life and its 'reason'" (272). Lone practices a Christianity that calls for active participation in the world, and this is what drives her listening:

> Playing blind was to avoid the language God spoke in. He did not thunder instructions or whisper messages into ears. Oh, no. He was a liberating God. A teacher who taught you how to learn, to see for yourself. His signs were clear, abundantly so, if you stopped steeping in vanity's sour juice and paid attention to His world. (273)

Lone allows herself to nurse resentment "Had she been paying attention, first to the buzzards, then to the minds of men, she would not be using up all her Wrigley's and gasoline on a mission she hoped was her last" (273), trying to save the Convent women. Again, Morrison does not follow the simplistic logic of denying one religion for another. *Paradise* may point towards the importance of religion with its religious essence, racial discrimination and gender construction. War-paradise demonstrates the dichotomy as all false and ostensible. Morrison's intension is to construct a disparate *Paradise* as opposed to all black patriarchy with its rigid Christian religion.

Chapter Five

Summation

Toni Morrison commented by the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy as "a literary artist of finest work" is an inspiration for many writers. Though Morrison did not experience slavery, her stories reflect the turbulence of her ancestors. The experience of racial segregation of black population in America is voiced through her works. To begin, the novels title, *Paradise*, is the first allusion to the text being parallel to America. *Paradise* is Morrison's counter narrative of America. The novels title parallels the name America as a sarcastic response to the true nature of the country. It is evident throughout American rhetoric that there is a sense of privilege for those who are citizens of the United States. These same principles have manifested themselves into the American psyche and corrupted the moral of the people. In Ruby, the attempt to retain an ideal of purity and righteousness, to repeat the past without change, creates the greatest changes of all.

Morrison shows how this has trickled down for generations and to different ethnic groups outside of white culture. Being that the town of Ruby was formally named New Haven is a black community; Morrison again parallels the novel to the history of America. The story of an oppressed and imperiled people seeking to create a safe haven based on an earlier model, a people who inadvertently become somewhat like the original oppressors, can be read as a contemporary critique of numerous nations, including the state of Israel, and certain concepts of black nationhood.

Morrison's *Paradise* is an imaginative discourse on the oral-written interface in African American culture. In *Paradise*, however, memory is interrogated as Morrison

presents a slice of African American experience centered on the abuse of memory In some ways, *Paradise* is a demonstration of Morrison's awareness of the complex nature of the African American historical experience, an experience that she is reluctant to represent in binary terms that is, black or white, written or oral. Although *Paradise* employs familiar Morrison techniques, cutting back and forth from one character's point of view to another, back and forth from the past to the present and the novel's language feels closer to the hectoring didactic voice.

The oppressed women's silenced voices depicted in the novel are the violent history of descendants of the former slaves who sought to leave behind the racial and economic oppression they experienced during the slavery and reconstruction. They guard against the oppression by rigid, isolationist code of behaviour that refuses to allow any new ideas, believes or ethnicities to interfere with their sense racial pride and community. The women belonging to convent and to Ruby in the *Paradise* are rightly associated to Eve and Mary as they are truly characterized with their personality. The women in the town had undergone discriminations and they are poorly treated. Even the male society in the town was not ready for the support of their own women. The slaughters happening in the town is evident that there is no place for mercy.

The three women who are considered as the major female characters are Consolata, Gigi, and Mavis. These women first belonged to the town Ruby but they were then drawn to the convent. Consolata is kind, wise and she has a women trait. Mavis is a tender hearted woman, Gigi's characters sets an image that any brave women can come up to fight against or even win the men in Ruby. The men in the town felt a threat about the women in convent as they consider inferior to them. The woman in ruby explores the

domination of patriarchal system in the *Paradise*. They are weak, dependent and coward. They follow the courses of men even to have their own life and this clears the dependence of women in the town.

A Woman generally is expected to stay obedient to her father and husband. In marriage life, a woman should be completely relayed upon her husband and she should look forward to her husband to take any decisions in her life. A sense of chauvinism to any male could make him take control over his wife and her limits. The oppression of women changed the ideology and the societal view in Ruby. The women in convent who were once the people of Ruby, is now independent and they are no more inferior to any men. This analysis of the oppressed women in Ruby brings out the dominant notion that is expressed proficiently in Morrison's narrative.

The contrasting identities in *Paradise* are between the Old Father and New father identities about their women. The Oven had sentimental and monumental value for the eight-rock men. For, the eight-rock men, it is similarly their ability to provide safety from such 'kitchen dangers' that saw them value the Oven to a degree that the women could not understand. For the Old Fathers, the true test of their triumph and achievement lay in the fact that none of their women had ever worked in a white man's kitchen. The Oven, as a kind of communal kitchen, is in stark contrast to the white kitchens where the abuse of their women if not a certainty a distinct possibility. The thought of this danger to their women was too much for the men to even consider. The Oven symbolizes triumph of their manhood, their perseverance and their triumph of having made it and of being able to protect their women.

Like the Old Fathers, the New Fathers base a fundamental aspect of their identity on their ability to fulfill the responsibility they feel to provide for and protect their women and children. The image of absolute safety is further emphasized by the image of moonlight being the only source of light and the assurance that the women would remain completely at ease even incase if a strange or sudden sound coming from the side of the road. His description gives the impression that this woman has never been exposed to anything remotely threatening, thereby showing how good a job the men have done in keeping Ruby a safe Haven. From time to time the men indeed treat he women as if their only cares are domestic and as if being good is the only moral possibility for women. This unidentified man's thoughts continued to compare the convent women to the Ruby women, which gives an insight into what he regards as the proper role and place of women. The emphasis on protection and provision in combination reveals a very strong patriarchal worldview in which both genders have their assigned roles.

Dichotonomy in *Paradise* deals with the men in Ruby as they are very much concerned about preserving the purity of their race. The women in the convent involved in adultery and it was exposed to the town. The men's lack of ability to put everything under control and particularly the growth in intellectual and skillful activities of the Convent women made them insecure. There aroused a friction between both the parties which erupted as War. Men were grouped together in a mission to completely eradicate the convent women on whom they discussed of heresy, witchcraft and adultery.

The social divisions or the binary oppositions is the one which make men stronger and the other women weaker. There was already a pressured tension between the light coloured and the dark. For instance in case of Menu, the only light skinned Convent

women is the one who went through a traumatic discrimination. The entire people of Ruby were Prejudiced that whiteness is something vile and abominable. The black women undergo triple Jeopardy (Classism, Racism and Sexism). The plight of every coloured person is challenging and being a black woman are further more pathetic.

Paradise comments on two relations through this impression. The greatest indictment is leveled at a country where a mother had reason to believe the battle field of foreign countries offers a safe place for her sons than their own country. Morrison employs war as a metaphor to juxtapose the general notion of war, as a situation of horror. Thus, if horrors of war look like peace in comparison to the situation for young black men in USA, then the people in America must have been exceptionally horrific. The racial, religious and gendered Dichotonomy differs from men and women, it is a totalitarian practice. They think that they have outfoxed the white man but they actually imitate them.

Women either black or white were always expected to fit themselves inside a restricted circle drawn by the society. If they dare to explore out of that predestined orders they might go through consequences which cost them their life. Toni Morrison marks a deep insight into the racial problems that are being confronted by the Blacks since their existence. Being African American woman, Morrison boldly presents Afro-American feminist consciousness through her literary endeavor as she strongly expresses her philosophy as a feminist. As a result, her novels manifest and highlight Black women who are doubly differentiated in the form of male standard and poverty

The storyline seeks to explore the feminist concepts and patriarchy in *Paradise*, in search of a reason for the attack. It declares that in Ruby, patriarchy and feminist

awareness are in contrast that eventually lead to the massacre. The racist matters are exceptional in this novel and they carry a special attention. The novel is a multilayered novel, which engages several characters in the historical background of African American black people, who a long time ago determined to put up their own community.

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Biblical Parallels and Christian Symbolism in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Biblical Parallels and Christian Symbolism in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Amutha Pobilna J. During the year 2018-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Biblical Parallels and Christian Symbolism in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Biblical Parallels and Christian Symbolism in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*** highlights the spiritual journey of the author and also his growing awareness on his own part. It leads to the realisation that imagination cannot be divorced from reason in one's apprehension of reality.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of C.S. Lewis, his life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for the study.

The second chapter **Plot Construction** deals with the exploration on the plot of the novel and reveals the unordinary image of the magical world, *Narnia* through fantasy and supernatural elements.

The third chapter **Archetypal Characters** focuses on the archetypes of the characters in the novel such as the four Pevensive children, Jadis, the White Witch, and Aslan, the Great Lion.

The fourth chapter **Canons of Christianity** concentrates on the Christian messages of resurrection, self-sacrifice and betrayal as well as Christian virtues.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

C.S. Lewis was a British writer, essayist and Christian apologist. He is best known for his children's classic series – *The Chronicles of Narnia,* fantasy series and his pro-Christian texts. In essays, critical studies, poems, novels and works of autobiography, he turned his formidable literary gifts to the task of re-presenting the Christian view of human destiny to a world bewildered by scientific materialism. He did not shirk the real difficulties that Christian belief encounters, nor did he down-play the cost of faith in an age of self-indulgence. Nevertheless, the radiant happiness and good sense that shine through his prose have never ceased to find new and eager readers, and his books remain part of the canonical wisdom of our culture.

Clive Staples Lewis was born on 29 November 1898. He was an Irish-born British novelist, academic, medievalist, literary critic, essayist, and Christian apologist. C. S. Lewis was raised as a Christian. Clive Staples Lewis, referred to as "Jack" by most of his friends, grew up in a Christian home with his parents Albert and Flora and older brother Warren. At the age of six, his family moved to a home he called "Little Tea" in Northern Ireland. His parents were avid readers, and encouraged young Lewis to make ample use of the family library. His father as quoted by Carpenter:

> Bought all the hundreds of books which lined the study and the drawing-room and the cloakroom, and were stacked two deep in the landing

> bookcase, and filled the corridors and the bedrooms. Jack turned the pages of most of them in turn (4).

When his mother died from cancer in 1908, as stated by Dorsett: Lewis "grew angry with God, that God was either cruel or a vague abstraction" (4). By the year 1912, Lewis had become an atheist under the influence of a teacher at Campbell College, the preparatory school he attended at the time. Then, in 1914, Lewis spent three years under the tutelage of a brilliant headmaster and family friend named Kirkpatrick, whom he and his brother referred to as "The Great Knock." Kirkpatrick pushed Lewis not only "to read great literature in its original languages" but also "to express himself logically and clearly". As said by Gresham Kirkpatrick's instruction, Lewis:

> learned Greek, Latin, French, and Italian . . . He soon was reading the great classics of literature of those countries in their original languages, and he began to realize that he was gifted with a peculiar, rare, and valuable talent, one which he worked hard to develop fully: Jack never forgot anything he read (26).

In 1916 Lewis came across the book that had the greatest impact upon his life: George MacDonald's *Phantastes*. Lewis described his encounter with it in his autobiography; Surprised by Joy, stating that it had "baptized" his imagination (181). Green and Hooper say on Phantastes: "left the deepest and most enduring impression both on his literary and his spiritual life" (27). Lewis claimed in the preface to his biography on MacDonald that he never wrote a book in which he did not quote from MacDonald.

By the end of 1916, Lewis earned a scholarship to University College, Oxford, and when he was nineteen, attended Oxford University. He would later join the English faculty from 1925 to 1954 and befriend the famous writer J. R. R. Tolkien, who contributed to Lewis's conversion from atheism to Christianity. His only departure from Oxford was during his brief World War I service in the British Army from 1917 to 1919. Lewis published his first work, *Dymer*, in the year 1926. When his father died in 1929 Lewis became a theist, but not a Christian. Then, in 1931, he made a confession of faith and received salvation. In 1941 Lewis began a series of twenty radio broadcasts from the British Broadcasting Corporation radio. He was later voted first professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at the University of Cambridge in 1955 at Magdalene College.

At the age of 59, Lewis married Joy Davidman, who died only four years later and who became the inspiration for his 1961 work, *A Grief Observed*. Lewis died on November 22, 1963 on the same day as Aldous Huxley and John F. Kennedy. Between the year 1933 and his death, Lewis published almost forty works and left behind a legacy that would forever affect Christian thought.

Lewis contributed to the development of Christian media in the areas of literature, radio, magazines, and drama. He contributed to literary media by producing nearly forty books and countless letters for publication. Lewis quickly became one of the best-selling authors of his time. He enriched a variety of genres, including science fiction, fantasy, Christian apologetics, poetry, philosophy, literary history and criticism, and autobiography.

In the September 8, 1947 issue of Time Magazine, Lewis appeared on the cover, "focusing national attention on a British Christian who was … already one of the most popular Christian authors in America and Great Britain". His 1941 broadcasts as a "by-product of the war [made him] become a famous radio personality". These broadcasts during wartime, which reinforced the central truths of Christianity, brought him widespread popularity. They also later became the basis for a number of his literary works, including *Mere Christianity*. In drama, playwrights reproduced his work, *The Chronicles of Narnia,* in the form of skits or plays. Since his death, he has been the influence and inspiration for innumerable books, including a vast number of biographies as well as a myriad of books in which his work and ideas are quoted.

C. S. Lewis contributes a unique Christian worldview to his audience of skeptics, Christians, and those who are simply curious about the faith. His generic variety as well as his distinctive perspective appeals to a wide range of audiences. Because he converted from atheism to Christianity, he can relate to the skeptics who choose to read his works. His rigorous academic training from a young age, as well as his excellence among other Oxford University scholars, give him the opportunity to share Christian ideas with an intellectual audience. His various writings in apologetics and philosophy have caused even the profoundest skeptics to consider God's existence.

Additionally, many contemporary writers and theologians pull from Lewis to build their own Christian worldview. Lewis accomplished more in his life than seems possible. Even after his death, Lewis is still a best-selling author, as his books continue to sell over one million copies each year.

Lewis's spiritual journey represents a conversion not only from atheism to salvation but also a growing awareness on his own part that imagination cannot be divorced from reason in our apprehension of reality. Unlike Romantic writers who used the imagination as an escape from reality, Lewis creatively uses it to reflect what is most real. In his own fiction, he creates worlds that captivate the imagination yet point the reader to a greater understanding of eternal truths in the real world. Mark Noll considers the influence and importance of Lewis:

> Lewis's writing has constituted the single most important body of Christian thinking for American evangelicals in the twentieth century. His defense of supernatural Christianity, his ability to exploit learned culture, his example as a writer of fiction, his demonstration that the truths of the faith could be expressed in lively prose—all contributed an unusual measure of intellectual stimulation to evangelicals on this side of the water. (218)

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is one of the novel series written by Clive Staples Lewis. It was the first-published book of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and is the best known book of the series. The book has been published in forty seven foreign languages. From that time on, millions of copies have been sold throughout the world. The TIME magazine included the novel in its *TIME 100 Best English language Novels* from 1923-2005.

The Chronicles of Narnia series is the most popular book among the others. The first series of the book was published in 1950. As a children's novel, the series is quite

successful in that its storyline has a good balance of adventure and lesson. Lewis described the origin of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* an essay entitled *It All Began with a Picture.*

> The Lion all began with a picture of a Faun carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood. This picture had been in my mind since I was about sixteen. Then one day, when I was about forty, I said to myself: Let's try to make a story about it. (24)

Lewis was aware of the public criticisms. At that time it was fashionable for children's stories to be realistic: fantasy and fairy tales were seen as indulgent, appropriate only for very young readers, and potentially harmful to older children, even hindering their ability to relate to everyday life. Some reviewers thought the tale was obviously moralistic. In some ways, as Lewis was famous for his religious works and he was considered as a very obedient Christian, most of his books were influenced by this aspect. Indeed, *The Chronicles of Narnia* has a very strong element which indicates the theology of Christian beliefs. This inner element of the book becomes very contradictive. Reviewers thought it was over-stated. It attempts to indoctrinate children. That was very dangerous for the publication of the book.

Peter, Susan and Lucy have many obstacles to overcome before they can even come close to saving Edmund. Luckily, they meet the great Aslan, who has come back to Narnia to help them on their quest to defeat the White Witch. Aslan is a giant, talking Lion who originally created Narnia. Aslan sends some of his followers to take save

Edmund from the grips of the witch's henchmen. When the four Pevensie children are reunited, a battle to end the 100-year winter begins, with Peter leading the way!

In the book, there are many incredible creatures, animals, and people such as the jaunty fauns, elated dryads, serene naiads, talking beavers, and amiable Father Christmas. Because they are there, an element of magic is added to the story. It shows the readers that not only humans have to be in control. C.S. Lewis also shows some of the Christian beliefs and the story of Jesus Christ because Aslan represents Jesus Christ. When Aslan dies to save Edmund, it is like how Jesus died to save the people on Earth. Also, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* describes about having compassion and forgiving others. This is shown when the Pevensies Children forgive Edmund for betraying them to the White Witch. Incredibly, Aslan goes to die in Edmund's place, which shows how Aslan had compassion for Edmund, even though he is perfectly innocent.

The Chronicles of Narnia becomes one of the greatest children novels which have been produced. Since the first publication of this book, the popularity of this book is so great. This book tells about the story of four siblings who accidentally travel into a fantasy world called Narnia. They are children who become victims during the World War II and evacuated from London to escape from the air raid by Nazis. They are sent to the house of Professor Digory Kirk located in English countryside. In this house, they find the wardrobe which leads them into the fantasy world of Narnia. The adventure begins soon after they meet the magical creatures who live in Narnia.

The books are instantly recognized as one of the premier fantasy stories, easily capable of pulling in and fully engrossing readers of all ages and walks of life. Somehow,

the popularity of the books were not always become good and positive influences. As the first series was famous with its allegory of Christian marks, the book was banned in numerous public lower schools, faced criticism from various religious communities, and even faced removal from public libraries. It has also been cited for arousing children to act in mischievous manners, disobeying the conventions of their elders while looking for adventure. Other critics also concerned that the many violent incidents might frighten children. Nevertheless, the novel and its successors were highly popular with young readers.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe has much fantasy and adventure that allows to explore their imagination. The children's fantasy by genre, this would at first appear extremely surprising. "Christianity Today", a popular Christian magazine, highlighted many of books anger arousing aspects when it said "it [Narnia] is a sullied book that attempts to animalize Jesus Christ, putting his struggles into clichéd animal characters..." These critics somehow only make this book even popular. Even in 2008, the movie based on the first book *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* have been released and make this fantasy story become a must for younger readers.

Since the first publication of this book, Lewis was aware of the public criticisms. At that time it was fashionable for children's stories to be realistic: fantasy and fairy tales were seen as indulgent, appropriate only for very young readers, and potentially harmful to older children, even hindering their ability to relate to everyday life. Some reviewers thought the tale was obviously moralistic. In some ways, as Lewis was famous for his

religious works and he was considered as a very obedient Christian; most of his books were influenced by this aspect.

Chapter Two

Plot Construction

Fantasy is a genre that uses magic and other supernatural phenomena as the primary element of plot, theme, and setting. The term fantasy has a strong association with dream and imagination. According to Freud, fantasy is also called as screen memories. It is a memory that a normal human being has, but it is not a genuine memory. Freud says that the fantasies and yearnings of the child were at the root of later conflict rather than stressing the corrupting initiative of adults in the etiology of neuroses. In psychology, the term is defined as a form of consciousness that lies between ordinary thought processes and an uncontrolled state of awareness.

According to Barron, there are three essential levels of truth in any fantasy. Those are sensual truth, emotional truth, and spiritual truth. The sensual truth makes the readers capable of feeling the subtlest sensations in a fantasy using all five of the reader's sense to life. The most essential ingredient in achieving this sensual truth is the form of details. The emotional truth goes beyond the sense. The spiritual truth becomes the deepest of all truths. It connects the readers with something profound linked to human condition.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a form of literary works which mainly presents fantasy. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* contain many fantastic things, such as its magic and marvels. The magic wardrobe, the land of Narnia, the magical creatures such as the Faun, the talking animals such as the beaver, the White Witch, and Aslan, are some examples of

the magical things in the novel. Aslan is a talking beast, the great lion, the King, the Lord of the whole wood, the former ruler of Narnia, and the savior of the "Narnians". All those things become the inspiration in analyzing other fantastic elements and things deeply.

The story of the novel begins with a narrator introducing four siblings whose names Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie. It seems that those names are common English names. Those siblings are sent to the house of an old Professor in London to prevent the air raid of the Nazis because it is the World War II. The beginning of the novel seems so clear that the story begins with an introduction of the main characters.

> ONCE there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids. They were sent to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country, ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office (2).

The house of the professor is so big; it makes them want to explore it. In the middle of the exploration, Lucy, the youngest, finds a room with a big wardrobe in it. She is curious with the strange room with only a wardrobe and decided to see it.

> She immediately stepped into the wardrobe and got in among the coats and rubbed her face against them, ... Soon she went further in and found that there was a second row of coats hanging up behind the first one (5).

Here, Lucy is described to be bravely entering the wardrobe to look into it. It is because of her curiosity about what could have been inside such a huge wardrobe. She has a big

question to be answered: are there any strange things inside, or just an ordinary wardrobe full of clothes?

> Next moment she found that what was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. "Why, it is just like branches of trees!" exclaimed Lucy. ... ... A moment later she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air (6-7).

The wardrobe is a kind of passage or a portal from the real world into another world which is different or magical. When she enters the wardrobe, she accidentally finds herself entering a magical land named Narnia. Narnia is a name put on the main title of Lewis' series. In the first series entitles *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, Narnia is a name of a magical country, which is not in the real world, which is snowy, cold, and it seems that most of the places are woods and not cities or villages. The next thing she encounters is a magical creature that lives in Narnia.

> In about ten minutes she reached it and found it was a lamp-post. ... ... And soon after that a very strange person stepped out from among the trees into the light of the lamp-post. ... ... From the waist upwards he was like a man, but his legs were shaped like a goat's (the hair on them was glossy black) and instead of feet he had goat's hoofs. He also had a tail, ... it was neatly caught up over the arm that held the umbrella so as to keep it from trailing in the snow (7-8).

There she meets a magical creature named Tumnus. He is a good and kind faun; a half human and half goat. He carries an umbrella to cover him under the snow. The story then tells about the first problem encountered by Lucy. It is a problem of her as a human being. Narnia has recently been ruled by the White Witch, the Queen who turns the whole country into an eternal winter but never Christmas. There is a prophecy said that when the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve come to Narnia, they would overthrow the White Witch and be crowned as Kings and Queens. It makes the Queen angry and then tries to take her first step to overcome her problem.

> ... ... Taken service under the White Witch. That's what I am. I'm in the pay of the White Witch." ... ... "I'm a kidnapper for her, that's what I am. Look at me, Daughter of Eve. Would you believe that I'm the sort of Faun to meet a poor innocent child in the wood, one that had never done me any harm, and pretend to be friendly with it, and invite it home to my cave, all for the sake of lulling it asleep and then handing it over to the White Witch? (15-16)

As the faun considered as a very kind creature, he then lets Lucy to go home. He takes the risk he had done as he lets the daughters of Eve to escape. This is the beginning of the story. It not only reveals the introduction of the major characters, but also reveal the first problem leading to other crucial problems in the whole story.

The middle part of the story tells about the Magic of the White Witch that begins to break. The indication is the coming of Father Christmas whom everybody believes that Father Christmas will appear during the Christmas Eve. Before that crucial incident, the

story tells about four children who accidentally came into the wardrobe while they were hiding inside it. They then meet the Beavers and reveal the real story about what has happened in Narnia.

The middle part of the story is well-marked with when the three children and the beavers finally get to the Stone Table. As the story firstly reveals that Edmund is in the hand of the White Witch because White Witch had controlled him when they first met and the Witch promised him to be the King if Edmund brought all of his siblings to her. It makes Edmund as the traitor here. The Beavers and the three children then finally meet Aslan who already had a plan to save Narnia in a battle against the White Witch in the Stone Table.

> Aslan stood in the centre of a crowd of creatures who had grouped themselves round him in the shape of a half-moon. There were Tree-Women there and Well-Women (Dryads and Naiads as they used to be called in our world) who had stringed instruments; it was they who had made the music. There were four great centaurs. The horse part of them was like huge English farm horses, and the man part was like stern but beautiful giants. There was also a unicorn, and a bull with the head of a man, and a pelican, and an eagle, and a great Dog. And next to Aslan stood two leopards of which one carried his crown and the other his standard (122-123).

The world of fantasy is also dwelled by fantasy creatures. Not only talking animals such asbeavers and Aslan, but also creatures who does not exist in the real world,

such as centaurs half men and half horses, unicorn, a horse with a horn, and a bull with the head of a man.

Peter's first battle happens when Aslan takes Peter in to top of the hill. Aslan wants Peter to see the clear landscape of Narnia and the Cair Paravel in the far sight. They hear the sound of the Susan's horn which means that Susan is in trouble. Aslan then lets Peter as the leader to confront the problem as he knows that Susan is encountering enemies.

> Then he saw Susan make a dash for a tree, and swing herself up, followed by a huge grey beast. At first Peter thought it was a bear. Then he saw that it looked like an Alsatian, though it was far too big to be a dog. Then he realized that it was a wolf—a wolf standing on its hind legs, with its front paws against the tree-trunk, snapping and snarling (126-127).

Peter encounters a big beast which already attacks Susan. He thinks it is a bear, but then it appears to be a big wolf. He does not feel so brave to encounter the wolf, but he has to save his sister from the danger. Then he rushes towards the beast and aims his sword to it.

> That stroke never reached the Wolf. Quick as lightning it turned round, its eyes flaming, and its mouth wide open in a howl of anger. If it had not been so angry that it simply had to howl it would have got him by the throat at once. As it was—though all this happened too quickly for Peter to think at all—he had just time to duck down and plunge his sword, as hard as he could, between the brute's forelegs into its heart (127- 128).

He never gets a training of a real battle which makes him hesitated to draw his sword, but then with his confidence, he strikes his sword into the wolf's heart. A moment later he finds that the monster lay dead and he has drawn his sword out of it. He feels tired all over, but the real battle is not over yet. It seems that there is another wolf hiding in the woods who keeps on its sight at Peter's battle. The wolf then runs away and tells the White Witch about the incident.

The White Witch with her army including Edmund arrive at the camp and meets Aslan to make sort of deal about what will happen to Edmund. The meeting then reveals an old treaty in the land of Narnia. It is an old treaty named The Deeper Magic from the Dawn of Time. It is said that,

> ...You at least know the Magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill. (138-139)

The Deeper Magic says that the traitor under the control of the Witch must then be killed by the Witch. But Aslan stands by to make another deal that he will surrender himself to the Witch in the change of Edmund's life. Then both sides agree. In the evening Aslan secretly goes alone to meet the White Witch, but followed by Susan and Lucy without the privity of Aslan. The Witch meets Aslan and she stabs him with a strange and evil shaped knife made of stone. A moment later, when the Witch and the army leave his dead body, Lucy and Susan came closer to Aslan which gave them the strength. After the girls flee back to the camp, they feel a strange feeling yet strong and

powerful. It is a resurrection of Aslan. He comes back from the death. Aslan then explains to the girls that it is because the Deeper Magic from Before the Dawn of Time:

> It means," said Aslan, "that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know... ... when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards. And now" (159-160).

The story ends with the struggle of Aslan and the two children to bring back the life all the victims of the White Witch who had turned into stones and helps to melt the ice and brings spring time. The great battle between Aslan, his army, and the children against the White Witch and her Army become the ending of the story. At last, the good wins. Aslan, his army, and the children win the battle and the children finally fulfill the prophecy to be crowned as Kings and Queens of Narnia.

The imaginative world makes the reader's imaginations grow. The main characters, the four children, start their new life story in this magical world. Narnia. They meet their bigger conflicts of their life which lead them to be such different children. They gain their best accomplishment to become the Kings and Queens of a country. But then after returning to the real world, they turn into ordinary children with their old clothes and the same ages as they enter Narnia at the beginning. It strengthens the characteristics of the story to be a fantasy story.

In this novel there are two worlds that all the characters live in. Both worlds have both similar and different characteristics. The world of fantasy is necessary for fantasy

characters to live, move and have their being. It is not a dream world. It is not a never-never land, but it is a world that matches ones world in reality. There is the real world which is in London, the house of the Professor and the other world called Narnia. Narnia is a name of a world where all of the major incidents in the novel take place. Narnia can also be called as a name of a country in the Narnian World because there are other countries lying in the World of Narnia. The two worlds are linked by the Wardrobe as the portal passage. The wardrobe lies in an empty room in the house of the Professor. The real world where the main characters live is clearly defined as the real human world: the world which human beings live in.

> This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the airraids. They were sent to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country, ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office (1).

The four children actually live in London but then sent to the house of an old Professor far from any big cities because it lies ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office. It means that the house of the old Professor is so private and safe. The founding of the fantasy world is firstly revealed by Lucy when she goes into a room which has a big wardrobe in it. She finds it to be a portal to travel into the magical world of Narnia.

> "Why, it is just like branches of trees!" exclaimed Lucy. And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back

> of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. Something cold and soft was falling on her. A moment later she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air (6-7).

There is similarity between the real world and the magical world, Narnia. Although it is magical, the description of the world seems so real. It has trees, branches, a light, a cold weather, and falling snow which indicates that the winter season is like in the real world. It is not a strange world or a never-never land in which no one can imagine. But it appears to be the world which actually has the same images as the real world. "Why, it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It's she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!"

The novel reveals the unordinary image of the magical world, *Narnia*. It is told that the whole country is changed into eternal winter but not Christmas by the White Witch's magic spell. Although the appearance of this another world seems so common, it has a difference in its unique characteristics. It is said that the winter season is eternal. It means that it has been so many years that this country has its winter season. Normally in the real world, the winter season lasts for just four months.

> In the very middle of this open hill-top was the Stone Table. It was a great grim slab of grey stone supported on four upright stones. It looked very old; and it was cut all over with strange lines and figures that might be the letters of an unknown language. They gave you a curious feeling when you looked at them. The next thing they saw was pavilion pitched on one

> side of the open place. A wonderful pavilion it was—and especially now when the light of the setting sun fell upon it— with sides of what looked like yellow silk and cords of crimson and tent-pegs of ivory; and high above it on a pole a banner which bore a red rampant lion fluttering in the breeze which was blowing in their faces from the far-off sea (121-122).

The Stone Table is a table where the Deeper Magic from the Dawn of Time was crafted. It is also the table where the Narnians used to gather around. The stone table is made of grey stones supported on four upright stones. In the surroundings of the stone table is a wonderful pavilion. It looks like yellow silk and cords of crimson and tent-pegs of ivory. Above the pavilion there is a pole banner which bears a red rampant lion fluttering in the breeze which is blowing in their faces from the far-off sea. In the real world there is no such thing like the Stone Table, although the image of it is very clear and understandable. It indicates that somehow in the real world, that kind of building can be built for some reasons. Such building can be defined as a sacred building for a sacred activity.

> ... ... in the Great Hall of Cair Paravel—that wonderful hall with the ivory roof and the west wall hung with peacock's feathers and the eastern door which looks towards the sea, in the presence of all their friends and to the sound of trumpets, Aslan solemnly crowned them and led them to the four thrones amid deafening shouts of, "Long Live King Peter! Long Live Queen Susan! Long Live King Edmund! Long Live Queen Lucy!"(178-179).

The greatest achievement done by the main characters in the magical world is becoming the Kings and Queens of Narnia and dwelling in a beautiful castle called Cair Paravel. It can be said that it was the reflection of their being in the real world. A long journey full of obstacles, miseries, efforts, and struggles finally come to the final goal. It means that the system of the way of life is also reflected in the real world. In the real world, human beings cannot achieve the greatest achievement if they do not put so much efforts and struggles for it. Those evidences show that the evocation of another world in the novel characterizes the novel as a work of fantasy literature.

Chapter Three

Archetypal Characters

The Chronicles of Narnia is a classic work of legendary literature, in which children read strange and vivid stories, older children decipher the codes of legends and myths from their adventures, while adults retrieve lost memories and interpret the sacred religious spirit. According to Frye, "the Bible is the chief source of undisplaced myth in our tradition." That is to say, the Bible does not change myths or metaphors, the archetype is the original form. As a classical work that influences the culture and daily life of the western world, its profound influence on western literature can be imagined.

The charm of *The Chronicles of Narnia* is to draw nourishment from the traditional Bible and interpret the traditional mythological archetypes. The environment, characters, and themes in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe are taken from the Bible. The influence of The Holy Bible and its Christianity belief towards English literature was very great. Since C. S. Lewis had been called the unofficial spoke—person for Christianity. *The Chronicles of Narnia* can be regarded as the adventurous fairy tale edition of the Holy Bible. Religion and literature have been intertwined with each other and they are one of the important fields of human spiritual life. Both of them embody human's pursuit and exploration of ideal life.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, narrates the story of four ordinary children: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie. It happened during the Second World War. They were sent away from London to the house of an old Professor because

of the air-raids. They discovered that the wardrobe in the professor's house led to the magical land of Narnia. The inhabitants are fauns, beavers, dwarves, tree elves etc. But while Aslan, the great Lion, was away from Narnia, the country was occupied by an evil white witch. She oppressed the inhabitants and subjected them to the eternal winter. "It's she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas."(1)

The four children fulfilled an ancient, mysterious prophecy as they helped Aslan save Narnia from the evil white witch. Then Narnia came back to its normal seasons. The four children became the two kings and two queens respectively in the end. Years later, they accidentally crossed the wardrobe while hunting and returned to the real world. Christian culture has become an important expression of human culture, which has exerted a profound influence on western literature and their writers. Lewis was one of them who were deeply influenced by Christian culture and he even had been called the unofficial spokesperson for Christianity. Most part of his life was dedicated to his Christian belief. There is no doubt that his works are under the influence of Christianity or have some biblical elements. In the archetypal criticism theory, The famous Canadian Northrop Frye has made it clear that literature is not the mere imitation and representation of nature and society, but the embodiment of myth and ritual. He believes that literature is the prototype form of myth and he thinks that literature is the "displaced myth".

The ancient religion and myth are displaced in modern times. In the novel, the displacements are expressed by the images of the characters, the plots of the story such as the plot of birth, death and victory etc., which finally contribute to the building of the holy themes. According to Frye, the myth is archetype. In the western literature, the

biblical stories, characters, plots and even some Christian themes are the archetypes. This chapter focuses on the archetypes of the characters present in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Northrop Frye said in his Great Code that man lives, not directly or nakedly in nature like animals, but within a mythological universe, a body of assumptions and beliefs developed from his existential concerns. Most of this is held unconsciously, which means that one's imaginations may recognize elements of it, when presented in arts or literature, without consciously understanding what it is that we recognize. The story of the Garden of Eden has long been accumulated as the collective unconsciousness in people's hearts. Therefore, it is natural that Louis should imitate the Garden of Eden in his description of Narnia in his novel. And the Garden of Eden is Narnia's archetype.

First, the birth of Narnia is similar to the birth of Eden. God whose spirit moved upon the face of the waters is the governor of the world. He created everything. The whole world was formed under God's will. There was light and darkness, day and night, heaven and land, seas and rivers and all kinds of plants and animals. While the world of Narnia was created by Aslan who was the king of all animals, "the son of the Emperor over the sea". In the beginning of the birth of Narnia, Digory went to a place he had never been before. At first there was darkness everywhere, but soon there was a noise in the darkness. In the distance Aslan, the lion, walked back and forth and began to sing, and then all at once the darkness overhead was full of stars, and in that glorious moment thousands of stars and planets sprang up. The valley was green with grass and spread like a pool of water from the lion's side.

The creatures of Narnia were born with the thought of Aslan and the wild song of the lion made people want to run, jump or climb, and make people want to shout. In two similar powerful ways, God created Eden and Aslan created Narnia.

Secondly, both Eden and Narnia had rich and lush scene. According to Liang Gong, the myth of Eden itself contains the utopian spirit that the primitive people yearn for an ideal life. It is a picture depicting the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature with simple lines and the original expression of the idealized relationship between human beings and nature.

In the Bible, God made Adam out of clay and he planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had made. In the garden of Eden, every tree grow out of the ground, which "is pleasant to the sight, and good for food". There are four rivers around the garden and Genesis chapter two verse ten of The Bible says: "a river went out of Eden to water the garden… where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone." The scene in Eden is rich and lush.

While in *the Chronicles of Narnia*, the forests of the kingdom of Narnia are also lush and flowery. There are also rivers and mountains, all kinds of plants and animals. The people of Narnia are part of nature and live in harmony with everything. All living things have the spirit. The Faun and Lucy hit it off immediately; birds have spirits. They have the human nature and guide the four children to find the beaver. Trees have ears that can understand human's speech, and petals that can be anthropomorphic. They have the power to move with the wind and change into human forms. No matter in the process of

the creation or the creatures, the author has always used the Garden of Eden as the model to create Narnia.

Hila, eleven yearold, wrote to Lewis, asking Aslan's name in this world. Lewis wrote back:

> As to Aslan's other name, well I want you to guess. Has there been anyone in this world who: arrived at the same time as Father Christmas; said he was the son of a great emperor; gave himself up for someone else's fault to be jeered and killed by wicked people; came to life again; is sometimes spoken of as a Lamb... Don't you really know His name in this world? Think it over and let me know your answer! (166)

Obviously, Aslan is the embodiment of Christ. In the novel, He is the King. He is the lord of the whole wood, but not often here. Aslan is called "the son of the Emperor over the sea" who can be compared to this world's Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the son of God whose spirit "moved upon the face of the waters." Aslan seemed to have some mysterious power and something that beyond the nature just like Jesus Christ who is also the King of the Jew. When the Jew was in trouble, He would turn up to help them. When the four children heard that "They say Aslan is on the move—perhaps has already landed", "Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror", but the other three had a very comfortable just like they were in spring. When Father Christmas came to meet the Beavers and the three, the spring was coming. The cold winter was over. Jesus Christ arrived at the same time as Father Christmas. So Aslan is the Jesus Christ of Narnia. His coming will put all to rights and all evil things will vanish.

Aslan played the role of Jesus Christ in Narnia, especially when he sacrificed himself. Aslan took Edmund to his siblings and told Peter, Susan, and Lucy that: "there is no need to talk to him about what is past". Here the author tried to publicize the biblical belief that human's sin could be remitted by God's forgiveness. In the novel, the white witch wanted to kill Edmund after he was rescued. She came to Aslan and wanted to have a talk with him. She said Edmund was hers and Edmund's life was forfeit to her. Then Aslan had made up his mind to sacrifice himself for Edmund. At that night, Aslan went to the Stone Table by himself.

The white witch had waited for him. At first, Aslan was humiliated and shaved. He didn't even resist. Instead, he chose death. He had decided to use his blood to save Edmund. The scene was similar with the time when Jesus was nailed to the Cross. The next day the rising of the sun had made everything look so different. "The Stone Table was broken into two pieces by a great crack that runs down it from end to end; and there was no Aslan." Aslan came back to life again because of the deep magic. "When a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the table was crack and Death itself would start working backwards." There was a new Aslan who was full of power.

Edmund was lured by the white witch and ate the Turkish delight which were full of the witch's magic. He wanted to be the king and control the others, especially his brother Peter. And then he betrayed his brother and his sisters. In the Holy Bible, there are two archetypes of Edmund. One is Eve, the other is Judas. The serpent told Eve: "you

eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)

Then Eve ate the fruit, violating God's will. So her people were punished by God. The second archetype is Judas. In the Bible, John the thirteenth chapter, it was said that Jesus Christ gave a piece of cake to Judas, who ate it and then "the devil having now put into the heart of Judas". Because Edmund cannot resist the seduction of Turkish Delight and of becoming the king. For a long time, Narnia was in a poorer state. In order to save Edmund, Aslan had to sacrifice himself.

The white witch, Jadis, believed that she was human. "It's on that that she bases her claim to be Queen." "She was one of the Jinn. That's what she comes from on one side. And on the other she comes of the giants."(122) Jadis tried to control all the souls of Narnia. Whoever disobeyed, she would turn it into statue. At that time, she had ruled Narnia for hundred years and there were no Christmas which was used to celebrate the birth of Christ. She went against Aslan and wanted to rule Narnia forever. She seduced Edmund by some magical Turkish delight and made him betrayed his siblings. Through Edmund's betrayal, she could capture the four children. And she could defeat Aslan and control Narnia. She was the same serpent of the ancient times. The ancient serpent wanted to revenge God. So he lured Eve. The white witch and Satan had many in common.

Most of English literature works are about sin and the results of the sin. Evidently it has a close relation with religion. Sin and redemption are the most important themes in

Christianity. The reason that God should do the work of redemption is that there is sin. According to the Gospel, there should be death and resurrection.

In the Bible, Luke chapter twenty- four chapter and verse seven says. "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." After the crucifixion of Christ Jesus, the body was put into the tomb. After the Sabbath, at daybreak on the first morning of the week, the tomb was found empty and the large stones at the entrance were rolled away. A young man in a white suit was found sitting on the right. "He is not here, but is raised: remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee". In The Bible Luke chapter twenty- four and verse six says. Go and tell his disciples say, "He has risen from the dead". So they went and told people. Many people who had a close relationship with Jesus did not believe what they were saying. Then, Jesus appeared to his disciples, and they saw the risen Jesus as if he were alive. Later the disciples began to teach that Jesus was the risen Lord and that Jesus was the Christ Governor, the son of God. This shows people the miracle and power of the rebirth of life and is to enhance the believers' faith of eternal life. The event of Jesus' "resurrection" was the most direct and obvious motif of "resurrection" archetype, which is also full of religious meanings.

The "resurrection" archetype in the Bible is presented through the original sin and redemption. Therefore, the construction of the archetypal theme of resurrection is also inevitable in these two aspects: original sin and redemption. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Edmund is the second youngest of the four children. He is in the charge of Peter and Susan. But he wants to be out of the control of his brother and sister. He always

did something evil to go against them. Once he entered the land of Narnia, he was lured by the turkish delight given by the white witch. That was his sin. He was told if he could bring his other siblings to the white witch, he would be the King of Narnia. When the four children were all in Narnia, they met with the beavers. In the beavers', Edmund slipped away. He went to the witch's castle. Then he told the witch about his brother and sisters, even about Aslan. He betrayed them. Fortunately, Aslan stepped forward and exchanged his life for Edmund's freedom, inspiring and encouraging all the creatures of Narnia with love, courage and responsibility. This reflects the original sin in the Bible. In Romans five and verse nineteen says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

According to the Christian belief, because Adam and Eve were against the will of god and ate the forbidden fruit, the sin was passed on to the future generations, which was the root of all evils. Similarly, because of Jesus Christ's salvation, all things are to be saved in order to restore its original state. This is the ultimate desire of God. It is because of the redemption and resurrection of the Lion that brings hope to people, people began to follow Jesus Christ sincerely. Finally in the war Edmund was wounded. When he was dying, his sister's Christmas present saved his life. And that was his resurrection. He was not only saved physically, but also mentally. Thus, this chapter explains about the different kinds of archetypes experienced through the characters in the novel.

Chapter Four

Canons of Christianity

C. S. Lewis was a religious person who believed in the Christian God and in *Mere Christianity*. Throughout the book he talks about Christianity with no intention of convincing oneself that Christianity is the right choice, he rather introduces Christianity in different aspects such as; moral values and beliefs. *Narnia* alludes to the Bible because the narrator wants to express seriousness, which strengthen the story as noted by Robinson. Robinson further argues that "even when the references are unintentional — they are still a natural consequence of the persistence of a powerful literary tradition" *The Book of Books* which further supports the argument regarding Christianity in *Narnia*. Lewis did not intend to include the Biblical allusions from the beginning; however, they found their way into the novel on their own.

Christian messages and values are represented by several of the characters; focusing on Aslan, the Lion who is a Christ-like figure, and Mr. Tumnus, the Faun, and three of the children: Peter, Edmund and Lucy. It focuses on the Christian messages of resurrection, self-sacrifice and betrayal as well as Christian virtues.

Forgiveness is an important aspect of Christian morality, which is shown by Lucy after she is almost betrayed by Mr. Tumnus. High King Peter further shows forgiveness when he forgives his brother Edmund for his mistake of joining the Witch. Both Edmund and Mr. Tumnus make wrong choices in the novel, but they are also forgiven, as will be demonstrated shortly. The Bible Luke chapter seventeen verse three says: "If your

brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them" The quotation will be connected to Edmund's betrayal of his siblings later on in the story. The moral values and lessons of betrayal and forgiveness are interrelated; forgiveness is given after the betrayal has taken place. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis argues that one can only be forgiven if one is capable of forgiving others (116).

When Lucy first enters the world of Narnia she meets Mr. Tumnus, who is a faun. What Lucy does not know is that Tumnus has, "taken service under the White Witch" (25) meaning that he has to obey her laws and wishes. The most important order that Tumnus has is that if he, "saw a Son of Adam or a Daughter of Eve in the wood" (26) he "was to catch them and hand them over to her" (26). If the faun fails in this mission, the implication is that he will be punished in some way. The Witch does not forgive those who fail to obey her laws, she punishes them, which Tumnus demonstrates when saying: "she'll have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off, and my beard plucked out" (27). The sentence indicates that the Witch is not a forgiving person like Lucy. Lucy's forgiving personality is a contrast to the Witch's traits.

So when Tumnus tells Lucy that he is "a kidnapper" (25) she can see that he is sorry: "you're so sorry for it that I'm sure you will never do it again" (25). This indicates that Lucy is a very forgiving individual since she forgives him immediately after he confesses to kidnapping. The word "sure" is an indication that Lucy tries to comfort Tumnus while she also tries to convey her trust in him when saying "I'm sure you wouldn't do anything of the sort" (26). The word "sure" shows Lucy's confidence in Tumnus since she sees a better side of people who are not always friendly. In this case,

her forgiveness changes the character Tumnus, from a betraying individual to a more dependable one. Tumnus becomes friends with Lucy and wants to repay her for being so openhearted.

After this, Lucy tries talking Tumnus into letting her go and not handing her over to the Witch. Once again, she tries to channel her trust and forgiveness by saying. "Oh, but you won't...You won't, will you? Indeed, indeed you really mustn't" (27). The repetition of the words "Indeed, indeed" and "will you" indicate that Lucy is nervous and anxious. Furthermore, "won't" and "mustn't" are her way of showing trust in Tumnus since she has already forgiven him for what he has done. Lucy's words have the ability to change the faun for the better. Indirectly, Tumnus no longer works for the Witch since he helps the daughter of Eve and disobeys the Witch's laws.

Another illustration of Lucy's forgiving nature is shown when she says: "I do hope you won't get into dreadful trouble on my account" (29). Here she tries to soothe Tumnus by blaming herself for the dreadful event hoping no harm will come to him because of her. Instead of being deeply disappointed in the faun, Lucy just hopes that this will never happen again and that henceforth he will be a pleasant faun. The sentence demonstrates that Lucy hopes that Tumnus has learned something about forgiveness. The tension between "you" and "I" makes the overall message clear. Lucy is a prime example of a forgiving person.

After Lucy gets back to the real world, she tells her siblings all about Narnia and the faun that she met. Nevertheless, the response she gets from Edmund is: "He sneered and jeered at Lucy and kept on asking her if she'd found any other new countries in other

cupboards all over the house" (32). Even if her story is hard to believe, a person especially a sibling should not be mean in such a way. Lucy's forgiving side is shown the second time Lucy enters the world of Narnia where Edmund follows her. When she meets him in the woods, she is happy and says, "If I'd known you had got in I'd have waited for you" (49), implying that she is no longer saddened. She has forgiven him for not believing in her because he can testify to the existence of Narnia (49). The Bible Ephesians chapter four and verse thirty- two says "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" and this is demonstrated by Lucy when she forgives her brother.

Lucy expresses her happiness: "I *am* glad you've got in too. The others will have to believe in Narnia now that both of us have been there" (49). The word "am" is italicized and indicates that Lucy is very happy. It implies that Lucy can forgive Peter and Susan for not believing in her now that there is more proof of Narnia's existence. However, Edmund is letting her down, telling them he played along with Lucy (52). Edmund's betrayal of Lucy can be connected to the Bible's statement: Proverbs chapter nineteen verse five says: "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape".

Lucy believed that Edmund would testify about the existence of Narnia. However, he lets her down. This is not Edmund's first time lying and betraying people according to Peter who says: "You've always liked being beastly to anyone smaller than yourself; we've seen that at school before now" (53). The word "beastly" shows that Edmund has a lying and betraying personality; the quotation additionally demonstrates that Edmund was a bad person before the adventure that started when they came to the

mansion. Edmund's action is not civilized, it is that of beasts. Lying is seen as a "beastly" since it is an act against the Christian belief. The narrator tells that the mentioned passage and Edmund's behavior towards Lucy is one of the most obnoxious parts of the story (51); thus suggesting that betrayal of a family member is one of the worst acts an individual can do, consequently a parallel is drawn to the Bible which also states that lying is one of the worst actions. The third time when all the children enter Narnia, Lucy forgives Peter and Susan (63), but she does not forgive Edmund until after he is rescued from the Witch (150) which is the consequence of not telling the truth.

Peter's forgiving nature is shown after Edmund leaves the beaver's hut to go to the Witch: "we'll still have to go looking for him. He is our brother after all, even if he is rather a little beast" (95). The word "still" indicates that Peter loves his brother even though he just betrayed them, which is further shown in "after all".

However, even if there is a brotherly love, Peter still calls him "a little beast" which suggests some sort of undesirable aspect that Edmund possesses. One can also argue that it is a paradox to look for a person who has betrayed his own family. Still, this is connected to the Bible, which indicates that if the brother "repents" his wronging, he shall be forgiven. When Edmund is rescued from the Witch, he meets up with his siblings and says "I'm sorry," (150) and they all shake hands. Just as the Bible states, the siblings forgive their brother. After the reconciliation, the siblings' relationships are stronger than ever.

Betrayal is shown by Tumnus and Edmund; however, the most important betrayal is that of Edmund's when he decides to side with the Witch (46-47). He does not just

betray his siblings; the betrayal stretches to all of the "good" animals in *Narnia* including Aslan who is "The king of the woods and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea"(89). It implies that Aslan is the son of God thus making him a Christ-like figure. When it comes to self-sacrifice and resurrection of the Lion. Edmund's betrayal is similar to that of Judas in the Bible; Judas asked what he would get to deceive Christ and the answer was, Mathew chapter twenty – six verse fifteen says: "They paid him thirty pieces of silver". Instead of money, Edmund had become mesmerized with the Witch's Turkish delight and is promised more if he hands over his siblings (47). Edmund betrays his brother and sisters similar to Judas's betrayal of Christ; however, Edmund's reward is only a promise of sweets, which in this case is a little ironical since it does not take long for him to repent his action.

Edmund's betrayal does not end with the forgiveness shown by his brother and sisters, because in the land of Narnia traitors belong to the Witch which she demonstrates when talking to Aslan: "You have a traitor [...] You at least know the magic which the Emperor put into Narnia...You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill" (152-153). The repetition of "you" implies that the Witch stand above the Lion, pointing out that the Lion has made an error. The Witch is trying to invert the order concerning who has the most "power", which is a form of parallelism. Each betrayal in the form of treachery must end with a killing from the Witch. This is a requirement set forth by "The Emperor" himself and cannot be overruled because if one does not obey the law, "all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water" (152-153); thus demonstrating that the Emperor's laws are absolute. The sentence can be connected to the Bible, Ecclesiastes chapter twelve verse thirteen

says:"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man". The word "water" can be connected to Noah and the flood.

The analogy between the Bible and *Narnia* is fascinating because Lewis, as mentioned earlier, had no intention of including Christianity in the novel from the beginning; Christianity moved into the novel by itself (Jacobs 267). When Jacobs observes that Christianity moved in, he draws attention to the fact that it was not Lewis's original attention to incorporate Christian ideals. This happened automatically and is reinforced in the novel through narratorial comment. The resemblance between the Emperor and God is hard to deny. The Narnian people must fear the Emperor and the laws constituted by him. The Bible's texts concerning untruthfulness explicitly state: Proverbs chapter six verse sixtenn says:"There are six things that the Lord hates...a lying tongue and a false witness who breathes out lies will perish". Both the Emperor in the novel and the Bible emphasize the seriousness of lying; thus Edmund has gone against the Lord's words in the Bible and the Emperor's in the fictional world. The punishment of lying and consequently betrayal, according to both the Bible and the novel, is death.

The betrayal must in this case end with death, however, the Witch does not say that it must be Edmund who must die, only that someone must die, which Aslan knows; thus the Lion takes it upon himself to obey "God's" law and protects Edmund by making the ultimate sacrifice (155-156). Here a parallel is drawn to the death of Christ, John chapter fifteen verse thirteen says: "Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends". Both Aslan and Christ offer their lives to save others; Aslan saves Edmund from his betrayal while Christ died for humanities many sins. One can

John chapter fifteen verse thirteen argues that: "offering one's own life to save the life of another is the greatest act one can do". This further demonstrates that the Lion makes the ultimate sacrifice.

As already established, the act of self-sacrifice was made to protect others; however, one can also argue that Aslan did it because he knew that, "when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead...Death itself would start working backwards" (176). This resembles the resurrection of Jesus, The Bible Romans chapter four verse twenty five says: "who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification". Both Christ and Aslan were delivered to death because of others, and they were resurrected. In the Christian belief, sacrifice and forgiveness are essential aspects because they are linked to the actions of Christ.

Aslan displays Christ-like characteristics when saving Edmund from his error in the same way Jesus did when sacrificing himself on for the redemption of all sins on behalf of mankind. Aslan's character does indeed resemble the characteristics displayed by Jesus in the Bible. Before the Lion goes to the stone table to fulfill his promise to the Witch concerning the self-sacrifice, Aslan completes a last supper: "Supper that evening was a quiet meal. Everyone felt how different it had been the previous night or even that morning. It was as if the good times, having just begun, were already drawing to their end" (159).

The sad emotions that everyone is feeling are a contrast to the good times everyone had felt since Aslan arrived. Ever since the Lion "had settled the matter" with the Witch, there has been a feeling of unease in the camp among the Pevensive children

and the Narnian animals. Everyone knows that something bad will happen however, no one knows what. Aslan's last meal is similar to Christ's last supper stated in the Bible, Mathew chapter twenty six verse seventeen says: "When it was evening, he [Jesus] reclined at table").

When Jesus sat down, he proclaimed that someone at the table would betray him. What differs is that Aslan had already been betrayed by Edmund and also forgiven him before his last dinner while Jesus announced the future betrayal at the final supper; still, the final meals are very much alike, even though the narrator does not go into detail about Aslan's last supper. Both the Lion and Jesus knew that they were going to die, however, neither of the two tried to oppose their impending fate; they embraced it. Jesus sacrificed himself for humanity's sins while Aslan dies to protect Edmund and the world of Narnia.

The act of self-sacrifice does not only involve Aslan, it also extends to Edmund, who demonstrates this courageous action on the battlefield where he fights against the white Witch. When talking to Aslan, Peter says: "It was all Edmund's doing" (192). What Peter is referring to is when Edmund sacrificed himself in order to break the Witch's magical wand. It is evident that Edmund did not only think of himself, he acted to save others; which is in accordance with The Oxford dictionary's definition that one should "give up one's own interests".

Due to Edmund's action to engage a fight with the Witch and break her wand, he was wounded: "He was covered with blood, his mouth was open, and his face a nasty green colour" (193). Edmund's daring act was not without consequences, just as Aslan's self-sacrifice, Edmund had offered himself to save others and was now in a critical state,

as revealed in the words "covered with blood". The critical wounds suggest that it is not just an act of bravery; it is also an act of self-sacrificing that have been shown by Aslan and Edmund. Edmund's action is one of the aspects which this essay hopes to enlighten.

Furthermore, Tumnus demonstrates self-sacrifice after his betrayal of Lucy as already established. When Lucy forgives Tumnus, he realizes that he must let her go (27). Tumnus's decision is contrary to the Witch's proclaimed law, which states that all Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve should be delivered to her; consequently, the punishment for not obeying the Witch's law is torture (26-27). Tumnus demonstrates the Witch's punishment when talking to Lucy: "[The Witch] will have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off…my beard cut off" (26-27). The words "cut off" show that betrayal is punished with pain. Even though Tumnus knows the outcome of betraying the Witch, he still does it; thus demonstrating the act of self-sacrifice since he does not care what happens to him as long as Lucy is safe. Tumnus's action resembles that of Aslan and Edmund from a biblical perspective since the Bible states that giving one's life to save another individual's life is one of the most important acts a person can do. Through the selfless act, Tumnus has saved Lucy from the Witch and also gruesome torture and persecution just because she is a daughter of Eve.

Edmund's selfless act when he engages the Witch to break her magical wand is an act of bravery as noted by Peter when saying:

> It was all Edmund's doing. We'd have been beaten if it hadn't been for him. The Witch was turning our troops into stone right and left. But nothing would stop him. He fought his way through three ogres to where

> she was…And when he reached her he had the sense to bring his sword smashing down on her wand. (192)

Even if Peter fought directly with the Witch, he was not as brave as Edmund as seen in the first sentence: "It was all Edmund's doing". Peter is the eldest of the siblings, however, he takes a step back and highlighting his younger brother; thus suggesting the battle was won all because of Edmund. Edmund's heroic act does not only involve him fighting the Witch, he has to fight "three ogres" which takes a lot of courage since he is not only young; he is inexperienced when it comes to battles and swinging a sword.

Another individual who becomes courageous in the fictional world is Peter who from the beginning is not brave. He becomes more courageous and less frightened as the novel progresses. The first encounter between Aslan and Peter demonstrates Peter's cautious side:

> "Go on," whispered Mr. Beaver.
>
> "No," whispered Peter, "you first."
>
> "No, Sons of Adam before animals," whispered Mr Beaver back again.
>
> "Susan," whispered Peter. "What about you? Ladies first." (139)

Aslan's resurrection in the fictional world (*Narnia* 174-176) coincides with the Biblical text concerning Jesus, Hebrews chapter nine verse twenty eight says: "so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him". Peter and Edmund were

waiting for him to save Narnia and end the battle. Aslan's resurrection is also noted by Ward who briefly mentions the Lion's courageous act (3). Lucy and Susan, who had seen Aslan die on the stone table, were mesmerized when they saw him after the resurrection. They had stayed at the stone table hoping that it was just a bad dream, and deep down one can argue that they waited for him. They had faith in Aslan that he would come back and save them all which he also did when he killed the Witch.

Jesus was strong when alive and dangerous for the higher priests, as Aslan is strong when alive. Both are then vulnerable before their sacrifice which is a paradox. Before Aslan dies on the stone table and completing his self-sacrifice, he is shaved, insulted and spat on (164-165) to make him more vulnerable just as Christ was in the Bible: "They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him... and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. In The Bible Mathew chapter twenty seven verse twenty eight says: "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said" (Matthew 27:28-29).

Chapter Five

Summation

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe remains an exciting and even thought-provoking classic no matter what side of the theological fence one sits on. Though believers and skeptics alike can nitpick its themes and allusions to death, on the whole this is an uplifting story about how it's good to be a good person, and bad to be a bad person, and when bad people rise to power and threaten the world, it's up to the good folks to rally and fight for what's right, which is a message that certainly resonated in postwar England, no doubt. There are some other themes hiding in the bushes — the importance of honesty, keeping promises and treating others with respect, that sort of thing — but mostly, this is just a marvelous, timeless adventure for young and young-at-heart alike.

The Chronicles Of Narnia is a series of seven fantasy novels for children that is by far the most popular of Lewis's works. The books have Christian themes and describe the adventures of a group of children who visit a magical land called Narnia. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, which was the first published and the most popular book of the series, has been adapted for both stage and screen. Written by Lewis between 1950-1956, The Chronicles of Narnia borrow from Greek, Roman, and Celtic mythology as well as traditional English and Irish fairy tales. Lewis reportedly based his depiction of Narnia in the novels on the geography and scenery of the Mourne Mountains in County Down, Northern Ireland. Lewis cited MacDonald as an influence in writing the series.

C.S. Lewis was a British writer, essayist and Christian apologist. He is best known for his children's classic series – *The Chronicles of Narnia,* fantasy series and his pro-Christian texts. In essays, critical studies, poems, novels and works of autobiography, he turned his formidable literary gifts to the task of re-presenting the Christian view of human destiny to a world bewildered by scientific materialism. He did not shirk the real difficulties that Christian belief encounters, nor did he down-play the cost of faith in an age of self-indulgence. Nevertheless, the radiant happiness and good sense that shine through his prose have never ceased to find new and eager readers, and his books remain part of the canonical wisdom of our culture.

C. S. Lewis contributes a unique Christian worldview to his audience of skeptics, Christians, and those who are simply curious about the faith. His generic variety as well as his distinctive perspective appeals to a wide range of audiences. Because he converted from atheism to Christianity, he can relate to the skeptics who choose to read his works. His rigorous academic training from a young age, as well as his work among other Oxford University scholars, give him the opportunity to share Christian ideas with an intellectual audience. His various writings in apologetics and philosophy have caused even the profoundest skeptics to consider God's existence.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe was the first-published book of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and is the best known book of the series. The book has been published in forty seven foreign languages. From that time on, millions of copies have been sold throughout the world. The TIME magazine included the novel in its *TIME 100 Best English language Novels* from 1923-2005. Lewis has an

uncanny ability to make *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* readable as an adult and readable to a child. The reflections towards real life and the magical life of Narnia are incredibly easy to relate to one another.

C.S. Lewis's is known for his portrayal of Christian symbolism and biblical parallels in his seven-book series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Religion played a huge role in Lewis's life, and it influenced his writings. This is evident from the very beginning of the first book of the series, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. The book reimagines the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and illustrates various other Christian themes within the storyline. Despite coming out over 60 years ago, the story still resonates with a modern perspective and remains a relevant piece of literature.

A reason for its continued success is partially due to the social context in which it originated, as the series emerged from a heavily Christian based society. Today, it manages to remain important even though the foundation of our society is primarily post-Christian. Many of the modern values and morals compare to Christian based values. C. S. Lewis replaces the biblical stories with current allegories that have engaged subsequent generations and kept the traditional myths alive. As a result, the story has become a relevant part of the cultural heritage of contemporary readers.

Notable are the Christian reflections of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, of what it's like to go down a path of sin with Edmund as he makes his way through the cold to the witch's castle, having fellowship amongst themselves at the dinner table, and Aslan's ultimate sacrifice, while being a being of immense power, allowed himself to be muzzled, beaten, and killed by the hands of the witch.

Indeed, *The Chronicles of Narnia* has a very strong element which indicates the theology of Christian beliefs. The book has been banned in numerous public lower schools, faced criticism from various religious communities, and even faced removal from public libraries. It has also been cited for arousing children to act in mischievous manners, disobeying the conventions of their elders while looking for adventure. Other critics also concerned that the many violent incidents might frighten children. Nevertheless, the novel and its successors were highly popular with young readers. The later publication of the novels was very impressive.

C. S. Lewis was a religious person who believed in the Christian God and in *Mere Christianity*. Throughout the book he talks about Christianity with no intention of convincing oneself that Christianity is the right choice, he rather introduces Christianity in different aspects such as; moral values and beliefs. *Narnia* alludes to the Bible because the narrator wants to express seriousness, which strengthen the story as noted by Robinson.

Robinson further argues that "even when the references are unintentional — they are still a natural consequence of the persistence of a powerful literary tradition." Lewis did not intend to include the Biblical allusions from the beginning; however, they found their way into the novel on their own.

In the novel, *Narnia* is demonstrated as a mesmerizing world which does indeed provide Christian messages of resurrection, self-sacrifice and betrayal as well as moral values and lessons that can be learned from the virtues. The charm of *The Chronicles of Narnia* is to draw nourishment from the traditional Bible and interpret the traditional

mythological archetypes. The environment, characters, and themes in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe are taken from the Bible.

The influence of Holy Bible and its Christianity belief towards English literature was very great. Since C. S. Lewis had been called the unofficial spoke—person for Christianity, *The Chronicles of Narnia* can be regarded as the adventurous fairy tale edition of the Holy Bible. Religion and literature have been intertwined with each other and they are one of the important fields of human spiritual life. Both of them embody human's pursuit and exploration of ideal life.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a form of literary works which mainly presents fantasy. Lewis' The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe contain many fantastic things, such as its magic and marvels. The magic wardrobe, the land of Narnia, the magical creatures such as the Faun, the talking animals such as the beaver, the White Witch, and Aslan, are the magical things in this book. Aslan is a talking beast, the great lion, the King, the Lord of the whole wood, the former ruler of Narnia, and the savior of the "Narnians". All those things become the inspiration in analyzing other fantastic elements and things deeply.

C.S. Lewis's is known for his portrayal of Christian symbolism and biblical parallels in his seven-book series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Religion played a huge role in Lewis's life, and it influenced his writings. This is evident from the very beginning of the first book of the series, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. The book reimagines the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and illustrates various other

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The narrative of Narnia which creates such a world is built upon which it is realistically structured. Magic is the conveyor and the chief index of the narrative. One has to give oneself to believe that such a world exists. One knows that such worlds cannot exist on physical level, but art or as Tolkien quips magic, 'makes the created world real.' The rules of this world dominate and it is only desirable that one surrenders to the principles of these bizarre worlds which are created by substituting the real for a distorted version of it. The fantastic world is real, once the readers enter it and it is created by the creative faculty of the author as Tolkien suggests.

The narrator uses the tropes of horror, shock and suddenness in this context. Real life situations are distorted. Nowhere in the narrative does Lewis allow the reader slip off the track and maintains the terseness of the narrative so intricately that the conversation between a boy and a wolf does not seem unnatural at all. Lewis consciously exploits and shatters the normative sense of reality. He realizes the requirement of the narrative very.

The narrative space is so perfectly balanced that it moves on steadily .The story was in the witches house very recently and now it enters the territory of the beaver once more. Lest forget the reader the beaver in the heat of events emerging at the house of the witch, the narrator reminds of the need of going back to the beaver. The word must in the context of this reverting back to the beaver is of central importance. This must is a narrative necessity. In this case it is a language game which manipulates the real by distorting it in a way which the child can associate to.

The imaginative world makes the reader's imaginations grow. The main characters, the four children, start their new life story in this magical world, Narnia. They meet their bigger conflicts of their life which lead them to be such different children. They gain their best accomplishment to become the Kings and Queens of a country. But then after returning to the real world, they turn into ordinary children with their old clothes and the same ages as they enter Narnia at the beginning. It strengthens the characteristics of the story to be a fantasy story.

The novel reveals about the unordinary image of the magical world, Narnia. It is told that the whole country is changed into eternal winter but never Christmas by the White Witch's magic spell. Although the appearance of this another world seems so common, it has a difference in its unique characteristics. It is said that the winter season is eternal. It means that it has been so many years that this country has its winter season. Normally in the real world, the winter season lasts for just four months.

Aslan the mighty lion is representative of Jesus Christ. Simply hearing Aslan's name creates a different, powerful sensation in each of the children: It horrifies Edmund,

makes Peter feel brave, comforts Susan and gives Lucy hope. Aslan is called *King, Lord* and *the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea*. He is killed in Edmund's place and is resurrected the following day.

Tumnus emphasizes that one of the worst things about the constant winter is that the White Witch prohibits Christmas. Human children are called either Sons of Adam or Daughters of Eve. Mr. Beaver exclaims, "Lord love you." *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* will forever remain the most beloved of Lewis' written works. It is in this novel that readers were first introduced to the magical realm of Narnia and the immortal character of Aslan, the lion. It is in this novel that the wonder and the beauty of Jesus death was rendered in stunning metaphor. And it is in this novel where Lewis began the seven-book saga which would capture the imagination of children everywhere.

There is no way to capture the power of the story without reading it. Even theatrical and movie depictions cannot do justice to the way Lewis brings the character of Christ to life, as well as the meaning of his atoning death. In an age that admires non-Christian fantasy books, parents, children and people of any age would do better to read this first installment of the Narnia series. Not only is it well written, it turns our hearts to eternal matters. Skeptics who have their guard up against any preaching or ordinary ministry may find that they can best hear God's voice where they least expected to – in a children's book.

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Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West:* A Narrative of the Reinvigorated Self of the Refugees

A project submitted to

St.Mary's College(Autonomous)

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affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

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(Re- accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West:* A Narrative of the Reinvigorated Self of the Refugees** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi in partial fulfillment of the requirements affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Anantha Yogeswari A. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West:* A Narrative of the Reinvigorated Self of the Refugees** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

M. Anantha Yogeswari

OCTOBER 2019 **ANANTHA YOGESWARI M.**

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*: A Narrative of the Reinvigorated Self of Refugees** analyses how Hamid bridges the theological disconnect between the so-called 'East' and 'West' through the lives of the two protagonists who stand for every refugee in the modern world. It also states how the protagonists travel through a magical gate way to different places in order to rebuild their lives and attain reinvigoration of their own selves amidst dislocation and adverse experiences,

The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on the salient features of the Pakistani Literature, Mohsin Hamid's biography, discussing at length the general characteristics of his work, his style and his predominant place in the realm of Pakistani Literature.

The second chapter **Magical Realism** hammers the horror of the situation of homelessness in the most subtle and unexpected way, through the magical doors that close in one place and open in another to let in the refugees have a new home in a hostile country.

The third chapter **Reinvigoration of Self through Religion** explores the ways in which religious practices in general can influence an individual's relationships, memories, and sense of self.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** uniquely reflects upon Hamid's narrative style which devotedly captures the precise moments in the refugee life, a time overflowing with refugees worldwide, homelessness and war, and yet, an era that is more able than ever to showcase human resilience.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The research has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Pakistani English literature refers to English literature that has been developed and evolved in Pakistan, as well as by members of the Pakistani diaspora who write in the English language. English is one of the official languages of Pakistan (the other being Urdu) and has a history going back to the British colonial rule in South Asia (the British Raj); the national dialect spoken in the country is known as Pakistani English. Today, it occupies an important and integral part in modern Pakistani literature. Dr. Alamgir Hashmi introduced the term Pakistani Literature originally written in English with his Preface to his pioneering book Pakistani Literature.

The dialect of English spoken in Pakistan is known as Pakistani English. English poetry from Pakistan from the beginning held a special place in South Asian writing, notably with the work of Shahid Suhrawardy, Ahmed Ali, Alamgir Hashmi, Daud Kamal, TaufiqRafat, and Maki Kureishi, and later of Athar Tahir, Waqas Ahmed Khwaja, Omer Tarin, Hina Babar Ali and others; but fiction from Pakistan began to receive recognition in the latter part of the 20th century, with the popularity of the Parsi author Bapsi Sidhwa who wrote *The Crow Eaters, Cracking India* (1998) etc.; after the earlier reputations of Ahmed Ali and Zulfikar Ghose had been made in international fiction. In the diaspora, Hanif Kureshi commenced a prolific career with the novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), which won the Whitbread Award, and Aamer Hussein wrote a series of acclaimed short story collections. Sara Suleri published her literary amemoir, *Meatless Days* (1989).

From 1980s Pakistani English literature began to receive national and official recognition, when the Pakistan Academy of Letters included works originally written English in its annual literary awards. The first major English writer to receive this national honour was Alamgir Hashmi. Subsequently, through the last three decades, a number of other English writers, including Bapsi Sidhwa and Nadeem Aslam, have been recognized by the Academy. In the early years of the 21st century, a number of Pakistani novelists writing in English won or were shortlisted for international awards.

English is an official language of Pakistan and has been established in the area since the British colonial era. Bana Qudsia, Umera Ahmed, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Benazir Bhutto have contributed to Pakistani Literature and have received awards for their contribution. It is appropriate in this regard, to provide a select survey of Pakistani English literature.

Mohammed Hanif born on November 1964 is a British Pakistani writer and Journalist who writes a monthly opinion piece in *The New York Times*. Hamid is the author of the critically acclaimed book *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, which was long-listed for the Booker Prize, shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award, and won the Commonwealth Prize for the Best Book. His second book, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, won the Welcome Book Prize. He also worked as a correspondent for the BBC news based in Karachi and was the writer for its acclaimed drama and the feature film, The Long Night. His work has been published by *The New York Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The New Yorker* and *The Washington Post*. His play *The Dictator's Wife* has been staged at the Hampstead Theatre.

He was born in Okara, Pakistan. He graduated from Pakistan Air Force Academy as a Pilot officer, but subsequently left to pursue a career in journalism. He initially worked for *News*

line and wrote for *The Washington Post* and *India Today*. He is a graduate of the University of East Anglia. In 1996, he moved to London to work for the BBC. Later, he became the head of the BBC's Urdu service in London. He moved back to Pakistan in 2008. His first novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* was shortlisted for the 2008 Guardian First Book Award and Booker Prize. It won the 2009 Commonwealth Book Prize in the Best First Book category and the 2008 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize.

Hamid has also written for the stage and screen, including a feature film, The Long Night in 2002 a BBC radio play, *What Now, Now That We Are Dead?*, and the stage play *The Dictator's Wife* in 2008. His second novel, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, was published in 2011. It was shortlisted for the Welcome Trust Book Prize in 2012, and the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature in 2013. He is currently collaborating with composer Mohammed Fairouz on an opera titled Bhutto. Hamid's style has often been compared with that of author Salman Rushdie. But Hamid disagrees. Even though he says that he enjoys reading Rushdie's books, he would not want to suffer the same fate as Rushdie did.

Fatima Bhutto (born 29 May 1982) is a Pakistani writer. Born in Kabul, she is the daughter of Murtaza Bhutto, niece of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and granddaughter of former Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. She is a critic of her aunt Benazir Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari, whom she accused of being involved in her father's murder. In November 2013, her first fictional novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* war published. The book had long-listed in 2014 for the Baileys Women's Prize for fiction. In 2015 Bhutto's short story titled "Democracy", an e-book, under Penguin Books was released. Bhutto's latest novel *The Runaways* is published by Penguin Viking.

Ashfaq Ahmed was born on (22 August 1925 – 7 September 2004) was a writer, playwright and broadcaster from Pakistan. He wrote several bookes in Urdu. His works included novels, short stories and plays for television and radio. He was awarded President's Pride of Performance and Sitara-i-Imtiaz for meritorious services in the field of literature and broadcasting.

Ahmed was born on 22 August 1925 in Muktsar, Punjab, British India, into an ethnic Pashtun family of the Momand tribe. He obtained his early education in his native district of Muktsar. Shortly before independence in 1947, he migrated to Pakistan and settled in Lahore, Punjab. He completed his Masters in Urdu literature from Government College Lahore. Bano Qudsia, his wife and companion in Urdu literary circles, was his classmate at the Government College.

After partition, when Ahmed arrived at the Walton refugee camp with millions of other migrants, he used to make announcements of directions on a megaphone around the clock for the refugees. Later, he got a job in "Radio Azad Kashmir," which was established on a truck that used to drive around in various parts of Kashmir. He then got lectureship at Dayal Singh College, Lahore for two years. Where after, he went to Rome to join 'Radio Rome' as an Urdu newscaster. He also used to teach Urdu at Rome University. During his stay in Europe, he received diplomas in the Italian and French languages from the "Sapienza' University of Rome and University of Grenoble, France. He also earned a special training diploma in radio broadcasting from New York University. He started writing stories in his childhood, which were published in *Phool Flower magazine*, Dastaango Story Teller, and joined Radio Pakistana as a

script writer. He was made editor of the popular Urdu weekly, *Lail-o-Nahar* [Day and Night], in place of famous poet Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum by the Government of Pakistan.

In 1962, Ahmed started his popular radio program, Talqeen Shah – The Preacher which made him immensely popular among the people in towns and villages. He was appointed director of the Markazi Urdu Board in 1966, which was later renamed as Urdu Science Board, a post he held for 29 years. He remained with the board until 1979. He also served as an adviser in the Education Ministry during Zia-ul-Haq's regime: Ahmed, in his later years of life, was greatly inclined towards Sufism. His close association with Qudrat Ullah Shahab and Mumtaz Muft was also attributed to this tendency. He used to appear in a get together with his fans in PTV program Bithak (The Guest Room) and Zaviya (The Dimension) where he gave swift but satisfying responses to each and every question posed by the youth audience. On 7 September 2004, Ashfaq Ahmed died of pancreatic cancer. He was laid to rest in Model town, Lahore, Pakistan.

He wrote short stories, novels and poetry in Urdu, and also literary Columns for *Dawn newspaper* and *Daily Express newspaper*. *The Seventh Door*, *Leaves* and *Basti* are among books that have been translated into English, among the five novels he wrote. On February 2, 2016 he died at National Hospital, Defence Housing Authority at Lahore on 2.45p.m, after contracting pneumonia. *The Indian Express* termed him the best known Pakistani writer in the world after Manto.

Hamid's first novel, *Moth Smoke*, tells us the story of a Marijuana-smoking ex-banker in Post-nuclear-test Lahore who falls in love with his best friend's wife and becomes a heroin addict. It was published in 2000, and quickly became a cult hit in Pakistan and among Indians

who speak English. It was also a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award given to the best first novel in the US, and was adapted for television in Pakistan and as an operetta in Italy

Moth Smoke had an innovative structure, using multiple voices, second person trial scenes, and essays on such topics as the role of air-conditioning in the lives of its main characters. Pioneering a hip, contemporary approach to English language South Asian fiction, it was considered by some critics to be the most interesting novel that came out of its generation of subcontinent English writing. In the New York Review of Books, Anita Desai noted one could not really continue to write, or read about, the slow seasonal changes, the rural backwaters, gossipy courtyards, and traditional families in a world taken over by gun-running, drug-trafficking, large-scale industrialism, commercial entrepreneurship, tourism, new money, nightclubs and boutiques. Where was Huxley, Orwell, Scott Fitzgerald, or even the Tom Wolfe, Jay McInereney, or Brett Easton ellis to record this new world? Mohsin Hamid's novel *Moth Smoke*, set in Lahore, is one of the first pictures one has of that world.

His second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, narrates the story of a Pakistani man who decides to leave his high-flying in America after a failed love affair and the terrorist attacks of 9/11. It was published in 2007 and became million-copy International best seller, reaching No.4 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. The novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, won several awards including the Anis Field-Wolf Book Award and the Asian American Literary Award, and was translated into over twenty five languages. The guardian selected it as one of the Books that defined the decade.

Like *Moth Smoke, The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was formally experimental. The novel used the unusual device of a dramatic monologue in which the Pakistani protagonist continually

addresses an American listener who is never heard from directly. Hamid has said *The Fall* by Albert Camus served as his model.

Hamid literally leaves the readers at the end in a kind of alley, the story suddenly suspended; it is even possible that some act of violence might occur. But more likely, we are left holding the bag of conflicting worldviews. One is left to ponder the symbolism of changes having been caught up in the game of symbolism a game oneself been known to play. In an interview in May 2007, Hamid said of the brevity of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*: that he would want people to read his book twice than only half-way through. His third novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, was excerpted by the *New Yorker* in their 24 September 2012 issue and by Grant in their Spring 2013 issue, and was released in March 2013 by Riverhead Books.

As with his previous books, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* bends conventions of both genre and form. Narrated in the second person, it tells us the story of the protagonist's journey from impoverished rural boy to a tycoon in an unnamed contemporary city in rising Asia, and of his pursuit of the nameless pretty girl whose path continually crosses but never quite converges with his. Stealing its shape from the self-help books devoured by ambitious youths all over rising Asia, the novel is playful but also quite profound in its portrayal of the thirst for ambition and love in a time of shattering economic and social upheaval. In her New York Times review of the novel, Michiko Kakutanis called it deeply moving, writing that *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* reaffirms Hamid's place as one of his generation's most inventive and gifted writers.

Hamid has also written on politics, art, literature, travel, and other topics, most recently on Pakistan's internal division and extremism in an op-ed for the New York Times. His journalism, essays, and stories have appeared in *Time*, *The Guardian*, *Dawn*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The International Herald Tribune*, the *Paris Review*, and other publications. In 2013 he was named one of the world's 100 Leading Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy Magazine. Hamid's most recent novel, *Exit West*, is about a young couple, Nadia and Saeed, and their relationship in a time where the world is taken by storm by migrants. It was shortlisted for the 2017 Man Booker prize.

In 1998, at the age of 15, Bhutto published her first book named *Whispers of The Desert*. Her second book 8.50 a.m. 8 October 2005 marks the moment of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake; it records accounts of those affected.

Exit West is a novel published in 2017, written by Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid. It is Hamid's fourth novel. Hamid spent part of his childhood in the United States, where he stayed from the age of 3 to 9 while his father, a University Professor, was enrolled in PhD program at Stanford University. He then moved with his family back to Lahore, Pakistan, and attended the Lahore American School.

At the age of 18, Hamid returned to the United States to continue his education. He graduated from Princeton University summa cum laude in 1993, having studied under the writers Joyce Carol Oates and Toni Morrison. Hamid wrote the first draft of his first novel for a fiction workshop taught by Morrison. He returned to Pakistan after college to continue working on it.

Hamid then attended Harvard Law School, graduating in 1997. Finding corporate law boring, he repaid his student loans by working for several years as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company in New York City. He was allowed to take three months off each year to write, and he used this time to complete his first novel *Moth Smoke* Hamid moved to London in the summer of 2001, initially intending to stay only one year. Although, he frequently returned to Pakistan to write, he continued to live in London for eight years, becoming a dual citizen of the United Kingdom in 2006. In 2004 he joined the brand consultancy Wolff Olins, Working only three days a week so as to retain time to write. He later served as Managing Director of Wolff Olins' London office, and in 2015 was appointed the firm's first-ever Chief Storytelling Officer.

Exit West is a recent fiction which could be seen as a product of Post Modernism. Manifestation of Magical vision and the portrayal of the religion of the refugees is an illustration of Post Modernism and it is appropriate at this stage, to first define and discuss Post Modernism.

Postmodern writing does not so much set itself against modernist literature, as it develops its theme through a logical conclusion. Modernist authors moved away from the nineteenth century realist notion that a novel must tell a story from an objective and omniscient point of view, instead embraced subjectivism turning from external reality to examine inner states of consciousness. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything, reality only comes into being through the interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of experience will necessarily be fallible and relative rather than certain and universal.

With *Exit West*, Hamid has entered the realm of speculative fiction. It would be a pleasure to report that he has mastered the genre with the same biting prowess that he

brought to his satire, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, and to his Man Booker Prize-nominated masterpiece, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. But that's not quite the case. *Exit West* works best in its first half, as it describes the deteriorating conditions that its characters endure. In his earlier books, Hamid was a master of streamlining and distillation. But as *Exit West* winds down, his narrative is sometimes more perfunctory than being artfully spare.

In contrast to Hamid's earlier work, *Exit West* is a novel of restraint with a subtle humour and a romance. Hamid refrains from naming the city where the lovers begin their life as refugees. But the book rapidly becomes an ambitious and far-roaming tale of migration and adventure. This gesture arguably places *Exit West* in the tradition of postmodern magical realism inhabited by the likes of Italo Calvino and Angela Carter, where little doses of fantasy (raining flowers, or telekinesis) break the ordinary world's laws. But the magic is limited to this single phenomenon, which feels like something quite new. The creative gesture is subtle and extreme at the same time, and the result is a novel of exceptional focus. Hamid stays with his protagonists like a spirit looking over their shoulders: The voice is sensitive, tender, as if these characters really are beloved. Hamid's care for his protagonists, the sheer insistence in the novel of human beings,' giving importance to one another, is an artistic and a political statement.

Exit West, is a novel about migration and mutation, full of wormholes and rips in reality. A man and a woman meet at an evening class on corporate identity and product branding. Saeed is down-to-earth, the son of a university professor, and works at an advertisement agency. Nadia, who wears a full black robe and is employed by an insurance company, lives alone, rides a

motorbike, enjoys vinyl and psychedelic mushrooms. She doesn't pray. Anyone could understand what will happen next: a boy-girl love story, opposites attracting, secular individuals struggling with the shackles of a theological state.

The project explores how Mohsin Hamid depicts the plight of refugees in their war ravaged countries by specially focusing on an anonymous city torn apart by civil war through the protagonists. It shows how the protagonists never lose their courage in the middle of chaos and dangerous circumstances and how they strive hard amidst all the odds to lead a normal life. It also states how they reinvigorate their selves through their religious practices and by helping each other under the most daunting circumstances.

The upcoming chapters depict how Mohsin Hamid brings together the real and the magical elements in the novel through his portrayal of the sociopolitical phenomena which is closely connected to the most recent wave of migration. Hamid's narrative techniques authenticate the fact that human beings are very resilient and are able to reinvigorate their selves and they don't cease to live even amidst the most trying circumstances. Hamid's protagonists exhibit the power of endurance in their state of being the refugees.

Chapter Two

Magical Realism

Magical Realism, or marvelous realism is a style of fiction that paints a realistic view of the modern world while also adding magical elements. It is sometimes called Fabulism, in reference to the conventions of fables, myths, and allegory. Magical realism, perhaps the most common term, often refers to fiction and literature in particular, with magic or the supernatural presented in an otherwise real-world or mundane setting.

Benda Cooper defines magic realism as striving to "capture the paradox of the unity of opposites" contesting polarities such as history and magic, the pre-colonial past and post-industrial present, life and death. Characters and events in magic realist texts exit, in Cooper's formulation, between the 'extremes of time and space' (1). It is a space where colonial forms co-exit (15). More importantly they embody points of transition in Post colonial society where the two forms battle for power in contemporary geopolitics. Stephen Selmon suggests:

> "In the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of functional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the 'other', a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences."(409)

The elements of magical realism come into play with these enigmatic doors about which he says "It was said in those days that the passage was both like dying and being born, and indeed Nadia experienced a kind of extinguishing as she entered the blackness..."(27) The doors stand as a metaphor for immigration itself which means inevitably casting aside one's old self. "You are not just leaving a place; you are leaving a part of your personality, cleaving old attachments to forge new one's"(59). Along the way Saeed and Nadia encounter labour camps and refugee shelters and the narration subtly delineates how humans inherent prejudices against other religious and races manifest themselves, even when they are all on the same side.

Exit West is by turns fantastical and all too real, and always thoughtful and gripping. It's a novel about ideas that also cares deeply about the pleasures of language, and a novel of disconcerting timeliness that does not depend upon its historical context to be compelling. Its language and ideas might have a particular resonance today, but they would be worth reading at any time.

It marks, for Slemon, a 'sustained opposition' between 'two opposing discursive Systems [that] forestalls the possibility of interpretive closure through any act of naturalizing representation (410). The form itself is, therefore, an attempt to restore non-European forms of narration and epistemology. It is about breaking the borders of reality, blurring them, and redrawing them. It liberates the postcolonial narrative from not only European poetics but also European ways of knowing (which gave rise to their realist poetics). Of course, this mode also runs the risk of perpetuating the (colonial) divide: progressive, modern West and pre-modern, 'magical' East.

Mohsin Hamid's ethereal, richly detailed world of magical realism simultaneously captures the minutia of human relationship and the sweeping tide of globalization in a beautiful study of character and culture. But its most impressive accomplishment is creating an effective blueprint for compassionate immigration policy in an increasingly bleak landscape.

Exit West is a story set in the Middle East. In an unnamed city on the brink of war, love between Nadia and Saeed blossoms and life carries on. But it is not long before it is too dangerous to stay at home and they must join thousands of other people fleeing their country. Passage through the doors that lead to other places in expensive, painful and often used to steal from desperate; Nadia and Saeed are the lucky ones and eventually arrive in London.

The magical realism in the story is a total surprise. Horrific stories, pictures and rhetoric about the refuge crisis have been long heard, but Hamid hammers the horror of the situation of home with the most subtle and unexpected way: magical doors that close in one place and open in another.

The crisis goes on in the real world even more real. Usually that is a trait of fantasy taking elements of reality and placing them in a fantastical world to explore them in a brand new way, but magical realism, in this case, is that just as well. That is especially apparent in the introduction of Black London and beyond. When the two lovers eventually make it to London they find comfortable beds and running water, as the other refugees who used the same door. More and more people arrive in the city and the rich and the ignorant start to lash out. These characters who escape from the horrible situation make the reaction of English even more repulsive.

The unnamed city is filled with refugees and the militants create unrest. The old world is neither paradise nor hell, early morning junkies and gay lovers had departed their houses with more time than they needed for the errands they were heading out to accomplish – but its terrors drive out those with ambition and connections. Saeed and Nadia embark on a journey that, like the dream logic of a medieval odyssey, takes them to Mykonos, London, San Francisco.

Characters move through time and space like abrupt jump-cuts or skipping compact discs. There are no descriptions of life-or-death journeys in the backs of lorries or on flimsy passages. Just as the cognitive shock of having been freshly transplanted to tough new terrains, Hamid is deft at evoking the almost contradictory nature of Nadia and Saeed's digital life whose broadband freedoms contrast with the roadblocks, barbed wire and camps they face in what passes for reality.

As a basis for investigating the nature and cultural work of magical realism, Doniger Wendy's Faris in *Ordinary Enchantments* provides five chief features of the style. "First, the magic realist work employs an irreducible element of magic; second, the narratives in magical realism, picture the dominant presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader of the work, might experience some disconcerting doubts in the endeavour to resolve two opposing strains of events; fourth, the stylistic mode reconciles multiple realms; and, finally, magical realism distorts common understanding of time, space, and identity." (27)Irreducible element refers to an aspect which cannot be fruitfully understood based on the natural laws of the universe as they might have been created in Western empirically forged discourse, that is, according to logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief, as David Young and Keith Hollaman describe it.

In the district of Shinjuku in Tokyo, a man in a "crisp white shirt" (26), concealing his many tattoos sits at a bar and drinks whiskey he does not pay for but is, apparently, entitled to drink. It is past midnight, and the man steps out for a cigarette in the alleyway. As he lights up, he hears something behind him, which is odd, since the alley is a dead end he checked for people when he originally came outside. Nonetheless, two Filipina teenagers are standing in front of "disused door to the rear of the bar, a door that is always kept locked, but is in this moment somehow open, a portal of complete blackness" (32). The girls speak in scared voices as they walk by the smoking man without looking at him. Touching a knife in his pocket, he sinisterly follows them as they walk away.

"In times of violence," Hamid writes, "there is always that first acquaintance or intimate of ours, who, when they are touched, makes what, had seemed like a bad dream suddenly, eviscerating real" (28). Nadia discovers this for herself when her cousin is "blown by a truck bomb to bits, literally to bits" (29). Hearing about her cousin's death only after his funeral, she plans to visit the graveyard alone, and Saeed accompanies her. As Nadia stands above the grave, Saeed prays, and though Nadia does not join him, she stoops and touches the mound of dirt and closes her eyes.

In this group, Hamid wites about the people who were foreign in one sense and not foreign in the other. Nonetheless, Nadia and Saeed still seek out a group of fellow country women and men, who tell them that they have reached the Greek island of Mykonos, a destination that attracts tourists in the summer and migrants in the winter. Like everywhere else, Mykonos has its own doors that can take people to even richer places, but they are guarded, though the doors are easy to pass through, nobody stands to watch over them, "perhaps in the

hope that people go back to where they came from although almost no one ever or perhaps because there are simply too many doors from too many poorer places to guard them all" (100).

The camp itself runs primarily on bartering, like a trading post. Nadia and Saeed learn from their fellow expatriates that almost anything is attainable in this settlement, "from sweaters to mobile phones to antibiotics to, quietly, sex and drugs" (101). Nadia and Saeed buy water, food, a blanket, a backpack, a tent, and local service for their cell phones. After doing this, they set up the new tent on the fringe of the camp, slightly elevated on the beach's craggy hill, where it is not windly or rocky. While setting up, Nadia feels like she is "playing house" (112). While Saeed feels like he is "a bad son"(113).

Meanwhile, a young woman comes home from work in Vienna. Apparently, militants from Saeed and Nadia's country enter the city, shooting Austrians to provoke a reaction. Unfortunately, they have succeeded, because angry Austrians are planning to attack a group of migrants living near the zoo. Fortunately another group intends to form a human cordon to protect them. Wanting to help, the young woman boards a train to the zoo while wearing a migration compassion badge, but she finds herself trapped in a car with the xenophobic mob. These white faces look upon her, shouting and pushing until she feels "a basic, animal fear" (105), and jumps off at the next stop. Despite this harrowing experience, though, she resolves to continue her trek to the zoo, walking there as the sun falls in the sky.

Nadia and Saeed wake up in their cramped tent one morning and hear people running out of the camp. Springing to their feet, they follow the crowd to a new door that has opened in town, one rumoured to lead to Germany. Just as the crowd reaches it, though, they see soldiers guarding it, and so Nadia and Saeed fall back, watching as

several migrants try unsuccessfully to run past the guards, though nobody gets hurt. After a while, the crowd disappointedly files back to the camp and waits for the next opportunity.

To fight off the boredom of life in the camp, Nadia and Saeed decide to explore the island. Sometimes they see sinister groups of men, but they otherwise enjoy drifting through town and along the beach. One day, they meet an old friend of Saeed, who tells them he can help them get off the island bacause he knows "all the ins and outs" (109). He even gives them a discount on his rates because Saeed is a friend. After the couple gives the man their money, they never hear from him again and are unable to track him down. For a while, Saeed gives the man the benefit of the doubt, even praying for his safety. Soon enough, though, he gives up hope, he reconciles to the fact that the man has stolen their money.

As money is tight, Saeed obtains a fishing rod to help them supplement their meals. One evening, he and Nadia are fishing after dark when they see a group of men moving towards them. They decide to leave, walking quickly in the other direction, but the men follow even as they speed up, winding up? the beach's hill. At one point, Nadia slips and cuts her arm on a rock, but the couple forges on, shedding their belongings to go faster. Tossing the fishing rod, they scurry up the hill, creating only to find a small house guarded by soldiers, meaning that the house contains a door to a desirable place. The guards yell at them to halt, and so they stand trapped between soldiers and a group of sinister men. Fortunately, the group of men never reach the hilltop, and the couple pitches their tent where they stand.

As spring arrives in Mykonos, Nadia and Saeed visit a health clinic in town, where a nineteen-year-old volunteer cleans and dresses Nadia's wound, though she has no official

medical training. As she does so, she and Nadia start talking and ultimately form a connection. The volunteer says she would like to help the couple, asking what she can do, Saeed and Nadia tell her they want a way off the island. Not long thereafter, after Nadia visits the clinic to smoke joints with the girl on a daily basis, the volunteer takes them to a house with a door. Wishing them good luck, she hugs Nadia, who squeezes her tightly. To Saeed's surprise, the girl's eyes are teary as she whispers something into Nadia's ear. Their hug lasts longer than expected, and then Nadia and Saeed step through the door.

One night, the mansion comes under attack by a nativist mob. Saeed and Nadia are just returning after eating out, and they each sustain minor injuries. Apparently, riots like this one ran throughout all of London, and the next day Saeed and Nadia awake up sore and bruised, shuffling against one another uncomfortably in their single bed Nadia pushes Saeed with her hip to make space, and, in return, Saeed bumps her back. Annoyed, they turn to look at each other and Saeed touches Nadia's swollen eye and they both start laughing, agreeing not to begin the morning with an argument.

Rumours run rampant throughout the city that a massive plan to reclaim London for Englanders. Nadia and Saeed learn that the effort will be executed by both law enforcement officials and angry nativists,that a large-scale attack is on the horizon. These thoughts prompt the couple to consider their options, sitting in their bedroom at night debating whether or not they should stay in London. During these evenings, they feel closer to one another than they have been feeling in the recent weeks, deciding to treat each other more kindly from here on. Even so, the British government patrols the zone from overhead, flying in drones and helicopters over

people like Nadia and Saeed, who have "run from war already, and do not know where next to run, and so are waiting, like so many others" (138).

Despite various volunteer efforts and aid from sympathetic Londoners, Saeed and Nadia cannot help but recognize the pre-conflict feeling presiding over London. During this time, they see a fox in the courtyard, and an old woman tells them that this fox is not truly a fox, but rather Saeed and Nadia's love. Well-intended as this comment is, it makes the couple uncomfortable because they have been struggling to remain romantic. They have even taken to going their separate ways during the day, though they know that if the nativist attack descends while they are apart, they may never be able to find one another. Still, spending time separately somewhat enhances their relationship, and they sit on the evenings, sometimes even holding hands or kissing.

There is a waitlist to live in the new buildings, and Saeed Nadia are not far from the top, though first they have to help erect the lodgings. Overall, through, existence in Britain has become relatively safe, though, Saeed and Nadia must share a single cot, where one night Nadia dreams about the volunteer from Mykonos. In the dream, she has gone back to the island, and when she wakes up, she is almost panting and her body feels alive, or alarmed, regardless changed. Henceforth, she periodically catches herself thinking about the volunteer. Saeed, on the other hand, spends his time thinking about his father, whom he learns from a cousin has died of pneumonia. In response to this news, Saeed commits himself to working, signing up for extra shifts to keep himself busy, for he is not sure how he should mourn.

Nadia is also deeply affected by the passing of Saeed's father, but she does not know what to say and Saeed himself remains quiet. Because of this dynamic, she finds herself relieved

when she is working her shift because it means she is not with Saeed a feeling that startles her and makes her feel guilty. When Saeed gathers a group of people to pray for his father, Nadia comes to join the circle, even if only to sit there in solidarity. In response, Saeed tells her she does not need to be there, but she insists on staying. As they pray, though, she feels "for the first time unwelcome. "Or perhaps unengaged. Or perhaps both" (171).

As Nadia and Saeed both become more and more involved with their respective crews at work, they drift further and further apart. Indeed, they hardly even touch on their single cot. "They put their lack of conversation down to exhaustion" (185). Hamid explains, "for by the end of the day they were usually so tired they could barely speak" (185). Instead of spending time with one another, they pay attention to their phones, because "phones themselves have the innate power of distancing one from one's physical surroundings" (185).

> "They call it treasure island', Saeed said,
>
> She smiles.
>
> 'what an interesting name .' 'Yes'.
>
> 'The one behind it should be called Treasure Island. It's more
>
> mysterious." (206)

Saeed also considers Nadia in this new context, finding that she looks the same, though perhaps more tired. Still, she continuous to wear her black robes, a fact that begins to annoy him, since she does not even pray, actively avoids speaking their shred languages, and even goes out of her way to not spend time with "their people," "well take it off then!" (187). He wants to

shout, but this is a sentiment that makes him feel guilty and angry with himself, since he knows he is supposed to love and thus respect her. He wants more than anything to love Nadia the way he used to, but he cannot seem to do this, an idea that leaves him feeling unmoored, adrift in a world where one could go anywhere but still find nothing. "I am so tired, this morning,' Nadia said 'I know,' said Saeed. 'So am I" (180). Given the nature of their shifting relationship, Nadia suggests one day "under the drone-crossed sky" (188). That she and Saeed leave behind the worker camp. She tells him that she has heard of a door that takes people to Marin, California, a place settled in the hills outside San Francisco. To her surprise, he instantly agrees, hoping that in this new place they will be able to "rekindle their relationship, to reconnect with their relationship, and to elude, through a distance spanning a third of the globe, what it seems in danger of becoming" (189).

The post colonial writer, borrowing forms of story-telling, is worried less by the verisimilitude of the events portrayed than by the fact that she has to tell a story. Salman Rushdie describing his 'profession' captures this aspects of the postcolonial writer.

> "What made me become a writer was the simple desire to tell stories governed by the principle that stories did not have to be true. Horses were expected to fly and so did carpets. I found that I was writing within a literature that for a longtime had shaped an opposite view a novel had to be mimetic, to imitate the world, the rules of naturalism and realism" (75).

Throughout Hamid focuses on the magical doors which are a sort of relief to the present situation, but throughout Saeed and Nadia move from one door to the other and no door gives them peace of mind. Refugees are seen throughout the world and Hamid has painted a clear

picture of the sufferings of the refugees irrespective of the places they move on. Each refugee moves on with a hope and passes through each magical door with a belief that life has got something good in store. But all their hopes are in vain wherever they go, they suffer. Hamid captures the sufferings of the refugee and presents them with supernatural effect thereby creating an interest in the readers.

Chapter Three

Reinvigoration of Self through Religion

Mohsin Hamid has long been a prime example of an author who has managed to flawlessly bridge the ideological disconnect between the so-called 'East' and 'West'. His latest work, *Exit West*, could not have been published at a more pertinent time. Global conflict, reactionary nationalism and a growing refugee crisis are central in guiding the text's narrative. While the novel incorporayes aspects of magical realism, through the piercing reality of the novel's themes, Hamid fashions a dystopian reality that so vastly mirrors our own.

The authenticity of Hamid's work largely arises from the fact that Hamid tends to construct characters that are not constrained by involuntary factors such as gender, religion or nationality. Instead Hamid's work is scattered with individuals who very much resemble the complex people we encounter in our everyday lives; conservatively dressed liberals, loving women who resist motherhood, high-lying drug addicts, atheists, theists and everything else in between.

Religion plays an important role in the culture worldwide. No culture is free from texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual elements. However, there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion.

Religions have sacred histories and narratives, which may be preserved in sacred scriptures, and symbols and holy places that aim mostly to give a meaning to life. Religions may contain symbolic stories, which are sometimes accepted by followers to be true, that have the

purpose of explaining the origin of life, the universe, and other things. Traditionally, faith, in addition to reason, has been considered a source of religious beliefs.

There are an estimated ten thousand distinct religions worldwide, but about eighty four percent of the world's population is affiliated to one of the five largest religion groups, namely Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or forms of folk religion. The religiously unaffiliated demographic includes those who do not identity themselves with any particular religion, atheists and agnostics. While the religiously unaffiliated still have various religious beliefs.

Sigmund Fraud talks about one area of particular prominence that has been the examination of the links between religion and mental health, and in particular, that of religion and obsession neurosis. "In view of these similarities and analogies one might venture to regard obsessional neurosis as the pathological counter part of the formation of a religion, and to describe that neurosis as an individual religiosity and religion as a universal obsessional neurosis" (126-127).

Rather than mining the specifics of a given faith, in *Exit West*, Hamid explores the ways in which religious practice in general can influence an individual's relationships, memories, and sense of self. The country where Saeed practises his religious faith has also never identified but certain elements, like calls to prayer, suggest that it is rooted in Islam. Nonetheless, religion brings itself to bear on Saeed and Nadia in different ways. After fleeing his country, Saeed uses religion to reconnect to what he has lost, praying as a way of remembering his parents and his homeland.

Nadia, on the other hand, has always dressed in religious garb to protect herself from unwanted advances even though she is not actually spiritual. Even after and migrating to new countries she does not change this habit. Although these ways of engaging to religion differ from one another, it is worth noting that both Saeed and Nadia benefit first and foremost from the cultural and social aspects of religion. As Saeed finds comfort in shared rituals and Nadia finds personal freedom or safety in religious dress, Hamid suggests that religion itself is something people can use to their advantage even if they are only engaging themselves with the customs and not the actual theology,

> He would see his parents preparing to pray and see them praying, and see their faces after they had prayed, usually smiling, as though relieved, or released, or comforted,and he would wonder what happened when one prayed and he was curious to experience it for himself. (200)

After Saeed leaves his country, religion becomes a comforting way of interacting with the memory of his parents and his homeland. Although in the beginning of *Exit West* he admits to Nadia that he rarely, prays, by the time he lives in Marin, he prays several times per day. In this way, Hamid traces Saeed's growing spirituality, charting the young man's slow gravitation toward his parent's religious customs. When Saeed was a child he had first prayed out of curiosity, Hamid writes, describing Saeed's original interest in prayer.

Watching his parents pray, young Saeed associates the act with relief, release, and comfort. It is unsurprising, then, he turns to religion once more after having lost his parents and having been forced to leave his country. Unlike the things he has lost, he takes this religious ritual wherever he goes, thereby retaining a part of his past. This is why he prays multiple times a

day; doing so soothes him and links him to his childhood. When he prayed he touches his parents, who could not otherwise be touched, Hamid, illustrates that Saeed's gravitation toward religion allows him first and foremost to travel back in time, rejoining him with his dead parents by engaging himself with the worldviews they held. As such, religion emerges in *Exit West* as something that has the potential to reinvigorate a migrant's lost sense of connection to their homeland.

In addition to providing him with a way of regaining elements of his old life, religion also gives Saeed something to focus on when facing hate and xenophobia. While living in London, he and Nadia are forced to contend with the fact that London nativists and law enforcement actively want to push them out of the country. Having found a group of fellow countrymen who are deeply pious, "Lets agree to try harder not to speak slightly to each other, she said. He smiled Lets promise I do I do as well." (133).

Saeed listens to a bearded man who urges others to buoy their religious faith as a way of organizing against the people who wish to do them harm. This man advocated a banding together of migrants along religious principles, cutting across divisions of race or language or nation. At this moment, Saeed's elder countryman argues that people should look to religious principles, and band together in accordance with these ideals. This suggests that people should strive to be intrinsically good. Interestingly enough, this aligns with Saeed's own conception that religious devotion and prayer make him into a certain kind of person.

Hamid notes that prayer for Saeed became about being a man being one of the men, a ritual that connected him to adulthood and to the notion of being a particular sort of man, a gentle man, a man who stood for community and faith and kindness and decency, a man, in other

words, like his father. With religion signifying all these things, Saeed suddenly finds something to latch onto admist the hate and tumult aimed at him by angry nativists. In other words, religion symbolizes a way of addressing and coping with the difficulties of being a migrant.

Whereas religion connects Saeed to his past and gives him a sense of self-improvement, for Nadia it provides something a bit more tangible: personal space and safety. This is even the case before widespread turmoil ravages her country. She admits as much to Saeed when he asks on their first date why she wears long black robes even though she does not pray: "So men don't*** with me," (16). While Saeed eventually turns to religion in order to connect with his parents, Nadia uses religion to keep unwanted attention at bay, since the assumption is that a woman dressed in such conservative clothing should be left alone. This indicates how strongly Saeed and Nadia's fellow citizens respect religious custom, a respect Nadia uses to her advantage.

By presenting herself as devoutly religious, she enables herself to act freely, behaving in a way nobody would ever guess. Indeed, she smokes marijuana, takes mushrooms, has casual sex, and lives an altogether independent life as a professional woman. At least, this is the case before she is forced to leave the country, but even after fleeing to Greece, England, and the United States in places that boast religious freedom she refuses to give up her long black robes.

One morning Saeed asked Nadia why she still wore her black robes, since there she did not need to, and she said that she had not needed to wear them even in their own city, when she lived alone, before the militants came, but she chose to, because it sent a signal, and she still wished to send this signal, When Nadia asserts that she wants to send a signal by wearing religious robes, she confirms that her engagement with her country's religious practices has little

to do with spiritual faith. Instead, her participation in religion is primarily practical and cultural, since the robes carry implications about the kind of person wearing them. Hamid once again demonstrates that the cultural elements of religion are often as meaningful as religious belief itself, empowering Nadia to lead the life she wants to.

While smoking a joint one night, Nadia nonchalantly suggests that she move out. Saeed does not say anything as he watches her hold in a cloud of smoke. When she awakes the next morning, she finds him looking at her. He touches her face tenderly and says he should be the one to leave, though he feels strange, while saying so, he realizes that his gentle caress of Nadia's face is false and only a mere pantomime of affection. Still, he knows this might be the last time he is able to touch her like this.

Fortunately, Saeed and Nadia both agree that it is better to part ways, before their union turns ugly. As Nadia leaves the shanty, they do not embrace or kiss, but look at each other for a long time. Then with inevitable finality, Nadia turns and walks as she leaves Saeed standing in the shanty's doorway. Nadia secures a room above the food cooperative where she works, which is open to migrants when they need it.

In general, she feels somewhat isolated amongst the other cooperative workers, since they give her too much personal space because of her black robes. This changes, however, when a tattooed man comes in while she words the register one day. Placing a pistol on the counter, he says, "So what the … do you think of that?" (16). Not knowing what to do, Nadia remains still and says nothing, simply training her eyes on his chin. He repeats the same sentence but with less confidence.

Finally, after unseemingly interminable moment of silence, he scoops the gun up from the counter and leaves without shooting anybody or taking anything. In the aftermath of the tattooed man's presence, Nadia's coworkers begin to embrace her, either because they are impressed by her mettle in the face of danger or because they have recalibrated their sense of who is a threat and who is threatened. In this way, Nadia begins to feel that she too she belongs to them.

As Nadia has always thought of her role, the garb has secured her from the gun of a tattooed man. The role that kept her aloof from others brought her closer to the co-workers. Though *Exit West*, Hamid reiterates the notion of religion which gives peace and hope to a meddled mind. Both Nadia and Saeed in some way or the other turn towards their religion and find serenity. Religion serves not only personally but also socially which gives safety and confidence to one's outlook. Religious scriptures also motivate an individual to live an ethical and peaceful life.

In "*Exit West*," there is a constant underlying movement, and a sense that intrinsic laws of moral physics are at work. In a recent interview, Hamid noted that the current political paralysis in America and Europe could be attributed, at least partially, to our denial of the reality of mass migration. "The more that people who are economically freezing and precarious become aware of places where people are economically warmer and more safe, the more they want to move," he said, adding "We need to figure out how to build a vision for this coming reality that isn't a disaster, that is humane and even inspiring."

In "*Exit West*," Hamid rewrites the world as a place thoroughly, gorgeously, and permanently overrun by refugees and migrants, its boundaries reconfigured so that "the only

divisions that mattered now were between those who sought the right of passage and those who would deny them passage." He doesn't flinch from the mess and anger that come from redistribution and accommodation- but, still, he depicts the world as resolutely beautiful and, at its core, unchanged.

Nadia and Saeed take the chance, and begin a new kind of adventure- one that Hamid unfurls in deceptively simple prose, as spare and dreamlike as a fable. But *Exit West*'s mystical spin isn't gloss on geopolitical reality: nearly every page reflects the tangible impact of life during wartime- not just the blood and gun smoke of daily bombardments, but the quieter collateral damage that seeps in. The true magic of the book is how it manages to render it all in a narrative so moving, audacious, and indelibly human.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

Hamid's writing, elegant and fluid, with long sentences that encapsulate the myriad contradictions of his characters' lives, makes *Exit West* an absorbing read, but the ideas he expresses and the future he's bold enough to imagine define it as an unmissable one. When Saeed and Nadia first hear about the magical exits popping up throughout the city, they learn that normal doors can become special doors, and it can happen "without warning, to any door at all." The same, Hamid points out gently, is true of humans. Assuming catastrophe will never strike is as myopic and ill-advised as ignoring until the very last minute how dangerous reality has already become.

The narrative depends on clear storytelling so much for its effect, and Hamid makes this clarity a means of generating suspense. So suffice it to say that while Saeed and Nadia continue to try to prove their individuality in ways that are not entirely dictated by war and its consequences, they also continue to function as a means for Hamid to think about questions of national identity and social cohesion. This makes for a comparatively quiet conclusion to a book that began with fire and blood.

A narrative technique also known more for literary fictional narratives as a literary technique, literary device, or fictional device is any of several specific methods the creator of a narrative uses to convey what they wants in other words, a strategy used in the making of a narrative to relay information to the audience and, particularly, to develop the narrative, usually

in order to make it more complete, complicated, or interesting Literary techniques are distinguished from literary elements, which exist inherently in works of art.

The general perspective of the narrator is third person omniscient with a greater focus on Saeed and Nadia's perspective, though the narrator seems to be able to access other perspectives and stories as well. Certainly, the narrator seems to know the facts of other characters, especially their deaths. When Saeed's father tells his son to leave him alone in the city and travel without him, the narrator has access to what Saeed's father is thinking about and, crucially, what he thinks but does not say to his son.

From a third person perspective, the narrator also has access into the stories of other migrants who are also using the doors to travel. However, these representations are more distant and factual in their quality. For example, the reader is not given any sense for why or how the woman returns to fetch her daughter.

This is the signature style Hamid uses throughout *Exit West*. The sentences are long, conversational in tone, yet slightly distant or even cool, as the passive tense can be, like in the pivotal moment in the relationship between Saeed and Nadia. The civil war in their city has become increasingly dangerous, especially for Nadia as a woman living alone. Saeed urges Nadia to move into his family's home.

But part of Nadia still resisted the idea of moving in with him, with anyone for that matter, having at such great difficulty moved out in the first place, and become quite attached to her small flat, to the life, albeit often lonely, that she had built there, and also finding the idea of living as a chaste half lover, half sister to Saeed in close proximity to his parents rather bizarre,

and she might have waited much longer had Saeed's mother not been killed, a stray heavy-calibre round passing through the windshield of her family's car and taking with it a quarter of Saeed's mother's head, not while she was driving, for she had not driven in months, but while she was checking inside for an earring she thought she had misplaced, and Nadia, seeing the state Saeed and Nadia's father were in when Nadia came to their apartment for the first time, on the day of the funeral, stayed with them that night to offer what comfort and help she could and did not spend another night in her own apartment again.

Mohsin Hamid weaves a powerful and relevant narrative in *Exit West*. It claims fame as a most anticipated book by *Buzz Feed, Time,* and *The Washington Post,* a well-deserved title. Amidst their unnamed country's political turmoil, the main characters Nadia and Saeed find each other and fall into deep, complicated love. As militants take over their city and bombs destroy houses, the two lovers try to understand the nuances of their relationship. Soon they begin to hear whispered rumors of doors that lead to faraway cities heavily guarded by officers. This initially seems too good to be true, but Nadia and Saeed decide to try their luck and escape. Thus begins their travel, continually westward, to find a new home.

Hamid has been much laurelled for the lucent beauty of his prose. The sentences of *"Exit West"* are persuasively stressed with a fairy-tale frankness and its sinister undertow. If his ear betrays him with "impending ending" and "insulating glazing," it rewards him with "labyrinthine gloom" and "seaside villages gasping beneath tidal surges." If he is too frequently fond of the dead pair — "free spirits," "hushed tones," "vast majority" — he is also fully in command of the conquering image: "She had shuffled off the weight of her virginity with some perplexity but not excessive fuss," or: "Their phones rested screens-down between them, like the weapons of

desperadoes at a parley." Writers should be wise, and Hamid is wiser than many- an unobtrusive wisdom born in wry counterpoint to ruin: "The end of the world can be cozy at times," or: "Alone a person is almost nothing."(169)

Hamid creates a plot relevant to today's global issues, yet many seemingly important details are left out. Although the discussion of immigration, refugees, faith, and the constant fighting between "natives and migrants" (93) imply controversial subjects, the language of *Exit West* keeps the novel from being about a specific crisis. Hamid never clarifies which country his characters are originally from or what religion they speak.

Although certain practices such as prayers throughout the day, and women wearing robes seem to imply that the two are Muslims, it is not explicitly stated. This ambiguity might make it hard to contextualize the deeper messages of a novel about race and religion, but it actually makes it more applicable. This vagueness also sheds light on a particular refugee experience, while suppressing any prejudices a reader may have and influence their ability to sympathize with those who must flee their homes. Its obscurity allows this text to be read in many different ways, depending on what global issue it is being compared to.

The writing style Hamid employs is brilliant. He deals with complicated themes such as attempting to feel at home in a foreign country while knowing that returning to your homeland is not an option yet uses simple and approachable language to do so: "He knew how little it took to make a man into meat: the wrong blow, the wrong gunshot, the wrong flick of a blade, turn of a car, presence of a microorganism in a handshake, a cough. He was aware that alone a person is almost nothing" (58). While he fleshes out his ideas, Hamid makes sure not to lose his reader with convoluted sentences. Throughout the novel, there is a striking juxtaposition of the beautiful

and the horrid. In one moment, Hamid describes the love Saeed feels as he looks at Nadia, and in the next he illustrates her neighbour's brutal death.

Hamid delivers his poignant messages in beautiful but concise ways. As Saeed and Nadia leave the country they have grown up in, they struggle to say their final goodbyes. The deep sorrow is not fully expressed until the thought provoking line, "for when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (94).

The use of doors gives the narrative a surreal quality and artistic style. Although clearly not realistic, the use of doors as a means of transportation to cities across the globe is within the realm of the possibility for the characters of the novel. The doors create conflict by facilitating immigration. As large waves of immigrants of all sorts of nationalities flood into cities like London, problems arise when the natives feel hostile. Although a great plot device, the doors also serve the book by attributing an imaginative flair, adding unreal essence quality to a situation grounded in reality. Saeed and Nadia's ability to traverse the globe gives the novel many different beautiful backdrops as the two lovers try to understand themselves and each other away from their homeland.

The succinct style with which Hamid writes and his poignant messages allow *Exit West* to live up to the hype surrounding its release. By balancing the surreality of the doors with the ambiguity surrounding the characters' identity, Hamid paints a picture of a refugee experience that could reflect those of many immigrants today.

Saeed and Nadia, meet at the beginning of the book, at a night class on "corporate identity and product branding" (15). He invites her for coffee in the cafeteria. They trade instant

messages at work, and go for dinner at a Chinese restaurant. That the banality of their courtship plays out as their country is lurching toward civil war is deliberate. Hamid shows how familiar and persistent human existence is, even at the edge of dystopia. But it is also a warning against the assumption that the end of the world will leave rich, western countries unscathed.

Hamid's novel is both timely, a tale about refugees playing out against a global migrant crisis and impossibly prescient. When it comes to the future, he posits, that everyone would be migrants, whether one moves from country to country or stay in one place until the day one dies. Either way, the world can become unrecognizable in the blink of an eye. What makes *Exit West* so striking are the ways in which it maps the breakdown of a society, and how effortlessly the cycle begins to repeat itself even when Saeed and Nadia think they have made it to safety.

At the novel's opening the two live in "a city swollen by refugees, but still mostly at peace, or at least not yet openly at war" (1). In a country left deliberately ambiguous, it could be Pakistan, Hamid's home country, but also Syria, or Libya or any number of others. Saeed works for a company that places outdoor advertisements; Nadia sells insurance. They are both attached to their smartphones. As is normal for educated, unmarried men in his country, Saeed lives with his parents. Less typical is that Nadia lives alone and rides a motorcycle, and though she is not remotely devout, she wears long black robes as a measure of protection as she tells Saeed, "men don't *** with me" (16).

As their relationship develops, their city experiences a series of incremental changes, each one manageable individually, but catastrophic in total. One night, gazing through the telescope on their balcony, Saeed's family hears gunshots in the distance. Then helicopters and drones begin to swarm in the sky. Militants take over the stock exchange, but are gunned down

by the government, with considerable collateral loss of life. Then the militants begin arriving at the city in unexpected numbers, taking over the territory. There are air strikes and bombs. Cellphones suddenly lose their signal, and all interest is shut off. Municipal services shut down, meaning there is no electricity or running water. There are purges of people with certain surnames and denominations. One day, Saeed's father nostalgically watches a group of young men playing soccer, until he realizes they are not playing with a ball, but with a human head.

Meticulously but casually, Hamid charts a society's descent, and how innate the human impulse is to endure. Until things become entirely untenable that Nadia and Saeed decide to leave, seeking out one of the mysterious doors they have heard about that transport people to faraway countries. The doors are both a stylistic device for Hamid and a practical one, which frees them from considering the arduous nature of the act of fleeing. This seems paradoxical, the physical journey from one land to another is, for most refugees, the most dangerous and traumatic part, it lets Hamid focuses instead on a different part of the refugee experience about how his characters adapt to being interlopers in unfamiliar places.

Although the country Saeed and Nadia flee from is vague, the locations they flee to are specific, which allows Hamid to elucidate some of the more grimly absurd realities of migration. First they arrive on the Greek island of Mykonos, where thousands of refugees share space with wealthy tourists. Another door takes them to London, where migrants begin moving into the countless empty houses purchased by foreign nationals in the centre of town. "It was now said between Westminster and Hammersmith legal residents were a minority, and native-born ones vanishingly few, with local newspapers referring to the area as the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation" (168). It is in the London scenes that Hamid is at his most artful, signaling

subtly how a new environment can come to resemble an old one, and exploring the familiar prejudices and foibles of human nature.

After this, the book loses some of its momentum, shuffling towards a conclusion. But *Exit West* is a remarkable accomplishment nevertheless, not putting a human face on refugees so much as putting a refugee face on all of humankind. Saeed and Nadia seem thinly sketched as characters by design, standing in as an everyman and everywoman who can communicate the ordinariness of the apocalypse. Their love affair is complicated, as most love affairs are, and is challenged to an unthinkable degree by the conditions they find themselves in. But together, they represent the instinct to find communion with other people, and to love even amid circumstances that mean loving another makes you twice as vulnerable.

Stylistically, *Exit West* is an easygoing gem. The book is very readable, edging itself close to beauty but never stepping off into the purple prose abyss. *The New York Times'* Michiko Kakutani called Hamid's writing, "spare" and "crystalline." The novel is, "devastating," due to the brutal honesty with which Hamid pens this novel. Hamid explains how a fissure in Saeed and Nadia's relationship begins to appear:

> "It seemed to Nadia that the further they moved from the city of their birth, through space and through time, the more he sought to strengthen his connection to it, tying ropes to the air of an era that for her was unambiguously gone." (187)

So Hamid's prose is pretty. But even more impressive than the writing it is the author's brilliant use of magical realism. Often associated with mid 20th century Latin American Boom writers, magical realism has been used to reflect a version of the world that feels too strange to

be true, and yet, unmistakably, too true to be strange. Magical realism seeks to expose what is absurd about the banal and what is banal about the absurd. Though hailing from quite a different context, Mohsin Hamid does precisely that in *Exit West*.

The land-transcending portals are, of course, a metaphor for mass immigration. In the novel, Saeed and Nadia are two amongst millions who cross through to the Western world (hence the title, *Exit West*) in perfectly magical realist fashion, though, Hamid never focuses on the details of this fantastic occurrence. There is no conversation about the unreal science of these portals, nor any serious inquiry into their origin; the world just accepts them as fact. Some readers might be inclined to dismiss this as laziness on behalf of the author but, in truth, quite the opposite is true.

Hamid does not fret the tangibility of his magical doors because, in reality, everyone does just the same when it comes to the mass-migration of peoples across the world. One discusses (and fume over) the consequences of immigration and the influx of foreign persons into one's country but one often fails to really investigate the unfortunate causes of such migration. That is Hamid's magical realism working. What is normal (immigration) is given a supernatural twist (land-transcending portals). Yet it is the banal component that's considered in the novel, not the absurd. By doing this, Hamid places a mirror in front of the reader, saying, "Do you recognize yourself?"

In previous novels, Hamid has used a heavily inflected narrative voice to filter everything through a personality that is not his own, but which he nevertheless owns as the author. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* one eavesdrops on a marvellously well-sustained dramatic monologue

that reveals a great deal about its speaker, while also concealing precisely what he intends to do to his listener. In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid ingeniously adapts the form of a self-help book to create a tale-telling "you" who becomes intimately realised while remaining a nameless everyman. *Exit West* confidently adopts yet another kind of voice – a tone of radical simplicity that in the opening 50-odd pages borders on brutality, and makes every conversation, every detail, every scene feel at once vital and under threat.

Hamid's writing is elegant and fluid, with long sentences that encapsulate the myriad contradictions of his character's lives makes *Exit West* an absorbing read, but the ideas he expresses, and the future is bold enough to imagine and define it as an unmissable one. Hamid through the use of magical doors reveals how human nature tries to escape from each situation, whenever catastrophe strikes. Though sometimes it is a dangerous reality, it helps them to go forward in life.

Exit West is significant to Western contemporary culture in that it is an inherently hopeful novel. In the closing chapter, Nadia returns to her city of birth only to discover that "the fires she had witnessed in her youth had burned themselves out long ago, the lives of cities being far more persistent and gently cyclical than those of people" (227).

The doors themselves, which could potentially symbolise chaos and the breakdown of social order, are instead a symbol of reincarnation. With each passage, an individual has the opportunity to start afresh, to find love, to choose a new life. In an academic sense, *Exit West*, alongside Hamid's other works has limitless possibilities. His work could easily find a home in diaspora studies, post-colonial literature, or even women's studies.

All of Hamid's work and, in particular, *Exit West*, present a literary image of our contemporary world. Fifty years from now, *Exit West* could be reflected upon as a text that devotes itself to capturing this precise moment, a time overflowing with refugee-dom, homelessness and war, and yet, an era that is more able than ever to showcase human resilience.

Chapter Five

Summation

Today, Pakistan literature has taken a shape of its own by depicting the complex class system and common man. It also has evolved in merging Urdu literary forms and English literature leading to experimentation. Many writers of fiction borrow from English and viva versa. Pakistani literature's main official platform is the Pakistan Academy of Letters, whose work is overseen by a Board of Governors.

The transnational author, Mohsin Hamid has been preoccupied with critical issues of global relevance like identity crisis, racism and mass migration of people. Not only are his novels timely, but he also shows an anxiety about future. The main focus of his award winning second novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) was the post-September 11th world and the changing nature of the US"s relationship with the East, and in particular with the Muslim world. In Exit West, he once again writes about a subject that has been making headlines recently. Be it Brexit or the immigration policy of Donald Trump, borders are being closed down on „unwanted outsiders" in a world where distance in time is collapsing radically. Mohsin Hamid tries to imagine a world where there are no strict borders and where people move across places with a relative ease.

Magical realism is often considered an off-shoot of Post-modernism. There are several features such as metafiction, self-reflexiveness, eclecticism, erasure of boundaries, intertextuality, redundancy, parody and multiplicity which are typically attributed to post-modernism but they can also be used to describe literary magicalism. Much like post-modernism

it tends to work against dichotomies such as ancient versus modern in favour of pluralism. It thrives on being eternally in the present by distorting time and space. Moreover, both magical realism and postmodernism share the themes of displacement, disorientation and fragmentation along with postcolonial discourse which jumps in time and focus and cannot really be explained with scientific but rather with magical reasoning. Authors like Gunter Grass, Michael Turnier, Louis Ferron and Angela Cater are widely considered post-modernists but might just as easily be categorized as magic realists.

Magical Realism is the capacity to enrich our idea of what is real by incorporating all dimensions of imagination, particularly as expressed in magic, myth and religion. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* abounds in mythological elements. He moulds mythical references to reflect contemporary conditions in a true new historicist fashion.

Mohsin Hamid has been credited for successfully mastering the genre known as 'magical realism' which was largely developed in India by Salman Rushdie and in South America by Gabriel Gracia Marques. Anita Desai sees Hamid as "belonging to this international school of writing which successfully deals with the post-colonial ethos of the modern world without sacrificing the ancient histories of separate lands" (149).

Mohsin Hamid has used magical realism very discreetly in his first novel *Exit West*. He has fused fact and fiction perfectly with magical realism. In accordance with the tenets of magical realism which "presume that the individual requires a bond with the traditions and faith of the community, that she is historically constructed and connected" (285). He has re-conceptualized society and history from a different perspective to formulate a fictionalized history.

Rather than mining the specifics of a given faith, in *Exit West*, Hamid explores the ways in which religious practice in general can influence an individual's relationships, memories and sense of self, because the country where Saeed and Nadia live remains unnamed throughout the novel. The religion Saeed practises is also never identified though certain elements, like calls to prayer, suggest that it is rooted in Islam.

Nonetheless, religion brings itself to bear on Saeed and Nadia in different ways. After fleeing from his country, Saeed uses religion to reconnect to what he has lost, praying as a way of remembering his parents and his homeland. Nadia, on the other hand, has always dressed herself in religious garb to protect herself from unwanted advances even though she is not actually spiritual and migrating to new countries does not change this.

Although these ways of engaging with religion differ from one another, it is worth noting that both Saeed and Nadia benefit first and foremost from the cultural and social aspects of religion. As Saeed finds comfort in shared rituals and Nadia finds personal freedom or safety in religious dress, Hamid suggests that religion itself is something people can use to their advantage even if they are only engaging with the customs and not with the actual theology.

After Saeed leaves his country, religion becomes a comforting way of interacting with the memory of his parents and his homeland. Although in the beginning of *Exit West* he admits to Nadia that he rarely prays, by the time he is living in Martin, he prays several times per day. In this way, Hamid traces Saeed's growing spirituality, charting the young man's slow gravitation toward his parents' religious customs. "When Saeed was a child, he had first prayed out of curiosity. He had seen his mother and father praying, and the act held a certain mystery for him" (199). Hamid writes, describing Saeed's original interest in prayer. "He would see his parents

In this moment, Saeed's elder countryman argues that people should look to religious principles rather than arbitrary geographical or cultural groupings, and band together in accordance with these ideals. This manner of thinking suggests that people should strive to follow a good way, should try to be people who, because of their principles are intrinsically good. Interestingly enough, this aligns with Saeed's own conception that religious devotion and prayer will make him into a certain kind of person.

Hamid notes that prayer for Saeed became about being a man, being one of the men, a ritual that connected him to adulthood and to the notion of being a particular sort of man, a gentleman, a man who stood for his community and faith and kindness and decency, a man, in other words, like his father. With religion signifying all these things, Saeed suddenly finds something to latch onto amidst the hate and tumult aimed at him by angry nativists. In other words, religion symbolizes a way of addressing and coping with the difficulties of being a migrant.

Religion connects Saeed to his past and gives him a sense of improvement, whereas for Nadia it provides something a bit more tangible: if offers her a personal space and safety. This is even the case before widespread turmoil ravages her country. She admits as much to Saeed when he asks on their first date why she wears long black robes even though she does not pray: "So men don't *** with me," (16).

While Saeed eventually turns to religion in order to connect himself with his parents, Nadia uses religion to keep unwanted attention at bay, since the assumption is that a woman dressed in such conservative clothing should be left alone. This indicates how strongly Saeed and Nadia's fellow citizens respect religious custom. Nadia uses this to her advantage. By presenting

herself as devoutly religious, she enables herself to act freely, behaving in a way nobody would ever guess. Indeed, she smokes marijuana, takes mushrooms, has casual sex, and lives an altogether independent life as a professional woman. At least, this is the case before she is forced to leave the country, but even after fleeing to Greece, England, and the United States, places that boast religious freedom she refuses to give up her long black robes.

One morning Saeed asked Nadia why she still wore her black robes, since here she did not need to, and she said that she had not needed to wear them even in their own city, when she lived alone, before the militants came, but she chose to, because it sent a signal, and she still wished to send this signal, Hamid writes. When Nadia asserts that she wants to send a signal by wearing religious robes, she confirms that her engagement with her country's religious practices has little to do with spiritual faith. Instead, her participation in religion is primarily practical and cultural, since the robes carry implications about the kind of person wearing them. Once again, Hamid demonstrates that the cultural elements of religion are often as meaningful as religious belief itself, in this case empowering Nadia to lead the life she wants to lead.

Exit West is a story about dislocated people and their experiences, and the tale is made typical with the help of magically created doors that take refugees to different places. The novelist is guessing an age in which all the humankind will be refugees. We are provided with glimpses of a migration apocalypse where everybody seems to be on the move. Wars and drastic climate changes cannot be ruled out in the time to come. All this gives Exit West a faint tinge of science fiction as well. While dealing with the subject of inevitable mass migration of people, the physical and mental agony faced by refugees has also been exquisitely portrayed. Hamid has tried to alter our perception about the concepts of nationhood and borders. He posits a quite

different approach towards the issue of mass migration of people by presenting a totally different view of world geography and the artificial borders. The novelist is reminding us that it is imperative to rethink our beliefs about the world and our future.

Perhaps a very few works of fiction have made a momentous impact on Pakistani literature and Hamid's *Exit West* is one such. Its impact is all the more significant. Indeed the work has been acclaimed as a work of postmodernist literary trend. Very few novelists have been able to bring out magical realism. Hamid evokes the realism and the pathetic condition of the refugee. Themes of love and connection, problems of border, division, fear and escape are yet to be proved in Hamid's *Exit West*. Hamid and his novel *Exit West* will always remain evergreen in the minds of readers and will evince to be controversial yielding themselves to different levels of interpretations.

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A Psychological and Eco-feministic Reading of Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock*

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for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Psychological and Eco-feministic Reading of Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi in partial fulfillment of the requirements affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Anitha Maharasi B. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Examiner

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Psychological and Eco-feministic Reading of Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock*** analyses Anita Desai's attempts to discuss the novels as woman who longs for the pleasures of life and explores the revelation of the inner self of the character Maya.

The first chapter **Introduction**, opens with a precise foreword on Indian English Literature and the life, works and achievements of the Indian author, Anita Desai.

The second chapter **Dilemmas in Relationships** portrays the protagonist Maya, who undergoes the various stages of suffering and the problems in their family relationships.

The third chapter **Women Nature Nexus** provides the most significant and unique analysis in this novel, Anita Desai correlates the feminine trauma with nature imagery, which signifies the concept of eco-feminism in her novel.

The fourth chapter **Exploration of the Psyche** deals with psychology and on the other hand, human relationships play an important role in creating such circumstances where the character is in dilemma and human psyche has to face a tumult.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the importance aspects dealt in the preceding chapters accounting from the introduction to the objectives and justifications to the novel *Cry, The Peacock*.

The research has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian English literature is the work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early works began by Michael MadhusudanDutt followed by R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao who contributed to Indian fiction in the 1930s. The Indian tradition is the oldest in the world. Indian literature in English is historically verifiable phenomenon. It is the result of the commercial, cultural and literary encounter between India and Britain. It cannot be presumed that a set of historically given conditions are to be identically interpreted or understood by successive generations of critics and historians. The wealth of Indian literature available reveals the fact that the creativity and the experience of the writers have made a lasting impression. Indian culture which was largely found to be metaphysical with lots of subtleties of religious belief and a hatred for things. German romanticism strongly supported this image of India.

There is today great interest evinced in Indian fiction in English. This interest ignores an important aspect of Indian writing in English that direct reportage and sketches of domestic as well as rural life in Indian which were undertaken with a view to eliminating certain social evils such as the tyranny of customs and superstitions and the economic plight of peasants, directly or indirectly influenced the development of Indian fiction in English. They highlighted social evils, the lovable qualities of Indian womanhood and depicted Indian rural life. One of the earliest novels written under the influence of Gandhian philosophy was K.S. Venkataramani's *Murugan the Tiller* (1927). This was followed by *Kandan the Patriot* (1932) which was dedicated to 'the

unknown volunteer in India's fight for freedom' and expresses in a not inartistic manner the idealistic politics of the day. Besides Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, the three foremost Indian writers of fiction in English. Their contributions have enriched Indian literary effort in English to a great extent.

Mulk Raj Anand Born in 1905, along with other writers of his time including R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, are considered to be the pioneers of Indian English fiction. Angered by an India where the caste system was still rigidly prevalent, he based most of his work on the lives of people in the so-called lower castes. His first major work, *Untouchable* (1935), is based on a single day in the life of toilet-cleaner who has an encounter with a member of a higher caste. His other major works, including *Across the Black Waters* (1939), *Coolie* (1936), and *The Big Heart* (1945), are all critically acclaimed and central to the history of Indian literature.

Khushwant Singh was a famous Indian writer, journalist, lawyer and politician has penned what is one of the most essential reads in 20th century Indian literature, *Trainto Pakistan* (1956). This historical novel recalls the partition of India in August 1947, with a focus on its human toll unlike few other accounts have managed. Among other known and critically acclaimed books penned by Singh are *I Shall Not Hear theNightingale* (1959), *Truth, Love and Little Malice* (2002), *Delhi: A Novel* (1990) and *The Company of Women* (1999).

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

fourteen books to her credit that include ten novels, two collections of short stories and two books of children. The plight of Indian women, which is still a matter of tears, has always been a subject of absorbing interest whether in an early writer like Toru Dutt or a later writer like Anita Desai.

Anita Desai was born in Missouri on 24th June 1937, to a Bengali father and German mother. Desai's father was an engineer and his family hailed from East Bengal, now called Bangladesh, born and brought up in India. After the Second World War and with the partition of India in 1947, both her parents decided to make Delhi their home. Her dual heritage, both racial and cultural, has had a strong impact on her life and has also influenced her writing at the thematic as well as stylistic level.

She began writing fiction at the age of seven and published small pieces in children's magazines. She was educated at Queen Mary's school first and at Miranda house later. She has been living in various cities, Kolkatta, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pune. The life of people in these cities finds expression in her novels. Desai's Characters cannot be dubbed as escapists, for they usually discharged the duties allotted to them effectively but resent the circumstances in which they have to operate. Unlike most of the Indo-Anglian novelists, Anita Desai has achieved something unique of portraying each of her individuals as an unsolved mystery.

Desai emerged on the literary horizon after independence, deliberating on the highly debatable contemporary issues. As such she added a new dimension and marvelous flavor to the contemporary Indian English fiction. She has secured a unique and significant place due to her innovative thematic concerns and deals in her fiction with feminine sensibility. Her preoccupation is with the revealing and examining of the deep psyche of her characters, especially women characters. A

concerned social visionary Anita Desai is a keen observer of the society and the position of the women in the contemporary society draws her special attention. The novels of Anita Desai are noted for the profound probing into the inner life and feelings of the women, bounded by the shackles of the middle class. They are the explorations of the family problems, which perhaps is the chief cause behind the estrangement of the women from their family.

The fiction of Anita Desai is relevant to all times because she writes about the predicament of modern man or woman. She digs into man's inner psyche and goes beyond the skin and the flesh. Literature for her is not a means of escaping reality but an exploration and an inquiry. She prefers the private to the public world and avoids the traditional grooves of external reality and physical world. In fact, her real concern is the thorough investigation of human psyche, inner climate, and she unraves the mystery of the inner life of her characters. She writes neither for placing entertainment nor for dissemination and propagation of social ideas. Her main engagement is to study human existence and human predicament, her exploration being a quest for self. Manmohan Bhatnagar says "She is the novelist of psycho-emotional situations and her theme is the individual against himself and against the milieu" (110). This particular reality leads to the most common theme in her novels that is the complexity of human relationships, particularly the man-woman relationship.

This theme however, has been as old as novel itself and is usually delineated in the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and Faulkner. As far as Anita Desai is concerned she writes mostly about the miserable plight of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands, fathers and brothers. On the other hand, man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, withdrawal,

loneliness, isolation and lack of communication that frequently occurs in her novels. Most of her protagonists are alienated from the world, from society, from families, from parents and even from their ownselves because they are not average people but individuals. When these characters have to face alienation, they become rebels and turn reactionaries. Tension, worries, depression, disappointment, anxiety and fear become their lot and they lose their sense of sanity and mental poise. Anita's main focus, in this way, is to depict the psychic states of her protagonists at some crucial juncture of their lives. Therefore, the most recurrent themes in her novels areAccoding to RajiNarsimhan "the hazards and complexities of man-woman relationships, the founding of individuality and the establishing of individualism of her characters" (23).

Feminism is an idealogy which seeks not only to understand the world but to change it to the advantage of women. Simone de Beauvoir opines that woman's idea of herself as inferior to man and dependent on him springs from her realization. Though the biological distinction between male and female is an accepted fact, the notion that woman is inferior to man is no longer acceptable to women in general and feminists in particular .

Anita Desai's academic contribution constitutes an essential adjunct for a woman who suits her identity on the background of feminity and who is always an object of gaze in the masochistic society, whether she is a wife, a daughter, an artist or a writer. The passion and agony of woman on all contexts undergoes repression and suppression unless she transcends her boundaries of inner insecurity and inner dilemma to meet the outer world realities that are largely controlled by the man's world.

Anita Desai explores the Indians' use of make shifts to escape attachment and their attempt to find love and life in disillusion that are the end product of their alienation, obsession, transgression and diffusion of self in double consciousness, that is, of a woman and then an Indian. The uniqueness of Anita Desai's fiction, however, lies in her treatment of feminine sensibility. In India where women have redesigned role, do not allow any room for individualism, identity and assertion, Anita Desai advocates for women who question the age-old traditions and want to seek individual growth. They try to reassess the known in a new context and find a meaning in life.

Desai suggests that a balance between the conventional pre-set role of women and the contemporary issues has to be struck. Her female protagonists try to discover and rediscover meaningfulness in life through the known and the established. These characters are not the usual, average, normal women, but different from others. They do not find a proper channel of communication and thus become alienated and start worrying about their lives. All their wanderings and reflections finally bring them into a new vistas of understanding, which they had formerly ignored or rejected.

Most of Desai's protagonists are alienated characters. She portrays her characters as individuals "facing single-handed, the ferocious assaults of existence". *(The Times of India)* Thus, characters in her novels are generally neurotic female, highly sensitive and engaged with their dreams and imagination, and alienated from their environments. They often differ in their opinions from others and embark on long voyages of contemplation, in order to find the meaning of their existence. That is why they suffer from their relationships more than others do. In other words, in Desai's novels, the love encounters explode into marital disputes as the result of devastating post-marriage relationship between husband and wife.

Desai has dwelt upon problems of love, marriage and sex in her novels in a very convincing and realistic way. She seems to champion the view that marriage alone does not provide a ready-made solution to life's tension, chaos and turbulence. Instead, mental satisfaction and happy married life mean better understanding between husband and wife. One needs the genuine help of the other. A proven and trusted sense of co-operation at every stage and place is required. Psychological adjustment is safe by a healthy compromise and cardinal existence in a conjugal life. Husband and wife need to be complimentary to each other.

The novel, *Voices in the City* (1985) is divided into four parts. From the beginning the theme of loneliness, alienation and loss of identity of the characters, is often stressed by the novelist to create an atmosphere of dramatic tension and conflict. Desai's concern, in the novel, is primarily with human relationships and how in the absence of a meaning relationship the individuals suffer.

Where Shall we Go This Summer (19750), in this novel Desai pinpoints are VinayDubey says "a real and pathetic picture of a lovely married woman and aspires to establish victory over the chaos and sufferings of her rather unusual existence" (5). She presents her favourite theme of investigating the consciousness of an introvert and sensitive woman who is bored and frustrated by her commonplace and hum-drum life and tries to escape into purposeless and unproductive loneliness.

Desai's fifth novel *Fire on the Mountain* was published in London in 1977. It won the Royal Society of Literature's Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize and the coveted 1978 Sahitya Akademi Award. The novel, on a plain scale, may be considered the story of the agonized cries of Nanda Kaul, an old woman who has had too much of the world with her and so longs for quiet, retired life. Her busy past now

looks like "a box of sweets". But, on being examined on a broader scale, the novel tends to focus on 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 story of the novel, *The village by the sea* (1982) is woven around an alcholoic fisherman, his stick wife and their four children – Lila, Bela, Kamal, and Hari. Here Desai describes human relations, man's relation with woman, man's relation with woman, man's relation with God in the real village. This situated in the western coast on India. Village life with the advent of modern technology and machinery becomes commercial. Consequently the purity and charity of human love is violated.

Desai's sixth novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980) describes the emotional relations of two main characters Bim and her Younger sister Tara, who are haunted by the memories of past. The novel highlights the theme of the effect of remembrance of the past on the chief protagonists.

An eco-critical approach towards Anita Desai's works brings out the importance of environment as one of her major themes. Even the unexplored world of female psyche is understood best by the reader through the use of nature imagery. The life of human beings is deeply rooted in nature. Desai knows that as Wordsworth says in "Tintern Abbey" "Nature never did betray the hear that love her" (122-123). This may have been the reason for sending her protagonist Nanda to Cargnanao far from her long tedious life. She finds in Nature a true solace and a true lover. Anita Desai has an insight into human psyche. In her novel, feminine trauma is correlated with nature imagery which signifies the concept of eco-feminism. The close bonding of

woman and nature is depicted throughout the major frames of the novel while the make is shown alienated from nature. Women have not been considered as equal partners in the patriarchal society. In the family and the society they have been treated as the second rate members. Nature has also been exploited by the same male dominating society for fulfilment of their needs and luxury. The suppression of women and nature is deeply correlated.

Anita Desai's first novel *Cry, the Peacock* reveals the inner realities and psychic reverberations in the minds of her characters. In this novel Desai explores the hysterical mind of an Indian housewife, Maya. Her novel faithfully captures the contemporary Indian reality, especially the domestic life. The novel Is an attempt to account the turbulent, emotional world of the neurotic protagonist, Maya who is married to Gautama. Maya is portrayed as a spoilt and pampered daughter of a wealthy Brahmin. The pre-marital freedom she enjoyed in her father's house puts her utterly defenceless when she counters a different code of conduct in her father-in-law's house. Moreover she is portrayed as a woman constantly haunted by the predictions of the horoscope which adds more woes to her married life. The second chapter deals with the problems in familial relationships and the problems faced by women in Indian society. The novel *Cry, The Peacock* is a family play mainly concerned with the theme of marital discord between Gautama and Maya.

Chapter Two

Dilemmas in Relationships

The theme of Anita Desai's novels reveals her consummate craftsmanship. Desai sincerely broods over the fate and future of modern woman particularly in male-chauvinistic society and her annihilation at the altar of marriage. The novelist however does not challenge the futility of marriage as an institution but discloses the inner psyche of the characters through their relations. In her novels, mostly women have been both culturally and emotionally dependent on men, and disruption of attachment or affiliation is seen not as a loss of relationship but a total loss of self, which is then seen as a neurosis.

Desai's female protagonists are generally caught in a web of painful circumstances, their struggle and the outcome of which is usually the basis of the novel. The struggle, one can readily see is not without purpose and the aim is to achieve the sort of harmony that generally eludes them whether it is the harmony in marital relationships between parents and children, the harmony with society or between the inner and outer life of the characters. The problem invariably in each case, is the difficulty of adjustment in conjugal relationships, of building bridges, of bringing together or harmonizing and taking a holistic view of one's situation.

Anita Desai's first novel *Cry, the Peacock* is concerned with failure of the central character Maya to have a meaningful and sustaining relationship with the members of the family as well as with her husband Gautama. She tries to probe into the depths of a woman's psyche and show it to the society. She is well known for her powerful and domineering female protagonists especially of *Cry, the Peacock*. Her characters see the world as negative and meaningless and feel isolated. Their effort to

adjust in their respective familial relationships always fails and they live as emotionally unfulfilled souls. Most of Desai's novels focus on man-woman relationship. R.K. Srivastava, Ramesh Kumar Gupta says that: "The man-woman relationship becomes more important due to rapid industrialization, growing awareness among women of their rights and individualities, and westernization of attitudes and lives of the people" (156). A common trait in Desai's all major women characters is their longing to have from all kinds of social and familial involvement. Their expectation from their husband, family and society leads to final disaster. As Twinkle B. Manavar has said on *The Novels of Anita Desai* "Most marriages prove to be unions of incompatibility. Men are apt to be rational and matter of fact while women are sentimental and emotional" (136).

Maya is a young woman married for four years to Gautama, a lawyer and protégé of her father and much older than she. Maya discontentment with her marriage rises from her husband's lack of a loving relationship with her and their lack of common sharing of interests and mutual understanding. Maya values and savors her possessions, "the world of sounds, senses, movements, odours, colours, tunes" (36). She is life-affirming and is in conflict with her husband whose values, as an exponent of the *Bhagavad Gita's* concept of detachment, she feels are life-denying. Gautama denigrates Maya's concern with attachments and relationships after she receives a letter from her estranged brother who had been disowned by her father. Maya is angered by his mocking, amused, objective smile, when he treats the estrangement as an amusing piece of fiction worthy of a woman's magazine.

Anita Desai's themes are mostly about the miserable plight of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands, fathers and brothers. In this novel Anita Desai deals with the feminine sensibility through the reactions and

responses of the heroine to the events and situations in the novel. A highly emotional, sensitive and sensuous woman, Maya has obsessive love for life, she is perfectly normal and healthy woman. Her only sin is, she is sensitive, imaginative, passionate and sensuous which cause disturbed psyche of modern woman. She tries to strike a balance between institutional needs and intellectual aspiration and is deeply bewildered when the existential absurdity of life is brought before her.

Maya and Gautama belong to two different worlds which is the the cause of incompatibility and unhappiness in their marital life. Maya has a very happy childhood. She is left to enjoy the full share of her father's affection as she is motherless and her brother runs away from home at an early age. So she starts thinking about the happy childhood whenever she feels frustrated in her married life. Gautama has grown on the prescriptive norms and traditional expectations. He has been brought up in a totally different family atmosphere. His mother is a social worker. She works very hard and moves hard and moves about pretty fast to attend to needs of her dispensary, her workshop for the blind, disabled, unemployed. His family members have various subjects to discuss. They used to speak on parliament, bribery, corruption revealed in government. His father is a freedom fighter and wants to write book about freedom struggle and free India. He has not time to make emotional attachment with his family members as he is busy in his activities.

Maya grows as a highly sensitive and emotional type of woman and Gautama is an over busy and intellectual type who is practical to the core. It is due to this temperamental difference between them that their marriage proves to be incompatible. Maya is a character who suffers due to tensions and anxieties of being modern in a traditional society. Meenakshi Mukherjee comments, "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." (56)

In this novel, Maya and Gautama have strained relationship because of their incompatible temperaments. Maya was very much in love with Gautama and needed his companionship and understanding but there were very much missing in their relationship. Maya starves for her husband's companionship and spends sleepless nights consuming with this starvation. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional by nature while Gautama is realistic, insensitive and rational in thinking. Maya is poetic in sense and high-strung. Gautama has detached and remote attitude towards the incidents. He keeps his philosophical view alive. Maya cherishes tenderness, softness and warmth in her behavior. But Gautama remains hard and cold in his response to the happenings in their married life. They are just like the two pole apart in nature living together whose matrimonial bond gradually becomes fragile and tenuous. The tensions between them reach to the extreme state in which she kills Gautama and commits suicide.

Maya being a prisoner of past lives almost perpetually in the shadow world of memories which engulf her. Gautama lives in the present and accepts reality and facts even though they are not very beautiful. On the contrary, Maya never tries to accept the facts, but she wants to live in her imagination and fairy world. She keeps on remembering her childhood days or the treatment her father meted out to her. She is father-obessed means, she feels that no one else loves her as her father did. She seeks other father in her husband. But he does not respond her. Sensitive Maya is terribly upset over the death of her pet dog that she loses calmness of mind and Gautama neglects emotional yearning of Maya and says that he would bring another dog for her. This mechanical behavior reflects his insensibility towards Maya: "Showing how

little he knows misery, or how to comfort me. But then he knew nothing that concerned me. Giving me an opal ring... no, no not harness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me." (Cry the Peacock, 39)

Maya and Gautama are the victims of poignant problem of maladjustment in marriage. Being emotional sensitive, her favourite pet Toto's death upsets her so much that she finds it difficult to endure the psychological strain. The sad demise of Toto produces a terrifying vacuum in her life. Gautama's detached and matter of fact attitude towards the incident multiply her misery.

Being alone in the family, her mother being dead, and her brother having gone to America, she gets the most of her father's attention and affection. Her father without thinking much married her off to his lawyer friend Gautama, who was a middle aged man. Maya, who lived a carefree life under the indulgent attention of her loving father, desires the similar attention from her husband, but totally fails in marital journey. Their relationship get fractured. She fails to establish rapport with Gautama and finds no meaning in her life.

Maya's childlessness exaggerates her loneliness. She becomes highly sensitive as a result of it. She wants to enjoy life to the utmost. She enjoys life in all its forms. She enjoys beautiful sights and sounds. She is an epicurean to the core. In contrast, she is married to Gautama, a friend of her father very senior to her age and a prosperous middle aged lawyer. Gautama is kindly cultured, rational and busy with his own affairs of business. He looks upon her love for good things as nothing more than sentimentalism and once makes a disparaging remark about her that she has mind of third rate poetess. The novel echoes in the cry of Maya the desire of a married woman to be loved with passion which few tend to get.

The novel is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmonious and unfulfilled family relationships. Protagonist Maya, born in an orthodox family and brought up under the protection, affection and kindly care of her father, suffers from a cute father fixation. Being a motherless child she is a hypersensitive and neurotic woman and as a result even after her marriage, she looks for the father image in her husband. When Maya, fails to identify herself with her husband's world she finds herself being alienated from the affection she enjoyed from her father. M. Mani Meitei comments: "Lack of mutual concern leads to apathy which causes the total breakdown of husband-wife relationship" (46).

The novel gives an impression of indifference in the married life of Maya and Gautama. Maya's marriage to Gautama is more or less a marriage of convenience. It was a match between two different temperaments and there was not single link in the physical or mental outlooks to bring them to a close tie. She faces a totally different code of conduct in her husband's house and finds that her feelings are not cared for feels being neglected, isolated and alienated there. Gautama attributes Maya's behavior to her father-fixation. The death of Toto, the dog makes the situation worse. Toto's death was intolerable to her, as for childless Maya Toto was like a child. Maya is badly disturbed by the indifference and carelessness of her husband towards the death of her dog. Both of them have different views about death. Gautama thinks death to be a normal event while Maya is disturbed by it. Husband's love and sexual gratification in a normal course would have compensated to or helped her to overcome the loss of her childhood world. On the contrary, Maya's surrounding does not help compensate the loss, instead it allows her to drift. Maya's childhood prophecy of a disaster becomes obvious point of fixation in Maya's unconscious.

Though Gautama in his own way is indulgent and affectionate enough for Maya it is the inner spiritual contact that fails to click. He has a cool, analytical attitude towards Maya's zest for life. His error lies in his rigidity. He wants to change Maya as he thinks she 'ought' to be instead of understanding her as she 'actually' is. Maya was very much in love with Gautama and needed his companionship and understanding; but these were very much missing in their marriage. Maya begs Gautama not demand her to join him in his world which is so different from her own. Again and again one finds Maya turning towards her husband for support and love but Gautama is unable to reciprocate her love and Maya feels deprived of the pleasures of a happy marriage. By marrying a man twice her age, she probably had already minimized her chances for a good husband wife relationship.

The incompatibility and lack of communication between the two characters are repeated many times in the story. Because of their different mental make-ups there is a total alienation between husband and wife and they share nothing and disagree even over trifles. Both of them have fanatic adherence to their beliefs and ideas and neither is prepared to relent. Although their marriage has been a complete failure, they continue to be together, leading a mechanical life. To make the life possible, Maya looks for points of communication. Contrary to her expectations, her husband has a mechanical attitude towards life. There is always an air of detachment about whatever he does. They live in a loveless cage of marriage in which Maya's emotional urges usually get defeated by Gautama's rudely philosophical gibberish. Due to the incompatibility she hesitates to lay bare her mind to Gautama and is driven towards insanity which becomes the cause of tragic end of both of them. Sudhakar T. Sali says, "The incompatibility of character stand revealed-Gautama who touches without feeling and Maya who feels even without touching" (web).

Gautama tries to satisfy Maya's appetite for love with logic, rationality and material things but does not notice and neglect her beauty and the longing to be loved. The physical, mental and emotional separation between them torments Maya who struggles in a pursuit to relate to Gautama. Gautama detaches himself so much that he does not get involved in any physical contact with his wife. On the other hand, Maya involves herself in sensual life to such an extent that her past romantic life becomes an obsession. She feels that he is not concerned about her misery, her physical and psychological demands. Sanjay Kumar says, "Engrossed in his busy schedule, Gautama continues to ignore Maya's needs remaining callously immune even to her physical desires. This is how Maya usually suffers the agony of her unfulfilled desires." (23)

Though Maya does not find Gautama according to her expectations and has adopted a complaining attitude towards him, she herself is also responsible of her tragedy to some extent. Due to her over sensitive and over possessive nature she is not able to have a meaningful relationship with her husband. Her poignant cry is a passionate urge to express herself to be understood by her husband. But Gautama never feels the necessity of interaction. Slowly the events and the tensions pile up leading to the final catastrophe. Maya's obsession with death drives her to a curious insanity which prevails over her common sense and in a fit of madness she pushes Gautama over the parapet who falls down to death. Her giggles of laughter are partly due to her idea that now she is free to enjoy life but in her insanity she also jumps out of the open balcony and meets the same end as Gautama did.

Maya is pushed to the limits of her emotional tether by the actively cruel environment that Gautama aspires for the ideal of renunciation. All that is left of this marriage is pity, regret and a want on waste. The only string that had, kept them tied

were the norms of society. Yet the tragedy could have averted with a little bit of communication, a touch of accommodation on Gautama's part.

Anita Desai in *Cry, the Peacock* has depicted not only the conflict in man-woman relationship of Maya and Gautama but of other characters also. Nila, Gautama's sister is not leading a happy life either. They are incompatible and she takes divorce from him after ten years of marriage. Leila, Maya's friend, had a love marriage and her husband suffers from tuberculosis. She feels satisfied and they love each other until death. Pom, another friend, though satisfied with her husband, does not want to live with her in-laws. Desai returns to her favourite theme of incompatibility and problems in marital relationships. The incompatible are confronted with the problem of male female dichotomy, inadequacy of marital love relationship and dissastisfaction.

The fulfilment in relations in marriage which Maya desires to have is disconcerned by her in the married life of two of her close friends Leila and Pom. She remembers how devotedly Leila was busy caring her husband when once she went to meet her. Similarly Pom who does not bother about anything and is a typical woman in total contrast to Maya who is fragile, with deep cultural roots and refined sensibilities. However Maya now rejects the idea of meeting her friends as there is not one of them who connects as an anchor to her. She is not able to achieve fullness in familial relations just like her friends have as she lacks Leila's theory of acceptance and Pom's good behavior and flexibility of mind. The hollowness of various familial relationships in the novel is also highlighted through the depiction of the character of Nila, who's married life is not happy and who has come to her brother, Gautama to seek his help in getting divorce from her husband. But Gautama is not ready to fight her case as he considers it below his dignity to fight divorce cases like cheap lawyers.

Thus the novel abounds in variety of familial relationships and has many references which give a deeper insight into the nature of relationships the characters make with each other. On the one hand, there are characters like Maya and Gautama who lack the flexibility in their relationship and ultimately meet their tragic end, and on the other hand, there are Pom and Leila who are always trying to give meaning to their married life. Anita Desai presents her opinion about complexity of human relationships as a big contemporary problem and human condition. So she analyses this problem due to shows changing human relationships in her novels. The next chapter deals about Nature naturalizes women and women feminize nature and the eco-feministic theory which is used in the novel *Cry, The Peacock.*

Chapter Three

Women Nature Nexus

The intimate association of nature and literature is depicted in the literary works of poets and writers of all ages, belonging to different cultures of the world. The aim of the eco-critics is to illustrate the rapport of nature and society as depicted by the writers in their works. In this frame reference, the terms which have gained utmost importance are ecology and eco-criticism. In the present day, Ecology portrays the manner in which plants, animals and humans are linked to each other and their habitat. This condition of being blood relation is virtually complementary so that any imbalance in one disturbs the other automatically. Unwittingly, changes in the environment have impinged upon civilization so intensely that it might lead to its freedom from the face of earth. Hence, the concern for ecological subjects has become a crucial issue today.

Literature renowned for imitating the contemporary problems could not have remained untouched from this concept. This uprising threat to humanity from unceasing misuse of the ecosystem has seized the attention of the writers in recent past. The textualization of environmental problems in literary works has given rise to a new division of literary theory, namely eco-criticism.

The perception of equating women with nature antecedes to the times of archaic classical mythology. Nature is portrayed as a woman as its fundamental functions encompasses reproduction and nurture. Similarly women's duties are contemplated as natural to her. Thus, the liaison of nature and women is best described by the phrase: Nature naturalizes women and women feminize nature. One's approach to discuss the relation between women and nature is to interpret the

coextensive demeanour they have been wielded into in patriarchal society. Women's role has been to fulfill the demands and aspirations of men. Correspondingly, nature is supposed to have an innate constitution of catering to human needs. Hence, both women and nature are exploited by men leading to a mutual association between oppression of women and deterioration of nature.

Eco-feminism is an interdisciplinary movement that calls for a new way of thinking about nature, politics, and spirituality. Eco-feminist theory questions or rejects previously held patriarchal paradigms and holds the domination of women by men is intimately linked to the destruction of the environment. Eco-feminists argue that traditional male-centred approaches involving exploitation of and supremacy over women are echoed in patriarchal practices and discourse with respect to the environment. Eco-feminism came into being in the early 1970s in the United States, when a number of women became disillusioned with the mainstream environmental movement and sought to create more awareness among feminists about environmental concerns.

Feminists are interested in why women are treated as inferior to men, and why they have only been partially included in the sphere of culture. Environmentalists are interested in why nature is treated as inferior to culture and why humanity has not commonly been included within the definitions of nature. Both movements seek Liberation. So eco-feminist by connecting them together are aiming to construct new practices based on a model of non-domination. In other words Eco-feminism is the social movement that regards the oppression of women and nature as interconnected. It is one of the few movements analyzing the theories that actually connects two movements. More recently, eco-feminism theories have extended their analysis to

consider the interconnections between sexism, the domination of nature and also racism and social inequalities.

Although not many, there are few novels in the history of the Indian Emglish literature which can be read through the lens of eco feminism. Eco-feminism gave a new perspective to the suffering of Indian woman. Violence against nature and against women is inter-related. Especially in India the identification of feminine principle with nature has its own relevance. The prominent writer of this age in whose work which the dominance of nature images which act as important part of theme in Anita Desai. Nature which includes animals, plants and birds, has a strong presence in almost all her works. Known in Indian-English fiction for ushering in the psychological novel, Desai uses external landscapes to portray interior states of mind.

Eco-feminism looks at attitudes and world views that differ basing on male and female perspectives of life. Desai brings out in her novels the connections between how men and women interact and the way they interact with the environment. Anita Desai through her narrative technique addresses the close link between environment and female psychology. Through an examination of her writing from an eco-feminist viewpoint, the relationship between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature becomes apparent. In *Cry, the Peacock*, the language and imagery employed suggest her treatment of nature.

In this novel the form of the woman and the animal is central, although both the woman and the animal are removed and distanced from society. The position of ambivalence occupies the heart of Desai's protagonist, particularly Maya, in *Cry, the Peacock*; the women in this novel belong neither to the cultural nor to the natural. Desai's novel seems to debate on the connection between women and animals in

society. The novel also provides an opportunity to re-think some of the postcolonial issues espoused in the fiction of male writers through a gender perspective while simultaneously considering the specific processes that assign women and animals to inferior and stereotyped positions. The woman and the animal, then, become mediators for each other. The notion of violence is key in exploring forms of patriarchal oppression of both the woman and the animal in Desai's novel.

The connections between and the oppression of women and animals cannot be viewed of women and animals cannot be viewed in a vacuum, independent of other forms of abuse, degradation, exploitation and commercialization. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin have stated:

> Postcolonialism's major theoretical concerns: otherness, racism and miscesgenation, language, translation,... voice and the problems of speaking of and for others-to name just a few-offer immediate entry points for a re-theorising of the place of animals in relation to human societies...[However], the metaphorisation and deployment of 'animal' as a derogatory term.. make it difficult to even discuss animals without generating a profound unease, even a rancorous antagonism, in many postcolonial contexts today. (135)

There is no actual or literal peacock in the story. The image of the peacock crying during the first monsoon rains is entrenched in Maya's mind when she suddenly gets the idea that it could Gautama who is to die. The entire idea in her mind is framed by a refrain that repeats itself in the novel, "Pia pia'they cry. 'Lover, lover. Mio,mio,-I die, I die,"(82) mimicking the cry of the peacocks during the mating, where "cry" and "die" then assume critical significance when Maya thinks about

killing Gautama. The image of the peacock, then from being associated with positive connotations when Maya marries Gautama, becomes a progressively negative image as Maya thinks about killing her husband.

The pet animal is a major topic of study in human-animal studies, including eco feminism. A pet is generally defined as a companion animal, and the act of naming a pet. Maya, in constantly referring to her dog by name in her thoughts and soliloquies, confers upon him a distinct identity and personality. In giving Toto a distinct identity and a definite place in her life, she refuses to deny Toto's material reality and history of his body that she has known and seen rotting after death.

It can be argued at the same time that Maya, in speaking for the dog, may be speaking for herself and her plight. However, it is important not to view this negatively as Desai uses this as a strategic device to contrast Maya's husband Gautama's reaction to the death of the dog. Gautama comes back from work late and,

> He did all that was to be done, quickly and quietly like a surgeon's knife at work. He telephoned the Public Works Department, he had them send their scavenging truck to take the corpse away, and saw to it himself that they lifted it in with care. "Yes, yes the bed too," he said. 'By all means, burn it too.' When the truck had left, he came to her, wiping his fingers on a handkerchief much used and soiled during the day, yet still in neat folds. 'It is all over,' he said. 'Come and drink your tea, and stop crying. You mustn't cry'. (8)

Gautama's reaction to the dog's death is the complete opposite of Maya's. In saying that he takes care of everything "like a surgeon's knife at work," (8) Desai implicitly invoking the image of scientific discourse by referring to a typical

instrument of medicine, the surgeon's knife, to suggest the distancing of humans, especially men, from animals. Gautama's actions here are purpose-driven and not communicative, making him detached and unemotional.

In the patriarchal society, women have not been seen as the equal partners. They have been treated as the second-rate members in the family and the society. In a similar way nature has been exploited by the same male dominating society for fulfillment of its needs and luxury. Hence the oppression of woman and nature is deeply correlated. The cries of both go unheard and their pain go unfelt. This symptom generally remains unnoticed by male writers, but female writers, portray the genuine feminine and nature's anguish. It is an integral part of their lives.

Anita Desai's novel *Cry, the Peacock* signifies the inner spirit, the mood of sensibility that roars like thunder and instantly outbreaks forward like lightning. It is more crucial than the outer climate or the visible action. Her consociation is with the inner climate of feelings rather than the outer world of action. She has tried to imitate the style to convey the intimate relationship of the protagonist with nature and environment. The relationship of female and non human entities clearly depicts the fact that woman is more severely attached with nature as compare to man. The pain and trauma felt by the female character is represented through a natural imagery mimicking similar condition.

As Maya is a childless woman she loves Toto more than people in general love their pets. She "saw its eyes open and staring still, screamed and rushed to the garden tap to wash the vision from her eyes, continued to cry and ran defeated, into the house." (7) She wants Toto to be buried in a befitting manner. The death of her pet dog reminds her of loneliness. She had to bear in the early parts of her life:"It was not

my pet's death alone that I mourned today, but another sorrow, unremembered, perhaps, as yet not even experience, and filled me with the despair." (13) The pet's death shatters Maya beyond measure. She is left alone in the world of frustration and disappointment. No one will come to console her. Everyone has his or her own fad.

Gautama treats Maya as a child and she resents it. Once both of them were walking together and Maya talked of the flower, Gautama plucked it and gave it to Maya saying, "Who should deny you that?' he said, and smiled at me as to a winsome child." (102). Then in the debate, Maya said, "And you will think me a tiresome child for it, for showing what you once called my 'third-rate poetess's mind". (96). Maya's likings and hobbies takes her more close to Mother Nature.

Anita Desai has insight into human psyche. At many points in her novel, she correlates the feminine trauma with nature imagery, which signifies the concept of eco-feminism in her novel. She equally shows the inertness of her male characters towards woman and nature who uses them for their benefits only. The death of Maya's pet dog aggravates her mental condition. It makes her increasingly conscious of the mysterious working of destiny. The intimate consociation woman and nature is depicted in major frames of the novel while the male is shown alienated from nature.

Maya's predicament is to come to terms with the astrologer's prediction and to enjoy the moments of life on earth with her practical minded husband. But she, as a creature of "song, dance and flowers" meets with the situation which beyond her control, and consequently goes mad. Maya's feelings about Gautama are revealed through her words. To her, his hand appears "as cool and dry as the bark of an old shady tree". (22) Maya reveals her neurotic mind through the appropriate use of words, "Wild horse, white horse, galloping up paths of tone, flying away into the

distance, the wild hills. The heights, the dizzying heights of my mountains, towering tapering edged with cliff-edges, founded on rock... Danger!" (150) The vocabulary clearly shows the use of natural icons to depict human condition and character.

Maya, full of dismay and in a morbid state, observes the flowers in the garden and recalls "I was drawn away from pain into a world that knows no pain."(24) Under the impression of her sadness, she perceives the fragrance of flowers in a different way: "I bent over them, inhaling that mist of sad maidenly scent feeling mood merge into sensation, till there was nothing left but that mist." (24)

The striking contrast in the characters of Maya and her husband, Gautama is evident from the incidence when Gautama is incapable to find out the difference between the scent of petunia and lemons. At this, Maya ponders:

> The blossoms of the lemon tree were different, quite different: of much stronger, crisper character, they seemed cut out of hard moon shells, by a sharp knife of mother of pearl, into curving petals that guarded the heart of fragrance. Their scent, too, was more vivid-a sour, astringent scent, refreshing as that of ground lemon leaf. I tried to explain this to Gautama, stammering with anxiety, for now, when his companionship was a necessity, I required his closest understanding. (22)

Gautama, who gives importance to his work and tries to find logic in everything, has no feelings for nature's beauty and as well as of Maya's. Maya is romantic by nature and needs special attention from her husband, which he fails to give. She seeks pleasure in nature and its elements observing trees and plants in minute detail. For Maya, the spring season, in which she is in Gautama's house in Delhi, brings melancholy as it ushers the mournful wails of Brain fever bird. The cry

of the bird makes her sullen and sleep deprived. However, the spring in her memory lanes, is quite different. It is tranquil and soothing rather than agonizing. Thus the difference in Maya's perception of the same season at two different places and stages of her age gives the reader an insight into her mindscape.

Maya's garden of dreams the garden in her father's house, the garden which is like the Garden of Eden for her, no longer remains idyllic. An albino astrologer, depicted metaphorically as a snake, enters her garden when she is lying in her chair waiting for somebody unknown: "I lay back in my chair and breathed deeply, lay there waiting for summer? For snakes? For the moon? I did not know." (17) She envisions the shadow of the astrologer as a snake and as he approaches her, she conjures up a shadow coming towards her to entwine her. She jumps from the chair terrified "by a sensation of snakes coiling and uncoiling their moist length about me, of evil descending from an overhanging branch of an insane death, unprepared for heralded by deafening drum beats..." (17)

The novel makes use of natural elements to portray the emotions of Maya. Every animal or bird has an image attached to it. A dog is known for its loyalty, a peacock of its beauty and shyness, a snake for its poison and a crow for its guile. These associative images are effectively interwoven with the incidents in Maya's life. Toto's death, a very moving event in Maya's life is ascribed to her enstrangement and psychological imbalance:

> All the day the body lay rotting in the sun. It could not be moved on to the veranda for, in that April heat, the reek of dead flesh was over powering and would soon have penetrated the rooms... Crows sat in a

> circle around the corpse and the crows will eat anything-entrails, eyes, anything. (7)

When Maya's pet dog dies, she becomes transfixed and is not ready to accept the bitter truth that death is inevitable. She asserts, "Childless women do develop fanatic attachments to their pets" (15). She is a sufferer of estrangement due to the cold response of her husband towards her desires. When her psychic imbalance climaxes, she begins to see imaginary creatures attempting to bite her. Maya's inability to conceive is the foremost reason for her anxiety. The botanical elements used in the novel relate to her infertility and the emptiness thus caused. She observes:

> Leafless, the fine tracery on the naked neem trees revealed unsuspected, so far carefully concealed, nests, deserted by the birds... Down the street, the silk-cotton trees were the first to flower: their huge, scarlet blooms, thick petaled, solid-podded... then dropped to the asphalt and were squashed into soft, yellowish miasma, seemed animal rather than flowerage, so large were they, an heavy an moist and living to the touch. (33-34)

The 'silk cotton trees' having 'huge blooms' are 'squashed into yellowish miasma' indicate Maya's affliction of her being infertile. The introduction of various nature related images is pivotal to discern the fact that Maya is aware of these events happening around her. When she hears the doves cooing noises during mating, she pities her own life devoid of love. When she sees the fledglings in the pigeon's nest in her verandah, she thinks about her inadequacy in bearing children. She is even more aggrieved at seeing the little babies of a rat and thinks, "Rats will suckle their young

most tenderly. I know this as now I lived quite near one, with seven young ones nestling between her legs." (107)

All these events further aggravates her pain and gradually she becomes paranoid. She cannot stop thinking of serpents which "all white flowers chaste sweet white flowers," (107). She even looks at lizards with a suspicion as if they are trying to give her some indications and says,

> Of the lizards, the lizards that come upon you, stalking you, stalking you silently, upon cold, toes slipping their club like tongues in and out, in and out wills an audible hiss and death's rattle , slowly moving up, closing in on you... rubbing their cold bellies upon yours... rubbing and grinding..." (108)

Eventually, when Gautama asks Maya about the behemoth lizards known as Iguanas, she says, "Iguanas! My blood ran cold, and I heard the slither of its dragging tail even now, in white daylight. Get off-I tell you, get off Go!" (108) These events vivify to Maya's morbid fears lying in her subconscious mind. Maya develops abhorrence towards crawling creatures to the extent that, for an instant, she sees her pet cat in a contemptuous manner. Her morbid perspective towards creatures makes her mental insanity conspicuous.

Maya, who fears death more than anything else is not ready to die and sees Gautama's death as the only way she can extricate herself of this conundrum. In order to survive, she decides to murder her husband who is also the chief underlying factor of her unfulfilled desires. She has no thought in her mind other than that of Gautama's death and engages herself in devising the method of his murder. She is not ready to wait any longer and tries to find the first chance she can get to kill her husband.

Eventually, it becomes hard for her to kill her husband and she tries to find every single reason she needs to do so. Ultimately, she agrees to her decision after contemplating on her past life with her husband. She ponders:

> The man had no contact with the world, or with me. What would it matter to him if he died and lost even the possibility of contact? What would it matter to him? It was I, who screamed with the peacocks, screamed at the sight of the rain clouds, screamed at their disappearance, screamed in mute horror. (146)

Desai effectively uses botanical images and ravaging scenarios prevalent in nature to intensify the characterization of Maya's doleful distress. Meanwhile, Maya's father plans to go to Europe to spend some time peacefully and asks Maya and Gautama to accompany him. When they are at the railway station, Maya's attention is caught by the cages filled with monkeys who are destined to go to a laboratory for experiment. This pathetic sight is quite heart-wrenching as Maya's condition is also similar to those animals. Maya becomes angry to observe the thirst of monkeys and there seems "not even a bowl of water for them." (130)

Maya, instead of accompanying Gautama for a walk in the garden, insists that he accompanies her to the rooftop. While having casual conversation with Gautama, Maya thinks: "Poor Gautama, poor dear Gautama who was an intense and yet had never lived, and never would." (172) Talking to him, she takes him to the edge of the parapet and gives him the push to the very bottom screaming "Gautama! in fury," (173). Gautama's sudden death causes a shock to his family when asked about the incident, Maya declares as an accident. There displays no sign of sorrow and continues to walk in an elated manner.

After a month of Gautama's demise, Maya, along with her mother-in-law and sister-in-law moves to her home Nila and her mother, one day, hears the voice which is different. Maya's mother-in-law quickly goes to the balcony in an attempt to stop Maya from taking any adverse step, but she vanishes into the dark quiet. Maya ends her life to escape pain in a manner similar to the peacocks. Maya's life has been an example of her close relationship with nature. The novel deals deeper into the psyhe of the character. The next chapter explores Anita Desai's revelation of the inner self of the character Maya.

Chapter Four

Exploration of the Psyche

Cry, the Peacock, the first novel of Anita Desai, is a powerful psychological analysis of Maya. She is seen as neurotic, introvert and love famished character, victim of the inadequacy of human relationships. Maya's claustrophobia, loneliness and frustration are effectively brought out by the writer. Anita Desai prefers to explore the private to the public world. Her real concern is the exploration of the human psyche, inner climate and she unravels the mystery of the inner life of her characters like Maya.

Desai's female protagonists are alienated from the world, society and family because they think of themselves as individuals. Her characters project the battles that are fought and those left unsought. The psychological battle is fought against traditionally defined womanness. The psychological suffering of finding themselves and their identity along with the pressures felt by women to fulfill the demands by the so called ideal concept of womanhood, culminates in with drawl, regression, neurosis and suicide mania.

Anita Desai possesses one of the healthiest and psychologically most balance minds in the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction on the sanity of her tastes and the attitudes, is almost exemplary, a point worth emulation for her fellow-religionists in the field of writing. She has the sharpness and penetration of vision of extraordinary degree, cutting things clean and entering into the inside of things with perfect ease. She seems to possess to high degree the intuitive power of seeing into the nature of things.

The insightful working of Anita Desai's vision is best evidenced in the intuitive origin and organization of symbols and metaphors in work after work with amazing consistency. Her insightful intuitions into life is spectacles elucidates a plan and system inherent in the scheme of things in life. The harmony of sharpness and insight endowed her with the sense of divination that is necessary for a subjective writer for projecting revelations at every stage.

It is agreed that Desai is the writer who introduced the psychological novel falling in line with the tradition of Virginia Woolf to India. Her novels are certainly reflective of social realities from a psychological perspective. She closely examines the emotional world of womankind. The most important aspect of Anita Desai art is the delineation of the characters. She depicts female characters living in separate, closed, and sequestered world of existential problems and passions with remarkable ease and adoration. All her female characters Maya, Monisha and Sita are obessed with the idea of death. Anita Desai is not interested in portraying everyday, average characters but in peculiar and eccentric characters.

Desai's basic interest lies in exploring the disturbed depths of the female psyche. She portrays her characters as individuals facing single-handed the ferocious attacks of existence. The most significant aspect of her fiction in her manner of individualizing the character. She presents each individual as an unsolved mystery. Almost all her protagonists are over sensitive, solitary and lost in thought. Her heroines are seen withdrawing into a world of isolation and solitude. Even if they enjoy material prosperity, their emotional and intellectual aspirations remained unsatisfied. All heroines are suffering individuals. They suffer because they refused to conform due to the fact that they all possess "abnormal consciousness".

The women characters of Anita Desai undergo a strange psychic experience and suffer from failures and frustrations. They undergo trauma due to their hypersensitive nature and their insensitive husbands. Most of the female characters of Desai are either women with affluent background or are mere house-wives. The women in the novels under study are not those who play dual roles as that of a house-wife and a career woman in order to suffer from the tension of being over-worked. The restricted surroundings make the women suffer intensely, due to which they react silently or violently. This leads to incompatibility between the husband and the wife.

In the novel *Cry, The Peacock*, Maya is the pivot character whose father's excessive care and concern makes her behave abnormally in her later life. Maya's sorrow begins with her marriage to Gautama who is a rational, middle-aged, busy lawyer and protégé of her father. Gautama is insensitive to the desires of his young wife and therefore she feels lonely, isolated, alienated, neglected and frustrated. The vast difference between their ages creates a wide chasm between them. Maya expects more attention from Gautama, like the one that is given to her by her father. Her husband is busy in his professional preoccupation and has no time to spare for his wife.

Maya is childless even after four years of her marriage. She naturally gets attached to her pet dog, Toto. Toto is enough to create an emotional upheaval in her life and she becomes inconsolable. Gautama's indifference towards the death of Toto makes Maya neurotic which further worsens her condition. When Gautama does not heed to her feelings, his indifference upsets her terribly and she becomes highly reactive. Though he arranges burial of Toto, it is without any attachment. When Gautama sees Maya bereaved at the loss of her pet dog, he utters:

> You need a cup of tea, he said. Yes, I cried, yes, it is his hardness-no, no, not hardness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me. His coldness, his coldness, and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk and talking, reveal myself. It is that-my loneliness in this house. (14)

Gautama's professionalism and utter lack of tender care makes Maya drift further away from him. Maya who led a protected life under the care of her father tries to find her father figure in Gautama. She is unable to strike a note of compromise between her inner self and the realities of the outer world. Her tragedy is solely due to her not coming in terms with life. It is this incompatibility that brings disharmony in their lives. Maya's tragedy further worsens as a result of her father's fixation, coupled with the haunting fear of the prophecy of the albino astrologer who portends that either of the partners would die in the fourth year of their marriage. The childhood prophecy remain deep rooted in her mind becomes one the causes for her abnormal behavior.

Maya has nothing to keep herself busy and does not have anything to fill the long lonely hours. She feels neglected by her husband. Maya is childless, even after years of married life. It gives rise to frustration and she becomes psychic: Temperemental incompatibility makes Maya unhappy, unfulfilled, lonely, disappointed and alienated from her husband. It is this temperamental that makes their relationship inconsistent. Neither make a sincere effort to over-come this jarred relationship and their conjugal happiness becomes a total failure.

Maya wants Gautama to love her very intensely. Gautama advises Maya to practice detachment, for attachment leads to self-destruction. Gautama's indifference

towards her desires and above all the albino astrologer's prophecy that either of the partners would dying the fourth year of their marriage results in the psychological trauma in Maya. Both Maya and Gautama have opposite views on life and are not able to see beyond their own points of view. Maya is governed by strange obsessions and becomes hypersensitive. It is Maya's desire to live and the fear of death haunts her that makes her to push Gautama down the parapet.

Maya, is a young sensitive woman obsessed by childhood prophecy of a disaster, whose extreme sensitivity is rendered in terms of immeasurable loneliness. The very beginning of the novel highlights the husband-wife alienation theme by unfolding the relationship of Maya and Gautama. Maya is self-centered, eco-centric exaggeratedly fanciful and unpractical. She is idle self-indulgent, and dreamy. She is trained to regard everything as meant for her. That is the reason for the abnormality of her adjustment with her husband and society and her love of seclusion. Her sensitivity of feeling, emotions and love is more than normal.

Cry, The Peacock depicts the neurosis of Maya who becomes a psychic and pathetic figure and in the end kills Gautama as she thinks that is the cause of her suffering. The women characters in Anita Desai's novels are shown to have sensitive and emotional nature which is too fragile to cope with the dehumanized and artificial urban surroundings and with the hardened unfeeling nature of the in-laws. It is a difficult situation for the sensitive women to adjust themselves to the changing scenario, a troublesome transit from the protective nests of the parents' family after their marriage to a totally different family in the urban surroundings.

The tragedy is caused by the self-centered egotistical nature of Maya. The end thus is the consummation of a process issuing from Maya's complex personality.

Psycho-analytical techniques are used to represent Maya's disintegration of personality. Gautama sees only the upper surface of her life; he is cold to her 'inside' feelings and affections. There is mutual drying up of affections on both sides, increasing bitterness, consummating in Gautama's death. Desai's artistic skills lies in making insanity and understandable through Maya's abnormality.

Anita Desai's presentation of plight of the alienated Maya heralds the beginning of a new kind of psychological novel. Thus, this novel *Cry, The Peacock* incorporates Desai's vision of the self and goes a long way towards presenting the personal problems of a helplessly sensitive character caught in the crisis of isolation and insanity. The novel thus unfold the story of the married life of Maya and Gautama through Maya's "stream of consciousness".

In *Cry, The Peacock*, Desai skillfully explores the turbulent emotional world of her neurotic protagonist, Maya. Neurotic Maya smarts under acute alienation and insanity. Her neurosis indicates a collective neurosis which tries to shatter the identity of woman in Indian society as it is dominated by man in which woman longing for love is driven mad or she is left to commit suicide. Her neurosis is heightened by her awareness of her horoscope and the macabre prediction of the albino astrologer. She is obsessed by the morbid sense of death which continues throughout her life. She hurls Gautama down to death and ultimately herself commits suicide. She has always in her mind the astrologer's prediction:

> My child, I would not speak of it if I saw it on your face alone. But look, at the horoscope. Stars do not lie. And so it is best to warn you, prepare you... 'Death,' he finally admitted, in one such moment, 'to

one of you. When you are married-and you shall be married young'...
'Death-an early one-by unnatural causes,' (30)

Thus, the astrologer's prediction assumes the existential dimension and an ominous obsession in Maya. Maya's moods, obsessions and agonizing abnormality or portrayed effectively through different sets of symbols and images. They depict her aberrant mind and fast disintegrating personality adding to the textual density.

Maya dreams of human love and her dreams lie both in her conscious and unconscious levels of mind. However, Gautama fails to distinguish between fact and fancy. Therefore, trauma visits Maya's unconscious mind, leading to an obsession in her psyche. Moreover, the prophecy that one of the husband or wife would die after four years of their marriage becomes troublesome to her unconscious mind. This constant anxiety in Maya makes her to develop a separation of idea and emotion. She develops a negative approach towards life and finds it entire essence as useless and meaningless.

The over loving attention of her father makes Maya oblivious of the deadly shadow, but her husband Gautama knew nothing that concerned her. This loneliness makes her a psychotic patient. She makes a conscious journey through her dreams to an unknown world. Temperamentally, there is absolutely no compatibility between Maya and Gautama. Dissimilarity in attitude, results in unsatisfactory mental and physical relationship between Gautama and Maya.

Maya marries a father like man who is without sentiments and emotions. Maya has been alienated through and through slowly she moves towards insanity. The fear of death threatens her as much that she is forced to think about the death of one either Gautama or herself. But her psyche is so dominant on the human relations that

ultimately she decides for Gautama who will not miss life because he is already detached to it. Her obsession for life drives her crazy.

Desai takes a bold step in projecting women's biological needs. There is lack of emotional communication between the husband and wife, they are poles apart one being pragmatic, unromantic and unsentimental and believe in 'detachment' on every count and the other hand is a highly sensitive, gifted with poetic imagination and neurotic sensibility. Unable to establish rapport with her husband and to find a meaning in her 'existence', Maya becomes helpless, alienated and lonely in the indifferent world. Gautama is unresponsive to her desperate calls for intimacy. A continuous frustration of the sexual needs can be disastrous to somebody like Maya, given her fierce instinctually. A healthy emotional and sexual life would have given her a sense of security and stopped her psyche from decaying.

Maya did not find relief from any quarter and the dimensions of her psychological insecurities kept on widening. When she looked around for some guidance, the advice available to her, clashed with her inclinations. Her friends, her father's fatalism, Gautama's pragmatism and her surroundings all led her to feel trapped. Therefore, with her sickened imagination and neurotic mind, she began to form many frightening images from remotely corresponding objects.

Maya reacted strongly with the happenings in her life, which shows how heightened her general level perception had become. She becomes a representative of the 'new era' women whose thought process is walking the tight rope of sanity. She, with no outside concerns or social contacts, lived a life which was by its very nature self-centred. Her childhood had being carefully perhaps more so in memory than in reality. She had been free to rome with pets or small flowers or do what her father

taught was right. She was almost as free in her latter years, except for two constraints: Gautama and the astrologer's prediction. She could not deal with them rationally.

Maya's failure in associating herself with people and things around her makes her surrender her 'unique identity' and mould herself 'role-based security'. Despite this transition, her unconscious mind continuous to be at work. She thinks about different things and there images keep on haunting her. For instance, the subtle transformation of the image of moon from an object of a beauty to that of terror implies the coexistence of beauty with ugliness.

The prophecy becomes troublesome to her unconscious mind. Maya's unconscious mind never reconciles with her conscious mind. Her conscious level of mind signifies the associative approach to human behavior whereas her unconscious mind forces her to realize her identity as a woman and as a wife. When her husband was unable to soothe her burning heart, at that point, anxiety enters her mind. In psychological findings, if the level of anxiety enters the unconscious level of human psyche, it makes a person to keep apart what actually belongs to him together. Thus, this constant anxiety in Maya makes her to develop a separation of idea and emotion. She develops a negative approach towards life and finds its entire essence useless and meaningless. Therefore Maya says:

> All order is gone out of my life, all formality. There is no plan, no peace, nothing to keep within the pattern of familiar... Thoughts come, incident occur, then they are scattered and disappear. Past, Present, Future, Truth and Untruth... and I am tired of it. My body can no longer bear it; my mind has already given way. See, I am grown thin worn. (149)

On one hand, Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* deals with psychology and on the other hand, human relationships plays an important role in creating such circumstances where the character is in dilemma and human psyche has to face a tumult. Human relationships are like thin, weak threads which bind one human being with another. Many novelists have dealt with humanism in general, but Anita Desai has very skillfully related it to the human psychology. As, it is universally accepted that human happiness is attained only by harmonizing the hardships of life. The last chapter deals with the styles and techniques which are used by Anita Desai in the novel and the chapter sums up the analysis.

Chapter Five

Summation

Anita Desai uses various techniques to make her work impressive. One of the most important parts of her style is to use stream of conscious technique. 'Stream of Consciousness'. When there is stream of consciousness, there is lack of actions. One of the most prominent technique of Desai is to telescope past with present. The technique has been effectively use in *Cry, The Peacock*. Past is of supreme importance in the novel of Desai that is recalled again and again. It is the most skillfully woven with the present. Every incident of the past and of present is of integral part of the whole and fusion of the past and present has been brought in a perceptible manner.

Another aspect of Desai's technique is her skill of beautiful contrast between two characters and because of this contrast each character becomes clearer in the eyes of the readers. Her forte is the psychic presentation of individual human beings, the narrative is rightly allowed to move freely. Her plots are always simple, neat enough to impede the psychological revelation. Her plot structure therefore, shows a splendid fusion of form expression and spontaneity. All the protagonists of her novels develop throughout the course of the novels either towards good or worse.

The use of symbols is also a very important technique in the novels of Desai. Her novels abound in variety of symbolic situations, episodes, events and characters. These symbols are drawn from human life and nature trees, birds, animals, etc. In *Cry, The Peacock* death of Toto is a symbol of death as an inevitable thing in human life. Maya's shock at the death of Toto is symbolic of her unawareness of the harsh realities of life. Her fear to see the death of Toto is symbolic of her own fear from death. It shows her first closeness to death, an end of life. Day and night are also used

as symbols in her novels. Day is symbolic of the naked reality; night is for darkness of ignorance.

Another important aspect of Desai's artistic technique is use of imagery. Imagery lends a poetic and lyrical coloring of the estranged self and enlarges the critical and interpretative horizon of her art. Images in Desai aren't confined to the world of art but they are scientific images. She makes an unending search for the suitable images to express subconscious. Her imagery is always in character which suits the love plight of her character.

Cry, The Peacock is a poetic novel with dense imagery. Her descriptions are poetic. Over the last thirty-seven years since the publication of her novel, Desai's vision of life has also undergone a marked transformation. *Cry, The Peacock* is a novel the theme of which may be described as an incompatible marriage with the focus on the heroine's psyche, the narrative is not chronologically straight. There is a constant to and fro movement between the past and present in the mind of Maya.

In this novel Desai does it by making use of the weird animal imagery which suggest her disturbed state of mind. Such imagery is to be seen in contrast to the majestic image of the peacock which is the central symbol of the novel as suggested by the title. *Cry, The Peacock* is a psychological study of the hypersensitive, childless, young protagonist May, who haunted by a childhood prophecy of disaster, kills her elderly detached husband in a fit of frenzy. Finally, she goes completely mad and commits suicide. The novel uses technique of fantasy.

Anita Desai always surprises the readers by using special technique in her novels. For instance *Cry, The Peacock* starts with the death of Toto and its effect upon the two characters Maya and Gautama. On reading of the novel shows.it is irrelevancy but the close analysis of the section prove the artistic device of Desai, her skill of

building up a mood. Through the detailed description of things the novelist presents how the things are very important for one character and quite trivial to other and they are husband and wife. For other Maya is neurotic but for herself she alone is sensible to the events occurring around her and others are blind to them. The mode of the novels of Desai is also different.

In *Cry, The Peacock*, she uses first person narration. Maya is a narrator and she presents one sided view of the events and the writer allows the readers to critically examine the actions and reactions of the narrator. Every time Maya attempts to communicate her feelings sometimes she fails and then withdraws. The world which seems sometimes familiar suddenly becomes menacing and frightening. The last section of the novel becomes somewhat different and narrated in third person. It is an ironical comment upon same and rational people like Gautama's mother and daughter couldn't understand why Maya murdered her husband.

While justifying the title of the novel, the allusion to the mating of the peacocks in the wild signifies the conceptual dimensions of both "desire" and "death", and thus sets the tone and texture of the work. Peacocks are wise. The hundred eyes upon their tails have seen the truth of life and death, and known them to be one. Living, they are aware of death. Dying they are in love with life. With extraordinary sensitiveness, Desai underlines the truth about life and death. What is true in case of the peacocks is also true in case of the human beings.

"Death" as an inevitable fact of life is Maya's truth; her painful reality. She is obsessed with it. The Albino priest's prediction of death during the fourth year of her marriage has become an unconscious fixation threatening her with an unexplained terror. Gautama's understanding of death is scriptural and in his actions and relations

with Maya, he projects a counterpoint of view. Having an indulgent and somewhat over-protective childhood, Maya is an introvert woman.

Eco-feminism is an analytical approach which has been in use for sometime but is still at a preliminary stage. An eco-feminist analysis would involve the combination of eco criticism and eco-feminism into one analytical frame, where it would be imperative to interpret that the oppression of nature and women are intimately bound. Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* studies such predicaments which lead the woman and nature both to astray.

An eco-feminist approach towards Anita Desai's works brings out the importance of environment and women as one of her major themes. Even the unexplored world of female psyche can be easily understood through the use of natural imagery in her works. The deeply rooted life of human beings in nature has been presented in this work vividly and effectively.

Anita Desai explores the tormented consciousness of an introvert, Maya. She peeps into the mind of Maya, who is in a state of constant flux. Maya defines the opposing temperaments of herself and her husband through images. Through simile, metaphor and symbol, the two spouses are evoked for us as opposed archetypes. Maya feels neglected by her husband and his family members.

Maya associates her happy sensations and pleasant emotions with birds, plants, flowers, fruits and poetry. Animal imagery acts as a significant outlet to express her latent fears and hatred. The color symbolism, dance symbolism, the symbolic function of stars and moon provide much needed density to the texture of the novel. Maya thinks about her brother, Arjuna. She compares her brother to a 'wild bird' because he constantly tries to escape from the stifling rich world of his father.

These images suggest their inner needs. Maya is a creature of the earth but Arjuna wants to fly away into distant realms and attain some meaning in life.

In Anita Desai's fictional universe even actual events connected with animals and animal-like behavior of people become extended image because they hold symbolic import by an the level of actuality. The Cabaret dance Maya witness with Gautama and his friends is a frightening experience to her. The exploitation on Cabaret women brings to her memory the bear dance, which she witnessed as a child.

Colour symbolism is equated with isolation, madness, desperation and death. The positive and negative attitude of bird, plant and animal imagery are reinforced by a colour symbolism of white and dark. Black incorporated into animal imagery depicting negative emotion, and the white colour is incorporated into bird and flower imagery. There are references of various flower images like Bougainvillea, Night Queen etc. These blooming flowers instead of attracting her through their beauty seem to portend only their impending end by the evening.

Ungratified desires of Maya are brought out through the sexual images like frenzied dance of peacock, mating calls of pigeons, heavy silk cotton trees, male papaya trees, etc. Her inability to capture the external world of rubies and butterflies is juxtaposed with her unattained closeness with her husband. The various dance images that are depicted, fuse the experience at fantasy level with the one at the realistic level and become very powerful, haunting symbols.

Maya's tragedy is that she is a victim of two egoistic strong-minded men. They toy with her and try to mould her according to their fancies and in the process crush the delicate, sensitive young girl Maya. She suffers both from the excesses of love showered on her by her father and the total lack of it from her husband who is devoid of emotions. Unable to come in terms with these extremes, Maya goes lifeless.

Through the use of interior monologue and imagery, Anita Desai is able to effectively bring out the consequences of the 'Caged Chilhood' of Maya', remarks a critic. The novelist interweaves the key images of imprisonment and insanity in presenting the predicament of the protagonist. It is this imagery that lends richness and beauty to the narrative of *Cry, The Peacock* through the story line. Her neurosis growth, development and crisis are painted in all the three parts of the novel. The marriage of Maya with Gautam leads to the tragic tone of *Cry, The Peacock*. Maya's infatuated visions and unfulfilled fancies reveal the innermost shrines of human beings.

The absence of relief from any quarter unnerves her. With her sickened imagination and neurotic mind, she begins to for many frightening images from from remotely correspondingly objects after being to convince that she has been caught in the net of the inescapable and there was no possibility of mercy. When Maya comes to realize in the fourth year that her days are numbered, love for life spring in her and she becomes hysteric over the oncoming threat of death.

Anita Desai has tried to describe the concept of strangeness in human relations which leads to the alienation of self. She explored the dilemmas which a erson has to suffer in one's life. *Cry, The Peacock* rotates around the relationships of a husband and wife in particular. It tells us about the consequences which one has to face when there is a lack of communication in a relation. That is what happens with Maya and Gautama in the novel when the relation between them starts unfolding layer by layer. Both husband and wife have a big age gap and are total contrast with one another in their temperaments and attitudes. Their married life is punctuated all along by matrimonial silence.

Maya's unhappiness in the novel is not related to her circumstances in reality but is related to her own consciousness. She has led a protected life and been brought up in her own consciousness. She has led a protected life and been brought up in her own imaginary world but when she comes face to face with reality, she is unable to cope with the situation. She thinks that Gautama has taught her nothing except pain.

The two characters, Maya and Gautama, has been studied and described so deeply that a reader gets a complete picture of the impact of psychology on their relationship. Both the characters are total contrast of one another. Maya's depression and uneasiness forces her to believe that Gautama has no love for her and her subconscious and pushes her to kill her husband without any guilt. In the novel, one feels the communication gap between husband and wife throughout the novel. Maya is one of the uncommon woman.

Cry, The Peacock is the greatest attempt of Anita Desai to reach to the depths of psychological problems of the alienated persons. Through her novel, she tries to describe the complexities and working of human relationships in the modern scenario. A man-woman relationship can be seen from various angles of human emotion; that is Father-daughter, brother-sister, girlfriend-boyfriend, lovers and husband-wife. But in modern era, these relations have come under the darkness of suspicion, distrust, in communication and on the top of all silence. The elasticity of relationship is disappearing day by day. Now a days, relations are just a formality with which one has to live.

Anita Desai, as a novelist, has least concern for revealing the social economic problem in her novels. She has devoted her creative energy completely to the psychological states of human mind. She finds her way to the inner most region of

human psyche and explains about that region from where the original ideas of human mind come into operation. Anita Desai works on revealing the different mental and states and human psyche of the various characters. She tries to analyze a man in action to reveal the hidden motives behind the surfacial reality of conscious mind. She unfolds the dim dark regions of the subconscious and unconscious mind where the suppressed desires lie buried.

Desai has opened a new world which gives an excellent study on the relationships and the psychology of human beings. The world presented by Anita Desai is a conflicting one; it is a world where the central harmony is aspired to but not arrived at and the desire to love and live clashes. Instinct and emotion and passion seem to be strangers in the world of daily routine and scurry away into the dark corners to flourish in conditions of solitude, which is presented in its varying shades and meanings. In all her novels there is a striving, on the part of the protagonists towards arriving at a more authentic way of life than the one which is available to them.

Through a psychological study of the various novels, a picture of subject matter of Anita Desai's novels has emerged. Anita Desai brings forth some marked deviations from the style of her predecessors. She tries to grasp her characters psychologically; she is a great analyst of human mind and human relationships a creator of brilliant characters and astute interpreter of life and its problems. The world of Anita Desai is an ambivalent one where the central harmony is aspired to but not arrived at and the desire to withdraw and achieve harmony. Most of her characters are pre-occupied with themselves, and are lonesome. Yet they are tried to rebel against the established norms and struggle to protect their privacy.

Cry, The Peacock is the greatest attempt of Anita Desai to reach the psychological problems of the alienated persons. Maya's tragedy is fully formulated in the symbolism of peacocks. Maya echoes the agony of their cry for love and death. The mental incompatibility and disharmony is made clear by her reactions to the things around her and her attitude towards death. Gautama thinks that she is immature and has never been brought her face to face with the quotidian realities of life. Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* exposes the psychological troubles that are induced by the disintegrated marital relationship of a disharmonized woman.

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Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*: A Narrative of Conscientious Self-scrutiny

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

BENSI VERONICA J.M.

(REG. NO. 18APEN05)

PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project **Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*: A Narrative of Conscientious Self-Scrutiny** entitled submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Bensi Veronica J.M. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project **Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*: A Narrative of Conscientious Self-scrutiny** entitled submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Bensi Veronica J.M.

Thoothukudi **Bensi Veronica J.M.**

October 2019

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Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for his guidance, grace and the wisdom, He bestowed on me in completing this project successfully.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*: A Narrative of Conscientious Self-scrutiny** discusses how the protagonist consciously analyses his luminous self with its characteristic Christian sensibility, spiritual wonder, moral wisdom and understanding of God. It also captures the need for cherishing the values of forgiveness and grace like the protagonist Reverend John Ames in a world which is torn by sin and hatred.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of American Literature, the biography of Marilynne Robinson, her unique contribution to Literature, and a short synopsis of the novel *Gilead.*

The second chapter **Spiritual Gravitas** studies the protagonist as a remarkable character with his softness of spirit, his resignation and his spiritual dignity in accepting suffering as God's plan, large heartedness and wisdom.

The third chapter **Doctrine of Predestination and Grace** discusses how the protagonist believes in the saving and empowering power of God's grace in defining human relations and understanding of value of humanity and the loveliness of the world.

The fourth chapter **Validity of Values** concentrates on the combination of faith, family and education as three protected values placing an emphasis on the significance of everyday Christian life.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the previous chapter. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Marilynne Robinson, is a 74 year old Pulitzer prize winning novelist and an acclaimed essayist. Her fiction and nonfiction alike have found a home in the hearts of Americans especially the former American President Barack Obama as well as in the best seller lists. She's a humanist, a Congregationalist, an artist and a student of history. Her confidence, views and eloquence have helped her readers evolve themselves as thoughtful people.

Robinson's fiction is as rooted in theology as her nonfiction. She is disappointed by the current state of Christianity in America. Robinson sees her politics as an extension of her faith. Robinson perceives that Christianity is unfashionable in certain circles. Her books offer a different impression of the faith that has played such a large role in her life. She loves and respects the American country. She is a great American novelist and essayist.

American literature is a literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. The American literary tradition broader tradition of English literature.

The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified his status as a key American writer. It was

in the late 18th and 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. William Hill Brown's *The power of Sympathy* was published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related.

With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narratives such as Frederick Douglas's Narrative of the *Life of Frederick Douglass*, an American Slave.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet letter,* a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd.* America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Mark Twain was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The Portrait of a Lady.* At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote too about the war. Earnest Hemingway became famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms;* in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner became one of the greatest American writers with the novels like *The Sound and the Fury.* American poetry reached a peak after World War I with such writers as Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra pound, and E.E. Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with works of Eugene O'Neil, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath.* Henry Miller assumed a distinct place in American Literature in 1930s when his semi-autobiographical novels were banned from the US. From the end of the World War II until the early 1970s many popular works in modern American Literature were produced, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird.* The main literary movement since the 1970s has been postmodernism, and since the late twentieth century ethnic and minority literature has sharply increased.

The religious disputes that prompted settlement in America were important topics of early American literature. A journal written by John Winthrop, *The History of New England,* discussed the religious foundations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Edward Winslow also recorded a diary of the first years after the *Mayflower's* arrival. "A modell of Christian Charity" by John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, was a Sermon preached on the *Arbella* in 1630.

Puritan poetry was highly religious, and one of the earliest books of poetry published was the *Bay Psalm Book,* a set of translations of the biblical Psalms; however, the translations intension was not to create a literature, but to create hymns that could be used in worship. Among lyric poets, the most important figures are Anne Bradstreet, who wrote personal poems about her family and home life; pastor Edward Taylor, whose best poems, the *Preparatory Meditations,* were written to help him prepare for leading worship; Michael Wigglesworth, whose best-selling poem, *The Day of Doom,* describes the time of judgement. It was published in the same year that anti-puritan Charles II was restored to the British throne.

The Revolutionary period also contained political writings, including those by colonists Samuel Adams, Josiah Quincy, John Dickson, and Joseph Galloway, the last being a loyalist to the crown. Two key figures were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* are esteemed works with their wit and influence toward the formation of a budding American identity. Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis* writings are seen as playing a key role in influencing the political tone of time.

During the Revolutionary War, poems and songs such as "John Jefferson Briones" and "Nathan Hale" were popular. Major satirists included John Trumbull and Francis Hopkinson. Philip Morin Freneau also wrote poems about the War. During the 18th century, writing shifted from the Puritanism of Winthrop and Bradford to Enlightenment ideas of reason. The belief that human and natural occurrences were messages from God no longer fit with the new human-centred

world. Many intellectuals believed that the human mind could comprehend the universe through the laws of physics as described as Isaac Newton. One of these was Cotton Mather.

The first book published in North America that promoted Newton and natural theology was Mather's *The Christian Philosopher.* The enormous scientific, economic, social, and philosophical, changes of 18th century, called the Enlightenment, impacted the authority of clergyman and scripture, making way for democratic principles. The increase in population helped account for the greater diversity of opinion in religious and political life as seen in the literature of this time.

In 1670, the population of the colonies numbered approximately 111,000. Thirty years later it was more than 250,000. By 1760, it reached 1,600,000. The growth of communities and therefore social life led people to become more interested in the progress of individuals and their shared experience in the colonies. These new ideas can be seen in the popularity of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography.*

In the post-war period, Thomas Jefferson established his place in American literature through his authorship of the United States Declaration of Independence, his influence on the United States Constitution, his autobiography, his Notes on the State of Virginia, and his many letters. The *Federalist Essays* by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay presented a significant historical discussion of American government organization and the republican values. Fisher Ames, James Otis, and Patrick Henry are also valued for their political writings and orations. Early American literature struggled to find unique

voice in existing literary genre, and this tendency was reflected in novels. European styles were frequently imitated, but critics usually considered the imitations inferior.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the first American novels were published. These fictions were too lengthy to be printed as manuscript or public reading. Publishers took a chance on these works in hopes they would become steady sellers and need to be reprinted. This scheme was ultimately successful because male and female literacy rates were increasing at the time. Among the first American novels are Thomas Attwood Digges's " Adventures of Alonso", published in London in 1775 and William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fell in love without knowing they were related.

In the next decade important women writers also published novels. Susanna Rowson is best known for her novel, *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth,* published in London in 1791. In 1794 the novel was reissued in Philadelphia under the title, *Charlotte temple. Charlotte Temple* is a seduction tale, written in the third person, which warns against listening to the voice of love and counsels resistance. She also wrote nine novels, six theatrical works, two collections of poetry, six textbooks, and countless songs. Reaching more than a million and a half readers over a century and a half, *Charlotte Temple* was the biggest seller of the 19th century before Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Although Rowson was extremely popular in her time and is often acknowledged in accounts of the development of the early American novel, *Charlotte Temple.*

Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette: Or, the History of Eliza Wharton* was published in 1797 and was also extremely popular. Told from Foster's point of view and based on the real life of Eliza Whitman, the novel is about a woman who is seduced and abandoned. Eliza is a "coquette" who is courted by two very different men: a clergyman who offers her a comfortable domestic life and a noted libertine. Unable to choose between them, she finds herself single when both men get married. She eventually yields to the artful libertine and gives birth to an illegitimate stillborn child at an inn. The *Coquette* is praised for its demonstration of the era's contradictory ideas of womanhood.

After the War of 1812, there was an increasing desire to produce a uniquely American literature and culture, and a number of literary figures emerged, among them Washington Irving wrote humorous works in *Salmagundi* and the satire *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker.* Bryant wrote early romantic and nature-inspired poetry, which evolved away from their European origins.

The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and his paper *The Liberator,* along with poet John Greenleaf Whittier and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her world-famous *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narrative autobiography, of which the best known examples from this period include Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* and Harriet Jacobs`s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.*

American dramatic literature, by contrast, remained dependent on European models, although many playwrights did attempt to apply these forms to American topics and themes, such as immigrants, westward expansion, temperance, etc. At

the same time, American playwrights created several long-lasting American character types, especially the "Yankee," the "Negro" and the "Indian," exemplified by the characters of Jonathan, Sambo and Metamora.

In addition, new dramatic forms were created in the Tom Shows, the showboat theatre and the minstrel show. Among the best plays of the period are James Nelson Barker's *Suoerstition; or, the Fanatic Father,* Anna Cora Mowatt's *Fashion; or, Life in New York,* Nathaniel Bannister's *Putnam, the Iron Son of '76, Dion Boucicault's The Octoroon; or, life in Louisiana,* and Cornelius Mathew's *Witchcraft; or, the Martyrs of salem.*

Realism began to influence American drama, partly through Howells, but also through Europeans such as Ibsen and Zola. Although realism was most influential in set design and staging audiences loved the special effects offered up by the popular melodramas and in the growth of local color plays, it also showed up in the more subdued, less romantic tone that reflected the effects if the Civil War and continued social turmoil on the American psyche.

The most ambitious attempt at bringing modern realism into the drama was James Herne's *Margaret Fleming,* which addressed issues of social determinism through realistic dialogue, psychologist insight, and symbolism. The play was not successful, and both critics and audiences thought it dwelt too much on unseemly topics and included improper scenes, such as the main character nursing her husband's illegitimate child on stage.

At the beginning of the 20th century, American novelists were expanding fiction to encompass both high and low life and sometimes connected to the

naturalist school of realism. In her stories and novels, Edith Wharton scrutinized the upper class, Eastern-seaboard society in which she had grown up. One of her finest books, *The Age if Innocence,* centres on a man who chooses to marry a conventional, socially acceptable woman rather than a fascinating outsider.

Marilynne Summers Robinson is an American novelist and essayist. Across her writing career, Robinson has received numerous awards, including the Pulitzer prize for fiction in 2005, National Humanities Medal in 2012, and the 2016 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. In 2016, Robinson was named in *Time* magazine`s list of 100 influential people. Robinson began teaching at the lowa Writers` Workshop in 1991 and retired in the spring of 2016.

Robinson is best known for her novels *Housekeeping* (1980) and *Gilead* (2004). Her novels are noted for their thematic depiction of both rural life and faith. The subjects of her essays have spanned numerous topics, including the relationship between religion and science, US history, nuclear pollution, John Calvin, and contemporary American politics.

Robinson was born on November 26, 1943 in Sandpoint, Idaho, the daughter of Eileen and John J. Summers, a lumber company employee. Her brother is the art historian David Summers, who dedicated his book *Vision, Reflection, And Desire in Western Painting* to her. She did her undergraduate work at Pembroke College, the former women`s college at Brown University, receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree *magna cum laude* in 1966, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. At Brown, one of her teachers was the celebrated postmodern novelist John Hawkes. She received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in English from the University of Washington in 1977.

Robinson is a Christian whose faith is not easily reduced to generalities. Calvin's thought has had a strong influence on her, and she depicts him in her essays as a misunderstood humanist, likening his "secularizing tendencies" to the "celebrations of the human one finds in Emerson and Whitman." Her novels could also be described as celebrations of the human characters that inhabit them are indelible creations.

Robinson leads a relatively solitary life. She is divorced, and her two sons are grown with families of their own. Her intellectual and creative ambitions leave little time for socializing. Marilynne Robinson, an unapologetic Calvinist, committed humanist, brilliant writer is undoubtedly one of the most important contemporary American authors.

Robinson has written four highly acclaimed novels: *Housekeeping* (1980), *Gilead* (2004), *Home* (2008), and *Lila* (2014). *Housekeeping* was a finalist for the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, *Gilead* was awarded the 2005 Pulitzer, and *Home* and *Lila are* companions to *Gilead* and focus on the Boughton and Ames families during the same time period.

Robinson is also the author of many non-fiction works, including *Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution* (1989), *The Death of Adam: Essays on Modern Thought* (1998), *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self* (2010), *When I Was a Child I Read Books: Essays* (2012), *The Givenness of Things: Essays* (2015), and *What Are We Doing Here?* (2018). She has written numerous articles, essays and reviews for *Harper's, The Paris Review,* and *The New York Review of Books.*

She has been writer-in-residence or visiting professor at many universities, including the University of Kent, Amherst's MFA Program for Poets and Writers. In 2009, she held a Dwight H. Terry Lectureship at Yale University, where she delivered a series of talks titled *Absence of Mind: The dispelling of inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self.* On April 19, 2010, she was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In May 2011, Robinson delivered the University of Oxford's annual Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters at the university's Rothermere American Institute.

In the Spring of 2016, she retired as the F. Wendell Miller Professor of English and Creative Writing at the lowa Writers' Workshop. Robinson still lives in upstate New York. She was the keynote speaker for the Workshop's 75th anniversary celebration in June 2011. She gave the 2012 Annual Buechner Lecture at The Buencher Institute at King University. In 2012, Brown University awarded Robinson the degree Doctor of Literature *honoris causa.* On February 18, 2013, she was the speaker at the Easter Convocation of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa.* The College of the Holy cross, Notre Dame, Amherst College, Skidmore College, the University of Oxford, and Yale University have also awarded Robinson honorary degrees. She has been elected a fellow of Mansfield College, Oxford.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has described Robinson as "one of the world's most compelling English-speaking novelists", adding that "Robinson's is a voice we urgently need to attend to in both Church

and society here. On January 24, 2013, Robinson was announced to be among the finalists for the 2013 Man Booker International Prize.

On June 26, 2015, President Barack Obama quoted Robinson in his eulogy for Clementa C. Pinckney of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. In November 2015, *The New York Review of Books* published a two-part conversation between Obama and Robinson, covering topics in American history and the role of faith in society. Marilynne Robinson is a great essayist and novelist among the American authors.

Robinson was raised as a Presbyterian and later became a Congregationalist, worshipping and sometimes preaching at the Congregationalist United Church of Christ in Iowa city. Her Congregationalist and her interest in the ideas of John Calvin have been important in many of her novels, including *Gilead*, which centres on the life of theological concerns of a fictional Congregationalist minister. In an interview with the *Church Times* in 2012, Robinson said: "I think, if people actually read Calvin, rather than read Max Weber, he would be debranded. He is a very respectable thinker"(56).

Gilead is told in the voice of John Ames, an old Protestant minister, recently diagnosed with a fatal heart condition. In letters addressed to his young son, Ames provides a family history but mostly attempts to disclose his way of thinking and acting to someone who will not have a chance to know him as an adult. In the course of his narrative, the minister often characterizes discrete events in his life as blessings. Even though the term seems transparent, signaling an unadulterated good entering into an individual's life, in Robinson's text, the

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nature of that good begets unending reading. The confrontation with mystery begins with this very notion of blessing.

John Ames encounters the term through its frequent usage in his milieu. He grew up around his grandfather, who lost an eye in battle during the Civil War:

> I wish you could have known my grandfather. I heard a man say once it seemed the one eye he had was somehow ten times an eye. Normally speaking, it seems to me, a gaze, even a stare, is diffused a little when there are two eyes involved. He could make me feel as though he had poked me with stick, just by looking at me. (36)

That same grandfather also associated blessing with getting bloodied, the etymology of the word in English, which the grandson does not accept, but nonetheless acknowledges as part of his background. Because Ames is an inveterate reader, his sense of the word transcends his family's usage and even that of his immediate community. The nineteenth century German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, influences his understanding of the way the natural world becomes a source of symbolic meaning (23-24). Yet, although looking for blessing is common currency in both his milieu and his intellectual upbringing, Ames's discovery of blessing remains completely tied to his very private experience, even when Ames communicates it to his son, and by extension to us, his readers.

Blessing occurs early in the book when the narrator comments on a trip he took with his father when he was twelve years old. 'That journey was a great blessing to me', he says (17). Since the rest of the paragraph is a description of his father, the meaning seems evident:

> I realize, looking back how young my father was back then. He couldn't have been more than forty- five or –six.' Ames then departs from the trip itself to reminisce about his father's later years. 'He was a fine, vigorous man into his old age. We played catch in the evenings after supper for years, till the sun went down and it was too dark for us to see the ball. (17)

The project explores the way in which the Protagonist Reverend John Ames, a disciplined person of personal integrity presents an authentic picture of his own self through a letter to his son. It also analyses how the letter becomes a prayer of self scrutiny, a time capsule of fatherly wisdom, a plain spoken treatise on the difficulty of virtue within the most sincere moral consciousness.

The upcoming chapters deal with the spiritual dignity with which the protagonist practises the doctrine of predestination and grace and follows the Christian values throughout his life however hard the circumstances may be. Through his forgiveness Ames reiterates the life-giving power of God's grace in healing and restoring human soul.

Chapter Two

Spiritual Gravitas

Marilynne Robinson's Pulitzer prize-winning novel *Gilead* is preoccupied with religious epistemology. Protagonist John Ames, an aging and ill Congregationalist preacher in 1950s small town Iowa, maintains his Christian belief in spite of his father, brother, and godson all rejecting the faith. His epistemology grounds faith in religious experience. Ames has a way of seeing the world as obviously alight with the grace and glory of God:

> Grace is not so poor a thing that it cannot present itself in any number of ways, Ames tells his son; the same can be said of this book, one of the best American novels in recent memory, so replete with grace that almost anyone should find a balm in *Gilead.* (Churchwell 18)

In this first section of the novel Ames's character begins to unfold. He is the son and grandson of a preacher, and has his own Congregationalist church. He has a young wife and son but he is currently dying of heart troubles although he has a bit of trouble coming to terms with that since he generally feels okay in the beginning. However, he is acutely aware of the passage of time and its effects on himself and his friend Boughton, whose obvious worsening health strikes him.

His own imminent death does not seem to anger him; in fact, Ames is a remarkable character in his softness of spirit, in his resignation and acceptance, in his gravitas and wisdom. Even when he talks of the terrible things that have happened to him, such as the death of his first wife and child and the subsequent

dark years of his life, he maintains equanimity of temperament and the ability to delight in the pleasures of the world.

Similarly, his acknowledgement that he is dying is never hysterical or histrionic; instead it is accepting. Most of Ames's time is spent thinking and writing rather than doing, which is a reflection of his ill health and old age, but the reader still gets the impression that he is a man still engaged with the world. Much of the novel is Ames grappling with his family history, particularly his relationships with his grandfather and father, and their relationship with each other. While both men were preachers, they were very different in temperament and their understanding of the faith.

Ames's father's complicated history with his own father is indicated early on when he and Ames look for and find the gravesite, which is in Kansas because the old man left the family to return to the scene of his earlier exploits during the antebellum and Civil War eras. There is a great deal of pain in these pages, as family members hurt, disappoint, vex, and confuse each other.

Ames writes that his own father disappointed him sometimes. He also has an interesting relationship with his brother Edward, an atheist and scholar whom Ames admired but occasionally felt misunderstood by Edward and his father also had a tempestuous relationship, to which Ames alludes a few times.

Not just family history but the history of America lingers in the penumbras of the narrative. The antebellum era with its violence and abolitionism, the Civil War, racism and post-war experiences of African Americans, World War I, the Spanish Influenza, World War II, and the Eisenhower age all are the backdrop

upon which the intimate dramas of Ames's life play out. This is a very American book, with American history, American religion, the American landscape all shaping the people and events of the novel.

The first part of this section is Ames's continued meditations on his life, his family, his experience of the sensory aspects of the world, his love for his wife and son, and his sweet sadness about leaving the world. His grandfather, was one of the most memorable characters in the novel. The old man's exterior wild hair, crooked beard, one missing eye, a piercing stare with the other eye, emaciated frame matches his interior, which Ames describes as angry, restless, and impassioned.

He is involved with the violence in the Kansas territory before the war and helps John Brown in his radical abolitionist endeavours. Before the war he preaches the young men into fighting, and when he returns from being a chaplain in the Union Army, he cannot rebuild his broken and denuded congregation. Later in the novel Ames reflects on how nothing ever really went his grandfather's way; he always had to struggle, always had to rage. His grandfather is a symbol of the contentiousness, passion, anger, and tumult of the antebellum era.

The passions that rage within him and between him and his son point to the larger conflicts of the day. The difficulties Christians face when it comes to war and violence are made manifest here; while no one would disagree that a war to end the institution of slavery, is just and right, the loss of even one precious life is profoundly disturbing.

Ames's father balks at violence being the tool used to bring about justice, and laments his father's focus on war rather than peace. One of the aspects that critics most focus on is, of course, religion. Throughout the text Ames Grapples with theological questions, and Robinson frequently alludes to the writings of other prominent religious figures, such as Jonathan Edwards, Anne Bradstreet, John Calvin, Karl Barth, etc

Ames has heightened perception of the world around him, which is colored by his understanding that he will soon be leaving said world; this, however, does not mean he is obsessed with the infinite but seems to want to save that for when he is dead and spend his time here and now focusing on the sheer pleasure of the world. The novel engages with Robinson and religion, his central point being that:

> *Gilead* promotes the kind of aesthetic attention to the world that Ames exhibits in these digressions, as a vehicle to an experience of the divine in the immediate and the immanent: an experience that stops short of knowing through reason and is content with simply living is the experience of the miraculous in the everyday. (Leise's 24)

This is a repudiation of the Puritan tradition, Leise writes, because they had brand of Calvinism that looked to the afterlife. Robinson has a new interpretation of Calvinism after Puritanism one that finds the beauty of the world not simply as an a *fortiori* argument for the beauty of God's afterlife, but as an experience of the divine itself. Robinson places the humanist Calvin before the theological one.

Robinson does this through using the epistolary form of the great spiritual autobiographies that came before him, such as Augustine's Confessions, but she injects the much older form with a new purpose. The true Puritan is the first John Ames, grandfather to the narrator. He has a bleak and angry worldview, and is defined almost as much by what he rejects as what he believes.

Ames does not espouse this. He departs from the puritan way by not dwelling on shortcomings and suffering, by avoiding unnecessary anger and resentment. He delights in this world and all of the sensory experiences it offers. Leise looks at the moment when he interrupts his father's revelry with a kiss. He decides that the elder man's purely spiritual, abstract meditation is trumped by the rare beauty of the world about.

By an act of touch, he brings his father back into the world and a more immediate spiritual experience. He then does not have a "transcendent" moment or seek to connect his temporal experience with an infinite one; he just re-presents the experience, the miracle of the sublime, of God made manifest in this world never mind any higher ideas, and never mind the world.

Overall, Ames emphasizes and delights in the incandescent, which is not about denying the transcendent but instead leaving heaven and focusing one's attention and affection on the world around us. More of Ames's family history comes to light in this section. His grandfather was certainly in league with John Brown, and his father had difficulty coming to terms with the violent and lawless actions his father took. His father firmly objects to the tapestry placed in the church because it is not from the Bible in that it suggests that God will use violence and pain to sweep away sin and transgression.

Ames seems to be somewhere in between his grandfather and father, but closer to his father. He has a passion and conviction, but he does not advocate violence. He does not have visions of his own but firmly believes that the things that have happened in the 20th century the Depression, the Spanish flu are signs from God. Like his grandfather he dwells more in the sublunary, but he is more cerebral, more contemplative, more rational.

As a character in this novel, Lila remains somewhat mysterious. Even Ames does not know her full history, but does not seem compelled to press her to reveal anything she does not want to reveal. She was characterized mostly by her seriousness and sadness, as well as her love for Ames and her son. She is uneducated and did not know very much about religion when she first came to Ames's church.

Clearly something traumatic happened in her past, but she has now found peace and stability in her life. It is unclear if she truly loves Ames, but she loves her life with him. Ames continues to reflect on his past, but now there is something more pressing and occupying his mind on a daily basis is the return of Jack Boughton, son of Boughton and Ames's namesake. They are not familiar with what happened in Jack's past to make Ames dislike him, or what sort of life the man leads now.

Ames has a discernible antipathy towards him, and has trouble controlling his thoughts. He vacillates between referring to Jack as a "disruption" and wanting to warn his wife and son, and deciding he ought to be more cordial and realizing that being angry at him in not important. Ames delivers a sermon about Hagar and Ishmael in which he discusses children as "victims of rejection or

violence" (130), and since Jack is in the congregation," white as a sheet, and grinning" (130), his emotions run high and he is unable to focus fully on what he is doing.

Later in the novel, Jack had an illegitimate child whom he abandoned in his youth, and currently has a son whom he cannot fully provide for, this sermon's impact on the man and the reasons why Ames is so distressed and why he spends time wondering whether or not his parishioners think this sermon was specifically for Jack become a lot more important. It provides a bit more nuance to Ames's character, which, while still quite soft and kind and wise in an almost unbelievable way, contains more human characteristics than initially indicated.

First, Ames's frustration and vacillation regarding Jack is related and representative of his capacity to feel angry and annoyed. Second, he exhibits a moment of pride and arrogance when he writes that if he falls down while waltzing and has a particular book in his hand, "it would have an especial recommendation from being found in my hands" (115). He does acknowledge that it would be "theatrical" but it is an important moment. Finally, he does reveal some of this weariness and despair over aging and dying, writing, "I really feel as though I'm failing, and not primarily in the medical sense. And I feel as if I am being left out, as though I'm some straggler and people can't quite remember to stay back for me" (142).

This is a brutally sad confession, and one that makes the normally cerebral and holy Ames much more relatable. This is a difficult section, one that includes musings on theology, the painful and complicated back-story of Jack Boughton,

and awkward and disappointing conversations between Ames and Jack as Ames tries to work through his feelings regarding the man.

Robinson engages with Calvin and idea with which he is most commonly associated predestination giving voice to her own beliefs about the faith. Critic Todd Shy looks at Robinson's religion in his article on the novel and her book of Essays, *The Death of Adam*. Shy notes how Robinson believes Calvin is the most important American religious influence, and that her view of this is:

> Calvinism stretched and molded to humanist purposes; she most admires the grandeur of his visions of what God intends for humanity. It is the 'elegance' and 'gallantry' of his moral vision, not his orthodox precision that she extols. (27)

Shy believes that Calvin might not approve of her "modern" approach to his theology, though, as she seeks to shift attention away from the majestic heights of Calvin-style revelation to the local authenticity of the individual, as seen in John Ames. Her writing is cognizant of modern priorities of social justice and ethics to thrones formally occupied by less concrete debates.

John Ames is more concerned with wisdom and presence rather than metaphysics, and apprehension rather than revelation. Ames is rooted in the world, and what Robison wants to stress most about him and Jack is their humanity. When Ames finally sees Jack as a sort of son, this is complete. Jack's back-story now being revealed, to decide whether or not they find him a sympathetic character.

As the narrative of his childhood and his treatment of the young woman and their child unfolds. Jack's actions with the young woman are reprehensible, but he was a young man who made a mistake and seems to have paid for it the rest of his life. As a child Jack was mischievous and a cruel tad, but he was also a lonely child who never quite fit in. His siblings went on to accomplishment and prosperity, but Jack could never quite make something of himself. When Ames reveals what is going on with Jack right now.

Jack asks about Karl Barth and Ames is irritated. He also asks if Ames ever wonders Christianity always seems to wait for thinking to be done elsewhere and Ames responds no, even though he thought that himself. Ames is frustrated and although he speaks of Barth's wrongness, tears come to his eyes. Jack is profoundly sorry and sadly leaves.

As for Ames, though, he is still working through his feelings for Jack. He does seem to have an epiphany toward the end of the novel. He admits to his son that he had never felt close to the child, not even from the day of his baptism when his own name was bestowed upon it, and wondered that

> The child felt how coldly I went about his christening, how far my thoughts were from blessing him. I do feel a burden of guilt toward that child, that man, my namesake. I have never been able to warm to him, never. (188)

After he writes these thoughts toward the child but that he certainly does not hate him and actually considers him "my son… By 'my son' I mean another self, a more cherished self" (189). This does not mean that Ames is fully ready to

embrace Jack, especially since he does not know the true story of Jack and his family.

The novel ends in a manner that befits its general content, style, and themes: it is a quiet, soft, and sweet end in which Ames thinks of his son growing up without him, and then that he must pray and rest. This end is anticlimactic in the sense that Ames does not die, as some readers may have expected, or feature Ames's son picking up the narrative. There is very little closure at all no closure regarding Ames's death, Boughton's death, and what will happen to Jack Boughton in terms of his reunion with his family and answers to questions such as his ability to provide for them and live with them.

However, this is appropriate given the overall structure of the narrative, as Ames tells a meandering yet thoughtful story of his lift, current preoccupations, and advice for his son without much organization or hierarchy. Ames's letter to his son his major way of working through the problematic father-son relationships he has experienced in his life. He is able to do this because he is at the end of his life; because he his dying.

In his memory, moments of interaction between father and son mark the intermingling of emotion and perception; the moment with the biscuit and ash is particularly important, for the spiritual significance of the moment remains inextricable from its emotional and perceptual immediacy. Emotion and sensation are tied together indelibly.

Throughout the novel Ames grapples with the "anticipated loss" through his focus and his powers of perception. He may feel a degree of comfort that he

will have an afterlife, but this heightens his sense of an anticipated absence because it will be as if he is looking on from beyond the grave. Ames turns his attention to the immediate, to the temporal, to the physical.

Ames's advanced age means that he is now an observer rather than an active participant in life. Death has bracketed his life and it is impossible for him not to be conscious as well as self-conscious about everything that happens to him and around him. He feels that he is vanishing from the world, or at least only occupying it "contingently." He feels as if his relationship with time and space is "unravelling" and he is being dispossessed. This is seen when he admires the young family created by his wife, son, and Jack. It is also seen when Lila tells their son that he cannot hear them.

The most telling example of this absence is when Lila and Jack talk on the porch while Ames putatively slumbers next to them. He is present but also is not, and is more of a pleasure less voyeur granted invisibility by the process of disincarnation that accompanies illness and old age. Even though nothing inappropriate happens, it is still a melancholy and embarrassing moment for Ames.

While the novel is interlaced with grief, the acceptance Ames is finally able to offer Jack is a joyful factor. Although it may have more ease in appreciating Jack's situation and his essential humanity, the fact that Ames does get there eventually is notable. It is comfort for Jack to have Ames know his true story, to bless him, and to understand why he must leave. Ames believes that, he is not only saved by Christ but by the faith in him which is not his own but bestowed upon him by the grace of God; for faith in Christ leads to imitation of

Christ. This imitation is realized in the pattern of honouring others, serving others, and praying for them so that the weaker ones, like Jack, can be honoured and loved.

This theology together with the idea of 'the image of God, debated over throughout the history of Christianity, become reasons for Ames to love his Prodigal Son, and to come to the understanding that because God has created man in his image, to love his creation is to love him. Robinson's novel, so rooted in the lived experience of human beings, asserts that compassion, understanding, and love are what she offers to her fellow creatures in order to alleviate the suffering that is a concomitant of this mortal existence.

Chapter Three

Doctrine of Predestination and Grace

In the novel *Gilead,* a meditative letter written by an aging minister, probes the need for forgiveness and grace. It discusses the prevalent Christian themes, and the ways Robinson presents the saving and life-giving power of God's grace in healing and restoring human soul. The Protestant Robinson's sensibility regarding these religious themes seems very similar to that of the Catholic Bernanos. Indeed, the American writer seems to be considerably influenced by her French predecessor. Robinson explores themes such as forgiveness, love, peace, faith, and grace.

Predestination is, in a way, the secret heart of *Gilead.* The tensest moments in *Gilead* occur during a conversation on the subject between all the novel's major characters Old Boughton, Ames, Lila, Jack, and Glory, though Glory is present only to state her disapproval of the topic. Jack instigates it, and gets the sense that he is asking Ames with discomforting seriousness if he might not be one of those to whom God has not chosen to extend grace.

Robinson's career is incandescent with Christian sensibility, spiritual wonder, moral wisdom, and understanding of God. Robinson's *Gilead* chronicles the life of an aging Congregationalist minister, John Ames, who is dying of heart disease. After a long life of ministry in a family to which preaching has been a second nature, he spends his last days writing a long letter to his son, intending to show him the ways to live a good life.

There had been, in Ames's life, much loneliness, and much sorrow, over watching other men with a family of their own and longing for one of his own. Late in life he has been 'graced' with a family of his own, whom he loves and does not want to lose out to death. Moreover, Ames struggles over an older and deeper conflict within his conscience. Though a Congregationalist minister, he can hardly bring himself to forgive his prodigal godson, for disgracing his name and the family of his friend, Robert Boughton, a Presbyterian minister.

Later, the novel starts to record Ames's reaction to Jack's return after twenty years. Regarding his late marriage as an unexpected joy, Ames wants to saves his wife and son from the potential harm of Jack Boughton, one whose childhood was spent escaping from school, and lifting small items of special importance to Ames such as his Greek Old Testament, Ames's reading glasses, and a little photograph. Other harmful things were done, but Ames's virtue prevented him from blaming Jack even in privacy of his thought. Stealing was not the only transgression, though.

Earlier in his letter, Ames discloses a "pure meanness" as it seems to him of Jack's behaviour. Still in college, Jack gets involved with a too young girl of a very desolate family, and the involvement produces a child, but young Boughton never made any provision fothe child and his mother and left them. After three years the baby dies of infection. All these brings great dishonour to Boughton`s and Ames's name. Nevertheless, as a priest and someone highly aware of the value of humanity, God's gift of grace and difficulty of exchanging this gift, and of the beauty of forgiveness, Ames raises exceeding expectations of his mercy and virtue.

Initially, however, Ames warns his family against Jack, and it takes a long time for him to come to terms with his self and his namesake, whom old Boughton bestowed on him, to lighten the darkness of his friend's loneliness. Ames's failing in filial relations is not just because of his distrust of Jack's behaviour. As Ames records in his letter that gradually turns into a diary of a preacher's struggling over his moral failures it is "covetise" that plagues his mind. How young Jack is, and how "damn old" Ames is, and how much Ames desires that his son had seen him in his youth and strength. He writes to his son that Jack is just about "your mother's age," expressing his anxiety about his oldness, and that Jack and Lila, Ames's wife, are the same age, and they together with Ames's son look a nice family.

On the day Ames is preaching on the stories of "Hagar and Ishmael" and "Abraham and Isaac," suddenly Jack comes to the service, sitting next to Ames's family. During the whole service, Ames is preoccupied with the image of those three sitting there instead of his sermon:

> Then young Boughton came to the service. That was nothing I would have expected. You saw him and waved and patted the pew next to you, and he came down the aisle and sat with you. Your mother looked at him to say good morning, and then she did not look at him again. Not once. (18)

Once just before suppertime Young Boughton "came strolling by," as Ames records, and then they begin talking politics and baseball until Ames is "obliged" to invite Jack for the supper. Ames feels that his wife and son suppose

Jack to be a very wonderful man, and this feeling leads him to a very prejudiced description of young Boughton:

> You and your mother still regard him as a fairly wonderful surprise, this John Ames Boughton with his quiet voice and his preacherly manner, which, by the way, he has done nothing to earn, or to deserve. To the best of my knowledge, at any rate. He had it even as a child, and I always found that disturbing. Maybe it's something he isn't conscious of, growing up the way he did. But it seems to me sometimes that there's an element of parody in it. (27)

Ames's jealousy does not even exclude Jack's way of saying grace. *Gilead*'s striking variation on the prodigal son parable is distinctly underlined when Jack asks Ames on the doctrine of predestination. Both Ames and Boughton fail to give a satisfactory response to Jack's serious and pivotal inquiry. Eventually, Lila, who appears there, just for the earthly purpose of asking Ames and her son for supper, asserts all Jack wanted to know. Robinson maintains that she should regard every being that she encounters as someone sent by God, someone whom she will honour.

Young Boughton acts as God's special providence for Ames, to let him evaluate his faith and mirror up his treatment and love for his fellow beings, to measure him up in terms of God's grace and unfailing love for his creation:

> He learns from his father's teachings that someone's transgressions are God's benevolence in disguise, they act as a parable and deepen our understanding, so one should not take offence at the

thoughtlessness of any individual, when it is seen to be in the service of the mindfulness of the Lord. (07)

Robinson dramatizes how Ames by means of praying, pondering on biblical teachings, and following Christian ethics that involves conforming to Christ's humility, hope, and love comes to forgive and even to love his godson. Robinson and Ames believe that, they are not only saved by Christ but also by faith in him which is not their own but bestowed upon by the grace of God; for faith in Christ leads to imitation of Christ. This imitation is realized in the pattern of honouring others, serving others, and praying for them so that the weaker ones, like Jack, can be honoured and loved. This theology together with the idea of 'the image of God,' debated over throughout the history of Christianity, become reasons for Ames to love his Prodigal Son, and to come to the understanding that because God has created man in his image, to love his creation is to love him.

Reverend Ames not only tries for the restoration of his soul, and building up Jack in his love, he also tries, though late, to open Jack's heart to the splendorous love of God. Jack Boughton has had a forbidden marriage with an African American woman. Hopeful to settle for his nearly-broken family, he has returned to Gilead, hopeful to ask his father's help, but the old Boughton is in bad health. Therefore, Jack seeks for Ames help and his influence in Gilead, though Ames answers that he might not live long enough to make use of his influence.

Later he blesses Jack with a bigger hope. Seeing Jack on his way to leave Gilead, Ames calls to him and gives him Ludwig Feuberbach's *The Essence of Christianity*. Ames has become a narrative of self-scrutiny and self-discovery, a piece of moral wisdom and a sermon on the difficulty of virtue, and striking

versions of loyalty, prodigality, fair-mindedness, justice, and charity in contemporary moral conscience. In the world of this novel graciousness confronts evil, and there is not only a communion of saints, there is also a communion of sinners.

Reverend John Ames is an example of someone serious about being human and fully aware of mysteries of God's grace, someone whose piety and largeness of spirit pose an antidote to Robinson's perception that something has passed out of the culture, changing it invisibly and absolutely. There are too few uses for words like humour, pleasure and charm; courage, dignity, and graciousness; learnedness, fair-mindedness, open handedness; loyalty, respect, and good faith.

Ames feels his imminent death, due to their bad health. John Ames starts his letter telling his son that:

> I don't know how many times people have asked me what death is like, sometimes when they were only an hour or two from finding out for themselves. Even when I was a very young man, people as old as I am now would ask me, hold on to my hands and look into my eyes with their old milky eyes, as if they knew I knew and they were going to make me tell them. I used to say it was like going home. (04)

Back then he was living all alone in an old house and perhaps that is why he thought of the other world as a home. But later, graced with a wife and a family of his own, he feels more at home in the world and at odds with his

forthcoming death. However, Ames anxiety and fear is mostly rooted in the prospect of leaving his family with nothing, no provision, no money, and no protection:

> I do regret that I have almost nothing to leave you and your mother. A few old books no one else would want. I never made any money to speak of, and I never paid any attention to the money I had. It was the furthest thing from my mind that I'd be leaving a wife and child, believe me. I'd have been a better father if I'd known. I'd have set something by for you. (08)

Nevertheless, confiding in God's grace and providence Ames once again comes to peace with death. While Ames in the beginning of the novel is aware of his late in life death. Ames perceives existence as God's grace, and for him it is godlike to love someone's being as God loves our being. God by his grace has sent someone for him, to love, to honour, and to participate in his love. This mentality partly induced by his dealings with death, helps Ames to finally honour and to love Jack Boughton's existence as a gift from God too.

Ames is also deeply involved in the simple joy and beauty of life. He sees holiness in everyday world. He enjoys the company of his radio, listening to baseball games, eating fried-egg sandwiches, and even cold baked beans, and finds Presbyterian quality in his salad. He records the childhood joy he felt in the act of baptism he performed on some cats. He regards the atheist Ludwig Feuerbach marvellous in his ideas about the joyful aspects of religion.

As one who believes grace is everywhere, the young priest is not expected to forget that God desires everyone to experience fulfilment and joy. Whereas Ames feels unexpected joy in God's blessing of marital life to him in his old age. Ames , the country priest tries to hold up to the image of God, and endeavours for self-transcendence and worthiness for relationship with God, but his concentration on the spiritual aspects of humanity, neglects the external body.

And this stems not merely form the doctrinal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. Robinson believes, would be the summary of the Old Testament. As such, John Ames seems to be more of this world person, universal, and imaginable, and perhaps that is why this Robinson's has transformed someone's spirituality, reshaped someone else's Atheism, and put some ministers in mind of what to do with their sermons.

Grace is the divine forgiveness of sins and God's love and mercy that empowers people with faith, love, and hope, in meeting the demands of new life. Regardless of different strands of this doctrine the reality of God's grace shapes characters and their relations, and defines morally right decisions in their affairs. Robinson writes under the dictation of love and grace, as if they have no conception of world, humanity, and God without love. She believes that although man is flawed and the image of God is distorted in him, his heart still senses and responses to God's desire for love.

Epistemologically, grace is what renders the incommunicable communicable, God's loving repair of our sin-ravaged noetic equipment that allows us to perceive him. It is grace that finally overcomes Ames jealousy and unforgiveness and allows him to see the image of God in Jack Boughton:

> The idea of grace had been so much on my mind, grace as a sort of ecstatic fire that takes things down to essentials. There in the dark and the quiet I felt I could forget all the tedious particulars and just feel the presence of mortal and immortal being. And a sensation came over me, a sort of lovely fear, that made me think of Boughton's fear of angels. (224)

God's gracious action upon our noetic faculties that allows us to perceive him and come to faith, then presumably it is up to God to decide who receives that grace. This makes predestination and Grace. Robinson's novelistic endeavours depict the enigma and inevitable failure of human relations and understanding of their selves, if not interpreted in the light of God's grace. Charity is gift of God's Grace.

Robinson's sensibility regarding these religious themes seems very similar to that of the George Bernanos's *The Diary of a Country Priest* (1936) which pictures the suffering and sacrifice of an unnamed young priest in his attempt to open his parishioner's heart to the love of God. Both novelists explore themes such as forgiveness, love, peace, faith, and grace. Love or Grace of God is the warp and woof of priest's vision, weaving an image of Christ in him. Aware of God's grace in creating men after his likeness, he honors and loves others as epitomes of God's love, sent to him, inviting him for participation in Christ's fatherhood and serventhood.

Later Reflecting on their conversation and the letter from the countess, the priest provides a beautiful description of how God's Grace enabled him to give

what he does not have, and to empty himself for the others sake in The Diary of *Country Priest:*

> oh, miracle thus to be able to give what we ourselves do not possess, sweet miracle of our empty hands! He then prays: Lord, I am stripped of all things, as you alone can strip us bare, whose fearful care nothing escapes, nor your terrible love! (07)

His mercy and love for his fellow beings are God's Grace and he sees himself devoid of everything, for his faith is not his own either. Stepping out of the state of grace, to Robinson and Bernanos, is stepping out of humanity in the novel, Robinson does not seek holiness, goodness, loveliness, and saintliness beyond the world of humans.

By bringing the Christian sensibilities to the fictional world of their characters, Robinson sheds light on the saving and empowering power of God's grace in defining human relations and the understanding of the value of humanity and the loveliness of the world. Despite varieties in Christian theology and their views on the doctrine of Predestination and Grace, the fictional worlds of *Gilead,* the gift of seeing souls, the gift of living souls, and the gift of forgiving souls in the characters, even in those who are left at night like Jack. She presents the saving and life-giving power of God's grace in healing and restoring human soul. And also Robinson describes the protected values and the meaning of Life in the novel.

Chapter Four

Validity of Values

One of *Gilead's* major concerns is the reality of the transience of life. Reverend John Ames, protagonist and narrator, an elderly Congregational pastor in the small town of Gilead, Iowa, has been diagnosed with angina pectoris and knows that he is dying. The first paragraph of his narrative already suggests that coming to terms with approaching death would be one of the central issues of the story:

> I told you last night that I might be gone sometime, and you said, Where, and I said, To be with the Good Lord, and you said, Why, and I said, Because I'm old, and you said, I don't think you're old. And you put your hand in my hand and you said, You aren't very old, as if that settled it. (3)

Ames's words addressed to his seven-year-old son encapsulate the motivation to write and set a tone which would dominate his later discourses. He uses mild language to tell his son that he is going to die. Knowing the details of the diagnosis, Ames decides to write his child a letter. Meant to express everything that Ames intends to pass down to his son, his "letter" becomes a complex story of the crucial events that shaped Ames's past and shape his present, including the relationship with his beloved wife Lila, best friend Boughton, and his crucial connection with young Jack Boughton.

It is interesting to observe how Ames's narrative subtly changes and develops. The first pages reflect his past more than his present, yet he gradually

intuits that what he really needs to pass down is an authentic picture of himself, complete with weaknesses, shortcomings and failures. Ames's voice in *Gilead* is characterized by stark honesty and strong emotions; he is a pious and disciplined person of immense personal integrity. Ames's expression of his father-love may be the most eloquent and sincere.

In Robinson's *Gilead*, there are three major protected values: faith, family and education. It is important to realize that despite the fact that their validity and significance are never questioned or doubted, they are not depicted here as unproblematic. These values are central to the novel's main conflicts and their relevance is examined in the specific life events which Ames and other characters go through.

In *Gilead*, the fullness of religious experience is expressed by seeing the world as the Divine Creation in which everyone and everything forms a part of God's plan and is infused with a miraculous and mysterious nature. Thus, a deep faith in God guides Ames's everyday life. His existence becomes a constant prayer and perpetual dialogue with God. If he fails and rather often it is in faith and God that he finds refuge and a stable point upon which his actions and responses to various life situations can be based. It is interesting to observe how Ames articulates his understanding of the mysteries of life and death and which language he uses to express them.

When rational discourse fails, man seeks other expressive means by which the experience of death and afterlife might be verbalized. In this regard, Ames turns to the potency of imagination and to the figurative language of poetry. It is not actual physical suffering which appears as most cruel and harsh punishment

for one's sins, but the sincere insight into the soul, a concentrated self-scrutiny of the conscience in which one comes closest to vices, shame and fear. The metaphor of "life as a dream" expands into Ames's deep meditation on the "reality" of death as a transitory stage as an ultimate change of which man is not yet conscious in Christian believes.

Concerning other aspects of how the afterlife can be visually imagined, Ames observes in his conversation with Boughton that "although the Bible has much to say about final judgment, it offers no definitive picture of life after death" (146). The mere fact of mentioning heaven and hell as places of utmost relevance, however, prompts people to visualize them. The visions, as *Gilead* reminds us, are always personal, imaginative and highly subjective. In Boughton's mind the idea of heaven is likened to the beauty and goodness of anything on earth multiplied by two.

Like Ames, Boughton sees nature as a meaningful revelation. It is a grace to be alive, to be able to love, feel and experience God's creation via the senses as well as by the intellect. Ames's idea of heaven is slightly different from Boughton's in its emphasis on one's physical condition. Faith is one of the crucial protected values in the novel since it determines and conditions everything that Ames does. It provides him with moral principles, offers him consolation and gives him sufficient rationalization and explanation for everything that happens to him. Faith guides his inner world as well as his conduct.

Family life, relationships between generations and especially those between fathers and sons are arguably given a significant role in the text. One of the most important values Ames shares with his son is love and respect for those who are

no longer with us. While their physical absence is irreversible and many of their acts may be questioned, their presence is still felt, most intensely through memories and also through objects they once possessed. It is important that relationships within families are as important as they are difficult. Although family life in *Gilead* is based on mutual respect, serious quarrels happen there quite often.

The novel *Gilead* describes the conflict between Ames's father and grandfather and their opposing views on the resistance against slavery and social injustice. Being empowered by Christ's authority, his grandfather argues for fierce military action against slavery. The argument escalates in angry words pronounced by Ames's father, a bitter farewell to Ames's grandfather who departs soon after. Their conflict actually raises important philosophical questions.

Although Ames's grandfather and his father both believe in the purposeful life of a Christian, at the same time, the practical ways by which they live their faith are very different. For Ames's grandfather human life has a value measured by one's total and literal commitment to Christ's message, actualized in the specific historical cause of fighting against slavery. He is never concerned with his own pains and even "forgets" to mention his loss of an eye in his letters home. Ames further explains:

> All the regret he ever felt was for his unfortunates, with none left over for himself, however he might be injured, until his friends began to die off, as they did one after another in the space of about two years. Then he was terribly lonely, no doubt about it. I think that

> was a big part of his running off to Kansas. That and the fire and the Negro church. (36)

Intergenerationality becomes a crucial turning point in Ames's life too. He starts his writing unaware of the radical changes which life has prepared for him in coming days. His mental wellbeing undergoes a distinct crisis with the sudden arrival of Jack Boughton, and even more so when Ames realizes that Jack provokes in him feelings never felt before. It is the fierce and cruel passion of jealousy which begins to occupy Ames's mind. He understands how much Lila means to him and he is afraid he may easily lose her. In his confession, an emphasis is put on her bringing life and light to his former existence.

Passion is an intense emotion and life without Lila is an unbearable thought for Ames who vividly remembers the feeling when she did not come to church. The situation worsens as both Jack and Lila do not speak much and Ames simply conjectures on the details of their relationship. Even though there is no valid reason to suspect either of them of betrayal, it is obvious that Lila and Jack are close. The scarcity of words between them only raises Ames's suspicions. His mind becomes troubled and disunited, he is unable to find equilibrium and restore his inner peace:

> The truth is, as I stood there in the pulpit, looking down on the three of you, you looked to me like a handsome young family, and my evil old heart rose within me, the old covetise I have mentioned elsewhere came over me, and I felt the way I used to feel when the beauty of other lives was a misery and an offence to me. And I felt as if I were looking back from the grave. (141)

It is telling that Ames describes his feeling as looking back from the grave. This suggests his awareness of his physical condition and imminent death, which contrasts strikingly with Jack's vitality, youth and strength. On the other hand, the scene is also Ames's painful visualization of a possible future. When he is no longer alive, Jack, Lila and their son may well become a family. There is little doubt that the essence of Ames's confusion lies in the conflict between his faith and feelings. It is during this time of formidable worries when he appears most intensely human and fallible and when he pronounces his wish for a peaceful death.

In order to resolve his fears and restore his peace, Ames must be willing to sacrifice the two most precious elements in his life, Lila and his son. Ames realization of this is gradual and, as a matter of fact, his decision to allow Lila to find her happiness with Jack is one of his most crucial acts in the story:

> That morning something began that felt to me as if my soul were being teased out of my body, and that's a fact. I have never told you how all that came about, how we came to be married. And I learned a great deal from the experience, believe me. It enlarged my understanding of hope, just to know that such a transformation can occur. And it has greatly sweetened my imagination of death, odd as that may sound. (203)

Ames's conscious decision had a powerful effect on his consequent thought and approach to death. He again attains inner calm of the deepest and most satisfying nature; that which follows a perplexing and almost ruinous mental struggle. At this point, Ames is ready to die, although there is one more distinctive

moment at the very end of his narrative which symbolically ends the course of his life. It is the moment when Ames blesses Jack who is leaving Gilead in order to live with his wife and son.

Thus Ames finds much needed equilibrium after and in spite of the sorrow he experiences described as "a quintessentially American story" which encapsulates "the American foundation myth" *Gilead* is firmly rooted in the value of family which extends also to the concept of belonging and home. It is highly revealing that Ames's last words are also connected to Gilead, the place where all whom he loves to live: "I love this town. I think sometimes of going into the ground here as a last wild gesture of love. I too will smolder away the time until the great and general incandescense" (247).

A sense of belonging, closely associated with family, is often highlighted in the book. Ames admits that before his life with Lila began, he didn't feel very much at home in the world. Now, he obviously does, and he feels strongly attached to the physicality of life and existence. Home is the place where one may return any time and there are occasions when one should return. Ames is bitter when he remarks about Jack Bougton who, "When his mother died he didn't come home" (160).

Relationships within family are sacrosanct for Ames. Marriages, relationships between children and parents as well as between other generations become a main safeguard for the wellbeing of an individual. If these are not reconciled, people suffer. *Gilead* places an emphasis on the fact that it is the responsibility of each member of a family to create relationships that are embedded in sincerity, honesty and love.

Ames's love of books and learning permeates the novel. His reading habits and the selection of books he is familiar with are mentioned on several occasions. He often reads through the night, a practice followed by a walk and a visit to church. He reads classical Greek and Hebrew and with his best friend Boughton they used to go through the texts they were going to preach on, word by word, practising Biblical exegesis.

Ames has a deep knowledge of the Bible, much of it learnt by heart. The practice of memorizing goes back to Ames's childhood, when, motivated by his father, he was paid a penny for every five verses learnt by heart without mistake. Both parents facilitate their son's memorization of Biblical passages, hereby suggesting the exclusive importance of having such texts in one's heart.

When addressing his son, Ames is very clear about the values provided by books as a source of education and edification. He hopes that his son has read some of his books and particularly lists the English poets John Donne and George Herbert, and frequent references to the Bible expect the son's adequate command of it. Ames understands the capacity of the Biblical verse to enlighten experience and provide a new perspective.

Ames is a living library, well versed in poetry as well as in prose of a great variety. He owns mostly theology and some old travel books from before the wars. In a passage where he writes about the tension caused by his father's uncertainty about Ames's faith, he provides the names of many controversial and radical thinkers he is familiar with, such as the Welsh social reformer and one of the founders of utopian socialism. Reading improves knowledge as is the case of

his belief. He also discusses his reading on the Civil War to better understand the conflict between his pacifist father and militaristic grandfather.

In his understanding, the books one owns and reads are revelatory of a person's thoughts and character. His life-long passion for learning is obvious from frequent references to purchases of books, although his attitude to them, or better said, to the money spent on them, alters after the radical change in his life. The aforementioned spending becomes Ames's serious concern as he ponders over the sums which he could use to improve the financial situation of the now impoverished family.

These thoughts, however, do not prove his negative bias towards books and learning. They are, in fact, rather understandable worries of the father who cares about his family's financial security. The regrets over the money spent on literature are supplanted by Ames's appreciation of books as intimate friends and major joy and consolation in the period of sadness and loneliness, described as "my own dark time" and "deep darkness."

Ames constantly returns to books in relation to the past, and his portrayal of himself as an avid reader does not only provide the complex and detailed reader's experience, but it also simultaneously serves as a didactic and educational means for his son. There is good reason to suppose that Ames's intellectual pursuits owe much to the cultural traditions of Protestantism, with its emphasis on books and learning, as well as its highest regard for Scripture, read both in classic and vernacular languages.

In this regard, Ames's Congregational affiliation and Robinson's frequent use of the Bible both as a source of themes, conflicts, motifs and mentions in the book per se are central to *Gilead*. The characters of Cain, Abraham, Isaac and the parable of the Prodigal Son are major fertilizing influences which generate several theological discourses in the novel. The Bible's special meaning relates to Ames's understanding of it as a life-sustaining and spiritually highly relevant discourse. As a material object it is an important bridge connecting the past with the present:

> Whenever I have held a Bible in my hands, I have remembered the day they buried those ruined Bibles under the tree in the rain, and it is somehow sanctified by that memory. And I think of the old reverend himself preaching in the ruins of his church, with all the windows open so the few that were there could hear 'The Old Rugged Cross' drifting up the hill from the Methodist meeting. (96)

And the details of the event remained deeply engraved in Ames's memory. Here, the Bible conveys a sense of continuity, suggestive of the strong emotional appeal of the experience, a tragedy turned into revelation. In his narrative Ames makes several references to poetry. A special role is attributed to hymns, the singing of which brings tranquillity in difficult situations.

Ames is not only a poetry reader, but he also confesses his partiality to writing verse. While he underestimates his poetic skills, his mention of writing offers an insight into his love for the language, sounds and meanings of words, as well as for his thinking in figurative language, vividly evidenced in his imaginative narrative. Ames's education and learning establishes the essential interrelatedness of the common and the sacred.

Yet, this double nature of existence, which contains the experience of the numinous, is difficult to express in words. There are moments when books and learning fail to provide satisfactory comments and responses, as in the case of Lila's baptism when Ames admits that "no matter how much I thought and read and prayed, I felt outside the mystery of it" (21). Learning may provide one with information and knowledge, but the experience may obviously transcend the boundaries of the verbal discourse.

The life philosophy he proposes by his narrative is not easy to practise. To be wholly contemplative and wholly active a life worth living requires nothing less, according to Ames's experience. He speaks with the authority of an elderly man whose life was full of suffering and anguish but also of hope and joy. His authority is that of piety and of an old man's wisdom. The validity of his life philosophy is justified by his conduct and deeds and therefore appears as relevant also to the lived experience of the reader. He simply practises what R. Truss mentions in his article on S. T. Coleridge: "The particular must lead to the general. Love must begin with love of particular persons" (08).

Ames's philosophy of being a gift for others encompasses the total span of human experience and turns a negation of death into an active principle of life and purpose. The whole narrative can be in fact interpreted as an expression of gratitude for life as the ultimate gift and the novel elucidates how the cultivation of Christian virtues contributes to a sense of a purposeful life. Being connected to the world and to other people in a meaningful way resolves many tensions in life and generates much satisfaction. Ames convincingly proposes that inner strength is always found in relationships. His story, as a result, becomes training in a way

of life that is reflective, ethical and which establishes a space for God in the common discourse of everyday life. The combination of faith, family and education as three protected values places an emphasis on the significance of everydayness, on the simple life based on Christian worship, relationships and learning.

According to *Gilead*, faith helps to see one's condition in its true perspective; guided by it, a person may fall repeatedly, yet he is also aware of a constant hope and opportunity to improve. Ames's narrative is not the sentimentally sweet recommendation of a devout Christian life. Far from that, Robinson's novel shows the complexities and intricacies of one's existence. It promotes heartfelt piety the strength of which is based on non-judgmental, honest and fair treatment of oneself and of others.

Chapter Five

Summation

Gilead is described as an epistolary novel. In fact the entire narrative is a single, continuing, albeit episodic, document, written on several occasions in a form combining journal and a memoire. It comprises the fictional autobiography of the Reverend John Ames, an elderly Congregationalist pastor in the small, secluded town of Gilead Iowa, who knows that he is dying of a heart condition. At the beginning of the book, the date is established as 1956, and Ames explains that he is writing an account of his life for his seven-year-old son, who will have few memories of him.

According to Robinson, the fictional town of Gilead is based on the real town of Tabor, Iowa, located in the southwest corner of the state and well known for its importance in the abolition movement. Likewise, the character of the narrator's grandfather is loosely based on the real life story of Rev. John Todd, a congregationalist minister from Tabor who was a conductor on the Underground Railroad, and who stored weapons, supplies and ammunition used by abolitionist John Brown in his "invasion" of Missouri in 1857 to free a group of slaves, and later without Todd's knowledge or involvement in his 1859 raid on the U.S. military arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Robinson talks about Ames's grandfather's involvement in the civil war. She mentions an illness known as "camp fever". The term was generally used to describe Typho malarial fever. Symptoms included: pronounced chills followed by fever, abdominal tenderness, nausea, general debility, diarrhea, retention of

urine, and furring of the tongue. Also, as John Ames was describing his sermons in his letter, he tells his son that there was one he had burned before he was supposed to preach it. This sermon was written around the time of the Spanish Influenza.

Regarding Robinson's theological influences in *Gilead*, she herself has explained the importance of primary Calvinist texts, particularly Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In regard to Calvin's Institutes, Robinson states in her Yves Simone lecture entitled "The Freedom of a Christian," that "one of the reasons these texts are important to me is because they have everything to do with my own theology certainly, with my aesthetic perhaps, and in so far as I can say I have an intention in writing, they have everything to do with my intention" (64).

Gilead has been the focus of debates on Christian multiculturalism in literature. Critics have noted the political resurgence of fundamentalist and evangelical Christianity in the last four decades and the impact on literary history of the present. Former President of the United States Barack Obama lists the novel as one of his favorites on his official Face book profile. On September 14, 2015, in Des Moines, Iowa in a reversal of the usual journalistic convention, President Obama interviewed Marilynne Robinson for *The New York Review* of Books, and told her:

> I first picked up *Gilead*, one of your most wonderful books, here in Iowa. Because I was campaigning at the time, and there's a lot of downtime when you're driving between towns and when you get

> home late from campaigning. And I've told you this one of my favorite characters in fiction is a pastor in Gilead, Iowa, named John Ames, who is gracious and courtly and a little bit confused about how to reconcile his faith with all the various travails that his family goes through. And I was just I just fell in love with the character; fell in love with the book. (11)

In a poll of US literary critics that was conducted by BBC Culture and had its results shared in January 2015, *Gilead* was voted the fourth greatest novel written since 2000. In 2019, the novel was ranked 2nd on *The Guardian's* list of the 100 best books of the 21st century. Throughout the novel Ames grapples with the "anticipated loss" through his focus and his powers of perception. He may feel a degree of comfort that he will have an afterlife, but this heightens his sense of an anticipated absence because it will be as if he is looking on from beyond the grave. Ames turns his attention to the immediate, to the temporal, to the physical.

Gilead is all about its style. There are no chapter breaks, just gaps between sections. It's a plainspoken account of events with occasional academic delving into questions of theology or flourishes of lyrical language to remind you that Robinson teaches at the Iowa Writers Workshop. The action is presented circuitously in fragments, with bits given out here and there, with repetition and analysis and digression. Minor daily incident is placed next to major life event next to a discussion of baseball or sprinklers or weathervanes. You have to pay attention, for it's a patient book. Robinson is a fine writer and the voice of Ames

lulls you in a grandfatherly way. He has a gentle humour of the type that elicits a single chuckle and a thoughtful stare

Gilead is quite tedious at times and not only during the digressions about, say, the Fifth Commandment. Robinson does this thing that irritates the readers. She has Ames start a story, get distracted, and only pick the thread back up later on. In theory this is naturalistic, as if the old man is simply narrating his life: "I woke up this morning to the smell of pancakes, which I dearly love" (18). On the other hand, he's supposed to be a preacher who has written over 2,000 sermons, putting deep thought into the coherence of his message.

There is an unresolved tension here between the studious nature of the character and the fragmentary, casual style of the novel. Also this technique is patently used by Robinson to build narrative momentum. Because *Gilead*, for all its straight from the good people tone, is a highly metafictional novel, both in style and in substance. It often feels like Robinson is using the character of Ames to get a rant off her chest. The theology in this book is all gospel and no law. There is no Judgement, there is no Hell. This merely positive theology feeds into the impression that Robinson is presenting a romanticized vision of small town life to elevate it, which is especially at odds with the questionable portrait of race relations, about which more in just a bit.

There is one character, Edward, the narrator's older brother, an atheist professor, who feels like he was added simply to justify Ames cosmopolitanism. He is introduced as the reason Ames can quote Feuerbach and is not much of a character beyond that. Ames never travels except through books, which he has

read a fabulous number of, including all the books that his older brother reads at university. Thus Ames gets to be cosmopolitan even as he's simultaneously as smalltown as it gets. Robinson has it both ways.

There is very little narrative tension in the novel until Jack Boughton appears in town, after being hinted about before. Jack Boughton, christened John Ames Boughton after the narrator, is the rebellious son of Ames's lifelong friend Robert Boughton, a Presbyterian minister in Gilead. Jack always had a devilish streak in him, and is a very unlikeable character. Ames doesn't like him and his placidity is disrupted by his godson's return. Jack starts as a peripheral story and becomes the main plot.

Ames's advanced age means that he is now an observer rather than an active participant in life. Death has bracketed his life and it is impossible for him not to be conscious as well as self-conscious about everything that happens to him and around him. He feels that he is vanishing from the world, or at least only occupying it "contingently." He feels as if his relationship with time and space is unravelling and he is being dispossessed. This is seen when he admires the young family created by his wife, son, and Jack. It is also seen when Lila tells their son that he cannot hear them.

The most telling example of this absence is when Lila and Jack talk on the porch while Ames putatively slumbers next to them. He is present but also is not, and is more of a pleasure less voyeur granted invisibility by the process of disincarnation that accompanies illness and old age. Even though nothing

inappropriate happens, it is still a melancholy and embarrassing moment for Ames.

While the novel is interlaced with grief, the acceptance Ames is finally able to offer Jack is a joyful factor. Although it may have more ease in appreciating Jack's situation and his essential humanity, the fact that Ames does get there eventually is notable. It is comfort for Jack to have Ames know his true story, to bless him, and to understand why he must leave. Ames believes that, he is not only saved by Christ but by the faith in him which is not his own but bestowed upon him by the grace of God; for faith in Christ leads to imitation of Christ. This imitation is realized in the pattern of honouring others, serving others, and praying for them so that the weaker ones, like Jack, can be honoured and loved.

This theology together with the idea of 'the image of God, debated over throughout the history of Christianity, become reasons for Ames to love his Prodigal Son, and to come to the understanding that because God has created man in his image, to love his creation is to love him. Robinson's novel, so rooted in the lived experience of human beings, asserts that compassion, understanding, and love are what she offers to her fellow creatures in order to alleviate the suffering that is a concomitant of this mortal existence.

Bringing the Christian sensibilities to the fictional world of their characters, Robinson shed light on the saving and empowering power of God's grace in defining human relations and the understanding of the value of humanity and the loveliness of the world. Despite varieties in Christian theology and their views on the doctrine of Predestination and Grace, the fictional worlds of Gilead, the gift of

seeing souls, the gift of living souls, and the gift of forgiving souls in the characters, even in those who are left at night like Jack. She presents the saving and life-giving power of God's grace in healing and restoring human soul.

The life philosophy he proposes by his narrative is not easy to practise. To be wholly contemplative and wholly active a life worth living requires nothing less, according to Ames's experience. He speaks with the authority of an elderly man whose life was full of suffering and anguish but also of hope and joy. His authority is that of piety and of an old man's wisdom. The validity of his life philosophy is justified by his conduct and deeds and therefore appears as relevant also to the lived experience of the reader.

Ames's philosophy of being a gift for others encompasses the total span of human experience and turns a negation of death into an active principle of life and purpose. The whole narrative can be in fact interpreted as an expression of gratitude for life as the ultimate gift and the novel elucidates how the cultivation of Christian virtues contributes to a sense of a purposeful life. Being connected to the world and to other people in a meaningful way resolves many tensions in life and generates much satisfaction. Ames convincingly proposes that inner strength is always found in relationships. His story, as a result, becomes training in a way of life that is reflective, ethical and which establishes a space for God in the common discourse of everyday life.

The combination of faith, family and education as three protected values places an emphasis on the significance of everydayness, on the simple life based on Christian worship, relationships and learning. According to Gilead, faith helps to see one's condition in its true perspective; guided by it, a person may fall

especially, yet he is also aware of a constant hope and opportunity to improve. Jones's narrative is not the sentimentally sweet recommendation of a devout Christian life. Far from that, Robinson's novel shows the complexities and contradictions of one's existence. It promotes heartfelt piety the strength of which is based on non-judgmental, honest and fair treatment of oneself and of others.

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Voicing the Unvoiced: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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affiliated to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Voicing the Unvoiced: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Byrose Banu M. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Voicing the Unvoiced: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Byrose Banu M

Byrose Banu M.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Voicing the Unvoiced: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire** analyses the history, partition, political freedom, and the problems of postcolonial identity of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children.*

The first chapter **Introduction** is about the biography of Salman Rushdie and discusses the general characteristics of his works.

The second chapter **Theme of Partition** deals with the history, consciousness, interpretation, partition and political freedom of the novel.

The third chapter **Polyphony and Magic Realism** discusses the role of polyphony and magic realism in establishing various realities and undermining the conceptions of the totalising power founded on a monologic view of the world.

The fourth chapter **Hybridity and Postcoloniality** concentrates on the problems of postcolonial identity, through connected and dependent forms of hybridity.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature represents the culture and tradition of a language. It is difficult to precisely define, though many have tried, but it is clear that the accepted definition of literature is constantly changing and evolving. Literature is something that reflects society, makes us think about ourselves and our society, allows us to enjoy language and beauty, it can be didactic, and it reflects on the human condition. Literature is the creation of another world, a world that we can only see through reading literature.

Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English Language and whose native or co-native language would be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora, especially people like Salman Rushdie who was born in India. It is frequently referred to as Indo Anglian Literature. As a category, the production comes under the broader realm of Postcolonial Literature the production from previously colonized countries such as India.

'Indian English novel is a part of truly Indian novel and not a fragile extension of English fiction. It has now reached a youthful stage, and its movement as expected is being evaluated in terms of current trends in the world stream of fiction and criticism. The leading stars of Indian English novelists like Mulkraj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Arun Joshi, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, V. S. Naipaul, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and many others enjoy a privileged place as novelists of the front rank in the comity of nations.

The glimpses of the creative world of the great masters of Indian English novel would reveal that the novelists constitute a cosmopolitan group representing various religions, communities, professions and views. They come from East, West,

South and North. They belong almost to every community in India – the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian and the Parsi, and they represent every Shade of opinion – orthodox, liberal, progressive, Gandhian, communistic and socialistic. They interpret every segment and strata of human society – luxurious life of Maharajas, Nawabs, industrialists and peasants. The conflict between the old and the new, the East and the West also finds powerful expression in it.

The theme of national awakening under the stewardship of Mahatma Gandhi has been treated in epic dimension by many Indian English novelists. Various regions of vast Indian sub-continent with all their natural beauty and minute geographical differences have been represented with minute observation and rare vividness of expression in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, and Dhan Gopal Mukerjee. R. K. Narayan, the immortal creator of *Malgudi* shines with rare radiance as the founder of regional novel in Indian English, and in this respect commands comparison with Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Hardy, the creators of Waverly and Wessex. The Indian writers of English novel have thus given a very comprehensive and true picture of the myriad aspects and problems of India.

A majority of writers since 1947 evince no interest to recapture a recent historical past and have turned inwards to more private and personal concerns. These novels turn upon East West encounter and the conflict between the old and the new. These novels deal with the personal predicament of a particular individual and their existence. Diaspora is an emerging word in Literature. Literature produced by the diasporic writers explores the problems and possibilities engendered by the migrants.

The diasporic writings which are also known as 'expatriate writings' largely give voice to the traumatic experience of the Immigrants. Immigration proves a

pleasure experience only to a few immigrants who succeed in assimilating themselves with new geographical, cultural, social and psychological environment. To most of the diasporic writers, immigration is not a delectable experience. The feeling of nostalgia, a sense of loss and anxiety to reinvent home obsess them, which find expression consciously or unconsciously in their writings. There are many diasporic writers scattered in various countries like Britain, America, Canada, Australia and so on. The writers like V. S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Uma Parameswaran, Salman Rushdie and many others have left their country and settled in abroad.

The quest of the self and identity and despair and despondency caused by the feelings of rootlessness and the solution of existential problems characterize B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer, Too Long in the West,* Santha Rama Rau's *Remember in the House,* Attia Hassain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column,* Kamala Markandaya's *Some Inner Fury*, Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* and Nayantara Sahgal's *A Time To Be Happy.*

Bharti Mukerjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* deal with the personal problems of Indian immigrants in U. S. A. Tara in the *Tiger's Daughter* rejects Indian immigrants, as she is unable to grasp its meaning and equally unable to understand U. S. A. She therefore, plans to go back to America. Tara's father too had rejected his past. She discards her roots, overcomes the feeling of alienation and despair by achieving complete identification with American way of life. Dimple, educated in India and married to an Indian husband, does not feel at home in her world in *Wife.* She begins to dislike India, goes to states where she feels total estrangement from herself and her surroundings. Frustrated and disgusted she kills her husband, Amit, with the kitchen knife. The novels of Ruth P. Jhabvala also treat his theme. The solution of the traumatic existential problem is personal. Vikram Seth's *The Golden*

Gate – is an epoch making work in world literature, which has been written in sonnet form, the first of its type. Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upmanya Chatterjee, Allan Sealy, Salman Rushdie and Bharti Mukherjee have widened the scope of Indian novel in English both thematically and technically.

Salman Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947, in Bombay, India. He is an Honorary Professor in the Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and fellow of the Royal Society of Literature at the University of East Anglia in (1995). He was awarded the Austrian State Prize for European Literature in 1993 and the European Union's Aristeion Prize for Literature in 1996, and received eight honorary doctorates. He is also a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Commander des Arts et des Lettres.

Rushdie is an essayist and author of fiction, most of which is set on the Indian subcontinent. He is the author of ten novels, one collection of short stories, four works of non-fiction, and the co-editor of *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing*. He grew up in Mumbai and graduated with honours from King's College, Cambridge in England. After his graduating, he lived with his family who had moved to Pakistan in 1964 and worked as a copywriter for an advertising agency. His narrative style, blending myth and fantasy with real life, has been described as connected magical realism. In 2004, Rushdie married for the fourth time, this time to a prominent Indian model and actress Padma Lakshmi.

Rushdie is the President of PEN American Center. The subjects in his book, *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-fiction 1992-2002* (2002), range from popular culture and football to the twentieth century literature and politics. Salman Rushdie is co-author (with Tim Supple and Simon Reade) of the stage adaptation of *Midnight's*

Children, premiered by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2002. He now lives in London with his wife, Padma Lakshmi.

The most fascinating feature of his personality, though he has been settled in U. K is that he is a pure Indian both in thought and spirit despite his preference for English over his mother tongue Urdu, for the expression of his creative urge. Living in United Kingdom, he is understandably indifferent to the literary fashions of the west and so writes mostly on the socio-political issues of Indian sub-continent. Despite his preference to write on Indian themes, he is almost a craze in the whole world of English Literature. He prefers to write mostly on political issues of Indian Sub-continent. His novels, having subject matter as events in Indian society, is the clorama for the changing Indian society. His fiction mirrors the microcosmic India caught in the crucible of tradition, struggle and change. Rushdie's recent novels record almost all the major political events of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan such as Emergency, Indira Gandhi's assassination, General Zia's execution, Communal politics of Shiva Sena in Mumbai, Maruticar-scam, Bofor's cannon-scam, Bihar's Fodder scam etc. He ironically refers in his novels almost all the major politicians of Pakistan, Bangladesh and India such as Indira Gandhi, Bal Thakeray, Sunil Dutt, Rajiv Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, General Zulifikar Ali Bhutto, M. G. R, Jayalita, Amitabh Bachoo and others.

His writing career began with *Grimus* (1975), a fantastic tale, partly science fiction, which was generally ignored by the book-buying public and literary critics. His next novel, *Midnight's Children*, however, catapulted him to literary fame and is considered his best work to date. It also significantly shaped the course of Indian writing in English. It was later awarded the "Booker of Bookers" prize in 1993 after being selected as the best novel to be awarded the Booker Prize in its first 25 years.

This was seen in India as an attack on the Nehru - Gandhi dynasty and Rushdie was forced to leave India because of threats. His success of inciting violent reaction to his work produced a lot of publicity and sold books; a formula he repeated again.

After the success of *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie wrote a short novel, *Shame* (1983), where he depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan by basing his characters on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq. Both works are characterized by, apart from the style of magical realism, the immigrant outlook of which Rushdie is also very conscious. Rushdie spent the next nine years living in secrecy, under the protection of bodyguards and the British government. Fearful of his life, Rushdie nonetheless continued to write and publish books, most notably *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) and the *Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), as well as two works of non-fiction, *The Jaguar Smile* (1987) and *Imaginary Homelands* (1991). When the Iranian government lifted the fatwa in 1998, Rushdie was able to enjoy a return to a moderately normal life and eventually settled in New York City.

Midnight's Children and *Shame* are examples of magic realism, elements of this technique can also be found in his later fiction. Rushdie's third novel, *Shame* which many critics saw as an allegory of the political situation in Pakistan, won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger. Parts of his allegorical novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) were deemed sacrilegious and enraged many Muslims, including the Ayatollah Khomeini, who in 1989 issued a fatwa sentencing Rushdie to death. The novel centres on the adventures of two Indian actors, Gibreel and Saladin who fall to earth in Britain when their Air India Jet explodes. It won the Whitbread Novel Award in 1998. Violence occurred in some cities where the book was sold, and Rushdie went into hiding.

In September 1995 to the interview in "The Times of India" Rushdie notes that cycle of novels *Midnight's Children, Shame, The Satanic Verses, The Moor's Last Sigh* that record his response to an age in history that began in 1947 is now complete. According to Anita Desai, Rushdie showed English language novelist in India a way to be Postcolonial. Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* is of transforming Magic relentlessly to punning his way into his narrative and playing on words. It remarks up on the conundrum of the discovery of India.

From his seclusion Rushdie wrote *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990), a book of short stories which won the Writer's Guild Award and it was first staged at the Royal National Theatre, London. *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) is a novel that examines India's recent history through the life of a Jewish Christian family. Rushdie's next novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), mingles myth and reality in a surreal world of rock and roll celebrity. He is also the author of a travel narrative, *The Jaguar Smile* (1987). He has also written the novel *Fury* (2001) and numerous essays, many of them included in *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction (1992-2002).*

"From Routes to Roots: Diaspora in the Novels of Salman Rushdie" shows that Salman Rushdie is the author who inaugurated the field of post-colonial diasporism in his debut novel *Grimus*. He deeply studies all his novels from the diasporic point of view. Ved Mitra Shukla in his research article states that Salman Rushdie is a children's writer and he proves his statement with the help of Rushdie's selected novels, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990), *Luka* and *Fire of Life* (2010). Further he examines that in both these novels there are also some common themes which have been popular in the world of children's literature.

The fiction of Salman Rushdie, in the world of today are left unaffected by historical forces. Historical facts are bound to come in the way of any sensible writer. It was rightly said that the History is the mother of all subject and so every subject has its own history. There is a superb inter- relationship of history and the individual in the Rushdie's world of fiction. The "New York Times" remarked that "The literary map of India is about to be redrawn . . . . *Midnight's Children* sounds like a continent finding its voice. An author to welcome to world company."

Rushdie's second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981) won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction, an "Arts Council Writers" Award, The Booker Meconell Prize for fiction in 1993 and the English Speaking Union Award. The novel was translated into twelve languages. Also received an 'Arts Council Literary Bursary Trust' award. In 1993 the novel also received the "Australian State Prize for European Literature" In this novel, Rushdie's chief aim was to 'relate private lives to public events and to explore the limits of individuality in a country as big, as populous and culturally variegated as India.' The critic Malcolm Bradbury acclaimed the novel's achievement in *The Modern British Novel* (1994) a new start for the late twentieth century novel. Asha Kaushik remarks: "As a cultural quest for political relevance and vice versa, the novel is a valuable study in contradictions of the hegemonic process in India" (113).

Rushdie's birth coincided with a particularly important moment in Indian history. After nearly one hundred years of colonial rule, the British occupation of the South Asian subcontinent was coming to an end. Almost exactly three months after Rushdie's birth, Pakistan and India achieved their long awaited independence when, at the stroke of midnight on August fourteen and fifteen respectively, power was

transferred from Great Britain to the sovereign governments of each country. The period that immediately followed independence proved tumultuous.

Political and social tensions between Hindus and Muslims caused not only the division of India into two separate countries a calamitous event referred to as Partition but also wide-scale which riots claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The violence that accompanied independence was a prelude to the multiple wars, coups, and governmental abuses that plagued the area in the years that followed.

The novel narrates key events in the history of India through the story of a pickle factory worker Saleem Sinai, one of 1001 children born as India won Independence from Britain in 1947. He is born with several supernatural powers. He had a sense of telepathy. His sense organ is also very well developed and he could smell things from a very far distance. He later discovers all children born on that day between twelve a. m to one a. m are born with super telepathic power. Magic realism is a tool which has been implied by the author and it successfully connects the plot of the novel to the history of a country.

Rushdie is also highly influenced by modern literature. *Midnight's Children* borrows themes from the German novelist, Gunter Grass's novel *The Tin Drum*, which Rushdie claims inspired him to begin writing. *The Satanic Verses* is also clearly influenced by Mikhail Bulgakov's classic Russian novel *The Master and Margarita.* India and Pakistan are the themes, of *Midnight's children.* This novel has received accolades for being Rushdie's best, most flowing and inspiring work, but none of Rushdie's post works has had the same critical reception or caused the same controversy as *The Satanic Verses.*

Midnight's Children has earned immense praise both in India and abroad. The political upheaval and constant threat of violence that marked the first three decades

of independence forms the backdrop for *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie's most celebrated novel. Like Rushdie himself, Saleem, the narrator of *Midnight's Children*, is born on the development of both India and Pakistan. Most of Rushdie's novel concern themselves, to some extent, with the character and history of these two major South Asian nations and describe the various, often violent struggles between different religions, classes, languages, and geographical regions. In the thirty years following independence, India and Pakistan fought three separate wars: two over Kashmir, and one over the creation of an independent Bangladesh. The wars produced millions of refugees, claimed thousands of lives, and led to a nearly permanent state of tension between the two countries.

In this Epical novel, *Midnight's Children* Rushdie speaks of many Indians and many versions of reality. High seriousness of the elderly writers, like Raja Rao or R. K. Narayan, is replaced in his fiction by playfulness, comicality and triviality. *Midnight's children* remains an Indian novel in the sense that the author delves deep into Indian psyche and unearths rich ore of ancient indigenous resources like epic, folklore, oral myth and rituals which till date inform the mind and belief system of the millions in a substantial way. The urge for largeness or bigness exemplifies one Indian 'disease', a desire for the whole. The narrator hero of the novel *Midnight's children,* Saleem Sinai suffers from this Indian disease and proclaims, "to understand just one life, you have to swallow the world" (17).

Midnight's Children resonates more than ever in a world of growing conflict, calling for articulate and creative story telling. *Midnight's Children* demonstrates the purpose of how we as humans apply Magical realism to resolve cultural conflict and genocide. Rushdie says: "Reality is a question of perspective; the further you get from

the past, the more concrete and plausible it seems- but as you approach the present, it inevitably seems more and more incredible" (145).

This novel *Midnight's Children*, chosen for my research is often associated with several categories of literary fiction, including magical realism, postcolonial fiction and postmodern literature. *Midnight's Children* is as complete a reflection of the life and character of the subcontinent as any single novel could possibly provide. This project focuses on a detailed study of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire. The next chapter deals with the theme of the novel.

Chapter Two

Theme of partition

The second chapter titled "Theme of partition" deals with the History, Consciousness, Interpretation, Partition, Political Freedom, Post Colonialism and Nationalism of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. India has so many stories to tell about the past, the present and the future. It is true that a nation is not there if it is not part of one's own consciousness. A nation does not exist as a physical entity, but lives by and speaks to us through the culture soul.

Midnight's Children is Rushdie's interpretation of a period of about 70yrs of India's modern history dealing with the events leading to the partition and beyond. The identification between the public and private strands is complete in this novel and that gives unity to the novel. Throughout *Midnight's Children,* Saleem Sinai successfully tells the stories of his life and India's pre and post colonization. Saleem flashes back to major moments in his life while commenting on those events in the present. He offers his opinion on how his life unfolded in order to give the reader different perspectives, from struggles and tragedies to victories and joys.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is an imaginative tale that centres on the life of Saleem Sinai. Saleem is a boy who is born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, the precise moment that India becomes independent. Because of his timely birth, Saleem believes that his life is infinitely tied to his nation, so as India goes through the struggles of stabilizing as a sovereign state, he undergoes his own ordeals. Saleem's birth is so remarkable .that he, along with the thousand other midnight's children, is given a magical ability: he can hear the thoughts of all the midnight children and of others around him. So, Saleem creates the midnight's Children Conference and uses its members to observe the social and political changes

that reinvent the country, offering insight on the religious differences that led to the separation of India and Pakistan.

Saleem's tale is divided into three parts: the first describes his family history, the second talks about him being brought up as India is transforming, and the third recounts Saleem's various endeavors in adulthood that eventually led to his death. Throughout the novel, Rushdie uses Saleem Sinai to chronicle India's pre and postcolonial history by having him narrate his tale through flashbacks, experience memory loss for major national events, and encounter personal struggles and tragedies at the exact moment India does.

Saleem recites his story through flashbacks, offering vivid descriptions of his family, life, and India's development. He is currently thirty years old and begins his narrative by stating that time is running out, and he will most likely die before his next birthday. Therefore, Saleem decides to tell his story for his son who also has to bear the blessing and curse of a midnight birth.

Throughout the entire narration, Saleem tells his tale to Padma his caretaker, avid listener, and biggest critic. In doing this, Saleem is able to record his life, while flashing back to crucial moments in India's past that shape his family's history. *Midnight's Children* begins on the midnight of August 15, 1947, problematizing history, both retrospectively and prospectively to provide 'alternate history' through Rushdie's own narrative voice, along with Saleem's subjective self. By flashing in and out of the past, Saleem is able to offer his own opinion on the various events that parallel his life and India's colonization.

Saleem begins off his tale in Kashmir, the place where his grandparents met in 1915. At this point in India, the British Raj is still very much in rule, but Kashmir remains untouched because the partition has not yet wreaked havoc on the city.

Saleem's grandparents see each other for the first time on the day World War I ends. Saleem continues to chronicle his grandparents' marriage, their move to Agra, and finally, the moment when Saleem's parents meet. By the time his parents, Ahmed and Amina Sinai, move to Bombay to settle down, India is on the verge of collapse because of religious differences.

On June 8, 1947, Amina finds out that she is pregnant, and the partition of India is announced. Moreover, a fortuneteller prophesizes Saleem's timely birth, claiming to Amina, "A son, Sahiba, who will never be older than his motherland– neither older nor younger" (96). So, Saleem Sinai is brought into the world on August 15, 1947, and celebrations take place to mark the independence of India and the fall of the British Raj. Adult Saleem mentions that Prime Minister Nehru wrote him a letter, saying,

> My belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention: it will be, in a sense, a mirror of our own. (139)

By doing so, Nehru gives Saleem, along with the other Midnight children, the responsibility of pushing India into becoming the great nation that it can be.

As Saleem grows up in a swiftly changing India, he is able to observe events that threaten to tear down the newly formed nation. Soon after Saleem's birth, the government freezes Ahmed Sinai's assets, causing the family to struggle to make ends meet. During this terrible period, the Sinais receive the horrendous news of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The tragedy causes the Sinais to fear for their lives because they are terrified that a Muslim has killed Gandhi. Amina's brother warns the Sinais

to hide, stating, "Get out of here, big sister— If a Muslim did this thing, There will be hell to pay" (163).

The killer turns out to be a Hindu extremist, and the Sinais are saved. The occurrence reveals that relations between Muslims and Hindus, even after the Partition, are still strained, and neither side trusts the other. Another event that limits India's development is the 1956 language march in which protesters call for a division of Bombay, separating inhabitants by language.

By retelling both India's history and his own, Saleem ultimately creates a different account of the nation's past. Regarding this, Critic Abraham P. Abraham states, "The reader is taken to a world of Imagination where he/she believes that Saleem's story is one version of his story and Saleem indirectly suggests that he has created India's history by thinking it into reality" (23). However, adult Saleem realizes that he has not accurately depicted India's past but believes that he should still keep his version because it is what he remembers about his nation, and his version is crucial to telling his own story correctly.

As Saleem becomes an adult, his life is thrown into turmoil, causing him to lose everything he ever cared about. His family moves to Pakistan, the young nation that is the complete opposite of India. While Saleem struggles to adjust to the Muslim dominated country, India faces its own fight with China over border disputes. Simultaneously, relations between Pakistan and India start to completely crumble, and in 1965, the two fight a war over Kashmir. With this war, Saleem loses his family from a bombing raid over Pakistan. Eventually, he ends up back in India but only to find that Indira Gandhi has become the new prime minister, whom Saleem believes, is going to ruin the country. His predictions come true because Gandhi is convicted of campaign malpractice.

On June 25, 1975, she declares a State of Emergency against anyone who opposes her and begins a sterilization campaign against the midnight children, trying to cut off the magical abilities. But at this point, Saleem already has an infant son, Aadam Sinai, who carries on the magic. After his sterilization, Saleem states, "No longer connected to history, drained above and below, I made my way back to the capital, conscious that an age, which had begun on that long ago midnight, had come to a sort of end" (508). In the end, the story comes back to adult Saleem, and he says that Padma has finally gotten him to say yes to a marriage. However, on the wedding day, Saleem's body crumbles into dust, and he dies. Throughout the novel, Saleem's effort is to contain all of India within himself to depict his personal story with the stories of his country only to disintegrate and collapse at the end of his attempt.

In telling his story, Saleem tries hard to adhere to the accuracy of the events he describes, but he realizes that there is no way to fully tell both stories without having some flaws. As Saleem flashes between present and past, the reader is allowed to hear what Saleem really thinks of his own history and what occurrences in India's colonization are important to his own tale. Another way that Saleem depicts India's colonization is by suffering memory loss for key events that take place in India as well as in his own life. First, Saleem forgets the actual date of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. Referring to his mistake, he states, "But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; In my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time" (190).

This reveals that Saleem realizes his mistake in remembering the event, but he must continue with the wrong date because that is when the event unfolds in his memory. However, this mistake in memory seems ironic because Saleem claimed long ago that his life is tied to India's, and he must tell the past in order for people to

remember these events later on. Yet Saleem himself forgets a major moment in India's history that almost led to another war between India and Pakistan. Nonetheless, the flaw allows Saleem to stick to both stories as he knows them, and he does not try to make readers believe everything he says. Saleem's realization of the inaccuracy of his tale, then, makes himself aware as he narrates the rest of his tale and chronicles the rest of India's history.

Saleem also cannot remember whether the 1957 general election took place before or after his tenth birthday. The election was significant because while the All India Congress won the election, the Communist Party became the largest opposition group. The results of the election frightened politicians and citizens alike. On this, Saleem remarks, "The election of 1957 took place before... my tenth birthday; but although I have racked my brains, my memory refuses, stubbornly, to alter the sequence of events. I don't know what's gone wrong" (254).

Saleem is still shown trying to correct his memory, but a part of him wants to stay with the interpretation he already has. On the other hand, he realizes that if he keeps repeating these small lapses in memory, they will eventually add up to create a large gap that he will not be able to fill in with his own feelings on the events. Earlier in the text, Saleem comments, "Does one error invalidate the entire fabric? Am I so far gone... that I'm prepared to distort everything to rewrite the whole history of my times purely in order the place myself in a central role?" (190).

Saleem does not seem to know what to make of the failure in memory: Is the time or full context of the occurrence too important to forget or is it simply a minor detail that does not affect the meaning of his tales? Throughout the rest of his story, Saleem ponders this question as he faces more problems with his memory.

The biggest lapse in Saleem's recollection of thoughts occurs when he loses his entire memory. Immediately after a bomb falls down on his parents during the air raid in Pakistan, Saleem is struck on the head by a silver spittoon. The impact of the spittoon causes him to forget all of his memories, which adult Saleem later calls his process of purification. He ends up at a secret camp of the Pakistani army and travels with them for a period a time, being referred to as "Buddha" since he cannot recall his own name. One day, while carrying out army orders, he and two other soldiers get lost in the Sundarbans, a huge jungle between Bangladesh and India. After spending two days in the jungle starving and hallucinating, Saleem's memory comes rushing back when a snake bites him in the heel. He states, "I was rejoined to the past, jolted into unity by snake poison, and it began to pour out through the Buddha's lips. As his eyes returned to normal, his words flowed so freely that they seemed to be an aspect of the monsoon" (419).

Saleem believes that he is now purified because his remembrance of events that wreaked his family needed to be forgotten and wiped away so that he could start over again. Saleem's memory decides the way his two tales unfold, determining when and how events have taken place. While he is aware of his faulty memory, he does not seem to have a solution for solving this dilemma. So, he figures that he should just keep going on with the stories, trying to fill in the missing parts as best as he can.

Saleem creates the special type of history of an unreliable narrator, as he has his own perspective of history. He combines 'fiction' with 'facts' to emphasize the ambiguous nature of history. His memory serves as a way for Saleem to shape India's history to fit in with his own, and the reader sees only his interpretation of the country's history. But, Saleem's mistakes cause his readers to be skeptical of his narratives because the truth behind them is flawed by the missing information.

Padma, his caretaker, even has a hard time believing the stories after she finds out that Saleem fails to inform her of who his real parents are. Yelling at Saleem, she cries, "You tricked me. Your mother you called her; Your father, your grandfather, and your aunts. What thing are you that you don't even care to tell the truth about who your parents were? You are a monster" (131).

The fact that Padma cannot fully trust Saleem's tale is significant in that she is his biggest supporter. In addition, if no one can trust Saleem, then there is really no reason for him to be recounting his stories for future generations. The problem faced by Saleem is that if nothing can be true absolutely, then how meaning can be created? As his memory errors become increasingly obvious, Saleem himself becomes unsure of the truth of his narrative Saleem's unreliable memory is simply a factor that he must take in account when trying to chronicle India's colonization because he knows that his faultiness will cause people to view him as untrustworthy.

Lastly, Saleem is able to recount India's colonization by encountering personal struggles, tragedies, and other crucial events at the precise moment that India does. His own birth happens to take place as India is partitioned and created into a new nation. This incident marks the beginning of Saleem's journey into becoming completely tied to India. He prospers as India does but also suffers the same way that India does.

Saleem calls the country his twin because the two share such a close bond, which is why he chooses to tell India's history in the first place. He states, "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape" (3). Saleem is essentially an allegory of India because he brings together India's past, present, and

future in order to fully describe what happened to the nation after being split up and reinvented.

In 1956, language marches take place in Bombay with protesters fighting to divide the city up by language. At this time, hundreds of voices fill Saleem's head, forcing him to hear the thoughts of citizens all across India. Saleem soon discovers that these voices not only belong to ordinary people but also to the children of midnight, his brothers and sisters. His gift allows the midnight children to connect with each other, letting them share their thoughts and opinions. Furthermore, they offer Saleem insight on various events that take place all across the country, which in turn, lets Saleem talk about the different aspects of life in India. But, Saleem does not always use his newly acquired gift in a positive way. He says, "Despite the many vital uses to which his abilities could have been put by his impoverished, under developed country, he chose to conceal his talents, frittering them away on inconsequential voyeurism and petty cheating" (196). This reveals that Saleem's ability to read thoughts of the midnight children corrupted him for a period of time because he did not use the gift in a way that would benefit anyone or anything except himself. Similarly, India was being corrupted and tormented by protesters who approved or opposed the division of Bombay based on language.

In September of 1962, India reaches an all-time low as it battles China over border disputes. When relations between these two nations worsen, India makes a declaration saying that it will use any force necessary to stop the Chinese from moving into Indian Territory. The Sinais are currently living in Pakistan with Amina's sister because Ahmed Sinai has become consumed by alcoholism. As India crumbles under the pressure from the Chinese, they receive news that Ahmed Sinai has suffered a heart boot, a type of heart condition, which makes them urgently return to their

homeland. Referring to this, Saleem says, "I had overstepped the boundaries of what I was permitted to do or know or be; as though history had decided to put me firmly in my place. I was left entirely without a say in the matter" (338).

Amina helps her husband gain his health back, and the family is able to mend their relationships. As the Sinais enjoy being reunited and getting along again, India loses the war with China. These events in Saleem's life oppose each other because as India suffers greatly, Saleem is able to regain his family and be happy again. Soon after this occurrence, Saleem loses his entire family when India enters yet another war with Pakistan. In this case, he and the nation are both devastated because circumstances have caused them to experiences terrible losses.

The final events that shape Saleem's life are Indira Gandhi's election to the position of prime minister and the birth of Saleem's son, Aadam Sinai. Gandhi's election affects Saleem in ways that he could never have imagined. Saleem feels as though she is corrupting the government to the point where he refers to the Gandhi years as the darkest hour in India's history. To make matters worse, she calls for an Act of Emergency because she fears that her opposition will try everything to take her down. She invokes the sterilization campaign against the midnight children, causing them to lose their magical abilities and connections to one another.

When the midnight children lose their gifts, they give up on the thought that someone will be able to get rid of Gandhi's crueling policies and orders. Throughout this period, Aadam remains sick with tuberculosis, which Saleem blames on Gandhi's ruling of the government. Eventually, Gandhi calls for a re-election and loses, forcing her out of office. After she is gone, India seems to be improving and Aadam is no longer ill. These events conclude Saleem's story and the story of India's colonization because there is no longer a Midnight's Children Conference to connect him with the

rest of India. Saleem's crumbling death represents how large and vast India has grown and improved since its Partition and indicates that it is now time for Saleem to conclude the two stories.

"At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom." (1) 1947 was a year of inconceivable chaos and shock for the Indian people. As Lord Mountbatten carved up the subcontinent in his haste to secure a position of political indifference for the British towards the impending civil war, hundreds of thousands of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus were being subjected to the most macabre of tortures and death. Still more were left with no idea of whether their homes now fell into Indian or Pakistani territory. At the time, this was of no consequence compared to the constant threat of savage revenge attacks from opposing religious factions. The terror and deep suspicion which permeated the bloody birth of India and Pakistan were to become the new nations' recurring nightmare.

The trauma of Partition threw into question whether Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a 'New' India could possibly survive. The apportioning of blame and bitter anger at what had been allowed to happen was directed with full force by the media at key political figures which now assumed responsibility for the implementation of peace and progress. The next three decades did nothing to assuage fears of further bloodshed, and incredulity towards the grand promises of the future became a complete loss of faith.

In 1981, a novel as grand in scope and substance as those promises was published. *Midnight's Children*, written by Salman Rushdie, exquisitely allegorised the legacy of Partition to create a commentary addressing its reality. By accident of birth, the story's protagonist, Saleem, is born at midnight on August 15th 1947 – the

moment of India's Independence, and so he is "handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (2).

The novel's conceptualisation of Saleem as India itself is the book's central premise, and Rushdie's most forceful accusation regarding the cause of the country's continual political victimisation. As soon as he is borne from his mother's womb, Saleem is under immense pressure to 'end up meaning... something.' (3). His subsequent authorial quest for such meaning leads him to the construction of a self-centred past in which he alone assumes responsibility for key events in national history. This can be interpreted as Rushdie's critique of India's idea of itself as central to its failure. The importance of nationalism in India's struggle to gain independence from the British was paramount because it united the masses in common purpose. Through strengthened self definition, it became easier to project the idea of 'other' onto their rulers. For the Indian people, however, a unified identity was hard to conceive because of the country's inherent multitude of varying languages, cultures and religions.

Much of the coloniser's hegemonic success relied upon the internalisation of its definition of 'Indian' by those it sought to dominate. In so doing the population of India began to categorise itself according to the simplified British view of Indians through religion. The Indian Nationalist Movement saw its greatest weapon against Empire as the foregrounding of religious identity. This required new interpretations of ancient texts and of historical events, many of which had not been recorded in writing, but passed down orally through the generations. As religious identity became more clearly defined, a growing chasm appeared between not only the Indian and the British, but between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus themselves.

Rushdie's scepticism towards nationalism and the ultimate reality of nation itself as little more than myth is a fundamental theme in *Midnight's Children*. Just as India attempted to define itself as a united nation which incorporated all its constituent diversities, Saleem tried to unify "the so called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike which jostled for space within my head."(4). By right of birth, he had inherited the magical ability "to look into the hearts and minds of men." (5).

Saleem's self-conscious reconstruction of his past is Rushdie's theory of how 'nation' is formed as an ideological tool. As noted by Abdulrazak Gurnah in his *Themes and Structures in Midnight's Children*, Saleem is absent from his own history for one hundred and sixteen pages of the novel; It actually begins with the story of his grandfather. Throughout the narrative, Saleem makes repeated references to the legacy left to him by his forefathers, including his extraordinary olfactory powers and the "superb silver spittoon, inlaid with lapis lazuli" (8). By also 'filling in the gaps' of a history in which he is ultimately found to be uninvolved, Saleem situates himself in a present which is firmly rooted in the past. The representation of time in the novel emphasises the creative and therefore artificial nature of history.

This constant, nonlinear shifting of time is important for two reasons. The first is that it illuminates the selectiveness of writing; the juxtaposition of events from different time periods puts them in an altogether different context than when presented chronologically, thus revealing much about the author's intentions. In Saleem's case, his purpose is to place himself as a central character in his story with strong genealogical heritage. The second is that it shows the reliance of the historian upon the inaccuracy of memory, despite the distortion it must inevitably undergo if the memory is not first hand. Rushdie deliberately presents Saleem as an unreliable

narrator in order to show the fragility of 'nation' as a concept; That although it has the power to "... rouse unlike peoples in dramatically unlike conditions in an impassioned chorus of voluntary cooperation and sacrifice," (10), it is fundamentally a construct.

The myth of nationhood is further exposed through the Children of Midnight themselves, of whom Saleem and his nemesis Shiva are both members. The Conference signifies the five hundred and eighty one men and women who were to become members of the new Indian parliament. That they all possess some form of supernatural power according to their proximity of birth to the hour of midnight emphasises the impossible promise they carry for the realisation of national fulfilment. Corruption and cynicism could not allow them to survive. Nehru's great ambition for post independence India begins to disintegrate almost as soon as India is founded, in the partition violence and in the language marches.

After Three Five Year Plans, the end of the Nehru era and India's conflicts with Pakistan and China, the most frightening moments of the country's fledgling history arrived. Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, her father's vision of a free and democratic India was forgotten. After her party and the people realised the transparency of her image of democracy, they saw the emergence of her true "inclination and conviction a dictator." Having been found guilty on two out fifty two charges of campaign malpractice during previous elections, the Prime Minister declared that India was in a state of emergency. This period was to last almost two years, during which time Gandhi proved her true nature. Depending on whose reports were to be believed, anywhere from "a few thousand to fifty thousand" strike leaders and protesters were imprisoned, the press was meticulously censored and opposition parties were banned. Perhaps the most shocking violation of human rights imposed by

her were the wholesale demolition of slum areas and the enforced sterilisation of "men with two children or more, especially in crowded... towns" (14).

Rushdie's scathing representation of Indira Gandhi in *Midnight's Children* belies an anger felt by the masses at the time: "...green and black the Widow's hair and clutching hand and children muff and little balls and onebyone and torninhalf and little balls go flying green black her hand is green her nails are black as black" (15).

Saleem is unable to describe her as anything other than the monster of nightmares, and the absolute failure of the legacy of Partition is made clear. He and the majority of the other Children of Midnight are rounded up and forcibly subjected to sterilisation; The parliamentary members they signify are rendered impotent, unable to wield their governmental powers. Despite the hopelessness of Rushdie's representation of the Emergency, he still has faith in yet another positive vision of India. Saleem's wife at the time, Parvati the witch, is pregnant, and her long, agonising labour lasts thirteen days, the amount of time between Gandhi's indictment and her announcement of the Emergency. Aadam Sinai is borne from the coupling of two the most powerful of Midnight's Children, Parvati the Witch and Shiva. He is offered as India's new promise, as are all the other children whom Shiva has fathered: "We, the children of Independence, rushed wildly and too fast into our future; He Emergency born, will be is already more cautious, biding his time; But when he acts, he will be impossible to resist" (16).

Midnight's Children is a loose allegory for events in India both before and, primarily, after the independence and partition of India, which took place at midnight on 15 August 1947. In the temporal sense, *Midnight's Children* is post-colonial as the main body of the narrative occurs after India becomes independent. The narrative framework of *Midnight's Children* consists of tale which Saleem Sinai recounts orally

to his wife to be Padma. This selfreferential narrative recalls indigenous Indian culture, particularly the similarly orally recounted Arabican Nights.

His family is active in this, as they begin a number of migrations and endure the numerous wars which plague the subcontinent. During this period he also suffers amnesia until he enters a quasi mythological exile in the jungle of Sundarban, where he is re-endowed with his memory. In doing so, he reconnects with his childhood friends. Saleem later becomes involved with the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay's "cleansing" of the Jama Masjid slum.

For a time Saleem is held as a political prisoner; These passages contain scathing criticisms of Indira Gandhi's overreach during the Emergency as well as what Rushdie seems to see as a personal lust for power bordering on godhood. The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the *Midnight Children*, and there is little left for Saleem to do but pick up the few pieces of his life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his still young nation; a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history. Now, nearing his thirty-first birthday, Saleem believes that his body is beginning to crack and fall apart. Fearing that his death is imminent, he grows anxious to tell his life story. Padma, his loyal and loving companion, serves as his patient, often sceptical listener.

Saleem's personal life corresponds to the life and history of the nation. The story traces the various events in the life of the central character that synchronize with major happening in the recent history of India. The story traces the various crises in the life of the protagonist that synchronize with the major events and movements in the history of modern India. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Quit India Movement, the role of Muslim League, the post Independence riots, the Five Year Plans, the

reorganization of the states in India, the language agitation, the Chinese aggregation, the theft of the sacred relic from Hazrathbal mosque, the war with Pakistan, the independence of Bangladesh, the Emergency and other historical landmarks.

Every major event in Saleem's life is linked with some incident in the life of the nation. Saleem returns to India after a period of exile in Pakistan. In a fit of anger, Saleem resolves to give the nation the right to choose a better future, for he looks upon the country as "not only my twin in birth but also joined to me at the hip, so that what happened to either of us happened to us both" (385). At this critical moment in the life of both, Saleem and the nation, the pace of history accelerates and there are a number of synchronous events on either side. Shiva's "explosion" (410) into the life of Saleem at the magician's ghetto coincides with India's surprising nuclear capability demonstrated with the first nuclear explosions in the deserts of Rajasthan on 18th May 1974.

The marriage celebrations of Saleem and Parvati synchronize with the Republic Day festivities in the country and from then onward the parallels drawn between the life of the protagonist and that of the nation continue through Laylah Sinai (Parvati). The moment Laylah enters labour room, Indira Gandhi is found guilty of malpractices in the previous elections. Laylah's son, Aadam Sinai is born on 25th June 1975, the very day Emergency was imposed in India. He too, like Saleem, is "mysteriously handcuffed to history" (420) and his fortunes are inseparably linked with those of his country. His distress caused by tuberculosis is suspected of having "something darkly metaphorical" (422) in it. It seems to be manifestation of his connection to history. In the words of Rushdie,

> . . . in those midnight months when the age of my connection to history overlapped with his, our private emergency was not unconnected with

> the larger macrocosmic disease, under whose influence the sun had become as pallid and diseased as our son. (422)

Rushdie implies that Saleem's generation has failed to consolidate the possibilities inherent in independence. The possibility exists in each passing generation of midnight children, who are the children of each successive era. Each generation, as Saleem muses, will erase the presence of a previous generation that has not yet learnt to define a stable and solid sense identity. The individual voice is swamped by the creeping progression of time and history: nevertheless, the text's conclusion is open ended.

There may be no such thing as a single national identity in the contemporary world, where media and communication link cultures and countries: there is perhaps an interchange of cultures, to varying degrees, between all countries. This delicate ambiguity is emphasised in the final sentence of the text, which links magic with realism, the individual with history, the individual and regional identity and self assertion with the magnet of the universal. The next chapter deals with the Polyphony and Magic Realism of the novel.

Chapter Three

Polyphony and Magic Realism

The Third Chapter of "Polyphony and Magic Realism" aims to discuss the role of polyphony and magic realism in establishing various realities and undermining the conceptions of the totalising power founded on a monologic view of the world. By combining magic realism with polyphony, which reflects the consciousness of the others, the novel presents subjective versions of reality suggesting that reality is a matter of perception. Thus it takes polyphony one step further by the use of magical elements in giving voice to various possibilities. Through its polyphonic narrative and magical realist elements, *Midnight's Children* not only undermines the official accounts of history and the essentialist conceptions of identity and nation but also provides a critique of realism. By encompassing cultural diversity of the multicultural Indian community and replacing the totalising version of reality with a multitude of perspectives, the novel demonstrates the multiplicity of reality and undermines systems of authority.

Is this an Indian disease, this urge to encapsulate the whole of reality? (75). Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* features a polyphonic narrative that demonstrates the above mentioned "urge" to capture various modes of reality represented by the Indian subcontinent. Its first person narrator Saleem Sinai's autobiographical narrative provides an imaginative version of the historical events of his time that subverts official accounts of history and creates an alternative to the totalitarian and unifying understanding of truth. The novel mainly deals with the historical events in India after its independence from British rule. Saleem, switched at birth with Shiva, and other midnight's children, who were born at midnight on August 15, 1947, when India officially became independent of Britain, have magical powers

hinting at the multiple possibilities of India, but they are hunted by the state and most of them are sterilised or murdered. The repressive power of the state, represented by the rule of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, referred to as the Widow in the novel, attempts to eliminate cultural differences that constitute the Indian population in order to create a unified, totalising version of reality.

The monologic, authoritative voice of the government that restricts the multifaceted representation of the community is subverted by the voices of the midnight's children and the unreliable narration that depends on memory, magic, and multicultural values of the people whose beliefs, ideas, and lifestyles are different from what the state envisions. Thus, the novel's way of narrating is in accord with Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of polyphony, dialogism, and heteroglossia focusing on the novel's engagement with the individualised version of historical events. The experiences of significant social, cultural, and political struggles, such as the introduction of western culture, colonialism, independence, and partition, have had great effects on the Indian subcontinent that incorporates elements, rendering it culturally diverse. In the novel one can see that this multiplicity is under the threat of the state's policy of oppressing the cultural heterogeneity and totalising the construction of meaning.

Demonstrating these social and historical events in a fictional context, *Midnight's Children* celebrates multiculturalism as an enriching quality. Rushdie reflects the multifaceted nature of the country in the novel by giving voice to various segments of the society. In order to represent cultural diversity, the novel deals with Indian history by presenting it as a part of the individualised version of the protagonist narrator Saleem Sinai, who has telepathic powers enabling him to read the minds of

the people. Saleem's birth at midnight on August 15, 1947, the day that India gained independence, makes him "handcuffed to the history" of his country (3).

Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, wrote a letter to his parents celebrating his birth: "Dear Baby Saleem... We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own" (87). Thus, Saleem interprets the historical events in relation to his autobiographical account, according to which, for instance, the declaration of the state of emergency is an attempt to destroy Saleem and the people he cares about. Major historical events coincide with what happens to him in crucial moments, so he blames himself for some unfortunate events. For example, when he was ten, his teacher pulled Saleem's hair so hard that a clump of hair came out leaving his head in blood. Meanwhile, the ten-year-old India was hit by "storms, floods, hailstones" which "managed to wreck the second Five Year Plan" (149). Similarly, when he has an operation and his sinuses are drained, India loses the war with China and "PUBLIC MORALE DRAINS AWAY" (219). Besides, to reflect the multiplicity in Indian society, he feels his body will disintegrate into six hundred million pieces, the number of Indians at the time of his writing.

Midnight's Children fits Bakhtin's definition of the polyphonic novel in many aspects. It has an open-ended plot, and the characters are in continuous dialogical relations. Rushdie employs polyphony in his fiction to reflect a variety of points of view and interpretations. Beside a variety of characters from different social classes, beliefs, nationalities and ethnicities, the novel also encompasses the consciousness of political and cultural contexts from the past. None of the voices is privileged; all merge into each other and do not yield to the authority of a single voice. In the novel, the state targets the midnight's children who represent the multiculturalism of a new, independent country.

The *Midnight's children*, hold the alternative realities of a multicultural society; therefore, they are seen as a threat by the powers that totalise the understanding of reality. The undermining of the narrative authority by virtue of polyphony is parallel to the undermining of the notion of truth as a fixed category. Through its polyphonic quality, *Midnight's Children* demonstrates that the notion of truth is culturally constructed; reality is built on individual perception, and it also emphasises the constructed nature of nation, identity, and history. When he speaks of India, Saleem says that "although it had five thousand years of history... quite imaginary... a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will except in a dream we all agreed to dream" (80). He emphasizes the role of imagination in the construction of nation as a unified category. This collective will seek a common characteristic like religion or ethnicity to create an imaginary land just as Pakistanis hold on to religion to create Pakistan.

The novel suggests a non-essentialist attitude towards nation construction; there is no essence about being a nation since it is constituted by the multiplicity of consciousness. The language riots of 1957 and the partition of Pakistan into Bangladesh, which also depends on Islam, interrogates nationalism and demonstrates the constructedness of such ideals. The multicultural nature of the country can only be defined in plural terms without totalising any sensibilities of truth into a single voice. The novel's subversion of taken for granted ideas, such as racial and ethnic purity that categorises individuals into types, is embodied by the narrator himself Saleem's lineage is a significant factor that contributes to the multiplicity he embodies. He is born into a wealthy Muslim household, the Sinais, but his biological parents are Methwold, an English coloniser, and Vanita, a poor Hindu woman. With regard to

this, Wilson states that Saleem "encapsulates in his equivocal personal heritage the ambiguous identity of India itself" (60).

In addition to Hindu, Muslim, and Christian influences, Saleem has various father figures such as Winkie, Methwold, and Ahmed Sinai, and mother figures Vanita, Mary, and Amina sinai. Although he is not the biological grandson of Adam Aziz, Saleem's claim of resemblance to him undermines the dominant notions of purity in terms of lineage and ethnicity. His cultural upbringing also gives him a hybrid identity. His family is Indian but, living on a British estate, his father has taken on British habits, and his grandfather studied in Germany where he has adopted western culture. Besides, Shiva and Parvati's son Adam is adopted by Saleem and Padma. The lineage of the child, repeating that of Saleem, includes father figures such as Shiva and Saleem; mother figures such as Parvati, Padma, and Mary. His cultural hybridity also reveals a multicultural community, since he incorporates diverse values in himself.

On the other hand, Shiva, another midnight child, who is brought up by Winkie and bears a Hindu name, is the true heir of the Sinais. Raised in very different conditions from that of his biological parents and Saleem, Shiva becomes a radicalised figure who chooses destruction and totalising unity over peace and multiplicity. Neither child bears the characteristics of their family. Saleem's resemblance to his grandfather Dr. Aziz is not genetically based, it is just a coincidence; he belongs in neither Britain nor India. Yet, he is Indian as well as English. Therefore, the notion of the homogeneity of categories like East and West is also subverted. Shiva is not a Muslim like his biological parents; he does not feel he is an Indian either because he aligns himself with the power holders rather than having an emotional or cultural attachment to any specific place. All the categories that are

allegedly fixed and definite have porous borders between them. As Saleem states, "things even people have a way of leaking into each other" (25). Therefore, through the switching of the children at birth, Rushdie offers an undermining of the traditional notions of purity of nation, identity and culture. Since the totalising power is promoting homogeneity within the society, it attempts to destroy the porous borders among differences. Thus, this kind of undermining requires a polyphonic narrative to illustrate the multiple reality and embody different segments of the society.

In the novel, polyphony is essential, since it juxtaposes the most contradictory and conflicting viewpoints and makes them respond to each other. Bakhtin highlights that polyphony enables the readers to recognize that each speech of the characters stands on the border of someone else's thought or speech (Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics 30). In this sense, the role of magic realism in establishing polyphony is also important in *Midnight's Children* since the narrative includes others' consciousness by using magical realist elements. Magic realism, which is often associated with Latin American writers like Gabriel García Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges, is a literary mode that portrays magical elements as a part of a realist setting. In other words, what can be regarded as unreal is normalized within a magical realist mode; it is presented as an ordinary part of everyday life.

Leal claims that "in magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it" (121). Similarly, Rogers mentions the culturally constructed nature of reality that magic realism untangles. As he states, magic realism "is trying to convey the reality of one or several worldviews that actually exist, or have existed. It is a kind of realism, but one different from the realism that most of our culture now experiences (1). Thus, it is a device that can be used in political criticism and especially in postcolonial writing to offer alternative versions to official truths and to

give voice to silenced populations in their attempt to reclaim their cultures, beliefs, and identities.

Magic realism undermines totalising voices established by the official representations which keep the control of rational explanations. Rushdie's use of magic realism in the novel creates a hybrid reality out of the mundane and the magic and presents a different perception of the world. In the novel, Tai, the boatman claim that he is hundreds or thousands of years old, Saleem's possibility of dissolving into six million pieces, and the supernatural gifts of the children all embody different versions of reality embraced by the characters. Each child born between midnight and one o'clock on the day of Independence has special gifts such as flying, stepping through mirrors, turning into werewolves. Saleem's status as a representation of the multicultural identity of India is reflected by his gift of telepathy. He hears the voices "deafening many tongued terrifying, inside his head!" (117). Here the novel refers to the diverse cultures expressing themselves in different languages. Saleem mentions the multitude of persons he has been all at once: "I have been so-many too-many persons" (263).

"... I am the sum total of everything" (383). When juxtaposed with the state's attempt to create one single nation by eliminating opponents, his supernatural power can be considered as an undermining of absolutes by giving voice to a variety of consciousness. He can invite other midnight's children to The Midnight's Children Conference to have a conversation in his mind. This conference, reminiscent of the Indian parliament with its five hundred and eighty-one members, is parallel to the expectations of a new democratic, multicultural community. The conference introduces dialogues and inner voices of the children from all over the country. In this sense, magic realism is a part of the polyphony of the novel because thanks to his gift,

Saleem can empathise with other consciousnesses. Reflecting on his experience, he says: "I won't deny I was disappointed. I shouldn't have been; there was nothing unusual about the children except for their gifts; their heads were full of all the usual things, fathers mothers money food land possessions fame power God" (166). They represent the ordinary people of India. Therefore, the Midnight's Children Conference provides a ground for each different reality of the country to represent itself. The children assemble and can talk to each other through Saleem, as he states: "by opening my transformed mind to all the children I could turn it into a kind of forum in which they could talk to one another, through me" (164).

They are full of new ideas, hopes, disappointments, sympathy and they can have discussions about subjects ranging from religion to capitalism. Besides, Saleem is not an authority figure among them, as he states: "the children of midnight launched a concerted assault on me, I had no defence" (217). Their voices are not subordinated to an authorial voice; rather they can agree or disagree with any voices. They are able to criticise and abandon Saleem anytime. This plurality of conflicting consciousness renders the novel open-ended by not allowing anyone to have the last word.

Complexity, diversity, and multiplicity have been celebrated in opposition to the unifying voice of oppression in the novel. While the totalising reality of the state represses the voice of alternative realities, in Midnight's Children Conference, the voices that represent different views are in clash as in the case of Saleem and Shiva. Hogan describes the conflict between Shiva and Saleem as a clash between "authoritarian imagination" and the "pluralistic imagination" (512). Although it is Saleem that recounts the past, his voice does not function as an agent of oppression. Instead, he rewrites the history of his nation through the voices of the "others." As

Saleem himself states "I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well. Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me" (3). He himself stands for the multitudes as he is able to hear the thoughts and the inner monologues of people.

On the other hand, Shiva who takes his name from the god of destruction, as an archenemy of Saleem, joins Gandhi's army to carry out her orders of sterilisation of the midnight's children. Having grown up with hatred for Saleem, Shiva becomes a leader of a criminal gang of Bombay, and threatens the children: "Everybody does what I say or I squeeze the shit outa them with my knees" (220) because he wants to take the control of the other children in the conference but Saleem does not allow him to do that.

The use of magical realist elements offers a different perspective towards the reality presented by the authorities. These elements help capturing the multiplicity of truth that depends on the perception of various sensibilities. The narrator refers to the reality created by magical elements as follows:

> Reality can have metaphorical content; that does not make it less real. A thousand and one children were born; there were a thousand and one possibilities which had never been present in one place at one time before; and there were a thousand and one dead ends. Midnight's children can be made to represent many things. (145)

In the novel the abilities of the children are regarded as real because reality is a matter of perception. For Rushdie his use of magic realism is a way to interpret reality: "I think of fantasy as a method of producing intensified images of reality... one thing that is valuable in fiction is to find techniques for making actuality more

intense, so that you experience it more intensely in the writing than you do outside the writing" (Reder, *Conversations with Salman Rushdie* 43).

The burden of colonialism, political upheavals, and the chaotic atmosphere of Indian history can only be represented by virtue of fantasy. Thus it is the liberation effect of the imagination that furnishes magical occurrences with the power to transcend the limits. While the authoritative voice represented by the official history sets its rules by recorded facts and its constructed reality, the voice of those invisible realities of the "others" are heard by the use of myth, fantasy and folk tales that subvert the authority's version of reality by creating an alternative version to it. In this regard, Rushdie's use of magic realism and polyphonic narrative in a postmodern novel that undermines the notion of stable categories like identity, nation, and ethnicity takes Bakhtin's concept of polyphony even further.

In Bakhtin's conception, consciousness is revealed only in relation to others' consciousness. Rushdie, in a way, expands this plurality of consciousness by adding a magical dimension to reality to encapsulate the voice of the others. He not only obliterates the familiar structure of the realist novel by using an unreliable narrator and non-linear narrative but also adds a critique of realism by using magical elements and subverting the totalising discourse that realism depends on. Thus, his work exemplifies a use of polyphony that is even stronger and multidimensional.

In the novel, the narrator struggles with the voice of the totalising power. In his struggle, rather than totality, Saleem's narrative is marked by inclusiveness: "To understand just one life, you have to swallow the World" (77). Saleem's world is about to disintegrate just as India is torn into pieces. This integration is caused by the state's fierce attack on cultural diversity. Kuchta states that "both Rushdie and Saleem attempt to subvert Gandhi's authoritarian rule and her mythical status in the Indian

political imagery by allegorizing personal and national history within the context of the Emergency's repressive practices (205).

The repression stemming from the monologic centralising representation of the authority is replaced by a multivoiced perspective of the narrative. To expose the disorder that is brought about by the political figures and to satirise the monologic view of the world they establish, Rushdie describes Gandhi as a monster:

> The Widow's arm is long as death its skin is green the fingernails are long and sharp and black. Between the walls the children the walls are green the Widow's arm comes snaking down the snake is green the children scream the fingernails are black they scratch the Widow's arm is hunting see the children run and scream the Widow's hand curls round them green and black. (150)

She is depicted like a nocturnal creature feeding upon the children. In the novel, with the declaration of emergency, a majority of the population are robbed of their rights to be represented in the parliament. Saleem and many other midnight's children are subjected to sterilisation. Swann argues that the totalitarian regime of Gandhi attempts "to destroy the balance of nature, supplanting it with the ideal of unlinear progress" therefore "the absolutism which arrogates to itself a supreme knowledge is arraigned against the many gifts of midnight's children; transcendence is arraigned against immanence, unity against multiplicity" (358). Therefore, Saleem's interpretation of the major historical events as reflections of what happens in his life demonstrates the novel's engagement with the idea that all the official representations depend on the perception of the individual. In this regard, the novel questions the way reality is constructed.

The polyphonic nature of the narrative is also supported by the idea of fragmentation throughout the novel. As Rushdie admits in his interview, "one of the things that has happened in the twentieth century is a colossal fragmentation of reality" (Reder, *Conversations with Salman Rushdie* 50). Fragmentation enables polyphony since it defies the authority of the notion of purity and wholeness. Rushdie states that "there never was such a creature as a united India" (*Imaginary Homelands Essays and Criticism* 27). The idea of a homogenous Indian nation is just an imagined concept created by the colonisers and the totalising rule of Indian politicians. Even when India becomes officially independent of British rule, Indians do not become a unified nation. In this respect, the disintegration of the Indian subcontinent is represented by Saleem, since he is also falling apart.

Embodying the history of a post-colonial and multicultural land, and a dubious lineage, Saleem feels that he becomes fragmented both physically and mentally. He continues to tell his story struggling against this danger of fragmentation of his own body: "I am literally disintegrating, slowly for the moment, although there are signs of acceleration. I ask you only to accept (as I have accepted) that I shall eventually crumble into approximately six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous, and necessarily oblivious dust" (24). Also, he is physically deteriorating; he loses one finger, a clump of his hair, and his skin is cracking. He says he is falling apart, cracking into pieces, which also diminishes his reliability: "I am rushing ahead at breakneck speed; errors are possible... I'm racing the cracks, but I remain conscious that errors have already been made, and that, as my decay accelerates (my writing speed is having trouble keeping up), the risk of unreliability grows" (325). He holds himself responsible for the course of history but this very act of attaching personal

meanings to events and claiming responsibility become self-destructive. Saleem's fragmented identity refers to his many different names and roles in his story.

Throughout the novel, he is called piece of the moon, snotnose, baldy, buddha according to his position and physical characteristics. His fragmented identity also embodies different versions of him with various sets of values, beliefs an interpretations of reality. The Sinais's moving to Pakistan, "the land of the pure," where another interpretation of reality comes to the foreground, leads Saleem to become a misfit because "his head was full of all sorts of religions apart from Allah's" (310). Pakistan is a more conservative and non-secular place for Saleem, so he feels he will never be a part of it. He studies history at a college in Pakistan but he says that "not even learning could make me feel a part of this country devoid of midnight children, in which my fellow-students took out processions to demand a stricter, more Islamic society— proving that they had contrived to become the antitheses" (226). As the surrounding conditions vary, Saleem's interpretation changes as well. The novel reflects these various beliefs and lifestyles through Saleem's point of view but he does not impose his own beliefs on the other characters; the narrator's voice does not dominate the others' voices.

Another factor that contributes to the multiplicity of reality is the novel's undermining of the allegedly objective history by highlighting the misleading role of memory in the perception of reality. Saleem's story depends on his fragmented memories. In relation to the importance of these fragments of memory, through which reality can be appropriated, Rushdie states that: "...human beings do not perceive things whole; we are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable only of fractured perceptions. Partial beings, in all the senses of that phrase. Meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles,

chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved; perhaps it is because our sense of what is the case is constructed from such inadequate materials that we defend it so fiercely, even to the death" (*Imaginary Homelands Essays and Criticism* 12).

By playing tricks on the mind, memory subverts reality. Therefore, what is known as official and objective history can be a subverted reality or a product of memory. The novel invites the reader to recognise the imperfect and unreliable nature of history. As Rushdie states, "facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge" (*Imaginary Homelands Essays and Criticism* 25). All diversity cannot be contained by a coherent narrative, thus Saleem disrupts the linearity of the narrative by his digressions, distortions, and intentional mistakes which depend on the unreliability of memory.

For Saleem, India means multiplicity, therefore the state's totalizing tendencies cannot represent cultural diversity. He challenges the forces that legitimize certain ideologies by reflecting the individual perception of reality. In his account of the past his mistakes give a sense of his withholding information. He accepts his mistake as his own version of reality. In doing this, he suggests the fact that what he tells is just his perception of reality, not an absolute truth. Unlike the totalising discourses through which the individual is silenced, in the novel, the totalising version of history is replaced by an individualised perception of reality.

Beside the perception of reality by various social classes and religious communities, another element that contributes to the multiplicity of voices is the use of myth. The use of myth can be a device to privilege and liberate the native culture from the predominance of the colonizer force and its rational tendencies. The

characters such as Shiva and Parvati, taking names from Hindu gods, repeat the myths. Saleem uses fantasy and magic to embellish reality and tells their story as an interpretation of the myths of gods Shiva and Parvati who have a son, Ganesh. Shiva has destructive qualities, and Parvati stands for fertility and devotion just like the characters in the novel. Likewise, their son Adam has big ears like Ganesh.

Reder asserts that Saleem's mythology is personal because he suggests a new mode "which is the creation of a personal mythology that resonates in relation to, but independent of, the national culture from which it emerges" (229). In line with this, for Saleem, "sometimes legends make reality, and become more useful than the facts" (47). Further Saleem affirms that "Picture Singh and the magicians were people whose hold on reality was absolute; they gripped it so powerfully that they could bend it every which way in the service of their arts, but they never forgot what it was" (385). The magicians in the magician's ghetto are communists, led by Picture Singh, the snake charmer. They stand for the suppressed and marginalised classes of India. The state regards them as a threat, and during the destruction of the slums, they all die. The intermingling of myth and magic, then, provides liberty and an opportunity to give voice to unofficial reality.

Another factor that challenges the authority's claim for truth is Saleem's audience Padma. Right from the beginning of the novel, Saleem addresses an audience; he sometimes tries to make his tale more credible and linear by appropriating details and dates to satisfy her. The novel juxtaposes an educated narrator with an illiterate audience; Saleem is an educated man coming from a wealthy family but his illiterate narratee Padma questions the validity of what he tells.

Saleem exclaims: "but here is Padma at my elbow, bullying me back into the world of linear narrative, the universe of what-happened-next" (25). Padma, Saleem's

co-worker in the pickle factory, serves as a critique of Saleem's story which is non-linear and full of flashbacks and digressions. She represents the working class, and her doubts and questions about Saleem's story can be taken as another factor contributing to the heteroglossia and dialogism of the novel. Coming from a lower social class, she is a superstitious and ignorant woman who regards Saleem's storytelling as "writing-shiting" (13). This is important in terms of the polyphony of the narrative because as a character from lower class she has the right to contribute to the construction of reality with her comments and demands.

Saleem is not the privileged figure because his narrative is shaped by the reactions of Padma, representing the majority of masses: "...and certainly Padma is leaking into me. As history pours out of my fissured body, my lotus is quietly dripping in, with her down-to-earthery, and her paradoxical superstition, her contradictory love of the fabulous" (25). Padma's reaction to the magical events is also significant in terms of determining the position of the narrator as an unreliable one. The midnight's children's magical skills, and the events happening in the magician's ghetto like Parvati making people disappear, jugglers' keeping one thousand and one balls in the air at a time raise doubts in Padma's mind. She believes some improbable events without criticism; however, sometimes she questions Saleem's claims: "What nonsense ...How can a picture talk?" (47). Yet, Saleem, who thinks that "reality can have metaphorical content; that does not make it less real" (240), finds a way to reassure her.

Padma wants Saleem to continue the story in a linear way without digressing, but Saleem shatters her traditional understanding of the continuity of the narration. Unlike her expectations, there is no final word to end the story since it ends with the disintegration of the narrator. With regard to Padma she may not be the ideal listener

for him, but Saleem needs her as a critic; at one point what keeps him going is Padma. In Padma's temporary absence during his narration, he confesses that it is her "earthiness of spirit, which keeps – kept? – my feet on the ground...must I now become reconciled to the narrow one-dimensionality of a straight line" (177). Represented by Padma, the reader is engaged with the narrative and participates in the polyphony of the novel. Thus, in a way, Padma provides a multidimensionality and polyphony to the narrative and Saleem considers Padma's responses as his guide to reveal the constructed nature of reality and to disperse the totality of meaning.

In keeping with Bakhtin's concept of polyphony and by the use of magical realist elements, in Midnight's Children, reality is constituted by the coexistence of various meanings which depend on a variety of consciousness. The novel demonstrates the fluidity of concepts such as identity, nation, lineage, and the questionability of all narratives that seem to represent truth because there can be millions of version of reality which is vulnerable to distortion. Therefore, reality cannot be finalised but partially perceived. In this sense, what the novel achieves is similar to "chutnification," the term the narrator uses to describe the analogy he draws between history writing and pickling process. Incorporating Bakhtinian elements with magical realism, the novel takes polyphony one step further to represent the subjective realities. In the novel, the polyphonic narrative serves to subvert any discourse that seeks to exclude alternative versions of truth and reality that are mostly reflected by magical realist elements. In its celebration of pluralism, the narrative undermines the authoritative voice to present the multiple perspectives which establish reality. Thus, reflecting the continent's fate, in his challenging absolutes Saleem's attempts to encapsulate the whole of reality lead to his disintegration

between reality is decisive and cannot be maintained in a whole. The next chapter deals with the hybridity and psychopathology of the novel.

Chapter Four

Hybridity and Postcoloniality

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* remains a central novel in postcolonial literature. Rushdie's ambitious novel rejects the British colonial versions of India and constructs a new world and a new depiction of Indian citizens and history in an attempt to provide greater truth to Indian images and history. *Midnight's Children* follows Saleem Sinai, the novel's narrator, as he self-consciously explains his family's history to the reader and to his listener, Padma. While describing his grandfather and grandmother's personal history, Saleem intertwines Indian history within his narrative.

This combination of his own familial history and Indian history culminates in the moment of his birth. Born at precisely midnight, August 15, 1947, Saleem echoes the birth of an independent India, which gained its independence from Great Britain at the same exact moment as Saleem's birth. In this moment, Saleem gains the ability to communicate with the other "midnight children," those also born on the same day as Indian independence. The novel aligns Saleem's narrative to the narrative of a newly independent India, creating an allegorical reading of his character.

Midnight's Children's importance and significance as a postcolonial text arises from the novel's ability to intertwine three major themes: the creation and telling of history, the creation and telling of a nation's and an individual's identity, and the creation and telling of stories. Within these three connected themes, the novel explores the problems of postcoloniality, depicted in the novel as the difficulties in assigning one's point of personal or national origin, the problems in determining one's personal and national history, and the impossibility of finding and achieving personal and national "authentic" identity. The novel expresses these themes of the

creation and telling of history, identity, and stories, while simultaneously introducing the problems of postcolonial identity, through connected and dependent forms of hybridity.

Midnight's Children remains the embodiment of hybridity, because every aspect of the novel is imbued with this mixing and melding of various elements and characteristics. Along with the use of hybridity, the novel's use of humour throughout the text allows for the enthusiastic and exuberant exploration of Indian postcoloniality and history, allowing the novel to create its own literary and historical identity, instead of forcing the novel to remain a mere retelling of history. Through dependent forms of hybridity, the novel becomes able to openly explore Indian postcoloniality, while discussing the problems associated with this postcoloniality.

Midnight's Children employs different levels of hybridization, each depending on each other to exist and work within the text, through which the novel illustrates India's emerging postcoloniality. The ability of the narrator, Saleem Sinai, to wordlessly communicate with the other Indian children born on the same day, the date of Indian independence, August 15, 1947, demonstrates how magical realism gives Indians the opportunity to communicate the thoughts, desires, and dreams of a nation. The novel employs the formal technique of magical realism, a "hybrid" of realism and the supernatural, through myth and historical events, and Rushdie simultaneously represents ordinary events alongside fantastic elements (Abrams 203). Hence, these 'midnight children' 'literally give voice to an entire subcontinent,' (D'Haen 198) without the narrative being controlled by British colonial powers; this post-colonial narrative becomes possible with magical realism's supernatural power to connect post-colonial citizens and allows them to communicate together.

According to Homi Bhabha, hybridity is the only way the colonized people may gain some power and control over their colonizers. Bhabha explains that "hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation... that reverses the effects of the colonist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (1176). Through the use of hybridity, the colonized people are able to reverse the "formal processes of disavowal" which their colonizers practiced; thus, "the violent dislocation, the Enstellung of the act of colonization, becomes the conditionality of colonial discourse" (1177). By employing hybridity, such as the various forms of hybridity engaged within the novel, as the text expresses the cultural and social hybridity of postcoloniality through the formal hybridity of magical realism, thus allowing historical hybridization to occur, then the colonizers' racist and discriminatory images of the colonized people are undermined.

Hybridity in itself remains vital to the novel and Bhabha's theories, but along with hybridity, Bhabha draws attention to the act of writing and storytelling. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* explains that the "very writing of historical transformation becomes uncannily visible" (224). Similarly, *Midnight's Children*'s focus on Saleem's selfconscious storytelling illustrates how the novel builds upon past literary traditions and demonstrates how Saleem participates in identity creation of his personal history and national history.

The novel's cultural and social hybridity, depicted through the cultural and character diversity within the novel, allows new images of colonial and postcolonial Indian citizens to emerge. As the characters become hybridized socially, through their shifting relationships with each other, the characters alter and change. Through these character interactions and subsequent character changes, the novel depicts societal shifts and historical changes. The relationships between the other "midnight's

children," with whom Saleem is able to communicate with, alter after these children learn their parents' religious and traditional beliefs. Before this cultural indoctrination, the children communicate with each other openly, able to discuss their different gifts and talents, but after learning their cultural traditions, the relationships between the children disintegrate. Through the novel's presentation of a multitude of differing characters and allowing these characters to articulate their own histories and stories, a new colonial and post-colonial history emerges through these varying characters' voices, which remained silenced in an imperial and colonial India.

Eventually, the overwhelming nature of the multiplicity present within India itself and the novel, Saleem becomes forced to end his own personal narrative and focus on the national narrative, consisting of varying narrative threads. Saleem explains that "the curse of midnight's children is to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace" (533). Although this "whirlpool" may refer to the large number of "midnight's children," Saleem describes how the "midnight's children" must be "both masters and victims of their times." Thus, they remain forever connected to their birth date, the date of Indian independence, and they eventually must "forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes," preventing them from living or dying in peace (533).

The individual identities of these "midnight's children" become lost through their connection with Indian independence, Saleem describes how the "midnight's children" will eventually have their own children, continuing until the "thousand and first generation" (533). The "thousand and one midnights will have bestowed their terrible gifts," allowing their powers to continue, even as the "midnight's children" die (533). Yet, Saleem differentiates between the "midnight's children's gifts" and

their own identity. He attempts to separate his gift of telepathy from his personality, yet the two remain forever intertwined, due to their effect upon his life. However, even though Saleem seeks to separate himself from his gift, the novel remains unwilling to allow him to do so. The novel complicates any simple choice between the importance of a personal narrative and identity and a national narrative and identity.

Saleem Sinai's narrative position in the novel makes him central to the questions of hybridity. He self-consciously calls attention to the process of narrating his story and attempts to justify theatrical and literary devices used in the telling of his story. Saleem's authorship and creation of his life narrative become inextricably linked to India's creation due to the significance of his birth date, the date of Indian independence, August 15, 1947. Saleem melds Indian and his familial history and connects both histories to his own present moment. The simultaneous authorship of his own and India's history serves as a means to articulate and assert his own power and history, as a post-colonial citizen, and his nation's power and history, as a post-colonial nation, instead of remaining under British imperial versions of history. Saleem's position as author, writer, and creator of his familial history brings up the idea that history may be created, just as a family history may be embellished and exaggerated. Saleem appears as a "symbol" for India; his birth and his ability to communicate with his fellow "midnight children" associate him with a "mother-earth" figure, like "Mother India."

Fredric Jameson states that "all third-world texts are necessarily... allegorical and they are to be read as what I will call national allegories" (69). This reading of the novel seems fair, due to Saleem's significant birth date, Indian independence, and his supernatural ability to communicate with others born on that date. While Saleem

communicates, primarily to Padma, his listener, he simultaneously tries to express himself to the Western world, his former colonial rulers. Padma questions his narrative and forces Saleem to explain himself thoroughly, but Saleem requires Padma to inherently believe in his narration, no matter how ridiculous his story may appear.

Saleem's "magical powers" of telepathy, given to him due to his significant birth date, allows him to communicate with all of India's "midnight's children." He maintains this connection between the "midnight's children," and is able to communicate with the diverse number of Indian citizens. Saleem becomes associated with two of the "midnight's children" in particular, Shiva, who, as a war-hero, becomes Saleem's rival, and Parvati-the-witch, a sorceress who eventually becomes Saleem's wife. Shiva and Parvati are both Hindus, while Saleem is Muslim, and their relationships demonstrate the mixing of religious and cultural mythologies present within India. Thus, Saleem's character in the novel serves as an allegory for India, through Saleem's creation of his identity and life narrative, his attempts to explain his narrative, his ability to communicate with other Indian postcolonial citizens, and his association with other religious mythologies and traditions.

Midnight's Children's setting, Bombay, allows the novel's stylistic innovations and various forms of hybridity to flourish, because the city embodies the multiplicity, theatricality, and diversity which the novel espouses. Bombay's history, expressed through Saleem's narration, explains the process of Indian colonization by the various European powers, such as the Portuguese and the British, along with Bombay's central role in the Indian independence movement, to achieve independence from Great Britain. Using Bombay as the novel's setting, with its religious diversity, social caste differences and multiplicity, allows the novel to

illustrate the struggles of forming a postcolonial identity, due to the various type and number of people present in the city. The city itself is a hybrid, of Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Christian; of young and old; of the past and the present moment; within this context, the novel becomes able to express new versions of Indian history and accurately illustrate Indian postcolonial citizens.

Saleem describes the moment of independence, and this historical event takes on new meaning as he attempts to discover the true point of his own and his nation's origins. Inherently connected to this discovery and creation of history is the identity of the nation and the self. Saleem remains confused by his own identity, and within this passage, he describes how he has been called by many different names, like Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even Piece-of-the-Moon. The difficulties in determining one's identity remains central to the novel and remain connected to determining a nation's identity. The problematic nature of creating an Indian national identity becomes clear within the novel, through the multitude of cultures, religions, and peoples. Yet Saleem embraces his various names, realizing that one of the inherent problems of a postcolonial society is the impossibility of finding and embodying one true "authentic" identity.

Midnight's Children's character multiplicity, both in number and type, allows many varying perspectives to emerge as the novel's central narrative, ultimately connecting to Saleem, who tells his personal narrative through these multiple character narratives. By depicting a myriad of characters, the novel demonstrates the impossibility of identifying a true "authentic" Indian identity or history. Instead, the novel shows that if a postcolonial citizen is able to create his or her own history and identity, as Saleem does, it becomes possible to ignore questions of authenticity and instead embrace cultural multiplicity and diversity, in order to create a new

postcolonial narrative, consisting of the combined perspectives of all postcolonial citizens. The novel combines the perspectives of many postcolonial citizens, a manner of cultural and social hybridization, through Saleem's power of telepathy, along with Saleem's relationships with other postcolonial citizens.

The novel describes an immense number of people living within the city, even in 1951, along with the diversity of the population, in terms of religious and social backgrounds. Saleem comes from a middle-class Muslim family, while his "ayah," or nanny, Mary Pereira, is a Christian convert who works for Saleem's family. Shiva, a character born, like Saleem, as one of the "midnight's children" on the night of Indian independence, He is a Hindu who was raised in extreme poverty. The religious and social diversity of the characters echoes the diversity in Bombay itself, because the mixing and melding of various cultures and traditions within Bombay represents social hybridization. The novel illustrates the difficulties in creating one central historical narrative for a nation and people by providing so many various and multiple perspectives within the text. *Midnight's Children* seeks to combine India's narrative, imbued with various people and ideas, into Saleem's personal narrative, and one of the ways the novel attempts to do this is by placing Saleem into Bombay, allowing him to interact and meet various and diverse people.

Saleem continuously connects himself to Bombay, seeking to hold on to some inherent idea of "Bombay," which becomes removed from him when he becomes associated with other regions. Although Saleem's family history stems from Kashmir, a mountainous region in the Indian subcontinent, he remains disconnected from Kashmir: "in our house, we were infected with the alienness of Kashmiri blood" (101). When Saleem's family moves to Karachi, Pakistan, Saleem describes how he "never forgave Karachi for not being Bombay," and how he sought the "highly-spiced

nonconformity of Bombay" (352-353). In Karachi, as his family wanted to "'become new people'" because, "in the land of the pure Pakistan, purity because our ideal" (355). Yet Saleem resists and remains "forever tainted with Bombayness" (355). He associates this "Bombayness" with "nonconformity," believing that the essence of Bombay remains in the city's unwillingness to become an undifferentiated mass of people, but instead, combining various cultural groups and peoples together into one area, allowing their interactions to become centralized in Saleem's narrative. However, the fact remains that all cities, no matter their location, combine various peoples together into an urban location.

This "authenticity" which Saleem craves to deem as "Bombayness," the diversity and multiplicity of the city, consists of the same qualities which make up all cities. Yet Saleem clings to this idea that all Bombay citizens share this "Bombayness;" he seeks to find an authentic identity of location, but, as demonstrated through the discussions of Bombay's origins earlier, any authentic identity appears almost impossible to recognize. However, Saleem ties this idea of an authentic Bombay identity, "Bombayness," to the city's mythology and theatricality. The myth of "Bombayness," this myth of an innate social and cultural identity, combines with the city's religious and cultural mythology, allowing the novel to explore the problems of believing in and searching for a true authentic identity. Through Saleem's constant desire to remain as a part of the city, he uses these elements of Bombay, mythology, history, and cultural mixing, to tell his own narrative, through magical realism, which combines the elements of Bombay into a literary technique, necessary for the story which Saleem seeks to tell, with the city as its background and setting.

Midnight's Children interweaves two historical records: India's national history and Saleem's familial history. Just as the novel attempts to depict more

accurate versions of Indian history, Saleem seeks to create his own familial identity through his narrative. In the novel, identity creation occurs at both the national level and the personal level. Thus, while the novel describes the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre from the perspective of Indian citizens in an attempt to accurately depict the event, the description of the event serves as a means for Saleem to explain and understand his grandfather's past. Saleem's gift of having an incredible sense of smell, allowing him to determine others' emotions and thoughts, stems from his grandfather, Aadam, who also had the same large nose and magical gift. The novel explains how Aadam's sensitive nose ultimately saved him from being killed in the attack: "As the fifty-one men march down the alleyway a tickle replaces the itch in my grandfather's nose...Aadam Aziz ceases to concentrate on the events around him as the tickle mounts to unbearable intensities"(58). "Yaaaakh-thoooo!" he sneezes and falls forward, losing his balance, following his nose and thereby saving his life.

The "midnight's children" become associated with Indian independence, linking their postcolonial histories and identities to the newly created nation of India. Saleem seriously believes that all of their gifts stem from "history which had chosen to sow, in that instant, the seeds of a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world had seen up to that time." (256). Hence, at several moments within the novel, either the novel itself, through various characters, or through Saleem's own narration, demonstrates how Saleem and the other "midnight's children" remain vital to India's future. Not only are these children necessary for India's new future, arriving at a "point of highest significance and promise," but Saleem in particular remains a "mirror" for India's future, illuminating the strengths and weaknesses of an independent India. The birth of the "midnight's children" allows Saleem to literally

explore many perspectives and narratives within his own mind, along with demonstrating the importance of multiplicity and diversity within a postcolonial India.

Saleem discusses with these "midnight's children" theoretical ideas and theories regarding any number of subjects and issues within his own mind, via the "Midnight Children's Conference." By communicating with these other children, each of whom has different cultural backgrounds and religions, Saleem is able to encounter new ideas, different from his own family. The impossibility of categorizing a central postcolonial Indian narrative becomes clear as Saleem tries to sort through the voices of the "midnight's children" within his head. The idea of authenticity again becomes rejected as Saleem communicates with these "midnight's children." The novel clearly illustrates that each of the "midnight's children's" perspectives remains valid and important to understanding and creating a new history and identity for India.

Saleem's relationship with the "midnight's children," clearly demonstrates the multiplicity and diversity of India:

> ... I am refusing to distinguish the voices of the "midnight's children" from one another...For one thing, my narrative could not cope with five hundred and eighty-one fully-rounded personalities; for another, the children, despite their wondrously discrete and varied gifts, remained, to my mind, a sort of many headed monster, speaking in the myriad tongues of Babel; they were the very essence of multiplicity, and I see no point in dividing them now. But there were exceptions. In particular, there was Shiva; and there was Parvati-the-witch. (262)

Saleem's problems in defining and categorizing the "midnight's children" echoes the difficulties of postcolonial narratives, in which the attempts to define oneself, as a postcolonial citizen, nation, and people, becomes problematic due to the

immensity of the effort to rid oneself of the imperial presence. Even though Saleem explains how the "the children... were the very essence of multiplicity" (243) even he is able to form relationships and communicate with two of the other "midnight's children," Shiva and Parvati-the-witch. Along with his relationships with Shiva and Parvati-the-witch, Saleem remains influenced by the other "midnight's children."

Although Saleem remains a part of the "midnight's children," he is unable to understand them, referring to the voices as the "myriad tongues of Babel" (262). The "midnight's children," although "magical, they are not immune to... the prejudices and world-views of adults which began to take over their minds" (292). The "midnight's children" are unable to communicate with each other, and they reject Saleem's attempts to communicate with them, "accusing him of secrecy, prevarication, high-handedness, egotism... his mind... became the battlefield," instead of a "parliament chamber" (341). Most of the "midnight's children" retreat back into private life and reject the possibility for communication.

The novel combines religious mythologies and stories into the narrative, illustrating the realities of Indian postcolonial life, attempting to rectify the destabilization the British colonizers employed to maintain their power. Although the creation of Pakistan, on August 14, 1947, the day before India's independence from Great Britain, was an attempt to give Muslims living in British India a nation of their own, not all Muslims left the newly created India for Pakistan. India's borders hold many different religions, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, and others. The novel illustrates this multiplicity and combining of religious traditions through the relationships of Saleem, Shiva, and Parvati-the-witch, Shiva embodies the warrior nature of the Hindu god Shiva, yet his "religiousness" does not extend to doing good works. Parvati-the-witch, just as the Hindu goddess Parvati, whom she is

named after, becomes involved as a consort to Shiva. She forms a relationship with Shiva, finally becoming pregnant with his child. Yet he rejects her and she then goes to Saleem; Saleem and Parvati-the-witch marry, but only after she converts to Islam.

Saleem describes that he "found himself insisting, in another throwback to an earlier life" (477). As the novel combines and changes the relationships of these characters, the religious backgrounds remain present in the background, and sometimes, taking precedence, such as when Saleem insist Parvati to convert into Islam. The characters' religious associations continue to shift, such as Parvati's conversion and her name change to Laylah. The changing and shifting religious mythology connected to the characters illustrates the multiple religions present within India and the mixing and melding of those religions together forms hybridized religious practices, although the "pure" versions of those practices continue to exist.

The religious hybridization that occurs within the novel allows Saleem to connect his own narrative, his own creation and telling of his identity and history, to these religious mythologies. These mythologies aid Saleem in his attempts to formulate his own identity and history, while also providing a point of origin for him, if he seeks it. Saleem describes the Quranic passage in which Gabriel tells Muhammad that "thy Creator... created Man from clots of blood." (187). Thus, God becomes the ultimate point of origin and these "clots of blood" remain the actual origin of all humankind. Yet, Saleem's attempts to create his own point of origin show that religion, for Saleem, remains an inadequate narrative for his new postcolonial status.

The novel demonstrates the complicated relationship between the listener and reader of a narrative and author of the narrative; both influence the other, although the author, Saleem, claims to maintain control over one's narrative, the listener, Padma,

influences the author's writing. During Padma's absence, Saleem becomes confused by his "certainties… even his nose has been playing tricks on him" (189).

Saleem remains unsure whether he has fallen in love with Padma, saying to himself, "the workforce giggles behind its hands: the poor sahib has been crossed in what? Sure not love? ... Padma, and the cracks spreading all over me… a little confusion is surely permissible in these circumstances" (189). Yet, due to this confusion, Saleem discovers "an error in chronology," and is unable to fix it (190). Padma's relationship with Saleem shifts, from being merely a listener, to his helper and editor, to perhaps his lover. Yet these changes in their relationship further confuse Saleem's narrative, but there is no solution to fix his problem. These complications in Saleem's relationship with Padma further illustrate the difficulties in creating a postcolonial narrative. Just as Saleem tries to combine oral storytelling with novel writing, becoming confused with the methodology of each, Saleem struggles with telling his story due to the psychological interactions. Thus, Padma serves the role of the Western world, a former colonial ruler, who listens to Saleem's postcolonial narrative of his own familial history and his version of Indian history

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* remains a cornerstone of postcolonial literature. The novel clearly illustrates these important ideas of postcoloniality, the creation and telling of history, identity, and storytelling. While the novel discusses these important and significant themes, it becomes necessary to discuss the problems associated with formulating and creating a postcolonial identity and history. The novel illustrates the problems of postcoloniality, the difficulties in assigning an origin point, determining one's own history, and finding an authentic identity. The novel *Midnight's Children* illustrates these problems of postcoloniality is through hybridity. The novel itself remains the embodiment of hybridity and through the formal

hybridity of magical realism, the social hybridity of the multiple and diverse characters, and the historical hybridity of the characters' perspectives, along with the hybridity of storytelling itself, with Saleem's conflict between oral storytelling and novel writing, the novel is able to adequately respond to and attempt to solve the issues surrounding postcolonity. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Salman Rushdie, one of the most prominent and powerful yet controversial novelists of the late twentieth century, belongs to a cosmopolitan group representing various religions, communities, professions and views. His writings focus on the east-west encounter, conflict between the old and new, postcolonial modernity and magic realism. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* explores the different dimensions of the colonial part of India. The novel foregrounds incidents that take place in India at the time of Independence. Saleem Sinai is the central figure around whom the main plot has been intertwined. He is a telepath with a nasal defect. He was born at the exact moment when India became independent. Rushdie never fails to point out how the postcolonial culture and its influence has resulted in the psychological and moral debasement, the novelist's shrewd observation of men and his satire never missed its mark. His vision of welfare society in India and his concern for the dignity of man both in the national and transnational contexts are clearly revealed in *Midnight's Children.*

Midnight's Children is Rushdie's interpretation of a period of about 70 years of India's modern history dealing with the events leading to the partition and beyond. The identification between the public and private strands is complete in this novel and that gives unity to the novel. Throughout *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai successfully tells the stories of his life and India's pre and post colonization. Saleem flashes back to major moments in his life while commenting on those events in the present. He offers his opinion on how his life unfolded in order to give the reader different perspectives, from struggles and tragedies to victories and joys.

This novel is an imaginative tale that centres on the life of Saleem Sinai. Saleem is a boy who was born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, the precise moment that India becomes independent. Because of his timely birth, Saleem believes that his life is infinitely tied to his nation, so as India goes through the struggles of stabilizing as a sovereign state, he undergoes his own ordeals. Saleem's birth is so remarkable that he, along with the thousand other midnight's children, is given a magical ability: he can hear the thoughts of all the midnight children and of others around him. So, Saleem creates the Midnight's Children Conference and uses its members to observe the social and political changes that reinvent the country, offering insight on the religious differences that led to the separation of India and Pakistan.

Throughout the entire narration, Saleem tells his tale to Padma his caretaker, avid listener, and biggest critic. In doing this, Saleem is able to record his life, while flashing back to crucial moments in India's past that shape his family's history. *Midnight's Children* begins on the midnight of August 15, 1947, problematizing history, both retrospectively and prospectively to provide 'alternate history' through Rushdie's own narrative voice, along with Saleem's subjective self. By flashing in and out of the past, Saleem is able to offer his own opinion on the various events that parallel his life and India's colonization.

The biggest lapse in Saleem's recollection of thoughts occurs when he loses his entire memory. Immediately after a bomb falls down on his parents during the air raid in Pakistan, Saleem is struck on the head by a silver spittoon. The impact of the spittoon causes him to forget all of his memories, which adult Saleem later calls this as his process of purification. He ends up at a secret camp of the Pakistani army and

travels with them for a period a time, being referred to as "Buddha" since he cannot recall his own name.

Saleem creates the special type of history of an unreliable narrator, as he has his own perspective of history. He combines 'fiction' with 'facts' to emphasize the ambiguous nature of history. His memory serves as a way for Saleem to shape India's history to fit in with his own, and the reader sees only his interpretation of the country's history. But, Saleem's mistakes cause his readers to be skeptical of his narratives because the truth behind them is flawed by the missing information.

Lastly, Saleem is able to recount India's colonization by encountering personal struggles, tragedies, and other crucial events at the precise moment that India does. His own birth happens to take place as India is partitioned and created into a new nation. This incident marks the beginning of Saleem's journey into becoming completely tied to India. He prospers as India does but also suffers the same way that India does.

Rushdie implies that Saleem's generation has failed to consolidate the possibilities inherent in independence. The possibility exists in each passing generation of midnight children, who are the children of each successive era. Each generation, as Saleem muses, will erase the presence of a previous generation that has not yet learnt to define a stable and solid sense identity. The individual voice is swamped by the creeping progression of time and history: nevertheless, the text's conclusion is open ended.

As a postcolonial text, *Midnight's Children* signals the present reality of the past colonization. It also attempts to narrate the writer's assumption about a life story or a nation's history. It centres on the author's native India and it is a major milestone in postcolonial literature. Rushdie's novel depicts postcolonial India with its traumatic

colonized history – the enslavery and the struggle for freedom from the British. It is a documentation of traumatic experiences under the British rule and their feeling of displacement and dispossession of men and women who face diasporic experiences. The novelist examines colonialism existing within the postcolonial context through Indian culture, and storytelling. He suggests the subservience of the colonized through colonial discourse.

Midnight's Children aims at decolonizing the mind of the readers by making nativism evident in one form or another. It is a protest novel voicing social injustice. Rushdie highlights alienation of individuals supported by white colonialism and oppression. His postcolonialism makes him break the literary tradition of moral perspective. His magic realism is a device which binds Indian culture of the past with the multiculture of the present. The abilities of Saleem and other children born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, their abilities to communicate with each other, Saleem's ability to read the minds of those around him make *Midnight's Children* a postcolonial magic realist work. In this magic realist text, Rushdie displays his preoccupation of borders and centres. He tries to destabilize their fixity.

Rushide's *Midnight's Children* is a post-colonial fiction as it ideas with the postcolonial India after its release from the British colonial rule for long. The novel breaks down the national and geographical barriers as it extends beyond the borders of India into Pakistan. For example, Saleem Sinai the central character is the biological son of a Hindu woman, Vanita and an Englishman, William Methwold. But he is brought up in an orthodox Muslim family; he is half Hindu and half Muslim. As he is brought up by his Christian ayah, Mary Pereira, he also imbibes incredible faith. As a result he compares himself to the legends and myth of all these religions.

Alienation is one of the features of postcolonial fiction. Saleem Sinai suffers from isolation and dispossession towards the end of the novel as all the members of his family are wiped in Into-Pakistan war for liberating Bangladesh. Hence, *Midnight's Children* reflects the postcolonial hybridism through conflict of cultures and political offshoots. Free India herself is 'twice born' out of original India and British colonial rule.

Rushdie recalls the Indian parliament of "half -grown brats" (238) because the distortion is severe. "Those children born in the last seconds of the hour were little more than circus freaks" (238). The writer points out the degeneration of India after Independence. Partition of India has also deranged the sense of moral values of men and they often forget the new "myth of freedom" (Wilson 23). Saleem who represents the author, is reduced to a state of an animal as he is psychologically affected because of Ahmed's violent behavior towards his mother, Amina. He forces Amina to take Saleem to Pakistan when he comes to know that he is not Saleem's biological father. There he experiences the harshness of martial law. When Saleem's father suffers from heart attack, Amina returns to Bombay. After India's military loss to China, Saleem's family moves to Pakistan once again. In the war between India and Pakistan Saleem loses all his family members except Jamila his sister – a famous singer in Pakistan.

Apart from Theme of Partition, Polyphony and Magic Realism, Hybridity and Postcoloniality, there are still more scope for discussion in this novel. Some topics for discussion can be about Indian women, religion, historical and political catastrophe and the quest for heroism.

The title *Midnight's Children* gains significance as the country still remains in darkness and the Indians remain in ignorance and indifference to the condition prevailing in India. Indians consume alcohol in a dry state and in artificial midnight

because India's political freedom is not a reality as it exists only in the dreams of Indians. Rushdie's vision of India is not quite positive as it is marked by his sense of exile and alienation. The novelist identifies himself with three nations. He pronounces: "I am emigrant from one country (India) and a newcomer in two – England where I live, and Pakistan, to which my family moved against my will" (*Shame* 85).

Rushdie shows his resistance to the traditional way of writing through a fine mixture of myth and history, stylish language, history, satire, philosophy, imagination, and art that satisfy the senses of the readers. Most of the stories are based on some historical facts but are narrated with the elements of myth. The myth of Indian freedom reveals the miserable human condition. The multicultural creative artist, unfolds a full circle intrigue of dynasties with terrific pace. The history of India's Independence struggle and the final victory leads to only disintegration, identity crisis and distortion. The writer makes use of history but as a postcolonial modernist, he denies any fixity to truth as history cannot capture the past as it really happened. He uses colonial metaphors of migration, hybridity and globalization in this postcolonial novel. He makes use of the postcolonial strategies – a blend of history, myth and magic realism.

His fine mixture of myth and history shows his resistance to the traditional way of writing, which is also postcolonial strategy. He has used language as a weapon for liberation. Rushdie, the voice of the unvoiced exhibits the state of powerlessness of Indians and leaves them a message that only conscious struggle of Indians to redress the societal and political inequalities can empower them to realize the independence of India. *Midnight's Children* is Rushdie's attempt to create a revolution in the consciousness of the Indians to have self-assertion of their cultural

identities. Asha Kaushik remarks: "As a cultural quest for political relevance and vice versa, the novel is a valuable study in contradictions of the hegemonic process in India" (113). This novel *Midnight's Children*, is often associated with several categories of literary fiction, including magical realism, postcolonial fiction and postmodern literature. *Midnight's Children* is as complete a reflection of the life and character of the subcontinent as any single novel could possibly provide. This project focuses on a detailed study of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a Political Satire.

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Deconstructing the Social Construct in Liz Tigelaar's *Playing with the Boys*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

CATHERINE TEHILA J.

(REG. NO. 18APEN07)

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Deconstructing the Social Construct in Liz Tigelaar's *Playing with the Boys*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Catherine Tehila J. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Deconstructing the Social Construct in Liz Tigelaar's *Playing with the Boys*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Catherine Tehila J.

Catherine Tehila J.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Deconstructing the Social Construct in Liz Tigelaar's *Playing with the Boys*** analyses society's constructed labels and its effect upon the female gender in the field of sports.

The first chapter is about a new way of evaluating sports and gender background that is intermingled one with sports and its structure. The tension between the pursuit of male approval and sports participation is similarly manifested, through a general study of the novels of Liz Tigelaar.

The second chapter implicitly points out the social disorder created by the female sports participation, which is deliberately declared by the society. This idea conveys the roles regarding gender ideology and society's expectation on team games and the demeaning treatment experienced as a direct result of gender discrimination. It discriminates one to the extent of toughest at the same time the other to the extent of least tough.

The third chapter discusses the role of women in sports and the giant leap taken by a woman, in the guise of the protagonist Lucy, amidst the male dominated game. It substantiates the manner in which she defies the odds and wrestles with athleticism and femininity, in order to make history.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the empowerment of women by destroying the labels which is constructed by the society. The tough path which is undertaken by the female players on account of their hard work to disable the fierce stereotypical notion on feminity, crowns them with triumphant success.

The fifth chapter exclusively projects all the hyphenated experiments dealt in the previous chapters.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is life, events reflecting life are intermingled with literary works. Postmodern literature gives voice to all sorts of fields and ideas, one such idea is sports. The role of sports in literature was not much elaborated in earlier days, but in modern days it is in progress. Literature can convey any emotions through any path as it is, that makes sports literature more attractive and more vibrant.

Sports literature became prominent in Britain and North America during the late nineteenth century. Historically, sports have not been taken seriously among literature scholars, gradually this postmodern idea got its growth in recent years. Only gaining traction once institutional efforts to promote sports and physical education moved into main stream. One longitudinal study found that sports is the third most popular book topic for high school boys and girls.

Charles Gordon's *Glengarry School Days* became a prototype for Canadian sport fiction authors such as Leslie McFarlane and Scott Young, who popularized the form in the mid-20th century. Roch Carrier's *TheHockey Sweater* and Roy MacGregor's *The Last Season* helped to establish hockey as the central focus of Canadian sport literature, while the works of W.P. Kinsella, George Bowering and W.O. Mitchell brought other sports into the spotlight. Meanwhile, authors such as Priscila Uppal, Angie Abdou, Samantha Warwick and Arley McNeney have challenged male dominance in the genre by depicting female athleticism as normal and natural. Their stories typically portrayed sports as a proving ground where boys become men by learning important moral lessons such as hard work, perseverance, fair play and self-sacrifice

Sport holds a sacred place in western culture and literature. Writers as diverse as Ernest Hemingway, Willa Cather, Norman Mailer, Don DeLillo, Tom Stoppard, Joyce Carol Oates, and David Foster Wallace have written about sport. The exhibition showcases the literature of sport through fiction, essays, poetry, and plays. Organized by sport, the exhibition highlights some of the finest examples of literary writing about baseball, football, boxing, tennis, cricket, bullfighting, and other sports. Great literary works capture the broad appeal of the sport and its ability to transform individuals and society. Through sport, writers explore the complexities of life, from its challenges and disappointments to its great pleasures. Prominent themes in many of the featured works relate to friendship, aggression, failure, honour, humiliation, pride, loss, and hope. Powerful passages are highlighted throughout the exhibition and demonstrate how writers, through their verbal craftsmanship and dexterity, elevate language to literature. The exhibition celebrates the crack of the bat, the roar of the crowd, the crushing blow, the herculean feat, the triumph, and the thrill of literature and sport.

William Louis Nack was an American journalist and author. He wrote about sports, politics and the environment at Newsday for 11 years before joining the staff of Sports Illustrated in 1978 as an investigative reporter and general feature writer. *Secretariat: The Making of a Champion, My Turf: Horses, Boxers, Blood Money*, and *The Sporting Life, Ruffian: A Racetrack Romance*are his famous sports works. *Secretariat: The Making of a Champion* is about a red cross. Secretariat, the Big Red Horse, won the 1973 Kentucky Derby 2½ lengths in front in a time of 1:59.4, breaking the track record of 2:00-flat established by Northern Dancer in 1964. *My Turf* brings out the news of Nack as a player. His ever-famous work *Ruffian: A*

Racetrack Romance deals with the woman power in the sports field. And it traces how Ruffian has overcome all the circumstances and builds a history of her own.

Leigh Montville is a former newspaper columnist for *The Boston Globe* and writer for *Sports Illustrated,* a sports reporter and author. He has authored many books, including best-sellers such as *The Big Bam*, a biography of New York Yankees baseball legend Babe Ruth, and *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, about the Hall of Fame, left fielder for the Red Sox, which won the 2004 CASEY Award for best baseball book of the year. He also wrote *at the Altar of Speed: The Fast Life* and *Tragic Death of Dale Earnhardt*, and *Manute: The Centre of Two Worlds*, about former 7'7" NBA centre Manute Bol. He wrote the book *Why Not Us?* Which recounts the stories of long-suffering fans, including himself, and includes a large section from the Red Sox web site Sons of Sam Horn where fans posted their own stories book *The Mysterious Montague: A True Tale of Hollywood, Golf and Armed Robbery* told the true story of John Montague, a 1930s California-based amateur called the greatest golfer in the world by sports writing legend Grantland Rice, who later turned out to be a fugitive wanted for armed robbery in New York State.

Sally Jenkins is an American sports columnist and feature writer for *The Washington Post*. She was previously a senior writer for *Sports Illustrated.* She has been named the nation's top sports columnist by the AP sports editors four times. She is the author of a dozen books and received the National Press Foundation's chairman citation in 2017. *Sum It Up: 1098 Victories, A Couple of Irrelevant Losses* and *A Life in Perspective*, written with legendary basketball coach Pat Summitt, and *It's Not About the Bike* written with bicycle racer Lance Armstrong. Most of her works centre

around Lance Armstrong and she strongly believes in hardworking. *It's Not About the Bike* is a remarkable work of her and picturizes the life events of Lance Armstrong.

Specially casting female characters as lead characters,Armstrong portrays more aboutthe culture and society. The growing celebration of strong women in public discourse has opened myrid avenues of visibility for girls in popular culture. *Kelly and P*omerantz,2008 elaborately reveals the sports identity for women "American society appears to be engaged in a wholesale advocacy of tomboyish behaviour, which celebrates girls engaged in gender-bending activities ranging from athletics to punk music" this advocacy is reflected in popular cultures.

Rachel Elizabeth Tigelaar is an American television writer, producer and author. She has worked on the series *Brothers & Sisters, Dawson's Creek, What about Brain American Dreams, Once and Again, Once Upon a Time, Revenge, Bates Motel, Casual* and is well known for creating and executive producing The CW series *Life Unexpected.* She was co-producer of the girls-in-sports Disney feature film *Stick It.* She loves sports and believes in empowering and motivating young women to embrace their athleticism while encouraging them to lead active healthy lifestyles.

Tigelaar was born in Washington, D.C. She was adopted as a child, which influenced her work on *Life Unexpected.* She grew up in Dallas, Texas, and Guilford, Connecticut, and graduated from Ithaca College with a degree in scriptwriting and politics. Tigelaar, in 2000, was an assistant on the series *Dawson's Creek* and co-wrote her first episode with Holly Henderson, the third-season episode, *Show Me, Love.* Tigelaar also co-wrote with Holly Henderson two novels in the *Dawson's Creek Suspense Trilogy*, a series of novels based on the characters from the television series. From 2001-02, Tigelaar was an assistant to executive producer on the series *Once and Again.* Tigelaar became a writer for the series, *American Dreams* in 2002 and wrote

two books based on the series in 2004. Tigelaar also wrote three episodes of the animated television series *Totally Spies!* from 2001-02.

Tigelaar was an associate producer on the 2006 comedy-drama film, *Stick It*, about gymnasts. Tigelaar released her first novel as a solo writer in 2007 titled, *Pretty TOUGH*, a novel about two very different sisters, Krista and Charlie Brown, who have to face their differences and learn to work together when they are recruited for their high school soccer team. Tigelaar released a follow-up to the first novel titled, *Playing with the Boys,* in 2008.

In January 2009, it was announced that Tigelaar was developing a new drama series under the title, *Light Years*. The series tells the story of teenager Lux, who had been through the foster care system for almost her whole life and decides on her 16th birthday, to become an emancipated minor, but before that occurs, she has to get signatures from her unknown parents. When a judge decides that Lux is not ready for emancipation, Lux is unexpectedly granted temporary joint custody to her birth parents, Baze and Cate.

Tigelaar has received much praise for her work on *Life Unexpected*. A review in the Los Angeles Times called Tigelaar's writing smart and insightful. Similarly, Randee Dawn, from The Hollywood Reporter stated that Tigelaar has a delicate, spot-on feel for dialogue. The Futon Critic's Brian Ford Sullivan singled out Tigelaar, as well as director Gary Fleder, in *Life Unexpected* for adeptly exploring Lux's perceived lack of love in her life. Tigelaar was also a consulting producer on the 2009 series of Melrose Place, an updated version of the 1990s Fox prime time drama of the same name and wrote the series' second episode, *Nightingale*. In 2010, the first novel of Tigelaar's book series, *Pretty TOUGH*, was developed into a web series by Vuguru. In May 2011, Tigelaar joined the crew of the ABC fantasy series *Once Upon a Time*, as

a writer and co-executive producer. In Fall 2011, Tigelaar signed on to the ABC drama series *Revenge* as a writer and consulting producer.

Playing with the Boys deals with the story of a football player Lucy Malone and was published in the year 2008. The opening of the novel reveals the despair condition of Lucy. she is very much worried about her name which misses letter K to become Lucky. Her father Greg does not want to stay at Ohio after his wife's death. So, he decides migration to Los Angeles. The decision shatters Lucy's inner feelings and her friendship with Anne.

At Los Angeles, Lucy gets the friendship of Charlie Brown, a multitalented girl. She sees Charlie as a surfer at first sight and gets tensed to speak with her. Sooner she comes to know that Charlie is her classmate as well as a soccer player. She is so excited when she knows the available of the soccer team at Beachwood. She enters into the team with the help of Martie, her coach. There she finds many good souls like Pickle, Max, Charlie, etc. Lucy stands out with her super accurate kicking talent. 'Hell Week' carries sweats, blood and scars. It will squeeze them and calculate each players' capability. Lucy lacks the skills of attacking and tackling which lead her out of the team. She is heartbroken when she does not make the Beachwood High soccer team. She has overthrown her anger on Martie. She suggests her to use her kicking ability in varsity, men football team. At first, she surprises and neglects the offer so Martie quotes "you never know what you can do until you do it" (81). Later, she turns into positive vibes and believes "sometimes where you think you'll fit in the least is where you'll fit in the most" (80).

Lucy has to kick in front of coach Offredi in the try-out section. Her kick has reached more than forty feet which is a record in Varsity. Teammates start to hate her because of her gender except for Benji. He has taught the rules and kicking position to

her. He is the backbone of all her success. But her father has forbidden her to join the team. So, she starts lying and hiding everything from his knowledge. Devon and Adam, fellow players who never let her allow to kick properly. They give some trouble to send her back home. One day, her teammates have pasted her in the goal post and there is nobody to rescue her. Finally, she is rescued by Regan, the classmate. No one else wants her on the team. But she continuously fights against the hard situation. She ends up making the team but faces many challenges being a girl on the boys' team.

Ryan is the most attractive player on the team. Lucy has some infatuation on him and wants to get his hand. On the other side, Pickle also has some affection for him. She asks Lucy to express her feelings to Ryan. Lucy is entangled in a critical state, caught between love and friendship. Lucy obeys her friend and reveals Pickle's heart to him. Ryan does not say anyone's name but says that he has an affair. Kendall, a classmate, uses this infatuation as a trump card to humiliate the both. So, she frames a fake love note and sends it to both. It ends up with great shame to Lucy and Pickle.

As a player, Lucy does not allow her personal feelings into her profession. She is back to form with a positive mindset. Her leg got broken in a match and she has to take rest for ten days. Her place is replaced by Benji. The team beats Hillman Hall and ready to face the finals against Oak Wood. Dr. Cane reports that Lucy's fitness and health are good and she is ready to play. Finally, her father allows her to play and theywin the finals. She discovers that Ryan and Kendall are lovers. When Ryan approaches Lucy to dance, she denies and picks Benji as her dance partner. She realizes that her real partner is Benji and proposes to him. Both are very happy and Lucy feels that she is lucky.

Lucy Malone's determination and strength lead her to go, where no other girl in school has gone before. She constantly feels that she has to prove herself. After joining the soccer team, she gains potential friends. She starts learning people in the football field. She wins all her hurdles, caused by her teammates. But her positive mindset transfers herself. She makes history by playing football in the boys' team.

The project aims to portray how the central character tries to survive in the masculine soccer game and erases the gender stereotyping, that soccer is a taboo for women. Lucy proves that her femininity cannot be affected by the masculine game. Through this attitude, she completely neglects the masculine identity of the soccer game. She succeeds in this field and makes a history which gives a new meaning of woman.

Chapter Two

Society, Gender Roles and Gender Conflict

Liz Tigelaar is an American contemporary writer; she is well known for writing novels about sports. To destroy gender ideology, Tigelaar brings out new flavour to her writings by giving her characters a unique personality. Tigelaar used sports figures and sports events in order to make significant points on the themes of identity connected to gender, race, class, and nationality. Butler, believed that people who identify with a particular version of gender that is outside cultural norms, are rejected by most members of that society.

Lucy is the heroine of the novel. She is portrayed as a brave and rare personality, because she has super accurate kicking ability. This rare ability leads a new path in her life, by offering an awestruck chance of being a member of a male football team. This concept inbuilt with lots of opinion and ideas, hugely make the readers to analyse more about gender structure and ideology which the society has constructed. Society constructed ideology reveals the reality of a gender conflict, which arouses unwanted issues in the empowerment of women. Lucy undergoes same issue, Tigelaar uses Lucy deliberately in-order to kick out the realistic problem of woman amidst the male team. If the role is played by a male character, it seems impossible to encounter the same issue. So Tigelaar uses this technique by converting the gender of the character that reveals the stereotypical society's evil eye on the growth and development of women. In this case, society has nothing to do with the women's empowerment, it becomes problematic when it affects the pride of male and also their convections on women become wrong.

With regard to Lucy, there is a thought that a female player cannot kick the ball not even equal to the weaker male kicking the ball, when Lucy could kick the ball

more than forty feet. No male eye can bare the strength of a female player, which directly murders the convection of male constructed society's view on female players. Tigelaar elaborates more issues which proportionally affect the empowerment of women specifically on sports field. Thus, Tigelaar decides to take vital writing, to depict enormously the qualities of female players and how they are chained by the stereotypically constructed society's convictions.

The novelist comprehends the true colour of society and its roles particularly on sports. Tigelaar is smart enough to point out the real society's colour on gender. Gender is a common term that generally refers to the society's constructed roles, activities, and attributes, that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender generally refers to two sexes. Biologically both have different roles and some major responsibilities which they have to fulfil. A female is expected to look after her house, children, family. A patriarchal society system can be defined as a system where men are in authority over women in all aspects of society. In this system, men make all decisions in both the society and their family units, hold all positions of power, and authority, and are considered superior in all aspects of lives. Men are concerned with identifications that include qualities of control, package of strength, potential force of fullness, more rationality, strong work ethic, impressive competitiveness. Each of these qualities contribute a unique superior identification for men in a patriarchal system.

In patriarchal system men will be the focus and developer of all events and inventor of new things. Patriarchal society declares that men are the heroes in all situations, and that they are the center of social engagement, fun and entertainment. Tradition of society must be under the control of men at all times and this cannot be altered. They wish and desire to control the society and family and to take all

decisions regarding finances and education. The dominating role of men and the discrimination of the opposite gender, affects the women, the weaker section of the society, so hugely. This division occurs not on the basis of terms like partiality, the party which holds all authority, controls the other party and stands above the other. This Stereotypical concept is obtained simply and has become a principality by its own way.

Gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender discrimination affects the individual's living experience. The dominating role of men is not the only reason for the differences, but they arise due to biological, psychological differences and cultural norms. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Gender studies depict the different living experiences of women, across many domains including education, life, expectancy, personality, interest, facts, life, careers, and political affiliations. Gender inequality varies according to its culture.

Patriarchal society has assigned certain assignments for women and they are expected to perform certain duties. Neglecting the duties may lead to some kind of status crisis for women in their family. They are forced to accomplish their organized patterns of society. They are assigned to be a mother, to be a cook, to be a caretaker, and to be a model for the upcoming generation. Moreover, they are portrayed as an object in the hands of men. Decentring the feminine capability are the existence factor for the power of men. The clutches that men use to bind women have been slightly revealed in the writings of Simon De Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Virginia Woolf, and Wollstone Craft. They nurture the dignity of a woman by their eternal writings. Mackinnon Catherine's Feminist: *A Critique of Ideology* indicates the isolation of woman.

> Women's oppression is not just in the head; feminist *consciousness* is not just in the head either. But the pain, isolation and thingification of women who have been pampered and pacified into nonperson hood- women 'grown ugly and dangerous from being nobody for so long'- is difficult for the materially deprived to see as a form of oppression particularly for women whom no man has ever put on a pedestal. (58)

Gender discrimination is the greatest issue in every field. Even Sports encounters gender discrimination, here it is just in the form of stereotypical tension. The expectation of femininity often leads women to be dissuaded from lifting weight, sweating, grunting, and being aggressive, participating and, competing in sports and, physical activities. This notion leads women to cease from sports, though they are packed with sports skills. Womanly intention created by the patriarchal society let women to be muted towards sports. The word 'femininity' strongly moulds the women of patriarchal society to be more stereotypical by nature. This can be seen in Margaret Atwood's "*In Good Bones*", "You have good bones, they used to say, and I paid no attention. What did I care about good bones, then? I was more concerned with what was covering them. I was more concerned with lust and pimples. The bones were backdrop" (54).

Chiefly women are not allowed to play games like football, weight lifting, wrestling, and boxing. This idea is revealed when Martie asks Lucy to play football, describes it as a "crazy Idea" (78). Football, Soccer, Baseball, and cricket are exclusively for men, whereas women use these games as second hand. Visibly one can witness a great division, as certain games are labelled only for men. But they forget to label games only for women. Men can enjoy all sorts of priority in sports. Football is viewed as the most fashionable sport for men, whereas women cannot

equalize the stamina of men. Liz Tigelaar attempts to crack this notion through her creation, Lucy Malone.

Lucy Malone is a dependent child of Greg, who has lost her mother few months back. This critical situation has made them to migrate to Los Angeles, California. Lucy is crazy about Soccer and loved to play and spend her life by playing soccer in Toledo, Ohio. She has been a Soccer player in Ohio High school. But there rises gender discriminations and patriarchal issues, like holding authority over feminine gender in the form of protection and emotional appeal. Greg says it is "Family Decision" as a member of the family he does not even consider Lucy's opinion, and never lets her speak regarding the decision, decision had been clearly already made. "We're Moving; he'd replied firmly" (4). Lucy's father Greg has been portrayed as the classic example of patriarchy.

Caged Women are expected to be away from midnight parties, outing, hanging out, and living life of their own. Society insists that men are born to live the life of their own whereas women are under the custody of men, and expected to be obedient to men in all aspects of lives. While they fulfill men's decision, women undergo great depression, throughout their life and are expected to be under the shoes of men. Sylvia Plath's poem *Daddy* expresses the caged condition of women. The following lines reveal her situation as foot inside the shoe.

> You do not do, you do not do
> Any more, black shoe
> In which I have lived like a foot
> For thirty years, poor and white,
> Barely daring to breathe or Achoo. (27)

Stereotypical society stands for the cause of male; it not only takes control over female but also pushes to the extent of expecting obedience in the activities of everyday life. Lucy's feelings are totally neglected by Greg, it is evident in the scene of "Family Decision". Greg is portrayed as so selfish, he doesn't care about Lucy's feelings, her passion, her interest on sports, and everything is totally neglected by him for the cause of his decision of moving to California. He not only takes control over her decisions, at the same time he makes her familiar with his authority, by convincing her that all he does was for her protection, betterment, and the love for her. The selfish nature of her father is evident in the following lines.

> How parents used the phrase 'family decision' when talking about things like whether to get a dog, whether to go on vacation, or ... whether to move across the country. By the time her dad sat down to talk to her about it, the decision had clearly already been made. So much for the 'family decision'. (3)

As a result of stereotypical bondage, Lucy blindly accepts her father's decision, whether it affects her, or her interest, he wants to leave Ohio forever. Greg, a conservative father never allows Lucy to attend parties, or any other teenage fun. Society varies according to its own terms and conditions. This conveys the idea that the conservative father wants to move to a non-conservative society like California, so casually. In Ohio Lucy experiences gender inequality, but her arrival to California is a complete turn over for her. California is in its gender equality stage. California is known for its gender equality. Whatever the matter, Greg remains the same as a 'conservative father though he is at the centre of gender equality. The principles like the denial of the liberty of decision, gender inequality, etc. had been followed by many long years' generation after generation. Greg, being a by-product of this

generation and having been raised and moulded by these ideas, these principles could never be eradicated from his conservative mind.

Society believes that football is a game that can only be played by tough boys. Tigelaar uses Lucy to break that notion, by portraying her as a tough and bold girl. These elements shape her to become a soccer player as well as a football player. Lucy's mom remained an evergreen supporter of Lucy till she lived, after the death of her mother, Lucy shares everything to her friend Anne. Though the men never allow female to fulfil their passion, living in the same monotonous stereotypical society, made few women bold enough to stand for their cause. This inevitable result was due to the revolutionary acts of some parents, who evoked and gave responsibilities to girl children, amidst all the stereotypical notions about football. Annie and Martie encourage and motivate Lucy to become a kicker. Lucy is motivated to be a tough girl by her mother from the early stages of her life.

Her mom, a great skier, had stayed with her as she learned, encouraging her the entire time. As Lucy had taken face plant after face-plant and had begun to cry, Lucy's mom had told her, "you're Tough Lucy! Tough Lucy doesn't cry. She gets back up. She tries it again" (36).

Annie, Lucy's best friend, lives in Ohio. Lucy informs everything to Annie, her everyday routine and everything about California. Annie plays a role of crime partner. Annie is aware of Lucy's feelings for Reyan, her trials in male football team and her attending of midnight parties. One can compare their friendship as kite and thread where Lucy is kite and Annie as thread that much both are intermingled. Lucy flies happily with the help of Annie. Throughout the novel, Annie motivates Lucy to accomplish her passion, though male dominating society is against her passion.

Representing the gender equality, Tigelaar has created Martie, as a soccer coach for Lucy. According to Martie there is no inequality between men and women with this concept that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations, which are laid by stereotypical rigid gender roles and prejudices. This mentality allows Martie to encourage Lucy to join in the male football team. She just asked Lucy to join the team with her skill. Martie has confidence on skills not on gender. In stereotypical society female in a male team is somewhat like trespasser in the yard at the same time which is strictly prohibited in the circle of male mind. Amidst this Martie remained for Lucy as a backbone of her achievement as a kicker. She encouraged her by saying," You never know what you can do until you do it" (81).

In order to add more emphasis on gender equality, Tigelaar offers her female characters with male names, example: Charlie Brown, Max, Pickle, etc. This act implies the sense of equality of the author and she amplifies that name does not construct gender. This act deconstructs the social construction of name giving. Looking through the society, name divides the version of male and female. Authors like Tigelaar discourage the division among all genders.

Anima and Animus are terms given by C. G. Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist. Anima means an inner feminine part of the male personality and Animus means an inner masculine part of the female personality. "No man can converse with an Animus forFive minutes without becomingThe victim of his own Anima" (29). *Playing with the Boys* is loaded with Animus personality taking Lucy as example, which is evident with kicker role in both the teams. The below words are powerful evidences of Lucy's quality of Animus.

> Tonight for the first time, a girl was going to play football under these lights. She might have looked slight and slender, like she was a fragile doll that could easily break, but she wasn't. If this week hadn't broken her, nothing would. She was fired up. She was ready. (159)

Normally good kickers can kick 30 feet but Lucy kicks beyond 40 feet, this super-accurate kicking style makes her a star figure and finds a place in male football team. Gym activities such as rod, push-ups, squat, bench-press, dead lift, cross-fit, power-lift, and weight lifting etc. are some acts to improve physical strength, which relates to sports. These segments are meant for male players, and society assumes that biologically such gym activities will not suit the female players, yet society blames that a female player does not have guts to do such exercise. Tigelaar is condemnatory of this certain ideology about heavy workouts, and she uses Lucy to condemn this mind-set of the society. Lucy lifts more weight than a football male player. Not only does she lift more weight but also she easily adopts the repetition of exercise as earlier. These characters prove that Lucy has an inner personality of male. That does mean she is male. Tigelaar has made this kind of personality to remove biological assumption about women. Same way one can witness Charlie Brown, another character of Tigelaar, who loaded with the animus personality. She is surfer. Society hardly accepts that women can surf, even Lucy is surprised at Charlie's surfing style. Relying on talents and not on gender is the idea Tigelaar wants to convey through the animus personality of her characters.

It's a hard path for women to achieve in the male focussed society and its very rare to figure out men who allow women to succeed. The account of successful women in the field of sports is quite very few indeed, yet few players make the society to salute their talents. History always reminds that conquerors are not losers;

the path of glory of women is not easy they need to face so many hurdles and obstruction to construct a victory. Among those hurdles, the most vital obstacle is the male environment and their nasty notions. Offerdi, Lucy's football coach, never has a trust on female sports abilities.

Lucy's father Greg stands in the same row because his own insecurity over life stops Lucy's liberty on her passion. Benjamin's father who hesitates to understand the equal rights and opportunities available for both men and women, he wants to maintain the partiality over the availability of opportunities to be continued. These people do not treat her like with male players, at the same time they are not ready to have belief on her talents. They rather mistreat her and they become a barrier to Lucy's achievement. Lucy overcomes all these obstacles with self-energy, self-confidence, and mostly by hard work.

Giving equal priority over achievements on the basis of gender, seems quite great deal for patriarchal society. Men never want women to come up in life, they need women to be under their sky. With the change of sudden pace women, started to create a whole new world of their own and started to stand equal to male on all aspects of life. This thing is completely new for conventional males, so they protest against by discouraging and underestimating the talents of women, they use serious emotional weapons to pull them back from their individual successive track.

Lucy encounters this torture in the journey as a female in the male football team, her teammates ill treat her mentally as well as physically. They cannot bear her triumph as a kicker in the male football team; they welcome her with a double huge hole on her jersey. Whatever they did Lucy just picked her speed on rage towards her target.

> Most pathetically once her teammate's kidnapped and tapped her on the goal post to convey their dislike for her, yet Lucy doesn't lose her hope, she started work on the fire than before.Though her teammates behaved so cruelly on her part.The tape was digging into her skin, cutting off her circulation. (129)

Her pathetical condition is revealed through the following lines:

> Eyes wet with tears, she hung there, stunned that her own teammates could be so cruel and so mean. She could make out the bricks of the building and the blades of grass on the field, but just barely. Everything was beginning to blur together. She wondered if she was going to pass out. (129)

Above state of Lucy conveys that the mean and cruel attitude of men towards women's triumph, at same time they have jealousy eye on female. Moreover, male do not want to overcome female, just want to take control over them to supress, so they insist on women to do service to them, serving food by taking hold on household duties, precisely kitchen is preferable rather than office. Charlotte Bronte exposes her agony on gender equality through *Jane Eyre*.

> Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting, stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them. (133)

Once women are supressed to the extent of pronouncing them as weaker section of the society. After a defensive struggle for so long year they took to stand for the right cause, and they slowly progressing in this battle.Emotional weapons like love, care, etc.men usethese weapons on women to supress them. In this present era women developed their status to more successful and positive, positive energy in them never allow them to be easily cheated by unhealthy emotional appeal. Being protective and defensive on their own effort taught women to escape from the traps of men. Lucy had some soft corner for Ryan but that man exploits the infatuation of both Lucy and Pickle.

> Lucy felt a wave of humiliation crashing over her, drowning her. She couldn't take the eyes staring at her, the kids laughing at her, amused by her crush on Ryan and her argument with Pickle, as if her feelings were some sort of joke. She grabbed her stuff and ran out from under the bleachers, past the kids, past the school-she just had to get out of there. (213)

Above lines expresses the sensitive nature of Lucy. Though rough and tough girls too can't bear love failure, Lucy connecting her life with sports made her more valour and sporty.Ryan blocked her from progression for a moment of life, gathering herself again dusting away the past, she just moved forward.

Patriarchal society has another name called partiality society, sometimes it deliberately offers opportunities for male without having a small amount of concern for women. Authorities bended in the arms of majority of male, they tried to please the patriarchal society by bringing the dead old customs on lead. Masculinity never encourages femininity rather finds fault. Old dead patriarchal system construction wants to dump women's ability. On this view, system based male are like eagle

waiting for prey's mistake to take control over its life. Same treatment Devon followed it in the trials kicking section of Lucy, when Lucy tries to kick the ball in front of football coach, Offeredi, she is misled by Devon, fellow player. Adam and Tank mocked and treated her very ill, they seldom let her to kick the ball as far she can. Even her coach unrelieved her capacity and questions her ability of kicking. Totally the male football team dislikes her presence in the team as a member of the team except one soul Benjamin. The entire team hardly accepts her because she is a woman in the male team. Where Lucy experiences 'gender subaltern'. Gayathri Spivak opens a great topic in her famous article, "Can the Subaltern speaks" about the 'gender subaltern' thus:

> Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third- world woman' caught between tradition and modernisation. (89)

Superstructure of male does not allow women to glow to be popular. Benjamin's father Mr. Mason is an illustration of Male superstructure. He fights with the coach for accepting a female in the male team. He rages with madness because perfect father figure couldn't able to digest his son's failure as a kicker, Benjamin is a star kicker of the male team yet he stands below before the skill of Lucy as a kicker. Competition reveals great healthy truths about women thatmodels superstructure males. They stand as a perfect figure yet they fail to accept gender equality.

Society's gender discrimination led path to some same gender crisis. Love for other's position, advantages, or possession covert female to stand against their own gender. Kendall played this part in Lucy's life. Jealousy played a vital role in this

transformation of Kendall, Ryan's lover cannot take Lucy's growth as normal as anything. Kendall envies Lucy's talent so she tried to humiliate her in order to express her vengeance. Kendall feared that Ryan will fall for her if her term of ability often revealed before him, so she uses Ryan as a trump card to cease her success. Lucy bears the pain when Kendall cheats her with the love note of Ryan, Kendall technically played with not only on Lucy but also with Pickle. By her own hand Kendall sketches herself an evil figure in the play. Trying to protect her relationship, Kendall played with the feelings of her own gender. This role affected the character of Kendall so deeply, much also irritated the same gender for this act. So knowing this same gender issue, one cannot blindly put the blame on male alone.

Gender discrimination, gender inequality, conventional old patriarchal system and gender performativity problem are issues faced by the society for so long years. In spite of majority of these issues aroused by male, female cannot throw blame on all men. Really some good souls enjoying the success of women because they give equal priority for women in sorts of lives. Tigelaar not failed to light some good souls in her novel,talking about Benjamin who tirelessly believed on Lucy from the beginning, Dr. Cane, who supported her. Coach Offerdi, having some misconception about female talents he unrelieved Lucy at first, later he is the one who motivated her throughout the match. These people respect their talents they do not follow the conventional ideas of the society which had been followed by most of the men the society. Supporting male are less in numbers at the same time their voices are faded one among the conventional loud voices. These males have no guts to amplify their voices. It becomes vulnerable inside the socially constructed rules. When Lucy is tapped in the post, Benjamin doesn't able to utter a word against the huge gang. Same policy seen when Benjamin's father raised questions Offeredi has not able to replay properly.

Majority of the male supports the conventional policy, few affords the change, practically the few needs to remain dumb, lest they neglected by the male dominated society.

The protagonist Lucy less cared about her overprotective Dad, discouraging teammates and a heartless lover. These are the constructed norms of the conventional society. She focused her career as a player Lucy confidently overcomes the hurdles with the help of hard work. Her soundly attempt rewrites the history of female in the conventional society, which protested the ability of women in male circle. Lucy's hard work gets her a place in Beachwood institution. Lucy's voice reduced the volume of patriarchal system, which constructed gender, culture and tradition. Lucy's attitude took a leap step in the progression of changing view on women. With the self-confidence women can break all gender norms created by the society. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* describes the meaning of culture that "People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must it our culture" (3). She examines the significance of feminist in that essay and amplifies the attributes of women are social constructions. Lucy sends out these social constructions and says that a woman should be judged by her ability.

Chapter Three

Diversity and Positive Psychology

Tigelaar's novel depicts the insecurity of women in the field of sports and inconvenience created by the opposite gender, to find out a solution for this inconvenience. Tigelaar projects Lucy, the heroine of the novel, as a thoroughly triumphant character, due to her self-motivating factor, which is called her positive psychology. Showing this feature as the main backbone of Lucy's success, Tigelaar employs certain diversities that play a role in constructing Lucy into a powerful woman. Knowing more about gender diversity and its problems, Tigelaar tries a different style in her writing. Her narration is vividly elaborate and at the same time, easy to comprehend the in-depth concept of the tale. Connecting the life structure of female player, who gets a chance to build up her career with the male players, Tigelaar asserts the impossibility of Lucy to adjust her mental struggle. The male authority's treatment towards her, force the readers to know more about female psychology and its aspects.

This chapter expresses more about the gender diversity and how Tigelaar uses the plot to change the negative aspects of women to a positive approach. The field of psychology provides more feminist theories and suggestion, which offers correctness, elaborate study of feminine psyche and omitts experiences of certain trivial and forced survival of women in the male-biased society. Tigelaar uses this method of neglecting distorted experience of women instead, by her depiction of the protagonist Lucy, who achieves the award of survival to the fittest in the old stereotypical male dominating society. Lending a new path for researchers to undertake the social and institutional power of men over women, and to have an in-depth understanding of the inequality of gender, Tigelaar uses, gender concept in her novel which projects a thorough victory

over gender inequality. In order to comprehend the notion of diversity in gender, one needs to analyse the social position of gender separately, who among both the genders is more recognisable and who is heaped with opportunities. These questions remain unanswerable in most of the fields, and specifically in sports one can find the reason behind these diversities, through Tigelaar's novel *Playing with the Boys*. This novel considerably offers critical analysis of the portrayal of women by the society. The novel addresses certain topics such as gender stereotype, physical development of women in life cycle, theoretical perspective on women's personality, mental health career and psychology of women, women and leadership, gender, power and violence against women, and equity and social change. It also concerns with intersectionality among sex, race, class, age, ability, sexual orientation and national origin.

Generation after generation people wandering about the difference between male and female personality traits. There have been three major theories about the gender personality that focus mainly on male female differences on basis of biological, psychological, and social conditions. Biological terms explain and emphasize the role of biological factors in both the genders. This theory reveals the effects of gene, hormonal changes, and morphological factors. The second theory significantly talks about the mental stamina, and behavioural activities. The third theory details the social construction, and the sociological treatment that maintains differences between men and women in wide variety of social areas. Another theory that has emerged recently, studies the role of the social structure, and particularly sexism, as the major underlying factor involved in sex differences in personality. These theories substantiate that these traits are socially constructed. Its focus has been on the structural aspects of society, which, in turn, influence both individual socialization and most adult activity. A reader can connect these constructed theories

with *Playing with the Boys*, all the characters in the novel may be estimated under these theories. There is an old saying that each human differs from one another and understanding a woman's psyche is a vital thing amongst understanding other human traits.

Female psyche is tender and sensitive. It differs from woman to woman. The psychology of women cannot be predicted instantly. Women think differently than men, because the male and female thinking ability diversely vary. Often they are a puzzle to the society. They are unique in behaviour and peculiar in attitude. God has created them with a calm and composed temperament. But in the modern world women have become strong and bold. Evaluation of their psyche gives a new angle to women. Developing mental ability helps them to fix their identity in the pages of history. Lucy develops her psychological stamina which, places her name in the history.

Whatever may be the diversity in gender, none can replace anyone in the relationship cycle. Lucy misses her mother terribly. One's mother holds a sacrificial position, a place which none could replace. Lucy's mom's death affects her family badly and makes her gloomy throughout the novel.

> Lucy knew what he meant. Everything reminded him of her mom. From the markings on the wall behind the pantry, where Lucy's mom measured Lucy's height and wrote down the date ...you couldn't be in their house without feeling that overwhelming sense that someone was missing. But was it really going to be better somewhere else? Lucy wondered. Somewhere they'd be even farther away from her mom's memory? (4)

The above lines symbolise the emptiness in Lucy's life and the void left by her greatest asset on earth, her mom. Though each gender upholds equal number of values in the relationship matter, there arises gender diversity because of the misunderstanding between both the genders. Lucy's father too had a great impact on Lucy's life. However, comparing his character with her mom's character, one can view that psychological stamina in her was triggered only by her mother, and her father just relied on the psychological diverse notions made by the society. Tigelaar stresses that, the false social construction was the only reason behind the diversity in the genders.

Lucy's mother had played the role of a caretaker, mentor and motivator, during her earlier days. In fact, her mother is overloaded with tough characteristics. She is a great skier and has a strong psyche. She is strong enough to handle critical situations. Lucy's mother totally stands as a character of boldness. So she wants her daughter to have the same quality. But her death collapses everything. Lucy cannot bear the situation and loses her hope. This emptiness shatters her into a gloomy and devastated condition. Moreover, she starts hiding everything from her father. She does not have any guts to oppose her father's decision.

Generally, women are too sensitive and they feel inferior. At most times, they give importance to emotion. Their soft nature drags them back to emotion. Lucy's emotional attachment with her parents reveals her sensitive and inferior nature. She thinks them as her eyes and this emotional attachment makes her blind too. She says yes to whatever her dad says. Whenever he is in the state of emotional imbalance, she makes him happy. At one point Lucy decides to replace her sensitive part with sensible part, by giving all her strength to be in the team. Football replaces all her emotion. She concentrates on football in order to overcome her mother's death.

Going to a new place, created a new chaos inside Lucy's mind. Lucy starts worrying about unnecessary things like changing the skin tone, etc. Lucy tries to change her skin tone to live at Los Angeles.

> All she knew about Malibu was that it was on the Pacific Ocean and everyone who lived there had blond hair and blue eyes and a great tan. Lucy looked down at her own milky white skin. She was beyond pale; she was *frighteningly* pale. (2)

Her own imagination about the new place dulled her positive attitude and further blinds her to see the real reality around her.

> One look at her skin could seriously blind someone. Maybe if she had a few more freckles they would morph into one giant one, which could fool people into thinking she was tan. She stopped herself. Had it really come to this? Wishing for more freckles? Maybe the altitude had gone to her head. They were, after all, at thirty-five thousand feet. (2)

The hardest part of this, was to get adapted to a new place all on a sudden. Though she is a tough girl, Lucy struggles for a long period, to change her thoughts and deeds according to the new culture. The impressive positive notion inside her, assists her to quickly adopt the new atmosphere. She feels many differences in Ohio and in Los Angeles. She finds many dress code issues and senses discomfort with dress. She meets a strange person Charlie and admires her ability. She builds her inner strength there and her psyche gets fitter than before.

Life is full of ups and downs. Everyone must have the capacity to face the negative and positive aspects of life. It is a common thing but it differs according to one's capability. It is easy for some whereas it is tough for others. Treating them equally is difficult for everyone. It examines and questions one's mental power. Even

though Lucy faces a lot of hurdles in her life she emerges out successfully. *The Holy Bible* says "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief" (Prov. 24: 16). In the beginning, Lucy is fragile because of her mother's loss. Soon she overcomes her emotion with her passion on football. Throughout this process, she gains more strength in her physique as well as psyche.

Future is constructed by the past and present events. People who utilize the present will get a bright future. Memories are good enough to remember one's past. Sticking with past will always drag a person down from achieving great heights. Lucy is obsessed with past memories. The memories of her friend Anne, her mom, her room are unerasable things in her mind. She cannot live normally at Los Angeles. Her sad memories pull her back to stay with earlier life. It erases her entire happiness and transforms her into sadness. Lucy has locked herself with these past memories and cannot release herself from it. The following lines express Lucy's loneliness.

> She shook her head, unable to answer. *Try everything.* She missed her mom. She missed trading clothes with Annie for school. She missed being on a team where her teammates actually liked her- or at least didn't try to cut off her circulation with duct tape. She missed having a dad she could talk to about things, instead of hiding things from him. (136)

It reduces her ability of playing and turns her psychic power down. It is a great distress to humankind. It alters oneself into melancholic state and it is pretty tough to come back. Aggressive attitude is a strong side in female psychology. Sometimes women become more aggressive than men. If they are determined to do something, they never get back from it. To achieve it they go any extent. They are aggressive in making history. Their mental power shapes them into tough characters. Lucy's only

goal is to make for the team and she is ready to go for it though it may cost her self - esteem. She lifts more weight than men, kicks beyond forty feet which are evidences for her aggressiveness.

> She and the rest of the guys quickly began their ritual warm-up: running fast in place, dropping down to hammer out ten to twenty push-ups, popping back up for jumping jacks and then back down for push-ups, flipping over for sit-ups, getting back up to run, dropping back down for mountain climbers.... Since Lucy was new to the routine, it was tough to follow. She watched Benji and thought she was keeping up okay. When they finished, Coach Offredi called them over. (119)

This shows Lucy's aggressiveness and never give-up attitude. At one extent her aggressive playing ability breaks her leg. Yet that becomes the reason behind the great victory over the Oak Wood team.

Female psychology faces many trials to prove its strength. Women cannot be defeated easily. They never give up until they succeed. They melt themselves to get recognition from the world. They are mentally over smart than physically. Women are strong enough to overcome every hurdle. They can easily come back from all circumstances with their stable mind set. Lucy perfectly handles her barriers and conquers it with intelligence. Ryan's cheating is an unforgettable infidelity towards her. Normal human beings cannot overcome it easily. As a sports girl, Lucy comes out of that situation with strong will power. It is quite unbelievable but Lucy strongly believe in her mental ability and overcomes the situation with an absolute trust in herself. Psychologically she is very strong to sweep over any thorny state.

Being happy on someone else's success is an appreciative character of an individual. Making others happy is the world's best delight a person could possess. Sacrifice can be the reason for somebody's happiness. Smile is a result of someone's sacrifice. Women do some sacrifice to change the atmosphere from dull to bright. They never consider their own pleasure. Lucy hides her feelings in order to make Pickle happy. When Pickle reveals her feeling that she has a soft-corner for Ryan, she buries her feelings and stands as a voice for Pickle to Ryan. Benji's father does not like Lucy as she is a woman player. Moreover, he desires that his son should become a star player. For this Lucy loses her passion. Even though she is capable to play after a terrible accident she just neglects the offer. The reason is Benji and she wants him to remain back in the team. So she provides her position to him to play. Women are good enough in sacrifice and get satisfaction from others' happiness. This is a boon to every good human being.

Lucy projects herself as an emotive and sensitive figure at the beginning. She is emotionally imbalanced due to her family. Her pathetic state does not allow her to utter any words against her dad. The tongue tied Lucy, buries her thoughts inside her. The life of Los Angeles transforms herself into a strong girl. She learns to read people's mind. Her father forbids her to play in a male football team. So, she starts lying to him. When he strongly opposes her to play, she suddenly bursts out with her emotions which were packed for a long time. She neglects him entirely and plays the match. In the course of life, Lucy finds herself courageous. She cannot keep herself quiet when her dream gets down. In order to save her dream, she deliberately stands against her father and she realizes her valour.

Compared with men, God has created woman with over smart ability. They are capable of handling two things at the same time. Lucy concentrates in both fields at

the same time, her studies as well as sports. It is pretty hard to maintain equal amout of focus in order to taste the success in both areas. But she does this with her will power. Lucy studies *Madam Bovary* throughout the novel and constantly concentrates on her project work. Her equal commitment to both the fields is evidently seen throughout the novel, through the references given to home works, novels and projects.

A study of other female characters in the novel, offers a wide knowledge about women and their in-built personality of positive approach to everything. One such character is Charlie Brown. Charlie Brown is brought up with different ideology. Her name as well as her talent projects herself as a boy. The following words are a description about her bold characteristics:

> Lucy squinted and looked out to the horizon. She made out a surfer, paddling strongly as a huge wave approached. Right as the water swelled underneath, the surfer popped up perfectly, dropping down the face of the wave, then cutting back and forth inside of it. Lucy watched, awed. Growing up in Ohio, the closest she'd ever been to actual surfing was the third row at the local AMC, watching *Blue Crush.* As the surfer cut toward the beach, Lucy realized that she wasn't just watching a surfer. She was watching *a girl.* (11)

Her psychology is somewhat dissimilar to other characters. California is a state of freedom and multi culture. Everyone are treated with equality there. Charlie's well-dressed manner expresses her positive mentality. Her surfing ability enables her to evolve into a psychologically strong personality. She never allows Lucy alone. She advices Lucy to join in the male football team which is a life changing moment for her. She is pictured as an optimistic character throughout the novel. In fact, she is very

much happy when Lucy enters into Varsity team. She is never jealous on her friend's success rather she stimulates her. This sort of behaviour is an inbuilt quality of female psyche. Charlie Brown is an bold attempt of Tigelaar, to prove the generous mind set of women and also their flexible broad minded way of connecting people with one another, with no place for discrimination. Gloria Steinem writes about the togetherness of women that "Together with other women and becoming self-identified, female-identified, is a very long and inevitable part of gaining the power to reach a humanistic society in which we can integrate women and men" (Steinem 267).

Miss. Martie has been depicted as a character, which resembles angel or oracle. In the novel, she has two roles; she is an English teacher and soccer coach. She earns many names like soothsayer, prophecy teller and revaluation maker. She encourages her students not only academically but also physically. When Lucy is deserted from the team, Martie gently approaches her to advice her to join the male football team. Her prophetic words lead her to make history. Lucy sees her as a second mother as she simplifies all her troubles and provides solution for very struggle. Through Martie, Lucy learns the real meaning of friendship.

> 'He's my only friend here,' Lucy said Softly. 'I don't want to lose him.' Martie leaned in close and looked into Lucy's eyes. Her voice was stern. 'If you have to be less of an athlete, less of a person to have Benji as a friend,' she said, 'then his friendship isn't worth much, Lucy. It's not worth anything at all.' (249)

The above lines describe the definition of true friend. When Lucy back slides from sports, Martie helps Lucy twice and pulls her back to the sports field. Martie's character expresses the matured state of women, though they do not hold any position

in society. Women like Martie stands for the betterment of women and this is explicit by viewing them in a different angle. Normal people can't understand such visions.

Sensitiveness is a major trait of women's personality. Pickle is overloaded with this feature. As a sports girl, she is a positive, optimistic and encouraging player. She realizes many things from her first break-up with Benji. After this, she becomes emotionally attached to Ryan. Her sensitive nature never allows her to reveal her heart to Ryan, so she uses Lucy as a mediator. She is psychologically disturbed by love and overcomes this issue of love with friendship. She boosts up herself with her friends Max, Lucy and Charlie. Though Pickle seems to be weaker in surface because of her sensitive nature, mistakes are common in human race. Moving the analyzation further deeper, one can witness her standard way of overcoming her issue by holding the hands of her friends

Kendall sketches herself as wicked and Regan is a lapdog to Kendall. They never care about others' feelings; instead, they degrade them. They think humiliation is an only way to pull others down. The following lines mention Kendall's envious approach.

> Clearly, Kendall had obviously had it in for her, and with Regan as her lapdog, doing virtually anything and everything she asked of her, Kendall had succeeded. Lucy didn't know what the story was or why Kendall would want to humiliate Lucy in front of Ryan and everyone else- and the truth was, it didn't matter. All that mattered was that Lucy knew what kind of girls these were. (215)

They never realise the power of self-confidence. Another dark side revealed through Kendall. Villainous attitude is a kind of female psychology. In many fields, women are against their own gender. So many series and serials follow this trend. Their

envious thought itself is a disaster to them. It spreads joy for a while but leaves a restless future ahead.

The novel contains various female characters and their different psychologies, but everyone is connected by self-belief. It makes everybody to stand in their own legs. It is applicable to characters like Lucy, Charlie, Pickle and Martie. Life moulds them and lends lot of experiences. Tigelaar presents every woman with a rough and tough psyche. At the same time, they are modern, intellectual and talented. The author just breaks the historical definition of women and invents a new meaning for women by the achievement of Lucy. Psychologically, they are strong enough to overcome their circumstances. These positive approaches of women destroy the poisonous diverse thoughts of a constructed stereotypical society.

Chapter Four

Breaking the Stereotypical Labels

The main concept of Tigelaar's novel, *Playing with the Boys* is intermingled with sports. The role of sports plays a vital role in this novel. The protagonist of the novel is designed by the author as a soccer player. Male players earn fame through sports, at the same time its seems quite impossible for women to acclaim fame or name in sports, because there is a conventional concept in society, that women belong to the weaker section of the society. They are born to serve domestic role and never assume any role other than that. In order to change this notion from the society, women strive hard to break such labels through their hard work.

Offering her enormous support to break such stereotypical labels on women, Tigelaar employs a character who finds immense pleasure in playing football, and who is at the same time ready to do anything to break that notion, created by the people of the conventional society. This chapter elaborately explains the process and treatment which the protagonist undergoes to attain a fame, and how she toiled to destroy the stereotypical notions on her own gender.

Football is one of the most popular sports in the whole world. Everyone believes that football and soccer are one and the same. The truth is that both the games are different while they possess some similarities. Football is actually the common name of all those sports which involve the use of the foot and ball to score goals. This term can be applied to any form of football. Some of the different types of football games are association football, gridiron football, Australian football, rugby, and Gaelic football. The game, association football is what is commonly known as soccer. In soccer, similar to most of the football games, it is played on a field with two teams. The ball has to be moved into the opponent team's goal area by kicking it.

Sometimes, in a game, the use of torso or head to move the ball is used. In this game, only the goalkeepers have the right to use the hands and arm to stop the ball.

The shape of the ball also differs in the games. In soccer, the ball used is a sphere. This kind of ball is used in Gaelic football also. In other football games like rugby and American football, the ball has more rounded ends. The ball for Canadian and American Football has two pointed ends. In the United Kingdom, the terms football and soccer refer to the same thing while in the United States, soccer and football are two different games. In football games like the rugby, the players wear the armour to protect themselves from getting hurt, and in soccer, the teams use the feet to kick the ball around, and do not wear any armours.

The world views that football or soccer is a game of men, and women are outlawed to play the game. It constructs a reason that, women cannot be treated equal to men to play such games. Moreover, it sharply points out their poor physique and stamina, but the novel overcomes this barrier by depicting a woman character, who gets into the team of men. Also, Tigelaar displays a female soccer team in this novel. Furthermore, the central character Lucy gets a chance of making history by playing football in a men's team. The author beautifully breaks the stereotypes through this novel, by giving birth to a female role, which evidently plays a major part of changing the society's thought. In the work *The Mad Woman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar locate the female territory in its larger content and examine the borders along which the woman writer defined herself that:

> Coming into being an unnatural being, she must give birth to herself- the female artist commits a double murder. She kills 'Milton's bogey' and the spectre Virginia Woolf called 'the angel in the house', the

> patriarch and his wife, returning then to an empty universe she will people in her own image. (54)

A women soccer team is a first success in the liberation war. Lucy, Pickle, Charlie, Carla, Jamie, Erica, Heather, Karen, Ruthie, Max, Tucker, Marlo all stand for liberal women. They constitute the Beachwood soccer team.

Every sports woman has to be skilful and should have a good physique, so they must be committed to their self with constant practice. Day-to-day practice will equip a sports person. In this process, they get injuries and scars but they do not mind it. Exercise provides a great physique. The novel discusses about a term that is "Hell Week" (27) which means a tight practice session. Lucy sees this as a barrier because she has never done this before in her sports career. She hesitates to do so and is not much interested in it. She hopes that a kicker need not be skilful and her area is kicking not tackling. This careless attitude makes her out of the team. She beats the Hell Week hurdle with the help of her friends.

A good companion can change darkness into light. Friendship always teaches a meaningful life and erases one's trouble. Friends are the backbone of everyone's success. When Lucy is migrated from Ohio to Los Angeles, she struggles with making friends. Genuinely, she expects a trustworthy friend like Anne who is her close friend in Ohio. In the new atmosphere, she fails to make a good friend. Lucy needs somebody to share her inner heart in Los Angeles. She wins the obstacle of making good friends and gets the friendship of Charlie, Pickle, Max, Carla and Benji.

Friendship can be categorized into two which are fake and good. All should be aware of good friendship. No one can be judged by their outlook. Everyone must have the strength of sensing others. Finding a good friend is a tough thing in every field. Lucy is introduced with an emo girl and her strange outfit makes her feel bad. Sooner,

everyone comes to know that her name is Marbid and her profession is photography. She captures pictures while Lucy is playing with the boys. At the beginning, Lucy fixes wrong notion about her and later she finds that she is good. On the other hand, Lucy gets closer with Regan and Kendall. In reality, they are evil and they do not respect one's emotion. Lucy blindly believes them and does not care about others' negative comments on them. It ends with their betrayal and she is cheated by them.

> 'You know what, Kendall?' she said. 'You're a bitch. And Regan? You are even worse than. What you do to people- to me, to Charlie- all for sake of what? Getting in with her?' Lucy pointed to Kendall. 'As if that's so great. What exactly do you love about it? Getting her drinks? Doing her dirty work? That's not friendship. It's a dictatorship.' (273)

The above lines portray the response of Lucy when she realises the true nature of Regan and Kendall. Finally, Lucy gets the true friendship of Marbid.

Beachwood soccer girls' team is known for skillful players. They are strong enough in tackling as well as defencing. They acquire victory all the time and hardly lose. A player should undergo many try-outs in order to get into the team. Luckily, Lucy enters the team but cannot enter the team as she is not skillful enough. She is excluded from the team because of her poor performance in the Hell Week. She is heartbroken as she could not make up for the Beachwood High soccer team. At that time, her coach Martie suggests her to use her super-accurate kick in another sports, Varsity football. Martie clarifies Lucy's confused state and she says "Sometimes where you think you'll fit in the least is where you'll fit in the most" (80). Lucy gets out from this pressure with the helpline of Martie.

A conservative family is constructed by strict rules and regulations. Midnight parties, pubs and roaming out are strictly prohibited in such families. The old-

fashioned father of Lucy does not permit her to attend any parties. She executes Anne's secret plan in order to go for Ryan's house party. The later part of the novel reveals that Lucy is permitted to attend parties. She comes out from her father's clutches and gets free will to go anywhere.

Isolation is a barrier that hinders one's progress in life. Loneliness and emptiness will reduce one's speed of achievement. Lucy experiences these troubles at her mother's loss.

> 'But do you know why?' Lucy asked. 'Because there are a million reasons. You know .... 'But the thing I miss the most,' she said, her voice wavering, 'was that she wasn't afraid to just...you know, let me grow up and meet my own decisions and be my own person.' Lucy mustered the courage to say what was on her mind. 'She didn't treat me like this fragile little girl that needed protecting. Mom saw how strong I was. And I wish you'd see it too.' (251)

The above speech of Lucy exposes her feelings for her mother. A fifteen-year girl cannot survive in the world without her mother. She struggles a lot to overcome that situation. She wants to make herself busy so that she will be away from her mother's memory. Lucy's character is akin to the characteristics of Gauri from Aravind Parashar's *Messed Up! But All for Love*. In that novel, the main character Gauri gets separated from her husband. She hides her pain by making herself busy. She commits herself to a clinic whereas Lucy plays football. The following lines reveal the pain of Gauri's heart. "Everybody knew that she would keep her clinic open seven days a week now. This did perturb her parents, but she wouldn't listen. She was running a marathon and she did not want to stop. She felt that she could not afford to stop" (7).

Lucy is affected by her mother's death whereas Gauri is pained by husband's separation. Smart Lucy overcomes this isolation with her passion.

In every sport, the outfit varies between men and women. Every player should feel comfortable with their dress. Jersey and shorts are the outfits for football. Lucy is uncomfortable with her soccer attire. She has to wear pads like shoulder pads, thigh pads, elbow pads, hip pads and knee pads. Moreover, she has some feminine issues on wearing the jersey.

> But when she slipped on her jersey, she noticed it didn't quite cover all her body parts. Lucy gasped. Two giant holes had been cut out of the chest, where her boobs were supposed to be. She stared at her reflection, horrified. She couldn't go out onto the field like this, with her sports bra showing through...or could she? Lucy shook her head defiantly. Someone had obviously sabotaged her uniform. Someone who wanted to keep her down in the locker room, too embarrassed to show her face. Well, she'd show them her sports bra instead. (108)

The above passage expresses Lucy's embarrassment on wearing sports dress. She hesitates to follow that dress code, while playing football in front of other male players, so she redesigns her jersey and wears it.

Lucy suffered a lot in the hands of the patriarchal society. Her father's traditional attitude plays a vital role in her career. For him, playing football and choosing it as her career is not an issue, but being a player in men's football team is his issue, because his mind is filled with traditional thoughts. Among all the barriers, this conservative attitude of, the master of her house, her dad, stands against Lucy, making her a slave in her own castle. This makes her as a liar. She uses lie as a tool to

achieve her goal. In order to participate in the football matches, she creates fake situations. Thus, her first weapon to break her hurdles is lie.

Lucy is brave enough to handle her father and football. Once she is caught by her father when she appears in the live performance, he finds her as a liar and again locks the door of her passion. This time, she takes her emotion as a shield to protect her passion. The following lines describe Lucy's attitude of rage.

> All the emotion she'd been trying to contain for months, for years came pouring out of her. 'You just, you decide these things, like, arbitrarily! Without any consideration for what I want. I'm the one who agrees. I'm the one who doesn't argue, who tries to make everyone happy, but it's not fair! When do I get what I want? You decide I can't play football, then that's it, end of discussion, and I'm supposed to tell Coach I'm not playing.' Tears formed in Lucy's eyes as she continued to rant. She pushed her hair out of her face. (222)

She argues with her father by saying that, if her mother is present here, she could have easily achieved her goal rather than facing such obstacles. By this argument, her father comes to know that his actions lead her to think about her mother's love, who is no more and so he decides to allow his daughter to play in the men's football team as a replacement of her mother's love.

A woman has the freedom of choosing her own life partner in California. By heart, women are closely attached to their life mates. Finding a genuine soul is a pretty tough job in the world. At many times, people blindly believe an outsider. Love cannot bloom by beauty, physique, money or intelligence, rather it happens by a trustworthy soul. If a person gets attracted to someone based on one's beauty, physique or money, it is just an infatuation. The difference between infatuation and

love is that infatuation is a short-lived passion for some, whereas love is a deep affection for some, that stands the test of time. The problem is that infatuation is a powerful feeling that gives a fake feeling of love.

Lucy gets confused in finding her partner. She swings between Benji and Ryan. Benji is the one who loves her truly whereas Ryan's is just an outcome of infatuation. Lucy admires Ryan's beauty and wants to get his hand. Sooner, she comes to know the real face of Ryan. She receives a love note from Ryan which carries the news of a gathering. She gets joy and goes there to meet him. Later, she realizes the fake action of Ryan and his friends. Furthermore, she finds Benji as her real partner. She recalls every happy moment which she has enjoyed with Benji. He teaches football to her and takes her on a ride to hillside. Finally, she gets out from the fake relationship and joins hands with Benji.

The greatest barrier in Lucy's life is entering into the team. The Varsity football team is full of talented players like Benji, Ryan, Adam, Devon, etc. No one is interested in her arrival except Benji. They are good enough in sports but not in character. They cannot accept a girl into their team and wish to dismiss her. Thus, they start troubling her. In the practice session, Devon misleads her with ball and pulls her back down. They leave her hanging in the goal posts after tying up her hands and legs. She is rescued by Regan. She is furious with her team mates but does not complain against them to the coach as it is against the team spirit. She fights back with her talent and skill. She becomes a permanent fixture in the team because of her long and powerful kicks. She becomes a star player without whom the team cannot win.

An injury forces her to step down from the team. Her leg is fractured when she tries to tackle the ball. Benji enters the team in her place. In order to make Benji

continue playing in the team, she still acts injured even though she is perfectly alright. Her former coach, Martie's advice makes her realise her mistake. She regains her position and helps the team to win. Finally, she unites with Benji too.

> And at that moment, under the shimmering light, surrounded by her friends, Lucy finally found that missing K. In the company of the right friends and with the right boy, knowing she had made the right decision, for the first time since as far back as she could remember, Lucy Malone felt truly *lucky*. (278)

Thus, she overcomes all her barriers, the loss of her mother, surviving in a new place without any friends, in spite of her expulsion from the soccer team, and enters the good books of her team mates in the men's soccer team, breaking the hurdles of the uncomfortable team uniform, the clutches of her patriarchal lover, her infatuation with Ryan, and bad friends, with fierce determination, will power and optimism. She is never disheartened by the barriers. She faces them head on. Finally, she gains the love of her soul and becomes 'Lucky' Lucy.

Chapter Five

Summation

Patriarchal society can be defined as an existing system where men are superior to women. They want to take control over women in all aspects of society. Men make all decisions in both society and family. They hold all the positions of power and authority. Gender discrimination is an issue bound by stereotypes in all the fields. Even in sports, women are not treated equal to men. Women are forced to follow the social construction. Everyone accepts that football is a men's game. The world thinks that football is an aggressive and arrogant game which is applicable only to men. Tigelaar breaks this ideology with her central character, Lucy Malone. She is strong enough to play football like men.

Lucy's mother's death has made her migrate from Ohio to Los Angeles. There, she struggles to make friendship. She longs for a person to pour out her emotions. Her father is a symbol of masculinity, who drags her back from her passion. She lives under the control of her father and mutely accepts his decision of migration. Lucy's passion is to become a soccer player and it happens with the Beachwood High soccer team, but she is dismissed because of her poor skill.

Society believes that football is meant for toughest boys, but Lucy breaks the notion with her super-accurate kicking ability. The dismissal makes her feel down and she terribly misses her mother. She is consoled by Martie, her coach, who forces her to join the Varsity football team. She hesitates to join the boys' team. Martie believes in Lucy's talent than gender identity. Lucy agrees to join the team after a tussle between mind and soul.

Lucy experiences many troubles in the try-out session. A patriarchal figure, Offredi, her coach does not believe in her ability. She attracts everyone by her super-

accurate kicking power. When the coach allows her into the team, she thinks about her father's opinion. Her father has no interest in her playing with the boys. He thinks that it is a taboo and so he bans her to play with them. Lucy fights with her father but he says no to her. At that moment, she does not have the guts to question his father, a patriarch.

Lucy's abnormal kicking style makes everyone to be jealous of her. Her coach, team mates and her friends all are surprised about her unique talent. Her team players do not want her in their team, not because of any personal vengeance; the only reason is her gender. Her gender is a problem for them. Moreover, this gender discrimination really spoils one's skill. Patriarchal issues are interconnected with gender discrimination. The novel portrays many patriarchal figures like her father, her team mates etc. They subjugate women because of their gender and except them to have the stereotypical image, that labelled them as feminity.

Lucy, being the opposite pole, strongly disagrees with this subjugation. She patiently waits for the right time to prove herself. When the chance knocks at her door, she accepts this as a task of proving herself to the world. In this process, she becomes stronger. At one point, she neglects her father's decision and wants to fly free. She bursts out her emotions and started playing as she wishes. Her patriarchal father changes his mind set after hearing her emotional words. Inthis way the protagonist proves herself as a feminist.

Tigelaar promotes her female characters with male names like Charlie Brown, Max, Pickle, etc. The author amplifies that name does not construct gender. It is just opposite to social construction of giving names. Animus is an interior masculine part of the female personality. The main character Lucy has this in her life which makes her to play football. Not only Lucy but also Charlie is also a portrayal of animus. She

owns the characteristics of men. She is a surfer and also a striker in the soccer team. The author by giving such a male name to her characters; she attempted to reveal that the feminity is created by the society.

Male dominant society never recognizes women's achievements. Conquerors win history and losers get muted. A woman player faces many struggles to construct a victory. Lucy's team mates cannot bear her triumph and want to deny her ability. They paste her in the goal post in order to dispose her from the team. Shehangs like a bat and nobody is there to help her except Regan, but Lucy does not get a chance to open her mouth. Masculine power mutes the vulnerable voice of women.

Love is a constant and an everlasting thing. Women cannot be cheated easily because they are protective and defensive. Human beings are weak in affection, so Regan makes love as a trap to cheat Lucy with the help of Kendall. Masculine power does not care about one's feelings or affections. Ryan exploits the infatuation of both Lucy and Pickle. Even though Lucy is humiliated by Ryan, she compromises the loss with her self-belief.

Masculinity never encourages feminism, rather it encourages, feminine nature as it is weaker in nature. Patriarchal society tries to dump women's ability. They eagerly wait for a woman to make a mistake and if it happens, they will corner them. Lucy's fellow players always find fault in her gaming style. Even her coach Offredi does not believe her and the entire team wishes to send her out except Benji. Benji's father, Mr. Mason hates Lucy for playing football with a male team. She accepts everyone's hatred and turns it into the steps of her success. There Lucy proved her feminism is more powerful than her feminity, which is encouraged and supported by the society.

Women have struggled due to gender discrimination, gender inequality, patriarchal problem and gender performativity. Women have not thrusted the problem on men. There are women who are really motivated by men. The ironical statement is that there are also men who want to rescue women from the social construction rules but their voice fades inside the world. The supportive men are not brave enough to resonate their voice. Benji remains silent when Lucy hanged on the goal post. Coach Offredi cannot support her against Benji's father. Thus, all are muted by the social power structure.

The psychology of women changes according to three ideologies which are based on difference in the personality patterns. The first type highlights the role of biological factors. The second one emphasizes the significance of differential socialization for boys and girls. The third one emerges recently and it studies the role of the social structure and principally sexism. These major themes have brought up many changes in the psyche of every woman.

The human being's psychology differs from one's own thinking ability. Often women are a puzzle to the society. Their uniqueness makes them stand out. They have been fragile once, but in the present era, women have become bold. Evaluation of their psyche gives a new angle to women. The current environment transfers them into a tough nature. The death of Lucy's mother makes her gloomy and she remains sad, but she overcomes it with her passion.

In the beginning, Lucy is portrayed with a soft and sensitive nature, but towards the end, she describes herself as rough and tough. The main reason for her transformation is Martie, who is a mentor and motivator to her. Lucy thinks that Martie is her mother's reflection. Her mother also advises that women have to be courageous and have to make their own decision. She takes them as her role models to

reach higher and stay stronger. She enters into the football team with the help of Martie and makes history.

Lucy's migration from Ohio to Los Angeles also makes her feel bad. The new environment is not feasible to make friends. Likewise, Lucy gets stuck with making friends. She starts her friendship account with Charlie and then it goes on like Pickle, Max, etc. Even though she faces many hurdles in her life, she emerges out successfully along with her friends. Her mother's death makes her fragile but her passion makes her powerful. Throughout this process, she gains more strength in her physique as well as psyche.

Sometimes, women become more aggressive than men. If they commit themselves to something, they never run away or stay away from it. They are very much keen in constructing history. Mental power makes them tough whereas physical power makes them rough. She is capable of lifting weight more than men. This ability shows her aggressiveness and never give-up attitude, proved in her leg break scene. That state of attitude allows the team to experience victory against Oak Wood Team.

Making others happy is the wonderful feeling one can experience. Women sacrifice themselves in order to make others happy. In this sense, Lucy hides her feelings for the sake of Pickle's joy. When Lucy comes to know that Pickle needs Ryan as her partner, she buries her feelings and stands as a mediator between Ryan and Pickle. Moreover, Benji's father desires that his son should become the star player of the team. In order to make Benji's father happy, Lucy offers her kicker position to Benji. Women are good enough in sacrifice and get satisfaction from the happiness of others.

Women are capable of handling two things at the same time. Lucy concentrates on two fields at the same time – studies and sports. In other words, they

are strong enough to manage both the faces, like evil and angel. Kendall and Regan project themselves as angel. The course of the novel reveals their originality and they think humiliation is the only way to take others down. In many fields, women are against their own gender. Their envious nature itself is a disaster to them. It gives an instant smile but leaves a restless future ahead.

In sports, constant practice is an essential aspect and it makes one a professional. The novel deals with a term that is 'Hell Week', which means tight practice session. Lucy hesitates to undergo it and is not much interested in it. Moreover, she thinks that a kicker does not need to be skilful in tackling as her area is kicking not tackling. This careless attitude makes her drop out of the team. Every player should feel comfortable with their dress in order to give their best in the game. Jersey and shorts are the outfit for football. Lucy is uncomfortable with her football attire. She has to wear pads like shoulder pads, thigh pads, elbow pads, hip pads and knee pads. Furthermore, she has some feminine issues on wearing the jersey.

Love cannot happen because of beauty, physique, money or intelligence rather it happens for a good soul. If a person gets attracted to another based on their beauty, physique or money, it is just an infatuation. Lucy swings between love and infatuation. Her soft corner makes her fall in love with Benji. Though the society remains a barrier for Lucy to achieve her goal, Benji is the only man who motivates her to pursue her dream and that creates a soft corner for him in Lucy's heart.

This project analyses how the protagonist tries to survive in the male dominated soccer game and breaks the stereotyping, that soccer is only a game for masculine gender and not for female. The protagonist tries to prove that she does not lose her femininity even after playing a masculine game. All she wants is to erase the masculine identity given to the soccer game. Her affection towards her lover helps her

achieve her goals. She becomes a role model to all the women as she struggles amidst the male gaze and conquers the male dominated game. She secures the 'dominant' position in Raymond Williams' 'RED'. In the beginning she is a residual and becomes an emergent in the middle and at the end of the novel she is a dominant woman, conquering the male designed and male dominated game. Though she does not call her as a feminist, she can be called as a complete feminist, who stands as a role model for other women. This project analyses her struggles to survive in the soccer game. Further research can be done on *Playing with the Boys* with reference to feminism, gender performativity and the concept of animus.

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A Panorama of Desolated America in Roth's *American Pastoral*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Panorama of Desolated America in Roth's *American Pastoral*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Cerlif Christy K. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Panorama of Desolated America in Roth's *American Pastoral*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

K. Cerlif Christy

Cerlif Christy K.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Panorama of Desolated America in Roth's *American Pastoral*** describes the darker side of the degenerated America of the 1960s.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives a brief history of American literature and introduces Philip Roth and the novel, *American Pastoral.*

The second chapter **Kaleidoscopic Scenario of America** deals with the history of America during the 1960s.

The third chapter **Bereavement of Philanthropy** discusses the loss of faith in humanity in America during 60s and unveils the unseen side of America.

The fourth chapter **Pastoral Nostalgia** concentrates on the nostalgic state of both the protagonist and the narrator and their aching passion to live a bucolic life which was typical of the psyche of every American of 60s.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a record of human experience. Every nation has its own literature and it is based on its historical periods. Literature is a collection of works and this makes a whole nation. It is people's impression of life. People write it in the form of diaries, letters, pamphlets, essays, poems, plays and stories. The term 'literature' is a symbolic record which can include images, sculptures as well. Literature is a thought of one person, puts his idea and imagination into writing which appears more attractive.

> Literature, is a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. (Rexroth)

American literature begins with the colonization of England in America. The first English colonies in America was Virginia and New England. Colonial times in America was the beginning of the American literature. The literary wealth of the American country was brought by these colonists with them. Most of these Americans were the English migrants who began writing in the sixteenth century. Capt. John Smith (1580-1631) was considered as the first American writer. His work *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608) in which he describes the new land of Virginia. He was an adventurer. Other writers of his time were William Byrd, William Bradford and John Winthrop. Much of the colonial writing was done in New England. Southern literature came quite later.

American literature was dominated by the influence of Puritanism, for the next 300 years. "Mayflower" was a ship which landed in Cape Cod in 1620 carried pilgrims in that ship. Puritans settled in New England. Puritans are people who protested and purified the practices of the Church of England from the Roman Catholicism. They were also known as Protestants. The Puritans believed the Bible as God- manifestation. For educating the people they started Harvard College in 1636. Religious feeling prompted people to write during this age. Cotton Mother, Samuel Sewall, Michael Wigglesworth, Edward Taylor and Jonathan Edward was the last Puritan. Psalm book was the first book published in America in 1640. Imaginative literature was not encouraged by Puritans. As the worldliness and scientific temper grew, Puritanism lost its hold. Yet Puritanism was lovely and have strong moral nature.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Americans began to shape them into a new nation. On July 4, 1776 they declared their independence. Paine argued for declaring independence for America. This Independence influenced in literature and everyone started to write about American idea and Americanism. Americans formed a union and a Constitution. Thomas Jefferson was one of the important persons for the independence. Some important writers of this time of independence were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Trumbull, Susanna Rowson, Philip Freneau and Noah Webster. Important work of this time was American Dictionary of English Language which was compiled by Noah Webster. Mallikarjun Patil in his *Studies in American Literature* states that:

> He [Thomas Paine] argued in favor of declaring American independence in 1776. George Washington appreciated Paine. Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) said "all men are created equal".... Noah Webster compiled

American dictionary of English language saying that "every nation should have its own customs, habits and language". (x)

The flowering of American literature occurred during the mid-nineteenth century. This was seen as the beginning of the great American literature. The period 1850-55 marked the American Renaissance. American literature flourished in the New England region. The prominent writers of this age were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne and Herman Melville. Walt Whitman was the greatest poet of this time and was also known as the Poet of the People. The famous works of this age were *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick* and *Leaves of Grass*. This *Leaves of Grass* was written by Whitman, was the greatest poetic work of America.

The late nineteenth century was considered as the transition to Modern age. During this late nineteenth century that is 1860s people had a harsh experience with the Civil War. This war influenced the works written by the authors of the nineteenth century. Gay novels were banned in the nineteenth century. Political corruption, violent conflicts and loss of religious certitude gave path to tragic novels of the twentieth century. The major writers of this age were Mark Twain, Henry James, William Howell and Henry Adam whose notable works were *The Adventure of Tom Sawyer, The American* and *American Tragedy*.

The twentieth century modern American literature differs from earlier literature. It is complex, technically more sophisticated, varied in content, simple in language, realistic and individualistic in approach. The major writers of this age were Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, and Eugene O' Neil, Tennessee Williams, Margaret Mitchell, F. Scott Fitzgerald,

John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. Some major works of this age were *The Waste Land*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Grape of Wrath*.

The American literature since 1950s varied both in structure and content. It is epical, historical, spy, war and science influenced works. This late. twentieth century American literature was special because of its diversity among writers. In American literature there are Black American writers, Jewish writers, and Feminist writers. Some important writers were Vladimir Nabokov, Toni Morrison, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Cynthia Buchanan, Lorraine Hansberry and Sylvia Plath. Some important works are *Lolita*, *Song of Solomon*, *Invisible Man* and *Raisin in the Sun*.

Philip Roth belong to the late twentieth century American literature. Saul Bellow, John Updike, Richard Malamud and Thomas Pynchon are some of the contemporary writers of Philip Roth. They belong to the post war period of postmodernism. These writers produced their work after the World War II, which influenced their works. Thomas Pynchon's novels and stories were a mixture of historical information, comic – book fantasy and counter cultural suspicion. His notable works are *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Richard Malamud was a Jewish writer like Philip Roth. Malamud was known for his dark comedy. *The Natural, the Assistant* and *A New Life* are some of his impressive works. John Updike was an American writer. He used present tense narration. His rich stylish language and his work had a deep connection with Christian themes. Some of his works are *Rabbit is Rich* and *Rabbit at Rest*. Saul Bellow was also one of the most influential novelists in America after World War II. He portrays the American city and

the distinctive character of the people of America. *The Adventure of Augie March, Herzog* and *Seize the Day* are some of his notable works.

Philip Roth (1933-2018) is a Jewish American novelist and short story writer. He is dedicative, obsessive about his works and he was intensely private man and known for his autobiographical character. When most writers lost their interest in writing during his period, Roth has written a series of books in the last decade. Shuchi Agarwal in his work *A Study of Philip Roth: An American Bestseller Novelist* states about the command given by Aaron Ascher that:

> "Even now, he doesn't relent", says Aaron Ascher, Roth's old friend and editor. "This is a 70 something-years-old writer who is still going uphill and keeps getting better. He has back problem which gives him great pain, yet he's always working. He never stops, even in his worst periods." (188)

He always believed in the separation of life and art. In the works and heart of Roth's, family relation plays a major role.

Philip Roth was born on 19 March 1933 in Newark, New Jersey, United States. He was educated in University of Chicago and Bucknell University. He regularly set his fiction in his birth place of Newark, New Jersey. Roth served two years in the United States Army. He was a Jewish descent but most critics emphasized that his career has largely been constructed out of his creative and cultural conflict with his Jewish readers. Roth is far more a novelist than he is a Jew. Roth's work portrays his American-Jewish experience. Roth was frustrated as a Jew in American society and he gave expression of this frustration in his fiction. He was a second generation American from a lower middle class Jewish family. Many novels of Roth were written in first person. He used this style

to gain freedom. He used conversational tones and rhythms. He has the capability to turn the volume up and down and can slip from colloquial talk to formal talk in a single sentence. Roth used the symbol of sport to heighten the sense of disparity between urban and the city. He is a serious writer and his narrative voice is unique. His characters inhabit a variety of cultural backgrounds. Philip Roth's fictional characters were typical products Jewish families in Newark or Jewish families who left Newark. Some characters of Philip Roth resemble himself in some places.

In most of the Philip Roth novels, Nathan Zuckerman is one of the most important characters. The character presents the psychological struggle of author himself. In his novel *American Pastoral*, this character Zuckerman goes through a strange path that was his by-bass surgery and the author Philip Roth also died of heart failure on May 22, 2018 at the age of 85. Through Zuckerman, he resembles himself through his novels.

> "Philip Roth is a male", "Philip Roth is Jewish", "Philip Roth is American", "Philip Roth is Nathan Zuckerman", "Philip Roth is kidding", "Philip Roth is Divorced", "Philip Roth is His Mother's Son", "Philip Roth is prolific", "Philip Roth is mortal", "Philip Roth is immortal". (Amidon)

Some of the important works are *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), *My Life as a Man* (1974) and *Sabbath's Theater* (1995). *Goodbye, Columbus* was his first book published in the year 1959. This is a collection of five short stories. Each story deals with the concern of second and third generation American Jews. *Sabbath's Theater* was a novel by Philip Roth about the exploits of 64 year old Mickey Sabbath published in 1995. *My Life as a Man* was his seventh novel published in the year

1974. It was a collection of short stories. *Nemesis* was his 31st and last novel published in 2010. This novel talks about Newark community and its children of 1944.

Philip Roth had received many awards for his works. He had won National Book Awards for Fiction two times for his works in 1960 and 1995. Two National Book Critics Circle Awards in 1986 and 1991. He also won three PEN/ Faulkner Awards for *Operation Shylock*, *The Human Stain* and *Everyman* in the 1991, 2001 and 2007. In 2010 he was awarded National Humanities Medal by U.S. President Barack Obama. In 2011 Roth was awarded Man Booker International Prize for lifetime achievement in fiction on the world stage. In 2012 Roth received Prince of Asturias Award for literature.

American Pastoral was a novel written by Philip Roth and published in the year 1997. The novel *American Pastoral* received Pulitzer Prize in 1998 and was included in TIME's List of the 100 Best Novels. The novel was adapted for the film in the year 2016. This novel *American Pastoral* talks about Seymour "Swede" Levov, a Jewish American business man and former high school athlete from Newark, New Jersey. The novel was narrated by Nathan Zuckerman. The novel talks about the happy and conventional life of Levov and his ruined by domestic social and political turmoil. The death of the "Swede" Levov was said by his younger brother, Jerry Levov to Zuckerman at their 45th high school reunion of the "Swede" and the war which took place in 1960's which changed his daughters life Merry, who was not mentioned by him in the novel. Merry protested against American involvement in the Vietnam War. She was hiding herself with the help of Seymour until his death in 1995. His novel and his character was burdened with a sense of moral responsibility, afflicted with guilt consciousness, rooted in Jewish-American identity and involved in Narcissism and egocentricity.

Swede happily took the reins at his father's glove factory, married Dawn Dwyer, a gentile candidate for Miss America, and they moved to the American pastoral from Newark to Old Rimrock, New Jersey. The Swede Levov carries his nickname as "invisible passport":

> Like an invisible passport, all the while wandering deeper and deeper into an American's life, forthrightly evolving into a large, smooth, optimistic American such that his conspicuously raw forebears [...] couldn't have dreamed of as one of their own. (207-8)

Merry Levov plants her bomb and the inherited condition that outlasts even the attachment to parents. The American ideal that the Swede so effortlessly pursues as embodied for the Swede by the rural splendor of Old Rimrock. Merry Levov being an American is not about escape but being got up in American history.

Roth's novel revolves around the important places in America and tells us about the nation over the past fifty years. The subject taken by him in his novel *American Pastoral* was America. Some of the places in America was presented by him in this novel. They were New York, New Jersey, Newark, Weequahic, Old Rimrock, Morris Country, etc. These places in Roth's novel represent the America of 1960s. In America people protested to stop war in Vietnam and on the other hand some people do not involve themselves in the protest. Merry was the example for the people who protest to stop the war. Many protesters were students of school and Universities of America. The increase in the population of Black people was also the reason for the collapse in America. Due to this war America was shattered and many of them affected. The affected peoples were mainly families of the young protesters. The young people separate

themselves from the family as Merry did and they were scared of their life. Parents suffered because of their children as Swede suffered because of Merry. Swede was not interested in protest and he had nothing to do with it. He wanted to be American and he loved to be an American. He lived in pastoral America surrounded by nature and he lived in a hundred years old house. The disturbed America of 1960s, the young people of 60s and the destroyed America was presented by Roth in this novel *American Pastoral.*

The novel begins at 1940s with Swede the protagonist as a high school boy. Through this he gives us some information about World War II, about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Swede's life was portrayed by the narrator Zuckerman. Swede's school days as a player, his experience in World War II, and his marriage with Dawn, as a business man, as a father of Merry were portrayed by Zuckerman. But at the end he was left all alone in his nostalgic state. As his business was in decline, he had an attack of a severe heart problem. He was also very much shocked when he heard about his daughter's bombing in Old Rimrock. These situation left him in the state of nostalgia. He returns to his past where he enjoyed his life and he wished the days to return. Zuckerman presents this nostalgic Swede to represent the generation of America in 1960s. Many people of this period were caught by this nostalgia because of the war and its protest in America which separated the young generation from their parents.

The riot of 1967 affects many people in America. Many people protested against the war of America in Vietnam. American military troops in Vietnam killed many people of Vietnamese. Some famous philosophers, boxers, musicians raised their voice against this killing of people. This triggered the hearts of young people and they started to protest against this Vietnam War. They not only protested against the Vietnam War but also

protested for the equal rights to the Black Americans and women's right. Many protesters were students of colleges and schools. Most of them in this protest got arrested or injured and even some of them were dead. Roth presents the America of 60s which is unknown to the world.

The nostalgic state of the narrator Zuckerman, Swede and Merry is described by Roth in his novel *American Pastoral*. Zuckerman and Swede suffer from heart disease and the author himself also died of heart disease. Zuckerman was in the state of nostalgia. He was all alone and to free himself from this nostalgic state he moved to his childhood memories. His strong nostalgic feeling was expressed through his 45th high school reunion. There he visits his childhood friends and recalls his childhood memories. He says that nearly twenty of his classmates were dead. Merry herself was also in the state of loneliness. After her separation from her family, she moved from one place to place to escape from the hands of FDR. She was away from the society. She was all alone in loneliness. This was the state of every youth who involved in the protest against Vietnam War. Swede wishes to live a pastoral life and his life was scattered by his daughter Merry. She bombed many places and killed nearly four people. She was the only comfort for Swede but she separated from him and left him in a nostalgic state.

Chapter Two

Kaleidoscopic Scenario of America

Philip Roth's twenty second book *American Pastoral* (1997) talks about the history of past fifty years of America. Roth seems to be more American than Jewish and he seems to have identified himself with America and its policies so much that he goes to the extent of defending America's dropping the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This long novel explores the course of American history from the late 1940s, which Roth's narrator and alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman regards to the social upheavals that marked the 1960s and early 1970s. Roth describes the aftermath America of World War II in his *American Pastoral* novel that:

> Let's remember the energy. American's were governing not only themselves but some two hundred million people in Italy, Austria, Germany, and Japan. The war-crimes trials were cleansing the earth of its devils once and for all. Atomic powers was ours alone. (40)

This novel *American Pastoral* opens in familiar Roth territory; Newark, New Jersey. New Jersey is a state in mid- Atlantic region of the United States. New Jersey is the fourth smallest state with its biggest city, Newark. New Jersey lies completely within the New York City and Philadelphia. New Jersey was originally settled by Native Americans. A half lit age of post- war hopefulness a time when New York was still a city of old-world craftsmen and new world chancers, and atomic energy was belong to America. Roth's novel *American Pastoral* says some important matter about the America of 1960s. The whole novel revolves around this New Jersey city, United States. It was the place of the protagonist, Swede and the birth place of the author Roth.

Newark is both a place where characters grow up and live. It is a Jewish hometown and also for the protagonist Seymour "Swede" Levov. Shuchi Agarwal in his work *A Study of Philip Roth: An American Bestseller Novelist* says that "Philip Roth fictional universe, on the other hand, is entirely peopled by Jewish families in Newark or Jewish family who left Newark. There are some characters who resemble Philip Roth (205)." Newark was the most popular city in the United State of New Jersey. Newark is one of the oldest cities in United States. Several leading companies have their headquarters in Newark. In 1922, Newark had 63 live theaters, 46 movie theaters, and an active nightlife. Broad and Market Streets in Newark was the busiest intersection in the United States. The city saw tremendous industrial and population growth during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Newark was bustling in the early to mid-twentieth century.

After the World War II the population of Newark reached its peak since the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe settled there. Newark was characteristic by distinctive neighbourhoods, including a large Eastern European Jewish community concentrated along Prince Street. After the post-World War II Newark got declined in the city budget from $58 million to only $45 million in 1944. This was the slow recovery from the Great Depression. The city increased its tax rate from $4.61 to $5.30. By the 1960s Newark was a poor urban center surrounded by but disconnected from its middle class suburbs. As its white population shrank from 363,000 in the 1950s to 158,000 in 1967, its black population grew from 70,000 to 220,000 during the same period. The African American population had very quickly become the majority. At present America has a population of 60 percent of African American's. Among them 30 percent are

Hispanic or Latino and white Americans are only 18 percent. Currently Newark occupies the largest community of Portuguese immigrants in the United America.

Swede was the third generation to hold the glove factory named Newark Maid in Newark, New Jersey. Swede is a High School athlete, football, basketball and baseball player. They lived in Keer Avenue. It is a place where post immigrant generation of Jews had grouped into a community. Nathan Zuckerman, the narrator of this novel, *American Pastoral* says about Swede that:

> Three generations. All of them growing. The working. The saving. The success. Three generations in raptures over America. Three generations of becoming one with a people. And now with the fourth it had all come to nothing. The total vandalization of their world. (237)

Philip Roth gives a general introduction to Swede and his family at the beginning of the novel. After that he introduces Nathan Zuckerman through his 45th Weequahic High School reunion. Zuckerman narrates this reunion that:

> I'd driven back from New Jersey, where, on a sunny Sunday late in October, at a country club in a Jewish suburb far from the futility prevailing in the street of our crime-ridden, drug- infested childhood home, the reunion that began at eleven in the morning … a group of elderly adults who, as Weequahic kids of the thirties and forties, would have thought a niblick was a hunk of schmaltz herring. (45)

Through the narrator Zuckerman, Roth presents the life of Swede and how his life changed because of his daughter, Merry Levov and the war which affected his life as an American. Weequahic is an unincorporated community within the city of Newark, New

Jersey, United States. Weequahic was largely a middle class Jewish neighbourhood and home to many Jewish restaurants until the late 1960s. Author Philip Roth was graduated from Weequahic High School in 1950 and this was the setting of his novel *American Pastoral*. It is said that it is his semi–autobiographical novel and the narrator Zuckerman himself, describes about the life of Swede.

The community of Weequahic is named after the park which it borders and is located in the South Ward. The South Ward was created when people left the Central Ward. Until the 1960s Weequahic was largely a middle class Jewish neighbourhood. Weequahic experienced more "white flight" than almost any other section of the society. 1950 – 1970 saw the biggest change when more Jews escaped to the suburbs. Ninety eight percent of white people were there during the period of 60s and 70s. Now there were 95 percent of black people and this Weequahic had become a centre of urban decay and slums. It is believed that the Riot of 1967 was the main reason for the shift in exodus from Weequahic. The great wave of Jews began with the German Jews in 1836. By 1924 two million Jews immigrated her and 45 thousand of them were in Newark. 35 thousand of them found their home in Weequahic. Until 1960, Weequahic High School graduate more PHDs than other school in United States. The school abruptly changed into one of the most dangerous schools in New Jersey where grades plummeted and the bloods and crips ruled campus and streets.

For many years Weequahic offered many foreign languages than any other high school in the city. The languages which included were French, Spanish, Latin, German, Russian, and Hebrew and had a Swahili language club in the 60s. The Jewish immigrants

of twenties grouped together to form a community. The Weequahic section of America was described by Roth in this novel *American Pastoral*:

> During the boom years of the early twenties, the first postimmigrant generation of Newark's Jews had regrouped into a community that took its inspiration more from the mainstream of American life than from the Polish shtetl their Yiddish-speaking parents had re-created around Prince Street in the impoverished Third Ward. (10)

Swede is an athlete and player. He joined in the Marine Corps in June 1945 during the World War II the next day of his graduation in Weequahic High School. Swede returned home in 1947 and enrolled at Upsala College where he saw Dawn Dyer. He married Mary Dawn Dyer, Miss New Jersey from Elizabeth in the year 1949. Before the marriage of Swede Dawn competed at Atlantic City for the 1949 Miss America title, she had been Miss Union Country and before that, Spring Queen at Upsala. Atlantic City is a resort city in Atlantic Country, New Jersey, and United States. Since 1921, Atlantic City has been the home of the Miss America pageant. The 1920s with tourism at its peak are considered by many historians as Atlantic City's golden age.

The narrator Zuckerman and Swede met each other on summer 1985. Swede wanted to convey a matter about his father, so he wrote a letter to Zuckerman after ten years in 1995. Swede took Zuckerman to Vincent's Plaza in New York. In this visit Swede first gives an account of his family and about his brother Jerry. Jerry who is a doctor and was once the friend of Zuckerman in his Weequahic High School. Swede in his letter had mentioned about his father's death and he wanted to talk about his father's death. Swede says in his letter that: "Not everyone knew how much he suffered because

of the shocks that befell his loved ones (18)." But at their meeting Swede does not talk anything about the shock which was a great question to Zuckerman. Later this shock was revealed by Jerry in their 45th reunion. At this reunion Zuckerman came to know about the death of Swede through his brother Jerry in 1995 two months after their visit.

Meredith Levov, daughter of Swede who was the shock for the death of Swede's father and also had blown the life of Swede by her revolution against America and was responsible for three bombing in America during the anti-Vietnam War protest. She was known as "Rimrock Bomber", because she bombed the post office in Rimrock in 1968 which devoured the life of Dr. Fred Conlon. After the bombing, Swede went to the home of Mrs. Conlon and apologized for what her daughter had done to her and her family. But she feels sorry for Swede and said that it would take time for her and her family to be happy again. She also says that:

> We will survive as a loving family. We will survive with our memories intact and with our memories to sustain us. It will not be any easier for us than it will be for you to make sense of something so senseless. But we are the same family we were when Fred was here, and we will survive. (216)

Through these lines Mrs. Conlon conveys one message that Swede will no more survive as a family. This was the situation of the family whose children involve themselves as the radicals and the anti-Vietnam War protesters. The family was broken and their happiness as a family was stolen by the war of 1960s. Merry was mainly inspired by Angela Davis. Angela Davis was the leftist activist of African-American and she was also a professor, "Angela Davis, a black philosophy professor … a Communist professor at UCLA who is against the war, is tried in San Francisco for kidnapping, murder, and conspiracy. She is

charged with supplying guns used in an armed attempt to free three black San Quentin convicts during their trial"(157). She was responsible for the bombing carried out between 1969 and 1973 and other radicals opposing the US military intervention in Vietnam.

Old Rimrock is a town in Morris Country, New Jersey. It developed as a wealthy suburban community, with commuters travelling to Newark and the rest of the New York City. After bombing Old Rimrock was described by Roth in *American Pastoral* as:

> Facility destroyed! Eleven hundred Old Rimrock residents forced, for a full year and a half, to drive five miles to buy their stamps and to packages weighed and to send anything registered or special delivery. That's all show Lyndon Johnson who's boss. (216)

Merry was also responsible for the bombing in Oregon. This bombing took the life of three people. This bombing was also another shock to Swede and he was unable to believe what Merry revealed to him about her five year of loneliness. Oregon is a state in the Pacific Northwest region on the West coast of the United States. Oregon's economy is largely powered by various form of agriculture, fishing, and hydroelectric power.

After the bombing in the post office, Merry hides herself and she was separated from her family and the society, in which she had been brought up as a child. She was all alone and moves from one place to other to prevent herself from the hands of FBI and also from the hands of cruel men. Swede saw her after five years in one of the underground resistance in Newark Street. Sheila Salzman was the speech therapist of Merry, who had hidden Merry after the bombing. After bombing Merry escaped to home of Sheila Salzman in Morristown.

Morristown was a town and the country seat of Morris Country, New Jersey, and United States. But she does not tell anything about this to Swede. Swede came to know about this when Merry told her suffering of five years to Swede. Swede was a great athlete and his life was changed into a pitiful life because of the situation in America. This burden destroyed him till his death and he died of cancer. The novel ends with the death of Swede's father. His dream and his life destroyed by his daughter and the decade. Swede finally understands that he is living through the moral breakdown of American society.

Roth presents the America of 1940s to 1970s in this novel *American Pastoral.* Using the character of Swede he represent three generation of American history. Newark continued to decline during the 1970s. In *American Pastoral* Lov Levov's comments made at the dinner party in 1973 which sum up the drastic decline of the city:

> Streets aren't cleaned. Burned-out cars nobody takes away. People in abandoned buildings. Fires in abandoned buildings. Unemployment. Filth. Poverty. More filth. More poverty. Schooling nonexistent. Schools a disaster. On every street corner dropouts. Dropouts doing nothing. Dropouts dealing drugs. Dropouts looking for trouble. (345)

The glove business is an unfortunate metaphor for Swede's flawless life. His unchanging hand in his business, his existence is static, frozen in an impossible project, immobilized by stereotypes. The most harmful of them all proved to be the American Dream, an ideal that conflicts with the harsh realities of postwar American history and left those who believed in it in bitter dismay. Michiko Kakutani in his *A Postwar Paradise Shattered From Within,* talks about the speech given by Roth in 1960s that:

> He argued that real life, the life out of newspaper headlines, was outdoing the imagination of novelists, and that fiction writers were in fact abandoning the effort to grapple with "the grander social and political phenomena of our times" and were turning instead "to the construction of wholly imaginary worlds, and to a celebration of the self." (1)

John F. Kennedy's assassination and the social upheavals of the 60s pictures the tragedy of the America's. Kennedy was the young president represented a spirit of hope for nation and especially youth. When he was assassinated the hope of young people and members and supporters of minority groups vanished. The rise and fall of one man's fortune was described during the decades between World War II and Vietnam War, and in doing so created a resonant parable of American innocence and disillusion. Swede says that after the 1967 riot the city collapsed. The factories in America which were nearly hundred years old were windowless, sunlight sealed out with brick and mortar and their entrances and exits plugged with cinderblock. People had lost their fingers and arms, their feet crushed and their faces scalded. The factories were destroyed and the places were deserted.

Student protesters attacked 197 ROTC buildings during the year 1969 to 1970. Protests grew after the Kent State shootings and thereby radicalizing more and more students. Although the media often portrayed the student antiwar movement as aggressive and widespread, only 10 percent of the 2500 colleges in the United States had violent protests throughout the Vietnam War years. By the early 1970s, most student protest movements made powerless due to President Nixon's de-escalation of the war, the economic downturn, and disillusionment with the powerlessness of the antiwar

movement. The aspect of war was to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. They bombed the villages and killed the civilians. They hold large number of political prisoners and tortured political opponents.

Roth portrays America's optimistic and pessimistic side through Swede and Merry. Swede represents the optimistic side of America. Swede "loved America. Loved being an American" (206). He represents the optimistic side of America even though the 1960s of America was known for its war and protest. But America on 1960s involved in many scientific inventions. Historians describe these ten years, 1961 to 1970 as the most historically significant. By the end of the 60s a man entered moon through which humanity had entered into space-age. The famous event of America in 1960s was Apollo 11. America became the first country to land men in Moon in 1969. The first man to land in moon was Neil Armstrong and his companion was Buzz Aldrin on July 20, 1969. Computer Mouse was invented in 1963. The first ATM started dispensing cash on 1969. In 1964 Johnson launched the War on Poverty. He also established Medicare and Medicaid, which provide healthcare to the elderly. He also involved in education reform. The Primary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 authorized $1 billion in federal funding for public education and established special programs for schools in low-income areas.

Industrialization became one of the most important factors in 1960s. Swede runs a glove factory in Newark, New Jersey. The name of the factory was Newark Maid. This shows us the industrialization of America in 1960s and the positive side of America. This was represented through Swede even though he was depressed by his daughter Merry. Swede represents the America's blooming buds of 40s and the optimistic side of

America. It runs on one side to earn money and to live a happy life as Swede wished and in this period Americans invented many inventions.

Roth on the other side represents the darker side that is the pessimistic side of America through the character Merry and through the cause of Vietnam War and the anti-war movement in America. This affects the young generation who involved in protests and many people were killed in this protest. Many families were also affected by this war because young people in a family involve themselves in the movement and they got separated from their family. The narrator Zuckerman describes about American family in this novel *American Pastoral* that:

> I am thinking of the sixties and of the disorder occasioned by the Vietnam War, of how certain families lost their kids and certain families didn't and how the Seymour Levov's were one of those that did-families full of tolerance and kindly, well-intentioned liberal goodwill, and theirs were the kids who went on a rampage, or went to jail, or disappeared underground, or fled to Sweden or Canada. (88)

The separation of the parents and the children largely relationship affects the society of America. This was expressed by Roth in this novel *American Pastoral*. Merry separated from her family and her separation affects her parents both mentally and physically. If there is a proper relationship between Swede and Merry, Merry would not have involved in such bombing which took the life of four people. Merry represents the pessimistic side of America and the rebellious generation. The young generation made many rebellion in America and destructed many places through bombing to stop the war in Vietnam. Many innocent people were killed in this bombing.

The things that changed America were corruption, taxes and racial issue. The rise in the percentage of population of African Americans was also the reason for the change in American society. These unhealthy factors namely corruption, taxes and races changed the Black kids into barbarians. The black kids steal nearly forty cars in Newark for every twenty- four hours. They steal the car and they caused accidents by rash driving. They rob the car in the gunpoint and finally ends with accidents. The roads are filled with cars in destroyed condition. This was the scenario of the America of 1960s. The 1960s was associated with a large increase in crime and urban unrest of all types. Between 1960 and 1969 it is reported that incidents of violent crime per 100,000 people in the United States nearly doubled. Some incidents were mentioned by Roth in his novel. The riot of 1968 against the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement was the example. Large riots had broken out in many cities like Newark, New Jersey, New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Millions involved in rebellion. Most of the rebellions were students of schools and Universities. This was the America, Roth portrays through his novel *American Pastoral* were humanity was lost.

Chapter Three

Bereavement of Philanthropy

Roth gives an account of America in the decades between World War II and Vietnam War in his latest novel *American Pastoral*. The America where humanity was lost by wars during these periods is portrayed through the life of Seymour "Swede" Levov. These wars affected the lives of common people and it raises the question about humanity. Instead humanity deteriorated due to wars in America. Many common people were left unnoticed during these wars. The complacencies of the 1950s and the confusion of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s in America and the rise and fall of one man's fortune, is the story of Seymour "Swede" Levov. Two contradictory impulses in American history are represented in this novel. First and the foremost, Swede represents the optimistic strain of Emersonian self- reliance, predicted upon a belief in hard work and progress. Zukerman says that:

> He carried it with him like an invisible passport, all the while wandering deeper into an American life, forthrightly evolving into large, smooth, optimistic American such as his conspicuously raw forebears- including the obstinate father whose American claim was not inconsiderable- couldn't have dreamed of as one of their own. (208)

The second is Swede's fanatical daughter Merry represents pessimistic and the darker side of American individualism. Swede had become a broken man and his bright hope was shattered by his daughter Merry. Merry, the radical involved in anti-Vietnam War protest in 1968 and set a bomb in Old Rimrock's post office that killed a man.

The novel has the impact of the World War II. Swede, the day after his graduation had joined the Marine Corps. He says that the mariners of America were ready to attack the Japanese beaches on March 1, 1946 when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. In the sixth Marine Division they raised the flag over Okinawa's second air base, Kadena, and the final staging area for the invasion of Japan was secured. An island some fifty miles long and about ten miles wide had been occupied by American forces at the cost of 15,000 American lives. The Japanese dead, military and civilian numbered 141,000. To conquer the Japanese homeland to the north and end the war meant the number of dead on each side could run ten, twenty, thirty times as great. In 1945 they dropped the atomic bomb and the war was over anyway.

The 1960s was a decade once again dominated by a war that is Vietnam War. It was not a world war but the effect was still felt throughout the world. It is also the start of showing how the people can affect politics through the power of peaceful demonstrations. Students were the driving force of this war, because of the education which empowered them and their empowerment was reflected in their voices against the war in Vietnam. In 1965 the Vietnam War continues to worsen. The Americans dropped major bombing in North Vietnam which took the life of more men. At the same time the Anti- War movement grows and on November 13th, 35,000 of protesters marched towards Washington as a protest against war. Zukerman says about humanity that:

We're talking about humanity! When has there ever been progress for humanity without a few small mishaps and mistakes? The people are angry and they have spoken! Violence will be met by violence, regardless of consequences, until the people are liberated! (216)

Americans were entirely fed up with war. While big business reaped the profits from the war, it was American people that paid for the cost of war. Young men had been forced into military service. They not alone separated young men from the family but they was also forced to pay tax of 10% to counteract inflation, rising unemployment, poor working conditions and increasing costs of social services. The main goal of the Anti-War Movements was to unite Americans and demand the immediate withdrawal of all American soldiers out of Vietnam. To achieve this, many youth movements across the nation organized, protest, walk-outs, and sit-ins to gain the attention of other groups such as high school students and minorities so that they could grow large enough to attract the attention of the higher officers in government.

The protesters carried with them the signs reading as "Stop the War," "Bring the GIs Home Now," and "We Mourn Our Soldiers, They Are Dying in Vain." As the protesters walked, some handed out flyers, flashed peace signs, and held candles. Their chanting was so loud that they could be heard inside the executive mansion. "There aren't enough walls to isolate you from that," Lyndon Johnson's younger daughter, Lucy, later recalled of the constant refrains of "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Johnson knew why they protested. He knew why they begged for their fathers, sons, brothers, and boyfriends to come home from Vietnam. As America's military presence grew, so did the parallel battle for peace. It had been growing since the 1964. Civil rights groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society and the Free Speech Movement had held teach-ins and marched in Washington and elsewhere. Young men publicly burned their draft cards and many people was also against this war.

In *American Pastoral,* Roth mentions some of the places which were destroyed by the protesters through bombing as Merry did in Rimrock and Oregon through his narrator Zuckerman.

> College buildings are attacked with bombs at the University of Wisconsin. In Chicago a bomb destroys the memorial statue to the policemen killed in the Haymarket riots. In New Haven someone firebombs the home of the judge in the trial of nineteen Black Panthers accused of planning to destroy department stores, the police station, and the New Haven Railroad. (148)

The protesters also bombed in the Universities of Oregon, Texas and Missouri and also in shopping mall, a Washington nightclub, a Maryland courtroom. The United Fruit Line pier, the Marine Midland Bank, Manufacturers Trust, General Motors, the Manhattan headquarters of Mobile Oil, IBM, and General Phones and Electronics in New York was attacked with serious of explosions. The criminal court building is bombed. Bombs explode in safe deposit boxes in banks in eight cities. Among these Bombs which was set by the protesters the bomb in Oregon was set up by Merry. This bombing took the life of three peoples. In Morris Country Rimrock bombing was the most shattering disaster since the September 12, 1940. Some twelve miles away in Kenvil, fifty two people had been killed and three hundred people got injured due to the explosion of Hercules Powder Company.

While a March 1967 poll had shown that more than half of Americans supported the way Johnson was handling the war, by early 1968 that proportion was down to about a third. The antiwar movement became more grounded in political analysis than in the

starry-eyed assurance of earlier protesters, Antony DeCurtis tells LIFE: "It was about capitalism and about something that needed to be overthrown," he says, "and not by consciousness." Protest spread, and schools served as major centers of agitation. At Harvard Law School, Professor Alan Dershowitz taught a class on legal ways to resist the draft. Students there, as well as at Radcliffe and Boston University, took part in a four-day hunger strike against the war. At Columbia, 3,500 students and 1,000 faculty members boycotted classes in protest. When 1,000 New York policemen descended on Columbia's campus to clear out the protesters that resulted in many injuries and 700 arrests.

The protesters spread to hundreds of schools. A *Milwaukee Journal* survey found that 75 percent of students supported organized protest as a "legitimate means of expressing student grievances." Some of them abandoned the Gandhian principles of nonviolence championed by Martin Luther King Jr. there were three arson attacks at Southern Illinois University by those opposing the war. Students of various universities also opposed recruitment by firms profiting from the war and protested their universities' investment in companies such as Dow Chemical, which made napalm, a jelly gasoline that was used in Vietnam in firebombs and flamethrowers. Stephen Zunes, a professor of Politics and International Studies at the University of San Francisco, and Jess Laird, a conflict resolution educator, summarized the movement in a 2010 article for the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict. This was described by Mark Engler in his article *Anti-War Movements, From Vietnam to Today* that:

> The first major protest began in 1964 and quickly gained strength as the war escalated. Starting at the University of Michigan, "teach-ins" on the

> Vietnam War modeled after seminars raising consciousness in support of the Civil Right Movement, brought in thousands of participants....
>
> The anti-war movement did force the United States to sign a Peace treaty, withdraw its remaining forces, and end the draft in early 1973. (Engler)

When the antiwar movement was held in a very serious manner, President Nixon in one famous incident in November 1969, publicly announced that he was watching college football on TV while marches fought with police outside the White House. This incidents led some people to believe that protest was ineffective. In a February 12, 2017 article for the Guardian journalist Clara Bingham describes the increased anti-war agitation, some of which turned violent:

> Four million high school and college students went on strike in May 1970, shutting down more than 800 educational institutions in response to the invasion of Cambodia; 12,614 people were arrested in a peace demonstration in Washington in 1971; 400,000 enlisted military personnel deserted; the U.S. government imprisoned 3,250 draft resisters. (13)

The war in Vietnam eventually lead to a commitment of over half a million American troops and resulting in over 58,500 American deaths and producing a large-scale antiwar movement in the United States. At the end of the 1965 there were only few protesters in America but as the war dragged on, the involvement of protesters increased. Students became a powerful and disruptive force and university campuses sparked a national debate about the war. The anti-war movement began mostly on college campuses as members of the leftist organization Students for a Democratic Society. A small but outspoken liberal minority was making their voice heard by the end of 1965.

This minority included many students as well as prominent artists and intellectuals. By November 1967, American troop strength in Vietnam was approaching 500,000 and U.S. casualties had reached 15,058 killed and 109,527 wounded. The Vietnam War cost the U.S. dollar of some $25 billion per year, and disillusioned was beginning to reach greater sections of the taxpaying public. As U.S. commanders demanded more troops 40,000 young men were called into service each month, adding fuel to the fire of the anti-war movement.

October 21, 1967 movement was one of the prominent anti-war demonstrations, as some 100,000 protesters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial; around 50,000 of them continued in a march to the Pentagon later that night. More Americans ready to commit nonviolent civil disobedience than at any time in history. Thousand broke through military police lines, and a few even penetrated the Pentagon itself. This history was brought into the novel by Roth. He says that:

> The bombers leaves a note: "Today we attacked the Pentagon, the center of the American military command. We are reacting at a time when growing U.S. air and naval shelling are being carried out against the Vietnamese; while U.S. mines and warships are used to block the harbors of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; while plans for even more escalation are being made in Washington." (148)

After a brutal confrontation with the soldiers and U.S. Marshals protecting the building, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested. Many of them were younger, angrier and more frustrated than the men and women who had led the first wave of opposition. In 1967, the anti-war movement got a big boost when the civil rights leader Martin Luther King. Jr.

went public with his opposition to the war on moral grounds, condemning the war's diversion of federal funds from domestic programs as well as the disproportionate number of African- American casualties in relation to the total number of soldiers killed in the war.

Protesters attempted to shut down induction centres in Berkeley, California and New York City. Troop trains were impeded. Campus protesters blocked access to military and C.I.A. recruiters. Clergy members dumped blood on draft records. Racism became a focus when it was revealed that blacks were drafted, assigned to combat units and killed at rates significantly higher than whites were. In 1968 the nation and the war seemed to be spinning out of control. The assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, the widespread racial rebellions and the police violence at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago all made it clear that the political system would not stop the war or reduce the racism and poverty crippling the country. The antiwar movement also gave rise to other kinds of organizing that continue today. Many of these organizations continue today to work for racial and economic justice, women's rights, worker's power, quality education and healthcare for all, a healthy and sustainable environment, and an end to war.

Rejecting the social order, many activists called themselves revolutionaries. Some embraced Marxist ideologies often becoming trapped by the unclear rebellion disputes that seemed among them. Such disputes destroyed Students for a Democratic Society and encouraged a remnant to go underground and set off a series of bombs that humiliated themselves and discredited the movement. In May 1971, 800 men threw their combat medals over a fence surrounding the Capitol, an attempt by 20,000 activists to shut down

the federal government in Washington failed. But a few weeks later, the release of the Pentagon Papers drove public opposition to the war even higher. A majority of Americans had turned against the war but they felt unable or unwilling to join the organization against war because they were afraid that they will be arrest or risk to injury by the militancy. In this novel *American Pastoral* Angela says to Swede that: "Merry is not alone, she is part of an army of eighty thousand radical young people who have gone underground the better to fight the social wrongs fostered by an oppressive politico-economic order" (161).

The portrayal of the war in the media made the American public to turn against the government of America. The government got only little support throughout the universe due to the strong influence of the media. The Vietnam War was one of the first wars to truly give total and complete freedom to the press. That meant that war journalists were able to report on what they saw and not just on what the government allowed them to. Reporters were finally uncensored and they were able to report on the true horrors of the war.

Roth in his *American Pastoral* addresses one of the most radical figure of American history, Angela Davis. The most difficult era of America that is the radicalism and terrorism of the late 1960s anti-war anti-imperialist movements. Merry daughter of Swede ends up blowing up a building and killed an innocent person. Swede first comes into contact with 60s radicalism by way of Rita Cohen, a friend of Merry and a student of the Wharton school who is researching the leather business for a dissertation project. In his meeting with Rita Cohen, Zukerman looks to show how Swede responds to her rhetoric of radicalism. The interesting plot twist is found in the fact that Roth decides to

metonymically link Cohen's radicalism to a prominent African-American figure of radicalism, Angela Davis. This link is fascinating because it links Jews and African Americans. In this novel, one needs to look into this relationship because in it the Jewish-American women take an African-American woman as their model. When he was in kitchen Angela Davis appears to Swede and Zukerman narrates about the Angela's description of Merry to Swede. She says that Merry is not a terrorist. She is a hero. The lines below gives us the account about Angela's description of Merry:

> She praises his daughter, whom she calls "a soldier of freedom, a pioneer in the great struggle against repression." He should take pride in her political boldness, she says. The antiwar movement is an anti-imperialist movement, and by lodging a protest in the only way America understands, Merry, at sixteen, is in the forefront of the movement, a Joan of Arc of the movement. (160)

The Vietnam War and the anti-war movement in 1960s and 70s in America was reflected in this novel. Roth gives us an account of America during the war and anti-war movement through the character Merry, daughter of Swede Levov. Merry involved in anti-war protest and also involved in bombing. She moved away from her family after the bombing in Old Rimrock as a high school student. In history it is said that many protesters where students. The assassination of the American President John. F. Kennedy and the great 1967 riot in America is also mentioned by Roth in this novel. Merry after bombing lived in the street of Newark and she was also afraid that she may be get arrested if the police caught her. In history many protesters nearly 12,614 were arrested

during their protest. Jerry, younger brother of Swede and friend of Zuckerman says about Merry and her bombing to Zuckerman that:

> "Meredith Levov. Seymour's daughter. The 'Rimrock Bomber was Seymour's daughter. The high school kid who blew up the post office and killed the doctor. The kid who stopped the war in Vietnam by blowing up somebody out mailing a letter at five A.M.... Brought the war home to Lyndon Johnson by blowing up the post office in the general store." (68)

Merry was draped into the protest against America and her soft heart of kindness and child life was changed into cruel when she killed four people through bombing. There was a lack in the society during that period. It was the lack on both sides that is Government of America and the other side was the people of America. The Government of America used their military force to control the protest against them and on the other hand the protesters of America who wanted to stop the war in Vietnam used weapons as their equipment and bombed many places. These lack of understanding between government and the people leads to the death of many people both military and protesters, both cruel and innocent. The death of many people shows us the loss of humanity in the society of America during the period of war. The loss of humanity caused because of the wars in America.

Chapter Four

Pastoral Nostalgia

Roth has skilfully worked the myth of pastoral nostalgia into a parable of the confused era of the Vietnam War. The glove industry provided inspiration for the historical theme of nostalgia and helped Roth to explore a corner of American life unfamiliar to most people. Roth's narrative genius dazzles from the frontier of America immigrant business sense and true grit. The tragedy happened in the story of the Swede and Merry could be any family's tragedy. The hard work of Jewish immigrant, Lov Levov and his son's assimilation into the colonial heritage represented by the stone house in Old Rimrock. Lov disappointed by his daughter-in-law, Dwyer. All the conflicting views says us that surely Swede's life was a tragedy. The main idea of the narrative covers a period of two decades from 1940s to 1960s. There was a huge changes in American society during this period. The novel has a kind of looping back structure, in which the central is frequently interrupted by digressions and flashbacks. The novel begins with the Zuckerman reminiscence about the 1940s.

Zuckerman depicts the period from 40s and 60s as a fall from innocence into a chaotic era. The post-World War II era has been described in the book I of the novel and titled as "Paradise Remembered". But Zuckerman looks at this nostalgically. The nostalgic attitude is strongly conveyed through the 45th high school reunion where Zuckerman and his friends recollect about their past childhood days. At their reunion, Zuckerman says to Jerry about his nostalgia that: "Because I'm sixty-two. I figured that of all the forms of bull-shit nostalgia available, this was the one least likely to be without unsettling surprises" (62). Many of his fellow students had emerged from humble

background and hard life to successful professions. At the time of 40s and 60s people in Jewish neighbourhood knew where they were going and how they would get there. The poverty and hardship shows us their determination to make something in their lives. They knew the rules and they know their roles as well. In this novel *American Pastoral* Jerry shares nostalgia experience with Zuckerman as:

> "No patience for the nonessential. Only time for what's indispensable. After all, what they sit around calling the 'past' at these things isn't a fragment of a fragment of the past. It's the past undetonated- nothing is really brought back, nothing. It's nostalgia. It's bullshit." (61)

Nostalgia is a sentimentality for the past period or place with happy personal associations. It is associated with the feelings of the past, personal experience, and events in their old days or in their childhood. Nostalgia is the emotional seat of the brain. The recollection of one's past are important events. Music and weather can also be strong triggers of nostalgia. The term "nostalgia" was first coined by a 17th century medical student to describe the anxieties displayed by Swiss mercenaries fighting away from home. Till 1850s nostalgia was considered as something related to disease and medical term. But by the 1850s nostalgia was losing its original status as a particular disease and became a symptom or stage of a pathological process. By the 1870s nostalgia completely lost its medical significance. Nostalgia reminds an individual of his past. The resulting emotion can vary from happiness to sorrow. It is commonly used to describe pleasure emotions or a longing to go back to a particular period of time.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998) defines nostalgia as "a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy

personal associations" (1266). One can recollect an event or some memories that makes it one's own nostalgia, "One can remember without being nostalgic without remembering" (Batcho 362). Today researches and theorists regard unanimously that nostalgia as a universal emotion. Kaplan says that "There is no one who at one time or another has not experienced nostalgia" (465). Werman said it is a "wistful pleasure, a joy tinged with sadness" (393). Nostalgia is sweet because to the original point, it was positive and bitter because it is now lost to the past. The significance of nostalgia are family, antiques, toys, photos and cars. These significance make people nostalgia. School excursions, holidays wax a person with nostalgia. "Nostalgic memories also preserves something of the self of early childhood, a feeling of a much loved child" (Kaplan 482). The most influential theory in nostalgia literature is the discontinuity hypothesis developed by Fred Davis in 1979. He argues about nostalgia that:

> The nostalgia experience is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love…nostalgia feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative, for example, unhappiness, despair, frustration, hate, shame, and abuse. (Davis 18)

Zuckerman in his sixties talks about the vibrant atmosphere of his hometown during World War II. He is depicting paradise as the title of the first part of the novel, "Paradise Remembered". This title "Paradise Remembered" also reminds one of Milton's description of Genesis. He recalls his hometown Weequahic and about his childhood idol, Seymour "Swede" Levov was depicted as a mythical hero. Swede stands as an epitome of Jewish assimilation. The bitter sweet recollection is clearly seen through the soft focus of

nostalgia by both pleasure and pain. Zuckerman's nostalgia presents an idealized version of his hometown, but he readily admits that it is a fantasy. Swede's later life is not his perfect American dream but a tragic downfall brought about by the bomb which was planted to protest against the Vietnam War by his daughter Merry.

The 45th high school reunion is the perfect example for nostalgia and it is a fitting event of reminiscing and reevaluating the past. This reunion stirs the whole range of memories and emotions. Nostalgia has little to do with one's past how good or enjoyable but it shows about the present condition of which everything is frustration. Cancer left him both impotent and incontinent. At this situation Zuckerman and Swede turn to the past for consolation and this was also a major cause for nostalgia. For him and Swede nostalgia offers a safe haven but it is only temporary thought from their mortal condition. When Jerry was conveying the past life of his brother Swede, he says about Swede that: Seymour wasn't built like me. He had a big, generous nature and with that they really raked him over the coals, all the impossible ones. Unsatisfiable father, unsatisfiable wives, and the little murderer herself, the monster daughter. The monster Merry. (67)

Nostalgia was at the crossroads of the personal and collective, his personal experience as the entire Jewish community of Weequahic and the life of Swede was the collective. This connects the individual biography with the biography of whole community or biography of a nation. This novel gives us an individual biography of Swede and the biography of America during 1960s. He goes on to describe that, "something powerful united us. And united us not merely in where we came from but in where we were going and how we would get there" (44).

Lou Levov father of Swede and founder of the glove making company Newark Maid. He was also a figure of nostalgia in this novel. The involvement of United States in the World War II was a great rejoice for Lou Levov.

> The war came along and saved us. Government contracts. Seventy-seven million pairs of gloves purchased by the quartermaster. The glove man got rich. But then the war ended.... Our downfall was that we could never compete with overseas. (346)

For Lou Levov the World War II was the beginning of his golden age. But it came to an end at the sixties with two disaster "The assassination of John F. Kennedy and the arrival of the miniskirt, and together that was the death knell for the ladies' dress glove" (349). Most of the glove business was a family business from father to son and his heart bleeds for the death of his beloved glove. His nostalgic longing was passed from him to his son Swede.

Zuckerman describes Swede's later life as a tragedy during his 45th high school reunion. He decides to become one with Levov to erase his own presence and to focus on Swede's point of view. But Zuckerman's presence can be felt in some places between his point of view and Swede's point of view and in many parallels between their lives. Swede's passion towards pastoral life was proved when he brought a huge stone country house in rural New Jersey and living out the American dream with his wife and daughter. Zuckerman, lived a pastoral nostalgic life away from his hometown just as Swede. Swede's pastoral life of fantasy was completely shattered by his daughter's act of terrorism and left in a state of nostalgia. In 1940s their hometown was a paradise. The

same hometown was described as hell in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1967 riot was important event during this time. Zuckerman describes Swede's nostalgia as:

> Doesn't look back at all, I thought. He's unseared by memory. To him, all looking back is bullshit-nostalgia, including even the Swede's looking back, twenty-five years later, at his daughter before the bomb went off, looking back and helplessly weeping for all that went up in that explosion. (72)

Merry's character shows us the impossibility of return to normal life of Swede. Nostalgia is about the past which does not occur again. Swede's life and dream of American life was destroyed by her and she was the only reason for his destruction. But even before her teenage rebellion there is something in her that is both uncontrollable and unaccountable. The main reason for her rebellion was her stuttering and this disrupts Swede. According to Susan Stewart, nostalgia is "the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition" (23). Swede's past life and his inability to relive it was cruel. In 1960s Merry's radicalism overthrow Swede to nostalgic and a sense of complete chaos. Merry opposed everything whatever her father stands for including his family values. All the reason for him to seek refuge in an idealized past. Swede's nostalgia is a simple nostalgia, a sincere wish to return to the past. It is a constant oscillation and tension between knowing that nostalgia is an illusion and giving a desire to believe. Swede recollects his past which was an illusion for him which cannot be regained.

Nostalgia is a creative force through which a fictional writer can create a different kind of narrative and he has more control over his narration. Dorrit Cohn explains that, "involuntary memory is merely the precondition-necessary, but insufficient-for recreating

the past through narration. The narrative process itself, by contrast, is emphatically conscious, deliberate, and intellectual" (146). Nostalgia and fiction share common ground. This allows Zuckerman to operate the transition between his nostalgic musing and his artful reinvention of the Swede's story. The creative process of Zuckerman was only because of the nostalgia and his yearning to return to the hometown and the golden age of the past of Levov and Zuckerman. But this nostalgic desire was not easily satisfied. Fiction is the place where Zuckerman's nostalgia takes him to continue this journey. Fiction is not a place without contradictions. Zuckerman creates and explores the past through the medium of narration.

The issue of pastoral longing is also a nostalgic feeling. Swede's dream and peaceful life of American pastoral focuses on the time of the Vietnam War. The post-World War II generation longed for pastoral life. Swede's was left in a nostalgic state when Merry shattered his American life by the bomb dropped in the local post office. Merry's stutter left Swede to recognize his own emptiness. "The powerful, the gorgeous, the lonely Swede, whom life had never made shrewd" (79). Swede's dream of America was destroyed day by day and his uncertainty, despair and his loss of energy shows us the fall of innocent man from his paradise. Zuckerman says about the Swede's longing for American pastoral that:

> The daughter who transports him out of the longed-for American pastoral and into everything that is its antithesis and its enemy, into the furry, the violence, and the desperation of the counterpastoral-into the indigenous American berserk. (86)

Zuckerman nostalgia is a form of escape from his present to the past in the era of John F. Kennedy's presidency. Zuckerman's nostalgia is blind during the Vietnam War and his nostalgia is a flight from history and his nostalgia is a flight from history and responsibility. *American Pastoral* has the emotional effect of past experience and its narration relies on the memory to handle the emotional effect.

A clearer image of Swede's ideal life, and his version of American dream shows us that he longed for pastoral life. In spite of his wish he was all alone. Swede's American pastoral is a farfetched paradise which is unreal till the last. It is "an embodiment of an ideal, a nostalgic yearning for a rural origin where one can recover an Edenic oneness. Such a vision, in the end, proves illusory" (Kumamoto Stanley 18). Swede's pastoral projections are natural response to the collective ideal that he embodies in his Jewish neighborhood. Merry's displacement from the center of her father's pastoral American dream and her evolution into a fanatic and a bomber gives this novel a tragic and pastoral nostalgic dimension. Swede dreamed of pastoral life. He wished to live in hundred acre land of with trees and animals around him. But his life ended in tragedy. He died of cancer. It was the situation of every father who wishes to live a pastoral life. Zuckerman says about this situation as:

> Here is someone not set up for life's working out poorly, let alone for the impossible. But who is set up for the impossible that is going to happen? Who is set up for tragedy and the incomprehensibility of suffering? Nobody. The tragedy of the man not set up for tragedy- that is every man's tragedy. (86)

Zuckerman's Nostalgia is strongly conveyed through his 45th high school reunion. He recollects his own past life, then the past life of Swede and the past history of America. Zuckerman's nostalgia makes him escape from his present life to the past. His loneliness and his suffering from heart disease are the main causes for his nostalgia. Swede loves to be an American and lived as an American. His constant pondering thought about his daughter which paved the way to reminiscence the past. He liked to live in a pastoral life. But his daughter destroyed his dream. She separated herself from the family and left Swede in a nostalgic state. Swede's pastoral longing and his nostalgic feeling disturbed his normal life. He wished to have his early life with his family and his enjoyable time with his daughter Merry. He hid his real self and pretend to be happy. Roth present Swede to reflect the society of 1960s. Most people in America was in the state of nostalgia. This was the nostalgia of Swede.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature is a record of human expression. It is the first and foremost of humankind's entire body of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Literature also functions more broadly in society as a means of both criticizing and affirming cultural values. The term literature is a symbolic record of dairies, letters, pamphlets, essays, poems, plays and stories. Literature is a thought of one person, puts his idea and imagination into writing which appears more attractive.

American literature is shaped by the history of the country that produced it. America was once merely a group of colonies for almost a century and a half. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation. By the end of the 19th century American literature had become a powerful nation of the world and its fortunes interrelated with those of other nations. It involved in two world wars and the problems of Europe and East Asia during the 19th century. The history of the American literature begins with the colonization of England in America. The flowering of American literature occurred during the mid-nineteenth century after the independence from the hands of England. This was the beginning of the great American literature. The literature produced by the American was known as American literature. The Civil War was a turning point in U.S. history and a beginning of new modern America. The rise of modern America was accompanied, naturally, by important mutations in literature at the end of nineteenth century.

Important movements in drama, poetry, fiction, and criticism took shape in the years before and after the World War I. Fictions they produce were mostly related to psychological or modern in their unsparing portrayals of contemporary life. Novels of the 1920s were often not only lyrical and personal but also, in the despairing mood that followed World War I, express the disillusionment of the postwar generation. Certainly American literature attained a new maturity and a rich diversity in the 1920s and 30s. Roth was one of the famous twentieth century Jewish American writer. His best later work was his bitter, deliberately offensive story of a self-destructive artist. Roth won new readers with his trilogy on twentieth century American history, *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain* (2000).

American Pastoral is a historical novel of the United States during World War II and the Vietnam War. This novel talks about the life of Swede, a fourth generation Jewish American. Swede was a famous athlete, basketball player in his high school at Weequahic. After that he joined in military during the World War II. When the war gets over Swede joint in Upsala College for his higher education. There he married Dawn Dwyer, Miss New Jersey of 1949. After that he moved to a pastoral life of hundred year's old house in Old Rimrock. He took charge of his father's business of glove factory. His daughter Merry involved in the protest against Vietnam War and bombed many places in America. This separates her and her family and left Swede in a state of nostalgia. A great athlete in school days life was ended in tragedy.

The story of the Swede was narrated by Zuckerman, the narrator of this novel. The main portion of the narration covers a period of just over two decades, from the 1940s-1960s, a period that saw huge changes in American society. Zuckerman represent

this is a period of mysterious, trouble and extraordinary historical transition. This period represents a fall from innocence into a confusing, chaotic world in which all the rules of life have changed. Zuckerman idealized the immediate post- World War II era, as the title of book one, "Paradise Remembered," demonstrates, and he looks back on it nostalgically. This attitude is strongly conveyed in the chapters about the forty-fifth high school reunion, in which Zuckerman and his old friends reminisce about times long past. Many of the people at the reunion have emerged from humble backgrounds and difficult childhoods to become successful professionals. There was a work ethnic in place then in Newark's Jewish community, as well as a sense of shared purpose and goals. Then Zuckerman asks the key question, through the story of Swede, of how the unity, order and clear sense of purpose of this period gave way so quickly to the disorder, violence, and chaos of the 1960s, embodied in the story of Merry, the nice little girl turned terrorist. In the 1960s the discord that accompanied the Vietnam War, the old rules and values were overturned. Children turned against their parents, and urban violence broke out in places such as Newark in the riot of 1967 and even pastoral retreats like Old Rimrock became subject to bombing and violent death.

The novel has a kind of looping back structure, in which the telling of the central story is frequently interrupted by digressions and flashbacks. The novel begins with Zuckerman in the year 1985, reminiscing about the 1940s. Then he returns back to 1985 and the meeting with Swede and again to Zuckerman's dinner with Swede in 1995. On the same year Zuckerman's high school reunion flashes back to the past. Zuckerman begins to create his narration about the Swede, Merry. Chapter four in the book begins four months after the bombing in 1968, and the narrative then moves slowly, with

flashbacks and long introspective sections in which Swede examines himself and the dire situation in which he had been placed. Half of the book was filled with extensive flashbacks. The non-linear structure of the book seems to imitate the endless back and forth of Swede's own mind as he struggles to get rid of his nostalgic state of mind.

As the war in Vietnam escalated and the United States committed hundreds of thousands of troops to South Vietnam in an attempt to prevent a takeover of the country by communist North Vietnam. Protest arise within the United States against the war also escalated of troops to South Vietnam. Anti-war protesters rioted at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. The decade also saw the rise of the New Left, a movement that was more radical and more militant than the Communist Party of the 1950s. One radical group, which was a splinter group of the organization, Students for a Democratic Society, was called the Weathermen. The Weathermen was a terrorist organization dedicated to fomenting revolution within the United States, destroying capitalism an bringing an end to what it called U.S. imperialism abroad.

Often the pastoral is presented as a contrast between an idyllic, peaceful countryside, and a dangerous, chaotic city. In this case Roth in his novel *American Pastoral,* present the dangerous, chaotic city Newark, New Jersey, Roth's hometown. The collision of rural and urban is hammered home for the Swede when Merry bombs the Rimrock post office, killing a local doctor. The Swede achieves one popular version of the American dream working hard, having a fancy house in the countryside, with plenty of money, and a perfect family. As a third generation immigrant, he has completed the dreams of upward mobility put into play by first and second generations. His religion is America. He loves everything about it. Then his daughter Merry becomes aware of the

Vietnam War and America's role in it. She comes to believe that people only get rich by making war, taking advantage of others, and hurting others especially the poor and the powerless. She comes to question her father's version of the American dream. She comes to think of it as false and exploitative. *American Pastoral* seems to be all about asking really hard questions, stirring things up, asking us to question our realities and our assumptions about American life and the American dream.

The character Swede was presented by Roth to portray America of 1960's. Roth was inspired by the real character Seymour "Swede" Masin. He was a high school and college athlete of great versatility. He briefly played professional basketball in the American Basketball League, a precursor to the National Basketball Association. He was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants. He grew up in the nearly all-Jewish Weequahic section of the city, and attended Weequahic High School. Even today, more than seventy years later, he is considered the school's best athlete ever. Big, very strong, fast, and agile, in his day Masin was arguably New Jersey's best football, basketball, and track and field athlete. Besides his imposing physical presence, he had blond hair and blue eyes, and his Scandinavian-looking appearance earned him the nickname "Swede".

After graduating from high school, Masin went to Panzer College. At Panzer, Masin again was a three-sport phenomenon. He was the best in the state in the shot put and discus, he was named to the Coaches' All-American team in soccer, and he was the star of the tiny school's remarkable basketball team, which won 44 straight games, a collegiate record at the time. Swede was among the inaugural inductees for the halls of fame for Weequahic High School, Panzer College, and Newark, New Jersey. In 2000, he

was named one of New Jersey's top fifty all-around high school athletes of the twentieth century. Upon graduating from Panzer in 1942, Masin served as a lieutenant in the United States Navy during World War II. The protagonist of this novel *American Pastoral* was also severed in navy during World War II. In 1946, Swede married Estelle Lepore, also a Weequahic High School graduate. They raised two sons and two daughters, and lived in South Orange, New Jersey. Masin was a liquor salesman for fifty years.

In the late 1990s, Masin attracted much attention because of Philip Roth's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *American Pastoral* (1997). His inspiration for the novel's central character, Seymour "Swede" Levov who was also a legendary Jewish athlete at Newark's Weequahic High School, who later attended a teacher's college in nearby East Orange and married out of his faith. Roth had never met Seymour "Swede" Masin until the publication of *American Pastoral* even though they had grown up in the Weequahic section of Newark and never denied that his character was based in part on Masin.

The novel *American Pastoral* is divided into three parts, "Paradise Remembered," "The Fall" and "Paradise Lost". Swede's and Zuckerman's past life is described in the first part. In the second part he talks about the fall of Swede both physically and psychologically. His fall as a father, his fall as a business man and the fall in his life. Roth got inspired by Milton's *Paradise Lost* and henceforth he has given the title for his third part as "Paradise Lost". In the third part Roth talks about the paradise which Swede has lost. He lost his daughter, he lost his life, he lost his health, and he lost his pastoral life in Old Rimrock. Every important thing for Swede in his life was lost. In Milton's poem Adam and Eve lost the Eden Garden because of the disobedience and her Merry's disobedience bought a great disaster to her family. One man's sin made every man

sinners and one Merry's mistake destroyed the life of her family. Moreover, because of the Vietnam War many of the American's involved in protest against government to stop war in Vietnam. Because of this there was no peace in America. Every place in America remained peace less and many died and got arrested. The peace less situation in America was also a loss. The people of America lost the life of paradise because of the war.

The anti-war movement and the riot of 1968 is one of the important incidents in the history of America. The future generation of America is against their nation. The people of America wants to stop the war in Vietnam so they protested. During this same time many fought for the racial discrimination and women's right. At the end as the result of their protest, the Vietnam people got their independence and Black people were free from their discrimination and also women were equal to men. This novel is about the anti-war movement. So far the America the world knows as a well-developed nation. But this novel digs out the dark shady past. They reach the top in their scientific inventions. But on the other side they faced many wars and problems to reach this height. Roth present Merry in the novel *American Pastoral* to represent the young generation of America of 1960s.

The whole novel is a flash back of both America and the past life of the protagonist Swede. The history of past fifty years of America from the end of the World War II to till the death of Swede in 1995 and a pictorial description of America evolving into a most powerful nation. The past life of Swede was recollected by Zuckerman through his narration. The young generation involved in this protest and many of them were arrested, killed and many secluded themselves away from society to escape the hands of FBI. Because of this many families are affected. Roth portrays the pathetic

condition of families in 1960s through the family of Swede. Swede has nothing to do with the protest but his daughter was a revolted against the government which separated Swede from her. She stayed alone and away from her family. She was not under the safe shelter. She strives from hunger and she desired to be united with her father. Zuckerman, Swede and Merry can only recall their past life but the life cannot return.

The novel centres on the suffering of Swede and the ruin of his life from a great athlete and business man. The message conveyed through Merry is that nothing is permanent in this world. Fortune and wealth are never permanent and no one is aware of what the future holds. Destruction and calamities can strike at any moment without any alarm. Tragedy happens very often and unexpectedly. Swede was really good at concealing his true feelings especially when Zuckerman came to visit, he pretend as everything is okay. He does not show any of his inner trauma to anyone. The inner mental conflict of Swede's mind is contrasted with America's struggle during the period of social unrest in 1960s. Through Swede it was evident that everyone has two faces one is seen and the other face was hidden. Everyone has their own suffering, grief and sadness. Though there is hardships and troubles which burdens the Americans who lived around 1960s but still they had a glimpse of hope and a strong faith in humanity which motivated them further to pursued happiness. This laid a firm foundation in their heart and they take to explore life through the experiences they face. For Swede he wished to live a pastoral life, to get rid from this trauma both from inner mind and outer world. Thus everyone has their own way and their own time to get rid off from their struggle and can be great persons in future.

Roth successfully presents the major historical events not only as a painful reminiscence but also he tries to project the tragedy which preceded the wars, to bring about a complete transformation of the society and hence imprints his impact as a novelist with a purpose, conscious of the welfare of his own community and society at large. In this way, he differs from those writers who try to escape from the present and live a fanatic life and he present the America as it is and the historic events during 1960s. This inspired to select the novel *American Pastoral* for its historic content and portrayal of the characters.

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A Redeeming Journey of the Siblings towards Home: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Home*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

CINJU I.

(REG. NO. 18APEN09)

PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Redeeming Journey of the Siblings towards Home: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Home*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Cinju I. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Guide

25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Redeeming Journey of the Siblings towards Home: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Home*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

Cinju I.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Redeeming Journey of the Siblings towards Home: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Home*** analyses the sentimental and purest form of love, racial discrimination, overcoming guilt and trauma of Toni Morrison's *Home*.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of African American writers along with the biography of Toni Morrison and discusses the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Recovery from Trauma** deals with the impact of Korean War and the mental illness, suppressed emotions, regaining health, liberation from darkness, confessions and deliverance.

The third chapter **The Limits of Empathy** focuses on the warmth of home and the sibling's inseparable bonding against all odds.

The fourth chapter **Racism** concentrates on the problems of racial discrimination faced by the African Americans during 1950s.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

African American Literature is a body of literature written by American African descent. Beginning in the Pre-revolutionary war period, African American writers have engaged in creative, if often contentious, dialogues with American letters. The result is a literature rich in subtlety and social insight, offering illuminating assessments of American identities and history. Although since 1970 African American writers led by Toni Morrison, have earned widespread critical acclaim, this literature had been recognized as well as nationally since its inception in the late eighteenth century.

Poet Phillis Wheatley and orator Frederick Douglass reached an early high point with the Harlem Renaissance. Maya Angelou and Walter Mosley were ranked among the top writers in the United States of America. Among the themes and issues explored in African American literature is the role of African American within the larger American society. Before American civil war, African American literature primarily focused on the issues of slavery, as indicated by the popular subgenre of slave narratives. At the turn of the twentieth century, books by authors W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington debated whether to confront or appease racist attitudes in the United States of America. During the American civil rights movement, author like Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about issues of racial segregation and Black Nationalism. Today, African American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature, with books such as *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* by Alex Haley, *Colour Purple* by Alice Walker and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison achieving both best selling and award winning status. African American tends to focus on themes of particular interest to black

people, for example, the writers of African American within the large American society and issues. This focus began with the earliest African American writings such as the slave narrative genre in the early nineteenth century and continues through the work of many modern day authors.

Another characteristic of African American literature is its strong tradition of incorporating oral poetry into itself. There are many example of oral poetry in African American culture, including spiritual, African American gospel music, blues and rap. The oral poetry also shows up in the African American tradition of Christian sermons, which make use of deliberate repetition, cadence and alliteration. All of these are examples of oral poetry that made their way into African America literature. Some African American writings lack black characteristic and situations and are not particularly targeted at black audiences, such as, for example, much of the earlier work of best-selling novelist Frank Yerby and that of science fiction writer Samuel R. Delany. Yerby, whose historical fiction with white protagonist earned him the title king of the costume novel, became the first African American to write the best-selling novel, *The Foxes of Harrow*. The work of Delany, who is outspoken gay, often has treated issues of sexual identity and social bias. While Delany does not specifically address these issues in an African American context, many considered him as a leading voice in African American literature.

Early African American spiritual autobiographies were published in eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries. Author of such narratives includes James Gronniosaw, John Marrant, George White and William L. Andrews argues that these early narratives gave the twin theme of the African American pregeneric myth, knowledge, and freedom. Their earliest narrative form spiritual narratives that proliferates

the literary scene of the nineteenth century. These spiritual narratives have often been left out of the study of the African American literature because some scholars have deemed them historic scholar sociological documents, despite their importance to understanding African American literature as a whole.

The Harlem Renaissance from 1920 to 1940 was a flowering period of African American literature and art. Based in the African American community of Harlem in New York City, it was part of large flowering of social thoughts and culture. Numerous Black Artists, musicians and many others produced classic works in fields from jazz to theatre. The renaissance is perhaps best known for the literature that came out of it.

Among the most renowned writers of the renaissance is poet Langston Hughes, whose first work was published in 1921 *The Brownies Books.* He first received attention in 1922 publication, the books of American Negro Poetry, edited by James Weldon Johnson, this anthology includes the works of the periods most talented poets including Claude Mc kay who also published three novels, *Home to Harlem, Banjo and Banana Bottom,* a non-fiction book, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis and collection of short stories.* In 1926, Langston Hughes published a collection of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, and in 1930 a novel, *Not without Laughter.* His most famous poem is *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* which he wrote as a young teen. His single most recognized character is Jesse B. Simple, a plainspoken, pragmatic harlemite whose comedic observation appeared in Hughes's column for the Chicago Defender and New York Port. *Simple Speaks his Mind* in 1950 is perhaps the best known collection of simple stories published in book form until his death in 1967.

Hughes published nine volumes of poetry and eight books of short stories, two novels and a number of plays, children's books and translations. Another notable writer of this Harlemn period is novelist Zora Neale Hurston, author of the classic novel *Their Eyes were Watching God* (1937). Although Hurston wrote fourteen books that ranged from anthropology to short stories to novel length fiction, her writings fell into obscurity for decades. Her work was re-discovered in the 1970s through a 1975 article by Alice Walker, found in Hurston a role model for all female American writers. Jean Toomer, author of *Cane*, a famous collection of short stories and sketches about rural and urban black life. Dorathy West, whose novel *The Living is Easy* examined the life of upper class black families. Another popular renaissance writer is Countee Cullen, in his poems described everyday black life. Cullen's books include the poetry collection *Colour* (1925), *Copper sun* (1927) and The *Ballad of the Brown Girl* (1927). Frank Marshall Davis's poetry collections *Black Man's Verse* (1935) and *I am The American Negro* (1937) published by Black Cat Press. Author Wallace Thurman also made an impact with his novel *The Blacker the Berry: A Novel of Negro Life* (1929) which focused on intra racial prejudice between lighter-skinned and darker-skinned African Americans.

A large migration of African Americans began during World War I and hitting its high point during World War II. During this great migration, black people left racism and lack of opportunities in the south and settled in northern cities such as Chicago where they found work at factories and other sector of the economy. This migration produced a new sense of independence in the Black community and contributed to the Vibrant Black Urban culture seen during the Harlem Renaissance. The migration also empowered the growing Civil Rights Movement which made a powerful impression on Black writers

during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Just as Black activists were pushing to end segregation and racism and create a new sense of Black Nationalism so too were Black authors attempting to address these issues with their writings.

Beginning in the 1970s African American literature reached the mainstream as books by Black writers and continually achieved best-selling and award winning status. This was also the time when the work of African American writers began to be accepted by academia as a legitimate genre of American literature. As part of the larger Black Arts Movements which was inspired by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements African American literature began to be defined and analyzed. A number of scholars and writers were generally credited with helping to promote and define African American literature as a genre during this time period, including fiction writers Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and poet James Emanuel.

James Emanuel took a major step toward defining African American literature when he edited (with Theodore Gross) *Dark Symphony! Negro Literature in America* (1968) a collection of black writings released by a major publisher. This anthology and Emanuel's work is an educator at the City College of New York. Other influential African American anthologies of this time included *Black fire: An Anthology of African American writing and We Speak as Liberators: Young Black Poets*. An anthology over the past thirty five years, Toni Morrison has earned a reputation as one of the most respected novelists in American and world Literature and as one of the most influential figures in the world of letters. Morrison has challenged herself in each of her novels to explore the power and sense of self that can emerge from directly confronting one's communal and personal histories. Her work has earned international praise from both

critical and popular audiences. The breadth of her remarkably vast leadership is evident in the honors she has received, which range from four Oprah Book Club selections (*The Bluest Eye, Paradise, Song of Solomon and Sula)* to the Pulitzer prize for the novel *Beloved* on 1989, to the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993 for her life's work, in addition to eight novels, those not already mentioned are *Tar Baby*, *Jazz* and *Love*. Morrison has also written a highly acclaimed collection of essays on the presence of blackness in literature by white writers, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness is an the Literary Imagination* (1992).

Morrison had said that the stories she heard and values that she absorbed while growing up in the small rural town of Lorain, Ohio, gave her a rich basin from which to draw in her writing. As a young girl, Morrison learned the music and folklore of African American culture, including stories of Br'er Rabbit and of Africans who could leap into flight. She immersed herself in books, discovering writers like Jane Austen, Leo Tolstoy and Fyoder Dostoyevsky who wrote passionately about experiences firmly bedded in particular culture and planted seeds within Morrison that came to fruition in her later writings.

From the publication of her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 through the release of her most recent, *Love* in 2003 Morrison has sought new ways into the stories of everyday African American lives. Morrison works to familiarize the strange and mystify the familiar, and she avoids focusing on heroes and leaders that readers might have seen before, creating instead characters such as the young girl, Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*, who feels hopelessly inferior to white standards of beauty and wishes for blue eyes, and Sula, the title character of Morrison's second novel who rejects her community's

expectations by skipping church suppers, sleeping with another woman's husband, putting her grandmother in a nursing home, and worst of all for many in her town, having affairs with white men, but who ends up realizing that self-definition is impossible, unless it is connected to a larger, and communal identity. Morrison presented readers with perhaps her most famous character, in her 1987 novel *Beloved*, an escaped slave Sethe, who killed her two-year old daughter to spare her from slavery, which is based loosely on the life of a Kentucky slave named Margaret Garner who escaped with her four children to Cincinnati, Ohio. When caught, she tried to kill all her children by slitting their throats but was successful in killing only one.

Morrison learned about Garner and hundreds of other African Americans whose stories might otherwise have been forgotten when she worked as an editor at Random House in the early 1970s on a project called *The Black Book* which offered a pictorial history of African American life form the days of slavery to approximately the 1940s. Working on the book allowed Morrison to study things like the head braces that had once held slaves, bills of sale, photographs, sheet music, newspaper clippings and other artifacts that she and the project editors accumulated over the course of putting the book together. Her experience working on the *Black Book* continue to be a source of inspiration as she continues to work to keep such remarkable stories from getting lost in a lump of statistics and she used Margaret Garner's name for its title.

Morrison is keenly aware of her potential influence on future generation of African Americans. In her Noble prize acceptance speech, Morrison admitted that she felt respected a whole world of women who were either silenced or who had never received the imprimatur of the established literary world. Morrison addressed the issue

again later in an interview with the *New York Times* in which she discussed the impact of earning honorary degrees from a number of the most prestigious universities of Pennsylvania; Yale, Columbia, Brown, Harvard and Georgetown Universities. Toni Morrison occupies a central place in the literature of twentieth century America.

Her epic themes and characters are her unique and sophisticated style of story-telling and her ability to recreate urgent, long-silenced voices that have expanded what readers know about African American history and what they understand about the complex, often confusing relationships between race and gender in contemporary society.

Toni Morrison is the first African American woman to win the Noble Prize for Literature. She is best known for her novels focusing on intimate relationships, especially between men and women. These stories are set against the backdrop of African American culture.

Toni Morrison was born in Chloe Anthony Wofford in Lorain, Ohio on February 18, 1931. She was born to Ramah and George Wofford. She is the second of four children in a working class, African American family. When Morrison was about two, her family's landlord set fire to the house they lived in, while they were home, because her parents couldn't pay the rent. In 1949, she enrolled at the historically black Howard University seeking the company of fellow black intellectuals. She graduated on 1953 with a B.A. in English and went on to earn a Master of Arts from Cornwell University in 1955. Her Master's thesis was Virginia Woolf's and William Faulkner's *Treatment of the Alienated.*

Morrison played a vital role in bringing black literature into the mainstream. One of the first books she worked on was *The Ground Breaking Contemporary African Literature* (1972), a collection that included work by Nigerian writers Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe Fugard. She fostered a new generation of African American authors, including Toni Cade Bambara, Angela Davis and Gayl Jones, whose writing Morrison discovered and she brought out the autobiography of boxer *Muhammad Ali, The Greatest.* She also published and publicized the work of Henry Dumas, a little known novelist and poet who was shot dead by a transit officer in the New York City Subway in 1968.

Among other books Morrison developed and edited is *The Black Book* (1974), an anthology of photographs, illustrations, essays and other documents of black life in the United States of America from the time of Slavery to the 1970s. Random House had been uncertain about the project, but it got good review. Alvin Beam reviewed it for the Cleveland Plain Dealer Writing; editors like novelists, have brain children books they think up and bring to life without putting their own names on the title page. Morrison has one of these in the stores now, and magazines and newsletters in the publishing trade are ecstatic, saying it will go like hot cakes. Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1988 for *Beloved* (1987). The novel was adapted into a film for the same name in 1998. In 1996, the National Endowment for the Jefferson Lecture was U.S. federal governments' highest honour for achievement in the humanities. She was honoured with 1996 National Book Foundations Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Morrison wrote the libretto for a new opera, Margaret Garner. On May 29, 2012 President Barack Obama presented Morrison with the

presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2016 she received the PEN/ Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American fiction.

Morrison's best novels are *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*, She did much more than she proliferated. She sang, excoriated, narrowed, educated, mythologized and uplifted. It has been 40 years since the publication of *The Bluest Eye* (1970), her ground breaking first novel about self-hatred and incestuous rape in the black community, but after nearly half a century, denouncing brutality becomes a fairly circular enterprise. It is not that novelists should shy away from historical trauma, far from it: but their job is to find something interesting to say about evil, rather than simply announcing its existence, being outraged, and going home. There is no dearth of possibilities, after all as a species we are deficient in many ways, but we have a talent for atrocity.

Generational legacies, haunting, ghosts and the persistent effects of racism and sexism are Morrison's enduring themes. But her novels about them are getting smaller, in every sense. Over the years Morrison's settings have also become increasingly historical as her novels grow closer to fables. *A Mercy* went the farthest a field historically, travelling back to the seventeenth century to tell a revisionist version of the founding of America. *Beloved* is set in Ohio and Kentucky during the antebellum days of plantation slavery. Many of Morrison's novels range across the twentieth century to explore the lingering effect of slavery and poverty, often amid all-black communities. *Sula* (1973) tells of two women bound by a terrible secret, while *Song of Solomon* is about the need for people to take flight. *Jazz* (1992) played with music to tell the story of Harlem during its renaissance in the 1920s. Morrison's novel is not set exclusively in America. Much of its action occurs on an imaginary Caribbean island. Although the

cross-cutting storyline of *Love* (1993) does reach into the 1990s, *Beloved* continue to be Morrison's masterpiece, though acknowledgement is rarely made of the strong similarities between *Beloved* and *Corregidora,* a remarkable novel by Gayl Jones, which Morrison edited and some say it was co-written when she worked at Random House in the 70s. *Beloved* has been followed by a catalogue of increasingly symbolic abstractions, *Paradise* (1997), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* and *Home* (2012). In *Home,* Morrison returns to the 50's an era. She remembers the traumatic possibilities of the Korean War and of biological experiments on African Americans. The two themes could have come together neatly, one is Black soldiers were experimented upon to America's eternal shame, as one of Morrison's subjects has always been violence against black women, she makes the victim of medical experiments to be the sister of a soldier.

Home tells the story of Frank Money an African-American veteran traumatized by his experience in the Korean War. He has been back in America for a year but felt too violent and dislocated to go home to Georgia where his younger sister still lives.

As the novel opens, Frank finds himself restrained in a hospital, but can't remember exactly why he's there. He has received a mysterious letter from a woman named Sarah, telling him that he must hurry home and rescue his younger sister from some unnamed danger. So Frank breaks out of the hospital, shoeless in the dead of the winter and begins to make his way cross-country. To Georgia, relying on the kindness of strangers and trying to suppress his traumatic memories of the war as he goes. Fortunately for him, the first person he encounters is a kindly minister subtly named John Locke, who gives him seventeen dollars and helps him on his way. Morrison cross-cuts Frank's story with that of his sister, Ycidra, known as Cee, who left home at fourteen

with "a rat" who called himself Prince. He abandoned her and Cee finds a job as a medical assistant for a white doctor named Beauregard Scott. His housekeeper, Sarah, shows Cee his office, who is gazing in awe at titles such as *The Passing of the Great Race and Heredity, Race and Society*, she innocently wonders what "eugenics" means. A mounting sense of anxiety, what terrible things are going to happen to Cee, and how would Frank save her when he can't even save himself.

Within this realistic framework, Morrison makes two gestures towards a more experimental sensibility. The first is the insertion of brief, italicized passages in which Frank narrates his own memories and argues with the narrator of the other sections. Frank also thinks frequently of the "Homeys" who went to war with him but did not return home. Frank arrives back to Georgia and finds Cee. Cee's traumatic experience with the doctor is dispatched in a matter of euphemistic sentence. Frank carries her out of the doctor's house and they both head back towards home, the small town they both hated, where a familiar group of sisterly healing women nurse Cee back to health. As Frank revisits his memories from childhood and the war that have left him questioning his sense of self, he discovers a profound courage he had thought he could never possess again.

Home is a deeply moving novel about an apparently defeated man finding his manhood and his home. Cee learns to quilt while recovering from near-fatal run-in with a doctor who used poor, black women as experimental subjects in his research. After returning to her hometown, her neighbors were helpful in her sickness and with their help, she makes her first quilt, she also starts to put together the broken pieces of her life to make something she can call her own and be proud of. Toni Morrison presents a

concise and explosive story about a brother and sister who return to a small town in Georgia, both damaged but destined to find their home again. They liberate themselves through revisiting the brutal violence and losses in their past. It paved the way to realize and redeem and also a befitting topic for research. The next chapter is about the traumatic disorder in Frank's behaviour due to the awful experience in war and racial discrimination and the protagonist's progression towards healing.

Chapter Two

Recovery from Trauma

Most critics and reviewers of Toni Morrison's latest novel, *Home* (2012), have agreed that it upholds many of the themes and narrative techniques that readers have become familiar with in her previous novels. Although deceptively slight, *Home* brings together most of the resounding topics and storytelling devices that she mined in her earlier novels. In her novels, Morrison connects healing from personal and communal psychological wounds with remembering the traumatic past. Morrison manages to capture how many African Americans experienced the period of the 1950s.

For the first time in her long writing career, Morrison focused primarily on a male protagonist, Frank "Smart" Money, and the difficulties he faces in forming an adequate manhood. Unlike her previous works which mostly cover female issues, this book delves deep into typically masculine experiences such as the horrors of war, their injurious psychological effects, bonds of male friendship, and brotherly responsibilities. It is no exaggeration to state that adverse criticism of the dominant trauma paradigm has been a constant in postcolonial literary studies, as has the continuing increase of trauma studies in the field, particularly after 2005. In 2008, Michael Rothberg, in *Decolonizing Trauma Studies* summarizes various critical views on postcolonial theory and trauma theory, expressed serious doubts as to whether in its current form "trauma provides the best framework for thinking about the legacies of violence in the colonized/postcolonial world" (226). In the same year, Roger Luckhurst's *The Trauma Question* posed an 'inconvenient' question to postcolonial trauma critics by pointing out the depoliticizing tendencies in trauma theory, and its "shocking" failure to address "atrocity, genocide and

war" (213). After 2008 a consensus began to form as to what were seen as the shortcomings of trauma theory for postcolonial studies, which, as an article in 2009 expressed it, was in a "crisis situation," although trauma remained among the "hottest research topics" (Craps 51-2). This "crisis" has by now given way to a general awareness that the constraints of trauma theory necessitate expansion and redirection of the theory in order to adequately understand the problems of trauma during and after colonization.

These critical contributions to a decolonized trauma theory all attest to the present need to rethink and resolve the continuing tension between the desire for specificity and comprehensiveness in postcolonial literary studies, and to avoid the prescriptiveness of the currently dominant trauma theory in literary studies which, as critic Katherine Baxter writes, "potentially closes off other modes of presenting trauma" (19). In postcolonial literary studies today, the growing consensus appears to be that, the way forward in trauma research is to conceptualize trauma not by theorizing hierarchical structures which would privilege some conceptual approaches and delegitimize others, but by envisaging trauma as a complicated network of concepts and approaches, all centered around trauma. Given the current multi-disciplinary knowledge of trauma, this relational approach seems the most productive way forward for postcolonial trauma studies. This connection may be visualized as an intricate knot, with the unspeakable nature of trauma at its centre and connected to it, in a centripetal as well as centrifugal movement, to be envisaged as a multi and interdisciplinary entanglement of strands of concepts, theories and therapies.

Bruno Latour's theory of knowledge consist of complicated networks, as "hybrid assemblages" or "tangled objects," rather than hierarchies or clearly delineated categories (14). What Latour's theory emphasizes is the positive nature of that intricacy, his theory

being, in Luckhurst's explanation, that a concept succeeds through its heterogeneity rather than its purity since "a successful statement can be measured by how many links or associations it makes, not only within the rigours of its own discipline but far beyond it, too, as it loops through different knowledge, institutions, practices, social, political and cultural forums" (14). The notion of the knotted intricacy of the trauma paradigm not only clearly illustrates the strong potential for fruitful connections among academic disciplines but also stimulates thinking about trauma theory's potential for further additions and expansion.

Moreover, Morrison exposes the life of the black soldiers who have been deployed to an armed conflict. Frank the protagonist was terribly traumatized and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, returns home from the Korean War to cope with the harsh life of other ordinary black people. Morrison actively engages in the narrative analysis of the many forms of healing: psychological, social, historical, etc. She unveils the strong and complex link between the psychological and social recovery of the black individuals and the healing of collective traumas. Morrison also discloses the amelioration of war veterans' emotional and mental disorders, their struggle for manhood and their role as victims.

Home recounts the story of Frank Money, an African-American war veteran showing clear symptoms of PTSD, who has to return to his hometown in Georgia in order to save his younger sister Cee. One year after being discharged from the army, Frank is leading a disoriented and mostly empty existence in Seattle, tortured by horrifying flashbacks and gruesome hallucinations of his experiences in Korea. Then, he receives a letter from a friend of his sister's telling him to "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (8).

His deeply-felt responsibility towards his sister, who is now his only family and has been "a shadow for most of my life, a presence marking its own absence, or maybe mine" (103), provides Frank with a new mission.

However, Frank's journey across the country is far from being the kind of reconnecting experience but he needs to recover from the various traumas he suffers from. He soon transpires that he has been the victim of some hateful childhood experiences, war shocks, and racial humiliations that he has long repressed and that produce that type of breach in his mind. Frank succeeds in rescuing his sister and quieting many of his own demons by the end of the journey; it is much more difficult to argue that the cultural and racial traumas that he bears are fully healed.

Frank leaves his hometown, which is asphyxiating him, with his friends to serve in the Korean War. Back home, he is tortured by acutely distressful recollections from his war ordeals, such as his friends' deaths, horror of war memories recur through short flashbacks so broken soldiers can deal with them, make them hark back to the origin of trauma, so as to face it. Their shattered remembrances are mirrored by the dismembered pieces of their split identities. Morrison shows the contradictory effects of being at war for blacks. On one hand, in the Korean War, the desegregated military allowed African Americans to achieve some racial equality and the reaffirmation of their manhood. It is especially harsh for Frank, in his victimizer role, to surpass the shame at having been aroused and the guilt he experiences when he kills the scavenging Korean girl. On the other hand, Morrison exposes the disconnection between the institutionally desegregated army and a socially segregated home where these black soldier's return, them becoming a racial victims. Morrison emphasizes the collective quality of the characters healing

process, which would not be possible without the especially supportive social network that the black community provides, giving African Americans the human connection and love that they need to rebuild their traumatized selves. Mending from psychological wounds can only succeed with the full backing of the community, since cultural trauma leaves indelible marks in the individual, but also in the communal consciousness and identity.

Co-operation among blacks is necessary to let go of the disturbing past, and come up against the racial prejudice and violence they have to endure on daily basis. When Frank is released from the military hospital despite his acute mental disorder, he finds himself in an urban setting where he lacks the caring environment he requires. He has a tough time adapting to civilian life. Being stripped of warm and regardful relationships drags the Korean veteran into isolation and alcoholism. Frank's restorative path goes through various women, who give him the affection he lacks not to succumb to complete insanity. The novel pictures the African American encounters and their association with traumatic, but also with curative experiences. With his girlfriend, Lily and under her warmth he feels that he finally comes home. She helps to stitch his life together but this lasted not for long. The damaged soldier, who is still haunted by the specter of war, has no goals or hopes. Only by incorporating his appalling memories and atoning for his actions can Frank develop a new sense of self. Frank himself a healer with regenerating properties is a perfect example of recovering from past. The brother sister relationship is the cardinal importance in the novel.

Facing their past is the only thing that can give them back their whole selfhood. It implies the presence of the past in the present and the need to recall coping up with

traumatic recollections. *Home* is a novel about trauma and memory, as much as Morrison's acclaimed *Beloved*, and perhaps even more so, due to the personal oral narrative that frames the novel. More than any other of Morrison's novels, *Home* dramatizes the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in particular disrupted sleep patterns, enhanced sensitivity to stressors, over-excitability alternating with lethargy, as well as intrusive and crippling memories. Frank Money, a "tilted man" (80), has horrific memories which frequently bring on a numbed, melancholic state of dissociation or incite him to violent, cruelly aggressive rages. Frank's debilitating and aggressive emotions are first presented as the result of his memories of the deaths of his two 'home boys' on the battlefield, his survivor's guilt and anger translating as "shame and its fury exploded" (24).

Morrison adds further meaning to these memories by making them screen memories, hiding a deeper and more profoundly disturbing memory of Frank's own brutal and impulsive murder of a young Korean girl. Frank's screen memory is of a fellow soldier on guard duty who kills a child that comes crawling towards them. Later he "blows her away" when she makes sexual advances, saying "yum-yum" and displaying her two missing front teeth (95). This memory of the child is connected with Frank's formative memory of himself and Cee as young children, crawling through the high grass and referenced deliberately in his memory of "Cee and me trying to steal peaches off the ground under Miss Robinson's tree, sneaking, crawling..." (94). These interrelated memories of childhood hunger and sneaking and crawling combine to create a web of meaning in which trauma event and aftermath become indistinguishable. The complexity increases when at a later time Frank's trauma process leads him to an underlying,

gradually accessible truth. That is, it was he and not his comrade who shot the girl, blowing her face away and severing the hand that still clutched an orange. Hunger, sexual desire, protectiveness of his sister, war tension, and war trauma constitute the entanglement of Frank's disclosures to the nameless scribe.

It is through the trauma process, the construction of his oral narrative that Frank's memories are brought under conscious control and lose their intrusive and disruptive force. The drive to tell seems itself a factor of trauma, like the biological processes of healing that are prompted by physical injuries, the psychic process too, may be instigated by the traumatic wounding itself. The capacity to tell, to relate memories, sensations, and feelings, can be the primary mechanism through which individuals are able to maintain a sense of self-worth in the face of moral, social and personal failings, according to psychotherapists Maruna and Ramsden, and it is particularly self-narratives that "may be crucial in the management and resolution of the shame that results from violating shared ethical codes" (131). What Frank's eventual realization of the truth hidden behind his screen memory demonstrates is the potential for full recollection of the traumatic event. This has implications that warrant closer attention, for what this development in Frank's trauma process shows is that Morrison envisages a recalling of trauma that brings the true nature of the traumatic event to light. This stands in clear contradiction to Caruth's foundational notion that traumatic memory in narrativization is a loss, or even a betrayal of the true and literal nature of the traumatic event. Caruth even goes so far as to speak of the betrayal of "the truth of the traumatic past, which cannot be represented" (154). Another point that can be deduced from the representation of trauma in *Home* is that the retrieval of memory is a recursive process, with mistakes and rectifications, since Frank's

initial remembering, even of recent events, is corrected in the course of his ongoing narrative. An example of this is when Frank returns to a story he had told about a couple he met on the train to change it substantially, making clear that his first telling was incorrect.

Morrison's point in presenting these corrections seems to be that only in the recursive process of telling and remembering can truth emerge. The relational approach enables the view that silence and absence remain at the heart of the trauma process, but that vital aspects of the traumatic event, including physical experiences as well as feelings of shame and guilt, can be brought to cognition as a result of the therapeutic process of narration. The narrative of trauma requires a listener; Morrison's listener is silent, fully attentive, and as invisible as an implied author. This allows Frank to emerge as an autonomous, yet also fully relational narrator. *Home* depicts Frank Money in this state, imprisoned in this new closed in traumatic reality during his prolonged long stay in Seattle, a long way from home. The formative childhood experience, that is, the first memory narrated in the opening chapter of the book sets out the complexity of the novel's themes.

In returning to the place of his formative memory, Frank reinforces his capacity for protective love, and diminishes his proclivity for aggressive masculinity. The process of oral narrative is a memory process that eventually leads to this unexpected recovery of Frank's core identity as nurturing, protective and gentle. The burial rites performed at the end of the narrative for the gentleman whose corpse act as a victim of racial violence his skull "clean and smiling" under the bay tree remind the reader of Crawford's burial under his grandmother's magnolia tree, but the connotation is of restored dignity and regained

vitality, signifying a celebration of transformation, in a peaceful scene resplendent with vibrant colours, fireflies, hummingbirds, and honeybees (143). "Trauma changes shapes and meaning as it crosses boundaries; it is constituted out of the controversies generated in these passages," as Luckhurst observes (209). In passing from past to present, from postmemory to rememory, trauma changes in the process of oral narration and acquires new meaning. In *Home*, this change is intensified by Morrison's choice of interface between novel and fairy tale, a narrative framing that further increases the entanglement of trauma and narrative. To the various relational dimensions in *Home* Morrison adds the generic and imaginative dimension of fairy tales. In this novel's bleak and violent intricacy of trauma and memory Morrison interweaves the seemingly simple and reassuring fairy tale story of Hansel and Gretel which is less visible than the plot lines of Frank's war trauma and Cee's physical abuse.

In their loveless childhood home, "Frank and Cee, like some forgotten Hansel and Gretel, locked hands as they navigated the silence and tried to imagine a future" (53). This deliberate referencing accentuates the primacy of relationship in this novel, joining to the knotted intricacy another major element of Morrison's artistic imagination and novelistic work, but in a new, and positive configuration, drawing on Hansel and Gretel's story of hardship and deprivation overcome through courage and sibling love. In the fairy tale, Hansel and Gretel are deprived of their home and sent into the woods, there to find the insidious, sweet home of the witch's gingerbread house. In *Home*, Frank's earliest memories are of being deprived of their home in Texas. Cee is born en route, in a church basement. Their new domicile in Lotus, Georgia, is remembered in Frank's later life as "the worst place in the world" (83). In Lotus, Georgia, the parents work sixteen hours a

day picking cotton and planting crops, while the children are raised by their cold and cruel grandmother. Like Hansel and Gretel, Frank and Cee also only find protection and affection with each other. The witch's gingerbread house is paralleled by Dr Scott's evil mansion, the place where illegal and life threatening surgical experiments were performed on Cee. In a direct allusion to the fairy tale, Cee is first fattened up, her appetite becoming enormous, indicative of starvation through lack of affective relationships. Frank and Cee's partial recovery at the end of the novel is especially remarkable because of the intense pain and isolation which they experienced throughout the novel.

Frank begins to give signs of his slow recovery process even before he arrives in Lotus: "This feeling of safety and goodwill, he knew, was exaggerated, but savoring it was real. He convinced himself that somewhere nearby pork ribs sizzled on a yard grill and inside the house there was a potato salad and coleslaw and early sweet pees too" (118). Despite his earlier reluctance to return to the South, as Frank gets closer to the region he realizes that there are certain things like the weather, the food, the pace of life that he immediately identifies with.

So once he has fulfilled his main mission of saving his sister, he knows he is now ready to battle against his own trauma in this more welcoming context: "Waving occasionally at passing neighbors or those doing chores on their porches, he could not believe how much he had once hated this place. Now it seemed both fresh and ancient, safe and demanding. [...] Frank tried to sort out what else was troubling him and what to do about it" (132).

After witnessing his sister's physical and spiritual recovery, Frank realizes that it is time to confront his own traumas. On dating as far back as his childhood days in Lotus, when they saw the secret burial of a black man, the other related to the murder of the scavenging girl, who looked like Cee that he himself committed in Korea after she sexually propositioned him. Frank had repressed the memories of these incidents by using some screen memories connected with those primal scenes of trauma, the beautiful horses on the farm, in one case, and the loss of his two homeboys and the fact that "the guard" (100) had been the one who brutally killed the girl, in the other. But now, as he tells the scribe, he seems ready to face the truth of those past events and to recover his deeply-hurt black male identity: "I have to say something to you right now. I have to tell the whole truth. I lied to you and lied to me. I hid it from you because I hid it from me. I felt so proud grieving over my dead friends" (133).

Frank demonstrates that he has come full circle by first admitting that "he had covered his guilt and shame with big-time mourning for his dead buddies" (135), which had allowed him to keep his murder of the Korean child hidden: "Now the hook was deep inside his chest and nothing would dislodge it. The best he could hope for was time to work it loose" (135). Soon after, Frank convinces his sister to go back with him to the stud farm where they had originally witnessed the burial. They dig up the body of the black man, itself a symbol for uncovering memories–and wrap it in the first quilt that Cee had made.

With this unearthing and reburial of that from their past, Frank and Cee finally come to face their childhood trauma, and the reader feels that they are now progressing towards maturity and responsibility. Even nature seems to respond exultantly to the main

characters decision to rebury the man under the split down the middle sweet bay tree and under the wooden marker that Frank had prepared for the occasion: "Wishful thinking, perhaps, but he could have sworn the sweet bay was pleased to agree [with the legend on the marker]. Its olive-green leaves went wild in the glow of a fat cherry-red sun" (145). This celebratory sunset clearly contrasts against the colorless memories that the readers seen emerging in Frank's mind throughout most of the text. In a similar line, Valerie Smith has concluded that "[b]y reclaiming their personal secrets, they are able to reclaim Lotus as their literal, physical home. Through their willingness to confront their past, they find their true home within them in the memories they share" (135). The book closes with a short poem which, again, makes evident the profound transformation that the two main characters have undergone and that, at least momentarily, they have found a place where they can belong together. The next chapter focuses on the strong bonding between Frank and Cee. It is the purest form of love and also the indispensable theme of the novel.

Chapter Three

The Limits of Empathy

Home a mere word which gives a soothing effect and a sense of belonging to a place, to another person or to a passing moment. Home is in a sense of acceptance and relatedness. Throughout the novel the idea of home is presented. In the very beginning as Frank money wanted to go back to that place that should be his home even though he did not feel that. When he was younger he wanted to escape from the place called Lotus, since he did not like it and said that there was nothing to do in that small town.

Frank himself said:

> Lotus, Georgia, is the worst place in the world, worse than any battle field. At least on the field there is a goal, excitement, daring and some chance of winning along with many chances of losing. Death is a sure thing but life is just as certain. Problem is you can't know in advance. In Lotus you did not know in advance since there was no future, just long stretches of killing time. There was no goal other than breathing, nothing to win and, save for somebody else quiet death, nothing to survive or worth surviving for. If not for my two friends I would have suffocated by the time I was twelve. (35)

Frank thought he has no future there, "He tried to tell her the army was the only solution. Lotus was suffocating, killing him and his two bet friends. They all agreed. Frank assured himself Cee would be okay. She wasn't" (35). Cee terribly missed him and Frank's absence made her miserable. The empty space in her heart when he abandoned was never filled by any other. Cee grew under the guidance of her big brother ever since

the very first word she uttered was "Fwank". Frank anticipated for a better future but only after the war he realized that he was not well good in any place. He met Lily for the first time and though about himself as "I must have looked the fool but I didn't feel like one. I felt like I'd come home. Finally, I'd been wandering. Not totally homeless, but close" (68).

In Lily's embrace he felt at home anyway and it was not because he needed a home, it was because he loved her. He was feeling this way because when he came back from the war, he did not feel the United States as his home either, because there was still discrimination about his skin colour and racism. He could not find a formal job and the only thing he had was his pay from the war. He was always drinking and spending his money on drinks. When he met Lily, it was a kind of salvation for him, "You are dead wrong of you think I was scouting for a home with a bowl of sex in it. I wasn't something about her floored me, made me want to be good enough for her" (69). But his trauma came back again when he decided to go to Georgia and rescue his sister.

The sense of belonging is also present in the novel. It is clear to see how Frank is always fighting with himself because he dislikes the place where he was born and he also feels that he is not well accepted anywhere because of his skin colour. It is almost, same what happened with his sister, Cee, who did not want to stay in Lotus either. That is why she got married with Prince, for she wanted a better life for her in Atlanta:

> Cee looked forward to a shiny life in the city where after a few weeks of ogling water coming from the turn of a spigot, inside toilet free of flies, street lights shining longer than the sun and as lovely as fire flies, women in high heels and gorgeous hats trotting to church two sometimes three

> times a day and following the grateful joy and dumb founded delight of the pretty dress Prince bought her – she learned that principal had married her for an automobile. (48)

Cee was fourteen when she eloped with Principal whom they called Prince. She was ignorant about the world outside Lotus which was the only place where she felt like trapped. As young and innocent she believed whatever Prince told her "So if Prince said she was pretty, she believed him. If he said at fourteen she was a woman, she believed that too" (48). Morrison wanted to demonstrate that women are free to do what they want, that is why she took Cee as an example of a dependent woman, who at the end of the story realise that she is free and can do whatever she wants. Morrison also presents the idea of chauvinism in the story, with the characters of Dr. Scott, Cee's boy friend and Frank, who did not behave well with women, and only wanted to show their power and authority on women.

Cee is clearly, an example for lack of independence with the character of Prince, who just wanted her because she had her grandmother's car. He did not care about her and treated her badly. It is because of her relationship with Prince that Cee realized that the security of her brother's protection had not been so positive for her, as she had not developed as an independent person. Frank while at Lotus, Georgia never let any stranger or young boys get close to his sister but now his absence allowed those worthless intruders get into her life to spoil it entirely. First her affair with Prince and second the cruel Dr. Scott who made experiment on her body which almost killed her. Frank Money has always taken care of his sister since childhood, because their parents have to work a lot to have some money to survive. "Mama and Papa worked from before sunrise until

dark" (43). So, since they moved to Lotus, Georgia from Texas, he has been always with her: "I hugged her shoulders tight and tried to pull her trembling into my own bones because as a brother four years older, I thought I could handle it" (4).

Cee was guilty about her misdeeds and agonized, "She though, of having a smart, tough brother close at hand to take care of and protect you- you are slow to develop your own brain muscle. Besides Prince loved himself so deeply, so completely, it was impossible to doubt his conviction" (48). Though they were chained by poverty, her parents and her brother sheltered and protected her. Frank describes his harmonious childhood in a way very appealing and it was total contrast to those terrible things happened in his and Cee's life later.

> Mama was pregnant when we walked out of Bandera Country, Texas. Three or may be four families had trucks or cars and loaded all they could. But remember, nobody could load their land, their corps, their stock… Mama cried but the baby she carried was more important than kettles, canning jars, and bedding. She contented herself with a basket of clothes held on her knees. Pap carried a few tools in a sack and the reins of Stella, our horse that we would never see again. (39)

Mr. Gardener is a white man who confiscated their property and sent all Black people out of the area. By that time others and Ida, the victimized Black couples, moved towards Lotus, Georgia. Ida was pregnant and she "delivered on a mattress in Reverend Bailey's church basement, turned out to be a girl, mama named her Ycidra" (40). Frank loathed Lotus and it started even while he was too young. He describes the heat of scorching sun as "Tress give up. Turtle cook in their shells" (41).

Lenora, the grandmother of Frank and Cee was quite settled. She allowed the family to stay for a while until they could get enough money to buy their own. The menial situation of her birth and the sound while the infant cried, completely drove her mad. She hated Cee while she was an adorable infant. But Luther and Ida had no options because the only relation they had was this proud Lenora. And the very presence of Cee disgusted Lenora and if Frank was not there by her side she might possibly could have harmed the baby.

> Cee was partly ashamed about her conduct with Prince and fate pulled her towards Dr. Scott. She took an oath to never return to Lotus, Georgia and never went back even to the funeral of both her parents while Frank was at war Cee thought Lenora will definitely kill her for the automobile which Prince took away. "Lenora was the wicked witch. Frank and Cee, like some forgotten Hansel and Gretel, locked hands as they navigated the silence and tried to imagine a future" (53).

Frank's insanity and the traumatic disorder which tormented him was treated in some hospital. He received a letter "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry." (8) Frank skillfully sketched to escape from the asylum. At night while it was snowing he successfully got out without shoes. He walked bare footed on the snowy freezing surface to rescue his one and only soul in the world to whom he devoted his heart. Cee longed for Frank's comfort, "Cee felt her heart breaking. If Frank ere there he would once more touch the top of her head with four fingers/ or stroke her nape with his thumb. Don't cry, don't cry girl. I'm right here. But he wasn't there or anywhere near" (53). Morrison beautifully describes the brother and the sister's love for each other and how in course of

time their love develops into a much strong bondage. Frank even risked his own life and security to save his sister. Walking without shoes in a freezing surface, without proper clothes and particularly being a black man, he escaped from a mental asylum at the possible risk of getting caught even worse to get shot by police who will be convinced that he might be a murderer or thief.

Frank's entire focus was fixed towards Cee and he will never step back from this mission. Moreover *Home* deals with the siblings redeeming journey back home, to a nurturing community that can provide these uprooted orphans with support and care. Furthermore, Morrison delves into the restorative powers of love and nature for African Americans. The novel puts the spotlight on the healing elements and mechanisms that the author uses so as to illustrate Frank and Cee's recovery process, as well as the regenerative potentiality that both black individuals and their community possess. In *Home,* Morrison narrates how the African Americans have traditionally had a special bond, has strong recuperative powers, which contrasts to the Western male concept of nature as something to be controlled and owned, to pass on from heir to heir. In their childhood, both siblings, but especially Cee, put up with the abuse and neglect of their step-grandmother, their surrogate mother. They are bereft of the nurturing care that infants need to grow to their full potential. The lack of nourishing parenting results in Cee's low self-esteem and self-loathing, which lead her to a failed relationship with Prince and into the predacious hands of the evil eugenicist, Dr. Beau, her employer. Cee has to go back to her infancy recollections to understand the true reasons for her self-contempt and the ensuing adversities she has had to struggle through in her bitter existence.

Both the siblings are entangled in this redeeming journey towards home. Frank and Lee are plagued by the ghosts of the past which refuses to be forgotten. They have appalling childhood violations, racial prejudice and humiliations, family dysfunction. Michiko katutani postulates that in *Home*, Morrison "has found a new, angular voice and straight ahead Story Telling Style" (2021).

When Frank was a child, he has felt the devastating effects of racial hatred. His family, the Moneys and other black households were forced to abandon their home in Bandera County, Texas, a very distressing part in his life that has perturbed him his entire life. Blacks could find liberation during slavery and in its aftermath, bringing them to their ancestral origins. African Americans were far from the Political and Cultural domain of the white people who ruled their destiny.

Though Frank had his own burdens and huge mountains which stands as an obstacle, he was so determined to save her sister. He watched his close friends dying before his eyes and he has lost his parents and everyone whom he cares about except his sister:

> No more people I didn't save. No more watching people close to me die. No more And not my sister. No way she was the first person I ever took responsibility for. Down deep inside her lived my secret picture of myself – a strong good me tied to the memory of those horses and the burial of a stranger, Guarding her, finding a way through tall grass and out of that place, not being afraid of anything – snakes or wild old men. I wonder if succeeding at that was the buried seed of all the rest. In my little boy heart

I felt heroic and I knew that if they found us or touched her I would kill. (104)

"Come on brother," Cee says. "Let's go home" (147). This happy ending to Morrison's novel has been negatively reviewed, with reviewers, critics, and bloggers and pointing out that it is perplexingly different from Morrison's other works. Reviewing *Home* for *The Guardian*, Sarah Churchwell wrote that Home "should be relentless, unsparing" and that if Morrison had ended the novel in the way it began, "it might have been one of her best in years" but that, instead, Morrison "refuses to confront the violence she has invoked" (7). It is indeed important to note that this remarkable ending distinguishes *Home* from Morrison's previous novels. In her astute discussion of Morrison's fiction, Rebecca Hope Ferguson concludes convincingly that in Morrison's oeuvre "there can be no final movement of return, no closure or healing in a restorative spiritual journey" (288). While a positive potential, or a movement towards progress may occur at the ending of Morrison's fiction, Ferguson concludes, it is just as often that "this movement takes place in a range of directions, or in a direction that is then repeated in reverse" (282-83).

This novel among all of Morrison's has portrayed the redeeming journey of the siblings and in particular its theme of the close and non-sexual relationship between brother and sister. It is said that "Frank and Cee, like some forgotten Hansel and Gretel, locked hands as they navigated the silence and tried to imagine a future" (53). This deliberate referencing accentuates the importance of relationship in this novel, joining to the knotted intricacy another major element of Morrison's artistic imagination and novelistic work, but in a new, and positive configuration, drawing on Hansel and Gretel's

story of hardship and deprivation overcome through courage and sibling love. Cee opens her heart when she confesses to her brother that she cannot have a baby. She believes that there is a baby girl that had picked her as mother but now she has choosen another. By the end of the novel Cee's growth is manifest in her strength to acquiesce to her barrenness and move on with her life. Morrison suggests that soldiers like Frank, on returning to their native country, find themselves without a home similar to the slaves of the previous century that sought to escape bondage. Home here means the country or political state of belonging and protection that is denied to them. When Frank hears his sister's revelation, he also cries, which he had not done since he was a child, not even when he saw his friends dying at war. The characters finally embrace their suffering and they come forward very boldly to confront their traumatic recollections they have tried to keep at bay for a long time.

Facing their past is the only thing that can give them back their whole selfhood. Frank and Cee's partial recovery at the end of the novel is especially remarkable because of the intense pain and isolation which they experienced throughout the novel. Frank demonstrates that he has come full circle by first admitting that "he had covered his guilt and shame with big-time mourning for his dead buddies" (135), which had allowed him to keep his murder of the Korean child hidden: "Now the hook was deep inside his chest and nothing would dislodge it. The best he could hope for was time to work it loose" (135). Soon after, Frank convinces his sister to go back with him to the stud farm where they had originally witnessed the burial. They dig up the body of the black man –itself a symbol for uncovering memories– and wrap it in the first quilt that Cee had made.

With this unearthing and reburial of that from their past, Frank and Cee finally come to face their childhood trauma, and the reader feels that they are now progressing towards maturity and responsibility. In *Home* the central contrast is between the cold and loveless home of Frank and Cee's childhood and the warm and welcoming home offered by the women in Lotus. It is said in the novel as "Say, tell me, why does its lock fit their key" (137). Which already foreshadow the protagonist's amazement at finding a home in Lotus, Georgia, the hometown that they once hated and left at the first available opportunity and now reluctantly return to only to find that they belong there. In Morrison's own words it is said that "its lock fit my key" (137). Whèreas in the novels preceding *Home* there is no final sense of achieving that place of acceptance and belonging, *Home* does in fact provide a sense of homecoming. The next chapter gives the historical account of 1950s, a very challenging period for the African Americans who encountered various issues and segregation.

Chapter Four

Racism

The nineteenth century witnessed a mass transformation both on ideological and technological platforms. Imperial expansion, industrialization, the rise of nationalism and racism became the trend of that era. Scientific Racism arose in America around the work of Samuel George Morton's comparative study in craniology. It ranked races according to skull measurements and concluded that the Caucasian race, especially Germans, English, and Anglo Americans, were intellectually superior, while Ethiopians were endowed with the lowest intellectual abilities. Though Morton's studies were carried out without proper scientific method, they were enormously influential to support the theory of recapitulation in the study of skulls.

Atrocities experienced by Negroes were linked with the struggles of colonial people world-wide. Du Bois was a prominent person to develop Negro nationalism. He analyzed the various legal and illegal practices that facilitated the African slave trade from 1638 to 1870. He conducted the first sociological studies of African Americans and edited the journal *The Crisis*. He also helped to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Du Bois stated in *The Crisis* that "prolonged policies of segregation and discrimination have involuntarily welded the mass almost into a nation within a nation with its own schools, churches, hospitals, newspapers, and many business enterprises', have given the right to appeal to the United Nations like all other nations" (2). He described the dual perception of "double consciousness" (2) in the Negro race. According to the perspective of Du Bois race would become a problem for the metropolis of late

modernity. He defined the problem of the twentieth century as "the problem of the color line, the question as to how far differences of race... are going to be made, hereafter, the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization" (6).

Throughout the twentieth century, efforts have been made to establish a new version of racial identity. The aesthetic and critical tradition speaks about the unique experience of the Afro-American. Du Bois and Alain Locke ignited the cultural nationalism of writers of the Harlem Renaissance. The Black Arts movement of the 1960s was the aesthetic arm of Black Power and the handmaid of the Civil Rights Movement. These movements stimulated different groups to the emancipation of the American Negro and the development of a unique black aesthetic. The focus of attention towards cultural national aesthetics was challenged by the later economic shift. It made difficult to combine aesthetics with national identity, racial or otherwise. Henry Louis Gates expanded the problem and he said;

> Ours is a late twentieth century world profoundly fissured by nationality, ethnicity, race, class, and gender. And the only way to transcend those divisions-to forge, for once, a civic culture that respects both differences and commonalties is through education that seeks to comprehend the diversity of culture. (12)

Patricia Waugh also given her opinion in her writings as;

> Whiteness, and the imperative to keep America white, came to underpin the development of both social/political and educational policy. As America progressively came to dominate the geopolitical space after

> World War II, this white Universalist ideology helped to promote the economic colonization of the so-called Third World. (16)

In *Home*, Morrison tries to depict the 1950s, a violent time for blacks that she wants to demystify. In those wonderful days, African Americans still bear the brunt of indiscriminate violence, injustice and racial prejudice. The legacy of slavery has brought about distressing and disturbing situations. African Americans carry the burden of both personal and collective cultural traumas, inherited from the times of slavery which are at the core of their communal memory and in their identity. As in historical trauma narrative it mostly deals with the fragmented images, identities and collective haunting histories of African Americans, who have to do with slavery and its legacy, but also with the Korean War. The siblings Frank and Cee Money are plagued by the haunted memories of their past, which refuse to be forgotten. They have undergone appalling childhood violations, racial prejudice, humiliation and family dysfunction.

For the past twenty years, the question of modernity's relation to racial, ethnic, and national identity formations and have transformed our understanding of its mainstream concepts. Toni Morrison in her article, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature", states, " 'black matters' and 'the people who invented the hierarchy of "race" when it was convenient for them ought not to be the ones to explain it away, now that it does not suit their purposes for it to exist'" (12).

However, the 1950s are still arduous years for African Americans, since Jim Crow laws and racial segregation are in full swing, especially in southern states. Throughout the 1950s, American white people underwent some changes in their lives.

These changes were good, except the one that happened at the beginning of 1950. Truman ordered many men to go and fight on the side of South Korea, and also to fight the communism that existed in North Korea with the presence of the Soviet Union, so that communism would not spread in the south. This war brought many new jobs for American soldiers and nurses because Truman needed many soldiers to fight for his ideals in Asia. The U.S. Army expanded to 3.6 million men, six times its size when the Korean War began. And not only that, but also "it lasted three years and involved over 3 million U.S. military personnel" (315). Therefore, on the one hand, it was good for Americans because they had new jobs, new opportunities and after the war the veterans had their pay, but on the other hand it brought misery and trauma, as many people died or were injured, which Moss pointed out in his book.

The book starts in a mental hospital where the protagonist is treated and he is always remembering his past, what he did when he was young and what he did in the Korean War. His memories are not so good and they are with guilt and fear combined together to traumatize him. The only good memories are the ones that come when he is next to Lily, his girlfriend and his sister. When he talks about his friends who died in the war: "One was the Durhams Michaels folks. Lenora remembered him as a nasty piece of work and close friends with Frank. And another boy named Abraham, son of Maylene and Howard Stone, the one they called 'stuff' was also killed. Frank alone of the trio survived" (89). "It changed him. What died in his arms gave a grotesque life to his childhood" (98).

In *The Guardian*, Sarah Churchwell criticizes the way Morrison developed the story by saying, "*Home* barely begins before it ends; just when the readers expect the

story to kick into gear, as Frank arrives back in Georgia and finds Cee, Morrison seems to lose interest." Churchwell's opinion about the novel is, it is very short and the reader might want to read more about how the protagonist achieves his goals and what he does to relieve his pain and his trauma with more detail.

In her novel *Home*, Toni Morrison tells the story of a black veteran who had recently returned from the Korean War, the main protagonist, Frank Money. After the war, once back in the United States he received a letter, which said that, his beloved sister, Cee, was in danger and could die at any moment in the hands of a white doctor because he was practicing medical experimentations with her. "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (8). In *Home*, Morrison vividly brings out the medical experimentations that took place in the 50s with Afro-American people and particularly Cee the victim of the story who went through scientific experiment under the abusive Dr. Beau. White doctors used to put into practice these social experiments with black people, those who white society did not want. That is why they did not want them to have more children. In *Home*, she wanted to deal with those abuses of authority on helpless persons and army people, all African Americans.

Morrison wanted to portray this other side of American society and she used two relevant examples to support this idea, one of them at the mental hospital, and the other at Dr. Scott's house, who experiments with Frank's sister, Cee. Thus, at the beginning of the story, Frank escaped from the mental hospital and went to Reverend Locke's house, who told him about the hospital: "You lucky, Mr. Money. They sell a lot of bodies out there . . . to the medical school . . . Doctors need to work on the dead poor so they can help the live rich" (12). The hospital for soldiers in Seattle mentioned in the novel was a

hospital where they used to take the bodies of the soldiers; in this case the African American soldiers, who are considered as a mere object or more like a lad rat and are subject of do experimentations . The other example in the novel takes place when Cee, Frank's sister, went to work for a doctor called Beauregard Scott, as "a helper" (58).

The doctor's wife explained to her that "He is more than a doctor, he is a scientist and conducts very important experimentations. His inventions help people. He's no Frankenstein" (60). Furthermore, Dr. Scott also has two daughters and they both suffered from Cephalitis, "big heads" (63), and this problem made him decide to do some experimentation on people: "I guess that's why he invents things he wants to help other folks" (63). However, he used Cee to do some experiments with her uterus because he was interested to study about her womb and she almost died because of this. This is the reason why Frank wanted to go back to Georgia and rescue his sister: "Her boss back in Atlanta had done something – what, he didn't know— to her body and she was fighting a fever that wouldn't go down" (119).

Morrison points out that Sarah, the girl who worked in the Doctor's house, "knew he gave shots, had his patients drink medicines. He made up himself, and occasionally performed abortions on society ladies. He got so interested in wombs in general, constructing instruments to see farther and farther into them, improving the speculum." (113). Obviously, when Sarah saw that she sent a letter to Frank, the only relative that "Cee had an address for" (113).

With these two examples Morrison has brought up some other aspects of the American society in the 1950s, something that many historians have not talked about.

Medical experimentations on African Americans are a clear example of racism and that is why Morrison wanted to portray them in her novel as a denunciation of those abuses.

Frank Money, the protagonist of *Home*, has been in Korean, and at the time the story is told he has spent a whole year in Fort Lawton, Seattle, where "he disembarked" (15) as a veteran. That year he met a girl called Lily who was in love with him, but Lily got tired of his behavior, his attitude towards life and she also felt that he did not share his dreams with her. Frank Money, at the same time, was going through a very bad moment. His traumatic experiences in the war had affected him in many ways. Like many other war veterans, he was suffering Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He had to face many problems at the war such as killing people, or seeing his dear friends dying. Toni Morrison has confessed, in Interview Magazine, her feelings about the 50s: "Then I thought about what was really going on. What was really going on was the Korean War. It was called a 'police action' then never a war even though 53,000 soldiers died." Morrison is really concerned about those people who went to the war and who nobody remembers. That is why she wanted to portray Frank Money as an African American veteran who suffers and feels traumatized by his days in the war.

In the Korean War both the black soldiers and white soldiers were not be together and this clearly signifies that the army was a desegregated institution, where blacks and whites were fighting for the same purpose. In *Home*, Morrison supports this idea when the Reverend Locke says; "An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better" (18). One more example of how war has affected Frank's mind is when he argues about the conditions that he and the others had to suffer in battle field and a place like that:

> Korea. You can't imagine it because you weren't there. You can't describe the bleak landscape because you never saw it. First let me tell you about the cold. I mean cold. More than freezing, Korea cold hurts, clings like a kind of glue you can't peel off. Battle is scary, yeah, but it's alive. Orders, gut-quickening, covering buddies, killing- clear, no deep thinking needed. Waiting is the hard part. Hours and hours pass while you are doing whatever you can to cut through the cold, flat days. Worst of all is solitary guard duty. (93)

The theme of segregation and racism are implicit in the novel and they are present as key elements that surround the whole story and help to develop it. Since the very beginning, the novel depicts how racism surrounds the African American characters. In those years, lynching black people was common. This lynching action had not started in the twentieth-century, but long before. White foremen used to treat their black workers badly and treat them as slaves. They were hung, burnt or tortured. According to Franklin and Moss Jr, "One of the rapidly growing elements in the population was the slave. In 1790 there were less than 700,000 slaves. By 1830 there were more than 2 million" (139). In the twentieth-century lynching was still prevailing among the blacks for instance the one that happened with Emmett Till, the boy who was brutally murdered by a white person in 1955. In *Home* the plot line shows how a group of white people tortured a black man and buried the body:

> We saw them pull a body from a wheelbarrow and throw it into a hole already waiting. One foot stuck up over the edge and quivered, as though it could get out, as though with a little effort it could break through the dirt

> being shoveled in we could not see the face of the men doing the burying, only their trousers; but we saw the edge of a spade drive the jerking foot down to join the rest of itself. When she saw that black foot with its creamy pink and mud-streaked sole being whacked into the grave, her body began to shake. (4)

The protagonist of the novel and his sister watched this scene with fear, and he remembered that moment of his childhood. Another example of lynching in *Home* is when the narrator is talking about the time when a lot of African Americans had to move from their native town, from their houses, to another place in the years of the Great Depression. Whites gave them twenty-four hours to leave their houses. "Twenty – four hours, they were told, or else.' Else' meaning 'die'" (10). So, the narrator explains how a "man named Crawford sat on his porch steps and refused to vacate. Elbows on knees, hands clasped, chewing tobacco, he waited the whole night. Just after dawn at the twenty four hour he was beaten to death" (10). Later people came to know that "Mr. Crawford's eyes had been carved out" (10). As it is suggested in the novel: "Yet, in spite of the treats from men, both hooded and not" (10).

Furthermore when Frank is talking to Billy at Bookers, a bar only for black people, they start talking about their memories, back in 1938, where the waitress of the bar told him; "we hid in an abandoned house for half a year" and Frank asked her, "Hid from what? White sheets?" (28); she answers that they were not hiding from the white sheets, but from "the rent man" to which Frank tells her that it is the "Same thing" (28).

These are few examples which proves that the lynching on African Americans are present in the novel and not only in the nineteenth century, but also in the twentieth

century. Billy, a black man who helps Frank in his way home, introduces his son, Thomas, and his wife to Frank. Frank could see that Thomas had no right hand, and he asked why, and Billy answered; "Drive-by cop" he said. 'He had a cap pistol. Eight years old, running up and down the sidewalk pointing it. Some redneck rookie thought his dick was underappreciated by his brother cops" (31). This action in the novel takes place at the beginning of the 1950s, when the child was 8 years old and now he is 11, after the return of Frank from the Korean War. Lynching or the ill treatment of black people by white people was something common in the history of the United States, and this is exposed in the novel.

Later it was revealed that the kid was shot to death. "Cops shoot anything they want. This here's a mob city" (31). Racism does not always end in lynching but this does not mean it is not harmful to the sufferer, in this case the African Americans. Segregation was the consequence of the racist ideas that white people had. Segregation is seen throughout the novel *Home*, as for instance when the Reverend Locke told Frank Money:

> You'll be grateful for every bite since you won't be able to sit down at any bus stop counter. Listen here, you from Georgia and you have been in a desegregated army and maybe you think up North is way different from down South. Don't believe it and don't count on it. Custom is just as real as law and can be just a dangerous. (18-19)

Here, even people in the North had the same prejudices and they did not want black people around. Frank witnesses a public violence where a black couple were stoned and humiliated. The owner or customers or both kicked some more, and when his lady

came to help, she got rock thrown in her face. On his way home, Frank had to sit at the back of the train, in the last seats, following the instructions of the Reverend Locke. In Portland, Frank met another Reverend, Jessie Maynard, this one gave Frank some helpful information about the places where he should go in his journey, and how he had to behave. Frank had to use the instructions of the book if he wanted to have a safe trip to Georgia. Also, in his way home, in Chevron station, he wanted to go to the bathroom and he found that a "sign on the door stopped him" (23). This is another incident of segregation in the 50s in the United States.

Racism is also seen in the moment when Frank's girlfriend, Lily, wanted to buy a house. She had money because she had worked a lot to get it. She worked as a seamstress in a theater and then she worked as a dry cleaner at Wang's Heavenly Palace, "she had added enough to what her parents left her to leave the rooming house and put down payment on a house of her own" (72). But at the moment when she wanted to buy a house for her own the woman at the agency told her that she could not buy any house, and she did not tell her that it was due to her skin color but she told her that there were some "restrictions" (73). And she pointed out an underlined passage that says: "No part of said property hereby conveyed shall ever be used or occupied by any Hebrew or by any person of the Ethiopian, Malay, or Asiatic race excepting only employees in domestic service" (73). Through these examples Morrison made it very clear that not only African Americans were discriminated but any person of different race than white people. But Churchwell's review of the novel for *The Guardian* holds another point of view about Toni Morrison´s writing: "Generational legacies, hauntings, ghosts, and the persistent effects of racism and sexism are Morrison's enduring themes: they are big

ones. But her novels about them are getting smaller, in every sense; she seems to be losing patience with her own stories." Again, Churchwell imply that Toni Morrison seems to be more tired of writing with her last novels, and that is why her books are very short and it looks as if she does not want to focus on all of the details. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapter.

Chapter Five

Summation

Toni Morrison's latest novel, *Home*, is concerned also with war, injustice and home coming. This novel by Morrison investigate firstly, how the novel witnesses the intersecting traumas of American racism and sexism and, secondly, how it utilizes constructions of race, gender, and home alongside literary portrayals of trauma and collective histories of marginalized Americans. *Home* tells the story of Frank Money, an African-American Korean war veteran living in Seattle, who is called home to Lotus, Georgia to rescue his sister Cee from a sadistic doctor's pseudoscientific experiments. . He receives a mysterious letter urging him to hurry home to his sister. "She be dead if you tarry." Frank, bitter and brimming with self-loathing, has been back in America for a year but has been unable to bring himself to head back to his native Georgia. The letter gives him the spur he needs.

He breaks out from the mental assylum and starts his journey, first barefoot through snow. As he journeys South, Frank demonstrates clear signs of post-traumatic stress. He is frequently disoriented, suffering intrusive flashbacks of his experiences during the Korean War as well as blackouts. He cannot remember why he has been arrested by the police or hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. He also encounters both in the North and South the racial segregation and rampant prejudice that pervaded the Jim Crow era. When Frank, with the help of a group of local women, successfully saves Cee, he and his sister begin to realize that Lotus, a town they hated their entire lives and from which they could not wait to escape has somehow, to their surprise, become "home." The subverted home-sweet-home sentiment is utilized again in *Home*. Lotus, for Frank, is a

town of dead-ends, "the worst place in the world, worse than any battlefields" (57). Navigating the town's transportation system is also "rougher than confronting a battlefield" (57).

Authors and critics define "home" as both a physical place and a psychic space. The concept of "home" extends beyond the material structure of a house into a psycho-emotional space of being. Carole Després explains that home provides a sense of "physical security" for individuals and thus becomes a "haven" or "sanctuary" wherein one can escape "outside pressures" and maintain "privacy and independence" (98). Home, she explicates, offers both security and solace, affording its occupants a sense of "belonging" (98), "there's no place like home" underscore a state of safety, comfort, and nostalgia. Accordingly, home becomes a "locus of intense emotional experience," offering inhabitants an "atmosphere of social understanding" where one's identities and behaviors are often accepted (98). This interpretation may have led Maya Angelou to call home "the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned" (196) and Robert Frost to quip, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, / They have to take you in" (38). While the memories connected to home are often positive, they can also bring pain. If "home is where the heart is," as Pliny the Elder affirms (312), and then home, like the symbol of the heart, evokes not only love and joy but also heartbreak and heartache. Perhaps for this reason, Salman Rushdie depicts home as a state of trauma and loss (22).

In her novel *Home*, Morrison utilizes home's physical and psychological senses to underscore the concurrent difficulty and necessity of confronting the troubling and even traumatizing memories and relationships associated with "home." *Home* highlights

the importance of dual-witnessing in and across the current era. Set in mid-twentieth-century America, when African-Americans are still treated "like dogs" (19), *Home* narrates the story of Frank Money who with the help of an empathic narrator and engaged reader struggles to work through untold tragedies, from the childhood trauma of witnessing a lynching, to the horrors of the Korean War, "You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs."

Frank's own potential to victimize the innocent, to the general mistreatment of blacks in both the North and South. To come to terms with his past, Frank must return "home" not just to a physical place in Lotus, Georgia, but to the psychic center of his overlapping traumas. To get there he must journey with a secondary witness who is willing to share the burden of his traumatic testimony, as, only through the help of another, can Frank surmount his past. Accordingly, Frank seeks secondary witnesses in all of his relationships from his sister, Cee, to the novel's narrator and finally to the readers. *Home* emphasizes the ultimate indispensability of dual-witnessing, underscoring that "home" is less of a physical place than an active, psychic space. As Leah Cohen notes in her review for *The New York Times*, in *Home*, Morrison "raises our gall repeatedly at sickening abominations routinely inflicted on African-Americans," including sterilization, institutionalization, Mandingo fighting, racial profiling, segregation, and shootings of children by the police. When asked why she decided to set her novel in the 1950s, Morrison explained: "I wanted to rip the scab off that period. There's all this *Leave It to Beaver* nostalgia. That it was all comfortable and happy and everyone had a job. Oh please. There was violent racism. There was McCarthy. There was this horrible war we didn't call a war, where 58,000 people died" (Minzesheimer).

Moreover, such injustices did not cease with Reconstruction or the Civil Rights movement but persevere today. "Although we have come close to healing," Debra Walker King writes in *African Americans and the Culture of Pain*, "we still have open sores, injuries bleeding from ongoing assaults of racism and prejudice, blatant and inadvertent stereotyping, defensiveness, denial, and racial hurt" (160). One way Morrison combats such subjugation is to refuse to elide the legacy of racial discrimination and to confront instead the systemic oppression that continues to shape American race relations.

Home not only witnesses wide-ranging instances of American injustice but also delves into the particularized experiences of its individual characters, emphasizing the need for each person to confront one's trauma in order to prevail over it. One who clearly wrestles to work through past suffering is Frank Money, a protagonist who ardently attempts to repress all he has endured only to find that he cannot, as "everything remind[s] him of something loaded with pain" (8). The only way to dispel the "haunting images" that "dance before his eyes" (97), *Home* suggests, is for Frank to witness them primarily. This process, however, proves challenging for Frank, who hesitates to witness a past in which he acts as both victim and victimizer. A central trauma for Frank is that, as a soldier in the Korean War, he befriended and then killed a young Korean girl. In the present, Frank cannot withstand the trauma of being both a victim as an African-American homeless veteran and a victimizer as a soldier who killed a girl because he was sexually aroused by the child and wished to eliminate the attraction she awakened in him. Frank is traumatized by his wrongdoing and does not excuse his victimization of the innocent. Instead, through Frank *Home* reminds readers to witness not only those moments in which one has been injured but also those instances in which one has

contributed to the suffering of another. Morrison also wanted to show the other side of the country, the one that not so many historians talk about how the Korean War and other social problems affected African Americans at that time. Army is the only place where the black people are treated as equals, the authorities established a desegregated army but their rights were not the same, neither in the war nor in the country.

Furthermore, the gender role is contrasted by men being independent and women being dependent. Cee is an example of a dependent woman, who was a symbol of weakness but emerges as a bold independent woman by the end of the novel. Male chauvinism in this story is represented with the characters of Dr. Scott, Cee's boyfriend, or Frank, who did not behave well with women and imposed their power or their authority over women. There are few bold remarkable feminist statement made in this novel. There is further scope for research in terms associated with feminism.

Morrison achieved what she wanted with this novel, which is to show that the 1950s were not the same for white and black people in the United States. After this period there were many protest movements that helped African Americans to get want they deserved; the Civil Rights movements that took place in the following years showed how many people black, and also white, people went to the streets to fight for an equal society.

The 1950s were not the same for everybody, some people had more opportunities than others, and it was not an affluent society for all. For instance, Morrison denounces in her novel the medical experimentations that were taking place in the United States at that time with black people. Morrison demonstrated those events which were mentioned in her novel happened in real life, how white people used black people, who were

considered inferior by them, to do so experimentations with their bodies. The terrible idea of eugenics, a method which some white doctors thought that could improve the human race, to create a perfect human being, affected African Americans, as is the case of Cee in the novel. Racism took place not only in the medical experimentations but also in daily life; Morrison wanted to reinforce this idea with some examples of discrimination to black people or the segregation laws.

The Korean War is a great problem for the soldiers; its effect is displayed in their eccentric behavior. Some came up with more money, as may be the case of whites and others with less money, but the major problem is how they came back to the United States, with a mental trauma for the consequences of war, the pain and suffering of what they had done or seen there. Morrison perfectly portrays the mental problems that any soldier could have after a war with the protagonist, Frank Money. At the same time this novel emphasized how black people went to fight at the war just because the United States needed them but it does not mean that they were treated as equals, the authorities established a desegregated army but their rights were not the same, neither in the war nor in the country.

Frank reflects on his relationship with his sister: *"She* was the first person I ever took responsibility for. Down deep inside her lived my secret picture of myself" *(103).* The protagonist's description of his feelings for his sister mirror what he once hoped to find with Lily: a stable and shared psychic state in which he takes responsibility for another, thereby serving as her secondary witness, and she does the same for him by safeguarding his wounded psyche within her own consciousness. From a young age, Frank and Cee begin to dual-witness. Thus, when the children witness the Ku Klux

Klan's burial of a lynched African-American man, they intuitively turn to one another for support. When Cee watches the victim's "black foot ... being whacked into the grave, her whole body beg [ins] to shake " (4). In response, Frank" hug [*s*] her shoulders tight and trie [*s*] to pull her trembling into [his] own bones " (4). This moment illustrates the engagement of personal trauma on an individual level and societal trauma on a collective one: Frank does not look away but faces catastrophe. He embraces Cee's experience in order to feel her "trembling" in his bones.

The effort to maintain this reciprocity is where many prospective witnesses falter. If Frank and Cee are to dual-witness, then, they must work consistently to renegotiate and reassess their relationship. It is undeniable that *Home* ends on a very positive and optimistic note, since the main characters have journeyed deep within themselves to come to an understanding and a partial assimilation of the memories that had previously haunted them. In this sense, it could be argued that the concept of home in the novel is not so much related to a particular place but, rather, to that psychic space where the memory of the self dwells. Schreiber notes that, for Morrison, home is primarily "a space of security and comfort lodged in memory", usually "embedded in the unconscious" (160). It has also been observed, though, that at least in the case of Frank Money, the existence of a physical location in which people recognize elements connected with their collective identity may also be of some assistance in their recovery process. It would be difficult to understand the tortuous road that Frank and Cee have had to travel in the novel if one did not take into account the kind of prejudice and injustices that they suffered as children in Lotus, first, and in exile, later. As a few reviewers of the novel pointed out, these characters are representative of a new generation, coming of age in the

1950s, which were aware of the traumatic past of most African Americans and will carry on the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Within the scope of the novel, however, it is difficult to speak of a mourning process that would transcend the very immediate reconstruction of the main characters' individual pasts or of a recovery that would involve a consideration of the broader cultural traumas. In this regard, Charles notes that "*Home* is a daringly hopeful story about the possibility of healing", but perhaps even more precisely about the possibility "of surviving in a shadow of peace" (2012). It would not be like Morrison, or like trauma fiction, to let the reader assume that once Frank and Cee Money get over their particular regrets and mental blocks, they would be fully reintegrated and totally free to pursue their new ideals, regardless of the context. On the one hand, as Herman and others have underlined, "Resolution of trauma is never final; recovery is never complete. The impact of the traumatic event continues to reverberate throughout the survivor's lifecycle" (211). This fact is abundantly illustrated in *Home* because every time Frank and Cee run across difficulties in their adventures away from home, some ghosts from their childhood are likely to be reawakened. The years of McCarthyism were still very problematical for African Americans, since signs of exclusion and segregation were plentiful in U.S. society.

As Eyerman (80) sees it, "[f]or blacks this rejection after the raised hopes engendered by emancipation and reconstruction forced a rethinking of their relation with American society." On the other hand, the open-ended character of the novel is also suitable because, as Christiansë has claimed, a fundamental characteristic of Morrison's writing is that "mourning dominates, in an art of incompletion that seeks to register, if not accommodate, the realities of trauma" (Christiansë 22). Indeed, her ethical poetics is

based on the combination and distinction between an art that primarily remembers and, therefore, is all about recuperation, restoration, and recovery, and another one that "refuses to close the wound of African American history in recognition of the impossibility of ever fully coming to terms with the history of racism, the impossibility of abreacting an 'event' that did not take place at a singular, historically specific moment in time" (Durrant 83). In short, then, it could be argued that while *Home* suggests that individual recovery from past traumatic experiences is usually possible, it is not so easy to bring the insidious effects resulting from cultural and collective negation to a closure. In *Home* Morrison engages in the narration of the traumas of slavery and racism as well as in African Americans' various modes of healing and recovery.

She explores the unique network of care, support and solidarity that the black community provides so as to help traumatized black individuals to overcome their psychological and emotional wounds. In spite of the trials and tribulations Frank and Cee undergo as children, as Schreiber says, home and community are still "the psychic support for the 'self' or subjectivity" and "a space of security and comfort lodged inmemory [...] embedded in the unconscious" (160). According to Ibarrola, in this psychic space "where the memory of the self dwells," some elements connected with their collective identity can be recognized at least in the case of Frank Money, which "may also be of some assistance in their the siblings'recovery process" (121). This novel comes full circle when Morrison ends up the story going back to the opening scene, hence, intimating the siblings' self-reshaping process, along with the link between scarring personal, but also historical racial memories, and the present. According to Vega, in their return to their community and Frank's different vision of it, "the process has been

completed, the circle has been closed." The image of the circle signals that "the scattered patches have been gathered and put together into that inner unity which constitutes Frank's and Cee's renewed selves" (216). Brother and sister are no longer defenseless and frail little children watching a disturbing episode of history.

Through Frank and Cee Money, Morrison sheds light on African Americans ability to recuperate after traumatic life events in their healing journeys towards self-actualization and wholeness. Notwithstanding, their trauma recovery is far from complete and it is much harder for the siblings to get rid of the haunting ghosts of the scavenging Korean girl and the never-to-be-born baby. As Judith Herman among other researchers, has highlighted "Resolution of trauma is never final, recovery is never complete. The impact of the traumatic event continues to reverberate throughout the survivor's lifecycle" (211). *Home* is a hopeful story about the possibility of recovery and transformation for African Americans. The siblings' sweet bay tree, as a striking metaphor for trauma and healing, illustrates the regeneration of the traumatized black self. The sweet bay tree has a hollow space at its center, but it has two strong branches that reach out and it keeps growing:

> It looked so strong
>
> So beautiful.
>
> Hurt right down the middle
>
> But alive and well (143).

Trauma has also left an ineradicable void at the characters' center: Cee's mutilated womb and Frank's "hook" in his chest (17). And yet, the siblings have achieved substantial bettering and advancement. This purest love between the siblings

[illegible] of a [illegible] (from Bible: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born [illegible]" (Proverbs 17:17).

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Agony of the Aborigines: A Study of Kate Grenville's

The Secret River

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Agony of the Aborigines: A Study of Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Doma Briscillla .L. during the year 2018-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Agony of the Aborigines: A Study of Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

J. Doma Briscilla

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Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Agony of the Aborigines: A Study of Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*** comprises five chapter.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the origin and development of Australian Literature and deals with the life and works of Kate Grenville and her contribution as a novelist to Australian Literature is highlighted.

The second chapter **Clash of Cultures** explores the Australian Aboriginal-White relationship.

The third chapter **Victimization of the Aborigines** brings about the various sufferings undergone by the Australian aborigines.

The fourth chapter **Exile and Alienation** explores the imagery of over population, this is, life exportation and also deals with two vital problems such as exile and alienation.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Australian literature is literary work written by the people of Australia and its former colonies. In its former Western History, Australia was one among the colonies by British. Australian literary tradition is linked with English literature. Australian literature in English language covers the period from 1788 to the present day and includes not only fiction, verse, drama, history, biography and autobiography but also includes journals, diaries, letters and memoirs.

Early Australian literature reflects this unusual social context and the physical demands of the environment which dominated the lives of Europeans moving into the countryside in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The literary value of many nineteenth century Australian publications is sometimes not as great as social and historic records. The themes of all authors who wrote are more urban – oriented, internationalist and cosmopolitan. Convictism has been a common theme in every period. The themes include egalitarianism, democracy, migrant and national identity.

Several nineteenth century authors deal with the theme of Aborigines in their works. The first major aboriginal writer is Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) who began publishing her poetry in the 1960's, the perspective of European writers on the aborigines varied. Aboriginal Australian society before European settlement in 1788 had no written literary tradition. Aboriginal Australians had an oral literary tradition going back many thousand years. After many years aboriginal myths and legends are

also being recorded in written form and aboriginal writers are producing literary works in English which reflect the concerns and perspective of the indigenous people of Australia. Woman authors also played an important role in the Australian literature in all periods. The earliest works in the 1830's is Anna Maria Bunn's The Guardian. Nineteenth century women writers mostly write fiction, and semi – autobiographical events based on their own experience in the Australian environment. Some early feminist writers had difficulty in publishing their works.

Notable Australian writers are Kate Grenville, Patrick White, David Malouf, Randolph Stow, Christopher Koch, David Ireland, Marcus Clarke, Thomas Keneally, Morris West, Collen McCullough, Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. The historians are Manning Clark and Geoffrey Blainey. The playwright is David Williamson.

The great Australian novelist is Patrick White's literary career began with verse produced in 1930's. In his career he produced much poetry, short story, an autobiography and many novels. His novels are complicated and intellectual, influenced by European ideas. His stories are symbolic, sometimes satirical, and frequently contain a sour assessment of Australian life. His own background, family experiences and homes provide the setting for many of his works.

David Malouf divides his life between Australia and Italy. His first works were verse including Bicycle and other poems. Malouf's first novel is *Johnno*. Malouf's themes are about imagination and the importance of the places in which we live. It is fully dealt with physical and emotional exile.

Randolph Stow is a novelist whose works have a poetic quality influenced by Taoism. He began his career in the year 1950 with *To the Islands*. He was influenced by Asian philosophy. England was the setting for *The Suburbs of Hell.* His works are set in Australia often displays demythologizing of national stereotypes.

Christopher Koch also began his literary career as poet and this can be seen in his novels. Like Stow he was also influenced by Asian philosophy and Hindu mythology. His works were set in Indonesia. His novel *Highways to a War* won him the Miles Franklin Award.

David Ireland is three time winner of the Miles Franklin Award. It deals with the destruction of Australian resources and the human rejects of modern society in his writings. He is a satirist; he criticizes conventional systems, social classes and the male chauvinism of Australian society. His style is bleak and surrealistic.

Kate Grenville was born in Sydney in 1950. He is one of the three children born to Kenneth Grenville Gee, a District Court Judge and a pharmacist. She has also been a teacher of creative writing. Between 1976 and 1980 she lived in London and Paris, and wrote fiction while supporting herself by doing film – editing, writing and secretarial jobs. She returned to Australia in 1983 and became a sub – editor at SBS Television in the subtitling department. She was awarded a doctorate of creative arts by the University of Technology, Sydney. Grenville lives in Sydney with her husband, son and daughter. Her leisure activities include learning to play the cello and performing in an amateur orchestra.

Grenville's reputation as a short story writer was made by the publication in 1984 of her collection *Beard Ladies* .She has published fifteen books, including fiction, non-fiction, biography and books about the writing process. Her books have been awarded many prizes in Australia, as well as Commonwealth Writers' Prize, and Britain's Orange Prize. *The Secret River* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Her novels have been published all over the world and have been translated into many languages.

Kate Grenville got the Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (FAHA) in 2008, Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of New south Wales in 2010, Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Sydney in 2012, Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Macquarie University in 2013,The Dixson Medal awarded by the Library Council of New South Wales in 2014.

In 1984 Grenville got The Australian Vogel Literary Award for *Lilian's Story,* 1995 Victorian Premier's Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction for *Dark Places,* 2001 Orange Prize for Fiction for *The Idea of Perfection,* 2006 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for *The Secret River,* 2006 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, Christian Stead Prize for fiction for *The Secret River*, 2006 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards and Community Relations Commission Award for *The Secret River.*

Grenville's novels are *Lilian's Story in* 1985, *Dreamhouse* in 1986, *Joan Makes History*; A novel in 1988, *Dark Place* in 1994 (alternative title is Albion's Story), *The Ideas of Perfection* in 1999, *The Secret River* in 2005, *The Lieutenant* in 2008, *Sarah Thornhill*, sequel to *The Secret River* in 2011.

Grenville's early fiction presented characters trying to free themselves from social and gender stereotypes. *Bearded Ladies* is a collection of short stories about women trying to free themselves from the gender stereotypes of their society: metaphorically they are the "bearded ladies" of the title.

Lilian's Story, set in the early 20th century, takes as its subject a woman who rejects her middle-class background and the conventional future that is expected of her, and instead chooses to live as a street person, making a living by offering recitations from Shakespeare.

Dreamhouse is a black comedy about a marriage on the rocks. It explores themes of both men and women freeing themselves from stereotypes to accept their true selves. Both partners in the marriage are attracted to their own sex: the wife is prepared to acknowledge that and act on it while the husband refuses to.

Joan Makes History is a satirical r-writing of Australia's history, foregrounding the women rather than the men. Joan is an Everywoman who in various guises lives through all the iconic moments of Australia's past. She "makes history" both by simply living her life, and by remaking history by writing it.

The Idea of Perfection is about the Harley Savage a plain woman, a part-time museum curator and quilting expert with three failed marriages and a heart condition Douglas Cheese man is a shy, gawky engineer with jug-handle ears, one marriage gone sour, and a crippling lack of physical courage. They meet in the little Australian town of Karakarook, where Harley has arrived to help the town build a heritage museum and

with Douglas to demolish the quaint old Bent Bridge.

The Ideas of Perfection is about people haunted by the impossible ideal of perfection. The two main characters are both middle-aged and frumpish, and consider themselves unlovably flawed. The journey they make is to recognize that to be "imperfect" is simply to be human, and carries its own power.

The Lieutenant is the story of one of the earliest moments of black-white relationship in Australia, at the time of the first settlement in 1788. Based on a historical source- the gadigal-language note books of Lieutenant William Dawes – the novel tells the story of a unique friendship. In learning the Gadigal language from a young girl, Dawes wrote down word-for-word parts of their conversations. Grenville has used these fragments as the basis for a novel exploring how it might be possible for two people to reach across the gulfs of language and culture that separate them, and arrive at a relationship of mutual warmth and respect. She has described it as a "mirror image" of *The Secret River.*

Sarah Thornhill is a sequel to *The Secret River*. It tells the story of one of the children of the main character's in the earlier book. Sarah Thornhill grows up knowing nothing of the dark secret in her family's past, and when she has to confront it, the direction of her life and her thinking is changed. It's a story about secrets and lies, and how to deal with a dark legacy from the past.

Although Australia was chiefly populated with Indigenous Australians, the first century of colonization saw a drastic decline in their population. This due to clash of

desire for the land the native's innate protection of their land and the white settlers struggle to declare their right to an area already inhibited by natives-possibly for 40,000 years. The two cultures failed to ever create a peace agreement or compensation and as a result, the frontier was often marked with blood. Overtime, a successful of the British colony meant that white settlement overpowered any possibility of the natives retaining their land. The Secret River's exploration of this powerful change in Australia's history is a poignant reflection of the past, and demands attention to the sensitive issue of Australian and native relationship that is still present today.

The Secret River was inspired by Grenville's desire to understand the history of her ancestor Solomon Wiseman, who settled on the Hawkesbury River at the area now known as Wisemans Ferry. Her inspiration to understand this came from her taking part in the 28 May 2000 Reconciliation Walk across Sydney Harbor Bridge during which she realized that she didn't know much about the early interactions between the settlers and the Aboriginal people. Initially intended to be a work of non-fiction about Wiseman, the book eventually became a fictional work based on her research into Wiseman but not specifically about Wiseman himself. The novel took five years and twenty drafts to complete.

The novel is dedicated to the Aboriginal people of Australia. Although sparking hostility from some historians received a positive response from many Aboriginal people, Grenville has said "they reognise that the book is my act of acknowledgement, my way of saying: this is how I'm sorry".

The early life of William Thornhill is one of Dickensian poverty, and

criminality. After a childhood of poverty and petty crime in the slums of London, William Thornhill is sentenced to death for stealing wood; however, in 1806 his sentence is commuted to transportation to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. With his wife Sal and children in tow, he arrives in a harsh land that feels at first like a death sentence. However, there is a way for the convicts to buy freedom and start afresh. Thornhill then gets sent to Sydney on a boat, by himself. After 9 months, Thornhill's master, and Thornhill obtained a ticket of leave, one year later, after he demonstrated good behavior. His son, Willie is already five years old, and Willie could not recognize his father, after being away from him for so long.

During Thornhill's first night in this new land, Thornhill encounters an aboriginal and struggles to communicate with him. The following weeks, Thornhill went to work as a lighter man for Mr. King. Thornhill then brought the alcohol, which he got from Mr. King back home, to set up his own bar, named the "Pickled Herring" Scabby Bill was a regular customer, who would entertain the customers, by dancing for money.

Three years later, and Thornhill quits his job and works for Thomas Blackwood, a former convict who is attempting to reconcile himself with the place and its people. Blackwood lived on the Hawkesbury River, with his boat, "the Queen". Thornhill also met Smasher Sullivan, a man whose fear of this alien world turns into brutal depravity towards it.

Thornhill soon realises, that the aboriginal people of Australia have a different concept of land ownership, as compared to the white settlers, and notices that many of

the aboriginals were stealing his corn. Thornhill realizes that Blackwood has an aboriginal wife, and son. Shocked, he goes on to tell his wife about it. He also gave the black people names, to tell them apart easily, and renamed some of them as "Whisker Harry", "Long Bob" and "Black Dick". Thornhill was also shocked to see his son, Dick playing with the aboriginal people, and he beat up Dick. As Thornhill and his family stake their claim on a patch of ground by the river, the battle lines between old and new inhabitants are drawn.

Soon after, Saggity, a friend of Smasher Sullivan was killed after a raid on his farm by Aborigines; it is Saggity's death that leads to the battle with the Aborigines. Blackwood tries to stop the fighting, but gets whipped by Smasher. In the battle between the settlers and Aborigines many casualties are sustained on both sides, Whisker Harry kills Sullivan, while he gets shot in the stomach, and long Jack gets shot in the head. Though Thornhill is a loving husband and a good father, his interactions with indigenous inhabitants are villainous. Thornhill dreams of a life of dignity and entitlement that are manifested in his desires.

After befriending Blackwood under his employ, Thornhill finds a patch of land he believes will meet his needs, but his past comes back to haunt him. His interactions with the Aboriginal people progress from fearful first encounters to appreciation. The desire for him to own the land contrasts with his wife wanting to return to England. The clash is one between a group of people desperate for land and another for whom the concept of ownership is bewildering.

A decade later and William Thornhill becomes the wealthiest man in the area.

He builds his own house, but he has always felt that something fell off. He also bought a new boat, named "Sarah" and renamed "Darkey's Creek" to "Thornhill's Point." Long Jack continued to stay, at Thornhill's Point, when all the other natives had fled. Thornhill's son, Dick, leaves him to live with Blackwood, and Thornhill's friendship with Blackwood also deteriorates, which leads Thornhill to have a sense of guilt of his actions.

The forthcoming chapters deal with indigenous and non-indigenous relation with nature and land in *The Secret River*.

Chapter Two

Clash of Cultures

The perceptions of the past from Indigenous and Non-Indigenous perspectives are radically different, which can be demonstrated by the depiction of the Aboriginal rock paintings in a novel. In *The Secret River*, Thornhill's villa can be read as a symbol of the colonial empire and the painted fish in the rock below represents him Aboriginal heritage:

> Under the house, covered by the weight of Mr. Thornhill's villa, the still swam in the rock. It was dark under the floorboards: the fish would never feel the sun again. It would not fade, as the others out in the forest were fading, with no black hands to re-draw them as. It would remain as bright as the day the boards had been nailed down, but no longer alive, cut off from the trees and light that it had swam in. (316)

Constructing the villa upon the rock painting is a sign to recognize the Aboriginal people's central place in the construction of the national foundational narrative, which is a redesign of the Aboriginal-white relationships, a changing of the postcolonial stance. Though the color of the fish under the villa would not fade, it has lost strength and becomes immobile and tends to be dismissed as a past cut from the Aboriginal present. Like an artifact in the museum, though appreciated and admired, its significance to the Aboriginal people cannot be exposed. Since "a nation's loss of certainty regarding its moral worth can threaten both national identity and identification with the nation" (243),

the portrayal of the rock painting in *The Secret River* can be considered as an attempt to lay past settle guilt to rest, thus instead of destabilizing the foundational historical narrative, it becomes complicit with it.

In *The Secret River*, Thornhill's dishonored convict past is something that needs to be discarded and polished over. When asked about his family history, he invents a new story to fit himself in:

> In this place, where everyone had started fresh-born on the day of their arrival, stories were like those shells down on the beach. A crab might live in one for a while, until he grew too big for it, and then he would scuttle around to another, the next size up. (321)

Hodge and Mishra have exposed the identity crisis of the European settlers in their book *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (1991): "This now-dominant group jettisoned their European past and in the process they jettisoned their chance of a future, and their culture ossified, just as languages cease to develop when have provincialized and cut off from the center" (15). And this is why the Desperance white fell as in Carpentaria were depicted as a hopeless and helpless people, who suffered from collective amnesia and insisted that "they originated from nowhere" (57), thus contradicting themselves of any chance to regenerate their past and visualize hopeful future.

The Uptown white people's collective amnesia of their past and their obsession with history with a new beginning of the continent is equivalent to Thornhill and other

European settler's newly created identities, and ridiculed by the Prickle bush people: "People became full-hearted, loving the memories of their personal histories, even if it was an aberration from a history only as old as the cemetery down the road" (61), and their history "was just a half-flick of the switch of truth simply a memory no greater than two life spans" (57).

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous perspectives also vary greatly in their conceptions of land and nature. From the European settler's perspective, nature is ruthless and aggressive to them, and land is to be cultivated and tamed with their hard labor. In *The Secret River*, the settlers feel alienated from the environment. To gain a sense of security, the European colonizers try to overcome the land and transform it into something they are familiar with. They build up fences and work hard in the cultivated fields. They seize different pieces of land and name them after themselves, such "Blackwood's Lagoon", "Thornhill's Point", "Thornhill's Creek", "Millikin's Inlet" and "Jamesson's Mill" (313). The act of naming, as an "imposition on the landscape" (175), genuine the colonizers claim of the land based on the doctrine of "terra nullius" (no one's land) and dispossessed the Aboriginal people of the right to their traditionally inhabited land.

Another instance to show the settler's wish to conquer the land is Sal's garden, enclosed in "a high stone wall":

> With the wall the ground had been cleared and leveled for Sal's garden.
>
> On that bleak rectangle a garden along English lines was planned.

> Daffodils and roses were planted. Paths were marked out with string and laid with crushed white sandstone in lieu of gravel. It glittered harshly in the light, but it divided the garden up into squares in the way she wanted. Between the garden and the house there was to be a lawn and, on Devine's advice, expensive turf was imported from Ireland. (318)

The revisionist postcolonial stance tries to tease a sense of guilt and unease from Thornhill, who, with "three hundred acres and a piece of paper to prove it was all his", still feels "an emptiness", contrasted with Long Jack, who treats the place as "part of his flesh and spirit" (329). And the fate of Sal's garden is also pathetic:

> In spite of her care the garden did not thrive. The roses never put to their roots down. They clung to life, but were little more than stalk. The daffodils were planted but no trace of them was ever seen again. The turf yellowed and shriveled and finally blew away in wisps of dry straw. (319)

Postcolonial theory is a literary or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that takes colonies or their peoples as its subject matter. The theory is based around concepts of otherness and resistance.

The emptiness Thornhill feels and the invalidity of Sal's efforts to import English garden are also instances of the double perspective in the novel, which stands for a postcolonial rearrangement of the white hegemonic colonial history and acknowledges

the subjectivity of the environment, as Thornhill has observed when he arrives on the continent: "This place had been here long before him. It would go on sighing and breathing and being itself after he had gone, the land lapping on and on, watching, waiting, getting on with its own life" (83).

However, too much prominence is placed on Thornhill's hard work and sentimentality towards the environment, which lends support to the ideological and mechanisms of subjugation characteristic of conquest and colonization, and can be regarded as an attempt to legitimize the national identity constructed on the dispossession of the Indigenous people. By setting up fences and building the house into a fortress, Thornhill's family (and the settlers in general) further isolate themselves from nature and land.

In Aboriginal people's cosmology, land and nature are spiritually connected to them and can interact with them. Their Dreaming tracks "connect points on the landscape, showing relationships between points", and are the 'boundaries' that unite (52).

The Prickle bush people believed that the ground underneath them could breathe and groan and it "gave them old clan folk real power" (372). Mozzie Fishman, as the Aboriginal religious leader, led his convoy of zealots "along the spiritual travelling road of the great ancestor, whose journey continues to span the entire continent and is older than time itself" (119). On their road, "the only sound is the ghostly intermittent chime of a single distant bell, ringing out of the ground, echoing throughout the bush lands" (119).

As "bearers of the feared secret Law ceremony" (119), they regarded the pilgrimage as their "ways of renewing the strength of the country" (150).

Instead of being alienated by the surroundings, the Aboriginal people were "at home on the sea, at home on the land" (182). They could become invisible people when necessary:

> Norm knew that could look like a pandanus tree if he wanted to hide.
>
> He knew how to melt away into countryside. In a flat stretch of clay
>
> Pan, Will could flatten himself out behind the clumps of yellowing grasses
>
> and become caked mud all afternoon while a search party walked all over him. (288)

Plants, animals and natural forces all convey messages for the Aboriginal people to decipher and also serve as their shield or haven against danger or enemies. When Phantom tried to hide himself from the mining people's helicopters, the windy night sang for him "through the slender, bow-bent spear wood forest" below where he slept, and "the ghost-white under-leaf of the wax-green foliage of the stick trees became a procession of spirits moving across the soft earth of darkness, protecting the country of the water people" (182).

Though "Mozzie claimed the lagoon" (426), it was treated as a sacred place and remained unnamed. Normal Phantom regarded himself "the best fisherman that ever breathed" (292), but he showed reverence to the sea woman "whose name must not be

mentioned because she might be listening, far out at sea, was spinning herself into a jealous rage" (276).

When the white people changed a river's name into Normal's River as a sign for "meaningful coexistence" (8), the act was ridiculed by the Aboriginal people, even though Norm pretended to accept it and expressed his thanks to the white people. In their mind, "the river only had one name from the beginning of time. It was called Wangala" (10). The act of naming the river after Normal Phantom is the same with that in *The Secret River*, only a sign to show the white people's possessive desire of land and nature.

This double perspective on Thornhill's mind reveals tensions between the hegemonic colonial discourse and a reconfigured form of whiteness, thus invoking the past disturbing experience "to deploy its presentences", and enabling its "transcendence in the search for a more secure and universal value system" (Hutcheon, 88). One perspective of Thornhill's perception shows complicity with the master narrative of the colonizers, which judges the natives by the European norms of value:

> It was true the blacks made no fields or fences, and built no houses worth the name, roaming around with no thought for the morrow. It was true that they did not even know enough to cover their nakedness, but sat with their bare arsis on the dirt like dogs. In all these ways they were nothing but savages (229)

The other perspective reconfigures the white norms, paying respect to the Aboriginal people's way of living: "the blacks were farmers no less than the white men were. But they did not bother to build a fence to keep animals from getting out. Instead they created a tasty patch to lure them in. Either way, it meant fresh meat for dinner" (229), and even showing admiration for the nobility of the natives: "Even more than that, they were like gentry. They spent a little time each day on their business, but the rest was their own to enjoy. ... In the world of these naked savages, it seemed everyone was gentry" (230). This reconfiguration of the settler subject's consciousness highlights "the self-destructing tendencies of racial subjectivity" and becomes a "substantial hope of overcoming racism" (135).

However, some critics have pointed out the limitations of representing exclusively the settler point of view in the depiction of Australia's colonial past. Collingwood-Whittick (2013) argues that "it inevitably causes the transgenerational trauma of Indigenous dispossession to fade, if not from sight entirely, then at least into the periphery of the reader's field of vision" (17).

Grenville tried to justify her choice of not representing the Darug people's consciousness in her writing memoir: "I didn't own that story. It had to be allowed to speak for itself. My job was to get out of its way" (171). Nevertheless, her strategy is still criticized as merely creating "a context where is no acceptance of difference those that cannot be understood become other" (484).

The novel's attempt to rewrite a past with postcolonial empathy has also built up tension between history and fiction, and the representation has been questioned by some

historians. As first pointed out, Grenville ponders what she would have done on the frontier and what sort of person that would have made her. The leading character in her novel is not an 18th century swiftsman at all; it is herself. The "Great Australian Silence" in Australian history cannot be fully broken without considering the Aboriginal people's perspectives.

Chapter Three

Victimization of the Aborigines

Aboriginal people are inseparable part of Australia. They are one of the oldest cultures in the world, their existence going back at least forty thousand years. When looking at Australia one cannot consider just the isolated continent and its exceptional animal species but also its habitants. *In Black Words, White Pages*, Shoemaker stresses the importance of Aboriginal people. They make up only native inhabitants who had face the cruel reality of European invasion and later settlement. However, the development of land seizure was distinct from other parts of the world:

> Australian Aborigines have much in common with other indigenous peoples who suffered under the impact of European colonization. But there are a number of distinctive features about the Australian Aborigines and the formation of the Australian colony that need to be recognized, in order for us to understand the particular forms of the representation complex which was constructed on the their behalf. (24)

One of the most important features which distinguish Australian Aboriginal people from other Indigenous people is the attempt of Europeans to reeducate Aboriginal people by sending them to special settlements or to white families and thus stealing the children from their families. Aboriginal people are the minority of Australian population; they play a very important role in Australian culture and history. They are not a homogenous folk the Aboriginal people who do not live in the urban areas still remain in

isolated rural communities. They share a common heritage which may be different from community to community.

Aboriginal people are a distinctive group of people who have strong traditions and whose culture is rooted in the remote past. A lot of books and materials have been devoted to the theme of Aboriginality because it seems to be a 'secret chamber' which remains unrevealed for most people. It is a quite complicated concept which cannot be fully understood by non-Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal literature begins as a cry from the heart directed at the Whiteman. It is a cry for justice and for a better deal, a cry for understanding and an asking to be understood. These are first words in writing from the fringe by an Aboriginal author Mudrooroo Narogin. His novel *Wild Cat Falling* was published in Australia in 1965 and it is an important event for Aboriginal people because it is one of the landmarks of Aboriginal literature. Storytelling is the first form of literature. The oral tradition of Aboriginal people is rooted deep in the past; nevertheless, it still influences the modern Aboriginal literature.

Aboriginal people must have relied on their memory. They trained it through telling stories the more they talked and listened, the better their memory was. Storytelling is thus an instrument for education, keeping traditions, transferring information and last but not the least entertainment. It is almost unimaginable for people who have not experienced the oral tradition that storytelling could work for such a long time. It is admirable that Aboriginal people were able to absorb to much information and pass it further on.

Australians had to accept Aboriginal writing as a part of Australian literature because Aboriginal people are the inhabitants of this land and thus they have the right to express their opinions by means of writing. As far as the themes of Aboriginal writing are concerned, they are manifold. It is important to point out the despite of this diversity; the purpose of Aboriginal writing is always very similar. The cultural heritage of Indigenous people is reflected in their writing and the Aboriginal experience is evident in the works of Aboriginal writers.

All the authors writing about Aboriginal society try to achieve the same aim to express their personal ideas about Indigenous inhabitants and to share their views with readers. Shoemaker emphasizes the difference, yet the close connection, between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal writing as the same time as both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal writers do not deal with the same topics. However, sometimes their approach is similar (10).

Australian novelist Kate Grenville, the winner of numerous prizes for her literary work, was born in Sydney. She is a white mainstream writer which might not fit into the work devoted to the Aboriginal writing.

There are no strict rules about who is considered an Aboriginal writer who is not. Besides writing about various topics such as male – female relationships, Grenville has decided to devote some novels to the important part of Australian history the first encounters between Indigenous inhabitants of Australian and White settlers.

Before she started writing, Grenville worked in the film industry. Her first book was published in 1984 as a collection of short stories called *Bearded Ladies*. As the title suggests, these thirteen stories show women in different roles living in the 'men's world'. Since then she published several novels sharing the common factor gender relations. Well-known novels by Grenville include *The Idea of Perfection* (1999) the winner of the orange prize. It is rather a 'love story' that traces and explores the role of the sexes and the relationships between them.

The novel called *Joan Makes History* published in 1988 is a parodic history of Australia written from the woman's point of view. The main female protagonist Joan Radulesco appears in different roles in Australia history within the novel. Joan also performs a role of an Aboriginal woman, which is the first mention of Aboriginality in Grenville's work. Another novel which deals with the first encounters between white settlers and Indigenous inhabitants is the most recent novel called *The Lieutenant* (2008).

The novel traces the story of a soldier from the First Fleet sent to Australia in 1788 and his interaction with the Indigenous inhabitants. He meets a young Aboriginal girl Patyegarang who teaches him her language. Their friendship represents the bridge between the two different cultures and the novel in thus perceived to be more positive than *The Secret River*.

In her novel *The Secret River* (2005), Grenville's takes the readers in time. It is a historical fiction based on the story of one of the Grenville's ancestors Solomon Wiseman. Although Grenville drew on the historical records and the events depicted in the novel really happened, the genre of fiction remains untrustworthy for understanding

the past and in the fiction authors are those who decide about the outcome of the novel. The historical events in *The Secret River* are real but the characters are fictional. Grenville devoted couple of years to the research into her ancestry and also into the early colonial Australia. Besides reading theoretical books and studying, among others, the old ships and boats, she realized that she needed to explore the places she was going to write about by visiting each part of the land she wanted to portray. She has admitted in the interview that she is a great believer in the experiential theory of writing.

Grenville experienced the turns of the weather, the harshness of the river and various difficulties while travelling along the Hawkesbury River. Australian history is full of secrets and the first encounters between Aboriginal people and European settlers are one of them:

> "Grenville's symbolism is a striking reminder of the history that lies beneath our modern Australian state and of the ways in which that history has sometimes been deliberately suppressed to give the impression of more noble beginnings" (4).

Australian don't appear to be pleased with this a part of their history neither of the time of thus referred to as 'Stolen children' that is represented in Pilkington's novel. *The Secret River* is a chronicle of a British man William Thornhill who is sentenced in 1806 to be transported to New South Wales in Australia. He is forced to leaves his beloved England and start living in a completely unknown a alien land.

Although his life in England is difficult he had to face adversity when his parents and his wife's parents died and they had no money left he loves it because he was born there. On the other hand, he knows that without stealing he and his family cannot survive. Australia, which is a convict colony, seems to be a harsh land at first. But at the same time it is a significant opportunity for a new, better start. William can start a new life here and provide 'security' to his family only after several years when he is granted a pardon. William is happy here and he starts to feel tempted by owning a piece of land. It is so easy for him to annex a hundred acres of the land and assert that it is his own. Will does not realize that it is a kind of theft as the land is inhabited for more than forty thousand years by Darug people.

The main theme of this novel is the clash between two cultures the Aboriginal and the European. British Privy Council declared the entire continent of Australia 'terra nullius' which means 'nobody's land'. Great Britain used Australia as a convict colony so the first settlers were mostly former convicts. Suddenly, two groups of different people needed the same land as a source of food and water. The clash between them was inevitable. The exiled British criminals had to coexist with the Indigenous people of Australia. They unable to communicate together and this initial lack of understanding turned into fear. In the novel, Will is drawn into this clash.

Although he is aware of the fact the Aboriginal people are usurped on their own land, his hunger for land prevails. When Will and his family settle down in Sydney, they encounter the first Aboriginal man whom they call Scabby Bill. The hunter-gatherer way of living, practiced by many Aboriginal people, is in contrast to the farming attempts of

the white settlers. It is quite incomprehensible for the white settlers that the local Aboriginal people do not build houses to live in and the fences to guard their possessions. Will admires the ability of the Aboriginal population to organize their work and he envies them the spare time spent with their families. At the same time, Will is frightened of the inscrutable behavior of the Indigenous inhabitants.

In fact, there are two groups of the white settlers on the Hawkesbury River. One of them, the minority, tries to coexist with the Aboriginal people and tolerate their way of living. The second group is completely hostile towards the Indigenous inhabitants. Will cannot decide which group he will join but finally he becomes involved in a cruel massacre of the Aboriginal people. The climax of the story, the final murderous violence, estranges Will from his wife and also from the son who used to play with the Aboriginal children as a child without any hints of hatred.

They would like to mention the background of the origin of the title of the book. As it was mentioned above, the word 'secret' is related to the Australian past which is closely connected to myths. The phrase *The Secret River* is taken from the W.E.H. Stanner's Boyer Lecture of 1968, There is a secret river of blood in Australian history.

Stanner is talking about the times of the first encounters between Aboriginal people and White settlers. Despite of the appalling consequences of this period, it seems to be a suppressed part of Australian history. Grenville found the expression *The Secret River* fully appropriate for her title. Naming it 'The River of Blood' would be too far-fetched and would give the book different connotations. The word 'river" is quite

significant as it represents the substance of William's life. He had been apprentice for seven years on the river Thames before he became a skilled waterman.

In Australia he uses his knowledge from the apprentice years and makes his living on the Hawkesbury River. The Thames means the hard work for Will as he has to face a great competition but it also represents the place where he was born and where his home is. On the other hand, the Hawkesbury River is the unknown, dangerous place but quite prosperous. He is one of the few watermen there so he can earn enough money to build his own house, which would not be possible in London. According to Sean O'Brien, *The Secret River* may be a tale of two rivers one lost, other ambiguously claimed. Both of them form an irretrievable a part of Thornhill's life.

It is important to point out that Grenville avoids giving voice to the Indigenous people in her novel. She is fully aware of the fragile issue of the appropriation of Aboriginal voices in many literary works so she tries to be even-headed. Grenville does not try to pretend that she knows what the Aboriginal people are thinking about. She admits the difficulty of the task to write about the Aboriginal people: "That was tricky because what I didn't want to do was to step into the heads of any of the Aboriginal characters". Grenville seems to be writing 'from the distance' without judging the characters and their actions.

In my opinion, *The Secret River* is a balanced portrayal of the first encounters between white settlers and Aboriginal people. The author leaves the reader judge who is complicit and who is innocent. She tries to be unbiased and fair when describing the skirmishes between the white settlers and the Indigenous inhabitants. By refusing "get in"

the minds of the Aboriginal characters, Grenville runs the risk of making her Aboriginal characters rather blank and unconvincing.

The Secret River offers a wide range of the Aboriginal characters but they seem to represent the whole community of people rather than just individuals. In fact, there are two groups of the Aboriginal people in this novel:

> The black natives of the place seemed to come in two sorts. The visible ones were those who lived in the settlement. [...] The other sort of native was the kind that Thornhill had met on the first night, when they been on the very edge of civilization. This sort of native was invisible to those like Sal who confined themselves to the township. They lived in the forest and in the bays where settlement had not yet reached, and melted away if any of the new arrivals tried to come close. (90-92)

The character of Scabby Bill thus embodies the 'visible' group of the Aboriginal people. He comes to the Thornhill's hut every day to beg for some food. He can even say a few English words. At first his naked body scandalizes the puritan white women because they are not accustomed to the sight of naked body of an adult man.

Later on the nakedness of the Aboriginal people becomes ordinary for the white settlers. The different approach to nudity shows the gap between the two cultures. The things, such as clothes, are important for Europeans as they can represent people's wealth. On the other hand, Aboriginal people do not consider any form of wealth important so they do not need to present it by clothes. Scabby Bill's nakedness reveals

the scars on his body which will always remind him of the period of the Australian history when he and his contemporaries had to struggle for their land.

Nevertheless, William's wife Sal seems to get used to Scabby Bill's presence. It is like an exchange: Sal gives him something to eat and Scabby Bill leaves. Every time Scabby Bill disappears, Sal feels relieved. Scabby Bill is not a source of fear for the white settlers: "She [Sally] did not seem to fear him: he was the same as the ants or the flies, a hazard of the place that had to be dealt with" (91). He represents the group of Aboriginal people that can be appeared with food and drink. Scabby Bill is willing to do almost everything for a sip of rum.

On the other hand, the Aboriginal people inhabiting the surroundings of the Hawkesbury River cannot be appeared with food donation. Will realize that when his wife tries to offer food to them, but they seem to want more: "It was the way she had dealt with Scabby Bill. Something told him that these two men were different from Scabby Bill [...]" (145). Every though the Aboriginal people accept the victuals, it is not the main reason why they visit the white settlers dwellings. The Aboriginal people want to show that their privacy was intruded and that it will not be left without consequences.

Grenville speaking, the white settlers consider the Indigenous inhabitants to be 'savages'. The Aboriginal people lead completely different lives from the European newcomers: they do not live in houses and they do not wear clothes. They just wander around; sometimes kill some animals to provide food for their family and the rest of time is spent with their families: "It was true the blacks made no fields, and built no houses worth the name, roaming around with no thought for the morrow. It was true that they did

not even know enough to cover their nakedness, but sat with their bare arsis on the dirt like dogs. In all these ways they were nothing but savages" (229).

The Aboriginal people devote a lot of time to their families and to the rituals such as dancing and singing. It is quite the opposite what the white settlers do. They work hard to be able to secure their families from starving. Will compares the life of the Aboriginal people to the life of aristocracy in England: "Gradually, Thornhill starts faintly to appreciate that the Aborigines most remind him of the gentry back home. They don't appear to work for their food: they spend their days creating art, telling stories, making their babies laugh" (40). The white settlers have to leave their families, if they have any, very often to search for sources of living and as far as arts and other forms of free time are concerned there are no spare time for them.

As the Aboriginal people are everywhere, the white settlers must put up with the fact that the land is not theirs only. The presence of the Aboriginal people is perceived differently by the newcomers. The white settlers do not know anything about the Indigenous inhabitants so the first encounters are very cautious. William learns about the Aboriginal people from the European, most of them convicts, who settled down in Australia earlier.

When Smasher Sullivan, one of the white settlers, talks about the gruesome murders committed by Aboriginal people, Will's children are scared to death. All these rumors contribute to prejudices against the Aboriginal people.

As it was mentioned above, Grenville tries to avoid giving voice to her Aboriginal characters, as she is aware of the fact that she cannot speak for people who are not her kin. She combines her imagination with the years of research about Aboriginal people and thus portrays the Aboriginal people in her novel.

Chapter Four

Exile and Alienation

Grenville's in *The Secret River* tells about the exile of the people and emigrated ancestors from London to New South Wales. Grenville in her novel depicts the people's lifestyle in London during late nineteenth century and those seen and experienced. The city brings out the imagery of over population, disease, life's expectation and their meaningless contemporary and social support. She begins her story with Thornhill who remembers his childhood in the slum of London, and his attempt to keep himself preserved from the under grade city. By depicting the young William's childhood friends as "all thieves, any time they got the chance" (16), Grenville addresses both the boys and the so ciety in general. Stealing was often a style of life and entertainment for the boys and people in that ill society, as the young William states, "there could be no sin in thieving if it meant full belly" (16)

Adam Gall, "Grenville represents the novelist as trying to produce an empathetic history of settlement, but also trying to step back and allow the story of the place to appear" (96). Within the novel, Grenville takes the reader back in time. Grenville herself states:

> I hope to create an experience for a reader in which they could understand what that moment of our past was really like. The great power of fiction is that it's not an argument: it's a world. Inhabit it for a while and you are likely to come out a little changed. (152-153).

In addition to reading theoretical texts, Grenville understood that she required exploring and visiting the places where she wanted to write about. She confesses in an interview that she is a "great believer in the experiential theory of writing" (Grenville, Interview).The main theme of *The Secret River* is that the conflict between two cultures and races. As Kelada argues:

> Grenville's texts are 'arguments' and 'worlds' whose representations race and power relations offer important insights into the strategies an performance of whiteness in Australian contemporary literature, particularly in relation to the idea of the 'reconciliation' between white Australians and Indigenous peoples. (1)

British settlers got to exist with the Aboriginal people of Australia, however each team has lack of communication and understanding. Moreover, some critics scan the novel as an unpleasant illustration of the massacre of indigenous individuals. For example, Kossew describes "Grenville fiction as a reappraisal of what it suggests that to be a white Australian". Kossew continues that "in therefore doing, she is situating her novel as a transforming of the narrative of settlement with a recent sensibility" (9). She argues:

"Grenville sees her novel as standing outside that polarized conflict" of right and wrong by providing instead and 'imaginative understanding of these difficult events' (Grenville in an interview with Salvia officinal Koval). It's solely by uncovering the painful scars of the past, the text suggests, by readjusting the "Great Australian Silence" that a method of reconciliation and shared happiness will begin. However even then,

from her own positionality as a "White" Australian, it's qualified regarding by ethical ambiguities. (17)

Kossew considers ethical ambiguities of the novel. However, Grenville describes several of those ambiguities of her fiction within *The Secret River* that permits the reader to seek out the background and origin of the novel.

In spite of those criticisms, Grenville makes attempts to be even-handed. She admits the issue of writing on the Aboriginal people: "That was tricky because of what I" (Grenville, Interview). *The Secret River* may be a balanced illustration of the Aboriginal individuals and white settlers.

Whereas previous studies frequently considered the clash between the Aboriginal individuals and white settlers, or explained the problems that the Aboriginal people faced with in *The Secret River*. This study aims to explore the white settler's expertise of exile and alienation. In fact, this study finds exile and alienation as two vital problems that almost all immigrants have been encountered not merely in fictional work like *The Secret River*, however in addition with the reality.

In *Reflection on Exile* (2000), Edward Said states that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience" (137). Exile has been an intricate issue for the writers and critics who have accomplished it. The motif of exile attracts several authors' imagination in the field of literary of history, since they include the experiences of departuring their motherland for varied reasons. In fiction, as in life, there are diverse types of exile that folks have experienced and written about.

Martin Tucker, Edward Said, Celeste Schrenck, and many others have thought and written regarding the figures of exile. For example, Schrenck explored the actual displacement skilled by female students in exile. Samuel Gladden examined the writing of Oscar Wilde as following his imprisonment and moving to France. Leo Gurko portrayed Joseph Conrad's writing and skill in exile. Edward Said additionally observes that each literature and history reflects exile. According to him: "While it is true that literature and history contain heroic romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement" (137).

Grenville in *The Secret River* tells about the exile of the individuals and among them her ancestors who emigrated from London to New South Wales. Grenville first depicts the people's manner in London. The late nineteenth century and then presents their exile in New South Wales. Grenville tends to inform the readers to consider the construct of exile as she has seen and skilled. She begins her story with Thornhill who remembers his childhood within the slum of London, and his attempt to keep himself preserved in an overpopulated town wherever unwellness is fashionable, life expectations area unit up to date and social support is nonsense. By portraying the young William's childhood friends as "all thieves, any time they got the chance" (16). Grenville addresses both the boys and also the society generally; stealing was typically a mode of life and diversion for the boys and folks there in ill society, as the young William states, "there could be no sin in thieving if it meant a full belly" (16).

Although within the novel, London isn't the central setting, it brings William's life as a settler into context, and provides the bottom for description of the conflicts he encounters during a colonial landscape and atmosphere. In New South Wales, Thornhill should learn to manage the financial condition and also the miseries, in rather than fighting against them and making the conditions worse. He learns to adopt himself with the new scenario, convention, and culture that, in step with same, are "in giant half the work of exiles, émigrés, refuges" (137).

Grenville very beautifully illustrates the variation between Thornhill's London and also the new land. Whereas London is an overcrowded town with no individual area, Thornhill finds enough empty large lands in New South, though quickly he understands that the lands belong to the Aboriginal individuals.

Furthermore, through Sal, the author investigates the displacement expertise of those who immigrated to the new land. Sal works laboriously and never complains regarding the new scenario, however subsidence their new life in Australia has gone with difficult to her. Sal experiences exile as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home: its essential disappointment will ne'er be surmounted" (137).

The trees, atmosphere, and weather tell Sal that she is not any longer in her motherland. She feels the pressure of exile that produces the condition Byzantine for her. She feels unhappy for the smells and vision of her motherland. Indeed, exile has torn Sal "from the nourishment of tradition, family and geography" (138).

While Thornhill makes an attempt to form his life on the new land, Sal sees it troublesome to change since she failed to bear identical quantity of mortification that her husband did. Sal adheres to her past in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, reimagining her life in her motherland the maximum amount as potential. The author employs Sal to look at the emergence of British culture in Australia and also the dogging notion the European country was Home and also the new land was exile. In Reflection on Exile, same refers to Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Pakistani author, who

> Was exiled from his native Asian nation by Zia's military regime, and located a welcome of types in strife-torn national capital. Naturally his highest friends were Palestinian, however I detected that, though there was an affinity of spirit between them, nothing quite matched language, poetic convention, or life history (138)

Grenville like Faiz sees the variations in culture, language and convention between her own land and also the new land. She shows her suffering through the characters of her fiction. Thornhill understands that he has lost the life he left in Great Britain forever. Whereas in jail in London and sentenced to death, Thornhill was wondering escaping the loop. But now, he is not free on a land thousands miles distant from his motherland, as being in the middle of water. He suffers from exile, of being separated from his past and imaginations.

Grenville depicts exile as a painful drawback that a lot of immigrants in Australia have round-faced it. Exile is a sort of nightmare for Thornhill, Sal and Grenville. Once one finds himself/herself in exile he/she has no interest and involvement there in land and

makes an attempt to flee from the exile through alternative ways like recalling his/her past reminiscences or creating dream for future. "Concludes that the crucial factor is that a state of exile free from this triumphant ideology-designed to tack an exile's broken history into a brand new whole- is just about intolerable and just about not possible in today's world". Then he offers some samples of "the fate of Jews, the Palestinians and also the Americans" (140-141). So the Thornhill's don't have any means, to simply accept the fact of their exile.

Thornhill's childhood and youth in London is roofed by financial condition that leads him to the crime that he's condemned to exile; however he keeps identical social values that have turned him. However, unlike Sal, Thornhill doesn't wish to retreat to London; he still needs to remake for himself the lifetime of English man within the new land, however all the resources and facilities for making such a life is much off from his hand. Before long once he settled on what later was named Thornhill's place, he determines the realm within which he tends to grow his crops:

> In the centre of the clearing he dragged his heel across the dirt fourfold, line to line. The line and also the square they created, were like nothing else there and altered everything. Currently there was an area wherever a person had ordered his mark over the face of the land. It had been astonishing however very little it took to have a chunk of the world. (134)

Thornhill simply closes his eyes on the clear emblems of the existence of last land house owners. His son Willy refers to the time they start ploughing the soil: "Look Da... another bugger already digged it up." (140). Later, the blacks afford to require over their

land results eventually in their massacre by the Caucasian race. However, Thornhill sees himself because the English gentleman that he has unreal to be:

> The Irishman Devine had designed a fine stone house for man. Thornhill [...]. They'd named it Cobham Hall [...]. Devine was choked with ways that to form the place a defensive structure. The eminence itself was the beginning of it. 100 of the buggers couldn't cut you off here he had assured. The walls were to be of stone, 0.5 a yard thick... Cobham Hall was a gentleman's residence. (316)

In spite of Thornhill's feeling of success there's a deeper feeling of loss that's the sense of exile. Since the attack, there's simply a black survivor, Jack, who gets back to prove his right to possession. However, Thornhill makes an attempt to satisfy Jack, however Jack sticks to his idea: 'No', he stated. Jack places his hand on the ground powerfully. During this moment, Thornhill involves the understanding regarding the hollowness of his acquisitions:

> He would have said he had everything a man could want, but there was Emptiness as he watched Jack's hand caressing the dirt. This was something he did not have: a place that was part of his flesh and spirit. There was no part of the world he would keep coming back to, the way Jack did, just to feel it under him. It was as if the very dirt were Consolation. (329)

Thornhill realizes that in exile nothing is secure and sees exile as a situation of terminal loss. He sees his alienation that, according to Coser in Masters of Sociological Thought, is a "condition in which men and women are dominated by forces of their own creation, which confront them as alien power" (50). In short, the creation rules over the creator. Furthermore, according to Eric Fromm in Marx's Concept of Man,

> Alienation means, for Marx, that man does not experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world (nature, others, and he himself) remain alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects, even though they may be objects of his own creation. (44)

Alienation is that the emotional isolation not solely from others, however additionally from the motherland, dreams, and reminiscences. In Grenville's novel, the Thornhill's feel alienated in spite of their possession within the new land. Grenville presents totally different sorts of alienated settlers. On one facet, she shows the "good settler" like Tom Blackwood who believes "Give a little, that's the sole way" (108). Blackwood is in sensible terms with natives, and even he suggests that Thornhill pursues identical policy concerning the Aboriginal individuals. On the facet, there's the cruel person likes Smasher, who is in Broken Bay, and is defendant of the rape and assassination of many Aboriginal individuals.

Thornhill keeps an intermediated position, and is troubled to be somebody like Smasher, however finally, gets concerned within the assassination of the Aboriginal individuals. Following the murder, the novel clearly depicts the results like gain and loss for Thornhill. The passage of time brings a climate of tranquility which ends up in

Thornhill's approval of his possession of the land, in spite of his feeling of hollowness. What is more, it's a loss, as of one of his sons, who accepts the culture of the Aboriginal individuals, decides to measure with the nice settler, Tom Blackwood. All of those demonstrate Grenville's cultural-historical concern in her novel.

Chapter Five

Summation

Grenville's novel *The Secret River* explores the problems that arose when the Whites landed where Aboriginal people already lived. The story deals with the colony of New South Wales, newly home to British convict William Thornhill and his family. Thornhill was transported to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. Suddenly Thornhill found himself falling in love with the country as Thornhill saw the possibility of owning land on the Hawkesbury River.

Grenville seeks to re-write the history of those early days of settlement. She describes the intercultural conflict that emerged as people of two different cultures settled side by side in the same area. Thornhill was transported to New South Wales in 1806 along with other convicts. The area where he landed was inhabited by Aboriginal people who belonged to the Darug tribe. They lived on the land and used it without any visible markings of ownership, which divisions and markings which rendered their land sacred and significant.

The thesis mainly explores the Australian Aboriginal-white relationship in a novel *The Secret River* (2005) by non-Indigenous writer Kate Grenville. It compares the discursive strategies and narrative devices the author has adopted to represent whiteness and Indigeneity, one from the European settler's point of view, the other from the of an Aboriginal author. In *The Secret River*, Grenville resorts to the genre of historical novel as a way of reconciling the past. Though the novel challenges the racialised stereotypes

of the Aboriginal people by adopting a double perspective (a reconfigured white perspective to refute the colonists views), the moral ambiguity of the settler identity is still complicit with the colonial discourse. The literary explorations of the notions of identity are encompassing representations of landscape, and the past; and the "postcolonial experience" rests somewhere between pride, shame, and academic factotum.

Kate Grenville uncovers the problematic relationship between the white settlers and the Aboriginal people which stems from the lack of understanding. *The Secret River* reveals the Australian past which is not possible to forget. The cultural clash Grenville, being a non-Indigenous author, can portray Aboriginal people in *The Secret River* only on the basis of her personal encounters with them. Therefore, she avoids speaking for Aboriginal characters. Grenville was not sure whether Aboriginal people would accept her notion of the first encounter between white settlers and Indigenous inhabitants. After receiving the thanks from the Aboriginal community, she expressed her relief: "They recognize that the book is my act of acknowledgement, my way of saying: this is how I'm sorry" (Grenville qtd. in Maral). It seems that the purpose of the novel was accomplished. Even though Grenville is a non-indigenous author, she has managed to portray the Aboriginal people only on the basis of historical materials and years of research.

The history of Indigenous inhabitants cannot be left out when dealing with Australian past. The novel functions as an important reminder of Aboriginal history and

the Aboriginal protagonists help non-Indigenous readers to understand the concepts of Aboriginality.

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* portrays the history and culture of two notions. Grenville depicts the fiction in the form of history that belongs to her own ancestors. Grenville's novel gives her the chance to do a historical research that is from the history of her ancestors in 1805 to the realities that contemporary historians disclose about Australian settlers. In her historical fictions, Grenville depicts the exile, alienation, failure, success, dream, desire, and lifestyle of her own ancestors. Furthermore, through her novel, Grenville creates the opportunity to write on behalf of her ancestors as frontiers. In this respect, her act of writing *The Secret River* is an act of revealing and solving some historical realities and mysteries with the help of the knowledge that she inherited from her own ancestors. It unreveals these realities and mysteries with the help of the knowledge that she inherited from her own ancestors. The present study aims to explore these realities and in particular the exile and alienation of the white settlers in *The Secret River*.

Grenville illustrates the Aboriginal culture conflicts with its British counterpart. Though the novel represents Thornhill's journey from London to New South West, Grenville puts virtually equal weight on the Aborigines and their manner. Apparently, the events and character in *The Secret River* are mature in Grenville's soul and blood. She reflects the exile and alienation of her ancestors from their motherland.

The Secret River on the one hand deals with orally transmitted Aboriginal stories of violent encounters with the Whites and, on the other, with those White

historical accounts that try to seek to justify the White settlement. Grenville challenges the White history, what Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra term "the dark side of the dream" of Australian national identity, the "occulded but central and problematic place of Aboriginal Australians in the foundation of the contemporary Australian and in the construction of national identity" (*Dark Side of the Dream*; *Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* 24).

As Grenville was involved in finding more about the times wherein her ancestor and the Aborigines fought for the same resources, she says, "the picture of his life in Australia was much sketchier. It was all interesting enough, but my imagination wasn't stirred by any of it, until the day of the Reconciliation Walk across the Harbor Bridge" (Grenville, *Living the Past*: *Confessions and Memories*: *Best Stories under the Sun* 17).

Though the relationship between the Europeans and the Aborigines has evolved positively since the mid 1900s, some Whites still look at the Aborigines negatively. Breaking the boundaries of culture and mending the past are a positive way of coping with the distance between the two. Real understanding can pave the way for peace so that the two races can coexist regardless of physical and cultural difference.

There was continuous protest against the Whites during the bicentennial year celebrations of 1998. As Judith Wright says, it was an affirmation by indigenous Australians that their long history in this country had primary, legitimacy and a rich and positive integrity of its own. Secondly, it was an accusation, a reminder to those celebrating a mere two hundred years of European settlement, that this celebration was based on a false premise. The slogan was a reminder to the country that a dark pall of

shame lay over the history of European settlement in Australia and that, until this was recognised and acknowledged, the prospects for reconciliation were bleak.

The inconsistency that existed in literary representations of the real life experiences of the Aboriginal people by Whites is highlighted in Aboriginal writing. These writers have tried to repair the terrible damage done to Australia's indigenous peoples by the historic act of European settlement.

Australia's indigenous people have suffered gross injustices and are engaged in the processes of land rights reform, cultural heritage protection and policy development that are intrinsically bound up with issues of reconciliation and social justice. The Aboriginal cultural heritage is diverse, deep and rich, with a close relationship to the land.

Australians had a culture in which individual competition; individual striving and individual ownership were not a part of their word view. The settler could not understand that the Aborigines had as great sense of territory as they themselves did, but did not need to build a fence, or a house, or a road to claim that.

Aboriginal culture has undergone an immense identity shift, as urban living and new cultural influences shape newer generations of Aboriginal communities and rewriting history may help to develop ways of preserving the traditional ways, thereby discovering new ways of living a healthy and harmonious life.

A huge legacy of the past still to be acknowledged before justice which is to be delivered to the Aboriginal people in their own country. Of late there has been evidence

of a substantial shift in Australian society, pointing to responsiveness to and understanding of the correctness of the Indigenous cause. A shift is seen in the mindset of the Whites who for long saw the Aborigines as submissive beneficiaries living off the charity offered by the Whites (Main Merridy and Debra Midment, "Education, Indigenous Survival and Well-being: Emerging Ideas and Programmes" 86-89).

Many protests have come up, which shows that Australia has begun genuine attempts to mend fences with its indigenous people. Historians and writers have done significant work in exposing and articulating the great injustice done to the Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal writers stress the importance of regaining control of their cultural values without being marginalized, exploited and damaged. Aboriginal writers make their fellow-beings conscious of the fact that they are also the sole custodians of significant collections of resources which constitute an important part of the cultural memory and heritage of Aboriginal Australians a memory and heritage which has been closed to and withheld from the wide world. Aboriginal discourse affirms that the history of the Aboriginal community exists in its own right as a positive and creative force. Some of the writings provide insight into Aboriginal wisdom and expertise, while some reflect the negative side of Australia's history by narrating sad and dreadful stories of the contestation between the Whites and the Aboriginal people. Through these materials, it is possible to trace most of the major themes which define the history of Australia's indigenous people from the beginning to the present day. These writings embody the key aspects of the Australian debate about issues of Aboriginal identity and sovereignty.

The novel *The Secret River* is divided into six sections. The first and the second sections of the novel are set in London around the late 1700s. The deprivation prevalent in London is projected through Thornhill's hardships. In the rest of the novel, Grenville depicts Australia and the life therein, and the confrontation between the two races. She also portrays how Thornhill thrives and posts a success of his own in the Dargus land.

The novel *The Secret River* begins with a brief introduction depicting the family's very first night on the island. Being released from the clutches of the White government, Thornhill feels happy to be reunited with his wife and two children. But the strangeness of the new place makes him apprehensive (Grenville, *The Secret River* 1-6).

The novel *The Secret River* represents her effort to re-frame and place the Aborigines back into the picture. Grenville has attempted to show the destructive effects of the early encounter on both sides. Grenville writes of the shared history of suffering and also of the beginnings of a mutual understanding (Kate Mitchelle, "Australia's 'others' History Wars: Trauma and the Work of Cultural Memory in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*." anu.academia.edu).

Grenville has clearly described the real horror and the torment of the situation in the novel. The confrontation is not a conventional battle between two rival groups eager to possess the same tract of land, but more complicatedly, of one group being driven by hunger for territorial possession and the other being innocent of the very concept of individual ownership.

Grenville reflects the cultural alienation of her ancestors within the new land wherever they're falling apart not solely from their own land however additionally from their culture. Grenville's fiction is a component of the history that she had unbroken inside her own heart before commercial enterprise it. In fact, before the manifestation of her novel, she lived inside her own exile and alienation, however through *The Secret River*, Grenville emancipates herself from each of them a minimum of mentally, if not physically. Kate Grenville's novel *The Secret River*, a historical fiction genuienly examines the existence of class, race and gender in colonial and contemporary Australia.

The novel has been chosen because it is an Australian novel. Most of the events in the book "really happened" and much of the dialogue is what people really said or wrote. It was important to me that the incidents and characters were solidly based on history, but as a researcher I drew on the historical sources loosely for the work of the imagination. The final events and characters mainly historical references together and they are fiction, but they are based on fact.

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Trauma of War and the Dynamics of Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

A project submitted to

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Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project **Trauma of War and the Dynamics of Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Felcia.V during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Trauma of War and the Dynamics of Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

V Felcia

Felcia V.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

Trauma of War and the Dynamics of Identity, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* analyses the Nigerian Struggles of War and Sufferings.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with African literature and the biography of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie discussing the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Biafran War** discusses about the impacts of Biafran Civil War on the domestic and public life of the weaker section and a background of the Biafran war.

The third chapter **Strings of Suffering** deals about the people suffer in war especially women and sexual exploits the assertion of life symbolising the balance of physicality and violence in the war.

The fourth chapter **Repercussions of War** discusses about the Nigerian politics and the sufferings of the characters and the issue of violence because of war. It also deals about the conflicts in culture and tradition.

The fifth chapter **Summation** all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It projects the narrative techniques used, the characters' struggle for identity, which was lost by the politics of the country and the intervention of the westerners in postcolonial Africa.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

The root of African Literature was the beginning of the oral Literature. African Literature generally refers to a comprehensive, complex and creative literature from Africa. But different critics belonging to different schools of thought have provided varying interpretations about African literature. African literature may be classified into three distinctly and widely accepted categories-traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African languages and literature written in European languages. Africa in pre-colonial times was divided into various ethnic groups. During that period different communities developed distinct oral literature of their own. Traditional oral literature of Africa may be in the form of prose, verse or proverb. It is generally described as orature. Orature flourished in Africa primarily in absence of widespread literacy and was handed down the generations through memorization and recitation. The contents may differ in length ranging from single sentence formulation such as proverbs to epics which has to be performed over a period of time. This verbal art had a utilitarian purpose of providing entertainment as well as instruction. They served as the medium to explain the creation of universe, the essence of the activities of God and creatures and their intra and interrelationships. Oral folklore was employed to reinstate faith in group values and discourage antisocial tendencies.

The span of African written literature is close to five thousand years. The antecedents of Africa's written literature can be traced to hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt. African literary works are also available in native African languages like those of Yoruba and Hausa in West Africa; Amharic, Somali and Swahili in East

Africa; Sotho and Zulu in Southern Africa. However, with one or two exceptions most of African written literature is in European languages especially English, French and Portuguese. African literature is nevertheless not extensive as Anglophone African literature. This can be ascribed to the fact that though Africa was colonized by several European imperial powers, British annexed various parts across the length and breadth of Africa beginning from Egypt, Uganda and Kenya in North Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria in West Africa; Zambia, Botswana and South Africa in the southern part of Africa. It is usually referred as the modern African literature. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) chooses to describe them 'Afro European literatures'.

Modern African writing came out of association between West Africa, a contact which was both historical and experimental in dimensions. The rich traditions of African continent, the trials and tribulations of contemporary African life induced by socio politico-economic experience of colonialism and its agonizing neo colonial aftermath, permeates in African literary texts. African imagination and creativity have also been given detailed expression in African literary tests. African literary giants like Wole Soyinka, Eskia Mapahele, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o made colossal contribution to African literature. The writings of these writers helped in familiarizing the 'African Consciousness' in Europe and America. Writers of this era were artists cum political activists. These works reflect the sense of euphoria at the birth of independent nations. But this feeling of exultation was swept away by a feeling of disillusionment caused by the misery of their countries in the aftermath of decolonization.

African literature achieved great heights when Wole Soyinka received Nobel Prize in literature from Africa. It represented the West's acknowledgement of

Nigerian literary extraordinaire. African literature also received momentum when a series on African writers was published by Heinemann Publishers. Nigerian English literature has a greater influence nationally and internationally. The compositions of Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri and Wale Soyinka are often pervaded with a sense of dismay and pain at the state of Nigeria during the colonial and post-colonial era. Literary writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and John Pepper Clark were referred as 'quartet of Nigerian literary scene' in the post-independent times. They were brilliant and self-assured writers known for their reformist views and perceptions about Nigeria and Africa. Wole Soyinka, has drawn much of the attention from different parts of the world.

Nigerian women who has to face a multitude of problems like poverty, sexism, racism, gender inequality, polygamy, infringement of reproductive rights, domestic violence and intimidation by patriarchal practices. Since time immemorial womenfolk has been forced to confront challenges and accept impositions thrust upon them by society, customs and traditions and men. All over the world in every social setup, in East as well as in West, women have been assigned lower and subordinated position compared to men over the years, and they had been groomed to accept this relegated position. This degenerated status is so deeply etched in a woman's psyche that she performs her duties, functions and obligations without demanding any recognition and rarely shows a spirit of rebellion. She chooses to be an embodiment of love, docility, patience and sacrifice. Female subordination has been the main feature of Nigerian society. On the other hand woman is expected to participate in the cultivation of land, preparation of food, home education of children and other matrimonial matters, but on the other hand, she is coerced to accept ignominious position both at home where all the important socio-economic and political decisions are taken by male elders of the

community. However in recent times the status of women in African countries has been undergoing a rapid change. Access to western education; exposure to western culture; awareness about the benefits of education; urbanization and active participation in various sectors of employment resulted in financial independence, and ushered emotional-mental well-being. It helped women to gain a distinct identity of their own and realize themselves as human beings capable of learning and earning. Male authors like Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutola, and Wole Soyinka generally deal diverse themes exclusively about male concerns and interests. They usually depict women tied to patriarchal authority and situated in uncomplimentary roles. Flora Nwape was the first Nigerian female novelist in Africa to have her work published in London. Her first novel, *Efuru (1996),* refines the place of the woman published in the prestigious Heinemann African Writers Series. Thus, 1966 marked the advent of contemporary female writing in African fiction. These female writers like Flora Nwapa, Mariamma Ba, Ama Ata Aidoo, Grace Ogot, Efua Sutherland, Buchi Emecheta represent the dawn of black female literary writing.

The voices of African women have rarely been listened to, contrary to the noises of men which have drowned us out in every sphere of life, including the arts. Women are artists, endowed with a special sensitivity and compassion, necessary to creativity owing to the two major, irreversible, though accidental facts of their lives – being born an African and a woman. It has been argued that unless something is done urgently to save it, the woman's world will be destroyed. The opinions of women should be included in planning for the remedies for a better Africa, free from colonialism, slavery, failure and post-independence disillusionment. In the literary world, which has also been dominated by men, female authors of African literature have struggled to gain audience over the years. A few of these writers have won

awards, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yvonne Vera and Marjorie Macgoye. Adichie's award winning novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* throws light on literary construction of the Nigerian woman, and by extension the African woman in the colonial and postcolonial era in Nigeria. Literature enlarges the perception of a culture by a reader through expanding their understanding of the projected world and conveying a distinct image of the people that comprise the setting in the literary work. *Half is a Yellow Sun* was translated and published in 37 languages.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, was born on September 15, 1977 Enugu, Nigeria, Nigerian author whose work drew extensively on the Biafran war in Nigeria during the late 1960s. Early in life Adichie, the fifth of six children, moved with her parents to Nsukka, Nigeria. A voracious reader from a young age, she found Things Fall Apart by novelist and fellow Igbo Chinua Achebe transformative. After studying medicine for a time in Nsukka, in 1997 she left for the United States, where she studied communication and political science at Eastern Connecticut State University. Splitting her time between Nigeria and the United States, she received a master's degree in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University and studied African history at Yale University. In 1998 Adichie's play *For Love of Biafra* was published in Nigeria. She later dismissed it as "an awfully melodramatic play," but it was among the earliest works in which she explored the war in the late 1960s between Nigeria and its secessionist Biafra republic. She later wrote several short stories about that conflict, which would become the subject of her highly successful novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* in 2006. As a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, she began writing her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* in 2003. Set in Nigeria, it is the coming-of-age story of Kambili, a 15-year-old whose family is wealthy and well respected but who is terrorized by her fanatically religious father. Purple Hibiscus garnered the

Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2005 for Best First Book (Africa) and that year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book. It was also short-listed for the 2004 Orange Prize. It was later called the Orange Broadband Prize and now the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction.

Half of a Yellow Sun, Adichie's second novel, was the result of four years of research and writing. It was built primarily on the experiences of her parents during the Nigeria-Biafra war. The result was an epic novel that vividly depicted the savagery of the war which resulted in the displacement and deaths of perhaps a million people but did so by focusing on a small group of characters, mostly middle-class Africans. *Half of a Yellow Sun* became an international best seller and was awarded the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction in 2007. Eight years later it won the "Best of the Best" Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, a special award for the "best" prize winner from the previous decade.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's acclaimed second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* in 2006, present characters thrown in the tumultuous years of the Biafran war in the 1960s which broke out soon after Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain. The title refers to the flag of the short-lived Republic of Biafra, the rising sun becoming a symbol of incompleteness and division. Divided into four parts, the novel depicts lives of the main characters coming from disparate backgrounds who painfully experience the burden of difference. One of the characters, a historian and engaged academic teacher, criticizes the Eurocentric dominance of the academic debate and triumphs that the hegemony of the British Empire is over. Political conflict breaks out between the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani people. Adichie depicts a world of conflicting cultures where identity is endowed with negative properties. Combative

confrontations between various ethnic groups turn into atrocious acts of violence. The idealized future never materializes, the post-colonial world impatiently awaited by Nigerians, brings tension, violence and bitter ethnic struggle. Many of the issues raised by Adichie's novel, which offers a powerful re-examining of the historical past, are still present today. Nigeria became independent from Great Britain in 1960. The Nigerian-Biafran civil war lasted from 1967-1970 and was marked by extreme starvation and ethnic violence. Ethnic tensions fostered by the British played a major role in the war. The majority of eastern Nigeria, was comprised of Igbo peoples, and this area seceded to create Biafra. *Half of a yellow sun* is the symbol of the Republic of Biafra, appearing on both its national flag and military uniforms.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* offers a heart-wrenching account of the Biafran War (1967-1970), beautifully wrapped in a story of love, loyalty, betrayal, resilience, and hope. *Half of a Yellow sun* follows the course of the Nigerian-Biafran civil war through the experiences of the ethnically Igbo characters namely Olanna, Odenigbo, Kainene, and Ugwu. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is explained through third person point of view in four parts. Each chapter illustrates a change in point of view, shifting between Ugwu, Olanna Ozobia, and Richard Churchill. Parts one and three take place in 'The Early Sixties.' Parts Two and Four take place in 'The Late Sixties.' The primary purpose for these divisions is to draw a comparison between the privileged life led by the characters in the early sixties and the poverty of war depicted in the late sixties. It also marks a series of sexual infidelities committed by Odenigbo, Olanna, and Richard, which take place during Part Three. In Part one, thirteen-year-old Ugwu leaves his village to work for Odenigbo, a revolutionary u-niversity professor, at his large home in Nsukka. Shortly thereafter, Olanna, daughter of a wealthy Nigerian chief, comes to visit Odenigbo. Ugwu learns she will soon be

moving in. Ugwu is initially jealous of Odenigbo's affection for Olanna, but eventually grows into a friendship with his master's lover. Olanna is apprehensive about moving in with Odenigbo, fearing she will fall in love with him. She refuses to marry him, but eventually tries to conceive a child with him. Olanna's standoffish twin sister, Kainene, runs her father's business in Port Harcourt. Richard is a shy Englishman striving to write a book about Nigeria. He feels disconnected from his community of racist expatriates in Nigeria. He is immediately taken by Kainene when the two meet at a party. They begin an affair that lasts throughout the novel. In Part Two, the unhappiness between Odenigbo and Olanna, that they were separated for a time, and that they now have a daughter named Baby. Throughout these chapters, a series of disturbing events occur that mark the beginning of war. Richard witnesses the mass shooting of Igbo people. Olanna witnesses a similar massacre in her cousin's village while visiting her former lover, a Hausa man named Mohammad. The trauma leaves her freeze. Biafran independence is declared. Odenigbo, Olanna, and Ugwu flee Nsukka while Kainene and Richard remain in Port Harcourt.

In Part three, the affairs by Odenigbo, Olanna, and Richard is portrayed. Odenigbo's mother tricks him into sleeping with her servant, Amala, who becomes pregnant. Olanna, with grief overcoming, goes to bed with Richard after a night of drinking. Olanna eventually forgives Odenigbo and adopts Amala's unwanted child. Kainene is enraged upon learning of Richard's infidelity. She burns his manuscript, but the two end up forming a stronger bond than before. In Part Four, the horrors of war and starvation first hand as Olanna, Odenigbo, and Ugwu are moved to increasingly worse refugee camps. Ugwu falls in love with a refugee-named Eberechi. While walking with her, he is forced into the Biafran army, where he participates in the rape of a bar waitress. This experience haunts him, particularly when he returns to

his family and learns that his sister was raped in a similar manner. Kainene and Richard flee Port Harcourt, and Olanna ends up running a refugee camp and trading across borders. In the final chapters, Kainene goes missing and is never found. The novel ends with Odenigbo, Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard returning to Nsukka and mourning the loss of Kainene.

This novel is chosen because it is a Nigerian novel and the writer is a feminist. It is a study on the oral traditions which is born from the awareness that orality is a distinctive element among the African writers. These writers make a conscious effort to translate orality in literature through the medium of the novel. Though orality and literature is an oxymoronic construction, it makes interesting study to observe the way the novel as a western form is used to create a distinctive African sensibility. The purpose of this selection lies in a judicious representation of the writers spanning of the three generations in African literary history. The second chapter deals with the horrors of the Biafran War.

Chapter Two

Biafran War

Half of a Yellow Sun is a love story based on the Biafran War that took place between 1967 and 1970 in Nigeria. It is important therefore to mention the historical aspect of the causes of the war and the political leaders involved in order to understand and relate with the context of the novel. Adichie uses not only the real names of the military leaders in her novel, for instance Gowon-the leader of Nigeria, and Ojukwu- the leader of Biafra, but also the real names of places and events that took place, like the conference held in Aburi, Ghana, to calm the civil war in Nigeria. The religious conflict that led to Biafra civil war, in which thousands of people including women and children were killed.

The civil war was not a direct result of the religious conflict. However, the political conflict and the ethnic conflict were aggravated and were in line with the religious divide existing in the country. The religious divide was so strong that during the three years of civil war, many innocent people were killed since they belonged to a particular religion. Many women disappeared and nobody could trace them. Many relationships were broken due to the religious difference. Though the conflict started because of political ambition, religious favouritism was at the backdrop of the historical conflict. The Igbo ethnic people were mostly Catholic Christians who were influenced by the evangelical missionaries from Europe. They abhorred the Hausa ethnic people who were mostly Muslims. The impacts of Biafra civil war on the domestic and public life of the weaker section.

In the novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Adichie, has portrayed the humiliating experience of the Igbo Christians in Nigeria that left its scars for

generations to come. The cruelest method of violence adopted then was starvation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie does not support any one religious group. It is nevertheless concerned about the impact of violence on women, children and the minority community during the civil war. The historical background at the time of the civil war through a few documentary evidence. The impact of the conflict in personal relationships during and after the war. The modes of violence let loose on women and minority. Though the novelist Adichie did not witness the religious conflict during Biafra civil war, her grandparents were directly affected by the war. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* mainly reminds the world about the starvation, the anguish, the massacres, and the mass killings that took place during the Biafra civil war that was fought between the Muslim dominated Northern Nigeria and the minority Christian belt in the Southeast region, a self-proclaimed nation known as Biafra. As the Nigerian troops advance, the characters run for their survival and their loyalty is tested.

The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* revolves around moral responsibility and particularly ethno-religious allegiance. Adichie indicts the outside world for its unconcern, arrogance and ignorance that perpetuated the conflict. Ugwu, the houseboy in Odenigbo's house, becomes the most important character towards the end of the novel. His transformation from a naive houseboy to a writer is the direct influence of the war on him. He chronicles his experiences during the war. Ugwu is the author of the historical narration of the novel titled 'The World was Silent When We Died.' The novel is an evocative tale that captures the impact and immediacy of the Biafra war through the lives of characters. Born after seven years of the war, her masterful tale of events preceding war arouses powerful memories of Nigeria's nauseated past that still haunts the present. Chimamanda Adichie wants to remind

people about the dark patch in Nigeria's history and ensure that people do not forget. Chimamanda Adichie said on the occasion of *Half of a Yellow Sun* winning the Orange Broadband Prize for fiction that the book was her refusal to forget. Adichie's refusal to forget accentuates one of the essential functions of the story teller in traditional African society.

In the novel, the Northern Nigerian army, after facing stiff resistance from the Biafra forces, uses economic blockade and starvation as the final step to subdue the Biafra forces. The parallel presentation of the historical events leading to the civil war and its impact on the soldiers and common people and the fictional story involving the different characters and their adventures during and after the civil war are well balanced. It is therefore essential to know the historical background leading to the civil war to foreground how geopolitical issues have influenced the course of the war and its aftermath. This chapter particularly focuses on the various methods of violence used against the minorities during the civil war in order for the majority to win the war. It also brings to notice other themes like relationship and religious divide and the manner in which they have been affected by the civil war.

Nigerian-Biafra civil war began on July 6, 1967 and lasted till January 15, 1970. There are a number of causes cited for the war. Religious differences endorse the strong divide between different regions and ethnicity of Nigeria. The Northern region was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani tribes who were mostly Muslims. The South-western region was dominated by the Yoruba tribe who were of different religious communities. The South-eastern region was dominated by Igbo Christians. They lived in mostly self-ruling and democratically organised communities. The Igbo were said to have been a republic tribe for thousands of years. They had deposed even the gods that had outlived their usefulness. The tradition derived differences were perpetuated

and enhanced by the British system of colonial rule in Nigeria. During 1940s and 1950s, the Igbo, the Yoruba and the Hausa communities united and fought together for the independence of Nigeria. But in the year 1966, the military governor of the Igbo-dominated Southeast Odumegwu Ojukwu declared publicly in the southern parliament the secession of the south eastern region and declared it as the republic of Biafra, an independent nation. The British and the Soviet Union supported the Nigerian government while Canada and France helped the Biafra rulers. As the Nigerian forces faced stiff resistance from the Biafra forces, it began to close the ring around Biafra creating economic blockade and surrounded Biafra. This led to a humanitarian disaster as there was widespread hunger and starvation in the besieged Igbo area. It has been recorded that the civilians were starved and slaughtered by the Nigerian military during the war. It has been estimated that more than three million people have been killed due to the conflict mostly of hunger and various diseases due to lack of food supply.

The whole world became a spectator to the starvation, death and other sufferings of the aftermath of civil war. There had been deterioration in the relationship between the ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria for many centuries and particularly in the mid-seventies and eighties. It has been recorded that the debate on Shariat (Islamic laws) in the Constituent Assembly which gave birth to the Second Republic created division within the religious groups of the country in the late seventies. This period witnessed the influence of Iranian revolution and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. Now religious conflicts have become an integral part of Nigeria's politics and society. But at the same time, radical Christianity motivated by the Pentecostal revivalism in the West had contributed to the empowerment of Christian faith in Nigeria. There is an increasing suspicion and hostility between

Islam fundamentalists and Christian radicals. There exists an organic link between Islam and politics. Other faiths threatened by this link have been dragged into playing the politics of religion. The historical background of the civil war clearly highlights the contrasting perspectives of political arena along with the religious conflicts and how they complemented each other. On the one hand were the Western powers trying to expand their empire by supporting particular groups, providing them with arms and food supplies, and on the other hand were the Pentecostal revivalism and the growth of Islam fundamentalism in Nigeria dividing the country strongly into two warring groups. The Western liberal influence on the elite in the Igbo Christian community isolated them from the relatively less educated but sturdily religious Muslim community. The political rivalry between the Igbo leader Odumegwu Ojukwu and the leader of the Nigerian force Yakubu Gowon was responsible for the prolonged civil war. Both of them wanted to remain in power and had little concern about the starvation and the death of millions of people during the conflict. While Yakubu Gowon wanted economic blockade to weaken the Biafra force, Odumegwu Ojukwu wanted the intervention of International community.

Half of a Yellow Sun portrays the character of the war and the individuals who are faced with destruction of ideals, values, relationships, bonds, eventually leading to complete devastation to life and belongings. The first part of the novel is set in Nsukka, focusing on the impending crisis and the civil war yet to begin. Ugwu, a young boy, has moved from rural Nigeria to Nsukka to work with Professor Odenigbo to stay in the University Campus. His educated master as well as his mistress, Olanna, treats him as a family member. Odenigbo is a radical surrounded by a group of activists aimed at fighting for the cause of Biafra. Among his coterie prominent are, Lara Adebayo, Okeoma, Professor Ezeka and Dr. Patel, and two English namely

Susan and Richard. They are engaged in grim social and intellectual activities, with spells of alcohol and food. The members are comfortable in company of each other and indulge in serious intellectual meetings in Odenigbo's house. The second part of the novel opens with a coup led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu. Mayhem in Nigeria has precipitated in form of a coup, though initially it is a welcome move to the Odenigbo band. Yet, the coup d'état fails to solve the problems of the country giving rise to increased anarchy. The Nzeogwu government promotes business man like Chief Ozobia a wheeler dealer who drags the government further into trouble. Kainene verbalizes, Chief Ozobia, her father: "Daddy hasn't wasted any time ingratiating himself. He ran off until things calmed down, and now he's back to make new friends." (134). A counter coup takes place with the Igbo officers in Nigeria being killed. The norther part of the country chants, "The Igbo must go. The infidels must go. Araba, araba!" (147). Olanna escapes to Nsukka from Kano narrating the grim story of the killings of Igbo people and her narrow escape. The episode ushers in a demand of secession which Odumegwu Ojukwu materialises in Biafra's declaration of independence. Ojukwu addresses his people:

> Fellow countrymen and women, you the people of Eastern Nigeria; conscious of the supreme authority of Almighty God over all mankind; of your duty over posterity; aware that you can no longer be protected in your lives and in your property by any government based outside Eastern Nigeria; determined to dissolve all political and other ties between you and the former Republic of Nigeria; having mandated me to proclaim on your behalf and in your name that Eastern Nigeria be a sovereign independent Republic; now therefore I do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory and region known as and called Eastern

> Nigeria, together with her continental shelf and territorial waters, shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of the Republic of Biafra. (161-62).

Odenigbo climbs, up to the podium waving his Biafra flag: "swaths of red, black, and green and, at the centre a luminous half of a yellow sun" (163). Odenigbo is sent to Umuahia to render his services to the Manpower Directorate of Biafra. Part three of the novel drifts back into past where the war is not the talk of the day in and around 1960s. Odenigbo is living in village with his mother, and his short and his consummative affair with Amala and the subsequent birth of their daughter in the absence of Olanna, who upset by Odenigbo's act herself enter into a seductive affair with Richards.

Part four of the novel resumes the War scenario of late 1960s and its tormenting effects on the citizens of the weak and newly seceded state of Biafra. The defected state is in crisis and on the verge of a breakdown. The hospitals are flooded and there are no medicines; the relief centres are full of people and there is nothing to provide them relief; there is hope for victory and there are no means to win the war. The teachers and the nationalists incite the feelings of nationalism in the people, and provoke them to even lay their lives for the cause of Biafra, despite delinquent act unreasonable enough to contribute to a successful rebellion. Teachers like Olanna teach the national anthem deepening the nationalist feelings in the people and reminding them that, "Biafra will win the war, God has written it in the sky" (289). Thought there is enough reason to believe in the cause of Biafra yet there is no justification for the act that they have ensued. The newly consecrated state has lost faith in its own people and suspects them first out of its own weakness. Kainene and Richard face the agony of soldiers as they are moving from Port-Harcourt and Orlu.

They doubt Ojukwu's leadership, and pledge that after gaining independence and as the war is over they will first remove him from office. The revolutionaries soon change to worst, the soldiers do not pay house rent, force young boys into army and to fight; those who are capable enough, bribe them escaping terrors, young girls are targeted and raped, and the refugee centres swell by day and night. Soon they lose their capital Umuahia, which symbolises the coming defeat and beginning of the end of Biafra and its secession. The horrors are equally worse on the other side even decent and honest people have turned corrupt. It is told that Father Marcel has started sleeping with women. Odenigbo and his people are forced to leave Umuahia, from here they escape to Abba before returning to Nsukka. He finds his property destroyed by Nigerian soldiers, Kaniene's property taken over by government she gone missing is declared dead. There are other evil deeds that lead him and Olanna devastated and unable to return to their earlier state of existence.

The war has turned epochal for them, their entire generation, and for the generations to come. War Psyche War surfaces the beast in man destroying all his dreams and comforts. This act of violence precipitated by whatsoever is self-destructive in nature and causes more harm to self than to anyone else. This thirst for blood is an instinct in human beings that precipitates into war. War turns their behaviour abnormal and turning those alcoholics, rapists, and a series of repugnant impulses. They are thrown astray into a foray for food, shelter, and safety. Unsupported by any other national emissary Biafra suffers on all sides, the armies are repelled, people die of disease and starvation, crime, exploitation of children and women especially, and above all a thwart to national sentiment that sends them flying into quarters unknown and unforeseen. The gang rape to which Ugwu is a party to is one of numerous heinous crimes that remain unforgiving on part of the belligerent

warring parties. The greatest irony of these lie not in the fact that a mere thirteen year old boy is a party to it but the fact that these are carried over by soldiers who are fighting in the pretext of liberating people from their oppressors. This surfaces the animalistic instincts of men in the form of proceedings of the war. Odenigbo and Olanna have taken refuge in Orlu, Ugwu joins them where they contemplate their wrong doings and repent for their crimes. The Biafra affair and dream is all over, Ugwu appears to have renounced war though others do keep the hopes of Biafra alive in their hearts. Ugwu's realisation that, "There is no such thing as greatness" (399) about the hardships and abhorrence towards war. The surrender of Biafran forces instigates more misery for those who were supporting the cause of a separatist state. Kainene and many other thousands are missing; these people were just civilians who were fighting for their survival during the war and not supporting any side in wake of victory and have fallen for the cause without leading to anywhere.

The portrayal of the Civil war in Nigeria during the late 1960s in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is an account of history's horrific episode of disaster and suffering of common men for no reason and much more than that it goes unaccounted. The existence of Biafra in Nigeria is still a social reality. Adichie draws her characters form the social environment coloured in the time of the tumults they lived in and were a party to it. She peeps inside the feelings and character of human beings, old and young, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, of sexes, good and worse, the conqueror and the vanquished. Adichie picks names common in Nsukka region like Ugwu; whereas, Odenigbo, Olanna, and Kainene are common in Anambra belt; contrarily, Richards and Susan are foreigners caught up in the war.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Chimamanda Adichie reveals the truest form of war where soldiers enter into a murdering spree killing civilians, molesting and raping

women, and vandalise life and property. The exploitation of women at the hands of rich and powerful is also a form of violence that Adichie presents in the novel. Young women have been shown traded for favours from relief workers and soldiers both fighting for and those fighting against the Biafra cause. Eberechi, young women whom Ugwu has a crush on, is handed over to an army officer by her parents securing a job for her brother in the Army. Thus she becomes a commodity which has been traded for favours by her own family members. This portrayal of women depicts them as weak and powerless in a social setup. Eberechi too is indifferent to being used as a sex-object as she realises her frailty and has no role, even nominal, in the entire transaction.

The scene manifests both social and moral corruption that has gone down deeper into Nigerian culture. Nigerian society has abysmally reached a state where human beings are traded as commodities, especially women being treated as inferior to men and are exchanged being equated the commercial value they possess. Olanna too has travelled through the same times when her parent wished to use her to get a contract from finance minister. Amala's case is just another example; Odenigbo's mother uses her as a commodity anticipating to separate Odenigbo from Olanna aiming to get a son from her, albeit she gives birth to a girl.

Thus, *Half of a Yellow Sun* exposes how women have suffered under the yoke of patriarchy; they have been oppressed both by men as well as by other women. The sexual violence that are worth mention, one of Olanna's and Odenigbo's friends called Special Julius freely exploits the war situation and takes, "those young-young girls that crawl around looking for sugar daddies… he takes five of them into his bedroom at the same time. (278). There also if reference of a white mercenary who, "throws girls on their backs in the open, where the men can see him, and does them."

(323). Ugwu too has witnessed several incidences where women have been sexually played upon by army men. He finely observed while serving in the army: Sometimes younger women came and went in the commander's quarter and emerged with sheepish smiles. The sentries at the entrance always raised the barriers to let the women in. (360). Her own sister, Anulika, was gang-raped by five men during the war. This incidence is of great importance to focus upon the scene from victim's perspective as Ugwu too has been a party to similar incidence. Despite these, the most horrific of the war crimes towards women are the ones committed by Father Marcel in the refugee camp where he molests all the little girls that come his way for relief and support. His acts are premeditated and deserve no pardon either from men or from almighty. He, "fucks most of them before he gives them crayfish"; and it has resulted into one of these girls being pregnant as well. (398) .Adichie finely comments through Kainene the truth of sexism and nationalism of the nationalist leaders, like Ojukwu the Biafran separatist. He too is party to sexual abuse towards women as he has, "imprisoned men whose wives he wanted, Ojukwu is having an affair with the man's wife and has just had the man arrested for nothing." (313).

This is the portrayal of the Biafra army which is fighting the war, on the pretext to safeguard its own people from the attacking forces seemingly loyal to Nigerian government, and has itself turned to rape young and innocent women and torture its own men forcing them to contribute to this of their illicit desire. Perhaps, herein can be witnessed the seeds of the cause of failure of defecting Biafra state. Poverty and weakness is not a crime, but the crime is to nurture these two ills, and Biafran leaders seem to tread on these path and exploit their own women who are working as a saviour supplying them food and other essentials. Chimamanda Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* has portrayed women as progressive as they come out with positive

thinking and promote their own society in difficult times of civil war. Women fight for supplies during the difficult times to keep the war going and support their men both physically and morally. Women are more entrepreneurial as Kainene promotes self-dependence as a key to success in war times. The novel thus foregrounds the role that Britain played in Nigeria's political structuring and the civil war. The next chapter projects the suffering of the Nigerians and their struggles.

Chapter Three

Strings of Suffering

In the war waged by the patriarchal system, women are the victims. They suffer tremendous pain and suffering especially during the war. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie follows a feminist narrative that stresses the strength of women. Adichie is known for her radical approach in dealing with the issues of feminism. Women are the principal characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Women are brave during and after the war. In all the relationships depicted, in personal or public, women are portrayed as the initiator; they are adventurous, courageous and superior to the male characters. In domestic life, the female characters dominate their counterparts. They are the ones who take decisions on the conduct of the ceremony of marriage, on the ritual practices of choosing a residence, and even on having sex. Even at the time of sexual act, women are shown as the initiators who get maximum pleasure from their counterparts. In rejecting their partners too, women, as shown in the novel, have the upper hand. It is the women refuse to bow even to the political might of their parents. They do not lose heart when the middle class families of theirs lose everything except their lives.

Olanna chooses Odenigbo over Mohammed. Sex also greatly influences relationship during war. Sexual exploits and abuse become a day-to-day activity during the war. Chimamanda Adichie has brought meaning to the meaningless war by narrating the sexual exploits between people of different ethnicities, religions and even races. These are well-crafted into the novel and simplify the complexity of human relationship in a war torn country. Religion is another multifarious identity that everyone is aware of and which everyone consciously or unconsciously adopts during the war. Relations are like mirrors that once broken are impossible to frame

again. So many friends and good neighbours become foes and strangers during the civil war. The religious divide aggravates the conflict and it becomes an easy tool to victimise and annihilate the enemy group. Hence, it is the relationship and the impact of war on it. The theme of relationships falling apart is one of the major concerns of contemporary literature.

Globalisation and women empowerment also play a major hand in creating a rift in a relationship. Betrayal in friendship and marital life has been very much exposed in the war. During a war, there is no time to make or strengthen friendships. The only instinct is to run away for survival. No time is spared for any kind of entertainment except killing and raping. Olanna loves Odenigbo and Mohammed equally and she has to break any one of their hearts in the event of marrying the other. Olanna made a conscious decision to choose the professor and untangle herself from Mohammed. Olanna did not like him boasting of his lineage of holy warriors and his pious masculinity. Mohammed himself is not interested in continuing the relationship further. Mohammed teases her for sleeping with Odenigbo as he is an intellectual lecturer and would make her one. Olanna wonders how people can switch affection off and on, to tie and untie emotions. Olanna wants to be different and wants to become a kind of person who does not need anyone to rely on.

Olanna adores Odenigbo as she finds him to be an idealist who is a freedom fighter and an intellectual mathematician, who at the same time spends time writing newspaper articles about African socialism. She feels something has been snatched away from her after the visit by her mother-in-law. Odenigbo and Olanna do not want to beget and raise a baby in an unjust world. Hence they postpone their plans for a child. However, her mother-in-law takes this as an advantage and brings a village girl Amala to replace Olanna. A child is born and she is named 'Baby'. Her mother

abandons her and it is Olanna who takes care of her. Olanna avenges Odenigbo by sleeping with Richard and then redeems herself through her acceptance of the child. Thereafter Olanna cares for everyone, Ugwu, Baby and of course her husband. The relationship between Richard and Kainene does not begin smoothly. Richard, a married man finds Kainene more attractive and beautiful than his wife Susan. The irresistible love and passion for Kainene makes him abandon his wife and court Kainene. Kainene herself is hoping for a better companion like Richard who is very gentle and who is also concerned about Biafra's freedom. Sex plays an important role in the doing and undoing of any relationship. However, sexual urge is not the only cause of infidelity. Richard never feels happy or satisfied in the relationship with his wife. He likes Kainene for her genuine love and concern rather than the show of false sympathy when one shares one's worries of life.

The relationship between different characters portrayed is not smooth even before the civil war. The twin sisters Olanna and Kainene introduced in the novel enjoy all the pleasures of life as they are born to an Igbo minister in the Nigerian Federation. They both live independently. The elder sister Olanna has a 'live in' relationship with the professor Odenigbo. The 'live in' relationship and extramarital relationship portrayed in the novel indicate the celebration of life in the middle of the devastating war. Sexual exploits become the assertion of life symbolising the balance of physicality and violence in the war.

Olanna also has developed a strange relationship with Mohammed of Hausa the Nigerian. However, during the rift between Biafra and the Nigerian forces, the relationship between Olanna and Mohammed gets tainted. Olanna and Mohammed mistrust each other. Olanna always reminds him about her ethnicity and religious identity whenever she gets a chance. Mohammed is helpless at the massacre of her

relatives that includes her aunty Arize. Though he helps her to escape from the violent mob, she does not trust him as he belongs to another religion. The junk of relationships and complexities depicted signify that during war people live and powerfully love each other with the same intensity with which they hate and kill each other. Sexuality is the common denominator among characters from very diverse religions and nationalities. Sexual act is one of the common activities they all follow in spite of the many differences and difficulties they face. There are overt descriptions of Ugwu's nightly encounter with Chinyere, the love making between Olanna and Odenigbo, the one between Richard and Kainene and the use of words describing the parts of body are vulgar. The graphical description of sexual encounters is a deliberate attempt to emphasise the humanity of the characters.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once admitted that this novel is about relationship and the grittiness of being human. Adichie confesses in her essay, "African 'Authenticity' and the Biafran Experience," that was determined to make *Half of a Yellow Sun* as the grittiness of being human. It portrays relationship and about people who have sex and eat food and laugh, about people, who are fierce consumers of life. The conflict arises when Odenigbo sleeps with a village girl Amala. Olanna complicates the relationship more by sleeping with Richard, her sister's husband. Sex is the ingredient for the theme of love and betrayal. Sex is also used to denote the typical African man-woman relationship in which the woman takes the lead. However, men have a control over the emotions and passions of women. Olanna needs Odenigbo more than he needs her. In the same way, Kainene loves Richard more than anything.

> She knelt down before him and unbuttoned his shirt to suck the soft-firm flesh of his belly. She felt the intake of breath when she touched his trousers' zipper. In her mouth, he was swollen stiff. (252).
>
> She unbuckled his trousers. She did not let him take them off. She turned her back and leaned on the wall and guided him into her, excited by his surprise, by his firm hands on her hips. She knew she should lower her voice ...and yet she had no control over her own moans, over the raw primal pleasure she felt wave after wave... (289).

Apart from such explicitly described lovemaking, there is also some vulgarity and the use of words describing body parts, like penis etc. For example, when Olanna tells her cousin Arize about Odenigbo's infidelity, she calls him a "wild animal from Abba. His rotten penis will fall off soon" (229). The virility of a man is measured by the way he controls the emotions of women. Though the women are not fully satisfied in their sexual exploits, they love their men for their way of love making and their stand in the political arena.

Sex is also used as a substitute for violence in the warfare. People distract themselves by engaging in sex instead of facing guns in the battle. When everything in relationship falls apart during war, they hold on to the common and inexpensive activity of sex in all manners. One can also identify the feminist tone in the description of sexual relationship. Both the leading lady characters Olanna and her twin sister Kainene are shown initiating the sexual act, and the men Odenigbo and Richard are portrayed as weak, always at the mercy of their lovers. Sexuality is a matter of celebration as presented in this novel. Sex is again used as a metaphor for the oppression and exploitation in the African society. The colonel is offered Eberechi as a gift to change her brother's posting. Ugwu and his fellow soldiers rape a bar girl.

They have transformed from freedom fighters to target destroyer. Father Marcel uses his power to make young girls his sex slaves. The people who are expected to uphold moral values perpetuate exploitation of their fellow humans.

Sexual acts become a ritual activity during war times. The characters involved in sexual activity are passive. They perform sex acts mechanically without any passion or love as the fear of death and the apprehensions regarding their survival always lurk behind. It is an irony that even the two popular Abrahamic religions are unable to prevent such abominable sexual exploitation taking place amidst both the warring groups during the civil war. People use religion for attacking others. They do not follow the tenets of religion when they indulge in violence, rape and other atrocities to destroy the other group. The Christian Igbo people forget Jesus's words 'Love your enemy,' and the Hausa Muslims forget Prophet Muhammad's advocacy of brotherhood when they kill their fellow countrymen. Olanna remembers her meaty relationship with Mohammed in the past before the Biafra war.

Olanna used to meet him often in his house and watch him swim and play polo. Olanna spent most of her weekends with him. Mohammed is shown as being close to young girls not only in Nigeria but even in America. Mohammad teases Olanna for loving an intellectual lecturer. Mohammad feels jealous and even thinks of him as the cause for the rift in their relationship. His lineage of holy warriors and pious masculinity has not allowed him to plead with Olanna to break her relation with the lecturer and marry him. Both of their parents were against their love and their desire to marry. They thought the marriage would taint the lineage with infidel blood. Another important Muslim character in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Abdulmalik. Whenever Olanna visits her uncle Mbaezi and Aunty Ifeka, she is introduced to Abdulmalik by them. Abdulmalik sells leather slippers close to their stall. Abdulmalik

offers Olanna a pair of slippers as a gift. Olanna takes them without any protest. They enjoy Olanna visit by offering her sugarcane, soup and other village made food items. The friendship between Abdulmalik, a Hausa, and the Mbaezi family is very thick. All the three have a very good time together. Mbaezi's family is completely annihilated with the help of their closest friend and neighbour Abdulmalik. The way they are being massacred is astonishing. The brutality and bestiality displayed by Abdulmalik towards her uncle Mbaezi's family show how the religious difference strips human value and dignity once and forever during a war. Religious identity became very crucial during the civil war in Nigeria. The war that was waged for the secession had taken a toll on the religious diversity. Most of the Northern Hausa people being Muslims, naturally, showed animosity and hatred towards the Igbo Christians of South-eastern Nigeria.

The Christians living in the Northern region had to pay a heavy price during the conflict. Even their neighbours and well-wishers turned into foes. This situation can be well compared with the enmity between the Muslims and Sikhs in Pari Darvaza of Punjab during the partition. Before the partition they lived as friends and helped each other. But during partition, the religious difference brought havoc in their lives.

In the novel the Igbo Christians are slaughtered and left to die in the street to rot. The neighbours become suspicious of each other. Many relationships break due to the religious divide. Olanna loses her relatives just because they belong to Christianity. People are butchered for being born into the minority religion in that region. Good friends become foes and villains as they belong to a particular religion. They feel proud to kill the people of other religion to bring glory to their god. It is ironic that gods need to survive with the bloodshed of their own creations. Sex and religion make life during the war very complex. Though sexual activity has been

depicted as a positive sign of life assertion and domination, it has also been used as a mechanism to humiliate the other community by rape and abuse. Religion is not portrayed positively as it failed to avoid bloodshed and bring unity. It rather becomes the fuel added to the burning fire of conflict. It has not been able to hold the relations falling apart.

Violence is the primary trait of any war. Violence is displayed in different forms. Physical and psychological violence during the war pushed the people further to the edge of destruction and devastation in Nigeria. Violence was not only happening in the battlefield, but also everywhere in streets and malls. Violence is aimed in particular at the weaker section of the society, namely women, children and the minority. There is no exception to this in Nigeria. Women have been sexually abused to humiliate the other community. Children are the other vulnerable victims of violence. The physical violence includes shooting down enemy soldiers in the battle zone, butchering and lynching neighbours who belong to other religious community, massacring the innocents, etc. The psychological violence includes abusing and exploiting women sexually and causing lifelong wounds on the victim and victim's community. Forced displacement and forced living in refugee camps, where food is scarce, is another form of violence where people starve to death. The soldiers are shot point blank, the bullets tearing open the chest. They are killed like ants. Children are recruited to quantify the strength of army. Many innocent people are amputated and left with no help. Towards the end of the war in the Southeast region, the minority community is at the mercy of the enemy. Persons from the minority community are killed mercilessly just because they belong to a different religious community. Women, children and minority were the easy targets of nonstop violence during the Nigerian civil war.

The situation is worse in a patriarchal society than it is in any other kind of society. Adichie explores the themes of human beings propensity for violence, propensity for the betrayal of love, trust, friendship and country; and their disposition for child soldiering. She takes great pains to portray the historical truths of the brutalities and effects of war. The gruesome scenes of killing and eviscerating pregnant women, raping young girls and other kinds of atrocities are told in a style reminiscent of the past.

Chimamanda Adichie tries to humanise the characters that are stripped of their humanity in the war ravaged Biafra. Vultures and dead bodies were dumped outside the city of Kano. Adichie goes deep into the horrendous conflict. Adichie compares similar incidents of violence that took place in different parts of the world during different wars. Adichie goes deep into the horrendous conflict. Adichie compares similar incidents of violence that took place in different parts of the world during different wars. Human depravity is further accentuated when Richard witnesses the butchering at the Kano airport. The captured soldiers are made to eat their own shit and some of them are tied to the iron cross and are thrown away. They are left to die in wilderness. Adichie humanises the ravaging effect of war on the minds of various characters. She is able to handle the historical truths of the brutalities and impacts of war without making it a melodrama. Adichie believes women suffer various forms of domestic and public violence to a great extent because of the mindless social and religious constructs. This form of gender violence occurring in many parts of the world within a home or in a wider community affects women and girls disproportionately.

The violence against women is realised as domestic violence, rape, sexual violence during the conflict and harmful customary practices like forced marriages,

and genital mutilation. A discussion about the emergence of various feminist theories is necessary to understand gender violence and the reaction to it by the feminists. The radical feminists blame the patriarchy and the oppressive social system. They challenge the existing patriarchal power and try to overturn it. They are concerned with women's rights rather than gender equality. The Marxist feminism finds fault with capitalism for the misery of women.

The lack of accessibility to the means of production and women's economic dependence has pushed them into the position of subjugation. Liberal feminism, on the other hand, fights for gender equality and wants to get women's rights by all means. Liberal feminists stress that all people are created equal and that culture and general attitude are responsible for promoting gender conflict. The radical feminism denounces the patriarchal family system and views sexism at the core of patriarchal oppression. It focuses on violence against women in the form of rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and so on. Adichie has proved to be a female supremacist by portraying two women, Olanna and Kainene, always enjoying supremacy over their male counterparts. The female supremacists wish for the independence of women which they believe will lead to balance of emotions, sharing and healthy inter-dependence between men and women. The liberating experience is well brought out in the act of Olanna sleeping with her sister's lover Richard. She writes:

> She raised her lips, moving with him, matching his thrusts, and it was as if she was throwing shackles off her wrists, extracting pins from her skin, freeing herself with the loud, loud cries that burst out of her mouth. Afterward, she felt filled with a sense of well-being with something close to grace (234).

Adichie narrates how women suffer in their homes as well as in society through their demoralising humiliation at the hands of enemy. Women are the softest targets and by attacking them one can easily demoralise the enemy group. It is the gang rape or mass rape which traumatises the victims for a long period. Many young girls are gang raped in both the camps of the army stationed. Ugwu himself, known for his innocence and honesty before entering the army, changes and becomes part of a gang that have raped young girls. Many women are missing from the camp. Kainene disappears and never returns. Till the end of the novel nobody knows where Kainene is. Women are not shown as too vulnerable. Kainene refuses to be a mistress to the minister to win favour for her family. She resists inspite of the tremendous pressure from her parents. It is a pity that Kainene parents are ready to mortgage her for government contracts. This avaricious attitude is well expressed in the following words:

> So will you be spreading your legs for that elephant in exchange for Daddy's contract?' Kainene asked. 'Daddy literally pulled me away from the veranda, so we could leave you alone with the good cabinet minister,' Kainene said. 'Will he give Daddy the contract then?' 'He didn't say. But it's not as if he will get nothing. Daddy will give him ten percent after all.' 'The ten percent is standard, so extras always help. The other bidders probably don't have a beautiful daughter.' Kainene dragged the word out until it sounded cloying, sticky: beau-ti-ful (35).

Survival becomes the critical purpose of everyone during the conflict. The women have to face great odds. They are pushed to the corner. Women are not only abused by the enemy group, but also by their own people as they become vulnerable

at the time of war. The women are shown superior in the first part of the novel as the lady characters never yield to the temptation of power or the force of their patriarchal parents and always have equal footing with their 'live in' husbands. However, they become submissive and helpless during and after the civil war. Olanna takes care of the Baby and other domestic work like cooking and washing. Kainene also accepts Richard and her sister meekly and goes for hunting food for survival. The civil war fought on the line of ethnicity and religious divide is a great burden on women. They become the target of both the warring groups.

In any war, children also suffer at the hands of both the warring groups. Children are either recruited in the army to show the strength or killed indiscriminately in the battlefield. Children are the silent sufferers in any kind of conflict. Children are exploited in different ways during the civil war in Nigeria. Both the Nigerian and the Biafra armies recruit children to take part in the battles. Ugwu tries to escape from the army several times. However, Ugwu is forcefully enrolled in the army. Ugwu goes through a great ordeal in the battlefield and bunks. Ugwu is also part of the molestations and gang rapes taking place during the war. Many young children have learned to play war games in school campus with guns made from bamboo. Children look just ten or eleven years old and wear banana leaves on their head. Children also fling stones at each other. It is so pathetic to see the elders watching and cheering at the children playing war games.

Starvation is an effective tool successfully employed by warring groups to win the war at any cost. It is not new to humanity. War has been practiced since the crusades. Starvation fulfils a twin purpose it weakens the enemy's forces in the battle and quickens the end of the war. In the Nigerian civil war, both the warring groups followed this strategy. The Federal forces successfully forced embargo on Biafra,

blocking all supplies, both from the neighbouring countries and from the international organisations. The economic blockade weakened the Biafra forces and many soldiers died of starvation. In addition, children became mal-nutritional due to lack of essential mineral and food supply. Women also lost weight and became weak.

Biafra wanted international attention and consequent intervention for their cause of independence. The Northern Federal forces wanted to weaken the strong resistance of the enemy. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has graphically exhibited the scheme and the after-effects of starvation. The babies are fed with 'breast blood' instead of mother's milk. The description of eating one's own shit in order to survive is heart-wrenching. No one can withstand starvation for a long time. Women have been portrayed as the most affected victims of starvation as they have to take care of themselves and the babies they carry in them. The description of the long queues in the refugee camp, fighting over a piece of dried food, is shocking..The children are the most vulnerable section to have been affected by starvation. Children cannot compete with elders to get their share of food. They also have to face the impending danger of disease and death.

According to the reports, most of the children died due to malnutrition. More than 30 thousand people were killed in the Biafra civil war that was fought from 1967 to 1970. The Biafra diplomacy of delay deteriorated the situation. The support of the European nations and other African countries placed Nigeria in a strong position. Biafra wanted to appeal to the sympathy of humanitarians all over the world by claiming genocide. The leaders of both sides did not have sympathy for the common people. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the leader of Biafra, was only concerned about winning the international attention. So he delayed the peace accord that would end the war. He opposed the daytime flight which could bring food and medical supplies that could

have saved thousands of people dying of starvation for political reason. Yakubu Gowon, the leader of United Nigeria allowed the prolongation of starvation as it would weaken Biafra's capacity to resist. A few countries like Tanzania, Ivory Coast, and Zimbabwe supported and recognised Biafra which brought cheers to Biafra. The countries that supported Biafra were all Catholic and these could have ended the war earlier and could have avoided the disaster. However, Nigeria received more support by way of ammunition and humanitarian help than Biafra. The economic blockade initiated by Nigeria aggravated the pangs of starvation in Biafra. These historical events are well delineated in *Half of a Yellow Sun.*

There are many incidents in the novel that suggest the starvation imposed by the Nigerian army, and the delay tactic of the Biafra rulers ruined lives. People not only starve for food and water but they also starve for love, sex and other relationships. An empty stomach cannot understand freedom, independence and patriotism or any other ideals. The more there is lack of food, the more there is loss of idealism and optimism. The only thing left is the struggle to survive. Everything undergoes change when the conflict begins. The abundance recedes.

The nation is left with starving people. People carry empty stomach. Ugwu who once enjoyed sumptuous food has to put up with puffy rice and corn meal that never emerged smooth after stirred in hot water; and the powdered milk ended up as stubborn clumps at the bottom of tea cups. People rush and fight over meager food supply. They stand in queue for long hours and days to get a loaf of bread or biscuits. Biafra has become a starving landscape where people die without food and soldiers are unable to fight any longer. Lack of food and search for it have become an obsession with the victims of war. Togetherness at the dining table is lost and replaced by haughty talks and gossips. Starvation is used as a weapon of war by

Nigeria. It has brought to the notice of the world, the civil war and the starving people there. It has made the world to realise and help the starving people by providing food. Many nations came forward to help starving Biafra at that time. The appalling condition in the camp is very well brought out in the novel. Olanna stands in the queue to get food which makes her feel uncomfortable. Olanna child Baby has to eat egg yolk. The officer in the relief camp announced that egg yolk was over and only milk was available. A man in charge of the camp recognised her and helped her with a bag of egg yolk. The next day, after struggling to reach the end of the queue, she managed to get a chunk of beef. However, she was surrounded by a group of soldiers who hunted her bag and left her crying. Starvation has been the easy mode of weapon used tactfully to defeat the enemy, from the past to the present. Nigeria is no exception to this. The ultimate sufferers are the common people, especially women and children. The next chapter also deals with the repercussions of war and post-colonial influences.

Chapter Four

Repercussions of War

Post-colonial literary movement is a movement started after the Second World War. Many countries that were under colonization got independence, writers from sub-regions emerged. Example of such countries are; India, Caribbean, South Africa, Nigeria etc. In Nigeria, post-colonial literature are works that are written during colonialism or after independence of the country. Frantz Fanon in 1961 wrote a book called *The Wretched of the Earth* in French, which examines the anti-colonial violence that was happening or happened after colonization all over the world. He also ascertains that children should be taught history from the beginning before colonization and there shouldn't be differences between the blacks and the whites. Another post-colonial literary theorist who changed the world's view is Edward Said whose greatest contribution to the world is the publication of his book *Orientalism* published in 1978. According to him, the word "Orientalism" is a western conception about the eastern part of the world. As he wrote "Orientalism", it was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar and the strange. Oriental is a person who is represented as feminine and weak, incomparable to the whites who are masculine and strong. Edward Said mentioned that the westerners divided the world into two parts: the east and the west, orients and the occident. They lay the basis of the concept of "them" and "us".

Orient applies to all that is eastern and occident applies to all that is western. These concepts are opposite to each other like male and female, master and slave, colonized and colonizer etc. According to Edward Said, colonialism is a powerful instrument which differentiates between Europeans and non-Europeans. The purpose

of orientalism is to enhance and to strengthen the interests of imperialism or strengthen the imperial practice. Edward Said used Michael Foucault's notion of "discourse" to define Orientalism. Foucault said orientalism as a colonial discourse becomes a powerful instrument to give knowledge about culture and civilization, history and other colonial discourse can be understood by looking at the relationship between colonizers and colonized. Colonial discourse is a form of knowledge in which colonial people would be able to understand themselves.

The gathering at Odenigbo's house brings about the role of identity and politics in postcolonial Nigeria. In the house young people gather to discuss the political future of the country. In the meeting, the importance of several kinds of African system of government is discussed amongst the educated people like Odenigbo and his friends. Odenigbo has always tried to defend the ideal unity for Africans, and his colleagues have always stressed upon the pan Africanism or nationalism. Odenigbo said the white people have always claimed that they are the one that created what is called Nigeria. Odenigbo used to say the real African man has existed since before the white man came, according to Odenigbo they created what is called "black" as much as possible in order to differentiate themselves with the blacks. Odenigbo said he was an Igbo man since before the emergence of the white man. The role of identity can also be seen in the character of Kainene. She was given a name which was partial since her birth because she is not as beautiful as her sister which makes her lose her identity in the family, and she always feels out-casted.

The Nigerian politics after independence of the country is said to be unstable because the Igbos think that the Northerners have occupied all the major parts in the governmental offices and have filled the country with corruption. This has resulted in

the loss of identity of Igbos who feel that they are not a part of the country any more. In the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Professor Ezeka said "It was mostly Northerners who were in government, Professor Ezeka whispered" (125). In trying to find their real identity Ojukwu, fought against the government. He had no arms, no weapons to fight: only wooden sticks; He deceived and risked so many lives that depended on him. Kainene said that "Madu told me today that the army has nothing, absolutely nothing. They thought Ojukwu had arms piled up somewhere, given the way he has been talking" (183). The postcolonial Africa is in confusion since after independence, just like Edward Said has also stated the idea about "identity", the characters in the novel are in search of their identity which has been ruined by the Europeans and led to so many deaths in the novel scenario. Even though the Europeans are not in the country they indirectly controlled the people using their manipulative way. The westerners have a great influence on Biafran war but there is subtle critique found in Richard's character. Richard's intention is clean. Adichie is trying to show that not all the westerners are bad. He tries very hard to be a part of Nigeria and later part of Biafra too. His interest with the culture is also something good, he speaks for Biafra and also tries to help them, he also wrote to the Western press.

Adichie shows her talent in creating a character that will make the Europeans not feel bad. The westerners are not in the country but all that is being taught in schools are planned by them. When Odenigbo was relating to Ugwu what will happen in his school: this is a clear domination of the Europeans, what Ugwu will be taught in the school and what he must say to pass his examination. The following lines explain regarding a white man who discovered a river and it mentions about how it was discovered long back and how it was in use. "They will teach you that a white man

called Mango Park discovered River Niger, which is rubbish, our people fished in the Niger long before Mango Park's grandfather was born, Odenigbo" (11).

Susan is the real representation of the westerner's conception of the orients. Through her Adichie draws the map of how they look at all the orients. The westerners are living in Nigeria like Susan, owning most of the wealth and still referring or calling them savages and uncivilized, "The people were bloody beggars, be prepared for their body odours and the way will stand and stare at you...never show weakness to domestic staff" (54). Edward Said has said on cultural hegemony that the westerners have always been considered to be superior and the easterners as inferior. Major Madu asked Richard to write a letter to the British in order to voice out their sufferings for external support, He asked him to do that because according to him they will be listened to, if a Westerner is in support of them, the Europeans would help them.

The Westerners are also seen as superiors because the Biafran think that if they will support them, everything would be settled. Just because of Richard's letter two journalists were sent away from England to Nigeria. They considered one dead European man to be equal to one hundred black men. One of the journalists who were sent to Nigeria said that the African women are said to have sexual transmitted disease and it is through this instance Adichie shows how the Europeans look at the African women. Another European journalist also said the blacks don't have the sense of what to eat, just because he saw Biafran children eating roasted rats, he didn't think that they are in war and don't have food and meat to eat but only rats and lizards as substitute of meat. In the novel the characters suffer the issue of violence because of the war.

Were you silent when we died?

Did you see the photos in sixty- eight

Of children with their hair becoming rust;

Sickly patches nestled on the small heads,

Then falling off, like rotten leaves on dust!

Imagine children with arms like toothpicks,

With footballs for bellies and skin sketched thin.

It was Kwashiorkor- difficult word,

Their skin had turned the tawny of weak tea

And showed cobwebs of vein and brittle bone; (375).

Through the lines of the poem the reader's attention is drawn to the brutality of war. Chinua Achebe has said in the novel *There Was a Country* that Adichie was "fearless" (30) to uncover what has been hidden for a long time. Achebe said: "I do not agree I believe that in our situation, the greater danger lies not in remembering but in forgetting" (30). According to Ojinmah "Adichie refused to forget, one of the fundamental functions of the writers is like those of story tellers in traditional African society" (4). According to Dickson "Articulating in writing the horrors of the war as stored in her memory through stories she was told by her parents and relatives, and written accounts of the war, serves a cathartic process" (86). Adichie uncovered the realities of war at the beginning of the novel before going into psychological and emotional face of the story. Adichie presents the explosion of the North-South war as an important moment which does not just offer the history but also functions as a stepping stone into the psychological mind and emotions of the individuals on the effect of war, which also affected the relationships, ethnic groups and the nation as a whole. The psychology and emotions of the characters also inter wined with the

moment when they realized how the war has affected them. The story *Half of a Yellow Sun* is also considered as a melo-drama, using humour to pave the way. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a presentation of the civil war deeply. The history travels through the deepest root of the war, the conflict, injustice, violence and the pain of war.

Adichie uses the theme of humanity to voice out the issue of the civil war. The characters struggle with the issue of love, class, race, profession etc. *Half of Yellow Sun* is a novel that two different things comes together; fiction coexists with war. Adichie through the characters has shown the clear picture of the Biafran war, one is made to travel to the time. The characters have suffered because of the violence which was caused by the civil war. Violence is first introduced in the first part of the novel, Adichie opens the book as a comic one, with Ugwu and his Aunt on the way to his new masters house but at the end of part one, she introduces a book called *The World Was Silent When We Died*; this creates a new atmosphere to the reader, the novel which looks like a happy novel now looks different.

After the first coup, two weeks later the Northerners come into power, this was the appearance of violence in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Kainene heard in the radio that so many Igbo's were killed in the north, Zaria, Kano and Kaduna; Kainene became worried because her childhood friend Major Madu is in the north, they try contacting him but they were unable. Kaniene's friend Colonel Udochi Ekechi was killed in the north. Major Madu escaped; he narrates how Kainene had suffered, so many of his friends were killed, his friend: a Hausa man helped him he took him to his cousin's house where he spent some days in the chicken room and then escaped in a water tank, which almost killed him. According to Kainene so many innocent men

were killed, even Udochi who does not care about tribalism, who speaks Hausa fluently and never encourages the coup, was also killed. Odenigbo heard in the news that over five hundred Igbos were killed in Maiduguri. Some men also come to the village and narrated what they had seen in the railway station. Odenigbo asked Ugwu to take some bread to the railway station to the wounded who had escaped from the north, the first man which Ugwu saw was wounded on the head with knife and the second had lost his right eye, this is an extreme violence caused by the war.

Olanna who was in Kano was rescued by her ex-boyfriend Muhammad. She visited Kano in order to bring her cousin sister Arize who was due to give birth, Olanna wanted Arize to give birth in Nsukka, but unfortunately the war caught her there. Muhammad asked Arize to put on the Muslim Hijab, so that Arize would not be recognized, Muhammad took her immediately to the railway station so that Arize would be able to escape. On their way Arize insisted on going to Sabongari to check on her Uncle's family, she saw her uncle and his wife's body lying on the ground dead, blood was running all over the place, the entire street was covered with blood. Olanna in the train saw so many people injured, she met a woman carrying calabash. The woman later opened the calabash, Olanna saw the head of a baby still plaited new, the violence did not only affect adults, but children were also killed, Olanna looked into the bowl; she saw the little girl's head with ash grey skin and the rolled eyes and open mouth. The mother said "Do you know, she said, it took me long time to plait her hair! She had such thick hair (149).

Such were the great struggles of the characters which were caused by the war in the novel. People were killed innocently because of the so called "BIAFRAN WAR", the war did not bring any good to the country; it only led to their suffering and so many killings. Another incident of violence was the one Richard encountered

when he was coming back from London and he branched in Kano, he met a young man called Nnaemeka, with whom he chatted with for some minutes, the man was full of dreams, he told him that his family depended on him, but before you knew it the soldiers come into the airplane and shot him, just because he was an Igbo man, they killed so many people in the plane at that time. When the war was declared, Odenigbo and his family had to leave Nsukka for their safety, they moved to Abba his parental village. Odenigbo and Olanna had to leave everything in Nsukka, they only packed little that they needed. Olanna's parents also left Lagos to London. So many people started leaving the cities to the village because the Nigerian army had spread all over the town of Nsukka. Moreover Odenigbo's family had to leave Abba because it was not safe anymore, he begged his mother to follow them to escape but she refused, they went to Umuahia where they stay for some time.

Olanna and Odenigbo in the midst of their suffering decided to marry, Odenigbo had always dreamt of a grand wedding, but because of the war they only invited few people. On the day of the wedding after the marriage in a "tiny church", there was bomb; people gathered for the wedding ran for their lives, there was no reception because everything was ruined. Olanna was not happy because no one in her family attended the wedding. Lack of support from other countries, they all supported the Nigerian government, which tried to eradicate the Biafran, even France which sold some weapons to the Biafran did not support or recognize Biafra. This is the reason that led to the downfall of Biafra and violence. Olanna grew up in a luxurious home with abundance of everything, Olanna had to cope with the situation because she intentionally refused to follow her parents, and instead she followed Odenigbo. Baby became sick and Olanna was disturbed thinking that the child will die, money became problem to the Biafran because of the new currency they had introduced which they

called the "Biafran pounds", and Olanna had to follow a long queue for her to be able to get the money. Mrs Mukelu brought some egg yolk, which they gave to baby and it helped her to regain her health. Olanna had to follow a long queue to get those dried egg yolk. She met a man whom she knew, who collected the egg yolk for her and gave her some corn beef she thought of cooking it for her family, but some group of Biafran soldiers followed her and snatched the corn beef from her.

The war ruined their lives, food became scarce, and rice was not available in the market because not all people could afford to buy it. Hunger became rampant everywhere, the office that provided food for them didn't give them every day, so the day the food was not given; the children stayed with hunger. As mentioned earlier, the war did not only affect the adults but also teenagers and children. It corrupted the mind of the children with bad thoughts. Olanna in her class introduced the Biafran flag with its meaning, which had three colours, "red was the blood of the siblings massacred in the north, black was for mourning them, green was for the prosperity Biafra would have… (281). A girl in her class when submitting her drawing said she would kill the vandals. Olanna felt bad and guilty for teaching the girl all this, which she later complained to Odenigbo. This was misguiding and teaching violence to young children to hate the northerners; this would lead to another problem.

The violence had gone to the extent that Umuahia was also not safe and so many schools were closed and turned into refugee camp, there was no living school. This was bad, the children no longer could go to school; education became history in their cities. In the refugee camp Ugwu met so many people that made him feel sad. A woman narrated that she was in the market when the war started, she was only able to escape with the clothes on her body, the baby she backed and some money she had for selling pepper, she ran and left all her children because she was not allowed to go

back home, she doesn't know what had happened to them, Ugwu pitied her. He also smelt something awful, he then realized that one woman had used water in a bowl for so many days to wash her cassava, this is true cruelty not only hunger is the problem but also hygiene, the water could cause so many harmful diseases, which may lead to their death. Port Harcourt was considered to be Biafra's support and strong army, Kainene and Richard lived there, rumour spread that it would also soon fall, they didn't believe at first, but one afternoon they were attacked and one of their houseboy was killed called Ikejide, Kainene was left in great shock because she saw the boy's head separated from his body, this was the reason why they left for Orlu, where she had bought a new house. There she met a man who could do carpentry work, without him asking her for money, he told her that he only needed food to survive. In the country of Biafra money was a waste, one wouldn't be able to buy anything even if had the money, "Why don't you want money? Kainene asked him "what will I buy with money" he asked" (317).

Kainene and Richard also helped some people in one refugee camp; they gave them food and even called doctors for them. There was also a pastor in the camp who preached the people to give them some hope. Inatimi was a man they met who appeared to be a foolish guy, he talked nonsense, this was because he had lost all his family members in the war, and he said he didn't have anybody to remind him of the past. The war also started to take a new dimension; besides hunger people started to lose their manners. Odenigbo was asked to vacate his two room apartment because the landlord had got a new tenant who would pay twice the money, accommodation started becoming problem for the people. They got a house which had nine rooms, one bathroom and toilet; almost all the people in the house were refugees. "There were too many people in the yard; a family of sixteen lived in the room next to Mama

Oji, the bathroom floor was slimy with too much dirt washed off too many bodies" (326).

There was over population in the compound which made the tenants aware of all what other people were doing, there was no privacy at all. Olanna's room was next to the toilet, it was unbearable for her at first because of the smell, she always wished there was a fan in their room, there was no electricity at all, unlike the house they left; she had never experienced such in her life. She also met uneducated and uncivilized people, first was Mama Oji, who thought that being a doctor meant medical doctor, until Olanna explained to her that Odenigbo was not a medical doctor but book doctor. Also because of overpopulation the compound became so noisy, whenever Mama Oji was fighting with her husband; she doesn't allow them to rest because of her shouting. Olanna also had to endure the Pastor's loud praying which he did all the time. There was also a girl who played piano every day, her name was Alice, she also disturbed Olanna because her room was next to hers, they also followed queue when they had to go to the toilet. Kainene ran a refugee camp where she helped the people to get medicines, crayfish and some food stuffs which was serves as a great help to them. When Olanna visited her, she took her around some of the refugee camp, Olanna was shocked on seeing how people were dying, mothers dying leaving their children. She felt pity for them, according to Kainene countless people die every day.

Kwashiorkor, also known as "edematous malnutrition" because of its association with edema is a nutritional disorder most often seen in regions experiencing famine. It is a form of malnutrition caused by a lack of protein in the diet. Kwashiorkor became everywhere, at the compound of Olanna, a girl Adanna had a fever and she realized it was kwashiorkor and gave her some milk. In the camp they visited, they also saw so many children with the disease; Kainene told her that it was

lack of protein. Innocent young teenagers were dragged to the war field because in 1968 many of the Biafran men were killed. Ugwu is also dragged on the road, without asking for his opinion they forced him inside the lorry. Ugwu is shocked when he met a young boy who was not more than thirteen years, the boy was drinking alcohol, this was very bad, the boy that was supposed to be in school under the care of his parents, but he drank alcohol and was exposed to danger of war. The name of the boy is "high tech", the boy is so proud of himself that he is a warrior, it is childishness because he thinks that everything is a game. The war has not brought any good but rather the fall of the Igbo society. The children do not only suffer separation from their parents but also they were also exposed to wrong doings, they do not know its disadvantages. Their schools were also turned into training centers for the Biafran soldiers. Ugwu was taken to the centre. Ugwu's first experience shows the sign of brutality, which is the first part of his struggles.

> The skinny soldier –with no boots, no uniform, no half of a yellow sun on their sleeves- kicked and slapped and mocked Ugwu during physical training. The parade left Ugwu's arm stiff. The obstacles training left his calves throbbing. The rope climbing left his palms bleeding (359).

Ugwu also realized what Professor Ekwenugo described about what the battalions have for the war, he was so happy at first to be among the battalions who would fight for Biafra, but was disappointed because they didn't have the weapons to fight the vandals, that is why so many of the Biafran army were killed, "But when he went to the first training session, he stared at what was before him: a dull metal container full of scrap metal" (359). Ugwu then realized that they were just offering themselves to be killed because they didn't have guns. The boys together with Ugwu

were bullied all the time. Eberechi Ugwu's friend, whom he secretly loves, is someone that was exposed to prostitution, she was sold to the soldier, in exchange of money because of poverty and also the commander helped her brother to join the army. This is the struggle the women in the novel suffered; they were exposed to men because of poverty, some of the girls take themselves willingly to the soldiers in the camp, the young girls that are supposed to be in school or married became prostitutes, this was the effect of war. Ugwu said "Sometimes younger women come and went in the commander's quarters and emerged with sheepish smiles" (360).

The young boys are not only exposed to drinking alcohol, but also to smoking of weeds, marijuana and so on. The war spoilt the behaviour of the young children, they smoke in front of the commander and he always felt happy and praised them, and the young soldiers are also exposed to robbery. They rob and maltreat the civilians; they even beat some and collect their money. On their way to the bar Ugwu and his friends stopped a man in his car, even after showing them his Biafran identity movement card, they didn't listen, they slapped and collected his car keys and drove away, this is the struggle they have to go through; they have to live in that way for them to survive.

Ugwu said "He was not living life but life was living him" (364). They were all not happy with their lives but had to endure it due to circumstances. They arrived in the bar, got drunk and gang raped the bar girl, together with the thirteen year old boy high tech, this is the effect of war. Ugwu never wanted to do it, but because he didn't want them to tease him and call him someone that is disabled that is why he joined. Muhammad wrote to Olanna and sent her some gifts which she shared with some of her neighbours. The only person that eats thrice is Baby; they only eat once or twice a day. Olanna used to pity Odenigbo because he is man who likes fashion

and also drinks the best beer, but he now only drinks the local gin, he smells bad and has only two shirts and a trouser. Alice the girl, who lived in the same compound with Olanna, told Olanna that all her family members were killed by the vandals. Her state had also fallen, she cried a lot when she was narrating the story. Even though Kainene tried her best but the situation becomes so bad, the children in the camp now eat only once in a day, and the food is "garri". The suppliers were not able to cross mobs to find some garri for the refugees. Hunger started becoming worst; they now eat lizards as meat. They also don't have water to use, talk less of taking bath. Kainene is so worried because the refugees now smell badly, she even asked them to use orange from the tree to drink and rub it on the back of their bodies, according to her the scent of the orange will reduce the smell of their bodies. The Southeast of Nigeria, has the highest rainfall in the country, because of the heavy rainfall it becomes almost impossible for the people to do farming extensively, which makes them rely mostly on the North for grains of food such as rice, maize etc. So when the Nigerian government commanded all the roads of supplying of food for the Biafran to be blocked, the food became scarce, they were not able to farm; this increased the rate of hunger during the war.

Ugwu was luckily rescued by some thugs, he suffered a lot during the war and everyone had thought that he had died. After the thugs took him, they didn't give him water, which made him wish to have died than been denied water, he spent days without water. He has wounds all over his body that made it impossible for him to be able to move his body, he was taken to the hospital where he saw so many wounded people. The issue of adultery became rampant during the war, this is seen in the refugee camp in Orlu, and one girl was impregnated by an elderly person, who used to sleep with girls in exchange of stock fish. Ugwu who always poked nose in all that is

going on around him became very quiet after coming back from the war, he no longer wants to hear people talking about the war, and he usually sits alone and talks to himself. Adichie in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* tries to show how the characters took love in the novel, how their love is shattered, and also shows how strong real love is how one that is in love can sacrifice for the other. Love is a natural phenomenon that happens between two people, love is something that cannot be pretended, it exists naturally. Normally when two people are in love they sacrifice for each other.

Adichie shows the romantic relationship of the characters in the novel, the love between the two sisters - Olanna and Kainene, Olanna and Odenigbo, Richard and Kainene, Ugwu's love to Nnesinachi and Eberechi. The love in the novel is being affected naturally or due to the political uproar. Olanna comes from a rich house, her father is a rich business man, but the issue of love in the house is absent, Olanna feels more comfortable when she visits her uncle's house in Kano, even though they are not rich but there is an atmosphere of peace and unity which is bounded by love. Their life is simple they are not faking life like her parents, this makes Olanna and Kainene to distant themselves from their so-called "rich family". Odenigbo's house is a paradise to Olanna because of the love they share between themselves, even though sometimes he stays in the library for the whole day to study. Susan's love for Richard is real but he has to leave her because he doesn't feel the same, Susan has to struggle because of her love for him.

Adichie divided her story into three sections. In the second phase, the sisters" share some bond of love not like in the first section and also Kainene wrote to Richard longing to see him, this is showing that something must have happened in one way or the other. Ugwu from the start of the novel has a strong attraction to girls. As a child

he had fallen in love with his cousin Nnesinachi whom he was attracted to because of her beauty, was attracted by her looks, and had always wanted to touch her. Nnesinachi is a cousin to him but his mother told him that she is like a real sister, which makes it impossible for him to have her, Ugwu has to suffer separation of love because Nnesinachi has to leave for Kano to stay with her uncle's family. Ugwu later met Chinyere, whom he never had feelings for but have sex with and always imagine her to be Nnesinachi.

Ugwu falls in love with Eberechi, he loves her but was more attracted to her body, she has a round buttocks. Ugwu's love for Nnesinachi and Eberechi is shattered because of the war; he is separated from Eberechi and taken to war. Odenigbo's love is disintegrated because of the war, he became an addict, he neither talks to Olanna nor smiles to her. In Kaniene's house he talks arrogantly and Olanna said that he has not been himself since the beginning of the war, the love of the couples was taken away. Odenigbo does not even have time to talk to his wife. Odenigbo became a little insane, not repaying Olanna for what she did, she would have followed her parents to England but she stays with him. Olanna has to struggle because of his change of attitude, "I want this war to end so that he can come back, and he has become somebody else" (388).

The absence of love in Olanna's family was the reason her father cheated on their mother, when Olanna went to talk to her father about the issue, there was emptiness of closeness between her and him, she pitied them all, and their life; "Olanna felt a sudden pity for him, for her mother, for herself and Kainene" (219). Even though Odenigbo betrayed Olanna and she also did the same but the strong bond of love between them is unbreakable, she forgives him and also adopts his daughter as hers. The love between Kainene and Richard is also alluring in the book. The

characters go through physical indisposition of cultural ebb of their society. African countries are considered to be the countries that have a lot of culture and tradition. Nigeria having more than 400 ethnic groups makes it possible to have different set of people, with different believes. Their cultures are governed by set of rules, which they always maintained before the coming of British colonizers to the country. The British colonizers bulldozed the southern part of the country, introducing so many things that did not exist before.

Chapter Five

Summation

The action in *Half of a Yellow Sun* takes place in the 1960s in Nigeria which is the setting and context referred. The narrative techniques shift from a third person objective point of view and first person point of view when various characters begin to narrate the events. The tone and mood is tragic and violent. The protagonist are Odenigbo, Olanna and her sister while the soldiers in the opposite camp are the antagonists. The major conflict is between the two tribes that end up fighting in the Nigerian civil war.

The story reaches its climax when the civil war starts. When in the beginning of the novel Odenigbo talks with his friends about revolution and other massacres foreshadows the events that will take place in Nigeria. When one of Odenigbo's friends claim that Olanna is not intelligent and is just a fake because of her British accent proves to be an understatement as Olanna proves herself to be intelligent and resourceful. Some of the Nigerian extremists rejected everything that had to do with the Western world, including the Nigerians who have been influenced by the Western way of thinking. Because of this, Olanna has a hard time being accepted by Odenigbo's friends because for them, she is too western. This alludes to the idea that the Nigerians saw not only the white people as being dangerous but their way of life as well. The most important imagery in the novel is when Olanna describes a woman carrying the severed head of her child.

The image is important because it exemplifies just how cruel the war was and how much it affected the normal population. In the first chapter, Odenigbo tells Ugwu that he will enroll him in the staff primary school so he could learn how to read, write and receive a basic education. Odenigbo tells Ugwu from the beginning that he will

receive a double education: one dictated by the British and real knowledge. This seems paradoxical but when analysing the situation one could see that the British influenced education greatly in the colonies they had. To support the claim that they discovered a certain land first, they had to teach the children that the territory they invaded was unpopulated. This however is a lie because indigenous people lived on those lands for hundreds of years before being colonized by European powers.

Adichie draws a parallel between Odenigbo and Ugwu, the two main characters in the novel. Both are Nigerians but they were raised different and so Ugwu never got the chance to be educated in the same way as Odenigbo was. Because of this, the two have different belief systems and see the world in a completely different way. Ugwu is superstitious and continues to believe in the power of the spirits and in the power of magical herbs and plants. Odenigbo on the other hand broke free from the old traditions and even considers himself as being an atheist. The idea transmitted through this parallel is that the environment influences a person's belief system more that some would be inclined to believe.

Adichie in the novel shows how the characters struggle because of the dying of their culture. The story opens with Ugwu's Aunty telling him how his master. He has spent most of his time on reading books of overseas according to her, and hardly returns greetings, this is entirely something different in relation to the tradition of the Igbo society; they respect greetings and always return greetings. The idea of Ugwu's attraction to his cousin sister is totally different from Igbo culture, it can be said that going to the primary school in his village corrupted his mind. Ugwu's master asked him to call him with his first name which is totally absurd and unacceptable in his villages, he felt awkward because he never calls his elders with their first name. Ugwu never got the courage to call him with his first name till the end of the novel. Ugwu's

aunt describes the women in the university; she says they are always with wigs and mini-skirts.

The traditional village people do not put on mini- skirt that is why she is telling him because it is something new he will see. Miss Adebayo a friend to Odenigbo who always comes to their meeting every Saturdays in his house together with other lecturers, has some manners which is also very different to the traditional African woman, Miss Adebayo's way of talking is different because she raises her voice above all the men present in the meeting which Ugwu finds inappropriate, but because she is an educated person, she feels what she is doing is right. Olanna's parents" meeting with the minister Chief Okonji is also something disgraceful, instead of the parents to look for a young and handsome man to marry their daughter to, but rather they want to push her to sleep with an old man, the age mate and partner of her father. Adichie has shown how the characters struggle for identity, which was lost by the politics of the country and the intervention of the westerners in postcolonial Africa.

The struggle for safeguarding human values was something very hard for the characters in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, they suffered violence because of the war, and their value as human being was taken away because of the war. The characters also suffered degradation of human values in the field of love between themselves. The study has shown that war is not the final solution to all problems but is just a way of deteriorating the society. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is not completely fictional because Adichie has gone back through history and presents what had happened forty years ago in Nigeria; she has shown how war has affected and destroyed the country's happiness.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Utopian Domain of Women: An Eco-Feministic Reading of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*** a Science Fiction novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Hannah Sheebu. E during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Utopian Domain of Women: An Eco-Feministic Reading of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*** a Science Fiction novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

E. Hannah Sheebu.

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THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Utopian Domain of Women: An Eco-Feministic Reading of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*** is a Science Fiction novel analyses the highlights of women power and their mastery over the environment.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of American science fiction which is difficult to define precisely as it includes a wide range of concepts and themes, along with the biography of Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It discusses the general characteristics of her works and the main idea of the novel *Herland*.

The second chapter **Scientific Utopia** deals with the exploration of social and political structure of utopian fictions and the features of it and it also talks about the women's capability to create their own world which patronizes with nature.

The third chapter **Procreation and Ecology** focuses on the advanced industrialized society that has mastery over nature and their reproduction and Environmental Engineering that holds a healthy balanced ecosystem, including human and non human inhabitants.

The fourth chapter **Feminist Vision** concentrates on the female archetypes and it deals with eco–feministic approach which was considered to be a seminal part of third wave feminism comprising a set of philosophical, practical, and analytical concepts.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. Feminism thus is endorsed with societal, political and all other adult female.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Science fiction is difficult to define precisely as it includes a wide range of concepts and themes. It is a genre of speculative fiction that has been called the literature of ideas. In general it has imaginative and futuristic concept, that are advanced in science and technology, time travel, parallel universe, fictional worlds, space exploration, and extraterrestrial life. This genre explores the potential consequences of the scientific innovation.

The science fictions in ancient times are related to fantasy, horror and superhero fiction and it has many subgenres. The exact definition of science fiction has long been disputed among authors, critics, and scholars. Science fiction has influenced much of the world and has become more popular in literature, film, television, and other media. This genre criticizes the society besides being an entertainment and it often inspires sense of wonder. Science fiction had begun in the ancient times, when the line between myth and fact was blurred. It was first incorporated in *A True Story* by the satirist Lucian during 2nd century. It has the themes and tropes of characteristics of modern science fiction, including travel to other world, extraterrestrial life forms, artificial life and interplanetary warfare.

Science fiction developed and boomed in the 20th century, as the deep integration of science inventions into daily life which encouraged a greater interest in literature that explores the relationship between technology, society, and the individual. In recent decades, the genres have diversified and become firmly established as a major influence on global culture and thought. Science fiction elements were written before the

emergence of science fiction as distinct genre. The elements in this genre often express the idea or the imagination of a fantastical voyage to the moon or using the advance technology of imagination.

One of the most and earliest commonly cited text for those looking for early precursors to science fiction is the ancient Mesopotomian "Epic of Gligamesh" with the earliest text versions identified as being from about 2000 BC. American science fiction author Lerter Del Rey was one such supporter of using Gilgamesh as an origin point, arguing that Science fiction is precisely as old as the first recorded fiction. That is Epic of Gilgamesh.

In the wake of scientific discoveries, that characterized the enlightenment, several new types of literature began to take its place in 16th century Europe. The Humanist thinker Thomas More's 1516 work of fiction and political philosophy entitled Utopia, describes a fictional island whose inhabitants have perfected every aspect of their society.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the so called 'Age of Reason' and widespread interest in scientific discovery fueled the creation of speculative fiction had anticipated many of the trophies of more recent science fiction. In the last decades of the 19th century works of science fiction for adults and children were numerous in American. America thought it was not yet given the name 'Science fiction'. There were science fiction elements in the stories of Nathaniel Hawthrone and Fitz James O' Brien.

Edgar Allan Poe is often mentioned with Jules Gabriel Verne and H. G. Wells as the founder of science fiction. A member of his short stories and the novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* are science fictional. An 1829 satiric novel by

philosopher George tucker *A Voyage to the moon* is sometimes remarked as a first American science fiction novel.

There were many contradictions and that impulse paved way for the modernist period to prove to be one of the richest and most productive in American literature. A sense of disillusionment and loss pervades much American modernist fiction. The early 20th century is bounded by the emergence of the American world power and the trauma of the stock market crash and the depression which is divided by the World War I. The writers during this period looked outside America more readily and inside more critically before Internationalism and Expertriatism, this became major movement and major sense of creative insight. The certainties and uncertainties, the change and the reaffirmations of the periods are all reflected in literature which enquires and experiment to its limits. Through the techniques of realism, naturalism, symbolism, and expression, the writers of the period mirror the American religion, its village, its cities, its ethnicity. Yet this is also a par excellence, an era of psychological literature of the individual consciousness, an era which strikingly affirms the value of the imagination. After the middle 20th century, during 1950s and 1960s, the movement of Beat writers was established.

The term Beat has several theories, one of them being "Beautified" that as a state of bliss, holy or spiritual state of upliftment. Beat writing was generally anti-traditional, anti-establishment and anti-intellectual. Beat writings are iconoclastic against the tradition, pretensions that they criticized also spoke about the people who put themselves in the margins, against the militarization of America, Nuclearisation, against the Vietnam War. They wanted America and its society that was as equal as possible. *On the Road* is a non-fictional and a very important accomplishment that was acknowledged to be a wide

open space because American was a enormous country. The *Travel Narrative roads* are very important part of the American consciousness.

Charlotte Perkins Steton, rightly called Charlotte Perkins Gilman lived at the time of tremendous upheaval in the country's history was a writer, lecturer, social critic and feminist. Gilman witnessed a profound effect on the development of the American society from the Civil War to Reconstruction and Industrial revolution and from the Women's movement to the development of the major schools of the social sciences. Gilman became a commentator on evolving social order, especially of its effects on the status of women as she unknowingly watched the events went without scrutiny.

Gilman called herself a humanist, because she had an opinion that women are oppressed by the domestic environment through the patriarchal belief that upholds the society. Gilman's argument during the post-prehistoric times, the male aggressiveness and maternal roles for women are artificial and they are no longer necessary for the survival. She says, there is no female mind and strongly says that brain is not an organ of sex and that might as well speak of a female liver. Gilman also argues that Androcentric culture have halted the women's contribution to civilization throughout the history. Gilman felt necessary about the improvement in preventing the deterioration of human race, as the womankind is still the underdeveloped half of humanity.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born on July 3, 1860, in Hartford, Connecticut, to Mary Perkins and Fredrick Beecher Perkins. During Gilman's infancy her father abandoned her family and Gilman spent her early life in isolation and poverty. The Perkins' were often left under the care of her father's aunts.

Her schoolings were erratic which she describes as four years among seven different institutions, ending when I was fifteen. Gilman lived isolated throughout her early life, which influenced her more in reading books and making friendships. Her autobiography, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins* Gilman talked about her mothers' affection shown only when she thought her young daughters were asleep. Although her childhood she lived was in isolation and in improvised loneliness she unknowingly prepared herself for her life, visiting libraries frequently and studying the ancient civilization on her own. It was evident that her father's love for literature influenced Gilman, when he met her after long years with list of books that would be a worthwhile for her to read.

Gilman's friends were mainly young women, a theme that was consistent in her life. She had an intimate relationship with Martha Luther, describing their relationship in her autobiography:

> We were closely together, increasingly happy together, for four of those long years of girlhood. She was nearer and dearer than anyone up to that time. This was love but not sex.... With Martha I knew perfect happiness, we were not only extremely fond of each other, but we had fun together and deliciously. (78)

Gilman then has a life with regard to the reform of the women's condition in society and was married. But, later she was divorced in order to cherish her career and she published *The Yellow Wallpaper* a fictional short story based on her experience with the rest cure in 1892. In addition to it, she also wrote, *In this Our World* in 1893 and she finished her writing Women and Economics during this period, which was then published

later. In the mean while of her career as a writer she became a journalistic advocate of the radical Nationalist Party as well as world-renowned lecturer.

Consequently she became a sole writer to magazine *The Forerunner,* after her second marriage. In 1925, she finished her autobiography, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* which was published after her death. Through her concept of Utopian fiction, Gilman tried to describe the kind of world she envisioned for women and she succeeded in it. In *The Yellow Wallpaper,* though it is not an Utopian fiction, she depicted an escape of a woman from the seemingly a seemingly unwanted marriage and a consequent attachment of marriage into a new self housed in the wallpaper of her bedroom. The Utopian novels *Herland* (1915) and *With her in Ourland* (1916) create a new world based on the principles of equity that she has promoted in her non fictions and lectures.

In 1912, Gilman published her poem *The Socialist and the Sufffragist,* a testimony to the ongoing debate about the role of both worker's right and women's right as a part of struggle for human emancipation. In Gilman's *Herland*, the author visits an island where the spheres of life had replaced the society of male domination, competition, and war with the community of women organized around the principles of New Motherhood.

Gilman to demonstrate the quality used the word-build in *Herland* which she longed to see. She in her novel has portrayed the women of Herland as 'providers'. This concept made the take over the gender roles that are specially given to men that appeared to be a dominant sex. Using the novel *Herland* Gilman challenged such stereotype made the society to have women to hold all the power showing more equality in this world alluding to the changes she wanted to see in her life time.

'Through her popular fictions and her intellectual writings, she always attempted to reach a wide variety of audience with her social commentaries, specially targeting women to awaken them to her revolutionary ideas. All her concepts continued to intrigue the feminist in the social science as it can be attested by her inclusion in many books of feminism and this was changed in women's studies course After her husband died suddenly in 1934, Gilman moved back to California to live near her daughter. In 1935, she committed suicide with an overdose of chloroform, writing in her suicide note that she "chose chloroform over cancer." Her autobiography was published posthumously.

After her death until the middle of the 1950s, Gilman largely disappeared from the world of literary scholarship. If anything, historians merely highlighted Gilman as a figure of the suffrage movement, and failed to recognize her literary achievements on a serious level. Gilman finally began to receive recognition for her work with the women's movement and development of feminist scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s. In the past two decades, Gilman has become particularly well-known for *Herland* and *The Yellow Wallpaper*, both of which have achieved prominent positions in the canon of contemporary literature. Gilman's legacy is still being uncovered today, as much of her previously neglected work is currently being republished.

The Yellow Wallpaper one of the short stories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1892 a work considered to be important early work of American feminist literature, due to the illustration of attitudes towards mental and physical health of women in 19th century. The main idea of the story is the subordination of women to men and the dehumanizing treatment historically suffered by women at the hands of men. *Herland* (1915) a utopian novel, it describes an isolated society composed entirely of women. The

people in that society reproduce through Parthenogenisis. This in turn results in social orders like free of war, conflict and domination. *Women and Economics* (1898) is a book about the study of the Economic concern between Men and Women as a factor in social evolution. It is her greatest works as it touched the female dominant themes. Her central argument in this book is about the economic independence and specialization of women as essential to the improvement of marriage, motherhood, domestic industry and racial improvement. This book made Gilman a 'leading intellectual in the women's movement' Gilman called herself a humanist and believed the domestic environment oppressed women through the patriarchal belief upheld by society. Gilman's feminist work often included stances and arguments for reforming the use of domesticated animals. In When I was a Witch, the narrator witnesses and intervenes in instance of animal use as she travel through New York, liberating work horse, cats and lapdogs by rendering them a 'comfortable dead'.

An entirely female society is discovered somewhere in the distant reaches of the earth by three male explores who are now forced to re-examine their assumption about aspects that sets apart is an unadulterated utopia. There is no hidden rot to be uncovered, no crime or a sudden scandal. The three men of the huge significance, does not throw everyday out of a knock. The women in Herland are capable of doing away with the biological necessity of male. They need no men and they do not need saving from anything. The people in Herland keep a detailed history of their lineage and they see no need to claim ownership over their children by instilling their own name upon the children, the way the culture if men used to. The women are able to love openly without forcing subordination upon others, not excluding their off springs. Gilman creates a

means of equality to the men and at times conveys them being the men. In contrast to the world where the men came from, they feel weak compared to the women in Herland. These women are expressed as a kinder and, smarter than men as determined by the narrator. The women are smart by means of surviving when they are cut off from the rest of the world. Herland will breed-out individuals in their society who are defiant and not virtuous. In the novel, the three men, Van, Terry, and Jeff explore a scientific expenditure to an uncharted area. Doubtful about the strange land and the existence of all female country, they are nevertheless excited by the chance to explore an unknown land. The three men are driven out by a genuine desire for knowledge, love for the adventure, Van although admit it by the fantasies of land full of women without men.

After their entry into the land, they were caught by three women of Herland. They were soon kept in the custody. When they gave an attempt to escape, they where drugged and made unconscious. The three men, were now the captives, who were well treated and the Herlanders taught them their language and their culture. In due course of time they learnt the history of Herland that the strange land has been without men for more than two thousand years, ever since a sequence of war, natural disaster and internal strife combined to leave a small population of women alone atop their hidden Plateau. Later, the women of Herland are themselves concerned about their lack of men feeling that their society would benefit from a masculine perspective and contribution. The young women see themselves as the equal partners with men. This in turn gave an outcome of the experiment that could determine the future of Herland and mark their return to a 'bi-sexual' state. At the end, Terry was pleased to leave the place, while the other two found it more convincing than the troubled world. But, they have to leave the place, they

promised to keep the location of the plateau a secret and the three men left to the troubled world below.

The reason for the choice of the novel is a deep interest on science fiction and on the exploration of the concealed. *Herland* is explored here as the feminist utopia, where Perkins envisions an idealistic society where women syntheses with nature and they are soulfully connected to the geology of fictional world. The long preserved ecology and the spontaneous evolution of their conserved life is tainted by the intrusion of men which further developed in developing the plot line. The progressing second chapter deals with the origin of utopian science fiction and detailed study about science fiction studies and their features in this science fiction novel.

CHAPTER TWO

Scientific Utopia

Utopian fiction explores social and political structures. Utopian fiction portrays the setting that agrees with the author's ethos, with various attributes of another reality intended to appeal to readers. Dystopian fiction sometimes combined with, but distinct from apocalyptic literature is opposite: the portrayal of a setting that completely disagrees with the author's ethos. Many novels combine both, often as a metaphor for the different directions humanity can take, depending on its choices, ending up with one of two possible futures. Both utopia and dystopia are commonly found in science fiction and other speculative fictional genres, and arguably are by definition a type of speculative fiction. The word *utopia* was first used in direct context by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 work *Utopia*. The word *utopia* resembles Greek words "no place", "Outopos", and "good place", "Eutopos". In his book written in Latin, More sets out a vision of an ideal society. As the title suggests, the work presents an ambiguous and ironic projection of the ideal state. The whimsical nature of the text can be confirmed by the narrator of Utopia's second book, Raphael Hythloday.

An earlier example of a Utopian work from classical antiquity is Plato's *The Republic*, in which he outlines what he sees as the ideal society and its political system. Examples are seen in Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, which uses an anagram of "nowhere" as its title. This, like much of the utopian literature, can be seen as satire, subgenre is *feminist utopias* and the overlapping category of feminist science fiction. Writer Sally Miller Gearhart calls this sort of fiction political: it contrasts the present world with an idealized

society, criticizes contemporary values and conditions, sees men or masculine systems as the major cause of social and political problems example war, and presents women as equal to men, Another having ownership over their reproductive functions.

Utopias have explored the ramification of gender being either a societal construct or a hard-wired imperative. In Mary Gentle's *Golden Witchbreed*, gender is not chosen until maturity, and gender has no bearing on social roles. In contrast, Doris Lessing's *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five* (1980) suggests that men's and women's values are inherent to the sexes and cannot be changed, making a compromise between them is essential. In *My Own Utopia* (1961) by Elisabeth Mann Borgese, gender exists but is dependent upon age rather than sex — genderless children mature into women, some of whom eventually become men. Marge Piercy's novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*keeps human biology, but removes pregnancy and childbirth from the gender equation by resorting to assisted reproductive technology while allowing both women and men the nurturing experience of breastfeeding.

Utopic single-gender worlds or single-sex societies have long been one of the primary ways to explore implications of gender and gender-differences. One solution to gender oppression or social issues in feminist utopian fiction is to remove men, either showing isolated all-female societies as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, or societies where men have died out or been replaced, as in Joanna Russ's *A Few Things I Know About Whileaway*, where "the poisonous binary gender" has died off. In speculative fiction, female-only worlds have been imagined to come about by the action of disease that wipes out men, along with the development of technological or mystical method that allow female parthenogenetic reproduction. The resulting society is often

shown to be utopian by feminist writers. Many influential feminist utopias of this sort were written in the 1970s the most often studied examples include Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Holdfast Chronicles*. Such worlds have been portrayed most often by lesbian or feminist authors; their use of female-only worlds allows the exploration of female independence and freedom from patriarchy. The societies may not necessarily be a homosexual, or sexual at all — *Herland* (1915) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is a famous early example of a sexless society. Charlene Ball writes in *Women's Studies Encyclopedia* that use of speculative fiction to explore gender roles has been more common in the United States than in Europe and elsewhere. Utopias imagined by male authors have generally included equality between sexes, rather than separation.

Utopia was originally the realm of philosopher-kings concerned primarily with how abstract principles of truth, virtue, and harmony could bring about the good life. Plato laid the groundwork, but, as a genre, utopia really gained momentum in the Renaissance, particularly after the growth of the new sciences. Thomas More's Utopia (1516) is largely animated by a spirit of scholasticism, and his society, as Nell Eurich notes, "did not in any way emphasize the investigation of nature, nor did it suggest any particular method for the advancement of knowledge". Francis Bacon established a new type of utopia with his unfinished New Atlantis, published posthumously in 1624. At the heart of Bacon's fictional society is Salomon's House, a scientific institution "for the finding out of the true nature of all things." A similar emphasis on the new learning and on progress rather than tradition can be seen in other utopian works of the time, including Johann Andreae's *Christianopolis*, Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and

Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*. That the scientific utopia became a dominant genre in the utopian tradition is easily accounted for, given the affinities between science and utopianism. Both seek to improve the human condition, to render the universe comprehensible, and to provide a sense of order. As J. C. Davis explains, "The one depicted the society in which the other would flourish, or, to reverse the equation, science provided the material and technological base upon which the ideal society could be built"(68). Just as in the sixteenth century, we see another exponential increase in utopian works of the nineteenth century, and contemporary advances in science account for much of these, or at least their heavily scientific content. Gilman's *Herland*, like Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward and H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, is very much a part of this phenomenon. Published in 1915, *Herland* follows three amateur male explorers on a journey to confirm rumors of an isolated, all-female society.

Critic Freibert even regarded *Herland* as "the first truly feminist work in the American tradition" (67). Wu-Qing-Yun did a very good summary of *Herland's* criticism since 1977. He put the criticism into three categories: the politically positive, the politically negative, and the aesthetic. The positive group regards *Herland* as a classic text for its depiction of ideal utopian worlds. Within this group some critics have linked the novel with contemporary feminist utopias. Carol Pearson was the first critic to note the "surprisingly numerous areas of consensus" between contemporary feminist utopias and *Herland*" (150). Pearson listed the consensus areas including the absence of men, de-urbanized and decentralized anarchy, a nurturing ethic, relationships based on the love between mother and daughter, worship of a mother goddess and mothering as a social function. In 1981, Joanna Russ, in her "Recent Feminist Utopias" insisted on separating

contemporary feminist utopias from Herland on the ground that Herland was "responding to the women's movement of its time" while contemporary feminist utopias are "not only contemporaneous with the modern feminist movement but made possible by it" (72).

However, except for sexual permissiveness, Russ did not really demonstrate any difference in principle between Herland and its modern sisters. In 1990, Libby Jones still declared: "Sixty years later from 1915, the thesis of *Herland* is still current" (119). The negative group, however, points out that Herland reveals the restriction of Gilman's age, such as, according to Wu, "Victorian women's moral superiority, a prudish attitude toward sex, and a blind optimism in the marriage of feminism with socialism" (150-151). This group also criticizes the society of Herland for being, like most Western utopias, 'limited incomplete, inhuman, static' and finds in it a potential totalitarian nightmare. The aesthetic group stresses its narrative structure and design. Most critics feel that Herland has little aesthetic value, with its monotonous structure and didacticism: Gilman gave little attention to her writing as literature, and neither did the reader, I'm afraid. She wrote quickly and carelessly to make a point. However, the author thinks *Herland* gives full play to satirical humor and verbal wittiness, even though this is in line with classical Western utopian traditions. And Gilman successfully creates dramatic conflicts and fully developed characters as well.

The author's contribution to the study on the book is that she would stress that Gilman creates an all-female utopian Herland that is superior to the man-made world. Gilman is seen as radically challenging the patriarchal ideology of marriage, sex, motherhood, love, work and education as she has positive and critical attention. This supposedly utopian world is actually static, without possibilities of growth and even

inhuman, gothic, and nightmarish. This is because Gilman constructs the women's utopia out of the conviction in women's superiority over men. In the end, to establish female superiority in a marginal utopia settled by women alone is an escape from the real world. Contrary to their sexist expectations, they find an advanced, efficient, harmonious civilization of women who reproduce through parthenogenesis. *Herland* takes on scientific themes in several ways. Gilman arranged three men and three Herlanders to marry. Through their marriages, Gilman brought into question the unequal monogamy, sexual subordination, femininity, the role of a wife, and the role of a husband. Herlanders are an all-female society before the three male travelers arrive. Herlanders have no idea about sexual difference.

The most obvious is Gilman's decision to make her male explorers amateur scientists in pursuit of "some nice little discovery"(4). More interesting is the way Gilman engages science and literature at a meta-critical level in setting up a sort of experiment. The idea goes back to the origins of the novel, found nowhere more conspicuously than in Robinson Crusoe, in which Defoe embeds experiment and observation in his narrative at multiple levels. With the island his laboratory and Crusoe his subject, he sets out to find out what might happen if you took a Puritan, middle-class merchant and stranded him on a desert island with a limited set of tools and supplies.

Gilman does something similar in her thought experiment designed to "test" the range of female capability against contemporary gender stereotypes: If a geographically isolated group of women somehow managed to reproduce without men, what sort of civilization might result? What results, as Van notes, is "a mechanical and scientific development fully equal to ours" (82), and the means by which this is achieved are what,

in part, make *Herland* a classical scientific utopia. Although the male visitors are the alleged scientists, Van's description of the women of Herland makes them seem even more scientific in their disposition and habits. He notes that they are "marvelously keen on inference and deduction" and "the most salient quality in all their institutions was reasonableness" (65). They are also portrayed as levelheaded and objective, never expressing horror or disapproval, nor indeed much surprise—just a keen interest, and as having "keen scientific eyes". They treat the visitors preeminently as sources of information and are methodologically well prepared for their study:

> What they were doing with us was like . . . Napoleon extracting military information from a few illiterate peasants. They knew just what to ask, and just what use to make of it; they had mechanical appliances for disseminating information almost equal to ours at home; and by the time we were led forth to lecture, our audiences had thoroughly mastered a well-arranged digest of all we had previously given to our teachers, and were prepared with such notes and questions as might have intimidated a university professor. (66)

Like good philosophies, they compile encyclopedia like texts of their own knowledge and quickly create new volumes to disseminate what they learn from the men. Terry's jewels, rather than arousing admiration and gratitude, as he had intended, go straight into a museum. Also in line with Enlightenment practice, their religion "gave to the searching mind a rational basis in life . . . clear, simple, rational directions as to how we should live—and why" (115). We might also note the experimental nature of their involvement with the men. In their failed escape, the men are unknowingly observed all

along by the Herlanders, only to be briefly humored when they reach their airplane and whisked back to their place of captivity. The marriages are also conceived of as a great experiment, as is Ellador's eventual fact-finding journey back to *Ourland* in the sequel.

As Michael Bryson correctly notes, Gilman's envisioned approach is no less than the scientific management of all human labor, be it industrial, agricultural, or reproductive. Through the novel it is made clear that the Herlanders are ignorant in geology, geography, and anthropology due to their isolation, but they are competent in astronomy, physiology, chemistry, botany, and physics and excel in mathematics and psychology. The field of medicine is conspicuously absent in Herland the men note the lack of medicinal plants, especially given its prominence in most scientific utopias. Van suggests, however, that the absence is actually a triumph, medicine having been rendered obsolete thanks to their success in ecology, nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, and eugenics. The narrative's focus on the cultivated forests and overall "cleanliness" of Herland has tended to distract critics, who often mischaracterize the country as "preindustrial," but industry is there indeed.6 Among the men's first pieces of tangible evidence of the existence of Herland is a piece of cloth that "no savage tribe" could have made—"they spin and weave and dye as well as we do" (7).

Herland's culture is not only women oriented but also mother oriented. The society is organized around principles of motherhood and the care of children. Gilman figured women's power and superiority chiefly in their ability to bear children. She believed that women are equal to men in intellect and ability to do work, but are superior to men in their chastity, forbearance, and their roles in the parenting process. Tie to this cultural ideal, the most important role share by Herlanders is that of being a mother.

Motherhood is everything for Herlanders. It is the dominant culture. Virtually all Herland women are mothers–if not biologically, it is then through helping raising children). Even though Herland women specialize in different areas, their most valued specialization is the education and care of children. All individuals in society assume and share the responsibilities for the growth, development, and education of children. Children are raised by a community of women. The biological bond between mother and child is deemphasized. Most feminist utopias champion a collective motherhood.

Plato believes that both men and women should live communally and share property and sexual partners. After the birth of a child, state officers (male or female) take over the raising of the child whose identity is concealed from the parents. This makes men and women to continue with their guardianship training, although Guardian women are expected to nurse the child. Mothers in Herland do live closely with their children for up to three years, where they nurse them and care for them in conjunction with the teachers. But after the "baby years" are over, they resume their regular work duties. Blurring the biological link between mother and child leads to a redefinition of the parent-child relationship. Each Herlander has a first name, but she has no family name. Every member of the community regards every child, not just her own biological child, as her own responsibility. Gilman thus transforms the private world of mother and child into a community of mothers and children. Gilman believes that mothering should be collective to ensure that children will learn comradeship, community interest. Moreover, specialists, who are not necessarily biological mothers, take over the role of educating children. Somel tells Van that Herlanders believe that childrearing is the highest art. So

Herlanders gladly entrust it only to those who are the most skilled. But the communal care disrupts family intimacy and autonomy.

Plato compares nurture to the eye which can turn to the light or obscurity. Its rightful task is to guide the eye towards the light. Education is like a nurturing eye. It can bring the best which is latent in the soul by directing the soul to the right objects. The soul is imitative and it assimilates itself to its surroundings. Therefore, its surroundings should be conductive to the soul's enhancement. Thus, infant education must be undertaken through controlling the environment, by creating a healthy atmosphere and exposing children to desired objects. Likewise, Gilman's perfect motherhood also involves "utilizing a controlled educational environment to facilitate children's development and ensure their optimum functioning in her utopian society" (81).

Plato believes that negative emotions such as anger and jealousy undermine virtue, happiness, and social harmony. Similarly Gilman does not believe that negative experiences hold potential for growth. She shelters her children from these negative emotions and feelings. Every function Herlanders perform is geared towards providing an ideal environment for their children. They make *Herland* as safe as possible by removing all possible dangers from nurseries and dwellings. They cultivate the forest to make it safe and attractive for the infants. Industry develops highest quality of health care and hygiene, so the raising of infants and toddlers is disease free.

The *Herland* babies are surrounded by waterfalls, grasses, trees, sandy areas, birds, frogs, cats, and exotic flowers. By modern society's values, this education method may be too much strict control and intervention. As Cornford has summarized, in Plato's *Republic*, mating occurs during annual marriage festivals, and Philosophers. Kings are in

charge of pairing individuals for the sole intention of superior breeding. In other words, the best specimens are selected and put to perform their reproductive functions. The Guardians themselves are not aware of his manipulation and are led to believe the unions happen by chance. In between festivals, Guardians practice celibacy. Herlanders practice selective breeding as well. In the discussion with Somel, Van learns that any woman with bad qualities would be asked not to give birth, so that these qualities are not passed on to later generations. The quality of children becomes Herlanders' utmost national concern. Gilman divides Herland women into two main groups or classes: mothers and non-mothers. Those who are suitable for motherhood exhibit qualities of wisdom and physical strength appropriate to life in the community. Non-mothers are "the physically, mentally, and morally weak women" (180). However, non-mothers have access to communal mothering, so this role is not completely removed. Gilman's tendency to deify motherhood is linked to her tendency to deny sexuality. And both tendencies can find resources in her middle class consciousness.

Nineteenth century was a time when there was not reliable or easily accessible birth control. Women got pregnant very fast. As middle class women's social roles narrowed to childrearing, they lost the prestige and the productive role they had enjoyed in an earlier agrarian economy. They recovered their lost genteel status by moralizing motherhood, purging its sexual associations, and promoting the conventional Mary image. The Herlanders have textile, agricultural, and publishing industries on the same scale as the contemporary United States. (Preindustrial societies also tend not to have average population densities of 250–300 people per square mile, as Herland does.) We may not see the factories themselves, but the products betray their existence, and the

attitude of industry is pervasive. Van notes: "They loved their country because it was their nursery, their play- ground, and workshop. . . . They were proud of it as a workshop, proud of their record of ever-increasing efficiency" (95). Gilman's method of feminism is not to release women from the domestic sphere but to expand the domestic sphere to encompass everything and apply industrial methods and domestic economy across the spectrum. this characterization of *Herland* as a scientific utopia next to its standard reception as a feminist utopia, we come to the topic of feminist science studies. Hilary Rose suggests that the plot of *Herland* allows Gilman to "poke fun at masculinist scientific rationality, and Bryson writes that Gilman exposes the inherent weaknesses in any practice of science that casts itself in androcentric terms

More specifically, Jane Donawerth says that in the novel, genetics is applied not through the traditionally masculine values of hunting, competition, and individuality, but through the traditionally feminine values of nurturing and, more generally, creating an environment where no one will be hurt. The field of feminist science studies is by no means homogeneous, but one fundamental charge is that women have been systematically excluded from scientific professions and have been assumed naturally unfit for such intellectual activity. That the women of Herland have made the advances they have is certainly a feminist statement by which Gilman contradicts millennia of gender stereotypes expressed explicitly both in the mainstream scientific thought of her own day and in the utopian tradition. So far as the utopian tradition began with Plato, it began on a note of gender equality, as Plato stipulates that women will have the same educational and professional opportunities in his Republic: Natural gifts are to be found here and there in both creatures alike; and every occupation is open to both, so far as their

natures are concerned. This equality, however, is political, not natural, as Plato also asks, "Do you know of any human occupation in which the male sex is not superior to the female . . . ?"(11). One of the most common feminist critiques of science is that it seeks to "dominate" nature and has an inherently exploitative function. As Vandana Shiva puts it, "The dominant science system emerged as a liberating force not for humanity as a whole . . . but as a masculine and patriarchal project which necessarily entailed the subjugation of both nature and women"(62).

Bryson is incorrect in suggesting that Gilman implicitly rejects the nineteenth-century explorer-scientist's goal of conquering nature. Gilbert and Gubar, on the other hand, are certainly right in saying that the crucial difference between Herland and our land is the feeling Gilman strives to give us that culture in her feminist utopia is no longer opposed to nature, in part because of the intercession of the female. More accurately, though, it is because of the intercession of science. Culture is no longer opposed to nature because nature has been thoroughly brought under the control of culture. Herland is a little paradise that is designed too perfect. Gilman basically deals with any potential areas of conflict or evil by simply getting rid of them. Alcohol or drugs do not exist in Herland. There are no dangerous animals. Cats are bred to destroy mice but not birds. All plants produce nutritious nuts or fruits. Johnson-Bogart observes that this eliminating the unwanted is a strategy for achieving perfection in utopias.

Gilmans' imaginary world with only women as a single species gives a pictorial fantasy land where there is peace and harmony. This world is not tainted and it is pure as a virgin like the entire women society, which is not exposed to the hazard and exploited universe in which humanity lives. Everything happens in Gilman's world have a deep

connection to the universe. Women are capable of creating a world which patronizes with nature and their fates are entangled together. Nature carries out its offspring without any mediator to help so as the women of Herland who are capable of controlling their own fate. Women and nature sink together, they both can be delicate and at the same time they have a fierce strength which is mostly undermined in our world. The third chapter discusses about the reproduction of the women in Herland and their artistic connection to the nature.

CHAPTER THREE

Procreation and Ecology

The novel *Herland* presents an advanced Industrialized Society that uses Herlander's radical mastery over environmental engineering and the environment. Perkins has produced an approach of critical reading from eco feminism and feminist science in characterizing the novel. This has been abundantly studied in terms of gender politics and far in less terms of scientific utopia. When the characterization of *Herland* is put up as a scientific utopia next to its standard reception as a feminist utopia, it arrives at the subject of feminist science studies. The field of feminist science studies is by no means homogeneous, but one fundamental charge is that women have been systematically excluded from participating in any scientific profession. They have been assumed naturally unfit for such intellectual activity. Gilman contradicts the millennia of gender stereotypes by enhancing the novel with more advancement, with the women in Herland. This is certainly a feminist statement that expressed explicitly both in the mainstream scientific thought of her own day and in the utopian tradition.

As C. J. David explains, there are two advantages of science to utopia, the establishment of human dominion over the natural environment and the reduction of nature to a realm of law and therefore predictability. Far from protesting this utopian tradition as masculine aberrannce, Gilman firmly embraces it raising her ideal society on the twin pillars of ecological engineering and eugenics. Gilman strives to give a culture in feminist utopia that is no longer opposed to nature in a part because of the intercession of the female. This is more accurate though it is because of the intercession of science, now

culture again is no longer opposed to nature because nature has been thoroughly brought under the control of culture.

Gilman claims that culture, in general, is androcentric in nature. This has been the case at least since history was written. Bryson writes that Gilman "exposes the inherent weakness in any practice of science that casts itself in androcentric terms" (58). In her *Our Androcentric Culture*, or *The Man-made World* (1970) Gilman argues at the length how culture which includes all aspects of humanness, family, health and beauty, art, literature, games and sports, ethics and religion, education, society and fashion, law and government, crime and punishment are all man-made. She explores that acting on this assumption, all human standards have been based on male characteristics, and when we wish to praise the work of a woman, we say she has a 'masculine mind'. *A Unique History* says, this led me very promptly to the conviction that those 'feminine charms' we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity. She also provides three distinct fields in life- 'masculine, feminine, and human'. The masculine is the man's sphere and the feminine is the women's sphere and the humanity is of which belong to both alike.

According to the theory of Natural Selection, Charles Darwin emphases that "though in almost all species the female was the choice-maker, the males completed among themselves, in human societies the privilege of choice-maker had passed to the male, with deleterious effects" (xxiv). Furthermore in human societies, the men compete among themselves in order to possess women, "the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their place in nature, will leave most progeny" (xxiv). At the beginning of the novel, when the three men reach Herland, Terry, "who was rich enough to do as he

pleased" (1-2), thinks that he can seduce the women of Herland: "Terry, in his secret heart, had visions of a sort of sublimated summer resort-just Girls and Girls and Girls . . . Terry was popular among women, even when there were other men around" (6). Terry is well liked by women and is more successful than his friends to attract them. He imagines that he has a better chance than his friends to become the king of Herland and conquer it.

Gilman pokes fun at Darwin's assumption of natural selection and superiority of men by introducing strong and courageous female characters in *Herland*.

> To them the country was a unit – it was theirs. They themselves were a unit, a conscious group; they thought in terms of the community. As such, their time-sense was not limited to the hopes and ambitions of an individual life. Therefore, they habitually considered and carried out plans for improvement which might cover centuries. (79)

The three men come from a patriarchal society that ascribes timidity, emotion, and weakness to femininity, and associates reason to masculinity. Despite the fact that the three men are strangers and new comers for the women of Herland, they do not scare the three men. Van describes that "with no more terror . . . they . . . frankly, curiously stared at us" (13). Gilman also uses humor to challenge the presumed Darwin's human evolutionary development and the idea of natural selection that emphasizes male –female distinctions as well as the lower place of women in the patriarchal societies. Upon the three men's arrival at Herland, three young women are on the trees, and Van describes, "We started up the tree, separated into three swift-moving figures and fled upward" (12). Darwin's theory of struggle for existence implies that the lower and the weaker women

are, the poorer they are. But the low class women who do the most work get the least money, and in this way, women do not count in the market economy.

Herland is a utopia constructed out of the aftermath of some natural disaster and social holocausts. Two thousand years ago Herland was still a polygamous, slaveholding, and heterosexual society. But the original population was reduced by war. The remaining population is driven up from their coastline to settle in hinterland. The majority of the remaining male population is composed of slaves. In slave revolt, these slaves kill all their male masters, boys, along with old women, mothers. The slaves seize the remaining young women and girls and turn them into their slaves. The infuriated virgins rise up to resist their oppression fate by killing off all the conquerors. Having done so, they are left without a choice; all men in the country were literally killed off, the women went on to build an exclusively female world.

Gilman arranged three men and three Herlanders to marry. Through their marriages, Gilman brought into question the unequal monogamy, sexual subordination, femininity, the role of a wife, and the role of a husband. Herlanders are an all-female society before the three male travelers arrive. Herlanders have no idea about sexual difference. Accordingly, before the appearance of three male travelers, the word 'sex' never appears in *Herland* as a signifier for sexual intercourse. Herlanders have no sexual life, sexual feeling, sexual needs or desires. Herland women not only live without men, but also need no men to reproduce. The nation uses parthenogenesis, asexual reproduction, as some plants and insects do.

As Herlanders have not seen men for 2000 years, they have no way of relating to men as romantic sexual lovers. To them, love is not sexual; love is comradely, warm,

sisterly, and motherly instead. So even after the heterosexual marriages, friendship and mutual respect should come before sexual expression. The girls also demand the men to be compassionate to the female country's values before they make the great change from parthenogenesis to bisexuality the sexual intercourse is not romantic sex love but purely a reproductive function. Herlanders permit sex only for procreation purposes. The wives mate only in the mating season. Sex for pleasures sake alone or for its own sake does not exist. Herlanders don't understand why men want to have sex "in season and out of season". Van describes Ellador at the consummation of their marriage as unmistakably aloof and coll. After marriage, Ellador refuses to give in and have sex with Van as often as he would like. Another couple, Jeff and Celis also engage in intercourse for purposes of procreation only. Terry insists his wife to learn to be submissive.

Throughout the entire text, Terry has been interested in only one thing- women, who are sexual objects to him. Therefore, when he cannot persuade his wife Alima for sexual love, he tries to seduce her. He is first arrested and later expelled from the all-female country when the three Herlanders marry the three male travelers, the men are valued initially for their reproductive capabilities. In contrast, in Aldous Huxleys and George Orwells' world of sex keeps humans from becoming machines, and women are the symbols of men's sexuality. The Herland practice of employing sex only for reproductive purposes like utopian Herland to two famous dystopian novels: 1984 and The Handmaids tale. In this horrifying society that is "founded on hatred'' there is no link "between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman" (267). Like in *Herland*, the sex instinct has been eradicated. In Orwells' world, non procreative sex is what keeps humans from becoming machines, and women are the

symbols of men's sexuality. After all, in this dystopian land there is no loyalty, except loyalty toward the party; there is no love. But Gilman never addresses women's development. As wives, Herlanders have not changed. They marry the three male travelers initially because they value the men for their reproductive capabilities. Men are placed in this society only on a limited scale and only to prove the authors point. Throughout the marriages, Van and Jeff appreciated women and their culture of Herland. But the marriages fail to aid women in developing a sense of sexual intimacy, a romantic view of marriage, a view such as couples stay together out of respect as well as love and passion, instead of out of one and supposedly higher purpose-procreation. Gilman's belief in women's superiority contributes to her denying sexuality in *Herland*. But the restrictions of her time also contribute to her denying sexuality in the novel. As middle class women's social roles narrowed to childrearing, they lost the prestige and the productive role they enjoyed in an earlier agrarian economy.

They recovered their lost genteel status by proving the angle in the house images and women's domesticity, and purging sexual association. In contrast the early 1920s emphasizes sexual liberation and sexual pleasure. Herland was written in 1915. Women's utopian representation in Herland is caught precisely between these two ideological moments or two distinct periods of feminism. It breaks with the cult of angels in the house sphere on one hand, and yet fore-closes and eliminates sexual pleasure on the other.

The physical land of Herland is one of the novel's most interesting features—and, one of its most troubled is argued here. Herland is regularly referred to as "Arcadian" and "pastoral" in the critical literature and the male explorers respond with

admiration to the landscape, which they say is "too pretty to be true": "A land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden" (13). Gilman has been praised for her environmentalist thinking in Herland, and in certain aspects, praise is justified. Her awareness of the environmental impact of the meat and dairy industries is forward-thinking, although it is limited here only to land usage and does not relate to the larger problem of pollution.

> Gilman's concern is with changing consciousness. She is free to create a material world that encompasses science and technology on the one hand and the beauty and simplicity of a pastoral life, on the other, and to avoid the major error of both. (xxii)

Bryson praises the Herlanders' "conservation-minded agriculture" and writes that "Gilman's views on the importance of nutrient and resource recycling are highly progressive" (76). The practice is admirable and, while "progressive" from a limited perspective, is in fact a concept to be found among the earliest scientific utopias. In the 1660 "continuation" of *New Atlantis*, one finds the practice of,

> Meliorating the Earth with several composts; as the dry with Marl, the lean and hungry with dung of pigeons, man's, or horse's, soot, seas and or owse, chalk; the sandy with mud, the cold with ashes; the rich with brakes, straw, sea-weeds, folding of sheep; all which, as we find the ground, we use and apply to it. (42)

Critics have also wanted to see *Herland* more specifically as an eco-feminist text. Eco-feminism is not a unified field, and a variety of perspectives, sometimes conflicting,

are grouped under the heading. A foundational principle is the suggestion that the subjugation of women and the subjugation of the natural world share certain affinities and may be part of a single phenomenon or logic of domination and ought to be examined together.

Many argue that the science, industry, and technology that brought about the level of environmental destruction that is seen today are characteristically masculine and that women may have an inherently closer connection to nature; others, however, reject such positions based on essentialist views of gender. Other common principles include the rejection of mechanistic views of nature, rationalism, the nature/ culture dichotomy, and systems of natural hierarchies. Eco-feminism also stresses the continuity between humans and the natural world, pays heed to the knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples, and, at its fringe, advocates various forms of goddess worship and mysticism. A careful reading of the novel reveals that *Herland* violates these values in so many particulars that it is puzzling how critics can suggest that "Gilman is adopting, in eco-feminist terms, what is identifiable as a social eco-feminist position" (118).

The "savages" who surround Herland are to be noted. Although the women are aware of the indigenous tribes in their vicinity, they ignore them, at best, assuming them to have no valuable knowledge, ecological or otherwise. Many critics have engaged with the racism inherent in the novel, but grim possibility that the explorers' indigenous guides might be telling the truth when they say that "a good many" had gone to Herland 'but they never came back' is to be considered. When the guides tell the male explorers of a mysterious "Woman Land," they say that a river that comes from there runs "red and blue." Terry and Jeff suggest that it might be cinnabar and indigo. When they find smears

of coloring along the river, it turns out to be "chemicals of some sort." The guide says that it varies: "One day blue—one day red—one day green" (6).

Water pollution is obviously not of concern to Gilman's utopians—at least not downstream. From their airplane, the men observe that the "land looked like an enormous park, only it was evidently more an enormous garden" (13). Entering the forest, they find only fruit-bearing trees "under as careful cultivation as so many cabbages" (15). Despite the tone of this observation, the men remain generally impressed with the Herland landscape, as are most readers. From a fairy-tale perspective, one could agree with Gilbert and Gubar that Gilman presents an "earthly paradise" (75), but from any sort of realistic point of view, and certainly an eco-critical/eco-feminist one, it is difficult to look past many features. It should be noted, at this early stage, the men do not see: "All we found moving in those woods . . . were birds" (16). Van confirms later that "there were no wild beasts in the country and very few tame ones" (51). *Herland* comes up short against another eco-feminist concern. When Van questions Zava about animals, the conversation reveals an attitude far from a concern for animal rights:

> "Have you no animals?" "We have cats," she said. "The father is not very useful." "Have you no cattle—sheep—horses?" I drew some rough outlines of these beasts and showed them to her. "We had, in the very old days, these," said Somel, and sketched with swift sure touches a sort of sheep or llama, "and these"—dogs, of two or three kinds, "and that"—pointing to my absurd but recognizable horse. "What became of them?" asked Jeff. "We do not want them anymore." (49)

Even the famous cats, the "big, handsome silky things, friendly with everyone and devotedly attached to their special owners," tell a mixed story (52). It is considered very humane and tasteful that the cats have been bred not to kill birds, yet they have also, apart from purring and squeaking, been devoiced, presumably because it annoyed the women. Far from finding intrinsic value in nonhuman species, the Herlanders see only their use value. Discussing dogs, for example, Moadine wonders that "in most civilized countries a kind of animal is kept which is no longer useful" (54). Donna Haraway writes that "eco-feminists have perhaps been most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as resource to be mapped and appropriated in bourgeois, Marxist, or masculinist projects" (182). Far from the eco-feminist ideal, Herlanders view nature as precisely such a resource to be appropriated, putting them squarely in line with the (masculine) Renaissance utopian tradition. The inhabitants of Thomas More's Utopia, for example, "consider it a most just cause for war when a people which does not use its soil but keeps it idle and waste nevertheless forbids the use and possession of it to others who by rule of nature ought to be maintained by it" (76).

Eco-feminism holds that "healthy balanced ecosystem, including human and nonhuman inhabitants, must maintain diversity" and that "ecologically, environmental simplification is as significant a problem as environmental pollution." It therefore abhors "biological simplification that is the wiping out of whole species". Again, this is the opposite of what is seen in Herland, where the forests have been "reset." From a realistic perspective, Gilman's knowledge of ecology is undeniably limited. She may introduce cats that do not kill birds, but in reality, such a pervasive destruction of plant and insect species would wipe out most bird species as well.

It is not that one should look at Herland realistically, but any claims for Gilman's eco-feminism or "proto-environmentalism" (iii) that should require. Given that in South America, where the novel is usually presumed to be set, a single hectare of forest can have up to 250–300 species of trees, and a single tree can contain hundreds of species of insects, the environmental engineering of the Herlanders involves not just the removal of dogs, cows, horses, sheep, and pigs but the wholesale extermination of many thousands of species. This realization firmly invalidates claims such as Bryson's that "Gilman expands our notion of community by linking bird, tree, insect, water, earth, and human in close and apparently benevolent association" (78) Far from an ecotopia, *Herland*, if read realistically, represents ecocide. The fourth chapter brings out the feministic views, their archetypes, sexual strength and it also talks about the women's attachment to the nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

Feminists Vision

The term 'eco-feminism' was first used by the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* (1974) which was considered to be a seminal part of Third Wave Feminism comprising a set of philosophical, practical, analytical concepts. The connection between ecology, women and population growth is an interesting trend. During the rise and subsequent growth of capitalism, the required labour force was much higher than the resources at their disposal. As an obvious result, women were denied contraception so as to facilitate a spurt in population growth, supplying manpower to meet the demands of industrialization and capitalism. However, with time, as demand and supply were at par, the law of diminishing marginal utility came into effect and with every additional unit of labour that was supplied, the corresponding demand for the same diminished.

Eco-feminism is a theory that has evolved from various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: "peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements" (1). Western culture's oppression of nature, women, and animals can be traced back to the construction of the dominant human male as a self, and Gaard suggests that "the logic of domination is rooted in the alienation and the myth of a separate self" (327). The dualisms of self or other, according to Gaard and Gruen, "are manifested as culture/ nature, man/ woman, white/ non-white, human/ non-human animal . . . reason/ emotion" (237). According to these dualisms, all things associated with the self, is considered masculine, are valued, and all things, described as other, are devalued. Gaard and Gruen recount the sources of

the separation of culture from nature that results in the oppression of women and nature. These sources are scientific revolution, patriarchal religion, human evolutionary development, and metaphorical or ideological assumptions of the separation of culture from nature. They express the sources that result in the separation of culture and men from nature, women, and animals. According to Greta Gaard:

> Eco-feminism studies the structure of oppressive systems, identifying three steps in the 'logic of domination'': first, alienation (the belief in a separate self-identity, individualism, autonomy), then hierarchy (elevating the self-based on its unique characteristic), and finally, domination (justifying the subordination of others based on their inferiority and lack of the Self's unique characteristic). (323)

At one point, population growth was considered to be a deterrent to socio-economic advancement as it gave rise to the problem of unemployment due to population explosion which the profit-driven system refused to accommodate. Thus the allowance of contraception to women was initiated in highly industrialized countries to put a tab on the ever- increasing population and the proportionally increasing manpower.

The root of repressions is hierarchy, as Gaard puts it, and "eco-feminists tend to believe hierarchy takes place as a result of the self/other opposition" (3). They consider masculinity as a 'self' that is separated from the 'other' (women, nature, and animal that are considered to be interconnected to each other). Feminists have also argued that "women's oppression in western culture is characterized by their association with emotion, the body, and nature" (159). Western culture regards the linkage between women, nature, water, and animal to emphasize the inferiority and oppression of these

categories. Most eco-feminists attest to the interrelationship between the exploitation of nature and the degradation of women.

According to Demaris S. Wehr (1987), the focus of feminist approach is on how social forces determine social behaviour. In other words, feminism is interested in the fact that society has a powerful influence on how humans behave. Therefore, if a society is androcentric, then men and women will have androcentric behaviours, tendencies and beliefs. Conversely, a Jungian explanation of social behavior is more biological. Wehr (1987) illustrates this with Ann Ulanov's Jungian justification regarding social behaviour.

If behaving in a "feminine" manner, for example, is biologically, genetically, and even ontologically determined, then certainly women who do not act in a way that are violating their own natures. This is what the Jungian view of the "feminine" and the "masculine" implies (13). However, Wehr argues that if the feminine and masculine is explored further, a certain degree of ambiguity is revealed as the two concepts which are not strictly gender-specific. She says "each one represents a potential for development in each sex" (13). Wehr's thesis parallels Gilmans' because both argue that many of human behaviours categorized as gender specific are actually more neutral than society would like to believe.

Gilman, for example, states that women are actually the archetypal worker. She says as a matter of fact, industry is in its origin feminine; that is, maternal. It is the overflowing fountain of mother-love and mother-power which first prompts the human race to labor; and for long period men performed no productive industry at all; being merely hunters and fighters. Though in androcentric culture men have become the economic creature, Gilman believes that women can bring a different set of values to

industry – maintenance of peace, health, order, and morality - based on the experience of care and nourishment of children at home as Vandyck admits:

> As I learned more and more to appreciate what these women had accomplished, the less proud I was of what we, with all our manhood, had done. . . .You see, they had no wars. They had no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies. They were sisters, and as they grew together, not by competition, but by united action. (60)

It is the economic woman that Gilman tries to portray in *Herland*; women who are simultaneously industrious and motherly without any concerns with whether they are the archetypal feminine or not as observed by Vandyck in the novel:

> These women, whose essential distinction of motherhood was the dominant note of their whole culture, were strikingly deficient in what we call "femininity." This led me very promptly to the conviction that those "feminine charms" we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity – developed to please us because they had to please us, and in no way essential to the real fulfillment of their great process (58-59).

Vandyck's observations are contrasted with Terry's frustration with the women in Herland: "It's likely women - just a pack of women – would have hung together like that! We all know women can't organize – they scrap like anything – are frightfully jealous" (58). He feels that the women of Herland are not real because "these women aren't womanly" (58). What Gilman does is to encompass all the stereotype notions and expectations of the feminine – sensuous or objects of male pleasure, tending toward

passivity and socially isolated within the domain of home; tending to be emotionally unstable and inclining towards being moody; and generally not having independence, power, and ability to control life's challenges – in Terry's character to provide an avenue for comparison to show the very androcentric nature of society.

> …Tell us – what is the work of the world, that men do – which we have not here?" "Oh, everything," Terry said grandly. "The men do everything, with us." He squared his broad shoulders and lifted his chest. "We do not allow our women to work. Women are loved – idolized – honoured – kept in the home to care for the children. (60-61)

In addition, Terry's misplaced confidence seems more ridiculous when the entirety of what he takes for granted does not make any sense in Herland where the women's role extends from childcare to construction of industries that mark the progress of this society without any men.

Gilman was undeniably ahead of her time, that some of her utopian social visions regarding women have become a social reality for most societies. Gilman's projection of daring animus images through the women of Herland provides alternatives to traditional androcentric roles and modes of thought. It also shows alternative images and ways of living for both men and women. She illustrates how women have been forced into restrictive roles in society – staying at home, forbidden to be industrious or to pursue knowledge. Through the novel *Herland*, Gilman also shows the unnatural division of roles according to androcentric believes that the female is characteristically finer and weaker, thus needing masculine protection.

Gilman believes that women's reproductive role is crafting the proper national genealogy as the enduring component of her feminism. In Gilman's fiction the utopian reproductive scenarios and alternative visions of maternity are offered as scheme for the social change. Women's work is not solely in the home, Gilman argued, but also in building a better society and ultimately reproducing a racially 'pure' nation.

Just because women construct their own world, or even an all-female world, where they achieve utmost autonomy, does not mean that this supposedly improved society is a feminist one. Parthenogenesis a divine intervention solves the problem five or ten years later. A woman miraculously gives birth to a child. The mother bears four more children in four consecutive years. These female children (parthenogenesis births produce only girls children) in turn at the age of twenty five are able to reproduce in the same manner their mother did, each giving birth to five baby girls. Thus Herlanders are saved from extinction. It is also worthy to note Herland becomes a nation of mothers and daughters, all of whom have descended from one ancestral mother.

Herland intertwines utopia and dystopia. The three works all underscore celibacy, chastity, eradication of sex instinct, sex for reproductive purpose, and collective and technological control of reproduction. Second, by making sex intercourse a ritual only for reproductive purpose, Herlanders fail to grow. Among the three explorers, Van represents the average or moderate type; Jeff is romantic, gentle, and chivalric; and Terry is a wealthy, macho, patriarchal playboy and a womanizer. So through their marriages Gilman illustrated three types of male-female relationships. Her purpose was to explore men's development as the novel progresses. These three men are an example respective order of development. Terry is the bottom of the scale because he is incorrigibly

chauvinistic; Van is at the top because he is able to free himself from the prejudice. Van and Ellador are best friends as well as lovers after Van accepts the arrangement that Ellador proposes about their sexual relationship; Jeff is in the middle because he considers the wife an element of worship. Although harmonious, Jeff's relationship with Celis seems to lack depth.

After all, women are superior to men. Men are wanted for reproductive purpose principally, and women are first and foremost mothers in Herland. Anyone who cannot keep up with this all-female country's supposedly superior values needs to be got rid of. Terry in fact, eliminating the unwanted is a strategy achieving perfection in many classica utopias. Gilman posited means the main, if not the only source of women's problems. Men also cause social ills. The absence of men from Herland therefore results in the absence of their characteristic trait. That is why Herland does not witness wars, conflicts, violence, competition, and misery. It is a calm, rational, harmonious, peaceful world inhabited by equally pleasant women. It is too perfect a utopia that is completely isolated from outside influence.

The female body is recurrent presence throughout the productions of world culture over thousand years and is still the focus of different and, multifarious schools of criticism. Plato differentiates between the world of appearances, which is unstable and untrue, and the intelligible world which is stable and true. The physical body, as an element pertaining to the former, can and does change over time. The soul, on the other hand is an element pertaining to the latter because of its inherent permanency. Therefore body in Plato is negatively constructed. It is generated "female" and rendered weak, passive silent, and self-denying. This is also generally the western configuration of the

body. More's utopia, however, is an exception because the utopians do not disdain the importance of physical attributes. They believe the endowments of the body makes one esteem the virtues of the mind more. Men and women see each other naked before deciding to marry. If we look at late nineteenth century and first half of twentieth century America realistic writers such as William Howells, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, they all dramatized a gross and brutal relationship between capital and female body. These writers maintained or reproduced patriarchy through commodifying the female body.

Beauty in definition is supposed to be a subjective thing. Society dictates what is beautiful and everyone falls for it. Yet societal norms also make people insecure. For the sake of women's autonomy and superiority, Gilman, in contrast, evades the myths of femininity and physical attractiveness. Van realizes femininity is a creation meant to satisfy men's wishes and pleasure,

> Those feminine charms we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but are artificial and are mere reflected masculinity-developed to please us because they had to please us, and in no way essential to the real fulfillment of their great process. (60)

In *Women and Economics,* Gilman wrote about the role of economics as a crucial factor influencing male-female relationships. She contended that the way a living is earned is the most influential factor in life. Human beings are the only animal species in which women depend on men for food, the only animal in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation. Therefore she made Herland women not economically dependent upon men.

They believe that the inferiority of women and nature is a discursive social construct, and in the dominant patriarchal cultures, as Gaard puts it, "'reality is divided according to gender, and a higher value is placed on those attributes associated with masculinity, a construction that is called 'hierarchical dualism'" (18). In these cultures, they expose false hierarchical opposition between men and women associated with the earth or nature. They separate men from women and nature, and see the linkage between women and nature in order to dominate both women and nature. However, eco-feminists' attempt, according to Gaard, is to reject the self/ other, man/ woman and culture/ nature dualisms of patriarchal thought and to liberate women and nature from oppression.

Gilman throughout the novel tries to improve an environment where children are closer to nature, and undercuts the distinction between nature and culture. Through improving their agriculture to the highest point, Herlanders solve the problem of overpopulation, hence rejecting Darwin who mentions that the problem of overpopulation of species is often solved by competition and war for the essential nutrients which people need for survival. She shows a utopia organized by women that supports their people with the standard of peace, comfort, and progress to refuse any exploitation of women, nature, and animals. They also try to educate and tame the three men, Jeff and Van, who are samples of gentle and non-dominating people, but Terry who is a sample of a separate self is banished. Based on Gaard's theory of eco-feminism, Herland is a country based on a form of justice in social relations that "honors the interdependence of diverse humans with each other, other animal species, and the earth" (159).

CHAPTER FIVE

Summation

Herland is a first person narrative recounted in a pseudo-documentary style by protagonist Vandyck Jennings, and it has a style of an explorer's journal. Much of the information is presented in academic tones, yet the journal format is more conducive to story-telling than to a structured, textbook style of writing. Vandyck's recollections of his days in Herland are presented as reminiscences, and his detailed accountings of Herland society are worked into the overall narrative. Vandyck tells his story chronologically. So the details of his knowledge build over time and they are not presented in an organized fashion. His sociological viewpoint is critical to the author's central intent, which is to convince the reader of the feasibility of her utopian ideals.

Author Charlotte Perkins Gilman writes *Herland* with an eye toward social change. Vandyck is a man of science, representing the prevailing wisdom of the Victorian society, which Gilman seeks to change. This novel is also a characteristic of Victorian Era writing with its indirect, almost oblique allusions to matters such as sexuality, and with its tediously rapturous descriptive style. If the author can make a case compelling enough to sway someone like Vandyck to her viewpoint, she believes she can succeed in changing the reader's mind as well.

A close reading of *Herland* reveals a number of implications including the principle of organization of the community, portrayal of different gender signals, signs of patriarchal ways of thinking, restrictions imposed on women, and Herlandian ways in shaping their people to achieve an efficient community. In forming such community, theories of learning, education, and training along with a variety of different perspectives

and dimensions need to be considered since this play a shaping role in educating the people.

> "Gilman's utopian fiction, which might be said to have a dialogic relationship with readers, is instructive and her didactic genre ignites transformational possibilities of writing and reading; for this reason the fiction and non-fiction of hers invite the readers to participate in the dialogue both verbally and behaviorally" (4).

The narrative's focus on the cultivated forests and overall "cleanliness" of Herland has tended to distract critics, who often mischaracterize the country as "pre-industrial", but industry is there indeed. The Herlanders have textile, agriculture, and publishing industries on the same scale as the contemporary United States. The factories may not be evident but the products betray their existence, and the attitude of industry is pervasive. Vandyck notes: "they loved their country because it was their nursery, their playground, and workshop. . . ." (95).

Only in the Utopian novel *Herland* does she envision a full transcendence of the sorrows and perplexities that most concerned her. Of course, Gilman did not, by turning to Utopian fiction, distinguish herself from radical compatriots. Populists like Ignatius Donnelly and socialists from Edward Bellamy to Jack London all took advantage of that genre's usefulness as a stage for dramatizing ideas that, broached in the context of the actually existing, appeared insufficiently plausible to move as many adherents as were required to effect radical change. Outside Utopia, however, Gilman remained deaf to what many of her contemporaries deemed the appeals of pragmatism. If sexism is consensual, as it surely was in all but a remote corner of Gilman's world, egalitarian

truths require a more secure ground than is provided by either expert or public opinion. To a feminist in Progressive Era America, adopting an inter-subjective position on truth meant trading the impartial rule of physical 'Law' for the complicit authority of men like Jeff, Vandyck, and Terry.

Gilman's method of feminism is not to release women from the domestic sphere but to expand the domestic sphere to encompass everything and apply industrial methods and domestic economy across the spectrum. "Gilman envisioned approach, is no less than the scientific management of all human labour, be in industrial, agriculture, or reproductive" (74). Gilman's place in tradition of scientific utopia has received less attention, and it is time that we bring this into the discussion around the revival of her works.

William Leiss writes that "in the context of modern utopian thought, 'mastery of nature' is a shorthand expression for the guarantee of an adequate material provision for human wants" (16). Though Gilman's vision of restricting the landscape in Herland may be distasteful from a current ecological perspective, it both follows and develops common aspects the utopian tradition. Gilman's solution, beyond that of cultivating the whole land like a garden, reveals the tendencies in the scientific utopia that has now became the base for the modern dystopia. As William Leiss notes,

> " The same scientific and technological order which promise to liberate mankind from its universal enemies like hunger, diseases, and exhausting labour also enables ruling elites to increase their ability to control individual behaviour" (169).

Herland differs from most utopias in that it gives little attention to the theme of government, and in what clues it does give as to power structures, it differs again. In scientific utopias the power is usually wielded by scientist, but the women of *Herland* seem to be in such agreement on everything that they are in no need of government and they are exemplified in the modern versions by H. G. Wells as 'Samurai'. *Herland* projects alternative societal model and possibilities for women, and men, in a changing society. As A. J. Lane states, "in her utopia, Charlotte Perkins Gilman transforms the private world of mother-child, isolated in the individual home, into a community of mothers and children in a socialized world . . . in the interest of us all" (xxvii). What this means is that Gilman expands the importance of the feminine such as motherhood and childcare from the domestic domain to a larger societal significance without falling into the simplistic opinion that only women are oppressed.

The analysis of *Herland* is about an idealistic society that is emphasized as a scientific exploration envisioned by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. This novel has many anticipated ideas that had been imagined even before many decades by Gilman. This kind of imaginations and the vision for women in particular are not highly appreciated. But Gilman gave an attempt to break out this notion and contributed this novel to the literature. An in depth analysis of *Herland* gives an experience of women power which now being an explicit ideal to the novel. Through this novel Gilman has brought about the gender equity which once only an imagination but now it is re-examined and taken into action. Though many critics and writers talk about feminism and gender equality, Gilman has given all the highlights of women power, and their mastery in environment and their ability to govern their own land.

The research progresses with the idea of woman in Herland, ever wanting a masculine support and their women power can make the isolated society a secular and proficient society. When the other two men admired the culture and heritage of Herlanders, Terry takes it an advantage to exploit the spontaneity in their life. It is the invasion of men into women's life could strangle the whole ambiance of the society. It is clear that Women can be independent and be free from any sorts of oppression until one takes control over her.

Thus feminism is endorsed for societal, political and all other rights of adult females, equal to those of work forces. The idea of defining genders begins when the men first meet the women of Herland. They have masculine physical features, having short functional hairs and lacking curves. The all-female society operates chiefly around the child rearing process. Gilman called herself a humanist and believed that domestic environment oppressed women through the patriarchal beliefs of held by society. Gilman embrace the theory of reform and Darwinisim and argued that Charles Darwins' theories of evolution presented only male in given in the process of human evolution. But Gilman pictures a utopian land which is populated only with women and her radical thoughts brings a revolution among women writings.

This is an analytical representation of Gilman's contribution to feminist' movement, however, her eco-feminist thoughts have not been fully explored. This project has studied her utopian novel and explored her eco-feministic views by drawing a detailed study about the patriarchal society and the women in Herland. This in turn explores her foresight of deep concern on ecology. *Herland* here takes the traditional stereotypes about adult female and reverses them wholly. Possibly one of the most

controverted women's rightist facets is the fact that adult females of Herland reproduce without the aid of the work forces. This characteristics of the novel helps to make a genuinely self-supporting society of the adult females that the narrator cannot look to hold on. This makes these adult female superhuman.

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Unhousing in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*

A project submitted to

St.Mary's College(Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

HEARTLINE SAVIO MONICA A.

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Unhousing in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Heartline Savio Monica. A during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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I hereby declare that the project entitled **Unhousing in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Heartline Savio Monica A

October 2019

HeartlineSavio Monica .A

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Unhousing in Marilynne Robinson's *House keeping*** vividly details how women are capable of empowering themselves without having any men to hold them.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on Marilynne Robinson's life discussing the general characteristics of her work, her style and her predominant place in the realm of American Literature.

The second chapter **Plot Construction** deals with the summary of the novel focusing on an orphan young girl who sets out on a journey with a determined passion to explore the world and made an identity for herself.

The third chapter**Intransigence and Transfiguration**portrays the warmth and soothing comfort of home and how heritage is preserved and passed on to generation to come.

The fourth chapter **the Potent of Reality**presents how reality is intrinsically presented in the novel. The narrative occurs in the realm of consciousness where each character experience reality differently.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up important aspeçts dealt in the preceding chapters and shows how Marilynne Robinson's mindful fiction highlights the role our minds' play in understanding and living within reality.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Marilynne Summers Robinson is an American novelist and essayist best known for her novels *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*. Marilynne Robinson is arguably one of America's best contemporary authors. Winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for her novel *Gilead* and of the 2009 Orange Prize for fiction for her novel *Home*, Robinson is often recognized for her graceful diction and the interfusion of theology into her fiction.

Robinson's novels are noted for both their mid twentieth century American Midwest setting as well as their thematic depiction of rural life and faith. In addition to her novels, Robinson is a prolific essayist and commentator. The subjects of her essays have spanned numerous topics, including the relationship between religion and science, nuclear pollution, John Calvin, and contemporary American politics.

Marilynne Robinson has received numerous awards for Fiction including the 2012 National Humanities Medal, and the 2016 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. In 2016 Robinson was shortlisted for Time Magazine's list for 100 most influential people. Robinson has taught at the Iowa Writers' Workshop since 1991, and plans to retire in the spring of 2016. Robinson tends to highlight the influence of her theology on her writing or to focus on her significance as a woman of faith in American letters.

Robinson's self-awareness, is complicated and has the compelling ability to reflect, to analyze and to respond to the world. This capacity is found somewhere outside the self, an ability to look at one's own reactions, thoughts and emotions. Robinson in her essay "Facing Reality" recognizes "there is that mysterious thing the cognitive scientists call self- awareness, the human ability to consider and appraise

one's own thoughts"(35). And she explores the implications of this self-awareness by contrasting her perspective with that of many early modern and contemporary scientists and thinkers. Robinson suggests that current approaches to explaining the mind are inadequate because they assume an unwarranted confidence in the power of modern science and rely heavily in Darwinian explanations of origins and development.

Robinson was born on November 26, 1943 in the far-west town of Sandpoint, Idaho. She moved often throughout her early childhood as her father, John J. Summers, followed the jobs in the lumber industry along the Idaho and Washington border, through towns like Coolin, Sagle, and Talache. The work required him to be away for long stretches of time, so Marilynne spent much of her childhood in the company of her mother, Ellen, and her intellectually precocious older brother, David. Robinson attended high school on Coeur d' Alene where she encountered the Latin writers Horace, Virgil, and Cicero.

After graduating high school in 1962, Robinson followed her brother off to Rhode Island, where she attended the women's college Pembroke, formally attached to Brown University. There she studied English with an emphasis on nineteenth century American literature, bringing her into a deeper relation with authors who would have a major influence on her imagination, including Herman Melville, Henry David, Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman. After graduating in 1966, Robinson returned to the Pacific Northwest and enrolled in a Ph.D. research in English at the University of Washington. In 1977 Robinson completed her dissertation "A New Look at Shakespeare's Henry VI Part II: Sources, Structure and Meaning," her first major piece of writing. The dissertation asserts the

value and coherence of that play mainly through an examination of Shakespeare's sources and a close reading the play's system of metaphor and allusion.

Robinson began piercing together scraps of prose, combining them with memories of her childhood in the American West. Within a year she had a draft of the manuscript that would be her first novel *Housekeeping*. Robinson suspected it was not publishable due to its elevated rhetorical style, extended metaphors, general plotlessness, and gloomy atmosphere. The book won immediate praise upon its publication in 1980, winning the PEN, Ernest Hemingway Foundation Award for Best First Novel and the Rosenthal Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and it was short-listed for the Pulitzer Prize. More surprisingly still, it proved a bestseller, and was eventually adapted into a film released in 1987 directed by Bill Forsyth. *Housekeeping* remains Robinson's most widely read and critically respected work of fiction. It would be twenty four years until she published another novel.

In the meantime Robinson went to work as a professor, moving from job to job in a pattern that resembles her itinerant early childhood. She accepted appointments at Washington University 1983, the University of Kent in England 1983-1984, the Fine Arts Centre in Provincetown, Massachusetts 1985-1986, the University of Massachusetts 1987, and the University of Alabama 1988. While at Kent, Robinson became intensely interested in the environmental impact of the British nuclear reprocessing plant located at Sell afield.

Robinson wrote an essay for Haper's Magazine which claimed that millions of tons of nuclear materials had been dumped daily into the Irish Sea for over thirty years. Her outrage at the contamination and at Britain for allowing it to happen

eventually turned into *Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution*, published in 1989.

Although *Housekeeping* was a finalist for the National Book Award's non-fiction prize, and though it gained a minor reputation within the emerging environmental movement, it remains highly controversial. The book was disparagingly reviewed in The New York Review of Books for its use of non-scientific sources and the environmental activist group Greenpeace successfully sued Robinson for libel in Britain where the book was banned.

Robinson's professional wandering stopped in 1990 when she accepted a position at the University of Iowa's Writers Workshop, arguably the most prestigious writing programme in the U.S. The product of this re- education was *The death of Adam*: *Essays on Modern Thought,* published in 1998. Since *The Death of Adam*, Robinson's reputation has steadily gained ground. Robinson has become a popular lecturer both in the U.S. and abroad and a much more visible force in the national literary scene.

Robinson published her school novel, *Gilead* in the year of 2004, an epistolary work about an ageing Congregationalist pastor in a small Iowa town, which won the hearts of both the public and prize committees. *Home*, a companion novel to *Gilead,* was published in 2008, received the best Anglophone novel written by a woman.

In 2010 Robinson accepted an invitation to give the Terry Lectures at Yale University on the relation between two of her favorite topics, religion and science, which were published in 2010 under the title *Absence of Mind*: *The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self.* On April 19, 2010, she was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science. In May 2011, Robinson

delivered Oxford University's annual Esmond Harmsworth Lecture in American Arts and Letters at the university's Rothermere American Institute.

Robinson is currently the F. Wendell Miller Professor of English and Creative Writing at the Iowa Writers` Workshop, and lives in Iowa City. She was the keynote speaker for the Workshop's 75th anniversary celebration in June 2011. In 2012, Brown University awarded Robinson the degree of Doctor of Literature, honoris causa.

Robinson was raised as a Presbyterian and later became a Congregationalist, worshipping and sometimes preaching at the Congregational Unites Church of Christ Iowa City. Her Congregationalism, and her interest in the ideas of John Calvin, have been important in her works, including *Gilead* which, centre's on the life and theological concern of a fictional Congregationalist minister. In an interview with the *Church times* in 2012, Robinson said: "I think, if people actually read Calvin, rather than read Max Weber, he would be rebranded. He is a very respectable thinker". The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has described Robinson as "one of the world's most compelling English speaking novelists", and said: "Robinson's is a voice we urgently need to attend to in both Church and society here"

On January 24, 2013, Robinson was announced to be among the finalists for the 2013 Man Booker International Prize. *Lila* is a novel that was published in 2014, her fourth novel, and the third installment of the *Gilead* trilogy. Another collection of essays, "The Givenness of Things: Essay."

On June 26, 2015, President Barack Obama quoted Robinson in his eulogy for Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney of Emanuel AME Church in Charelston, South Carolina. In speaking about "an open heart," President Obama said: "what a friend of

mine, the writer Marilynne Robinson, calls that reservoir of goodness, beyond and of another kind, that we are able to do each other in the ordinary cause of things".

Robinson is also the author of non-fiction works including *Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution, The Death of Adam: Essays on Modern Though, Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the self. When I was a Child I Read Books: Essays, and The Givenness of Things: Essay*. Robinson has written articles, essays and review for *Harper's, The Paris Review* and *The New York Times Book Review.*

Gilead is Robinson's epistolary novel that is the fictional autobiography of the Reverend John Ames, an elderly Congregationalist pastor in the small, secluded town to Gilead, Iowa, who knows that he is dying of a heart condition. At the beginning of the book, the date is established as 1956, and Ames explains that he is writing an account of his life for his seven year old son, who will have few memories of him.

Home is Robinson's third novel, published in 2008. The novel chronicles the life of the Boughton family, specifically the father, Reverend Robert Boughton, and Glory and Jack, two of Robert's adult children who return home to Gilead, Iowa. A companion to *Gilead, Home* is an independent novel that takes places concurrently.

Lila, her fourth novel focuses on the courtship and marriage of Lila and John Amens, as well as the backstory of Lila's transient past and her complex attachments. It won the 2014 National Book Critics Circle Award.

"Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution" is a work of nonfiction that tells the story of Sellafield, a government nuclear reprocessing plant located on the coast of the Irish Sea. The book shows how the closest village to

Sellafield suffers from death and disease due to decades of waste and radiation from the plant. "Mother Country" was a National Book Award Finalist for Nonfiction in 1989. While on Sabbatical in England, Robinson's interest in the environmental ramifications of the plant began when she discovered a newspaper article detailing its hazards.

"The Death of Adam: Essay on Modern Thought" published in the year 1998 is a collection of contrarian – minded essays offered reevaluations of major figures in intellectual history, including Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and especially John Calvin, as well as incisive inquiries into subjects such as the environment, nineteenth – century American Abolitionists, and the Puritans.

"Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self" collect four lectures given at Yale last spring for the Terry Foundation, the brief for which concludes, "...that mankind may be helped to attain its highest possible welfare and happiness upon this earth."(157). It is a sort of objective Robinson routinely turns her hand to, acquiring for her trouble an Orange Prize, a Pulitzer, and a troop of readers enthralled by fiction shot through with grace and wisdom, not to put too fine a point upon it.

When I Was a Child I Read: Essays books tackles the charged political and social climate in this country, the deeply embedded role of generosity in Christian faith, and the nature of individualism and the myth of the American west. Clear-eyed and forceful as ever, Robinson demonstrates once again why she is regarded as one of our essential writers.

In The Givenness of Things, the incomparable Marilynne Robinson delivers an impassioned critique of our contemporary society while arguing that reverence must

Sellafield suffers from death and disease due to decades of waste and radiation from the plant. "Mother Country" was a National Book Award Finalist for Nonfiction in 1989. While on Sabbatical in England, Robinson's interest in the environmental ramifications of the plant began when she discovered a newspaper article detailing its hazards.

"The Death of Adam: Essay on Modern Thought" published in the year 1998 is a collection of contrarian – minded essays offered reevaluations of major figures in intellectual history, including Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and especially John Calvin, as well as incisive inquiries into subjects such as the environment, nineteenth – century American Abolitionists, and the Puritans.

"Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self" collect four lectures given at Yale last spring for the Terry Foundation, the brief for which concludes, "...that mankind may be helped to attain its highest possible welfare and happiness upon this earth."(157). It is a sort of objective Robinson routinely turns her hand to, acquiring for her trouble an Orange Prize, a Pulitzer, and a troop of readers enthralled by fiction shot through with grace and wisdom, not to put too fine a point upon it.

When I Was a Child I Read: Essays books tackles the charged political and social climate in this country, the deeply embedded role of generosity in Christian faith, and the nature of individualism and the myth of the American west. Clear-eyed and forceful as ever, Robinson demonstrates once again why she is regarded as one of our essential writers.

In The Givenness of Things, the incomparable Marilynne Robinson delivers an impassioned critique of our contemporary society while arguing that reverence must

be given to who we are and what we are: creature of singular interest and value, despite our errors and depredation.

Marinlynne Robinson's contemporary writers are Anne Tyler, Philip Milton Roth, Alice Malsenior Walker, Lois Lowry, and Alice Ann Munso. Tyler celebrates unremarkable Americans and the ordinary details of their everyday lives. Because of her style and subject matter, she has been compared to John Updike, to Jane Austen, and to Eudora Welty, among others.

Robinson took a writing workshop with the postmodernist writer John Hawkes, who encouraged her to have confidence in the ornate language, complex sentence, and extended metaphors that characterize her writing style. She has often said that *Housekeeping* began as a collection of metaphors. Eventually her childhood became a powerful central image in the novel.

Housekeeping contains no reference to specific years or significant national events. The vagueness of time and lack of news from the larger world contribute to the novel's powerful sense of place: the northern Idaho wilderness. The fictional town of Fingerbone has much in common with Robinson's childhood home of Sandpoint, Idaho, including a spectacular railway bridge suspended over a broad of cold water.

The book *Housekeeping* is about two sisters, Lucille and Ruth, who lose their mother at a young age, and with no father figure, they are passed around through a series of other guardians all of which are female. The two sisters passed from one relative to the other, finally landing in the care of an eccentric aunt with an unconventional lifestyle, especially according to the residents of tiny, isolated Finerbone. It is clear through the text, which is narrated by Ruth, that the girls struggle to connect with a mother figure which is not present. During this search the girls grow apart as they struggle to find themselves. After a series of abandonment,

Ruth and Lucile of Robinson's *Housekeeping* find their own identities through the mother-daughter relationships they form and the homes that they connect with.

Robinson revisits the traditional model of domesticity and explores significant issues about the meaning of home. What is especially significant is that Robinson does not acknowledge a division between the psychology of characters and the space they inhabit. Robinson highlights the relationship between them and gives importance to space as if it were a character with a body and a soul. Robinson employs the house's spatial settings, the inside, the outside, and the landscape as spaces of significations. The motif of home is powerful. Robinson shows that home cannot be effective if a coherent relationship between subject and space is not consistent.

Chapter Two

Plot Construction

Housekeeping is the story of two sisters coming of age in an isolated mountain town. The narrator, Ruth, and her younger sister, Lucille, rely on each other to survive. Their father deserts the family too early for them to remember him. When Ruth is about six, their mother commits suicide. Their grandmother takes them in for five years until her death. Then two, unmarried, elderly great-aunts take custody. These anxious ladies cannot cope with children, so they turn the girls over to their mentally unbalanced aunt, Sylvie. The household gradually dissolves into total disorder. Ruth bonds with the free-spirited Sylvie, but the more conventional Lucille yearns for stability. The school ignores the girls' truancy and increasingly uncared-for appearance until Lucille begs for help from her home economics teacher, who gives her refuge. The chaos of the household situation is exposed. A judge tries to take custody of Ruth, but she refuses to be parted from her aunt. Sylvie leads Ruth in a dangerous midnight walk out of town across a high railway bridge. They elude the authorities and go on to live a transient life, drifting from place to place. Ruth is haunted by thoughts of her sister and always contemplates getting in touch with Lucille, but never does so.

Ruth's grandfather loves the mountains and settles in the remote town of Fingerbone, Idaho. He works on the railway, prospers, marries, and builds a house with his own hands and no knowledge of carpentry. He dies in a spectacular midnight train derailment off the high railway bridge into the fathomless lake just outside of town. This disaster is the one notable thing that has ever happened in Fingerbone. His widow continues to live in the house and raise their three daughters: Molly, Helen,

and Sylvie. Molly goes off to China as a missionary. Helen marries Reginald Stone and moves to Seattle. Sylvie marries a man named Fisher and leaves Fingerbone, though she seems to have no fixed address after leaving.

Helen and Reginald have two daughters, Ruth and Lucille, but their father deserts the family so early in their lives that the girls have no memory of him. They grow up in Seattle in an apartment with their mother. A gossipy neighbor, Bernice, babysits while Helen goes out to work. Bernice offers the loan of her car so Helen can take Ruth and Lucille to Fingerbone to meet their grandmother. Helen drives the girls to her mother's house, arriving sunday morning. She leaves them on the screened porch, telling them she will be right back. After leaving, she drives the car over a cliff into the lake to her death. Ruth and Lucille are raised by their kindly grandmother for the next five years. The grandmother provides a comfortable home, but due to old age and the loss of so many loved ones, she often seems too distracted to really see them. She never asks them about their lives or discusses their mother.

After the grandmother's death, her sisters-in-law, Lily and Nona, agree to move to Fingerbone to take care of the girls. But the dithering, elderly maiden ladies are nervous around children. They hate the remote town of Fingerbone and long to go back to their cozy residential hotel in Spokane. They don't know how to reach Helen's sister, Sylvie, but she happens to write with her most recent address. Sylvie is persuaded to travel to Fingerbone to consider looking after the girls. She arrives on a bitterly cold winter day, wearing a huge, shapeless overcoat and loafers with no socks. She also has no gloves, scarf, or hat. Even the girls can see she is barely able to take care of herself, let alone anyone else, but she talks calmly to the girls and answers their questions about what their mother was like. Sylvie tells the girls frankly that the

aunts are too old to take care of them and she will stay, for the moment. The aunts are gone by that evening.

Within a week of Sylvie's arrival, the town of Fingerbone suffers the worst flood in living memory, prompting many to evacuate or travel around town by boat. Sylvie, Ruth, and Lucille, whose house is on high ground, have only four inches of water flooding the ground floor, but they must spend the next few days in the second floor bedrooms. With no electricity and mainly card playing to distract them, Lucille complains of boredom and Sylvie tells them a story about a woman whose children were taken away by the court. The girls realize that they might lose their home with Sylvie, and are even more frightened when she goes to the flooded downstairs and doesn't come back up again, or even reply when called. Terrified that they have been deserted, Ruth goes to fetch her. She finds Sylvie, who doesn't recognize her and won't speak to her. Ruth hits her and pulls her back, where Sylvie picks up the playing cards to resume the game as if nothing had happened.

As the floodwaters recede, the town begins to set things to order, but Sylvie, Ruth, and Lucille's home has begun a downward spiral that will only intensify. Lucille fakes an illness to avoid an embarrassing situation with a teacher who falsely accuses her of cheating. The excuse note Sylvie writes to the school says that she didn't take Lucille to the doctor because she didn't seem really sick. The girls know that note won't be acceptable, and they both play truant from school. For a week they go down by the lake, until the day when they see Sylvie talking to some hobos camping there, and walking out onto the high railway bridge over the lake. Up on the bridge she finally notices them and waves. When they tell her they didn't go to school she accepts the fact with no particular interest. Ruth and Lucille go back to school

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with no note or excuse, but no one asks them any questions. They begin to get the idea that others have noticed Sylvie's odd behavior.

Lucille and Ruth have different views of Sylvie's eccentric housekeeping. Sylvie insists on eating dinner in the dark and accumulates collections of autumn leaves, newspapers, and tin cans on every flat surface. She also furnishes the girls with sequined blue velveteen ballet slippers as school shoes to trudge through the inches of spring mud. Ruth accepts Sylvie's bizarre behavior, but Lucille begins to rebel. Both girls stop going to school once the weather turns warm, but when they return to school in the fall, Lucille tells Ruth they need to make new friends and she begins to spend all her spare time with a group of girls at school. Ruth is isolated and alone. Sylvie takes Lucille's absence as a rebuff and is more and more silent.

Lucille walks out and goes to take refuge with her Home Economics teacher, Miss Royce, who is so moved by her plight that she essentially adopts her. From that moment Ruth no longer has a sister. Sylvie responds by taking Ruth on an expedition by stolen rowboat to see an abandoned house that has fallen into its cellar on the other side of the lake. She abandons Ruth there for most of the day and they end up spending the night in the boat and riding a freight car into town the next morning. As Ruth is sitting in the kitchen by the warm stove, totally exhausted, Lucille comes in to tell her that she doesn't need to stay with Sylvie, but Ruth is too sleepy to be able to talk to or even hear her sister.

The sheriff starts visiting soon after Sylvie is observed bringing Ruth into town on the freight train. It is assumed that Sylvie is turning Ruth into a transient as well. Neighbor women and church women come to the house bringing casseroles and

questions, and cast shocked looks Sylvie's collections of bottles and cans and stacks of newspapers, magazines, and paper bags. Sylvie realizes that she is about to lose Ruth, and she makes a heroic effort to create a more normal household, burning all the stacks of paper late into the night, forgetting supper. Ruth mischievously hides from Sylvie in the dark, and Sylvie is calling for her when the sheriff arrives, drawn by the fire and the noise. He tries to get Ruth to come home to stay with himself and his wife. When she refuses, he promises to return the next day. As soon as he is gone, Sylvie and Ruth set the house on fire and escape by walking across the railroad bridge, the one route no one will dare to follow.

At dawn, Sylvie and Ruth reach the other end of the bridge and climb down just as the first train of the day roars past. They hop on a boxcar, and begin a life of drifting. Ruth occasionally takes a waitress or clerical job, but leaves before anyone can get close to her. People soon realize she is an outsider. Ruth speculates that she was always different from other people, and that every event of her life increased that distance until the harrowing midnight walk across the railways bridge sealed her destiny. She and Sylvie talk about contacting Lucille, but she knows they never will.

Robinson's novel *Housekeeping* is overwhelmingly populated by women. The women of the Foster family lose, eschew, or ignore their male partners completely, and devote themselves instead to the careful art of housekeeping and the collaborative bringing up of their younger generations. As the main characters Ruth and Lucille navigate their own relationship as sisters, they are brimming with questions about the relationship between their somewhat reluctant caregiver and aunt, Sylvie, and their mother, Helen, whose recent suicide has thrown the girls' lives into turmoil. Surrounded by women but with little blueprint for how to navigate their burgeoning

womanhood. Ruth and Lucille flail and fight as they try to discover how they should be but are unable to find the answers in one another. As the novel progresses, Robinson explores, extolls, tests, and questions the bonds of sisterhood, ultimately suggesting that no matter how close any pair of sisters seems to be, and no matter how much their lives overlap, sisters can still be unknowable to one another.

Through two pairs of sisters Helen and Sylvie, Ruth and Lucille Robinson demonstrates the intense emotions and fraught decisions which comprise girlhood and womanhood. Robinson purposefully creates parallels and similarities between the two generations of sisters, but as the novel unfolds, she chooses to show how despite their shared blood, hometown, and ancestral living space, these two sets of sisters are essentially strangers to one another all throughout their lives. When Sylvie arrives in Fingerbone to take care of Lucille and Ruth, the girls pepper her almost nonstop with questions about their mother, Helen what she was like as a girl, as a woman, as a sister. Sylvie's answers are oblique and cryptic, and she insists that it's "hard to describe someone you know so well." Sylvie's failure to be able to put her memories of her sister into words for the girls or perhaps to access any memories at all other than the snippets and glimpses she ultimately provides that sisterhood, though a sacred and intense bond, is a complicated one as well.

The distant relationship between Helen and Sylvie shows that physical proximity does not correlate with emotional closeness. The two sisters grew up in the same household, sharing clothes and space and food, but are revealed, ultimately, to know or understand very little about one another. Sylvie and Helen saw each other only a few times after leaving their hometown, and though their respective marriages seem to have both been fraught, unstable, and unimportant to the two women, they

never bonded in adulthood over the hasty unions into which they plunged almost immediately upon leaving home. In the wake of Helen's death, Sylvie's befuddlement as to the truth of who her sister was deepens her duty to care for Lucille and Ruth and shepherd them through the difficult journey of sisterhood, she seems unprepared for the daunting task. Sylvie and Helen also have a third sister, Molly, whom they haven't heard from in years since she left home as a teenager to become a missionary in China. Sisterhood does not guarantee closeness and understanding, and the fact that neither Helen nor Sylvie ever speaks of Molly or her whereabouts demonstrates this fact.

Ruth and Lucille's relationship is the central one throughout most of the text. The girls, only a year apart, are constant companions at home and at school. They share a bed, they walk to and from their junior high together, and though they aren't in the same classes, they make time for one another at lunch and recess. The girls begin cutting class together as well, spending their days exploring the shore and forests surrounding the large, dark lake at the heart of Fingerbone. They are physically together constantly, but when it comes to emotional connection and solidarity, the girls' relationship is actually revealed to be quite shallow. Like Helen and Sylvie before them, the girls are mysterious to one another, unable to reach out across the large but ineffable chasm between them to help one another. Lucille gets her period and enters puberty earlier than Ruth, and Ruth feels the separation between her and her sister deepen as they struggle separately with their very different relationships to Sylvie. As the gulf between the pair widens and they eventually separate forever, it becomes clear that just because Ruth and Lucille are sisters just because they share memories, traumas, and emotional and physical spaces they are

not bonded for life. Through Ruth and Lucille, just as through Helen and Sylvie, Robinson laments the fragility of a bond widely assumed to be unbreakable. By the end of the novel, Ruth has not spoken to her sister in more than seven years, and knows nothing about where she lives or who she is as a person. Ruth imagines that her sister watches and waits for her always, but has no way of knowing for sure whether Lucille still loves, misses, or wonders about her.

The confusing and ever-shifting rules and regulations of not just what it means to be a woman but what it means to be a sister define the emotional backbone of *Housekeeping*. Women are expected to be nurturers to staunchly defend the bonds of family and support the women within their family units. The women of the Foster family, however, struggle with this role, and ultimately find themselves confused and confined by the expectations that come with being a woman and a sister.

Robinson uses the unpredictable and emotional character of Sylvie a transient who has spent much of her adult life riding the rails across America and subsisting on her own wiles and the kindness of strangers she meets to show both the danger and the beauty of submitting to the impermanence of the world. The citizens of Fingerbone, hardy people who have developed an insular community and a rote way of life in response to the dangerous natural forces that rule their valley, struggle to control the physical, emotional, and natural landscapes of their town, and never like Sylvie and later Ruth admit or submit to the fleetingness of their own lives. By demonstrating the perils and the joys of transient life through Sylvie, Robinson uses the concept of physical transience as a metaphor for emotional impermanence ultimately suggesting that people fear transient individuals because they fear the transience of their own lives.

When Sylvie arrives in Fingerbone to "take up housekeeping" and begin caring for Ruth and Lucille, the girls know very little about their peculiar aunt. Right away, they sense that she is odd, eccentric, and afraid of connection and permanence. She has few possessions, she sleeps with her shoes on her feet or under her pillow, and she has a proclivity for canned or packaged food such as sardines and oyster crackers. As the girls grow closer to Sylvie, they constantly fear her leaving a fact which is, to them, inevitable, and which sends ripples throughout the town of Fingerbone, as concern for and about Sylvie spreads far and wide. That Ruth and Lucille fear transience and transient people is a given something instilled in them seemingly from a young age. It is unclear who taught them about the dangers of a life lived untethered to people, places, or possessions, but what is clear is that the girls are inherently skeptical of drifters. At the same time, though, once Sylvie arrives in Fingerbone, they develop an odd attraction to and fascination with those who exist on the margins of society when they play down at the lake, they stare at the hoboes who gather under the bridge and at the shore, and they beg Sylvie for tales of the strange, crazy, lonely people she's met in her years riding the rails. As the months go by, though, Ruth's fascination with transience increases while Lucille's revulsion for such a way of life compounds. When Sylvie brings the girls gifts of sequined velveteen slippers, Lucille rips all the sequins off and asks why she couldn't have gotten brown oxfords or red rubber galoshes Lucille, according to Ruth, sees "in everything its potential for invidious change." Something invidious is unpleasant, difficult, or inspiring of discontent so, in other words, Lucille has developed a heightened sensitivity to and fear of things changing, decaying, or devolving.

While Lucille grows more and more ashamed of Sylvie's odd outfits and odder behaviors napping on park benches and in the family orchard, eating supper with the lights off to enjoy the evening light, cooking unlikely meals Ruth becomes increasingly enamored of her aunt. Though both Lucille and Ruth for a long while feared Sylvie would leave them, in the end, Lucille is the one who does the leaving when she goes to stay with her home economics teacher, Miss Royce, rather than be subjected a moment longer to Sylvie's whims. Lucille so detests the potential for transience and the creeping dread of change that she takes matters into her own hands and establishes the impermanence of her relationship with both Sylvie and Ruth on her own terms in other words, she leaves before she can be left. Once Lucille is out of the house, she begins telling others in town lurid stories of how unfit and unpredictable a caregiver Sylvie is. The townspeople of Fingerbone begin dropping in on Ruth and Sylvie more and more, poking around the house and trying to determine whether Ruth is being changed or corrupted by Sylvie's transient past. The townspeople, firmly rooted in their ways and afraid of the threat to their traditions Sylvie's irreverence represents, lodge complaint after complaint until the sheriff intervenes to schedule a hearing and it becomes clear that Ruth will soon be taken away from Sylvie. Lucille's actions and their repercussions are Robinson's way of indicting the fear of impermanence. By trying to cling to the status quo and prevent change, she suggests, one can actually bring horrible change to fruition. Lucille does not foresee, though, what will happen next she does not realize that to Sylvie and Ruth, their independence is all that matters, and that they will do anything to maintain it.

At the end of the novel, Sylvie and Ruth work together to set fire to the Foster family home. Ruth knows that they could not abandon the house without destroying it to leave the objects it contains to be picked over and pawed at by the people of Fingerbone would be to do disservice to the memories within the house's walls. The fire is hard to start given the house's dampness, and as Sylvie and Ruth leave Fingerbone by walking across the bridge over the lake, Ruth refuses to look back and see whether the blaze successfully engulfed the house. This moment shows how the fire or its lack makes the house into an object of impermanence rather than stability for Ruth. It is both forever on fire and intact, destroyed and everlasting she is not sure whether it survives or not, and never once in her adult life does she return to Fingerbone to see what became of it either way.

Ruth ultimately dedicates her life to riding the rails and traveling the country with Sylvie, leaving Fingerbone behind for good. She embraces transience in her actions because she has come to understand, through her relationships with Sylvie and Lucille, that impermanence is an undeniable part of life to attempt to ignore or outrun it only makes things worse. Ruth does not allow fear of change to rule her, and instead solemnly burns her old life to the ground to make room for the unknown.

In Robinson's *Housekeeping*, the natural world is a character in and of itself. From the beautiful but dangerous lake at the center of Fingerbone to the rare and transformative experiences Ruth and Lucille have during their various explorations of the Idaho wilds, nature plays a pivotal role in the text and serves as a kind of litmus test in Ruth and Lucille's attempts to discover what kind of women they want to be. Though Robinson frames nature as an intimidating and occasionally dangerous force,

she ultimately argues that nature has the power not just to destroy but to remake, refract, and in a way christen those who encounter it with an open heart and mind.

By positioning the threatening, lush natural world of Fingerbone in direct opposition to the town's genteel interiors the houses full of furniture adorned with doilies, the soda shops teeming with girls poring over dress patterns in magazines, the schoolhouse full of children in neat rows Robinson establishes the strange duality of her fictional town. As the novel progresses, Ruth and Lucille's encounters with nature both nourish and frighten them, and Robinson explores both girls' entry into womanhood through their very different relationships with the natural world. Ruth and Lucille are, at the start of the novel, both haunted by and drawn to nature. They arrive in Fingerbone knowing already that the vast lake at its center once claimed their grandfather Edmund's life, only to have their mother Helen allow the lake to claim hers, too. Nevertheless, the girls soon begin skipping school frequently to ice-skate along the lake's surface, fish down at the lake's shore, and explore the woods around it. The girls are unintimidated by nature and coexist with it almost without a second thought. After a night spent out in the woods, though, the girls' relationships to nature begins to change. While Ruth finds herself increasingly drawn to the dense forests of Fingerbone, the orchard behind her own house, and the magnetic, dangerous lake, Lucille begins to eschew the natural world and focus more and more intensely on beauty, grooming, and socializing. She becomes obsessed with making a dress for herself, starts hanging around with other, more "normal" girls from school, and even crushes some old pressed flowers Ruth finds in a dictionary to demonstrate how little nature has come to mean to her.

Towards the novel's end, when Lucille moves out of the house and goes to stay with one of her teachers, Miss Royce, Sylvie fervently begs Ruth to accompany her on a journey to a "special" valley on one of the lake's many island outcrops. Ruth is initially reluctant, but after realizing that Lucille is not coming back, she agrees to skip school so that Sylvie can take her to the lake as soon as possible. During their trek out to the valley a frost-covered clearing in the middle of which sits a fallen-down house, reclaimed by nature itself Ruth finds herself tormented by visions of her dead mother, questions about the ever-growing distance between her and her sister, and fear that Sylvie, too, will soon abandon her. Ruth's intense journey into nature breaks her down and then builds her back up when she and Sylvie at last leave the woods together, Ruth has reckoned with several huge questions about the nature of life, love, and memory, and seems reborn as Sylvie's daughter rather than her mother's. Indeed, in the novel's startling final pages, Sylvie and Ruth work together to set fire to their family's ancestral home in preparation for setting out together as a pair of transients. Their symbolic burning-down of the house reveals their commitment to eschewing the genteel interior spaces of the place that has become their shared hometown, and venturing out into the unknown venturing out into nature as a way of finding a place that will not try to contain them, but will rather allow them to continually expand and remake themselves.

At the novel's end, Ruth tries to imagine her sister, Lucille, living in the old house in Fingerbone, but ultimately cannot. Instead, she pictures her sister living in Boston, a big city removed from nature removed from the self-examining forces of refraction and rebirth. Ruth has chosen the stranger and more difficult path in life, the path Sylvie laid out for her a path which continually demands she commune with the

natural world and give herself over to its powers. Lucille, however, has chosen the simplicity of a normal life: a life full of doilies, dinners in fine restaurants, and perhaps a devotion to the art of housekeeping, the art of preserving the very spaces which entrap her.

Chapter Three

Intransigence and Transfiguration

The house at the heart of Robinson's novel is built with a set of guiding principles in mind. Like the house in the gothic novel, it is meant to be a safe haven for the family. When Ruth's grandfather, Mr. Foster, decides to settle down in Fingerbone, he does so "trailing us after him unborn" his family, even before fully existing, guides the creation of the house. This focus on family does not fade over time, as Ruth begins the novel by introducing herself and her relatives through their relation to the house:

> My name is Ruth. I grew up with my younger sister, Lucille, under the care of my grandmother, Mrs. Sylvia Foster, and when she died, of her sisters-in-law… Through all these generations of elders we lived in one house, my grandmother's house, built for her by her husband. (3)

"All these generations of elders" lived in the house; the structure is so tied to the Foster family history and identity that Ruth can neither begin her story nor introduce herself without first placing herself and her family lineage in the house. So closely tied are the Foster family and the house that Ruth offers the lineage of the house immediately after describing her own. Ruth's introduction also shows that the house is meant, more specifically, as a safe haven for the women of the family. Thus the house, though built by her grandfather, is her "grandmother's house." Through all the generations listed, the house does not change hands because Mr. Foster builds it for her; it remains Mrs. Foster's after his death, and even after hers. Mrs. Foster does not take this issue of ownership lightly, as she understands the perilous position of women in the mid-twentieth century: "Sell the orchards,' she would say… "But keep the house. So long as you look after your health and own the roof above your head,

you're as safe as anyone can be" (27). Both grandfather and grandmother are well aware of the natural dangers outside the house, but Mrs. Foster here is referencing a different kind of safety. She tells Ruth 'as safe as anyone can be,' but the unspoken message is 'as safe as any woman can be.' As the women of her generation are relegated to the home, Sylvia understands the need to preserve and maintain that safe space for women; having uprooted herself to follow her own husband to Fingerbone, Ruth's grandmother knows firsthand the benefits of a solid foundation. Her house ties her to Fingerbone, gives her roots and allows them to grow stronger, which become invaluable when tragedy strikes. Mr. Foster dies in a train accident that rocks the community and ends with the train at the bottom of the lake, after which no bodies can be recovered.

In order to maintain the safety and independence afforded by the house, Mr. Foster builds the structure with some specific boundaries in mind. Firstly, the house must separate itself from the landscape surrounding it. Ruth's grandfather "had grown up in the Middle West, in a house dug out of the ground… mere mound, no more a human stronghold than a grave" (3). Though in execution, this first ancestral home is more reminiscent of a grave than anything else, the original intention is clear: the structure was meant to be a "human stronghold" against the elements. Ruth's description paints this first house as a humble shelter daring to defy a barren, harsh landscape, an image that follows Mr. Foster as he makes his way from the desert to the mountains and finally to Fingerbone. Consequently, the house he builds for his own family is a prouder, improved stronghold against nature: it stands on a hill, far from the reaches of the lake's yearly floods. Fingerbone's lake is not the only threat, however; in fact, all of the natural features and elements of the area seem to wage war against the house.

This protection from the natural world becomes all the more important as Ruth starts to equate the lake with death. Mr. Foster and the other unfortunate train passengers lie at the bottom of its depths, as does Ruth's mother Helen, and after Mrs. Foster's death, Ruth places her in the lake as well. After reading her grandmother's obituary, Ruth dreams that she walked on the surface of the lake,

> "but in the dream the surface I walk on proved to be knit up of hands and arms and upturned faces…The dream and the obituary together created in my mind the conviction that my grandmother had entered into some other element" (41).

The hands and arms that she imagines are the bodies of all the lake's dead. By adding her grandmother, who did not drown in the lake, to this "element," Ruth imagines the lake to be a sort of purgatory: its inhabitants do not belong in houses with the living, but they remain present on earth.

The house is also built to be equally isolated from the town. As Ruth explains, "Our whole family was standoffish… If its fenestration was random, if its corners were out of square, my grandfather had built it himself, knowing nothing whatsoever of carpentry" (74). The Fosters prize their self-sufficiency over community, so the house is purposefully removed from the social center of the town: after a particularly bad flooding that threatens to wipe Fingerbone off the map, Ruth notes "[my grandfather] had the good judgment to set [the house] on a hill…we simply spooled up our living-room rug and propped it on the porch step" (74). The family, already physically distant from the town, grows emotionally distant as well when Fingerbone's natural disaster leaves them essentially untouched: they cannot share in the suffering, and their relative wealth sets them apart from the newly destitute town's people. This isolation results in a much-desired sense of privacy. Mrs. Foster, for

whom the house is built, so enjoys the peaceful solitary existence of a housewife in a lonely house that her husband's death has little effect on the life in the house, perhaps because it was "not altogether unanticipated. How many times had she walked in the morning to find him gone?" (10). If anything, his death heightens the most peaceful effects of the original founding principles. The house becomes intensely private because Mr. Foster's death removes the family entirely from the public sphere:

> With him gone they were cut free from the troublesome possibilities of success, recognition, and advancement. They had no reason to look …it is no wonder that five serene, eventless years lulled my grandmother into forgetting what she should never have forgotten. (13)

With the loss of the only male member of the household, the remaining members of the Foster family are released from the worries of the public world. Free from the demands of success and advancement, Mrs. Foster and her three daughters seem to fall away from the course of history. They belong not to the world now, but only to themselves, and out of this intense privacy Mrs. Foster creates her own little paradise.

The new living circumstance is described as a kind of heaven, with "immortality" and "serene, eventless years," free from "troublesome possibilities" and regrets. The Foster women also fall away from time. Life continues in the house, but time has somehow stalled; nothing develops or changes, but neither does it end. Their life becomes an endless dependable routine: "breakfast time, suppertime, lilac time, apple time." Having lost ties to, and therefore the influence from, the masculine outside world, the house is feminized. The girls abandon the standard measurements of time in favor of chronological markers that reflect domestic yet poetic activities. For Mrs. Foster, this simplicity marks a "resurrection of the ordinary," a return to the

stability and comfort she had felt before her husband's death (18). Built originally to provide safety, the house also provides stability, and continues to do so even after Mrs. Foster's death. When Lily and Nona, the two maiden aunts who come to care for Ruth and Lucille, consider asking Sylvie to care for the girls instead, they discuss her unconventionality and then consider how to fix them:

> "Perhaps some attention from her family..."
>
> "A family can help."
>
> "Responsibility might help."
>
> The spoons went round and round in cups until someone finally said, "...a sense of home" (39).

Lily and Nona have heard some rumors about Sylvie's eccentricities; she is difficult to find as she is constantly moving and her address is perpetually changing. Sylvie is, then, unstable a condition which might be helped by attention, family, and responsibility. Ultimately, though, the only antidote to her variability is a matched stability created by a sense of home; the house itself can act as an influencing factor and a method for stability.

The destabilization of walls hints at the corresponding threat to independence: earlier, Ruth considers her grandmother's house, orchard, and belongings, recognizing that "all of these things would eventually become liquid, capable of assuming new forms" (27). The explicit meaning here is that the belongings will become monetary capital, but the phrase is also a hidden prophecy of the terrible flood that invades the house and if the flood can endanger the safety of the house, perhaps it can endanger the ownership and independence of the house as well.

Ruth sees and feels the presence of her mother, "the woman in the water," so strongly that she begins to doubt her own senses. The lake's intrusion reminds her of

her great loss, and the pain of this memory begins to haunt Ruth she can no longer trust herself, and she sees her dead mother as a being with influence, guiding Sylvie's hand as she brushes her hair. These ghostly presences and reminders, having once gained entry to the house, remain throughout the novel.

The isolation that Mrs. Foster enjoys so much is only a temporary isolation, if not an illusion altogether. Despite the geographic and emotional distance between the Fosters and the town of Fingerbone, the town seems to take a strong interest in the Foster family and homestead. While privacy might make the family strong, it makes the town weak, as Ruth explains: Fingerbone is "shallow-rooted…it flooded yearly, and had burned down… difficult place. So diaspora threatened always" (177). Entirely dwarfed by its natural surroundings, "the town itself seemed a negligible thing…it would have been possible not to notice the town at all" (34). This dwarfing of the town has significant consequences in the minds of its inhabitants, who are keenly aware of Fingerbone's vulnerability. To combat the threat of diaspora and negligence, the town must unify and protect its houses. This requires an intense publication of private matters, seen most easily in the treatment of death. Mrs. Foster, for example, always knew that at some point "her simple private destiny would intersect with the great public processes of law and Finance that is, [at] the time of her death" (27). This "great public process" revealed when her obituary is "bunched, no doubt, to cushion Christmas… For my grandmother's passing had brought to mind the disaster that had widowed her" (40). The private life of the family, then, becomes so public that it leaves the house for the public sphere, and then enters the private spaces of others the greatest violation of privacy possible. Family history, like Mr. Foster's disaster, is also paraded in public, because his death relates to the life and health of his family, and therefore the town has an interest in it.

Because of the duties of housekeeping and motherhood, the women in the Foster family are discussed frequently in the outside world. This interest is not reciprocated, however; in fact, the Foster women are so disinterested with the public world that the men in the novel, who are the only link to the public sphere, seem entirely negligible. Ruth describes her grandfather, for example, as "a watchman, or perhaps a signalman" (5). She knows so little about him that she cannot even recall his position in the very job that ended in his death. This indifference to her grandfather's history is directly contrasted to the immediate and detailed recitation of female family members at the very start of the novel, "I grew up with my younger sister, Lucille, under the care of my grandmother..." (3). Had he known, Mr. Foster may not have minded her indifference, as he seems to have viewed himself as worthy of little note. His only photograph features "a man identified as my grandfather... one of astonishment" (40). His inconsequence sets the tone for that of the other husbands in the novel, including "a certain Reginald Stone, [Ruth's] putative father," of whom she has "no memory...at all;" and Sylvie's absent husband, "someone named Fisher" (14). In cases, Ruth's disinterest and lack of knowledge is echoed by the men themselves. In the only photos taken at Reginald's wedding, he is looking off to the side and "clearly he does not consider himself the subject of either photograph" (14). 'Someone' Fisher is allowed even less acknowledgement, as "no snapshots were made" of his marriage (14).

This resounding lack of male presence causes the Foster women to 'fall off the map.' Without a male presence to tie them to the public world, the only place left to them is the private house. This does not immediately present a problem, because Mrs. Foster owns the house and therefore has no pressing need to re-enter the public sphere. Consequently, her ownership of the house, independence, and comforting

routine "lull [her] into forgetting what she should never have forgotten:" that there is loss within the house, too. Just as the house has become the only place for the women, with the death of Mr. Foster it becomes a place only for women (13).

Comfortable though they are in their own isolated world, the Foster daughters will leave if they choose to marry, as both Sylvie and Helen do. In fact, daughters will leave even without marrying, as Molly does when she becomes a missionary: because the house is so private and has no connection to the public sphere, the daughters must leave it entirely when they choose to enter the public sphere. Herein lies the inherent problem of the home, as Ruth eventually realizes: "The sorrow is that every soul is put out of house" (170). No matter how stable, safe, and private the house may seem, it is impermanent; though the walls and histories remain, the inhabitants do not. Whether they live or die, none can stay forever. The very routine that Mrs. Foster hides behind leads her blindsided when all three daughters leave within the year; it was "among the things she thought of as familiar that this disaster had taken shape" (25).

The house, meant to be a safe place for family, must also always be the place of deep painful loss. So the only privacy that is granted to the house ends up harming it. This loss, is specifically a gendered loss: the pain inherent in the house is the pain of motherhood. All mothers must lose their children: children die, are removed by the state, or simply grow up and leave the house. Even Lily and Nona, the maiden aunts who come stay after Mrs. Foster's death, suffer from this pain. Fretting over the girls one cold winter evening, the aunts could not be calmed because "granting that... the perils of adolescence, or marriage, of birth" (36). After this conversation, the aunts decide they are unequal to this sorrow, asks Sylvie to come instead, and quit the house entirely. Routine, then, cannot protect against loss. The perceived stability is

ultimately a state of permanent impermanence: children are forever leaving, and no amount of isolation or stability can prevent it.

Housekeeping presents a string of women who fail at their duties: Lily and Nona find the duties of motherhood, or rather the pain of loss that comes with motherhood, too difficult to handle so they quickly give it up. Helen's reaction, far more extreme, is a complete abandonment of both the role of motherhood and the world that demands it. Mrs. Foster, the only woman who successfully and skillfully fulfills the roles of housewife and mother, suffers equally she does not find the enjoyment promised to her by the theory behind the gender roles. In following and failing convention, none of Ruth's elders have found the peace that ought to exist in the house; perhaps Sylvie, who defies convention, is better prepared for the task of motherhood.

When confronted with the porousness around her, Ruth initially clings all the more steadfastly to the boundaries around her in an attempt to reinforce them. This is evident from her very introduction, where she describes her environment by separating it into different sections:

> At the foundation is the old lake, which is smothered and nameless and altogether black. Then there is Fingerbone, the lake of charts ....And above that the water suspended in sunlight. (9)

She creates a lineage for the water, echoing the lineage of her own family, by labeling the different layers of water to separate them into different spaces. The exercise also allows her to distinguish between the black, old lake that claims the dead, and the sunny lake in which she plays. However, distinguishing one lake from another does not stop either from invading the house. The first breach of boundary opened the

floodgates, and more and more boundaries are overrun. Forced to confront the lack of order in her life, Ruth eventually understands the peace that comes with Sylvie's equilibrium. After walking too far along the shore of the lake one day, Ruth and Lucille are forced to spend the night in a makeshift camp along the shore. They build a "low and slovenly structure, to all appearances random and accidental," (114) but it provides enough of an illusion of perimeters that the girls "fell uneasily asleep" (115).

Ruth awakens in pitch darkness to a collapsed roof; she "scrambled out through the roof and over the wall into darkness no less absolute" (115). Like the darkness that Sylvie invites into the kitchen, the internal and external darkness of the makeshift hut is the same, thereby negating the necessity of walls and boundaries. In this moment, Ruth finds peace with the destruction of boundaries: "I simply let the darkness become coextensive with the darkness in my skull and bowels and bones" (116).

Like Ruth, Lucille reacts to the initial destruction of boundaries by holding tightly to order, thereby establishing herself as the contradiction to Sylvie's disorder. In this she aligns herself with the beliefs held by the townspeople, who are increasingly troubled by the new forms of housekeeping. A visiting wife from the town tells Sylvie very serious, "a young girl needs an orderly life" (185). Unlike Ruth, however, Lucille does not have a moment of change the same evening that Ruth allows darkness to penetrate her, Lucille pushes away the equilibrium, "never accepting that all our human boundaries were overrun" (115). Consequently, she never feels quite comfortable in... purpose with which, from a slowly sinking boat, she might have regarded a not-too-distant shore" (92). This becomes a moment of divergence between Lucille and Ruth.

Ruth is quite content with Sylvie and her destructive influence, Lucille clings to the traditional structures around her and begins to turn elsewhere for companionship. This external influence leads Lucille to import voices from the town into the home: "Lucille had a familiar, Rosette Browne... Lucille was galled and wounded by her imagined disapprobation" (103). By in bringing these social voices, she further facilitates the destruction of the house's privacy and isolation.

So Sylvie's welcoming of the outside world, and specifically darkness, into the house sparks a moment of conflict between Sylvie and Lucille. Lucille fights the darkness by turning on the overhead light, revealing the state of the kitchen:

> We saw that we ate from plates that came in detergent boxes, and we drank from jelly glasses... but she had never replaced the curtain... "Where's your husband, Sylvie?" (101)

Moment, told by Ruth but showing Lucille's perspective, demonstrates the divergence between the two sisters. Ruth's reaction to seeing the kitchen in this state of relative chaos is to turn the lights off again. To Ruth's mind, Lucille's action and not Sylvie's is the problem in this moment: "Lucille had startled us all" (101). After Sylvie leaves the kitchen, Ruth laments being "alone in the lighted kitchen with its blind black window" (102). Lucille, however, sees the restoration of light as a moment of clarity, not blindness her reaction to the chaos is to, first, chastise Sylvie for her poor housekeeping, and then to clean the kitchen herself.

Sylvie has clearly done a poor job of cleaning and maintaining the kitchen, despite the example set by her female relatives. The fact that she puts out a fire with the copy of good housekeeping is doubly bad, as she fails to use the tools given to her to fulfill her role and most likely burns the manual in the process. There are

consequences to bad housekeeping if one fails at housekeeping, perhaps one fails in terms of femininity as a whole.

The sheriff returns in a matter of days. Of the visit, Ruth says, "It is a terrible thing to break up a family… face was slack with regret. "There'll be hearing, Mrs. Fisher" he said" (190). He comes with what was initially a threat, but now a promise, of removing Ruth from Sylvie's care and with this final invasion of the house by the public interest, he deals the final blow to the sanctity and sanctuary of the house. The public sphere, which Ruth thought "under no possible combination of circumstances" could ever enter the private, has broken the last boundary (103). The house, built to protect family, is left with no working foundation and no working walls, can no longer even maintain the family. It is no house at all, and the house is to continue as a concept, it must be transformed so Ruth and Sylvie burn the house.

Chapter Four

The Potent of Reality

Robinson is very concerned about how to represent, and interpret reality. She cites exploration of the definitions of reality as her impetus for writing *Housekeeping* and revisits the subject repeatedly in her later non-fiction work, detailing its social and political relevance to both American democracy and global culture. In *Housekeeping*, reality is presented intrinsically hypothetical, impossible to confine in any single definition but ripe with probability and possibility. Much of the narrative occurs in the realm of consciousness, where each character experiences reality differently. The characters are placed in a coextensive relationship with each other and the landscape, exploding assumptions about the limits and boundaries of reality. *Housekeeping* reveals the potential of reality and is therefore part of Robinson's canon of political commentary, holding wisdom and strategies for today's world.

Robinson's self-reported influences are among others, the Bible, John Calvin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, Abraham Lincoln, and Herman Melville, anchoring her philosophical perspective in Protestant Christianity, humanism, and American transcendentalism. These influences also bear considerable weight in her frequent commentaries on the historical import and current state of American Democracy. While clearly not politically shy, as evidenced by her 1989 exposé of Britain's nuclear pollution, *Mother Country,* and her highly publicized friendship and conversations with Barack Obama, Robinson is careful to separate the purpose of politics from that of literature. As she explains in her 1994 interview with *Contemporary Literature*, politics is for the "management of the cruder aspects of existence" whereas literature is meant to "articulate feelings that are very deep and also very general." She dismisses contemporary literary criticism as being guilty of

"collusion" with the media to produce "simpler and simpler models of reality", demeaning the purpose and possibilities of literature

Robinson's fiction does not need to overtly address political issues to have social and political relevance. Literature, like all art, "is perfectly legitimate in its own terms". A novel's true power and potential lies in its use of language to "create simulations of experience". The kind of experience a novel creates has consequences extending through the individual reader into society at large. This places quite a large responsibility on a writer like Robinson. She does not just tell a story that the reader passively experiences. She enables the reader to enter the story and emotionally interact with it to the extent that it is experienced as reality. Due to the effective nature of this interaction, the kind of reality presented in the novel is very important. Robinson has a specific idea about what kind of reality her fiction represents: reality that goes beyond what is familiar or known to what is possible.

Robinson explicitly says *Housekeeping* is not a "realist novel". Instead, she believes fiction is "narrative freed from the standard of literal truth" (131). But she does endow fiction with the power to affect both politics and reality. In 2006 essay "On Beauty," Robinson explains the connections among fiction, reality, and politics:

> "Perhaps one function of fiction is to train oneself in the fact of the intrinsic plausibility of narrative that is, acknowledging the fact that plausibility is no guarantee of truth, that plausibility can be merely an effect of intelligibility, compounded by fantasy, or fear, or worse.... I have a theory about this moment in American history" (135).

She zooms out even farther. Robinson invites readers to, not only accept other versions of reality, but to recognize the inherent limitations of all prescriptive notions of reality, no matter how seemingly accommodating or inclusive. She reveals the

fluidity of reality in general. She questions whether reality is knowable at all, then surpasses even that obstacle to address the value of the unknowable, grounding perceptions of reality in individual consciousness instead of external definition.

In the novel Ruth and Lucille stay out overnight alone by the lake. Here the boundlessness of landscape, shelter, character, selfhood, and memory collide. The landscape is described as simultaneously extraordinary and ordinary, close up and endless. The lake appears to be "spread over half the world" but is also as "ordinary as any puddle" (112). It is "in league with the moon" (112) at the same time as it is "distinctively domestic" (113). The mountains are as big as a "dam" and as small as a "pot" (112) and the lake's shallows are compared to the "unswept corners of a house" (113). Similarly, the horizon is both "film" like (112) and "calligraphic" (113), contrasting a large production with an intimate and handmade form of communication. These dichotomous descriptions of the landscape serve both to contain the vast lake and mountains and to disassemble the borders between the domestic and the geographic. Robinson moves back and forth between intimate spaces and global spaces as though there is no difference in their scale, importance or meaning. These spaces are all on one borderless continuum from house to sky to beyond. As soon as boundaries between these spaces are asserted, they automatically fail.

As night approaches, Ruth and Lucille build a shelter out of driftwood, fir limbs, and stone. It falls over twice while being built and can only be inhabited "cautiously" (114). Lucille, attempting stability or ownership, writes her name in pebbles in front of it. Of course, the structure fails, physically by collapsing and metaphorically by proving insufficiently definitive of the boundaries between human space and the great outdoors.

Robinson describes this failure as "human boundaries" being "overrun" (115). She places the burden of proof on the "human," implying that the boundaries are not preexistent or predetermined, but humanly constructed at best. Lucille sees the failed shelter and the uninhibited approach of wildlife as an assault on her rightful human domain, but Ruth accepts the inevitability of their cohabitation. For her, as for Robinson, the nighttime accentuates a truth she already knows: "everything that falls upon the eye is apparition, a sheet dropped over the world's true workings" (116).

In darkness, observable boundaries disappear as the eye no longer detects lines, space and distance. Other senses take over and release the constraints sight imposes. Here, Ruth experiences the fore mentioned co-extensiveness. Ruth discovers that, although her childhood has largely been defined by loss, she can connect to a definition of herself that is not labeled as unfortunate by society or inhibited by the uncertainty of memory. If the lake is at once a puddle and the size of the moon, then she too is as small as her individual body and as large as the darkness. Feeling invisible then becomes a powerful connection to the people of her memory instead of a form of alienation from society. Ruth realizes that reality exists far beyond what is visible and this understanding helps to heal her sense of loss and build her identity. Recall that the landscape is measured in terms both intimate and universal, domestic and global.

Robinson's use of scale not only plays with the relative size of things, it also comments on their relative value. When a large object is brought down to human scale, as when a mountain is described like a pot (112), it may be interpreted as a devaluation of the large thing, a demystification of the universal. But the opposite is also true, if not more important in this case. The pot is raised to the level of the

mountain. The ordinary becomes universal and valuation becomes irrelevant, particularly when it comes to an object present in memory.

Ruth's experience in the darkness leads her to believe that "relic," "remnant," and "memory" need not be clung to if the kind of perception that exists in darkness is permanent (116). Relics only hold value to those who cherish them and memories are unreliable, as Lucille's and Ruth's frequent arguments over what their mother looked and acted like illustrate. But in co-extensiveness of the kind Ruth feels in the darkness, nothing is devalued or lost. Death is acknowledged because the passing of Ruth's and Lucille's grandparents and mother is traumatic in their lives, but loss is reevaluated.

Ruth describes her memories as things she can "hold in [her] hand" like a china cup or an apple (124). Consider those analogies. A china cup is made from clay and perhaps bone, then hardened with fire, materials that are elemental and timeless in their use and application. An apple is as basic as the ABC's but as emblematic as Adam and Eve. Robinson's apple has "an affinity with the deep earth" and "a trace of the perfume of its blossoming" (124). The apple is placed within its own genealogy in a circular reference that points from the apple to the seed to the blossom and back to the apple. Although the apple is an object that can be held in the hand, it is inseparable from its origin and its future, containing both the scent of its blossom and the seeds for its progeny. Similarly, people move from life to death but remain somewhere along a continuum of existence far more completely than relics or memories indicate. Robinson calls this the "life of perished things" (124) and the "presence unperceived" (122), both of which rely on feelings and sensation, not material objects or visible observation.

Just as she shifts seamlessly from a pot to a mountain, Robinson blurs the line between living and deceased presence. Presence is determined and evaluated by the intensity of the personal experience, not the ostensible reality of physical existence. When Ruth is having her experience in the darkness by the lake, Sylvie, who is still alive but back at the house, comes to "haunt" Ruth in her dreams alongside "ghosts" of Helen and Sylvia, who are deceased (116). At the same time, Ruth also hears Lucille "pacing and whistling" in the darkness right beside her (116). It does not matter who is deceased, alive, or physically present; Ruth's experience of their presence is what matters.

More than simply describing the experience of presence beyond the visible or knowable, Robinson ties absence and presence together. Absence opens the door to a deeper awareness of presence and it is suggested there is even more value or truth in an experience of "presence in absence" than physical presence itself". When Edmund dies, his young daughters cling to their mother not because they are "afraid she [will] vanish" as he has, "but because his sudden vanishing [has] made them aware of her" (12). Similarly, Ruth asks: "when do our senses know anything so utterly as when we lack it?" (152). In both cases, physical absence yields greater sensitivity to other forms of presence. Ruth sees her mother everywhere, "whole and in fragments, a thousand images of one gesture" (163). Once again, Robinson deploys juxtaposition of small and large to illustrate the meaninglessness of scale and quantity.

Ruth's memory of just "one gesture" is rich enough to evoke "a thousand images" and beckon the presence of her mother without the need for intermediaries like photographs or mementos. "It is better to have nothing," Ruth asserts (159). No thing can accurately embody the experience of feeling her mother's presence. This heightened appreciation for the experiential over the material is a core value shared by

Sylvie and Ruth, but rejected by Lucille. This shared value makes it possible for Sylvie and Ruth to leave their house behind, jump a train, and live as transients, while remaining meaningfully connected to Lucille, who stays behind in Fingerbone, and to the other family members who have died.

Robinson's manipulations of scale, value, and meaning point to the limitations of observable reality and are meant to entirely dissolve the borders between objects or people, not merely construct alternative cross-border connections between them. This is precisely the discovery Ruth makes in the darkness. A deep understanding of Robinson's point here renders connection unnecessary because coextension implies a far more comprehensive kind of connectivity than a line from one thing to another. The lake within the lake is connected to the evaporated water in the sky, but not through a linear connection between single water drops. The water is connected through a process, a cycle. This is the same way that Ruth is connected to her deceased mother. Not via supernatural communication, but because they are each part of the same system, part of the same substance. Their connection need not be constructed or maintained through the limited means of relics or memory because it always exists. Sylvie and Ruth have the ability to feel it; Lucille does not.

Without vilifying Lucille, this difference between her and Ruth can be used as an entry point to the larger implications of presence and reality in *Housekeeping*. Sylvie and Ruth are doing more than just rejecting normative domestic roles and familial relationships when they burn down their house and leave Lucille and Fingerbone behind. Their experientialism gives them insight into a reality that Lucille and the rest of Fingerbone's residents do not understand.

Robinson explains that by refusing to take "the impress of society," Sylvie "expresses the fact that human nature is replete with nameless possibilities and, by

implication, that the world is accessible to new ways of understanding". Ruth shares Sylvie's innate ability to experience the world in this way, so she chooses to leave with Sylvie rather than stay with Lucille. In so doing, she makes a "radical choice about whose terms of reality she will accept".

Robinson, community "consists very largely of imaginative love for people we do not know or whom we know very slightly". Community is shaped by the imagination; the larger the imagination, the more inclusive the community. And, the more "generous" the imagination, the more "healthy and humane" the community. Therefore, personal experiences of reality have implications beyond the individual. Comfort in a small vision of reality causes, what Robinson calls, "inappropriate certainty" which has "atrocious" societal consequences. If one's view of reality is limited, relying entirely on what is visible or what are offered as common truths and ideas, a variety of other possible realities are erased.

Robinson insists that there are "thousands of different ways of thinking about things" and that homogeneity is only a myth that "hardens and contracts" the idea of community. Importantly, Robinson defines the domestic sphere as crucial to the formation of a person's view of community. She states: "The shrinking of imaginative identification which allows such things as shared humanity to be forgotten always begins at home". This gives some clue as to why Robinson titled the novel "*Housekeeping,*" when it appears to be a book about anything but domestic duties. The home is the fundamental building block of a community structure. When compassionate imagination, respect, and love for others is not taught at home, the "institutions of society – law, journalism, education, and religion" are endangered.

When Lucile chooses to go live with her Home Economics teacher instead of remaining under Sylvie's care, she chooses to stay within the confines of Fingerbone,

a place that has longstanding opposition to anyone who threatens its carefully guarded principles of community. Being on a rail line, Fingerbone often receives visits from "hobos" and transients who set up temporary residence in shacks and abandoned huts by the lake, before catching the next train to another such place (179). While initially given "pity or charity" these people are never made part of the community (178). They are "terrifying as ghosts" who haunt the town (179). In fact, Sylvie's and Ruth's real crime in Fingerbone's mind is showing themselves to be "unredeemed" transients through their odd behavior and alternative housekeeping habits (177). Consistent with how they treat the transient strangers, Fingerbone is not initially hostile to Sylvie and Ruth. The townspeople offer support with visits and casseroles. Even the Sheriff can be seen as a generally benign authority figure, apologetically enforcing his power with the intent to keep the children safe. But, Fingerbone is ultimately exclusionary because its notion of community is too rigid to allow room for alternative versions of family life and domesticity.

The transients are not welcomed into the center of the town but are relegated to the lake. Every event that occurs outside the socially acceptable order of Fingerbone occurs at or near the lake. The tragic train accident that takes Edmund's life happens in the lake. Helen commits suicide by driving her car into the lake. When Lucille and Ruth skip school, they go to the lake. Sylvie spends her afternoons at the lake instead of in the house tending to traditional duties of housekeeping. When Ruth and Sylvie leave town, there is some speculation that they have fallen into the lake and drowned (213). The lake is an open space shared by the less accepted members of society and by the famously dead Edmund and Helen. With its deeper lake within and its connection to the sky, as discussed earlier, it is a template for a more inclusive society. The lake encourages imagination by both its literal scale, including its

unknown depths, and its constant intrusion into Fingerbone's order and domesticity through flooding. It embodies both presence and absence in Fingerbone, holding a history of tragic death while also supplying the town with water, a necessity for life. Regardless, Fingerbone defines itself in opposition to the lake. All those who belong to the lake, not the town. Othering is one symptom of an unimaginative and constrained understanding of reality.

Robinson contrasts contemporary ideas of the "other" with that of 19th century American writers. Whitman's outsider is "a visionary" and Thoreau's is a "critic". But now people who are "less shaped and constrained by society are assumed to be disabled and dangerous". Robinson identifies this as a "fearful and antidemocratic idea" that threatens the foundations and potential of American Democracy. Whom a nation or society chooses to include in or exclude from their community is greatly influenced by their notion of reality and the limits and boundaries they prescribe as a result. A small-minded approach to reality produces exclusion; imaginative reality on the scale that Robinson presents it engenders inclusion. In her article about Barack Obama's presidential legacy,

> "A Proof, a Test, an Instruction," written in 2017 for *The Nation,* Robinson writes that the idea of the organic society, united by blood, faith, language, and culture, attractive as it may sound, actually tears societies apart, since some intolerable difference can always be found" (20).

Any rigid definitions of community are inherently problematic because they draw strict lines which inevitably cause bothering. But imagine the potential for inclusion and equality if the broad and encompassing notions of reality that Robinson imbeds in her fiction were applied to social consciousness and politics. If the "genius of

democracy" is "respect for people in general", imagine if that respect was informed by an open and holistic understanding of reality, an understanding of the importance of both what is known and what is unknown, who is known and who is unknown. Think about the power of Robinson's ideas about the intrinsically hypothetical nature of narrative to refute Trump-era rhetoric. The value of coextensiveness for defining community as an antidote to the rise of global right-wing populist movements. In all these scenarios, Robinson's fiction and non-fiction emerge as a beacon of insight with inarguable relevance to the current political climate. *Housekeeping* is most powerful when read as a study in human potential, a template of a reality that is imaginative, compassionate, and rich with possibility.

Chapter Five

Summation

Housekeeping is an introspective, almost ethereal coming of age story that navigates the hazy division between presence and absence, loss and survival, radiance and darkness. When Robinson published her novel, *Housekeeping*, in 1980, she was unknown in the literary world. But an early review in *The New York Times* ensured that the book would be noticed. "It's as if, in writing it, she broke through the ordinary human condition with all its dissatisfactions, and achieved a kind of transfiguration," wrote Anatole Broyard, with an enthusiasm and awe that was shared by many critics and readers. The book became a classic, and Robinson was hailed as one of the defining American writers of our time.

When at the Cambridge literary festival in November 2014, Robinson was asked about the genesis of *Housekeeping*, her account was typically low-key and matter-of-fact, without any of the ostentation you might expect from the author of such an immense literary achievement. She had written the novel, in longhand, for her own pleasure, she said, without much thought about its after life, found it taken up by friends, then represented by the New York literary agent Ellen Levine, who sold it without delay to the famous American literary publishing house Farrar Straus and Giroux, and in the UK to Faber.

The protagonist Lucille and Ruth have been left to the care of their elderly grandmother in Fingerbone, their mother's natal village in Idaho. When the old woman passes away, their eccentric aunt Sylvie returns to Fingerbone with her unorthodox personality and her particular way of understanding life that will open a

chasm between the two sisters. Sylvie discards everything she considers superfluous and acts accordingly to her transient essence.

As they grow, Lucille and Ruth are confronted with the uncertain nature of existence and they have to choose between the rituals of a socially accepted normality or embrace Sylvie's deeper vision of a parallel world where memories, dreams an reality become a permanent heritage in detriment of material stability. The story is replete with symbols that acquire mystical magnitude.

The recurrent idea that one feel about family members more keenly when they are gone resonates throughout the book with spiritual force. Reading Robinson's prose is like a sensory experience. The unruly quality of abstract thoughts captured in immaculate words makes it beautiful like the wilderness, like some untamable creature that can't be caught, only admired from afar. It has a life beyond the reader's consciousness. Sometimes, it also reads like poetry, for there is total harmony in the slow paced hues of the narrative voice and the uncommon sensitivity that gives sustenance to the sinuous meditations on identity, loneliness and belonging the novel revolves around.

Housekeeping was admired for the luminous subtlety of Robinson's work, and powerful simplicity. *Housekeeping* was celebrated for its technical virtuosity, the poetry of its language, especially as well as its pathos and humour. The poetry of the language is meditative and mesmerizing, drawing the reader ever onward into its magic and away from the mundane. The narrative warps the dimension of time, pulling the readers to a remove from his more usual expectations. It can be dizzying or disorientating, but to be in it is always to be elsewhere. Time moves in the novel but not as one would expect: Ruth's time is full of eternity.

The novel *Housekeeping* was one vast poetic vision; it is also a very human story, very moving. Ruth and Lucille are real girls growing up in unsettled circumstances. They struggle to attend school, they fight with each other and they are friends with one another, and they couldn't but feel for them. Their rivalry and affection s captured in snappy dialogue, a key component which saves the narrative from insupportable weight.

The novel's title pertains ostensibly to the keeping of house, of keeping a home together after Ruth's mother's suicide. Ruth refers severally to aunt Sylvie's strange style of domestic organization and her growing attraction to it, but there is a sense throughout the book of housekeeping being Ruth's own job for herself, a kind of cosmic housekeeping, an ordering of life, death and the universe. Again, this is partly how the reader finds himself within Ruth's psyche, situated by the narrative in her need to overcome trauma, to put something between herself and chaos.

Ruth's narrative to the anatomy of a defence mechanism. Had this character been born into different circumstances, she would always have been a mystic, a contemplative of some sort of an anchoress, a poet or a druid, something along those lines. But she is seen her in this life, the one where she has lost her mother in early childhood and had to go on mother in early childhood and had to go on without her struggling and haunted. Her articulation of this is what reveals her soul to us, her innate profundity. In the novel's climax, Sylvie takes Ruth on rite of passage further up the lake from Fingerbone, leaving her alone with her thoughts.

Robinson selected points of view that capture the complex working of the mind. Reflecting on her writing, Robinson supposes that her attempt was to simulate the integrative work of a mind perceiving and reflecting, drawing upon culture, memory, conscience, belief or assumption, experience and response and then

reshaping them both as narrative, holding one thought against another for the effect or affinity or contrast, evaluating and rationalizing, feeling compassion, taking offense. Since Robinson endeavor is simulating the integrative work of the mind, it should come as no surprise that she refrains from employing any form of directly omniscient narration. Robinson's style itself is evocative of drifting and drifters' tales, with long, often poetic descriptions that suddenly snap back to the original point or deflect to a new unrelated one.

The high value Robinson places on the mystery and distinctiveness of human presence coupled with the abilities and limitations humans bring to the act of perceiving also preclude an omniscient narrator. Although this type speaker can certainly describe the thoughts and emotions of any character he chooses, his point of view generally revolves around the larger story itself and its cast of characters rather than focusing on the inner processes of any particular individual.

In *Housekeeping* the patriarchal image of man as adventurer is established through the feminine exploration of this textual space. Robinson characterizes women in the role of active heroine rather than escape, thus creating a space for women to traverse freely. In each of her novels the reader does not simply see or hear a story unfolding but is given the opportunity to engage with the minds of Ruth, John Ames, Glory Boughton. Robinson's character are not, of course, "real" in the sense they ever had a physical existence on Earth, they come alive on the page and grant to each reader an encounter with a beautiful soul. Robinson characters embody that exceptional mystery that accompanies each human presence. Given that she approaches fiction as an exploration of personhood through another character, surely this mysterious presence is something Robinson achieves because she intends to.

Housekeeping can be described as a coming of age tale. The novel reminiscent Ruth who opens the novel simply, drawing the focus centrally on her personhood. The adolescence Ruth struggle to come to terms with the deaths of her grandparents and mother, and with the implications those deaths have on her own existence. Ruth story is replete with metaphor and analogies tools the mind can use to make sense of and create meaning in the world and with wonderful imagery. Every description, even of the most domestic tasks and seemingly insignificant occurrences, suggests a mind highly active and alert, fascinated with the details of the world and equally comfortable with its imaginings as with the physically real.

Robinson establishes the fictional Lake Fingerbone at first as the prominent symbol of orthodox society's demands, and pits her female protagonist the two sister Ruth and Lucille and their Aunt Sylvie in various stances in rejection or acceptance of those demands. She explores the merits and compensations of an unorthodox life, a life outside everyday society and how it seems naturally to flow from a deep understanding of life's true issues and consequences.

Discovering identity is a struggle that many young girls go through as they grow, and without any prominent guardians to provide examples, this struggle is only magnified. Missing their mother to act as a model Ruth and Lucille, of Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, find their own identities by finding new mother figures to connect with. Despite the different journeys the girls undertake, by the end of the novel they both seem to have progressed to a point where they each appear comfortable. There is no ending to the quest for identity, as many adults are still altering their own; however, in finding new mother figures, the sisters are able to learn more about themselves and be cannot with what they learn. Described as fragile, freshly abandoned children in the beginning of the story, readers discover that by the

end of the novel Ruth and Lucille are portrayed as much more complete characters and stronger individuals.

Housekeeping explores reality from two very different perspectives, and it shows characters who choose either a fluid or solid lifestyle and view of the world, which irretrievably results in tension and loss. Ruth's narration also describes how she as well as Lucille and Sylvie fruitlessly try to live in realities with values they do not identify with. Sacrifices have to be made in order for the characters to live in any reality at all. Ruth and Sylvie must live divided from Lucille since they need fluidity in their lives, while Lucille needs solidity in hers. This unavoidable choice between either solidity or fluidity, with the loss it entails for all of the characters, is not so much a condition of life as a function of the cultural codes operating in Robinson's novel. Housekeeping is filled with women whose perspectives of domesticity represent alternate attitude to a woman's mobility in America and her place in society.

Robinson arranges culture, memory, belief, experience and response into a narrative, employing first person to create order in a way that simulates the experience of a mind. Consciousness, voice, loneliness, perception aspects of mindfulness noted by Robinson in her own nonfiction find expression in her fiction, not merely by being talked about her fiction, not merely by being talked about by her characters but through the narrative techniques she employs. Robinson captures the unique qualities contained in the interplay of body and mind that are important aspects of each individual existence, of each soul, engaging our own mind and thereby effectively conveying the mind's importance.

Robinson believes in the holiness of the human person and of humanity as a phenomenon, which proceeds from her view of the mind. Each human life is a short lived existence, at the centre of which are memory and mystery. Robinson captures

how experiences compound, forging and reforging connections in minds in the forms of memories. These memories reflect what is more important to us. Sometimes these memories come from painful circumstances, leading one to behave in ways others cannot understand.

Robinson demonstrates the value she places on the mind by incarnating the meaning of memory, mystery, and mercy in her novels. And by so doing, she beautifully implies how a mindful life may be best lived. Robinson's mindful fiction highlights the role minds play in understanding and living with the reality of housekeeping, of ageing of ordinary items and occurrences, creating beauty from the quotidian and reviving a new appreciation for each detail of life. And she imbues her novels with her humanism, creating mysterious, weak characters for whom to care. Robinson novels help remind one the fragility of humanity and of the important role imagination plays in one's own minds for empathy and for showing mercy. In rendering universal truths the novel is founded on the aesthetics of Realism, then rises into Modernism with its poetic style, evocative Expressionism, allegorical symbolism and transcendent vision.

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Iconic Representation of Religion and Science in Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*

A project submitted to

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Thoothukudi

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Iconic Representation of Religion and Science in Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Jenin Vincy Pearl.S during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Iconic Representation of Religion and Science in Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

American fiction is a changeable historical trend. Science fiction writing starts after 1930s It captured the American dream and depicts the society impact in the fiction genre.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the uniqueness of American fiction and introduces the author.

The second chapter **Investigation of Dark images** explores the failures of a country through religion and war which is narrated by Vonnegut through the aspect of irony.

The third chapter **Illusion versus Reality** focuses on the author's mastery of imagination and deals with psychological inputs.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** focuses on the various techniques employed by the author.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the key points dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Invocations of a great American novel began in the early nineteenth century during the period of " Literary Nationalism" between the middle of the century, and the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth. Moreover, the world depression in 1929 and its consequences in the 1930's grouped young American writers to express their malaise and feeling of their anxiety of the currents, by exploring the spiritual nature of man and the value of the American society and institutions. The great world depression of 1929 caused many emerging young writers at the time to revolt against the situation and depicted the American's nightmare, just after they had been dreaming of a brightened future along the century. As Harry Levin writes:

> The history of the realistic novel shows that fiction tends towards autobiography. The increasing demands for social and psychological details that are made upon the novelist can only be satisfied out of his own experience. The forces which make him an outsider focus his observation upon himself. (322)

When one considers the American fiction in this regard, it could be said that the novelist becomes the hero. The theme of the novel is the formation of the artist's character, and the habitual pattern and thus, the artist writes and rewrites personal dilemma. That is why, he communicates his or her experience more fully and subtly. The 1930s Depression ignited desire and passion to produce a unique American fiction, and hence, a number of literal figures emerged on the scene. The American writers started expressing the disillusionment following the Depression. Their fiction is

representative of the restless, yet pleasure hungry mood of the 1930s, with their characteristic theme being the tendency of the youth. As Robert Spiller observes, "American literature was destined to be a literature of beauty, irony, affirmation and despair". (5)

American fiction brings into focus the clear details of the expanding social spectrum which encompasses both high and low life that is connected to the naturalistic school of realism. Edith Wharton comes as a good example of this category, which through her novels portrays the upper class, Eastern Sea board society in which she had grown up. Her novel *The Age of Innocence* focusses on a man who prefers a conventional woman to a glamorous outsider. Stephen Crane (1871 - 1900) comes as a good commentator of the civil war. His novel *The Red Badge of Courage* is also inclusive of the New York City prostitutes. HL. Mencken writes:

> The English of the United States is not merely different from ours; it has restless inventiveness which may well be founded in a sense of racial discomfort, a lack of full accord between the temperament of the people and the constitution of their speech. The English are uncommunicative; the Americans are not.... (7)

Further, American fiction has always been involved with the experimentation of style and form. This attempt on experimentation had generated a new freedom oriented subject matter. At the same time, one must remember that the 20th century American novelists are basically artists who are primarily concerned with beauty in art. However while professing beauty; they never fail to pinpoint the irredeemable inconsistencies of the community in which they are fixed. The great figures like Herman Melville,

William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain and George Orwell to name only a few had projected their literature populated with human beings who are pressurized by the terrible impact of the industrialization and the consequent depression followed by unemployment and frustration.

In early 1970s, a new kind of fiction has emerged. Labelled as post-modern, which encompassed writers like Thomas Pyncheon, Robert Stone, Paul Austen, Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, and Joyce Carol Oates to name a few. For, they have dealt with many of the ways pop culture and mass society have influenced, the American Youth's perception and experience in a concrete jungle of a world. Also, these post-modern authors set out to break the traditional settings like a beach, a garden or a ship only to make the scenes of action in junk food joints, on subways or in an abandoned railway compartment. The eternal presence of drugs, plastic surgery and soap commercials and these cultural metrics come out as great celebrations in the hands of the novelist. That is one of the reasons why, sometimes, these self-conscious and sarcastic writers drift apart towards science fiction. As Leo Brandy writes,

> Born with the modern age, novelist have always been entrepreneurs of order, impresarios each promoting a personal vision of the world. World War II has made decisive change in many of ways those multi-dimensional visions could be expressed (84).

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., (1992-2007) is a classic example of one of the most prolific of the 20^{lh} century American novelists. Born to Kurt Vonnegut, Sr., and Edith Libber Vonnegut during the fourth anniversary of the Armistice (November 11, 1922) in Indianapolis. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., comes as the fourth generation German-Americans

who maintained close relationship with Germany. The father had a tangible break with his profession as a building contractor during the great Depression of the 1930s. He retreated from the real, harsh life and became "...a dreamy artist". (Allen 227).

Poverty had inflicted a heavy dent on the family, and as a result, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. had to be moved into a public school. Nevertheless, the public school experience brought Kurt Vonnegut in close nexus with interesting people. The mother's suicide on Mother's Day in 1944, when the son was home on leave from the army, jolted the latter back into the stringent reality. After that, Kurt Vonnegut stayed close to his younger brother Alex. He found Alex as ".... responsive and amusing and generous with me... my ideal grown-up friend" (Palm Sunday 53) Ida Young, an African - American cook and house keeper was a very close companion to the junior from whom; the latter received a lot of concern, comfort and consolation. He describes the cook as ".... humane and wise". (Allen 245).

Kurt Vonnegut started his career with "Short ridge Echo" a daily newspaper and working with it he discovered himself as he writes, "Each person has something he can do easily and can't imagine why everybody else is having so much trouble doing it. The important event of life for Kurt Vonnegut was his first day at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York where he started as a bio-chemistry student. At the University, he preferred polishing his prose style to attending the science classes. Though he failed a Degree from Cornell University, he won a successful career as a novelist. Science and technology has always been present in his novels in order to access the impact of technology on society.

Mother Night (1961) is the third novel. It has the added things of science fiction in it. It is a story of a brilliant Nazi propagandist, Howard w. Campbell, Jr., an American expatriate, who lived in German.

During the World War II sending out coded message to the Allies. *Cat's Cradle,* (1963) is the fourth novel. Vonnegut was an obscure writer when *Cat's Cradle,* was published. It transformed Vonnegut from an obscure writer into a cult figure. *Cat's Cradle,* is a grim fantasy about the end of the world. It earned a positive notice in *New York Times* by Terry Southern. In *Cat's Cradle* John, the first person narrator, a free-lance writer, engages himself in writing a book about what famous people were on the day when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. According to Josephin Hendin:

> In human terms, Vonnegut's pessimism adds up to a vision of people doomed by a programming they cannot resist or change in *Cat's Cradle,*. Felix Hoenikker, father of the A-bomb, also fathered three unhappy children. He leaves them his last discovery; a chunk of ice ... Vonnegut makes a mock religion out of pessimism. Bokonon Hoenikker's black counterpart tries to save the island of San Lorenzo from poverty and disease but fails to accomplish anything by social reform. He then invents a religion of scaled-down aspirations which is equivalent of ice-9, conferring emotional coldness. (258)

Cat's Cradle, tells the story of Joh's failed attempt to write his book and of his discovery of a new religion, "Bokononism", which provides him with a unique perspective on his own life and human history in general. As a Bokononist he looks

back at his previous life as a nominal Christian with an ironic detachment. *Cat's Cradle,* warns readers that science can devise many ways of ending the world, but it shows that human ingenuity can also make life worth living for millions of human beings who currently live in poverty and despair. The title of the book is derived from the string game- *Cat's Cradle.*

God Bless You Mr. Rosewater (1965) is a satirical novel. It pokes fun at the way how labour-saving devices have begun to replace factory workers at the time, when the impact of money, and the personal greed of the individual had begun to seep into the character of American society. In one of the interviews, Vonnegut assets, "That depression has much more to do with American character than any war". (Wampeters 282).

Kurtz Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) is a well-known novel. It established his reputation as a major American writer. In 1967, Vonnegut won a Guggenheim Fellowship and it enabled him to revisit Dresden, a trip descried in the first and last chapters of *Slaughterhouse-Five. Slaughterhouse-Five*, a concoction of brutal realism and fantasy, challenges readers to make sense of a world gone mad. In this novel, according to Billy Pilgrim, the novel's protagonist, a hapless American private is neither physically and mentally fit to be a soldier. War is not a heroic contest between the forces of good and evil but a senseless slaughter with many victims and no villains.

Billy Pilgrim, an innocent, yet sensitive man encounters so much death and so much evidence of hostility to the human individual. While he is in the army, he takes refuge in an intense fantasy life which involves his being captured and sent to a remote

planet, being transported by the Germans as a prisoner-of-war. He also comes "unstuck in time" and Billy ascribes this strange gift of being able to slip around in time to his experience on the planet, which has given him an entirely new way of looking at time, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is obsessed with death and packed with corpses. One of the minor characters in Slaughterhouse-Five, an English Colonel says about the horrors of war: "We had forgotten that wars were fought by babies. When I saw those freshly shaved faces, it was a shock. My God, My God-I said to myself, it's children's crusade". (134-35).

Bluebeard (1987) is the twelfth novel. Vonnegut revisits the major themes of his earlier novels, including the questions of personal identity, the role of artists in society, the American class system, the importance of family, and the physical and emotional costs of war. For the first time in his fiction, two well-developed female characters seem to speak for themselves, rather being tokens for the author's ideas. The main theme is artistry in each novel. There is at least one person who is aware of human folly, and thus is a living proof that intellectual blindness is not universal. In addition to novels, Vonnegut has also produced short stories, many of which were collected in Welcome to the *Monkey House*: A Collection *of Short Works* (1968). He has also written essays, which had appeared in volumes in volumes as Wampeters, Foma and Granfallons: Opinions (1974). In Vonnegut's works there can be no villains. The basic theme confines itself to a kind of fantasy largely drawn from folk traditions. It stands mythically opposite to science. Nevertheless, science paradoxically is fantasy. According to Darshan Singh Maini:

> The style of American Prose in not vastly different, for the ehoes of English writers may be found all along. Still, there are some new accepts, some new tricks of thought and style which set American Prose and poetry apart. (20-21).

Vonnegut generates a world not too real since he is averse to the harsh and bleak realities. Fantasy is a safety wall for Vonnegut through which he releases nihilism.

Significantly, *Cat's Cradle,* projects a fantastical story of how the world meets its end. The narrator, Kurt Vonnegut creates John, the character of he is found in the visiting passages from the *The Books of Bokonon.* A fictitious religious guru Bokonon is the author of the book. Vonnegut himself is also a character in the novel. Thus there are three writers in the novel. They discuss a passage from another of Vonnegut's book. They hold the view that truth is slaughtered in the name of aestheticism. Hence, it should be the most vulgar of all creativity.

Bokonon is the most interesting character. He comes from the island of San Lorenzo. He creates a religion deeply fixed on lies. Vonnegut's main intension is to point out how people are blindly dependent on religion. Bokonon is only happy misleading people into oblivion. As he confesses, "I wanted all things to seem to make some sense, so well all could be happy, yes, instead of tense. And I made up lies so that they all fit nice, and I made this sad world a par-a-dise" (127 [hereafter referred to as CC]. The lines established Bokonon who is christened Lionel Boyd Johnson as a down right cheat.

Previously, Bokonon is a sailor. He meets with six shipwrecks and it is during these unexpected events that he comes in contact with ".... brilliant, self-educated, idealistic marine deserter" (77). With Earl Me Cabe who has just stolen his company's money, he sets off for Miami. He meets with a shipwreck again on the shores of San Lorenzo. His Christian name Lionel becomes Bokonon not because of some mystic vision but it is how the natives pronounce Johnson.

The people of the Island are thin, starving. Bokonon and McCabe together declare they take control of the Island and immediately the rules step down. The tow split out their duties and attempt to make the Island "Para-dise". McCable take control of the government as Bokonon invents the new religion. They both realize that through religion they can bring about great redemption to these starving people with swollen legs and missing teeth. John, the narrator, who calls himself Jonah, compiles quite an interesting account of what these Americans were doing exactly at the moment when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Through correspondence with the three children of the late Felix Hoenikker, the Noble Prize Winner and the so called "father of the atomic bomb", he evolves a portrait of the man in relation to his family and the community.

Cat's Cradle, like many of Vonnegut's other novels, gets considerable mileage from irony and humor as it makes serious points words have a considerable bit. The novel is a tale of caution. Vonnegut wrote it in the wake of the Cold War and Cuban Missile Crisis, amid growing concern about the American role in international relations and the ability of the world's greatest powers to destroy nations with the click of a

button. *Cat's Cradle,* centers on this worry, with the main plot involving one of the developers of the atomic bomb and a deadly substance called ice-nine.

Vonnegut represents parts of his life in the novel through characters. The family structure of the Hoenikker's is not unlike Vonnegut's Many of the characters hail from his home state of Indiana, and a few attended his alma mater, Cornell. These parallels allow the sometimes fantastical novel to be grounded in reality, creating the assumption that no matter how comical the characters may be, there are people in the world who act and think like they do. The result is a great example of the ironic, critical style that his readers love. About *Cat's Cradle,* Allen Brien comments.

What remains really impressive is the ingenuity and imagination used to make Boknonism convincing. Its founder's maxims and poems are quoted every two or three pages with startling effect. Bokonon, for instance, rejects the New Testament message "Render unto Ceasar the things which are Caesar's" as any Manichaen must. He substitutes "pay no attention to Ceasar. Ceasar doesn't have the slightest idea what is really going on." By the end of *Cat's Cradle* it is hard to remember that Bokonon is a fictional character-religions have been built around for less improbable creators before (158-9).

What Vonnegut is doing as he moves half mystically, half laughingly, in and out of Science fiction and fantasy is to try to come up with a definition of himself and others that will stand in the terrifying light of twentieth century knowledge (Lundquist 100). When he is writing simply as a Science Fiction writer the stories he published in Galaxy or in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, he does not move very far toward that definition. But when he combines the special effects of Science Fiction

with Cosmic irony in his novels, he transforms one of the most important forms of pop culture into his own distinctive form of astral joke book.

Throughout the novel, Vonnegut makes allusions to the Book of Jonah and Moby Dick. The novel opens with the lines, "Call me Jonah," which is a joint allusion to the opening statement of Melville's Ishamael and a biblical story of rebellion against God's will. Like Jonah of the Bible, Vonnegut's narrator will be required to follow a path that he neither wants nor understands, and his role in the events of the novels cannot be underestimated. At the end of the novel, he is one of the sole survivors, and he must tell his and the other characters tales, much like Ishmael in Moby Dick. The dystopian world that Vonnegut creates is based on a rich literary tradition, and it is essential to his characterization of the world in which his characters and readers live.

Chapter Two

Investigation of Dark Images

Vonnegut discusses certain phases of the contemporary scene as they relate to the war time experiences of the soldiers during the Word War II. His first paradox is that he uses black humour rather ruthlessly to lay bare the establishments, what they are. In Vonnegut's fiction one confronts establishments, and one cannot miss it and also knows more, implicitly about the martial establishment which has left man on battle field. Vonnegut is preoccupied in his novels with a protest literature and that literature rebels against the establishments. Vonnegut very much seems to have been aware of the existential questions, as Addison Gayls formulates, "Who am I? What is my identify? What is my relationship to the universe, to God, to the existential other?" (11).

Vonnegut examines in detail, the failures of a country through religion, a component of a country. Eventually, religion and country emerge as big establishments which pressurize man only to alienate him from achieving a functional identity. The establishments fragment an individual and obstruct him from getting clinch an identity. Religion is primarily there not to be admired, nor to be criticized but to be believed. It is the fellowship of those who seek, journey and loose their way, of the helpless, the anguished and the suffering, of sinners and pilgrims. In *Cat's Cradle,* both Bokonon and McCabe have been 'called' by God to pronounce a religion since the island cannot exist without a religion. They create their own religion urging the individuals to come in fellowship with each other, so that they can know and identify the Truth. But, Truth is not the Truth what God speaks of, but what both Bokonon and McCabe deliver. They exploit the

individuals who rush towards the religious establishment, so vehemently, yet blindly, As Vonnegut writes, "Truth was the enemy of the people, because the truth was so terrible, so Bokonon made it his business to provide the people with better and better lies" (CC 118) In fact, Vonnegut attempts to point out that the holy establishments mislead people who rush with the hope of attaining salvation. But Bokonon tells people that religion is the product of the final aim of God's plan of salvation and it is not the salvation of all men but the salvation of people who have become part and parcel of Bokononism. Bokonon tries to infuse more zest to the religious life of the people. It is easy to see how fake the religion becomes with the cruel tyrant McCabe Bokonon has a theory of dynamy that talks about the balance between good and evil. Good societies which only survive by keeping the tension between these two things high at all times. Bokonon is basically a rich man, the source of wealth hinted by Vonnegut with his notable sense of humour. Vonnegut writes:

> Bokonon, I learned from castle's book, was born in 1891. He was a Negro, born an Episcopalian and a British subject on the island of Tobago. He was christened Lionel Boyd Johnson. He was the youngest of six children, born to a wealthy family. His family's wealth derived from the discovery by Bokonon's grandfather of one quarter of a million dollars in busied pirate treasure presumably a treasure of Blackbeard, of Edward Teach, (CC 103).

Kurt Vonnegut's main intension, through the presentation of Bokonian religion, is to parody. He sees the church as representing authoritarian policies. He expresses

surprise and wonder at the ironic reality of the church being dominated by the war generation. Consequently Bokonon's religion comes as a bitter reminder of the original church. Bokonon is the parodied representation of the pastors of the original church.

Kurt Vonnegut emerged on the literary scene at a time when the anti-establishment push was at its peak. Vonnegut is a war veteran who has seen the traumatic scenes of inhumanity. He begins to question every aspect of life including the meaning of life. For Vonnegut, the world has ended up absurd and the life has been circumscribed by ultimately meaningless incidents. In *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut intensifies the idea of anti-establishment through absurd coincidences like Jonah's chance meeting with Marvin Breed and the discovery of the pedestal on which his own name is engraved. Those short anecdotes exaggerated to the point of absurdity establish Vonnegut as an anti-establishment figure. Vonnegut says, "People have to talk about something just to keep their voice boxes in working order, so they'll have good voice boxes in case there's ever anything really meaningful to say."(22).

Vonnegut is seen as one of those anti-establishment figures who argue or act against the ruling class. Usually, satirical humour is used to mock at the deference expressed by the majority of the Christians in *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut uses black humour.

Cat's Cradle is short, pacy and humorous to make it an attractive read, and as entertaining a read as possible, while still allowing Vonnegut to explore the anti-establishment theme that interests him. Furthermore, much of the humour seems simple and accessible. The form and language of Bokonon's calypsos are good examples. The reader is introduced to the first calypso of the novel in chapter two, before there is any

strong feeling for how subversive aspects of Boknonism really are. The result is amusement that has only the merest smudge of blackness to it.

Oh, a sleeping drunkard
Up in Central park,
And a lion-hunder
In the jungle dark,
And a Chinese dentist,
And a British queen-
All fit together
In the same machine
Nice, Nice, very nice;
Nice; nice, very nice-
Nice, nice, very nice
So many different people
In the same device (CC 3).

The type of humour used in *Cat's Cradle,* is Black Humour, a direct consequence of the apocalyptic nature of the themes which Vonnegut develops in this novel. No other kind of humour can work so cohesively as Vonnegut's satire and irony in the novel, and yet these types of humour are not predominant. *Cat's Cradle,* is too absurd in places to be predominantly ironic and too morally ambiguous in places to be predominantly satirical. As Vonnegut writes, "Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless laughter can be said to remedy anything". (47).

The world of *Cat's Cradle,* as represented by these two viewpoints is a world searching for a sense of meaning and purpose. Vonnegut writes, "Beware of the man who works hard to learn something, learns it, and finds himself no wiser than before... He is full of murderous resentment of people who are ignorant without having come by their ignorance the hard way." (CC) But in this topsy-turvy world where truth is dead and lies are bliss, "Understanding is the booby-prize" (Mayo 31). The people who claim to understand anything are shown to be fools like the "Episcopalian lady in Navport. She was a pool and so am 1 ... and so is anyone who thinks he sees what God is doing". (CC 9) This is what Marvin Thomas makes of the novel:

Vonnegut's surprising imagination is on full display in *Cat's Cradle,* This apocalyptic novel presents readers with a vision of the end of the world that is quit is different from the nuclear annihilation that was widely feared in the 1960s... *Cat's Cradle,* warns readers that science can devise many ways of ending the world, but it shows that human ingenuity can also make life worth living for the millions of human beings who currently live in poverty and despair. (77).

Cat's Cradle, is a game which is indicative of a complete absence of fact which means no cat no cradle which is an illusion. Vonnegut intensifies the idea religion is a search for something which does not exist. Bokonon brings in this idea and he finds it comical why people should make a hectic search for a meaning trough a religion. It is human nature to search for meaning through a religion. Thus the nihilistic views of Vonnegut begin to become clear as *Cat's Cradle,* comes to a close. It is human nature to search for meaning in life, a meaning that science alone cannot provide. Science has discovered that the basic need of human existence is "Protein" (24). This

fact of science intensifies the conclusion that human existence is futile without meaning. However, that is just the statement that Vonnegut expects the people of the world to make. The void that humans feel a need to fill, with thoughts such as religion, will never be filled; the search for meaning is never-ending. Just like an endless, pointless game of *Cat's Cradle,*. "Bokonon, in his infinite wisdom knows not to take his own advice and the validity of it was null. There is no truth, there is no meaning, No damn cat, and no damn cradle." (66).

In *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut brings his perspective to bear on contemporary aspects of the old collision between science and religion. As the scientist finds the truth that kills, the prophet looks for a saving lie which also ultimately kills. On the title page of the first of the books of Bokonon, the Bible of this new religion is the abrupt warning. Vonnegut writes, "Don't be a fool! Close this book at once! It is nothing but foma! Foma, of course, are lies" (265) Bokonon an African-American from Tobago in the Caribbean, has invented the religion for the island of San Lorenzo. His philosophy of life includes some parable-like anecdotes, some epigrams, and many psalm-like calypsos. The epigraph to Vonnegut's book reads this way. "Nothing in this book is thee live by the foma that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy", (vii).

Vonnegut uses *Cat's Cradle,* as a way of communicating his own thoughts and ultimately establishes his anti-establishment stance. The novel is used as an outlet almost as a way for the author to "empty his head". Vonnegut's method of expressing himself is mainly through his fictional religion of Bokononsim. Consequently, he expresses freely his viewpoints without feeling that he is speaking against religion

this is because there are not obviously, Vonnegut is the creator of this religion, yet he still can use excuse of claiming all ideas to be fictional. As Liana Price writes:

> The following is issued as a warning from the author Kurt Vonnegut to the reader: "Any unable to understand how a useful religion can be founded on his will not understand this book either" this quote is typical of Vonnegut in his usage of creating a personal narrative. (Qtd in Allen 58).

Vonnegut's approach at writing this novel is interesting in his use of two authors within the book itself. They are simply used as communicators perhaps, even comparable to translators to the effect that they interpret Vonnegut's mind for the reader. Vonnegut's point of satire is very clear, that any religion could be based entirely on shameless, yet harmless, lies, Vonnegut's style is one that, even though perhaps offensive to an extremely religious reader, still grabs the attention, but are only important in the context in which they are used, and continue to have no further meaning so while the reader continues to comprehend, expecting to find out what these "symbols" represent. Vonnegut plants the sub-conscious ideas that eventually take effect. To put it simply, *Cat's Cradle,* might be considered a "thinking-novel".

Vonnegut's excellent technique and unique style are unbelievably powerful. The thought-provoking text and incredibly well-developed characters are not to be forgotten either. It would be an understatement to say that *Cat's Cradle,* is a commendable literary work. Vonnegut has certainly composed a masterpiece to be unforgotten and to be talked about for years to come.

It is easy to conclude that many of Vonnegut's concepts of work have been spread widely. His parody of a modern invented religion that will make everyone happy spawns websites for this "jaunty, hip, fatalistic gospel delivered mainly in calypsos." This religion, Bokononism, has generated more interest than the book *Cat's Cradle,* itself. But *The Books of Bokonon* are lies mixed with truth.

The first sentence in the *Books of Bokonon* is a version of Epimenides Paradox. Epimenides, who was a Cretan, said that Cretans always lie. So therefore he must be lying when he says that Cretans always lie. There seems to be no way out of this linguistic maze. The first line of *The Books of Bokonon* is "All the true things I am about to tell you are shameless lies." In a sense, the statement is existentialist. Faced with a world without meaning, we are forced to make our own. We are not limited to the meaning we give our lives, but as Vonnegut states as a preface to the novel, quoting a verse from *The Books of Bokonon.* Nothing in this book is true. "Live by the foma that make you brave and kind and healthy and happy." (Vonnegut, 1998).

Vonnegut's ethical message was lost on the intellectuals of the *New York Review of Books* because of its humour and deceptive simplicity. His irony was lost on his younger audience because they focused on his irreverence. But in part his style and irreverence are part of his message. *Cat's Cradle,* is essentially about the moral issues involved in a democratic government using the atomic bomb and how to be really ethical, to think about right and wrong, means that one must dispense with the authorities who tell one what is right and wrong.

The most popular book about the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima was John Hersey's 1946 book *Hiroshima,* first published as a complete issue of the

New Yorker magazine. *Cat's Cradle,* style comments on John Hersey's book, which uses all the tricks of the novel: irony, cliff hangers, suspense, understatement, drama, vivid descriptions, heroes and heroines. Hersey follows the lives of six survivors of the bombing of Hiroshima from the night before the bomb was dropped to several months later. He switches back and forth from story to story, interspersing information, describing their emotions and struggles. In other words, it has all the entertainment of a well-written novel.

On the first page of *Cat's Cradle,,* its narrator explains, that when he was younger he "collected material for a book to be called *The Day the World Ended."* The book was to be "factual" and tells what "important Americans had done on the day when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan" (Vonnegut, 1998, p. 1). This is a clear reference to John Hersey's book. But Vonnegut is also making a point: to discuss the ethical implications of dropping the bomb on Hiroshima, one should not look at the victims, but at those who were involved in developing such a bomb and their government.

The narrator and fictitious writer of *Cat's Cradle,* is an idol whose moral outrage seems to be awakened only at the end of the story he is telling. The villains are quirky and banal. There is no dramatic tug of war between good and evil. The text seems simple, almost childish at times. But almost every line is ironic. Unfortunately, many fans and critics missed his most serious irony, which deals with ethical behaviour.

The original title of this paper is Kurt Vonnegurts Novel *Cat's Cradle,* "Science Fiction, Thought, and Ethics." Perhaps it would be better to say "Science's Fiction." In a sense science is fiction. Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific*

Revolution was not the first work to point this out. Science is another existential attempt to make meaning out of meaninglessness. It invents explanations or fictions for empirical data. As our fictitious writer Jonah says, quoting Bokonon, "All the true things are shameless lies."(Vonnegut, 1998).

Cat's Cradle, tells the story of Felix Hoenniker, one of the fathers of the atomic bomb and his new invention ice-nine, which brings the end of earth as a functioning ecosystem, leaving instead an inert surface and ravaging tornadoes in the sky. The story follows a writer who begins a book on what famous Americans were doing on the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Through his investigation, he makes contact with the orphaned children of Felix Hoenikker: Newt, a midget and college dropout and Angela, a gawky horse-faced woman married to a handsome philandering arms manufacturer. The third child Frank is a refugee from justice. Hoenikker's children, best known to the writer, possess a seed of the crystal ice-nine, which if released into a body of water, will result in the water of the world freezing, since its melting point is 4.4 degrees.

The writer, who urges the readers to call him Jonah, though his real name is John, goes to the Caribbean island of San Lorenzo to work on a story and also drawn by a photograph he saw in the newspaper of Mona Aamons Monzano, the adopted daughter of the dictator, Papa Monzano. On the plane, he meets Newt and Angela, who are on their way to Frank's wedding where he is to marry Mona. Frank has received the title of Major General, Minister of Science and Progress. Jonah eventually learns that the three have used their chip of ice nine. Newt has a short affair with a Russian circus midget Kurt Vonnegut's Novel *Cat's Cradle,* Science Fiction, Thought,

and Ethics 259 who is really a spy. Angela has used her chip to buy her philandering good lucking husband. Frank has given his to Papa Monzano, the dictator of Haiti-like Republic of San Lorenzo in exchange for his appointment.

When Papa Monzano is dying in horrible pain, he takes *ice-nine* and kills himself. Jonah, the writer of the story, goes with Frank, Angela and Newt to clean up the mess. Besides the frozen body of Monzano is the body of his doctor, who had frozen when he tried to taste *ice-nine* and then fell to the floor. They clean up the mess and plan to burn Monzano's body. Before they can burn the body, a pilot, who has been performing for the celebration of the One Hundred Martyrs for Freedom, crashes into the palace with his burning plane and Monzano's body slips into the ocean and all the water of the world becomes frozen and the world turns into a desert and the sky fills with tornadoes.

Cat's Cradle, uses *ice-nine* to reveal what Vonnegut feels are the ethical causes of Hiroshima. Not all of them are related to science. Zenophobia, nationalism, elitism, and religious determinism are also attacked. But the tool for the world's destruction is produced by science. Science is a great mystery of which most people know nothing. When Jonah, the fictional writer of *Cat's Cradle,* visits the General Forge and Foundry Company to interview its director about Felix Hoenikker, he meets the secretary of one of the research scientists. As the novelist writes:

> "Ech," gurgled Miss Pefko emptily. "I take dictation from Dr. Horvath and it's just like a foreign language. I don't think I'd understand even if I was to go to college. And here he's maybe talking about

something that's going to turn everything upside-down and inside-out like the atom bomb."

"When I used to come home from school Mother used to ask me what happened that day, and I'd tell her," said Miss Pefko. "Now I come home from work and she asks me that same question and all I can say is" Miss Pefko shook her head and let her crimson lips flap slackly "I dunno, I dunno, I dunno" (Vonnegut 1998:25).

Science has an unexplainable quality. They do not understand what they are typing or transcribing. They feel as if they have false consciousness about the world and therefore are not able to make ethical judgments about science.

Miss Pefko refers to a science display as magic, which with its bells and smoke and bubbling liquids seems to be its intention. When Asa Breed scolds Miss Pefko for calling the display magic, he says, "We don't want to mystify. Give us credit for that." is, of course, showing us that science does want to mystify.

Magic mystifies. It is the word which we use for phenomena we cannot explain, when we are unable to understand reality.

And Ada Breed expects the non-scientist to not understand. The Girl Pool, the secretaries who work in the basement and listen "to the faceless voices of scientists on Dictaphone records—records brought in by mail girls" (38) come in to Kurt Vonnegut's Novel *Cat's Cradle,:* Science Fiction, Thought, and Ethics sing Christmas carols and Dr. Breed remarks, "They serve science too...even though they may not understand a word of it." (35).

In an earlier episode in the novel, Jonah has been in a bar. The bartender mentions that he read that science had discovered "the basic secret of life. Science

uncovers secrets, but for most people the scientists seem to keep their secrets well. The bartender finally remembers what the secret to life was in the article, "protein." He takes science's ridiculous claim at face value, not questioning whether science can really answer the philosophical question of the secret of life. He accepts that the secret of life is protein. By the way, if you look up on the Internet today for the secret of life and DNA, you will find 83 pages of entries that refer to DNA as the secret of life.

Vonnegut also sees science's role as the new religion as an obstacle to ethical action. Felix Floenikker is treated as a god. When asked by Jonas if he had been Hoenikker's supervisor, Asa Breed answers, "If 1 actually supervised Felix, then I'm ready now to take charge of volcanoes, the tides, and the migrations of birds and lemmings. The man was a force of nature no mortal could possibly control" (21). Asa Breed sees Felix Hoenikker as superhuman. He is beyond the control of mortals. There are similar reactions to him by his daughter. Angela when she screams at Newt that their father "is one of the greatest men who ever lived. He won the war today! Do you realize that?" (16V, Vonnegut emphasizes Hoenikker's apotheosis when Jonas visits his laboratory, A purple cord had been stretched across the doorway, and a brass plate on the wall explained why the room was sacred: "In this room, Dr. Felix Hoenikker, Nobel laureate in physics, spent the last twenty-eight years of his life, "where he was, there was the frontier of knowledge." the importance of this one man in the history of mankind is incalculable." (56)

Felix Hoenikker has the authority of God so he is not accountable. As he is dying, Papa Monzano tells Jonah, who has just been named president of San Lorenzo, to teach the people science. He says, "Science is magic that works" (218). The statement

both emphasizes the common feeling that science is miraculous and holy, and that it is incomprehensible.

As Simon Blackburn (2001) stated about religion's threat to ethics, "We have God's authority for dominating nature, or for regarding them others different from ourselves as inferior, or even criminal" (18). Science as the new religion is above condemnation. When Breed is explaining to Jonas the history of Ilium, he mentions that the hanging of a man who had killed twenty-six people and marvels at how the man had no sense of guilt. The unstated irony is that the atomic bomb at Hiroshima killed 100,000 people and Asa Breed himself has no sense of guilt. Towards the end of the novel Vonnegut shows us in a gruesome manner how a sense of scientific superiority leads to a sense of God-like enlightment.

Chapter Three

Illusion versus Reality

Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* carries a serious message eventuating from the dark realities of life. A witness to the gruesome devilries of war, and the outright cheating carried out by the religious establishments, Vonnegut, is deeply bent upon sending very strong signals of protest through his fiction. Bokononism is a term that stands pivotal to the entire thematic pattern of the novel.

Vonnegut Cat's Cradle provides a strong example of the importance of the play being compared to a children's game of weaving yarn between the fingers whereby the player forms various patterns. To see beyond what exists (or in Vonnegut's words: to lie) so as to create substance out of the drooping string such as the form of the Eiffel tower, a rocket ship, or a cradle-imagination and playfulness are used. The *Cat's Cradle* game can be allegorically employed to model Freud's interpretation of childhood play and, most importantly, creative writers. In the essay, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," Freud writes, "every child at play behaves like a creative writers, in that he creates a world of his own, or, rather, re-arranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him".(45) Here Freud brings his theory to light by likening the creative writer to the playful process of the child. The child draws some connection from reality to build a playful construct that branches off from what is real and becomes his or her own world. Freud views the process of writing and the fantasy involved as he views the child's development of his or her imaginary structures.

If one uses the *Cat's Cradle* as a microcosm, then the world created is symbolized by the substance derived from the string, and the pleasure one gets from creation can be symbolized by the playful recognition of from in the skeletal embodiment of it. The rearrangement of things is signified by the rearrangement of string. Freud goes on to write, "[the child/creative writer] takes his play very seriously and he expends large amounts of emotion on it."(46) What Freud defines here is that for the child or the creative writer to mentally involve him or herself completely in a playful activity, he or she makes use of a substantial amount of energy, thus taking the final creation seriously. The expenditure of this emotion can be related to the concept of the *Cat's Cradle* as well; within the necessary process of learning and, later, work, which gives rise to the imaginative aspect.

In "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" Freud delineates between those who have the capability of internalizing fantasy and those who do not. Vonnegut both verifies and negates this statement with Bokononist philosophy. Bokononism, in essence, argues that life is inherently displeasing, and the only way one can find happiness is through foma, or strength in imagination and playfulness. Vonnegut thus verifies Freu's statement through his explication of the way in which dissatisfaction leads to fantasy. However, Vonnegut negates Freud's contention by intimating that everyone is displeased in some way, and the sole path to happiness is fantasy. Whereas Freud seeks to divide people into happy and unhappy categories, as he seeks to divide creative writes from laymen, Vonnegut universalizes the concept.

The division between creative writes and laymen that Freud outlines in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" is addressed by *Cat's Cradle,* as well. In a sense, Vonnegut offers a different literary assertion of Freud's to contend with the division principal. Freud implies that the story's hero is an alter ego of the author's self (Freud, Freud Reader, 440-443). In order to establish this concept, Freud develops a specific, three-pronged formula as follows:

> Freud claims that the motivation behind a writer's creative process is linked to an external stimulus that drives out a wish fulfillment scenario from a previous experience. "Mental work is likened to some current impression, some provoking occasion in the present which has been able to arouse one of the subject's major wishes. From there it harks back to a memory of an earlier experience; it now creates a situation relating to the future which represents a fulfillment of the wish" (439).

First, the mental work behind *Cat's Cradle* may have been aroused by the Cold War hostilities of the time. In 1962, the year before the novel was published, America experienced the Cuban missile crisis. This time period was also punctuated by the impending conflict in Vietnam; the Vietcong were established and ready to fight. These two historical points may have triggered Vonnegut's mental work. Interestingly, the two examples given are both located in tropical settings; Cuba in particular is similar to San Lorenzo in Vonnegut's Caribbean description. Moreover, Freud's idea of "harking back to an earlier experience" may be Vonnegut recalling his WWII experience and the horror he underwent in a meat-packing cellar during the bombing of

Dresden *(Freud 439)*. Perhaps this mental work led to the construction of Bokononism. It is a philosophy of psychological freedom, that lets its disciples lie in the face of the horridness of reality, of which both Dresden and Vitenam stand as paramount examples.

Freud writes, "Harks back to a memory of an earlier experience (usually an infantile one)" (Freud, *Freud Reader,* 439). Vonnegut's Dresden memory does not at first appear infantile, however, this discrepancy is lessened by examining one of his later literary works. The sub-title of Vonnegut's novel about his Dresden experience, *Slaughterhouse Five, is The Children's Crusade.* Furthermore, within the text he writes, "We *had* been foolish virgins n the war, right at the end of childhood" *(Slaughterhouse-Fivea 14).* Here there is testament to a type of infantile memory that may have become the mental work behind Bokononism. Vonnegut defines his WWII experience, and thus his recollection of it, as infantile in recognition of the vacuum of profound life-experience he and his fellow soldiers had the chance to undergo.

To augment and test imagination and fulfil this mental work more completely, Vonnegut subjects Jonah to the filters of four distinctive paradigmatic modes of thought. Freud derives particular importance from this observer brand of hero, writing sees the actions and sufferings of other people pass before him like a spectator; the ego contents itself with role (Freud 442). Freud's spectator; hero gives the reader the ability to compare the forms of thought presented- Christianity, nihilism, science, and Bokononism - and ultimately decree Bokononism as the supremely freeing entity. Here, Vonnegut defines himself as an alter ego of Jonah, who is himself a writer, because it is

the path through these paradigms into foma and humor that Vonnegut deems each individual must take. In other words, the participation on the part of the reader is the metamorphosis from Freud's description of the layman to his description of the writer. Because Vonnegut paves this path in his plotline, and travels it through his narrator, he eradicates the distinction between those having pre-conscious limitation and those who lack it, thus denying Freud's concept of a division between creative writers and the mass of humanity.

Vonnegut utilized two of Jonah's experiences to portray the barriers science poses in its desire to organize reality into a regimented system. A first example occurs when Jonah asks about a previous conversation between a secretary and the late Dr. Hoenniker. Jonah is told, "I said to him, 'God is love.' He said, 'What is God? What is love?' "Urn." (CC 55). Here science restructures the secretary's foma, restricting her happiness through faith. While Christian faith already demonstrated to be repressive, it involves some level of imagination above this depiction of science. Here the social shame Freud distinguishes is brought upon the secretary, which is exhibited by her awkward response. A second example takes place when a scientist by the name of Dr. Breed explains the value of pure research to Janah. Dr. Breed says, "New knowledge is the most valuable commodity on earth. The more truth we have to work with, the richer we become" (41). To this, Jonah mentally replies, "Had I been a Bokononist then, that statement would have made me howl" (41). This segment of dialogue and internal monologue differentiates Bokononism and science more directly over the issue of truth. Science's supposed quest for truth to bring richness requires a Jonah's response which

marks Bokononism as an elevated doctrine, because of its realization that life is only livable through the fantasized utilization of the untrue.

Vonnegut makes one last ironic job at reality with his destruction of the earth by ice-nine, a chemical produced by the great, seemingly benevolent institution of science. The entire earth freezes over, killing nearly everyone. With this contextually comical ending, Vonnegut drives the claim that reality is drastic and ruthless; the best one can do is to make light of it. In the novel, by folly engaging in fŏma it is possible for the characters to accept the things with their own unconscious fantasy that their conscious mind would have them cope with through repression. This aligns itself distinctively with Freud's own musings on the ability of the creative writer from the essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming". Freud believes that creative writers both had the ability to dissolve their pre-conscious gates in order to create fantasy, and also to therapeutically engage their audience with creativity and imagination (Freud 436-443). This concept rests as a superstructure over the plot of *Cat's Cradle*. In the end, when the earth is still and frozen and Jonah reigns as San Lorenzan king of deadly squat, bokonon recites a final note of insolence to the stupidity of restriction, saying

> If I were a younger man, I would write a history of human stupidity; and I would climb to the top of Mount McCabe and lie down on my back with my history for a pillow; and I would take from the ground some of the blue-white poison that makes statues of men; and I would make a

> statue of myself, lying on my back, grinning horribly, and thumbing my nose at You Know Who. (CC 287)

Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* carries a serious message eventuating from the dark realities of life. A witness to the gruesome devilries of war, and the outright cheating carried out by the religious establishments, Vonnegut, is deeply bent upon sending very strong signals of protest through his fiction. Bokononism is a term that stands pivotal to the entire thematic pattern of the novel.

In the Books of Bokonon, when Bokonon tells the story of how man was created, he has man who asks God what the meaning of "all this" is. God replies that he doesn't see why everything must have a meaning and if man does, he leaves man to find one (CC 177). This is how Vonnegut, as well as Bokonon, sees religion, a hopeless search for truths that do not exist.

Through Vonnegut's other characters there arises more insight into how different people view religion and society. Julian Castle refers to Jesus as "oh. Him". (116). Julian here demonstrates his Bokononist view of life by accepting the fact that though he talks of Jesus and religion, he knows it means nothing. Jonah is surprised to find out that all the people on the island are Bokononist and that he is one also (118). This refers back to the reason he wants to be called Jonah. As Reed observes, it is both a parody of Melville's Moby Dick and an allusion to the Bible story of Jonah, "it is characteristic that Vonnegut's speaker should be a Jonah, who gets swallowed by the whale, rather than a whale-hunting Ishmael" (124). The whale, of course, symbolizes Bokononism and religion in general. Jonah is the only character with running inner

dialogue in which one sees his struggle with power once he is offered the rule of San Lorenzo. He quickly gets rid of his allusions to make Bokononism a welcome religion, recognizing the Dynamic Tension that must be present in society. He also finds it impossible not to "... learn on God" to write his speech (CC 152). Jonah is also confronted with the cold, but lovely, embodiment of Bokononism, Mano Aamons Manzano. She grows up as the sexual icon for her people and hating it, runs away to study under Bokonon. The religion of harmless untruths helps her cope by taking her emotion. The only time an outburst is elicited from her is when Jonah tells her to love only him. This, under Bokononist thought, is considered utterly wrong and when Mona tells this to Jonah, she challengingly asks what his religion says about this. Again, it is pointed out that religions who boast of loving only one person do not make much sense and seem barbaric to Bokoninsts:

> A lover's a liar,
>
> To himself he lis.
>
> The truthful are loveless.
>
> Like oysters their eyes! (23)

The title of Kurt Vonnegut's novel comes from Newton Hoenikker's, or Newt's speech to Jonah about the deceptions society teaches its children. Newt tells Jonah that,

For may be a hundred thousand years or more, grown -ups have been waving tangles of string on their children's faces. A *Cat's Cradle* is nothing but a bunch of X's between somebody's hands, and little kids look and look and look at all those X's . No damn cat, and no damn cradle (l 14).

This is proper analogy for all aspects of society, especially religion. Society makes something up and pretends it's something. For instance, religion says it has all the answers, but when it is examined closer, nothing is really there. This just, once again, reiterates the point that religion is only a divine created by man to answer otherwise unanswerable questions, but it is all lies.

Newt's father and brother both serve the purpose of showing the scientific view of religion. Newt's father Felix was the creator of the atom bomb and was practically a Jesus (53) but, as one man asked, "how the hell innocent is a man who helps make a thing like an atomic bomb?" (53) This comparison to Jesus is striking. It takes a man to cause deaths to in that, he is compared to Jesus. Once the comparison is made it is surprisingly relevant in that Jesus created a religion that would, over time, cause hundreds of thousands of deaths also. Religion was and is the topic of many wars around the world, with Christianity being one of those conflicting religions. At one point he asks why he should "be there with made-up games" such as religion" when there are so many real ones going on (17). Felix questions everything and it is easy to assume that he believed in nothing. He does not believe in sin and he once challenges a woman to tell him one thing that was absolutely true, knowing she should not answer satisfactorily. He responded to her reply of "God is love" by asking "What is God? What is love?" (44).

The woman, Miss Faust, is a typical devout in that she refuses to question her faith. Her name is conspicuous because of its correlation with the Faust legends. In these legends a persona sells his soul to the devil for something he wants, and later regrets his decision. Since Miss Faust represents all those devout people who wil not accept

anything outside their narrow view of religion, the Faust legend applies to all these people. They sell their minds and their ability to think for themselves to a religion to have an easy way to comfort them which will eventually lead to their disappointment.

In *Cat's Cradle,* the end of the world comes about when all the oceans, streams, lakes, and other bodies of water freeze because of an invention of Felix Hoenniker who tackles water to crystallize as hard as a desk with a melting point of one hundred and thirty degrees Fahrenheit. As soon as it touches human skin or gets inside the body, all blood turns to ice and the person dies. The reactions of the various people on San Lorenzo give insight into their character. The Crosby's eun away from the tornadoes that suddenly form because of the sudden lack of moisture yelling "American! American!" (65), true to their granfalloonary and belief that what they classify themselves as in their heads will have no effect on the happenings around them. The People of San Lorenzo, the ones who survive find Bokonon and captures his. They carry him to the top of the highest mountain on the island to tell them what God was doing and how they should react. Bokonon tells them that "God is surely trying to kill them... and that they should have the good manners to die" (182).

Throughout the novel Jonah is found searching for the meaning of his existence and what all these strange coincidences in his life are leading up to. John tells Newt of his dream of climbing the mountain on San Lorenzo to put up a symbol, but he does not know what the symbol should be. At the end of the novel Konah finds Bokonon sitting by the side of the road writing the last page of the Books of Bokonon: Vonnegut writes:

> "If I were a younger man, I would write a history of human stupidity; and I would climb to the top of mount McCabe and lie down on my

> back with my history for a pillow; and I would take from the ground some of the blue - while poison that makes statues of men; and I would make a statue of myself, lying on my back, grinning horribly, and thumbing my nose at You know who (SC 287).

It can be assumed that *Cat's Cradle* is the history of "human stupidity" Bokonon speaks of, and this would also "...satisfy Jonah's original intention of writing the day the World Ended" (Read 124) like he originally says he would. It is also conclusive to find that the symbol Jonah dreams of carrying is Bokonon.

Through Vonnegut's unique characters and his cynical view of society, the pivotal role religion plays in everyday life is brought into a new perspective and its very validity is questioned. Bokononism becomes the one true religion of all the people in Vonnegut's fictional worlds because it has recognized the religion to be trash and its only purpose is to give meaning to a world where no meaning exists. The only people who take it seriously are the miserable villagers of San Lorenzo who end up killing themselves because they refuse to question their religion though it admits as being made of lies. Newt describes religion best:

> Little Newt snorted, 'Religion!'
>
> "See the cat? Asked Newt. 'See the cradle?'(183)

In addition to religion, *Cat's Cradle* confronts, in a simple manner, man's destructive nature in the destruction of the worlds. This theme is one that pervades many of Vonnegut's novels. In his anti-war novel, Slaughterhouse-Five, Billy Pilgrim asks the Tralfamadorians if they are afraid of humans because humans are so destructive. In *Cat's Cradle,* the destruction of the world is caused by a substance that is

developed this substance because the military wants an easier way to traverse swamps. Ironically, the chemical the military wants is the same thing that eventually wipes out all the armies everywhere, because ice-nine would cause all water it comes in contact with to freeze, so one tiny molecule has the ability to destroy the world, while the occurrence is an exaggeration. A prior invention of Hoenikker's inventions does have the power to destroy the world. Vonnegut's exaggeration makes his point clear—if man cannot destroy the would one way, he will continue trying, because it is human nature to risk destroying the world to further one's own ends.

Cat's Cradle depends on Vonnegut's simplicity and other literary techniques, like exaggeration, to make its point. Man's destructive nature is clearly expressed in this excellent novel. The message, and the readability of the novel, are more important than if the novel is of the same literary calibre as the likes of Shakespeare and Hemingway. Vonnegut's simple sentences, combined with exaggeration, irony, and elements of science fiction, make his novels, and the messages contained within them, very powerful, and very enjoyable to read. In this way, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. has established himself as a literary master.

Vonnegut presents a final way of not having free will through science, which conclusively and completely removes the possibility that people can act freely. Slaughter house –Five's alien Tralfamadorians have a decidedly linear view of time.

In *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut attacks the idea that truth is innately desirable and good -an idea which is all pervasive in our culture, particularly within the two major competing explanative philosophers of religion and science. He attacks these notions in many different ways, but primarily it is through the use of humour. The opposing yet

balanced forces in the book are represented by the differing ways Bokononism and the scientists of the Research Laboratory of the General Forge and Foundry Company treat truth. Onehas, in fact a major opposition between the sinless scientist and the distinctly fallen religious prophet, Bokonon. As the scientist finds the truth that kills, the prophet looks for a saving (CC 165). The opposition is kept in equilibrium through the philosophies similarities. Through each arises out of separate intellectual system, they are twin states of being, Both Science and Religion have a facade of harmony that obscures a hideous life. Illium's affluences compensates for its spiritual poverty; San Lorenzo proffers spirituality to fill its material want. Together they school Janah in the futility of aspiring to improve or even understand the human condition. One can see this opposition in action in the following statements, firstly by Dr. Asa Breed, head of the Research Laboratory, and secondly in one of Bokonon's Calypsos

I wanted all things

To seem to make some sense,

So we all could be happy, yes,

Instead of tense.

And so t made up lies

So that they all fit nice,

And I made this sad world

Apar-a-dise. (CC185)

This search for meaning and truth takes many forms of play or invention. Vonnegut is in fact "pushing quite hard for a recognition of the deeply ambiguous

creative/ destructive aspects of the innate human instinct to play", with the associated connotations that "we cannot know how our games will end". (113)

For Felix Hoenikker the search was in the form of the ability to stop and look and wonder, and sometimes learn, (25) no matter what the consequences might be. For Frank Hoenikker, the "chunk of the old man's magic meat", the search is for honour and creature comforts, without taking any responsibility. "I know I've got limitations" he says to John when explaining why he can't be president of San Lorenzo. "They're the same limitations my father had.... I've got a lot of good ideas.... but he was no good at facing the public, and neither am I". (26)And neither father nor son is interested in learning anything about the public or humans in general. The scientists, Felix and Frank Hoenikker, seem to reveal

Scientific knowledge cannot provided the answers to essentially human problems, but that people all often think it can; that science is frequently exploited to create human problems, while scientists do too little to prevent this; and that the scientist may put his incomprehensible truths before other people, but turn away from the human truths life may present him.

The negative view of science is only marginally refuted by the medical practices of the two doctors on the island, Julian Castle and Dr. Schlichter von Koenigswald, both of whom rely on 'unscientific' religious methods to relieve the suffering of their patients when medicines fail.

Bokonon, on the other hand, is interested in finding the best way to make people brave, kind healthy and happy. He will tell a 'foma' to do so. But are 'foma' really as harmless as they seem? When the outside world intrudes, Bokonon's

lies lose their 'Dynamic Tension'. His invented created myth – "And God said, 'Let Us make living creatures out of mud"- is undone by Frank's seed of ice (9), which was designed to eliminate mud.

And yet religion seems to be revealed as a more useful, and less dangerous, invention of meaning than science, despite its paradoxes and shortcomings. It has proven "helpful, having greater flexibility for suggesting purposes and at the same time the means for making man feel better about his lack of purpose" Bokonon's lies prove more liberating that the Hoenikker's truths.

Despite this more positive representation of religion over science, lies over truth, the reader is left with no very definite idea of the equipoise between science and religion being morally resolved. The ending of John's book remains enigmatic. We never find out the 'truth' about what happens at the end of the world we have been privy to through the novel, or the final destiny of our narrator. We are left instead with the overriding impression of laughing at death. As Bokonon puts it: "I would make a statue of myself, lying on my back, grinning horribly, and thumbing my nose at You Know Who." A fairly good example of Vonnegut's holy wandered finding nothing but "junk and lies and idiocy", and yet laughing rather than crying. (CC 121).

The end result of these searches is another of the elements present in Black Humour, as defined in the introduction. The multiplicity of searches, utilising either religion or science, brings on the realisation of the complexity of moral and aesthetic experiences. Bokonon's and eventually John's, answer to this complexity which affects the individual's ability to choose a course of action, is ironic detachment. John's tale about the world ended is no sob story. And it is called by the much less bleak title *Cat's*

Cradle, Bokonon's books, likewise, are laughing in the face of misery and death. Both of these fictional writers are Black Humorists, which is why Black Humour is fundamental to both our enjoyment and understanding of the novel.

A novel is meant to be a fabric of fictions, woven for our entertainment, but suspension of disbelief is usually expected while reading these lies. As the book continues, the almost inescapable conclusion is that in Vonnegut's world one must be aware of the lie and truths one is choosing to accept, that "the primary criterion for choosing a philosophy of life is pragmatic: not whether or not it is 'true', but whether or not it works.

The Meta fictional nature of the novel also keeps the reader in a slightly uneasy awareness that they are 'reading' without being aware of themselves unselfconsciously in the text. Just as we become used to the idea that we are reading about the writing of a book (The Day the World Ended) that turned into another book *(Cat's Cradle,),* we are thrown again by the introduction of another set of fictional books - The Books of Bokonon. Then Papa Manzano and Frank Hoenikker get a brief look-in with fictional ghost-written statements, and then Philip Castle's fictional book on San Lorenzo. And so it goes.

It is only through self-awareness of our own actions and responsibilities that individuals can potentially avoid never questioning the status quo, or our cultural myths, In this regard Black Humourists could be considered similar to satirists: "they would prevent us from 'warming ourselves with our secretly virtuous insides' while we condone the freezing of others... comically but relentlessly they seek to make us

thoughtful". But unlike the satirists, there is not the "rhetoric of moral certainty" within the texts of the Black Humorists.

Black Humour is not an easy concept to define, and yet those elements which do seem to be repeated across definitions all seem to lead towards the belief expressed by Voltaire and Kant. "Heaven has given us... things to compensate us for the many miseries of life, hope and sleep and laughter". Perhaps we have also been given Black Humour, for those times when the search for meaning fails, and we can no longer explain why there are such miseries.

In any case, this is what that underpins Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle,*. He aims to entertain, raise our self-awareness, and nudge us towards questioning the fundamental 'myths' that underpin our society: science, religion, and a belief in our ability to make our own destinies. Inextricably intertwined with all of these aims is Black Humour, running through the novel like of tangle of strings in a *Cat's Cradle,* I wrote this essay in 2008 in response to a book review assignment. I wanted to include it in my portfolio to show that I can critically evaluate a book and write a review on its own merits. I think that I succeeded in painting an unbiased picture of Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle.*

Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle,* is undeniably a satirical commentary on the world that we live in. Among many themes that occur in Vonnegut's novel, humanity attempting to save itself from its own foolishness is a reoccurring one. In any examination of catastrophic circumstances that exist in the world today, one can conclude that much of the circumstances are as a result of human selfishness, foolishness, vengeance, and greed. The state of conflict that exists in the world today

can be attributed to our own society's actions. Vonnegut discusses these topics in his book, and uses metaphors and satire to point out that it is our own human foolishness that is the cause of our issues and our inevitable destruction. This paper will examine various circumstances in the plot that exemplify the theme Vonnegut creates in *Cat's Cradle*, as well as applying it to themes in the state of our current culture.

Vonnegut introduces the substance "Ice-nine" manufactured by Dr. Hoenikker, a socially inept scientist who also created the atomic bomb. Dr. Hoenikker created these substances as he was instructed to do by the government, regardless of the consequences or ramifications that these substances would create. In essence, Dr. Hoenikker is a human synecdoche for the concept of science as a whole. Our society uses science to further knowledge and discovery, and in turn uses it for monetary or warfare gain - failing to fully examine the extreme ramifications that these discoveries may have. Although there are many positive implications that science creates, such as improved health and advancements in technology, the image that Vonnegut creates is not a positive one. Dr. Hoenikker's creation of Ice-nine is what eventually causes the destruction of civilization, as it is due to his detachment from the vast implications of his creation that eventually allows the substance to get into the wrong hands. One cannot help but make the connection to biological warfare or weapons of mass destruction that exist in our world today. The threat of WMD's in our society is a very frightening but extremely realistic one.

It is unfair to point the linger and just one person in the novel that may be at fault for the catastrophe that happens in *Cat's Cradle*. It is safe to assume that Dr. Hoenikker is a catalyst to the events that take place leading up to the ultimate demise of

civilization, but it is not just him at fault. This mirrors our society today as well, as it is impossible to fault one person for the way things are today. It is however, safe to say, that is due to greed and foolishness that our society is at a constant state of conflict, as well as it is safe to say that it is due to this same reason that Vonnegut's civilization has been destroyed. Due to Dr. Hoenikker not safely containing the Ice-nine, and not fully knowing that the substance was poisonous, it was possible for his children to become in contact with the substance. Dr. Hoenikker's fate alone, poisoning himself with his own creation, is a metaphor for the entire world eventually succumbing to the same fate. Society in turn creates their own Ice-nine for selfish reasons, and in turn poisons the very same world they live in.

In our society, it is a very well-known fact that it is due to our carbon emissions, our wasteful habits, and our constant draining of natural resources that our own planet is decaying and will eventually become inhabitable. But continuously, we waste resources, and we drain our planet, fully knowing the consequences. Our collective foolishness and greed will be our collective demise, and that is the message that Vonnegut is implying. Horlick Minton exemplifies this point in his speech to the San Lorenzan's when he simply states, "Think of what a paradise this world would be if men were kind and wise" (256). Perhaps if humankind were less foolish, our world as we know it would be a thriving and safe one.

On the other end of the spectrum, religion plays a major part in the demise of the society in *Cat's Cradle,* specifically the citizens of San Lorenzo. The San Lorenzan's blindly practiced the religion of Bokononism, a religion that states that everything is lies, or foma. The people knew everything was a lie, and yet they followed

the religion anyways. Bokonon continued to feed the citizens of San Lorenzo lies, and they blindly believed, leading them to their ultimate demise. In Chapter 120, it is told that the people gathered together and forced Bokonon to explain why the catastrophe was happening. Bokonon in turn tells them that God is through with them, and was trying to kill them, so if they were still alive now they should follow through with God's command. And so the people once again follow the word of Bokonon, even though everything he says is a lie. Vonnegut is clearly making a mockery of organized religion and perhaps cults or other organized groups based on dogma and dictatorship. This portion of the book is also in line with his recurring theme in the novel, it is the citizens of San Lorenzo's own fault that they perished that day, because they were foolish in practicing a religion that is based on lies.

Cat's Cradle, is a very interesting novel with respect to the themes that are prevalent throughout the novel. Vonnegut expresses his frustration with society, particularly with regard to science and organized religion, through satire and sardonic images. He uses comedy and irony to point out that society needs to make a change, in order to save itself. His protagonist John, watches as a scientist kills himself with his own regimen in a society that is so driven for knowledge at whatever cost. He meets an ignorant group of siblings that single-handedly become a catalyst to world destruction, a civilization so blindly apt to believe anything that they will kill themselves because their leader said they should. The theme is clear, humanity strives to save itself from its own foolishness, and evitably humanity becomes the sole cause of its own demise. Without consideration of these foolish mistakes our society

continues to make, it is clear that our fate will be likened to those civilians of San Lorenzo.

The only thing in my life that I can be positive about is change. Everything changes, from the moment we die. Reality has many twist and turns, and our perception of reality is what shapes us to become who we are. Our life is spent on deciphering the difference between reality and not reality. This is hot to define because reality is unique to each individual. Our environment and the people we are around shape our perception of what is real. Reality is our grip what is true and false, write and wrong, what is real and what is not. So reality can be distorted by our belief in it. We can sincerely believe something is right, but we sincerely wrong.

Chapter Four

Narrative Technique

Vonnegut can certainly be considered a postmodern author. His satiric voice makes use of postmodernism and the irony of its holes for Grand narratives. He eloquently constructs a tale filled with parodies of absolute truth and modern concepts. These parodies express the key principles of postmodernisms show the flaws in modern ethic. Vonnegut's glorifications of untruths and his attack of modern short comings paired with his satire of Grand narratives makes *cat's cradle* a literary piece of postmodern art.

Vonnegut's war experiences have left clear marks on his writings. As a direct witness of the bombing of Dresden, Vonnegut was left with unforgettable memories. The scene of senseless misery and mass destruction at Dresden has played an important role in forming Vonnegut's intellect and pacifist views. The best description of America at that time is to be found in Lundquist's book Kurt Vonnegut, where he quotes Vonnegut's words:

> America was an idealistic, pacifistic nation at the time. I was taught in the sixth grade to be proud that we has a standing army of just over a hundred thousand men and that generals has nothing to say about what was done in Washington. I was taught to be proud of that and to pity Europe for having more than a million men under arms and spending all their money on airplanes and tanks. I simply never unlearned junior civics. I still believe in it. I got a very food grade (23).

Individual chapters of the novel and their compositions expresses the postmodernist metonymy. This succession and titles are rather unusual for a novel. Chapters are short and with describing titles such as "A Nice Midget", "O.K., Mom", "No Pain", "Communists", "Nazis", "Royalists", "Parachutists", and "Draft Dodgres"... etc. The factual metonymy can be seen in the *Cat's Cradle,* as well. The complicated structure of the *Cat's Cradle,* in the form of string parallels the structure of the atom bomb. Hoenikker himself connects both, when he plays *Cat's Cradle,* on the day that his invention is used.

The main narrator of the book differs from his modernist predecessors and regular heroes already in his name and treatment of his character. The first sentence of the book tells one: "Call me Jonah." (7) This name could be easily connected with the Biblical Jonah. The playfulness is clear from the title of the book. The *Cat's Cradle,* resembles a game with a loop of string. The *Cat's Cradle,* is actually one of the figures made with the string.

Complete anarchy is seen in the Bokonons verses and opinions. The innovation and new ideas spring from all his sayings: "Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless laughter can be said to remedy anything." (55) Even the invention of foma, which are lies, harmless untruths or as in the online Dictionary of Terms from the Books of Bokonon called "a useful and harmless sort of horseshit" (56) are a kind of new religion, and innovative interpretation of a new look at the way of living.

Vonnegut uses the plot of Cat's Cradle to make a postmodern parody of how science really does not lead to a utopia. 'You,' he said to Frank hoarsely, 'you - Franklin

Hoenikker - you will be the next President of San Lorenzo. Science - you have science. Science is the strongest thing there is.' 'Science' said 'Papa' 'Ice' (Vonnegut 146). He elects to make Frank Hoenikker the new president of San Lorenzo because he thinks he is about to die. He chooses Frank because he knows of his possession of Ice-Nine (which happens to be the greatest and newest scientific discovery of mankind in the novel). The satire is this: Papa assumes Frank would be the best option for President because he has science; Ice-Nine. Papa's ideas about how science betters society reflect the Modern idea of the concept. However, later in the novel, the reader discovers that Ice-Nine brings about the end of the world. Vonnegut's satire reflects the postmodern concept that pursuing a utopia through science is a facetious pursuit because the further mankind dives into scientific discovery, the more destructive society becomes.

Vonnegut uses a religion he created for the novel called Bokononism to convey society's misconceptions about the usefulness of truth. Bokononism is a religion that identifies with its own falseness. It rejoices in accepting that its ideals are not true. In *The Books of Bokonon* (the bokononist equivalent of the Christian bible) it states to "Live by the foma (harmless untruths) that make you brave and kind and happy and healthy." Bokononists see that a religion does not have to be true to be useful. The religion shows its followers that the ideals of a religion can be beneficial to oneself without them being based on ultimate truth. In the novel Vonnegut uses the island of San Lorenzo to portray how lies can help mankind more than truth.

The island is extremely poverty stricken and they have no means of building the island's economy or natural resources to make it an island worth living on. So instead of attempting to do so, the citizens confide in the hope which their religion can bring them,

regardless of whether it's true or not. It can bring them hope and happiness nonetheless. "Well, when it became evident that no governmental or economic reform was going to make the people much less miserable, the religion became the one real instrument of hope. Truth was the enemy of the people, because the truth was so terrible" (Vonnegut 172). This is a postmodern theme because it shows how gaining all truth, does not really better society in all cases, in fact in this case truth becomes the very antithesis of benefit. From a modern perspective it is assumed that gaining knowledge leads to good things, and that seeing beyond falseness brings mankind one step closer to a utopia.

However from a postmodern outlook, in example the outlook of Vonnegut's Bokonism, this truth really leads society no closer to a perfect society, it actually causes deviation from it. Vonnegut uses Bokononism to parallel with the postmodern idea of there not being a single all-knowing religious being. Bokononism is used to parody the concept of a Grand Narrative. Bokononism is a perfect example of this kind of irony, in fact the entire novel is, "The first sentence in The Books of Bokonon is this: 'All of the things I am about to tell you are shameless lies'" (5).

Vonnegut goes on to satire these principles further, mainly the idea of progress through knowledge. Early in the novel, the main character has a conversation with two other characters and they land on the subject of the secret of life: "What is the secret of life?' I asked. 'I forget,' said Sandra. 'Protein,' the bartender declared. 'They found something out about protein." 'Yeah,' said Sandra, "that's it."

Vonnegut's sense of humor is directly in play here, he toys with the idea that discovering the secret of life would lead society to a catalyst of transcendence into depths of progression never seen before. However, the discovery of "the secret of life" in *Cat's*

Cradle, leads to nothing. The fact about the importance and beneficial uses of protein to the human diet does nothing for society. It is merely a nifty fact and it does not lead mankind into new fields of undiscovered enlightenment or progress. Vonnegut uses postmodern irony to show that knowledge does not always mean progress, and that progress is not always beneficial. The author uses this comedic sense of irony throughout the entire novel, and he never does it without it having a postmodern twist. Later in the novel, several characters are talking about science and how wonderful it is. Yet Vonnegut makes sure to use the word "wonderful" very satirically.

> How can anybody in his right mind be against science? asked Crosby.
>
> I'd be dead now if it wasn't for Penicillin,' said Hazel. 'And so would my mother.'
>
> 'How old is your mother?' I inquired. 'A hundred and six. Isn't that wonderful?' (231).

Vonnegut's "jokes" are always flavored with a postmodern punch-line. This is ironic because it displays how science is not always a benefactor to an individual. In a modern perspective, it would be assumed that science –the pursuit of knowledge through collection of observation and empirical data- benefits people. However Vonnegut uses his postmodern irony to show that this is not always true. Clearly, just because a person's life is prolonged that does not mean they are in better shape. The author uses this satiric sense of how "wonderful" science is to convey these postmodern ideas.

One of the most significant examples of Vonnegut's postmodern attitude in *Cat's Cradle* is the entire symbol his novel is based on and titled after. The symbol of a "*Cat's Cradle*" (which is a design that can be made by threading string between one's hands)

plays an extremely important role in the novel. Vonnegut uses this to symbolize how all of mankind's ideas and "truths" are really based upon lies, or narratives. Everything we accept as truth is either a myth legitimized by the necessity for its own creation, or science, which is a narrative that cannot even legitimize itself. In the novel the main character is talking with another character named Newt, and Newt says,

> No wonder kids grow up so crazy. A *Cat's Cradle* is nothing but a bunch of X's between somebody's hands, and little kids look and look at all those X's...'
>
> 'And?'
>
> No damn cat, and no damn cradle (166).

This dialogue expresses everything the symbol represents, which is all of the lies mankind accepts as truth. What Vonnegut is really pulling into view here is that no one has the authority to say what is true, or really even define what truth means. In addition, that no one can define how much more useful one "truth" is than others, because it all depends on the individual. And moreover, that in reality, these truths are all ultimately untruths, because they are based on narratives- myths. This is an exceptional example of Vonnegut's understanding of postmodernism, and his use of its concepts in *Cat's Cradle*. Vonnegut can certainly be considered a postmodern author. His satiric voice makes use of postmodernism and the irony of it holds for Grand Narratives. He eloquently constructs a tale filled with parodies of absolute truth and modern concepts. These parodies express postmodernisms key principles and show the flaws in modern ethic. Vonnegut's glorifications of untruths and his convey of modern shortcomings paired with his satire of Grand Narratives makes *Cat's Cradle* a literary piece of postmodern art.

The world according to Vonnegut is based on these Bokonon's quotations: "God never wrote a good play in his life, History! Read it and weep!" And another harmless attack on religion "Of Course its trash!"(60).

Vonnegut is an author of the postmodernist culture, who embraces to all problems of our society. He addresses the generation, which finds pleasure in parodicing on human stupidity and the deepest convictions and beliefs. He masterly manages all these with his superb humor and inventive style, despite the fact, that many of the themes are not optimistic about human fate at all. Vonnegut's partly autobiographic book *Cat's Cradle,* is full of playfulness, striking oppositions and metonymical comparisons

Vonnegut's rejection of the idea of human progress reflects the dim view he takes of the human character. This disparaging view of man, along with his belief in a purposeless universe, constitutes an absurdist vision, a vision that overshadows any protest found in his novels. Like most novelist of the absurd, however, Vonnegut entertains little for either social or individual form.

Chapter Five

Summation

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., is a classic example of one of the most prolific of the 20th century American novelists. *Cat's Cradle,* like many of Vonnegut's other novels, gets considerable mileage from irony and humour. The novel is a tale of caution. Vonnegut wrote it in the wake of the Cold War and Cuban Missile Crisis, amid growing concern about the American role in international relations and the ability of the world's greatest powers to destroy nations with the click of a button. *Cat's Cradle,* centres on this worry, with the main plot involving one of the developers of the atomic bomb and a deadly substance called ice-nine.

Vonnegut represents parts of his life in the novel through characters. The family structure of the Hoenikkers is not unlike Vonnegut's Many of the characters hail from his home state of Indiana, and a few attended his alma mater, Cornell. These parallels allow the sometimes fantastical novel to be grounded in reality, creating the assumption that no matter how comical the characters may be, there are people in the world who act and think like they do. The result is a great example of the ironic, critical style that his readers love. Vonnegut is seen as one of those anti-establishment figures who argue or act against the ruling class. Usually, satirical humour is used to mock at the deference expressed by the majority of the Christians in *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut uses black humour.

Cat's Cradle is short, pacy and humorous to make it an attractive read, and as entertaining a read as possible, while still allowing Vonnegut to explore the anti-establishment theme that interests him. Furthermore, much of the humour seems simple

and accessible. The form and language of Bokonon's calypsos are good examples. In *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut attacks the idea that truth is innately desirable and good -an idea which is all pervasive in our culture, particularly within the two major competing explanative philosophers of religion and science. Vonnegut has been an important mentor for young pacifists since he began writing. His novels are known for their dark humor and playful use of science fiction, as well as their serious moral vision and cutting social commentary. Although his novels have been eroticize for being too simplistic, he has a cult following of readers who love his imagination and sense of humor. He is at once irreverent and highly moral, and this rare combination has made his voice integral to American Literature.

One of the most compelling aspects of *Cat's Cradle,* is Vonnegut's distortion of the concept of truth. He warns that "Nothing in this book is true", yet the reader's historical and personal experiences make the novel's events seem real and valid. This disclosure is paralleled in the Books of which Bokonon repeatedly admits to be lies, but which are followed, religiously, by all of San Lorenzo's inhabitants. As the narrator of the story, Jonah is able to provide omniscient insight at different points in the story which help foreshadow certain events but also reveal the white lies and misunderstandings in which all of the characters become involved. Without Jonah to provide insight and clarification, it would not be clear who is lying or whose sense of reality is most accurate. Still, Jonah's involvement in telling the story helps highlight the fact that real life has no narrators, and what many readers might consider true in their own lives might simply not be so.

Vonnegut often juxtaposes science and religion in *Cat's Cradle*. He characterizes sciences as a form of discovering truth, while he characterizes religion as a form of creating lies. Despite this negative depiction of religion, Vonnegut's most severe criticisms are reserved for science and its goal of seeking and discovering truth. Vonnegut attacks the idea that truth is innately desirable and good, seeing it as a pervasive belief in culture. He describes a realistic world in which truth is used for material and personal gain without concern for the lasting effects those truths will have on humanity.

Felix Hoenikker's invention, ice-nine, is created to address the military's need for a way to get through mud quickly while travelling in the field. Ice-nine, which effectively freezes any liquid with which it comes in contact, could be heralded as a great success for science and a considerable asset to the U.S. Military. But Hoenikker also realizes the extremely destructive nature of his invention, which could be used as a biological weapon to permanently destroy a nation's water supply and ensure its eventual demise. Thus, the truth that he has created through science is at once a danger to humanity.

Felix and Frank Hoenikker's experiences as scientists seem to reveal that scientific knowledge does not provide sufficient answers to human problems, although many people think that it can. Science is frequently exploited to create human problems, and scientists like the Hoenikker's, Usually do little to prevent this result because they are too concerned with discovering truths to weight the consequences of their discoveries.

Felix Hoenikker, sensing the gravity of his discovery, hides ice-nine from the research company for which he works. Unfortunately, he does not have the presence of

mind to realize that the remnants he has left for his children to find will ultimately lead the world to the fate that he is trying to avoid, simply because his children cannot resists the power that his discovery would give them. His truth leads to their deaths and ultimately to the death of everyone on the planet.

Vonnegut presents religion as mere useful and less dangerous than science, despite its paradoxes and shortcomings. In the novel, religion is beneficial not because it conveys some truth about the world, but rather because it gives people elaborate lies in which to believe. Bokonon's lies prove more liberating than Hoenikker's truths, because his lies have the means for making men feel better about their lack of purpose and destitute existence.

One of Bokononism's central ideas is that man has always been responsible for giving meaning to life. Thus, the possibility of happiness exists in this world if only man gives life the "right" meanings. Bokononism's purpose is to provide people with better and better lies that will keep them from seeing the Hobbesian truth that life is short and brutal. It is their belief in his lies that keeps the people of San Lorenzo alive, and this creates a paradox for Bokonon. Although he thinks that he makes people's lives better with his lies by giving them a reason to continue their unhappy existence, his encouraging them to continue that existence actually leads them to experience more suffering such as starvation and injuries. His lies are both their source of hope and the reason for their destitution, and by the end of the novel it is unclear whether he is right or wrong for propagating his lies.

Vonnegut's allusion to the Book of Jonah may provide some clarification of the paradoxical characterization of Bokonon's lies. In the Biblical tale, Jonah the prophet tries

to resist God's command to pass Judgment on the people of Nineveh, which causes God to interfere with his life and trap him in the belly of a whale for three days. When Jonah finally concedes to God's will and is released from the whale, he does what God has commanded. Later, God saves the people of Nineveh, which makes Jonah's prophecy a paradox if not a lie. But if Jonah's prophecy against Nineveh is necessary for the salvation of the people f Nineveh, then perhaps parades and lies serve noble purposes. Such an argument might lend moral credence to Bokonon's approach.

The dichotomy between religion and science is epitomized by the opposite words of IliurrTand San Lorenzo. The first is the setting where scientists create in a moral vacuum, while the other is a society deeply entrenched in the "foma" or untruths of a madman whose only purpose in life is give them hope. Each is the product of a separate intellectual system, but they are twin states of being because each of them provide a facade with which one can obscure a horrible life.

Eventually, neither Ilion's science nor San Lorenzo's religion can truly save any of Vonnegut's characters from their wretched existences. The world has no real concern for their happiness. Bokonon writes that people should just be happy for the memories that they will bring with them when they return to the mud, because crying over one's fate is just as meaningless as laughing about it.

An overriding theme of the novel is that the technological advancement could lead to the destruction of human race because of science's frequent disinterest in humanity's survival. Vonnegut attempts to show that humans' temptation to control life, death, and nature has led to advances like the atomic bomb and other novel ways of bringing death in exchange for power. Scientists such as Felix Hoenikker are one of

Vonnegut's primary concerns, because they seem to lack the moral capacity to care about other people. Because Felix is portrayed as somewhat childlike, there is almost the assumption that others have been more responsible for his moral transgression than he is. Indeed, since he is a man who can become districted by almost any toy or trick, much of the blame for his creation of deadly weapons lay on the shoulders of the politicians and government officials who fill his laboratory with materials for building weapons.

Most of the characters in the novel are involved in a number of interpersonal relationships take the form of specific groups. These "karasses" and "granfalloons" have differing degrees of importance, and because it is work it is supposed to do on Earth, many characters placed an undue importance on the granfalloons in their lives. Often, Jonah notes some of the superficial characteristics he and other characters have in common, such as his and Newt's ties to Delta Upsilon. Hazel Crosby is a perfect example of human's overemphasis on granfalloons and in that she takes an unnatural pride in the number of successful Hoosiers she met.

The novel questions the idea of self-determination, the ability of a person to control one's individual destiny. Being reasonably able to determine one's destiny relies on the assumption that one lives in a fairly predictable, meaningful universe. If this is not true, the events that occur are better characterized as chaotic and absurd, and people are simply creating their own meanings to mask their ignorance.

The theme of desire and its effect on happiness provides some of the most lugubrious if not fully tragic moments in the novel. Frank's primary desire is to create a world that he can orchestrate technically, like that of the model town he has built in

lium. He pursues this desire to the destruction of the human race, because he uses his father's ice-nine to bribe "Papa" Monza no for power. Angela desires a companion after being left alone by her brothers and deceased father, but she is so desperate that she cannot see that Harrison Conner's is using her for her piece of ice-nine. She thus finds herself stuck in a loveless marriage. Newt, likewise, is searching for love, and his desire for a companion allows him to be fooled by a Ukrainian spy into thinking that she is half her actual age and in love with him, which allows her to steal a piece of his ice-nine.

The Hoenikker are given the opportunity to make their greatest desires come true, but when they get what they ask for in some form or another, none of them becomes happy. The reader ends up with the suggestion that it is better to want nothing at all, as though all human pursuits really are meaningless and nothing can bring happiness. Although Vonnegut despairs of being able to stop the war he likens being anti-war to being anti-glacier, meaning that wars, like glaciers, will always be a fact of life, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an earnest anti-war novel. Vonnegut's own war experiences have turned him into a pacifist, Like his protagonist, Vonnegut was present at Dresden as a POW when American bombers wiped the city off the face of the earth. The bombing, which took place on February 13, 1945, was the most terrible massacre in European history. The novel is disjointed and unconventional. Its structure reflects this important idea - there is nothing you can say to adequately explain a massacre. Part of Vonnegut's project was to write and antidote to the war narratives that made war look like and adventure worth having.

Kurt Vonnegut, known for his social criticism laced with his love of argument, a touch of robust humor and a unique taste for paradox, has been regarded as a unique artist, who still has the power to awaken the readers with the old forgotten battles. Vonnegut objects to the "science fiction" label because it is often used as a way of refusing to take writers seriously.

Vonnegut concludes the novel with his view point that science is an inscrutable pure knowledge unconnected to human reality, or as new religion one may surrender to its authority and cannot make ethical evaluations that lead to action. The meaning derived is that one should Live by the foma that make one brave and kind and healthy and happy. One may not be capable of knowing what the truth is, but one is able to make choices about what one believes about those choices.

A socially committed novelist aims to bring in positive transformation in the society in which he lives. Since a novelist is regarded as the buy-product of his own, he faithfully mirrors the happenings of the society.

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Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*: A Critical Study of Disability and Dignitas

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This ' to certify that the project entitled **Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*: A Critical Study of Disability and Dignitas** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Jenisha Fernando A. P. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*: A Critical Study of Disability and Dignitas** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Jenisha Fernando A. P.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Jojo Moyes's *Me Before You*: A Critical Study of Disability and Dignitas** analyses how the protagonist encounters his life after he becomes a quadriplegic. It states how his lack of self confidence pushes him to a state of depression in spite of getting support from his parents and his care taker. It captures the protagonist's desire to approach dignitas, a Swiss organization that supports assisted suicide. It also presents how the protagonist through his final letter to his care taker triggers confidence in herself.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the salient features of British literature, the biography of Jojo Moyes and a short synopsis of *Me Before You.*

The second chapter **Disabled Self** focuses on the conflict in the mind of William Traynor as he tries to confront his disabled self. It also analyses the golden moments that William Traynor spent with Louisa and their olden memories when they were not together.

The third chapter **Depression to Dignitas** analyses how the protagonist suffers from depression as he compares his life as a disabled person with that of his earlier agile life. He contemplates that committing suicide is the only solution to his pain and suffering.

The fourth chapter **Triggering Self-confidence** portrays how the protagonist put an end to his life due to his lack of self-confidence and how he instills self confidence in his care taker Lou through his final letter to start a new life.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapter. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Jojo Moyes is a British voracious reader and writer. A journalist by profession, Jojo Moyes loves writing scripts. She felt the risk of unkindness and it is important to show where all stand. The joy of getting older is that she sees as remarkably bolshy. She is a romantic writer and romance is the genre that all his works carried. Her writing style is emotional, heartfelt and intelligent. She tries to create characters who are properly complex and she always left the readers to work out something for themselves. Jojo Moyes' earlier books, most of which had a significant historical strand. She says, "perhaps more than some other writers I write a completely different book every time" (45).

Jojo Moyes was not very romantic in her real life. She guessed love is the only thing that makes one to do the most extraordinary things, the emotion that can bring highest or lowest, or be the most transformative and extremes of emotion are always interesting to write about. She is also too wimpy to write novels with the genre, horror. When not writing, at free time, she used to spend her time riding her ex-racehorse, Brian and tried to just hang out with her children without muttering: "I'll be with you in a minute. I've just got to finish this" (62). A dream weekend, however, would be spent alone with her husband in Le Marais, Paris.

Recently she joined Patrick Ness and other authors in donating £10,000 to save the children for Syrian refugees. It was just a gut reaction. She felt the situation was unbearable. She is a big follower of the "do as you would be done by" school, and thought if they were subject to an invasion here and she had to

pack up with her children and undertake a horrific journey. It would be kindness and generosity.

Literature is a body of written works. It has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intention of their authors and perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified accordingly to a variety of system, including language, national origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in their respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

Literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. The concept is difficult to precisely define though many have tried, it's clear that the accepted definition of literature is constantly changing and evolving. A canon is the accepted body of works for a given author. Some works of literature are considered canonical that is, culturally representative of a particular genre. Great literature should be some good to the reader; must quicken him perception though dull, and sharpen his discrimination though blunt, and mellow the rawness of his personal opinions.

British literature is the body of written works produced in English language by inhabitants of the British Isles from the seventh century to the present day. The major literatures written in English outside the British Isles are treated separately under American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature and New Zealand literature. British literature has sometimes been stigmatized as insular. It can be argued that no single English novel attains the universality of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or the French writer Gustave

Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Yet in the Middle Ages, the Old English literature of the subjugated Saxons was leavened by the Latin and Anglo-Norman writings. Eminently, it is foreign in origin, in which the churchmen and the Norman conquerors expressed themselves. From this combination emerged a flexible and subtle linguistic instrument exploited by Geoffrey Chaucer and it was brought to supreme application by William Shakespeare. During the Renaissance the renewed interest in Classical learning and values had an important effect on English literature, as on all the arts; and ideas of Augustan literary propriety in the eighteenth century and reverence in the nineteenth century for a less specific, though still selectively viewed, Classical antiquity continued to shape the literature. All three of these impulses derived from a foreign source, namely the Mediterranean basin. The Decadents of the late 19th century and the Modernists of the early twentieth century looked to continental European individuals and movements for inspiration. Nor was attraction toward European intellectualism dead in the late twentieth century, for by the mid-1980s the approach known as structuralism, a phenomenon predominantly French and German in origin, infused the very study of English literature itself in a host of published critical studies and university departments. Additional influence was exercised by deconstructionist analysis, based largely on the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida.

Further, Britain's past imperial activities around the globe continued to inspire literature in some cases, wistful and in some other cases, hostile. Finally, English literature has enjoyed a certain diffusion abroad, not only in predominantly English-speaking countries but also in all those others where English is the first choice of study as a second language.

English literature is therefore not so much insular as detached from the continental European tradition across the channel. It is strong in all the conventional categories of the bookseller's list, in Shakespeare it has a dramatist of world renown; in poetry, a genre notoriously resistant to adequate translation and therefore difficult to compare with the poetry of other literatures, it is so peculiarly rich as to merit inclusion in the front rank; English literature's humour has been found as hard to convey to foreigners as poetry, if not more so, a fact at any rate permitting the bestowal of the label "idiosyncratic."

British literature's most remarkable body of travel writings constitutes another counterthrust to the charge of insularity in autobiography, biography and historical writing, English literature compares with the best of any culture and children's literature, fantasy, essays and journals, which tend to be considered minor genres, are all fields of exceptional achievement as regards English literature. Even in philosophical writings, popularly thought of as hard to combine with literary value, thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, John Stuart Mill, and Bertrand Russell stand comparison for lucidity and grace with the best of the French philosophers and the masters of classical antiquity.

Some of English literature's most distinguished practitioners in the 20th century, from Joseph Conrad at its beginning to V.S. Naipaul and Tom Stoppard at its end, were born outside the British Isles. What is more, none of the aforementioned had as much in common with his adoptive country as did, for instance, Doris Lessing and Peter Porter two other distinguished writer-immigrants to Britain, both having been born into a British family and having been brought up on British Commonwealth soil.

On the other hand, during the same period in the 20th century, many notable practitioners of English literature left the British Isles to live abroad: James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Robert Graves, Graham Greene, Muriel Spark, and Anthony Burgess. In one case, that of Samuel Beckett, this process was carried to the extent of writing works first in French and then translating them into English.

Pauline Sara Jojo Moyes known professionally as Jojo Moyes, is an English journalist and, since 2002, a romance novelist and screenwriter. She is one of only a few authors to have twice won the Romantic Novel of the Year Award by the Romantic Novelists' Association and has been translated into twenty-eight languages.

Pauline Sara Jojo Moyes was born on 4 August 1969 in Maidstone, England. Before attending university, Moyes held several jobs. She was a typist at NatWest typing statements in braille for blind people, a brochure writer for Club 18-30, and a minicab controller for a brief time. While an undergraduate at Royal Holloway, University of London, Moyes worked for the *Egham and Staines News*. Moyes won a bursary financed by *The Independent* newspaper which allowed her to attend the postgraduate newspaper journalism course at City University in 1992. She subsequently worked for *The Independent* for the next 10 years (except for one year, when she worked in Hong Kong for the *Sunday Morning Post*) in various roles, becoming Assistant News Editor in 1998. In 2002 she became the newspaper's Arts and Media Correspondent.

Early in her writing career, Moyes wrote three manuscripts that were all initially rejected. With one child, another baby on the way, and a career as a journalist, Moyes committed to herself that if her fourth book was rejected, she

would stop her efforts. After submitting the first three chapters of her fourth book to various publishers, six of them began a bidding war for the rights. Moyes became a full-time novelist in 2002, when her first book *Sheltering Rain* was published. She continues to write articles for *The Daily Telegraph*.

The books which she wrote always had an incredibly love story at the heart of them. In her ground breaking novel in 2012, *Me Before You*, Moyes crafted a swoon-worthy love affair between a quadriplegic and his caretaker, and also touched on the issue of the right to die. Her book *The Ship of Brides* pumped life into a historical era. Her last novel was *The Girl You Left Behind.* Coupling a dangerous and complicated attraction between French Sophie and the German Kommandant during World War I with a modern-day story of young woman who struggled to get over the death of her famed architect husband, Moyes managed to bring in the issue of war reparations, enemy lines, and class differences, all in one joyful human package. She chats with Goodreads about her writings done with three kids, how she hoped her books reminded people to live without regrets, and the difficulties she faced as she searched for more roadblocks to keep aspiring lovers apart.

Moyes' publisher, Hodder and Stoughton, did not take up the novel *Me Before You* and Moyes sold it to Penguin. It sold six million copies, went to number one in nine countries, and reinvigorated her back catalogue resulting in three of her novels being on the *New York Times* bestseller list at the same time.

Jojo Moyes list of works are *Sheltering Rain* in 2002, *Foreign Fruit* in 2003, *La Casa De Las Olas* in 2004, *El Bazar De Las Suenos* in 2005, *The Ship Of Bridges* in 2005, *Silver Bay* in 2007, *Night Music* in 2008, *Peacock Emporium* in 2009, *The Horse Dancer* in 2009, *The Last Letter From Your Lover* in 2010,

Honeymoon In Paris in 2012, *Me Before You* in 2012, *The Girl You Left Behind* in 2012, *The One Plus One* in 2014, *After You* in 2015, *The Paris For One and One* in 2015, *Me Before You After* in 2016, *Still Me* in 2018.

After You is a romance novel written by Jojo Moyes, a sequel to *Me Before You*. The book was first published on 29 September 2015 in the United Kingdom and the second sequel, *Still Me*, a funny, romantic and poignant story, was published in January 2018, both discover the love story that captured over 20 million hearts.

Night Music is a novel about obsessions. This novel follows the lives of the people in the little village where 'The Spanish House' is located. It is a story of new beginnings and friendship. It is a novel about relationships and the importance of family life. There are some stereotyped minor characters. The main characters are much more of a realistic mixture of traits. The end of the novel is highly dramatic. It might even be called melodramatic, although there were sufficient clues in the book to point towards the climax followed by surprising events. The conclusion is perhaps a little too tidy.

Moyes first won the Romantic Novelists' Association's Romantic Novel of the Year Award in 2004 for *Foreign Fruit* and again in 2011 for *The Last Letter From Your Lover*. She is one of few clarifications needed authors to have received this award twice. *Me Before You* hit the *New York Times* bestseller Top Ten chart in 2016 and spent 19 weeks on the chart. *Me Before You* was nominated for Book of the Year at the UK Galaxy Book Awards. As a child, Moyes remembers reading *National Velvet* by Enid Bagnold and how that book made her feel that, as a child, she could achieve things greater than she thought possible at the time.

Behind the Scenes at the Museum by Kate Atkinson is a book that Moyes cites as one that really changed her feelings about writing as she matured and

grew into her career. She cites it as being one of those books that keeps readers invested, and it was one that she said pushed her to become a better, stronger writer. Moyes cites Nora Ephron's use of wit to display the business of love and being human. Marian Keyes and Lisa Jewell are two authors whom Moyes cites that are often referred to as "chick-lit" authors, but whose writing is well-refined and goes beyond the "lightweight" implications of being labelled a "romance writer." Jonathan Tropper is a writer whom Moyes cites as someone she admires hugely, noting that she tries "to read authors who are better than she is," because it pushes her to be a better writer. Jane Austen is an author whom Moyes admires for her ability to write about what truly influences love and what makes a love story realistic.

Jojo Moyes' contemporaries are Ian McEwan, David Mitchell, Zadie Smith, Dorothy Koomson, Sarra Manning, Janey King, J.K.Rowling, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Hilary Mantel, James Lever, Martin Amis, Graham Swift, William Woodard Self.

William Woodard Self (born 26 September 1961) is an English author, journalist, political commentator and television personality. He has written eleven novels, five collections of shorter fiction, three novellas, and five collections of non-fiction writing. His 2002 novel *Dorian an Imitation* was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and he predominantly set the novel within his home city of London. His writing often explores mental illness, drug abuse and psychiatry.

David Stephen Mitchell (born 12 January 1969) is an English novelist and screenwriter of innovative storytelling. He has published seven novels, two of which, *Number9Dream* (2001) and *Cloud Atlas* (2004), were

shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In 2012, *Cloud Atlas* was made into a film and in 2013 a short film, *The Voorman Problem*.

Ian Russell McEwan (born 21 June 1948) is an English novelist and screenwriter. In 2008, *The Times* featured him on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945 and *The Daily Telegraph* ranked him number 19 in its list of the "100 most powerful people in British culture." He began his career writing sparse, Gothic short stories. *The Cement Garden* (1978) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981), his first two novels itself earned him the nickname "Ian Macabre." He won the Man Booker Prize for *Amsterdam* (1998). He was awarded the Jerusalem Prize in 2011.

Julian Patrick Barnes (born 19 January 1946) is an English writer. Barnes won the Booker Prize for his book *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), and three of his earlier books had been shortlisted for the Booker Prize: *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), *England* (1998), and *Arthur and George* (2005). He has also written crime fiction under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh. In addition to novels, Barnes has published collections of essays and short stories.

J. K.Rowling, is a British author, film producer, television producer, screenwriter, and philanthropist. She is best known for writing the *Harry Potter* fantasy series, which has won multiple awards and sold more than 500 million copies, becoming the best-selling book series in history. The books are the basis of a popular film series, over which Rowling had overall approval on the scripts and was a producer on the final films. She also writes crime fiction under the name Robert Galbraith.

Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You* centres the life of Will and Lou, the hero Will met with an accident, so he decided to end his life. At the time Louisa entered as a caretaker in Will's life. Those six months which Lou spend with Will made his memories nostalgic. Even though Will had a great time with Lou. He couldn't quit away from his suicide plan. Though he ended his life, Will laid a new way to start her life journey independently. *Me before you* hit the New York Times bestseller top ten chart in 2016 and spend nineteen weeks on the chart. *Me before you* was nominated for Books of the Year at the UK Galaxy Book Awards.

This novel is such a heart-wrenching story and is definitely one that one needs tissues for. Although it has quite unique circumstances, everyone can sort of relate or at least compare to how they will feel. The characters are humanly flawed rather than solely being good or bad, which makes them much more likeable and realistic. Moyes writing flows easily but also gives a lot of detail which helps one put one's self into the story and relate towards how the characters feel and what they are experiencing. It's mainly written in Louisa's point of view, with some others when needed, which brings the reader closer to her character and makes it more emotional as she experiences the different parts of her journey. The story addresses many problems that most people will look over or not really imagine will be a problem, which I think brings a new light towards these circumstances.

The story may be about a subject that only some understand but she makes you think about what will happen and how one will feel in that type of situation. She addresses the topic of human nature and how connecting with certain people will make one see life in a happier way. Not only does the story contain romance but it shows the hardships within the adult working life and how life can change at

any moment. The moral is embracing life and living each day to its fullest. The book was placed on the Richard and Judy Book Club. Disability advocates have criticised the book and film for suggesting that life may not be worth living for some with severe disabilities.

The thing that she had learned was that one had to write the story that was just lodged in the front of one's head. She said that one cannot write something cynically. This story is about the young athlete in England who had been left quadriplegic after an accident and several years later persuaded his parents to took him to a centre for assisted suicide. At that time, she just couldn't believe that what she was hearing. She didn't understand this on any level. So Moyes started to read more about it. The things which happened to think that if we would suffer some catastrophic physical accident. Effectively this was not just a story of two people. It was about how we could change somebody. That's how we could accommodate them when they refuse to be changed. It was only about the quality of life and who got the right to decide what might be. But mostly this story was about a love story between two slightly mismatched people who made her to laugh a lot while she was writing them and it gave the subject matter.

The novel *Me Before You* is really a beautiful romantic novel. It tells the readers that one should always never lose self-confidence, which is the main theme of the novel, as according to me it is true that if one has self-confidence, he or she can never be stopped from reaching success in any field one enters. And there is a beautiful, true love found in this story, which greatly inspired the researcher to take this novel for an in depth analysis.

The project explores the deplorable state of the protagonist Will Traynor after he becomes a quadriplegic due to an accident. He suffers from depression

which turns out to be a mental block for him. He fails to come to terms with the reality and contemplates suicide. Though he likes the efforts of his care taker Lou to bring him back to normalcy, he never deviates from his desire to commit suicide. The project has registered the arguments in favour of and against the Dignitas, a Swiss organisation that supports assisted suicide. It also presents the protagonist's last wish which triggers self confidence in his care taker Lou.

The upcoming chapters analyse the story of the novel in a critical manner, about all the memories Will and Lou had together since at the end of the novel, Will would have lost his life, it also tells about how he lost his life, the lack of self-confidence of the protagonist, Will Traynor, the difficulties he underwent due to this lack of self-confidence, that lead him loose his life. Then it tells that this lack of self-confidence is mainly due to depression, the state of the protagonist throughout the novel after he met with an accident. The last chapter is the summation of all the preceding chapters.

Chapter Two

Disabled Self

Jojo Moyes knows very well that *Me Before You* is a novel that has already floated high on Britain's best-seller lists as British critical consensus affirms, "a real weepy." And yet, unlike other novels, it has achieved its mood-melting powers through calculated infusions of treacle. Erich Segal's *Love Story* is similar to Jojo Moyes' *Me Before You*. The story of *Me Before You* provokes tears that are redemptive, the opposite of gratuitous. At some situations, Moyes forces the reader to recognize that it is really are worth crying over. *Me Before You* is a love story and a family story, but above all it's a story of the bravery and sustained effort needed to redirect the path of one's life, once it's been pushed of course.

In the early months of 2009, Louisa Clark, a 26-year-old working-class girl, landed in a position as a care assistant to an intelligent, wealthy and very angry 35-year-old man named Will Traynor, who had spent the past two years as a quadriplegic after being hit by a motorbike. It was Will's mother, Camilla, who hired Louisa to look after her son knowing that he was miserable. She already employed a nurse to attend to his medical needs, but she hoped that somehow Louisa might boost his morale.

At the novel's outset, the prospects for this appear bleak. With his rudeness and his fits of temper, Will resembles Charlotte Bronte's Mr.Rochester, albeit in a wheelchair. But Louisa Clark is no Jane Eyre, even if, like Bronte's

heroine, she was quite small, dark-haired and unprepossessing "one of the invisibles," as she herself put it. But being with Will, she required backbone.

Hardly introspective and not at all intellectual, Lou lived in a sleepy market town, where the largest employer was a National Trust castle with a shrubbery maze. Lou's hometown was as dull as dirt. The one point of interest was Stortford Castle, a tourist destination that drew people from all over the world. In fact, Lou marked "the changing seasons ... the return of the tourists" (6). Besides this occasional influx, however, there was not much going on, making the village a generic fill-in for every small town ever. That created a sense of confinement for Lou. She saw her life playing out, "I supposed I would probably marry Patrick, knock out a few kids, live a few streets away from where I had always lived" (23).

Really exciting stuff, in that way, the town came to represent Lou's feelings of insecurity and fear about her future, as well as a sense of inevitability about the fate she saw awaiting her. It was as if she resigned herself to remain in that boring little town simply because she thought it was what she was supposed to do.

There, at the age of 20, she was spooked by a run-in with boys and beer, an encounter robbed her of the confidence to explore the world beyond her village. Almost seven years later, she still lived at home with her parents, sleeping in a windowless closet so her unemployed younger sister, Katrina, a single mother, could occupy the larger bedroom. Lou worked as a waitress in a cafe, a job that allowed her to lead a straitened but cozy existence and helped her to support her family. And although she had a steady boyfriend, a personal trainer

named Patrick with "the kind of face that became instantly invisible in crowds" (9), neither felt the urge to discuss marriage.

When the cafe shut down, Lou must find a new job. Unskilled as she was, she had the full use of her limbs, but she was emotionally paralyzed. To take a job caring for a man like Will was terrifying, but her family's financial difficulties allowed her no choice. As she got to know her combative patient, Lou belatedly wrestled with her own passivity. "Shoved up so hard against someone else's life", she reflected, "forces you to rethink your idea of who you are" (27).

Lou had never fully lived. Will had, but no longer could he. In health, he had exhilarated in crushing people in business deals. He had scaled rock faces at Yosemite, swum in volcanic springs in Iceland, sampled warm croissants in the Marais and had his pick of glamorous, leggy girlfriends. After the accident, he couldn't walk, couldn't feed himself. The only power he believed that he retained was the power to end his life and as a man of action he wanted to exercise that power. Lou wanted to take him to adventures deciding that the only chance she had of getting Will to take an interest in his own future was to make him take an interest in hers and so she devised character-building adventures, they would undertake together for her benefit. In Lou, he discovered an unexpected outlet for his energies, teaching her how to exert her own autonomy:

> You cut yourself off from all sorts of experiences because you tell yourself you are not that sort of person, You've done nothing, been nowhere. How do you have the faintest idea what kind of person you are? Promise me you won't spend the rest of your life stuck around this bloody parody of a place mat. (480)

"Then tell me where I should go," Lou demanded.

Moyes disarms the reader with the normalcy of her voice. Her language is never lofty; she exposes her characters' flaws with the literary equivalent of a fluorescent bulb's naked light. The matter-of-fact language of Lou and Will's conversations and thoughts, and the starkness of their surroundings; Lou's humble, cramped family house; Will's disability-adapted annex with the "white metal and plastic hoist" over the bath, magnified the poignancy of their friendship. Moyes' pacing is ingenious, one doesn't quite notice when the wheelchair moves forward, but it does, despite the resistance of the man within it and the woman behind it.

Lou seemed to make Will at least "halfway happy," and her determination to impress him led her to read improving authors, to watch foreign movies, even to join the once-fearful local library, where she used the computer to communicate with other caregivers and quadriplegics. Reading those e-mail exchanges was a reminder that the fictional burden borne by Will Traynor was shared by thousands of real people and that the anxieties Lou faced were shared by still more.

It's a curious phenomenon that in this digital age, in which thoughts that once emerged quietly and gradually on paper have been overtaken by instantaneous visual and audio impressions that are swiftly taken in without really being absorbed, the rapt viewer sometimes needs to be jarred, slowed down and forced to look inward. In *Me Before You*, circumstances lead non-contemplative people to contemplation. When Lou was a caregiver, sat in a hospital room during one of Will's illnesses, she holded his "good man's hands, attractive and even, with squared-off fingers and felt oddly reassured by how they felt in my own"

(99). She admired "the calluses that told of a life not entirely lived behind a desk, at the pink seashell nails that would always have to be trimmed by somebody else" (102). Moyes' heroine, Lou can be so styled, may not be heroic; her male counterpart may be nobody's idea of a leading man and yet with Lou and Will she has created an affair to remember.

The tone of this novel is, for the most part, heartfelt and candid. Louisa shared her feelings quite openly with the reader, and it is, after all, a love story, so there are plenty of feelings to go around. This candidly emotional tone is a reflection of a candidly emotional narrator, and on the occasions when the narrator switches, the tone tends to also. Therefore, it becomes matter-of-fact and restrained when Nathan narrated, or cold and clinical when narrated by a government bureaucrat. Even when narrated by Lou in its more heartfelt tone, though, the novel avoids sentimentality, thanks partly to joke-heavy dialogue.

The mood is more variable, and tends to swing between hopeful anticipation and dread, following the novel's plot structure. When the protagonist is hopeful, the narration is rich with lovingly described images, and layered with figurative language, creating a relaxed, luxurious mood. When the protagonist feels dread, though, this is reflected in the mood as well, since the images become fewer and more unpleasant, the sentences shorter and the language more literal. This more utilitarian prose discourages relaxation and prompts readers to feel anxious.

The novel's major conflict is between Will Traynor, who wanted to carry out an assisted suicide, and his friends and family, who wanted such a thing not to happen to him. While Will remained resolute in his wishes, Lou, working with

Will's family members, put a great deal of time and energy into changing his mind. The conflict is resolved, in terms of plot structure, when Will explained that he would still be seeking out assisted suicide, not because Lou's efforts had failed but because, in spite of their success, Will's medical conditions were unchangeable. Its emotional resolution came later, when Lou accepted Will's right to make his own choice and understood that his choice was not a result of her own failure.

The novel's climax came when Lou left her family's house to go to Switzerland and met Will, in spite of her mother's protestations. That demonstrated Lou's love for Will, since she went to support him at great personal and emotional cost to herself, but that also demonstrated that Lou had become a more mature and independent person than she was in the beginning of the novel. After a series of smaller challenges, Lou stood up for herself and her beliefs in the most substantial way yet.

When the guard at Will's building warned him in the prologue not to ride his motorcycle unless he had a death wish, Moyes gives us some foreshadowing of Will's later wish to die. Later, when Lissa told Lou that "You can only help someone who wants to be helped" (120), she similarly foreshadowed Will's unchanging decision to go to Dignitas and die. On a less significant level, when Lou brought Will to the races, she prefaced the scene by remembering some advice from her father about the disappointments inherent in planning a family day out. That foreshadowed that the day won't be quite what Lou had planned.

When she hired Lou, Mrs.Traynor told her that Will could be difficult. That turned out to be a massive understatement, since Will, at that point, was

wildly antagonistic and cruel. Mrs.Traynor herself took note of an understatement when Will's doctors noted that his suicide was not "a cry for help." This polite phrase reveals that Will desperately wanted to die, and the doctors' use of understatement in this context hints that the topic of suicide is so taboo that people are unwilling to speak about it without euphemisms.

Will has a "Christy Brown" imitation. Brown was a 20th-century Irish writer with cerebral palsy. Mrs.Traynor makes an allusion to King Canute, an English King who, according to legend, failed to hold back the tide. Lou compared her and Will's situation to "My Fair Lady," and Will corrected her, arguing that the true title of that is "Pygmalion." Will refers to a play by George Bernard Shaw, in which a wealthy man tries to transform a poor woman into someone with the affectations and language of his own class. Lou refers to a musical, based on the play but with a different title.

Some of the book's most vivid images revolve around illness and disability, and the author does not shy away from disturbing portrayals of the pain and discomfort that Will suffered. Both Will and Nathan, on different occasions, listed the litany of physically uncomfortable situations in which Will might find himself, using images to ensure that Lou fully understood their meaning. These images are mostly tactile, though they are sometimes visual. This contrasts with idyllic imagery of the town where the novel is set and its seasonal changes. The castle, in particular, is described with visual imagery demonstrating its grandeur and beauty. Will and Lou's travel destination of Mauritius, a small island off the coast of Africa. She had never imagined that she would spend time somewhere like this. Of course, part of Lou's bliss could be attributed to her growing romantic feelings toward Will, but equally important was her sense of amazement

at the beauty the world has to offer. Mauritius was about as different from small-town England. Mauritius, got the full treatment: not only detailed visual images, but tactile ones of sunshine and warmth, as well as taste imagery of various foods. There were also plenty of visual images describing Lou's outfits, showing how much she cared about her clothes and how much thought went into them. These images increase in frequency and detail throughout the book as Lou became more confident in her knowledge of clothing and fashion.

Will decided to commit suicide in spite of claiming that he had just experienced his happiest six months ever. Furthermore, he committed suicide partly in order to give Lou a better life, even though the best thing in Lou's life was, in fact, Will himself. This paradox is never resolved, and Moyes hints that it can't be. The subject is just too complex, and the emotions of love and grief are too strange, to untangle. Like Lou, the reader must live with these unresolved truths.

Will's relationship with his sister, Georgina, parallels Lou's relationship to Treena. Both Lou and Will had one sibling, and in each family, one sibling felt that they were less appreciated than the other. Georgina argued that her parents expected more from her after Will's injury than they might if the situations were reversed, and Lou resented Treena, since her life's trajectory had resulted in Lou having to support their family. Lou and her sister, though, were open and caring with one another, while the same cannot be said of Will and Georgina. The similarities between the pairs of siblings largely serve to highlight their differences and show how healthy Lou's family life was compared to Will's.

Lou and Will each had one traumatizing event from their past that haunted them more than any other. Lou's was her rape, which had caused her to lose her feelings of fearlessness. Will's was his accident, which had caused him to lose his physical independence. Each was limited by their trauma, but each also worked to help the other to confront those traumas. Will allowed Lou to confront her fear of the castle maze, to understand that she was not at fault for her assault, and to approach the world fearlessly once more. Lou helped Will move through the physical world as easily as possible, and she also gave him an outlet to talk about his pain and his fear of the future. Yet again, though, the parallels were perhaps most useful because they shed light on places of divergence. When Will announced that he would still commit suicide, Lou reminded him that he had told her not to let one day define her life. Will replied that, in his case, the day of his accident would inevitably define his life regardless of his actions. After that Lou could try to move past her trauma in a way that Will couldn't, or at least believed he cannot.

Lou refers to Alicia as "that silly caramel woman," an instance of synecdoche in which Alicia's tan comes to stand in for her entire appearance. The tan signifies her place as a wealthy person able to maintain appearances and take vacations, which was, in Lou's opinion, the only interesting thing about her. Therefore this synecdoche expresses Lou's feelings more generally.

On her first day of work at Will's, Lou complained that the morning "decided to last several years," attributing her own perception of time passing slowly to a personified concept. While narrating, Treena said that the flowers on the castle grounds "look defeated, as if they were already half preparing for

autumn" (37). This echoes the feeling of defeat that Lou was experiencing after Will's decision to commit suicide.

There are two ways to look at the title. *Me Before You* as "what I was before I met you." That's what the book is about to a large degree: the different person Lou became, after she met Will and *Me Before You* as "putting myself before you." Will certainly did that, choosing to go through with assisted suicide despite his growing relationship with Lou. This dynamic can also be seen in a lesser degree with Lou, as she slowly came to put her own needs and desires before those of other people, at least when it was right to do so.

The novel has two endings, the first of which is a bummer, and the second of which is a bummer with a silver lining. Will decided to go through with his assisted suicide. Lou was furious when she learned that, especially because it came right after her declaration of love for him, but she eventually relented and accompanied him to Dignitas despite the protestations of her mother. This was a big moment on two levels: it shows that Lou was willing to be there for Will even if she disagreed with his decision, and it also shows that Lou was not going to let her family control her actions as they always had.

The epilogue finds Lou in a Paris cafe, which brings to mind a conversation she had with Will earlier in the novel, when Will told her that Paris was his favourite place on the planet. And it turned out that Will directly requested Lou go to Paris: he gave her a letter saying that the letter should only be opened in a Paris cafe, accompanied by coffee and croissants. He wanted to make her start really living her life:

> I'm not really telling you to jump off tall buildings, or swim with whales or anything (although I would secretly love to think you were), but to live boldly. Push yourself. Don't settle. Wear those stripy legs with pride. (480)

The letter covered a lot of stuff, but the gist was that Will knew that Lou would be a better person for their relationship, even if that caused her pain then. To that end, he left her a small amount of money that would allow her to fund her schooling.

In the closing moment of the novel, Lou got up and headed, "off down the street toward the parfumerie and the whole of Paris and beyond" (481). That represented the most important way that Will had changed Lou. She was then eager to explore the world without letting fear control her. That was a priceless gift.

Chapter Three

Depression to Dignitas

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can have a negative effect on one s thoughts, behaviour, feelings, world view and physical well-being. Depressed people may feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, hurt or restless. Depression is more than just feelings of unhappiness. clinical or major depression is a mood disorder, a medical illness that involves both the body and mind. Depression is an excessively sad feeling until it may make someone think that his life is meaningless. Depression is usually thought of being a disorder or disturbance in mood. Everyone, at various times in life, feels sad or blue. Sadness or grief is a normal response to death, loss, separation or difficult life events.

Depressed people are potentially capable of doing very well on tests of memory abstract thought. They may lose interest in activities that experience loss of appetite or overeating, have problems in concentrating, remembering details, or making decisions, and may contemplate or make an attempt to commit suicide. Depression is a problem which is commonly faced by people nowadays and even it can be more serious if it cannot be overcomed correctly. Depression is a normal reaction to a fairly severe event in life. Someone who is depressed contemplates committing suicide.

Depression can also produce a range of physical changes: disturbances of appetite, either indifference to food or compulsive overate; problem with sleep: sleeplessness, commonly sleeping excessively; impairments of digestion and elimination: nausea, heartburn, constipation, fatigue, inability to concentrate, and

slowed thinking and moving are also characteristic physical signs. Some people sometimes do not care about what has happened to them even though there are so many problems that cause the people to be depressed. They even forget the psychological problem that has happened. Depression is a psychological disorder characterized by long bouts of severe mood disturbance or excessive relation, which are unconnected with the individual's present situations.

Depression is a psychological problem that commonly happens to the people. It is kind of mental disease that is caused by anxiety. Depression is the condition when people are sad, broken hearted, or losing someone or something in their life. Depression gives the bad mental influences for those who feel it. Based on the distinction about the theory of depression, it is clear depression that gives mental influence because they face problem in their life. Feeling sad and broken hearted, brooding over personal loss feeling are identified as the characteristics of depression.

Depression is a psychological condition that changes people's feeling and thought. Depression can affect all kinds of people, young and old; rich and poor; famous and unpopular people. It means everybody can suffer from depression.

Causes of depression may be different from one person to the next, especially depending on which type of depression one is experiencing. Depression can occur as a result of major life changes across the life. These changes may cause feeling of inadequacy and stress. Young people may find it difficult to get a job; they may experience loss of job and as a result of this they have financial difficulties such as debt. Younger people may also experience relationship breakdown. Middle age people may experience a variety of loss.

By reading the novel, *Me Before You* by Jojo Moyes, one can get not only entertainment but also insight about symptoms, causes and how to overcome depression as depicted in the novel. The analysis focuses on the psychological condition of the protagonist in the novel, especially depression. The protagonist in the novel shows the symptoms of depression due to two causes: social aspect and psychological aspect. The analysis is divided into two sub topics. They are the symptoms and cause of the protagonist's depression. There are three symptoms of protagonist's depression shown in the novel: believing that there is no one to care about him, self-centeredness, and a tendency to commit suicide. Then the two causes of the protagonist's depression are social causes: loneliness or isolation and psychological cause: trauma.

The first symptom of protagonist's depression is believing that there is no one to care about him. The protagonist, Will Traynor, felt that there was no one to care about anymore. And he isolated himself from other people and environment and lost the connections with other people especially his friend and his family.Lou wanted Will to stay alive but Will wanted to end his life because he thought that no one would feel lost after his death. That was the heart of the issue. Out of their love for Will, Lou and his family wanted to keep him alive at all costs, but they did not take into account what Will wanted. That was not necessarily to support his decision, but simply to explain that.

Will's mother truly loved him. But he always rejected all the attention of others and he just believed that no one could be trusted. Therefore, he always tried to end his life repeatedly. His mother kept trying to care about him but he always refused his mother's care and even got angry with what his mother did. Will's mother asked various pleasant things about what he wanted to do. Unfortunately,

Will sometimes answered the questions with very rude words, showed that he was never close to his mother. His mother always spent time working, but after he met with the accident, his mother changed herself and wanted to pay more attention to him. Again, Will did not believe that and he was always rude to his mother. Will was only being nice to his father, and that sometimes made his mother feel disappointed:

> I needed to tell him, silently, that things might change, grow, or fail, but that life did go on. That we were all part of some great cycle, some pattern that it was only God's purpose to understand. I couldn't say that to him, of course, Will and I have never been able to say much to each other, but I wanted to show him. A silent promise, if you like, that there was a bigger picture, a brighter future. (184)

Will Traynor was self-centered. He only thought about himself. He ignored everything and everyone. He did not pay attention to other people or what happened around him. Will was selfish and refused to change his mind. Even though Lou wanted to help him change his decision and gave him a little hope that the illness he suffered from could be cured. But Will still did not accept that and endured the plan to end his life. Will refused to accept all attention of others, especially from Lissa, his ex-girlfriend, After the accident, Will seemed disappeared and he showed concernonly to himself. Although Lissa had tried to maintain communication with Will and tried to approach Will back, but all her efforts failed. Will still avoided her and he did not receive attention from her:

> But I did try. I really tried. For months. And he just pushed me away. Her jaw was rigid, her expression oddly furious. He actually

> didn't want me here. He made that very clear'. You know you can only actually help someone who wants to be helped. (65)

Not all suicide attempts have made someone end in death, even some can be saved from death. However, despite survival, the perpetrators will try to take their own life because only death is what they want. It also happened to the protagonist, Will Traynor. He kept trying to commit suicide but not all attempts lead to death. He tried to commit suicide but failed because that was noticed by his housemaid. But he did not stop his attempt. Finally, he decided to join Dignitas group. It was a group in which there were people who wanted to end their lives because of various problems of life:

> His head lolling by his armrest, a sea of dark, sticky blood pooling around his wheels. He had located a rusty nail, barely half an inch emerging from some hurriedly finished woodwork in the back lobby, and, pressing his wrist against it, had reversed backwards and forwards until his flesh was sliced to ribbons. (141)

Will's decision to end his life was simple. He could not live without hope for recovery. Suicide is an awful thing, and he never wanted other people to ban him to do so because he had decided to end his life and did not change his plan. He wanted to die was the hardest thing that Lou had ever faced in her life, but it proved the extent of her love for him. Obviously she hoped him choose to live. Obviously she had rather that they spent the rest of their lives together. But she knew Will well enough to know that he would not waver in his decision, and she chose to support him as best she could through that difficult time.

The first cause of the protagonist's depression is loneliness or isolation because of the circumstances that had occurred. Will Traynor was not confident to meet his friends and finally decided to avoid the outside environment. That finally made him feel isolated. He did not want to meet others. Lou thought that Will only had isolated himself in the room without doing anything. The only thing he could do was daydream of thinking about everything happening to him. Will intentionally became far from his ex-girlfriend because he did not want anyone to know his relationship. So he chose to be alone and to be isolated from his ex-girlfriend and his friend. What Will felt was seen by Lou. Lou understood that Will had preferred being isolated due to his physical condition which made him unable to do what everything he did usually:

> And as the days went by and realized that his condition was not just a matter of being stuck in that chair, of the loss of physical freedom, but a never-ending litany of indignities and health problems, of risks and discomforts, I decided that if I were Will, I would probably be pretty miserable too. (57)

This was what Lou saw from Will's condition. That shows Lou would commit what Will had done. And according to Lou, it would make Will feel miserable and wanted to be isolated from others.

Will Traynor had met with a very severe accident and finally he became paralyzed and could only be in a wheelchair without being able to carry out any activities. Such trauma experienced by Will, created a huge impact on him; therefore, he wanted to carry out repeated suicide attempts. Not only did he try to kill himself but also suffered from very acute depression until he had to isolate himself from social life and that made him lose everything. Life that was

originally very perfect suddenly changed dramatically after the accident. The accident had changed his whole life:

> When I nodded, he closed his eyes again. Motorbike accident. Not mine. I was an innocent pedestrian. I thought it would be skiing or bungee jumping or something. Everyone does. God's little joke. I was crossing road outside my home. Not this place, My London home. (105)

Will told Lou that the accident continued to shadow him. Because of the accident, he could not continue his life. He continued to be in a wheelchair. He also could not do anything he liked anymore because of the physical limitations he experienced then. Will experienced quite heavy trauma so he thought his life had no meaning anymore. He felt so depressed on his condition. It was bad enough that he lost his independence and ability to do the things he loved, but he also had to face the prospect, it was only going to get worse. The trauma experienced by Will shattered him totally, he found it difficult to accept his spinal injury because that removed his ability to do the things he once enjoyed. He, not being able to do his favorite hobbies ever again, would be miserable and traumatic. Will Traynor's outlook and behaviour, post-accident, showed all the signs of major depression (sadness, hopelessness, social withdrawal, loss of pleasure in life, fatigue, poor appetite, suicidality).

Depression leads to lack of self-confidence. When a man is depressed, he lacks self-confidence, he enters into sadness, disappointment, loneliness, hopelessness, self-doubt, whether he is capable of survival or not and always feel guilt to face the society. All these, now has become common characters, as it is found in most of the people in the present world which leads to number of loss of

life, who attempt suicide. They think that they cannot achieve when they are in the cross certain worst part in their life. Laziness is also the reason for depression. One feels confused and uncertain without knowing the reason. But instead of making the effort to investigate, procrastinate and worry, they take the decision to commit suicide.

Me Before You is about how Will developed suicidal, tendency, became depressed following the traumatic event. Will planned to kill himself. He promised his loving parents six more months of life. During that time, Lou entered his life as a formally hired caretaker and took wonderfully loving strides to re-engage him with a life he could deem worth living. She failed. In the end, Will followed through on his suicide plan with the help of Dignitas, a swiss-based assisted suicide organization. *Me Before You* did not deliver the message that people with disabilities are a burden on their families; nor did it not promote the view that disabled people are better off dead, or stereotype, misrepresent the disability. If this novel takes a political stand, it does so on the issue of patient-assisted suicide. Patient-assisted suicide is about two things - it is about one's intentional decision to kill oneself; and whether or not one's quality of life has truly and permanently plummeted to such a low point that the decision to commit suicide seems fair and objective.

Will, as a character, lived a very high quality life trajectory, to start. He had it all; charm, good luck, intelligence, and countless other positive personality traits. And he was loved and supported by a prominent family with seemingly bottomless wealth. After his paralysis, Will's life was not just as rich and resourced as a paralyzed life could possibly be, he also had his mind fully intact and access to cutting-edge technology and round-the-clock care. In short, it

was a decent quality of life considering the circumstances. But Will never saw it this way, he dropped his career, withdrew from his social circle, barely maintained healthy routines, and guarded himself from a burgeoning love with Lou. He became clinically depressed, as a result and outcome of his difficulties, grieving and coping with the loss of his previous life, and the relatively more limited future that laid predictably in store.

As for the political issue, Will declared his desire to die, and while all his loved ones worked to voice their distressed consternation and validated his expressed desires, there was very little examination and questioning of the quality of Will's thinking and decision-making. Will was not doing the basic things needed to build a life worth living. And he killed himself not because he was living a disabled life but because he was viewing his disabled life through a depressive perceptual filter. His quality of life seemed significantly harmed by ongoing medical difficulties. Will appeared to suffer daily bouts of pain and frequent hospitalizations due to an easy susceptibility to infections. At one end, the decision to facilitate the suicide of a highly suffering individual was objective, compassionate and understandable; at the other end, the decision was irrational, impulsive and misguided. Will should not have been allowed to follow through on giving up, the desire to live because his quality of life did not dip sufficiently low; he had too many personality strengths, environmental supports and opportunities for growth. There was not enough pain, distress, and practical limitation. Will was not overwhelmed by unavoidable, inevitable and perpetual mental and physical pain, so much as he failed to adapt to the traumatic event and major life transition inherent in his quadriplegic disability. This makes the ending not just sad, but

distressing, and it is a comment on unchecked depression more than it is the value of a disabled life.

The most annoying and confusing thing is that there is no direct or useful conversation around patient-assisted suicide or depression themes. The main character clearly has depression. It comes to a conclusion that depression sometimes can cause people to commit suicide. In this novel, the protagonist tried to commit suicide because he had been diagnosed that he got depression, and that was known through the symptoms shown by him in the novel. He got depressed because the accident left him quadriplegic and made him traumatic and to feel isolated from many people especially his family and friends.

Chapter Four

Triggering Self confidence

Will Traynor was a handsome young man. All guys wanted to be a friend of Will and all ladies wanted to be with him. But it was the inducing nature that made so hard for Will to deal with the accident that left him paralyzed. Before the accident, Will lived a full life in every sense of the phrase. He was a successful international businessman. He made love with foxy ladies in the reg. He partook in every extreme sport under the sun. He lived the life to the maximum.

Will's later status didn't make him regret his past exploits, it made him treasure them even more. He said to Lou that he would never ever regret the things that he had done. While Will's memories undoubtedly caused pain, those were also the only things that provided him relief. That was until he met Lou. She became the only thing that gave him a sense of relief, no matter how brief. She became the only thing that made him wake up in the morning. Even so, that love wasn't enough to keep Will from going to Dignitas to undergo assisted suicide. In the same way, not only Lou, but Will's memories simultaneously made him happy. He loved her and he was sad because he knew that he never expressed that love as deeply as he wanted. He couldn't be the man he wanted to be. That kiss, they exchanged, became, another remainder of what he was not. He did not want an unequal relationship. He did not want to put Lou through a life time caretaker. It was a brutal catch that he just couldn't overcome.

Lou never wanted to travel anywhere, much less she lived in another city but then she met Will Traynor, a business man and world traveler, whose explorations were cut short when he was paralysed two years prior. Although Will

was no longer able to participate in the activities that he once took for granted, his example helped Lou to discover the outside world that had more to offer that she ever thought.

Ironically, Will was not injured by any of those extreme exploits. He survived all those exploits. He was injured on a rainy day while he was simply crossing the street, an irony, he referred to as God's little joke. That explained why Will had such a hard time in adapting to quadriplegia. He was never the type of man who was content to just sit around. But then he couldn't do anything like that and so he experienced as whole a lot of tension between his former dreams and his current situation:

> The thing is, I get that this could be a good life. I get that with you around; perhaps it could even be a very good life. But it's not my life. I am not the same as these people you speak to. I's nothing like the life I want. Not even close. (425)

Louisa Clark was appointed to take care of Will. Lou tried to speak to Will, but he mocked at her at first. Will must have someone with him always. He could handle only for ten to fifteen minutes alone without anyone's help. Will had movements only in his fingers. Lou tried to care for him a lot, but Will avoided Lou. Will's ex-lover, Alicia, was engaged with Rubert, who was one of the dear friends of Will. They came to invite Will for their marriage. Will remained in silence for few minutes, then he broke his silence and wished them. After they went, Will was so depressed as he felt Alicia was the only reason for him to wake up every morning but she was no more. Will destroyed all the photos and dresses. Will said to Lou that he never wished to see anyone anymore:

> Do you know? What, Louisa? It would be nice-just for once-if someone paid attention to what I wanted. Me smashing those photographs was not an accident. It was not an attempt at radical interior design. It was because I actually don't want to look at them. (73)

> You thought you knew best. Everyone things they know what I need, let's put the bloody photos together. Give the poor invalid something to look at. I don't want to have those bloody pictures staring at me every time I'm stuck in my bed until someone comes and bloody well gets me out again. Okay? Do you think you can get your head around that? (74)

After few days Will became little bit close to Lou and he spoke with her. Will started to spend most of his time with Lou in all his activities. Will was in C5/6 quadriplegic stage, nothing worked below. Lou came to know about all the physical details about Will. She noticed the livid red lines on Will's wrist.

Will could not regulate his own temperature. Nathan, a medical caretaker took a lesson for Lou how to take care of Will. Nathan said to Lou that "He's not going to walk again Louisa. That will only happening Hollywood movies" (150).

Will had tried to kill himself on January because he felt that there was no use for him to live in a paralyzed stage. He felt that the world would look at him in a different way. He thought that he cannot achieve anything in his life being in that stage. He declared that his life was an utter waste and failure. Since all his dreams and his aims of his life were broken, Will thought that it was not necessary to live.

Georgia, Will's sister argued with her mother, Mrs.Camilla Traynor, that how she could agree to take Will to a place called Dignitas. Dignitas was a place where people those who were bedridden were killed by the acceptance of their families. Mrs.Camilla told Georgia that she had made a promise to Will that he should survive for six months, if he thought that his life had turned, he could give up the idea or else she would take him to Dignitas. He said, "I don't want to live like this, mother. This is not the life I chose. There is not prospect of my recovery; hence it is perfectly reasonable request to ask to end it in a manner" (133).

Georgia said to her mother in reply that the promise which she made to Will was unfair. Lou came to know that, she felt uncomfortable to work. Mrs.Traynor convinced Lou to continue her job. Lou made a condition that if they allow her to take Will outside, she would continue her job. Mrs.Traynor hesitated Lou's idea because Will would not feel conformable. Later she agreed to Lou's idea. Lou started to work out for her plan. With the help of her sister, Lou referred some places in internet and she spent more time in library. She searched the places with all the facilities where Will would feel comfortable. Lou had decided to take Will to see horse race along with Nathan .Will watched the horse race but he didn't enjoy it. The day was not good for them because it was rainy and there were some people to help him by lifting his wheelchair because the grass was so marshy .Will didn't like them because they viewed him in a pathetic manner. After they returned home, Will told Lou that he hate horse race and horse. Will said to Lou that all were worried only about their own wish, they had never bothered about what he liked.

Camilla was so furious, she saw, that all around her were the things that could move and bend and grow and produce, but her son just remained the same.

Camilla Traynor was worried about her son's injury, not just because of its profound effect on her life as his caretaker, but because she was forced to see all of his hopes and dreams for the future squashed. That was an unimaginable thing for her and for any parent to go through.

Will and Lou spent sometime in the garden. Will asked Lou whether she was interested in music. Will gave tickets to Lou to take part in the music concerts. Lou also requested Will to take part in that along with her. Will also agreed and they both enjoyed the music concert. They had a great time listening to the Violin music. Lou thanked Will for the tickets and she said that it gave a relief for her and that she felt better then:

> Hey Clark, He said. Tell me something good. I started out of the window at the bright blue Swiss sky and I told him a story of two people. Two people who shouldn't have met, and who didn't like each other much when they did, but who found they were the only two people in the world who could possibly have understood each other. And I told him of the adventures they had, the places they had gone, and the things I had seen that I had never expected to. I conjured for him electric skies and iridescent seas and evenings full of laughter and silly jokes. (372) .

Will and Lou attended Alicia and Rupert's marriage. Lou and Will enjoyed the ceremony as best as they could. It was time and they both were not in a steady stage. So Will asked Lou to book for a hotel room. Alicia and Rubert finally came to say hello to them. It wasn't the most charming interaction in the world, but it could have gone a lot worse. Lou persuaded Will to go on a trip with her. He agreed to that. Being toasted certainly made the dude more amenable.

Next day Lou told Nathan about what had happened last night. Nathan was annoyed at Lou for how she took care of Will at the wedding. Will drank a bunch, which was really a bad thing for him, which would worsen his health. Later, Will and Lou revealed their plan to gateway vocation and invited Nathan along with them. After talking to her online friends, Lou finally figured out and located the trip to The Four Wind Ranch in California. It was specially designed for quadriplegics, allowed them to engage in a bunch of fun activities.

Lou told Mrs.Traynor about the trip and got her approval. Lou rushed into the hospital. Lou thought that how Will had seemed fine on Friday how could get so sick so quickly. Lou sat with Will until he woke up. Will got up in the middle of the afternoon. He was in a rough shape. After a bit of idle conversation, Will finally told her as Lou feared that he was not healthy enough to go on a trip and he asked her to cancel the trip. While he cancelled the reservations, Lou was interrupted by Nathan. She asked Nathan that whether he knew about Will's plan for assisting suicide. Nathan replied that he knew. While he obviously wanted his friends to stay alive, as Lou wished, he only wanted him to hold on to that he wanted to live:

> I do. Unless there is some massive breakthrough in stem cell research, Will is looking at another decade in that chair. He knows it, even if is folks don't want to admit it. And this is half the trouble. She wants to keep him alive at any cost. Mr. T thinks there is a point where we have to let him decide. (400)

That was an important distinction. Lou didn't give up without a fight; she thought she could put together a different trip, one that Will's doctor would approve. Ten days later, Lou, Nathan and Will were at the airport. Lou got help

from Ritchie, one of the dudes in her online quadriplegia community. Will wasn't feeling well still then, but they were all at one place. By the third day, however, Will looked a lot better. Will seemed to have attained peace that had been missed from his life for a long time. And Will wasn't the only one who had a great time, either on the fourth day of the trip, Nathan met a lovely lady from New Zealand named Karen, on that second to the last night of the trip, Nathan told Lou that he told Karen to stay over in his hotel room for the night. Lou and Will shared a room. Lou and Will stayed lying in bed while a storm raged outside. Will fell asleep as they cuddle, but Lou was so swirling with thoughts about the future that took her forever on the last day, Will and Nathan convinced Lou to go for scuba diving. She didn't want to go at first as usual but she had amazing time at the end.

That night, Lou got a bit tipsy while she and Will shared some time alone on the beach. And finally Lou kissed Will. It was not that he didn't want to, but he knew he couldn't give her the life that she wished to live. She tried to convince him that his life was worth living and even she told him that she loved him. Lou tried her best to change his mind but Will was not ready to listen to her words. Will said that he wanted to die. Even though apart from being a care taker Lou did her best to make Will feel the urge to live, but Will didn't have that confidence in him. He thought that he was an utter failure. He thought only others could make him happy and he thought that he needed to depend on others for all the things. "There is a host of condition encroaching on me. I can feel it. I don't want to be in pain anymore, or trapped in this thing, or dependent on every one, or afraid" (169).

Lou ignored Will for the rest of the trip. Finally Lou gave up her job and she met Will during his last moment of death. Will said that he was happy only in

those six-months. "The best six months of my entire life" (471). Will ended his life in front of everyone in the family. It was only lack of self-confidence that led him to death.

After the death of Will, Lou struggled with a whirlwind of emotions, grief, anger, guilt and sadness. Although love for Will had caused her a great deal of pain, while she was in a cafe at Paris, she got a letter which was written by Will to Lou that made her gain self-confidence. Will had written that a few weeks before and he would have passed away by the time while Lou read that:

> There are a few things I wanted to say and would have told in person, but you would have got all emotional and you wouldn't have let me finish. So, here it is. When you get back home, Michaël Lawyer will give you access to a bank account that contains enough to give you a new beginning. Don't start panicking. It's not enough for you to sit around for the rest of life but it should buy you your freedom, at least from that little town we both call home. Will tells Lou to live boldly. Push yourself. Don't besettling. Wear those stripy legs with pride. Knowing you still have possibilities is a luxury, knowing I might have given them to you. This eased something for me. So, this is it. Don't think of me too often. I don't want you getting sad. Just live well. Just live. I'll be walking beside you every step of the way. (479)

Even though Will lacked self-confidence, he was able to encourage Lou and he never wanted Lou to be the same as he was. So he encouraged her to raise herself up in her life.

The author considered many answers to the question, what makes life worth living. One possible answer was money and status, as the well-to-do and high society Traynor family seemed to have everything that the Clark family did not have, living pay-check to pay-check desires. Yet though Will owned a castle and paid for anything he wanted, his wealth did not console him after his accident and it did not bring the Traynor family closer together, as Moyes argued that money cannot make people happy or be the only end goal of a fulfilled life. Another possible answer was adventure, given the thrilled life that Will led before his accident and Will took many attempts and forced Lou to have those type of adventures as well. Lou learned that some amount of adventures had satisfied her other than ordinary life, but that the true meaning of life cannot be something that was so easily taken away by a loss of health or finances.

When Will was sad that no amount of money or wheelchair-friendly adventures could shake him, his love for Lou and Lou's love for him was the only thing that gave Will true happiness in his final month. This love was also reflected in Will and Lou's families, as each of Will and Lou's family members found way to support and care for each other through the difficult situations and Will's condition. Yet even love could not be the only reason for life, as Will decided when he continued with his plan to end his life on his own terms. Lou also confronted the edges of romantic and familial love as she had accepted and supported Will's dignified suicide even though it strained her relationship with her mother. All those became still stronger with the letter that was written by Will to Lou, triggering her self-confidence.

Will always lived his life by choice, whether in life or death. He loved his life. He could never love his life in the similar manner. He chose his death like he

chose his life. He taught Lou to live her life to the fullest, so he could build her up for her adventures later. He build up her life while he built up his death. Will could not learn from his pain and live his life in regret of things only because that was not him. He had a choice and made his own decision no matter what happened. He did not want to blame anyone for his life, but himself.

A lack of self-confidence can be emotionally and physically affected. Almost everyone would have experienced brief lapse in confidence, which tied them in to self-esteem and self-image. A negative self-image creates fear. Depression is also a main reason for lack of self-confidence. When a man lacks self-confidence, he enters into sadness, disappointment, loneliness, hopelessness, self-doubt, whether he is capable or not to survive and always feel guilty to face the society. Now a day's these were common in our society and as a result of this, people lead themselves to suicide because they don't have faith in them. They think that they cannot achieve when they are in the cross certain worst part in their life.

Lack of self-confidence is more often than not only simple laziness. One feels confused and uncertain without knowing the reason. But instead of making the effort to investigate, procrastinate and worry with the use of mental energy, one expects in worry and fear to get out and find out what he or she does not know, should make the self-confidence grow. Lack of self -confident cannot be overcome by faith, but by action. It is a lack not of certainty, but of effort. Too often it is certain that all think "cannot" before giving a fair chance.

The same happened in Will's life also after being paralyzed in a freak motorcycle accident, he totally fell down in his life. He was disappointed that he would no longer able to travel and live the life once he did. He was disappointed

that his future looked bleaker and bleaker, and he felt that he lost his sense of independence. Although he eventually stroked up a strong bond with Lou Clark, a goofy girl with an even goofier sense of humour, it remained to be seen whether Will could overcome those feelings and gain a renewed perspective on what life had to offer him. But all the efforts of the family members and Lou did not bring any meaningful life for Will. He didn't even have the confidence what others had in him. He had no change of idea to die till the end. Finally as he wished, he ended his life. The only reason for Will's end was lack of self-confidence.

Self-confidence is very important in our life. Based on this novel, *Me Before You,* the hero, Will, in his last letter, had instructed his care taker Lou to start a new life without worrying about the past. But Will failed to do that in his life. The same may happen in reality also to many people. If they have self-confidence, they can overcome any hurdles and set a new path in their lives. So everyone must have self-confidence to lead a happy life. "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, whatever cost, must be attained" (97).

Chapter Five

Summation

Jojo Moyes is a voracious reader and writer. After been in journalism, she got a voice that writing a novel didn't seem impossible. Jojo Moyes loves writing scripts. She felt the risk of unkindness and it is important to show where all stand. The joy of getting older is seen by her as remarkably bolshy. She is a romantic writer and romance is the genre that all her works carried. Her writing style is emotional, heartfelt and intelligent. She tries to write characters who are properly complex and she always left the readers to work out something for themselves.

Jojo Moyes was not very romantic in her real life. She guessed love is the only thing that makes one to do the most extraordinary things, the emotion that can bring the highest or the lowest, or be the most transformative and extremes of emotion which is always interesting to write about. She is also too wimpy to write horror novels. When not writing, at free time, she used to spend her time riding her ex-racehorse, Brian and tried to just hang out with her children without muttering: "I'll be with you in a minute. I've just got to finish this" (45). A dream weekend, however, would be spent alone with her husband in Le Marais, Paris.

Literature is a body of written works. It has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intention of their authors and perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified accordingly to a variety of system, including language, national origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires

and provides; and in their respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

Me Before You tells the story of an energetic young man from U.K, Will Traynor. Will was a man who had scaled rock faces at Yosemite, swum in volcanic springs in Iceland, sampled warm croissants in the Marais and had his pick of glamorous, leggy girlfriends. However, one day he met with an accident when a motorcycle hit him before he got into a taxi. The accident left him quadriplegic for two years. That accident took all his later life happiness. At first, his parents were horrified and were against the decision their son had decided on, but when he decided to take his own life, they ultimately agreed, if he gave them six more months. He accepted his mother's search for a caregiver to take care of him. Louisa Clark, a 26-year-old working-class girl came to attend the interview for that job. Louisa had no experience in the caregiving field, but she was a pleasant human being and Will's mother Camila Traynor hoped that she would change Will's mind. She accepted to the condition that if she was going to change Will's mind.

Louisa later began to help Will to have a great life in the world considering that he was not a quadriplegic. She talked to Will about short outing and they also went on a vacation to Mauritius. During that vacation, Louisa confessed that she was in love with Will and that they could have a life together. He said no and he assured her that he won't change his mind about visiting the doctor in Switzerland. Louisa went back home and spent days locked in her room, days later she decided to go to Switzerland before Will killed himself. Will told Louisa that the past six months were the best in his life, but that wouldn't change his mind. Louisa kissed him and later Will Traynor was dead. Sometimes later,

Louisa was at a table in Paris, where she read a letter from her sister and then she held on a letter written by Will. The letter had instructions that she had to visit a perfumer and also that he had left her some money which she could use to make her life better. He hoped that she would live well. Louisa cried and got up to fulfill Will's final wish:

> You cut yourself off from all sorts of experiences because you tell yourself you are not that sort of person, You've done nothing, been nowhere. How do you have the faintest idea what kind of person you are? Promise me you won't spend the rest of your life stuck around this bloody parody of a place mat. (480)

The tone of this novel is, for the most part, heartfelt and candid. The mood is more variable, and tends to swing between hopeful anticipation and dread, following the novel's plot structure. There are two ways to look at the title of the novel and there are two endings in the novel.

The main theme of this novel is lack of self-confidence. Will, the hero hated to live his present life due to his accident that made him paralyzed. Will felt that all his life was over because he couldn't live the happy life that he lived before the accident. As a result of that, he had attempted to commit suicide, even though the caretaker Lou beyond her daily routine work she did her best to make Will to think that he could start a new life. She took him to various amazing trips. Will was happy in those trips but he was not in a mood to give up his suicidal tendencies. Due to his lack of self-confidence Will ended up his life. For every human being self-confidence is very much essential. If a man has self-confidence, he/she can overcome all sorts of pain and suffering that he has met with in his past. If Will also had the same self-confidence, he would have started a new life in

a different path and would have lived happily. So nothing is impossible in our life if we have self-confidence.

Depression is another major theme of the novel. Will, as a character, lived a very high quality life trajectory, to start. He had it all; charm, good luck, intelligence, and countless other positive personality traits. And he was loved and supported by a prominent family with seemingly bottomless wealth. After his paralysis, Will's life was not just as rich and resourced as a paralyzed life could possibly be, he also had his mind fully intact and access to cutting-edge technology and round-the-clock care. In short, it was a decent quality of life considering the circumstances. But Will never saw it this way, he dropped his career, withdrew from his social circle, barely maintained healthy routines, and guarded himself from a burgeoning love with Lou. He became clinically depressed, as a result and outcome of his difficulties, grieving over and coping with the loss of his previous life, and the relatively more limited future that laid predictably in store.

As for the political issue, Will declared his desire to die, and while all his loved ones worked to voice their distressed consternation and validated his expressed desires, there was very little examination and questioning of the quality of Will's thinking and decision-making. Will was not doing the basic things needed to build a life worth living. And he killed himself not because he was living a disabled life but because he was viewing his disabled life through a depressive perceptual filter. His quality of life seemed significantly harmed by the ongoing medical difficulties. Will appeared to suffer daily bouts of pain and frequent hospitalizations due to an easy susceptibility to infections.

At one end, the decision to facilitate the suicide of a highly suffering individual was objective, compassionate and understandable; at the other end, the decision was irrational, impulsive and misguided. Will should not have been allowed to follow through on giving up, because his quality of life did not dip sufficiently low; he had too many strengths of personality, environmental supports and opportunities for growth. There was not enough pain, distress, and practical limitation. Will was not overwhelmed by unavoidable, inevitable and perpetual mental and physical pain, so much as he failed to adapt to the traumatic event and major life transition inherent in his quadriplegic disability. This makes the ending not just sad, but distressing, and it is a comment on unchecked depression more than it is the value of a disabled life. The most annoying and confusing thing is that there is no direct or useful conversation around patient-assisted suicide or depression themes.

Depression sometimes can cause people to commit suicide. In this novel, the protagonist tried to commit suicide because he had been diagnosed that he got depressed, and that was known through the symptoms shown by him in the novel. He got depressed because the accident left him quadriplegic and made him traumatic and to feel isolated from many people especially his family and friends. And so one should keep himself from being depressed mainly by gaining self-confidence.

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Political Marginalization of the Colonized: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Political Marginalization of the Colonized: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Jerline I. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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I hereby declare that the project entitled **Political Marginalization of the Colonized: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Political Marginalization of the Colonized: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** analyses the history, political, economic, social, religious, psychological and cultural lives of the colonized, families.

The first chapter **Introduction** is about the biography of Amitav Ghosh and discusses the general characteristics of his works.

The second chapter **Displacement and Exploitation** deals with the dislocation, blurring of boundaries, colonization, migration, conflict of cultures and rootlessness of the colonized.

The third chapter **Mapping the Power Discourse** discusses the history of the army under British rule and how Indians were responsible for the exploitation.

The fourth chapter **Plantation and Colonial Army** highlight the plantation and the colonial army of suppression and domination of Indian and Burmese people.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a form of human expression. But not everything expressed in words, when organised and written down is counted as literature. Those writings that are primarily informative, technical, scholarly, journalistic would be excluded from the rank of literature by most, though not all, critics. Certain forms of writing, however, are universally regarded as belonging to literature as an art. The purest literary form is the lyric poem, and after it comes elegy, epic, dramatic narrative and expository verse. Many novels certainly all the world's great novels are literature, but there are thousands that are not so considered. Most great dramas are considered literature.

Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. Some literatures are treated separately by language, by nation, or by special subject. The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page; they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond "mere" pleasure.

Indian English Literature is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the Indian Writing in English. Indian English Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of world literature. Wide ranges of themes are dealt with in Indian Writing in English. While this literature continues to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living

elsewhere, recent Indian English fiction has been trying to give expression to the Indian experience of the modern predicaments.

There are critics and commentators in England and America who appreciate Indian English novels. Their works contemplated and deliberated on multifarious range of issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, individual consciousness and the like.

This literary movement was fortified by the overwhelming output by novelists and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction. This has been achieved by novelists who sought to prove their inner creative urge in English language, which is indeed an alien tongue for them.

India's substantial contribution to world literature is largely due to the profusely creative literary works generated by Indian novelists in English. The Indian English fiction has had a meteoritic growth during the dawn of the millennium year and the writing in all genres of literature has gained momentum, particularly the Indian novel.

The crusaders of the contemporary and modern era include Salmon Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and many more. They elucidate and substantiate strength of the emerging modern voice of India, which has the vibrancy and energy of a gushing artesian along with an unmatched resolve to experiment and explore new avenues of writing novels. A host of contemporary postcolonial writers like Rushdie, Arundati Roy, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri have initiated the process of decolonizing the 'Colonial English' and using it as a medium to express Indian thoughts and sensibilities with a distinctive Indian style.

The dual combination of independent movement and nationalist consciousness gave much impetus and spur to the overflow of novels in which affection for motherland was the crux and this served to invoke the patriotic sentiments to the masses. The novels that belong to this category include Nayantara Saghal's *A Time to be Happy* and Khawja Ahmad Abbas *Inquilab*. The triumvirs Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan were the novelists who stabilized and fortified the Indian English fiction with their works and unique literary style.

It is significant that the spirit of the age is more pervasively and effectively reflected in the third generation fiction than in other forms like poetry and drama. The novel, by its very nature, is better equipped to deal with social reality, whatever liberties it may take in projecting it. It is hardly surprising therefore that the most substantial contribution of the period comes from the third generation fiction.

The new Indian writing, published between 1980s and 1990s, has ushered in a literary renaissance in the third generation Indian English writers like Salmon Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Shashi Tharoor, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Upamnyu Chatterjee, Gita Mehta, Bharathi Mukherjee, and Amitav Ghosh. These are the foremost third generation novelists who hold centrality in the contemporary literary scenario. They have made a distinct mark on the world literary scene with their rich cultural heritage and skilled language control. They have received national and international recognition, fabulous royalties and prestigious awards. Amitav Ghosh's new novel, *Gun Island* effortlessly spans between space and time. It is the story of a world on the brink of increasing displacement and unstoppable transition. On the other side it is also a story of hope, of a man whose faith in the world and the future is restored by two remarkable persons.

Among these novelists the most talented are Salmon Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Farrukh Dhondy, Rohinton Mistry and Firdaus Kanga. The New York Times has called these new Indian writers Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. These novelists are making conscious efforts to redefine English prose with myths, humour or themes as vast as the subcontinent ways. Thus, they demand a serious critical attention, analysis, classification and finally definition as a distinct genre of fictional literature of our time.

The works of these novelists have been accorded genuine recognition in India also. For example, no less than five novels were found worthy of the Sahitya Akademi Award – the greatest literary honour of the country during the 1980s itself. These are Arun Joshi's *The Last Labyrinth*, Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. These facts, which are only illustrative and by no means exhaustive, clearly show that Indian English novel has been given proper response and recognition inside India and abroad.

The first of the new novelists to arrive was Salman Rushdie whose *Midnight's Children* heralded a new era in the history of Indian English fiction traditions and narrative pattern of the Third World Societies. Rushdie's another novel *Satanic Verses* brought him considerable notoriety, as devout Muslims found it blasphemous.

Indian writers like Jumpha Lahari, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, and Arundhati Roy too have written novels of magic realism, social realism and regional fiction. They have probed into human relationships, since the present problem is closely concerned with mind and heart and the crusade is against age-old established systems.

In order to make the process of changes smooth and really meaningful, women writers have taken upon themselves this great task.

Shashi Deshpande who is labelled as feminist novelist succeeded in depicting the plight of a successful educated woman and problems of being a woman. She has written eight novels, six collections of short stories, and four children's books. Her popular novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* portrayed the life of a woman who marries a doctor and becomes the victim of brutalization.

She depicts the Indian middle class mentality in all her novels. Deshpande generally has the heroine as the narrator and employs a kind of stream of consciousness technique. In another novel *Roots and Shadows* a rebellious woman refuses to accept traditional family life and escapes to the city to work. Her work is women-oriented, but it would not be correct to term her a feminist, as she consistently regates with the feminist identity. She simply portrays, in depth the meaning of being women in modern India.

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian by ancestry, British by birth, American by immigration. She targets the Western audience by deliberately portraying the Indian American life. *Interpreter of Maladies* her debut anthology is collected stories that deal with the question of identity. Her another famous novel *The Namesake* is essentially a story about life in the United States. But Lahiri says that *Namesake* deals with Indian immigrants in the United States as well as their children. For instance, though she is much more American than her parents, she inherited a sense of exile from her parents. Her characters move constantly between two worlds grappling bravely with this cultural displacement.

Amitav Ghosh, famous Indian English writer was born in Kolkata in 1956. His father was a lieutenant-colonel in the army. As a result, he got to travel to different parts of the world. Thus, Amitav Ghosh was raised and educated in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran, Egypt, India and the United Kingdom. He received his early education at the Doon School, Dehradun, and later went to Delhi University for his higher studies. Here he completed his graduation from St. Stephen's College in History, followed by Masters in Sociology from Delhi School of Economics. After completing his Masters of Arts, he earned a diploma in Arabic from Institute Bourgiba Des Languages Vivanates, Tunis, Tunisia. Then he went to Oxford University where he earned his doctorate in Socio Anthropology in 1982.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of the new novelists who appeared in the 1980s. He has addressed himself to those areas of darkness that remained hidden from the very beginning of Indian English novel. *The Circle Reason* and *The Shadow Lines* established him as "the finest writer among those who were born out of the Post Midnight's Children revolution in Indo Anglian fiction" (The New York Times 15).

He was an Indian born writer whose ambitious novels use complex narrative strategies to the nature of national and personal identity, particularly of the people of India and Southeast Asia. He worked as a journalist for the first time with the Indian Express newspaper, Delhi. Ghosh famously withdrew his novel *The Glass Palace* from consideration for "commonwealth writer's prize", where it had been awarded the best Novel in Eurasian section, citing his objections to the term "commonwealth" and the unfairness of the English- language requirement specified in the rules. Amitav Ghosh is an Indian novelist, essayist and non-fiction writer. He was popular and

highly respected Indian author. In his novels and essays, he draws heavily upon the character, traditions, and dichotomies of his native land, yet Ghosh's protagonists and themes often extend beyond India's actual boundaries, most notably toward the Middle East and Great Britain.

Ghosh's novels become a metaphor of our times and enshrine every man's discovery of himself. However, a gifted craftsman, the novelist never ceases to be an Indian even in his superb flights of fantasy, which impart to his novels the folktale charm of the Arabian Nights and make him a Don Quixote of another era. Amitav Ghosh's works are indicative of the exploratory nature of his fiction, which reveal to his readers surprisingly different aspects of his personal, cultural, and national identity.

The Glass Palace is the story of ordinary people's life being taken over by politics and drowning them into insignificance. *The Glass Palace* tells of Rajkumar, a poor boy lifted on the tides of political and social chaos, who creates an empire in the Burmese teak forest.

During the British invasion of 1885, when soldiers force the royal family out of the Glass Palace and into exile, Rajkumar befriends Dolly, the woman whose love will shape his life. He cannot forget her, and years later, as a rich man, he goes in search of her. This superb story of love and war begins with the shattering of the kingdom of Burma and the igniting of a great and passionate love, and it goes on to tell the story of a people, a fortune, and a family and its fate.

Pankaj Mishra describes Ghosh as one of few postcolonial writers "to have expressed in his work a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and

disappointments of colonized people as they figure out their place in the world" (New York Times Review). *The Glass Palace* is set primarily in Burma and India and catalogs the evolving history of those regions before and during the fraught years of the Second World War and India's independence struggle.

The novel opened depicting the war time situation. "There was only one person in the food stall who knew exactly what that sound was that rolling in across the plain, along the silver curve of the Irrawaddy, to the western wall of Mandalay's fort" (3) describes the tension among the people. *The Glass Palace* is an epic in length and covers three generations of Indians in the countries of Malaya and Burma from 1885 until the end of the twentieth century.

Chapter Two

Displacement and Exploitation

Amitav Ghosh's novels reflect his engagement with some of the serious issues faced by contemporary ex-colonies in Asia and Africa. *The Glass Palace* is rich with several ideas such as displacement or dislocation, blurring of boundaries, colonization, migration, conflict of cultures and rootlessness. Dislocation is a critical term that refers to the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event.

The phenomenon of displacement may be the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement or a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to unknown location. The sense of self may also have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. Dislocation results in hybridity. Dislocation becomes most obvious in the attempt to convert the uncolonized 'space' into colonized 'place'.

The theme of dislocation is one of the major themes in *The Glass Palace*. Rukmini Bhaya Nair says, "*The Glass Palace* is a narrative of colonial displacement" (162). Shubha Tiwari wrote "It is a novel about many places, war and displacement, exile and rootlessness" (103). *The Glass Palace* brings together history, fiction, autobiographical records and memories and thereby dislocates the genres also. In this novel a historical event leads to a series of connected dislocations.

Ghosh seeks an understanding of the past to have a bearing upon the present. *The Glass Palace* is a saga of many families, their lives and their connection with one

another with a sweeping historical background. It begins with the introduction of an Indian orphan who is transported to Burma by accident. The name of this character is Rajkumar. As a child, Rajkumar is remarkable for his exploring spirit, keen perception and his ability to take calculated risks. Rajkumar works in a tea stall of a matronly lady Ma Cho.

Once he lands in Mandalay, his lifelong search for places and people begins. He is a complete destitute in an alien city with absolutely no acquaintances. Because of his skill in the art of survival in a difficult world Rajkumar gradually succeeds in becoming, with the loyal help of his friends Doh Say, Saya John and others, a rich and powerful member of the Indian community in Burma. Thereafter, he tracks down Dolly, the devoted maid servant of queen Supalayat, with whom he had fallen in love at first sight as a boy during the British takeover of Mandalay.

Dolly now lives in the distant Indian city of Ratnagiri with the exiled king Thebaw, Queen Supalyat and the princesses. There Dolly has made a lifelong friend of Uma, the wife of an Indian District Commissioner assigned to look after the king Thebaw and his family. Rajkumar finally marries Dolly. The rest of the chapters of the *The Glass Palace* account the interaction between three families of Dolly and Rajkumar in Burma, Uma and her brother in India and Rajkumar, Saya John and his son Mathew in Malaysia.

Interspersed in the story is the harrowing experience of war between Japan and Britain with its implications. The invasion of British army proceeds so smoothly as to surprise even its planners. The imperial fleet crossed the border of Burma. The Burmese army surrendered to that of British without much resistance within a few a days. In *The Glass Palace*, the repercussions of this war are tracked.

The novel opens with the echoing sound of canon along the silver curve of the river Irrawaddy. The British cast eyes on the wealth of the golden land, Burma. As the Burmese army could not match the British army, without informing the king Thebaw, it surrendered. The war lasted for just fourteen days.

> Everywhere people were intently at work, men and women, armed with axes and das; they were hacking at gem studded *Ook* offering boxes; digging patterned gemstones from the marble floor; using fish hooks to pry the ivory in lays from lacquered sadaik chests. The Queen was witnessing this horrifying scene blindly. A day before, she could have had a commoner imprisoned for so much as looking her directly in the face (33).

Thus, the dethroned King, the Queen, the Princesses and entourage were exiled to Madras, then finally to Ratnagiri. After the dethronement the King experienced a lot of humiliation. The King was asked to move in bullockcarts along Mandalay's streets. When the king was about to step in, he noticed that the canopy set to the carriage "had seven tiers, the number allotted to a nobleman, not the nine due to a king" (43).

The King and Queen had sold almost everything they had brought over from Mandalay. Thus, struck by the shock the King never went out of the Outram House throughout the exile. The King recollects how his ancestors were feared and respected and laments over the current position. The Queen harshly criticizes the colonial by stating that "We who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. This is what they have done to us; this is what they will do to all of Burma" (88).

The Queen says that the imperial powers had not only dislocated them but they would dislocate the entire Burma also. In the course of twenty year exile the

King's First Princess marries Sawant, a coachman and the Second Princess elopes with a Burmese commoner. The King sends a note of bringing back his second daughter, when she does not return, "he fell to the floor, clutching his left arm" (205). Ten days later the King died in 1916 in India.

The colonial rule did not transport the King's body to Burma with the fear that the body might become a rallying point in Burma. The saddest part is that even Her Majesty flatly refused to attend the King's funeral. The First Princess in a letter written to Dolly writes that "no one could believe that this was the funeral of Burma's last King!" (205).

After the death of the King, the Queen returns to Rangoon. She spends last years of her life spending money on charities and feeding monks. The Queen died in 1925 six years after her return from Ratnagiri. Thus the colonial occupation dislocated the Royal family from political power never to retrieve it again.

The dislocation is not confined to the Royal family and its encourage. People from colonized India were transported to Burma to work in oil camps and do other menial works. The colonial rule was not solely responsible for all the displacement and exploitation. The greedy native people like Baburao from Guntur and Rajkumar supplied work force to the British. Many of them died on the way itself. On the voyage the women were sexually exploited. For instance, Ilongo's mother was sexually used by Rajkumar on the voyage from Madras to Rangoon. The opinion of Mathew, son of John Saya, exemplifies the hardship faced by the plantation workers.

Uma went to meet her friend Dolly at Morningside Estate, in Malaya. When she went with Mathew to have a look at rubber plantation she was struck to see similarity in size, height and branching off at the same height of rubber plants. So she asked Mathew how it was possible. Mathew replied that different people express

different opinions. "But the tappers know better. They have a saying you know every rubber tree in Malaya was paid for with an Indian life" (233).

This opinion of people throws light on the cruel, exploitative nature of colonizers and neo-colonizers. It seems Ghosh questions here how can the colonizers represent themselves as civilized and rational. Another pervasive element that runs through the novel is how the colonized people and soldiers were used to colonize and exploit other free countries.

The dislocation which resulted from colonial occupation may help some people to migrate, to form their personality using their skills, and to prosper in their lives. Ghosh doesn't squarely say that dislocation causes only disadvantages. He vividly represents the other side of dislocation. For instance, Rajkumar, the protagonist, lands in Mandalay. He is from Chittagong. He develops the sense of belonging at the new place. He overcomes the challenging barriers. When he views the fort of Mandalay, instinctively he knows that orphans like him cannot go there. Yet "no matter what Ma Cho said, he decided, he would cross the moat, before he left Mandalay, he would find a way in" (7).

When the Birtish dispossessed the King of Burma, Rajkumar is told that the British wished to control Burma's territory for wood. From this point he starts shaping his future plans. He earns his job at Saya's company with his integrity and personality. His professional rise is impressive. When he decides to take a loan from Saya and establish his separate timber yard Saya is full of doubts. Now it is Rajkumar's turn to give a few tips to Saya. He remarks, "if I am ever going to make this business grow I will have to take a few risks" (130).

Rajkumar is capable of speaking several languages fluently, including English and Burmese. He is for all practical purposes, an illiterate, barely able to sign his own

name. In India a man like Rajkumar would have little chance of gaining acceptance in the society. Thus, Rajkumar has become a successful and respected businessman.

At this stage he thinks of meeting and marrying Dolly whom he had seen when the King Thebaw was exiled. Being a practical businessman Rajkumar brings a letter for the collector of Ratnagiri from a relative of Uma Dey, the collector's wife. Uma who is a good friend of Dolly arranges meeting between Dolly and Rajkumar. "He is in love with what he remembers. That is not me" (161). She tells Rajkumar about her past relationship with Sawant.

Finally Rajkumar and Dolly are married. Dolly returns to Rangoon with Rajkumar. They are blessed with two sons namely Neeladhri and Dinu. Rajkumar gets the share in the Morningside Rubber Estate and offers his children good education in the city's reputed colleges. Up to this part, dislocation proves to be advantageous to Rajkumar's family.

After this, dislocation proves detrimental to Rajkumar and his family. "Because of racial clash resulted from colonial rule things have changed in Burma, there is a lot of anger and a lot of resentment, much of it aimed at Indians" (240). Uma also experiences that everywhere there are signs of a widening rift between Indians and their Burmese neighbours. The root cause for this racial and communal hatred was the dislocation, the pattern of imperial rule and its policy of dividing its subjects.

In the meanwhile Rajkumar's elder son Neeladhari marries Manju, Uma's niece. They are blessed with a girl by name Jaya. Rajkumar takes the risk of staying back in Burma, though Dolly has insisted upon returning to India. Rajkumar has accumulated a lot of teakwood in his yard. When Rajkumar reaches the yard, tries to find his son's body, "the body was almost unrecognizable, crushed by an immense

weight, despite the terrible disfigurement Rajkumar knew that this was his son and that he was dead" (463).

When Manju, Dolly and Rajkumar came to river bank, there are already some thirty thousand refugees waiting and thousands of people had already gone through wilderness. On their journey they face many harships and travel without proper food and water. Rajkumar collects some firewood and sells it for food. It was the plight of several thousand refugees. A Nepali woman fell down; her face was caught in mud. No one was there to help her. Therefore "she died where she lay, held fast by the mud with her child tied to her back. The baby had starved to death" (470).

One day Manju fell asleep sitting up with the baby in her arms. The vultures were always seen on people who were too weak to go on or who were near death. In hysteric and frustrated mood Manju tells Rajkumar, "Look at you; you have gone on and on and on and on and what has it brought you?" (472) this remark clearly evokes the consequence of migration caused by dislocation.

When Manju heard that she had to go a long way to reach India she jumped into the river and died. Such is the plight of displaced people. Rajkumar's younger son Dinu who had gone to sell off Morningside Rubber Estate does not return. He stays in Rangoon. Though the displacement changed Rajkumar's life initially, the end result of it is pitiable. Rajkumar's wife Dolly returns to Burma again and she joins nunnery and dies there. Like Rajkumar his mentor Saya John too prospers because of dislocation but ultimately his life also ends tragically.

Saya John is also an orphan brought up by catholic priests in Malacca. Saya John with his knowledge and spirit succeeded in teakwood business and later it is he who persuaded Rajkumar to have share in the Morningside Rubber Estate. His son Mathew was in America for his study. There he fell in love with Elsa and married her.

Due to Uma's persuasion he came to Malaya. They also got two children Alison, daughter and Tithmy, son. Till the outbreak of Japanese and British war their life was happier and more meaningful.

After that Mathew and Elsa died in an accident. Saya John spent his last days with his grand daughter Alison in the Morningside, because Saya John was caught by the Japanese soldiers. Alison shot herself before she was caught and killed by the soldiers. Thus, the colourful life of Saya John came to a tragic end. Dislocation has resulted in the cultural transformation.

When the King Thebaw and his family were exiled to Ratnagiri, initially the family could retain Burmese culture. While they were in Burma the Royal family members rarely came out and mixed with common people but here in Ratnagiri the Princesses were playing with their servant's children. The First Princess fell in love with Mohan Sawvant, a coachman well as the guard of the gate of Outram House. She became pregnant, married him, gave birth to a child and permanently settled in India. Irony of the situation is that when Uma discussed with Dolly about the marriage of the Princesses, Dolly told that in the entire Burma there were only sixteen eligible grooms.

The Royal family's custom was to marry within their houses. Further Dolly told Uma that "the queen would not allow her daughters to defile their blood by marrying beneath themselves" (115). The Second Princess also eloped with a common Burmese and married him. Both the First Princess and the Second Princess who had been born in Burma remained in India. After the death of the King they did not go with their mother to Burma.

Dislocation or displacement has blurred racial borders. For instance, Rajkumar, an Indian married Dolly, a Burmese. So their sons Neel and Dinu are half

Indians and half Burmese. Neel married Manju, an Indian, Uma's niece. Their child Jaya was half Indian and half Burmese. Mathew married Elsa, an American. Rajkumar's younger son Dinu married a Burmese writer. Thus, the saga of these families dislocates the concept of racial purity. The race is hybridized and the concept of pure race is deconstructed. Saya John is a fine illustration of this breed of hybridity which blurs the national and racial borders.

> When I told them how this had come about, they would laugh and say, you are a *Dhobi Ka Kutta*- a washerman's dog- *na ghar ka no ghat ka*- You don't belong any where either by the water or on land and I'd say, yes, that is exactly what I am (10).

Ghosh has shown the cruelty of colonization and its impact on the lives and mind of the colonized. The theme of how the colonized army and persons were being used to colonize other free countries runs though this novel. These soldiers were psychologically dislocated. *The Glass Palace* portrays this conflict and the emergence of questioning within the Indians, particularly among the educated middle class.

The colonial occupation led to the physical, political, psychological, racial and cultural dislocations. Yet the novel ends with a desire to re-establish a culture of ease and love, comfort and compassion, forgoing the hatred and violence. The real hope among the people is awakened by the figure of Aung San Suu Kyi who has torn the masks from the face of cruel regime and inspires people with her charisma. She holds no political institutional post but she has become an institution in herself. Ghosh shows her popularity, her openness in facing the public and her ability to laugh. Thus the novel which begins with invasion and plunder ends with reconciliation, faith and hope.

Chapter Three

Mapping the Power Discourse

In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh employs the genre of family saga to disclose the under currents of power discourse in everyday existence of human life. The narrative style gives the illusion of a transparent, neutral, historical records, which leaves out the traces of power play within the given historical recordings. It is generally believed that the expression of power is related to the modern world and noted that power discourse is a modern phenomenon. *The Glass Palace* with a view that power discourse may be a modern phenomenon but the power play is not related only to the modern world.

The power network in *The Glass Palace* is best understood by determining the interwinings and relative importance at any given time of the organisations based on four overlapping and intersecting socio political networks of power. These networks are Ideological, Economic, Military and Political. Besides these major networks of power, there are other networks present within and outside family saga in *The Glass Palace*. Though they are important in one sense, they have an independent existence of their own outside the societal significance.

Ideology in sociological terms is understood more particularly as any system of ideas which justifies the subordination of one group by another. Ideology, in later criticisms and developments is presented in terms of a social class representing its particular sectional interests as 'natural' and 'universal'. The ideological network in *The Glass Palace* encompasses its operation at various levels. The ideology of the British Raj through the lives of the colonized people takes life at the varying points in the novel.

The most prominent one is seen among the people who are closely associated with the rulers. For example, Beni Prasad Dey, the District Collector and Arjun, the British Indian Army Official, had the privilege of getting British education. Beni Prasad Dey's ideas were formulated through his academic experiences and knowledge. Beni Prasad Dey, after passing out from the Calcutta University, joined the Cambridge University and subsequently cleared his administrative services and resumed the post of the District Collector. He was married to Uma. His idea of a wife was a girl who would be willing to step out into society; someone young who wouldn't be resistant to learning modern ways. Ghosh comments on this strange relation between then,

> The wifely virtues she could offer him he had no use for: Cambridge had taught him to want more; to make sure that nothing was held in abeyance, to bargain for a woman's soul with the coin of kindness and patience. The thought of this terrified her. This was subjection beyond decency, beyond her imagining. She could not bring herself to think of it. Anything would be better than to submit (153).

But Uma fails to fulfil his idea of a wife. Even the petty detail of his life was an imitation of the British Raj. Though Uma was completely aware of it, it was not possible for her to follow it. Dey was almost mesmerized by the British and their way of life.

> She was impressed by the way the young woman had intervened to save the situation. Self-possession was a quality she'd always admired. There was something attractive about this woman, Uma Dey; the

> liveliness of her manner was a welcome contrast to her husband's arrogance (108).

The education had not only given him knowledge but also had made him acquire an ideology, the ideology of the ruler. It made him treat the British as the superior and the Indian as the inferior. So he tries hard to prove himself an exceptional Indian who is more close to the British than Indian ways of life. As the Deputy Collector of Rathnagiri, he tries his level best to fulfil the expectations of his superiors. His major responsibility was to take care of the family of the exiled king Thebaw.

The marriage of the first princess with Mohun Sawanth, the coachman, comes as a blow to him. Though his wife knew it, she maintains it a secret from him. "She was more comfortable with and faithful to the prisoner and the jailer" (117). Dey had to pay very heavily for that. He was terminated from the post and was asked to return to Bombay. His failure to prove himself the best, leaves a deep scar in him. Queen Supayalat spits in to the garden in commemoration of her jailor's death.

The ideology that he acquired served the British well but created a great tragedy in his personal life. He was not able to live a life of his own. Dey's life not only failed to fulfil his ideals of life but also failed to understand the lives of others like Uma, Mohan Sawant, and Queen Supayalat. He understood them as his wife, coachman, and the queen in exile. It was beyond his capacity to understand them as individuals who are capable of having a life of their own.

Arjun is Uma's nephew and holds great fascination for the British customs and ways of life. He is educated in the British modelled institutions and so naturally holds the British in awe and respect. However, Uma tells Arjun that

> Mahatma thinks that the country can only benefit from having men of conscience in the army. She encourages Arjun to join the army because India needs soldiers who won't blindly obey their superiors (258).

Arjun's profession begins with the same ideals as Dey. Arjun, in his letters to his sister Manju, takes pride in listing out the honours conferred on his regiment in the past. Arjun, the more prominent of these figures, can initially express himself only within the discourse of the military culture. The happiness and confidence with which he brims shows that he genuinely believes in achieving great things in the army and takes pride in his achievements. Arjun repeatedly affirms that soldiering is a mere job. The job is associated with power and is closely associated with the rulers. Beyond that there is no other value attached to it.

> The Royal was in Burma during General Prendergast's advance on Mandalay and it fought so well that it came to be known as *jarmail sahib ki dyni haat ki paltan*, the general's right hand battalion (262).

In spite of repeated humiliation, Arjun fails to identify that he is only a tool in the hands of the British. Like Dey, even to Arjun, everything about the British was unquestioningly acceptable and admirable. Without any confusion he holds them superior in all aspects and everything Indian assumes the inferior status. When the Japanese defeat the British, Arjun begins to think about his life. He wonders whether it is the defeat of the British. His life was moulded by acts of ideological network of the colonial masters. He had never acted on his own volition, never had a moment of true consciousness. It was always the false consciousness given by the ruler that governed him.

When realization draws on him that he lived only as a victim of the ruler's ideology, he wants to live for his country. He recognizes the stranger that he had always been to himself that his loyalties and beliefs had been misplaced. His old loyalties to India, the ancient ones had been destroyed long ago, the British had built their empire and now the empire had died within him. He realizes that it is impossible for him to re root his loyalties because it was beyond the abilities of someone such as himself, someone trained to destroy.

Though Arjun joins the INA, this realization of the "self" does not allow him to succeed. His action was only resisting and fighting the "self". The ideological power completely conquers him when he tries to resist the ideology that formed him. Dey and Arjun lived with the false conseiousness which destroys them.

> The Indian National Army's resistance at this stage was largely symbolic, undertaken in the hope of inspiring a revolt in the Indian Army. Although they were never a serious threat to the victorious Fourteenth Army they were more than a minor irritant (480).

Economic Network is the Motif of Capitalist Ideology in the ideological network which overlaps with the other networks that operate in the novel. The British invasion of India was the expansion of empire for economic benefits. The British expanded their empire to strengthen their economic network. The economic structure of the British was heavily dependent on capitalist economy.

The economic network could be understood as the set of institutions concerned with satisfying material needs through the extraction of transformation, distribution and consumption of the objects of nature. This means that class structure

may not be unitary, a single hierarchy of economic power. Economic organization involves the intensive and practical.

Marx called the praxis the mass of the population. Michael Mann calls economic organisations circuits of praxis. Through this usage he highlights two of Marx's insights. First, at one end of a reasonably developed mode of production are a mass of workers labouring and expressing themselves through the conquest of nature. Second, at the other end of the mode are complex, extensive circuits of exchange into which millions may be impersonal 'natural' forces.

The major economic network in the novel comprises two things, the first is the timber export in Burma and the second is the rubber plantation in Malaya. Both timber and rubber were not a part of the merchandise culture in Burma and Malaya before they were colonized. The heavy teak epitomised nature and was part of inherent Burmese culture. The land of Malaya was chosen for rubber plantation. "The British colonial government was looking to India to supply coolies and workers for the plantation" (183).

Through this, Nature became commodified, transformed and transported, both in Burma and Malaya. As a result, teak and rubber were brought within the folds of economic network of the imperial rulers, extending their power in the economic form. Firstly, the resultant effect operates at the level of capital intensive economy that involves a range of exploitation. Secondly, economic power turns into political power through an understanding of the operation of economic power. The exploitative part of capital intensive economy appears in the form of exploitation of nature, human beings and animals. For Raj Kumar, nature is always an epitome of wealth. He justifies his involvement in human trade in indentured labour.

Their economic status is more stabilized as indentured labourers. As a part of the economic network, his world fails to notice that he is not inevitable to the system. It gives him an illusion that he is an essential part of the system. He makes a lot of money in timber business. But as a tool in the hands of economic power, he develops greed for money. He becomes a victim of economic power, when he loses his son Neel in the mishap, and when he was forced to flee the land.

Raj Kumar throughout his life knew only to extract, transport, to consume the objects of nature. His attitude of consumption leads him to exploit the helpless women, whom he transports from India for labour. They are the unnamed women. One such nameless woman happens to bear the child of Raj Kumar, namely, Ilongo. Ilongo's birth does not create any guilt in Raj Kumar. He compensates the whole affair by regular providence of money. Both Raj Kumar and Mathew believe that they are helping people to lead a better life.

This exactly is the ideology of economic power. It delivers a false consciousness that the true progress lies in improving the economic status of people. But at what cost, and is it really the progress of human kind, are the questions raised when one thinks of the indentured labourers in Malaya and Burma. Wherever economic power operates, the place of its operation gets annihilated in course of time. Perhaps Burma is the good example for this. It is precisely at this point the economic power withdraws from the locate. Raj Kumar, who was completely a tool in the hands of economic power is withdrawn from the land of Burma. He suffers a sense of loss. Unlike Raj Kumar, Ilongo knows how economic network is within itself a ruthless exploitative force. Power is like convertible energy. Therefore, he uses the economic power as a spring board to the political power very successfully.

Another unexplored aspect of Indian history also finds a voice in this novel. The history of Indian army under British rule is completely over sighted in the discussion of the colonial past in terms of what it meant for those who had joined British Army. It is Arjun whose class and agency changes in accordance with time and space.

The time span of the novel makes space for the monstrous manifestations of exploitation from the time of colonialism to the period of neo colonialism. Ghosh points out the fact that Indians were also responsible for such exploitation of people and place. British Indian Army is a military network of the colonizers.

Military power also has a more extensive reach of a negative terroristic form. As Lattimore pointed out, throughout most of history, the military striking range was greater than the range of economic production relations. But this is minimal control. Thus military power is socio politically dual in which positive coerced controls can be exercised, surrounded by an extensive penumbra in which terrorized populations will normally step beyond certain niceties of compliance, but those behaviour cannot be positively controlled.

> The military network is defined in terms of organized physical violence. It is the power of direct and immediate coercion. Historically, many armies fought for the benefit of their own leaders, who created "empires of domination" by taking over newly arisen civilizations based on the economic, ideological and political networks. Military organization is essentially concentrated coercive. It mobilizes violence, the most concentrated, if the bluntest instrument of human power (Rajalakshmi N.K. 120).

In the precolonial Burma, the military takes the rule into its clutches, joins hands with the British, and overthrows king Thebaw from political power. The political power of Burma is handed over to the British by the military force. In other words, the military power withdraws the political power from king Thebaw. The British colonial in Burma, paradoxically through the British Indian Army, exercise the coercive power over Burma.

The British Indian Army was fighting the war neither to defend nor to extend the territory of India. It was helping the British to protect and expand their territory. Another military power that operated in Burma due to the British rule is the Japanese Army that fought its war with the British in Burma. As a consequence, Burma suffered the bomb raid. The raid resulted in complete devastation of the land. It led not only to the loss of natural resources and wealth of Burma but also to the displacement of many Indians who had settled in Burma

The military created fear amongst people. The fear resulted in evacuation and desertion. In devastated, postcolonial Burma, the military rule suppresses even the basic freedom of the people. The voices that opposed the military power were not only just suppressed through violent means but also completely stopped through extermination. The organization that is supposed to defend and protect its people defended itself at the cost of the life of the people.

Political network stems from the usefulness of centralized, institutionalized, territorialized regulation of many aspects of social relations. Its primary function is territorial regulation. Its usefulness in laying down rules and adjudicating disputes in specific territories is the source of its uniqueness. This unique function is the basis for its potential autonomy, but it gains further autonomy due to the fact that interacts with

other states, especially through warfare. The state can take on other functions besides territorial regulation and had varying degree of influence at different phases in Western history. People in general, and the economic network in particular, desperately need the regulatory and judicial services offered by the political network.

Political network is a necessity, at least to a large number of people for various reasons. Three different forms of political network are presented in the novel, the rule of queen Supayalat, the British colonial rule, and the military rule in Burma.

Each form of political network generates an ideology amongst its people or subjects that their rule is the best to emancipate their subjects from threats of various forms. Though the people need a governing body to avoid chaos and to maintain order, their relationship with the governance is always confusing.

The relationship between the political power and its subject always remains as a relationship between the 'powered' and the 'powerless'. In spite of acknowledging the need for a political network, the ruler and the ruled have always remained as two separate entities rather than forming an organic whole. The narrative form in the novel beautifully depicts the role of political network in generation of power.

Ma Cho describes The Glass Palace to Raj Kumar in third person narrative in highly objective and descriptive terms. Supayalat says:

> there are hundreds and hundreds of rooms, with gilded pillars and polish floors. And right at the centre, there is a vast hall that is like a great shaft of light, with shining crystal walls andmirrored ceilings. People call it the glass palace (7).

When the queen loses her power, it is through symbols that her loss of power is communicated to the reader. The palace was unguarded. The guards and sentries were all gone. The intruders slipped through the gates and vanished into the fort. The palace functionaries including the queen's maids to volunteer their service to the royal family were in their exile.

> This is how power is eclipsed in a moment of vivid realism, between the waning of one fantasy of governance and replacement by the next, in an instant when the world springs free of its mooring of its drams and reveals itself to be girdled in the pathways of survival and self preservation (Rajalakshmi N.K. 123).

The political power of Thebaw maintained the distance with the subjects. As the land of Burma was rich, the people subsisted. As the queen Supayalat states, no one ever went hungry and no one was too poor to read and write.

The Glass Palace talks about the inexplicable shift of power and margins in the society. Again, an example of how people in centre can shift to the margins. Thus, ironically, the royal family is reduced to the status of subalterns. He considers on the force and nature of power of British Empire that was changing fates of thousands across the subcontinent. The extension of political power over Burma as a colony strengthened the economic power of the British. However, the British succeeded in making people like Raj Kumar believe that freedom existed wherever they lived.

The political power of the British was based on an ideology directly related to the economic condition of its people. The political power concentrated on Burma as a source to improve the economy of its kingdom. The colonial political network extended its territory in those lands which were rich in natural and human resources.

The regulatory and judicial power of the colonial political network enabled not only the British but also Indians like Raj Kumar build their economic status. The 'incomprehensible power',

> muge people in huge numbers from one place to another, it moved kings, farmers, dock workers, soldiers, coolies and the policeman. It was a furious movement. People were taken from one place to another to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile (44).

As Saya John puts it, "the elephants that were used only in pagodas and palaces, for wars and ceremonies were made to work for human profit" (74). The elephants that were the symbol of power, dignity and authority are transformed into commodity. The mere political power capacitated itself to change the ideological, economic, military network of the system. Ghosh nicely shows the demonstration of pride and prejudice of such protagonists under the influence of colonialism.

When the novel turns to a closure, the political power slips into the military force of Burma. Burma is full of spies, bloodshed, poverty and a sort of emptiness. Though the reader feels a sense of void, everything is not lost to this world. This is a strong hope in Dinu's studio. He uses the entire different language, the language of photography to take people in the world of freedom, the world of humanism, to the world that is present, in the words of Dolly. He teaches people to understand the habit of obedience to parents, teachers, and military.

> Conversation between Uma and Dolly tells us exactly the difference that the floating power makes on Burma. Like the British, Uma is also under the impression that the Burmese have been helped by the British invasion (Rajalakshmi N.K.123).

The Mayanmar government does not understand the power of the idea that is in the Dinu's studio lecture. Dinu uses the alternative language, which appears to be completely insulated to the outside world. Ghosh seems to suggest that an awareness of this would bring in a world of difference to the life of an individual. The awareness can lead to create a world outside the power network secretively. This secret world would use the deeply coded language that could be easily understood by those who subscribe the world outside power structure. The coded language would be an attempt without the disciplined grammar of the other languages.

Chapter Four

Plantation and Colonial Army

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, probes the ideology of colonization in its various shades. His continuous research and unique storytelling brings together the social, cultural and political events of the past, the far-past, the present and the future where 'history' or the 'past' shapes and re-shapes the traumatic 'present' and the 'future' of the individuals.

Amitav Ghosh concentrates upon violence on the people, imposition of Western culture on native population during European imperialism, transportation of convicts and the transplantation of native peoples through slavery and indentured labour, the exploitation of resources, forced exile of native kings, moneylenders, wealthy people and the illegal undertaking of their property, the forceful extraction of commodities form the empire, particularly what were seen as 'raw materials' for industrial expansion, the culture of consumerism and implantation of alien values into the lives of the people in his fictional works.

Amitav Ghosh focuses on the history of teak and rubber trade; the Burmese Royal family and their sad exile to India from Burma; the British Indian Army and her role in the subjugation of Burma; cultural expression in the form of violence in the narrative; psychology of the suppressed native; indentured migration and the divisive tactics of the colonizers to break up their national movement towards self-determination.

The Glass Palace primarily concentrates upon the colonial masters, who constructed their authority through their power on the royal household of Burma. British army conquered the cities of Burma and King Thibaw and Queen Supayalat of

Burma were almost made prisoners. In the meanwhile, under the pressure of British army, the King was lifted to surrender in front of colonial powers. Rajkumar, the protagonist of the novel, elaborates colonialism and points out that in the idea of brutality, power and money are the two major instruments of colonialism. After the victory of British and the subjugation of Burma by the colonial powers, Royal family was uprooted and was exiled to be located in India.

The term 'colonialism' has political, economic, psychological and cultural connotations. It concentrates on oppression, domination and cultural and political marginalization of the colonized country.

> Colonialism only recently attained its pejorative connotation, particularly through the reaction against the exploitation of and imposition of Western culture on native population during European imperialism. While this is certainly a valid point to make, it is equally important to remember that for post colonialism, the term "colonialism" is a matter of political struggle (Das and Patra 244).

The Glass Palace mainly deals with Burma, Malaya and India. The novel is set in the nineteenth century and opens with the British attack on Burma and the exile of the Royal family. The Glass Palace sets an atmosphere of British attack on Burma when Saya John's son Mathew informs Rajkumar: The English are preparing to send a fleet up the Irrawaddy. There's going to be a war. Father says they want all the teak in Burma (15).

The colonial institution of the gentleman's club, which looms large in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, appears in *The Glass Palace*, when the west wing of the palace in Mandalay is converted into a British club. The novel primarily deals with

the ravages done by the colonialism. Here, an attempt has been made to depict the history of certain individuals, groups, families that were dislocated in the wake of Burmese exodus in the last part of the nineteenth century, as a result of British imperialism.

In the beginning of the novel, everybody in Burma was vigorous on hearing "A Royal Proclamation issued under the King's signature" (15), the royal pronouncement on receiving the threats in preparation of war:

> To all Royal subjects and inhabitants of the Royal Empire: those heretics, the barbarian English *Kalaas* having most harshly made demands calculated to bring about the impairment and destruction of our religion, the violation of our national traditions and customs, and the degradation of our race, are making a show and preparation as if about to wage war with our state...To uphold the religion, to uphold the national honour, to uphold the country's interests will bring about threefold good, good of our religion, good of our master and good of ourselves and will gain for us the important result of placing us on the path to the celestial regions and to Nirvana (15-16).

After the initial panic in Burma, the streets of Mandalay quickly quieted. There were many foreigners living in Mandalay.

> The number of foreigners living in Mandalay was not insubstantial, there were envoys and missionaries from Europe; traders and merchants of Greek Armenian, Chinese and Indian origin; labourers and boatmen from Bengal, Malaya and the Coromandel coast; white-clothed astrologers from Manipur; businessmen form Gujarat (16).

But the foreigners were no longer to be seen on the streets. They suddenly disappeared. There were rumors that they had barricaded themselves in their houses or gone downriver. It was announced that the royal troops had defeated the invaders and the "English troops had been repulsed and sent fleeing across the border" (16-17). "Shoppers and shopkeepers came crowding back and Ma Cho's stall was busier than ever before" (17). But the shouts of joy on the streets were soon going to be ended. A whitebeard boat owner, Nakhoda informs Rajkumar that the war was not over. He further informs,

> What we hear on the waterfront is quite different from what's said in the city...the English are going to be here in a day or two...they are bringing the biggest fleet that ever sailed on a river. They have canon that can blow away the stone walls of a fort; they have boats so fast that they can outrun a tidal bore; their guns can shoot quicker than you can talk...coming like the tide nothing can stand in their way (17).

The symbolic booming of the British canon evokes the native's awakening to his identity. In the palace, Queen Supayalat, the King's chief consort was seen "mounting a steep flight of stairs to listen more closely to the guns" (19). She was pregnant, now in its eighth month. The factually verifiable characters acquire fictional dimensions in the novel and can interact with those of purely invented characters.

Ghosh highlights the family as the central imaginative unit and concentrates mainly upon the Royal family of Burma and the family of Rajkumar. It was Queen Supayalat who was somehow behind the war. She had roused the great council of the land, the Hluttdaw, when the British began to issue their ultimatums from Rangoon. The company has full dominance over teak trade and trade customs: a few months ago

there'd been a dispute with a British timber company- a technical matter concerning some logs of teak. It was clear that the company was in the wrong; they were side stepping the kingdom's customs, regulations, cutting up logs to avoid paying duties.

> The royal customs officers had slapped a fine on the company. The Englishmen had protested and refused to pay they'd carried their complaints to the British Governor in Rangoon. Humiliating ultimatums had followed. One of the King's senior ministers....suggests that it might be best to accept the terms; that the British might allow the Royal Family to remain in the palace in Mandalay, on terms similar to those of Indian princes....(21).

The Queen Supayalat, who was an expert in cruel court intrigues, had prevailed and the Burmese court had refused to yield to the British ultimate. She proclaimed in the court:

> The Kings of Burma were not princes, they were kings, sovereigns, they'd defeated the Emperor of China, conquered Thailand, Assam, Manipur. And she herself, Supayalat, she had risked everything to secure the throne for Thibaw, her husband and step-brother. And what if the child in her belly were a boy how would she explain to him that she had surrendered his patrimony because of a quarrel over some logs of wood? (22).

Because of her proclamation in the court, now it was evident that Burma may soon be under the wrath of British. Later, an officer who had arrived from the battlefield informs the Queen that the British had destroyed the fort of Myingan with immaculate precision, using their canon and they had not yet lost a single soldier.

Moreover the Burmese army was in a deprived condition. The British were going to imprison them soon. They were soon going to reach Mandalay. The Hlethin Atwinwun had surrendered. The army had disintegrated; the soldiers had fled into the mountains with their guns. The Kinwun Mingyi and the Taingda Mingyi had dispatched emissaries to the British.

> The two ministers were now competing with one another to keep the Royal Family underground. They know that British would be grateful to whoever handed over the royal couple; there would be rich rewards. The foreigners were expected to come to Mandalay very soon to take the King and Queen into captivity (25).

The Burmese were not in the position to stand in front of the colonial powers. "There were thousands of soldiers in the British invasion force and of these the great majority about two thirds were Indian sepoys. The war lasted just fourteen days" (26).

A few days later without informing King Thibaw, the Burmese army surrendered. In Mandalay, panic struck in the market when a man went running through the marketplace shouting, foreign ships had anchored off the shore; English soldiers were march towards the city. "The cavalry men were waving people away with drawn swords, clearing the road. The dust had made patterns on their polished boots. Looming behind them was a solid mass of uniforms, advancing like a tidal wave" (27).

The narrator concentrates on the identity of these soldiers. These soldiers were not English- they were Indians. They were peasants from small country-side villages. It was money that makes them fight. They earn a few *annas* a day. They are crushed by their masters.

> For a few coins they would allow their masters to use them as they wished to destroy every trace of resistance to the power of the English. Chinese peasants would never allow themselves to be used to fight other people's wars with so little profit for themselves (30).

Ghosh attacks on the British by saying, "How do you fight an enemy who fights from neither enmity nor anger, but in submission to orders from superiors, without protest and without conscience?" (30). These Indians were fighting wars for their English masters. After the British invasion in Burma, there was chaos in the palace. People were indulging in looting the palace.

They were entering into the palace without the permission of royal household and on the other hand, Queen Supayalat was powerless to act against them. Her face was red, mottled with rage. "The palace was unguarded. The guards and sentries were all gone. The intruders slipped through the gates and vanished into the fort" (31).

The narrator reminds and compares the past incidents with the present: Just one day earlier the crime of entering the palace would have resulted in execution. "But yesterday had passed thé Queen had fought and been defeated. None of those things was hers anymore" (34). The queen was hated by the people for her cruelty. In *The Glass Palace*, with the presence of British, one witnesses the actual process of oppression, domination and colonization.

After the complete victory over Burma, it was decided by the British that "the Royal Family was being sent into exile. They were to go to India, British Government wished to provide them with an escort of attendants and advisors. The matter was to be settled by asking for volunteers" (41). Ghosh beautifully sums up the situation:

> power is eclipsed: in a moment of vivid realism between the waning of one fantasy of governance and replacement by the next; in an instant when the world springs free of its mooring of its dreams and reveals itself to be girdled in the pathways of survival and self preservation (41-42).

In the meanwhile, the British soldiers were shifting the King's precious jewels and ornaments from the palace to the ship that was waiting to take the royal family into exile. The novel here strips the veils of human nature to reveal the crude and brutal greed that drives people at various levels. The queen further raises the questions against English brutalities. The English consider themselves superior, lawful and they alone understand liberty, they do not put Kings and princes to death; they rule through laws then the Queen asks, "Where are these laws that we hear of? Is it a crime to defend your country against an invader? Would the English not do the same?" (150).

The Queen Supayalat, who had chosen captivity over freedom for the sake of her husband, suffers humiliation for love. The British imperialists make the people believe that the native kings and rulers are cruel tyrants and only the British are civilized whereas the subject races are uncultured and uncivilized. Hence, the process of providing a proper civilization demands western.

> Such an attitude of learning and the British intervention is required. The essential barbarity of the native rulers is highlighted by them through different practices (Neb N.K.122).

Uma is the wife of an Indian officer working as a representative of British Empire, the politically active character, whose adventures in India open the reader's eyes to India's early twentieth century campaign for independence. She has been

made to believe, like other people, the ideas floated by the Empire. Unaware of the subtle working of the so called propagators of human values, she shares her concern with Dolly: "One hears some awful things, about Queen Supayalat...Someone like that?" (113). Dolly's response to her questions challenges the essentialist nature of her views: "Don't you sometime wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria's name? It Must be millions, wouldn't you Say 'I think I would be frightened to live with one of those pictures" (114).

After the banishment of King Thibaw and Queen Supayalat from Burma, the British had reshaped everything in Burma. The British made the people believe that the West can only provide a proper civilization. In Burma, the Europeans started exploiting the resources- human and natural. Forests were cut on a mass scale without giving any thought to the hazards of environment that such an unthinking act would cause. Here, with the colonial policies of oppression, Ghosh highlight's the larger question of Europe's greed. For them everything had become a resource to be exploited – woods, water, mines, people, just everyone and everything. "Resources were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hitherto undreamt of" (66). Everything in Burma was shaped by the British.

> West Wing had been converted into a British club; the Queen's Hall of audience had now become a billiard room; the mirrored walls were lined with months-old copies of *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*; the gardens had been dug up to make room for tennis courts and polo grounds; the exquisite little Monastery in which Thibaw had spent his novitiate had become a chapel where Anglican priests administered the sacrament to British troops (66).

The novel also concentrates on the two key institutions of colonial rule: the plantation and the colonial army which vividly illustrate the racial technologies of rule employed at the colonial frontiers. It is observed that when natives like Rajkumar became owners of plantation still ended up a 'tool' of the colonial plantation economy. In the plantations, the coolies are relegated to the status of "tools". The army too is an 'exceptional' institution. Army personnel are crucial "tools" for maintaining law and order in the colonies. This idea finds a direct expression in the novel when Uma tells Dolly after her return to Rangoon from New York

> the Empire does everything possible to keep these soldiers in hand: only certain castes of men are recruited: they're completely shut off from politics and the wider society; they're given land, and their children are given jobs (193).

The British army that subjugated Burma was mainly comprised of Indians. They are presented in the novel as a 'tool' of colonial rule. This is the actual identity and existence of these British (Indian) soldiers who unthinkingly were carrying out the orders of their masters. This is what Rajkumar authenticate in his response: "They're just tools without minds of their own. They count for nothing" (30). Later in the novel, Uma, Hardy and Alison tell Arjun that he is just a "tool," (281) a "toy" (326) and a "slave" (381). However there are many instances of revolt in the army. This is the essence of what Giani Amrik Singh proclaims in the novel:

We never thought that we were being used to conquer people. Not at all: we thought the opposite. We were told we were freeing those people. That is what they said that we were going to set those people free from their bad kings or their evil

customs or some such thing. We believed in it because they believed it too. It took us a long time to understand that in their eyes freedom exists wherever they rule (193).

Instead of fighting their common enemy- the British, the Burmese and Indians were fighting among themselves. The British imperialism is barbaric and anti human towards not only the local population but also towards its propagators and the one who work for it. The British employ their young men to work in the forest as long as they can endure the dangerous atmosphere and unhealthy climate.

The structure of the plantation in Burma stands as a microcosm of the hierarchical system of power relations, predicated on race, which characterized colonial rule in many parts of the world. On the plantations, the value of coolies was lesser than the value of the elephants. They were constantly subject to racist abuse from their white and Eurasian overseers. That's what Saya John warns to Rajkumar: "The big English companies could destroy you, make you a laughing stock in Rangoon. You could be driven out of business". Rajkumar replied "if I'm ever going to make this business grow, I'll have to take a few risks" (130). Uma exposes the timber merchants and businessmen of Burma like Rajkumar.

During the riots in Burma, the British suppressed and killed many people. "In the city gaol a mutiny erupted among the prisoners and was suppressed at the cost of many lives" (246). In the meanwhile, to check and root out rebellion "villages were occupied, hundreds of Burmese were killed and thousands wounded" (247). The British used Indians to root out the rebellion. Uma comments "I can't believe what I've seen here – the same old story, Indians being made to kill for the Empire, fighting people who should be their friends" (247).

Later in the novel, through the character of Dinu, Ghosh severely criticized fascist ideas. He gives a long speech about the nature of the forces that function against human freedom and dignity. He tells Uma,

> Don't imagine for a moment that India and Burma will be better off if the British are defeated...The Germans plan is simply to take over the Empire and rule in their place...and think of what'll happen in Asia...The Japanese are already aspiring to an Empire, like the Nazis and Fascists (293).

The novel concentrates upon the tendency of the colonists to create a specific model of knowledge and their attempt to define human values in terms of their own standards. Amitav Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* highlights the colonial discourse within the narrative reconstruction of the history of Burma and also explores the issues ranging from the changing scenario of the landscape of Burma and India because of the colonial hypocritical policies .The novel highlights the account of Burmese Royal Family, their uprooting and migration to India due to the British subjugation of Burma. They loose their quest for identity and homeland in their exiled life in India. The British are always there in their minds.

The novel also concentrates upon the two key institutions of colonial rule: the plantation and the colonial army. These two key institutions help the colonialists to maintain and expand the British Empire at the colonial frontiers. The oppressive policies of the colonizers have been highlighted by the 'plantation' and the British (Indian) army acts as a 'tool' of suppression, and domination of Indian and Burmese people.

Chapter Five

Summation

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* set in Burma, Bengal, India, and Malaya spans a century from the British invasion of Burma and the consequent fall of the Konbaung Dynasty in Mandalay, through the Second World War to late twentieth century. Through the stories of a small number of privileged families, it illuminates the struggles that have shaped Burma, India, and Malaya into the places. It explores the various facets of the colonial period, including the economic fall of Burma, the rise of timber and rubber plantations, the more dilemmas faced by Indians serving the British army, and the devastating effects of World War II.

Focusing mainly on the early twentieth century, it explores a broad range of issues ranging from the changing economic landscape of Burma and India, to pertinent questions about what constitutes a nation and how this change as society is swept along by the tide of modernity. *The Glass Palace* presents the causes and consequences of British colonization and the deceitful strategies of the colonizers to exploit the colonized nations.

The novel also highlights the commercial aims of the imperialists for the accomplishment of which, they waged unlawful wars and exploited the colonies. It expounds the economic, social, cultural, political and ecological degeneration wreaked by the British in their colonies. The dislocation of the people from one place to another had a tough bearing on the native population on their psyche, their social and economic conditions and above all on their identities. The novel depicts how unjustified and inhumane the British were, in subjecting the indigenous people to displacement and exploitation. Expulsion of the weak and the poor in the interest of

the powerful, dislocation and relocation of people against their will, humiliation and harassment of the natives with no regard for their self-respect and dignity and indifference to the feelings and emotions of the colonized are some of the aspects of colonialism.

Amitav Ghosh rightly asserts how the violence and clashes arising from political and communal differences, assumes an added significance for the middle class people of the society. Ghosh advocates the unnecessary misery, hardship, and unhappiness caused by communal frenzy and violence uncontrollable by political machinery in power. Ghosh goes on to show that in modern world how the hypocratic religion and resultant exploitation by organized militant fundamentalists play vital roles in the lives of men and women in the society.

A political solution of these problems by fixing of national boundaries based on political mistaken belief is neither a solution at grass root level nor it solves the problems of dislocated families. Homelessness and mass dislocation as a result of Second World War and agony of the people are another issue discussed and developed in *The Glass Palace*. The novel describes the fatal condition of thousands of people, mostly Indians, migrated from Burma to Calcutta on account of Japanese invasion on Burma in 1942. The invasion created a tumultuous condition to the people, when Japanese fought against British.

The Glass Palace presents the concept of fall of empire of Burma during the period of pre independance India and how the change of rule of empire affects the royal princely families. The theme of mass migration of people from Burma to Calcutta during Second World War between British and Japanese is also developed in the novel. Rajkumar becomes an orphan and seeks his livelihood through the teak forest of Burma.

The novel is discussed into more than a generation in old glory of empire and new ambitions of not only royal families but also the subject of empire consisting men and women, merchants, rich and poor. Their aspirations are further destroyed by the invasion of Japanese on Burma in Second World War. The theme of homelessness and identity of South Asian families in pre and postcolonial time is explored in the novel. The violence and sufferings of war, arising out of two foreign countries, British and Japanese in war against each other for territorial ambition to win Burma are projected in the novel. The Japanese took hold of Burma in 1942 and thousands of people mostly Indians and refugees, feeling war and suffering, traveled thousands of miles from Burma to Calcutta, in their struggle for existence. Large scale migration of people was from Burma. Ghosh describes them as:

> They began to notice other people – a few scattered handfuls at first, then more and more and still more, until the road became so thickly thronged that they could barely move. Everyone was heading in same direction: towards the northern landward passage to India – a distance of more than thousand miles. They had their possessions bundled on their head; they were carrying children on their backs, wheeling elderly people in carts and barrows (467).

When the Japanese carry away the British from Burma, some members in Indian Army are divided and it has greater effect on common people especially middle class families who faced a serious question in anguish as to whom to support – British or Japanese. Pico Iyer in his article "The Road to Mandalaya" puts up this way:

> These characters torn between two kinds of operation – traitors if they support British, traitors if they support Japanese – take Ghosh back to

> what has always seemed to be his central concern, the consequences of displacements (The New York Review 29).

The novel has created awareness about ecological sensibility by depicting the impact of colonialism on environment. The Mandalay palace was situated in a sprawling complex of pavilions, gardens and corridors. The pebbled path that led to the South Garden Palace was meandered between picturesque pools and goldfish-filled streams. There is a self contained, peaceful, sylvan civilization in harmony with nature. East of Irrawady waterway down the Sittang River, Huay Zedi is introduced as a small village that was a day's journey from the river bank town of Pyinmana. Saya's work often took him to this village that stood above a sandy bank where a mountain stream had drifted into a winding curve. It seems to be a place where nature is in harmony with culture.

In *The Glass Palace* varied voices, conflicting opinions and contradictory ideologies are represented through the Collector and his wife; Rajkumar and Uma; Dolly and Rajkumar. It may also be called the hybrid products of all major trends in literature. Ghosh, though an ardent admirer of Indian oral narrative tradition with great intensity, still opens to all international currents available to him. While remaining rooted firmly in his native trends and traditions, Ghosh very playfully and convincingly synchronizes the postmodernist trends with the elements of oral narrativity.

The novel follows the tradition of oral narrative which gives a distinct sheen, splendour and structure to it. His novels are as diverse in the treatment of narrative strategies as any of his contemporary Indian, Australian, African or European counterparts. This is clearly evident through the study of his novels which have divergent dimensions both thematically and technically.

The Glass Palace portrays the ecological devastation caused by European intervention in South Asia. The fact that teak provided for the motive for the colonization of Burma is explicitly brought forth in the novel. "None can doubt that the desire for profitable trade, plunder and enrichment was the primary force that led to the establishment of the imperial structure" (Beginning Colonialism 7).

Ghosh's novels, in restoring Indian history and culture, give Indian English fiction a relevance and vitality. Through using the narratological devices like different kinds of narrators, repetition, polyphony, focalization, shifts in focalization, memory, recall etc. he raises many logical and ideological issues that are distinctly different from the issues mainly confronted in other Indian English novels as well as European and American novels. The issues like how world histories are inextricably linked to personal histories and how usually they have profound effects on intimate family history are well expressed in Ghosh's novels. Ghosh uses different narratological devices and techniques to interrogate time, space and voices of characters to get over the insolvability of problems.

The novels written in India during the postcolonial period reveal that many of them who tried to assert themselves on the global literary arena are determined to rewrite the incomplete history by searching into the consciousness of people whose worlds are destroyed by the violence focused by the historical events like World Wars and Partition. Amitav Ghosh reflects a confluence of history and postcolonial insights. The unrecorded histories of ordinary people and the chronologically ordered histories of historical characters merge throughout his fictional works. Ghosh has gathered some information from history which is supplemented by his insights and the details concerned with facts that he has collected through careful research and observation.

The postcolonialism, historicity, nationalism, quest for identity vary in many folds. Certain thematic aspects of life are portrayed in *The Glass Palace.* Amitav Ghosh an anthropologist and contemporary Indian English writer, has created new thematic elements in his novel where the reader can exercise his mind and intellect to find out what is the true meaning of nationalism, cultural and cross religious, clashes, different religious, faith and belief and migration of people taking place out of political ideologies and system of ruling changing from time to time.

The postcolonial resettlement of the post-partition period and the subsequent increase in the diaspora, alienation, and displacement are also analysed. Reconstruction of the histories of the South-East Asian countries like, Burma, India, and Malaya and the consequences of the British invasion of Burma in 1895, the First and Second World Wars, the Japanese invasion of Burma, the sense of rootlessness experienced by the people, migration and the identity crisis and hybridity in language, religion and culture in their colonial and postcolonial period find elaboration in this novel.

The ethical dimension is symbolized by silence. The alternative mode of being achieved in the reality of silence would result in a unified, but not homogeneous world, which is not defined merely by the power politics distributed by language. In addition to the awareness of multiple histories, agencies and voices highlighted this change in the way he thinks of the world may constitute a major step towards more authentic multicultural representation.

Ghosh makes the thinking for the migrated people or people at the border of migration. He projects the worst situation of war-affected people. They are forced to such a position that they face challenges for their very existence apart from the fact of homelessness situation.

The main theme of the novel is the unavoidable recognition of the human being especially at the time of large scale dislocation of the people. Through the character of Arjun in *The Glass Palace*, Ghosh presents the faithfulness of people for foreign rulers on their own land country. Ghosh brings further the dilemma of self-realization in Arjun's life view. Arjun feels that he was 'used' instead of 'employed' in the British army. Arjun has served British Army for major parts of his life, feels deceived by British Army. Helen Hayward comments on Arjun's feelings as:

> Arjun undergoes a journey of self-realization, which ends with his recognizing the falsity of values by which he has lived his life. He feels that he has been mere a mercenary and tool in the hands of British, self-divided and lacking in even an elementary self-awareness (Once a Golden Land).

Ghosh's thematic preoccupation is middle class families in colonial time of pre-independence and how they were treated by British rulers. By creating self-realization in Arjun, Ghosh claims the theme of the development of an individual rather than society. Apart from other aspects and ideological issues and Ghosh's involvement for middle class families for their homelessness and migration, the theme of *The Glass Palace* is of romantic relationship amid different countries and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles.

The historical background of *The Glass Palace* traces The Glass Palace in Mandalay before British invaded Burma in 1885. Ghosh writes that The Glass Palace shined with golden light when the lamp was lit. Ghosh narrates the story and writes Rajkumar's glimpses of glass palace. The character Rajkumar, an orphan teenager from India happens to spot a royal maid in The Glass Palace in Mandalay. He sees her as "beautiful beyond belief, beyond comprehension" (142) and he is out to search her

and assert his claim on Dolly. Ultimately he proposes Dolly to marry him and she hesitantly marries him.

Though *The Glass Palace*, deals with war, invasion, freedom, army, dislocation and homelessness, the characters in the novel are simultaneously related in love and 'females beauties', which are the prime forces of human beings for moving to action in life. Despite political and cultural diversity the men and women in their quest follow their hearts rather than other considerations. Such thematic preoccupation of Ghosh in this novel makes it more interesting and the reader is more assimilated in search of the outcome of love affairs. Michael Wood in his article "Freedom to Tango" rightly observes:

> It is deeply romantic work. I say more in admiration complaint, but nevertheless with some surprise. The characters have their differences but they are courteous, understanding people even the ruthless ones. They fall in love, they follow their hearts and female beauty, sometimes seem to be more of an engine for action than politics or empire (London Review Books 21).

The theme of racial and other religious and communal clashes among Indian and Burmese and section of other faith in public, is almost not figuring in the novel. Indian and Burmese and royal families and common people of middle class mix among themselves. Families of Rajkumar, Uma, and Soya John move in Burma, India and Malaysia as circumstances demand. Ghosh presents the development of Soya and Rajkumar keeping aside the racial, linguistic, and religious differences. Thus the theme of creating new societies based on simple reason of human relation is described in the novel.

The novel, a story of three generations, depicts many thematic considerations of post and pre-colonial situations in various locations of South East Asian territories. The title *The Glass Palace* relates to beauties of empire as well as to freedom. Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* is suggestive as that of Dinu's studio named Glass Palace in the story, where Dinu, a character of novel, running the centre presents the theme of education and freedom among strict political compulsions. Here the theme of freedom, wins over joy and beauty in the ending portion of the novel. Overall thematic consideration by ordinary people, during the time of threat for existence of life has been reflected in the novel along with their personal and inner conflicts and quests.

Ghosh is one of the few postcolonial writers who has expressed in his work, a developing awareness of the aspirations, defeats and disappointments of colonized people as they figure out their place in the world. Possessed of a highly refined sensitivity, Ghosh's main fictional characters retain, may be unconsciously, their experiences, and relate them to the experiences of the other characters in the novel, directly or indirectly, immediately or remotely.

Ghosh, the literary artist, has woven them all into an organic unity, befitting a successful novel. He has done it through narrative devices with the help of which the raw material i.e. memories, have got organized and become a major component of the novel.

The marginalization of the narrative voice had a great impact on the form of the novel. This effacement of the narrator added more dramatic elements and his relativistic fragmentation added irony and ambiguity. The ultimate result of all this was that the narrative gained an extreme complexity of form and structure.

The dimensions of narratology and concept of narrator and narrative voice are not very much different from that of the Western story tellers. Ghosh is influenced by great Indian narrative tradition of storytelling which has always been much stronger and older in India. At the very beginning of the novel the reader comes to know about the Glass Palace in Burma. Here the character focalizer is an eleven year old urchin Raj Kumar who looks at it for the first time and completely awestruck by its beauty. The focalization is from within. Though he cannot be relied upon being an eleven year old boy, it is evident that the narrator handles the narration and the readers by giving a glimpse of the palace. The narrator describes how the palace was being looted and plundered by the Burmese localities before the British troops arrived to take possession. The narrator talks about the people involved in unexpected relationships across countries and cultures. There are wars and rebellions. Political cultural, social and ethical issues are raised. Fortunes and destinies are made and lost. All this is presented through author's meticulous research and craftsmanship. He reports everything thoughtfully and precisely. The authorial presence is felt in every detail like military manoeuvers, models of automobiles and air craft drilling of oil, timber trade, food, clothing, language etc.

There is another important narrative technique used by Ghosh. It is the manner in which focus shifts between one country and another. All the major characters are distributed by Ghosh over to Burma, India and Malaysia and then knitting them together by presenting them as character focalizers. The strand used by him is 'history' not 'love', used as the motif that irradiates the first section. Through the enormous screen that he creates over the stage of South Asia, he enacts a shadow play with characters that focalize and bring alive the colonial history of the region. Polyphony operates in many ways in *The Glass Palace*.

The novel has polyphonic voices that come alive in the depiction of the characters of the Burmese King and Queen, Raj Kumar, Dolly, Uma, Dinu, Arjun and others. Every character has his own unique world view. In the novel there are many independent individuals whose truth emerges in contact with another's truth. Bakhtin observes quite significantly that "a single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (252). There are character focalizers that expose the reality of British Empire which is barbaric towards not only its subjects but also towards its propagators. These are the young English men who are used in an exploitative way in order to extend the Empire's hold and strengthen its power. In order to exploit the forest wealth under hostile surroundings the British colonialists employ their young English men to work in the forest as long as they can endure the dangerous atmosphere and unhealthy climate. The character focalizer Saya John, is one among those who indirectly conveys the voice of the author exposing these aspects of imperialism:

> The company knows this very well; it knows that within a few years these men will be prematurely aged, old at twenty-one; and that they will have to be posted off to city offices. It is only when they are freshly arrived, seventeen or eighteen, that they can lead this life, and during those few years the company must derive such profit from them as it earns (74).

Polyphony and heteroglossia are a powerful argument against homogenization and monologison. Infact, difference and otherness, multiplicity and fragmentarily can be found to be the major themes of the novel. Ghosh is against all absolutism and monologism and favours to explore different possibilities through dialogism. He celebrates discursive modes that allow evidence of other voices and ideologies. Thus

the openness of the novel, the variety of genres, the multiplicity of equally valid viewpoints and the indeterminacy and unfinishedness of the narrative structure makes the text truly polyphonic. The role of different socio-political institutions in stifling and curbing human voice and human rights for their own benefits and development has been exposed by many voices in the novel.

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Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*: A Study of Relocation and Subversion of Racial Power

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*: A Study of Relocation and Subversion of Racial Power** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Loorthu Shamini R. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*: A Study of Relocation and Subversion of Racial Power** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Loorthu Shamini R

Thoothukudi **Loorthu Shamini R.**

October 2019

PREFACE

This project entitled **Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*: A Study of Relocation and Subversion of Racial Power** traces how Gordimer presents an authentic picture of a racial war which has dethroned the white ruling class through a wise conceit of reversal of racial roles where the served becomes dependent upon the servant. It also explores how the subversion of colonial and racial power-play affect the Smales' in the country of July's people and how the identities of the master and servant are relocated, the servant replacing the master's position.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the characteristic features of the South African literature, Nadine Gordimer's biography with a special focus on the distinct features of her work and a short synopsis of *July's People.*

The second chapter **Change of Power Politics** deals with the politics and the cultural relationship between the white and the black communities in South Africa at the helm of the fictitious civil unrest.

The third chapter **Relocating the Identity** analyses the inversion of the racial identities in the South African context where the predominant position of the white colonisers changed into a subordinate position whereas the oppressed black natives emerged as the oppressors.

The fourth chapter **Subversion of Racial Power** dramatizes the subversion of power of the whites because of the black revolution, the blacks become powerful and the whites powerless.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapter. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Nadine Gordimer is a towering figure of world literature. She exemplifies now seemingly forgotten in a literary culture which has been under attack by the ubiquity of the superficial that a writer can be the mouthpiece of a time, a spokesperson for a crusade, and a tireless examiner of moral and psychological truth. She has also displayed great conviction and self-belief in refusing to become an exile, despite the banning of her works by the South African regime.

From the outside the history of South Africa has been marked by division and conflict along racial lines. This division was formalised from 1948 until 1994 in the National party's policy of apartheid. As apartheid intruded on every aspect of private and public life, South African literature was preoccupied with the politics of race and social consciousness. South African writers became moulded by the overwhelming reality of apartheid. Their literary creations were as, Robert Mossman, "the literature of imprisonment, repression, guilt and exile" (41). Both black and white writers have responded in varied ways to the problem that confronted their country. This led to tapestry of texts in which evolving cultural forms and models of identity are explored and articulated.

Among the major figures in South Africa fiction some are Jewish. However not all identify as being Jewish, nor do their writings reflect themes. They followed the general mood, concerning themselves with contemporary issue of race and class. Their contribution to South African literature may be described as realistic in mode

and liberal in political outlook. One of South Africa's most important white writers with a Jewish background is Nadine Gordimer. Gordimer grew out of the grip of her mother and fairy tales, the inevitable encounter with the unromantic and insane outside world happened. The life outside was eventful with campaigns, protests, violence, arrests and imprisonments. Gordimer is bound by her historical position. Writing in English had its own advantages. Her books recorded the land of the time and became history. Those books spoke about the better understanding of the colonial history, the objective history of South Africa.

Drawn from the human existence of perpetual hardships and social life, it presents dimensions of the dilemma of the marginalized through the looking glass of writer's insight. South Africa was a heterogeneous mixture of colour, race, religions, language, civilizations and past and present political influences. In the novels of Gordimer, the central character was South Africa with its prejudices and discrimination, agony and sufferings, hopes and dreams and the colonial past and the turbulent present.

Nadine Gordimer, a representative South African novelist and Nobel Laureate of 1991 has successfully depicted the contemporary reality in fiction in artistic terms. The novelist by holding a mirror to South Africa's political, cultural and emotional attitudes represent the language of the people, their culture and tradition by introducing new experiences. The motifs of the novels cover the whole range of human life and activity as well as every known manifestation of physical nature. It not only represents the events and sayings of people of South Africa, but the rules

deduced from the observation of the condition of men's lives are included in its records.

African Literature in the late colonial period increasingly exhibited themes of liberation and independence. Since majority of the African nations gained their independence in 1950s and 1960s, African Literature has grown dramatically in quantity in recognition, with its numerous works appearing in western languages notably English, French and Portuguese and in the traditional African languages. The clash between Africa's past and present, tradition and modernity, indigenous and foreign, individualism and community, socialism and capitalism, development and self-reliance and between Africanity and humanity from the major themes of African literature.

South African Literature, a wing of African literature, was a body of work, written in South Africa or by South Africans living in other countries. South Africa has a distinctive literature in many African languages as well as Afrikaans, a vernacular derived from Dutch and in English with a rich history of literary output. The South African social, economic and political history contributed greatly to the emergence of its literature during the last five decades of twentieth century, showcasing the rare gems of literature. South Africa literature has thus become a deep rooted plant.

South African literature was the literature of South Africa which consists of eleven national languages, Africans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Venda, Siswai, Tsonga and Ndebele. The main theme in the works of many South

African authors during the twentieth century is the racial segregation and apartheid in 1948 which dominated the country in 1990s. It is categorized by race, language, ethnicity and geography into multiple isolated streams of literary histories. This multiplicity is the result of the complex history of colonization and dissemination in South Africa. Olive Schreiner's novel *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) is considered to be the first text of South Africa literature. She was born in a mission station and worked as a governess in isolated Karoo farms, an experience which is told in the novel.

It was been criticized for its silence of the black African people in South Africa literature by the black South African emerged in the twentieth century. The first generation of mission educated African writers sought to restore dignity to Africans by reconstructing the heroic African past. The first novel by a South African was *Mhudi* by Solomon Thekiso Plaatje. Oliver argues: "of all the literature in South African, Africans literature has been the only one to law became a national literature in the sense that it developed a clear image of itself as a separate entity, and that by way of institutional entrenchment through teaching distribution, a review culture, journals" etc.

South Africa was colonised by Europeans against the resistance of Africans. Although South Africa became independent in 1910, the nation's varied ethnic constituents have not yet been unified in a harmonious whole, and the tension arising from the unequal relations between black and whites is the authentic note of South African literature. It began in the nineteenth century and became fairly copious in the twentieth century much of the work by persons born in South Africa was limited in

its viewpoint, often these writers only dimly apprehended the aspiration, perceptions and traditions of South Africans belonging to a people other than their own.

English speaking South African writers are mainly urban and cosmopolitan. Their culture in English, and they often have a wider audience among English Speaking communities abroad. By contrast, African writers belonged for many decades to a close knit community born of a defensive posture with shared experiences aspiration and religious, and a strong sense of nationhood. Only in the 1960's did a major break through with this tradition become apparent.

Populated by diverse ethnic and language groups, South Africa has a distinct literature in many African languages as well as Afrikaans and English. The early fictional works to emerge from South Africa were produced by immigrants who felt alienated from the South African landscape. These colonial writers were intrigued by what they perceived as exotic features of indigenous cultures. This is true of the writers of adventure type stories in which colonial heroes are romanticised and black South African's role is that of menials. Among the well known black women writers, Noni Jabavu, Bessie Head, Miriam Tlali and Zoe Wicomb made significant contributions to South African literature. The imprisoned leaders like Nelson Mandela sent many black writers like Alex La Guma into exile. While writers like J.M. Coetzee also left their country to write from an alien land.

Novelist, essayist, screenwriter and political activist, Gordimer was born of immigrant Jewish parents on November 20, 1923 in springs, Transvaal, a small gold-mining town in South Africa. Gordimer, the first South African and the seventh

woman writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991. Her father Isidore Gordimer, a jeweller and mother Nan Myres Gordimer is of British descent. Her father's experience as a Jewish refugee in Czarist Russia helped shape the young Gordimer's political identity.

Consequently, Gordimer developed an interest for solitary reading and writing and began writing stories at the age of nine expressing all her private and her personal feelings. At the age of fifteen, she published her first story, "*The Quest for Seen Gold*" which was followed by "*Come Again Tomorrow*" appeared in the journal *Forum*. She audited occurs for a year at the University of Witwatersrand where she got an opportunity to mix with people across the colour bar. She came to be known as a short story writer contributing regularly to popular literary magazines such as *New Yorker, Harper's* and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. The first collection of short stories, *Face to Face* was published seven years later in 1949.

Gordimer's compelling and powerful fiction made her proud recipient of numerous awards and prizes. Her works achieved literary acknowledgement in her career. Gordimer has assumed a body of work that includes fourteen novels, more than two hundred short stories and several volumes of essays that were translated into more than thirty languages. Gordimer's work has grown profoundly as psychological and social chronicle of half a century in South Africa. The early works of Gordimer focus on the imposition of external reality into the comfortable existence of South Africa's middle class white society.

Gordimer's two earlier novels display a promise of hope for the future of South Africa, the later works *The Conservationist, Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* exhibit a growing sense of pessimism and express the author's belief that the whites as well as the blacks are victims of apartheid. South African literature in English is essentially a creation of the 20th century, reflecting human experience and impulse of a unique kind.

Gordimer wrote fourteen novels, over two hundred short stories, and several volumes of essays. The most important of her novels are: *A World of Strangers* (1958), *Burger's Daughter* (1979), *July's People* (1981), *A Sport of Nature* (1987), and *The House Gun* (1998).They deal with a variety of themes and they reveal the concern for the blacks and the need for decolonizing the minds of people. Her first novel, *The Lying Days* (1953), was based on largely on her own life and set in her home town of Springs. In 1974, she was the joint winner of the Booker prize for fiction for her novel *The Conservationist*. The novel articulates the consciousness of Africa. It has the theme of resurrection.

Her first published novel, *The Lying Days* charts out the territory she was to explore throughout her life. The intersection of the personal and the political, and the way in which individual lives are bent out of shape by external forces. Her two grandest and most complex works *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* were both written when she was in 50s and had been engaged in the anti-apartheid movement for decades. Both were banned by the apartheid government.

Occasion for Loving presents a deviation from the liberal ideologies and presents Gordimer's "equivocal political stance" of the time according to Bessie Head. The story revolves around a love affair between a white woman and a black artist. *The Conservationist* is a farm novel written from the colonist point of view. It is distinct in style from Gordimer's previous novels with overlapping internal monologues and narration. Gordimer's another novel *Burger's Daughter* continues the strategy of internal monologue employed in *The Conservationist.*

July's People takes place during a future revolution in South Africa in the midst when such traditional roles are overturned and new ones had to be forged. The novel exists in source Antonio Glamscis's interregnum between the explosions of the old but before the birth of the new. Gordimer has been the interpreter of South Africa through her novels. *July's People* was hardly different in this respect but it is often treated not as a novel but as a prophecy. Anne Tyler praised this novel in the *New York Times Book Review.* For Tyler, the novel demonstrates with breath-taking clarity the tensions and complex interdependencies between whites and blacks in South Africa. She states that it is an intense look at a network of power relations like black to white, servant to master, child to parent.

Gordimer's most powerful novel *July's People* (1981) projects into the future, the final collapse of white supremacy and what that might for white and black people on an intimate level. It offers an unforgettable look into the terrifying, understanding and misunderstandings between black and whites in South Africa. It is a futuristic novel about a white family fleeing from war torn Johannesburg into a country where they seek refuge with their American servant. In this novel, an unexpected reversal

has made white people dependent upon a black man, a situation which they resent but are not powerful to oppose. It is set in a near future version of South Africa where apartheid is ended through a civil war. She wrote the book *July's People* before the end of apartheid as her predictions of how it would end. The book was notably banned in South Africa after its publications, and later under Post-apartheid government. Gordimer, a witness to the changing state of the political and social atmosphere of South Africa has expressed the pain and sufferings of its people in the segregated society in a multi dimensional view prompted to have a serious study of fictional narratives.

Nadine Gordimer has been a spokes person against the apartheid system which was introduced in South Africa in 1948. The riots in Sharpeville in 1960 and the arrest of one of Gordimer's best friend Nelson Mandela and his trials were important events and became the starting point for her political engagement. She was also deeply against the government practice of censorship which was the tool that prevented the free thought of writers. In addition to Nadine Gordimer, there are several other white authors who have been engaged and have participated in the struggle against the apartheid regime. The reason for selecting Nadine Gordimer for study is her long career as an author and that she was the first South African writer to receive the Nobel Prize in 1991. The fictional world of Gordimer reveals both the black and the white characters entrapped by circumstances and dilemmas generated by a tense political climate and the social determination of racial laws. *July's People* visualizes the inevitable collapse of white South Africans to fashion new identity.

The novel traces the end of white regime and the impact of sudden reversal of power relationships on both the whites and the blacks.

Though most of her work deals with the moral and psychological aspects of her racially divided country, her strong political and moral views are intervowen with a keen sense of how South Africans both white and black function in their everyday life. One of apartheid's fiercest critics, Nadine Gordimer has long been considered as a pre-eminent interpreter of South Africa and also its conscience. Her life is a vivid portrait of apartheid in human terms. Firmly grounded in physical and psychological detail, memorably evoking the texture of detailed life for South Africans every stripe her works have earned world wide acclaim. Gordimer not only captures but also expresses the fleeting as well as the common moments in the lives of human beings.

Having grown in postcolonial South Africa and lived through the various stages of its apartheid regime. Gordimer plays a vital role in the struggle against apartheid. She dreamt the possibility of a new life beyond apartheid by providing an insight into the roots of the struggle. This power of decolonizing human consciousness is possible because of her spiritual power, which motivates her literary imagination to give new life to the black by recognizing the human aspect in their existence, not as non-human entity but as a real human person with flesh and blood like the white people.

Gordimer emerges as a champion of tolerance, free speech and understanding revealing the ravaging consequences of apartheid in the life of liberation of South African writers, who were silenced and for whom she voiced her support. Gordimer stayed back in South Africa and endured the decades of struggle unlike so many who

had opted to move abroad. Her conviction and self belief in refusing to become an exile despite the banning of three of her works by the South African regime is laudable. With her restless energy and prodigious discipline, Gordimer is able to enter into the existence of others, whether they will be black or white, men or women. Her fiction establishes her as one of the most eminent modern women writers although she has resisted being classed as a feminist insisting that she is simply a writer who happens to be a woman. Gordimer had often been criticised for dismissing feminism in its early days, few decades later, she acknowledge the increasing diversity in feminism.

The confrontation between two dissimilar civilizations and cultures made the South African writers contribute a lot to literature. Numerous writings and great traditions of South African civilization appeared on the literary scene. The fact that all the writings were set in South Africa with its traditional values as the backdrop of the literary works was not an isolated incident. It was the conscious effort on the part of the South African writers. Among them, Gordimer, the most applauded writer of South Africa has carved out a special place for herself through her writings. The contemporaries, who occupy a prominent place along with Gordimer such as Bessie Head, Alan Paton, J.M. Coetzee, Franz Fanon Andre Brink, and Chinua Achebe.

Alan Paton (1903-1908), the South African novelist, social reformer and the founder president of the Library party of South Africa, in his first novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* received a great critical and popular acclaim distinguished for its compassionate treatment of the people caught up in the racial conflicts of South Africa. Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope* and *Ah, But Your Land Beautiful* deal with

racial tensions in the South African society and his outspoken opposition of apartheid led to confiscation of the passport of Paton between 1960 and 1970.

Franz Fanon, a famous African writer and psychiatrist became famous in 1967 through a powerful analysis of racism from the African point of view *Black skin, White Masks*. A pioneering postcolonial theorist and activist, who wrote in the 1960s in the context of the French occupation of Algeria, Frantz Fanon through his seminal *works The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin, White masks* (1967), analysed the psychological effects of colonialism on both the coloniser and the colonised. Fanon argued that the native develops a sense of 'self' as defined by the 'colonial master' through representation and discourse, while the coloniser develops a sense of superiority. He develops a psycho analytical theory of post-colonialism where he suggests that the European self develops in its relation and encounter with the other.

J.M.Coetzee, one of South Africa's most lauded novelists dealt in subtle ways with issues of power, authority and history. The novel *Waiting for Barbarians* was awarded the James Tait Memorial Prize and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, and the novelist is thrice the winner of the CAN Prize. Twice the winner of the Booker Prize for *Life and Times of Michael K* in 1983 and for *Disgrace* in1999, he was the fourth South African writer to be honoured with the prestigious Nobel Prize. The works *Dusklands, In the Heart of the Country, Waiting for Barbarians Life, Times of Michael K, Foe, Age of Iron, The Master of Petersburg, Disgrace* and *Bad Year* present the real South Africa to the world stage.

Andre Philippus Brink, wrote both in Afrikaans and in English. In the 1960's, he and Breyton Breytenbach were the key figures in the Afrikaans literary movement known as Die Sestigers. These writers sought to use Afrikaans as a language to speak against the apartheid government, and thus to bring into Afrikaans literature the influence of contemporary English and French trends. Brink's novel *Kennis van die Aand* was the first Afrikaans book to be banned by the South African government. Brink's early novels were concerned with the apartheid policy. The novels *The Ambassador, Looking on Darkness, An Instant in the Wind, Rumours of Rin, A Dry White Season* and *A Chain of Voice* engage new issue raised by life in post apartheid South Africa.

Bessie Emery Head who emerged as a leading South African woman writer, wrote of the traumatic experiences and unsettling existence, alienation and displacement. Head works dealing with the injustice, oppression, and hopes of social changes and peace. She presents much love and light and uses intense imagery to describe beauty to be found in both human and environmental nature. *An African Saga* suits well with the contemporary socio-political and cultural scene of South Africa.

Chinua Achebe presents this native African culture in his stunning work *Things Fall Apart.* It is probably one of the best works ever written in African literature and it talks about different cultures that are found in European literature. Wole Soyinka, a prolific writer talk about the conflict between modern Nigeria and its traditional culture in *The Interpreters* (1965). His famous play *Death and the King's Horseman* (1986) was awarded the Noble prize in literature.

Though Gordimer has much to share with experimental fiction writers such as Bessie Head, Alan Paton, Coetzee and Brink, the unique qualities that distinguish her from them are an empirical wealth of details, clinical detachment and a powerful yet innovative style. Gordimer's art through the five decades of writing has been keeping pace with current trends that exhibits, a mind accustomed to changing times and situations. Her stories present a paradox, the fabulous quality of a very real world of alienated individuals, caught up in revolutions beyond the imagination of ordinary people.

Gordimer occupies a pride of place among the South African writers. Like her fellow Nobel Laureates Gunter Grass and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, she is a towering figure of the world literature and the moral conscience of her nation. She belongs to the group of academics and radical South African historians who felt it necessary to expose the realities of South Africa. She is recognized all over the world as a representative voice from South Africa which courageously reveals the political turmoil, social segregation of the people and exploration of the effects of the apartheid system. Nadine Gordimer lives and writes in a half formed society of a kind almost never before seen on earth. Blacks and whites had agreed to bring about a multiracial democracy by their faith as much as by their work. Nadine Gordimer's work has grown into a profoundly psychological and social chronicle of half a century in South Africa. She is both its archivist and lighthouse keeper.

Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* is much more than other survival story. It is an imaginative novel as it explains the shifts in the characters and relationship and it gives one a terrifying understanding and misunderstandings between the blacks and

the whites. Nadine Gordimer, who is the author of this novel, gives a very personal and emotional touch to all the readers to understand the true horror and terror experiences of those people. She also adds how the Smales family reacts, survives, and adjusts in their modifying life.

Gordimer is one of the most powerful of the protest fiction writers of South Africa. By travelling in every nook and corner of South Africa, her realistic experience of the oppression of the natives widened the scope of writing in all fields evenly in political, social and culture.

The project explores the changed social and racial roles of the protagonists, Maureen and July in the transformational era of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The Smales' family is unable to grasp the fact that the social hierarchy and the authority granted by the apartheid system are now defunct, and resultantly, the master servant power dynamic is no longer operational. It also assesses the degree of transfer of power and sense of power and ownership versus disempowerment and dispossession.

The introductory chapter traces the growth, development and the diverse issues of the African literature and its wing South African literature, the emergence of black and the protest writings. The upcoming chapters deal with political relationship between the whites and the blacks, how the change of power fractions resulted in the relocation and reversal of their individual identity. It also captures the inversion of racial power in South Africa which resulted in the subversion of power of the whites because of black revolution.

Chapter Two

Change of Power Politics

July's People published in 1981 by Nadine Gordimer, is set during a counterfactual revolutionary civil war in South Africa, in which black South Africans rise up and overthrow their white oppressors with the aid of neighbouring African nations. The novel illuminates the effects of apartheid and how segregation impacts the relations between blacks and whites in South Africa. Gordimer wrote *July's People* before the end of apartheid and the book may be read as a projection of apartheid's end.

July's People, it was not expressly intended for a young adult audience, it may attract young readers through its themes. A major theme is racial discrimination. South Africa's policy of apartheid government approved and enforced discrimination. Gordimer portrays how the policy affects various types of people: liberal, privileged white people; rural black people; and black people forced to split their lives between two worlds, the urban areas where they work and the rural areas where their families are forced to live.

The novel is a narrative of initiation, but ironically the character coming of age is thirty nine years old. Maureen Smales comes to evaluate her life, her native political views, her relationship with her husband and with July, and her responsibility to herself, only when she is removed from her society and forced to adapt to a life in July's village. Through her own experience of isolation and worthlessness, she begins to understand more about July's life in Johannesburg, how

her treatment of him was acceptable from her perspective but often insulting from his. A political liberal who opposes apartheid , Maureen learns how she participated in the system.

July's People centres on the effect of the revolution on July, Bamford, and Maureen. The irony is that Maureen and Bam do not recognize the extent to which they participate in denying July some basic human rights until they are forced out of their protected environment. Gordimer continually emphasizes the relationship between material possessions and power:

> Its gentleness, ordinariess produced sudden, total disbelief. Maureen and Bam Smales. Bamford Smales, Smales, Caprano & Partners, Architects. Maureen Hetherington from Western Areas Gold Mines. Under 10s Silver Cup for Classical and Mime at the Johannesburg Eisteddfod. (3)

July's People is filled with a sense of the mixed blessing of being saved but transferred to a place that is uncomfortable. This deep ambivalence is captured in the opening scene as Maureen wakes on the mud hut. It's like places that she has stayed in for pleasure as a child, on adventures, but she can't have the same feeling now. She hears the mice and notices the cobwebs on the ceiling collecting dust. Her waking state is a nauseous state; she's reeling and realizing the gravity of her situation.

Maureen is shown to be respectful of July and appreciative of his help. She has manners. Despite her ambivalence she's gracious. She also doesn't let on about her

discomfort. She also doesn't dwell in it. She cleans her body in the tub efficiently and builds a fire. A certain distance between Maureen and her husband is hinted at. As she recalls the time he bought the yellow truck, she describes him as subtly childish. She looks at him in a distanced way:

> The vehicle was a bakkie, a small truck with a three-litre engine, fourteen-inch wheels with heavy-duty ten-ply tyres, and a sturdy standard chassis on which the buyer fits a fibreglass canopy with windows, air-vents and foam-padded benches running along either side, behind the cab. (6)

July is sensitive to Maureen and the family's sensitiveness. His sustained obsequiousness is striking; it feels out of place. They're at his home, but he continues to treat them as though he's at theirs, as their servant. He knows their cleanliness and what they're used to, and he worries that his place won't be nice enough. One striking irony is that despite the couples' liberal views and their anti-apartheid sentiments, they keep blacks as servants. When Maureen stands in the kitchen with the women, they can feel her difference, her whiteness. She describes stooping, repeatedly bowing her greeting. She seems tall and out of place. It is early morning but she remarks that she knows where they're at in their day.

Tension begins to rise in these sections, as hears July's wife and mother's views of the white people. July doesn't know what his mother and wife are thinking. Whether they are accepting his view of the situation and the need to help them, or whether they're against it. They have a way of holding back from him. July's wife

imagines the wealth of the white people and she thinks about the things that July has told her about their many rooms and cupboards full of dishes and glasses, including wine glasses that they use only for guests. Her meditations on this wealth reveal her awareness of one of the main differences between her people and the white people:

> July presented to his wife. A small, black-black, closed face, and huge hams on which the woman rested on the earth floor as among cushions turning this way and that as she took a tin kettle from the wisp of hearth ashes to pour tea, silently, over the mug an old lady held. (19)

The tensions continue to rise indirectly as get Bam expresses his views of the meagre farm equipment. His reflections on the limited equipment come right after July's wife's thought about their wealth. While Bam thinks that they could do much better, the question arises as to why he and his wife didn't share more of their wealth with July. Inevitable tension comes from the news they hear on the radio of how widespread the war is, how even the American foreign services is unable to fly out. When Bam wants to build the water reservoir, July will help him and:

> There was no bag of cement; but they worked together more or less as they did when Bam expected July to help him with the occasional building or repair jobs that had to be done to maintain a seven-roomed house and swimming-pool. (29)

Bam has an easier time maintaining his role than Maureen does. She wants to wash her own clothes, but July insists that his wife and mother will do it. The feeling that arises when she considers her dwindling soap, and insists on giving banknotes in

return for the washing, is that her privileges and positions as a white woman will not be sustainable forever in this place where they are so trapped.

Maureen wants to wash the few clothes which they have brought, July says his wife and mother will do it. She argues with him, but he insists. She insists on paying. Maureen has brought a book, Manzoni's *The Betrothed*. She snatched it on her way out. Now she is afraid to read it because she doesn't want it to be finished and it is to be left with nothing else to read. She gets superstitious beliefs about the idea of not reading it then sits down to read. But she is unable to be transported by the fiction. The fiction is weaker than her reality:

> She moved between them neither working as others did nor able to do nothing as others did. She did have one book- a thick paperback snatched up in passing, until that moment something bought years ago and never read, perhaps it was meant for this kind of situation: Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, in translations as *The Betrothed.* (34)

Now Maureen recalls her childhood in the gold mining town when she would return home from school every day with an older black woman named Lydia. Lydia would carry her books, bag on her head. They both held hands as they walked. One day, she and Lydia were chewing gum outside some shops when they saw a man taking pictures of them. He came up to them and asked if he could take another:

> One afternoon a photographer took a picture of Maureen and Lydia. They saw him dancing about on bent legs to get them in focus, just

> there at the shops while they crossed the road. When he had taken his photographs he came up and asked them if they minded. (39)

Lydia took charge and asked whether he would send it to them. He said he would and took a shot of them together; a white girl and a black girl with the bag on her head. Years later a friend of Maureen showed her the photo, which contains about images of South African apartheid. Maureen stared at the image but couldn't understand its meaning not to herself or not within the life narrative:

> Years later someone showed it to Maureen Smales in a *Life* coffee-table book about the country and its policies. White *herrenvolk* attitudes and life-styles; the marvellous photograph of the white schoolgirl and the black woman with the girl's school case on her head. (40)

Maureen's reflection on the photograph of her and her childhood nanny servant Lydia, points to an aspect of her present experience. In the same way as she can't objectively understand her relation to the people who are helping her now, she couldn't get any perspective on it back then. When the bakkie drives away, the central fears of the family's situation emerge. They feel themselves trapped. Even though they can't use it, the vehicle is their means of freedom.

When Bam and Maureen argue, the ambiguous nature of Maureen's loyalty to her childhood emerges. It starts around a discussion of language. It is revealed that Maureen's people were gold mine bosses who spoke a derogatory language of a vocabulary that was limited to orders given by whites and responses made by blacks. She considers it as shame, in the face of her liberal husband.

As they argue about whether or not they made a mistake by not fleeing, she accuses him of having no backbone and of liberal compromise. She brings up instances in which he performed falsely, for appearance sake. He then accuses her of being weak, the small compromise that have held them together. Also see a couple in the tense situation of being trapped in close quarters.

The scaffolding of the Smales relationship with July is also becoming revealed as July is found negotiating money and the bakkie with him. He has power over them now, the power to take the bakkie, as well as the power to expose them. His loyalty feels sincere. He's also an optimistic character. He has no doubt that they are safe in his home.

Through the objects of the bakkie, the keys, and the gun, the tensions and questions and feelings between these different people of different social standing are revealed. On the surface, Bam and Maureen's discomfort with July possessing the bakkie is about their freedom. The vehicle is a symbol of their independence and freedom, even though it is not a tool for those purposes, and though they can't actually use it. But perhaps there is more to their discomfort than this: their role as the benefactors of July in his life and his as beneficiary are being subverted. They are dependent on him here. July keeping the bakkie brings this dependency to their awareness. July however, proceeds in a practical easy, as though the only reason he's keeping the bakkie is to help them as well as to continue to serve them. July it seems feels himself to be entirely at their service.

Maureen tries to change the subject and she says that July's wife and mother gave her some herbs for the youngest child Royce's cough. July is upset by this. He says that those herbs are only for black babies. Royce needs real medicine. He tells her not to use those herbs. She argues that it was the same for Royce as it's for the others. She says that the dampness of the floor is the problem. She went to get the rubber floor mats from the bakkie but she didn't have the keys. She asks for the keys to the bakkie. She says that she will bring them back:

> You make small fire inside today, s'coming little bit cold.- Royce was coughing himself awake.-Yes, you see- The child's gaze came to consciousness on him, restfully, confident. He had dropped his city plastic raincoat and was the familiar figure bending about some task. (65)

The keys of the bakkie a solid object that fits in the hand are connected manifestation of this new tension. The struggle over the keys between July and Maureen is the struggle over their relationship. He wants to keep the keys to the bakkie as he kept the keys to the house, that is, as their servant. She wants the keys to the bakkie because July has never had the keys to the bakkie. Having him that independence, and them being dependent, creates a new dimension to their roles, even if he continues to serve them.

July hasn't considered which Maureen feels strongly about it, is that now that the Smales family are out here on his land, everything has changed, then how are they to relate to each other. July has been operating under the assumption that he's still

working for them. They have been operating under the assumption that he is doing them a favour. For the time, the positioning of these new roles remains ambiguous.

The argument between July and Maureen however brings to the surface the tensions of their previous roles. Never before has he told her about the things that bothered him. His new role in relation to her allows for this to be spoken. If they are going to be just friends, Maureen wants, then it is inevitable, if not necessary for previous imbalances to be levelled.

When Bam returns with the meat and Maureen cooks it, squatting, dirty, a shift in atmosphere occurs in the family. Not only is this the first meat that had since that had arrived. It is the first time they have been one in their circumstance, forgetting their troubles, harmonized. While they are settling in July's family grows critical, beginning to question their presence.

The tension between the July and Maureen doesn't go away in this pivotal section. It is merely compounded as Maureen pushes him, provocatively asking if he is afraid she will tell his wife the truth. While her assertiveness is strong, her motives are ambiguous. Perhaps she merely resists July telling her what to do. It seems there might be something impulsive in her driving her to provoke him through. A striking moment of passive aggregation occurs when it seems that July can't fix the bakkie. Maureen tells him to stop trying, that Bam will do it. She begins to walk away, but then she comes back and says what she feels nobody else should hear muttering in a quiet voice:

> She watched him for an answer. She saw he was thinking of something else, back there. The backyard photograph, the white man and woman and their children here and now –the concrete knowledge of these was hers but provided too scanty a trail for her to follow him by. (101)

There is a distinct childishness to this provocation and it brings to mind her own childhood near the mines where her father was a mine boss in racist, segregated conditions. Maureen's current situation brings some latent racism out of her. There should be something about the reversal of her and July's roles that is causing her to act out in ways that she doesn't recognize in herself. However may be what she wants is for them to be equal and the imbalance, the power he has over her and irritates her. Of course to become equal would require a reassessment of their past roles.

Outwardly, consciously, she remains as the liberal woman who married Bam. However, Bam and Maureen are forced to face the irony of their outward liberal position. They are in support of a black revolution, but the chief is not. He wants the old order to be maintained. There is a universal resonance to this dilemma.

A certain aspect if this dynamic may be reflected in the tension between Maureen and July. She wants them to be equal. He would prefer to think of her as his boss, he insists on continuing to refer to Bam as his master. While Maureen idealizes equality, she is also unable to establish it, instead needing July, using her knowledge about his past as a power over him. At the end if this section there's a sense if being held hostage that arises from the chief's demand that Bam should teach him to shoot

people. Not only do they owe him for their protection, but he's also a black tribal leader, the essential voice of the very people whose cause they defend.

Maureen's ides or accusation, that July was speaking about himself when he ridiculed the chief, is echoed lightly in July's conversation with his wife, about how he will bring her back to the city. But his fantasy feels like an idle one, not actually a desire and certainly nothing ideological. He is distracted by the immediate problem of putting new grass on the Smales family hut. Maureen's accusation then comes to sound like the projection of someone who feels vulnerable, at the mercy of another.

Bam shares her paranoia and its sentiments that causes them to feel that they must flee, even though it still makes no sense and even though they don't know where they had go. This drive to leave is what in turn causes them to look for the gun after a moment in which they are both away from the hut. It causes them to panic when they realize it is not there.

The gun is to them a lifeline, even though they have both agreed that Bam is not a killer of people, and even though they both know that it's a useless gun. They have come to depend on the gun and associate it with their potential freedom. When it goes missing, it's the opportunity of freedom that they feel is lost. This is what causes Maureen to find July and accuse him of stealing not only the gun, but other small things as well.

At this point, her fears have taken the better of her judgement. July is disgusted by her accusations and while at first he is confused about who took the gun, he ultimately feels little concern for the fact that it's missing. It's of little consequence,

making no difference to the present situation. In his view they are all doing fine. He has no plan to turn the family in. He's protecting them. But Maureen can't see this. A deep fear impulse has been triggered in her and she says words to make the rift she feels between her and July real.

Paranoia alienates the trapped white woman not only from July, but from her entire family. She insults July and forecloses any opportunity for harmony with the place she is. In the end, its self-interest that drives her as she runs toward the sound of an unknown helicopter to meet whatever fate it offers, abandoning her family:

> She runs: trusting herself with all the suppressed trust of a lifetime, alert, like a solitary animal at the season when animals neither seek a mate nor take care of young, existing only for their lone survival, the enemy of all that would make claims of responsibility. She can still hear the beat, beyond these trees and those, and she runs towards it. She runs. (195)

Thus the novel explains the lives of liberal, white South Africa family, the Smales who were forced to flee to the villages of their black servant, July and the novel also explains the change of power of politics due to their imagination.

Chapter Three

Relocating the Identity

South African apartheid, is not too different from the African-American segregation. The term Apartheid is an Afrikaans word that means "apartness or a state of separation." It refers to a series of laws that comprehensively governed all aspects of life and especially race relations for all South Africans during the years of 1948 to 1991. Apartheid in South Africa was "the symbol of white's dominance and black subjugation" (Dehmoune 139).

Unlike the American racial segregation, Apartheid was a system based upon not an ex-slavery system, but upon the belief of white's supremacy over coloured people. Whites behaved as bosses, they control the means of production, and their position gives them a kind of authority over the coloured, and sometimes it turned to exploitation which pushed the coloured into political rebel in order to have equal rights as whites.

Black identity is not an exception to the theories. It has been formed and became an important element in their societies, for both black South Africans and the African-Americans, because of an important concept in the history of their nations which is racism. So, black identity construction, like any other ethnic identity, is due to unsafe and unstable political and economical state of the groups or the nation. As a result, each ethnic group tries to distinguish itself from the others.

In both the United States and South Africa, black identity became an important element to face white racists, and prove their presence in society. In one hand, black existence in America is rooted to times of slavery. Although it was

banished, slavery still exists, not as an institution or an experience, but as a collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity-formation of a people.

South Africa's twentieth century witnessed a rise of the Apartheid regime movement. It was based on the separation and made apart the races of the South African society. It caused a lot of, if not a complete, destruction and suddenness on the lives of masses of people of all the races. However, these issues of racism and other sub issues such as black identity, which might seem less important in the eyes of some writers and historians, were the mere interest of many writers and thinkers.

Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* is a novel visioning the inversion of the colonial and subsequently racial power in South Africa whose history since the advent of colonization till 1990s had been nothing but a chronicle of racism, violence, bloodshed, slavery, oppression and exploitation of the South African blacks by the white English colonizers. In this narrative, the blacks become revolutionary and the whites are placed aside. The whole scenario turns into a subverted situation, now the blacks become powerful whereas the whites powerless; the blacks are in a relaxed mood, while the whites are struggling for existence; the blacks become oppressor, while the whites the oppressed.

Nadine Gordimer is a famous satirist and social reformer. She wants to bring about social change and reform, and the cure for social ills, which are known as "racial segregation". Gordimer is also well known for her *July's People*, portrays how would be the end of Apartheid regime in South Africa. And, since the novel in South Africa would for sure represent the political view of the author towards what happens in his or her surrounding, *July's People* may involve something historical. To justify

this, it is enough to consider the fictional revolution in the novel as the prediction of the author herself of the end of the Apartheid. And then, even though *July's People* is a fictional piece of writing, it may be more realistic than fictional.

Nadine Gordimer deals with the Apartheid system and the relation between racial groups in South Africa. Gordimer's first confrontation with racism started in her childhood. Gordimer devoted her life to writing collections that dealt with the racial tension that plagued her home country. Gordimer expressed her political views in her writings, especially in *July's People*.

It was based on what white English-Speaking group, to which she belongs, was facing in the twentieth century. The twentieth century was characterised by the emergence of African nationalism and the success of Afrikaner nationalism. English-speaking people in South Africa found themselves in a very difficult situation which is more like discrimination than any other concept. They could not be part of the Afrikaner nationalism because of the linguistic and cultural differences nor be a part of African nationalism because of their physical appearances.

In *July's People*, this situation is revealed through the confusion of Maureen the protagonist of the novel between either to integrate in the black society like other members of the family, especially her three children, and reject her past life attitudes, or to flee out and restore her previous prestigious life.

Gordimer did not see herself as an English descendent, but the politics of South Africa make her an outsider to the experience of the majority of her country men, and the literature of the empire still haunts her fiction. Nadine Gordimer as a nationalist South African argued for the South African "super-identity". This

super-identity has been formed because the South Africans needed it to avoid crisis and split. Gordimer's sensitivity to the mood and discourses of the current moment in South Africa is shown through her writings. One of her influential and famous novels is *July's People*.

The Smales were the members of a suburban, upper middle class white family living in South Africa. Recently the racial war in the form of decolonization has forced them to flee their home. When the rebel black armies in Soweto and other areas of South Africa revolted against the government and the white minority through attacking the radio and television stations and burning their homes, the Smales needed to get out quickly. Their servant July whom they always treated well and had a very uncommon relationship offered to guide the victim family to his remote village.

The novel is set in fictional space where South Africa goes through a civil war between blacks and whites. Whites loose their power and dominance over blacks. The author situates the Smales at an unconscious period between black and white where the whites could not realize what was happening and the blacks were not sure of what is happening.

The Smales is a white family living in a black village with their previous black servant as a refugee from the war in Johannesburg. The novel is a good sample of Nadine Gordimer's works discuss and illustrate the actions of whites toward blacks and how the blacks respond. It represents the author's vision and her search for her own African perspective in a country with deepening divisions between blacks and whites.

Also, the novel represents the writer's protest against the government decision to use Afrikaans instead of English as the language of study in some African schools. This act by the government was in order to reduce the black access to the wider world, and to force them to accept their situation as inferiors by learning the native language of Apartheid.

July's People, like any other novel of Nadine Gordimer, is centred on the relation between the races illustrated by the relation between Maureen, the protagonist, and other characters especially her servant July. Also, the novel expresses a shift of the balance of power. White people were gradually deprived of power and at the mercy of increasingly empowered black men. This shift could explain the situation that whites were taking before upon the blacks, and it is clear that the black is considered always as a servant to the whites rather than anything even if he is their saviour.

On their very first morning in the native village of their servant, July, while living in the July's mother-in-law's hut, the odd situation for the Smales family starts. Maureen, the protagonist, observes, "No knock; but July, their servant, their host, bringing two pink glass cups of tea and a small tin of condensed milk, jaggedly-opened, specially for them, with a spoon in it"(1).

In *July's People,* Gordimer speaks of a segregated society, which is presented and embodied in her fictional characters. In this work, when referring to the act of racism, it is not strictly limited to the physical separation, but it is more mental racism. This is because physical and mental racism generally go together; the racist acts of a person are likely done without thinking.

When it comes to the physical separation, these two parts, where white and blacks are described as separated in the novel. The first one is their separation before the war which can be perceived through the description of their part house in Johannesburg. The second case is when the Smales are in July's village where they are living in July's mother-in-law's hut. "There was the risk that if, as he seemed to assume, he could reconcile them to the strange presence of whites in their midst and keep their mouths shut, he could not prevent other people" (15).

This physical segregation is accompanied by a mental racism and segregation. The mental racism is embodied by the bad behaviour of Maureen toward July. Maureen is July's boss for fifteen years, and she still behaves like that. Although she acknowledges in her speech his act of saving them like what she expresses in the novel by saviour, July she does believe that it was his duty as a servant to do so. "He turned out to be the chosen one in whose hands their lives to be held; frog prince, saviour, July" (11).

Gordimer saw Maureen as the last colonial woman because she is directed and took care by men who are related to her from father to husband, even July, the black servant, took care of her and tried to keep her out of problems and at ease. These acts are a typically colonial attitude-that the white woman has a man who looks after her. Maureen identifies Bam's shameful behaviour and inability to save them from the situation, as a betrayal.

Just as July's refusal to hunt down the gun an ultimate protector of white power is a betrayal of their long-time relationship that she arrogantly assumed was based on their mutual regard. Female white mistresses, especially educated, liberal ones that

Maureen represents, were as guilty as the masters of unconscious patriotism during the apartheid era. For Maureen prestigious and racial value, the change she went through is so fast.

The changing of the sequence of her past life leads her to "another time, place, consciousness" (35). She feels very soon after their arrival in the village that she has been transformed utterly: "She was already not what she was. No fiction could compete with what she was finding she did not know, could not have imagined or discovered through imagination" (35). This would explain the transformation of their life and power from whites, who thought themselves as superior, to blacks, the former servants.

Also, her dignity as a former boss is totally destroyed when she realizes that she is more dependent on July rather than him on her. She thought about previous time when she is used to give charity to him and his wife. However, she realizes after getting close to them that they do not need what she thought they do. Maureen feels obliged to change her behaviour toward him because she discovers another version of their past, July's version. Even though she is convinced to change her thoughts and attitudes, Maureen always has self-justification and recrimination to justify her acts.

Maureen tries to understand why July helped them to flee from the apocalypse that occurred in the city. What she could understand is that he is "not a simple man" (74). This simplicity, that she thought he is, is due to her view of him as inferior without any complexity in his life like she does as a civilized and a member of the upper-class white society. She could not even understand him because of his

awkward not perfect English, because of the influence of his native language and accent.

Besides all these kindly acts of July, Maureen, and even her husband Bam, behave rudely with him, especially when he refuses to do something. For example, when July refuses to look after the lost gun, Maureen accuses July of stealing small items from her in Johannesburg. This accusation is due to view herself as the master who has everything that her servant would want to steal. In addition to Maureen, her husband Bam treats July as inferior. This action is mainly because his loss of his possessions and position.

Bam, as he is seen after the precious gun is discovered stolen, is emasculated by losing his possessions and position:

> He lay down on his back, on that bed... and at once suddenly rolled over onto his face, as the father had never done before his sons...She looked down on this man who had nothing, now. There was before these children something much worse than the sight of the women's broad backsides, squatting. (25)

Left with only shame, as he is undefined as a man without his money, career, vehicle, and gun, he abruptly gives up his responsibilities and previous morals. All in all the concept of racism was discussed through *July's People* by the acts and attitudes of the Smales couple, Maureen and Bam, toward their black servant July and his people in general. Whether by living apart from them, acting differently and even underestimate their culture and way of living.

The concept of identity in *July's People* is divided into two parts: the black identity and the white identity. The novel is based on the struggle between the two. The two main characters, July and Maureen, are the representatives of each identity. Maureen tried to act as she used to with the white supremacy and superiority, but July reacted differently as he used to do for fifteen years of his service. He became more complex and aggressive toward her superiority. However, the first sign of black identity in the novel is its title *July's People*. It tells us that those blacks are people we should explore and discover. The black identity is revealed through the novel more and more.

The first sight of black identity in South Africa in the novel is the relationship between Maureen and July: the relationship between master and servant. Blacks were seen as servant, just simple servant. Or what Gordimer expressed as:

> The decently-paid and contented male servant, living in their yard since they had married, clothed by them in two sets of uniforms, khaki pants for rough housework, white drill for waiting at table, given Wednesdays and alternate Sunday free, allowed to have his friends visit him and his town woman sleep with him in his room. (11)

This would make the blacks dependent on whites, but reality was the opposite because throughout the novel the Smales couple discover how much they were dependent on their servant.

Also, the black's tribal system astonished Maureen with her accustomed view of the social system which was based on the family rather than the tribe. This system is known all over the African continent, and each tribe has specific conditions and

quality. When Maureen woke up in her first day in July's village, she noticed that the tribal hut was dark traced by some brightness (3). In addition, the tribe praises of their chief and obeys him totally. Also they managed themselves with nature in order to survive rather than be dependent on the white's stuffs and way of life. Even in the building of their houses they rearrange their "meager resources around the bases of nature, letting the walls of mud sink back to mud and then using that mud for new walls..." (31). This kind of architect that is used by Africans destroys the principles of white's architecture which Bam represent as he is a white architect.

Besides July's people stick to their culture and identity, the Smales stick to their white culture became less when they interacted with the blacks, except for Maureen who felt threatened by black culture. "Her daughter Gina became more familiar with the black culture and played with black girls without any complex. His daughter was eating mealie-meal with her fingers, from a shared pot with two or three other small girls"(47). Even the father became involved in the village life. Bam discusses with other men, and tries to make him understood.

Furthermore, July became more aggressive toward Maureen. He gradually withstands her, displaying through language that he does not fear for the first time to lay bare suppressed opinions:

> Me? I must know who is stealing your things? Same like always. You make too much trouble for me. Here in my home too. Daniel, the chief, my-mother-my-wife with the house. Trouble, trouble from you. I don't want it anymore. You see? — His hands flung out away from himself. —You've got to get it back. No no. No no.—hysterically smiling

> repeating... She was stampeded by a wild rush of need to destroy everything between them. (26)

This attitude was his reaction as he felt free from her service. Maureen was notable to pay him, and he was serving her whenever she pays him. When she could not, he thought he was free from her, and he knew that he would not be in bad situation. He was just a servant who would find another job if there is no job for the Smales.

The characters in the novel are continually forced to negotiate with one another about the new circumstances, and Gordimer makes use of communication between the whites and the blacks that results from a new power structure and the language barrier between them to illustrate the discomfort of that negotiation:

> If they catch you, without a licence...He laughed. Who's going to catch me? The white policeman is run away when the black soldiers come that time. Sometime they take him, I don't know... No one there can ask me where is my licence. Even my pass, no one can ask any more. It's finished. (72-73)

After July laughs and talks about how he is not to blame for vehicular violation as there is no longer any white system of authority to stop him, the conversation becomes extremely difficult. July does not come right out and tell Bam and Maureen that he can do what he pleases, whatever they might say. July masks his revolt against the Smales authority by talking around it. He acts as though there was an understanding they have reached together; that he is only acting as if he had taken control of the bakkie.

The Keys symbolizes the inversion of the power relationship between the blacks and the whites. It must also suggest that the key is just to enter into something and to initiate the new power structure, but a long way is still remaining to pass. The keys and the car are July's if he wants them to be, though he returns them at the end of this exchange. The scene in which he returns, Gordimer depicts it in such a way that July seems to lend the car to the Smales for the time being.

The novel presents the life of South Africa during a fictional space where the black rebelled against the Apartheid regime. A white family, Smales, fled from the war in Johannesburg to their black servant village. Through the novel notice a lot of signs of racism. Racism is shown through the acts of Maureen and her husband toward their servant July and his people.

On the one hand, Bam's adjustment to the new life with July's people is much easier than that of Maureen because he can handle the situation rationally by attempting to become part of community without letting his emotions get the best of him. Maureen on the other hand, cannot adjust to the reversed situation and becomes insane because she cannot accept a life without superior racial identity.

Black literature in both South Africa and United States, presents the black sufferance from racism. Racism and identity is shown through the acts of Maureen and her husband toward their servant July and his people. The reaction of July and his people toward those actions which was through their behaviour as they are and do not imitate the white way of living.

Chapter Four

Subversion of Racial Power

The South African Nationalist party in 1948 designed an absolute "racial distinction" between blacks and whites. This resulted in no feigned equality under apartheid. The blacks felt suffocated by acts and laws created against them. From 1950-90 apartheid legislation altered native existence through banning interracial sexual relations and marriage, the use of public libraries and universities, admittance to entertainment facilities such as movie theatres, public bathrooms, mass movement of native to resettlement camps, any black person without a valid pass in possession was liable to arrest. Members of the state police force had the right to raid search, and arrest any black citizen under any pretence, many were tortured in detention. All these things lead to a kind of alienation among people in South African society.

In *July's People,* Bam as the provider of money was merely a source of income that his wife and children milked for their happiness in their cultural mores around them. Once he is unable to fulfil his duty, he is rejected. Maureen defines herself by "things" bought or brought to her by the three meals that have taken care of her entire life, father, husband and servant. For Maureen's children bought items in their lives bring enjoyment, no matter how trivial is the object. Once in the bush, they demand coco-cola instead of water. It has been their dialectic of privilege throughout their young lives. For elderly infidelity is ultimately defined by a monetary exchange. Nothing made them so happy as buying things; they had no interest in feeding rabbits (7). Maureen and Bam's world is created and supported by a capitalist economy that

affects blacks even out in the bush. Money is akin to the centrality of the universe. It rules the lives of the blacks and the whites who have agreed or who were forced to follow such economy guidelines.

The whites have robbed the black natives of their land, along with basic literacy and a decent wage to vie competitively in a capitalist society. Thus they are infantilized by the white culture in a never ending round. Moreover, black revolution has derailed their lives completely as evoked in *July's People* with lack of normal pursuits, going to the salon, working during the week, attending international conferences, the lack of privacy, and being surrounded day in and day out only by the native blacks. This aspect of life begins to alter Maureen's views of life, a view of herself, her marriage, and her loyal servant, July. For the whites, black resolution has derailed their lives completely. Moreover the novel is a revelation to the fact that the capitalistic life style is toxic in the extreme and the author sees it through the eyes of the subaltern.

On the other hand, in *July's People*, the novelist shows how the black revolution replaces the power of the white family and their comfort in their city home. How it reversely gives power to the July, how the servant shares their power and modern belongings.

The novel shows how urban space facility is given to July when Bbam's family is reluctantly dislocated. Homi K. Bhabha's idea of "unhomeliness" as imaged in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), shows the impact of black resistance and revolution on the white family. The idea is not given to the black people and their

exiled living on the contrary, it is viewed that the white family's journey is not in exile but a flight under difficult circumstances created by black riots and fear of death, when the entire state is disturbed. In this context Bhabha notes that "this process is relocation of home to another territory where the occupants cross to another culture" (13). However, "to be unhomed is not to be homeliness"(13) or shelterless it is a condition where another house structure, unknown space takes the place of the former home with its materials and the family relations are taken care of.

In the novel, there are two sets of relationship. In this first set consists of Maureen and Bam, and the Smales with their black servant, July. The ambiguity in the novel's title revolves around the economic context of material position and disposition. It consists of the change of power relationship between the white and the black people. Besides the reversal of roles, the idea of ownership and the location of the place are reshaped. The progress through the colonial space and the movement of the Smales from the centre Johannesburg to the boundary is unlike the traditional journey and exploration of the explorers associated with the power of exploring the place, conquering the territory, or going on an adventure and undertaking a religious pilgrimage. This journey is undertaken because of the torture of the black revolt and the reason for subversion of power and displacement of urban facilities benefited to the white family members. One of the results of the revolution and black people's revolt in *July's People* is that the Bourgeois are denuded of their civil power to protect their people wealth and privileges of the white South Africans. The white have become the target for the revolutionaries because of the racial inequalities and for their policy of apartheid.

Smales escape to July's native hinterland forces a reconfiguration of the power dynamic between the white family members and their servant, July. In the bush, they have to redefine the power of their dignity they exercised before. Maureen and Bam want to belong to a multi racial society but they stick to their old jealously of possessing material privileges to elaborate on the tension between two specific races the white and the black and being at home and not being at home.

In *July's People* the political circumstances, the white family members are forced to leave home for a safe place. The small families, drive through the bush for three days and nights have to spend the night in July's village. After arriving, they immediately realize that they are great a burden to their host. The interior design, furniture and details of other facilities they possessed back there is not available at the village. The novel describes the position of the village in a detailed manner:

> stamped mud and dung floor, above her, cobwebs stringy with dirt dangling from the rough wattle steeple that supported the frayed grey thatch. Stalks of light poked through. A rim of shady light where the mud walls did not meet the eaves; nests glued there, of a brighter-colored mud-wasps or bats. (2)

Maureen highlights the uselessness of Bam's old identity. His validity and the strength of his patriarchal authority and the headship of his family are displaced in a strange place. Bam is also disconcerted with his stay because he is underprivileged. In the new and strange area, the inadequate and insanitary baths and toilet stop the Smales from cleaning their sweats and bad smells. In a hut, without water, electricity

and proper sanitation Maureen is afraid to cook in the pot used by the African people. She is affected by surroundings and insists on Bam that she will cook on her own.

Gordimer continues to expose civilized unease by manipulating the colonial traveler's fear of disease and contaminated conditions. Maureen conceals this fear with civilized manners. Maureen suggests to July that they must make their own fire and she likes to maintain power over her family's nutritional habits. Maureen not only complains about the lack of her kitchen paraphernalia but she is also worried about the strength and construction of the native hut. She questions the security of the hut by saying "everything in these villages could be removed at the sweep of a bulldozer and turned to ashes by a single match in the thatch" (113-114).

In their dislocated journey, Bam and Maureen are bewildered by calculating time and by the unfamiliar home and protection, July has provided them with. The Smales, are deprived of home security, privacy, power, ownership, disinfected utensils, modern facilities and comfort, are left devastated with a nostalgic wish to return home. The family's bitter experience of both physical and cultural dislocation is best fit with Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness, because they are not at 'home' in themselves. They have nothing, which can be called their belonging in this primitive house of blacks.

The difference between the centre and the black in the colonial area is distinct as its people's culture and their method of living. Gordimer presents July and other men in his villages as both economic and cultural products of the contact sector where they are situated between two phases of city's technological development; the

urban road and rail network and commercial local company and the rural backward settlement. The man who brings a battery-operated amplifier to the village and July's western dress or the collection of his city possessions, like plastic cups and scissors, indicate them as active agents of introducing white city culture of consumerism and greed of possessions. In *July's People* Gordimer depicts the gap between the lifestyle of the rich whites and poor blacks:

> A room to sleep in, another room to eat in, another room to sit in, a room with books... a room with how many books... Hundreds I think. And hot water... the room for bathing... wash your clothes...there was a machine in some other room for that. (19)

The novelist presents the black and the white facts who oppose their socio-cultural systems. Apartheid's rigorous policy of segregation suggests black and white dispute for power, capitalism and habit of consumerism. In between culture and contact area both the whites and the blacks are turned into characters when they see each other's rigging of former social status and exercise of power hierarchy during the interval spent in July's village, Maureen's conception of her marriage to Bam and her status as a wife breaks down.

Maureen as a suburban cultured wife, had been very much in a lesser position to Bam, back in Johannesburg. Because of dissatisfaction with her current position, she is unsuccessful to generate care and maternal love, which she once performed in her metropolitan home. Bam has taken over her role. She is jealous of the black village women who have their duties and their own status. She feels dislocated to a

place that gives her no meaningful role to contribute to the happiness of her family or her community.

The Smales have always been proud of themselves on having equal relationship with July, providing him a room in their house and paying him courteously giving him Wednesdays and interchanging Sundays free and allowing to have his friends to visit or stay with his mistress. Victor shows a materialistic image of the white figure that desires to impress the black children with his city toys he brings his electric power to run it. He is only infatuated with showing his city toy to the black children and is worried about the native children possibly damaging his possession.

The conflict of power starts when July takes possession of the bakkie key and drives to the Indian store to buy foodstuff for them but it is not only hard for the Smales to entertain July's claim over the bakkie without seeking their permission but also they see his newly-gained power as a threat to their material equalities. The black man crossed his limits, he does not know his proper place. Interregnum and civil disorders have made July powerful to acquire new skills of taking possession of the bakkie key.

Inspite of the fact that Bam issues out his warning, he continues driving the bakkie without any fear of being arrested by the white police who would inspect his driving license or pass. July not only ignores the authority of Bam but also questions the whole power of the white government in which the helpless police is playing its role. "If they catch you, without a license... He laughed- Who's going to catch me? The white policeman is run away when the black soldiers come that time" (72).

As the novel progresses, the Smales are virtually disabled to control and guide their children's activities. Bam guarantees Maureen that "they've been drinking water wherever they find it, already...it's impossible to stop them" (17). Battery is a valuable asset for them to get the signal from the radio to know about the recent happenings of the city. For that they are worried about how to protect the new battery from the hut dampness, they have to raise the hut floor a level higher in spite of the fact that Bam is an architect, he has lost his technical skill to use bricks where they are a "cherished commodity; in every hut" (68).

The conflict between July and Smales, July takes the benefit of his master family's degrading position and as he removes his showy honesty and loyalty mask, and "an explosion of roles ensures." In *July's People*, July is the leader of the expedition. He decides the programme and the unit of the expedition. July is not only in charge of the first trip to Johannesburg to the village, but is also in charge of the second journey to chief's village. He not only decides the date and time of the visit to chief, but also spells out who will be included in the allocation. While Maureen wants only Bam to go and visit the chief, July persists that the entire Smales family must go.

Gordimer further shows a transfer of power from white to black in Bam's imagistic emasculation and July's increasing power and absolute control. July learns to drive not only the bakkie but also decides as to who will drive the vehicle on their visit to the chief. For Bam, the hierarchy of power between July and the chief is reassessed when he learns that July has no absolute authority in his village and he has to meet the orders of the chief. It's very difficult for the chief to believe the explosion

of roles and the capture of the white people's authority, property and army by black revolutionists.

Another significant challenge that the people who are relocated experience is the subversion of the language of patriarchy that comes between the master and the servant. Linguistic confrontation and verbal onslaught occur between them and it turns into a bitter conflict as Maureen insists on finding the food for her family by herself. For the first time July scolds her in his own language when she intimidates him, to reveal the tales of his city mistress to Martha.

Maureen tells July their earlier relationship has ended, that he is no longer a servant. She is still thinking of urban home and wants to bring in her role of a boss she had back there. She is not willing to digest her ordinary dependent position on July as long as they are free from their old system of leading a comfortable life with modern facilities. July has been affirming himself more and more as he grows used to being in the strange position of having power over Maureen and Bam.

One of the symptoms of the interval is the ending of the novel, the novel lends to multiple interpretations, the ending of the novel and Maureen's desperate rushing towards the helicopter, reveals her horrible life with the present hut condition and the torture that it puts her into. Her final act also shows her weakness to give up the reminiscent feeling of being there back. Maureen's rush towards the helicopter indicates her tragic situation for the unknown future lying ahead rather than continuing a frustrated life empty of city possession and its pleasures.

The main theme of the novel is the shift of power due to the revolution. All that happens in the novel is caused by the overturn of power. Maureen also understands

that there is a new division. All clashes in the novel are caused because of importance of power. July's brave endeavour by risking his own life gives him authority. The Smales are forced to leave the city and they therefore become powerless. The power relations in the whole country are reversed.

July's People exposes more awareness and truth of the unfair political situation of the South African people. The novel deals with the black revolution, which dispossessed the white family of their power and urban home facility and it reversely subverts the power of the white and empowers their servant, July. The novel also deals with the alienation of the Bam's family when they undertook the journey due to black riots and fear of death. The Bam's family not only takes shelter in July's village but also comes in conflict with the black mode of living. Everyone in the family is reversed as the revolution subverts July's master's family into his impotent guests. The novel evokes the truth of the epigraph from Gramsci's *Prison Note-books* "The old is dying and the new cannot be born."

The basic theme in *July's People* is based on falseness and alienation of the white ruling class and the vitality and true friendship of the black. The alienation rises in the black and the white communities because of lack of communication. The black understands the white only when they issue the words such as bring, take, sweep, go out, come in etc. and do not understand them when words expressing human emotions are used.

The theme of *July's People* is estrangement, alienation, displacement and subversion of power. In the novel, the protagonist is threatened with insecurity for the

land and to his right to it. It comes through the depiction of the land as unnatural, unproductive, unyielding and incommunicable:

> Beyond the clearing the settlement of huts, livestock kraals, and the stumped and burned-off patches which were the lands-the buttock-fold in the trees indicated the river and that was the end of measured distance. Like clouds, the savannah bush formed and reformed under the changes of light, moved or gave the impression of being moved past by the travelling eye; silent and ashy green as mould spread and always spreading, rolling out under the sky before her. (26)

In *July's People*, spiritual significance is attributed to desert, empty space and poor soil. Cultural poverty and oppression are human in *July's People.* The insufficient food, the uncomfortable, decrepit houses and drab clothing and the lack of even necessities of daily life such as sugar, tea by which human values of love and loyalty are at a discount.

Family relationship and its bond falls apart when Maureen runs frantically toward the helicopter which appears suddenly, abandoning her husband, her children and everything, like a solitary animal at the season when animals neither seek a mate nor take care of young, existing only for their lone survival. She runs away towards the helicopter without a care ever for her life because she can no longer live as July's People.

Maureen Smales thinks that she is liberal and liberated, but events prove her wrong. Believing herself to be an enlightened employer, she finds it incomprehensible to that the tables have turned and she can no longer manage July as

she had in the city. It is Maureen and not Bam who clashes with July over the truck and the gun. Maureen is leading the life of a black stripped off the things she values. Had she the sense of vicarious sufferings of the blacks, she would have known what the whites have made the black to endure under their rule. Gordimer has evoked this sensitive problem, nor does, Maureen has that sense of understanding of vicarious suffering. Therefore, she is alienated from the reality of existence even though she is placed in the thick of the problem of the black's suffering.

July's wife cannot even imagine that white people in the cities use different rooms for different specific functions. The Smaleses' awareness and understanding of the poverty of July's People does not produce any sympathy for the blacks. They are so selfish that they are worried about their own sufferings rather than express what a pitiable life the whites have dished out for the blacks.

The white women can never realize how the blacks endure a life apart from parents for years on. For the black women Gordimer does not envisage lie without pain or change without struggle nor does she indicate that white women are exempt from similar ordeals in life. Women, in Gordimer's view must struggle toward consciousness and responsible decision.

Gordimer's view of alienation and existential stance depends upon repression. The South African must accept his fundamental loneliness and solitude in a universe indifferent to his fate; for him there is no transcendent power to solve his problem. Only by using his power, he can give meaning to his life. The South Africans must choose the good in them, or to be annihilated by the evils surrounding them.

Alienation is accurately linked to despair in *July's People*, for if ever black and white could be expected to understand each other, it should be Maureen and July. In this novel, the best intentioned, liberal white employer cannot hope to understand a black worker. The setting of the novel, even the air is one of the alienation, because of the revolution. The Smales are physically and psychologically removed from their society and when immersed in the black one, they cannot cope and are disparate. The separation in *July's People* between the white and the black is really one of an immense darkness.

In *July's People*, Maureen wants to bring about neocolonialism, primarily economic and politically exploitation, but they have their cultural or physical counterpart which is both the cause and the consequence. Colonialism, in this counter sense, means the imposition of one world views on the people of another world. Maureen wants to impose her command. Maureen's view about July is one of the Judases Christian consciousnesses that look at the world in either black or white way, the evil being out there the good inside: the good people versus the bad people, the good with the white and the bad with the black. Thus Maureen does not like July dealing with her in the way he does. Therefore, she thinks: "to be intelligent, honest, dignified for her was nothing; his measure as a man was taken elsewhere and by others. She was not his mother, his wife, his sister, his friend, his people."(152).

Alienation is linked in *July's People* with despair. Only July and Maureen, if black and white could be expected to understand each other. In this novel even the best intentional liberal white employer cannot hope to understand the black worker. Because of alienation, the race relations and the turmoil of blacks and whites trapped

in South Africa operate as silent backdrop of forest and with its geographic isolation and physical apartness. Both blacks and whites are in alienation and despair. Alienation in *July's People* is well reflected in the text: "out of sheer misunderstanding the black man's English was too poor to speak his mind" (97).

Gordimer's novels thus portray the subversion of power of the whites because of the black revolution. The power and possession of the whites changed into the fist of the blacks. This is the nature of universality that change is the law of life. Moreover, Gordimer depicts the picture of alienation as a background of exploitation, degradation and repression of the black people in South African society.

Chapter Five

Summation

Nadine Gordimer narrates the history of apartheid in South Africa in her novels. Her critical realism that emanates from her close and critical observation of people and their lives sets her in the position of antiapartheid novelist. Her novels are the metaphoric representation of people who either are in distress for being separated from the majority of the society-like whites- or suffer from imposed deprivation like the blacks. As a novelist, she operates like a "sensitive needle," giving a voice to the conscience of her context. Gordimer's writing career to date has run along with the apartheid era in South Africa. During this era, the racist government of South Africa was systematically intensified through racial laws and brutal control after being elected to power as the Nationalist Government in 1948. Apartheid was a political programme of separate development subjecting the natives to be inferior to the whites.

Gordimer, like all serious South African writers, closely scrutinizes South African politics. Her novels include and transcend the world of constrictions and distortions. She highlights important issues. First, in the peculiar context of South Africa, it is not only the blacks but also the whites who need to struggle for freedom. Second, the question of individual freedom is closely tied to the notion of identity. Third, the black and white can achieve individual identities only by the recognition that they complement each other. They are incomplete without the other. However,

the very nature of the South African experience forces upon the individual choice, which makes it possible to live in South Africa and to be free at the same time.

The first chapter gives the detailed account of South African literature which refers to the deep-rooted analysis of politics and cultural resistance that deals with the history of colonialism and the necessity to uphold social justice, liberation in order to oppose oppressive structure of racism, discrimination and exploitation. The main theme in the works of many South African authors during the twentieth century is the racial segregation and apartheid in 1948 which dominated the country.It speaks about the distinct features of Nadine Gordimer's fiction and discusses the works of her contemporaries. It also focusess on Nadine Gordimer's biography and her writings as they exhibit the clear, controlled and unsentimental style that became her hallmark. Her stories concern the devasting efforts of Apartheid on the lines of South Africans the constant tension between the personal isolation and the commitments to social justice, caused by the unwillingness to accept apartheid, the inability to change and the refusal exile.

The chapter concludes with the short synopsis of the novel *July's People* as it explains the lives of a white liberal family, the Smales who were forced to flee to the village of their black servant July. In order to escape the violence, they must accept July's charity and have to live a life that makes them all confront their assumptions about one another.

The second chapter talks about the Change of Power politics. The novel is set during a fictional civil war where is the black South Africans have violently overturned the system of apartheid. The story follows the Smales, a liberal white

South African family who were forced to flee Johannesburg to the native village of their black servant, July. Maureen works with the women in the fields, digging up leaves and roots. Afterwards, she goes to see July, who is working on the bakkie. When July says that she should not work with the women, she asks if he fears she will tell his wife about the woman in the city. He angrily asserts that she can only tell Martha that he has always been a good servant. Maureen frightened, realizes that he and the Smales have been summoned to the chief's village. Though July has authority in his village, they still must ask the chief's permission to stay. Maureen struggles with her new subservience to July. Maureen abounded her family and she runs away from them.

As political activist, Gordimer is active in the artistic arena. She was an influential South African novelist having a whimsical character, and speaking for antiapartheid policy. Her literary career has illustrated the central idea: change of power. Her novels reflect the reality of South African life. In *July's People,* Gordimer argues that the blacks can only win their freedom with power. The political power between the black and the white people seems to be the most important theme of Gordimer's novel. The main movements in the novel are both related to the shift in power. Because July, the servant acquires power and the Smales, the masters lose theirs, all relationships change. Now that the power reversal is initiated, the whites lose power. Gordimer cites many examples where the reader can see the helplessness of the Smales' family. Maureen and Bam knew that a change was inevitable because of strikes and revolution by the blacks.

The third chapter Relocating the Identity discusses how the prominent characters witness a reversal of their identities from their previously held positions. Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another, which often results in discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or culture. The system of essential racist practices includes the idea that humans can be subdivided into different groups that are different due to their essential capacities as well as it is ranked as inferior or superior.

Racism is mainly the belief that people should be classified and separated according to their racial groups. It supports the practice of racism of a particular racial group and insult members not belonging to their racial group. Racism speaks that the content of a man's mind is inherited; that a man's belief, values and character are determined before he is born by accepting this situation and become familiar with the discrimination.

In *July's People,* Nadine Gordimer speaks of a separated society, which is presented and personified through her unreal characters. It is not harshly limited to the physical separation, but it is more of mental racism. It is because of mental racism which generally goes together as the racist acts of a person are likely done without intelligence. In other words, they are done carelessly without taking into account the result of a person's behaviour. It is the separation before the war which one sees through the description of their past house in Johannesburg.

The concept of identity in *July's People* is divided into two parts: the black identity and the white identity. The novel is based on the struggle between the two. The two main characters July and Maureen, are the representative of each identity.

Maureen tried to act as she used to with the white supremacy and superiority. July reacted differently from how he had been during his period of service for fifteen years. He became complex and violent towards her superiority. However it is the first sign of black identity in the novel *July's People*. It tells us that those blacks are people to be explored and discovered. The black identity is exposed through the novel more and more.

Gordimer deals with the problem of belonging to a racially segregated and economically exploited society. The inevitable and constant involvement with her society, which has been fractured by the colour bar, makes her fiction a unique testimony of racial discrimination, coloured identity, psycho-political development, marginalization, subversion of racial power and alienation. All these problems are the issues that the thesis endeavored to present.

Gordimer has achieved intercontinental appreciation for her works, most of which deal with political issues as well as the moral and psychological tensions of South African society. Almost all of Gordimer's works deal with issues of resistance, obedience of the blacks and politics, mainly racism in South Africa. Furthermore, Gordimer has been a keen activist against racism in South Africa and has long held an iconic status there; she is a champion of tolerance, free speech and understanding. Her conviction and self-belief in refusing to become an exile, regardless of the banning of most of her works by the South African regime are laudable. Thus literature for Gordimer is the main vehicle through which she conveys her protest and rebellion against apartheid, as her involvement with South African politics is apparent in her works.

The rise of agony and hatred among people in South Africa were the results of the racist laws practiced during apartheid regime. The apartheid was very typical to South Africa. The demonstrations and revolts of the blacks aroused as a reaction to such laws. The ideology of racial laws aimed to divide the society into many racial groups according to the colour bar. The government maintains that the ideology to be practised in the real life situation is by separating the whites from the blacks. Thus, racism and identity became the main components of Gordimer's novels.

Gordimer's experienced all the aspects of life in South Africa: political, social, and economical. Thus, Gordimer's fiction strongly responds to the question of race and coloured identity in South Africa that address the global audience. The interpretative and representative merits of her fiction have accorded her the international status of a white writer who writes back to the racist apartheid. Consequently, the significance of her writing became more distinctive when the question of racism stepped out of the borders of the country and she addressed the whole world in a more rigorous and severe tone.

Actually, South African identity was the notion of African novelists. Gordimer's highly symbolic language and fragmented structures reflected the cultural experience of being a black woman or man in Africa showing a specific cultural, economic, and political response to the situation. Gordimer uses theatrical motifs to expose the intensely alienating quality of life in the apartheid-era of South Africa. It is a place where the laws that demand separation also deny her characters opportunities to experience genuine emotions. Gordimer portrays a society where

people separated from the other community become aggressive to express their needs. This alienation seems to be at the root of all human evil.

The fourth chapter analyses alienation as the result of human degradation and identity crisis that include a series of social, economical, cultural, and political changes. The ways of alienation have destructive as well as productive effects. Yet, the down turning of local and global conflicts, repression of human rights and civil liberties, and general increase in fear and anxiety are regarded as results of alienation among people.

As a prolific writer, Gordimer explores surgically the subversion of power of the whites in South Africa. In *July's People* Gordimer reflects the subversion of racial power and alienation of the white ruling class and the vitality of the black. The alienation arises in the black and the white communities because of lack of communication. The black understands the white only when they use the words such as, bring, take, sweep, go out, come in etc. and do not understand them when words expressing human emotions are used.

Certainly, Gordimer's novels explore the implications of political power for the contemporary South African political transition. In *July's People*, Gordimer pictures a violent South African revolution, in which white people are hunted and murdered when black South Africans succeeded in their rebellious acts against the racist state in South Africa after their long obedience to the whites. The work follows Maureen and Bam Smales, an educated white couple, hiding for their lives with July, their long- time former servant. The story scrutinizes how people manage with the dreadful choices forced on them by violence, race hatred, and the state.

The white people feel the seriousness of the situation. The white family members depicted in the novel believe that they are completely without power and they are, therefore, desperate for a change. As soon as July recognizes his power and the Smales' powerlessness, he takes an interest in Bam's truck. Eventually, July takes Bam's truck while Bam and Maureen cannot act against it, because of their shelter in his place. When a helicopter suddenly appears, Maureen without any care for her family or even for her life, not worrying about whether it belongs to friend or foe, runs frantically towards it, abandoning her husband, her children, everything. Gordimer wants to show in the novel human being's ultimate affection is to save one's life –the rest comes afterwards. Like an animal, Maureen runs towards the helicopter caring for her own survival shelter from that place to some unknown territory.

Gordimer's view of alienation and subversion of racial power depends upon repression. The outcome of the revolution and black people's revolt in *July's People* is that the bourgeois whites are stripped of their power and the transfer of power from the whites to the blacks. The White government is trembling to face the revolt of the blacks. Moreover, the whites have become the target for the revolutionaries because of the racial inequalities and their apartheid policy.

Thus, the works of Gordimer, composed of an incredible series of themes and issues, reflects the trouble and problems of the people in South African society, during the apartheid regime. Gordimer has produced the history of her country, the rebellion and resistance, the aggression of the racist regime and stress of the people in her country. Apart from this, her characters deal with exile and compromise, race and

gender, exploitation and alienation, resistance and rebellion. Through these issues, she examines the complexity of white peoples privilege, inviting audiences and readers to see how weak the liberal response to apartheid was.

In *July's People*, the change of places proves to be essential in the times of change. The master-servant relationship, the coloniser-colonised, superior-inferior ideas get thrashed once the whites start realizing their position in the African continent. Maureen's running away from July's place proves to be her running away from the reality she had to face in South Africa. The concept of being a slave has been thrashed by July once the revolution starts and he takes over his identity once returning to his homeland. To conclude it is set in a near future version of South Africa where apartheid is ended through the civil war. *July's People* illuminates the effects of apartheid and how segregation impacts the relations between the blacks and the whites in South Africa. Gordimer wrote this book before the end of apartheid the book may be read as a projection of apartheid's end.

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Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Ayad Akhtar's** *American Dervish* submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Margerate Benica. R during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

R. Margerate Benica

Thoothukudi **Margerate Benica. R**

October

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PREFACE

Ayad Akhtar is a well-known author, playwright, and screenwriter whose work *American Dervish* was voted one of the best books of the year in 2012 by numerous publications. This project entitled **Cultural Adaptation: A Study of Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*** examines the clash between the religious and social aspects of Muslim's life in Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish.*

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of American literature, life of the author Ayad Akhtar, his contribution to literature, and finally a short introduction to the novel. It also has the part of presenting the contemporary writers of Ayad Akhtar.

The second chapter **Loss of Identity** deals with the theme of the loss of the Muslim Pakistani-American identity regarding people who lived in America during the 80s of the twentieth century. It crystallizes the heated struggle between generations, religions, cultures and races.

The third chapter **Process of Assimilation** focuses generally on the challenges faced by the immigrants in a foreign country with a cosmopolitan culture, and particularly in case of the Pakistani Muslim family in America.

The fourth chapter **The Politics of Polyvocality** deals the diversity of voices within Islam and discusses how the privileges of Polyvocality emerge from a unique dialectic between the individual and the community.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature, in its broadest sense, is any single body of written work. More, restrictively, literature is writing considered to be an art form or any single writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value, often due to deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary usage. Its Latin root *literature/litteratura* is used to refer to all written accounts. The concept has changed meaning, ever time to include texts that are spoken or sung (oral literature), and non-written verbal art forms. Developments in print technology have allowed an ever-growing distribution and proliferation of written works, culminating in electronic literature.

Literature is classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction, and whether it is poetry or prose. It can be further distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short story or drama. Works are often categorized according to historical periods or their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations.

American Literature begins with the age of colonialism produced in the area of the United States and to preceding colonies. During its early history, America was a series of British colonies on the eastern coast of the present day United States. Therefore, its literary tradition begins as linked to the broader tradition of English Literature. The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified the status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related. With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American

literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe.

In 1836 Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in (1852). These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas, an American Slave*

In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter,* a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* in 1851 and *Billy Budd* in 1924. America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was the first major American writer to be born away from the east Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The Portrait of a Lady* in (1881). At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser and Jack London.

At the beginning of the 20th century, American novelists were expanding fiction to encompass both high and low life and sometimes connected to the naturalist school of realism. Political writings discussed social issues and the power of corporations. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* in 1888 outlined other possible

political and social orders, and Upton Sinclair, most famous for his muck-raking novel *The Jungle* in 1905 advocated socialism. Other political writers of the period included Edwin Markham and William Vaughn Moody. Race was a common issue as well, as seen in the work of Pauline Hopkins, who published five influential works from 1900 to 1908. Sui sin Far wrote about Chinese- American experiences, and Maria Cristina Mena wrote about Mexican- American experiences.

The character of early American literature was strongly influenced by several factors: it was the era of colonizing the continent. Since not only the English explored and claimed the territories, the beginning of American literature is more or less connected also with French, Spanish or Dutch literatures as well. The first writers brought mainly English ideas and ways of writing, which means early American literature is based on the literature of England. Religion played an important part in the writers' lives. Many writings of the period were sermons and theological books. The fact that the pilgrims landed in the Massachusetts Bay in 1620 had an immense influence on the culture of the newly developing colonial system.

As dissatisfaction with the colonial system and the relations with Britain grew, the literature gradually changed its shape. The writers became more politically, anti-British and revolutionary oriented, rationalism and enlightenment prevailed. The period of romanticism represented a revolt against classicism and its values such as reason and form. The American variant of romanticism was different from the European one to a certain degree. There was a great interest in Indians and their culture. The writings were less political and religious, the topics were mostly American, and the writer stressed imagination, nature and individualism.

Just as in Europe, the period of romanticism was followed by the period of realism. Writers left behind the styles and topics adopted by the previous generation and rather concentrated on describing life as it was with its negatives typical for the period. It was the era of industrialization and migration, determinism was a major paradigm of the age. Naturalism was an intensified form of realism. Other American writers towards the close of the nineteenth century moved towards naturalism. Since the dawn of the twentieth century, writers were looking for new ways of writing and new topics. Their writings expressed their feelings about living in the modern age, some of them write positively, some negatively. Their style became more complicated; experiments were quite common. Many movements appeared together and that might be called 'modernism'.

Like other national literatures, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that was merely a group of colonies scattered along the eastern sea board of the North American continent colonies from which a few hardy souls westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation. By the end of the nineteenth century this nation extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico, northward to the forty-ninth parallel, and westward to the pacific.

By the end of the nineteenth century, too, it had taken its place among the powers of the world, its fortunes so interrelated with those of other nations that inevitably it became involved in two world wars and following these conflicts, with the problem of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in ways of thinking and feeling, wrought many modifications in people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States moulded the literature of the country.

Many American writers were influenced by the transcendentalism movement. Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Individualism remains a prominent topic in later works of American literature. American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) capture the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote about the war: Earnest Hemingway (1899-1961) became notable for *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926 and *A Farewell to Arms* in 1954.

William Faulkner (1897-1962) is notable for novels like *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929. American drama attained international status only in the 1920s and 1930s, with the works of Eugene O 'Neill, who won four Pulitzer prize in 1920 and the Nobel prize in 1936. In the middle of the twentieth century American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as the maturation of the American musical.

Depression era writers include John Steinbeck (1902-1968), who is notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath.* Henry Miller assumed a unique place in American literature in the 1930s when his semi autobiographical novels were banned from the United States. From the end of the World War II until, roughly, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the publication of some of the most popular works in American history such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. America's involvement in World War II influenced the creation of works such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), *Joseph Heller's Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-five* (1969). John Updike was notable for his novel *Rabbit Run* (1960). From the early 1970s to the present day the most important literary movement has been postmodernism and the flowering of literature by ethnic minority writers.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mencken's major enthusiasms included the fiction of Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, but he also promoted minor writers for their attacks on gentility, such as James Branch Cabell, or for their revolt against the narrow frustrated quality of life in rural communities including Zona Gale and Ruth Sucknow. The most distinguished of these writers was Sherwood Anderson. His *Winesburg Ohio* (1919) and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) were collections of short stories that showed villagers suffering from all sorts of phobies and suppressions. Anderson in time wrote several novels, the best being *Poor White* (1920).

As Salman Rushdie says, "American literature has always been immigrant". An immigrant is a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country. Immigrant literature is that written by migrants or tells the stories of migrants. Migrants are the people who left their cultural settings and started a new life in other settings. Migrant literature focuses on the social context in the migrant's country of origin, which prompt them to leave on the experience of hostility and on the sense of search for identity that can result from displacement and cultural diversity. The novels often show and explore generational differences in immigrant families, especially the first and second generations. These narratives express the experience of immigration and acculturation. These literatures are mainly associated with the new land, identification of self and other, and language acquisition. These writings seek to affirm the new immigration self while simultaneously using the other to restructure the immigrant's new identity. These writings explore the fact that children become more fluent in English than their parents do. The immigrant adopts English to conduct the business of social interactions. As immigrants and settlers moved to the

interior regions of America, they brought with their native culture and the fear of unknown.

American immigrant novels explore the assimilation and the relationship of American immigrant towards American identity and ideas. These immigrant novels explore the families of first and second generations. These novels open with the wild feeling as the protagonist migrate towards America. However once they are arrive in America, the immigrant family often finds themselves in an unfamiliar and seemingly unwelcoming and introverted culture. Parents try to retain their culture from the native while the second generation are fully assimilated Americans who understand American culture and become the guides for their parents.

Immigrant writers discuss not only the diversity, expansion and evolution of literature, but also the integral elements of culture. Some immigrant authors like Janine Joseph, author of *Driving without a License* are transforming American literature. She was brought up in Southern California. Many of her poems and essays are about growing up undocumented in America. *Driving without a License* contains stories of childhood and coming-of-age, immigrant experiences and so.

"Coming-of-age" is a term used to describe the conversion between childhood and adulthood. Coming-of-age is a genre that focuses on the growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood. Coming-of-age stories tend to emphasis dialogue or internal monologue over action and often set in the past. The subject of coming-of-age stories is typically teenagers. The Bildungsroman is a specific genre of coming-of-age story. Bildungsroman is a German word, first introduced by Karl Morgenstern in the early 11th century and later it was popularized by William Dilthey in the early 20th century.

The German word 'bildung' means "education", and 'roman' means "novel". In English, briefly, novel of formation, education, culture. A Bildungsroman is a story of education. It is similar to coming-of-age story the characters are more specific. It is especially prominent in literature and focuses on the protagonist's psychological and moral growth, and thus character change in extremely important. The goal is maturity and the protagonist achieves it gradually and with difficulty. The genre often features a main conflict between the main character and society. The common thing in coming-of-age story revolves around how a pre-teen discovers something about a parent. This could be a secret from the past or a personal life. Parents might admit to not being in love or deciding to change careers and move the family across the country.

Many realistic stories depict their protagonist growing up or coming-of-age. Typically, the coming-of-age focuses the protagonists' growing from a self-absorbed, immature individual into expansive, mature human beings concerned with the welfare of others. The character possesses a clearly defined personality and exhibits growth during the course of the story. At the beginning of the story, childhood has already left behind, and the hero has concluded that the world is not a safe or blissful place. An event that occurred prior to the beginning of the story, or the hero's overall situation, has made the hero feel lost or stuck in a world. They often set in the past. The protagonist of coming-of-age stories is about the conversion from adolescence to adulthood, from defined by family or society to defining oneself. The protagonist is between 10-years-old and late teens.

Assimilation refers to a part of the adaptation. Cultural assimilation is the process where a minority group gradually adapts to the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture and customs. Assimilation is most often discussed in terms of

minority immigrant groups coming to adopt the culture of the majority and becoming like them in terms of values and practices. This process can be forced or spontaneous and be rapid or gradual. Different groups can blend into a new homogeneous culture. Assimilation is a process that will differ based on race, ethnicity, and religion. The process of residential "redlining"- where racial minority were intentionally prevented from buying homes in predominantly white neighborhoods. The barriers to assimilation faced by religious minorities in America, like Sikhs and Muslims, who often ostracized for religious elements and thus socially excluded from mainstream society. Assimilation can also measure with language attainment.

When an immigrant arrives in a new country, they may not speak the language native to their new home. Immigrant assimilation is a complex process in which immigrants not only fully integrate themselves into a new country but also lose aspects, even all of their heritage. Assimilation usually referred to immigrants, but in multiculturalism, cultural assimilation can happen all over the world and within varying social context and is not limited to specific areas. People from different countries contribute to diversity and from the "global culture" which means the culture combined by the elements from different areas to affect one another.

Acculturation is the process of social, psychological and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing cultures of the society. Individuals of a different culture try to incorporate themselves into the new more prevalent culture by participating in aspects of the more prevalent culture, such as their traditions, but still hold on to their original cultural values and traditions. Acculturation is the process of change in beliefs or traditional practices that occur when the cultural system or one group displaces that of another.

The process of acculturation can cause conflict within individuals and families because they feel the competing pressures of adopting new cultural norms and maintaining the ways of life of their country of origin. Acculturation refers to psychological changes in individuals because of migration. From the perspective of a bi-dimensional model of acculturation, an immigrant group is economically marginalized. They are likely to also be socially marginalized from mainstream society. Acculturation is the fundamental aspect of psychological development for adolescents in migration. As children enter adolescence they become increasingly engaged in the larger society beyond their family and ethnic community.

Some of the immigrant writers like Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London to an immigrant from India, moved to America. The Lowland sets in both India and America and it tells the story of a young man who immigrates to America, but returns to India after his family is torn apart by his younger brother's sacrifice to political rebellion. Yaa Gyasi is a Ghanaian-American Novelist, whose work *Home Coming* in 2016, traverses the 300 years between 18th century Africa, introducing readers to Effia and Esi, sisters born in different African villages at the same father, but unknown to one another. Their divergent paths lead one into a life of slavery, the other into Marriage to an Englishman, though their path crosses in an expected way. Among them Ayad Akhtar is famous for his novel *American Dervish.*

Ayad Akhtar was born in Staten Island, New York city and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was graduated from Brookfield Central High School in 1988 and later attended Brown University where he majored in Theatre and began acting in student plays. He taught acting classes with Andre Gregory and earned his Master of fine Arts degree in film directing from Columbia University School of Arts. While at Columbia he and classmates Tom Glynn and Joseph Castelo formed the

ideas for *The War Within*, a 2005 film about an ordinary man radicalized into becoming a terrorist. In 2011 he played Neel Kashkari in the HBO film *Too Big to Fail*. He is an American playwright, novelist, screen writer and actor of Pakistani Heritage who is best known for his play, *Disgraced*. The play received Pulitzer prize for drama in 1999. His works cover various themes including the human condition, love, relationships, the American Muslim experience, immigration, identity and aspects of culture.

Akhtar tries to open a window on the complex reality of Muslim American experiences in all his writings. In *American Dervish*, he demonstrates a deft understanding of faith and of pubescent love and caprice. Ayad Akhtar has two subsequent plays produced, *The Who & The What*, which premiered at La Jolla playhouse in February 2012 and *The Invisible Hand* at Repertory Theatre of St. Louis in March, 2012.

American Dervish is Ayad Akhtar's debut novel, which reflects the Pakistani family's struggle to amalgamate in American Midwest. It's coming-of-age story encounters the problems by the Muslim immigrants who live in western communities, particularly in America. The novel centres on a family's struggle to identify both as Muslim and as American, a boy's devotion to his faith, and the tragic implications of extremism. As an American-born, first generation Pakistani-American, Akhtar wanted to recount the rarely told coming-of-age story of a Muslim-American boy. The Shah family copes with faith and belonging in pre-9/11 Suburbia, and through them, the reader understands the struggle, challenges, values, and cost of being Muslim in America. This novel has been published in more than 20 languages, and it is the best novel in the year 2012 in Kirkus Review.

Disgraced is a play centered on sociopolitical themes and the self-identity of Muslim- American citizens. It traces on a dinner party between four people with very different backgrounds. The play depicts racial and ethnic prejudices and also the challenges of upwardly Muslim Americans. *Junk*: *The Golden Age of Debt* is a 2016 play by Ayad Akhtar. Set in 1985, *Junk* tells the story of Robert Merkin, resident genius of the upstart investment firm Sacker Lowell. Hailed as "America's Alchemist", his proclamation "debt is an asset" propelled him to a dizzying level of success. By orchestrating the takeover of a massive steel manufacturer, Merkin, intends to do the "deal of the decade," the one that will rewrite all the rules.

Ayad chronicles the lives of men and women engaged in financial civil war: insatiable investors, threatened workers, killer lawyers, skeptical journalists, and ambitious federal prosecutors. *The Invisible Hand* (2008) is a play which centres around an American banker, Nick Bright, specializing in the Pakistani future market who is kidnapped by a terrorist organization looking to protect local community interests. It examines the nature of greed and pits the pervasive philosophy of capitalism against Islamic fanaticism, revealing unifying human passions, underlying tensions, and failings that span the ideological spectrum.

Hayat Shah, a young Pakistani American, lives in a boring suburb of Milwaukee with his unhappily married parents who are secular Muslims. His mother's best friend Mina and her son Imran come from Pakistan to stay with the family, escaping her ex-husband who threatens to take away Imran. Mina brightens the lives of the Shah family, becoming especially close with Hayat, telling him Sufi stories and teaching him the Quran. Hayat becomes obsessed with being a hafiz after Mina tells him that the parents of hafiz are guaranteed a place in Paradise.

Meanwhile, she meets Dr. Shah's best friend Nathan and falls in love with him. Nathan, who is a Jewish, explores Islam and even expresses an interest in converting.

Dr. Shah is an atheist and warns his best friend not to convert as he believes the local imam is only interested in money. When Hayat, Nathan and Dr. Shah go to the mosque to see the imam about Nathan converting he preaches an anti-Semitic Khutbah, devastating Nathan. Hayat is jealous when he realizes that Nathan and Mina plan to marry. He sends a telegram to her ex-husband, revealing that Mina is marrying Nathan. Mina's family threatens to disown her if she marries him and Nathan moves away to Boston.

Dr. Shah angrily forbids his son to read the Quran and burns Hayat's copy, although he secretly reads it at school in his effort to become a hafiz. Against the Shah's objections, Mina decides to marry Sunil, a divorced Pakistani man from Kansas. During her wedding, Hayat discovers from Farhaz that true hafiz recites the Quran in Arabic while he has only been learning it n English. As a result, Hayat gives up on the Quran for many years. After her marriage Mina realizes that her new husband is controlling and abusive; he forces her to move back to Kansas with him.8 years later when Mina is dying of cancer Hayat finally confesses to her that he sent the telegram. She forgives him and after she dies he sees Nathan and learns that the couple had been secretly keeping in contact.

The next chapter focuses on the loss of the Muslim Pakistani- American identity regarding people who lived in America during the 80s of the twentieth century. It explicates the inability of the Muslim protagonist, Hayat Shah, to assimilate himself into his community.

Chapter Two

Loss of Identity

Identity is the belief and personality that makes a person or a group. A psychological identity relates to self-esteem, and individuality. Identity is the individual characteristics by which a thing or person is recognized. "Identity is not fixed and singular. It is fluid, multiple, relational and in process" (Tsang Sze Pui, Jappe 5).

The term "identity" describes personal identity that makes a person individual. An identity is who or what a person or thing is. It is a state of mind in which someone perceive their characteristics feature that leads to finding out who they are and what they do and not that of someone. "People experience identity through communication, meaning that identity is often framed in terms of enactments or how they express their identity to those around them" (Crosby 16).

Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish* focuses on the concept of the loss of identity. It explicates the inability of the Muslim protagonist, Hayat Shah, to assimilate himself into community as far as he still holds on his remnant tenets he has inherited from his homeland Pakistan. This theme is overtly applied to both Hayat's character as well as his father's. Hayat represents the younger generation while his father represents the older one. They both follow the same path in that Hayat finds his identity in befriending the Jewish girl Rachel as well as in discarding the Islamic tenets, taught by his mentor Mina; in the meantime, his father finds his identity in accompanying his lifelong workmate Nathan Wolfsohn, a Jewish professor.

At the start of Book One, Hayat's mother Muneer Shah talks to him about her best friend Mina Ali who is coming to the States from Pakistan a year after her unbearable marriage to Hamed Suhail. Before she comes, Hamed sends her attorney to tell her that "he divorces you, he divorces you, and he divorces you" (21). In this respect, the attorney adds, "You have just given birth to Hamed Suhail's son. He has chosen the name Imran for the boy. Imran will stay with you until the age of seven, at which point Mr. Hamed Suhail has the right to full, undisputed custody" (21).

To flee from such a horrid milieu, Mina accepts the invitation from the Shah's family to live with the Shahs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Hayat very well observes that Mina's son Imran is magnetized by his father Naveed and himself to Mina. Hayat points out:

> I loved her voice. And I loved being so close to her. My days now revolved around the anticipation of that nighttime hour, when I would lie besides her, taking in the vaguely sweet, jasmine scent she wore, listening- my eyes closed- to her breathy voice as she told bedtime tales. (48)

By the time Mina Ali comes to the States, Hayat, who has been enchanted by his mentor Mina, begins to learn some of the Islamic tenets: how to be a dervish and how to memorize the Quran. His mother turns a deaf ear to these religious creeds. Hayat memorizes the Quran in English and he learn third of the Book by heart. To him, the dearest dream to fulfill in life is to become a hafiz; meanwhile, Mina recounts the story of the dervishes to Hayat so that he might someday become one of them. She would like to see him behave and act like the dervish, mentioned in Mina's tale, sitting at the side of the road and looking at two people who are eating oranges.

When the dervish looks at them they spurn him and wonder why he is doing so. They, then, toss him with the orange peels. "He didn't get angry. Instead, he got up and took both of them into his arms" (103). In this respect Mina adds:

> In fact, he realized he was the same as that ground, the same as those peels, as those men, as everything else. He was the same as everything created by Allah's hand. What was in his way before? He thought he was different. (104)

Because Hayat is being taught to be a hafiz at the hands of Mina, he, at the end of Book Two, begs God not to let his father be scourged in the flames of Hellfire because of his sins. Hayat observes, "I saw Father waving at me through the endless flames. I begged God to forgive him, to turn him away from his sins. I heard Father's cries of pain as the fire burned him. I imagined reaching in to pull him free. But even n my imagination, I couldn't" (153).

To save his father from the tortures of Hellfire is the reason why Hayat is eager to be a hafiz. "When I was done, both my parents would be saved. That's what Mina had said. Every hafiz earned not only his own place in Paradise, but his parents' as well. "No matter how many drinks, no matter how many mistresses, Father would be saved" (153).

Hayat's infatuation with Mina is shown not only spiritually, but physically as well. He begins to physically love her, especially after having seen her naked body in the bathroom. Hayat points out that, "Her skin gleamed a taut, pale brown. I had never seen anything so perfect as her naked body, its swelling at the chest and hips, the tapering between and down along her legs. My heart stirred. Something inside me was already burning" (72).

Out of his physical love for Mina and his enthusiasm for learning the Islamic teachings, Hayat cannot accept her being married to Nathan, a Jewish man. He sends a telegram to her parents in Pakistan, telling them that their divorced daughter is going to marry a Jewish man. Mina's parents arrive and prevent such a marriage. For that reason, Mina is married to a Muslim man, Sunil, with whom her life becomes a piece of hell perhaps more austere than that life she has spent with Hamed Suhail to the extent that she dies of uterine cancer. When she passes away, she does so without complaining in an attempt to display her intimacy and close relationship with the life of a dervish and what such a life behooves her to do.

Since Hayat's parents, Naveed and Muneer, are irreligious, Mina takes the responsibility to fill this gap in Hayat's life. Hayat never hears any religious stories from his parents; all he hears from his mother are her stories about his father's white mistress. Out of Muneer's sufferings at the hands of her husband, she starts to instill into her son the opinion that he should eschew the Muslim behavior of treating women and adopt the Jewish one. Many a time, Muneer tells her son that she would like to see him behave like a Jew, not like a Muslim. In an attempt to remind her son of her message to him, she says: "That's why I'm bringing you up differently, so that you learn how to respect a woman. That's the truth, *Kurban*: I'm bringing you up like a little Jew" (117).

Hayat's mother never spares any time or effort to show Hayat how the Jews are utterly different from the Muslims in treating women: the Jews treat them reverentially, but the Muslims disrespectfully. Muneer says, "I keep telling her the fact that Nathan's Jewish is a good *thing*. They understand how to respect women, *behta*. They understand how to let a woman be a woman, to let her take care of them. They understand how to give a woman attention" (117).

It overly seems that Hayat inherits his love for the Jews from his mother while she inherits it from her father. Muneer's father "instilled in his children a belief that Jews were the special people, blessed by God above others" (118). Hayat's fathers and forefathers derive their notions about the Jews from their experiences with them. Hayat points out that "I never met my grandfather - he died soon after I was born but I heard a lot about his respect for Jews, respect which stemmed from his experience living in their midst as a student in England in the years after the Second World War" (118).

To Hayat's grandfather, the Jews greatly respect learning while Muslims do not: he believes that the Jews' learning is a real one. To express his loathsome upbringing as a child at the hands of Mina who wishes to see him as a hafiz or a dervish, Hayat says, "My soul was outgrowing the child sized raiment with which my Islamic childhood had outfitted me" (332). In the epilogue, Hayat states "It was in Rachel's arms and it was with her love that I finally discovered myself not only as a man, but as an American" (345). Since Hayat finds his identity nowhere but in the company of the Jewish girl, Islam no longer means anything to him.

> My heart yearned to pray. I put my hands out before me in the Muslim style and tired to conjure the heartfelt fire I knew so well from back when Mina lived with us. But my words rang hollow. Like sounds spoken to the deaf, or worse, to no one at all. (333)

The other character who represents the loss of Islamic identity among the elder generation in *American Dervish* is Hayat's father- Naveed Shah. Throughout the novel, Ayad Akhtar makes it quite apparent that Naveed is a detestable character for a handful of reasons. First, his wife Muneer mentions nothing about him but hi

relations with the white mistress. Hayat, the son, observes, "I heard no more tales from mother about Father's mistresses than anything else" (49). The son also remembers his father's problems with his family. Hayat says: "Throughout my childhood, Mother spared me little detail about her troubles with Father. And at ten, I already knew myself well enough to know that if I listened too closely to what she said, my blood would start to boil" (27).

Second, he is contrasted with his colleague Professor Nathan Wolfsohn who is "from Boston, Jewish, urbane, and pleasantly gregarious" (84). Naveed, on the other hand, is from, "a third world village, Muslim, rough-hewn, and sardonic. Their colleagues at the hospital called them the Odd Couple" (85). To make their contrast more ostensible, Naveed's son adds that,

> He made fun of his appearance; of his New England accent; of his inability to stomach our spicy food; and yes, of the fact that he was Jewish. But the butt of most of Father's jokes was Nathan's love for all things cultural: the theater, symphonies, art museums, and above all books. (85)

Third, his family ties are broken and his relations with both wife and son fall asunder. Hayat refers to his parents severed relation when he states, "my parents now fought as they never had. They cursed and slammed doors and threatened to leave each other. More than once, Father walked out, car keys in hand, and didn't come back until the next day. Or even later" (257).

Fourth, he maltreats his wife. Muneer the wife regards, "All I wanted was to know how he was feeling! That's all!" (160). Hayat the son also affirms that his mother's marriage to his father has been a miserable one from its very start. Fifth,

Naveed tells his wife Muneer that he hates her as much as he adores the white women. Naveed, as a husband, has no respect in his wife's eyes. She points out, "After all, a man who drank and cheated on his own wife couldn't claim to have an credibility, she liked to say" (183). All these bad traits of Naveed's character can be regarded as part of his loss of Islamic identity.

Such a loss of identity is also exposed in his abhorrence of the act of praying five times a day. To Naveed, doing this is nothing but a kind of hypocrisy. He says," Praying all day long. Nothing to show for it. They're hypocrites" (88). Again, it is Naveed who has gravely affected his wife in such a way that she begins to be dubious about her religious beliefs. This stresses his terrible impact upon those around him particularly the members of his family. Hayat sheds light on this point when he says, "neither of my parents was particularly religious, and I heard more tales from Mother. Deep down, Mother was a believer but the years she'd spent who thought religion was for fools had trained her, I think, to check her religious impulses (49).

Likewise, Naveed prevents Mina from teaching the tenets of Islam to his son, and the Quran, in particular. Mina says "Your father asked me not to participate in your religious study anymore. He made me promise and ... have to honor his promise. I am his guest, after all" (256). Naveed does not find his pleasure at home: quite the contrary, he finds it in his joyful stay with the white mistresses. His wife confirms this point when she says, "What has you Father sacrificed for my sake?" (157). He desecrates the Quran since it means nothing to him. It is also quite different that the Quran is the foundation of his displeasure as it symbolizes his homeland, fellow people, religion, and most notably Islam. The way Naveed treats the Quran evidently shows his deep resentment of this religion.

> He pulled and tore pages and piece of pages falling to his feet. He tore and tore before long the carpet was covered with paper. And now Father danced and ground the pages underfoot. He had a wild look in his eye as he stepped madly on the pieces of our holy book. (247)

Naveed's reason for tearing the Quran into pieces and desecrating its tenets lies in his animosity of the wicked Muslim people as he sees them. To him, it is an indirect way of warning his son of such 'stooges' as he calls them. Naveed declares that there is mo man of God who can love God as much as he can love money. Yet, his lifelong friend, Nathan the Jewish professor, refutes his statement saying that, "My dad had a close friend who was a rabbi. He was a good man" (182). But since Naveed does not believe in the sanctity of any Muslim around him, he curses everything that is related to Islam and particularly the Quran. He speaks to his son this way:

> That's the truth. I know you don't understand why I burned your Quran, but there was a reason. It's because you're different. You can't live life by rules others give you. In that way, you and I are the same. You have to find *your own* rules. All my life I've been running away from their rules, Hayat. All my life. You will be the same. Don't ask me how I know it, but I do (320).

By the end of the novel, Hayat cannot be the American Dervish for many reasons. First, he discards all the Islamic teachings and tenets. He points out that his identity in America hinges solely on his intimacy with the Jewish people and community especially with Rachel. Hayat, has to renounce his follow people, the Muslims in general, and the Pakistanis in particular. When Hayat wants to know

more information about Mina's two children after her death, it is professor Nathan Wolfsohn, the Jewish professor, who informs whom about their lives. It is quite obvious that Hayat gets his information about Pakistani people from Professor Wolfsohn who still profoundly respects the departed Mina.

Secondly, Hayat in his dream does not stay with the Prophet till they perform the prayer. "I felt something inside me, a gnawing, an itch _ but nothing like the itching on my arm_ that at my mind tried to reach. Mina had said it was a great blessing to see the Prophet in a dream, but there didn't seem to be any blessing in mine. Instead of staying and praying with him, I'd left" (229). Third, Hayat cannot put up with any severe trial in his life. He could not digest the idea that Professor Nathan might marry Aunt Mina even though he is quite ready to be converted to Islam for her own sake. Nearly at the end of the novel when both Hayat and Professor Nathan meet, the latter says: "I never got over your aunt. She was, and always will be the love of my life" (349).

Again, Hayat could not attain or show enough patience with his father's austere vicissitudes that undesirably upset his relations with his family. Instead of giving advice to his father not to drink or pursue the white American mistresses, he collaborates with his mother to unearth his father's points of weaknesses. While Hayat is eavesdropping on his father and the nurse's flirtatious acts, he becomes fully aware of his father's debauched deeds. Hayat explains how he catches his father at that moment: "He was listening as she talked, every part of him leaned in toward her. He sipped at a drink, nodding. He looked happy. They both did. And then he kissed her" (314). The son is keeping an eye on the father while the father's posture may fall apart once the father glimpses his son watching him. "As if sensing something,

Father stopped. His gaze turned to the window. Our eyes met. He froze. Then the woman turned to look. I recognized her now. It was the nurse from the hospital room. Julie" (304).

Mina, on the other hand, is the best character in the novel who has forborne all the woes and throes she has come across. She never complains of any wrongdoings committed by any character against her. Further, she, in an attempt to teach Hayat how to be a dervish, uncovers one of her best traits. Her being a new dervish or the *American Dervish* is quite apparent in her following sermon, delivered to Hayat to teach him what it means to be a dervish. It is a mental state when life and death, happiness and sadness, and castles and prisons are all the same in her eyes. This is because she thinks of nothing but the path to God. Mina says:

> Faith has never been about an afterlife for me, Hayat. It's about finding God *now*. In the everyday. Here. With you. Whether I'm living in a prison or in a castle. Sick or healthy. It's all the same. That's what the Sufis teach. (342)

Mina adds that being a dervish perhaps means losing identity, dignity and even personality. Such an image of a true dervish is the other side of assimilation into any community. She openly declares that she could be a speak of dust, or a grain of sand, or nothing at all so that she will not hurt or be hurt by anybody on earth. In doing so, she best practices the meaning of assimilation to the extent that she does not care about the outer forms of her religion: therefore, "She didn't wear a head scarf" (66). To show the meaning of a true dervish or Sufi, Mina observes:

> "'To be a Sufi,'" she continued, "'means to give up the world and everything in it. To be a Sufi means to depend on nothing, to want

> nothing, to be nothing. A Sufi is a day that needs no sun, a night that needs no moon, no stars. A Sufi is like the dust on the ground, not the stones that hurt people's feet when they walk, but the dust that no one knows is even there.'" (274)

When one examines the aforementioned characteristics of a dervish or a Sufi, it seems quite apparent that Mina is the true one. She marries Hamed Suhail who divorces her three times and threatens her to take his son back to his custody. It is also Mina who accepts the invitation to come to Milwaukee, accompanied by her son Imran, to live as two guests with Hayat's father and mother.

Mina teaches Hayat Quranic lessons for nothing, quits teaching him when his father asks her to do so, cooks food for them like a maid, shows her utter readiness to marry the Jewish man, marries the sadistic man Sunil Chatha whose white American wife divorces him, and lastly dies at the hands of Sunil after a long imposes upon her, Mina changes her physical form in a way to assimilate herself into community. Again, part of her assimilation into society is displayed in her unwavering willingness to marry the Jewish man, Professor Wolfsohn.

It is quite obvious that Mina, not Hayat, is the dervish in the novel since it is she, not he, who can attain the true traits of a real dervish. It is worth noting that Hayat is the one identity, a search which ends in abjuring his Islamic tenets so that he can find his resort in assimilation. "The image that I thought I'd taught myself to forget would return, unbidden- her breasts; the thick, dark triangle at the top of her legs- and hours of confusion and unrest would ensure. I made fresh attempts to suppress the mental picture. To no avail. The more I resisted, the more persistent it proved" (117).

Later, he learns down in order to give Mina a kiss. The affectionate relation between the two seems to be mutual and both admit it. After kissing her, "I shrugged, suddenly elated. I leaned in to touch my lips to Mina's check. That's so sweet, behta. I love you, Auntie. I love you, too, Hayat. And then I left her there- her smile still brimming- and went up to my room" (208).

Hayat's mind is not only obsessed with Mina's image of her naked body, but also by her photograph, which his mother "posted the photo on our refrigerator door (18)." Hayat explains the ineffable effect the photo has on him both physically and psychologically. "One night I lost myself. Mina's picture before me, my hands between my legs, I disappeared into pleasure. Before I knew it, my loins shuddered and convulsed, releasing something thick and wet inside my underwear" (178).

In addition to Mina's image of the naked body and photo, Mina's physical proximity to Hayat disturbs him and ineffably quakes his body. "As long as you respect the Prophet's memory, that's the important thing. Mina leaned in to turn the page. Her arm brushed against mine, her touch whispering along my skin and echoing up my arm to the back of my neck" (53).

On another occasion, Mina takes the young boy into her arms, reminding him that he would become a hafiz someday. It is a moment which witnesses the amalgam of both physical and intellectual motives. Mina intends to remind him of becoming a hafiz while he is entirely obsessed with her exquisite beauty and convulsed with strong emotions. "She was so surprised. She took me into her arms, and all at once I felt it again: that exquisite shudder running along my limbs, up my back. I have a feeling about you, she said into my ear. I have a feeling you might just end up a hafiz someday" (42) Hence forth, a young boy like Hayat tutored by the beautiful Mina can

be neither a dervish nor a hafiz. It is perhaps part of the author's craftsmanship to show Hayat's abortive attempt to be either a dervish or a hafiz when author portrays Hayat's life as being possessed by his infatuation with his mentor, Mina. The next chapter tries to tackle the problems related to immigrants who live among western communities in general and America in particular. It also presents the struggle of the immigrants, trying to assimilate themselves with the host culture.

Chapter Three

Process of Assimilation

Ayad Akhtar's novel *American Dervish* presents the struggle of the immigrants, trying to assimilate themselves with the host culture. As Mark Krikorian says that "assimilation is really a psychological process where you come to identify with a new country as yours". The ease of overseas travel and information access interferes with that". There are also people who try to hinge on their faith managing to resist assimilation, and a few others despite their conservative background, easily move on their journey, and try to integrate themselves with the cosmopolitan culture of their host country.

In due process they drift away from the religion of their birth, and their faith becomes a matter of chance. The second generation settlers tread a different path; they find themselves in a quandary because of the experience of their parents with the cosmopolitan culture and the uncertainty they face. The protagonist Hayat Shah comes into this complex world, where he faces hurdles in assimilating to the modern world.

People who migrate to the cosmopolitan centres like America and Europe, especially Muslims, most often find themselves in a quagmire with regard to their cultural and religious identity. Their positioning of themselves in between two cultural polarities of faith and cosmopolitanism sometimes poses difficulties in their efforts to assimilate to the new situation. The novel *American Dervish* focuses generally on the challenges faced by the immigrants in a foreign country with a

cosmopolitan culture, and particularly in the case of the Pakistani Muslim family in America.

Ayad Akhtar's novel *American Dervish* examines the dilemma of the immigrant family of Hayat Shah thrown between the overbearing influences of their faith on the one hand and the promises of the secular space they have adopted, on the other. In the novel, Ayad Akhtar portrays a second generation Pakistani boy's struggle in choosing between his religion and the culture of cosmopolitanism. However, different characters in the novel try to change their attitude towards religion.

Even the other characters in *American Dervish* face this difficult situation. The novel presents the Pakistani immigrant family of Naveed Shah, consisting of his wife Muneer and their son Hayat, who is in his preteens at the beginning of the novel. Naveed finds more freedom in America than Pakistan; he falters from his faith in the process of trying to adapt to the American Culture, which threatens to ruin his family life.

Hayat is a second generation Pakistani immigrant, who finds himself in a tricky situation, because of his mother's influence of Jews and her liking for them. His tutor Mina Ali, who is a childhood friend of his mother, comes to stay with them fearing persecution from her husband. She teaches him the Quran and basic principles of Islam. Hayat is torn between his father's idea about religion and Mina's teachings. His case exemplifies the problems encountered by immigrant communities in general, where they try to grapple with their state of being in between and cosmopolitan.

Hayat's life is mixture of identities from the beginning of the novel; his relationship with a Jewish girl, Rachel, is a step forward for his getting absorbed in the American society and his mother always talks about the influence Jews had on her. She tries to bring him up as a Jew, because in her opinion, Jews are at their utmost civility when it comes to treating women; she says this is the reason why she is trying to bring him up like a Jew:

> She leaned in, kissing me on the nose, her face just inches from mine, her soulful eyes swollen with abounding love. "That's why I'm bringing you up differently, so that you learn how to respect a woman. That's the truth, *Kurban:* I'm bringing you up like a little Jew." (117)

Hayat's mother welcomes Nathan Wolfsohn, a Jewish doctor and a friend of her husband, and Mina's marriage, because she thinks that Mina would be respected by Nathan, irrespective of her broken marriage. She says, "I keep telling her the fact that Nathan Jewish is good *thing.* They understand how to respect women, *behta*, they understand how to let a woman be a woman, to let her take care of them." (117).

Her liking of the Jews was passed on to her by her father and forefathers who happened to mingle with them during Second World War. Hayat takes this seriously and develops a relationship with Rachel and he feels liberated and complete in her company. He discovers himself by having an interfaith romance with her. His eating of pork in the college makes him a full-fledged American. The vendor mistakenly hands him a bratwurst, he tries to call the vendor but he had already gone away.

> I turned back to the aisle to call out to the vendor when I stopped. What reason did I have anymore not to eat it? I lifted the sausage to my mouth, closed my eyes, and took a bite. My heart raced as I chewed,

> my mouth filling with a sweet and smoky, lightly pungent taste that seemed utterly remarkable- perhaps all the more so for having been so long forbidden. I felt at once brave and ridiculous. (4)

He feels that a burden has been removed, that night he had a sound and peaceful sleep, "I slept soundly that night, held in restful sleep like a baby in a mother's loving arm" (5). Mina's attempt to teach him the Quran, failed because of Hayat's father.

Mina tries to revive the faith of her friend's family who seem to have lost in the American wave. She supervises Hayat's religious learning. Hayat agrees to learn the Quran because of his infatuation towards her physical appearance. He wants to be near her. Mina narrates the life story with the "white prostitutes". He memorizes the Quran in English but his only aim in learning is to free his parents from the fires of hell.

> This was how the hafiz broke it up, the hafiz, or those who knew our holy book by heart. Mina said that becoming a hafiz was one of the greatest things a person could do in one's life. It meant not only securing one's own place in Janaat, but a place for one's parent as well. (54)

Naveed did not approve of his son learning the Quran. He forbids Mina from teaching him, because he feels that the Quran deters him from adopting his cosmopolitan culture and generates differences between Nathan and him. Hayat is confused that Mina is in loves a Jew, whom the scripture mentions as the cursed people. He argues with Mina about the status of Jews, when Mina scolds him not to spread lies against Nathan she says,

> But it was wrong for you to say what you said. It's not what is written in the Quran. Yes it is Auntie...it says in... You're too young to understand somethings. The Quran says many things. And some you'll not understand until you're older. (236)

His belief that the pages of the scripture will not burn, is shattered when Naveed, in a fit of anger tore the pages, danced on them and burnt them: "His thumb snapped at the lighter's switch, producing a thin, long flame. He flashed me a treacherous smile as he held the flame to the pages and waited. It wasn't until the paper actually caught fire that I realized I was surprised. I had expected the pages not to burn" (249).

But he continues memorizing the verses, so that he could save his parents from hell fire. Farhaz, the fifteen-year-old hafiz, is unable to stop laughing when he recites these verses in English. The Imam of the Milwaukee mosque also does not approve of his recitation though he praises him for his effort. Farhaz laughs, "You're a moron. Didn't anybody ever tell you it doesn't count if it's not in Arabic" (317). Hayat was eager to know whether his hard work will bear fruit. He asks the Imam about it.

> "Farhaz says it doesn't count if I didn't memorize the Quran in Arabic." "Arabic is our holy language, young man." "Does it count in English?" "Count for what?" "To get me and my parents into heaven." Souhef looked at me, a gentle light in his eyes. He smiled shaking his head. (317)

He feels that he was mocked by everyone. He gives up his effort lowly and by the time he meets Mina in her death bed after a decade, he is able to realize that he has

come away from religion, barely remembering what he has memorized. In a dream he sees himself walking away from the middle of a prayer which is led by the prophet,

> I walked out of the mosque and left them praying. Outside, the sun was shining, bright and strong. I looked down and notices my arm was covered with a golden cast. There was a name signed across it: Yitzhak. I woke up. (229)

The loss of identity is explicit in Naveed's approach towards religion. "Religion can play an important role in defining a person's identity (Shih-Yi Huang 31)". He tries to assimilate himself in the cosmopolitan culture and thereby loses his Muslim character once he arrives in America. His abhorrence towards religion starts from the time his mother enforces a strict rule in their house, waking up her children early and beating them for not following the prayer timings. Hayat says that, "Father's antipathy for the faith came from the fact that his own mother used devotedness to abuse her children, beating them out of bed for their morning prayers, not feeding them if they never put in their hours of religious study" (49).

His impact on his wife is so much that she too loses her faith. Hayat sheds light on this point when he says, "I heard more tales from Mother about Father's mistresses than anything else. Deep down, Mother was a believer, but the years she'd spent with Father- who thought religion was for fools- had trained her, I think, to check her religious impulses" (49).

He also believes that religious people like the Chahta's are hypocrites and he does not approve of their peaking against the Americans or the Jews. He does not mingle with the Pakistani families scattered in Milwaukee, their get-together is referred to as herds by him. Hayat says,

> Mother was referring to the Pakistani families scattered throughout Greater Milwaukee, people we barely spent any time with because Father hated them. He called them sheep, claiming that they gathered like herd animals as a way of avoiding the fact they were no longer in Pakistan. (80)

When Nathan speaks about religion to Mina he interrupts them saying that this topic is only for fools, "Religion, my friends, is a topic for fools. And this conversation is a living proof" (146). No wonder then that Naveed scorns all aspects of religion, as stressed by Randy Boyagoda when she says: "Hayat's father is a philandering alcoholic neurologist who wears his atheism proudly, scorns the local immigrant Muslim community, and regards all religions, and Islam in particular, as backward and embarrassingly crude" (2).

The same way he forbids Mina from teaching the Quran to Hayat and also the tenants of Islam. She has to stop teaching because it is a part of her assimilation to the society and succumbing to her guest's rule, she says,

> Come here, Hayat. She said, sitting on the bed and patting at the place beside her. I sat next to her. Behta, she began. Your father asked me not to participate in your religious study anymore. He made me promise and... I have to honor his promise. I am his guest, after all. (256)

By the time Hayat narrates the story of his parents, their life is already in shambles. Naveed had started cheating his wife, the moment they landed in America. Hayat says ". . . in Milwaukee's, where the landscape was flat as a table and covered for months with snow. It was a place she didn't understand. She was with a man who

started cheating on her almost as soon as they arrived in America. In short, by the time I was ten, she'd been miserable for years" (25).

As a result, Hayat starts to hate his father's behavior. He says, "Throughout my childhood, Mother spared me little detail about her troubles with Father. And at ten, I already know myself well enough to know that if I listened too closely to what she said, my blood would start to boil" (27).

A factor which has a great influence on Hayat is his mother's fascination for the Jews. Her grandfather's admiration for the Jews was the reason behind Muneer's decision. The love story of Mina and Nathan was a positive sign for her, as she was of the opinion that Jews respected women and her individuality. When Mina was worried about Nathan's religion she says it is a good thing that he is a Jew, and tells Hayat that,

> I keep telling her the fact that Nathan's Jewish is a good *thing*. They understand how to respect women, *behta*. They understand how to let a woman be a woman, to let her take care of them. They understand how to give a woman attention. (117)

She also tells Hayat that this is the reason why she is bringing up as a Jew. "That's why I'm bringing you up differently, so that you can learn how to respect a woman. That's the truth, *Kurban*: I'm bringing you up like a little Jew" (117). Her obsession was so much that she did not send Hayat to school during Jewish festivals. Moreover she drove long distances to buy meat from a Jewish butcher and also enjoyed talking to them. Her experience of marital life had given her a bad opinion about Muslim men. Naveed' behavior was responsible for her approach towards Muslim men. She had given up her studies in Pakistan and came to America to settle

there. She considered it as a great mistake not to have completed her degree. Hayat says,

> It was always her great regret that she didn't wait to finish her degree-ending up far from home, in Milwaukee's rural westerly suburbs, a stone's throw from dairy country, where the landscape was flat as a table covered for months with snow. (25)

Hayat says that he remembers his father's deception on his mother from the time he was five years old. He says, "I'd been hearing about Father's mistresses since the night Mother dragged me through the streets of Milwaukee as a five-year-old, searching for Father, who we eventually found at the apartment of a woman he worked with at the hospital. I waited in the stairwell as she and Father shouted at each other" (27).

Hayat's obsession for Mina and her closeness is threatened when Nathan comes into her life, though they are separated by religion their understanding makes think about their marriage. When Mina asks Hayat about his opinion on Nathan he says, "How could he be my uncle?" (155) The Quran say so many things Islam is a wonderful way of life

He incites Imran not to accept a white man as his father and also succeeds in stopping her marriage by sending a cable to her parents in Pakistan. Her father threatens her with dire consequences, and stops the marriage. Nathan is ready to convert, in order to marry her. Her first marriage to Hamed Suhail ends in divorce. She flies Pakistan to save her son Imran from Hamed, who threaten to take him away. Due to this she loses her faith in arranged marriages. When her parents asks her to remarry,

> She told her parents that not only was she interested, but there was no chance she would ever, ever consider another arranged marriage after what happened with Hamed. Her father started screaming. She screamed back. And then he hung up on her. (100)

She finds an alternative in Nathan, but his religion is an obstacle though he is ready to convert for her sake. But the immigrant community and the local mosque do not want to accept a Jew. As Voltaire says, "wherever there is a settled society, religion is necessary; the laws cover manifest crimes, and religion covers secret crimes". Thus religion plays a significant role in splitting the lovers.

The next chapter showcases the Politics of Polyvocality and the diversity of voices within Islam. It demonstrates how polyvocality actively catalyzes power relations within the Muslim community and is not simply the product of pre-existing hierarchies.

Chapter Four

The Politics of Polyvocality

American Dervish showcases the politics of polyvocality and the diversity of voices within Islam. While polyvocality is often celebrated as a challenge to representations of Islam as a monolith, *American Dervish* illustrates that it is neither a neutral concept nor an end unto itself. Written in the bildungsroman form or the story of formation of a Muslim protagonist into a national citizen, the novel orchestrates polyvocality towards specific ideological ends. The bildungsroman's insistence on the reconciling Islam with national belonging necessitates a univocal resolution to polyvocality, which requires the novel to draw distinction between the Islamic approaches, legitimize hierarchies between them, and privilege select voices that reinforce national agendas. *American Dervish*, specifically, draws on Sufism's embattled and marginalized position within Islam to project it a amenable to national inclusion, and dismisses and discounts other Islamic voices, sanctioning hatred against them.

Polyvocal community is the one that speaks with multiple voices. The term polyphony suggests the idea of many voices. The struggles and lives of multiple communities in the Muslim diaspora have found their voices in this genre. *American Dervish* has indeed emerged as the preeminent form that showcases the plurality within Muslim community. Mikhail Bakhtin defines the genre of the novel "a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (262). That is, the genre's capacity to establish polyvocality or elaborate the relationships between "the heteroglot, multi-voiced, multi-styled, and often multi-

languaged elements is the quintessential prerequisite for authentic novelistic prose" (264).

The novel's setting is narrowly focused on Milwaukee's Muslim community of the 1980s. Its polyvocality, based on a broad cast of characters an "unruly mass" with "various hues of brown" (301) lends it the halo of an epic, a grand and new kind of American text that interweaves Islam with the fabric of the nation. Because of the contradictions they engender, proclamations of the novel's greatness and polyvocality deserve further analysis in the current historical moment that views Islam and America as vehemently opposed.

American Dervish is also important because it is, like the other Muslim polyvocal novels, written in the bildungsroman form. The bildungsroman does not simply reflect or dramatize polyvocality. Instead, the politics of polyvocality extend beyond the novel's pages because this form plays an active role in the formation of the national community. Ayad Akhtar's novel traces the life of the young Pakistani American Hayat Shah from a youthful eleven year old to his college year, a journey of discovering himself "not only as a man, but as an American" (345). His family, much like the rest of the characters, is part of a South Asian community of professional elites. Highly educated, wealthy, and upwardly mobile, this immigrant religious community, historically formed in response to the state's need for professional labor, exemplifies the Asian American racial formation of "model minority". Hayat is surrounded by stock characters, each representing a different strain of Islam, and together, they make competing claims on his Islamic faith. Hayat's father, Naveed, is a secular neurologist who thinks religion is for fools. For his mother, Muneer, a believer in Jewish exceptionalism, the question of religion is less connected to daily rituals or religious practice and more about adultery and treating women with respect.

In the face of Naveed's string of affairs with white women, she thinks that Muslim men fail where Jewish men are steadfast and respectable:

> They understand how to respect women, behta. They understand how to let a woman be a woman, to let her take care of them. They understand how to give a women attention. I told Mina-Auntie that he will give her a life she can never dream of with a Muslim man. Muslim men are terrified of women... all of them. (117)

Ghaleb Chatha, the pharmacist, is a Quran literalist. He is immensely wealthy and well-integrated into the American social fabric, but he wishes destruction on American non-believers. Hayat has a teenage crush on Mina, his mother's friend who arrives in Milwaukee after escaping an abusive relationship in Pakistan and steers him toward Sufism or Islamic mysticism. The novel *American Dervish* comprises Hayat's struggles in sifting through these various voices of American Islam in a way that allows him to "merrily play at becoming the sort of American boy- embracing a bright future unhampered by his Muslim apprenticeship" (333).

American Dervish, therefore, offers a complex understanding of polyvocal Islam. First, it demonstrates how polyvocality actively catalyzes power relations within the Muslim community and is not simply the product of pre-existing hierarchies. Second, polyvocality within Islam signals neither egalitarianism nor democracy but produces its own privileges, hierarchies, injustices, erasures, and even failures. It is indeed ironic that while Muslim novels, including *American Dervish*, showcase polyvocality to challenge commonly held stereotypes about Muslims, they do not seriously engage with all the voices. The nation's demand for a univocal resolution to the bildungsroman mandates that they curtail or contain this very

polyvocality. That is, the depiction of pluralism within Islam, while clearly a challenge to "monolithic essentialism" is no guarantee against "silencing the multivocality of the Muslim articulations" (Malik 1).

The privileges and erasures of polyvocality in *American Dervish* emerge from a unique dialectic between the individual and the community. Governed by a triangular relationship between the individual, the Muslim community, and the American nation, the novel challenges the Western literary construction of bildungsroman as a genre of bourgeois individualism. Hayat's view of Muslim diversity on display at Mina's wedding with Sunil, the aforementioned triangulation reveals the uneasy intersections of consumerist capitalism, histories of colonialism, and American racial hierarchies: "The hall was filled with folks like us, and so was the lobby: Our various hues of brown, our baggy clothes, our skullcaps and beards, our shawls and head scarves on full display" (301).

Hayat' consciousness is not simply his individual terrain but has the capacity to reflect a panoramic view of society with its various boundaries and divisions of race and class. Beneath the polyvocality of "our various hues of brown," Hayat discerns common histories of colonialism that evoke Muslim diasporic sites as Cairo, Delhi, and Baghdad. He sees their markers of wealth and consumer capitalism, scarves and clothes, as efforts to repossess the dignity denied them by racial subjugation. The crowd has a complex relationship with the "white help", who in spite of a lower class standing are racially dominant and therefore retain some authority to contain the Muslim coward.

> Keep! It! Moving! People! He shouted as if addressing a crowd he wasn't sure understood what he was saying. To! The! Back!

> He yelled again, exasperated. But the crowd paid him no mind. It was a growing, unruly, mass, jabbering and moving about aimlessly.
>
> (301)

Ayad Akhtar devotes the rest of the novel to untangling this inscrutable, interpretive knot of hierarchies that prompts him to refer to the multivalent Muslim community as an "unruly mass," sorting out approaches that can be more incorporable into the nation. Hayat begins to untangle the "unruly mass" that he externally identifies with and parses its boundaries and fault lines by interiorizing n his psychology the various Muslim voices of this mass.

The internalization of plural viewpoints by a Muslim teenager requires to mature into American manhood reduces polyvocal Islam to a conflict in need of a resolution into a single, clear voice that can speak language of the nation, and religion onto a state of apprenticeship from which one must graduate into national belonging. For example, toward the close of the novel, Hayat says, "My soul was outgrowing the child-sized raiment with which my Islamic childhood had outfitted me"(332), words that signify that maturity means telescoping out from the narrow confines of Islam into the wide-eyed American future. In another instance, he says, "I could merrily play at becoming the sort of American boy- embracing a bright future, unhampered by his Muslim apprenticeship I the necessity of pain- that my childhood would not have promised" (333).

The phrase 'Muslim apprenticeship' indicates that the novel views religion as a period of training, reserved for novices, and not as a state of achievement or fruition.

Hayat's internalization of polyvocal Islam then becomes merely a dalliance at best, a painful encumbrance at worst, that needs to be shed to thrive as *American Dervish*.

The novel aligns the hate-mongering, exclusionary version of Islam with a teenager's point of view, rendering the literalist orthodox approach as nothing more than a childish preposition, something only believed by immature, gullible people and not by mature adults. Hayat's internalization of this exclusionary strain within the religion is an extension of his teenage crush and possessiveness of Mina, who is in love with Nathan Wolfsohn, a Jewish neurologist and Naveed's partner in medical practice. When Nathan goes to the Mosque to explore the possibility of converting to Islam in order to marry Mina, Imam Souhef delivers an anti-Semitic sermon intended to rattle the possible convert. While the adults Naveed and Nathan are resistant to Imam Souhef's hate-mongering, Hayat wholeheartedly believes the sermon. He believes that this hatred should motivate Nathan to continue with his plans to convert in order to disprove the hateful rhetoric in the first place. Otherwise, he says "*The Quran is right*, I thought. They *will never change*" (210).

That the darkest deeds and villainy of ending Mina's and Nathan's relationship are attempted by the very young Hayat, who only partially understands the consequences of his own actions and acting out of the literalist approach as mere childish behaviour, not worth engaging with enough to define or understand its hazily-defined contours. But most importantly, this approach to delegitimize and dismiss the literalist orthodox voice also simplistically, and contradictorily, provides legitimate reasons, thereby sanctioning hatred against this approach.

The story of the dervish reminds Hayat of his own distinguished class status of begin the "chosen one" and of the wide chasm between his model minority elite

standing and working class America. When Mina narrates the story, he mishears the word "dervish" as "gurvish", which fills his mind with the image of Mr. Gurvitz, the school janitor "trailing a trash can on wheels" (101). As Mina relates the story of the dervish at the side if the road, Hayat sees Mr.Gurvitz in his mind's eye: "And I saw him now, in tattered clothes, defeated sitting beside an empty road" (103). The immature Hayat feigns ignorance proclaiming that he "didn't understand what Mina was saying" (104) in the dervish story. Mina's Sufi narrative makes him yearn for a connection with the non-Muslim working class American, bridging the gap of race and religion that place him at odds with America, but leaves unquestioned his status as wealthy model minority and the promise of America as inclusionary and democratic.

The idea of distinction then becomes a crucial pivot between religion and nation. Both Hayat's reconciliation with the nation and acceptance as a legitimate religious subject rely on polyvocality as the means to establish distinction, or the idea that some are the chosen ones, whether by nation or by God. The novel deploys Sufism to appeal to the nation as the final arbiter of Muslim inclusion. It is significant that the moment that provide a unvocal Sufi resolution, or that distinguishes and chooses Sufism over the other voices, also erases the distinction between Hayat and fellow Americans.

When Hayat goes to the library to return his English translation of the Quran to mark the end if his apprenticeship in polyvocal Islam and his dalliance with the literalist orthodox approach, he encounters Mr.Gurvitz, "the bald old janitor pushing his trash can along on its wheels" (325). Mr.Gurvitz, who entered Hayat's consciousness through Mina's dervish story, recognizes him for the first time and

says, "Thing is, I see you around, and I have this feeling about you. Like you're a good kid" (325).

The simultaneity of Hayat's giving up of the Quran and Mr.Gurvitz's approval and recognition of Hayat the moment that solidifies Hayat's trajectory toward belonging a an American- has two significant implications. First, this cross class, cross religion solidarity between Mr.Gurvitz and Hayat, based on their mutual recognition as fellow Americans no better worse than each other, is rather superficial and politically vacuous for it does not dismantle either the class hierarchies that sep the two or the authority of the nation state. The surface nature of this solidarity ultimately reflects the tenuousness and superficiality of Hayat's American belonging, symbolized in the novel by other shallow gestures such as eating a pork sausage forbidden by his Islamic faith. The pork sausage is, troublingly, Hayat's most solid gateway to American freedom, for after eating it, he proclaims:

> I felt alive as I moved. Free along my limbs. Even giddy. Back at the dorm, I stood before the bathroom mirror. My shoulders looked different. Not hurdled, but open. Unburdened. My eyes drew my gaze, and there I saw what I was feeling something quiet, strong, still. I felt like I was complete. (4)

The hyperbolic language used to express how a pork sausage ushers in American freedom mocks and satirizes the demands America places on its Muslim subjects. A national belonging based on something a trivial and arbitrary as a pork sausage also reveals the fragility of Muslim inclusion in the nation.

Second, the simultaneity of giving up the Quran and Mr.Gurvitz's approval suggests that it is Sufism's embattled and marginalized position within Islam as

centered on ethics rather than doctrines, a version of Islam that s not really Islam that allows Hayat to claim legitimacy as both a religious subject and an American. On the other hand, the unorthodox aspects of Mina's Sufism are rejected and ridiculed by other Islamic voices. For instance, the Quran that Hayat memorizes under Mina's tutelage is in English and not in the requisite Arabic, because as she explains "it is the intention that matters" (53) and "not what language you speak" (323).

When Hayat recites from the English Quran to gain the title of hafiz, the vitriolic Imam Souhef dismisses the recital as one that does not count while others call Hayat a "moron" (317). Hayat's relinquishing of the Quran is not simply about repudiating the literalist approach. Instead he rejects the most visible manifestations of Islamic tradition in Sufism, such as the Quran, and retreats to the internal world of ethics and spirituality. Faced with the nation's demands for assimilation and rejection by other Islamic traditions, Hayat disciplines his faith to the extent that he becomes a religious subject without God. As Akhtar himself says of Hayat's transformation onto an *American Dervish*, Hayat has to lose all his ideas about God and faith and Islam in order to experience that deepening of the heart that the Sufis identify as the result of closeness to the divine sources. But Hayat is an American Sufi not because he gives up everything to attain Allah.

Hayat's object of desire is neither divinity nor Sufism but America itself, and it is only when he provides a univocal Sufi resolution to polyvocal Islam and renounces the outward trappings of religion that he can attain the respectability of national belonging. Hayat can belong to America only as a devout skeptic, for whom religion is nothing more than an intellectual pursuit, something to take classes in at college.

As a response to a culture that imagines Muslim men as violent Islamists, Hayat's path to national assimilation and inclusion is through an embodied feminine approach, a central battleground between Sufism and the wider Islamic tradition. The novel indicts Islam as "a culture that made no place for a woman" (17). Its representation of Sufism, however, offers an alternative for it envisions sexuality inextricably interwoven with daily, quotidian religious practices. It is Mina's hypersexualized persona that draws him to her stories of the Prophet and dervishes and ultimately, to the study of the Quran. The overlap between his religious awakening and sexual awakening is complete and total. Hayat recounts multiple encounters when his sexual attraction to Mina leads him to more pious attitude and rigor in Quranic Studies: "Mina leaned in to turn the page of the Quran. Her arm brushed against mine, her touch whispering along my skin and echoing up my arm to the back of my neck" (53).

The tingling nerves and "exquisite shudders" (58) become shocking reality when through a crack in the bathroom door, Hayat witnesses Mina masturbating. He says,

> Another shut farther down the hall. I was in turmoil. I tried to sleep, and then I finally did. I tossed and turned through the night, the verses I'd learned echoing in my mind, the perfect form of Mina's naked body- and that shocking darkness at the top of her legs- haunting my dreams. (72)

While Hayat draws distinctions between Sufism and other Islamic approaches to achieve acceptance in America, the contradictions between the erasure of

distinction as offered in the dervish's story and the bildungsroman imperative to produce distinction are scripted on Mina's body. Hayat describes the contradiction as,

> I remember not telling her what I was really thinking: that she herself was a paradox I couldn't resolve, my opposing ideas of her- enlightened and devour; intrepid and passive- only ever colliding. And never sitting comfortable enough for me to hold them at all, let alone function. (340)

Sufism does not censure Mina for harboring sexual desires o falling in love with the Jewish Nathan Wolfsohn, but ultimately the patriarchal domination of the literalist orthodox approach favored by her tow abusive husbands extinguishes her desire. The novel punishes her sexual transgressions and erases the gender egalitarian possibilities of Sufism by representing her body as sick and suffering, decaying with cancer. As in the dervish's story of erasing distinction, God's love and her pure intention do not make her the chosen one and she suffers a fate no better or worse than that of other voices within the religion. It is Mina who ends up embodying Sufism's embattled and marginalized position because these contradictions are unsustainable for Hayat's nationalistic pursuits, and he finds Mina's Sufi teachings as nothing more than empty stories:

> What are all these Sufi tales, I thought, but fictions she's using to shed a redeeming glow on a life scored with pain, pain I caused her, pain Sunil caused her and that she should have sought not simply to bear, but escape? (342).

Renouncing the intersections between Sufism and Islam and labeling Mina's erasure of distinction as nothing more than "fiction" enables Hayat to distinguish

himself from other Islamic approaches, a distinction that renders him acceptable but sanctions hatred and exclusion of others. The embodied feminine approach espoused by Sufism reconciles the protagonist with the gendered ideal of the nation, upholds the American racial formations of model minority, and consolidates class hierarchies.

Hayat's achievement of American belonging is, in more ways than one, a return to the mother. After finding American fulfillment in a pork sausage, he says "I slept soundly that night, held in restful sleep like a baby in a mother's loving arms"(5). These clichés of America's innocence and freedom belie the conflicts and sacrifices demanded of Hayat to be accepted into meaningful American citizenship. His incorporation into the gendered ideal of the nation s also manifested in his romantic relationship with a white Jewish woman Rachel: "It was in Rachel's arms and it was with her love- that I finally discovered myself not only as a man, but as an American" (345).

Contrary to his father's affairs with white women that earn his mother Muneer's wrath, Hayat's relationship can muster his Jewish exceptionalist, mother's respect. Echoing the Mina- Nathan romance and the Naveed- Nathan partnership, Hayat's self-affirmation as an American finds a firm footing not in the cross-class identification with Mr. Gurvitz but in the interracial romance between a Muslim and Jewish American. Hayat and Rachel's romance bridges the religious chasm between Islam and Judaism because it is based in Hayat's distance from "God and faith and Islam", and class and racial proximity between South Asian and Jewish Americans.

Asian Americans and Jewish Americans share the historical experiences of systematic discrimination and also the distorting racial designation of "honorary whites" and "model minorities", labels that silence and discipline them while denying

the existence of class and gender hierarchies within these communities. The novel's interracial romance, then, reveal the conflict on the common ground of higher class status and racial partnerships based on compliance with the American racial system. That is, Hayat's American citizenship and belonging are based in his conformity with the national racial, class, and religious hierarchies. His belonging also depends on a move away from intra-faith polyvocality to interfaith solidarity, the more visible and acceptable vision of pluralism.

Chapter Five

Summation

Ayad Akhtar is a Pakistani American writer. Akhtar is an American playwright, novelist, and screenwriter. He received Pulitzer Prize for his Drama, *Disgraced.* His works covers the theme of the American-Muslim experiences, immigration and the aspects of culture. *American Dervish* is his debut novel. It is about the pre-teen age boy who is questioning about his own culture. It is an immigrant novel, where the people from Pakistan migrated towards the city of Wisconsin. In addition, it reflects the Pakistani family's struggle to combine in American mid west.

Ayad Akhtar's wonderful first novel *American Dervish* tells quintessentially American coming-of-age story. This coming-of-age story encounters the problems by the Muslim immigrants who live in America. The child of the immigrants struggles to find a place in his life for the traditions and beliefs of his ancestral homeland in a new world of broader possibilities that are both enticing and threatening. The Shah family belongs to Muslim, and the position of women in the Islamic community is a central, agonizing concern. *American Dervish* so richly depicts a wide variety of humanly inconsistent and fallible characters that it feels reductive to call it a Muslim American novel, yet it is impossible to call it anything else because it is steeped in the tenets of Islam and a fierce debate over their deepest meaning.

Exploring the formative moments in the life of a Milwaukee born Muslim boy growing up in the 1980s, *American Dervish* avoids the politically over determined pressure and reactively sentimental payoffs of representing post Muslim American life. Moreover, leaving aside its unfortunate opening and closing frame chapters, where the struggle to believe is treated in banal, secular triumphalist terms from the

protagonist's adult vantage, this novel persuasively represents Islam as an active, complex source of theologically framed consolation and challenge for Midwestern Muslims, who emerge a variously flawed believers at odds with each other about the nature and imperatives of their faith. Its representation of Islam in America resonates strongly with parallel situations for major Christian and Jewish denominations, specifically the phenomenon of stark, even pointed, internal differentiation intensified by outsiders' usually simplistic, reliably critical assumptions.

The novel's protagonist and narrator is twelve year old Hayat Shah, whose life changes when his beautiful, devout aunt, Mina, comes to stay with his family in suburban Milwaukee. Mina, a cousin of Hayat's mother, is trying to escape a bad marriage in Pakistan, and her arrival immediately alters both family and faith dynamics for the better.

Ayad Akhtar does present a character with anti-Muslim beliefs Hayat's father, Naveed. However, it doesn't have much opportunity to find faith with this character's rage at what Naveed refers to as "their mindlessness" because he spent the novel drinking and cheating on his wife. At one point in the story, he tries to prevent Hayat from following the Muslim faith by burning his Quran.

Identity, assimilation and Muslim life are the major themes in the *American Dervish*. Hayat struggles with his identity as a Muslim while Mina, his father and his mother all have different ideas of what being Muslim means. Another important theme is the treatment of women in the Muslim culture. This is exemplified by Mina's treatment by her husbands, and to a certain extent, by Hayat. Her first husband seeks to leave her and take their child. Hayat goes out of his way to destroy what might have been a healthy and happy relationship between Mina and Nathan. Then, Mina remarries, but her new husband physically abuses her. Because Mina

believes that whatever she experiences is her path to Allah, not even her desire for autonomy and the freedom to self- identity can free her from the abuses put upon her because of her sex.

Book One deals with the character, Mina who just arrived from Pakistan in order to escape from her problems in her life, staying with her best friend Muneer. Mina is married to a Muslim man named Hamed Suhail Ali. However, she does not lead a peaceful life with her husband. She divorced from her husband and moved with her son, Imran to America. Muneer eventually helps her to overcome the cruelties in her. She shows the new world in America, which is completely contrasting to the life which she, lives before. The Book One also focuses on the protagonist Hayat who was ten years old pre-teen-age boy. After the arrival of Mina, Hayat was not only impressing by the beauty and the spiritual knowledge on her, but also physically attracted to her.

Book Two deals with the character Dr. Nathan Wolfsohn, a Jewish man. He is a friend and a colleague to Dr. Shah who is the father of the protagonist. Mina meets Nathan at a party, which is to celebrate the early spring in America. Mina and Nathan fall in love with each other at first sight and they started dating each other. There was a good relationship maintained between the Jews and Muslims. Muneer had a good opinion about the Jews. However, she insists Mina to marry a Jewish man, Nathan.

Book Three focuses on Mina's marriage with the Jewish man, Nathan. Nathan was ready to convert himself from Jew to Muslim on order to marry Mina. However, the local Imam does not accept the Jew to convert as a Muslim. In addition, Hayat sends a telegram to the Karachi address regarding Mina's marriage. Mina felt disappointed as she failed in her marriage.

Finally, in Book Four, Mina married a Muslim man, Sunil Chatha who was abusive. His cruelty reveals only after her marriage. Therefore, Mina led an unhappily married with him and she fell into dead bed. Hayat felt guilt over his deed for what he had done to Mina. He quit learning Quran and his interest to become a hafiz. The epilogue reveals the truth that Mina and Nathan were in secretly contact even after her marriage.

The introductory chapter discusses about the literature and the other works of author and the awards which he won for his works. It also has the part of presenting the contemporary writers of Ayad Akhtar and about the American Immigrant Novels. Coming-of-age story is a genre of literature, film and video that focuses on the growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood. The Bildungsroman is a specific subgenre of coming-of-age story.

The Novel *American Dervish* focuses on the theme of the loss of Islamic Identity in America. The major characters such as Naveed, Muneer, Mina and the minor characters Sonny Buledi immigrant to America who was actually from Pakistan, Nathan is a Jewish man, who also migrates to the Cosmopolitan city. However, these two different culture were creates a good bonding with each other in the migrant society. Some of the immigrant characters who lost their cultural identity are Nathan and Hayat the two main characters who are in dilemma about their identity. Nathan is a Jewish man but he shows his interest in converting as Muslim. While, Hayat is a Muslim boy he does not have the knowledge in his own religion. Mina creates interest in reading the Quran and teaching the Muslim tenants to become a hafiz. Hayat also took part in learning the Quran and the Muslim beliefs. However, Dr. Shan burnt the Quran and ordered him not to learn the Quran.

Assimilation refers to the part of adaptation. Immigrant assimilation is a complex process in which immigrants not only fully integrate themselves into a new country but also lose aspects, perhaps even all of their heritage. Cultural assimilation is the process in which a minority group or culture comes to resemble a dominant group or assume the value, behaviours, and beliefs of another group. Acculturation is the process of social, psychological and cultural change that stem from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society.

Ayad Akhtar showcases the politics of polyvocality and the diversity of voices within Islam. The term polyphony suggests the idea of many voices. The struggles and lives of multiple communities in the Muslim diaspora have find in this novel. *American Dervish* is also important because it is, like the other Muslim polyvocal novels, written in the bildungsroman form. The bildungsroman does not simply reflect or dramatize polyvocality. Instead, the politics of polyvocality plays an active role in the formation of the national community.

Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish* focuses on the cultural adaptation. Mina Ali, who come from Pakistan admired towards the American life style and tries to adapt herself to the new culture. Hayat who lives in cosmopolitan city and he was started learning the new words from Quran and try to use those words in order to speak. Naveed who adapts himself to the cosmopolitan city, has developing the habit of consuming alcohol and liberate from those Islamic tenants. The novel's description of multiple interactions of Islamic faith, all within the Greater Milwaukee no less, suggest that the Imam's sermon is not mainstream Islam, but the believable intensity of the scene as Akhtar evokes it highlights the reality of this troubling strand.

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Self - Realization and Self - Actualization in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Self- Realization and Self -Actualization in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Maria Arokia Steffi M. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Self - Realization and Self - Actualization in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Self - Realization and Self - Actualization in Shashi Deshpande's** ***The Dark Holds No Terrors*** analyses the history, partition, gender discrimination, and the problems of women.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of Indian literature, life of the author Shashi Deshpande, his contribution to literature, his honours and finally a short introduction to the novel.

The second chapter **Gender Discrimination** deals with unequal and unjust treatment in the oppressive male dominated and convention-ridden Indian society.

The third chapter **Problematising Feminine Discourse** discusses the masculinity and femininity of the social ideals developed within the matrix of heterosexuality.

The fourth chapter **Empowerment and Personal Mobility** concentrates on the suffering of the modern educated Indian woman who is in search of her individuality.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian English literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It has a relatively recent history, it is only one and a half centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, published in 1793 in England. Dhan Gopal Mukerji was the first Indian author to win a literary award in the United States.

Contemporary Indian English novels portray images of protagonists confined to rigid tradition and orthodoxy. The novels produced after independence show that the Western culture has been partly assimilated by Indians. Post-Independence Indian society also witnessed a new social and economic empowerment of women coming into existence. It was also to see the emergence of new patterns of class structure and the formation of new communities, i.e., educated women community according to the changing patterns of life.

Feminism in Indian English literature is influenced by the Western feminist movement, but it has got sustenance from our freedom struggle under the dynamic humanitarianism of Mahatma Gandhi, independence, spread of education, employment opportunities and Law for women's right. R.K. Narayan highlighted the imaginary little town of Malgudi - a microcosm of life in southern India, during the early 20th century. Narayan's *The Financial Expert's* was hailed as one of the most original works of 1951 and Sahitya Akademi Award winner *The Guide* was adapted for film.

Simultaneously with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very different writer, Mulk Raj Anand, vividly and powerfully depicts the sordid lives of the lowest strata of the society in his novels *Cooli* and *The Untouchable.* He was also similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India; but his stories were harsher and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of caste, class and religion.

Kamala Markandaya is best remembered for her novel *'Nectar in Sieve'*, published in early 50s. It is a touching account of the life of an Indian peasant woman, Rukmani, her struggle for survival and her abiding love for her husband. It also reflects the changing times and society. Other novels included *Some Inner Fury, A Silence of Desire, Possession, A Handful of Rice, The Nowhere Man, Two Virgins, The Golden Honeycomb and Pleasure City.*

Anita Desai's works appearing in the 60's are aptly classified under Post – colonial literature. Her *Voice of the City* is a story about three siblings, and their divergent viewpoints on life in Calcutta. *Fire on the Mountain*, set in Kasauli, focuses on three women and their complex experiences in life. As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker prize three times. She received a Sahitya Akademic Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain.* She won the British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea.*

Nayantara Saghal from the famous Nehru clan is a feminist writer, advocating women's emancipation. She is a child of the tradition, where the women are deified as an epitome of power. Her novels highlight the independent existence of women and their efforts to thwart attempts to isolate them from the centre stage of human existence.

Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie born in India, now living in the United Kingdom. Rushdie with his famous work *Midnight's Children* ushered in a new trend of writing. He used a hybrid language- English generously peppered with Indian terms – to convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. He is usually categorised under the magic realism mode of writing most famously associated with Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. In 2012, he published Joseph *Anton: A Memoir*, an account of his life in the wake of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses.*

The women novelists today are blazing a new trail worldwide, winning critical acclaim and international recognition. Novelists like Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapoor, Bharati Mukherjee, Geeta Mehta, Jhumpa Lahiri have been crowned with literary glory of winning international accolades and awards like the Booker Prize, The Commonwealth Prize for debut novel, and the National Book Critics Awards.

These women writers have analysed the socio-cultural model and values that have given Indian women their images and role towards themselves and society. The predicament of new Indian women has been taken up for fuller treatment by novelists like Anita Desai and Nayantara Saghal who generally concentrated on the plight and problems of educated women, mostly with the urban base whereas Shobha De and Namita Gokhale have portrayed the challenges of educated 'socialite' women with urban base.

Shashi Deshpande, a journalist by profession, started at a very early age, publishing her first short story in 1970. She is the second daughter of the renowned dramatist and Sanskrit scholar, Shri Adi Rangacharya Shriranga. At the

age of fifteen, she went to Mumbai where she graduated in Economics. She then moved to Bangalore, where she gained a degree in Law. The early years of her marriage were largely given over to the care of her two young sons, but she took a course in journalism and for a time worked on a magazine.

Her stories were published in magazines like *Femina* and *Eve's Weekly*. *Legacy* her first collections of short stories was published in 1978, followed by her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors in* 1980. She is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel, *That Long Silence*. Two of her other novels, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Root and Shadows* have also received major awards. *Small Remedies*, her latest novel, was released in India on the 16th March, 2000.

Shashi Deshpande, with her own distinct talents, particular range of interest and her individual style, added a new dimension to the Indo-Anglo fiction. This illustrious luminary of the firmament of Indo-Anglian fiction is a noted feminist writer and a dedicated saviour of womankind in our country. One of the most lucent, fascinating and distinctive patterns of the kaleidoscope of Shashi Deshpande's feminism is obviously its Indianness which distinguishes it from the feminism of the Western as well as most of the Indian feminism. The Indianness of her feminism lies in its typically Indian setting, female characterisation, selection of women's problem and at the top of it all her unique treatment of these problems.

Shashi Deshpande now lives in Bangalore with her pathologist husband and has completed her M.A. in English Literature. She is regarded as one of the most accomplished Indian women in English. She has written eight novels, four

volumes of short stories *The Legacy(1978); The Miracle(1986); It was Dark(1986), and It was the Nightingale (1986)*, and books for children too.

Deshpande is gifted with an inborn literary bent of mind which matured with her experience in life. Even her graduation in Economics and Law did not seem to have much impact on her writings. She writes mainly about, "everyday India, a society in which we breathe, a culture to which we belong. Her major concern emerges from our own lives" (R.K.Dhawan 20). She has explored many of these facts in her short story collection, *The Intrusion and Other Stories* published in1993 by Penguin.

Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala have, in their novels, portrayed these aspects of women's life without having the first-hand experience of it. Shashi Deshpande has projected this aspect of Indian women with more sensitivity and instinctive understanding as she belongs to this category. Unlike other women writers, she is born and brought up on this soil, gained her education in India itself and wrote about India. The projection of the women's world in her novel is more authentic, credible and realistic. Shashi Deshpande was still unknown to many until her novel *That Long Silence* got published by the Virago Feminist Press, London. R.S. Pathak states :

> It's meaningless that people know me as a person but not know what I've written. I feel publicity is not a good thing for a writer. It detracts you from your work. You become more interested in yourself as a person than as a writer. I'd rather be known for my books than for myself. (237).

The Dark Holds No Terrors is an important novel by Shashi Deshpande. This novel explores the trauma of a middleclass working woman who has become

a trap in the male dominated society. Deshpande picturises her men and women characters as the victim of modern society. She has mastery over the depiction of her characters as natural and genuine. In this novel Sarita, also called as Saru is the female protagonist who narrates the story. Through her narration we can understand her parents, dead brother Dhruva, her husband Manohar and her old teacher Boozie. Though the female protagonist undergoes certain trauma, she is strong and she decides not to protest against the oppression openly through breaking her familial life.

The novel begins with Saru's return to her maternal home after a long gap of fifteen years and the novel ends with her return to her family with her husband Manu. Saru realizes that always wife should be a few feet behind her husband to lead a happy life. The novelist has not written her men characters with the pre-occupied notion but she treats both men and women characters equally.

Both of them have their own weaknesses, shortcomings, feelings which the other can't understand. Manohar, Sarita's husband is purely an " Indian man", who is expected to control the family and to provide comfort to his family. When the role of women changes from domestic life to a socially established professional, the man or the husband finds it very difficult to cope up with that role.

In The Dart Holds No Terrors the woman protagonist Sarita is a well-known doctor whereas her husband Manohar is an underpaid college teacher. In the beginning, their life was normal but when Saru became an established practitioner and when people started to respect her, Manu develops a kind of guilty conscious in him. In one of the interviews, a female journalist asks Manu "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread

as well?"(Nirmala 53). At that time, he laughed with Saru. But this question underestimates his confidence and he feels inferior to himself. So he lets his wounded male pride manifest itself in the form of sexual sadism. He does it unconsciously, because next morning he will be a normal husband as usual.

The traditionally established role of a 'man' in India makes him difficult to adjust. As his wife Saru has good earning than Manu, when the society utters the same in a jovial manner in front of Manu, his male pride gets hurt. After the death of her mother Saru realizes the strength of her father who was literally dumb when her mother was treating Saru inferior to her son Dhruva. Her father didn't protest, didn't comment or didn't oppose his wife for the same, but he ignored and led a busy life, in which he was busy with his work.

Saru's father was an incapable man when his wife was alive. He never used to oppose her even when she punished Saru for the mistake which was not hers. But later when she returns home she found her father managing everything with ease in the absence of her mother. Now she saw him as a matured, bold man, who listened to her problem patiently. Boozie her teacher helps her in order to complete her degree and to be an established practitioner. He taught her how to speak good English, he improved her accent, taught her how to enjoy good food, how to read and what to read. She likes his masculinity and attractive laugh. Both Saru and Manu are the victims of patriarchy.

To strengthen male characters Deshpande strengthened, and created female characters in such a way that they are bold and supportive to their husbands and family. But in this mechanical world, they take opportunity to discuss each other's problem. So Deshpande tries to bring justice to her male

characters through the portrayal of her female characters. Her male characters are the victims of the society, through the helplessness they suffer like women.

Even though female characters talk a lot about their suffering, their inner trauma, victim of marital rape, the silence of the male characters conveys their dilemma, suffering, inferiority, and maladjustment. So Deshpande does not project the female as a victim but shows how equally men too suffer and are victimized in the society. But at the end, her men and women characters compromise and accept themselves as they are.

Deshpande sketches the role of women and men of middle class families where the female protagonists are highly qualified, courageous and strong, they struggled to cope with the existing norms of the society even though the female characters protest against patriarchy. Deshpande's men and women characters are caught between traditional upbringing and the longing for freedom in the modern society.

Even though the male characters play less important place in narrative, the novelist portrayed them as supportive to female characters. Her male characters have been sons, husbands, fathers, and the head of the families. These are roles that demand different kinds of responses from men in name of honour, dishonours, right, wrong, position and hegemony, away in the context of patriarchy to find ideal manhood. So these male characters are forced to play the role of a controller who control his family and fulfil his desires. When he fails to perform the established role he too suffers or fears about the society. As he is a man he should earn more than his wife, he should be in front of his wife because he is a man.

Saru protests against the oppression silently but she is not ready to take a bold step like divorce, because of her Indian mind set. So she patches up the relation with Manu. Deshpande projects even the men characters as the victims of the society. Totally these men characters are tradition bound and face the problem of adjustment. Commenting on the position of the women in India's male-dominated society, Shantha Krishnaswamy writes:

> she is a creature who, as a child, is sold off to a stranger for a bridal price, or when she grows up, serves as a supplier of dowry for her husband's family, or who as a widow, in a final act of obliteration immolates herself on her husband's funeral pyre to be acclaimed as 'Sati-Savitri' as an immortal. (113).

Deshpande refers to the myths, epics, puranas as well as other holy books in which women, even though innocent, have been presented as the embodiments of pativarta- obeying male persons and submitting to their wishes.

As long as Saru is a student, her husband, Manu is the bread earner, they had peace at home despite its different kind of obstacles. But the problem begins at the moment when Saru is recognized as a doctor. Her economic independence makes Manu feel thoroughly insecure and this cast a shadow on their married life. Saru emerges as a successful and reputed doctor and almost every morning there is a knock at the door and her visitors demand medical attention. She feels thrill in the profession, but Manu's behaviour begins to change. He feels totally ignored as Saru gets all the attention. Manu's earning now makes her feel that it barely covers her needs. She becomes so unhappy over the situation. She desperately takes the decision to sacrifice her lucrative profession.

In all these relationships the women occupy the central stage and significantly the narration shifts through her feminine/feminist consciousness. Her novels reflect the lives of suffocated women in search of a refuge from suffering. Searching for a solution to their private problems, the women protagonists in her novel shift from their personal pain to the sufferings of the women around.

The message which Shashi Deshpande finally conveys is that the women's emancipation lies neither in suffering quietly like a fatalist nor in repudiating all claims of the family and society like a rebel. She must draw upon her inner strength, which her education and knowledge has given her and bring about reconciliation between tradition and modernity without losing her own identity. This novel is a beautiful study of how women in their life feel.

As a realist writer Shashi Deshpande has written novels exposing the patriarchal designs in subjugating the women and their souls. Very appropriately Deshpande has described the theme of the rise of the status of the wife in the society. The novel is presented in four parts and even in the first part, all the important issues- bitterness towards the mother, insecurity of Manu, Saru's relationship with Manu and children, Dhruva's death - are touched upon. The rest of the three parts elaborate Saru's introspection of and her reaction to different issues touched upon in the first part. As a whole, the novel effectively portrays his concern about gender discrimination.

Chapter Two

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination takes many forms of unequal and unjust treatment in the oppressive male-dominating and convention-ridden Indian Society. Women are bogged down for centuries by the age-old blind beliefs and superstitious practices which prove to be stumbling blocks for the independent growth of women in an atmosphere of free thinking and free movement. Such instance of gender discrimination makes the protagonist in the novels of Shashi Deshpande launch a quest for individual identity.

The characteristics of gender discrimination are at any place or at any situation a person shows partiality over the opposite sex, that is female. From the birth itself a female infant faces the gender discrimination. Both sex are equal by birth in the world, but the society makes male as a dominated one and thought female as inferior to them. Gender discrimination can apply in many places in day to day life such as work places and in educational rights, domestic walls and in community.

Sexual frustration and sadism is what very few writers are bold enough to talk so unequivocally because these are very sensitive issues and improper knowledge and wrong handling of these can land them in hot soup in the literary society; setting every one's tongue wagging and raging controversies. But Deshpande is brave enough to come out with it in her very first published novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors.*

This novel takes into account the feminist assertion that economic independence is a major factor that can usher in happiness in a woman's life and

can equalise both men and women on a single and identical platform. Deshpande is a realist writer who knows the pros and cons of this assertion. Truly she depicts both the merits and demerits of this statement of feminist in her first novel, clearly bringing out that even economic independence is no sure of happiness for women. This novel exhibits the silence and surrender of the Indian women.

Identity is concerned with the self-esteem and self- image of an individual. This search for self-realization is marked by the protagonist's urge, attitude, and action to be free. The quest to be free and to realize the self leads to inner freedom which enables the protagonists to accept their roles, with a new awakening, uncrushed by challenges and hostilities.

Gender discrimination has been neglected by most writers whose stories teem with loving and sacrificing mothers irrespective of the child's gender. This gender sensitivity can be observed in all the novels of Shashi Deshpande, especially in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. The quest for identity is easily noticeable in the carrier of Saru, the protagonist.

The Dark Holds No Terrors, articulates the vociferous voice of a new feminist in Indian fiction. She is the first writer to record the heartthrobs of a career woman who is the victim of mother's gender based bias and also a victim of a sadistic husband. The novel turns out to be the woman's ceaseless but agonizing search for self-discovery in a society governed by traditional belief and practices.

Gender discrimination is the important theme in the novel. An unloved and unwanted child tied to unhappy relationship with her parents and unhappy marriage with the sadist, Saru yearns for a new environment, a new image, a new meaning, and an authentic voice.

Saru, the protagonist is projected as a victim of childhood insecurity. Parental love is necessary for the growth of a child. Saru has no soft word for her father or mother. The father is a symbol of apathy and indifference. Saru has no word of praise for her mother. As long as the mother is alive, there is no love lost between mother and daughter. She is unable to put up with the mother's undue preference shown towards her brother, Dhruva. She receives ignorance in favour of her brother, Dhruva.

Things become infinitely worse after Dhruva's death when her mother with her characteristic insensitivity blames Saru for his death. Not only gender but also her dark complexion becomes one of the objects of underestimating and discriminating the girl child. The mother always kept two different measuring yards, one for the son and other for the daughter. Sadly for Saru the gender discriminating starts at home. Saru cannot digest her mother's harsh comment on her unfair skin. Her words emphasise the cold discrimination:

> Don't go out in the sun. You'll get even darker,
>
> Who cares?
>
> We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.
>
> I don't want to get married.
>
> Will you live with us all your life?
>
> Why not?
>
> You can't
>
> And Dhruva?
>
> He's different. He's a boy. (45)

Her mother feels that physical beauty is 'must' for success in the world and she also criticizes her daughter's appearance. Saru is told very steadfastly how she is different from a boy. Every year on the day of haldi-kumkums the daughter used to become more important than Dhruva. It was a ritual for the daughter who could apply attar with tiny attar- drenched swabs of cotton to the backs of women's hand, sprinkle rose-water over them and distribute flowers. Saru's mother took every care that Dhruva being a boy does not participate in it.

Not only her mother but the likes of her mother, Maikaki has also tried to make her understand the purpose of a girl's life. Saru's life suffers a terrible jolt slowly by her mother's constant criticism and fault-finding nature. Indian culture adheres to the socio-cultural conditioning of a girl. She suffers psychologically when everyone in the family showers all their attention and affection upon her brother.

Right from the beginning Saru is made to understand that she is a girl and she is inferior to her brother, in every way. Saru is always made to feel ugly, unwanted, and undesirable. Her mother always scolds her for being responsible for her son's death, by drowning. Saru could not forgot her mother's hysterical outburst. " You killed him, why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (62). These words echo in her mind days, months, years and all her life. As a child Saru rarely speaks to her father, on the contrary Dhruva her brother has long conversation with her father.

A girl child suffers from the absence of parental love. The greatest crippling force on girl children is the discrimination shown to them. This gender discrimination towards the girl is embedded in our Hindu culture. She looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope that it would bring liberation from her

mother's suppression. It is natural for girls like Saru to seek marriage as an alternative to the bondage created by her nurturer.

As a result, she embarks on a journey to prove something to her mother. She seizes every opportunity to stand against her mother whether it is education or marriage. Saru moves to Mumbai, joins a medical college and meets Manu, whom she had known long ago as a debonair young poet. This meeting culminates in the two falling in love. Saru marries Manu against her mother's wishes. The initial years of her conjugal life are absolute happiness when she considers herself as the most fortunate woman on the earth. She enjoys a rich harvest of love in his company.

Manu becomes the recluse in whom she finds her belongingness. But the ecstasy of the married life soon vanishes when Saru from being a wife transforms into a sought after doctor. Saru is interested in improving her financial and social status. She does not like to live a life of common person. She realizes the inequality of success between herself and her husband is the cause of domestic squabbles. She is a best doctor in contrast to Manu who is an underpaid lecturer in a third rate college. Her predicament is contrary to the assertion of most feminists that economic independence brings fulfilment to the women.

Shashi Deshpande however proves that in the institution of marriage, an economically independent woman is still bound in shackles and must forever live in fear of hurting the ego of her husband. With the passage of time, her commitment to her profession, lack of communication between her and her husband and difference in her social and financial status alienate her from Manu mentally. Manu cannot tolerate people greeting her and ignoring him. This changes the loving husband into a sadist.

The gender discrimination continues even in her marriage life. Manu's sexual overtures hurt the woman in Saru. She cannot free herself from him as she is a part of the conservative society. Moreover, the next morning after the night's ordeal, he used to be the same smiling Manu again which Saru is not able to understand or digest. As a man Manu had the liberty to treat his wife the way he wanted, even to the brink of marital rape, but Saru being a woman could not stop this overtures or even complain about it. " The hurting hand, the savage teeth, the monstrous assault of a horrible familiar body. And above me, a face I could not recognise" (112).

Deshpande explores the strain and anguish of being a woman. She concentrates on woman's pursuit to find out her true worth. The strength of Deshpande's work is her awareness of gender disparity, sexual division of labour which starts at home and which are deeply rooted in the public and empower themselves. Manu gains the identity of the husband of a famous doctor, he is not very happy with the steady rise in Saru's status. This rise in her social status becomes the root cause of disturbance between them.

Saru plays different roles at different times – one a successful doctor in a white coat by day and a trapped animal by night. She is always depressed in her mind. Even though she is a doctor, in the eyes of her husband, she is just a slave. When she has been ill-treated and victimized by her husband, she wants to escape from her house. This is her difficult time when she has to face the inner crisis and conflict. She says:

> a+b they told us in mathematics is equal to b+a. But here a+b was not, definitely not equal to b+a. It became a monstrously unbalanced equation, lopsided, unequal, impossible. But is that the only reason ,

> or would it have happened in any case, what happened to us later, he being what he is and I being what I am? I have a feeling I will never know the answer to that one. (42).

Saru represents a middle class girl in a modern Indian social structure. She has been trapped in a conflict between traditional ideas and new. She is brought up in a traditional family. However, her education has changed her attitude towards life. She becomes rebellious towards mindless orthodoxy. However, she is a self-centred person. In her world, there are only her two children, her home, her practice, and her patients. Her circle of interest is very limited. Manu, her husband, is out of her circle. She is responsible for her own critical situation.

Manu fails to exercise his male domination over his wife hence he tries to play the traditional male dominated role through sexual molestation. This is also the result of gender discrimination which prevailed in the society at that period. Shashi Deshpande clearly presented the gender discrimination of male chauvinistic Indian society through the character of Manu. She is uncomforted with his solutions. She thinks there would be no respite, no solution of her problem. There can never be any way out and as such perhaps her living would mean nothing.

> But there can never be any forgiveness. Never any atonement. My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother dies alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood. (217).

She imposes all blames on herself for everything that befell on her family life. But her father urges her it is not her case. He informs her that she has

undergone the pain as a child because she has somehow accepted herself the murderer of Dhruva. Saru tells her state of affairs to her father and like a child seeks the solution of her problems. She urges upon him to suggest her some way out but he is left blank as no idea strikes his mind.

Her father could not answer her anything. The best he could suggest her was to seek some psychiatrist's counsel. He suggests her, "all the more reason you're a doctor, you should know, May be he needs treatment...."(203). She receives a mail that Manu is coming to take her back with him to their home. She could not feel easy as she does not want to be with a man who is very insensitive to her pain.

She realises that one is alone in this world and from nowhere one can hope for any succour, and she decides to leave her father's house prior to Manu's arrival. She is then back to the world of fancies and pleasant reveries where there is no burden of heaviness. Marching on her way to seek ultimate realisation of the self, she encounters several problems. From the self- alienation to self-identification, the novel evinces how she comes out of her fear which is the root cause of her sufferings. She was so scared of the final confrontation with Manu.

She hits upon the idea that everyone is alone ultimately in this world; an idea with which she was not reconciled earlier but now she seemed to accept that hard reality; however bitter it was but it had to be truthful that one is alone in this world; alone to tackle the umpteen problems which cling to oneself like the flies gather on carcass, but now she comes to term with that concept and becomes comfortable. Thus she enters into a phase of light leaving behind the darkness which has blinded her vision completely. She says,

> My life is my own.... Somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. It means you are not just a strutting, grimacing puppet, standing futilely on the stage for a brief while between areas of darkness. If I have been a puppet it is because I made myself one. I have been clinging to the tenuous shadow of marriage whose substance has long since disintegrated because I have been afraid of proving my mother right. (220).

Saru realises that escapism can never be possible way out. Escapism is no solution; a permanent solution has to come from within. Truly Deshpande sets new ideas working in this novel. She exhorts the fact that human relations cannot furnish solutions to rectify our problems. One has to look within only; then true path can be sought. It is like seeking God within. There is no possible glancing at God outside but only a real peep inside can prove fulfilling and can help in attaining the spiritual truth.

She does not want to escape now but she wants to confront the harsh reality. She wants to face Manu tooth and nail. She no more camouflages herself from Manu's arrival. The epigraph of the novel really captures the theme of the novel from the very outset:-

> You are your own refuge;
>
> There is no other refuge.
>
> This refuge is hard to achieve. (The Dhammapada)

The epigraph from Dhammapada apparently drills home the point that it is only the strong will that can counter any problem of however enormous dimension it may be. It authentically reflects the biological dread and

psychological difference that women experience, which makes them, their own refuge. Self-confidence and courage can tackle any problem.

Escapism is no solution. The courage is inside the human mind. Finally for Saru the time to face her life comes, she gets confidence that her life is her own and she cannot hope for a help from outside rather she has to find out the way from her inner self. Thus she resolves to shed off the darkness which has engulfed her life for quite a long time.

The novel thus is a beautiful study of how women in their life feel. As a realist writer Shashi Deshpande has time and again written novels exposing the patriarchal designs in subjugating women and their souls. Patriarchy can take up different forms. Women are subjugated in so many different ways. Deshpande has shown the cruel condition which the female protagonist has to pass through night after night.

As a woman who is emancipated, established, she need not pine for the man who is unable to give her honour, love and values. There are thousands of Saru who really need to think about their lives in terms of empowerment. Saru's self – orientation transforms her from a loving wife to an absolutely career minded woman. She establishes herself as a successful doctor and her profession satisfies her ego.

Her predicament is contrary to the assertion of most feminists that financial independence brings security to women. Saru finds a kind of hegemony when she considers the works of men, women and children- men go to office, children go to school but women stay at home and wash, scrub, bear children, beaten by their husband inspite of managing everything properly- that becomes

the destiny of thousands of women. Saru begins to think of her mother's generation.

Women like Saru's mother are nothing but puppets in the hands of their husbands because they were not strong enough to voice and their only alternative is to keep silent. But we find Saru as the representative of the changing phase. So novelists like Shashi Deshpande cannot restrict Saru within the household. She helps her to cross the threshold and to take the flavour of her wishes the "bitter pill" with a "sugar coating".

Shashi Deshpande portrays the gender discrimination through the character of Saru in this novel. She clearly presents the discrimination followed by her mother in Saru's early childhood and the discrimination of the society which makes Manu ill-treat her after her marriage. This novel also presents the social practices prevailing in male dominating society.

Through the character of Saru, Deshpande conveys a significant truth regarding the relegation of women, that in most cases, women are responsible for their lot. She reveals the problem of women gender discrimination, lack of identity, fruitless rebel against the subordinate position in the family and her helpless submission before the male dominating society. Women become the object of love, marriage and sex

Patriarchy transmutes a woman to be docile, frail, timid and emotional. It leads a woman to become almost an object or a thing in the hands of patriarchs. Beauvior views:

> ... humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous

> being.... She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her: she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. lie is the subject, he is the Absolute-she is the Other. (16)

Empowerment enables someone to develop a decision- making power. A woman needs this more than a man because she has always been the "other" in the patriarchal societal structure. Her status is always secondary, she is destined to depend on someone else- whether "He" be the father, brother, husband or son in other words, someone male. Towards the end of the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* Saru evolves as a confident woman who understands that darkness makes one incapable to see things clearly and objectively

Chapter Three

Problematising Feminine Discourse

Feminine as a literary theory entered the academic circle in the late 1960's with the advent of Post structuralism. This movement is different from the traditional approaches of literary criticism in the sense that it does not emerge from or address itself to literature in practise. The Post structuralism theory asserts that literature can be written according to the literary theory. Jaidev points out :

> Such a premise seems depressing because it expects literature to learn from a theory. In any case, several poststructuralists are feminists and naturally therefore they are busy creating a feminist aesthetics, a feminist literary theory which, out of politeness is supposed to illumine past texts but actually will be fulfilled in expressly written texts for theory. (109)

It seems Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is written under the sweeping influence of such a literary theory in its moment of euphoria. This contention is rooted in the concern when her protagonist Saru voices her anxiety. Ventriloquist is on who can speak so that his voice seems to come from some other person or place. This is precisely the situation not only with Saru but also her creator.

Deshpande highlights how success for woman in the patriarchal Indian society can deteriorate the roles in the family and destroy happiness. Using a double perspective, shifting of the narrative from the first person to the third person in every alternate chapter, and juxtaposing past and present, Deshpande

portrays the sense of alienation confronted by the protagonist in the *The Dark Holds No Terrors.*

In this process of creating an exclusively feminist text Shashi Deshpande seems to be tremendously influenced by the individualistic feminine propagated by the Anglo- American feminist tradition. This appears more so in the deliberate distortion of her female and especially male characters and sacrificing of many human values at the altar of a trendy feminism. At the outset of the novel, the protagonist Saru is discovered as a victim of her husband; Manu's sadistic torture through physical and sexual violence. Her mental state is expressed in a very realistic and touching manner.

In any case, in order to create a complete female text, one must create a female space that demarcated women as different. As Dorothy Kaufman-McCall writes :

> This was specifically the trend in post 1968 French movement of the groups known as Psych et Po (Psychoanalyse et Politique) which emphasized the centrality of biological difference between the sexes. Drawing heavily on Lacanian psychoanalytic postulates, this group argues that just this women's difference which lies in a sexuality that has been repressed by patriarchal culture is the source of women's potential liberation. (134)

The female psyche is very complex. "Psychotic rupture is perhaps the worst and the most regressive aspect of female subjectivity." (Tandon 24). A woman's experiences of life as a member of a gender biased society formulate her psyche. Psychoanalysis has a greater impact on feminist theory and gender studies more than any other critical theory. Feminism has always meant independence of

mind and spirit and body. Feminist effort to end patriarchal domination should be of primary concern precisely because it insists on the eradication of exploitation and oppression in the family context and in all other relationships.

Considering Shashi Deshpande's protagonist Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* one cannot fail to notice this differentness in her childhood till she is a grown up woman. Her kid brother Dhruva is her primary target in her contestation with the male power. Being, a son he had the advantage of receiving more attention, care and love from her parents.

Her childhood jealousy comes to the forefront when she pushes him from her father's lap when he was hardly a year old. He had been completely loyal to her in all respect always running after his beloved Saru. But she spared no occasion to assert her authority over him on every little opportunity. It seems, at first, that against the patriarchal power of domination, her relationship with Dhruva forms the battle ground on which she is fighting for a space of her own.

However, the novelist, surprisingly enough chooses the mother to represent the patriarchal power. One is impelled to ask why the mother should be chosen when her protagonist is meant to carve a female space by challenging the old order, the myriad bondages of tradition imposed by a male dominated society. Probably, it presupposes a psychological conflict in the protagonist's own self to problematize her feminity through the mother-daughter relationship. Simultaneously, with a decisive stroke the author brings the brother-sister relationship to a catastrophe.

Before the eyes of Saru her kid brother drowns in a pit full of muddy water. Her desperate attempt to save him reflects her concern for her brother but she vehemently denies any knowledge about him when asked by her parents.

Inevitably, she is confronted with her mother's hysterical accusation : " You did it, You did this. You killed him." (62). Dhruva's death should have restored Saru to her parental love and care as she is their only child left. On the other hand, this event becomes instrumental in alienating her from them by putting guilt consciousness permanently in her psyche.

Throughout the novel this guilt consciousness seems to act like a fatal flaw at times driving her to a mental state bordering on schizophrenia. This is the turning point in the novel that brings the mother-daughter conflict to the forefront. Every suggestion of her mother like : "Don't go out in the sun. You will get even darker."(45) which differentiated her from her brother made her contemptuous of her feminity. Even the onset of biological changes like menstruation is unbearable for her. She prays God that it should not happen to her anymore and save her from being ashamed of herself forever.

Saru's life, her mother's life and likewise the lives of women represent that they have no room of their own. Indian women are so groomed from childhood that they even desire death before their husband's. Saru's mother used to worship the 'tulsi' so that she can die before her husband. And she had died before her husband. It was what all women prayed to the tulsi for. Thinking of her own life and her mother's life she thought of Virginia Woolf's famous phrase 'room of her own'.

She immediately related the phrase to her own life and thought. .. my mother had no room of her own. She retreated into the kitchen to dress up, she sat in this dingy room to comb her hair and apply her kumkum, she slept in her bed like any overnight guest in a strange place. And I have so much my mother lacked. But neither she nor I have that thing 'a room of our own'. (136)

She had also thought of her father who being a man led different life. 'He had always been so much a man, the master of the house, not be bothered by any of the trivials of daily routine'. (20) In these and many more occasions, her reactions betray the influence of individualistic feminism on her. The novelist seems to put Jardine's textual process of Gynesis to work in her present undertaking :

> The putting into discourse of 'women' as that process diagnosed in France as intrinsic to the condition of modernity, indeed, the valorisation to the feminine, woman and her obligatory, that is historical connotations, as somehow intrinsic to new and necessary modes of thinking, writing and speaking. (208)

In projecting her protagonist in conflict with the hegemonic power structure and the social institution, Shashi Deshpande carries the true spirit of feminism very effectively. Yet, in her haste, it seems she has ascribed too problematic a personality to her positing her as a kind of psychotic rebel. During all these moments of mother-daughter problems, the father is either relegated to a non-entity space or seen silently supporting the daughter against the mother. When Saru decides to pursue a course in medicine in Bombay, the mother is traditionally ill disposed to let her have her way. But the father who already understands the modernised ideas of a professional woman, supports her morally and financially to achieve her goal. Saru is at least able to escape the maternal tantrums of do's and don'ts.

Either way the father seems the villain. But she takes her sweet revenge on her mother, at least she feels so, by another more shocking decision in choosing Manu, a lower caste man as her husband. By breaking away from the barriers of

caste system she frees herself from the matriarchal and patriarchal bondage, although she is dark and not so good looking. Manu becomes the recluse in whom she finds her belongingness. To her inferiority complex-stricken psyche and love starved body and mind, he proves that she is as much desirable as any other beautiful woman. With his help she completes her medical degree and embarks on a profession that has a high social respect.

Already they have two children son Abhijeet and daughter Renuka. But she is no more interested in the family life as she is possessed with a psychotic will to defy socially ascribed role of a wife and a mother. To Manu, she can only offer hollow suggestion to resign her job and devote her time to family. But, the truth is that she, once again, wills to be different, be free from all bondage as she had done by breaking away from her parents.

Her husband curtly said that to maintain the social status he needs to move on. She is once again dominated by the will of her husband. But fortunately that night he behaved sanely. But again the nightmares started gnawing her bit by bit- until she leaves for her parental home in the pretext of visiting her father after her mother's death. Saru's life is divided into two phases before and after her marriage, in both of these phases she is victimised due to her gender. And so is the society where woman is discriminated against man. Both Saru and other women are mistreated by the indifferent society.

Saru's insecurity is escalated by her disastrous experiment with marriage. Her dreams have a choking sensation; the nights are a terrible nightmare. Loneliness becomes an integral part of her and she leads a dual life. For the world, she is a competent doctor and in reality she is a tortured woman. She is going through quite an abnormal pattern of life which is full of hypocrisy and duplicity.

At her father's house Saru tries to objectively analyse her share of the blame in the disaster that her marriage has been. It makes her think, 'My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother died alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood'. (217)

This statement suggests a study in guilt consciousness. As S.P Swain observes:

> She marries to attain autonomy of the self and to secure the lost love in her parental home. Manu is her saviour, the ideal romantic hero who rescues her from insecure wooden existence in her maternal home. Her marriage with Manu is an assertion on and affirmation of her feminine sensibility. (35-36)

Saru for being sentient and sensitive is very much aware of the unequal position of women. Once Manu's friend Vidya, had said that Shakespeare presented a limited vision of life for his is a typical man's view of life to see the man at the centre. the woman always on the periphery. She had further said that it is not just their roles. It is the way he made the woman's personality to merge into the stronger colours of a man's personality.

Hamlet, Lear, Othello were clearly different from Ophelia, Cordelia and Desdemona. The women were poor and feeble shadows. And when there was a conflict or a climax the women always recede into the background. He disposed of Lady Macbeth though she starts off very splendidly. But the positiveness and action proved too much for the poor female and hence she bows out. Saru has said she would be down among the audience applauding all of them. On this Vidya reacted. ''See that you stay there,' Vidya said with a mock sternness. 'Or else, Manu won't like it.'' (156)

The popular discourses from ancient time represent women at the periphery which is but a reverberation of the voice of the gendered society. Another incident comes vividly to Saru's mind. Once she had gone to a family for tea. The wife came silently, unobtrusively like a shadow to serve them and went out the same way. The husband's conversation was not least disturbed by her presence as if she did not exist. He never introduced her to them and even they ignored her too. They ate and sipped the tea as if some waiter provided them the food and the drink. When Saru went to take leave of her and smiled at her, she did not respond and her face was expressionless. She had successfully effaced her person and had fallen in with her husband's desire. "I looked down at her feet and saw that there was no shadow for some reason, the words came to my mind ... If I cast no shadow, I do not exist." (159)

The renowned feminist theorists, Cixous and Kristeva, contend that patriarchy is a specifically cultural and historical context with power relations. Since language is based on binaries (male/female, presence/absence, etc.), it produces a patriarchal order which places the feminine as subordinate to the masculine. Strangely enough, the dominative discourse tells the story of half of humanity through the voice of the other half. Since writing is the place where subversive thought can germinate, it is specifically shameful that the phallocentric tradition succeeded in not giving woman her say. Woman therefore needed to invent another history which is outside the narratives of power, inequality and oppression, Cixous states :

> If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man ... it is time for her to dislocate this "within" to explode it, turn it around, and seize it, to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own

> mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside. (257)

Woman's writing as Showalter points out, necessarily takes place within, rather than outside, a dominant male discourse, through acts of revision, appropriation and subversion. Female perspective makes it easier to articulate many an emotion not acknowledged in the body of literature hitherto. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* as a feminist text questions the aesthetics of the traditional theoretical assumptions with a view to reassessing the relation between author, reader and language in order to subvert the phallogocentric discourse.

Gynofiction has evolved as aesthetics which is radically different from the aesthetics of male fiction and Deshpand's novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* employs a distinct kind of language in order to impart a new vision of reality. In this novel she takes up an "other" mode of discourse, the "ecriture feminine", to authentically depict the working of the psyche of the central protagonist. This reminds us of Helene Cixous's view that writing is of the body and that a woman does not write like a man because she speaks with the body. She advocated that "woman must write her Self: must write about women and bring women to writing ..." (320)

Cixous celebrates woman as "excess" who speaks her body and threatens patriarchy. Throughout her writing, Kristeva too, theorized the connection between mind and body, culture and nature, psyche and soma, semiotic and symbolic. She is concerned with discourses that break identity. Shashi Deshpande, on the other hand, attempts to break the long silence of Indian woman in her writing by transforming a predominantly androcentric symbolic order into a feminine narration. While the textures of all her novels are suffused with feminine

sensibility, the structures are also, by and large, feminine in the sense in which Irigaray uses the term.

The linguistic features of the novels in regard to their phonological, morphological, syntactic structures reinforce their feminist qualities. Both the theories of Cixous and Kristeva can thus be contextualized in her works. Deshpande writes her body. That is why the feminine touch is unmistakable in her works. In her novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, she creates a space from where various voices find utterance breaking the long silence of ages. The narrative speaks with the many tongues that defy patriarch"s notion of there being a single unified woman, Cixous says "sweeping away syntax, breaking that famous thread... which acts for man as a surrogate umbilical cord." (543)

Deshpande's forceful and authentic use of technique and language gives a feminine touch to the novel and this makes *The Dark Holds no Terrors* a rare specimen of gynofiction. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* depicts the life of a professionally successful lady doctor, Saru. Unable to face the humiliation that she suffers almost each and every moment in her otherwise happily married life, she escapes to her father's house. Though she marries the charismatic poet Manu facing all oppositions from her family, yet she faces the worst agony of marital rape years after her marriage. Manu soon realizes that his career is going nowhere and that his wife has overtaken him professionally she is not only the earner of bread but the butter as well and he grows vicious.

Saru comes back to her father whom she had left years ago. In her death-bed also Saru's mother had rejected Saru " Daughter? I don't have any daughter. I had a son and he died. Now I am childless." (196) Away from her place of trauma, the protagonist undergoes the arduous journey into her Self and learns to

free herself of guilt, shame, and humiliation. Now Saru feels it strongly that she is responsible for her own miserable, puppet like existence. Too much dependence on an institution like marriage has been sheer foolishness, rather she should be ready to face all the challenges and troubles of life.

Saru's decision to go with Manu shows her confidence and courage in this direction. Obviously, the problem faced by Saru is the problem of hundreds of such learned and professional women who become the victim of male atrocity in an androcentric society. The moment she realizes the importance of life, she determines to live with full gusto. Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is finally liberated from the fear of the darkness in her life. Kamini Dinesh's observation aptly sums up Saru's development as an individual in her own right, " To be true to herself, the woman has to excoriate the film of superimposed attitudes and roles. Her emancipation is not in repudiating the claims of her family, but in drawing upon the untapped inner reserves of strength." (200)

At the end of the novel Saru stands poised to receive her husband secure because of her new found confidence in herself. She successfully rids herself of her complexes and guilts and comprehends the meaning of human life where she realizes that she is not the only one caught in loneliness. She introspects philosophically and reaches to the conclusion that escaping the situation is never a solution. There is no refuge, other than one's own self. She realizes that as a woman she has a separate existence of her own:

> They came to her then, all those selves she had rejected so resolutely at first, and so passionately embraced later. The guilty sister, the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife ... persons spiked with guilt. Yes, she was all of them, she could not deny that now. She had to

> accept these selves to become whole again. But if she was all of them, they were not all of her. She was all these and much more. (220)

She can attain peace of mind only when she accepts all those selves which she had earlier rejected. Peace has to be created within. Thus, free from fears and pain, the final picture of Saru is appealing indeed, when she confidently waits for what used to be the greatest terror of her life, her husband. She is ready to face him. She is ready to face life. When Saru realizes that her parental home cannot be a refuge, she understands that neither her father nor her husband Manu can be her refuge.

She is her own refuge. She has to overcome herself; she has to kill the

ghosts that haunt her; she has to find her own way to salvation. She tries hard to overcome her psychological fears and finally realizes that "*The dark holds no terrors.* The terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them within us and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul" (85).

The discourse abounds in images and metaphors relating to the feminine experiences of sexual desires, agony and ecstasy of different biological experiences. The author constructs a new, unmasked and uninhibited language and experience. It is a woman's version of her sense of the world, it tries to accommodate other view points, but they are oriented towards an overall design of a woman-narrative, as a 'multiple patchwork quil' is basically a woman's art. Feminine desire is reflected in the language she employs, which echoes its rhythms and pulsations. It is non-linear, characterized by repetition, incompletion, disruption, and resistance to speech.

Recovering the self from the roles of a dutiful wife, submissive wife and caring mother, the protagonist gets a new lease of life that empowers her and helps her to reconstruct her identity once again. Masculinity and femininity are both social ideals developed within the matrix of heterosexuality. Through her feminine discourse Deshpande challenges this matrix to make these social and cultural constructs of identities unstable and malleable.

Chapter Four

Empowerment and Personal Mobility

Indian independence produced racial and lasting changes in Indian social and cultural life. Besides new technology, knowledge, institution, beliefs and values also dominated the Indian social minds. Subsequently, many cultural practices changed slowly and they started acting as a barrier to successful social adjustment. Contemporary Indian English novels portray images of protagonists confined to rigid tradition and orthodoxy.

Post-Independence Indian society also witnessed a new social and economic empowerment of women coming into existence. It was also to see the emergence of new patterns of class structure and the formation of new communities, i.e., educated women community according to the changing patterns of life. India too had a similar development phase.

Although some of the class barriers have broken down in this country, it is a mistake to think that India is classless society. Social change takes many forms and each change in the structure and function of a society has effects on other aspects of the society. Thus urbanization and industrialization affected the patterns of social class as well as those of living and working condition. The increase in population in this period, the improvement in working condition and the growth of trade unions has all changed pattern of social behaviour. Shashi Deshpande's novels reveal her views and opinions on empowerment of women community and personal mobility.

Empowerment in its simplest form means the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male

domination. It is both a process and the result of the process. It is transformation of the structure of institutions that perpetuates gender discrimination. It is a process that enables women to gain access to, and control of, material as well as informational resources. Empowerment is envisaged as an aid to help women to achieve equality with men, or at least reduce the gender based discriminations considerably.

Empowerment would enable women to perform certain social roles that they cannot perform without it. Gender equality – political, economic or social enshrined in the fundamental rights under the constitution. The major strategies of women empowerment include social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice e.g. to eliminate all types of discrimination against women and the girl child.

Though Deshpande doesn't like to be labelled as a feminist writer she mostly focuses on the issues relating to the rainbow coalition of rights, desires, agendas, struggles, victories', speaking for all the women. Just like a staunch feminist she seeks to discover the female author's quest for empowerment through self-expression by escaping the controlling authority of the male in the realm of social or sexual power and examines the 'double colonization' of women under imperial and patriarchic condition. Kaur also dares to "expose, question and challenge the age-old traditions and prejudices in male-dominated society" (15). Her novels eclectically employ the post-modern technique of deconstructing patriarchal culture and customs, and revealing these to be man-made constructs

Shashi Deshpande's fiction focuses on a real-life situation of society. Her description of person of one class assimilation into another class is a realistic picture of modern urban society and cross-cultural social realities. She

acknowledges that higher class and lower class or male or female gender can come together and they are closely interdependent. She has presented a variety of such images in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. This novel is concerned with the suffering of the modern educated Indian woman who is in search of her individuality. Saru, who is such a woman, also tries to fight from the constraints of caste based traditional social system.

The novel explores the various dimension of middle class family life and the liability which controls a woman's conduct and responsibility. Saru makes efforts to raise her dignity and image in society. She realizes that her basic drive is the greed for money. Saru resorts to hard work and makes effective use of her skill to earn money. She recalls her frugal life:

> It is a marvel how we managed to live. Manu's salary, never very much, barely covered our expenses. And for two years I was earning nothing. At first it didn't matter that I was out of all the things that were so much a part of student life- the parties, the eating out the movies, causal trips. (92)

Saru who has a healthy personality approaches situations with a rational attitude, accepting them. She knows that success comes only with hard work and strives for long-term gains rather than immediate pleasures. She accepts her drawbacks and improves those in which she is strongest. She lives in the present, and does not turn back to the past. Saru is self–governed and is independent in her thoughts and action. She keeps her emotion under control and does not harm her. She is able to meet frustrations without conflicts. She also develops tolerance towards stress, anxiety, depression, pain and emotional disturbance.

Saru is presented as an emerging female character. She visit her father's home after a gap of 15 years. Now she is a well-known reputed established doctor and mother of two children. When she reaches her father's house, she gets a cold reception. "She is confused, helpless and almost miserable".(15) Shashi Deshpande believes that society will not change because men will never give anything to women. It is a desirable social duty of women that they should come forward and bring certain change in themselves to face the ground reality.

The Dark Holds No Terrors is a reflective novel of the feminist aspirations. The discord and the disillusionment of the educated woman in a tradition bound 'Indian Society' is the elective theme of the novel. But after the ultimate realization at the end, after a prolonged mental dilemma and a long drawn introspection, women empowerment or women's quest for self-exploration is recognized as the principal theme of this novel. In an interview, the author reveals that all her characters are concerned with their 'selves' and they learn to be honest to themselves.

The novels of Shashi Deshpande are about women's self-quest and struggle to free themselves from the restrictions imposed by society, culture and nature. It is a story about a doctor who is disappointed as a daughter as the rapport between her and her mother is little bit strained. She is unable to identify herself as a beloved daughter to her mother. She understands that what she is to become is going to give her the identity that she is searching for. She realizes that becoming is productivity which means making life feasible and pleasant, and comfortable for others, and so she selects the avenue of medicine.

The initial experiences in her girlhood days influenced Saru heavily that she wanted to become a powerful dominant person in her life. This made her realize that she can fulfil her ambitions through education. After her school years she aspired for college education and became a doctor. Her neighbours become aware of her professional identity, the day she walks back to her home in a blood stained coat, after treating victims of an accident. Instantly her profession achieves for her a position superior to Manu's. She is recognized and respected by the neighbours who came frequently to consult her. The respect that Saru gets disturbs the traditional equilibrium of the superior husband and inferior wife.

Saru remembers Mai Kaki's advice to keep her hands soft and smooth, so that her, "husband will never let go of them" (120) But Saru's husband has left her hands because she has failed to please him. When invited by two students to speak on the topic, 'Medicine as a profession for women', Saru starts to rehearse an imaginary speech on the relationship that exist between a husband and a wife, and also imagines an old fashioned couple where the wife walks a few steps behind her husband. "That's important, very important, because it's symbolic of the truth. She longs to tell them the rigid rules of tradition according to which:

> A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he's an M.A you should be a B.A. If he's 5'4' tall you shouldn't be more than 5'3' tall. If he's earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety nine rupees. That's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage... No partnership can ever be equal. It will always be unequal, but take care it is unequal in the favour of your husband. If the scales tilt in your favour, God help you, both of you. (137) .

Saru's long hours of introspection into her marriage makes her realize that her professional success had killed Manu's spirit. Actually her introspection helps her to free herself from the feelings of guilt that she has made Manu what he is. She decides that she would not endure any more humiliation because of Manu's failure and her success. She decides to assert herself and fight her own battle. She realizes that her life is her own which she will have to shape as well as face the events of her life. There is no refuge, other than one's own self. With this mind she confidently waits to confront her husband and decides to go back.

Actually this going back to her husband is not to endure the humiliation. Saru as a wife finds refuge in the doctor, in her own self. It is the doctor who is going to help the wife in her to care her husband with the power of the doctor. She is bold enough to go back to her husband and cure him of his depression caused by inferiority complex and bring normal harmony in her family life. This is how she is attaining power and identity of becoming a doctor and this doctor in her has given her comfort and happiness in her personal life as well as in the life of others.

This capacity to create and give happiness gives one an identity. This is the identity that Saru searched for which gave her the recognition. Thus the novel ends with the certainty that Saru will no longer be a victim of Manu's frustrations. A confident and empowered Saru realizes that the essence of any marriage is understanding and mutual respect and not subjugation of one by the other. With this knowledge she readies herself to confront Manu. She could take such a revolutionary decision only because of her empowerment.

Our society is full of paradoxes and contradictions. Here a female is considered a peripheral member of the family, both in her parents' house as well as husbands. Throughout her lifetime, she is unable to decide her roots and this

leads to her insecurity. As the daughter is closest to the mother, this insecurity is rubbed on to her also. Saru confronts reality and, at the end, realizes that the dark no longer holds any terrors to her. She empowers herself to survive in a male dominated world that offers no easy outs to women.

She neither surrenders to nor does escape from the problems but with great strength accepts the challenges to face them strongly. Saru has to suffer a lot due to patriarchal dominion through which she learns to free herself of guilt, shame, humiliation and she is also initiated into the mystery of human existence as healing process for self-purification and self-empowerment is going on in her.

When Saru realizes that the parental home cannot be a refuge, she understands that neither her father nor her husband Manu can be her refuge. But she is her own refuge. She has to overcome herself; she has to kill her inner devil that haunts her; she has to correct her faulty attitude; she has to find her own way to salvation. She makes her inner self more strong and capable enough to fight against the discipline imposed upon her by the male dominated society.

The true substance of the novel lies in the mental processes that Saru goes through during her apparently eventless existence at her father's place. She analyses all the dark corners of her soul. She introspects. She judges life, relationships and chooses her way of living that she will live in the present circumstances only by making herself courageous enough to fight against the unwanted situation.

Saru carries within her the sad effects of gender discrimination but her feminism springs out as a reaction to this discriminatory psychological set up of society and her parents in particular. It is to be noted that Saru, at the end of the

novel, has come to realize that her profession as a doctor is her own and she will decide what to do with it. "My life is my own." (220)

She will no longer be a puppet. She wants to take her own decision. She longs to live a life as she desires to live without having any interference in her personal way of life. Thus she becomes fully vigorous to face what may come to her. The life that she lives at her father's place is essentially a spiritual life which a normal woman can't live. It is a reaction against her dirty physical experiences. For her, all that is physical is filthy. Her feminity being brutally crushed, she loses forever the dreams of sentiment and passion.

Saru has in her character a sparkling light that has made a fictional figure universal. Whatever her faults are, whatever her life is, she does reach depths of self-actualization. She introspects philosophically and reaches the conclusion that escape is a ridiculous idea. There is no refuge, other than one's own self. She realizes that she cannot attain happiness through anyone else be it a husband, a father or a child. She can attain peace of mind by her own efforts. No one gives peace. It has to be created within.

Thus, free from fears and pain, the final picture of Saru is appealing indeed, when she confidently waits for what used to be the greatest terror of her life, her husband. She is ready to face him. She is ready to face life. At last, she reaches a stage when she is not beaten down by other people's rejection, by low self-regard, by anxiety, or by conflict. The theory goes that if the self develops in an open, flexible, expansive manner, the individual will continue on the road to self-actualization by which to empower oneself is not possible. Saru is presented simultaneously as an individual and as a female.

Her predicament is contrary to the assertion of feminist that financial independence brings security to woman. Saru yearns for security and emotional attachment. She wants her father to support her and her feeling raised against Manu's brutality. She endeavours hard to gain what she had lost, her self-respect. She tries hard to overcome her psychological fears.

Thus, the novel of Shashi Deshpande clearly reveals the author's perception of the endemic imbalance between the sexes. But her novel ends on a note of determination by its protagonist who resolves to take the reins of her life into her hands. She decides to live an independent life. Saru comes forward to become change agent to alter her situation of deprivations, discrimination and decadence.

Her involvement would strengthen the process of women empowerment in general. Most of Deshpande's heroines belong to this category. This woman is neither traditional nor radical in her ideas and practice. She might walk out of her home in protest against her suffering, but gradually realizes that walking out does not solve her problems.

Saru broods over her agonies even after she escapes her marital home. Indu in *Roots and Shadows* leaves her husband to seek refuge in her ancestral home, but she is unable to accept her fate as any ordinary woman might do. These heroines suffer more because they are aware of traditional and radical women's situation in their family and society in general. Their initial position is one of remaining at the crossroads. It is towards the end of the novels, that Shashi Deshpande's female protagonist realizes herself and learns to live up to the challenge. Saru decides to face her husband and not run away.

The female protagonists of Shashi Deshpande are not representations of traditional 'Sita' images. They are the 'new women', who could be likened to the flooding rivers that find a pathway into crevices and holes. Saru also accepts her loneliness and tries to transcend it,

> All right, so I am alone. But so is everyone else. Human beings - they're going to fail you. But because there is just us, because there's no one else, we have to go on trying. If we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk. (22)

In a depressed mood Saru had decided to be happy, if her marriage remained an unequal partnership in favour of her husband. But now she ultimately determines to face her husband and assert her own independent individuality. This confidence imparts a casual and flippant touch to her demeanour towards the end of the novel. The denouement of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* tells us that the women should not only be independent but they should also believe in their strength.

A woman has to put these varlet experiences into a proper perspective and maintain her individuality, only then she can realize a true identity. Thus this novel has a particular significance for today's Indian society, in which the girls have to put up not only with the social discrimination, but also with the victimization by their near and dear one. To come out of all these social evils like Saru one has to be empowered. She offers new insights into Indian women who are seen moving slowly but surely from subaudition to autonomy, from Dharma to personal goals, from sexual purity to sexual emancipation and from silence to speech.

Saru's journey is a journey from self-alienation to self-identification, from negation to assertion, from diffidence to confidence. She learns to trust her feminine self. Saru who had earlier entrusted her father not to open the door, when Manu comes now, tells her father "And, oh yes, Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait. I will be back as soon as I can" (221) and rushes out to attend a patient. This is the expression of the assertion of her individuality, her willingness to confront reality and not to run away from it. She is sufficient within herself because there is no other refuge elsewhere.

The novel shows that strong will can counter any problem however enormous dimension it may be. Self-confidence and courage can tackle any problem. Escapism is not a solution. The courage is inside the human mind. One needs to be awake to that fact. Saru's all endeavours now are directed towards the only objective to live. She is mentally prepared to face Manu.

When finally for Saru the time to face her life comes, she gets confident that her life is her own and she cannot hope for a help from outside rather she has to find out the way out from her inner self. Thus she resolves to shed off the darkness which has engulfed her life for quite a long time. Deshpande seems to convey a significant truth regarding the relegation of women, that in most cases, women are responsible for their lot.

Deshpande in her novel tries to reveal the problems of women, gender discrimination, lack of identity, fruitless rebel against the subordinate position in the family and finally her helpless submission before the male dominion. Woman becomes the object of love, marriage and sex. Through this age-old oppression she loses her birth right of gender equality. Ultimately the tradition bound family restricts the flowering of girl's personality.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* towards the end of the novel Saru evolves as a confident woman who understands that darkness makes one incapable to see things clearly and objectively. Inspired by roots of Indian culture, Saru realizes that she is no longer a 'guilty sister, undutiful daughter, unloving wife instead she is a wise woman who is capable to steer the family out of any crisis and she resolves to stand up for her rights.

Chapter Five

Summation

Shashi Deshpande is one of the renowned women novelists belonging to the category of Indian Writing in English. Her novels bring into light a realistic and influensive demonstration of Indian women's status in the broader societal context. The depiction of womanhood in relation to the changing conditions of the society has been purely analysed in her novels. Her novels are defensive about what the characters want to portray through the disclosure of their individual realities.

Deshpande has never wanted to regard herself as a feminist, yet she has focussed primarily on the women issues and suppressions that undergo in every field of the societal arena. Her themes and issues in her novels are centred on the common lives and complexities of women living in several disturbing environments. She has put both the men and women in the systematic positions under which the analyses are centralised in the context of women's problems problematized by both the men and the society.

Actually, Deshpande has tried to voice against the illtreatment of the male beings upon the women. The women characters in her novels are created in such an order that they are bound struggling against the tradition-bound systems of the conventional society in the middle class scenario of the contemporary India. The plots as well as the sub-plots of her novels offer an indicator to the cataleptic conditions of the women in their conflicting involvement against the male dominated middle class society. She has also argued that the women in her novels are not fixed in

their struggling positions; rather they have resolved their redefined status by reforming the critical rules of the patriarchal society.

The background of most of Deshpande's novels is arranged with the on-going occurrences of the middle class society where the changing status of a woman has become very much confusing. The protagonists in maximum number of her novels return to the redefined situations of the society where a new world for them has been created by them with utmost care and trial. In logical terms, the capabilities of the women are upgraded by their individual psyche where the rules of the conventional society are transformed in relevance to the empowerment of women. The famous American feminist writer Betty Friedan has said that,

> A mother might tell her daughter, spell it out, 'Don't be just a housewife like me.' But that daughter, sensing that her mother was too frustrated to savour the love of her husband and children, might feel: 'I will succeed where my mother failed, I will fulfil myself as a woman,' and never read the lesson of her mother's life. (54)

Deshpande's protagonists also have transformed in relation to the changing conditions of the social outlook. Her narratives have acquired the authentic ideologies of a woman's eternal voice. The secondary status of women is thrown out by her as her protagonists have prepared them to struggle against the dominant social norms where women are not permitted to occupy the major places in the conventional structure.

The Dark Holds No Terrors is about a literate, economically independent middle class woman, who suffers as a girl, daughter, wife and very important as a self. She is made aware of being a female. Her loveless relationship with her parents and hollow relationship with her husband provoked her to search for her self - identity. Saru ponders again and again to rehabilitate her broken relationship with her husband Manu. She was avoided and given less importance than her sibling Dhruva.

She suffers gender discrimination preference, of boys over girls and color – consciousness. Saru's mother frequently reminds her of her dark complexion and avoids her going out in sun. This is not due to the love but due to the responsibility of getting her married. Saru was blamed by her mother for her brother's death. On her part she holds herself to be responsible for being a helpless dumb spectator to her brother's death by drowning. Saru is highly elevated with the ambition to become a doctor. She boldly resists traditional parameters. Defiance is her second personality. She defies her mother, tradition, and caste. In her childhood she has witnessed the predicament of separation of her grandmother at the hands of harsh and savage husband, from there onwards she firmly decided to be an economically independent woman. This would provide her the protective shield against subordination and suppression.

The partial attitude of her parents has an adverse effect on Saru's life. She turns to be rebellious. Her life has become worst after her brother's death; she grew more defiant and wild and had an intense hatred for her mother: "For Saru the very word 'mother' stands for old traditions and rituals, for her mother sets up a bad model, which distorts

her growth as a woman, as being." (29). Saru feels that her married life is destroyed and unhappy because of her mother's curse: "Let her know more sorrow than she has given me." (197).

Saru falls in love with Manu. She is embarrassed for evoking feelings of love to someone who is hard to convince. Marriage at the initial stage is a source of enjoyment for Saru. She lacked love in her life and finds Manu a savior of her life: "I was insatiable, not for the sex but for love. Of my being loved, of my being wanted" (40). Saru lived a blissful life with Manu, as long as she was a student, Manu has been the breadwinner and everything was calm. But problem begins to mount slowly as she got recognition as a doctor.

Manu felt insecure, and all the glowing colours of their marriage begin to fade: "The esteem with which I was surrounded, made me inches taller, but made him inches shorter."(42). Her role as a career oriented woman appeals to the standard life. She prefers to shift to a beautiful and decent apartment rather than living in a shabby and congested room. Manu feels a sense of jealousy with the success of his wife. He becomes a brutal rapist and proved his masculinity through sexual assault over her.

Saru puts all her efforts to save her marital life, like an Indian woman she is ready to sacrifice her profession. She courageously tells Manu: "I want to stop working. I want to give it all up, my practice, the hospital, everything." (79). Manu disagrees to her idea of leaving a job. But his concealed ego proves to be a blunder for Saru to marry him. Then she turns to her father to disclose her pain but he fails to understand the

word like sadism, love and cruelty, but to her misfortune he goes away leaving her alone. She insisted : "Baba, I'm unhappy. Help me Baba, I'm in trouble. Tell me what to do." (44).

She regrets her return to maternal home which she considers is an escape from unsuccessful marriage. The duplicity of her life has marked her real self. Her character could be better understood in terms of psychological parameters. She is a burden with the effects of gender discrimination, an implanted mentality of an unwanted child, and traumatic tortures in sex. She overcomes all her frustrations and goals for her self - actualization. She gave up the idea of escape, and decided to firmly stand for her existence. She also understood that for being happy a woman does not require a father, a brother and a husband.

Deshpande's protagonist Saru reveals the trajectory of the physical, intellectual and psychological growth through their constant resistance, struggle and success. The apparent failures at different phases of their lives don't weaken their inner strength, on the contrary it gives them way to look forward for their new self. Ultimately she realizes her faults and miseries of her own self: "My life is my own..... somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. I have been a puppet it is because I made myself one". (220)

As a realist novelist Deshpande has exposed the patriarchal designs in subjugating women and their souls. Deshpande has portrayed the brutal condition which the protagonist Saru has to go through day and night and endeavours the objective to live. Shashi Deshpande was burdened with the task of giving the women characters the specific roles

that would fit in the socio-cultural modes and values of the changed society.

A new generation of women emerged, embracing the changed values according to which women have a voice of their own, a voice that had been suppressed for centuries. These women, who have the capacity to make free choice and need not therefore depend on the choice of the male, are portrayed in the novels of the new generation women novelists. These new women characters are not however the same everywhere.

In her novels, the poverty stricken, hardworking, sincere and silent women of India who live like animals, embrace intolerable sufferings for survival, and yet hope for a better future for their issues only to be crest fallen at the end. Nothing happens in their life but series of disappointments along with humiliation, torture and repeated displacement. Besides the rural mass, there are middle class women in the innumerable towns and cities of India who are often unable to enjoy the legal status conferred on them.

Women are now treated on equal terms by law as far as inheritance of property and opportunities of jobs are concerned. But on the social level, these women who have been struggling since ages to assert themselves, are still being heckled by their male counterparts and forced to remain silent. The voice of this newly emerged class of women, who have the same education as men and are sometimes given the opportunity of supporting themselves financially, is heard in the writings of Shashi Deshpande.

A voice of protest against the marginalized condition of women as a class is also audible in her works. The bold heroines, having moral courage necessary for self-assertion replace the meek and submissive heroines who were accepted as the standard women characters. The women who have so far been subjected to marginalization and oppression of male patriarchal society have suddenly transformed themselves in the present day scenario of social and economic revolutions. Changes in socio economic conditions have affected the familial relations especially the man-woman relationship.

Shashi Deshpand's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* presents the heart rendering tale of injustice, violence, guilt, and terror to portray a tortured and bewildered woman who inspite of being successful, intelligent, independent, sensitive and attractive is condemned to live a miserable life of an unhappy marriage. The novel analyses in depth the meaning of being a woman in modern India by probing into the inner recesses of the protagonist's psyche to discover the root of her silent suffering and passive resistance, thus helping her strive towards self-realization and self-actualization. It is the post-modern dilemma of Indian woman, who needs to redefine herself to escape the perpetual darkness of torture, injustice, and ignominy.

It explores the theme of self-discovery and identity. For a woman, the need for self fulfillment, autonomy, self-realization, independence and individual actualization are important and this quest triggered off by some crisis in their lives makes them strive heroically to

overcome their cultural conditioning and barriers created by society in matter of tradition and manners.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* alienation takes an important role to play in two women characters, Saru and her mother Kamala. Only the concept of alienation put the names together but both of them dwell in their own isolated world as two different poles of earth. For her mother Saru didn't exist but died long before she left home, "We were like the three points of triangle, eternally linked, forever separate". (141)

She never lives her life but exists in it. She feels like any other well-trained animal, capable of making the right noises and the right gestures automatically in every sphere of her life. Marriage gives a girl both happiness and pain, pain is to get detached from her parents but for Saru there is nothing to get detached because it is already done and thus she is ready to defy her parents and family and to resolve to get married in spite of their disagreement, "It's going to be painful for you" (39).

Silence is a genetic disorder in every woman. Part of Saru's alienation was provided to her by her mother, for her mother, it must be from Saru's grandmother. This silence and detached attitude towards life can be witnessed in every woman's nature whether she is Indian, American or African. Whether a woman of modern era or of myth, the unchangeable character in them is silence. To reckon few Sita, Draupadi, Gandhari and Shakuntala. They are encouraged and praised for their unrestricted love and voluntary surrender.

Women are projected like blindfolded sheep to follow their shepherd whatever and however they are. They take great privilege in

destroying themselves to achieve meaningless modesty and unmeaning heroism; this is born out of the self-sacrificing mythical female martyrs, "All the indignities of a woman's life, borne silently ...stupid, silly martyrs, she thought; idiotic heroines" (107). Alienated life is not just the theme of contemporary literature but it is as old as human civilization.

Shashi Deshpande rendered a clear portraiture of Saru's alienated life by unmasking the rich and jazzy veil around the isolated world of an educated and independent woman. Saru by profession is a doctor, self-reliant and well balanced in thought. Family is predominant for any human, at the end of the novel Saru begins her actual journey in to a drab clouded terrifying nightmare to give and receive genuine love. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a veracious traverse of an agitated and frustrated alienated soul of Saru.

Deshpande has argued that a woman always seeks for a family which is liberal and which is free from complex conservative rules formulated by the society. The family members should always offer sophisticated liberal propositions to women figures whereby they can perform their duties in a proper way. The novel is written with the vision of empowering women to prepare them to struggle against the hallmarks of silence and solitude.

Deshpande has also put forward her opinion about feminine ideologies that women should never lose themselves out backwards for becoming the victims of male dominance. They should learn how to fight against the cruel nature of the patriarchal society in every moment. The ill-treatment of the conservative and conventional frameworks have

really pressurised them to the deepest and to rescue them from that situation, they should always look forward to a perfect life consisting of peace and happiness.

Deshpande has brought out powerfully the psychological problems of a career woman and has discussed it artistically without crossing the barriers of art. The novelist has tried to project the conceptual framework of an independent lady in the midst of utter complexities. Saru has stood upon her own feet and thereby she has realized the actual identity of a woman in the patriarchal society.

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Struggles of Teenage Identity: A Reading of Rainbow Rowells's *Eleanor and Park*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled Struggles of Teenage Identity: **A Reading of Rainbow Rowells's *Eleanor and Park*** submitted toSt.Mary'sCollege(Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Mary Angel S.N. during the year 2018-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Struggles of Teenage Identity: A Reading of Rainbow Rowells's *Eleanor and Park*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

S.N. Mary Angel

Thoothukudi **Mary Angel S.N.**

October 2019

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Struggles of Teenage Identity: A Reading of Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*** is an analytical study on teenage conflicts, problem of identity and love.

The First Chapter **Introduction** deals with the review of American Literature and the biography of Rainbow Rowell. It deals with her contribution to literature and characteristics feature of works.

The second Chapter **Gender Identity** shows how discrimination is raised in society by giving its constant presence in human relations. It shows its primary over all other aspects of life.

The third Chapter **Teenager Struggles** focuses on the description of Eleanor and Park as the major characters in the Rowell's Eleanor and Park. It also concentrates on the Park's motivation to help Eleanor's life struggles in the Rowell's *Eleanor and Park.*

The Fourth Chapter **Issue of Bullying** records the adverse consequences of children bullying, leaving a great impact on the rest of their lives not only physical condition, but the gender, race, religion, and culture of the characters come under bullying.

The Fifth Chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title. The project validates the struggles of the teenagers

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

American literature is literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. The American literary tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English literature.

The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified his status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related.

With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave

narratives such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.*

In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Mark Twain -the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The Portrait of a Lady*. At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack Landon.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote too about the war. Ernest Hemingway became famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner became one of the greatest American writers with novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. American poetry reached a peak after World War I with such writers as Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and E. E. Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the mid-twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Henry Miller assumed a distinct place in American Literature in the 1930s when his semi-autobiographical novels were banned from the US. From the end of World War II until the early 1970s many popular works in modern American literature were produced, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. America's involvement in World War II influenced works such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). The main literary movement since the 1970s has been postmodernism, and since the late twentieth century ethnic and minority literature has sharply increased.

The religious disputes that prompted settlement in America were important topics of early American literature. A journal written by John Winthrop, *The History of New England*, discussed the religious foundations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Edward Winslow also recorded a diary of the first years after the *Mayflower's* arrival. "A modell of Christian Charity" by John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, was a Sermon preached on the *Arbella* (the flagship of the Winthrop Fleet) in 1630. This work outlined the ideal society that he and the other Separatists would build in an attempt to realize a "Puritan utopia". Other religious writers included Increase Mather and William Bradford, author of the journal published as à *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–47*. Others like Roger Williams and Nathaniel Ward more fiercely argued state and church separation. And still others, like Thomas Morton, cared little for the church; Morton's *The New English Canaan* mocked the religious settlers and declared that the Native Americans were actually better people than the British.

Puritan poetry was highly religious, and one of the earliest books of poetry published was the *Bay Psalm Book*, a set of translations of the biblical Psalms; however, the translators' intention was not to create literature, but to create hymns that could be used in worship.[2] Among lyric poets, the most important figures are Anne Bradstreet, who wrote personal poems about her family and homelife; pastor Edward Taylor, whose best poems, the *Preparatory Meditations*, were written to help him prepare for leading worship; and Michael Wigglesworth, whose best-selling poem, *The Day of Doom* (1660), describes the time of judgment. It was published in the same year that anti-Puritan Charles II was restored to the British throne.

The Revolutionary period also contained political writings, including those by colonists Samuel Adams, Josiah Quincy, John Dickinson, and Joseph Galloway, the last being a loyalist to the crown. Two key figures were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* are esteemed works with their wit and influence toward the formation of a budding American identity. Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis* writings are seen as playing a key role in influencing the political tone of the time.

During the Revolutionary War, poems and songs such as "Nathan Hale" were popular. Major satirists included John Trumbull and Francis Hopkinson. Philip Morin Freneau also wrote poems about the War.

During the 18th century, writing shifted from the Puritanism of Winthrop and Bradford to Enlightenment ideas of reason. The belief that human and natural occurrences were messages from God no longer fit with the new human-centered world.

Many intellectuals believed that the human mind could comprehend the universe through the laws of physics as described by Isaac Newton. One of these was Cotton Mather. The first book published in North America that promoted Newton and natural theology was Mather's *The Christian Philosopher* (1721). The enormous scientific, economic, social, and philosophical, changes of the 18th century, called the Enlightenment, impacted the authority of clergyman and scripture, making way for democratic principles.

The increase in population helped account for the greater diversity of opinion in religious and political life as seen in the literature of this time. In 1670, the population of the colonies numbered approximately 111,000. Thirty years later it was more than 250,000. By 1760, it reached 1,600,000. The growth of communities and therefore social life led people to become more interested in the progress of individuals and their shared experience in the colonies. These new ideas can be seen in the popularity of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*.

Even earlier than Franklin was Cadwallader Colden (1689 - 1776), whose book *The History of the Five Indian Nations*, published in 1727 was one of the first texts critical of the treatment of the Iroquois in upstate New York by the English. Colden also wrote a book on botany, which attracted the attention of Linnaeus, and he maintained a long term correspondence with Benjamin Franklin.

In the post-war period, Thomas Jefferson established his place in American literature through his authorship of the United States Declaration of Independence, his influence on the United States Constitution, his autobiography, his Notes on the State of Virginia, and his many letters. The Federalist essays by Alexander Hamilton, James

Madison, and John Jay presented a significant historical discussion of American government organization and republican values. Fisher Ames, James Otis, and Patrick Henry are also valued for their political writings and orations.

Early American literature struggled to find a unique voice in existing literary genre, and this tendency was reflected in novels. European styles were frequently imitated, but critics usually considered the imitations inferior.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the first American novels were published. These fictions were too lengthy to be printed as manuscript or public reading. Publishers took a chance on these works in hopes they would become steady sellers and need to be reprinted. This scheme was ultimately successful because male and female literacy rates were increasing at the time. Among the first American novels are Thomas Attwood Digges' *Adventures of Alonso*, published in London in 1775 and William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1789. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fell in love without knowing they were related.

In the next decade important women writers also published novels. Susanna Rowson is best known for her novel *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth*, published in London in 1791. In 1794 the novel was reissued in Philadelphia under the title, *Charlotte Temple. Charlotte Temple* is a seduction tale, written in the third person, which warns against listening to the voice of love and counsels resistance. She also wrote nine novels, six theatrical works and two collections of poetry, six textbooks, and countless songs.[4] Reaching more than a million and a half readers over a century and a half, *Charlotte Temple* was the biggest seller of the 19th century before Stowe's *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin. Although Rowson was extremely popular in her time and is often acknowledged in accounts of the development of the early American novel, *Charlotte Temple* often is criticized as a sentimental novel of seduction.

Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette: Or, the History of Eliza Wharton* was published in 1797 and was extremely popular. Told from Foster's point of view and based on the real life of Eliza Whitman, the novel is about a woman who is seduced and abandoned. Eliza is a "coquette" who is courted by two very different men: a clergyman who offers her a comfortable domestic life and a noted libertine. Unable to choose between them, she finds herself single when both men get married. She eventually yields to the artful libertine and gives birth to an illegitimate stillborn child at an inn. *The Coquette* is praised for its demonstration of the era's contradictory ideas of womanhood.

After the War of 1812, there was an increasing desire to produce a uniquely American literature and culture, and a number of literary figures emerged, among them Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and James Fenimore Cooper. Irving wrote humorous works in *Salmagundi* and the satire *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809). Bryant wrote early romantic and nature-inspired poetry, which evolved away from their European origins.

Rainbow Rowell was born in Omaha, Nebraska, United States on February 24, 1973. She is an American author of young adult and adult contemporary novels. Rowell was very focused and serious in school. During her youth, Rowell spent her time working for the school newspaper where she was an editor there. Rowell really likes reading and writing. Before writing novels, Rowell wrote for her school and college papers, for the

city newspaper, and advertisements. Rowell graduated from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in 1995 and earned a journalism degree. At the age of 24, Rowell had become the youngest and the first female columnist at the Omaha-World from 1995 to 2012. After leaving her position as a columnist, Rowell began working for an ad agency and writing what would become her first published novel, *Attachments* as a past time. Rowell had a baby during this period and stopped working on the manuscript for two years. For her novel, Rowell often writes about people who talk a lot, people who make mess in their life, and people who fall in love.

The novel, *Eleanor and Park* a contemporary romantic comedy about a company's IT guy who falls in love with a woman whose email has been monitoring, was published in 2011. *Eleanor and Park* is said to be an Eastern version of Romeo and Juliet, and *Fangirl*, a love and family story of a geek. Kirkus reviews listed it as one of the outstanding debuts that year. In 2012, Rowell completed the first draft of her young adult novel *Fangirl* for National Novel Writing Month.

In 2013, Rowell published *Fangirl* and *Eleanor and Park*, another young adult novel. Both were named by *The New York Times* as among the best young adult fiction of the year. *Eleanor and park* was also chosen by Amazon as one of the ten best book of 2013, and as good read's best young adult fiction of the year. DreamWorks and Carla Hacken are planning a movie based on the novel, for which Rowell has been asked to write the screenplay.

Rowell's work gained some negative attention in 2013 when a parents' group at a Minnesota high school challenged *Eleanor and Park* and Rowell was disinvited to a

library event; a panel ultimately determined that the book could stay on library shelves. Rowell noted in an interview that the material that these parents were calling 'profane' was what many kids in difficult situations realistically had to deal with and that "when these people call Eleanor and park obscene story, I feel like they're saying that rising above your situation isn't possible."

Rowell's fourth novel, *Landline,* a contemporary adult novel about a marriage in trouble, was released on July 8th 2014. "*Carry on*" published inn2015 which is based on the book series central to the plot of Fan girl. It acts as the 8th book in a fictional series by Gemma T. Leslie about a boy magician named Simon Snow who attempts a magician school called Watford. Simon struggles to come to terms with his calling as the "Chosen One" meant to destroy the insidious humdrum a magical eagle force that is destroying the magical world. He embarks on his quest with his best friend Penelope and his girl friend Agatha, at the while struggling with T.Basilton "Baz" pitch his vampire nemesis. Although it exists in a fantasy world and "Fan girl" was part of his series the novel is a standalone book. It is heavily based on the Harry Porter series by J.K. Rowling.

Eleanor and Park is a teen romance novel about two dysfunctional teenagers that ride the bus and listen and read comic books together. It is a story that takes place in the mid-80s with punk rock, and Eleanor's bright red hair. The novel is a realistic love story but an ending with three words.

Eleanor and Park was defiantly not a typical high school romance. Eleanor was a new girl. A girl with red hair and strange clothes. Park was the quiet Asian boy who does everything in his power to avoid bringing attention to himself until Eleanor walks onto

the bus. The two awkwardly sat together never spoken, until they come to the conclusion that they share a common interest in comics and good music. Once their barrier of silence was broken they were propelled into a whirl wind of first love. And while neither have a perfect life they manage to find solace with each other.

Eleanor comes from a very dysfunctional family. After Eleanor's father left them, Eleanor and her four siblings were forces to move into a tiny shack of a house as their mother remarries. They had so little money that toothbrushes have become a luxury and all five sleeps in one cramped room. To top this off their new stepfather is a beast that will stop at nothing to get rid of them one by one. Eleanor's family life causes her to become somewhat of an introvert but her true character always shines through. She was made to have quite a skeptical personality but deep down she knows what she wants and that she does truly love Park.

While Park had a much more stable family life, he constantly struggles for the approval of his father. However after years of trying Park eventually just comes into himself whether his father likes it or not. This persistence speaks volumes about his personality. While Eleanor had her doubts Park makes them work. Their relationship was realistic and it was obvious that they were meant to find each other. His devotion saves Eleanor in every way it possibly can. He was truly a hero .All in all while the two fell in love with each other. Whatever came out of either characters mouth was silky and beautiful. The way they speak to and about each other renews my faith in humanity.

Park was a half- Korean kid who is passably popular but separated from the larger social order of his school both by his race and by his passion for comic books and good

music. On the first day of school Eleanor's at down next to him on the bus. Overtime she began to read his comics over his shoulder. Then he lends them to her. They bond over music. Eventually they began holding hands on the rides to and from school.

The hand- holding was by the way, intense. "Holding Eleanor's hand was like holding a butterfly. Or a heartbeat." Evocative sensual descriptions are everywhere in this novel, but they always feel true to characters. Eleanor describes Park's trench coat as smelling "Like Irish Spring" and a little bit potpourri and like something she couldn't describe any other way than boy. "Park watches Eleanor's mouth so closely that he could see that her lips had freckles, too".

After Eleanor castigates him for saying she looks "nice" Park thinks "Eleanor was right she never looked nice. She looked like art and art wasn't supposed to look nice it was supposed to make you feel something" and they were relentlessly deliciously fascinated with the feel of each other's touch. Two- thirds of the way through the book, when Park realized they have only touched north of the chin and south of the wrists.

Eleanor suffers at the hand of the intersection of multiple systems of oppression specifically poverty and gender. Eleanor's family severely lacks the necessary income to meet the basic needs of two adults and five children age ranging from sixteen to infant shared one small bedroom, most of them sleeping on the floor. In addition to this neglect both Eleanor and her mother suffer emotional, physical, and sexual abuse by Eleanor's step father Richie, who dominated the women in the family.

Park kept hurting Eleanor's feelings and called her fat and told her that she ate a lot. He kicked her out of his life for a whole year. He also hurt her physically one time in their story when he suddenly jumped on her and pulled her hair and kept shouting hard at her. Another abuse that happened from Richie was to Sabrina, his wife. He uses to hurt her and shout at her all the time, which was physical abuse. He treated Sabrina not as a wife but as a maid even worse. He also used to curse all the time and make Sabrina cry a lot from his abuse.

Richie imposes on the family, which include physical harm, drunk driving while others are in the vehicle, and shooting. In addition, Eleanor suffers sexual harassment by Richie, as he leaves lewd notes on her textbooks, refers to her with derogatory names such as slut and whore and she must hide showering and changing from his predatory eyes.

Eleanor and Park is beautifully crafted master piece. Rainbow Rowell has truly outdone herself. Rowell had instructed this book to be in both Eleanor's and Park's point of view. A better decision had never been made. It has the ability to switch between what both the characters were feeling and their backgrounds made this book whole. Some romances can be very one sided and read through it constantly having to guess about the secondary character; thus not developing as much a connection with them. However both characters are unique and well written. The second chapter deals with the problem of identity.

Chapter- Two

Gender Identity

In a book titled *A Handbook to Literature* by Holman and Harmon, setting of social circumstances is the general environment of the characters, for example religious, moral, social, and emotional condition through which the people in the narrative move (465). Setting of social circumstances can be categorized as social when the general environment in a story has a relation to human society and its modes of organization. Based on that definition, the setting of social circumstances in *Eleanor and Park* is about social and it relates to discrimination, gender and appearance.

According to Hugh Holman and William Harmon, setting of time is the time or period in which the action takes places (465). Rainbow Rowell, the novelist, shows that the time is important for this novel *Eleanor and Park* because it shows when the event happens. Time can also give an indication what kind of culture exists at that time, what kind of people and the society are, and the important events and cases happening. The setting of time in Rowell's novel is in the school year around 1986 during fall season to spring in 1987.

There is a reason why Rowel chose this year to become *Eleanor and Park's* time. She grows in the 80s, so she puts references to the mid-80s pop culture and music into her book. It can be seen through the character's favorite music, which is post-punk or New-Wave music. This genre was really popular in 1980s. Rowell grew up in the 80s, so she has a strong emotional tie to the decade. The setting in the novel

also contributes to reveal the theme. The setting of *Eleanor and Park* is categorized into the setting of time, place, and social circumstances and these are analyzed to reveal the theme. The setting of time affects the book because the 1980s is when the punk rock bands started to come out which is what shapes Park's personality.

Park likes to listen to the post-punk or new wave music. "Lately, Park was really into New Wave music. Or post-punk or something. He went through bands like Eleanor went through books"(231). He listens to this kind of music every day. One day, Park's mother tries to do makeup on Eleanor. At first, Eleanor rejects it and so she does the makeup on Park's face. She puts eyeliner on Park's eyes. When applying eyeliner, Park looks like a member of "Duran Duran", the group of electronic pop or rock music. He is satisfied with the result. On the next day, he decides to wear makeup on his eyes before he goes to his school.

Usually, a member of a post-punk band uses makeup on his eyes. When Park's mom accidentally puts eyeliner on his eyes, he thinks that he looks like his idol. Moreover, he says that he finds his true self. He finds that this pop-punk style is his style. Before starting using makeup, Park likes to wear clothes in black. The Pop-punk style is identical with black color. Based on explanation above, the setting of time in *Eleanor and Park* shapes Park personality.

In this novel, Rowell uses Omaha, Nebraska as the setting of place of *Eleanor and Park*. Park identifies himself as a Korean boy living in Omaha. He feels that Omaha is his home. "'Good thing I am the only Korean guy in Omaha', he said" (273). However, there are several detailed places shown in the novel. Rowell herself is from Omaha, and still lives there. The Flats is the name of Omaha's neighborhoods,

where Eleanor and Park live. Eleanor's and Park's neighborhood really contributes to the theme of being different which pervades this novel.

Eleanor and Park are outsiders in the Flats for different reasons. Eleanor is obviously not a native, and has spent some time away from the area. In Park's case, the Flats is an entirely a white neighborhood. Park's mom is a Korean decent and a beautician. She meets Park's dad when he is in the Army, and leaves her family behind to start a new life with him in Omaha. Park is different from the other kids in Omaha because of this reason.

Eleanor thinks that Park's family is also much better than a lot of the other families in the Flats. Eleanor thinks that Park's family is better than others because they welcome her when she goes to Park's house. At first, Park's mom thinks that Eleanor is weird because of her appearance. As time goes by, Park's mom accepts her nicely.

People in Omaha, especially women, are usually small and skinny. They look differently if compared to Eleanor because she is big and fat. Eleanor feels like she does not belong to the Flats because she is different. Instead of attempting to shrink into the background and trying to disappear, she takes the opposite approach and makes herself standout even more.

Some events in the novel happen in the school, for example, when Eleanor gets bullied by Tina because of her appearance. Tina does not like Eleanor because she thinks that Eleanor is a weird girl. She does not like her since the first day they meet. Tina does not only bully her once, but twice.

Eleanor's style is different from the other girls in her school. She stands out

because of her appearance. Tina thinks that she is weird, so she bullies her. Eleanor and Park meet in the school bus. Eleanor is a new student, and she does not have any seat on the bus to sit. Everyone in the bus does not want to sit next to Eleanor. When she is about to cry, Park lets her sit beside him. Park thinks that she is weird because of her appearance and her style. They keep silent even though they sit side by side in the bus. They start to converse after several days.

When Park and Eleanor get along well, she visits Park's house. Park's mom tries to put makeup on her face. Eleanor gets her makeover in Park's house. Eleanor does not like it. She feels like she is a different person. She becomes a person with cheekbones and giant eyes and really wet lips. Her hair is still curly, but calmer than before. She cries because of the makeover.

Once, Park's dad notices that his son does makeup before going to school and it makes him angry. Actually Park tries to sneak out without seeing him, but his mom says that he should have breakfast before going to school. Park's mom thinks that it is her fault, because she sometimes puts makeup on Park when he is in the kindergarten. She tries out a lipstick sample on him. The day before, she also puts eyeliner on him. Park's dad tells him to wash his face, but he does not want to do it.

For Park this is his identity. However he is discriminated. People in Park's neighborhood discriminate other people who come from outside Omaha because they are outsiders. Park is half-Korean and half-Caucasian, coming from a relatively well-off family. Park experiences bullying and subtle discrimination although he is not very popular and has a comfortable home life. In the novel, it is clear that Park experiences discrimination from some of his friends.

Park's Asian background is used by his friends to stereotype him. His friends cannot differentiate any cultural differences between Chinese and Korean. However, Park seems does not care about that because he does not fight back when his friends mock at him. Even though he faces subtle discrimination, he blends enough to be respected because his friends know him since childhood. Being Tina's first boyfriend also makes him get more respect from his peers. Tina is one of the reasons why Park does not get bullied often. She is a popular girl, so his friends choose to not have problems with her.

In Eleanor's case, her family also comes from outside Omaha and makes her become an outsider. They move to Omaha because her mother gets divorce and marries again with another guy. She gets bullied even on the first day she comes to her new school. "That girl---all of them---hated Eleanor before they'd even laid eyes on her. Like they'd been hired to kill her in a past life" (11).

The students in the school discriminate her because of her looks. Her mom is Danish so she gets her red hair from her mother. Eleanor's family severely lacks the necessary income to meet the basic needs for two adults and five children. Her family cannot even buy five tooth brushes for the children. It has also made her a target for bullying because she cannot afford decent clothing and makes her wear man clothes.

Teenagers always pay attention on their appearance when they go to high school. Sometimes, social status is one of the reasons why they try to care about their appearances. Eleanor and Park experience this situation in the book. Park' s friends never fail to remind him that he does not look like anyone in Omaha, and Eleanor is immediately shunned because of how she looks.

Eleanor knows that she is different from anyone else, even from her mother. She thinks that her mother is like a queen because she is beautiful. Eleanor shows her mother's beauty through her description. Meanwhile, Eleanor thinks of herself as a big and fat girl. Eleanor's body makes her different with the other girls in Omaha. The girls in Omaha are slender and tiny. Meanwhile, Eleanor is fat and big. The girls in Eleanor's school cares about their looks. Some girls even wear accessories to bolster their appearance.

Eleanor does not just wear men's shirts. She also wears ties, too. The example above shows that she uses a man's tie but she wears it as a ponytail ribbon. It shows that she does not care about her appearances. Eleanor comes to Park's house because Park wants to introduce her to his mom. She wears men's shirt again.

As a beautician, Park's mom does not like Eleanor because of her look. Park's mom loves traditional "girly" beauty so much that she cannot even imagine why a woman would want to look any different. No wonder she has such a hard time understanding Eleanor at first. On the other hand, Park knows he is different even before he wears makeup. He has after his mother's slender appearance rather than his father's tough, macho look. All of which contributes to his physical insecurities. His appearance makes him more stand out rather than his brother, Josh. Park also constantly feels as an emasculated being near his father and brother, who are both Caucasian looking and considerably taller than him.

Actually, Asian people are rare in Park's neighborhood. His skin color is like sunshine and honey and he has green eyes. This reason makes him different than the rest of the kids in Omaha. It is described in the novel that Park dates a girl named Tina

in grade school.

> His best friend, Cal, tells him why Tina wants to date him.
>
> When Tina liked Park instead of Steve in grade school, Steve had said, "I think she feels safe with you because you're like half-girl." Park hated football. He cried when his dad took him pheasant hunting [...] And he kind of wanted his mom to give him blond highlights. Park *knew* he was different (104).

This is the other reason why Park feels different from a stereotypical guy in Omaha. All the boys there are manly and he is more 'feminine'. Park expresses himself through clothing and makeup. He is the only boy who wears eyeliner in his neighborhood. His mom is against his idea to wear makeup when he goes to school because she is afraid that the other boys will mock at him. However, he does not wear makeup because he wants to feel like a girl. He just likes to wear it because he can find his true-self through makeup.

On the other hand, the kids in Omaha find that Eleanor's style is weird. When the girls try to make their selves pretty, Eleanor chooses to wear men's shirt and hates makeup. She gets bully because of her choice. Yet, Eleanor feels that her style suits her best.

The setting of place in *Eleanor and Park* is in Omaha, Nebraska. There are several detailed places shown in the novel, which are the Flats, the school, the school ' s bus, and Park ' s house. Those places explain how the main characters show their characteristics.

The setting of social circumstances shows in *Eleanor and Park* concerns with

discrimination, gender and appearance. Park and Eleanor come from outside Omaha and it makes their friends discriminate them. Their appearances make them different with the other kids. Eleanor wears men's shirt meanwhile Park uses eyeliner. Those exchanged gender roles look a little scrambled.

The main characters, Eleanor and Park, do not change their characteristic from the first until the last chapter in the story. Both of them show their true identity and they get some concerns because of it. Eleanor always wears her favorite shirt, which is men's shirt, and thus she gets bullied because of that. She feels confident when she wears it, whereas Park uses makeup though his mother and father do not like this. Park feels like he finds his identity when he wears eyeliner. Third, Rowell shows that Eleanor and Park are different from the other kids in their surroundings.

> "Park," she said, "do you… *want* to look like girl? Is that what this about?
>
> Eleanor dress like boy. You look like girl??
>
> "No…" Park said. "I just like it. I like the way it
>
> feels." "Like girl??
>
> "*No*," he said. "Like myself." (221)

The quotation above shows that Eleanor and Park experience a gender reversion. Park, who is a boy, enjoys wearing makeup. On the other hand, Eleanor hates it and she does not want to use makeup. "The next morning, Park took the Onyx eyeliner into the bathroom and put it on. He was messier than his mom, but he thought that might look better. More masculine" (217). Park's mom is a beautician and she makes Park as her model when he was a child. When he grows up, his curiosity towards makeup is getting bigger and he decides to wear eyeliner even though his family, especially his dad, does

not like his action. He feels like he becomes more masculine when he wears eyeliner.

The theme that can be seen in Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* is about gender identity. The author reveals the characters' changes in behaviors or ways of life, by which others consider them as weird and the setting of place which describes that a girl should be girlish and a boy should be manly. Both Eleanor and Park discover their own identities by reversing them and they feel most comfortable projecting these identities in their society. Eleanor and Park reverse the gender role that might be considered to be traditional gender roles. Eleanor dresses in man's clothing frequently and she feels powerful and confident in herself. Thus, they have made their best choice of their life style.

Park wears makeup even though he is afraid that the kids in his school will mock him. However, he finds out that some of them do not care about that and the other kids compliment him for looking cool. Meanwhile by wearing man clothes, Eleanor feels she is strong, powerful and confident.

It can be stated that one has the right to reveal her or his identity by being what she or he is. The novel shows the aspects of the whole story, which tell about how both Park and Eleanor have made up their mind to choose whether their life style is just the same as the other kids' or the one they feel comfortable and confident, no matter what others think it as weird. They have chosen their way of life, in this case by reversing their gender roles, to be different from others and most importantly they find it comfortable and make them confident. The next chapter deals poignantly with the struggl

teenagers.

Chapter Three

Teenager Struggles

This chapter focuses on the description of Eleanor and Park as the major characters in the Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* and their struggles. It also concentrates on the Park's motivation to help Eleanor's life struggle in the Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*. In Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* the prominent characters are Eleanor, Park, Richie, Sabrina, Jamie, Mindy, Tina, Steve, Josh, Ben, Massie, Mouse, Richie Jr, Mr. Stessman, DeNice, Beebi, and Cal. Eleanor and Park are often told in the story. *Eleanor and Park* can be divided into two parts, namely the physical description and also the description of their personality in the novel.

Eleanor's physical description is usually mocked by the other kids in the school. In the beginning Eleanor is described as a weird person. Her appearance could attract people's attention because it is quite unusual for a teenager to dress like her. She usually wears unmatched clothes with strange accessories. Meanwhile, teenagers usually wear something which not attracts people's attention. Eleanor's appearance makes her look different with the other kids.

Park thinks that Eleanor is someone who has messed-up attire with red curly hair. She wears man's shirt with weird necklaces on her neck and scarves on her writs. Her appearance makes everyone spontaneously look at her and they define her as a weird person. "Even if she was weird. (Jesus! was she weird. Today she was dressed like a Christmas tree, with all this stuff pinned to her clothes, shapes cut out of fabric, ribbon)" (24). Eleanor never looks ashamed with her appearance because

even though her friends think that she is weird, she keeps wearing those strange clothes. Even, she adds some unusual accessories like cut out fabric and ribbon.

Eleanor's mother is a beautiful woman and Eleanor looks like her mother in a different way. She has a bigger body than her mother. "Eleanor looked like her mother through a fish tank. Rounder and softer. Slurred. Where her mother was statuesque, Eleanor was heavy. Where her mother was finely drawn, Eleanor was smudged"(18). Her mother is always calm even though she actually has a lot of problems in her life, especially when she has a fight with her husband and she has some physical injury. On the contrary, Eleanor would rather leave the house instead of having a fight with her step-father.

In teenage life, dominating others is something that commonly happens. Eleanor also experiences being dominated by another kid in the school. She is dominated by Tina. Tina is the popular girl in school who always mocks Eleanor. When she meets Eleanor for the first time, she calls Eleanor Bozo, which means stupid. Afterwards, she calls Eleanor Rag head because she thinks that Eleanor's hair looks like a rag. "She had everybody else in their gym class calling Eleanor Bozo, but Tina had already moved on to Rag head and Bloody Mary. 'Cuz it looks like your whole head is on the rag,' she'd explained today in the locker room" (23). In this case, Tina tries to dominate the school by mocking the other kids including Eleanor.

Eleanor's characteristic can be described through Park's opinions. "Eleanor, today, was wearing her sharkskin suit jacket and an old plaid cowboy shirt. She had more in common with his grandpa than his mom" (124). Park actually cannot agree more with his mom. His mom says that Eleanor is a tomboy because she wears

something big and looks like a boy instead of a girl. Eleanor tends to use something bigger than her size. "She was wearing an orange argyle sweater today, way too big, with her silky green tie and baggy painter's jeans" (162). Park often gives his opinion about Eleanor's appearance implicitly. He never directly tells about what he sees in Eleanor's appearance. Park likes the way Eleanor dressed, no matter what it is.

Eleanor's personality is described and analysed through the theory of personality. Personality is the consistent pattern of experience and action of persons that are evident across multiple situations or life context and how they behave. Carl Jung says that introvert is a reflection of an individual's attitude toward the external world distinguished by the "direction of general interest". A person with introvert attitude has his or her general interest that is directed toward their inner world, which is the source of their energy.

Eleanor has ever been abandoned by her family. Her past experience influences her present life. She is different from the other teenagers in her age. She does not have any close friend except herself. She rarely talks to other people except her mom and her siblings. She also never likes to mingle with new people. "I hate meeting new people", she whispered (127). She tends to be invisible whenever she gets into a new society. She avoids any direct contact with other people. She likes to be left alone than to deal with the other people. "At least he didn't ever talk to her. Or look at her" (24).

Eleanor never wants to be noticed by the others, especially Park; an Asian kid who always sits beside her on the school bus. She always pretends not to see him or other kids. It is really different with other teenagers who usually look for attention.

"The girl sat down. She didn't say anything –thank God, she didn't thank him – and she left six inches of space on the seat between them" (9). The first time Eleanor gets into the bus, nobody lets her sit. She keeps looking for empty space but they still do not let her sit in the empty space. Park actually tries to ignore her; however, he cannot do it. He finally lets Eleanor sit beside him. Nevertheless, Eleanor does not say anything, which makes Park relieved because he does not have to make a conversation with the new girl who sits beside him. "She didn't talk to him on the ride home" (13). Eleanor still remains silent when they get home. She does not thank him for giving her a space to sit. Eleanor does not say a word to him.

Relationship between parents and children generally influences the children's personality. The example can be seen from Eleanor's introvert personality. Her introvert personality is the effect of the rejection parenting system. Eleanor's step-father never likes her and she is kicked out from her house for a year because she plays piano at night. Her step-father does not like to be bothered. Therefore, he kicks Eleanor out from the house. Being rejected makes Eleanor difficult to socialize and she has an introvert personality. Even though Eleanor has talked to Park for several months, Eleanor still does not want to talk about her family. "She wouldn't talk about her family or her house. She wouldn't talk about anything that happened before she moved to the neighbourhood or anything that happened after she got off the bus"(108).

Park always tries to make her speak about her personal life, but Eleanor keeps it for herself. Park ever forces Eleanor to talk about her family life; however, Eleanor still does not want to share it, especially with Park because Eleanor thinks that Park

has a perfect family that she always wants. Eleanor just wants to keep the story about her family for herself. Based on the evidences above, Eleanor's attitude toward the external world can be said as an introvert attitude because she does something based on her.

However, Eleanor's personality changes at the end of the story. She finally talks to Park about her family and tells him everything. On the phone call, Park asks when he will meet her again; she says that it is impossible for her to meet him. Park keeps asking why he cannot meet her. Eleanor does not directly answer this question. There is a pause; afterwards, Eleanor replies that his father does not like to see Eleanor mingles with the others. "Because,' she said, 'because my stepdad would kill me" (111).

Eleanor explains further why she cannot meet Park. She directly says that she is not even allowed to talk to the boys. "I'm not even allowed to talk to boys." (111). She says that his father does not like her. "He doesn't care. He just wants to kill me." (111). Eleanor finally talks to Park about her step-father. She shares her personal opinion about her step-father. "Because my stepfather is crazy." (111). She tells Park that her step-father is crazy and she really hates him. Eleanor also explains why she hates her step- father. "Because he's a bad person. Just … trust me. He's the kind of bad that tries to kill anything good. If he knew about you, he'd do whatever he could to take you away from me." (111). She also has friends, Denice and Beebi. Eleanor starts to hang out with them. "Denice and the other girl, the big girl, Beebi, talked to Eleanor now in gym" (62). Now, Eleanor not only has Park as her friend, but she also has DeNice and Beebi. She even makes a joke to DeNice and

Beebi. 'I'm going to tell Mrs Burt that my mom doesn't want me to do anything that might rupture my hymen,' Eleanor said. 'For religious reasons.' (62).

Eleanor no longer sits alone in the lunch time. She sits with DeNice and Beebi because they ask her to sit together. "She sat with DeNice and Beebi at their usual table by the windows." (63). Eleanor is a dynamic character because her character changes from introvert person to be more open.

Eleanor is a girl who has been left by her family at her young age. At that age, a child should be educated and accompanied by the caretaker, especially a mother. According to Allers (1951), a relationship between mother and the child is possibly the most intimate of all the forms of association between two persons. In this novel, Eleanor does not have a good relationship with her mother because she is abandoned for a year and has to stay with another family. That experience makes Eleanor feel unwanted. She always remembers how her stepfather asks her to move out from the house and throws her stuff.

Eleanor's past experience plays an important role in building and developing Eleanor's personality. She is always afraid of people touching her old stuff, including her siblings. "No." For the moment, all Eleanor could think about is keeping her box safe. "She didn't want Massie to see her colored pencils and clean paper" (27). She has a lot of memories in her old collection stuff and only some of them are left. That is the reason why she never wants anybody to touch or see her stuff.

There is a day when Eleanor finds out the person who always writes nasty words in her book. She knows that her stepfather does it. Afterwards, she decides to

run away from the house, even she runs faster than when she runs in gym class because she is incredibly afraid. "Then she was out the window and on the porch and running down the street faster than she'd ever run in gym class" (285).

Eleanor does not even know where to go; all she can only think is just run as fast as she can. 'No,' Eleanor said. 'He's going to kill me.' It was true, she realized, even if it wasn't" (287). Eleanor insists that her step-father will kill her because he hates her. The nasty words in her book are the evidence of how horrible her father is. When she arrives at Cal's house after running, she just barely breathes and all of her body is shaking because she is really scared of the fact that she just finds out. She needs time to simmer down herself until finally she tells Cal what is going on.

Eleanor is always worried of people knowing her relationship with Park. Therefore, she never tells that to anybody, not even her mother. "She pulled away when the bus stopped. She never lets him hold her hand once they were off the bus. She wouldn't touch him in the hallways. 'People will look at us,' she always said" (154). Eleanor and Park often spend their time together, nevertheless, Eleanor still does not want anybody knows about her and Park. She thinks that if anybody know about them, they will mock them and make Park uncomfortable. She is afraid that Park will leave her. Park is her whole new world, she cannot imagine what will happen if she has to stand by herself. She is afraid of dealing with the kids in school on her own.

Another thing that Eleanor is really worried is her step-father, Richie. Eleanor thinks that her family is completely a mess far before Richie is there. Richie's presence in her family is another chaos because he always does something terrible,

like he tends to use high tone whenever he speaks to Eleanor or her mom and he does physical abuse to her mom. Those experiences make Eleanor really anxious about Richie. Eleanor used to write a song and she has to do it when Richie is sleeping because Eleanor writes the song with her little piano and the voice from the piano is something that Richie does not like. "She didn't want him to see it in her eyes, so she pressed her face into her hands in her pillow" (156). One day, Eleanor keeps writing a song without realizing that Richie is really mad. Richie goes upstairs and says rude words to her. He even breaks the piano. Eleanor could not stand that and she just hides her face in her pillow.

Park realizes that something happens to Eleanor. "She was quiet, and she kept running her bottom lip through her teeth, making it go white, so that you could see that her lips had freckles, too" (165). Park knows that Eleanor is nervous. Eleanor is afraid if Park's mom will not like her for the second time because she has met Park's mom but his mother seems to dislike her. She feels uncomfortable with that and decides to leave Park's house without saying goodbye to another family members. In this case, Eleanor's reaction toward Park's invitation to visit his home shows that she is anxious of being rejected by Park's mother. She does not want if that thing happens because she wants to get close with Park's family. Eleanor is an anxious person based on the evidences above. The evidences show that she is anxious about her present life, especially the things that happen in her home and her school. She is also anxious about something that will happen to her if her father or her friends find out about her relationship with Park.

Park is the first main character in the novel *Eleanor and Park.* Park is a half

Korean, and he is one of the very few Asian-American kids in their high school in Omaha. In *Eleanor and Park* novel, Park is an introvert. Introvert is a quite person who is more interested in their own thoughts and feelings rather than in spending time with other people. He tends to be left alone and enjoys his own world.

Park remains silent whenever he gets on board on the school bus and he lives in his own world. He tries not to have an interaction with the other kids. When somebody talks to him he does not respond. "Park heard him, but didn't answer" (6). Park knows how to get along with the other kids at his school on the bus, but he is not able to hang out with them. Park never mocks or yells to the other kids like what everyone else does, because "He definitely wasn't one of them, the bus demons. He didn't talk to anyone on the bus (39)." When Park sits beside Eleanor, he does not talk to her at all. He feels shy to start conversing with other people.

> Park felt like he should say something to her. He always felt like he should say *something* to her, even if it was just hello or excuse me. But he'd gone too long without saying anything since the first time he cursed at her, and now it was all just irrevocably weird. For an hour a day. Thirty minutes on the way to school, thirty minutes back (34).

Park keeps silent even though he has something that he wants to say to Eleanor. He just does not know how to start the conversation. He likes to listen to his Walkman or reading comic books. "Park pressed his headphone to his ears (5)". He tends to listen to his Walkman rather than having conversation to his friends. His headphone is his world. The other things that he likes are comic books. He reads his comic when he does not listen to his Walkman.

Besides, Park lets Eleanor read his comic. "That stupid Asian kid totally knew that she was reading his comics. He even looked up at Eleanor sometimes before he turned the page, like he was that polite" (38). He tries to turn the page slowly and makes sure that Eleanor reads the same part as him. This evidence could be classified as an internal aspect of motivation. Park does that thing because it makes him happy to share something that he really likes to another person. He also needs to be recognized. His father never gives him any compliment because his father always thinks that Josh is better than him. Nevertheless, sharing his comic with Eleanor is something that makes him satisfied because he is able to prove that he can do something well. He wants to prove that he is as good as Josh.

Based on the analysis it can be said that Eleanor is a dynamic character because her character changes at the end of the story. She turns to be more open. Meanwhile, Park is a static character because his character does not change since the beginning until the end of the story. He is an introvert, attentive, and kind-hearted person.

The novel *Eleanor and Park* thus presents human experience. The characters show human's experience about having a broken family and being abandoned by the family. It shows how the family can influence a kid. A broken family could make the child become introvert and insecure. The child tends to keep everything for herself and never wants to share everything that happens. Therefore, it has been important to analyse *Eleanor and Park* in this context. The next chapter deals specifically with the issues that arise from bullying.

Chapter Four

Issue of Bullying

The novel Eleanor and Park is set from the fall of the year 1986 to 1987 in the summer in Omaha, Nebraska, over the school course. This is the first young adult novel. When the novel begins, it is clear that the narrator, Park has lost someone named Eleanor. The narrative alternates between Park's perspective and Eleanor's perspective. This novel is set in the third person. This book is set in the middle of 1980s. It is in the 80s Cassette-type style, which makes one to rewind to the beginning to know what has happened. This is a love story of two outsiders. The novel is infused with pop- culture, comic books and music. It has two narratives both by Eleanor and Park. Though it had too many controversies it has succeeded against all.

Rainbow Rowell address child bullying as a topic in the novel *Eleanor and Park* due to many reasons which is investigated in this chapter. Social problems in society such as sociology classes, gender issues, bullying, are the areas in which Rowell concentrates on. But bullying is still a big problem in society. Many people in the world have been bullying. From the phenomena of bullying Rainbow Rowell has sympathy about it. She writes the first novel with bullying as an issue entitled *Eleanor and Park.* Human in life must be a social person, the theory of sociology was state by Laurenson and Swingewood. They was stated "Sociology is essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social institution and of social process, it seeks to answer the question of how the society is possible, how it works, why is persist." (11).

Sociological study of literature is thus a fairly late arrival, for although there are today well developed sociologies of religion, education, politics, social changes, even of such an imprecise area as ideology, there is virtually no established corpus of knowledge. It also unfortunate that the small amount of knowledge and research which does exist is on the whole exceedingly dubious in quality, lacking in scientific rigor, banal in the quality of its sociological insights and frequently consisting of the crudest correlation between literary texts and social history.

Eleanor and Park sparked controversy in 2013, when a parents' group in Anoka-Hennepin School District, the largest district in Minnesota, called the novel profane and demanded its removal from library shelves. Rowell was disinvited to speak at a library event about the book, which, ironically, had been scheduled to occur during Banned Books Week. Anoka-Hennipin School District, which is conservative politician Michelle Bachmann's home district, has become notorious for fostering an anti- LGBT environment in its schools.

However, when the Anoka High principal convened a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to review the book, the committee agreed that it was suitable for high school students to read. In an interview with Mallory Ortberg for the website *The Toast*, Rowell expressed her disappointment with Anoka-Hennepin's censorship, telling Ortberg, "When these people call *Eleanor & Park* an obscene story, I feel like they're saying that rising above your situation isn't possible. That if you grow up in an ugly situation, your story isn't even fit for good people's ears. That ugly things cancel ou everything beautiful."

The relation of literary work and sociology is distinct. Literature is something unique of the human life which organized as literary work and reflected from the daily life of human and society. Whereas sociology is the study about human condition in social life, problem social, and social structural.

Protest against child bullying in Rainbow Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* is analyzed by using a Sociological Perspective. This is taken into account because bullying is a big problem in society. Which is analysed by Sociological Perspective. Donnellan states:

> Bullying is when people deliberately hurt, harass or intimidate someone else, these are some of the ways young people describe bullying by calling by names; being teased; being punched, pushed or attacked; being forced to hand over money, mobiles, or other possessions; getting abusive or threatening text messages or emails; having rumors spread about them; being ignored or left out; being attacked because of their religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, ethnicity or race. (1).

The phenomena of child bullying has a big power in society, due to the US is the third position case of bullying. From the statistic and data above is also explained that bullying phenomenon is serious case in society. A student who has different looks and behavior is sometimes being the object of bullying. They look down at the students and even give a bad name for them.

Bullying phenomenon is highly affected to the victim of bullying. Generally, the victim will be excommunicated and isolate their selves. It also give affected to the mental development of the victim of bullying. That is the reason why Rainbow Rowell addresses

the bullying as a topic at the novel *Eleanor and Park.* Rowell will show how does bullying happen at school, who is the usually as a victim and Rowell also tell the reader what the impact bullying for the victim mentally. As described in a character name Eleanor. She became object of bullying from her friend, Tina. She is bullied due to messy look, she has big girl with curly red hair, spotted chick skin and poor style in outfit. Those are the reason why Tina bullies her.

The reason why Park also get bullying from his friends because he given up on blending in. He is half Korean -Irish Dad, Korean Mom, he looks more Korean than anything else. Park's dad, Jamie Sheridan is on the surface a stereotypical "mass's man." He is huge, strong, and handsome army veteran. He is from an Irish family and lives next door to his parents, and he grew up in the neighborhood, and his family's owned their land forever. When he was deployed to Korea, he met Park's mom, fell in love and brought her home to Omaha. Park's mom, the real name Min-Dae is a beautician from Korea. She met Park's dad when he was in the army, and left her family behind to start a life with him in Omaha.

It is amazing that Park's half-Irish grandparents even make a big deal about it, and yet no one even considers that Park might be anything other than Asian. In fact, Park's family is one of those old, established Nebraska families. Eleanor and Park novel setting of place is in Omaha. In Eleanor & Park, the time period of our story is nearly as important as the place: 1986. This novel couldn't really happen in an era of cell phones and social media.

Rowell's *Eleanor and Park* is interesting, because it has a kind of uniquness between the main character Eleanor and the writer. They have same physical codes.

Eleanor is a big red girl, Rainbow Rowell also has Red hair and big girl. The next same is setting time and place of the novel, Nebaska. Rainbow Rowell also from Nebaska, was born on February 24, 1973. She currently lives with her husband and two sons in Omaha, Nebraska till now. From her interview, the reason behind the novel is being found. Eleanor & Park, the story of two teen misfits falling in love in 1986, it is suitable with Rainbow age at teenager.

Eleanor is the new girl at school, and her shock of red hair and weird clothes make her an easy target for her classmates' derision. Park is a Korean-American punk rocker who offers her a seat on the bus, at first. Aided by comic books and '80s mix tapes, the two begin to bond. Revealed through segments written from alternating perspectives, their tenuous friendship explodes into a first love that is romantic but never romanticized, complete with awkward moments and misconceptions. The interchanging voices expose Eleanor and Park's intimate, raw emotions. Phenomena child bullying has a big power in society, it was the reason why Rainbow Rowell address the bullying as a topic at the novel *Eleanor and Park.* Rowell will show how bullying happen at school, and Rowell also tells the reader how is damage of bullying for the victim.

Eleanor, a sixteen year old girl with a large volume of curly red hair, and Park a half-Korean meet on a school bus on Eleanor's first day at her new school. She never less the shows creativity and flair by patching her clothes with bright colors, wearing ribbon in her hair, and pairing unstrung and creative clothing combination, which her fellow students find weird and bully her about. Eleanor deals with bullying at school and at home. At school, her classmate Tina and other students bully her about her size, her hair, and her clothes.

As described in a character name Eleanor. She became the object of bullying from her friend, Tina. She is bullied due to messy look, she has big girl with curly red hair, spotted chick skin and poor style in outfit. Those are the reason why Tina bullies her. From this novel is described how suffered Eleanor was who the victim of bullying become. Every day, she was called Big red by Tina and friends. Besides Tina often stick sanitary napkin to her shelf. Another it, Tina was covered Eleanor locker with Kotex and red ink like a blood, in a neither day Tina throw Eleanor uniform and shoes away to the closet. Not only that someone also write bad words to Eleanor book such as "suck me off", "bitch", "kiss me", etc. In addition, her stepfather is an alcoholic. It give much pressures to her also. Generally, a victim of bullying should get attention from their family, but not her. She shall suffered both at home and school.

Eleanor and Park is a unique novel, because the novel has a dual narrative from Eleanor and Park. Not only the issues in this novel which are good, the unsure of this story also good. Beginning from the place. Eleanor live in Omaha, US, and the set of time this story in 1986, when at that time there was no phone cell and the only communication yet was better. That reason Rowell put this story with no cyberbullying. So Rowell focused with physical and verbal bullying. Besides that, the similarity of the content in this novel toward Rowell's life was the reason this novel is more interesting to be analysis.

The entire analysis of child bullying on *Eleanor and Park* is analyzed by Rowell by using Sociological Perspective. The depiction in the novel can be seen in the character and characterization, which is Eleanor a big red girl, and Park is the man with slanting eyes. Park's mother was from Korea, because from it, she called stupid Asian kids. The

event in the Eleanor and Park novel are shove, ignorant, and destroyed. Shove, on the first day Eleanor was passed at the bus stop from her friends. Destroyed, when Eleanor gets home, she arrives to a very vicious fight between Richie and her mother. On her bed are torn up comics, broken bottles of makeup, and destroyed mix tapes. While the style of the *Eleanor and Park* novel are diction, figurative language, and imagery. Rowell was choose Big Red, Bazo, Big girl, Raghead for depicted of Eleanor, because she has large volume and poor style. In this novel Rowell, was used personification for figurative language. She was depicted Eleanor dressed like a Christmas tree.

The data about bullying at early 2013 show that bullying is a big problem in US. Statistic shows that 30% of bullies have been bullied by other child. 77% got verbal bullying and even mentally. 14% of students having negative reaction to bullying from their classmates. Many object can be make bullying happened, physical condition such as being overweight will be bullied. In fact, statistic shows that 63% students with overweight likely to be victim of bullying by their classmates. Not only physical condition, but their gender, race, religion, culture, and social orientation also will be bullied. Phenomena about child bullying has a big power in society, it was the reason why Rainbow Rowelles address the bullying as a topic in the novel *Eleanor and Park.*

Rainbow Rowell does not mess around in this book. She gets straight to the point of using flowery descriptions and fancy language. Rowell speaks like a teenager, letting her writing style which reflects the youth and personality of her characters. She stays close to what her character are thinking and feeling and expresses it in a direct and often in a funny way.

Chapter Five

Summation

Eleanor and Park is the first young adult novel written by Rainbow Rowell, published in 2013. The novel follows dual narratives by Eleanor and Park who misfits living in Omaha, Nebraska from 1986 to 1987. Eleanor, a full figured sixteen year old girl with curly red hair and Park, a half- Korean sixteen year old boy met on a school bus on Eleanor's first day at the school and gradually connect through comic books and mix tapes of Eighty's music, sparking a love story.

In *Eleanor and Park*, the time period of the story is nearly important as place in 1986. Rowell constantly sprinkles references to mid- eighties pop culture and music into her book, but she chose the eighty's for more than just a nostalgia- fest. Rainbow Rowell touchingly explores the overwhelming nature of first love, the kind of love and that feels as if it can last a lifetime, that can help heals wounds and open doors.

Eleanor and Park are both misfits in their Omaha high school, but they see the best and the beautiful in each other. Their passionate conversations and debates about everything from the role of women in comic books. Eleanor says they are too passive, Park disagrees) to the opening measures of "Love Will Tear Us Apart" or the short-sightedness of "Romeo and Juliet"- lays the foundation for a believable and poignant story.

The main conflict of the story was that Eleanor and Park couldn't be together because they had it from Eleanor's stepdad. The conflict is resolved with Eleanor's

stepdad finding out and her running away to Minnesota with her uncle to hide from her abusive stepdad. Even though Eleanor and Park are a developing a blossoming romance, their home lives get more complicated and Eleanor in particular feels increasingly threatened by her stepdad, Richie.

Eleanor's stepdad, Richie is beyond evil- he's in straight-up monster territory- and his presence is so terrifying that it's felt in Eleanor's house even when he's not home creating an atmosphere of constant fear. Richie's temper is so bad that he threw Eleanor out of the house after an intense shouting match because her typewriter was too loud.

From the opening pages of *Eleanor and Park*, it's clear that race is a big deal. It's the first thing we hear the kids talk about on the bus, and in this white. Midwestern town anyone who's not white is an outsider. In Omaha in 1986, racist slurs are casually tossed around this is not to be a minority in a place with almost no other minorities at all.

Bulling is a theme that recurs throughout the novel. Park himself is picked on because of his Asian heritage though the bullying he experiences is relatively mild and doesn't really bother him. Eleanor, on the other hand receives a much harsher treatment than Park on a more frequent basis. Eleanor deals with bullying at school and at home. At school, her classmate Tina and other students bully her about her sizes, her hair, and her clothes. Eleanor's father makes comments about her weights, as well as Richie whose comments are much more vulgar.

Both *Eleanor and Park* are discovering their own identities and how they feel most comfortable projecting these identities in the world. Park frequently tells Eleanor

that he loves her but; Eleanor doesn't say it back to him. Eleanor is physically larger than Park, but Park is more emotionally sophisticated than Eleanor. Eleanor dresses in men's clothing frequently which is partly out of convenience. Most of the taunts that Eleanor receives are less directed at the fact that she wears men's clothes helps Eleanor give him the protection she seeks in a masculine identity.

The novel *Eleanor and Park* tells about the love between them. How these two strangers share their separation. Eleanor was the protagonist who puts up walls around her. She takes lots of time to trust other people. But she trusts park with in a short if time who was another protagonist. Park doesn't fit with other kinds rather listen to music. Park's parents were perfect couples, Park's mother, Mindly Sheridan behaves very kind to Eleanor. After knowing Eleanor's family situation she accept her and welcomed her warmly Park's father Jamie Sheridan had an affectionate relationship with Mindly.

But sometimes he behaves hard on Park but he always stood by the family. Eleanor's mother Sabrina was a worn-down woman. She can't handle a difficult situation of her own. She was afraid of her husband, Richie. He is an alcoholic and psychologically abuse Eleanor and Sabrina. He treats around him like they were his property. He sent Eleanor out of the house because of his anger. Eleanor's brothers and sisters were not close to her. They never missed her. In school, Tina and Steve used to mock at Eleanor. But at the end they made her to escape from her step father.

Park Sheridan was a half Korean boy who gave grew up in Omaha, Nebraska in 1986. He was sixteen years old boy who studies his tenth grade in a high school. While he was travelling in his school bus, he found a large girl with red hair who was trying to

find her a seat in that pleasant morning. Actually he doesn't want to make a target of himself by offering, but he allowed her to six next to him. After a week later, they both not only shared the seat on the bus but also gradually began to share their own thoughts about comic books and music.

While Park reading comic books on the bus ride, he allows Eleanor too to read over his shoulders. Within some days, when Eleanor gets down from the bus to her home, Park gave her the comic to read it in her home. Park was totally confused because he doesn't know surely whether the book will be returned to him by her safety or not which was new brand and a great deal for fans of the comic books. But if she gave him back he has to figure out what to say to her. The very next day she handed him the comic book. They both still doesn't talk to each other. Their silence is almost friendly Eleanor's situation at her home is desperate. She has four younger siblings. A year before she has been kicked out by her step returned back. Richie always explodes and the rest of the family tries to calm down him.

Park's home life issues are entirely different from Eleanor's. His father was slightly hard on him because he wants him to grow tries to calm down him.Eleanor and Park's bond became tighter with the progression of time, and the two were extremely protective over one another, an encounter between Eleanor and Park between Eleanor and rude bully, Steve, ended Park kicking him in the face with great force and the emergence of a fight. Soon following the incident, Eleanor became Park's girlfriend, and their routine of spending time together grew into a daily visit of Eleanor to Park's house after school, where she would stay until dinner time.

Eleanor and Park follows its two main characters throughout a school year, changing from one perspective to another. Eleanor, a disheveled red head with odd clothes, sits next to Park, a Korean boy with a love for comics, on the bus on her first day of school. Their story moves from dislike and pity, to curiosity and love over the next few weeks and months. *Eleanor and Park* was sweet and tender, with just enough darker drama for it to steer clear of being sappy and dull.

However, the novel is left contemplating its first love. First love is one of those universal experiences.While the novel touches on the harsh realities of school bullying, spousal abuse and financial struggle, it is the 'purity' of the love between Eleanor and Park that causes a contemplative state. The majority of the drama that unfolded lay outside of their relationship, though it did have an impact on it - Eleanor's family situation was less-than-desirable and it affected her ability to let Park in. However, the relationship between the two characters themselves was almost perfect - the only 'new couple' argument they really had involved Eleanor getting 'ex-girlfriend closure'.

For two sixteen year olds, their relationship was very black and white. It is not first love, especially in the teen years, conflicted by ideas and expectations of sex. Usually, it is an unbalanced, painstakingly awkward and blind love, as opposed to the mature, equality-driven relationship between Eleanor and Park. It is hard to foundascertain that both Eleanor and Park were unflinchingly selfless, and put each other before themselves and their longstanding friends. It is hard to believe that they had exactly the same boundaries and desires when it came to sex.

Perhaps all of this is part of the hopeful message the novel embodies. Rowell has spoken about the ugly situations out there, and how she wanted her characters to overcome them. She's also gone out of her way to break the stereotypical 'love story' characters, with unconventional leads like Eleanor, the bigger girl with red hair who gets bullied at school, and Park - the Korean boy who likes wearing eyeliner and reading comics. With simple, unpretentious language Rowell developed a tender story that was an unexpected breath of fresh air, in what can sometimes be a heavy time to be a reader.

Eleanor and Park is a beautifully crafted masterpiece of a book. Rainbow Rowell has truly outdone herself. This is her best writing so far at this early stage the characters appeared perfectly cast. Shortly following, it appeared that Rowell had structured this book to be in both Eleanor's and Park's point of view. A better decision has never been made. Having the ability to switch between what both characters were feeling and their backgrounds made this book whole. Some romances can be very one sided and when one reads through it constantly having to guess about the secondary character; thus not developing as much a connection with them. However both characters where so unique and well written that the reader feels personally intertwined between their story.

Eleanor comes from a very dysfunctional family. After Eleanor's father left them, Eleanor and her four siblings are forces to move into a tiny shack of a houses as their mother remarries. They have so little money that toothbrushes have become a luxury and all five sleep in one cramped room. To top this off their new stepfather is a beast who will stop at nothing to get rid of them one by one. Eleanor's family life causes her to become somewhat of an introvert but her true character always shines through. She is

made to have quite a sceptical personality but deep down she knows what she wants and that she does truly love Park.

While Park has a much more stable family life he constantly struggles for the approval of his father. However, after years of trying Park eventually just comes into himself whether his father likes it or not. This persistence speaks volumes about his personality. While Eleanor has her doubts Park makes them work. Their relationship is realistic and it is obvious that they were meant to find each other. His devotion saves Eleanor in every way it possibly can. He is truly a hero. Eleanor and Park is beautifully crafted masterpiece. Rainbow Rowell has truly outdone herself. Rowell has instructed this book to be in both Eleanor's and Park's point of view. A better decision had never been made. It has a ability to switch between what both the characters where feeling and their backgrounds make this book whole.

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James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*: A Psychoanalytic Approach

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project **James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*: A Psychoanalytic Approach** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Melba Sharon J. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*: A Psychoanalytic Approach** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Melba Sharon J.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

James Baldwin, a distinct portrait in the gallery of African American literature, is characterized by his powerful delineation of the Black American psyche and stands unsurpassed due to the new light he shimmers upon the racist studies.

This project entitled **James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*: A Psychoanalytic Approach** probes through the internal soul of the American Negroes by dissecting the inner segments of the psyche, as represented in the novel, and identifies the germs that corrupt the life of an African American. It asserts the role of spirituality in rewriting and engraving one's identity in solid rock, previously written in water.

Chapter One lauds Baldwin as a supreme master of the mind, art, literary techniques and philosophy, by tracing the trajectory of African American literature and contrasting him from his contemporaries.

Chapter Two deciphers the drastic part racism plays in disfiguring the identity of an individual and disintegrating the decaying self of the Black Americans, by showcasing the isolation of the protagonist amidst the society and his craving for assuming the identity of the Whites.

Chapter Three substantiates the disruptive impact of a person's family upon his psychology, by diving into the heart of John, which is devoid of parental love and states his state as a slave within his home, of which he should be the master.

Chapter Four exalts the almighty God as the emancipator of the coloured people, from the manacles of weariness, and portrays the ironical contrast between religion and spirituality in the context of their impact on psychology.

Chapter Five justifies the title by providing a synopsis of the previous chapters. It crowns Baldwin with glory, as a writer who aims arrows of criticism

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature, an embodiment of reality, is packed with truths derived from the author's face to face encounter with the chaotic world below and the sublime world above. Words and phrases vibrate with intense meaning in literary works, and pierce through either the intellect and reason, or appeal to the soul.

> Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become. (Sandvaer 150)

Literature never returns empty-handed, but rather echoes its views, be it religious, social, political, or intellectual, through the various epochs of literary history. Being a direct by-product of the society, literature is inseparable from the major currents of evil predominant during the age, for the writers have a social aim to achieve.

A perfect literary work arises not only in peaceful conditions but also when there is tumult, which in turn gives rise to sensuous and utopian works of art. In fact, mankind turns to the divine providence not in prosperity but in suffering. Hence the fixing of an eye of faith on heaven, amidst the raging sea of troubles, is the basic essence of life. This is reflected in literature. Spirituality is an inevitable quality of literature as reality is for life. African American literature may be seen to bear these traits, for the lives of the Black Americans were desperate always.

The African American literature is of later origin than the American literature. The early literature was characterized by the slave narratives, which voiced out the oppression of the Negro slaves by their white masters. Stanley Macebuh says that, "the root cause of racism is the failure of love in society" (59). With the abolition of

slavery in 1865 by President Abraham Lincoln, the African American literature took a new turn. The act states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (Stimson 118). The history of the Black literature of the 1900s may be regarded as the history of the free Blacks who were free in the exterior but bound by chains of racial discrimination in the interior. The education and the migration of the Blacks from the south to the north, worsened their psychological state thereby completely shattering their inner self. However the Harlem Renaissance was the Victorian era of the Black American writers, for the weightage of the Black's contribution to literature considerably increased.

The social condition of the Blacks is best illuminated in the literature of the post World War America, for there was no standard literature to voice out the depths of a Negro's heart till then. Freedom was an abstract term for them. Though they were free, assimilation to the American stereotypes was their greatest trauma. The African American literature of the 1950s is the result of strained brains, yearning for a time when the world would vibrate with their words, would facilitate the readers to action and transform America into an agreeable nation for the Blacks to live in.

Psychological disturbance, lack of roots and alienation, identity crisis, racial prejudice are the best words which describe the term African American literature. Though the Black literature gains its roots from the American literature, it was never enriched and nurtured by the Black's pleasurable experience in their country, but rather shaken in their foundations by the oppression of the Americans. The inner voice of the coloured people is revealed with much intensity in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation

where they will not be judged by the colour of the skin, but by the content of their character". The literature of this era is full of unfulfilled dreams, sighs and whims revealed through pathetic characters, who are the victims of racial injustice.

In order to withdraw themselves from the fierce reality, the African Americans took forms of escapism like alcohol and drugs. The Black men even went to the extent of abusing Black women to impose the authority which was denied to them. Yet some of them took religion as a protective shield so that the sharp and dangerous arrows of racial oppression aimed by the Americans could never affect them. African American literature is considered as an exponent of these two ideologies.

Literature being the voice of the divinely inspired, the developing African American literature could never escape the productive influence of religion. Belonging to the most piteous race of the society, the Black Americans trusted God in times of dejection. The Black American literature was influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, Harlem Renaissance and the four spiritual revivals. These revivals refer to the great religious awakening which swept Britain and its thirteen American colonies. The major leaders of the first revival like George Whitefield, John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards articulated a theology that transcended denominational boundaries and helped create a common evangelical identity. In the American colonies the Awakening brought about a split in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, while it strengthened the Methodist and Baptist denominations. The revival movements influenced a number of African slaves and free Blacks, who were eventually converted to Christianity.

The Second Great Awakening in America reflected Romanticism and was characterized by enthusiasm, emotion, and an appeal to the supernatural. It rejected the skepticism, deism, Unitarianism, and rationalism. The Third Great Awakening

spans the late 1850s to the early 20th century. It was marked by religious activism in American history and had a strong element of social activism. The major figure of this revival was William G. McLoughlin.

The Fourth Great Awakening took place in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The religious changes that took place in the US during these years were not equivalent to those of the first three great awakenings. Billy Graham was a notable harbinger of the Fourth Great Awakening.

The Black evangelism and the spiritual reawakening of the Methodist and Baptist churches, which followed the war, is also intertwined with the Black American works that appeared in the 1950s. The fast spreading fire of atheism, materialism and pessimism was extinguished by ambassadors of God, of the third and fourth revivals, like Dwight L. Moody and Billy Graham. It was due to these religious conditions that the spirit of Christianity stepped into African American literature. Indeed the prevailing prejudice that Christianity was the religion of a certain sect of people was slowly broken during this era. This may be reflected in the following words of Billy Graham: "Christianity is not a white man's religion, and don't let anybody ever tell you that it's white or black. Christ belongs to all people. He belongs to the whole world" (18).

Novel may be regarded as an ideal medium into which the feelings of the troubled souls may be infused intensely and elaborately. The sands of African American literature are imprinted with enormous footprints of notable novelists, which can never be erased by the winds of time. The influence of Toni Morrison in the African American literature of the twentieth century is profound, for she provides a painful portrait of the Black women in America. She is noted for her remarkable works *The Bluest Eye, Song of Solomon, Tar Baby* and *Beloved*. Morrison explores

the psychological trauma which the Black people face, due to the strong shackles of poverty, slavery and racial prejudice. Loris cites:

> Morrison's novel demonstrates through her characters that for African Americans living in a racist, post-slavery society which denies them their status as human subject, the bonds of love are often forged into the bondage of domination and displacement of the self. (53)

It is her unique style of expressing complex themes that makes her an unsurpassable figure in African American literature.

Richard Wright the author of *Native son* and *The Outsider,* brings forth violence as the remedy for the wounded hearts of the Blacks, in much of his novels, for which he was criticized. Being the founder of the protest novel, Wright advocated Marxist themes which won him universal acclaim. The award-winning author Alice Walker is the forerunner of the term 'womanism'. She gives an optimistic outlook of women in contrast to the weak women represented by the African American writers.

Ralph Ellison who penned the famous novel *Invisible Man,* is an exponent of the Black people's quest for identity. He gives a positive note to his writings, by stripping off the past, to facilitate the rebirth of the Blacks, and thereby providing a hopeful future. Yet the presence of a lustrous diamond, who is James Baldwin, outlustres the other gems present. As Robert A. Bone puts forth:

> The most important Negro writer to emerge during the last decade is, of course, James Baldwin. ... Awards and honors, wealth and success have crowned his career, and Baldwin has become a national celebrity. (29)

James Baldwin was an advocate of civil rights and a unique master of novels. His words are vibrant with intense emotions and yearning for rebirth that eventually

challenged the existing order of things. His troubled childhood accentuated him to become a writer of social concern. Baldwin may be considered as the foremost figure of the Harlem Renaissance. He is a distinct figure amongst the other Black American writers, for he deals with the individual problems of the Blacks and never socializes the issue, for if every individual is intact, there exists order in the society.

Baldwin's life is an open book. He was born on August 2, 1924. Indeed like his protagonist of *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* his first novel, he experienced greater distress during his early years, due to the ill treatment of his step father David Baldwin, a Baptist preacher whom his mother Emma Berdis Jones married after she left her first husband. Yet his sorrowful experience helped him to sharpen his intellect during his youth. His passion for writing began at an early age of 13 and his first article "Harlem Then and Now" was published in his school magazine, *The Douglass Pilot*. When he was ten and a half years old he wrote a play that was directed by his teacher. He spent his middle school years at Frederick Douglass Junior High. He was influenced by poet Countee Cullen, a leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Baldwin left for Paris to escape the harsh reality of social discrimination. He wanted to write outside the Black American context. He started to publish his works in literary anthologies which was published by his friend Themistocles Hoetis. He spent much of his later life in France. He died on December 1, 1987 of stomach cancer.

Baldwin's literary career has firm foundations dating back to his early years. His first published work was the review of Maxim Gorky, which appeared in *The Nation* in 1947. He contributed several articles to that magazine until his death. Baldwin stands exalted as a master of all the genres of literature. He enriched the African American fiction with his novels of outstanding quality. His noteworthy novels include, *Go Tell It on the Mountain, The Fire Next Time, Another Country, If*

Beale Street Could Talk, Just Above my Head and *No Name in the Street.* Baldwin's later works discuss homosexuality with fervour and forthrightness.

Another Country is packed with passions sexual, racial, political and artistic, notable for its emotional intensity depicting Blacks and Whites, men and women stripped off their masks of race and gender by love and hatred. Baldwin imbues the best and worst of liberal America in early 1970s. In *If Beale Street Could Talk* Baldwin gives a moving story of love in the face of injustice. Baldwin has projected the lovers as a mingle of despair and passion, for which they stay in the heart of the readers forever. *Giovannis Room* projects the dilemma which follows homosexuality and the characters are tossed between desire and convention.

Baldwin uses *The Fire Next Time* as a medium to voice out his support for the Civil Rights movement. *The New York Times* Book Review praised the book as, "sermon, ultimatum, confession, deposition, testament, and chronicle...all presented in searing, brilliant prose".

Just Above My Head combines the characteristics of his previous novels, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovannis Room.* The novel portrays 30 years in the lives of a group of friends, who start out preaching and singing in Harlem churches, survive incest, war, poverty, the civil-rights struggle, as well as wealth and love and fame in Korea, Africa, Birmingham, New York, Paris. The church of Harlem, the political fire and the homosexual passion are dealt with much vividness in this novel.

Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone is noted for its overpowering vitality and extravagant intensity of feeling. The tragic condition of a Negro in America is painted with painful intensity in this novel. The distinct manner in which Baldwin has poised the Harlem streets and the world of theatre together, through the life of the protagonist Leo Proudhammer, is the striking aspect of the novel.

No Name in the Street, is Baldwin's first published essay collection. Baldwin poses the questions of American identity and racial dilemma to his American readers in these essays. Baldwin delivers with much vigour and passion, the life in Harlem and the problems the Negroes face. In his essays, Baldwin analyses everything from books to movies, from communities to entire countries. Baldwin puts forth the idea that some of the Blacks end up by adopting the views, the Whites had about them.

Baldwin is an eagle soaring high in the skies of unique thought, for he denies the path of protest novel which his fellow writers undertake. He was said to have violated the Negro tradition in much of his works. He even criticised Richard Wright's writings. He did not connect the psychological origins of the characters with the social origins of the problem. As Standley observes:

> He treats not the rural and natural setting but the grime and the gutter, the anonymity and impersonality, the confinement and isolation indigenous to the modern metropolis, especially its impact upon those within the lower economic stratum. (50)

His novels may be regarded as a faithful portrait of a desperate hero trying to gain identity and peace amidst the troubled waters and confusion. Critics argue that Baldwin uses the Black man to show what the White man really is. Theodore Gross views that Baldwin "has created the Negro for his white audience" (139).

Baldwin's later novels are also controversial due to his utter rejection of religion and acceptance of homosexuality. Though he embraces Christianity initially, there are no traces of his first views in his later novels. The false example set by his step father, who was a preacher, led him to ignore Christianity. He views the sufferings of mankind not in the light of hope offered by God, but in the darkness of discrimination, that blinded him to the divine light. He forms an absolute contrast to

the temperament of his personal friend Martin Luther King Jr. He failed to understand that the White people in their hypocrisy were not only an enemy to the Blacks but were against God himself. He was led to question God and religion, only because the Christians before him did not reflect Christ. He failed to experience the peace that fills the heart when there is chaos everywhere.

Baldwin's female characters are complete only with men. Having been denied independent lives, they lack individuality and are under the influence of male chauvinism. For this he was attacked by feminist critics like Trudier Harris. She observes, "they (women characters) are incomplete without men or male images in their lives because wholeness without males is not a concept the majority of them have internalized" (9). When the male characters strive for their identity, the Black women of Baldwin's novels lose their identity by mere subjection to their men. Elizabeth in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is a perfect example of a victimised woman. However Julia Miller in *Just Above my Head* is an exception.

Baldwin's novels revolve around the major issues of alienation, abandonment, isolation, and solitariness. Standley asserts that, "The theme of identity is the most pervasive one in his work and involves the major issues of race, nationality, sexuality, art and morality" (20). Unlike any other African American writer he generalises the concept of identity and that makes his works universal. Any Black American writer divorced from the theme of racism could never survive in the world literature. Baldwin's works, however, facilitate passions in any reader, for even a White man identifies himself with John Grimes or any other character.

Baldwin's initial novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* may be termed as his masterpiece. He blends the spiritual and racial elements together, thereby giving rise to a new form of literature. Robert A. Bone says that the novel "cuts through the walls

of the store-front church to the essence of Negro experience in America" (31). Having taken in hand the most complex theme of spirituality, Baldwin contrasts an enduring and fruitful Christian life with a fruitless one. Never a time in literary history has such an intricate spiritual theme dealt with much practicality. Baldwin deserves to be lauded with praise for his sculptor like carving of even the minutest details with much delicacy. A perfect conception of Baldwin's writing may be derived from Kinnamon's words. He says:

> Out of Baldwin's experience have emerged certain recurring themes in his writing, the most important of which is the quest for love. On a personal level, the search is for the emotional security of a love of which the protagonist has always been deprived. In his brilliant first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* the theme develops with autobiographical clarity. (4)

The story revolves around a young John Grimes, who feels alienated due to the hard-handed treatment of his step father, Gabriel. John is expected to follow the footsteps of his father and become a preacher. John's eventual submission to God in spite of his initial aversion to Christ is the crux of the story. Baldwin has interwoven the lives of Grimes' father, mother, aunt and brother to add a racial and feministic perspective to a spiritual theme. The novel is undisturbed by the criticism it faces as a believer is in the arms of Christ.

Baldwin was criticised as an anti-Negro for not formulating a critical view of the Whites in this novel. Though *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is autobiographical and packed with spiritual themes, the real Baldwin may be cut off from the protagonist John Grimes, for Baldwin had failed in his complete submission to Christ. Therefore he was tossed about in the sea of worldly pleasures.

Baldwin employs a systematic style by dividing the novel into chapters specifically devoted to each character. Though the plot revolves around the service in the church, the author exports the readers to the past lives of every character. The introductory chapter of each part begins with verses from the Bible, a style which sets apart Baldwin from the other novelists of his day.

Similar to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress, Go Tell It on the Mountain* is a Black pilgrim's progress amidst the hindrances of the common world and the pressures of the White world. The entire story contains several symbols that signify various theological meanings. Indeed the fourteenth birthday of John Grimes and the title of the first part connotates the basic Christian doctrine. It is based on the burial of the sinful self in the sepulchre of Christ and the birth of a new being. As apostle Paul puts forth in Colossians, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (2:12).

With the deterioration of religious element in the current scenario, it is inevitable to research the novel so that the treasures of spiritual meaning hidden beneath the surface of mere social injustice may be discovered. As psychology and theological philosophy are interrelated, this project aims to examine the psyche and the spirituality of the Black Americans as presented in the novel. This project studies the novel not as a representation of the outward Christian life of the family of John Grimes. It rather pierces through the soul of the characters thereby analysing the inward life of a Christian (i.e.) a personal relationship with God. Baldwin's view is that a good Christian should have a balanced family and spiritual life. John Grimes may be regarded as an ideal Christian and Gabriel as the one who preaches but never practices.

The Black spirituality is mingled with the Black culture and in this way, it is contrasted to the convention of the established churches. A study of the novel as a story of a renewed Christian and a troubled Black American is the major aim of this project. Racial injustice is the greatest of social evils that facilitates psychological disturbance and identity crisis. Hence a psychoanalytic study of the novel may give a new dimension to racist studies. The exploration of the interconnection between the soul and spirituality, the psyche and racism, the mind and family is the purpose of this study.

The novel has a purely religious and racial basis. Therefore it is essential to explicate the novel in terms of the foundations that led to the formation of such a novel. An examination of the basic theological doctrines represented in the novel paves the way for a realistic approach to religion. Hence a careful dissection of the novel opens the intellectual and spiritual eye of the reader and enables him to view the novel in a new light. This project tries to erect Baldwin as a social and religious teacher, who teaches the application of theology to practical life.

Chapter Two

Psyche and Society: A Racist Perspective

Society, which is built by human relationships and bound by certain etiquettes and customs, has a great impact on the psychology of every individual. The nature of a society depends upon the collective spirit of the people existing in a particular section of the society. Generally, society is considered as a juxtaposition of contrasting elements like upper class and lower class, good and evil, voiced and voiceless. The essence or the spirit of the society depends upon the domination of one element over the other.

> Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe. (Grana 16)

The compromise between the oppressive and the oppressed appears to be a very rare occurrence in the society. Though various components comprise the psyche of a person, such societal conditions affect a person's psychology greatly, in the productive or destructive sense. Since mankind is the most important asset of the society, the psychological disturbance of a certain sect might shatter the entire societal order.

During the mid-twentieth century, the spiritus mundi or the general temper of the Black American community was at its worst level, whereas that of the White Americans was at its best. A Negro's individuality deteriorated because of the false convictions, by using a set of codes and standards, set by the Whites. This led to the popular ideology that all Blacks are evil.

The coloured people experienced psychological traumas in contrast to the peaceful life a White American enjoyed. A person who is emotionally unstable never acts as his intellect directs him, but rather indulges in acts of despair. Hence a study of a Negro's psyche with regard to his societal conditions is necessary, for even if he indulges in acts which appear to be evil, situations determine the cause of an individual's behaviour.

Eminent literary theorists and psychiatrists have put forth various theories in a psychological context. Many of them examine how the inner self is greatly affected by the outside influences. Sigmund Freud, an Australian neurologist, in his famous work *The Ego and the Id*, states the parts which constitute a person's psychological self namely, id, ego, and superego.

Freud developed a language that described, a model that explained and a theory that encompassed human psychology. His theories are directly and indirectly concerned with the nature of the unconscious, which is part of the mind consciousness that has a strong influence upon human actions. The ego is rational, logical, mostly conscious part of the mind. It regulates id and comes to terms with superego and driven by reality principle. "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions" (Polka 198). Superego is an inner censor but is derived from societal control and driven to fulfill the demands of morality principle. The id is instinctual, irrational, vital, and unconscious. It includes secret desires, dark wishes and intense fears and is driven to fulfill the wishes of the pleasure principle. The ego is said to be the battleground for forces of the id and superego.

A Black American's psyche tends to be more complex, for his id can never be balanced with his superego or morality principle save religion, which accentuates him

to follow the right direction. His rage and revenge prompt him to take the wrong path. Their id outweighs their ego and superego. Troubled by the traumas they face in life, the African Americans follow their pleasure principle and their ego or reality principle always seems subdued for the societal ethics are framed in the White American context. The ethical factor of the society is always against the Blacks. Hence the African Americans find it difficult to sustain in the society, for the troubles they face (i.e.) racial prejudice and identity crisis, are twice greater than that of a common man. For example, the Black men impose the hardships they face upon the women in the family.

An American Negro's personality is not judged by his deeds but by that of his entire race. Hence a factor which could bring about a peaceful compromise in any person's soul disturbs the peace of a coloured person and causes distress. An African American's psyche is of two extremes, with the id predominant in one hand or the superego predominant in the other (i.e.) entire submission to racial injustice.

Though James Baldwin seems to withhold himself from the direct projection of racial discrimination, his inner voice echoes the spirit which made up his early years. The man who suffers and the mind which creates are never two traits in Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain.* This novel is regarded as an exemplary work of social criticism. In this novel, Baldwin projects the inner self of each of the characters by devoting separate chapters for them. The plot revolves around a single setting, the church and the tarry service, which is insufficient to describe the psychology of a person. However, the description of the characters' thought process, prayer, and rumination about the past best illuminate their psychology.

Baldwin perfectly portrays the psychology of the inexperienced youth and the experienced adults. Generally, youth is the time when a person's mind is in a

progressive or destructive stage. The fragile psyche of young John Grimes, the protagonist of the novel, is unstable due to the unfavourable conditions he faces, on his fourteenth birthday. As Morgan puts forth, "The idea that early childhood experiences influence later personality, the notion that the true motives for our behaviour may be unconscious-these are direct outgrowths of dynamic theorizing, particularly Freud's" (591). Yet he eventually submits to Christ to start a new life. Though he feels secure in the arms of Christ, he fears that his father's fierce arm would snatch him away from his gained security, which he couldn't gain from the society or family. Hence a renewed Christian, Gabriel, disturbs the psyche and causes the alienation of a young man, which is sinful in the eyes of God.

John's walk to the theatre symbolises his journey to the dreadful reality of the society. He comes to realise the racial discrimination and the suppression by the Whites. He dives into his inner self to discover his understanding of the Whites. He wants to live like the Whites. The sight of the city of New York brings two thoughts in him, to destroy it or to be a part of it. "He would be of all, the mightiest, the most beloved, the Lord's anointed; and he would be in this shining city which his ancestors had seen with longing eyes far from away" (38). The society's view towards a Black is best expressed in these lines,

> He remembered the people he had seen in that city, whose eyes held no love for him. And he thought of their feet so swift and brutal, and the dark gray clothes they wore, and how when they passed they did not see him, or, if they saw him, they smirked. And how the lights, unceasing, crashed on and off above him, and how he was a stranger there. (38)

The racial discrimination affects the mentality of the Negroes greatly, for they feel that all Whites are evil. Thus they tend to segregate themselves from the Whites and the society at large, which affects their internal self. They feel that all Whites deserve perdition. John Grimes may be quoted as a perfect example. Though he yearns for a White man's lifestyle he calls it a broad way and a destructive path. Yet he wishes to take the same path and assimilate the White man's ways. Such is the psyche of most of the African Americans. Only some of them reject the worldly life of the Whites, to take a productive turn. But many of them wish to remain on the battlefield, by assuming the White identity, rather than being at peace with their own identity.

> But he did not long for the narrow way, where all his people walked; where the houses did not rise, piercing, as it seemed, the unchanging clouds, but huddled, flat, ignoble, close to the filthy ground, where the streets and the hallways and the rooms were dark, and where the unconquerable odor was of dust, and sweat, and urine, and home-made gin. (39)

Hence the Blacks are always in a dilemma, and their mind inconstantly moves between Christian life and worldly life. Though John hates the sinful life they lead he yearns for a lofty life like theirs with a house and horse of his own and a lovable family. Yet his spiritual instinct or superego warns him of the end. Hence his confusion reaches the worst possible heights and tortures him greatly.

John stands as a perfect example of what means a Black man should adopt and Gabriel of what ways a Black man should reject. John is the exponent of Baldwin's ideology himself. Though John generalises the concept of racism he never hates the Whites totally. "They were kind—he was sure that they were kind—and on the day

> wanted to break his neck trying, then he could try until the sun refused to shine; they would never let him enter. (42)

John's mentality seems entirely different when he wishes to be like the evil woman in the movie. "He wanted to be like her, only more powerful, more thorough, and more cruel; to make those around him, all who hurt him, suffer as she made the student suffer, and laugh in their faces when they asked pity for their pain" (45).

The American Negroes could remain at peace only if they submit themselves to the White's suppression. If they appear courageous and challenge the Whites they were not accepted by the society. Indeed Roy's life was John's dream life. John was safe externally, yet his inner self was extremely disturbed. Roy, on the other hand, faced the consequences for his deeds. He was a replica of his father. The African Americans, however, try to connect every misfortune of theirs to racism. Roy suffered not because he was a Black, but because he was apparently rebellious. But Gabriel says, "see what them white folks done to your brother" (52). He also says, "It was white folks, some of them white folks you like so much that tried to cut your brother's throat" (53).

The venomous racism works out its effect intensely in the minds of Black women, who become its tragic victims. Gloria Wade Gayle observes:

> There are three major circles of reality, in American society which reflect degrees of power and powerlessness. There is a large circle in which White people, most of them men, experience influence and power. Far away from there is the smaller circle, narrow space in which the Black people regardless of sex experience uncertainty, exploitation and powerlessness. Hidden in this circle is a third small

enclosure in which women experience pain, isolation and vulnerability. (3-4)

The prominent women characters in the novel live an enduring but desperate life. Racism, class conflicts and gender discrimination make their life the most devastating. Baldwin tries to project how the women who were ill-treated by the society fail to receive a helping hand from their husbands, though they are given the responsibility to do so. Deborah appears to be a scornful being for whom even the preachers have no affinity. She seems to be unattractive even in the eyes of Gabriel who later marries her. She is never annoyed by the troubles she faces since she puts her trust in God. Though she may be regarded as an ideal personality (i.e.) a balanced psyche, she appears to have a weak soul, at times. This is evident from the tears she sheds when Gabriel offers her his hand in marriage.

> For the first time since he had known her he touched her, putting his hands on her shoulders, thinking what untender touch these shoulders had once known, and how she would be raised now in honor. And he asked: 'You ain't scared, is you, Sister Deborah? You ain't got nothing to be scared of?' Then she tried to smile, and began, instead, to weep. With a movement at once violent and hesitant, she let her head fall forward on his breast. (129)

A society tends to judge a person based on fixed notions, be it true or false. Having lost her virginity in the hands of White men, she was viewed with eyes that were mindful of her past. Probably this young woman's soul would have been affected not only by the White's oppression but also by the societal opinion about her. Yet she proves to be a woman who prays not only for herself but for the redemption of others.

Deborah expects a peaceful life in Christ, with Gabriel, but she is rather disappointed because he turns towards Esther and develops a great dislike for her. Having been affected by racial oppression at an early age, she tries to suppress every disappointment without voicing them out. Her innermost desires and despair are revealed when she says, "I been praying all these years that the Lord would touch my body, and make me like them women, all them women, you used to go with all the time" (172). Gabriel fails to give her the joy in life and there is a sorrowful corner in her mind in spite of her happy self. Yet she loves him and forgives him. She expresses, "I'd been wanting you since I wanted anything. And then I got you" (173).

Not all people react to a particular situation in a similar manner. It depends upon the psychological composition of each person, as Freud states. Hence the external environment and internal self (i.e.) behaviour and psyche, are correlated.

> The poor ego has a still harder time of it; it has to serve three harsh masters, and it has to do its best to reconcile the claims and demands of all three...The three tyrants are the external world, the superego, and the id. (Kirsch 170)

While some try to resist the evil in the face, when it comes roaring like a lion, some fear and try to find other forms of escapism. Most people submit to their fate without any resistance. Florence belongs to the second category. She tries to adopt the ideology of the Whites.

Having a great hatred for the lifestyle of the Blacks, she migrates to the North to acquaint herself with the White's mode of living. She feels that the lives of the Negroes are dirty. She says, "You think I want to stay around here the rest of my life with these dirty niggers you all the time bring home?" (97). Yet her husband was not of the same conception. He replies, "Where you expect us to live, honey, where we

ain't going to be with niggers?" (97). Her marriage with Frank fails because he was Negro in spirit, while she was a White at heart. Florence's behaviour is a striking example of Freud's theory of personality. She acts according to her id or pleasure principle. Her soul is perfected by that part of the superego which is active in the Whites not in the Blacks (i.e.) racist instinct. This may be noted from the term that she uses to describe her own people, 'niggers'. The superego or the morality principle, of the Whites, is contrasted to the Black's ethical principle (i.e.) revolt and freedom. The superego is never the same for the entire human race. It varies from country to country, sect to sect, person to person. Hence a person cannot be termed as morally good only if the society accepts him to be so or his superego judges him to be so.

Baldwin compares the Black's condition in America to the Hebrews in the Bible. Though the Negroes were never under the direct influence of slavery, the racial discrimination they face, in a country that appears to be their own but never theirs, parallels the Hebrew's experience in Egypt. The continuous tribulations they face left a troubled psyche and both called on the Lord for deliverance.

Richard, Elizabeth's first husband, plunges into despair since he was falsely convicted based on racial standards. Indeed, the story of Richard is the story of a devastated Negro, diverted from his happy life due to a misconception on the entire race. On his return from prison, his inner strength completely gets shattered. This blinds him to reality. Hence he leaves his pregnant lover without any refuge. Indeed he wouldn't have acted in such a manner, for his personality is the opposite of his actions. His spirit is never steady, and the societal convictions have a drastic effect on him. The ego is effective only for those Black Americans whose morality principle is predominated by religion or governed by those principles formulated by the conscience-based Blacks themselves. Richard's ego proves to be ineffective. The

remarks of the White owner troubled him greatly. '"You Black bastards' the man said, looking at him, 'you're all the same"' (199). Hence the entire Black community is misjudged due to the misdeeds of certain individuals. Therefore a Negro could never fulfill his desires and morally satisfy the society.

The very freedom of spending the night time with his beloved is questioned, when the White people have the right to do so. If any White man had been at Richard's place, people would have believed him. Richard suffers on account of certain evil Negroes.

One is expected to have a perfect personality, when his ego brings about a balance between his id and superego. Yet a Black American is considered as a socially acceptable being only if he completely submits himself to the White Americans (i.e.) suppress his id. His superego comprises of those societal norms, which suggest submission rather than freedom. Hence his id and superego could never go hand in hand. There is no possibility of a powerful ego.

Richard's life reflects Maya Angelou's view in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings:* "It was awful to be Negro and have no control over my life. It was brutal to be young and already trained to sit quietly and listen to charges brought against my colour with no chance of defence. We should all be dead" (176). Hence it may be proved from Richard's story that the racist society has a great impact on a Negro's psychological self even if he is morally good. Hence the internal roots of hope of a Black American are uprooted. This may be proved from the following lines:

> he threw himself, face downward, on his bed and wept. She had only seen one other man weep before—her father—and it had not been like this. She touched him, but he did not stop. Her own tears fell on his dirty, uncombed hair. She tried to hold him, but for a long while he

> would not be held. His body was like iron; she could find no softness in it.... He fell asleep at last, clinging to her as though he were going down into the water for the last time. (203)

One's ego is influenced not only by the societal norms but also by his spirituality and faith in God. Though one component of Richard's ego is ineffective, he would have easily crossed the hurdles of life if he had made use of the other component, which is powerful. It is only during his critical time that he asks Elizabeth, "to pray to that Jesus of yours and get Him to come down and tell these white men something" (199). He is released due to Elizabeth's fervent prayer. However, he lacks the courage to face the outside world, for his soul is completely shattered due to the misapprehension of the Whites. Hence it is evident from Richard's life that racism is a germ that corrupts not only the immoral Blacks but the society at large. If one fails to intake the medicine.of spirituality, he may not be able to survive. That is why Deborah could stand as firm as a rock, despite her troubled psyche, whereas Richard stumbles. "The superego is, however, not simply a residue of the earliest object-choices of the id; it also represents an energetic reaction-formation against those choices" (Katz 204).

The societal events and happenings greatly influence an African American's psyche. The Negroes couldn't wander fearlessly in the streets, for they were beaten up if they stirred an eye against the Whites. The streets were filled with White Americans and scarcely with the Black Americans during night time. Royal was bold enough to face the dominative Whites but his father feared them. Gabriel warns him of the impending danger.

> 'Boy,' he cried, 'ain't you got good sense? Don't you know you ain't got no business to be out here, walking around like this?' ... I just

mean you better be careful, son. Ain't nothing but white folks in town to-day. They done killed ... last night .... (165)

Royal's reply reveals his personality. "'I know,' he said abruptly, 'but they ain't going to bother me. They done got their nigger for this week. I ain't going far noway'" (165). Probably such events are the reason for Gabriel's critical opinion about the Whites. When his sons Royal and Roy try to oppose the Whites, Gabriel fears to revolt, even when his psychological self impels him to do so. Though the deeds of the Whites infuriate him, he goes away patiently. Hence they spare his life. His vigorous self shows itself alive only to his family members. It appears almost dead to the white society. Gabriel mirrors the spirit of those Negroes who hate the Whites but never try to oppose them.

Society's positive and negative effect on the psychology of an African American is intricately examined by James Baldwin in *Go Tell It on the Mountain.* A ship is tossed about and can never make a steady sojourn when the storm is fierce and the winds and waves are raging. Similarly, a society that is full of discrimination, violence, and prejudice can never offer a peaceful life for man who is a social being bound by his absolute relationship with the society (i.e.) other social beings. A Negro's psyche can be peaceful, like the Whites, only if the tumult stops as Christ calmed the sea. A person can have a calm soul if he has an endearing and lovable family. A young Negro overcomes the racial obstacles if he receives absolute care from his family and identifies the love of Christ. Hence society is not the only aspect that shapes the psyche of an individual.

As per the Freudian concept, if a person either endures or fights the racist elements without being overwhelmed by it, he has a secure self. An ideal individual never goes to the extremes of intense rage or mere subjection. Even if one

Chapter Three

Psyche and Family: An Alienated Self

The human mind is comprised of several segments that contribute to the behavioural patterns of every individual. Several factors, internal and external, influence a person's psychology greatly. Even for those people who have a peaceful external environment, the internal zone of relationships (i.e.) one's family may be the cause of a tragic life. For almost every Black American, the society disrupts the smooth flow of life. The bitter fruit of racial oppression, which they consume, is further poisoned by the terrible family conditions. This leads to their complete alienation which is a clear indication that their inner spirit is deteriorating. Felix defines alienation as follows: "the loss of identity is alienation ... it leads to powerlessness, the lack of control over various aspects of existence" (251).

An individual's inner circle, who shoulder the responsibilities and share the feelings, may lift him when he is about to drown in the raging sea of racial injustice. The American Negroes who lose their identity, due to unfavourable social conditions, could redefine their identity with the emotional security they receive from their families. Among the influential factors of young adulthood or teenage, one's family is of vital importance. Family relationships decide whether a person's life is progressive or declining. A young adult who tries to climb the ladder of progress, in life, is pulled down by discouraging factors. However, a family can offer supportive hands for an individual to come up. These powerful components seem to be absent in the life of the protagonist, John Grimes. In the beginning, John is an alienated being strongly disturbed by the family conditions. His troubled psyche and identity crisis may be noted from the following lines:

> It was when John was five years old and in the first grade that he was first noticed; and since he was noticed by an eye altogether alien and impersonal, he began to perceive, in wild uneasiness, his individual existence. (22)

When a person begins to search his roots, it is clear that he is unsure of his identity. Eric Fromm indicates that: "The alienated person does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts, but his acts and their consequences have become his masters" (120).

Go Tell It on the Mountain provides a clear cut picture of the psychology of John Grimes. The depiction of the psyche of the African Americans is the major concern of the novel, for the entire story projects the feelings of the principal characters during the tarry service. Baldwin portrays the internal conflict of each of the characters to bring about the impact their life had on the protagonist. Baldwin explores the inner feelings of the Black Americans and the manner in which the societal events influence their internal selves. The novel dives into the soul and spirit of the African Americans, in general. By ironically portraying the doomed fate of John during his fourteenth birthday, Baldwin contrasts John's life of seclusion with the happy life every child enjoys.

The entire plot revolves around John's fourteenth birthday and the tarry service. His birthday does not affect the general course of life of the Grimes family. John's rage and irritable behaviour may be due to the family's failure to recognise his birthday. "He wanted to cry, like a child: 'But, Mama, it's my birthday!' He kept his eyes on his plate and began to eat" (26). The day which is supposed to fill a young boy with excitement and drown him in extreme mirth, plunges him into intense despair. He wakes up with disappointment, not with surprise, and this spoils his

mood. "John's birthday fell on a Sunday in March, in 1935. He awoke on this birthday morning with the feeling that there was menace in the air around him—that something irrevocable had occurred in him" (19).

John hates to perform the domestic chores during his birthday. He was intensely desperate and, "thinking bitterly of his birthday, he attacked the mirror with the cloth, watching his face appear as out of a cloud" (30). This act of John resembles the popular psychological view that a person's harsh behaviour may be due to some dreadful influence in his or her life. Baldwin explores the thought process of John during his fourteenth birthday, to illuminate the troubled psyche of an alienated being. It is evident that John was cornered and secluded even by his family. His existence was never a matter of fact for anybody in the family.

> His first thought, nevertheless, was: 'Will anyone remember?' For it had happened, once or twice, that his birthday had passed entirely unnoticed, and no one had said 'Happy Birthday, Johnny,' or given him anything—not even his mother. (20)

The fragile young mind is utterly broken by the family's ignorant attitude towards his birthday. Even the encouragement he received from his school Principal is never provided by his family. John's longing for love and recognition in the family is intense.

Baldwin indicates that John's home is a "precarious home" (23). John feels an emptiness in life and has a great hatred for the house in which he lives, in contrast to the admiration he has for the White household. "He moved to the table and sat down, feeling the most bewildering panic of his life, a need to touch things, the table and chairs and the walls of the room, to make certain that the room existed and that he was in the room" (25). He craves to have a loving family like the Whites. The poor

example which his family provides, leads him to conclude that the Black society is packed with loveless families and device a hatred for his entire community. Hence John's family is the major component that causes him to regard his race with hatred.

John's life is utterly destroyed by sibling rivalry, parental strife and strained father-son relationship. He appears to be a scornful being in the eyes of Gabriel and a burden to Elizabeth, adding further distress to her life of despair. John's mentality towards his father may be noted from the following lines: "'Mama,' John asked suddenly, 'is Daddy a good man?'" (26). The fear that John has for Gabriel causes him to distance himself from his father, rebuke him and, finally alienate himself from the entire family. "His father's arm, rising and falling, might make him cry, and that voice might cause him to tremble; yet his father could never be entirely the victor, for John cherished something that his father could not reach" (23).

Gabriel never wanted to accept John as himself but rather carve John into an identity as he wished. A person's personality and psyche can be transformed only under the influence of some influential person. Gabriel is the greatest enemy of John, a foe within the family. The more Gabriel imposes his wishes on John, the more he runs away from his identity (i.e.) a member of the Grimes family. Gabriel never loves him nor identifies him even as he does a believer in his church. He considers John as his son out of a sense of duty, not of love. Hence it may be noted that Gabriel is responsible for John's identity crisis. The advent of Gabriel into the life of John seems to disorient him greatly instead of taking him to productive heights.

In spite of his past sinful life, Gabriel calls John a sinner. He uses the phrase "the mark of the Devil's little finger" (31) to denote the cleft in John's chin. A child's psyche is greatly affected by the life the parents lead before his own eyes. Gabriel projects a negative example. Though Gabriel says that he is a "poor man trying to

serve the Lord" (51), there is a mismatch between his words and deeds. This is evident when he beats Roy and quarrels with Elizabeth and Florence. Gabriel's conception that a father should only be the breadwinner of the family, and has no responsibility in the emotive growth of the individual, causes the mental deterioration of the son.

Baldwin tries to illuminate the psyche of a fatherless child. Though a young adult requires emotional support and care from his mother, it is a father who defines life and explains the practical approach to life by experiences. Violence is not the only means to teach life lessons. The encouragement and love which a father offers, molds an individual to face life courageously.

John grows up without paternal affection and Gabriel never fills the void left by his father. Gabriel marries Elizabeth, not out of compassion, but to amend his past sinful life. "He watched over her and her baby as though it had become his calling; he was very good to John, and played with him, and bought him things, as though John were his own" (216).

Gabriel's hard handed attitude towards Elizabeth reflects his selfishness in marrying her. It is impossible for a person's mind to be at peace amidst quarrelsome parents. The fiery conflict and the verbal war that take place between the parents has a very drastic effect upon the children. Hence the space left by a dead person can never be filled by any other person.

Baldwin clearly emphasises the fact that John is Gabriel's object of aversion. "And John knew, in the moment his father's eyes swept over him, that he hated John because John was not lying on the sofa where Roy lay" (49). John's rage is so fierce that he wishes to gain identification amidst his family at the expense of Roy's life. Even when his brother lay hurt, his heart devices more hatred for his family. That is

why he wishes to run away from his family to the lovable world of the Whites. John's id tries to surface itself through his vigorous thought. He feels that he might gain recognition in the family if Roy is dead. He desires to obtain his pleasure principle at the expense of others. John's fear for his father subjugates his id or pleasure principle. A person bound by societal etiquettes, Gabriel, silences it. John feels that he may become the object of love for his parents, if there was no one else to be loved.

Baldwin portrays John as a figure who is dominated by selfishness and, this blinds him to the actual conditions in the family. Baldwin tries to underline the fact that fatherless children are alienated not only because of the stepfather's ill-treatment but also because of the feeling that lies deeply rooted in their subconscious mind, that they are stepchildren. The birth of a stepbrother or stepsister worsens the situation.

Not only does the lack of paternal love turn him into a devastated being, but also the lack of fraternal affection. Indeed a sibling who has to offer a supportive hand becomes the one who is responsible for the alienation of his stepbrother, John Grimes. Roy's attitude towards John is harsh and dominative. He fails to recognise his brother's birthday and acts in a rather rude manner, and this spoils John's mood. The joint forces of sibling and paternal rivalry cause him to drift away from his own identity.

The important factor which shapes the psychology of a young boy, as the psychiatrists term, is the impartial treatment of the children by the parents. Gabriel not only ill-treats John but offers a biased treatment to Roy. "It seemed that his mother, whose touch was so much more gentle, had been thrust aside by his father, who could not bear to have anyone else touch his wounded son" (48). Roy has paternal guidance, whereas John lacks it.

Indeed, Gabriel considered John as a gift given by the Almighty to make amends for his past sinful life. He felt that John would be the medicine that heals his past life of guilt. Yet he casts John away, as a detestable being, when the seed of his own, Roy is born. This disturbs the fragile mind of John Grimes. Initially, he had the maturity to consider someone else's child as his own. When a young child is born, the parents ignore the elder child and this deeply troubles the child's psyche. Hence the elder children feel neglected and can never bear to see someone else snatch them away from their parent's love. Almost every first child of the family is affected by this syndrome, of which John Grimes is never an exception.

Baldwin contrasts the violent and compassionate treatment which Gabriel offers to Roy with his contemptuous approach to John. Being alienated by the society, John wants to gain roots in a firm soil, which is possible only through the compassionate security of his family. However, he fails to gain it. The lack of love is the cause of his intense rage and anger.

When a young child has nothing to do with the sins of his parents, they have an indirect impact on him. Gabriel often highlights Elizabeth's sinful life, through the harsh words he rains upon John. He acts in this manner to camouflage his past life with Esther. The only evidence of his past sin, Roy, is completely erased due to his ignorant behaviour. However, the product of Elizabeth's sinful life, John, remains as an unerased evidence. She thrives to give her child an identity by risking her own image.

John was Elizabeth's only object of consolation, for he was the visible remnant of the true love Richard had for her. Though Elizabeth loves her son extremely, John feels that he is rejected even by his mother. Gabriel's behaviour blinds him to the love and sacrifice of his mother. This may be noted from the

following lines: "(he) thought how oddly she looked at him; as though she were looking at someone else's child" (35). An alienated being feels that he is ignored everyone, though he is not. This basic psychological concept is apparent from John's life.

Though Elizabeth loves John deeply, she is never able to show an open affection for her son. John was brought up by his loving mother, who couldn't reveal her love due to her stressful life. The springs of love which flow within Elizabeth's heart could never overflow out due to the lack of support from Gabriel. Hence it is evident that a woman can never follow her heart's desire if there is cooperation from her male counterpart.

John was scorned by Gabriel as sin begotten. Even Elizabeth feels that he was sin-born: "But what a turning! How could she fail to pray that He would have mercy on her son, and spare him the sin-born anguish of his father and his mother" (203). As any other mother does, Elizabeth puts down her desires for the welfare of her son. All the sacrifices she had done when her son was young were burnt to ashes after she married Gabriel.

> It was terrible work, and Elizabeth hated it; but it was at night, and she had taken it joyfully, since it meant that she could take care of John herself all day and not have to spend extra money to keep in a nursery. She worried about him all night long, of course, but at least at night he was sleeping. (204)

After Richard's death, Elizabeth led a secluded life. His death troubled her greatly. "'He wouldn't never of left me,' said Elizabeth, 'but he died'" (211). The isolated life of John's father and mother affected his delicate psyche deeply.

A person's heritage may play a vital role in the shaping of one's personality. Richard, John's father, was a shattered self and died a terrible death. Shaken by the death of her lover, his mother struggled for existence. John's birth did not bring her joy but increased her despair. His birth increases Elizabeth's responsibility and fear for his future.

The birth of John was under cynical conditions, when his father died as a result of a false conviction, on a racial basis. Richard died in a completely devastated state questioning his own identity and existence amidst a racial society. He was unable to face life courageously and brave against the storm of troubles that befall him. Therefore, he ends his life. With the end of one desperate life, there begins another life of distress (i.e.) the birth of John. Thus the state of conditions during John's birth decides the fate of John. He would have ruined his life if he hadn't realised that he was a beloved child of God.

Elizabeth marries Gabriel for the sole reason that he would be a protective shield for her son. She wishes to give John an identity at least by marrying Gabriel. However, Gabriel fails to satisfy her claim. Gabriel's initial greeting of John and his later treatment have no resemblance.

> His eyes were still on John, whose eyes had not left him. Then he looked again at Elizabeth. She felt that the air between them was beginning to be charged, and she could find no name, or reason, for the secret excitement that moved in her. (213)

It was Gabriel who gave Elizabeth hope after the death of Richard. Had his behaviour remained the same, John would have had a peaceful life. Gabriel breaks the promise he made before God.

> 'And I'll love your son, your little boy,' he said at last, 'just like he was my own. He won't never have to fret or worry about nothing; he won't never be cold or hungry as long as I'm alive and I got my two hands to work with. I swear this before my God,' he said, 'because He done give me back something I thought was lost.' (218)

She desires to give fatherly love and security to her fatherless child, for which she takes the wrong path. Elizabeth fails to pierce into Gabriel's internal self and judges him by looking at his outward life. She blindly trusts him. "She had told him that John was nameless; and she had tried to tell him something of her suffering, too. In those days he had seemed to understand, and he had not stood in judgment on her" (217).

John's preconception that his mother never loved him is false. Elizabeth never forgets his birthday and gives him a small amount, as a token of her affection. Hence it is apparent that no one can ever compensate a mother's love. Elizabeth has great hopes for her son's future.

> 'You getting to be,' she said, putting her hand beneath his chin and holding his face away from her, 'a right big boy. You going to be a mighty fine man, you know what? Your mama's counting on you'... He watched her face, his heart swollen with love for her and with an anguish, not yet his own, but he did not understand and that frightened him. (36)

John is unaware of his own identity. The society's view of his personality troubles him the most.

> He stared at his face as though it were, as indeed it soon appeared to be, the face of a stranger, a stranger who held secrets that John could

never know. And, having thought of it as the face of a stranger, he tried to look at it as a stranger might, and tried to discover what other people saw. (30-31)

John's mind swaps from inferiority complex to self-esteem. He takes pride in his ability to think, yet he wishes to be like the other boys (i.e.) live a worldly life. The positive and negative aspects of his personality are at fierce war within himself. When he ponders about his own life, his inner self is enlightened and he comes to realise the true nature of himself. However, the image of John, in its originality, seems to mock at him as it never satisfies the generally accepted claims.

> Yet, if he could not play their games, he could do something they could not do; he was able, as one of his teachers said, to think. But this brought him little in the way of consolation, for to-day he was terrified of his thoughts. He wanted to be with these boys in the street, headless and thoughtless, wearing out his treacherous and bewildering body. (34-35)

When an alienated individual couldn't discover his self amidst his family, he wishes to gain his identity by living a wicked life. John yearns to seek his roots at the expense of his taintless life.

John never receives solace from his family or his people. His life resembles the life of Maya in *Cry the Peacock*: "they put me away in steel glass container, a thick glass cubicle and I have lived in it all my life without a touch of love or hate or warmth on me" (Desai 247). He wishes to quench his thirst, for love, by living a life of fancy or illusion. The imagination of a fairy tale life where love flows like a stream, with his dream characters and himself relaxing in the meadows of peace and happiness, gives him temporary solace and comfort. Hilgard's view may be justified

by John's act: "When problems become too much for us, we sometimes seek the "solution" of escape into a dream world, a solution based in fantasy rather than reality" (438). Like any other Black boy, John tries to forget the despair of the dull day by going to a movie. In general, alienated beings try to engage themselves in activities like reading books and watching movies. They identify themselves with the characters and find temporary comfort. John wants to live a carefree life like the wicked woman in the movie.

> He wanted to be like her, only more powerful, more thorough, and more cruel; to make those around him, all who hurt him, suffer as she made the student suffer, and laugh in their faces when they asked pity for their pain. (45)

Though this may be an attempt to regain his identity, John completely loses his identity. However, he redeems it with the help of Christ.

The inevitable result of alienation is being cut off from reality and sheltering oneself within the safe walls of illusion. Yet one's inner spirit is in complete shambles when the illusory world fades away and the fierce reality comes into existence. When John returns from the theatre and learns that his brother is wounded, his peace gets disturbed. He hates his present environment of quarrels and sorrow.

A person's psyche is made up of co-joint elements. The ineffectiveness of one element shatters the entire order. The combined forces of the father, mother and sibling contribute to the happy life of an individual. In short, a family with all its components, crisis and rivalry compensated by love and understanding, influences the psychology of a person.

Only those individuals who have experienced a particular inner feeling can express them genuinely. Similarly, the novelist who has a lost identity, in real life, can

examine the true self of an alienated being. John in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is the mirror image of Baldwin himself. The novelist had a secluded and ignored life due to the ill-treatment of his father. He explains in an interview that he had dealt with what hurt him the most, his father, in his first novel. Having experienced pangs of suffering during his early years, Baldwin picturises the psychological trauma of a young Black American. Hence the novel may be termed as a truthful account of Baldwin's alienated soul.

John's life clearly defines how a family's impact can destroy one's personality. A family can drive an individual to the best and worst possible end. Baldwin not only explores the psychology of an alienated African American but the society at large. A child's birth and the past life of the parents profoundly influence the behavioural pattern of the parents. This, in turn, directly influences a person's psyche. A person becomes a stable or unstable personality due to the powerful influence of the family.

Even if the family and society have a negative impact on the individual (i.e.) the absence of earthly powers, the divine providence could offer a productive life. Unlike the worldly elements, such heavenly forces can have only a profitable influence. That is why John is not an altogether shattered being. John discovers his identity in Christ during the tarry service. Anyone who has lost their identity can search their roots and gain their foundation in Christ. To underline this idea, Baldwin sets the plot in John's fourteenth birthday. His birthday and the paralleled salvation emphasises the rebirth of John (i.e.) gaining a new identity. As per the basic theological doctrine, John's false identity, caused by the society and family, is buried with Christ in the sepulchre. The birth of a new John takes place.

Chapter Four

Psyche and Spirituality: Rebirth in Christ

The omnipotent presence of the divine force is responsible for the peaceful functioning of life in the entire universe. The heavenly power is a determiner that controls a person's mind and channelises his psychology towards tranquility. An individual, who is disrupted by identity crisis and racial prejudice and disturbed by pangs of sorrow and despair, can have a new beginning in Christ. One's life takes a new turn and his psyche is completely reversed, with the advent of Christ into his life.

When a person feels that the worldly forces have lost their power, the heavenly forces rescue him. The gospel of Matthew stresses the idea that Jesus is the reliever of stress: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (11: 28). Indeed, love is defined by the sacrifice of Christ and as all psychologists admit, love is the most touching emotion, which can melt even a stony heart and turn a fierce lion into a timid cat. With the failure of earthly love in a person's life, God's love can lift him up.

As theologians term, people raise their supplications to God not when they have everything in their lives, but when they feel an emptiness in life. As Jesus says in the book of Matthew: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (2: 17). That is why the Black Americans, with their shattered self, are more spiritual than the Whites who are well-provided. Having lived abandoned lives, every Black American tries to find alternate ways to turn his desert into a vineyard. The protagonist, John, is never an exception. Yet there are no alternate means of relief, save Christ, and finally they end more distressed.

The novel revolves around a purely religious plot. In short, the story is an account of the conversion of young John Grimes and the regaining of his lost identity. The protagonist is a replica of Baldwin himself. Baldwin tries to reproduce his experience with his religious yet rude stepfather. Baldwin has intertwined his religious background and the general spiritual background of his age with the psychology of the African Americans. American theology since the civil war represents an age of transition, of much fortunate silence, of expectant waiting as on a threshold. The belief system and the mode of worship peculiar to the Black Americans is a representation of their general psychology. The way of worship of the American Negroes has something to do with their general personality. The White Americans calmly worship God, whereas the Blacks' mode of worship is full of ecstasy.

Whenever a writer intends to bring about a particular impact upon the readers through his writing, the literary techniques play a vital role in bringing about the result. Baldwin establishes the connectivity between psyche and spirituality by choosing an ideal genre, bildungsroman. The novel traces the spiritual development of the principal characters. The protagonist, John Grimes, goes on a spiritual journey and penetrates his self through Christ. As a result, John acquires a new identity, as the seed of Abraham, according to Apostle Paul's statement in the Book of Galatians: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (3:27).

Baldwin sums up the essence of Christianity by the verses he provides at the beginning of each part. The threshing floor begins with the verse from the book of Isaiah: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King,

the Lord of hosts" (6:5). Baldwin stands unique by giving an instance from the Old Testament to indicate the forgiveness which Christ offers.

The novel may be divided into two parts, the Black evangelism represented by Gabriel's life and a Christian redemption represented by John's life. Baldwin presents the lives of the Christian preachers and projects their disturbed psyche. Gabriel, a powerful minister of Christ, is tempted by the beauty of Esther. Religion dominates the lives of the elders, in the novel, but they fail to subjugate the worldly pleasures and temptations and fall for gluttony, luxury and women.

Spirituality and religion are two different terms, indicated by John and Gabriel in the novel. Baldwin highlights the fact that it is the one an individual worships and not the way he worships that decides his or her destiny in life. The genuineness and purity of an individual's soul, reflected in his day to day life, determines the depth of his life in Christ and not the outward praise and worship he offers to God. As stated in the book of James: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (1:26).

The religious worship is only a sign that he is a Christian and not a determiner that he is redeemed. Hence, it is a pure soul held by a deep faith that can receive the blessings of Christ. A person's mind can be stable and untainted only if Christ is the master of his life, never dominated by religious customs. Religious customs have no impact on the psychology of a person. William Peterfield Trent condenses the essence of spirituality, in his *History of American Literature:*

> The religion that lived in the heart of Jesus and spoke in his words not only had a social faith … The kingdom of God calls for no ceremonial, for no special doings … Like Jesus it makes love to God and love to man. The soul is the outlet for the energy of religion and thereby

> harnesses that energy to the ethical purification of the natural social relations of men. (216)

With the advent of Christ into one's life, he reexamines himself and gains a new identity distanced from the sinful self. Roger Rosenblatt observes that: "everyone in the novel wants to change, because everybody wants to be saved, and salvation here is connected with change" (42). Salvation or rebirth in Christ is a rare mingle of internal and external signs. The fruitful life and state of ecstasy are the outward symbols, and the calmness and surety that one's sins are forgiven are the internal results.

The birth of a new John amidst the threshing floor or the altar, to the happiness of the saints in the church and angels in heaven above and to the irritation of the demons in hell, clearly indicates that the weak self of John is dead and a much stronger self comes into existence.

An individual's psyche is perfected not only when he accepts Christ as his saviour, but becomes like Christ himself.

> If it (The Bible) bring him (a man) to the presence of the living God and give him a personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ, that is his main purpose … The religion of Jesus Christ is not only the religion of the Bible, the religion of the personal communion with the living God. (Trent 205)

Gabriel, John's stepfather, may be termed as a paradoxical man, whose ideas and life contradict. As psychologists state, a person's behaviour is a reflection of his psyche and a perfect Christian's life reflects the calm psyche which he enjoys. The coming of Christ into one's life does not provide a moment's bliss but lifelong happiness, changing the course of his life. John, Elisha and Gabriel's mother are good examples.

The church forms the grounds for servicing an individual's soul and testing one's faith, as a hospital is for treating sickness and testing his health, a court for trying his justice, a battleground for proving his courage, literature for letting his imagination spread its wings. Christ tries to bring about a peaceful compromise between one's soul and body, his conscience and acts, which psychiatrists fail to achieve. John's life reflects Christ's light after he accepts Christ into his life. He makes a firm resolution to leave off his sinful ways, which he willingly follows previously, and adopt a new life in Christ. He expresses: "I pray God, I pray the Lord ... to make me strong ... to sanctify me wholly ... and keep me saved!" (252).

The Grimes family attends the tarry service after the riot within the family. Though the family appears to be carefree in the outset, their internal self lacks peace, which is evident from the characters' repentance for the past. Hence, the function of Christ is to calm down a person's psyche, which is raging due to the influence of other elements. John's life satisfies this claim. The pitiable fate of John, during his fourteenth birthday, is highlighted to underline the fact that spirituality could change such conditions. John's experience parallels Gabriel's rebirth.

> He carried a burden and that he longed to lay it down. This burden was heavier than the heaviest mountain and he carried it in his heart. With each step that he took his burden grew heavier, and his breath became slow and harsh, and, of a sudden, cold sweat stood out on his brow and drenched his back. (105)

Being in a state of seclusion and alienation, John turns to God for solace. He realises that he is drifting away from the maker of life. This causes a fear of condemnation by the creator, which further disrupts his psychology. However, with

the realisation of God's love and complete surrender to him, his soul overflows with mirth and extreme ecstasy.

The impact of spirituality on a person's psychology may be explained through two terms. Christ directly influences an individual's life. However, certain people who reflect Christ in their lives bring about the transformation of a person's life. Elisha and Deborah are the pillars of Christ who motivate the principal characters, John and Gabriel, through their prayers and encourage them to take the right path. "Victories are won while on your knees! Keep praying for those who rise up against you. Fear not. The Lord has rectified the problem. Prayer is POWERFUL!!" (Oliver 174). John is strengthened in his soul by Elisha, after the series of tragic events that shake his great day. Hence, it is evident that Christ warns a person in the guise of some other spiritual person.

> 'You got to remember,' Elisha said, turning now to look at him, 'that you think about it with a carnal mind. You still got Adam's mind, boy, and you keep thinking about your friend, you want to do what they do, and you want to go to the movies, and I bet you think about girls, don't you, Johnny? Sure you do.' (63)

Elisha's advice comes out of a mind and soul which was already moved by Christ's love. Joy, peace, contentment in life, and healthy relationships are the by-products when the major product, reborn self, is produced in a blood-washed day.

> When the Lord saves you He burns out all that old Adam, He gives you a new mind and a new heart, and then you don't find no pleasure in the world, you get all your joy in walking and talking with Jesus every day. (63)

Baldwin's narration of John's conversion proves this fact. Elisha's words move young John's heart, which is double-edged, a manifestation of Christ's spirit himself.

Philosophy, religious theology and love can influence a person's psyche greatly, of which John is a perfect example. The love of Christ, the powerful words of Christ in the voice of the ministers of God, and his terrific past are the reasons for the emergence of a new John. That is why the preaching of the preachers moves the lives of many people.

> The time to repent ain't to-morrow, it's to-day. They think ain't no sense to worrying now, they can sneak into Heaven on their deathbed. But I tell them, honey, ain't everybody lies down to die—people going all the time, just like that, to-day you see them and to-morrow you don't. (63-64)

Baldwin emphasises the effect of Christ's love in a person's psyche by the narration of many lives: John's conversion, Gabriel's recognition of his sinful self and repentance. The advice of Deborah, Gabriel's mother and the saints throws light upon the basic spiritual concept, salvation, and the impact it has on a person's psyche.

A personal encounter with God gives the power to encounter the collective worldly forces of temptation, which tend to drag an individual into the burning pit of hell. Gabriel loses, Elisha and Deborah win and John is about to triumph, in the test of one's faith. The outward life of a redeemed Christian may appear to be tumultuous, full of challenges facing the world of Satan, yet one's inner self is peaceful amidst riot and strife, happy amidst sorrows, filled with divine love amidst lovelessness.

When an individual's sins prick him like the thorns of a rose, the removal of these briars with the help of Christ can give him pleasure, like the fragrance of the flower. John trembles at the sight of his sins, but he is in a state of extreme bliss after

his sins are forgiven. "He wanted to rise up, singing, singing in that great morning, the morning of his new life … he felt himself, out of the darkness, and the fire, and the terrors of death, rising upward to meet the saints" (236).

Through the life of Gabriel and John, Baldwin asserts that the presence of sin is itself a burden that oppresses an individual's life, at the sight of God. A sinner's life is a life of guilt, filled with the fear of judgment. This is evident from John's anxiety at the theatre, when he fears that the doomsday has come. However, the Devil's Statement puts an end to the war between the good and bad elements. "Not yet. The day of judgment is not yet" (44). Gabriel's psyche was weak before his conversion, and he lacked faith. "He feared to make a vow before Heaven until he had the strength to keep it. And yet he knew that until he made the vow he would never find the strength" (106).

Gabriel's and John's life indicates that the joy which an act of sin provides is short-lived, and when an individual realises the reality of his sin, he is unable to face the world. John wants to hide from the condemnatory eyes of the saints when he goes for the movie. The happiness he receives in watching the movie dies away when he returns to his home. The pleasure of Gabriel's relationship with Esther is never long-lasting. "When he came to the harlot, he came to her in rage, and he left her in vain sorrow … having spent his holy seed in a forbidden darkness" (107). His was a life of addiction to alcohol, lust and altogether sin. He trembles at the sight of his sinful self.

> When each night came, chaos and fever raged in him; the silence in the cabin between his mother and himself became something that could not be borne; not looking at her, facing the mirror as he put on his jacket, and trying to avoid his face there, he told her that he was going to take a little walk—he would be back soon. (107)

Even after his redemption, Gabriel falls for Esther. It is notable from Gabriel's state of life that one's deliberate sin accentuates him to find possible means to hide his wickedness. His attempt to do so makes him weary and the pleasure of his sin is lost.

A sinner's life is unstable before Christ makes it stable. God's justice tears away the veils of the outward Christian life, to judge a person under the "naked eye of heaven" (109). Yet he is a compassionate and forgiving God, and never a rude judge. This is true with Gabriel's life.

> And there leaped into his mind, with the violence of water that has burst the dams and covered the banks, rushing uncontrolled toward the doomed, immobile houses—on which, on rooftops and windows, the sun yet palely shivers—the memory of all the mornings he had mounted here and passed this tree, caught for a moment between sins committed and sins to be committed. (109)

Fear and terror befalls every person at the sight of the screaming souls heading towards the fiery pit of hell. When a person feels the presence of God, his past flashes across his mind and this troubles him greatly. Baldwin symbolically represents this idea by illuminating the thought process of John and Gabriel. The past evil deeds which he had committed in the darkness come into the spotlight, leaving him in a state of complete agony.

> And something moved in John's body which was not John. He was invaded, set at naught, possessed. This power had struck John, in the head or in the heart; and, in a moment, wholly, filling him with an anguish that he could never in his life have imagined, that he surely could not endure, that even now he could not believe, had opened him up. (223)

John experiences intense pain, unlike any other moment of his life, when his sins mock at him, showing his helplessness. There is calm only after the storm. John's redemption stresses this idea. To be drowned amidst the darkness would be the only possible outcome, yet God's love turns things in the reverse order. Christ's blood cleanses his inner soul and channels his thought in the opposite direction, from evil to good.

The subjection to the ironic temptation or submission to the pleasant voice of Christ are the two options, and the choice decides the destiny of one's life. John is in a state of confusion: "(He) lay here, now, helpless, screaming, at the very bottom of darkness. He wanted to rise—a malicious, ironic voice insisted that he rise—and, at once, to leave his temple and go out into the world" (223-24).

The wicked self of a person tries to indicate that the wages of sin is death. Satan tries to divert Gabriel and John from the pure Christian identity they wish to attain, by threatening that their sin is unpardonable and that they could never survive before the wrath of God, with their wicked identity. However, the conscious sins of both the father and son are thrown away into the sea of forgetfulness. Gabriel may be condemned not due to his past sin with Esther, but due to his ill-treatment of Elizabeth and John.

An individual's psyche surfaces itself with all its ugliness to threaten the peace of his soul. However, this identity fades away by the power of the cross. John's dreadful past strangles him before it is killed and makes the pain intense. "Ah, down!—and to what purpose, where? To the bottom of the sea, the bowels of the earth, to the heart of the fiery furnace? Into a dungeon deeper than Hell, into a madness louder than the grave?" (225). Hence, every reborn Christian escapes death

before he attains an everlasting life. Redemption is the journey of a sinner, who is conscious of the wages of sin, through death and instant escape from the dread.

Dejection precedes the moment of salvation, of which John is never an exception. John lacks worldly help at the moment and this worsens the situation. "They did not help him because they did not care—because they did not love him" (226). John lay in a state where there was no solace, no hope, and no love. Yet Christ, the monument of love, redeems him. Christ who hates evil and is a personification of purity is responsible for rewarding a peaceful psyche to John. With the absence of men's help, the divine providence comes to his rescue. "No one to forgive him, no matter what his sin; no one to heal him, and lift him up. No one: father and mother looked backward, Roy was bloody, Elisha was not here" (231).

The absolute result is the sole reliance upon the power of God and an earnest plea for his mercy, since they feel no one could save them from the impending danger. "And he began to shout for help, seeing before him the lash, the fire, and the depthless water, seeing his head bowed down for ever, he, John, the lowest among these lowly" (233).

The instant transformation of the self, with the death of the old Adam and birth of a new self, is best represented through John's life.

> Then John saw the Lord—for a moment only; and the darkness, for a moment only, was filled with a light he could not bear. Then, in a moment, he was set free; his tears sprang as from a fountain; his heart, like a fountain of waters, burst. (236)

John's soul is deeply rooted in Christ, the rock, and can never be shaken as his foundations are strong. "For his drifting soul was anchored in the love of God; in the rock that endured for ever" (236). Gabriel falls for the worldly pleasures because he is

not firmly rooted in Jesus. A person should live like Christ throughout his life and not occasionally, to enjoy a stable psyche.

Baldwin condenses the life which succeeds John's conversion in pleasant words. "The light and the darkness had kissed each other, and were married now, for ever, in the life and the vision of John's soul" (236). It indicates the life of harmony he is about to enjoy, with the springs of love springing perpetually from Christ, the rock. His redemption ensures a promising future in the earth, with Gabriel as the only threat, and a place in the paradise above. Though John is a completely changed being, Florence's voice testifies that Gabriel, his stepfather, is the same cruel and heartless man.

> You ain't changed neither. You still promising the Lord you going to do better—and you think whatever you done already, whatever you doing right at that minute, don't count. Of all the men I ever knew, you's the man who ought to be hoping the Bible's all a lie. (248-49)

Baldwin contrasts the religious life bound by norms, represented by Gabriel, similar to the Pharisees in the Bible, with the spiritual life in Christ, predominated by the love of Jesus, represented by John. The impact of Christ's love upon an individual's life is more intense than mere church-going. Gabriel's inner soul remains forever evil with sin and fierce with rage, whereas John's spirit becomes lovable, pure, and dutiful due to the presence of Christ. By juxtaposing John's life and Gabriel's life it may be proved that God can have a powerful influence upon a person, however sinful he might be, however dreadful his past is. If a person completely accepts God, without trying to justify his misdeeds and hates his sinful self, Christ can save him. Gabriel subverts and John willfully submits to the power of God.

Baldwin tries to illuminate the Black evangelical context, on personal and generalized terms. He provides the harsh reality of the conditions which were prevalent during his time, in the guise of Gabriel and the elders. The fixing of some deeds as sin and some not, makes a preacher or a Christian a wanton sinner. Gabriel considers adultery as a sin but never cruelty. Gabriel never accepts his sin and feels that no one could question his identity as a preacher, since he is the Lord's anointed. Gabriel's life emphasises that preachers are men of the pulpit and not of the real world. This view is contradictory to the purely religious life one is about to take, a life full of challenges and crosses, yet free from trauma.

Gabriel's domination and pride drag him away from Christ. He considers his rivalry towards John, his oppression of Elizabeth and infidelity towards Deborah as justifiable. His thoughts and ideas cast away the feeble voice of Christ's warning in the guise of Florence. Gabriel escapes God's judgment once yet he never grabs the golden opportunity and is ensnared in Satan's trap never to be released. His life remains forever agitated, his psyche always disturbed, due to his deliberate sins. Satan, the disruptor of a person's mind, controls Gabriel's psyche due to the cruel treatment he offers to his family. His vigorous deeds reflect his shattered inner self.

One's trauma best finds an outlet through tears or rage. John is of the former kind and Gabriel of the latter. John's life proves the basic theological concept that salvation is impossible without repentance for the past and tears in the eyes. One is relieved of his stress and sorrow, with the shedding of tears, and is redeemed, with the blood of Christ.

Baldwin establishes a strong relationship between psyche and spirituality through this novel with the basic Christian concepts as the basis. Though Baldwin pens down contradictory ideas in his later novel *Fire Next Time*, he is identified with

the ideas he presents in his first novel. However, the deep spiritual truths win the battle through the tough fight offered by *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Baldwin is praised as the author of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* though his personal life is akin to the ideologies of his later novels.

The balanced impact of religious etiquettes and spirituality can productively influence a person's psychology. Following the religious customs merely, without a personal encounter with God and the death of the sinful self, can disorient an individual's psyche abruptly. With the birth of Christ into one's heart, a new self which is devoid of the past anguish and despair, is born. Hence, spirituality can help a person regain his lost identity, anchor his life firmly in Christ, and have a peaceful psyche amidst the world of temptations.

Chapter Five

Summation

The human mind, the manipulating factor of the entire human body, is controlled by invisible forces, both divine and earthly, which shape a person's personality. The moral and ethical, societal, spiritual elements jointly comprise the inner soul. The stable psyche an individual enjoys and his untumultuous life are directly correlated. Hence, the examination of the factors which contribute to the psychology of a human being is of vital importance in the current scenario of degrading psychological conditions.

Literature, an ideal medium that dissects and disseminates the outward appearances in the shred of reality, best magnifies the collective spirit of the society. A novel or any work of art with a purpose imprints its impact more deeply in the hearts of people, than those written for pleasure. Hence, the literature which illuminates the internal self of humanity, or a particular race in general, ought to have an in-depth study, to deliver the effect which the author intends.

African American literature mirrors the racial injustice inflicted upon the Blacks by the Whites, and the strained psychology they suffer as a result. The religious literature details the powerful influence one's personal relationship with God can have, on his or her life. As literature throws light upon the truths of life, it deals with the alienation of individuals with much intensity. All these three strains of influence culminate into a comprehensive whole in the novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain.*

Baldwin has carved with utmost perfection, the internal selves of the African Americans and presents the two extremes of their spiritual life, the state of being

spiritually dead but physically alive and the state of possessing a spiritual identity in Christ.

> Most of you will admit that something is missing in your life, but you probably will not admit that you are already a living dead person ... If you are outside of Christ, you are a dead person. The place of your spiritual deadness is your daily existence. Your physical body is the tomb of your spiritual death. (Graham)

Baldwin may be exalted not only for his mastery in the art of writing, but for his supremacy in the depiction of human psychology.

This project aims to delineate the general psychology of a young African American, John Grimes. The first two components of society and family prove to be disruptive in the case of John Grimes. Bound by the fetters of racial injustice and troubled family conditions, he experiences complete alienation and seclusion not only amidst the society but also within his family. However, his attempts to regain his identity by adopting the sinful ways of the Whites become a failure, and he is desperate prior to his conversion. With the killing of the old John and the birth of a new spiritual John, he assumes a life full of cheer and contentment.

This project studies the psychology of John, by contrasting it with that of his stepfather Gabriel Grimes. John is an alienated being, whose alienation is due to the harsh and biased treatment offered by Gabriel. However, Gabriel is the cause for the degradation of his own mind. John's confused psyche takes a productive turn towards tranquility after he submits himself entirely to Christ, yet, Gabriel who scorns him for the sinful life he leads, has a sinful self hidden beneath the faithful Christian life he leads. Gabriel harbours an immense hatred for the Whites within his heart, and this further intensifies the instability of his guilt-ridden life, but John, on the contrary,

yearns for a life like the Whites, and this collapses his life, which is already insecure. Though Gabriel and John possess completely ruined selves, the former is the cause for his own downfall, whereas, the latter is the victim of external influences.

Since the novel begins with the description of John's piteous state during his fourteenth birthday, it is evident that the prime purpose of the novelist is to showcase the isolated life of John. Therefore, the penetration into the internal self of John, to figure out the causes for his alienation, gives a new dimension to the studies in African American literature.

According to Sigmund Freud, one enjoys a stable psyche if his ego brings about a balance between his id or pleasure principle and his superego or morality principle. However, the African Americans possess an unstable psyche, since the ethical principle of the society is always in defence of the Whites and their deliberate acts of sinning. The ego is always submissive in the case of the Black Americans, for the entire submission to the racial domination, destroys their id and the revolt against the societal evils is against the ethical principle fixed by the White Americans. As Maya Angelou states in *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes:*

> No Black American I had ever known knew that security, our tenure in the United States, though long and very hard earned was always so shaky. We had developed patience as a defence, but never as aggression. (52)

John is never directly affected by the racial injustice, but the ideals ingrained in the minds of the Whites against the Blacks is the cause for him, and hence every African American, to be considered as a stranger amidst the society.

John's life perfectly reflects the state of affairs during the mid-twentieth century (i.e.) the indirect yet drastic impact the social ethics has on the Negroes.

Hence, racism either through direct domination or indirect impact through social etiquettes, can completely shatter the psyche of a Black American.

Like every Negro, John yearns for the carefree life of the Whites and is of a notion that his tragic life would come to an end, if he lives a luxurious life like the Whites. Though he eventually accepts Christ into his life, he initially tries to adopt wicked means of living, as most of the Negroes do. It may be concluded from John's life, that the happy life, the White Americans lead, is a sort of dream life or illusory world for the Black Americans into which they seclude themselves to attain a moment's bliss. However, they end up more devastated when they come to realise the reality, and the walls of illusion are broken, just like John feels when he comes back to his home after watching the movie and finds his brother wounded by the White folks.

An African American could be accepted by society, only when he adopts the Whites' mode of living. This psychology of the Black Americans is evident from John's thought process. John feels that he is unfit to live in the society dominated by the Whites and even amidst his own house, due to his fatherless condition. Baldwin portrays John as a complete stranger in the streets, park and even in the library, to emphasise the estrangement of the entire Black American community. "And then everyone, all the white people inside, would know that he was not used to great buildings, or to many books, and they would look at him with pity" (42-43). His existence was never a matter of fact to anybody in the society and even in the family. Human relationships which enable an individual to regain his identity, seem to deny the very right of existence to the African Americans, and are hence responsible for the degradation of their psychology.

Almost every American Negro appears to be alienated beings amidst the society, yet, they become the masters of their own house. If an individual is distanced from his family, even the dim hope for his future fades away. Such is the case with John, yet, Christ brightens the possibility of a promising future. One's mother offers compassionate encouragement and love, with the absence of worldly love, his father provides security, and safeguards him from the invisible threats of the racist society, his sibling partakes in his joys and sorrows. However, Christ's love surpasses the family love and God shelters his children within his protective wings when parental love fails.

By taking the central plot of the story, John's fourteenth birthday, into account, this project tries to picturise his alienated self and the complete death of his identity, with the birth of a new year, which is a powerful irony. John completely loses his peace of mind due to his fatherless condition, stepfather's ill-treatment, his mother's inability to show her love, his stepbrother's arrogance, and the family's ignorance of his fourteenth birthday. He hates to live in his home amidst his family, a life captivated by fear, dread, lovelessness, despair and pain. Even the temporary solace he receives by going to the movie is disturbed, by the tumultuous family conditions. He wakes up every morning, feeling an emptiness in life and closes his eyes every night, repenting for his sorrowful day. Though John's family directs him to have a strong foundation in Jesus, they fail to act as a living example of Christ, which leads him to detest the spiritual way of living. His dream was to live in,

> a world where people did not live in the darkness of his father's house, did not pray to Jesus in the darkness of his father's church, where he would eat good food, and wear fine clothes, and go to the movies as often as he wished. In this world John, who was, his father said, ugly,

> who was always the smallest boy in his class, and who had no friends, became immediately beautiful, tall, and popular. (21)

Hence, the first chance of regaining an identity, lost due to racial oppression, proves to be ineffective in the case of John. However, Baldwin highlights that there is a second chance.

Though many external forces play a vital role in controlling a person's psyche, Christ is the prime controller of a person's psychology and the game-changer of a person's life. As Christ says in the book of Luke:

> The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed. (4:18)

Hence, Baldwin unveils the basic truth that Jesus could deliver the African Americans from the bondage of racism and the troubled psyche, which is a result of racial domination. One's ego comprises of many components, of which spirituality is one. If the societal rules predominate the ego of any Black American, it is impossible to bring about a balance between his id and superego, yet, if Christ predominates his psyche may be balanced.

Through the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Baldwin emphasises the fact that, the divine providence can provide hope to the hopeless, love to the loveless, peace to the confused, stability to the unstable and eternal life to the doomed. This project clearly differentiates religion from spirituality by the examination of the principal characters Gabriel and John respectively. Spirituality, or one's rebirth in Christ, is a chain reaction that is characterised by the reversal of his psyche. Hence, every reborn Christian receives all the positive aspects as a bonus, in addition to

Christ's forgiveness, which is a result of complete surrender to God. An individual's mind becomes calm as a result of Christ coming into his heart, and his changed life represents his tranquil soul. However, his psyche takes an opposite turn if he lets Satan, the disrupter of peace, enter into his heart, of which Gabriel is a perfect example.

By juxtaposing the conversion of both Gabriel and John, Baldwin justifies the fact that, Christ's forgiveness has the same effect upon any person unmindful of their evil past. The final chapter justifies the title of the project, by elaborating the rebirth of John, whose inner soul was dead till then due to the dreadful impact of the society and family. The timeless, unchanging and abstract spiritual truth of salvation, is explained by the life of John in the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain.* Spirituality attains its perfection not only through the experience of salvation, but when one becomes a witness of Christ through the flawless life he leads.

The project discusses the impact of spirituality upon a person's psyche by analysing the various modes through which Christ works out his effect, sermons, reading of the Bible, advice of elders, prayers of the saints in the Church, and a personal relationship with the men of Christ, in John's case with Elisha. John's redemption is an outcome of all these joint influences. However hard a person may thrive for his peace with the labour of his hands, with the intelligence of his mind, with the instincts of his heart, he achieves contentment in life only when he kneels down in prayer.

It is evident from John's trip to the theatre, and Gabriel's sins with women, that one's attempts to regain his lost identity and peace, by worldly ways, ends in failure. The stark contrast between John's temperament before his conversion and after his rebirth, justifies the fact that a person can have a new beginning in Christ.

Baldwin gives a detailed description of the process of salvation, (i.e.) the transformation of his psyche, how a guilt-ridden sinner recognises the wickedness of his soul before the justice of God, how he fears the perdition that awaits him, how the devil brings the ugly reality of his sin to threaten him, how he experiences a terrific dilemma, and how he finally tackles all these hurdles to receive the divine blessings of God. Hence, James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* portrays the relationship between psyche and spirituality and elaborates that Christ can put an end to the tragedy in people's lives and turn their night into day, by shining his light upon them.

The popular thought that the African Americans have a doomed fate, without any possible means of redemption, is proved false by James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain.* Christ can change the course of one's life and trauma of one's mind, no matter what the colour of his skin is, no matter what race he belongs to. Baldwin's novel provides solutions to the unsolved problems of the Black Americans. Hence, a psychoanalytic approach to the novel, in a different context, not only projects the painful life which the American Negroes lead, but also highlights the promising future ahead of them, in the guise of John's life, which each Black American identifies with his own life. This project justifies Baldwin's role as a teacher of social values, spiritual truths, life lessons, and above all, as a novelist with a purpose. A psychoanalytic reading of the racist studies adds a new colour to the African American literature and exalts the novelist as a writer who is concerned about the rise of his race.

By providing the three aspects of a person's psychology in three different chapters, this project tries to underline the importance of every element in the shaping of one's personality and how the three components become a comprehensive whole, in the mind. Society, family and spirituality are jointly responsible for the proper

functioning of a person's life. However, not all the factors are active in every individual and one's life is towards decline only when his faith in God is lost. A person can survive with the lack of encouragement from the first two components, but never with the absence of the third.

John's drifting identity becomes stable, with the advent of Christ into his life and he attains a new identity as a redeemed Christian, he becomes a child of the heavenly father, and the lack of fatherly affection is filled up by God's love, his yearning to assume the ways of the Whites dies away and he is filled with a thirst to adopt the spiritual ways of living, and he begets a new soul in which the conscience, or God's warning, is always awake.

This project emphasises the fact that Christ fills the void which no other person could fill, gives a contentment in life which no other worldly things could provide and a hatred for sins which was their object of pleasure till then and thereby awards a calm psyche in addition to all these blessings. Hence, this project exemplifies the novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* as a perfect psychological work and enthrones James Baldwin as a supreme monarch who exerts his influence not only on the art of writing, but also on the mastery of the mind, with the help of basic theological doctrines and psychological theories.

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The Hypocrisy of Political Maneuver through the *Resonance of Historicity in* Ashwin Sanghi's *Chanakya's Chant*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

PON SNEKA RADHA T.

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Hypocrisy of Political Maneuver through the Resonance of Historicity in Ashwin Sanghi's *Chankya's Chant*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Pon Sneka Radha T. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Hypocrisy of Political Maneuver through the Resonance of Historicity in Ashwin Sanghi's *Chankya's Chant*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

T. Pon Sneka Radha

Pon Sneka Radha T.

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

This project entitled **The Hypocrisy of Political Maneuver through the Resonance of Historicity in Ashwin Sanghi's *Chanakya's Chant*** analyzes the historical context and the political maneuver that existed in the ancient days through the literary context set in the contemporary society. The novel is considered as a social satire which aims arrows of criticism at the existing evils of the day.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives an account of Indian literature, the literary life of Ashwin Sanghi with respect to his fictional works. It introduces the important aspects of the novel exalting the work as a summit of his wit.

The second chapter **Political Maneuver: Ancient and Modern** illuminates the novel as a splendid work which enumerates the transition in time along with the social circumstances with politics occupying the centre stage.

The third chapter **Spirotextuality in Narration** offers better orientation regarding the transition from classicism to modernism. This chapter is concerned with the fact that the old stimulates the new while the new confirms the old.

The fourth chapter **New Historicism** emphasizes the historicity of the text by relating it to the configuration of ideology in a given time and therefore the end product of a particular cultural movement to understand the intellectual history through literature and literature through cultural context.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is an adroitness of putting old words in new places with deep natural sensibilities and specimens of the conversations of an age, preserved in the spirit of taste and of genius. It is an amalgam of secrecy as well as voices echoed to successive generations, to be fed in turn by them.

> We need history, certainly, but we need it for reasons different from those for which the idler in the garden of knowledge needs it...we need it, that is to say, for the sake of life and action, not so as to turn comfortably away from life and action, let alone for the purpose of extenuating the self seeking life and the base and cowardly action. We want to serve history only to the extent that history serves life... (Nietzsche 59)

Indian Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of World Literature. It has witnessed development by the interweaving of eastern and western perspectives. India has eventually become the centre of ancient civilization which affected the language and culture of many countries in Asia.

As literature is the reflection of society, so is the writer the product of society. On the one hand he influences society by writing his ideas and thoughts; on the other hand, he is influenced by a number of factors prevailing in the society such as social and literary conventions, political, economic, educational and religious atmosphere of the society influence him a great deal besides the individuals.

Indian literature in English echoes the culture and contemporary realities of India to the World literature. It gets developed by adopting various genres from other literatures. Indian writers have stepped on all genres of writing in World literature, but in the present era the most dominating genre in Indian writing is Fiction.

The earliest known literature of India is a collection of traditions handed down by word of mouth. It is based on a deep religious spirit, corresponding to great epochs in the history of India. Indian Literature pertains to a vast and almost incomprehensible body of artistic works. India with its stupendously pre-historic past and culturally rich times does contain its prestigious share of historical evolution against the backdrop of civilisation.

Indian writers have linked themselves to pen down in distinctive genres for facilitating Indian literature, intensely going by the flow of the age. Genres of literature in India have changed with the metamorphosing era. The vast and swift changes in current Indian scenario, however, do not make any society-bound author wait for some catastrophe to happen.

As an apparent consequence, genres in Indian Literature will definitely keep on changing with the change of time, never forsaking its cultural richness from which it has come up today. Among various genres in Indian Literature, fiction is the rotund fruit which blossoms spontaneously. The study of history, its understanding and interpretation has become more dynamic in the contemporary world than in the past. Writers hold diametrically opposing and sometimes radically different points of view. In the *Histories* Herodotus shared his opinion on history

> I will proceed with my history, telling the story as I go along of small cities of no less than of great. For most of those, which were great ones, are small today; and those, which used to be small, were great in my own time. Knowing therefore, that human prosperity abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike. (Herodotus 158)

The rotundity of the fruit suggests the shape and significance offered by the artist of fiction to the immense panorama of the chaotic variety of life and its experiences. Amit Chaudhuri observes, "Indian life is plural, garrulous, rambling, lacking a fixed centre and the Indian novel must be the same" (Chaudhri 115).

The dichotomous view on fiction splits into two categories based on their varied objectives. It includes genre fiction and literary fiction. The former is typically characterized by a great deal of dialogue and characters meant for entertainment and pleasure. The latter is concerned with social issues and political happenings to convey a moral message to the reader. H. Thomas Milhorn points out

> Literary fiction is said to be the fiction of ideas. Its primary purpose is to evoke thought...Literary fiction is usually considered to be more concerned with style and solid writings, to stress character development and good descriptions, and to be placed more slowly than genre fiction. It is sometimes referred to as "serious fiction" compared to genre fiction, which is considered "commercial". (Writing Genre Fiction: A Guide to the Craft 71)

The writers show interest and open-mindedness to the absorption of influences from other disciplines. This change orients naturally towards historiography. This has led

to the disclosing of similarities between the structure and form of history and fiction. History is firmly rooted in philosophy. Historiography provides some methodology to interrogate and confront history as a product of socio-cultural, psychological and socio-political circulation. In the west, history, like literature, has also originated from myth. Both literature and history have mythological origins when perceived from different dimensions.

The interrogation of history has not only opened up new perspectives on history but also fresh implication for the reading of fictions of select authors. The select fictional works of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Gosh, Sashi Tharoor, Vikram Chandra and Ashwin Sanghi had been taking into account not only contemporary theories of fiction but also the theorisation of history.

> History is the long struggle of man, by exercise of his reason, to understand his environment and to act upon it. But the modern period has broadened the struggle in a revolutionary way. Man now seeks to understand, and act on, not only his environment, but himself; and this has added, so to speak, a new dimension to reason and a new dimension to history. (Hallett 57)

Interaction between history and fiction is the best way to approach and acknowledge history in relation to fiction. The contemporary Indian writers including Amish Tripathi, Aroon Raman, Hindol Sengupta, Christopher.C.Doyle and Vineet Aggarwal put together 'their' accounts of history along with whims and fancies of fictional writers.

Amish Tripathi is an Indian fiction writer who believes that religiosity and liberalism go hand-in-hand in our country. His notable works include *The Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas, The Oath of the Vayuputras, Ravan:Enemy of Aryavartha* which were based on mythological fiction and Hindu theology. His influence goes beyond his books and his books go beyond literature. He was selected as an Eisenhower Fellow, as a reward from outstanding leaders from around the world. He is the first Indian author in publishing history to have all six of his fiction books simultaneously in the top list of Nielson Bookscan national bestseller's row.

Aroon Raman has authored *The Treasure of Kafur, The Shadow Throne, Sky Fire.* He is often called as Robert Ludlum of Indian thrillers. His plots encompass historical contexts along with the flavour of fiction, making it effectively convoluted. His work *The Shadow Throne* was considered as the best Indian fiction release of the year and racy political thriller.

Hindol Sengupta is one of the leading historians in India. He is regarded as the founder of India's first open government platform, the Whypoll Trust. He has been awarded Wilbur award for his book *Being Hindu.* His work *Recasting India* was shortlisted for Hayek prize, given in memory of the Noble Laureate, F.A.Hayek.

Subroto Bagchi has written extensively in leading newspapers and magazines. His first book *The High Performance Entrepreneur* was published as part of Penguin portfolio to a great critical acclaim. His second book *Go Kiss the World* was hailed by Mark Tully as a remarkable story of courage, integrity and enterprise. He works at the

grassroot surface to enhance his plots with historical characters, classics of detection, adventure and history.

Nithya Prakash is an Indian author with eight published titles in the paranormal, general fiction, banking and romance fiction genres. He is the first ambassador of the World Union of Poets. His first work *Dear, I Hate You,* is a semi- fictional book which is based on his own life. His works are mostly a compilation of imaginary and historical characters portraying the state of society.

Anand Neelaka is the author of the classical work *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished.* In this work he gives the faint rhythm of chendas and the notes of the flute escaping over the rugged walls of the school of music. The rapid fascination remains dormant for many years emerging only briefly to taunt. The plot centers on the suburban hellhole and the history of Asura emperor along with the imaginary character Abhinav. This work has been described by Conan Doyle as a work written for the man who is half a boy and for the boy who is half a man.

Ashwin Sanghi is an Indian writer in the fiction-thriller genre. All his books have been based on mythological and theological themes. He is one of India's best- selling conspiracy fiction writers and is an author of the new era of retelling Indian history or mythology in a contemporary context. He has been hailed as the Indian Dan Brown for *The Rozabal Line* and *The Krishna Key.* Both these books were critically acclaimed as Indian versions of the best-selling *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Lost Symbol.*

Ashwin Sanghi's works are peppered with long timelines, mythologies and skilful blending of fact and fiction, past and present and a core historical mystery that

holds it together. He is inspired by Arthur Hailey whose fictions are always based upon solid bedrock of research. His notable works include *The Rozabal Line, Chanakya's Chant, The Krishna Key.* The Vodafone- Crossword popular Choice Award was awarded to *Chanakya's Chant.*

Ashwin Sanghi's *Chanakya's Chant* presents a gripping tale of wisdom, wit and mind boggling political strategies. The novel has two parts with the past reincarnated in the present. The story oscillates between ancient and modern India. The past is dominated by the presence of Chanakya and the present has adopted an ordinary man Gangasagar Mishra.

The two subjects are poles apart and to combine them and make the outcome interesting is a herculean task. But Ashwin Sanghi makes it look effortless and perfect to the core. The role of Chanakya is inseparable from Indian history without which the Indian Geography would have been different and more particularly the Mauryan Empire. The importance of history is emphasized by John Tosh which has a practical bearing on today's world in his work *Why History Matters.*

> Paradoxically, the value of the past lies precisely in what is different from our world. By giving us another vantage point, it enables us to look at our own circumstances with sharper vision, alert to the possibility that they might have been different, and that they will probably turn out differently in the future. (23)

Chanakya's Chant has been well received by critics. Shashi Tharoor called it a delightfully interesting and gripping read. According to Tharoor, works of authors like

Ashwin Sanghi were the culmination of the process started by Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in which a specifically Indian voice was used to narrate the story.

Power has always come at a price as Chanakya points out is not just one's emotions but one's conscience as well. This is the message that flows out of *Chanakya's Chant.* In the world of politics, every single person is a pawn in hands of someone. The hunger to gain political power urges the ambitious contestant to go any lengths.

Chanakya's Chant is an off-beat political thriller in which the cunning game of politicians is exposed. It discloses all the unknown incidents behind Alexander's poisoning, Paurus' murder and the most lethal of them all is the revelation of Vishakanyas who were secretly working for Chanakya.

The other protagonist is Gangasagar Mishra, a teacher from Kanpur. He uses everyone in the story as a pawn to make Chandhini Gupta, the next prime minister of India. Great men achieve greatness by facing substandard opponents, is another important theme revealed in both the plots.

History can be categorised into four aspects such as an age of growth, a time of troubles, a universal of state, and interregnum or disintegration. Facts are not the products of historians but they become historical facts when they are related to context and interpretation.in representing the facts the historians should judge it according to present context. As Shashi Tharoor points out

> History in any case, cannot be reduced to some sort of game of comparing misdeeds in different eras; each period must be judged in itself and for its own successes and transgressions. Historical fiction is simply fiction set in

> the past, and should be judged as such. I do not look to history to absolve my country of the need to do right things today. (38)

Linguistic expressions cannot be taken as literally as they are. The metaphorical and symbolic expressions of texts can suggest multiple ways of looking at the world. These theoretical claims can be linked to pragmatic accounts about history and fiction and the relevance of history in the contemporary cultural context.

The historical facts in the form of fiction have also incorporated satire, allegory, myths, magical realism, storytelling and fragmentation. History and fiction share social, cultural, political and ideological context from earlier times. As far as the historians are concerned, they decline the idea of a scientific, objective conception of history.

As far as Indian paradigm is concerned, both the western historians and Indian critics demonstrate that India does not have history. Indians are considered to be alien to history. This notion about India is not acceptable. The pre-colonial India had the historical consciousness through the recordings of myths, legends, literature, puranic stories, folklore, inscriptions and coins.

Ashwin Sanghi makes his readers put forth many questions such as "What if Chanakya were alive today?";"What if Chanakya were a player in today's politics?";"Will Chanakya of contemporary India be successful this time?";"Would his brilliance and principles be relevant in today's politics?"

Ashwin Sanghi illumines the hypocrisy of political maneuver and the struggle between past and present and offers a possible solution to it. The passage of time and the shift in time have brought *Chanakya's Chant* to cenre stage. The unending fascination

lies not only in its power to penetrate the readers but also in the remarkable complexity of the historical as well as the fictional characters.

> A political convention is not a place where you come away with any trace of faith in human nature. One ought to recognise that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. Politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous. (Brault 54)

The basic difference between ancient history and contemporary is the timeline that both the periods covered. Ancient history covers events from the beginning of recorded history to early middle ages or the post classical era. Contemporary history covers the span of historic events that are immediately relevant to the present time. Modern history never records everything that ancient history causes. But the impact it leaves in the contemporary stage can never be avoided.

The process by which historical understanding can impact the contemporary interpretation of our increasingly globalized society is given much more considerations. The fundamental reasons for studying history underlie more specific and quite diverse uses of history in our own lives. History as art and entertainment serves a real purpose, on aesthetic grounds.

Exploring what historians sometimes call the 'pastness of past' in distant ages constructed their lives, involves a sense of beauty and excitement, and ultimately another perspective on human life and society. Ashwin Sanghi presents the contrast between

ancient and modern times through the portrayal of two different characters which belong to different ages through spirotextualism.

The novel is considered as a social satire which aims arrows of criticism against the existing evils of the day. This thesis explores *Chanakya's Chant* as a replica of the ancient India with the hypocrisy of political maneuver through the resonance of historicity in Ashwin Sanghi's magnum opus.

The parallelisation in portrayal enumerates the transition in the way of living with political conspiracies in the center. It introduces the important aspects of the novel exalting the work as a summit of wit and mastery over several techniques. In *Chanakya's Chant,* new historicism is viewed as a form of cultural analysis which analyses the ways in which a cultural product interacts with and participates in the historical context, especially with reference to the power relations operating within the society of its time. The notion that historical values change over time, whereas historicists prioritize the unchangeable notions of facts is revealed.

Chapter Two

Political Maneuver: Ancient and Modern

What else are novels written for if not for experiencing the aesthetic pleasure which the writer explores from the perception of the spectator? The intention lies in confirming the law of art, which in harmony lifts the soul into the realm of the beautiful. Depicting high ideals, thereby exerting an influence for good is a herculean task, which has been worded and extended to readers through the art of voicing out the opinions, by one of the leading contemporary writers AshwinSanghi.

Chanakya's Chant oscillates between ancient ethics and modern stereotypes, thereby offering a stark contrast through the characters which are similar in portrayal by thrusting over different courses of time. *Chanakya's Chant* comes as breath of fresh air in the torrent of mythological retellings.one of the most characteristic feature is that it deals with legend rather than mythology. Sanghi employs the method of parallelisation to bring familiarity to the fore instead of changing the very essence of characters by comparing the ancient and modern epithets.

Parallelism is a form of text cohesion and interdependence of its parts and it is deemed an effective element in strengthening the text plot, linking the text at a high level of organization and balance. Parallelisms have achieved a series of acoustic constructions based on similarities and symmetry between dual plots thematically and structurally.

Parallelistic features divide the text into its originally intended segments or units, and link counterparts in the text, enrich the denotation, deepen the meaning, increase the

connotative space and aesthetic energies along with textual effects. It gives a general sense of contentment, proving that the text is more comprehensible and expressive.

To achieve parallelisation Sanghi uses two different plotlines which follow the same course with two different protagonists with similar characteristics- Chanakya and Gangasagar Mishra. The only thing separating them is the span of two thousand and three hundred years.

> The assignment of significance to a parallelism rests upon a simple principle of equivalence. Every parallelism sets up a relationship of equivalence between two or more elements: the elements which are singled out by the pattern as being parallel. Interpreting the parallelism involves appreciating some external connection between these elements. The connection is, broadly speaking, a connection either of similarity or of contrast. (Leech 3)

Gangasagar is the modern day fictionalised version of Chanakya, thus aiding in achieving familiarisation. He becomes a prototype to understand the current politics in the shade of the past. The plot moves from the canon of fantasy fiction to historical fiction as contemporary issues find its counterparts in a remote past.

Being a historical pine thriller, the portrayal involves a speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origin of existing things and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. A hunted, haunted Brahmin youth vows revenge for the murder of his beloved father. Cold, calculating, cruel and armed with a complete absence of accepted morals, Chanakya becomes the most powerful political

strategist in Bharat and succeeds in uniting a ragged country against the invasion of the army of that demigod, Alexander the Great.

Pitting the weak edges of both forces against each other, he pulls off a wicked and astonishing victory and succeeds in installing Chandragupta on the throne of the mighty Mauryan Empire. Political killing and conspiracy remain at the core of this historical thriller.

But history, which exults in repeating itself, revives Chanakya, two and a half millennia later, in the avatar of Gangasagar Mishra, a Brahmin teacher, who becomes a puppeteer to a host of ambitious individuals, including the progress of the slumchild Chandini into a powerful woman. Chandhini represents women who have acquired progressively greater voice and representation in civil society and the formal political system.

Her political engagement has led to a series of institutional, legal and policy reforms which in turn created further opportunities within formal politics and broader society. She strives a lot in responding rapidly to the shifting political opportunities and positioning her claims within the context of broader political contestations.

Often what draws us to mythologies and histories is the mystery that shrouds the life of the people in the distant parts. Sanghi unveils this mystery from the onset of the novel. The condition of the society, the heavy taxation of farmers and the government wealth pocketed by corrupt ministers, which prevailed then and now are exposed to the sight of the readers deliberately which are the major obstacles of nation building.

The path to success of both Chandragupta and Chandini follows a similar course: recognition of their potential by their gurus in early life, education in top universities to gain understanding of politics, use of cunning alliances to establish political reputation and finally achieving the political power and a successful long reign.

Bloodshed, legal trials, betrayals, murders, assassination attempts and all that makes the plot undergo several ups and downs, endorsing enthusiasm and hope on one hand as well as anger and fear on the other. The balance in proportion and the extent of emphasis in both the plots proves the artistic excellence as well as the neutral perceptions.

The plot centres on the four- stage struggle in both ancient and modern times, including ignorance at first stage followed by sarcastical view of society, then the fighting spirit of the upcoming and the oppressed against the dominant evils and ultimately comes the victory when freed from the invisible clutches of the society, implying that strength comes from an indomitable will rather than strong physique.

The depletion of resources and the traces of ruin play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between the past and the present. The depiction of the nationalisation of textile mills, lack of black granite, red alluvial soil and iron ore goes hand in hand with the ruined Magadha dynasty, exemplifying the decline.

The Dynasty has been denied renovation without tapestry, polished floor, rich furnishings which would once have embellished the court of the world's richest king. Accompanying those monuments stood the ruins of Durakhi Devi temple, a Buddhist

monastery as well as an ayurvedic hospital. The crash site ensures that there is no one in the vicinity.

As one count down the hours, the principles for winning and ruling over have been strengthened rather than diminishing. The phases are numbered, with priority to ruling by intellectual pacifying 'saam', by using wealth as foul means 'daam', by the fear of punishment 'dand' and by inducing inequality by social discrimination amongst individuals or populations 'bhed'.

The historical events revolving around Chanakya'sneeti portray Chandragupta as a mere puppet with strings of his moral values and valor in the hands of a master strategist. In the modern day depiction the role of Chandragupta has been reincarnated through the character, Chandini who is also a mere puppet in the hands of her guru, Gangasagar Mishra. The iterative interaction between government and people and also with the institutionalised change through policy reforms is at the heart of the story of progress on Chandini's in *Chanakya's Chant.*

There is a fair sparkling of humour across the book, including the Princess Diaries- style tutoring of Chandini to groom herself. The small capsules within each chapter act as a catalyst in fostering the progress of plot. There occurs no melodrama or arguments over morality and righteousness. The characters are slow to be ruthless almost having no conscience they act without morals, which in one plot, act as a replica of characters in the other by parallelisation.

Chanakya's motivations behind his actions are well known such as avenging his father's death and uniting the country against the invasion of Alexander. While

Chandragupta possesses all the desired traits of a good king and shows extraordinary tact as a child, the same occurs with Chandini Gupta, who is an ordinary girl with good debating skills and charming looks.

The omnipresent chant calls upon the power of the female and if Gangasagar wanted the chant to work, he could only help a woman gain the power. The sacred feminine, anyone who is capable of being a guiding star to the future of the nation is Chandini, who has been identified by Gangasagar Mishra. The chant which enhances the feminine power is

> Four thousand you shall pray
>
> Four hundred chants everyday
>
> Chanakya's power is yours to take
>
> Chandragupta, to make or break.
>
> If there's a lull, start once more.
>
> King must be queen, to be sure.
>
> Suvasini's curse shall forever halt
>
> If you can cure Chanakya's fault. (315)

The prologue provides the hint of the end of the life of a man with descriptions such as the room was dark, blackout curtains, block out sunlight, frail arms and offers a melancholic atmosphere. But, the circumstances turn the situation into something hopeful because of the oath taking ceremony in the Rashtrapathi Bhavan where with an Oxonian

accent Chandini begins her political career, resulting in the awakening of Gangasagar Mishra.

The history of top- down reform, the rise of Islamist movements, street protests and further democratisation has been the critical context in which she retains her power to convene the cabinet and veto major decisions. Chandini remains not only as the voice of women but also the voice of the minorities.

> This is now the new arena of women's mobilisation- ensuring constitutional provinces are implemented. This will be a long struggle ahead and a key challenge for women. The good thing that the constitutional reform brought about, with regards to women's political voice, is the formal establishment of gender equality, which is very important. (134)

The involvement of literary acts in the writing of history is something unavoidable. The language to record past events requires metaphors, phrases and figures of speech which are interpretative and fabricated. Myths underpin their language, their institutions, laws and ideals.

History and fiction cannot be antithetical as language is the common medium through which both are realized. The only way to confront these conundrums is to look at views from both historical and literary angles. It became imperative to rise above any impulse to interpret the historical record in the light of prejudices, utopian expectations, or sentimental attachments to traditional institutions.

However, it is necessary to locate some standpoint of social perceptions that may be truly objective and realistic. The fiction portion seems to be self- reflective where the themes suggest the prominent ideology as socio- cultural, political- economic, and historical- religious position of the time.

> This world already contains in itself its own past, experienced as that which we remember; so that the past as such is not discovered by history, which as it were prolongs and elaborates a phase of experience whose roots are already present to consciousness. (Collingwood 135)

An emphasis has been laid on maintaining secrecy in all aspects of life, when the situation demands so. This prospect becomes the game changer in both parts of the novel. It has been insisted that secret is no more a secret when being uttered by one mouth, provided that three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

The objective, scientific history becomes the subject matter of literary criticism. Before the advent of poststructuralism, postmodernism and deconstruction, most of the writing about history and historical fictions have attempted to present the past in narrative as objective than a display of formal analysis, and this has been perfinently attained in *Chanakya's Chant.*

The authenticity or the devaluation of reality in the textual representation is a key point in the contemporary theory and practice of fiction. The fictional literary narratives render enough scope for the aesthetic and artistic pleasures of complexities, complications, anticipation and unravelling of the suspense.

Chanakya's Chant deals with period and temporality where action shifts from present to past and vice versa. This fiction shows that all is time and time is all. The series of time appears at instances as present day and ancient in order to provide a conventional time sequence.

The mythical and realistic mode of writing shows the parallelism in both ancient and modern contexts. The temporality poses the question of the reappearances of the ancient historical character in contemporary India with all the evils of the politics.

The difference in the economical survey of both the ancients and moderns is because of the difference in administration with some similarities. 'The budget should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled and the mobs should be forced to work and not depend on the government for subsistence are the motives of the authorities- both Chanakya and Mishra.

Playing along communal societal lines has always been a thing among politicians both past and present. For instance, Shudra as the general in the court of Dhanandha is provoked by Chanakya to rebel against his upper caste Kshatria king. Similarly, Gangasagar elevates the status of Ikrambhai from a slumlord to a benevolent leader of his party who paves way for Chandini.

Chanakya uses the caste status of Chandragupta as a vrishala to gain public support. Gangasagar makes Ikrambhai adopt Chandini, a Brahmin, thus making her a living symbol of the reunion of Hindus and Muslims. Both use the tussle for power tinged with communal feelings and monetary rivalries to move the enemies out of their way.

Women are shown to play the stereotypical role of inciting scandals including both Chandini and Suvasini. Though the patriarchal outlook to the role of women would incite criticism one can find refuge in the fact that it was due to Suvasini's curse that Chandini has become a superpower of the nation.

Women's voice in ancient days has broke new ground in uniting and promoting a feminist agenda across diverse fields using a range of methods. In addition, both Suvasini and Chandini were trapped into local values to justify their demands for reform.

Suvasini, enraged by the brief captivity to which she was subjected to by Chanakya even after abiding all his commands, curses,

> You would hold a woman that you love as a prisoner because she's a pawn on your chessboard? O lord of anger and incarnation of death! I consign you to hell for a few thousand reasons to suffer tortures for the murders and villainies committed by you in the name of politics. (384)

Voice dipped into the lived reality of experiences and myths, legends and history means a lot to the equation of past which becomes a breeding ground for new ideologies and concepts thus becoming a tool in the hands of political parties. In *Chanakya's Chant,* demystifying mythology and history paves way for a rational explanation for everything. On the other hand, the pulls and pressures of federalism and democracy are wreaking havoc on basic governance. The two gurus use every conceivable trick and scheme to achieve their ends that include lies, deceit and even murder of some innocent pawns. The duo- strategists work on the principle that 'end justifies means'.

Chapter Three

Spirotextuality in Narration

The art of approaching a literary text is a systematic study, from varied perceptions for understanding the role of historical context through interpretations as well as the relevance of linguistic and unconscious elements of the text. A work of art reincarnates past, represents present and reflects reprobation of contexts by the application of literary theories.

Works of literature in many cases exhibit a high level of similarity in themes, style and objectives. While exercising their literary creativity, authors and critics may borrow ideas and structure from pre-existing or contemporary works. By being perceived as a critical methodology, the principle of spirotextuality is a manifestation of a drive to recycle for progressive advancement over time.

The theoretical framework assuring more realistic, comprehensive, historically sensitive and defensible description of interconnection between texts and relations between the old and the new is often termed as spirotextuality. It provides a better orientation regarding the transition from classicism to modernism.

> The concept of spirotextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self- contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures. Rejecting the New critical principle of textual autonomy, the theory of spirotextuality insists that a text cannot exist as a self- sufficient whole … (Alfaro 268).

Spirotextuality is concerned with the fact that the old stimulates the new while the new confirms the old. It also accounts for situations where two or more writers writing differently seem to express the same ideas, sometimes even using similar words in some lines. It provides the understanding that a work must be acknowledged as independent and deserving for respect and objective treatment.

One of the major achievements of spirotextuality is the critique of author-centered criticism. It underscores that a literary text can have multidimensional interpretations. These interpretations can never be sufficiently circumscribed by the author's own circumstances and opinions and particularly when it comes to a historical context.

> The local elements of structures of feelings are more dominant in regional language writings. To the other extreme the Indian English Literature exhibits more complex international spirotextuality in its style. Writing back to the empire has become a key concept in the postcolonial theories. Now the style is studied in terms of semiotics of culture and cultural hybridity. (Patil 36)

Based on the principles of the legendry Chanakya, the book *Chanakya's Chant* presents a gripping tale of wisdom, wit and mind boggling political strategies, set in ancient India. The past has been reincarnated through the protagonist, Gangasagar Mishra who is optimistic and determined of conning the system through greed, corruption, venality and sexual deviance.

Woven in and around the context of one of the largest politically influenced and ruled countries in the world, whether in a monarchical era or evolved democracy, the characters are carved out from India's unprecedented historical and present political

scenario. Modern India happens to be just as remembering ancient Bharat by class hatred, corruption and divisive politics and this landscape is the feasting ground for this wily pandit, Mishra. Understanding textual interrelationships as spirotextuality actually accounts for the fact that while texts do indeed reflect each other in various ways, originality and novelty do still come into the picture depending on the creative powers of the individual writer.

The better description of mutual interactions between texts and the new in relation to the old is spirotextuality. The indefensible and erroneous claims in implication of intertextuality lead to the rise of spirotextuality. If nothing new is capable of being generated and added then, the recycling would never be capable of progressing over time but remain fixed.

In this aspect, spirotextuality is a perfect concept explaining the mutual interactions between the old and the new and the transition that happened from classicism to modernism. History repeats itself, but in newer forms which is the domain of originality and novelty by means of creativity. Spirotextuality shows that old does connect with the new while, even with this exists as something new rather than old since some more things have been and will continue to be generated and added.

> Literary texts are always constructed by and within a context or tradition. The author of such a text would have to invent everything. It would be like inventing a new language from scratch, without any reliance on already existing languages. In this sense, spirotextuality is fundamental to the institution of literature. No text makes sense without other texts. Every

text is what Roland Barthes calls 'a new tissue of past citations'. (Barthes 39)

The basic four principles of ruling over have strengthened rather than diminishing by time. Ruling by intellectual pacifying, by wealth as a foul, by the fear of punishment and by inducing inequality by social discrimination among individuals or populations are some of the factors that remained unchanged beyond the test of time.

Two political stages, set in two different centuries present a well entrenched part of common history and an impoverished ordinary man's ambition in making history. Spirotextuality occurs in the point of the similarity in the vision of both the ancient and modern protagonists comprising a determination to rise above the divisiveness, corruption, factions of local politics and thereby preserving culture and tradition standing firm beyond the test of time.

Spirotextuality is used more often to narrate the transformation of Chanakya and Gangasagar from ordinary men to masters of intrigue and conspiracy. Many of the traits cited as being important to be an effective leader are typically masculine traits. But this period of postmodernism expresses the potential of women to be an administrator. This is achieved through the slum child Chandhini.

Sophist spirotextualism holds that there already exists a set of original, eternal and same ideas thereafter recombined in in various forms at each stroke of a writer's pen to yield different literature. The spirotextual cycle is literary metempsychosis. The literary metempsychotic cycle presupposes the existence of the fixed number of original ideas.

Spirotextuality does really imply a division of literary history into two broad categories including Pre-Literary Metempsychotic Era and Literary Metampsychotic Era. The past provides resources for the present and the future but do not enslave them into a vicious circle. The reincarnation occurs in the milieu of creative ingenuity without fatalism, determinism or predeterminism.

> Texts are carriers of particular ideologies and cultures while at the same time speaking to and from each other. Authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre- existent texts...in these sense, the text is not an individual, isolated subject, but rather, a compilation of cultural textuality. (Allen 35)

It is the brain of Chanakya, the smart political strategist, with his shrewd tactics and unbelievable brilliance, resists all other mighty invasions and traps laid against him. Spirotextuality occurs in this juncture of weaving this past with an efficient protagonist, who conceals his identity amidst all odds and heavily affected situations.

Possibilities that originality and novelty can exist by means by means of individual creative ingenuities despite the immensity of world's cultural heritage of literature and knowledge are strongly adduced by number of scholars. Spirotextuality achieves the originality in history and novelty in fiction by preserving the proportional balance.

The greatness of the work of art will be measured not only by its local worldliness but by the quality and richness of its intertextuality, internationality and spirotextuality.

As style is constructed by innumerable elements outside the man, the formation of the stylistic identity largely depends on intrinsic as well as extrinsic elements.

The historical context exposes the backdrop of Mauryan empire with the murder of Paurus; contended for the kingship of Kaikey and Magadh empires and slowly unfolds Chanakya's ruthlessness and deceitful ways to win. On the parallel .line of Chanakya, comes the believer of his chants, Gangasagar Mishra to succeed in his endeavours.

Trait theory is more obvious in *Chanakya's Chant* which analyses the effectiveness of a leader through psychological, demographic, intellective characteristics through the characters of different ages. Considering the challenges of the rulers, Chanakya has included recommendations on law, prison, taxation, fortification, coinage, manufacturing, trade, administration and spies. This gets reflected through Mishra who follows Chanakya's chant.

Every word or expression an author employs has a personal history or perspective of life behind it which no other audience or critics can exhaust. The indeterminancy in a fictional work provides neither consistency nor certainity. A text is no longer seen as a veil hiding a meaning but a free play without closure.

Spirotextual relation between texts and society has already characterized world literature beginning from the oldest known works such as, *Beowulf* through medieval works like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* and late modern works such as William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and some other potentially distinguished works.

The claims some literature makes to originality, realism, physical accuracy of description have ultimately to be seen in depleting light. A text can never be completely

free of other text and this leads to one of the most important insights into the nature of literature and semiotic affords.

The Mauryan dynasty had diplomatic and commercial relations with the Hellenistic kingdoms. Their relation with the west indicates the same situation which prevails in the contemporary India which has been westernised in ideals but the difference lies in the proportion to which the former was dependent on the latter. Alexander's invasion had also paved the way for direct contact between India and Greece. The routes opened by him and his naval explorations increased the existing facilities for trade between India and West Asia. However, his aim of annexing the northwestern India to his empire was not fulfilled due to his premature death. His authority in the Indus valley was a short- lived one because of the expansion of Mauryan Empire under Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta seems to have been the first supreme sovereign of Hindustan, his dominions extending from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian sea and reaching southward towards probably as far as the Narbada. Alexander's generals had made himself king of western and central Asia. By implementing spirotextualism Ashwin Sanghi brings out the same concept through the character of Gangasagar Mishra, where he expands the horizon beyond certain boundaries and restrictions with the power which Chandini possess as the Prime Minister of India.

Spirotextuality is indeed a broad textual canvass on which a literary artist uses devices such as allusions, inclusions and echoes to paint one context within or over

another context. It also highlights the diachronic and synchronic aspects of the development of a work of literature in relation to others.

It is entirely arbitrary and it could be represented either way depending upon the personal views of the historian. History is not separate from fiction and that for history to retain its semblance of truth, fiction has to exist. For fiction to retain its semblance of untruth, history has to justify its claim to authenticity. It is inevitable to escape this binary prison of mind.

> It is indeed the wide and varied range of experience covered by all the days of all the historians that makes the rewriting of history-not in each generation but for each historian- at once necessary and inevitable. Happy are non-historical societies- until this happiness is destroyed by the intrusion of discrete, empirical and retrospectively organized of solid facts (Hexter 13).

Ashwin Sanghi has meticulously revealed the fact that the society and political scenario remained as unchanged as the human nature itself. He deliberately depicts the division of society on the grounds of religion, caste, community and economic status and insists on the adverse consequences and the tremendous impact of the "Divide and Rule" policy.

Cyrus the Great was the conqueror of the Achaemenian Empire. He was the first conqueror who led an expedition and entered India. He captured the Gandhara region. All India tribes to the west of the Indus river submitted to him and paid tribute. Southern India was parcelled off into three sister kingdoms, those of the Cholas on the Coromandel

coasts, the Cheras on the Malabar coast, and the pandyas in the extreme south near Cape Comorin. These facts were merged with contemporary India based on the division between northern and southern states.

Ashwin Sanghi manages to bring in the machinations and possibilities in modern day politics including the nexus between politicians, businessmen, media, the creation of vote banks, alliances of conveniences. Even though the book is a historical tale, it has been called a contemporary novel that uses colloquial terms.

The story of historical Chanakya reveals that he was plotting against Dhananandha, who killed Chanakya's father. This further leads to the decline of the Magadha Dynasty, followed by the rise of Mauryan Empire. Chanakya unites all the Bharat under his protégé, the King, the son of Senapati Maurya, named Chandragupta Maurya.

On the other hand, Gangasagar Mishra, follows the chant of Chanakya and becomes a leading political personality. He befriends a local thug IkramBhai and persuades him to become the Mayor. He plays his cards tactically in every stage of Chandhini's political life.

In both of the stories, Chanakya and Gangasagar Mishra constantly chant a special verse throughout the novel before doing anything. Here, the author deliberately reflects the superstitious beliefs that prevailed in India during the ancient times. And portrays the situation in which our country is still thriving through spirotextualism. The mantra is

Adi Shakti; NamoNamaha

SarabShakthi;NamoNamaha

PrithumBhagavati; NamoNamaha

Kundalini Mata Shakti;Mata Shakti; NamoNamaha (212).

Ashwin Sanghi emphasizes his readers for some serious introspection, analysis and a need for soul searching to acquire knowledge regarding what marked the decline as a nation in the last millennium when the great Empires, the Aryan civilization and the Vedic civilization collapsed. This has further led to plundering of wealth, resources and the forced demise of part of our culture.

Spirotextual contexts incorporate variant recyclings of the old and progressive inclusion of the new, with something old in the new and something new in the old. It acknowledges continuity in tradition as well as originality and novelty which are critical for growth in global literature and progress in civilisation. "The past is not necessarily a guide to the future, but it does partly help explain the present" (Tharoor 113).

The international geopolitics, diplomacy, and the manifestation of diversity in our multi- cultural society are clearly expressed and the process by which historical understanding can impact the contemporary interpretation of our increasingly globalized society is reincarnated in the context of present political scenario. Through spirotextuality the historical events are imposed in the current circumstances. The view of traditional historians and contemporary fictional writers coincide in a point where the historical events are presented along with the current typical stereotypes in an entirely different perception.

A glorious past is no guarantee for a shining future unless we remain determined to maintain the continual goal of attaining or regaining what we have lost. Beyond the past learnings and experiences more particularly in the times of technologic [illegible] is why the author of Chanakya's Chant has been insisting throughout the need for epistemicism as an alternative world view that is more realistic, more comprehensive, more historically sensitive and more defensible.

Chapter Four

New Historicism

A work of art is not an autonomous body of fixed meanings but represents a diversity of dissonant voices and unresolved conflicts in a specific culture. Language, like other sign systems, is a collective construction and an interpretive task to grasp more sensitively the consequences of the fact by inquiring both the social presence of the world in the literary texts and the imaginative facts in the context of history.

Historicism is the attribution of meaningful significance to space and time, such as historical period, geographical place and local culture. It tends to be hermeneutical as it values cautious, rigorous and contextualized interpretation of information as well as relativist as it rejects the notions of universal, fundamental and immutable interpretations . It varies from empiricism and rationalism, which neglect the role of traditions.

New Historicism is a method of literary criticism that emphasizes the historicity of a text by relating it to the configurations of power, society, or ideology in a given time and therefore the end product of a particular cultural moment. It implies that political, social, cultural and economic views are always in flux and in negotiations with one another.

Ashwin Sanghi presents the perfect blend of facts of the contemporary society and its conditions. The novel takes an indepth view of the psyche of the politicians of both ancient and modern India. The story unfolds through the eye of Chanakya, the mentor of the mighty king, Chandragupta Maurya. This novel is not merely a piece of fiction, but it

engenders in its blurring of boundaries between history and literary criticism is to reconceive history on the model of literature.

Chanakya's Chant graphically depicts the milieu during the turbulent period of Indian history, when the process of merging the princely states into Indian union was attempted by the King maker, Chanakya. Ashwin Sanghi makes a fine balance between history and fiction, as he neither presents the documentary-like history nor does he exaggerates the fiction in melodramatic tone. The witty repartee and humour marked an inner melancholy and sense of desolation.

The popularly praised king of Magadha, Dhananandha is portrayed as an 'imperial thug' by taking into consideration, the tyranny of the citizens of Magadha. It includes the plight of the farmers, the sacrifice of soldiers, the death of young girls followed by many evils during Dhananandha's reign.

> How many more farmers have to commit suicide because the tax inspectors of Dhananandha loot their grain? How many more soldiers must die in battle because their armour has been compromised to make wine goblets for the king's pleasure? How many more mothers must cry over the corpses of their violated young daughters? How much longer are we going to tolerate this evil soverign. (76)

The cultural conservatives viewed literature as serving the purpose of disseminating the cultural heritage and values that are the foundations of political and social institutions. In an approach of history from a neutral position and its pervasive

notion of power, being deterministic and monolithic, leave no freedom and resistance to oppressive practices of the state.

The exposure of traditional as well as historical facts along with the act of bribery, prevailed in the ancient times, through the character of Katyayan is a notion that reveals the prioritisation of the immutable unchangeable facts of historical events. The expression of the Hindu custom in which a corpse had to be cremated before sundown and the accessory of a Brahmin teacher- Yagyopavita, are instances in which the cultural product interacts with and participates in the historical contexts.

New Historicists assert the interconnectedness of literary text with non-literary ones signifying that a literary work is not a product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts which are extra- literal. Literary text is akin to other texts pertaining to other disciplines of knowledge in particular socio-cultural scenario.

The duties of the king as implied in the musty rolls, parchments, and manuscripts are brought into light, which has been categorised as *Raksha*, protecting the state from external aggression; *Palana*, maintenance of law and order within and finally *Yogakshema*, welfare of the people.

The duties are followed by inscriptions portraying the possible means by which a king can settle political disputes such as *Sama*, gentle persuasion and praise; *Daama*, monetary incentives; *Danda*,punishment and *Bheda*, intelligence, propaganda and disinformation. The novelist lays emphasis on the visions of Chanakya, in *Arthashastra* where he says that the power of punishment when exercised impartially in proportion to

the guilt, irrespective of whether the person punished is the crown prince or an enemy state, that protects this world and the next.

> Wise pupil politics is war without bloodshed and war is simply politics with bloodshed. My son, kings are ignorant not because prime ministers do not give them right answers but because they do not ask their prime ministers the right questions. And here endeth the lesson. (90)

New Historicism understands the stories of the past as society's way of constructing a narrative which unconsciously fits its own interests. New Historicists are traditional historians who eschew any reorganisation of history that might diminish their own power or the importance of their subjects.

Ashwin Sanghi conceals the fact that India is the mother of history, birthplace of human speech, cradle of the human race and depicts the culture, prayers, traditions and deities while referring to Magadha, Gandhar, Kashi, Kuru, Kosala, Mallayrajya and Panchala. He puts forth the motive of Chanakya which centers on the concept of Bharat, as the common abode and cultural heritage of Indo-Aryans subjugated by petty rulers and kingdoms.

The role of horoscope and astrologers find a great place in Mauryan Dynasty, implying indirectly the invasion of external forces rather than the native enemy Dhanananda. This becomes evident when Chanakya chants, unlike the Sun which awakes in the east and falls asleep in the west, the Hellenic star has arisen in the west and is travelling eastwards, in reference to the Macedonian divinity- Alexander The Great.

> A ruler with contiguous territory is a rival and the ruler next to the adjoining is to be deemed a friend. My enemy's enemy is a friend. The root of wealth is economic activity and lack of it brings material distress. In the absence of fruitful economic activity, both current prosperity and future growth are in danger of destruction. (78)

New Historicists typically make liberal use of historical anecdotes or material artefacts in order to inform, contextualize and illustrate historical concepts. It is the use of past as an impetus for political struggle in the present and make it clear that the discipline of literary studies is not removed from the sphere of others.

The architects and constructions of the Magadha Dynasty imply the prosperous life of the kings of mighty Mauryan Empire. It comprises temples, irrigation dams, reservoirs, roads and mines. The infrastructure illustrates the zenith of administration, governance, economy, trade and wealth. The arts inscribed in the caves belonging to the Mauryan era have been greatly influenced by Greeks. The icon of the structural development is the extensive use of wells and burnt kiln bricks which stands as a testimony beyond the test of time.

Ashwin Sanghi casts his opinion that geography without history seems like a carcass without motion. Similarly, history without geography wanders as vagrant without a certain habitation. The change that occurs over a course of time in history as well as geography goes hand in hand, while describing Pataliputra. It had grown not only in size, but also in indulgrnce, licentiousness, corruption, debauchery, concubines, and people having over indulged in *Kinva, Asava, Maireya, Medaka, Madhuor Prasanna.*

The ancient geography of Magadha comprises most of the north Bharat and Deccan with tracts of land from the Himalayas to Kuntala and from Jamuna to the Brahmaputra, in making it the most powerful state in the north Bharat. Focusing on the bigger purpose will make the rest of the manifesto follow as a matter of course is the motto of the then Magadha dynasty led by Mahapadmanandha.

Ashwin Sanghi concentrates on Chanakya's views on deviations from destinations in which a man's mind will have a firm hold such as *kama, dharma, artha* and *moksha*. As a teacher of *Arthashastra,* he voices out that the source of livelihood of men is wealth and the science of the means of attaining it and protecting it is politics.

The streets, the houses, the street corner oil- fired lamps were changed. The only recompense is that the persecution of Brahmins has ceased. The result has been royal lethargy in the anti- Brahmin policy. Ashwin Sanghi unveils one of the important social problems which is very peculiar to the Indian society leading to the exploitation of members of other caste for their own vested interest in the name of superiority or inferiority.

> Mother Earth is weeping at the betrayal right now- Brahmins were supposed to be her guardians, the protectors of righteousness, devoutness, godliness, honesty, virtue, dignity and integrity. Instead we have become common whores, available to the highest bidder for the night. (101)

The classification of people and their duties based on the caste to which they belong is deliberately emphasized at some instances, as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas

and Shudras, with their duties ascending from teaching, bearing arms, trading and serving the upper class.

The battle of words occur among the people of different classes in the " Feast of Wisdom", where Chanakya, as a Brahmin nails his oath in the court of Dhananandha, of uniting the whole bharat, so that it may stand up to the might of the foreign invaders at our doorstep.

> Today I take a sacred oath! I swear upon the ashes of my wise father and loving mother that I shall not re-tie my shikha until I have expelled you as well as the Macedonian invaders from my country and united it under an able and benevolent ruler. (72)

Gnomes are widely recognised as a mythical race of short, stocky humanlike creatures who are generally skilled in mining and metal working. But how widely they were used in Magadha dynasty is the moment, where the novelist unravels their power in history and provides them a new identity.

Gnomes were used to access the ancient escape duct leading from the prison. They were posted as guarders of the royal treasury, as they establish concealed spots and secret corridors not accessible to thieves and bandits. The Lilliputian horsemen were appointed as leading soldiers in the battlefield.

The war tactics of Chanakya are reproduced through Gangasagar Mishra, who does the same in making Chandini, the most powerful leader of India. As portrayed in history, strong military authority, fair taxation, massive irrigation projects, and an overall

attitude of benevolence and tolerance characterized the reign of Mahapadmanandha. The golden period changed dramatically under his son Dhananandha.

New Historicists locate a text's meaning within the cultural system composed of discourses of its author, the text, and its readers and the three areas of concern: the life of the author, the social rules and dictates found within the text and the reflection of a work's historical situation as evidenced in the text. Historicism refuses the claim that the society has entered a postmodern phase and apparently denial to make a theoretical assumption and avoided political position.

There is a element of irony in the way Dhananandha is introduced within the sacral domain of the hermitage. One of the pivotal episodes is the revelation of a typical patriarchal society and thereby highlights the subservient role of women in the society of that time. The relation between the King and the Brahmanas is one of reciprocities.

This hierarchical difference is brought out in terms of oppositional spaces: the court being the space under the King's jurisdiction and the ashrama belonging to the Brahmanas located at the margins. The 'holiness' of the ashrama is respected by the king while the ascetics trained in the power of detachment dismiss the luxury of the King's court. This spatial location of the King as separated from the ashramas complicate the exercise of monarchy at one level.

In terms of scientific aspects of history, traditional historians regard history as an empirical search for eternal truths corresponding to what has been considered to be absolutely reality of the past events. History and Literature not only share mutually, but also interweave and blend in proper proportions.

> It is in the broad area of New Historicism, wherein history is not seen as an extratextual given to be transcribed more or less accurately into fiction, but is itself textually constructed, just as texts are historically situated and produced. Inside and outside not only overlap, but also interfuse- in this case especially because they are both part of the project of building nation and national culture. (Sharrad 14)

The depiction of emotions plays a crucial role in expressing the history of the mighty emperors and kings, which is not so emphasised or embedded within the historical context. More particularly, Sanghi deliberately presents the emotion of anger as a wonderfully energetic emotion which could be used very productively if channelled in the right direction, through the actions of Chanakya as well as Alexander the Great.

> The celestial deity had raised a terrifying dust storm as his army ran over Syria, Egypt, Mesapotomia, Persia and Bactria. His mother Olympias, on her marriage to King Philip of Macedonia had dreamed that her womb had been struck by a thunderbolt. And the product of that mystical union between Olympia and Philip had produced a son who was so mighty and no less than a thunderbolt. (89)

History as a repository of knowledge providing a base for literature is the product of the binarism of the west which resulted in the hegemonic discourse of history and conflated the rhetorical strategies of literature with the material base of history. New Historicists accord literature its unique function which lifts literature from its materiality and transforms it into a dynamic mode of cultural resonance. As Greenblatt explains

> The literary text remains the central object of my attention in this study...because great art is an extraordinarily sensitive register of the complex struggles and harmonies of culture. We seize upon a handful of arresting figures which seem to contain within themselves much of what we need, who both reward intense, individual attention and promise access to larger cultural patterns. (Greenblatt 97)

Consequently the postmodern characteristics of insecurity, uncertainty and scepticism, decenterment, fragmentation in dialogue, pastiche, irony, parody and allegory are inadvertently reflected in the historical context. Complexity and ambiguity are the very nature of the plot where there is a total lack of trust. There is an emotional void that exists when historical events are disconnected from reality within which they actually happened.

New Historicism engages in the power relations operating within the society of its time. It has been employed to understand the stories of the past as society's way of constructing a narrative which unconsciously fits its own interests. It gradually emphasises the relation between events and emotional response and informs the notion that such events are never to be considered neutral.

New historicists also focus on the impact of emotion in relation to events and not on a top-down analysis that tends to pervade history textbooks, but rather on the impact of the colonial encounter on indigenous population. The motto of New Historicism seems to be it can connect anything with anything. Although this dismissive explanation minimizes the importance of the New Historicism, it does speak to the degree of

resentment it engenders in its blurring of boundaries between history and literary criticism. In this regard *Chanakya's Chant* has established a balanced and proportionate view on both the historical and literary figures, thereby erasing the boundary between the historical context and literary fiction.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature, in its broadest sense, is any single body of written books. Literature is writing considered to be an art form, or any single writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value, often due to deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary usage. Literature can be classified according to whether it is fiction or non- fiction and whether it is poetry or prose.

It can be further distinguished into major forms such as the novel, short story, and works are often categorized according to historical periods of their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations. Historical treatment of various literatures with geographical regions, are African literature, African theatre, Oceanic literature Western literature, Central Asian arts, South Asian arts and Southeast Asian arts. Some literatures are treated separately by language, by a nation, or by special subject.

As literature is the reflection of society, so is the writer the product of society. On the one hand he influences society by writing his ideas and thoughts; on the other hand, he is influenced by a number of factors prevailing in the society, Social and literary conventions, political, economic, educational and religious atmosphere of the society influence him a great deal besides the individuals.

Indian literature in English echoes the culture and contemporary realities of India to the World literature. It gets developed by adopting various genres from other literatures.

Indian writers in English have stepped on all genres of writing in World Literature, but in the present era the most dominating genre in Indian Writing in English is fiction.

Indian literature has developed by intertwining the eastern and western perspectives. Indian fiction in English has been considered as imitative of western form, so it always stands apart from the native style of writing in Indian literature. Indian English serves the international role of communication with the global community of nations and intra-regional roles of link language among people of diverse linguistic backgrounds

The old writers of Indian writing in English believed that a work of art must contain certain qualities and it must be filled with philosophical thoughts. But nowadays the trend has changed, the writers of present era focus much on popularity of the fiction than the moral content in it and such kinds of fictions are called popular fiction or genre fiction.

In the present century, fiction holds the prominent place not only in English literature but also in the World literature. Indian fiction in English follows a typical structure in its narration than a casual writing for various reasons. In the early phase of Indian fiction, it was restricted in a limited circle. In 1980's, the mature phase of fiction in India brings a transformation in the attitude of the readers towards literature and the authors.

The theoretical framework assuring more realistic, comprehensive, historically sensitive and defensible description of interconnection between texts and relations between the old and the new is the technique Ashwin Sanghi employs to present a gripping tale of wisdom, wit and mind boggling political strategies.

The novel has two parts with the past reincarnated in the present. The story oscillates between ancient and modern India. The past is dominated by the presence of Chanakya

and the present has adopted an ordinary man Gangasagar Mishra. It is a perfect concept exhibiting the mutual interactions between texts and the new in relation to the old political scenario.

Two political stages, set in two different centuries present a well researched part of common history and an impoverished ordinary man's attention in making history. This occurs in the guise of the similarity in the vision of both the protagonists representing two different ages, comprising a determination to rise above the divisiveness, corruption, factions of local politics and thereby preserving culture and tradition standing firm beyond the test of time.

The plot has been divided into two distinct eras. In the contemporary part, the plot centres on a woman playing a lead role. Through the characteristic portrayal of Chandini, the novelist conceals the fact that women are an essential part of human civilization. But women are considered inferior to men and so she is usually victim of male domination and oppression is treated like a beast and an object for pleasure.

In the patriarchal society, woman is considered as an object who is not allowed to have any aspirations, any desires or any interests but has to shoulder the domestic chores only in which Chandini is an exception and raises above all odds under the shadow of Gangasagar Mishra as similarly as Chandragupta Maurya under the guidance of Chanakya.

Text cohesion and interdependence of its parts and are effective elements in strengthening the text plot, linking the text at a high level of organization and balance.

The novelist has achieved a series of acoustic constructions based on similarities and symmetry between dual plots thematically and structurally.

The path to success of both Chandragupta and Chandini follows a similar course: recognition of their potential by their gurus in early life, education in top universities to gain understanding of politics, use of cunning alliances to establish political reputation and finally achieving the political power and a successful long reign.

The mysteries buried in the history were unveiled from the onset of the novel. The condition of the society, the heavy taxation of farmers and the government wealth pocketed by corrupt ministers, which prevailed then and now are exposed to the sight of the readers deliberately as the major obstacles of nation building in *Chanakya's Chant* through New historicism.

Historicism is the attribution of meaningful significance to space and time, such as historical period, geographical place and local culture. It tends to be hermeneutical as it values caution, rigorous and contextualized interpretation of information as well as relativist as it rejects the notions of universal, fundamental and immutable interpretations. It varies from empiricism and rationalism, which neglect the role of traditions.

Ashwin Sanghi presents the perfect blend of facts of the contemporary society and its conditions. The novel takes an indepth view of the psyche of the politicians of both ancient and modern India. This novel is not merely a piece of fiction, but also contains the ideas and expressions of the novelist which actually are the result of the influence of his 'socio-environment' or milieu.

Chanakya's Chant graphically depicts the milieu during the turbulent period of Indian history, when the process of merging the princely states into Indian union was attempted by the King maker, Chanakya. Ashwin Sanghi makes a fine balance between history and fiction, as he neither presents the documentary-like history nor does he exaggerate the fiction in melodramatic tone. The witty repartee and humour marked an inner melancholy and sense of desolation.

The cultural conservatives viewed literature as serving the purpose of disseminating the cultural heritage and values that are the foundations of political and social institutions. In an approach of history from a neutral position and its pervasive notion of power, being deterministic and monolithic, leave no freedom and resistance to oppressive practices of the state. The degree of resentment it engenders in its blurring of boundaries between history and literary criticism is to reconceive history on the model of literature.

Historicism is a mode of thinking that assigns major significance to a specific context, such as historical period, geographical place, and local culture. New historicists assert the intercorrectedness of literary text with non- literary ones signifying that a literary work is not a product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts which are extra-literal. Literary text is akin to other texts pertaining to other disciplines of knowledge in particular socio-cultural scenario.

Chandragupta Maurya is credited with bringing together the small fragmented kingdoms of the country and combining them into a single large empire. During his reign, the Mauryan Empire stretched from Bengal and Assam in the East, to Afghanistan and

Balochistan in the West, to Kashmir and Nepal in the North and to the Deccan Plateau in the south.

Some of the historians believe that he was an illegitimate child of a Nandha prince and his maid, Mura. All the historic facts and mysteries are revealed with accurate geographic locations as well as timelines. The basic four principles of ruling over have strengthened rather than diminishing by time. Ruling by intellectual pacifying, by wealth as a foul, by the fear of punishment and by inducing inequality by social discrimination among individuals or populations are some of the factors that remain unchanged beyond the test of time.

Similarity lies between the administrative methods implemented by both Chandragupta Maurya and Chandhini. Chandragupta Maurya divided his empire into four provinces. He had established a superior central administration where his capital Pataliputra was located. The administration was organized with the appointment of King's representatives, who managed their respective provinces. It was a well- oiled machine as described in Chanakya's collection of texts called *Arthashastra.*

The Mauryan Empire was known for its engineering marvels like temples, irrigation, reservoirs, roads and mines. He built bigger roads which allowed the smooth passage of huge carts. He also built a highway which stretched across thousand miles, connecting Pataliputra and Takshashila.

Discoveries like DidarganjYakshi suggest that the art of his era could have been influenced by Greeks. A Greek text describes Chandragupta Maurya as a mystic who could control the behaviour of aggressive wild animals like lions and elephants. In the

context of contemporary India, Chandhini controls the entire nation which is an amalgam of both wise and evil people.

When it comes to Chanakya, there are no shortages of mystical legends. It is said that Chanakya was an alchemist and that he could turn a single piece of gold coin into eight pieces of gold coins. In fact, it is claimed that Chanakya used alchemy to turn a small wealth of his into a treasure, which would later be used to buy a large army.

Chandini has worked to promote bodily autonomy and integrity and to protect women from harassment and domestic violence .She was the driving force behind all kinds of defence provided to women throughout her political career which remained in stark contrast with the reign of Chandragupta Maurya which centered more on better administration and good governance than on the security of women, who were considered merely as objects of pleasure .

Resonanace of Historicity means the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand on one's own track, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention.

New historicism has distinct affinities with resonance as the literary texts reflect upon the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption to analyze the relation between circumstances and our own. The key is the intimation of a larger community of voices and skills, an imagined ethnographic thickness.

Political hypocrisy means a situation in which individuals do not follow their own expressed moral rules and principles in social life. The relationship between power and hypocrisy has been tested empirically. The phenomenon of hypocrisy has been approached in two ways in literature. The prime way is the discrepancy between expressed standards and behaviour whereas the other way is the discrepancy between the appropriateness and defense for a moral transgression committed by the self and the same transgression by another.

Maurya devised a strategy to invade Pataliputra, the capital of the Nanda Empire. A battle was announced and the Magadhan army was drawn from the city to a distant battlefield in order to engage Mauryan forces. Meanwhile, Maurya's general and spies bribed Nandha's corrupt general and created an atmosphere of civil war in the kingdom,which culminated in the death of the heir to the throne. The political maneuver reiterated a war that would severely affect Magadha and destroy the city.

Despite all the dynastic changes Magadha continued to remain the foremost kingdom in the Ganga valley. Deeper reasons for the success of Magadha lay in its advantageous geographical location, its access to the iron mines and the control it had come to exercise over important land and river trade routes. The hallmark of the structural development was thus the extensive use of ring-wells and burnt bricks. They imply the easy availability of timber and the abundant availability of natural resources.

The Mauryas in fact constitute a landmark in the history of the improvement of the system of taxation in ancient India. The resonance of historicity occurs in the measures

which were constantly emphasised as the country did face famines, and during these lean periods the level of revenue collection must have naturally fallen.

Only a small section of society came to have monopoly of power which they exercised over the rest of the society in various ways and for various purposes. The political supremacy of one region over a vast territory comprised many kingdoms and areas which were not organised as states that existed before.

Existence, within the vast territory of various geographical regions, cultural areas, and of different faiths and beliefs were put into big question under a hectic political maneuver that existed in ancient days. Monopoly of force by a ruling class of which the emperor is the supreme head reveals the resonance in historicity.

The complexity of the state system demanded a policy which required minimal use of force in such a large empire having diverse forms of economy and religions. Ashwin Sanghi casts his opinion that geography without history seems like a carcass without motion. Similarly, history without geography wanders as a vagrant without a certain habitation. The change that occurs over a course of time in history as well as geography go hand in hand, while describing Pataliputra. It had grown not only in size, but also in indulgence, licentiousness, corruption, debauchery, concubines, and people having more indulged in evil actions.

The hypocrisy of political maneuver and resonance of historicity bridges the gap between two distinct eras. Be it the throne of Chandragupta Maurya or the office of Chandhini, the hypocrisy in the administration, politics and their ideals leaves a great impact on the subjects and territories.

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Reliability and Feasibility of Postmodern Narration in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fullfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Reliability and Feasibility of Postmodern NarrationinAlice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Prishal Fernando. E during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Reliability and Feasibility of Postmodern Narration in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

Alice Sebold is one of the famous living American novelists. *The Lovely Bones* is her second novel. It has been translated into more than fifty languages and has appeared in The New York Times and The Guardian, among other publications. It is the story of a family devastated by a gruesome murder recounted by the teenage victim. Sebold takes this difficult material and delivers a compelling and accomplished exploration of a fractured family's need for peace and closure. The story is narrated from an omniscient first person point of view, the perspective of Susie Salmon, who is dead. Susie, from her vantage point in heaven, sees everything, her parents and sister move through the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Simultaneously Sebold, examines the traditional views, such as those about heaven, sexuality, and the place of women in American society, while challenging those views. Rather, it is the raw human emotion that Sebold managed to convey clearly through each character.

The project titled **The Reliability and Feasibility of Postmodern Narration in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*** is an account of how the main character Susie and her family members learn to cope up the pain after the cruel event of rape and murder. Susie, the narrator focuses more on the aftermath of her murder and rape rather than on the event.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the general characteristics of American Literature and the place of Alice Sebold in the realm of American Literature, her life, works, awards, achievements and a brief explanation on the plot of the novel ***The Lovely Bones***.

The second chapter **Investigation of dark images** examines briefly the dark elements in the novel, such as rape, murder, paedophilia, dissolution of families, social inequalities, gender differences etc.

The third chapter, **Emotional trauma of the Living and the Dead** focuses on the emotional disturbance each character in the novel like Jack Salmon, Abigail Salmon, Lindsey Salmon and Ruth Connors endured due to the sudden death of Susie.

The fourth chapter **The Convalesce** focuses on how Sebold amplifies these experiences through the use of literary devices to drive the narrative forward as the story unfolds in a manner reflective of causal coherence and thematic coherence to recover themselves from their pain.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the key points dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter- One

Introduction

Alice Sebold is an American writer who has gained fame, through going contrary to the traditional conventions of the crime genre, focusing on the dark subjects of suspense and mystery. As Literature is a reflection and interpretation of life, and a forum to express and pour out the thoughts and feelings of one's self through characters, Alice Sebold in her novels pours out her own reflection of life by means of literary characters and picturizes her society with ease and alleviates her mind. *The Lovely Bones* reflects Sebold's fascination for everyday violence and her burgeoning realisation of happenings like rape, child murder and dissolution of families within the suburban world of her upbringing in Philadelphia and the fervent craving for the destroyer to be found and punished.

American literature is considered as the most popular literature across the world. It reflects the practical condition of people and society. The harsh realities and sufferings faced by the Americans are seen through the works of American writers. American literature began as soon as pamphlets, poem and other convenient forms of literatures began to be written. History of American Literature reveals that it has developed with admirable freedom, energy and completeness depicting more or less usable past and war anxieties. Americans wrote their own historical narrative, they crafted their own glorious heroic past and purposely inducing the sense of American nationhood to rise above from the clutches of Britain.

The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified his status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related.

With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominent being Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was the first major American writer from the East Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The*

Portrait of a Lady. At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passes wrote too about the war. Ernest Hemingway became famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner became one of the greatest American writers with novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. American poetry reached a peak after World War I with such writers as Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and E. E. Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize.

Both World War II and Vietnam War left vicious mark on American history. Human struggles, harsh futile realities are seen through are seen through the eyes of the people. They experienced the brutalities of war and they lose their dignity and esteem. They saw a world of gloominess. The sad ruthless reality is portrayed in all contemporary American fiction. To define modern American literature is to recognize how merciless, brutal, isolated they are and it cannot be defined fully.

In the mid-twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the works of playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical. Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Henry Miller assumed a distinct place in American Literature in the 1930s when his semi-autobiographical novels were banned from the US.

From the end of World War II until the early 1970s many popular works in modern American literature were produced, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. America's involvement in World War II influenced works such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). The main literary movement since the 1970s has been postmodernism, whereas the late twentieth century ethnic and minority literature has been sharply increased.

Most of the American writings consist of sexual abuse, harassment, absence of love and horrible behaviour due to some psychological distress. Each and every writer, poet, novelist, explore the crux of this American concept and epitomizes the unsympathetic attitude. Brutality and inhumane attitude was captured in most of the American fictions. Violence and harassments are taken as common platform in American literature. The literature calls out lack of love that is the root cause of all violence happening in the society, this is due to the disillusionment of World Wars. Many writers explore the suffering and violence of women. Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, Morrison's *Bluest Eye,* Alice Walker's *Color Purple* and many other works are known for the sufferings of women. The present novel *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold also deals with her personal sufferings which are reflected in the novel. She also remains to be one of the prominent writers among the other writers.

Alice Sebold was born on September 6, 1963, in the college city of Madison, Wisconsin, where her father was a Spanish professor. Family life in the Sebold household was difficult. Alice's mother, Jane, was addicted to Valium and alcohol and suffered from

serious anxiety attacks. Both parents criticized Alice about her weight and compared her unfavorably to her older sister, Mary, whose grades were better than Alice's.

Sebold enrolled at New York's Syracuse University in the fall of 1980. During her first semester there, she was brutally raped in a tunnel on campus. Her assailant beat her badly, took her virginity, and then urinated on her before leaving. When Sebold managed to crawl to safety and was taken to the police station, a police officer told her she was lucky: another young woman had recently been murdered and dismembered in the same tunnel. Sebold took time off from Syracuse to recover but returned in the fall of 1981 and enrolled in the college's creative writing program. In October 1981, she chanced to see her rapist on the street. She reported him to the police, and the rapist, Gregory Madison, was arrested and brought to trial. Her rapist though was later caught and convicted, the dreadful experience sent Sebold into a downward spiral of depression and drug abuse until teaching and writing pulled her out. A few years before the release of *Lucky*, she decided to pursue a Master's in Creative Writing at the University of California at Irvine; it was there that the character of fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon was born.

In the late 20th century, rape victims were often treated harshly and accused of having encouraged their attackers. Though Gregory Madison's defense lawyers made the trial very difficult for Sebold, Madison was found guilty and sent to prison. The following year, just before Sebold and her roommate were due to graduate, Sebold's roommate was raped, possibly by a friend of Madison's to avenge the conviction. In the same tunnel another girl had been murdered and dismembered. The police said she was

lucky to have survived. Her family had an equally dysfunctional response. Hearing the news of her ordeal, her father, whom she now describes as "an interesting fish", asked if she'd like something to eat. Alice replied that this "would be nice, considering the only thing I've had in my mouth in the last 24 hours is a cracker and a cock".

On the verge of adulthood, Sebold was now on the wrong side of something her family would never understand, and she could scarcely understand herself. "My life was over," she says. "My life had just begun." Some critics have said that all Sebold's subsequent writing has been a tribute to the girl who died when she was raped in 1980. But then Alice's courageous singularity kicked in. With extraordinary determination, Sebold returned to college and enrolled in the creative-writing program taught by Raymond Carver and his wife, the poet Tess Gallagher, who both effectively baby sat a young woman in the midst of a full-blown crack-up. Slowly, they coaxed her, through her writing, to begin to confront her fate.

For a troubled, painful decade after her ordeal, Sebold tried, and failed, to make sense of her life. Reading between the lines, her parents found it all 'too much' to handle. In Paoli, young Alice Sebold was the crazy kid who had paid the price for being 'different' and gone off the rails. In a decade fascinated with personal trauma, she was also taking her story aggressively into the public arena. She published a first-person account of her rape in the New York Times; she appeared on Oprah as "The victim who fought back".

But there was still no resolution. She drifted down to Texas, had more failure, and then back to New York, where she joined a rootless, boho crowd in downtown

Manhattan, experimented with heroin, and continued, in Samuel Beckett's words to 'fail better'. Her most memorable achievement during these bleak lost years was high on drugs, to scale the Manhattan Bridge at the dead of night. After 10 years in the city, she moved to California, where she got the job of caretaker in an arts colony. She lived in an electricity-free cinder-block and plywood cabin and worked by the glow of propane light. Finally, at the age of 33, she began to write a novel called *Monsters,* a strange, other worldly story about the sexual assault and murder of a 14-year-old girl.

After college, Sebold moved to New York City and worked as an adjunct professor at Hunter College, occasionally publishing magazine articles on the side. Her story about her rape appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1989 and garnered an appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." Despite the outward trappings of success, Sebold suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and became a heroin addict. Desperate to regain her health, she took a two-month writing fellowship at a rural artists' community in California. After a brief return to New York City, Sebold moved to California and took a caretaking job at the artists' community where she'd stayed. From there, she applied and was accepted to graduate school at the University of California, Irvine.

Sebold's upbringing in suburban Philadelphia (her mother was a local newspaper journalist, her father a professor in Spanish) was, she says, 'wishy-washy Episcopalian' (Anglican): "I went to church irregularly and was mostly reading comics in the pew. My mom was briefly the warden for the vestry - but she quit after I was raped because the way people responded made her so sick. There's a religious idea that being raped is a

shame-filled thing and maybe you brought it on yourself. So the accusation that I'm religious is kind of hilarious to me."

"In my 20s, I railed against anything 'spiritual'. I thought it was all crap," she says. "Then when I was 33, a miserable failure - I don't know whether it was spirituality or getting older, but I decided I needed to lighten up a little on my judgment of myself and the world. So there's that. I like gardening – it's a place where I find myself when I need to lose myself. Killing slugs. Very spiritual! And I believe in dogs." Her advice to writers is to get a dog, so that you can "have a relationship that's nothing to do with words".

Progress was painfully slow. By now she had enrolled in a writing programme at the University of California at Irvine. Eventually, she broke off from the novel to address her own rape and wrote a "misery memoir" entitled *Lucky*. The man who raped Sebold appears as Madison in this haunting, enraged elegy for lost youth, which was published in the US in 1999 but made no impact. There, she also met and married Glen David Gold, a fellow writer in the graduate program at Irvine, and began work on a novel, initially called *Monsters*, that came to be called as *The Lovely Bones*.

The Lovely Bones was published in 2002 and became a near-instant sensation, popular with critics as well as the public. For five months it held the first spot on *The New York Times* best-seller list, and it stayed on the list for more than a year. Sebold won the 2002 Bram Stoker Award for First Novel in 2002 and the 2003 American Booksellers Association Book of the Year Award. A film version of the novel, directed by Peter Jackson, appeared in 2009. Stanley Tucci, the actor who played Mr. Harvey, was

nominated for Best Supporting Actor, and the film brought in more than $93 million worldwide.

Sebold's second novel, *The Almost Moon*, was published in 2007. Its plot concerns a suburban woman who suddenly murders her elderly mother. *The Almost Moon* fared less well than *The Lovely Bones*, but it did reach number one on the *Times* best-seller list. Many critics praised its Gothic mood and black humor.

Referring to *The Lovely Bones*, one interviewer asked Sebold: 'Why write about something so horrible, so unthinkable' as the rape and murder of a 14 year old girl? Sebold answered: 'Because it's part of life... It's very much part of the experience of what it is to live in this culture. It happens all the time' (Bianculli 2009).

Sebold grew up as a self-defined 'weirdo' in Paoli, Pennsylvania, the younger daughter of a Spanish professor father and a frustrated writer mother(McCrum). Her liberal arts education at the University of Syracuse was interrupted at the end of her freshman year when she was attacked, beaten, and raped. This rape and what followed, including her family and fellow students' inability to deal with the assault, and the deep traces on her identity that the rape left, form the contents of Sebold's first book, the memoir *Lucky*. The novel was reviewed with great acclaim in the States (Kakutani, "Power") and with some censure as maudlin and sentimental in the UK (Hensher). Its impact and popularity have been interpreted on the background of American culture in two ways.

The plot of *The Lovely Bones* is quite different. Susie, an young girl of fourteen who was brutally raped and murdered by a thirty six year old Harvey, a serial killer.

Surprisingly the story was narrated by a dead rape victim Susie. She narrated her own tragic tale of murder from her personal heaven.

In the first eleven pages of Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*, one is presented with the rape and murder of its 14-year-old narrator, Susie Salmon. For the next 317 pages, one witness the aftermath of Susie's violation—her father dissolves into rage and grief, her mother spirals out and away from the family; her sister, Lindsey, struggles to survive in Susie's shadow.

Given that *The Lovely Bones* was on the *New York Times* bestseller list, it was clearly a widely accepted and accessible novel. Its success could certainly be attributed to the fact that it contains elements of classic horror, of a thriller /murder mystery. Although *The Lovely Bones* has elements of a murder mystery, it doesn't really focus on the police investigation or the search for and arrest of the perpetrator. One could argue that *The Lovely Bones* could be classified as a horror novel in that it was awarded a Bram Stoker for First Novel, indicating that it had enough recognizable conventions of horror to be placed in that genre. And it contains elements of the supernatural (it is, after all, narrated by a dead girl) that one might find in such classic gothic novels as *Mysteries of Udolpho* or *Wuthering Heights*, or in the work of Poe or Hawthorne.

The novel explores the psychological effects of rape for both victim and her parents. Sebold in a roundabout way condemns the act of killing young females and antisocial behaviors and attitudes of American society in 1970s. She voices out for injustice, horror, pain which happens to young innocent girls. The powerful narrative voice of Susie makes the reader to feel that they also stand with her and watch the things happening in her family on earth. Sebold also explores the concept of heaven and afterlife

in this novel. Both Susie and her family members suffered with traumatic memories. Being a rape victim and dead in teen age, one cannot accept because, Susie's life ended before it started. The crime done to Susie not only kills her but also creates a wound in her family and friends; they also suffered the same kind of trauma that Susie experienced in her heaven.

Sebold's first two works deals with the story of rape and murder of fourteen year old Susie Salmon, in December 1973 on the eve of her high school career. Sebold's text is told in first person point of view by the main character Susie, who, having just been murdered, is able to watch her family and her killer from her own personalized heaven (in the company of other characters who also have their own personalized heaven, interwoven with that of the character, Susie). After a brutal description of her own rape and murder by George Harvey in a purpose-built underground cave hidden in a cornfield, Susie narrates, in present tense, the many subplots of the story – her killer's success in destroying the evidence; her father's obsession with finding her killer; her mother's withdrawal from the crumbling family and into an affair; and her two surviving siblings and their childhood experiences without her.

Michiko Kakutani's gave review for the *New York Times* sums up the power of this story nicely: "A deeply affecting meditation on the ways in which terrible pain and loss can be redeemed—slowly, grudgingly and in fragments—through love and acceptance. . . . Ms. Sebold's achievements: her ability to capture both the ordinary and the extraordinary, the banal and the horrific, in lyrical, unsentimental prose; her instinctive understanding of the mathematics of love between parents and children; her gift for making palpable the dreams, regrets and unstilled hopes of one girl and one

family." *The Lovely Bones* is haunting, mesmerizing, at times wrenching, yet ultimately hopeful. Sebold's ability to take us into one of the worst experiences life could offer up and then pull us through the other side is almost breathtaking, and her ultimate message of acceptance is as healing as is her ability to remind us of what is truly important in life.

In interviews, Sebold has rebutted the stereotype of raped women as weak, ruined, passive or falling apart and has insisted that 'you control things by naming them', refusing to refer to her rape as 'that horrible thing that happened'. Both in her memoir and outside of it, she demands that the community talk about rape and recognize that it is an everyday experience and fear for many women.

Sebold encountered a variety of responses by critics, including crime novelist Ian Rankin who said that he thought less of *The Lovely Bones* when he read of Sebold's actual experience of rape. Sebold stated in a subsequent interview that Rankin's critique 'ripped me a new arsehole', illustrating how critical reception of deeply personal writing can become another experience, which further injures and disempowers the survivor. Regarding Rankin's comment, Sebold stated: 'The one thing I'm certain my rape gave me in terms of writing *The Lovely Bones* is a feeling that I could write a scene of violence with authority. It is extraordinary that knowing I've been raped should lessen my achievement in anything'.

According to Daniel Mendelsohn: "Ms. Sebold has the ability to capture both the ordinary and extraordinary, the banal and the horrific, in lyrical, unsentimental prose" (16 January, 2003). In short through *The Lovely Bones*, Sebold has attempted to manage the impossible possible.

Chapter- Two

Investigations of dark images

The Lovely Bones is particularly different from the standard thriller, although it contains dark elements; it focuses more on the victim and not on the killer, Mr. Harvey. It could be possible as was done intentionally when Sebold was "growing up in the Philadelphia suburbs she was haunted by news stories about murdered girls." She remembers that "their story wasn't in the newspaper; it was always the story of the murderer. The girls seemed almost disposable" [ii]. *The Lovely Bones* is essentially a story of hope and suspense, not only for the readers but also for the characters in spite of all horrors and traumas.

It does not focus on evil; it does not attempt to make sense of bad people or bad acts. Instead the novel investigates issues of loss and grief, life and death, identity and self, remembrance and forgetting, womanhood and motherhood, coming of age and rites of passage, and heaven and earth. Sebold examines traditional views, such as those about heaven, sexuality, and the place of women in American society, while simultaneously challenging those views.

As Bennett states: "In recent fictional narration of afterlife the majority of a dead protagonist is victims of violent or unnatural death" (103). Even among those who died of some natural cause, there is some unfinished business on earth that keeps them attached to the world. In many tragic deaths and murders, someone narrates the story of the victim, but Sebold gives voice to voiceless. She does this by presenting the dead rape

victim as the narrator. The protagonist narrates her own brutal rape and murder story to show how horrible is rape, how brutal is murder. Sebold voices out for the young innocent girls becoming a prey for some brutal men.

It is well established that violence against women is a pressing social problem. Jack the Ripper is perhaps the most notorious example of what is defined as serial killer and he has been variously described as the archetypal rapist and a killer who committed, what seemed like the ultimate rape. Harvey is the serial killer in *The Lovely Bones* who brutally rapes and murders the protagonist Susie and many girls. Rape culture becomes the popular kind of criteria developing in American fiction.

The American Literature examines rape as a violent act against women. This can be seen in the fictions of Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the caged Bird Sings* (1969), Alice Walker's *The Color purple* (1985), John Grisham's A Time to Kill (1988). The literature on sexual violence against women depicts it as a severe social problem that affects mainly young girls and women. Being weaker of the human species, she has all through been the target of aggression by some brutal males. Women writing about the experience of rape often find the disempowering effect of rape continuing into the aftermath also. Rape is seen as an abhorrent phenomenon, considered to disrupt the psychological functioning of the victim. Alice Sebold intensely picturizes the plight of the victim and her family after the cruel event of rape and murder. This novel is an account of how Susie and her family learn to cope up the pain. Susie focuses more on the aftermath and effects of her rape and murder on her family rather than on the event itself.

Loss of a loved one, the stages of mourning and the grief manifest are the overriding themes in *The Lovely Bones*. Susie focuses more on the aftermath and effects of her murder and rape on her family rather than on the event itself. She watches her parents and sister move through the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Susie Salmon being endearingly honest, charming, and courageous, watches over the living from a very personal realm where she can have anything she desires, except the thing she wants most: to be reunited with her family on Earth. As Susie witnesses her loved ones grapple with unbearable grief and mounting frustration over the police's inability to solve her murder, she attempts to guide her father toward the identity of her killer, whom she also watches. As the bonds that held her family together start to unravel, Susie realizes that she must accept her own death and let go off her connection to her family on Earth in order to enable her loved ones to move on as well.

As the book progresses, Susie's family and friends overcome their shock and sadness from her disappearance, but each character handles their problems in different ways. Susie's father, Jack Salmon is "crazy with grief and is seeking revenge" because he can feel "the guilt on him, the hand of God pressing down on him, saying 'you were not there when your daughter needed you.'" Susie's mother, Abigail Salmon is "tired of thinking" and tries "to find a doorway out of her ruined heart" by attempting to "erase her life and children." Lindsey, Susie's younger sister, is also "not immune" to the hardship of losing someone. "When the story of Susie's death began to travel through the halls of the school, the horror became more horrible than it really was," making Lindsey push herself even harder to stay strong and hide the fact that she misses Susie "more than

anyone will ever know" and only "letting her tears roll down when no one would see her." Aside from watching the people on Earth continue life; Susie begins to figure out what heaven really means.

The story that Susie wants to share is not just the story of her rape and murder, it's about how some part of her memories still survives in her family. Susie watches the world from heaven, which is continuing without her. All her school friends spread rumors about her disappearance; her family holding on hope, that she'll be found. Meanwhile her killer had been trying to cover his tracks from being caught. As months pass without any leads, Susie sees her parents' marital life being distorted by her death; her sister hardens herself in an effort to stay strong, and her little brother struggles with himself to know the reason behind his sister Susie's absence at home.

Susie's father Jack Salmon feels traumatic breakdown in his life after his daughter's death. Everything that Susie wants is appearing before her in heaven except the thing she most wants, to be back with the people she loved on earth. With sympathy and longing, Susie sees her loved ones pass through grief and begins to mend their lives. Her father embarks on a risky quest to catch up the killer. Her sister undertakes a remarkable daring act of finding the evidence in the killer's house, but that fails. At the end Susie falls into earth and enters into the body of Ruth Connors to spend some time with her boyfriend Ray. After seeing her family's recovery from traumatic grief, Susie moves to "wide wide heaven" (325) with a peaceful heart. The powerful narrative voice of Susie makes the reader to feel that they also stand with her in heaven and watch over

the things that happen in her family on earth. Dealing with Trauma, pain, loss, trapped between life and death is the central experience in Susie's story.

The Lovely Bones is full of dark images and it is confirmed by its opening where it clearly states, "My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973"(1). What makes the act more painful, being the perpetrator is the neighbor, and he freely walks on earth after raping and killing the innocent Susie Salmon. The story is told through the eyes of the murdered. Using the bold words, Sebold never hesitates in telling what exactly happened to the victim.

> Each time I told my story, I lost a bit, the smallest drop of pain. It was that day that I knew I wanted to tell the story of my family. Because horror on earth is real and it is every day. It is like the flower or like the sun; it cannot be contained. (186)

However, Alice Sebold makes clear that these categories do not necessarily remain rigid and that individuals deal with grief in various ways. For example, Abigail, Susie's mother, withdraws from her living children, Lindsey and Buckley, whereas Jack, her husband, draws closer to them. Lindsey, Susie's sister, vacillates between denial and acceptance, sometimes exhibiting both elements simultaneously.

In addition, Sebold expands the definitions of both loss and grief by including Susie herself in the process. If readers limit their understanding of grief to losing and coping with the death of a loved one, then they have trouble accounting for Susie's emotions. She mourns her own death and the missed opportunity of getting to grow up,

but more significantly, Susie grieves over the loss of living people. In other words, the novel extends the grieving process to include the dead themselves.

Sebold investigates the nature of loss and its relationship to grief. While Susie's death emerges as the most blatant change in the lives of the Salmons, other significant changes also occur. Lindsey changes from adolescent to adult; Buckley changes from child to adolescent; Jack changes from a man secure in his place in the family to one questioning his ability to hold the family together; and Abigail changes from a woman questioning her position as wife and mother to one who redefines and then embraces that position. While each of these changes generates a sense of loss, ultimately each character moves on from the loss and grief.

The Lovely Bones is a life changing novel, all of which involves the body and the physical environment. The event that allows Susie to move on in her heaven, or to move on in death, is her return to earth. Although she has "returned" in a disembodied form, when she inhabits Ruth's body, Susie "realises that the marvelous weight weighing down was the weight of the human body." Yet Susie understands the temporariness of this corporality, but perhaps that realization is precisely one of Sebold's points.

The coming-of- age novel involves the initiation of the protagonist into adulthood. This initiation usually occurs through the acquisition of knowledge and experience. In many of these novels, the move into adulthood includes a loss of innocence or the destruction of a false sense of security. The protagonist often experiences a shift from ignorance to knowledge, idealism to realism or immaturity to maturity. In addition,

coming of age involves rituals or rites of passage. *The Lovely Bones* focuses on these issues as the author explores the process of growing up.

Lindsey Salmon, thirteen years old and ends almost ten years later, with Lindsey as wife and mother. It traces her move through the routines and events of female adolescence first kisses, shaving of legs, makeup, summer camp, love, friendship, college. The novel, however, also traces Susie's coming of age. By presenting the development of a dead girl along with a living one, Sebold imbues the experiences of growing up with enhanced significance. Susie cannot move on in death until she finishes "growing up."

The title of the novel has thematic significance pertaining to the theme of grief. The bones are lovely because they are the remains of the narrator who was deeply loved by her family. From her position after death, she watches her family grieve, even as she grieves herself, and while she cannot change the events in life. While 'bones' suggest death, the narrator seems very much alive throughout the story, and the word 'lovely' contributes to this. Generally, death is seen as something frightening and the bones of the dead as something to avoid, but by calling them lovely, the author changes the connotations to softening the fear of death. The title *Lovely Bones* also symbolizes the lovely innocent girls who become a prey to the serial killer Harvey, the deceased souls of them are gathered around in heaven. The lovely bones also symbolize Susie's family members grown into something new in her absence.

The word "bones" indicates that this will be a story about death. At first glance, the juxtaposition of "bones" and "lovely", two incongruous words, would suggest irony—

a sarcasm that means that the bones are not really lovely--but a quote near the end of the novel reveals that the title is sincere and captures a core message of the book:

> These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence: the connections—sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent—that happened after I was gone. And I began to see things in a way that let me hold the earth without me in it. The events that my death wrought were merely the bones of a body that would become whole at some unpredictable time in the future. The price of what I came to see as this miraculous body had been my life. (320)

The "bones" the title refers to are Susie's body (such as the elbow that is found), but, more profoundly, they also refer to the new life--the new structure of community that grew up and developed after Susie's death. They are the "connections ... often magnificent" that formed from grief, a new organism. As Susie, watching from the afterlife, realizes this, she is able to let go of having to live life in the world: she is able "to hold the world without me in it." From her death, new and lovely life has emerged, the new "body" of her family grows without her.

This larger perspective- a perspective that encompasses an afterlife and the consciousness of the dead looking down on us from heaven--brings comfort and this comfort is captured in the title. The novel's title provides a salient visual image that is reflected on and reverberates in a number of different ways throughout the narrative First, they represent Mr. Harvey's fetishizing of the physical remains of his many victims. The

lovely bones are analogous with the tokens from his victims that he keeps and treasures and worries over like rosary beads. With her omniscient, if powerless, vision, Susie looks into the thoughts, the house, and even the past of Mr. Harvey.

In so doing she helps to make his viciousness explicable of herself and her reader, while never condoning or justifying it. After Susie's murder Mr. Harvey begins to kill neighbourhood pets and put lime on their bodies in order to be able to enjoy their bare bones more rapidly. This self-prescribed form of therapy helps him to stave off his desire to rape girls and further possess them by cutting up their bodies and returning to their gravest to be with their bones:

> No one could imagine an appetite like the one in the green house. Someone who would spread quicklime on the bodies of cats and dogs, the sooner for him to have nothing left but their bones. By counting the bones and staying away from the sealed letter, the wedding ring, the bottle of perfume, he tried to stay away from what he wanted most - from going upstairs in the to sit in the straight chair and look out toward the high school' from imagining the bodies that matched the cheerleaders' voices' which pulsated-in waves on fall days during football games, or from watching the buses from the grammar school unload two houses down. [....] What I think was hardest for me to realize was that tried each time to stop himself. He had killed animals, taking lesser lives to keep from killing a child. (131)

One of the novel's strengths is that while it examines someone whose actions can only be characterized as evil, it does not equate Mr. Harvey with an animal or monster or suggest that he is wholly without human feeling. Second, the bones represent the healed soul of the dismembered Susie and her wounded family's growth into something new, several after her death:

> These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence; the connection - sometimes tenuous, Sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent – that happened after I was gone. [...] The events that my death wrought were merely the bones of a body that would become whole at some unpredictable time in the future. The price of what I came to see as this miraculous body had been my life. (320)

The dismembered body has grown into something new. Susie's loss can never be made into something good. Yet the horrible pain that her family members feel after her death slowly and incrementally gives way to their learning how to live in acceptance of her death and the necessity of their continuing to live and love without her. Likewise, Susie learns to accept the relationships that grow and change between her loved ones after her death.

Third, the lovely bones are part of a song about everyday things one misses that Susie's, father - much the easier parent to comprehend and idealize - sings to his daughters to put them to sleep. Susie then whispers this song to her parents during their reunion after a long and painful separation.

Stones and bones;

snow and frost;

seeds and beans and polliwogs.

Paths and twigs, assorted kisses,

We all know who Daddy misses!

His two little frogs of girls, that's who.

They kow where they are, do you, do you? (144)

In this context the image of the lovely bones reminds the reader that the prosaic elements of life, the stones and bones, need to be treasured. The repeated mention of the bones in several perspectives exemplifies the use of imagery throughout the novel. The novel's final lines provide a halcyon glow, a cheery wave, almost a salute. Susie's last words to us are, "I wish you all a long and happy life." It's not that far off from "have a nice day,"(328) and she is entirely sincere.

Susie learns her suburban and rather ordinary world is not safe. She moves swiftly and violently from innocence to experience and from idealism to realism. Yet this shift does not culminate in her "coming of age;" rather, it initiates a need for her to experience these things more slowly and more naturally. While Susie's death also hastens Lindsey's loss of innocence, it does so less dramatically. Although Lindsey understands that her

world is not particularly safe, that bad people exist and that these people do bad things, she still participates in the normal rituals of growing up.

Like many teenage girls, Lindsey experiments with makeup and with finding a style that suits her. She experiences a tender first kiss with Samuel, and they move slowly through the rituals of courtship. She grows into her sexuality, developing a relationship based on trust, gentleness, and understanding. However, Susie's murder, combined with her mother's absence, pushes Lindsey into adult roles early in her life. So while acknowledging the naturalness of growing up, Sebold also contextualizes that experience. In *The Lovely Bones*, moving from a place of innocence to one of knowledge can occur violently and abruptly. Coming of age can happen in circumstances that circumvent the normal, perhaps suggesting a need to rethink normal.

Alice Sebold presents the story told from an omniscient first person point of view, the perspective of Susie Salmon, who is dead. Susie, from her vantage point in heaven, sees everything—actions, motivations, thoughts—so her narration functions like third person omniscient, except that she tells the story in first person. Susie's access to the minds of other characters provides readers with this same access. In addition, as an omniscient first person narrator telling the story from beyond the limitations of earthly time, she also can and does experience many of the characters' memories. For example, she sees and relates incidents from her killer, Mr. Harvey's, childhood and his past killings. Because of her omniscience, Susie often glimpses intensely personal thoughts and actions, such as her mother's first tryst with Detective Fenerman, or her mother's internal thoughts about motherhood.

> Len Fenerman had been the first one who had asked my mother for my school picture when the police thought I might be found alive. In his wallet, my photo sat in a stack. Among these dead children and strangers was a picture of his wife. If a case had been solved he had written the date of its resolution on the back of the photo. If the case was still open—in his mind, not in the official files of the police—it was blank. There was nothing on the back of mine. There was nothing on the back of his wife's. (90)

The setting of the novel includes the time, place, and culture in which the action of the narrative takes place. Time and place emerge as crucial elements in understanding the setting in *The Lovely Bones*. Traditionally, time can involve three elements: historical period, duration, and the perception of time by the characters. Sebold uses dates at various points throughout the narrative; in fact, the novel opens with a specific date, December 6, 1973. Immediately, the reader understands the historical time—the early 1970s—as well as the seasonal time—winter. However, as the story progresses, the historical periods shift as Susie takes the reader into the past and alludes to the future. For example, after giving us the date of her death, she offers a contemporary reference to the pictures of missing children on milk cartons and in the daily mail. This reference raises questions regarding the time period from which Susie is telling the story. Sebold's use of time shifts—the narration slides among past, present, and future—ties very closely to elements of place.

Like the shifts in time, the location of the story shifts between heaven and earth. Most of the action itself occurs on earth with the telling occurring in heaven. Some action

does, however, take place in heaven: Susie meets Mr. Harvey's other victims in heaven; she and her roommate, Holly, explore; she dances with her grandfather. However, these actions do not necessarily propel the plot, but they do expand the story. Both place and time closely relate to the coming-of-age element in the book, as well as to the themes of loss and grief.

For the most part, Sebold's novel follows the traditional structure of plot. However, the events do not necessarily unfold in chronological fashion. For instance, the novel opens with Susie's murder, and as events unfold, establishes a relationship between events. To understand the causality, the reader needs background information, which Sebold presents through the use of flashback, a device that offers actions that occurred before the beginning of the story. Once Sebold establishes the murder, she has Susie look backward to how the murder occurred.

As with point of view and setting, Sebold also complicates the traditional idea of plot. For example, in chapter one, Susie discusses her murder and includes a detail about a neighborhood dog finding her elbow and bringing it home. However, the actual incident of the dog finding the elbow and the police telling her parents about it occurs weeks after the murder. These occurrences in the story are moments of foreshadowing, which create expectation. Through the use of flashback and foreshadowing, Sebold veers away from a strictly chronological unfolding of events; rather, plot becomes more circular even while the narrative progressive chronologically through the 1970s.

Thus this chapter was set to investigate focusing on the dark images in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*. The popularity of *The Lovely Bones*, as it is called Sebold's

Chapter Three

Emotional trauma of the Living and the Dead

This chapter aims to analyze the psychological trauma experienced by the protagonist Susie in Heaven and her family members on Earth. Sebold centers the novel on how both the victim and the loved ones suffer after the victim's death and the consequent emotional breakdown of the family members through the dead narrator Susie as she watches from heaven above, her family and friends on Earth. Apart from watching the people on Earth continue life Susie begins to figure out what Heaven really means and what on Earth horror is. Rather, it is the raw human emotion that Sebold managed to convey clearly through each character.

Dealing with trauma and loss is the central experience in the life of Susie. The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma narrative and History.* The foundation for trauma theory has been resolutely established across multiple disciplines and field ranging from American studies, history and psychoanalysis concept. Trauma can be the result of rape, murder, slavery or some other distressing event. *The Lovely Bones* explores different ways in which people undergo grief when they lose a loved one. The characters in the novel such as Jack Salmon, Abigail Salmon, Lindsey Salmon and Ruth Connors suffer from the Psychological trauma because of the sudden death of Susie.

Psychological trauma is a type of damage to mind that occurs as a result of some unpleasant events. Trauma differs between the individuals according to their personal experiences. People will react to similar traumatic events differently. Not all the people who experience a potentially traumatic event will actually become psychologically traumatized. However, it is possible for some people to develop Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after being exposed to a major traumatic event. The characters in the novel are affected by the sudden event of death which results in extreme traumatic grief. Recovering from the trauma of Sexual abuse will take a long phase, and the memories of distressing event keep on tormenting the victim. "Sexual abuse has multiple effects that occur over a number of years. For some women the longer the trauma is untreated the more severe or chronic their problems become" (Duncan 29).

The psychological problems of Post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms of psychosis are hallucinations, flashbacks and disassociation, fear, anxiety and stress. The characters in the novel often experience these symptoms. Hallucinations refer to something that is not really there. An auditory hallucination is an experience of hearing voices that are not there. This hallucination symptom is experienced by Lindsey, the victim's sister. Flashback and dissociation occur commonly with PTSD. Both the victim and her family members are often exposed to flashback memories, but not in a coherent way. Their troubling state of mind is reflected in the dissociation of flashback memories.

The reviews on Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* show a variety of approaches i.e. the interpretation of its hyper-reality, narratology etc. Many scholars have drawn their particular and personal conclusions on *The Lovely Bones*. "The novel is actually the

representation of contemporary American culture and social setup. Susie, the central character of the novel, imagines the hyper-real heaven. Although in real religious heaven people can reach to all their wishes in a moment, it is everlasting and this fact is a hyper-real aspect of real religious heaven which is different from the heaven of this novel (Kiaei & Safdari, 2014).

On some level, all literature investigates the nature of human experience or the human condition. Certainly life and death constitute the two most significant experiences of being human, and as such, much literature deals with these two issues. *The Lovely Bones* pointedly asks two questions: "What does it mean to be alive?" and "What does it mean to be dead?"

As Susie learns what being dead means, she must deal with what being alive. The fact that she can no longer experience the physical world - that she can no longer experience living - emerges as her biggest disappointment. The novel then offers experiencing the physical as an attribute of living. Although denied this aspect of living, the dead Susie can engage in the human condition of wanting, wishing, and desiring. Thus Sebold blurs the lines between what constitutes life and death. Susie clearly understands that she is dead. She knows she inhabits a realm different from earth, but in many ways, not completely separate from it. After all, Susie's heaven looks earthly, not celestial, and she participates in activities that associate much more closely with earth than heaven: eating ice cream, romping with dogs, living in a duplex.

As Bennett states: "In recent fictional narration of afterlife the majority of a dead protagonist is victims of violent or unnatural death" (103). Even among those who died

of some natural cause, there is some unlimited violence on earth for which there is no explanation in the world. In many tragic deaths and murders, whether natural or violent, the story of the victim, but Sebold gives voice to voiceless. She does this by presenting the dead rape victim as the narrator. The protagonist narrates her own brutal rape and murder story to show the reader how horrible is rape, how brutal is murder. Sebold wants us to see the innocent girl becoming a prey for some brutal men.

Susie after experiencing a horrific rape was unable to describe what is going inside her and losing her control and she also becomes terrified and helpless. She feels like she is thrown away in the pit of darkness. As Cathy Caruth says, "Post-traumatic stress disorder reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavailable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that is beyond control." (58) The traumatic event of rape and murder caused emotional pain and suffering to the victim Susie and also her family. They were brought to the pain with enormous pain and the traumatic memories of brutal rape and murder which put an end to their happy life.

Sebold is very classy in portraying her protagonist as a dead narrator to convey the cruelty of rape, and what the victim feels even after death. The narrator of The Lovely Bones, Susie Salmon, is a normal fourteen year-old girl. She has just received her first kiss and is looking forward to going to high school next year. She is on her way home from school when she is stopped by a man who wants to show her something in the cornfield. Susie thinks she can trust this man because he is a neighbour who knows her

parents. Unfortunately, this man, George Harvey, is a serial killer who rapes and murders Susie.

Susie is quickly taken to Heaven, where she meets Franny, her guide in the afterlife. Heaven can be whatever she wants, and Susie chooses to create her heaven in the image of her hometown high school. However, the only thing Susie truly wants is to be back on Earth, growing up with the people she loves. This is the one thing Susie cannot have in heaven, but there is one way Susie can keep up with her family. From heaven, Susie can look down and watch her family as they struggle with their own feelings about her murder.

The Salmon family is forever changed as a result of Susie's murder. Susie watches as her parents drifts apart, her siblings and her friends grow up and have experiences Susie can only witness. Her mother, Abigail, wants to run away from her feelings, whereas her father, Jack, wants to confront those feelings head on. Jack Salmon, unsatisfied with Len Fenerman's investigation, begins his own investigation of Susie's murder. This investigation leads Jack to suspect George Harvey. However, police cannot arrest Harvey because there is no evidence linking Harvey to Susie.

Susie follows her sister Lindsey's life from heaven. Lindsey experiences major life milestones witnessed vicariously by Susie. Susie cannot herself grow up, but can have a basic understanding of the process by watching her sister. She watches as Lindsey grows into a strong young woman who also shares her father's determination to find Susie's killer. Lindsey learns from Grandma Lynn the name of the man her father

believes killed Susie. Lindsey begins watching Harvey's house, committing his schedule to her memory, and waiting for her opportunity.

Family members are not the only people affected by Susie's death. Ray Singh, the first and only boy Susie kisses, is at first a suspect. He is quickly ruled out by police, by remains haunted by the memory of Susie's death. Ruth Connors, an unpopular girl in Susie's class, is also impacted by Susie's death. She is the last person Susie touches as her spirit leaves Earth. As a result, Ruth becomes obsessed with death and even begins seeing the dead on Earth. Ray and Ruth become forever linked in their shared grief and understanding.

George Harvey, the one who killed Susie is being watched by her from heaven. She meets and learns the stories of all of his victims. She sees Harvey hide her body, lie to her father and the police, and run from the crimes he has committed. Susie wants to help the living apprehend her killer, but can only watch as the police and her family try to gather evidence and find her murderer.

Susie Salmon mourns for her own death and her major trauma lies in her inability to intervene in the pain of the family members and unable to save them from the traumatic grief they experience because of her sudden death. Death of a loved one shatters the happy live of oneself. The whole family was unable to cope with the loss and the unanswered questions about the murder of Susie. Being a rape victim and dead in teen age, Susie cannot accept her life to be ended before its being bloomed and the thoughts of her loved one on the earth flashes on her memories. The emotional trauma reflects in each and every pieces of her narration. Susie experienced the weird kind of experience,

the touch which she never asked. Her narration of her brutal rape and murder flows over with pain, "I was so alive then. I thought it was the worst thing in the world to be lying flat on my back with a sweating man on top of me. To be trapped inside earth and have no one knows where I was." (12) After the rape, Susie is still trapped under her rapist and confronted with the knowledge of her impending death. The rape and murder of Susie is made all the more horrific by the dismembering of her body by Harvey and this brutal murder ruined her life.

> I knew he was going to kill me. I didn't know I was an animal already dying…He leaned to the side and felt, over his head, across the ledge where his razor and shaving cream sat. He brought back a knife. Unsheathed, it smiled at me, curving up into a grin. He took the hat from my mouth. 'Tell me you love me,' he said. Gently, I did. The end came anyway. (14-15)

The changeness of thoughts arises over her loved ones, whereas she can only watch over them from heaven. At one end the state of helplessness torments her and at the other end she feels guilty of being the reason for making her family members suffer. Susie desperately misses her family and she is frustrated with the thing that her neighbour is not just a rapist and murderer, but also a serial killer who had destroyed many young girls. Somewhere in the heart, some slight vengeance grows when seeing her murderer roam freely without getting caught. The psychological trauma is that she faces a battle within her mind. She is confused either to choose vengeance by letting her father catch the criminal or to weep in heaven.

Many traumatic events make the victims to feel that they are no longer the members of human race, they are often detached from the society and they feel completely isolated from everyone else. As Judith Herman explains, "Traumatized people felt utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustains life" (52). Susie feels alienated in heaven as she is discarded from her family and this sense of disconnection makes her feel broken.

Each character in the novel mourns for the deceased Susie, the theme of loss and grief is vividly carried out by Sebold. Grief takes many forms according to the personal makeup, that is, the relationship to what has been lost or the person who has died, and how the loss has affected the meaning in one's lives. In this novel *The Lovely Bones* each character moves to different stages of traumatic grief.

Susie's past on earth affected the people who took part in her life because the past memories were all that they had of her. Out of everybody present in the novel Susie's family thought more about the past. Each character handles the problems in different ways. Susie's father is "crazy with grief and [is] seeking revenge" because he can feel "the guilt on him, the hand of God pressing down on him, saying 'you were not there when your daughter needed you.' Susie's mother, on the other hand, is "tired of thinking" and tries "to find a doorway out of her ruined heart" by attempting to "erase her life and children." Lindsey, Susie's younger sister, is also "not immune" to the hardships of losing someone. "When the story of [Susie's] death began to travel through the halls of the school, the horror [became] more horrible than it [really] was," making Lindsey push herself even harder to stay strong and hide the fact that she misses Susie "'more than

anyone will ever know'" and only "letting her tears roll down [when] no one would see her." Aside from watching the people on Earth continue life; Susie begins to figure out what heaven really means. This gives the readers, room to imagine that "horror on Earth is real and it is every day."

Susie's father, Jack Salmon experiences a complicated kind of grief. He is perhaps the most affected in the family. The major depressive disorder affects him to a greater extent. Cohen identifies this condition: firstly by the guilt about things other than actions taken or not taken by the survivor at the time of the death. Secondly the thought of death other than the survivor feeling that he or she would be better off dead or should have died with the deceased person. Thirdly, hallucinating experience other than thinking that he or she hears the voice of transients. (16)

Jack Salmon undergoes the severe guilt of not being there to save his daughter's life when she was dying. "The guilt on him, the hand of God pressing down on him, saying, "You were not there when your daughter needed you" (58). He takes the weight of her death on his shoulders and letting it crush him like the hand of God. Jack hovers between life and death and he even thought of getting united with Susie in heaven by dying. The last symptom is also experienced by Jack by seeing the image of the dead one and hearing the voices of them. He wrote in his personal notebook "I think Susie watches me" (59), while seeing that Susie felt ecstatic in heaven. When Jack gets admitted in the hospital for heart attack he said "Someone came into the room and then left. I think it was Susie" (281). All the symptoms of major depressive disorder are perfectly matched with Jack Salmon.

Jack Salmon tries to move on from the traumatic memories of Susie. The obsession of catching Susie's killer makes him more depressive. He had some intuition that his neighbour, Harvey is the killer but there is no evidence to prove Harvey's crime. He even goes to an extreme state for finding the killer in midnight, on seeing the flashlight in cornfield. Jack mistakes Susie's friends Brian and Clarissa for Harvey and begins to attack. Brian beats Jack to death. On seeing the crucial act from heaven Susie's pain again raises, seeing her own father beaten up in front of her eyes. Her state of helplessness is being revealed in her words, "I could do nothing trapped in my perfect world" (139-140).

Susie can't bear to watch her father going into such a stage of trauma. At first Susie wants her father to find out her murderer. By finding the killer she thought her family would get some kind of relief but when seeing her father with a blood covered face Susie wants him to move on leaving her memory. Jack salmon is portrayed as a most frustrated father who knows the truth of his daughter's murder, but he could not prove it. His struggle is perhaps most poignant and he believes in Susie's ghostly projections and listens to what she has to say. He undergoes life with pain and he finds it heavy to cope up with the loss of Susie. He is unwilling to move on from traumatic memories.

On taking into account, Abigail Salmon's character, as a mother none can suffer the way she suffered. A mother cares and loves her children as nobody does. Unlike her husband she does not respond with rage, violence and anger instead she retreats and suffers within her. She is devastated of Susie's death. Sebold clearly conveys the struggles of a mother bearing the death of her daughter. Her daughter did not fall to a

[illegible] cannot but she fall to a brutal murder, one of the horrific ways to go down. This makes her to feel utterly alone. Abigail mourns for her daughter deep inside instead of opening her pain. All the family members are bereaved of Susie's death. She has no opportunity to express her heartache being unable to share her conflict of psychological trauma in her mind. From then onwards she felt emptiness in the family and decides to depart from the family thinking that she may get some rest in her mind while in isolation. Unlike knowing that, "Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships, it cannot occur in isolation" (Herman 133).

After moving to California Abigail Salmon does not get away from the memories of Susie. When she comes to know that her husband has a heart attack, she goes to visit him. She says to her husband, "Even in California she was everywhere" (28). Though she moved away from her family she was not able to control herself from the thoughts of Susie. She realizes that isolation does not give any kind of relief therefore, she returns to her family after eight years of Susie's death and has finally let go off the memories as the story progresses.

Lindsey Salmon, Susie's sister undergoes immense pain within herself. The death of her sister brings her an emotional pain in her. Even though Susie is dead, Lindsey lived in her shadows. Whenever someone saw her they recognize her as the dead girl's sister. "She either thought *Susie*, just one word, and cried there, letting her already damp cheeks, knowing no one would quantify this dangerous substance as grief or she would imagine me running … she fought back the constant question, *Where is Susie now?* " (60). If the house was quiet she hears some murmur. In heaven, Susie continuously follows her

because she views Lindsey's life, as the one she was not fortunate enough to live. This burdens Lindsey subconsciously and creates the feeling of guilt.

Lindsey never expresses her emotional heartache and sorrow in front of her father and brother because, they may breakdown. She becomes the caretaker of the family when her mother leaves the family. Lindsey suffers in silence and motivates herself to be strong to take care of everyone in her family. She hides her pain within her and bears many burdens. She had a six year old brother Buckley, who starts to lean on her when their mother leaves the family and she has to care her father also. Sebold portrayed her as a willful character in the novel. Though she was depressed of her sister's loss she tries to be normal for making her family to recover and to forget the past. She was courageous enough to break the house of the serial killer Harvey's house to gather the evidence to prove his guilt. On the whole Lindsey is the comforter of her family when the whole family is driven into a serious trauma.

Susie's friend Ruth Connors, played a big role in the life of Susie, is totally affected by her death. This is the last person Susie touches as her soul rushes away from Earth to heaven. From then onwards Ruth Connor is obsessed of dead souls. She started writing poems about "'Being Susie', 'After Death', 'In pieces', 'Beside Her Now', 'The Lip of the Grave' " (114). At the end of the novel Susie enters into the body of Ruth to spend some moments with her boyfriend Ray. "I was in her body.... I opened my eyes for the first time on Earth since I had died and saw my grey eyes looking back at me" (114).

Ruth allows her own body for Susie to dwell for some time. It made Susie to recover from heart rendering grief. She never gets chance to spend time with Ray. Their

first kiss was by accident in school. Susie explains that kiss is like a beautiful gasoline rainbow. Susie wants that pretty thing to happen again in her life that's why she rents Ruth's body. Czarnowsky states: "Susie's accidental touch allows Ruth to see spirits and retrace their steps. She begins to write down their stories, their fates, and thus very much like Susie's post mortal narrative itself gives the silenced a voice. She becomes the chronicler of their violent endings".

George Harvey, Susie's killer, is also watched by Susie. In heaven, Susie meets and learns the stories of all of his victims. She sees Harvey hide her body, lie to her father and the police, and run from the crimes he has committed. Susie wants to help the living apprehend her killer, but can only watch as the police and her family try to gather evidence and find her murderer.

While in heaven she is jealous of her sister Lindsey for spending some special time with her boyfriend but here she was trapped in the "Inbetween heaven". For fulfilling her wish she falls down to earth before she moves to wide heaven. Ruth acts as a vessel for fulfilling Susie's wish. Thus through the experiences of the Salmon family in *The Lovely Bones*, readers can examine their own feelings and reactions to loss and mourning. To conclude as said at the story's conclusion, when Susie ponders her friends and family's new found strength after her death:

> These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence: the connections - sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent -that happened after I was gone. And I began to see things in a way that let me hold the world without me in it. The events my death

brought were merely the bones of a body that would become whole at some unpredictable time in the future. The price of what I came to see as this miraculous body had been my life. (320)

Chapter- Four

The Convalesce

The Lovely Bones portrays the process of maturing and the recovering stages of the main character Susie from the state of unacceptance to acceptance. The creative component of *The Lovely Bones* seeks to present a story of profound maternal loss and grief, portraying the unbroken bonds which endure between a mother and child even after death. One of its themes is how seemingly innocuous personal choices can irrevocably change destinies. This chapter focuses on how Sebold amplifies these experiences, through the use of literary devices to drive the narrative forward as the story unfolds in a manner reflective of causal coherence and thematic coherence.

Susie contemplates her existence. At the beginning Susie wants to forget the traumatic event which tortures her. She wants to get rid of memories of that horrible day in her life, the memories of that gloomy evening, haunted cornfield memories and the violent rape. In heaven Susie converse to Franny the counselor that she just wants to forget the painful memories. Franny said that she can have that:

> "If you stop asking why you were killed instead of someone else, stop investigating the vacuum left by your loss, stop wondering what everyone left on earth is feeling, you can be free. Simply put, you have to give up on Earth"(120).

But that seems impossible for Susie. The very thought of leaving her family scares her. But at the end, Susie made up her mind to accept the pain. She decides to move on and let her family to build a new life without her.

Judith Herman, an American psychiatrist and researcher talks about the recovery stages of the victim from traumatic event in her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, she wrote "Sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of meaningful world" (70). By sharing the traumatic event with others, the victim gets relieved from the painful memories. Susie was unable to share her enormous pain and grief with her family on earth. So she decides to share her painful stories to other dead souls in heaven, who is none other than the other innocent girls raped by Harvey. Susie says:

> "Our heartache poured into one another like water from cup to cup. Each time I told my story, I lost a bit, the smallest drop of pain ... Because horror on Earth is real and it is every day. It is like a flower or like the sun; it cannot be contained" (186).

At last Susie overcame her trauma with courage and acceptance. Eventually, after a considerable period of time, the survivor reaches a stage of greater stability; she has discovered an inner strength and courage, and the determination to grow from difficult experiences.

At first she does not accept her death and moves away from her family. But after seeing her loved ones getting recovered and also spending some time with her boyfriend Ray Singh, she gets some recovery. But her complete healing from trauma occurs when

her rapist is dead by her idea of killing. Here Sebold employs the technique of reversal of fortune. The rapist falls to death by Susie's method of killing. "How to Commit the Perfect Murder was an old game in heaven. I always chose the icicle: the weapon melts away" (125).

At the end of the novel Harvey falls to death by icicles falling on him, when he tries to lure a girl. Susie's long period of sufferings and trauma was repaid by her murderer's death. Finally, *The Lovely Bones* is closed with an epilogue entitled 'Bones'. She explains in a mimetical way the heaven that she is currently living into. In this passage, Susie implies that she no longer has any desires for life, and that she has been able to move on with her death, leaving the human world as it is. In Susie's absence her family has grown into something new, with fresh restart of life.

As Susie witnesses her loved ones grapple with unbearable grief and mounting frustration over the police's inability to solve her murder, she attempts to guide her father towards the identity of her killer, whom she also watches. As the bonds that held her family together start to unravel, Susie realizes that she should accept her own death and let go of her connection with the family on Earth in order to enable her loved ones to move on as well.

Recovering from the trauma is a complex one. Many will fail during the process. But Salmon's family is able to recover themselves from the traumatic grief they had been experiencing for eight years. Inspite of going through a horrible pain due to Susie's loss they slowly move on from the pain and learn to accept the loss. They realize the fact that life has to move on. Forgetting the past and accepting the present is the only healing for

the person who suffers from any kind of trauma. The Salmon family passes through the stages of suffering to recover from trauma:

> Firstly experiencing the deep pain associated with the loss of the loved one. Secondly, accepting the permanence of the loss. Thirdly, reminiscing about the deceased loved one. Fourthly, committing to new relationships and finally reestablishing a healthy developmental trajectory (Cohen 16).

Susie's family goes through the intense state of pain to build a new life. All the stages explained by Cohen are being crossed by the family members. When some moment of happiness enters into the life of mourning people they get relieved from their affecting trauma. Abigail salmon rejoins with the family after realizing her fault of leaving the family. Both her husband and the remaining children are happy about her home coming.

Another joyous moment is Lindsey and her boyfriend Samuel Heckler decides to marry. These events bring delight in their gloomy life. The family members shift from the hard path of excruciating tragedy to a new renewed life. Mourning the loss of close friend or relative takes time, but researcher tells us that it can also be the catalyst for a renewed sense of meaning that offers purpose and direction to life. Susie's death serves as a catalyst that drives the family member into a severe trauma. Finally the trauma has been slowly disappeared in their life and it helps them to rebuild their lives.

A number of critics have taken issue with Sebold's handling of Susie's violation and its aftermath. Sebold presents us with a victim who is post-trauma, the kind of girl

who's all bravado; she doesn't want vengeance or confrontation, but instead is wholly focused on brokering, as best she can, her family's emotional survival in light of the event. A re-animated Susie, now whole and intact, narrates a tale of intense family bonds sustained across the chasm between heaven and earth.

The novel provides an entirely reassuring take on trauma: our loved ones live on in our hearts and if we grieve them and hold them dear we will find closure, a way to heal and move on. In this way, *The Lovely Bones* is wholesome and, ultimately, palliative. Ultimately the bereaved family manages to recreate themselves, and this allows Susie to "give up on Earth" (120), and depart to "wide wide heaven" (325).

On seeing her family overcome the traumatic memories, a healing came to her heart. It makes her to leave the earth without any burden. Susie sees her family getting healed from the trauma which had been tormenting them for years, when seeing their recovery her heart is lightened and she happily moves to the real heaven. The Salmon family finally gets off from the emotional journey they undergo due to unbearable loss.

Once she is "post-mortal," as it were, and residing in heaven, Susie encounters a girl who was also a victim of Mr. Harvey. And soon as his other victims-girls and women - arrive, "our heartache poured into one another, like water from cup to cup" (186). The narrator continues to explain her own violation, making sense of it via what Daniel Mendelsohn, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, terms "the pseudo-therapeutic lingo of healing. "Each time I told my story, I lost a bit, the smallest drop of pain. It was that day that I knew I wanted to tell the story of my family. Because horror on Earth is real and it is every day. It is like a flower or like the sun; it cannot be contained" (186).

What makes this statement disconcerting is that it is delivered to us in a contained fashion, with a flat affect; the message here is not one of unendurable, unending horror, but something more akin to a cataloging of benign quotidian occurrences.

Ali Smith, in *The Guardian,* speaks directly to the way in which Sebold, via her nonchalant narrator, appears to undermine the exigencies of traumatic experience. "*The Lovely Bones* is so keen, in the end, to comfort us and make safe its world that, however well-meaning, it avoids its own ramifications."

Each character of this novel is somehow affected by the murder of Susie. The most hurting thing in life is watching our loved ones suffering. Susie watches them with overwhelming pain in her heart. The traumatic experience of her rape and murder torments her like anything. Her family struggles to rise above the affliction which affects them for eight years. Both the victim and her family members are immersed in the flood of sorrow.

Memories play a big role in victim and their family member's life. Those moments which they cherished in the past are remembered in the painful present, they are recalling the events and comparing it with the present and suffers a lot. Susie recalls the incident of her happy childhood days with her father, mother, sister and brother and felt the intense suffering because, she has missed the chance of living and being a victim to brutal rape and murder.

Sebold presents the novel with the flash-forward technique for representing the events that occur in future. At the very beginning of the novel Sebold specifies the scene

of Susie's childhood memory, Susie tells her father that she is worried about the penguin that looks so lonely inside the snow globe in her father's desk. Her father replies that not to bother about that, the penguin doll has trapped in a perfect world. The snow globe represents the Susie's future in heaven. In heaven Susie says; "trapped in my perfect world" (140).

While Susie experiences the trauma in heaven, her family experience the traumatic grief in the aftermath of Susie's sudden death in earth. The traumatic memories and grief take over their life and made them feel broken. The character Jack Salmon in the novel gets affected the most than compared to others characters. His psychological trauma leads to heart attack. The agitated jack was haunted with the memories of Susie and this made him depressed. All the symptoms of depressive disorder are matched with the behavior of Jack Salmon.

Abigail Salmon also experiences the traumatic grief of sudden death of her daughter Susie and battles within herself. Though she leaves the family because of uncontrollable grief, she comes back after some years and rejoins with her family. She realizes that recovery can occur only within the context of relationship. Lindsey Salmon affected by the haunting voices of Susie. While Susie suffers in heaven by missing the chance of living, she lives her life on earth. This burdens Lindsey to the core. She struggles to get off from the memories of Susie.

For everything, there is an end and a way-out in life. Though the unexpected death of the loved one brings traumatic experience, the bereavement will someday disappear from the life. In the case of Salmon family, they all undergo serious traumatic grief, stress and pain but at the end they all overcome from the emotional breakdown.

The plight of the Salmon family due to the traumatic event was deeply projected by Sebold. The Salmon family recovers from the trauma by realizing that, life has to move on. With the strong bond of family they are able to recover from trauma. Even though they undergo serious trauma they overcome all the struggles by accepting the harsh realities of life. In this novel, Sebold explores the connection between living and dead and the thought process of dead one in the afterlife. Susie deeply misses her family and friends and longs to return to her life even as she accepts that she will not be able to. She relates that she is told many times by people in heaven that she will not be able to truly experience heaven until she stops watching her family and lets go of her earthly life. At the end of the novel we begin to see her doing this and as a result she begins to see more of heaven and greets relatives that she has lost.

The lovely bones—the literal fragments of the Susie's dismembered body—are made whole and comprehensible via her parents' authentic love, and via another celebration of monogamous, procreative love: a marriage between Lindsey and Samuel, her first love, which produces an heir, Abigail Susan, a namesake for Susie. These scenes, and others like them, inscribe normalcy and a reassuring domesticity.

The novel ends with an assertion of domestic bliss (Lindsey and Samuel's marriage), in very much the way that *Dracula* ends. In both novels, the monster is dispatched (Dracula requires a stake through the heart, but Mr. Harvey is taken out by an icicle), thus making way for the ideal of family, which is constant, unfailing, utterly reliable, worthy of all faith. *The Lovely Bones* doesn't see Susie's story as straining credulity, and in that way it prepares no defense.

Chapter Five

Summation

Alice Seobold's first novel, *The Lovely Bones*, a haunting account of a young girl's rape and murder, was hailed as the most successful debut since *Gone with the Wind*. Sebold, still possesses the singularity of a weird child telling herself stories, and the unworldly detachment from everyday life of a woman who needs to be lonely. But although she might seem a little bit gothic with black silk blouse, black trousers, jet-black fringe and pure white skin animated with sensuous scarlet lips, she projects none of the whimsical self-absorption one might imagine.

American literature is considered as the most popular literature across the world. It reflects the practical condition of people and society. The harsh realities and sufferings faced by the Americans are seen through the works of American writers. American literature began as soon as pamphlets, poems and other convenient forms of literatures began to be written. History of American Literature reveals that it has developed with admirable freedom, energy and completeness depicting more or less usable past and war anxieties. Americans wrote their own historical narrative, they crafted their own glorious heroic past and purposely inducing the sense of American nationhood to rise above from the clutches of Britain.

The Post Modern American Literature examines along with other problems rape as a violent act against women. This can be seen in the fictions of Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the caged Bird Sings* (1969), Alice Walker's *The Color purple* (1985), John Grisham's *A Time to Kill* (1988). The literature on sexual violence

against women depicts it as a severe social problem that affects mainly young girls and women. Being weaker of the human species, she has all through been the target of aggression by some brutal males. Women writing about the experience of rape often find the disempowering effect of rape continuing into the aftermath also. Rape is seen as an abhorrent phenomenon, considered to disrupt the psychological functioning of the victim.

Alice Sebold's number one national bestselling novel *The Lovely Bones* depicts the horrendous rape and murder of a small-town girl named Suzie Salmon. Suzie must then watch from her own personal heaven, her family and friends struggle to cope and move on with their lives. The novel is set in the suburbs of Norristown, Pennsylvania, 1973. Published in 2002, *The Lovely Bones* became an instant bestseller, and in 2010 it was released into theaters around the world.

Alice Sebold picturises the plight of the victim and her family after the cruel event of rape and murder, intensely. *The Lovely Bones* is an account of how Susie and her family learn to cope up the pain. Susie focuses more on the aftermath and effects of her rape and murder on her family rather than on the event itself.

The Lovely Bones does not focus on evil; it does not attempt to make sense of bad people or bad acts. Instead the novel investigates issues of loss and grief, life and death, identity and self, remembrance and forgetting, womanhood and motherhood, coming of age and rites of passage, and heaven and earth. Sebold examines traditional views, such as those about heaven, sexuality, and the place of women in American society, while simultaneously challenging those views.

A critical point came when she bought a copy of *Trauma and Recovery*, the classic book about sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress, because she was quoted in it (she'd written a newspaper article about her rape). "I was failing miserably in New York, I'd written two novels that weren't published. And I realised I was quoted in the trauma section of the book, but not in recovery." She read the book, realised she "wasn't all great" and went into therapy for three years.

Transformed, she took out a student loan, went to graduate school in California to study creative writing, and on the first day met her husband, Glen David Gold, author of the rapturously received *Carter Beats The Devil*, a magical mystery tour of a novel which was shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award. "She was sitting at the back in the corner, aged 33, surrounded by all these young tanned women in spaghetti straps, all cheerful and friendly and open. Glen came in late and he couldn't get his motorcycle helmet off. So there it was!"

All of the characters in *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold help create the overall message that the novel portrays. Throughout the novel Susie Salmon faces many difficult challenges that help her grow as a person and that ultimately lead to her to heaven. Alice Sebold opens up *The Lovely Bones* with Susie saying "My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie" (5). This statement is not only foreshadowing the death of Susie, it also helps the reader understand Susie's frame of mind at the beginning of her journey. In the beginning of Sebold's novel, Susie is stuck reminiscing on her past life she has an immense desire to be a part of the living world. While Susie is talking to Franny, her intake counsellor, she says; "People grow up by living. I want to live" (19).

Dealing with trauma and loss is the central theme in *The Lovely Bones*. The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative and History*. The foundation for trauma theory has been resolutely established across multiple disciplines and field ranging from American studies, history and psychoanalysis concept trauma can be the result of rape, murder, slavery or some other distressing event. The novel Alice Sebold explores different ways in which people undergo grief when they lose a loved one. The characters in the novel such as Jack Salmon, Abigail Salmon, Lindsey Salmon and Ruth Connors suffer from the Psychological trauma because of the sudden death of Susie.

Sebold has been praised for handling such dark material in honest, provocative, and imaginative ways. Upon its publication, *Time* magazine pronounced *The Lovely Bones* "the breakout fiction debut of the year," and it received enthusiastic endorsement from leading critics and such literary giants as the *New York Times Book Review* and the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. The book's critical acclaim, coupled with aggressive promotion on *The Today Show* and other national television programmes, ignited its overwhelming commercial success. In 2002, *The Lovely Bones* received the Bram Stoker Award for best first novel, the American Booksellers Association's "Book of the Year Award," and a nomination for best novel from the Horror Writers Association.

The Lovely Bones portrays the process of maturing and the recovering stages of the main character Susie from the state of unacceptance to acceptance. The creative component of *The Lovely Bones* seeks to present a story of profound maternal loss and grief, portraying the unbroken bonds which endure between a mother and child even after

death. One of its themes is how seemingly innocuous personal choices can irrevocably change destinies.

In some ways, then, the messages that Susie teaches her family, and that the readers take from *The Lovely Bones*, are the same that Alice Sebold has learned from her life. She was raped, and it was shattering, and as Susie says, "Horror on earth is real and it is every day."It never leaves you but, as Susie's father realises, "You live in the face of it." (186). She got older, relaxed, let her guard down, told her story, found happiness in simple connections rather than defensiveness and booze. Her memoir *Lucky* ends, "I live in the world where the two truths co-exist, where both hell and hope live in the palm of my hand." She gets up at 3am to work because she likes writing in the dark, but she lives in the California sunshine. When she signs people's books, Alice Sebold writes "Viva!" Instead, the focus of *The Lovely Bones* is on the trauma and the young victim's and her family's failed attempts to meet one another in the space that separates them after her death. Susie calls this imaginary place the "Inbetween" (34), after a c rayon drawing by her little brother that features a big blue line between heaven and earth. Here, Susie wishes she might meet her family again.

The novel provides an entirely reassuring taken on the trauma: loved ones live on in one's hearts and if one grieves for them and hold them dear one will find closure, a way to heal and move on. In this way, *The Lovely Bones* is wholesome and, ultimately, palliative. Ultimately the bereaved family manages to recreate themselves, and this allows Susie to "give up on Earth" (120), and depart to "wide wide heaven" (325). On seeing her family overcome the traumatic memories, a healing came to her heart. It

makes her to leave the earth without any burden. Susie sees her family getting healed from the trauma which had been tormenting them for years, when seeing their recovery her heart is lightened and she happily moves to the real heaven. The Salmon family finally gets off from the emotional journey they undergo due to unbearable loss.

Susie's ability to speak from the dead and her perceptions of Earth, small-heaven, and the "wide wide Heaven" to which she eventually goes (325), render the novel narratologically ambitious. Susie's liminal position allows her to take on a variety of narrative positions, ranging from a sympathizing heterodiegetic omniscience that is without the possibility of agency, to first-person homodiegetic involvement when she – somewhat unbelievably – trades bodies with her surviving friend Ruth. Given this variety of narrative positions, the novel may be used to demonstrate how narrator involvement affects the reader's sense of the story (Olson, "Introducing").

The Lovely Bones explores the theme of how death impacts and affects others in different ways. In the novel, Susie's death causes her mother to distance herself from her family completely whereas it causes her father and sister to invest more into the family by risking it all to catch her murderer. It makes Ruth want to know everything she can about Susie while most of her peers are trying to forget about her completely. It also affects Ray because he becomes more closed off when it comes to love and affects Buckley because he's living, but still gets less attention than Susie.

Thus *The Lovely Bones* conveys its main message in the contemporary parlance of love and healing. The rewards of an earthly life lie in human frailties, in their

vulnerabilities, their reliance on others and the promise of sustaining love. *The Lovely Bones* presents the grief and pain of Susie Salmon's parents, Jack and Abigail, and the temporary dissolution of their marriage, in order to cement those bonds, to make the readers believe in the power of grief's transformative potential.

A number of critics have taken the issue of Sebold's handling of Susie's violation and its aftermath. Sebold presents the readers with a victim who is in post-trauma, the kind of girl who's all bravado; she doesn't want vengeance or confrontation, but instead is wholly focused on advising, as best she can, her family's emotional survival in the light of the event. A re-animated Susie, now whole and intact, narrates a tale of intense family bonds sustained across the chasm between heaven and earth. Thus the novel provides an entirely reassuring take on the trauma of the loved ones lives on in one's hearts and a way to heal and move on. In this way, *The Lovely Bones* is wholesome and, ultimately palliative.

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Venturesome Journey towards Self Identity in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirementss

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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THOOTHUKUDI

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DECLARATION

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Venturesome Journey towards Self Identity in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*** submitted to St Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Queen Mercy s. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Venturesome Journey towards Self Identity in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Queen Mercy. S

THOOTHUKUDI **QUEEN MERCY S.**

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Venturesome Journey towards Self Identity in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*** analyses the problem raised in Korobi's life and the way Metra manages to achieve her goal.

The first chapter **Introduction** introduces the novelist and the novel, by providing a sketch of Indian literature and exalts Banerjee above all her contemporaries.

The second chapter **Portrait of Korobi** examines the protagonist as a victim of identity crisis and explores the manner in which the cross-cultural forces hinder Korobi's quest for identity.

The third chapter **Quest for Identity** picturises the troubles which an Indian woman faces in a foreign land, through the experience of Korobi. It contrasts the India culture with the American culture, to depict the problem of assimilation.

The fourth chapter **Craftsmanship** discusses the major symbols in the novel and analyses the vital role that the narrative technique play in the perfect deliverance of the theme.

The fifth chapter **Summation** justifies the title of the project, by providing a summation of the previous chapter.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature in its broadest sense is any single body of written works. It is considered as an art form or any single writing deemed to have an artistic or intellectual value. It is the mirror of society. Its origin lies in the joy of creation. It begins in the creative possibilities of human language and in the yearning of human beings to use their language creatively. Its use of solemn beauty enables to excogitate the most arduous and gruesome aspects of existence. Ultimately, it ameliorates life because it increases the capacities for understanding and communication. As a work of art literature discloses man's deepest observation, most profound thinking and firmest beliefs. Literature is an art form of language, and words are its tools. Literature of any age is shaped and coloured by all the elements which entered into the civilization of that age.

Indian writing in English has a relatively short but highly charged history. In 1793, Sake Dean Mahomed wrote perhaps the first book in English, called *The Travels of Dean Mahomed.* However most of the early Indian writing in English was non-fictional work, such as biographies and political essays. This began to change in the 1800s, when famous Indian authors who wrote mostly in their mother tongue, began to try their hand in English. Starting in 1917, Dhan Gopal Mukherji wrote many children's stories that were set in India. He was awarded the Newbery medal in 1928 for *Gay Neck*, the story of a pigeon. Soon after, a new generation of Indian authors, who wrote almost exclusively in English hit the book shelves. And it began in 1935 with R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable.* Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* followed that in 1938. Their works are forerunners to the magnificent Indian writing in English which is seen today.

India has contributed significantly to the overall world literature. This contribution of India has been chiefly through the Indian writing in English, novelists being in the forefront in this respect. A good number of novelists on the contemporary scene have given expression to their creative urge in no other language than English and have brought credit to the Indian English fiction as a distinctive force in the World fiction. To attempt creative expression on a National scale in an alien medium has seldom happened in human history. And it speaks of the prolific quality of the Indian mind to assimilate the nearly confronting situations and the complex dilemmas of modern world.

Indian literature in English dates back to the 1830s to Kaski Prasad Ghosh, the first writer of fiction who has brought in the tremendous attraction and brilliancy of admiration for Indian English novels. Rajaram Mohan Roy has written and dedicated pages about social reform and religion in India solely in the medium of English. Style of Indian English literature from the local languages appear to be an exceptional feature of the Indian literature in English and the local language construction and system is ultimately much reflected in the illustrations as mirrored in the literal translation of local idioms. Writing of Indian literature decides the legendary and hugely venerated Indian English literary personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, R.K. Narayan, and later Novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgaonkar, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sehgal. They have ceaselessly captured the spirit of an independent India struggling to break away from the British and the traditional Indian cultures to establish a distinct identity.

During the 1980s and 90s, India has emerged as a mirror literary nation. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* became a rage around the world. The worldwide success of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* made him the first writer of the

Indian diaspora to enter the sphere of elite international writers and leave an indelible mark on the global literary scene. Some of the Indian writers who hold a significant place in the literary scene are Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga. They are recognized in the national as well as international levels and they have received great royalties and prestigious awards.

New generation Indian English novelists are considered as the products of the present day transformed society. This society has undergone a great change by the impact of media and violently rising globalization. The concentration of the new generation Indian English novels has been on the problems of contemporary youth, their emotions, culture, concerns of family members and also to assess the present situation by looking back at the past. This type of novels are about reality, the roots of Indian psyche, family related life, generation gap and to be more precise, problems faced by the youth and the irreparable partitions that have taken place in their minds. Every generation has its own critical situation and difficulty. So has the contemporary youth.

Indian English Literature has acquired great importance in the World Literature. The genre novel was imported from the West. Indian Literature is the immortal piece of expression of unified experience of Indian English writers who have contributed much in the field of fiction. Many of the novels written after independence have socio-cultural perspective. The art of Literature is not reducible to the words on the page, they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, Literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Though literature elevates and transforms experience beyond mere pleasure, it also functions more broadly in society as the means of both criticizing and affirming cultural values.

Indian English Literature is associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora. Many of the writers neither live in India nor are Indian citizens. As a category this production comes under the broader realm of post-colonial literature, the production from previously colonizied country, India. Though one can trace such writers in India to a century back, Indian writing in English has come into force only in the last couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes.

A new revolution in English caught the public attention by the end of the nineteenth century, but it flourished only after independence. Independence in India not only brought changes in literature, but it also brought with it new uses of language. The term diaspora carries a sense of displacement experienced by the population who find themselves separated from its national territory and has a hope to return to their homeland at some point if homeland still exists in any meaningful sense.

The immigrants, whatever their reason for migration be, financial, social, political, no matter whether they migrated for trade and commerce, as religious preachers, as laborers, convicts, soldiers, as expatriates or refugees, exiles, or as guest workers in search of better life and opportunities have shared some common things as well as differences which are based on their conditions of migration and period of stay in the adopted land. Mostly the migrants suffer from the pain of being far off from their homes, the memories of their motherland, and the anguish of leaving behind everything familiar agonizes the mind of migrants. William Safran has observed that; "they continue to relate personally or vicariously, to the homeland in a way or another, and their ethnic-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship" (Safran 23). The immigrants attempts to assimilate, adapt and amalgamate with the society of their host country. It is

interesting to note that the history of Indian diasporic writing is as old as the diaspora itself.

The first Indian English novel, Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*, was published in 1864. It proves that the contribution of the Indian Diaspora to Indian English writing is not new. It is also interesting to note that , the descendants of the Indian intentured laborers in the so-called 'girmit colonies' have mostly favoured writing in English. Writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Kiran Desai, Amit Chaudhuri, Jeet Thayil, Aravind Adiga, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, Nirad C. Choudhuri, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, Rohintson Mistry, V.S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor and Upamanyu Chatterjee are diasporic.

V.S. Naipaul's characters like Mohun Biswas from *A House for Mr.Biswas* or Ganesh Ramsumari from the *Mystic Masseur*, are instances of persons who are generations away from their original homeland, India, but their inheritance gives them a realization of their past. They become examples of the outsider, the unhoused, for the world to see. Naipaul's characters are not governed by actual displacement but by an inherited memory of dislocation. For them, their native land India is not a geographical space but a creation of the imagination. Their predicament can be explained in Rushdie's words as he remarks, "the past is a country, from which we have all emigrated, that its loss in part of our common humanity" (Rushdie 87).

Women writers contribute a major segment on fiction of the contemporary Indian writing in English. The world is being seen in a new dimension through the eyes of women fiction writers. Indian Women writing in English is being recognised as major contemporary current in English Literature. The Indian women's perceptions

of their aspirations and expectations are within the framework of Indian social and moral commitments. Indian Women Writers in English are victims of a second prejudice vis-a-vis their regional counterparts. The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated homemakers. This subject matter is often considered superficial compared to the depiction of the replaced and oppressed lives of women.

Indian women writers have started questioning the prominent old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle. Today, the works of Kamla Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Geetha Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Manju Kapur and many more have left an indelible imprint on the readers of Indian fiction in English.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian Diasporic writer, whose novel is taken for study. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in Kolkata, India on July 29, 1956. She is an Indian American author, poet and the Betty and Gene Mc David Professor of Writing at the University of Houston. She received her B.A from University of Calcutta in 1976. The same year, she went to the United States to join the Wright State University, where she received her Master's degree. She received a Ph.D from the University of California, Berkeley in 1985. Divakaruni lives in Houston with her husband Murthy and her two sons Anand and Abhay.

Divakaruni puts herself through the graduate school by taking odd jobs, working as a baby sitter and as a dining hall attendant at the International school Berkeley. She taught at Foothill College in Los Angeles, California and Diablo Valley College. She now lives in Texas, where she teaches at the University of Houston,

creative writing program. Divakaruni is the co-founder and former president of Maitri, a helpline founded in 1991 for South Asian Women dealing with domestic abuse. She also serves in the Houston Board of Prathanam, a non-profit organization working to bring literacy to the disadvantaged Indian children.

An acclaimed and prolific writer, Divakaruni is concerned more with women's issues and immigrant reality in her fictional narratives. Literary resistance in women's fiction seeks to interrogate gender assumptions, cultural paradigms and patriarchal values. Voicing resistance is an endeavor to be heard and recognized and goes a long way to end the oppression and suppression of women in hierarchal society. According to Faith:

> Feminist resistance challenges prevailing discourse and delegitimizes presumption of female inferiority in local and specific ways. Literary resistance may not dismantle the hegemonic power structure altogether, but it can definitely weaken its impact. Feminine resistance helps to reclaim women's voice and identity, and weaken the process of victimization. An analysis of the behavioural pattern of female characters including their stoical silence, rage, rejection, defiance and readjustment provide new avenues for the exploration of feminine resistance. (47)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award winning author and poet. Divakaruni's work is widely known as it has been published in over 50 magazines, including *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New York* and her writing has been included in over 50 anthologies including *The Best American Short Stories*, *O Henry Prize Stories* and *Push Cart Prize*. Her fiction has been translated into many languages including Dutch, Hebrew, Indonesian and Japanese. Divakaruni explores issues of class and

politics in modern India and immigrant America, but the family issues at the heart of the novel give it a cross-cultural appeal.

Chitra Divakaruni's literary works have been significantly well received in the United States. She has won many awards including a California Arts Council Award (1998), a PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award (1996), a Pushcart Prize (1994), the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize (1994), the Editor's Choice Award from *Cream City Review* (1991) and the South Clara Arts Council Poetry Award (1990). Most of her works have been prized for the blending of lyricism, realism, myth and fantasy and Indian and the western culture. However, some critics have also criticized her works for her belittling of the Indian society and glorification of the taboo-free modernized society of the West, of the USA in particular. Nevertheless that is required for characterization and portraying real world. Moreover, Divakaruni as a writer demonstrates the deepest fear and trauma faced by women in India and elsewhere. She exhibits women characters that emerge stronger and self-reliant. Some of her characters seem to provide role models for women readers and women activists. She says that living in America has beneficial effect on many women writers. This shows her attitude towards other country as unlike other Diasporas of earlier time, which has also been witnessed in her fictions. She assimilates and accepts her home away from home though holding Indianness in most of her writings.

Divakaruni began her writing career as a poet. Her volumes of poetry are *Black Candle (1991), The Reason for Nasturtiums (1990)* and *Leaving Yuba City*. She won several awards for her poems, such as a Gerbode Award, a Barbara Deming Memorial Award, and an Allen Ginsberg Award. Her novels are *Arranged Marriage: Stories* (1995), *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *The Unknown Errors ofour Lives* (2001), *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams*

(2004), *The Lives of Strangers* (2005), *The Palace of Illusions: A Novel* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2010) and *Oleander Girl* (2013).

Divakaruni's first novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, combines magic and realism. magic as typical Indian beliefs. Tilo is a magical figure who runs a grocery store and uses spices, that are used to overcome the difficulties of the customers. But when she falls in love with Raven, a Native American, she is confronted with her own desire to be happy and to help others through the magic of spices; she has to decide which part of the heritage she will keep and which part she will choose to abandon. Tilo's dilemma is an allegory of the immigrant who experiences the dual pull of the charm of the past and the call of the present.

In *Sister of My Heart*, two cousins are brought together by destiny. The cousins were born on the same night in the same house. They share joys and pains of each other willingly. Sudha is stunningly beautiful while Anju is not. Bonded in mysterious way, they are sisters of the heart. They grow into womanhood but their fates remain merged. Sudha is gentle and quiet; Anju is rebellious and questions the old traditions that Anju respects. Yet when Sudha is put to the test, she makes the biggest sacrifice and treads the boldest path. When due to a change in family fortune. the girls are urged into arranged marriages. One travels to America while the other remains in India. When tragedy strikes both of them they discover that despite distance and marriage, they must try to each other once again. As usual, Divakaruni presents America as the land of hope and promise whereas India is the land, they must relinquish for good.

With the continuation of *Sister of My Heart*, another novel *The Vine of Desire* was published. Far from Calcutta, the city of their childhood and after years of living separate lives, Ajnu and Sudha rekindle their love and friendship. Now they face new

challenges: a baby born and a baby lost, Anju's husband's treacherous attraction to Sudha's beauty and Sudha's difficulty in finding a new home for herself. Divakaruni succeeds in revealing the fact about the reward and perils of breaking free from the past and unbound bonding.

Queen of Dreams is a spell bounding tale of mothers and daughters, love and cultural identity. Rakhi, a young artist and divorced mother in Berkley, California, struggles to keep her footing with her family and with a world in alarming transition. Her mother possesses a special power of interpreting dreams and guides others through their fates. This gift of vision fascinates Rakhi but also isolates her from her mother. She longs for something that might bring them closer. Her search for identity and vicious attack on her friends and family leads to their notion of citizenship in question.

Her most popular work, *The Palace of Illusion* is highly applicable in present scenario of war tattered world. It takes us back to the times of the *Mahabharata* and the story is narrated by Panchaali, the wife of the five Pandavas. Divakaruni envisions the readers a rare feminist interpretation of the great epic. Panchaali is shown as a fiery female voice in a rare world of warriors, gods and constantly manipulating fate. It is an ambitious work of art recasting the saga of the *Mahabharata.*

One Amazing Thing, is about a group of people who gets trapped in a visa office after an earthquake and how they are surviving in the dark place with no way out of the debris surrounding them. It is a highly sensitive novel. She portrays beautiful prose, haunting characters, and a luminously and ominously developed plot, the universal and individual qualities of the search for meaning in life, as well as the search's timelessness.

Chitra Banerjee's latest novel is *Oleander Girl*. It was published in the United States in March 2013. The novel *Oleander Girl*, opens with the engagement of Korobi Roy to Rajat Bose. Korobi is taken care by her grandparents, Sarojini and Bimal Prasad Roy. They raised her after her mother Anu dies during childbirth. Her father dies a few months before her birth in a car accident. After their engagement, a heart attack kills Korobi's grandfather. Then Sarojini reveals to Korobi about her father and mother. This unexpected revelation turns Korobi's world upside down because she now believes that she must go to America to find out her father. So she undertakes a courageous journey to find her true identity. Later she came to know that she was an illegitimate child of a mixed race parentage through her mother's roommate Mrs. Anand. This novel focuses on the journey of a girl in search of her roots who faces untethered hardships in an alien country. It also touches on the racial tensions in both America and India in the early twenty first century.

This project projects the protagonist quest for identity amidst the patriarchal society and her efforts to tackle the problems of diaspora. It delineates the character of Karobi and her courageous attempt to choose a path of hardship, sacrificing her love. The plight of Indian women with mixed heritage is perfectly highlighted in this project.

The second chapter portrays the character of Karobi in the context of her identity crisis. It describes Karobi's cross-cultural journey and her transcultural exposure, that is, her acquaintance with the eastern and western cultures. It illuminates Karobi's journey in search of her father, her resistance to the temptation of America, and her strong urge to follow her heart irrespective of the reaction of people.

Chapter Two

Portrait of Korobi

The novel is delineated from the perspectives of Korobi, her future relative, her grandma, the Muslim driver and some others. Divakaruni spellbinds the peruses into a story flooding with puzzle, legacy, sentiment, familial ties, and character emergency, conventional subjugation and different such fixings. Korobi, a stranded young lady being raised by her venerating grandparents in Kolkata, finds a puzzle about herself and her family. Her disclosure smashes her feeling of self and removes her from her shielded Kolkata life into a hunt. She experiences the organization of appealing outsiders, crosswise over America, a nation which she finds to be double hazardous, unwelcoming and charming. Korobi is cognizant about herself like the other women characters in Divakaruni's fiction. Regardless of being lovable grandchild of her grandparents, she muses over her mom because the significance of her own self and her name is given to her by her mom.

The Oleander, Korobi's namesake, is an excellent yet toxic plant, and Korobi's mom gave her the name since she needed her little girl to have the capacity to shield herself from predators. Korobi communicates her disarray before her dad why she has been named on noxious blooms, which is not really exceptionally prevalent. Korobi asked her dad, "Did my mom ever explain to you why she needed to name me Korobi?" Her dad advises her reason: "She did really, in light of the fact that the Oleander was lovely - additionally extreme. It knew how to shield itself from predators. Anu needed that strength for you since she didn't have enough of it herself" (253). Regardless of being obstinate with free pondered self, Korobi wavers to hurt or defy him and her affection for her granddad makes her to be cognizant about her conventional qualities and Indian custom of tolerating senior citizens' choices,

however little unwillingly at times. This makes her a blend of inconsistencies – compliant yet certain. When she purchases an "off the shoulder kurti in maroon chiffon with thin fitting jeans" (18) she is frightened of her granddad's response.

Divakaruni being an original diaspora essayist is exceptionally very much aware of old Indian customs which have been performed in India since ages without addressing them. A large number of such customs and conventions have been portrayed in the novel, exhibiting Indianness. Banerjee is especially mindful of class clashes in India, which has been unmistakably exhibited in the start of the novel. Other than awareness of class qualification, the creator additionally exhibits her responsiveness towards religionist. As original transient, she understands how little events are sufficient to make contact and bother the smooth working of the general public. So a question emerges at the distribution center attributable to some news in the radio about Godhra, prompting to slaughter. In wrath Rajat fires a Muslim laborer subsequently driving rage among the specialists at the distribution center. Being in America she had minutely considered how individuals of various groups in India create doubt among the other group when once they had been as one. Riots create after the Godhra episode fortified the religious fierceness among the average folks of both the races; laborers who had been co-operating till now get to be distinctly aware of the distinctions that differenciate them. Whenever Mrs. Bose is pursued by the Muslim laborers, Asif her chauffer acts the hero, yet because of her own doubt she questions him and hands over the duty of Pia to Shikha, her secretary. All the while, the author brings up that genuineness and commitment that has nothing to do with class or religion. This is seen when the laborers chasten Asif for securing Mrs. Bose: "Don't you understand they consider you an indistinguishable path from they do us... cockroaches to be smashed under their chappal when the time is correct?" (211). Asif

experiences a similar agony on losing Pia; he surrenders his occupation and joins the sheik. In any case, when Rajat and Pia are assaulted he again spares their life. In this way *Oleander Girl* lays a hand on the racial pressures in both American and India in the mid 21st century.

As in India, the bias against Muslims is additionally found in America after the psychological oppressor assaults of 2001 which overflow into the Indian people group. Indeed, even Indians outside India demonstrate their bias against Muslim people group and has maintained the sentiment weakly. Indians in India too associate 9/11 assault and Godhrakand with muslim group. Other than class clashes, Divakaruni has additionally discovered her familiarity with Indian Patriarchal society, the novel is the best case of exhibiting Indians in one sense as well as it contains every last part of Indian culture. Sarojani has appeared to be an exceptionally submissive spouse of Bimal Prasad Roy. She is the person who has long overlooked her singularity taking after the requests of her significant other notwithstanding, and even concealing his misleads and lie about the personality of her own child- in-law. She was especially cognizant not to do as such, but rather she does that for her husband. Patriarchy, an extreme thought of Indian culture stifles Anu over adoration. The author displays a genuine picture of Indian culture which does not permit its young ladies to pick what is correct. More than Korobi it is her mom who gets to the casualty of Indian idea of something fouling up or right. She shows that simple, universal, patriarchal, moderate states of mind destroy a valuable life, which isolates a girl from her folks and keeps a father far from his youngster for quite a long time. Anu Roy who turns into calm everlastingly and her dreary experience makes a loathsome memory. It is she who experiences character emergency and mental distance because of movement. One of the real subjects of the novel is Identity Crisis. Unlike different characters and

diaspora essayists the protagonist takes her adventure from India to America keeping in mind the end goal to look for her personality, the vast majority of the diaspora characters confront the issue of personality in the outside land because of social contrasts. The topic of personality emerges because of the stunning disclosure of Korobi's dad's character of not being Indian. Subsequently, her own particular character stops a question. Her personality gets weakened because of her mom's movement, social and in addition topographical. Having found a letter from her mom to her dad, loaded with favour however never sent, Korobi sets out on the mission to locate her own dad, eventually her own self. Chitra Banerji Divakaruni proposes an alternate way to deal her young women heroes.

Korobi's personality is snared with the notoriety of the family and the great old family name. She gets herself useless when she knows the genuine personality of her dad and her racial inadequacy considered by Indians, being the girl of an African American man since she is delighted in and respected for her status of being the granddaughter of the Roys furthermore being the life partner of the most sought and the wealthiest man of the town. She is shocked when she finds the mystery of her family about her dad who is NOT an Indian however an Afro-American. It is an awesome stun for Korobi to gain from her grandma Sarojini that her dad was not an Indian, an outsider, not a legal counselor and that he didn't kick the bucket in a fender bender. Anu, her mom was enamored with him amid her stay in America when she had been there for higher reviews on a grant. Anu needed to wed that man who likewise adored her profoundly, however did not get the authorization from her dad Bimal Roy. Anu needed to return any desire for getting her dad's assent however she was at that point conceived with Korobi.

Anu attempted all conceivable methods for persuading her unbending, moderate father, but it was all purposeless. In anger, she slipped from the staircase and began to die. That is the manner by which she kicked the bucket in the doctor's facility bringing forth Korobi. It was a serious catastrophe for Bimal Roy and Sarojini losing their exclusive adoring kid before their eyes and the main light of seek after them to survive was the recently conceived child, Korobi whom they would not lose at any cost and who was the just a single to tie Anu with them. Bimal Roy took a guarantee from Sarojini in their sanctuary not to uncover these actualities to any one not to Korobi as she develops or to abandon him for good, which again uncovers patriarchal mentality and powerful urge of social and customary grasp in Bimal Prasad Roy's mind. The entire story spins around Korobi's journey for personality and her battle to settle her character in absolutely inadmissible social conditions. Her skin shading accepts to be from the Roys however the shade of her hair still confounds her. She is worn out between the Indians and the westerners. She needs to adjust between the integrity of both societies and ought to pick the correct one for her. Along these lines, Korobi who is cognizant about her own character since the starting understands that it is troublesome for her to start another existence with Rajat, furthermore not prudent until she discovers the genuine personality of her divided self. She encountered every one with the feelings of outrage, distress, and trouble and disturb. However in the meantime she has got little any desire for investigating her own particular personality which won't be misleading any longer. The solution for her genuine personality lies over the sea, the United States, where her mom had put in a couple of years as an understudy. She doesn't accept the exhortation of Sarojini not to uncover anything to Rajat, to overlook everything and start another life. On the off chance that she does, it would be the continuation of a similar misdirection against the

reliable love of her folks and one of whom is still alive now with the learning that his little girl is no more. So Korobi converses with Rajat that she is so excited to think about her own dad and along these lines she joyfully takes test to investigate in remote land.

Bimal Prasad Roy has earned esteem and notoriety in the general public, securing the valuable social legacy and custom. That was the reason Rajat's folks had concurred for his decision, however Roy's family did not coordinate with their rich, present day high status. Since Korobi was an ill-conceived little girl of an obscure father, her going to USA was making Rajat perplexed. Rajat's dread again uncovers the hard Indians, who considers family values and culture more than any other thing, even individual's own particular character. She gets to be distinctly willful with eager wanting to discover her character, going out on a limb of social and in addition land field. It was exceptionally troublesome for Korobi to discover her dad in an outside land without having his photo and knowing just his first name i.e, Burglarize. In spite of knowing the hardship in transit, Korobi reluctantly demonstrates her awareness of self and she chooses to surrender all her solace and even to give up her adoration with a specific end goal to discover her personality. Like every single other vagrant, Korobi too moves in the opposite direction of extravagances and leads a simple life and strolls in way of hardship and test, however with any desire for showing signs of improvement, that is, her unique personality. "I cherish you Korobi. Dont forsake me and go to America" I need to state approve. I need it so severely; I can scarcely inhale however I can't. In the event that I do I know i could never feel complete, in his arms or any place else. I have an excessive number of unanswered inquiries to simply release this" (85). Rajat's dread additionally uncovers vulnerability of Korobi's coming back to India as nobody realizes what might occur next, neither Korobi nor

Rajat nor her grandma. In this way nobody wants her to leave India. In any case, cognizance and yearning of her character is so solid in her heart and mind that she figures out how to persuade everybody however not joyfully. Korobi guarantees to return India and wed Rajat.

Despite the fact that it has been noticed that in America, Korobi feels edified and soon gets tuned to American lifestyle, she strolls with the recognitions of guarantees and family estimations of India, yet when required she apparently adjusts, absorb and acknowledges American method for living. Her voyage to discover her dad makes her dive all the undesirable weights she used to convey as a major aspect of her identity of being totally Indian. Her disposition is neither western nor cutting edge, however it is her capacity in settling her status in her family and at home. With a similar cognizance of being free and self, she says that she has all the right over her body and her personality. When she required cash she chooses to offer her hair. She realizes that her hair however is her own particular property; they are connected with every one of the individuals who are in relations. In this way she says, "Had a place with Bimal and Sarojini's granddaughter, to Rajat's life partner, to Papa and Maman Bose's little girl in-law to be" (178). But she chooses to offer it since she feels that she has a definitive appropriate on her body and herself. The choice of offering of hair makes her more freed and sure. She admits, "I feel dazed, untethered. Be that as it may, once the cash is in my grasp I'm fairly reassured. I now have enough for California; I have done it without begging anybody" (177). She faces different remarks and looks of individuals and their worries over her choice. She confronts blended responses as some of them support and the other censure. Response of her companion Vic who bolsters her demonstration by remarking, "I like it. Makes you look current and confident" (177). This brings out advancement and westernized state

of mind in Vic being in America. However in the meantime, her companion Seema is stunned to see her short hair. Seema, being raised in conventional Indian culture puts stock in the estimation of ladies' dressing entwined in the social framework and its customs. For her, appearance makes the worthy individual from Indian social framework through her humble practices the obligation of a lady. "Gracious my God! What have you done! All your wonderful hair, gone! Does your grandma know? Did your in-laws give you authorization?" (177). Nevertheless she faces tough circumstances in America being distant from everyone else without her genuine character; the principal misfortune she faces is at Kennedy airplane terminal where she was aching to get Mitra, who should lift her up from the air terminal. She is separated from everyone else with none yet Mitra to get her, her lively self transforms into a keen one. When she doesn't find Mitra on the airplane terminal for 60 minutes, she gets to be distinctly on edge on that outside land, withdrew from her well known individuals and landscape. In spite of confronting hardship, she is resolved and after that after she has first experience of distinction amongst Indians and Americanized culture when she discovers Mitra being discourteous by not paying taxi passage, however she may have her monetary compels because of battle for survival. "As of now I'm losing my Indian kindnesses; I'm supposing as far as survival, similar to a foreigner" (94). Divakaruni through her Indian characters, be they Indians or Indian Diaporas, endeavors to reflect upon the more extensive feature of India and Indianness. That is the fragment of Indian culture that she may know and love best. She communicates the subtleties of the Bengali way of life and methods for intuition superior to anything different societies.

In *Oleander Girl*, set in Kolkata, some in an old manor, some in cutting edge discotheques, or in noteworthy Kolkata areas, for example, the Park Circus Cemetery.

This portrays she has been remembering her memory of past which she had deserted far in India. Divakaruni portrays the Indian, traditions and sustenance propensities as she gives scenes of functions included with scents, flavours and poojas. "Sarojini rushes to organize lights, camphor holders, incense sandalwood powder, marigolds, vast copper platters, natural products, drain desserts, rice grains, gold coins, and colorful pictures portraying a pantheon of Gods" (6).

While discussing Korobi's engagement function at her grandma's home, the author gives about different customs and rituals that are executed as a piece of Hindu conventions to turn away the stink eye and bring fortunes for the couple. It can be noticed that Divakaruni brings out Indians as superstitious who have confidence in dream elucidation, phantoms, enchantment, stink eye, and so on. Sarojini likewise says the custom of mustard-seed service to turn away the hostile stare which Korobi ought to fundamentally experience under the watchful eye of Korobi's in-laws land for engagement function. One can witness an exceptionally superstitious India and Indians through such discussions and portrayals. Hence Indians and Indian traditions and mindset can be seen here even in diasporic scholars who may review India with such picture which she may have had seen and been reviewing.

A standout amongst the greatest topics of Indian culture is displayed at the absolute starting point of the novel. The novel begins with the portrayal of Indian wedding and engagement service. It is watched that Divakaruni discusses the dread and apprehension that run with marriage and connections. Love for Bollywood melodies additionally happens in setting of India as well as in remote land. This shows that how Indians in outside land live more like Indians, korobi discovers this in Mitra's condo which is above Karaoke bar, its windows put with tremendous Bollywood publications. She ponders, "What a disagreement this loft is! Clamor from

the karaoke bar underneath hits me in sudden impacts as visitor come and exist. Bollywood sings, nostalgic old top picks, the migrant's yearning to catch home. In India, I never watched over this sort of music, yet now as I hear it, pining to go home contorts my internal part" (97).

Similarly, Indian nourishment by diaspora characters witnesses that how Indian sustenance to make space in outside land alongside the little India they carry with them. They allude to Indian music, sustenance, culture, custom progressively when they feel nostalgic. Fastidious portrayal of desi Indian sustenance in American setting can likewise be found in the novel. "He brings me plate of sustenance: rice and daal and Gujarati Karhi spiced with ginger, cooked by Desai's cousin" (214). A vast assortment of a few cases of nourishment are sent to Korobi for her engagement function and numerous different occasions in the novel. In this way it is seen that the novel is brimming with Indian touches in nourishment, as well as with Indian culture, custom ceremonies and the Indian mind.

Indian words are utilized over and again, for example karhai, dal, chapatti, khichuri, paubhaji, chutney, chai, khadi, khandaani, goonda sorts, mama, chappals and various others. Consequently it is seen that Divakaruni effectively places India in plain words to non-Indians through Oleander. Besides, Korobi's involvement of relocation looking for her own character shows her in the middle of capability of diaspora. Nobody strengths Korobi to leave India, neither her outer surroundings nor her conjugal reason. It was because of her own journey and to extinguish the push of her character, she disjoins herself from India and Rajat, at any rate till she discovers her own self. In this way, she is similar to all ladies characters of the creator, gets to be equivalent words of perseverance, quality and assurance. She was shocked, earth slided from her feet when she met her dad and when she came to realize that her mom

encompassing marriage and respect and the new India attempting to modernize. This impact is seen between the Bose and Roy families and is reflected likewise amongst Vic and Korobi in America. Vic, who is particularly western took the matter in a lighter way as it was not extremely stunning in America. Again one sees Indian western mentality when Vic says, "I know you've had a stun, yet stopped acting like you perpetrated a wrongdoing! It's not as unpleasant as you're making It out to be, not nowadays" (246). To this, Korobi who has been raised in an exceptionally refined Indian family, answers, "It is, the place I originate from" (252). Banerjee in her novel additionally considers the character of a man subjected to social desires. The request of society and the need to take after the ways of society towards the making of people's personality and in the event that it is to be found against social authoritative opinions the individual herself thinks that it's hard to acknowledge. The social uprooting, experienced by both Korobi and Korobi's mom turns out to be more troublesome due to their disappointment with their social qualities.

The creator has revealed the noteworthiness and part of female kids in Indian culture and their esteem as a component of the social framework. She draws out the way that in India, family notoriety is nearly connected with the conduct of the young ladies' kids and any infringement of the normal standards by the young ladies would harm the notoriety of the family, this is seen if there should arise an occurrence of Anu not being hitched without her dad's consent and keeping character of her own youngster in question. Korobi's character is laced with the notoriety of the family and the great old family name. As Korobi is the granddaughter of Judge Tarak Prasad Roy who had a road named after him, this personality stun comes to at the pinnacle when Korobi observes her dad to be a dark man and not a white nonnative. Dispire being knowledgeable, educated, socially prominent individuals from society, Indians

support racisms. Both Bimal Roy and Boses think that it's hard to acknowledge a dark man being identified with family in any way. This turns out to be clear when Anu visits her folks back in India amid her pregnancy. She never unveils it to her dad that, the father of the youngster inside her has a place with an African-American Rob Lacey. Truth is told, later when Korobi herself finds that her dad is a dark man. She is prompted by Sarojini for not letting this news out to anybody. Amid her trip of pursuit, she was pulled in by Vic who comprehends and backs her, it has been seen that Korobi had decision to remain back in America and she additionally cherishes the place by its all interests. "I'll need to settle on my new choice: Vic or Rajat, America or India" (218). However, it is acknowledged further that her profoundly established memory of India and her assimilated traditionalism and Indians takes her back to India. Divakaruni knows about each and every occurrence that how one understands and holds the awareness of other's expectations in India and moves his/her way as it needs to be. The essayist expertly invades the perplexing brain research of Indian ladies who notwithstanding dissolving them into another method for living, look for peace in their own root which depends on individual encounters and recollections. It has been seen that Divakaruni additionally shows bigotry, which is influenced to defy individual's own way of life too.

The next chapter analyses Korobi's quest for identity and her struggle to fix her identity in a foreign land.

Chapter Three

Quest for Identity

Rapid development in the field of trade, market, commerce, and telecommunication technologies, together with cultural confrontations at the global level are creating a paradigmatic shift in people's understanding of selfhood and identity. Identity is a multidimensional word. The identity of a person is subjected to social expectations. In psychology and sociology, identity is a person's conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliations. The term 'Identity' comes from the French word 'Identite' which finds its linguistic roots in the Latin term 'idem' which is a derivation of the Latin adjective meaning 'the same'.

According to Eric Erikson, who coined the term 'Identity Crisis', an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. Erikson describes identity as "a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image" (18). Identity crisis is the state of an individual not believing in himself. A person who is experiencing identity crisis has a feeling of not knowing his real self. Identity crisis is one of the most important conflicts that individuals experience during development.

The crisis of identity has always enjoyed a defining significance in the thematic framework of the Indo-Anglican novels. The novels of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Rai Anand and Raja Rao have redesigned the techno-thematic fabric of Indian English Fiction and have laid the foundation of the New Indian English Fiction. The post-colonial age represented by these novelists is chiefly a quest for identity along different dimensions of socio-political and economic order of India.

Many Indian diasporic writers have written their novels with the theme of identity; because 'Identity Crisis' is one of the most common topics nowadays. In academic as well as popular reviews of Chitra Banerjee's work, she has been praised for her literary creativity and personal sensitivity that is dealing with cross-cultural complexities of self-identity and family relationships. Chitra Banerjee's literary output treats all shades of identity crisis such as alienation, marginalization, despair, nostalgia, readjustment, assimilation, adaption or adoption. Most notable has been her continuing concern with these issues in connection with the experiences of Indian and Indian American women. The heart of her works have been her desire to 'go beyond the silence' about Indian and Indian American women who are striving to achieve strong individual identities, often in opposition to their families and communities. Many of her works deal with the immigrant experiences, especially of women in general. She has discussed the theme 'Identity Crisis' in many novels. Shilpi Somaya Gowda, the author of *Secret Daughter* also views *Oleander Girl* as a riveting and powerful exploration of family secrets, betrayal, love and ultimately the search for self.

In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*, she discusses a girl Korobi who fights for her true identity. As Korobi is growing under the control of her grandparents, she does not know about her father and mother. When her grandfather, Bimal has died she comes to know the truth through her grandmother Sarojini. She says that her father is living in America and his name is Rob. Korobi is shocked by hearing this news. She wants to pack all her things and wants to go to search her father. According to Sandhya Renukamba, in her article, "Review by Sandhya Renukamba" she states thus:

> Although Korobi is loved and cherished by her grandparents, she senses a secrecy in them, as though an important truth is being hidden from her. The unexpected death of her grandfather and the silence of her grandmother open up an unknown and uncertain past in Korobi's life.

On the night before her engagement party, Korobi gets a dream. She has seen her mother Anu Roy in that dream. As Korobi is going to start a new life with Rajat, she thinks that her mother has come to bless her. But her mother has not talked with Korobi. She has gone towards the ocean. Korobi wishes to tell her dream to her grandmother and starts to ask her about Anu Roy. So she enquires, "Tell me about ma" (8). This incident shows that Korobi longs to know her real identity.

Gowda discusses the same theme in her novel, *Secret Daughter*. Asha, the heroine of this novel was born in India and she is adopted by Krishnan and Somer. As Krishnan's family is living in Mumbai, Asha has come to her Dadima's house. In contempt of being one among the family member, she is very curious to know her own biological parents. She asks her Dadima. "I was just thinking about my mother.... I was wondering if she ever thinks about me, if she worries about me" (Gowda 241). She craves to know whether her biological mother yearns to look at her or not. Likewise, in the novel *Oleander Girl*, Korobi yearns whether her mother is looking at her or not. That is why she is too eager to ask about Anu to her grandmother. And she is very curious to know about her father. So she questions her, "Did she say anything to you before she died? About my dad, about me?" (61). This incident shows that Korobi is very much anxious to gather information about her father. While she comes to know, that her father is alive she immediately wants to

find him. And she is ready to take any risk in her life to know about her identity. Korobi is having a thirst to know who her father is. So she says,

> Eighteen years lost already. I can't waste any more time. The need to find out everything about my parents. Suddenly is like an ache in my bones, a deep deficiency so much that I've been deprived of all this time. I run back to the house, ignoring the thorns that catch at my kameez. (56)

The search for her roots implies literally as well as symbolically the quest for identity. On the one hand it is a search for an unknown father, a father who was supposed to be dead. Her identity remains fragmented without getting to know her father. On the other hand it is a feminist quest for self-actualisation. The protagonist's quest for her father brings the former in confrontation with certain reality that forces her to know herself better, in other words to attain self-knowledge. It gives her the opportunity to review her position in relation to her fiancé and her family. She realizes her potential to become an autonomous being capable of resisting the decisions and choices imposed on her by the society. She has the ability to survive despite obstacles as she says, "I'm Korobi, Oleander capable of surviving drought and the loss of love" (274-275). Korobi doesn't lose her hope until she finds her father. She overcomes all obstacles in her life journey. According to Rhetta Akamatsu, in her article, "Book Review: *Oleander Girl* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni," it is said:

> The journey not only leads Korobi to new discoveries about herself but also triggers new challenges and discoveries for her prospective in-laws, The Boses, and her fiancé Rajat, who are already facing business challenges in the changing and unsettling Indian political and social climate.

Korobi's journey in quest of her unknown father in an alien country is the highlight of the novel. Korobi understands the dream in which her mother points out an ocean to go in search of her father:

> Now I knew what my dream mother had wanted. She wanted me to understand that I had a future across the ocean, someone waiting there for me, although he didn't realize it yet. The photo had cemented my decision to find my father, the man who had shared my mother's smiles, the unwritten half of her tender letter, the presence at the other end of the camera. But I wasn't sure how to go about it. (69)

The whole story revolves around Korobi's quest for identity and her struggle to fix her identity in totally unacceptable social conditions. Her skin color believes to be from the Roys but the color of her hair still confuses her. She is tattered between the Indianness and the westernness. She has to balance between the goodness of both cultures and should choose the right one for her. Therefore, Korobi who is conscious about her own identity since the beginning realizes that it is difficult for her to begin a new life with Rajat and also not judicious until she finds out the true identity of her fragmented self. She experienced all the emotions of anger, sorrow, distress and disgust. However at the same time she has got little hope of exploring her own identity which won't be deceptive anymore. The answer to her real identity lies across the ocean, the United States, where her mother has spent a few years as a student. So Korobi decides to undertake a courageous search across post 9/11 America to find her true identity.

Korobi doesn't take the advice of Sarojini not to reveal anything to Rajat, to forget everything and begin a new life. If she does, it would be the continuation of the same deception against the loyal love of her parents and one of whom is still alive

now with the knowledge that his daughter is no more. So Korobi talks to Rajat how eager she is to know about her own father and therefore she happily takes challenge to explore in foreign land. But Rajat is uncomfortable on digging of Korobi's father's whereabouts. But Korobi was firm to speak to her would-be-in-laws to unburden herself. She was against the notions of pretending to her in-laws that her father is dead. She is just frightened to explore her identity."You want me to go through my whole life with my in-laws pretending that my father is dead? That he was an Indian? Why? Are you ashamed of who I am?" (73).

It was very difficult task for Korobi to find out her father in a foreign land without having his photograph and knowing only first name, Rob. Despite knowing the hard journey, Korobi decides to give up all comforts and even ready to sacrifice her love in order to find her identity. Though with hope of getting something better, she chooses to walk in path of hardship and challenge and assimilate into the foreign land. Here Chitra Banerjee DivaKaruni's has shown her original identity.

> I love you Korobi. Don't abandon me and go to America! I want to say okay. I want it so badly, I can barely breathe but I can't. If I do I know I would never feel complete, in his narms or anywhere else. I have too many unanswered questions to just let this go. (73)

Korobi's journey is that kind of journey which leads her from ignorance to knowledge. She faces tough circumstances in America being distant from everyone else without her genuine character; the principal misfortune she faces is at Kennedy airplane terminal where she was aching to get Mitra who should lift her up from the air terminal. She is separated from everyone else with none yet Mitra to get her, her lively self transforms into a keen one. When she doesn't discover Mitra on the airplane terminal for sixty minutes, she gets to be distinctly on edge on that outside

land withdrew from her well known individuals and landscape. In spite of confronting hardship, she is resolved and after that she has first experience of distinction amongst Indians and Americanized culture when she discovers Mitra being discourteous by not paying taxi passage, however she may have her monetary compels because of battle for survival.

Her journey to find her father makes her plunge all the unwanted burdens she used to carry as part of her personality of being completely Indian. Her attitude is neither western nor modern, but it is her ability in fixing her status in her family and at home. With the same consciousness of being independent and self, she proves that she alone has the right over her body and her identity. When she needed money she decides to sell her hair. She decides to sell it because she feels that she has the ultimate right on her body and herself. The decision of selling of hair makes her more liberated and confident. She confesses, "I feel light-headed, untethered. But once the money is in my hand I'm somewhat consoled. I now have enough for California. I have done it without having to beg anyone" (177).

While Korobi goes to meet Desai, the private detective, who will help her to find her father, Mitra accompanies her, not to protect her in this unknown part of the world, but to collect some news which can be instrumental in blackmailing the Bose family. When a man possibly a tramp, with shaven head and tattoos approaches her with hands outstretched, Mitra lets her stand alone. But Korobi is not the type of girl to act like a damsel in danger. She screams, "Go away! Stop harassing me!" (114). To reinforce her voice she claps her hands and it works. The man stops advancing and, Korobi's frightened self feels happy when she notices an appraising look in Mitra's face who says "I'm happy to have disappointed him" (114).

Korobi asks Vic to book a return ticket for her. She longs for her grandmother's love. She wants to bury her face in her grandmother's chest which carries the smell of her starched cotton sari. Korobi plans to return to Kolkata. Rajat feels very happy about her return. But Sarojini feels sad about her failure. After a search with the help of the detective Desai and his nephew Vic, she encounters obstacles, suffering, humiliation and disappointment. According to Korobi, her father must be a white American and a brilliant law student. But a disappointment awaits Korobi.

Korobi, somehow manages to track down her father. It is from her mother's roommate, Mrs.Anand, she comes to know that her father is Robin Lacey, a Black American. Upon meeting him she learns other facts about herself and her grandfather that leaves her shattered. Korobi is the illegitimate child of a mixed race parentage and that itself is enough to send her to a state of shock. She never expected this. Her mother cannot marry her African father because of a promise that she has made to her own father. Again, it was equally disturbing to learn that her grandfather has lied to Robin Lacey that both the mother and the child have died at birth. He proves it by showing him some fake death certificates. It is natural for Korobi to feel deceived and betrayed. She is now completely in dark about these things. It is quiet obvious how distraught she might be on gathering these facts. She says, "I'm speechless for a moment trying to find the words to describe the shock of discovering that my beloved grandfather had lied to me all life" (233).

No one forces Korobi to leave India, neither her external environment nor her marital reason. It was due to her own quest and to quench the thrust of her identity, she dislocates herself from India and Rajat, at least till she finds her own self. And therefore she, like all women characters of the author, becomes synonyms of

endurance, strength and determination. She was taken aback, her earth slided from her feet when she met her father and when she came to know that her mother and father has never got married. It was a question of her being illegitimate, which made her feel suffocating. Korobi shares all these matters to her grandmother through phone. She tells her grandmother that her father is a black. She says, "Grandma, I want you to sit down on the little stool by the telephone before I tell you. My father's not white. He's black" (224).

Korobi's father is African American who has curly hair. She gets Mr. Robin Lacey's phone number from Mr. Desai. Twice she punches the number and deletes it. She says that it is the most important call of her life. She gets some more information about Robin Lacey that is, he graduated from San Francisco, he got married and has three children. His wife also is African American who is a nurse at a local hospital and are active members in their church. Besides, they have good regard in the community. Once again she punches the number, and a deep raspy voice answers, "Rob Lacey here" (232). She replies that she is Korobi, Anu's daughter from Kolkata. There's a silence at the other end. Then he says that her daughter is dead. Korobi can't speak for a moment. She tries to find the right words to describe the shock of discovering that her beloved grandfather had lied to her all her life. He asks, "Trying to come up with a convincing story, are you?" (233).

Korobi is disappointed by the words of Lacey. In the midst of many problems she has come to America in search of her father's true identity. She doesn't want to ask anything else. She replies, "Go back to your wife and children and your comfortable job. You won't hear from me again. I've wasted enough of my life on you" (233).

Korobi disconnects the call. The ocean of deception roars in her head. She comes to know that her mother and father were not married. She is also shocked to hear this. She feels guilty. The truth about her African American heredity doesn't hurt her much, but the fact about the illegitimacy of her existence shakes her entire being. She is shattered but she gathers herself as she can't afford to spoil the treasured two days that she has planned to spend with her father. In an anguished outburst, Korobi throws her mobile away. Vic comes there on time to restore her mental stability. Soon, she goes back to the motel to continue her meeting with her father. She is so happy to meet her father and to taste the parental care. Korobi can give almost everything away to know that man whom her mother used to love so dearly. Moreover, she can also get to know many details about her mother whom she can never meet in her life. Korobi doesn't turn emotional. She needs only love, respect and trust. Any girl of her age would have cried her heart out and Korobi also does the same thing. She composes herself very quickly, without giving a vent. She says, "I'm furious with everyone my mother, my father, my grandfather" (246).

Korobi is named after the Oleander flower which is a beautiful but poisonous plant, and it is discovered that Korob's mother gave her the name because she wanted her daughter to be able to protect herself from predators. Oleander refers to the flower called 'Korobi' in Bengali. Korobi again expresses her confusion in front of her father why she has been named on poisonous flowers, which is hardly very popular. Korobi asked her father,

> "Did my mother ever tell you why she wanted to name me Korobi?"
>
> "Because the oleander was beautiful-but also tough. It knew how to protect itself from predators. Anu wanted that toughness for you because she didn't have enough of it herself." (253)

Korobi attempts to prove that she has her own identity and she alone has the ultimate right over her body, mind and her identity, when she badly crave for money, decides to sell her hair. The decision of selling of hair makes her more liberated and confident.

Korobi is shaken by the truth and she thinks that may be even her marriage could get affected after they come to know that she is an illegitimate child. Sill she decides to go to India and tell each one the truth. Korobi's decision to travel back shows her toughness. She physically leaves a land of possibilities but carries with her the independent streak and comes back much more confident, determined to fight back the challenges. She learns, "... to get to the other side, you must travel through grief" (276).

During her journey of search, she is attracted by Vic who is the only one who understands and supports her, it has been seen that Korobi had choice to stay back in America and she also loves the place by its all fascinations. "I'll have to make my new decision: Vic or Rajat, America or India" (218). It can be seen that how hard it is for Korobi to accept the newly found facts about her identity and it paves a way to a different aspect to the existence of life. On one hand she has been broken with the heartbreaking reality but at the same time she also dared to stand in fetching the true identity to her fragmented self. In the course of action of her search for identity in the foreign land the truth she faces is hard for her to believe. Values of India, faithfulness for would be husband and many other feelings about being Indian bring back Korobi to India. She returns to India as a better person who knows what is right for her, who knows how to resist temptations.

As Korobi is an illegitimate child, she knows that she has to face many problems from Rajat's family. She wants Rajat to be the first person to know the

truth. That is why she she does not talk about her father with Mrs. Bose. As a girl it is too difficult to live with these kind of problems. Mitra wants to take revenge on Bose family, so she uses Korobi as the vehicle of her revenge. And she faxed the news about Korobi's father who is a history Professor named Rob Lacey and adds that he is black. Mrs. Bose is very sad and thinks how her son will marry a girl of mixed blood, she cannot digest this news.

After seeing her father, Korobi comes back to Kolkata. She goes to Rajat's house. But Mrs. Bose hesitates to greet her wholeheartedly because of her father's identity. The way Mrs. Bose behaves and the words she speaks hurts Korobi very much. Rajat is very sick. She sees Rajat and returns home. Rob Lacey calls Korobi over phone every couple of days. After finding out how matters turn out with Rajat, he invites her to America to pursue her studies. Later Korobi reunited with Rajat.

At the end, Korobi experiences conversion by the circumstances and she does succeed in getting back her love freeing herself from the web of identity crisis being truly the beautiful Oleander that her mother wanted her to be. She realizes that one's own sense of identity is far greater than all social and cultural dogmas, she achieves sense of fulfillment. This can be the reason why Korobi didn't break down when she was deserted by Rajat and she returned his engagement rings with dignity. She accepts him at the end as and her heart senses freedom, without burden of identity dilemma, social pressures and she reads out poem written by her mother, "He who binds to himself a Joy Doth the winged life destroy; But he who kisses the Joy as it flies Lives in Eternity's sunrise" (288).

Thus Korobi finds her true identity. After discovering her father, she becomes very happy. She faces all problems well, which has come from Rajat's house. She reconciles with her mother-in-law. Finally, her marriage is arranged in a rich manner.

On the day of her wedding, she is a fully blown Oleander, beautiful but tough, ready to take challenges.

The search of her father which takes her to America, has transformed Korobi into a much stronger woman. When she begins the journey, she doesn't imagine the harsh facts that would turn her world upside down for a while. With gradual experience in a foreign land, far away from Kolkata, Korobi turns out to be a courageous woman who learns to make peace with her past, as well as with her future.

The protagonist takes her journey from India to America in order to search for her identity, most of the Diaspora characters face the problem of identity in the foreign land due to cultural differences. Here the question of identity arises due to the shocking discovery of Korobi's father's identity of not being Indian. Consequently, her own identity pauses a question. Her identity gets diluted due to her mother's migration, cultural as well as geographical. Having discovered a letter from her mother to her father, full of fancy but never sent, Korobi sets out on the quest to find her own father, ultimately her own self.

Identity crisis is experienced by Korobi due to patriarchal society and migration of her mother to other land. Korobi has passed through different stages to achieve a sense of fulfillment. Korobi has been shown to be conscious about herself like any other women characters in Devakaruni's fiction. The whole story revolves around Korobi's quest for identity.

Korobi takes the risk of leaving everything and moving to an unknown land in search of her identity and finally succeeded. In spite of knowing the hardships on the way, Korobi reluctantly shows her consciousness of self and she decides to give up all her comforts to find her identity. Somehow, the courageous daughter ultimately turns victorious in her quest for identity.

The exquisite symbols and the powerful allegory not only proves the novelist's mastery in narrative but adds more emphasis to the theme the author wishes to convey. The next chapter deals with the stylistic device that the author employs. It also analyses the significance of the title and Banerjee's unique manner of narration.

Chapter Four

Craftsmanship

> Narratives are the primary way in which we make sense of our lives, as opposed to, for example schema, cognition, beliefs, constructs. Definition of narrative include the important element of giving meaning to events and experiences over time by connecting them as a developing, continuing story. (Stedmon 18)

People are using the medium of writing to drive home good themes and morals to the public. Not all the books are getting the attention of the public, there are some tricks that are to be followed to get the attention of the public and response towards the work. Under the sky every profession has its own channel to reach its goal, and obtain their credits. Just like that even the writers have their own tool of style and techniques in the matter of transporting their thoughts and views to the readers through their works.

Style to a fiction writer is basically the way the writer writes, as opposed to what the writer writes about, it results from things like word, choice, tone and syntax. It's the voice the reader hears, when they read the author's work. Literary techniques are tools and methods that are part of the author's style to express and give more meaning to their writings. Just like character, plot, setting and theme are critical aspects of storytelling or novel writing, these are methods used by writers to give depth, subtley and express ideas by fabricating them in bunch of words that can convey many things just in few lines.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* deals with multiple premises and artistic techniques. She has employed various literary devices as symbolic title, allegory, various imageries and a mysterious plot for *Oleander Girl.* Chitra Banerjee

narrates the tale of the *Oleander Girl* with utmost fitness. She has been widely praised for her art of storytelling. The narrative has everything, a villain, a vamp, a mystery, a well kept dark secret, love, vengeance, an art gallery, an old traditional house with a temple, food and foliage, helplessness and resilience.

The novel *Oleander Girl*, tells the story of eighteen-year-old Korobi Roy who is thurst out of a sheltered Kolkata life into a courageous and troubled search, in the company of an attractive stranger, across post-9/11 America. It represents the post-9/11 tragedy. The post-9/11 period is the time after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, characterized by heightened suspicion of non-Americans in the United States, increased government efforts to address terrorism and a more aggressive American foreign policy. The people, who were living in America in the period of post-9/11, suffered a lot. Likewise, when Korobi passes through the post-9/11 America, she suffers in her life. Chitra Banerjee beautifully portrays the term post-9/11 in this novel.

The setting of *Oleander Girl*, its title, characters and narration all have been exquisitely represented. The title of *Oleander girl* has a profound meaning and it is a prevalent image throughout the novel. Even the young girl Korobi is named after the oleander flower in the Bengali Language. Oleander flowers are beautiful, but considered by many to be the most poisonous plant in the world. As interviewed by Debby De Rosa, Chitra Banerjee was asked about using this particular flower and its importance in the story, she replies;

> The oleander seemed to be the perfect symbol for the book on many levels. It is ambiguous, positive and negative, beautiful and dangerous and hardly capable of protecting itself. It is a central to the mystery of the protagonist Korobi's mother Anu, because Anu (dying at

childbirth) chooses to name her daughter after this complicated flower. A question that drives the novel is why Anu chooses to name her daughter Korobi after this flower, why not Rose or Jasmine or Lily, as is more common? It is also a flower that grows in both India and America, connecting the two worlds through which the novel and our protagonist travels.

The sudden death of Korobi's grandfather on her engagement night, followed by the shocking revelation that her father might still be alive, the eighteen-year-old girl goes from Kolkata to America on a quest and when Korobi's search has completed, she comes to know by her biological father why she was named Korobi which means oleander flower. She is confused why she has been named on poisonous flower, which is known by all, even her grandmother cannot know why Anu has given her the name. Korobi asks her father "Did my mother ever tell you why she wanted to name me Korobi" (253). Her father, Rob tells her the reason, "She did actually; because the oleander was beautiful but also tough. It knew how to protect itself from predators. Anu wanted that toughness for you because she didn't have enough of it herself" (253). Chitra Banerjee's art of using the symbol and revealing its significance at almost on end of the novel is worthwhile.

One thing which is very interesting and unusual about *Oleander Girl* is that about half of the book is told in first person with Korobi as the narrator, but then the other half is told in third person. This mixing of narrators, perspective and points of view makes the story interesting as the same event appears differently to different people.

In an interview, Chitra Banerjee was asked why she has multiple narrators in the novel: Korobi, Rajat, Sarojini and Asif and how challenging it was working

around different points of view, she replies that she was fascinated by multiple narrators. Many of her novels, such as *Sister of My Heart, Vine of Desire* and *One Amazing* Thing, have multiple narrators. This allows her to present the contradiction and ironies between how two or more characters understand the same event in their lives. This is certainly the case in *Oleander Girl,* for instance, Asif's take on the world is very different from that of his employer, Rajat. It is challenging for her to weave these different narratives into the text, but it's satisfying her.

Korobi gets a first person narrative as this is largely her story. The author gives the reason for giving the first person voice to Korobi. It is because she wants the reader to experience Korobi's emotions and bewilderment and conflicts close-up. Particularly, when she discovers a huge secret that her grandfather has kept from her all her life.

The other three characters, Rajat, Korobi's grandmother and Rajat's family Chauffeur all get a third person point of view. The intention is to show some distance, some irony, in their understanding of their situations. This technique of using multiple points of view edifies and helps the readers to draw art right inferences. Chitra Banerjee has been asked about Korobi's travels – her quest for truth and the trials she faced along the way which closely resembles that of the mythic hero. Chitra Banerjee has always been fascinated by myth and the timeless pull it has on the human psyche. In her point of view, much of the challenge and fun of dealing with myth structures is trying to figure out where to deviate from the contemporary concerns and questions, and that was an important part of writing *Oleander Girl.*

Another artful technique is using distinct places for the main situations in the plot. Place is an important fact in the story. The action of the story happens in India, New York, San Francisco and Boston, often at the same time. On top of that, Korobi

speaks to people from Arizona and Georgia in her quest. Locations are very important in the work. Particularly as in half the fictional world of the both it is night while in the other half it is day time. Thus communication between the characters becomes increasing difficult: it adds to the conflicts in the work and build up the tension of resolution.

Chitra Banerjee is an amazing story teller who leaves her readers in throes of surprises at unexpected turns. Till the end of the story, the narrative is tight, gripping and full of suspense. An exploration into human emotions, psyche, stigmas and changing social dogmas, the story also deals with life in America post-9/11. Like 9/11, there was another tragedy to unfold far away in India that would scare people cutting across social strata: Gujarat riots. The author delves into the relationship between man and woman, between masters and servants across generations, she tries to bring out the clash between the old and new traditions, capture the pace of the fast-changing Indian society, get a peek into some family secrets and divulge the meaning of love.

Chitra Banerjee's books are heavily influenced by the lives of women and the different ways in which they perceive the world. In all her novels, she portrays that women have been suffering throughout the novel. But they bravely face the problems and they win at last. Likewise, in the novel *Oleander Girl,* the heroine Korobi has a lot of problems in her life, but she boldly faces those problems and she wins at last.

Nowadays, writers use the flashback technique in their novels. In the novel *Oleander Girl,* Chitra Banerjee uses flashback technique very well. Through the flashback, Korobi has come to know her real identity. When Korobi's grandmother, Sarojini narrates the story about Anu, Korobi has a little idea about her mother. When she meets her father, Rob he tells her about Anu. He recollects the past memories and

tells to Korobi. From this she comes to know who her mother is. Thus the flashback technique plays a vital role in this novel.

In all her novels, Chitra Banerjee uses the directions East and West. In the letter, Anu mentioned that she and her husband were thinking of moving to the East coast of America because of a job opportunity. With this reference, Korobi successfully finds her father in the East Coast of America.

Oleander Girl is replete with various literary devices such as imagery and allegory, irony and proverbs. Imagery is a literary device. Here, Chitra Banerjee has used visual imagery, food imagery and nature imagery. Some examples of food imageries are when Korobi's engagement ceremony is about to be held and food is being prepared for their guests: "Luncheon smells rise from the kitchen-khichuri made with golden mung and gopalbhog rice from their ancestral village, sautéed brinjals, cabbage curry cooked with pure ghee cardamoms. Sarojini will have to supervise the fish fry" (7). Another illustration of food imagery is:

> Mughaliparaths from the corner shop. Kesto fries them so crisp. The bread fluffs up like this, and he puts eggs inside, green chilies and onions, extra if you ask. He'll even give spicy tomato sauce to eat it with. If you want, I can run and get you one. (125)

Food imagery along with Indian dishes with their Hindi names has been used extensively in the work. Hindi words are used repeatedly for instance karhai, dal, chapatti, khichuri, pau bhaji, chutney, chai, khadi, khandaani, goonda types, ma, chappals and a number of others.

There is extensive use of nature imagery in the novel. The work is enhanced by lyrical words as "A breeze blows through the neem tree, bringing me its clean, and therapeutic odour. A dragonfly made of shimmery gauze alights on bramble. Two

crows are building a nest in the crook of a branch, their movements an intricate, precise dance" (5). While Korobi was on the way with Vic to search her father, takes a look of surrounding.

> The road narrows; the ocean sends intermittent sapphire sparkles over the distance; the fog is draped across the tops of trees like fairy lace. When Vic turns of the engine, the silence, punctuated only by bird calls, is like nothing I've experienced before. (215)

Another fine and artistic use is that of allegory which is magically employed by the author. When Rajat is in India, far away from Korobi who is in America, he tries to compare his love and emotions with a tale in allegorical manner.

> He is reminded of an eerie tale out of his childhood, a prince and princess who were kept captive in an enchanted palace. The curse laid on them was that whenever one was awake, the other would be asleep. Although they fell in gazing at each other, they could never convey how they felt, nor understand what the other was going through. That story has a happy ending, thanks to pair of matchmaking genies. But where are genies that will travel the dusty distance that stretches between Rajat and Cara? (121)

Beside these, the story has a touch of magical realism as the ghost of Korobi's mother appears once and shows her that there is something beyond the ocean. This dream was initially tough for Korobi to perceive but finally she understands the meaning and sets out on the search for her father in post-9/11.

Robert Frost observes that "Style is that which indicates how the writer takes himself and what he is saying. It is the mind skating circles around itself as it moves forward" (101). Chitra Banerjee uses her own craft, technique, style, format and

structure, skillfully and innovatively. Her narrative voice is elegant, bitter sweet and gentle. Her novel talks of Indian culture, traditions, including food, clothes and customs.

Chitra Banerjee's fame builds on her art of storytelling which she maintains continuously and again and again praised by many authors. This chapter has thrown light on the various art and techniques used in *Oleander Girl*. Once again the author has created an artistic work of art, and she has amazingly narrated this novel. She has art of painting by words which captivate reader's attention. *Oleander Girl* is page turner and suspenseful story, she knows well how to reveal incidents artistically.

The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

This project deals with the search made by Korobi, the protagonist for her roots, implies literally as well as symbolically the quest for identity. Despite knowing the hard journey, Korobi decides to give up all comforts and even ready to sacrifice her love in order to find her identity. Though with hope of getting something better, chooses to walk in path of hardship and challenge and assimilate into the foreign land. Korobi has come out of all the hurdles with her identity at the end of the novel.

The Introduction deals with the growth and development of Indian novel in English literature with special reference to Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. She is widely acclaimed as a writer who has explored the hybrid identities in many of her works. Most of her works project the autobiographical stints which were used in her works in an aesthetic way. Her works mainly focus on an immigrant discourse based on India and travelling to many other countries especially America known for better opportunities and alluring life styles. Her writings also challenge the patriarchal command in the society. Men characters are replaced by the women characters in many of her novels. All her women characters are so powerful after realising their life. Literature is the mirror of society. Indian writing in English has a relatively short but highly charged history. In 1793, Sake Dean Mahomed wrote perhaps the first book in English, called *The Travels of Dean Mahomed.* However, most of the early Indian writing in English was non-fictional works, such as biographies and political essays. This began to change in the 1800s, when famous Indian authors who wrote mostly in their mother tongue, began to try their hand in English.

Women writers contribute a major segment on fiction of the contemporary Indian writing in English. Indian Women writing in English is being recognised as major contemporary current in English language Literature. The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated homemakers. This subject matter is often considered superficial compared to the depiction of the replaced and oppressed lives of women. Indian women writers have started questioning the prominent old patriarchal domination.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian English writer, whose novel is taken for study. Divakaruni is concerned more with women's issues and immigrant reality in her fictional narratives. Literary resistance in women's fiction seeks to interrogate gender assumptions, cultural paradigms and patriarchal values. Her novel *Oleander Girl* focuses on the journey of a girl in search of her roots who faces hardships in an alien country. It depicts her adventures in a foreign land, and the struggles of the protagonist with herself as well as with the outside world.

The second chapter holds mirror to the life of Korobi. The protagonist overcomes the constraints of the society in negotiating her position and role within the confines of patriarchy. Her mind and its wavering are excellently portrayed in the novel. The novelist has the penchant for exposing the womenfolk who desperately loves the liberty and at the same time, hesitant to go against the bondage. Korobi, the protagonist, comes from a traditional middle class Indian family that boasts of a rich cultural heritage. A young girl of eighteen, she has always been a conformist, happily abiding by the values of her family and society. Orphaned at birth, she has been brought up her grandparents. Her grandfather Bimal is always imposing his decisions and choices on his wife, daughter and granddaughter.

After the death of her grandfather, Sarojini reveals the truth that her father is still alive and is an American. Korobi is determined to find him out before solemnizing her marriage to Rajat Bose. So she undergones a hardship journey to find her father by moving beyond all the confines.

The third chapter summarises the protagonist's venturesome journey to the unknown country to find out her identity. The search for her roots implies literally as well as symbolically the quest for identity. Karobi is raised by her grandparents rendering her an identity as a grandchild of Bimal Roys in their village. She is offered over care and never allowed to ask anything about her parents. She finds a kind of darkness in her mind and feels complete isolation in her life. On one hand it is a search for an unknown father, a father who was supposed to be dead. Her identity remains fragmented without getting to know her father. On the other hand it is a feminist quest for self-actualisation. The protagonist's quest for her father brings the former in confrontation with certain reality that forces her to know herself better, in other words to attain self-knowledge. It gives her the opportunity to review her position in relation to her fiancé and her family. She realizes her potential to become an autonomous being capable of resisting the decisions and choices imposed on her by the society.

In America, Korobi, somehow manages to track down her father. It is from her mother's roommate, Mrs. Anand, she comes to know that her father is Robin Lacey, a Black American. Upon meeting him she learns other facts about herself and her grandfather that leaves her shattered. Korobi is the illegitimate child of a mixed race parentage and that itself is enough to send her to a state of shock. She never expected this.

Korobi is shaken by the truth and she thinks that may be even her marriage could get affected after they come to know that she is an illegitimate child. Sill she decides to go to India and tell each one the truth. Korobi's decision to travel back shows her toughness. She though physically leaves a land of possibilities but carries with her the independent streak and comes back much more confident, determined to fight back the challenges.This novel mainly centers in the feministic viewpoint of the central character of Karobi's journey to America at the tender age in search of her father. Her strong zeal with certitude has inspired her track down for her father. Though she faces physical violence and seductions, she brushed aside everything streaming only her vision. Consequently she finds her father. The American life and its culture develop her into a mighty woman. The picture of Karobi, Anu, Sarojini, Seema and Ms. Bose are very robust women by Chitra Banerjee Divakarunni. The Indian and American culture both spur her a lot. Karobi inherits the sense of belonging for her family from Indian legacy. She gets the empowerment and is ready to face the challenges that she learns from America. Therefore, she could find her identity.

The fourth chapter depicts Chitra Banerjee's writing style and also her usage of techniques in this novel.Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* deals with multiple premises and artistic techniques. She has employed various literary devices as symbolic title, allegory and various imageries and a mysterious plot for *Oleander Girl*. Chitra Banerjee narrates the tale of the *Oleander Girl* with utmost fitness. She has been widely praised for her art of storytelling. The narrative has everything, a villain, a vamp, a mystery, a well kept dark secret, love, vengeance, an art gallery, an old traditional house with a temple, food and foliage, helplessness and resilience.

The problem raised in Korobi's life and the way she manages, shows the brave nature of Korobi. It is also true that the position of women in the whole world is changing now. It becomes possible due to the awareness of women by various works of female writers. Korobi plays an important role in the novel. Finally she achieves her goal. It is only through resiliencse that one can change one's situation from despair to hope. The most important message conveyed in the novel comes through Korobi, is that of a long journey. Women, like Korobi have paved a path to prove their worth.

There is further scope for research in the untouched issues about identity and assimilation. This novel is a portrayal of Korobi's quest for identity and craftsmanship. Her startling journey thrust her into the most difficult decision of her life. Her courageous impulse and the sacrifice she made to find the meaning to her birth and identity and the struggles she encounters throughout the journey is very dramatically explained by deep picturesque writing and it unleashes the mystery and suspense of the novel.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*:

A Portrayal of Human Suffering

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

RABACCA S.

(REG. NO. 18APEN26)

PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*: A Portrayal of Human Suffering** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Rabacca S. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*: A Portrayal of Human Suffering** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Rabacca S.

Thoothukudi

Rabacca S.

October 2019

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PREFACE

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a celebrated nineteenth century American literary figure who had created numerous critically acclaimed novels and short stories. His writings were mostly Puritanical moral allegories set in New England. Element of Dark Romanticism, theme of inherent evil, moral dilemma and psychological complexity of human mind are explored in his works consistently.

The Marble Faun paints a surreal picture of guilt, love and responsibility when describing the adventures of three Americans and one Italian in the eternal city of Rome. Hawthorne's story takes many detours, describing in detail the Ancient Art and the beauty of the city.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the general characteristics of American Literature and the place of Nathaniel Hawthorne in the realm of American Literature, his life, works, awards, achievements and a brief explanation on the plot of the novel *The Marble Faun.*

Chapter two titled **A Narrative of Human Action** recounts how the story and the action of the novel revolves around the ideal of the golden age which is repeatedly juxtaposed with the reality of sin, sorrow, death and decay.

Chapter three **Art and Life** exposes how art and life are juxtaposed in such a way that art repeatedly reveals the hidden faces of both its creators and observers.

Chapter four **Narrative Strategies In The Marble Faun** focuses on the narrative techniques used by Hawthorne.

Chapter five, **Summation** sums up the key points discussed in the earlier chapters

The researcher has followed the guideline prescribed by MLA Handbook 7th Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Nathaniel Hawthorne was an American novelist and short story writer. His works have been labelled 'dark romanticism,' dominated as they are by cautionary tales suggest that guilt, sin, and evil are the most inherent natural qualities of humankind. His novels and stories, set in a past New England, are versions of historical fiction used as a vehicle to express themes of ancestral sin, guilt and retribution.

Although his natural inclination was to express himself through the short story form, he is best known for his novels, and particularly his most famous, *The Scarlet Letter*, a romance in an historical setting – puritan Boston, Massachusetts, in the 17th century. It is the story of the unfortunate Hester Prynne, who gives birth to a child as a result of an affair with a preacher, and struggles to create a new life of repentance. The novel explores the themes of sin, guilt and legalism. D.H. Lawrence wrote that there could be no more perfect work of the American imagination.

Hawthorne is ranked among the top American writers. He is admired by other writers, particularly, as a skilful craftsman with an admirable sense of form, which is highly architectural. The structure of his novels, *The Scarlet Letter* being a striking example, is so tightly integrated that it would be impossible to omit any paragraph without doing damage to the whole. The book's four characters are inextricably bound together in a complex situation that seems to be insoluble, and the tightly woven plot has a unity of action that rises slowly but inexorably to a highly dramatic climactic scene. In the short stories, too, there is that tight construction. Hawthorne is admired, too for the directness of his writing, and its clarity.

American literature is literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies (for specific discussions of poetry and theater, see Poetry of the United States and Theater in the United States). Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. The American literary tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English literature.

The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine among several others. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified his status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related.

With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. While leading the Transcendental Club in 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson pioneered the influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society and Unitarianism.

Novel, an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting. Within its broad

framework, the genre of the novel has encompassed an extensive range of types and styles: picaresque, epistolary, Gothic, romantic, realist, historical—to name only some of the more important ones.

The novel is a genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, representations of human life that instructs or diverts or both. The various forms that fiction may take are best seen less as a number of separate categories than as a continuum or, more accurately, a cline, with some such brief form as the anecdote at one end of the scale and the longest conceivable novel at the other. When any piece of fiction is long enough to constitute a whole book, as opposed to a mere part of a book, then it may be said to have achieved novel hood. But this state admits of its own quantitative categories, so that a relatively brief novel may be termed a novella (or, if the insubstantiality of the content matches its brevity, a novelette), and a very long novel may overflow the banks of a single volume and become a *roman-fleuve*, or river novel. Length is very much one of the dimensions of the genre.

The medieval chivalric romance (from a popular Latin word, probably *Romance*, meaning written in the vernacular, not in traditional Latin) restored a kind of epic view of man—though now as heroic Christian, not heroic pagan. At the same time, it bequeathed its name to the later genre of continental literature, the novel, which is known in French as *roman*, in Italian as *romanzo*, etc. (The English term romance, however, carries a pejorative connotation.) But that later genre achieved its first great flowering in Spain at the beginning of the 17th century in an antichivalric comic masterpiece—the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes, which, on a larger scale than the *Satyricon* or *The Golden Ass*, contains many of the elements that have been expected

from prose fiction ever since. Novels have heroes, but not in any classical or medieval sense.

The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, written in 1845.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery, isolation, and other important themes. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. Some of America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century include Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Edgar Allan Poe contributed to American literature by introducing darker themes and ideas, that would greatly influence later authors. Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The Portrait of a Lady*. At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passas wrote about the war. Ernest Hemingway became famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner became one of the greatest American writers with novels like *The Sound and*

the Fury. American poetry reached a peak after World War I with such writers as Wallace Stevens, T S Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and E E Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the mid-twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Henry Miller assumed a distinct place in American Literature in the 1930s when his semi-autobiographical novels were banned from the US. From the end of World War II until the early 1970s many popular works in modern American literature were produced, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Toni Morrison, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, writing in a distinctive lyrical prose style, published her controversial debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*, to critical acclaim in 1970. Coming on the heels of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, the novel, widely studied in American schools, includes an elaborate description of incestuous rape and explores the conventions of beauty established by a historically racist society, painting a portrait of a self-immolating black family in search of beauty in whiteness. Since then, Morrison has experimented with lyric fantasy, as in her two best-known later works, *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Beloved* (1987), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction; along these lines, critic Harold Bloom has drawn favorable comparisons to Virginia Woolf, and the Nobel "committee to "Faulkner and to the Latin American tradition [of magical realism]". *Beloved* was chosen in a 2006 survey

conducted by *The New York Times* as the most important work of fiction of the last 25 years.

Writing in a lyrical, flowing style that eschews excessive use of the comma and semicolon, recalling William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway in equal measure, Cormac McCarthy seizes on the literary traditions of several regions of the United States and includes multiple genres. He writes in the Southern Gothic aesthetic in his Faulknerian 1965 debut, *The Orchard Keeper*, and *Suttree* (1979); in the Epic Western tradition, with grotesquely drawn characters and symbolic narrative turns reminiscent of Melville, in *Blood Meridian* (1985), which Harold Bloom styled the greatest single book since Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying"*calling the character of Judge Holden "short of Moby Dick, the most monstrous apparition in all of American literature"; in a much more pastoral tone in his celebrated Border Trilogy (1992–98) of *bildungsromans*, including *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), winner of the National Book Award; and in the post-apocalyptic genre in the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Road* (2007). His novels are noted for achieving both commercial and critical success, several of his works having been adapted to film.

Don DeLillo, who rose to literary prominence with the publication of his 1985 novel, *White Noise*, a work broaching the subjects of death and consumerism and doubling as a piece of comic social criticism, began his writing career in 1971 with *Americana*. He is listed by Harold Bloom as being among the preeminent contemporary American writers, in the company of such figures as Philip Roth, Cormac McCarthy, and Thomas Pynchon. His 1997 novel *Underworld* chronicles American life through and immediately after the Cold War and is usually considered his masterpiece. It

was also the runner-up in a survey that asked writers to identify the most important work of fiction of the last 25 years. Among his other important novels are *Libra* (1988), *Mao II* (1991) and, *The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, also known by the British title *Transformation* was the last of the four major romances by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and was published in 1860. *The Marble Faun*, written on the eve of the American Civil War, is set in a fantastical Italy. The romance mixes elements of a fable, pastoral, gothic novel, and travel guide.

Though its exact parameters remain disputable, from the early 1990s to the present day the most salient literary movement has been postmodernism. Thomas Pynchon, a seminal practitioner of the form, drew in his work on modernist fixtures such as temporal distortion, unreliable narrators, and internal monologue and coupled them with distinctly postmodern techniques such as metafiction, ideogrammatic characterization, unrealistic names (Oedipa Maas, Benny Profane, etc.), plot elements and hyperbolic humor, deliberate use of anachronisms and archaisms, a strong focus on postcolonial themes of high and low culture. In 1973, he published *Gravity's Rainbow*, a leading work in this genre, which won the National Book Award and was unanimously nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction that year. His other major works include his debut, *V.* (1963), *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), *Mason & Dixon* (1997), and *Against the Day* (2006).

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 - 1864) was an American author who wrote eight novels and a number of short stories. He wrote four major novels: *The Scarlet Letter*(1850), *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). The most famous of these is *The Scarlet Letter*, which was one

of the first mass-produced books in America, and his first best seller. Most of his novels were set in New England and were considered part of the Romantic Movement, with a specific focus on dark or gothic romanticism. In 1837, the young Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) collected some of his stories as *Twice-Told Tales*, a volume rich in symbolism and occult incidents. Hawthorne went on to write full-length "romances", quasi-allegorical novels that explore the themes of guilt, pride, and emotional repression in New England. His masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, is a drama about a woman cast out of her community for committing adultery.

Hawthorne's fiction had a profound impact on his friend Herman Melville, who first made a name for himself by turning material from his seafaring days into exotic sea narrative novels. Inspired by Hawthorne's focus on allegories and psychology, Melville went on to write romances replete with philosophical speculation. In *Moby-Dick*, an adventurous whaling voyage becomes the vehicle for examining such themes as obsession, the nature of evil, and human struggle against the elements.

In the short novel *Billy Budd*, Melville dramatizes the conflicting claims of duty and compassion on board a ship in time of war. His more profound books sold poorly, and he had been long forgotten by the time of his death. He was rediscovered in the early 20th century. Anti-transcendental works from Melville, Hawthorne, and Poe all comprise the Dark Romanticism sub-genre of popular literature at this time.

American dramatic literature, by contrast, remained dependent on European models, although many playwrights did attempt to apply these forms to American topics and themes, such as immigrants, westward expansion, temperance, etc. At the same time, American playwrights created several long-lasting American character types, especially

the "Yankee", the "Negro" and the "Indian", exemplified by the characters of Jonathan, Sambo and Metamora. In addition, new dramatic forms were created in the Tom Shows, the showboat theater and the minstrel show. Among the best plays of the period are James Nelson Barker's *Superstition; or, the Fanatic Father*, Anna Cora Mowatt's *Fashion; or, Life in New York*, Nathaniel Bannister's *Putnam, the Iron Son of '76*, Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon; or, Life in Louisiana*, and Cornelius Mathews's *Witchcraft; or, the Martyrs of Salem*.

Hawthorne's major themes and thematic patterns include self-trust versus accommodation to authority; conventional versus unconventional gender roles; obsessiveness versus open-mindedness; hypocrisy versus candor; presumed guilt or innocence; forms of nurturance and destructiveness; the penalties of isolation; crimes against the human heart; patriarchal power; belief in fate or free will; belief in progress (including scientific, technological, social, and political progress) as opposed to nostalgia for the past; the truths available to the mind during dream and reverie; and the impossibility of earthly perfection.

Interestingly, and as an allusion to the Ancient classics, the concept of transformation was always a central theme of mythological writing and the production of art. That the character is named after one of the greatest artists of all time is just another allusion to this tradition.*The Scarlet Letter* achieved much critical acclaim for Hawthorne. His previously written short story "The Custom House" forms the prologue. His body of work contains three other major Romantic novels; *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Marble Faun* (1860).

After writing *The Blithedale Romance* in 1852, Hawthorne, who was then approaching fifty, was granted a political appointment as American Consul in Liverpool, England, which he held from 1853 to 1857. In 1858, Hawthorne and his wife Sophia Peabody moved the family to Italy and became tourists for a year and a half. In early 1858, Hawthorne was inspired to write his romance when he saw the Faun of Praxiteles in the Palazzo Nuovo of the Capitoline Museum in Rome.

Hawthorne began the manuscript and intended to complete it at home, The Wayside, in Concord, Massachusetts. Instead, he returned to England, where he remained until July 1860, and entirely rewrote the book. On October 10, 1859, he wrote to his American publisher James Thomas Fields that his wife enjoyed what she had read thus far and speaks of it very rapturously. If she liked the author less, I should feel much encouraged by her liking the Romance so much. I likewise (to confess the truth) admire it exceedingly, at intervals, but am liable to cold fits, during which I think it the most infernal nonsense. "Sophia wrote to her sister Elizabeth Peabody that her husband's reaction was typical: "As usual, he thinks the book good for nothing... He has regularly despised each one of his books immediately upon finishing it."

Hawthorne struggled with a title for his new book. He considered several, including *Monte Beni; or, The Faun: A Romance*, The Romance of a Faun, *Marble and Life; a Romance*, *Marble and Man; a Romance*, and *St.* Hilda's *Shrine*. The book was published simultaneously in America and England in late 1860; the title for the British edition was *Transformation: Or the Romance of Monte Beni*. The alternate title was chosen by the publishers and was used against Hawthorne's wishes. Both titles continue to be used today in the U.K. Encouraged to write a book long enough to fill three

volumes, Hawthorne included extended descriptions that critics found distracting or boring. Complaints about the ambiguous ending led Hawthorne to add a postscript to the second edition.

Historical issues include marketplace facts--for example, where Hawthorne's short stories first appeared (unsigned and low-paid), and which stories he chose to collect in *Twice-told Tales* and in later anthologies. Related issues include how each book was advertised, how well it sold, how much money Hawthorne earned for it, and how it was reviewed. Students should also know something about the whys and wherefores of Hawthorne's career options during and after college, of his undertaking literary hackwork and children's books, of his interlude at Brook Farm, of his appointments to the Boston Custom House, the Salem Custom House, and the Liverpool consulate, and of his efforts to win reinstatement at the Salem Custom House. Additional historical issues include Puritan versus Whig ideas about the self and the historical past; the political practices and social climate of Jacksonian democracy; and genteel assumptions about women's roles. Still other historical issues concern the particular place and period in which Hawthorne set each story.

The final novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne is often cited as his most interesting love story. He puts his characters into the city of Rome, the eternal city on a quest to discover the Ancient Arts. Throughout the novel, the characters are marveling at a range of artistic masterpieces. The marble statue of a faun becomes a central element and metaphor for the character of Donatello. The fact that all characters are somewhat connected to the art

world can be seen as a plot device to allow the metaphors of art and human psyche to flow more naturally.

The Marble Faun is a classic novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The book was published in 1860, and one of the major themes in the book is romance. It's set in Italy, and the focus is on Americans living in the country, such as Miriam, who is a painter whose past is never explained.

The 'fall of man' as depicted in Genesis in the Bible is also an important theme in the book, since the character Donatello, goes through a kind of fall from innocence when he kills a monk who is following around Miriam, Donatello's 'Eve'

This murder is a central event in the novel and Donatello has to deal with the guilt of it. This changes him, just like the sin committed by Adam in the Bible changes Adam and all of his children thereafter .

Hawthorne traveled to Italy in 1858 and stayed for a year and a half. During this time he detailed his experiences in his Italian Notebooks. He also produced a rough draft of *The Marble Faun*, which he completed when he returned to America. Reading his notebooks, it is obvious that Hawthorne experienced Italy not as a visitor attempting to immerse himself in the culture, but as a tourist. As Richard H. Brodhead notes in his introduction to a 1990 Penguin Books printing of *The Marble Faun*,

> Italy as he engaged it was, in fact, scarcely an affair of living Italian people. His company largely confined to other Americans abroad, Hawthorne met few Italians and made little effort to know their ways; and

> he showed virtually no responsiveness to Italy as another society with its own collective life, forging its own history in the present day (5)

This romance focuses on four main characters: Miriam, Hilda, Kenyon, and Donatello. Miriam is a beautiful painter with an unknown past. Throughout the novel, she is compared to many other women including Eve, Beatrice Cenci, Judith, and Cleopatra. Miriam is pursued by a mysterious, threatening man who is her "evil genius" through life. Hilda is an innocent copyist. She is compared to the Virgin Mary and the white dove. Her simple, unbendable moral principles can make her severe in spite of her tender heart. Miriam and Hilda are often contrasted.

Kenyon is a sculptor who represents rationalist humanism. He cherishes a romantic affection towards Hilda. Donatello, the Count of Monte Beni, is often compared to Adam and is in love with Miriam. Donatello amazingly resembles the marble Faun of Praxiteles, and the novel plays with the characters' belief that the Count may be a descendant of the antique Faun. Hawthorne, however, withholds a definite statement even in the novel's concluding chapters and postscript.

Connected to the theme before, the character of Hilda is the epitome of innocence lost. She witnesses the crime and is henceforth plagued by the visions that are in such a stark contrast to her Puritan upbringing that she cannot get rid of them. She is unable to keep it a secret but also unable to betray her friends. In her desperation she turns to the Catholic Church and later to marriage. In her connection to Kenyan she finally finds some of her mental stability again. However, the innocence of a Puritan lady is forever lost.

The theme of transformation is even a central concept in the original title of the book, "The transformation of the Faun". Nathaniel Hawthorne plays with the metaphor of a faun, a creature of Ancient mythology that is the embodiment of carelessness and mischievousness. The character of Donatello is described as a human that has similar attributes and is even physically similar to a marble statue of a faun. The transformation, hinted at in the title, takes place after the climax of the novel. The flirtatious Donatello is transformed into a pile of human misery, riddled by guilt over his fatal decision. The study will be a narrative of human actions depicting various emotions replicated in the characters of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*.

Chapter Two

A Narrative of Human Actions

Written after a long gap of eight years, *The Marble Faun* is the last of Hawthorne's completed romances. It is portrayed as an apt conclusion to the literary endeavour which began with *The Scarlet Letter*. In very many ways this romance is different from the other three. Set in Italy rather than the US, it has a dense texture, with symbols and metaphors swamping the narrative with meanings, suggestions and associations. As Leon Chai puts it: "By the time Hawthorne came to write *The Marble Faun* he had come to experience first the splendours of the European artistic heritage in paintings and sculptures. That experience was recorded at length in his French and Italian notebooks, could then act as a shaping influence. Critics have, at times, found the book contradictory and confused . But if we focus on the self-conscious dimension we will see that it has, what Bay calls, a "driving unity" that assimilates issues, ideas and concerns that pre-occupied Hawthorne all his life.

*The Marble Faun*paints a surreal picture of guilt, love and responsibility when describing the adventures of three Americans and one Italian in the eternal city of Rome. The book starts by introducing the characters. The first is Kenyon, an American sculptor who comes to Rome to study the Ancients. In his footsteps are Hilda and Miriam, two art students with different backgrounds. Finally, the Italian count Donatello, a friend of the group is introduced. The Italian is compared to the statue of a Faun by Praxiteles, alluding to his lack of conscience and general ease of mind.

Hawthorne's story takes many detours, describing in detail Ancient Art and the beauty of the city. Miriam, the passionate and exotic woman from New England has a chance encounter with a stranger in the catacombs. From this point onward, the stranger stalks her through the city, never far behind.

During a nighttime excursion to the Capitoline Hill, the stranger approaches her. Donatello, madly obsessed with Miriam by this point cannot take this and murders the man in cold blood. This act takes changes Donatello, transforming him into a man riddled with guilt and remorse. The innocent Hilda, originally from a Puritan background, has witnessed the act and is crushed by the secret. In her desperation, she decides to confess to the Catholic Church.

The book ends when Donatello can finally no longer take his guilt and gives himself up to justice. Hilda, deeply affected by what she has seen, agrees to marry Kenyon. Miriam, the one truly affected, becomes deeply depressed and disappears.

In *The Marble Faun* the ideal of the golden age is repeatedly juxtaposed with the reality of sin, sorrow, death and decay, and the action of the novel once again revolves around the efforts of the characters to come to terms with the reality of the fallen world. The statues in the Sculpture Gallery in the Capital of Rome, where we first meet the major characters of the book, are described as "shining in the undiminished majesty and beauty of their ideal life, although the marble that embodies them is yellow with time, and perhaps corroded." (3) The contrast between the shining beauty and the yellow marble is further emphasized in Hawthorne's description of the statue of the Faun.

> ... all the pleasantness of sylvan life, all the genial and happy characteristics of the creature that dwell in woods and fields, will seem to be mingled and kneaded into one substance, along with the kindred qualities in the human soul. Trees, grass, flowers, woodland streamlets, cattle, deer and unsophisticated man. The essence of all these was compressed long ago, and still exists, within that discoloured marble surface of the Faun of Praxiteles. (4)

Donatello, the Marble Faun, "

"miraculously softened into flesh and blood"(5) in the course of the novel, has to come to terms with the reality signaled by the discoloured stone. In the Borghese gardens, Donatello is shown in his original state. Being a representative of the golden age, he is at one with nature. But the impossibility and infeasibility of the simple, direct and joyous relationship with nature in the present is indicated by the numerous references to falseness, imitation and death that the chapter contains. The final charm of the garden is bestowed by Malaria.

> For if you come hither in summer, and stray through these glades in the golden sunset, fever walks arm in arm with you, and death awaits you at the end of the dim vista. Thus the scene is like Eden in its loveliness; like Eden, too, in the fatal spell that removes it beyond the scope of man's actual possession. (6)

Later, Miriam and Donatello sport together until they seem to be creatures of " ... the Golden age, before mankind was burdened with sin and sorrow, and before pleasure

had been darkened with those shadows that bring it into high relief, and make it happiness."(7)? But the Sylvan Dance too is annihilated by a strange figure that shook its fantastic garments in the air and pranced before them. It was the Model. The immediate result of his dance is that the spell which Donatello had cast earlier is broken, and what was Golden age and Arcadia once again becomes the old tract of pleasure ground;

> ... a tract where the crimes and calamities of ages, the many battles, blood recklessly poured out, and deaths of myriad's, have corrupted all the soil, creating an influence that makes the air deadly to human beings."(8)

In *The Marble Faun*, Rome stands for the oppressive weight of history, and its capacity to pass on sin from one generation to the next. 9 Thus in the '" descriptions of the city during the long night walk which leads to the central crime in the book, the Model is deliberately associated with every historical sight.

In his presentation of Donatello's lost gift of speech with the animals, Hawthorne once again contrasts the ideal of the Golden age with the reality of the fallen world. In the fountain in grove at Monte Beni, Donatello is almost able to recapture his lost language:

> The sound was of a murmurous character, soft, attractive, persuasive, friendly. The sculptor fancied that such might have been the original voice and utterance of the! natural man, before the sophistication of the human intellect formed what we now call language. (10)

However, the only creature that responds to Donatello's voice is a .brown lizard, a venomous reptile, and Donatello is left sobbing, "Death! Death! They knew it." (11)

The repeated juxtaposition of the ideals of Golden age with death and decay serve to emphasize what from the very beginning had been the central thematic movement of the book -a cancellation of the Golden age for which is substituted the reality of sin and death. The Arcadia is replaced by the chasm, that pit of blackness that swallows up all human positives- all the heroes, the statesmen, the poets, and human history. In the course of the novel, each character in his own way has to come to terms with this reality.

The accidental encounter with the Model in the catacomb serves to drive home the point that the issue of sin cannot be avoided. By making the act that connects Miriam with the Model precede the action of the novel, and by deliberately leaving it ambiguous, Hawthorne is able to use the Miriam - Model connection to raise the issue of sin in general rather than particular terms. Though we have no knowledge of the specific act that unites Miriam with the Model, It is not known that it was a crime of some sort and that it constitutes a fatal entanglement of both. The repeated reference to Cenci story hints at both incest and murder.

The Model is both a flesh and blood character, as well as an unreal apparition. His career as an artist model seems to go back to ancient times so that we recognize his image in artistic works produced over centuries. He is also projected as the demon who haunts the underworld of the catacombs, once again appearing in different ages. In his latest avatar he appears as the Capuchin, embodying corrupt patriarchy.

Donatello's eventual murder of the Model, triggered by a mere look of Miriam's shadowy re-enactment of some original crime associated with Miriam, and it suggests the same structural techniques as *The Scarlet Letter* in which the forest scene re-enacts the adultery, and *The House of the Seven Gables* in which Holgrave almost repeats Matthew

Maule's crime against Alice. As in the earlier novels, the re-enactment of a past crime, reveals the inadequacy of the attitudes of the various characters to the reality of the original crime.

Not just Donatello, but Miriam, Kenyon and Hilda all have to suffer the consequences, and all of them have to cope with what in Hawthorne is always the central dramatic motif- facing up to the reality of universal sin and discovering, if possible, the way of sympathy. In this, the characters and the novel become emblematic of Americans and America. Also they begin to represent all of humanity which too has failed to come to terms with the reality of the original fall.

In *The Marble Faun* the murder of the Model foregrounds the problem of universal sin.

> It is a terrible thought that an individual wrong- doing melts into the great mass of human crime, and makes us - who dreamed only of our own little separate sins--guilty of the whole. And thus, Miriam and her lover were not an insulated pair, but members of the innumerable confraternity of guilty ones, all shuddering at each other. (16)

And as Hilda later discovers, it is immaterial who is guilty and who is innocent; both suffer equally.

> It is very dreadful. Ah! now I understand how the sin of generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow. While there is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his

> innocence tortured by that guilt. Your deed, Miriam, has darkened the whole sky. (17)

In *The Marble Faun* the re-enactment of the earlier crime, and the ensuing response shows that the various characters need to recognize and cope with the problem of universal sin. Therefore, after the crime, all the four characters change and grow. Miriam, who is very much in the tradition of Hawthorne's "dark ladies" to begin with is, shown to be full of pride, anger and hatred directed against men. But afterwards, she becomes meek and humble. So such so, that Kenyon could not but marvel:

> ...at the subjection into which this proud and self-dependent woman had wilfully flung herself, hanging her life upon the chance of angry or favourable regard from a person who, little while before, had seemed the plaything of a moment. (18)

After the crime, the amoral Donatello, the natural man, begins to acquire a spiritual consciousness. While Kenyon, a young American artist like Holgrave and Coverdale grows by learning to truly sympathize with the plight of the sinners. Hilda, embodying the notion of purity at the heart of domestic ideal, also changes after witnessing the murder. She not only loses her unrealistic moral severity but also learns to, love Kenyon. At the very end, the novel poses the paradox of the fortunate faun.

There rises a debate about how sin can actually work for the betterment of humanity. Miriam asks;

> Was the crime in which he and I were wedded was it a blessing, in that strange disguise? Was it means of education, bringing a simple and

> imperfect nature to a point of feeling and intelligence which it could have reached under no other discipline... The story of the fall of man! Is it not repeated in our romance of Monte Beni--and may we follow the analogy yet further? Was that very sin--into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race--was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter and profounder happiness than our lost birthright gave? Will not this idea account for the permitted existence of sin, as no other theory can? (20)

Hawthorne's understanding of universal sin is, in very many ways, similar to that of Dostoyevsky in the Brothers Karamazov. As individuals people live in an organic whole much bigger than themselves, in which everything is connected with everything else. Each item of what they call reality is necessarily shaped by all that have preceded it and in tum shapes all that succeeds it. This reception and transmission is an ongoing, continuous dynamic process - a transition of energy and identity drawn into the interiority of each existing thing. Relationships in this sense are constitutive of existence. All things are woven together and evil anywhere is mediated everywhere through the relational structure of existence.

In this context, obviously those things most closely related to ourselves in the vast scheme of things exercise a definitive impact on who we are and how we are -hence the solidarity of the human race. Through the organic solidarity of the race, however, we are all affected by all the sins of others, and our own sins likewise have an effect upon all others. In the short run this might seem like a great drawback, but in the long run, Hawthorne would argue, it is the phenomenon of the solidarity of the race, that can lead

to the recognition of our connectedness to all others through subjective, compassionate sympathy, enabling us to transcend the viscous cycle of universal of sin.

In *The Marble Faun* art and life are juxtaposed in such a way that art repeatedly reveals the hidden faces of both its creators and observers. Donatello is seen as an incarnation of the statue of the Marble Faun. Later, his murderous self is revealed through the idle working of clay in Kenyon's hand, and his spiritual growth is reflected by the incomplete marble bust. Both Hilda and Miriam appear as subjects of paintings and both are seen to resemble Guido's portrait of Beatrice Cenci. The Model appears in Miriam's paintings and also in Guido's painting as the Devil. Kenyon is revealed through his sculptures and also through the broken up statue he discovers in the end. The novel itself goes on to self-consciously reflect Hawthorne's view of art. Hawthorne uses this aspect of art to re-examine the theories of expressive and mimetic art in light of his concept of universal sin, and also to question the value of much that passes for great art.

In *The Marble Faun,* painting is presented as an expressive art form while sculpture is seen in mimetic terms. All through the book, the two art forms are compared and contrasted. When Miriam visits Kenyon's studio, she compares her own art form which according to her is "too nervous, too passionate and too full of agitation" with that of Kenyon's who is calm and cool. She goes on to say, "sculptors are, of necessity, the greatest plagiarists in the world." (23) Kenyon does not agree with her but cannot contradict her either.

The several separate stages of production of works in both the arts are described in detail to bring out the expressive and mimetic features of each. In her studio, Miriam explains to Donatello how the expressive artist works.

> "We artists purposely exclude sunshine, and all but a partial light, because we think it necessary to put ourselves at odds with nature before trying to imitate her. That strikes you very strangely, does it not? But we make pretty pictures sometimes with our artfully arranged light and shadow." (24)

The significance of the sketches in expressive art is highlighted later in the chapter· "The Aesthetic Company". The sketches are valuable because they reflect, more accurately than even the finished painting, the mind of the artist at the creative pitch.

> But this hasty rudeness made the sketches only the more valuable because the artist seemed to have bestirred himself at the pinch of the moment, snatching up whatever material was nearest, so as to seize the first glimpse of an idea that might vanish in the twinkling of an eye. Thus by the spell of a creased, sliced and discoloured scrap of paper, you were enabled to steal close to an old master, and watch him in the very effervescence of his genius. (25)

As it is shown that Hawthorne's romances play with light effects repeatedly seek to self-consciously present to the reader not just the tale, but also the creation of the tale so that we too are able to see a romance writer at work. Miriam's sketches also reveal her personality. She shows Donatello two sets of sketches and both reveal aspects of her

personality. One set of sketches show images of common life, but in the other set of sketches there is the idea of woman "acting, the part of a revengeful mischief towards man". Miriam explains to Donatello that they are "ugly phantoms that stole out of my mind; not things I created, but things that haunt me." (26)

Because she is an expressive artist and because she has had experience of sin, it is Miriam who pinpoints the central problem with all expressive artists, including Hawthorne's face. Since the world is sinful, individual artist, need to first of all confront the issue of its ever-present reality without any shade of falsification or the cushion of escapism. Given the inevitable presence of negative realities in themselves, and in their world, when the expressive artists create, they have to cope with the deepest of anxieties for they can never take it for granted that their art will reinforce the principle of goodness, and not end up celebrating or enacting the triumph of evil.

Miriam criticizes Guido's painting of Michael destroying the devil precisely because it does not capture this particular fear and anxiety of the artist, the risk that he needs to take when he attempts to create:

> . . . with what half-scornful delicacy he sets his pretty sandalled foot on the head of his prostrate foe! But, is it thus that virtue looks the moment after its death struggle with evil? No, no, I could have told Guido better ... the battle never was such a child's play as Guido's dapper Archangel seems to have found it. (27)

She goes on to say that if she were to paint the painting she would have done it differently:

> The picture would have its share of truth I assure you,... but I am sadly afraid the victory would fall on the wrong side. Just fancy a smoke blackened, fiery eyed demon, bestriding that nice young angel, clutching his white throat with one of his hinder claws; and giving a triumphant whisk of his scaly tail, with poisonous dart at the end of it. That is what they risk, poor souls, who do battle with Michael's enemy. (28)

The stages of production of sculpture emphasize its essentially mimetic nature. First come some hastily drawn figures on the white wash of the walls. Next, there are roughly modeled figures in clay or plaster. Then there is the exquisitely designed shape of clay from which the plaster cast is made and is then transformed into a statue in marble. The essentially mimetic and mechanical nature of art is emphasized by the fact the final product is created not by the artist but by skilled craftsmen.

The problem with mimetic art is that art objects begin to replace life, breeding coldness and lack of sympathy in the artist. Thus Kenyon, when he falls in love with Hilda, sculpts her hands. "The sculptor sighed as he put away the treasure of Hilda' s marble hand into the ivory coffer, ...He dared not even kiss the image that he himself had made: it had assumed its share of Hilda's remote and shy divinity." (29)

The inhumanity and the falsification inherent in this attitude becomes apparent when Kenyon is faced with the issues of sin in real life. While sculpting the statue of Cleopatra, he has, as Miriam points out, seen far into womanhood, but when it comes to

helping out a real, suffering woman, he is found wanting. When Miriam wants to tell him about her troubles he is reserved and alarmed and Miriam tells him, "You are cold and pitiless as your own marble ... As for my griefs, I know how to manage them. It was all a mistake. You can do nothing for me unless you petrify me into a marble Companion for your Cleopatra there."(30)

Significantly, Kenyon's growth as a sympathetic character is illustrated in the scene when he finds the broken up statue of the goddess Venus. As Kenyon himself puts it: "What a discovery is here! I seek for Hilda and find a marble woman." (31) It was a discovery which made the world richer than it was, by something far more precious than gold. But Kenyon, who had been guilty of replacing life with art, has outgrown the weakness since then. After discovering the statue, Kenyon:

> . . . strove to feel at least a portion of the interest which the event would have inspired in him a little while before. But, in reality, he found it difficult to fix his mind upon the subject. He could hardly, we fear, be reckoned a consummate artist, because there was something dearer to him than his art; and, by the greater strength of human affection, the divine statue seemed to fall asunder again, and become only a heap of worthless fragments. (32)

Through Kenyon's growth as an artist, Hawthorne once against confronts what has been an ongoing theme in his romances - the issue of Eros, inhuman affairs as also in art. Kenyon, to begin with, believes in the Victorian ideal of art as the culmination of the artistic progress through the centuries. His encounter with classical art, however, plunges

him into confusion and depression for the artist in him recognizes the superior greatness of ancient sculpture.

As Nina Baym points out, his dilemma at this point is severe, "for the classic art is great in proportion to its possession of just those qualities that Victorian art prides itself on having left behind. Classical art is an undisguised, though brilliantly controlled expression of Eros, shamelessly and freely passionate, exulting in the flesh. It is 'ideal' in a sense directly opposite to Victorian art. The latter 'idealizes' the body by reluctantly employing it to represent an abstract idea while classical art makes the body ideal because it sees virtue and beauty in the flesh." (33) Kenyon's Cleopatra sculpture records his development as an artist. Not only is he able to capture life in stone, but, more important, he is able to celebrate Cleopatra's erotic nature.

However, it is when Kenyon begins working on Donatello's bust that Kenyon confronts a typically Hawthornian problem. Since mimetic artist is committed to a one to one representation, he finds it almost impossible to record the process of spiritual growth.

> He had never undertaken a portrait bust which gave him so much trouble as Donatello... he was chiefly perplexed how to make this genial and kind type of countenance the index of the mind within. His acuteness and his sympathies, indeed, were both somewhat at fault in their efforts to enlighten him as to the moral phase through which the Count was now passing. (34)

It is only by accident that the bust eventually succeeds in reflecting the growing moral power of Donatello. As Hilda points out;

> . . . . Forgive me, but I question whether this striking affect was brought about by any skill or purpose on the sculptor's part. Is it not perhaps, the chance result of the bust being just so far shaped out in the marble, as the process of moral growth had advanced in the original? (35)

Paradoxically, the success shows up the limitation of mimetic art for the effect could never have been captured in the finished statue.

Hawthorne's concept of Romance is grounded in a similar critique of realistic representation. Hilda is portrayed as someone who has the gift of discerning and worshipping excellence in a most unusual measure. She admires the worth of the mighty old masters to such an extent that she gives up painting herself and becomes a copyist:

> Reverencing these wonderful men so deeply, she was grateful for all they bestowed upon her, too loyal and too humble, in their awful presence, to think of enrolling herself in their society. Beholding the miracles of beauty which they had achieved, the world seemed already rich enough in original designs, and nothing more was so desirable as to diffuse those self- same beauties more widely among mankind. (36)

Hilda is also shown to be the ideal spectator of art:

> No other person, it is probable, recognized so adequately, and enjoyed with such deep delight, the pictorial wonders that were here displayed. She saw--no, not saw, but felt - through and through - a picture; she bestowed upon it all the warmth and richness of a woman's sympathy; not by any intellectual effort, but by 'this strength of heart, and by this guiding light

> of sympathy, she went straight to the central point, in which the master had conceived his work. (38)

The accuracy of Hilda's eyes is related to the accuracy of her moral perception. She is equated with doves all through the novel, and has to keep Virgin's lamp alight. After her inevitable encounter with sin, her moral stand point and aesthetic vision are both seen to be inadequate. After witnessing the murder of the Model, Hilda not only loses the gifted simplicity of vision, but also loses her enjoyment of art. "For the first time in her life, Hilda now grew acquainted with that icy demon of weariness who haunts great picture galleries." (39) Hawthorne uses Hilda's disillusionment to pinpoint the limitation of most great art in face of sin:

> The love of art ... if art had not strayed away from its legitimate paths and aims, it ought to soften and sweeten the lives of worshippers ... But, of its own potency, it has no such effect, and it fails, likewise, in the other test of its moral value which poor Hilda was now involuntarily trying upon it. It cannot comfort the heart in affliction, it grows dim when the shadow is upon us. (40)

The narrator himself goes on to give the reason why modem art had failed Hilda. "How indeed should she have found such? How could holiness be revealed to the artist of an age when the greatest of them put genius and imagination in the place of spiritual insight, and when from Pope, downward, all Christendom was corrupt."(42)

The works which are offered as exception to this general failure in art give a clue to the kind of ideal of art that Hawthorne is upholding. There is Fra Angelico's painting of the Angel. Perugino's painting of Virgin, and Sodoma's painting of Christ bound to a

pillar. All these paintings are inspired by sincere feeling which borders on the religious aspect:

> Fra Angelico ... must have breathed a humble aspiration between every two touches of his brush in order to make the finished picture such a visible prayer as we behold it. ..

"Perguino was evidently a devout man... " and Sodoma ,"beyond a question both prayed and wept while painting his fresco." It is this deep religious feeling which helps these painters to make the kind of paintings that "may still help a struggling heart to pray." (43)

Of all these paintings, it is only Sodoma's painting that is discussed in detail. In this picture, Christ is depicted as worn out, tired, exhausted and utterly lonely. But despite all this, the son of God remains divine. By presenting Christ's Divinity, Sodoma has shown that it is possible to conceptualize and create the image of the highest good even in the midst of most intense suffering. This, as Hawthorne says, cannot but inspire the suffering humanity. In short, the ideal artist in Hawthorne is to be inspired neither by imagination, nor by empiricism, but by sympathy - an almost religious feeling which will enable him to recognize and depict the suffering and guilt of humanity without losing sight of that which is good and just. And when it is able to achieve this effect, then like Sodoma's painting, it is able to reconcile "the incongruity of Divine omnipotence and outraged suffering humanity." The hallowed picture shows that art at its best performs the same function as the "most eloquent words of the preacher and the prophet" for it brings the "deeper mysteries of Revelation closer to man's heart." (44)

Hawthorne's praise of Sodoma's painting of Christ on the cross helps us to understand that in the final analysis Hawthorne's ideal of sympathy is secularization and humanization of the message contained in Christ's sacrifice for fallen humanity for on the cross Christ identifies with all sin and sinners and is therefore able to redeem all sinners from sin. In the Hawthornian version sympathy also brings about a feeling of oneness with others which can then empower action towards inclusive well-being.

Chapter Three

Art and Life

In *The Marble Faun* art and life are juxtaposed in such a way that art repeatedly reveals the hidden faces of both its creators and observers. Donatello is seen as an incarnation of the statue of the Marble Faun. Later, his murderous self is revealed through the idle working of clay in Kenyon's hand, and his spiritual growth is reflected by the incomplete marble bust. Both Hilda and Miriam appear as subjects of paintings and both are seen to resemble Guido's portrait of Beatrice Cenci. The Model appears in Miriam's paintings and also in Guido's painting as the Devil. Kenyon is revealed through his sculptures and also through the broken up statue he discovers in the end. The novel itself goes on to self-consciously reflect Hawthorne's view of art. Hawthorne uses this aspect of art to re-examine the theories of expressive and mimetic art in light of his concept of universal sin, and also to question the value of much that passes for great art.

In The Marble Faun, Nathaniel Hawthorne examines two of the problems that interested its author late in his career: the complications of living abroad and the possible benefits of human suffering. Considered by some to be less successful than his earlier works, the novel nevertheless offers a unique picture of the effects of a foreign culture upon American lives and values. Hawthorne wrote the story while he, his wife, and children lived in Rome for over a year. Hawthorne was in his mid-fifties, at the height of his fame, but also spent—he had not written a novel in nearly seven years. *The Marble Faun* was his final effort, a tremendous reflection on what it means to be an American who refuses either to cut himself off from the rest of his civilization, or to bow to it; what

it means to be a person aware of sin, and longing for forgiveness; what it means to be a creator of beauty, but a creator who is aware that the power of the human artist encourages a terrible pride which can pit him against both nature and history, but more profoundly, the Creator of Nature and the Artist of history. There is mystery, murder, love, cruelty, retribution, and forgiveness—the full sweep of human experience.

The story follows the movements of a group of artists living in Rome in the 1850's. Miriam, a beautiful painter with a mysterious background, is haunted by a strange man from her past. In a moment of passion she allows Donatello, her Italian suitor, to murder the stranger by throwing him from the cliff once known as the Traitor's Leap. From this point Hawthorne's interest in the ability of guilt to bring about changes in identity guides the novel. Donatello, happy but shallow before the murder, soon develops a more profound understanding of human nature through the sympathy created by his feelings of remorse. His relationship with Miriam also deepens, though his shame at their mutual secret soon drives him into isolation at his family home in Tuscany. There Donatello finds himself unable to appreciate the natural beauty he loved as a boy. Having gained wisdom and experience, he has lost his youth and innocence. Donatello is guided through this difficult period by Kenyon, an American sculptor who acts as observer and partial spokesman for Hawthorne. Not only does Kenyon express many of his creator's ideas about Italian art and architecture but also he speculates about the effects of Italian life and culture on uprooted New Englanders such as Hilda, a young copyist he secretly loves.

When his fidelity to Miriam leads Donatello to murder this monk, an act witnessed by Hilda, the heroes enter a realm of paranoia and guilt. Hilda breaks her close,

almost sororal relation to Miriam, while Donatello retreats to his ancestral tower in the countryside, and Kenyon goes to visit him there. In the countryside, we learn that local lore tells of Donatello's descent from "[a] sylvan creature, native among the woods" who "had loved a mortal maiden"—that he in fact may be, rather than merely representing, a kind of pastoral atavism to a human life in harmony with nature. Yet Kenyon finds that Donatello's crime has transformed him from innocence to experience, has deepened and enriched his character. The resolution of the plot is ambiguous—so much so that Hawthorne was forced by early reader outrage to add an exasperatedly explanatory postscript—but the upshot is that Miriam and Donatello accept responsibility for their sin, and Kenyon and Hilda return, sadder but wiser, to an America where history impinges less on the individual and where Puritanism's moral simplicity dissolves the decadent corruptions of old Europe, with its priests and aristocrats and freight of cultural history.

On the moral of the story, Hilda and Kenyon differ. The fair, sensitive Hilda as opposed to the dark and authoritative Miriam is the customary heroine of Anglo-American domestic fiction going back at least to Rose's displacement of Flora (another fair/sensitive vs. dark/authoritative pair) in Scott's *Waverley* (1814). At first, Hilda seems as if she will serve as some other, newer archetype: an incipient New Woman or Woolfean female genius having her vision.

She demonstrates an attraction to Catholicism throughout the novel, even living in a dove-circled tower where she maintains a traditional shrine to the Virgin Mary; moreover, her single life as an artist in Rome moves the narrator to reflect on social changes portended by what was not yet called feminism.

This young American girl was an example of the freedom of life which it is possible for a female artist to enjoy at Rome. She dwelt in her tower, as free to descend into the corrupted atmosphere of the city beneath, as one of her companion doves to fly downward into the street;—all alone, perfectly independent, under her own sole guardianship, unless watched over by the Virgin, whose shrine she tended; doing what she liked without a suspicion or a shadow upon the snowy whiteness of her fame. The customs of artist life bestow such liberty upon the sex, which is elsewhere restricted within so much narrower limits; and it is perhaps an indication that, whenever we admit women to a wider scope of pursuits and professions, we must also remove the shackles of our present conventional rules, which would then become an insufferable restraint on either maid or wife.

And she is an artistic genius of a type: a brilliant copyist. In an era before painting's easy mechanical reproduction, she reproduces spiritual progeny, so deeply sympathizing with the works of the Old Masters that she is able to transmit their essences through her own hand. Yet this is a feminized genius:

Hilda's faculty of genuine admiration is one of the rarest to be found in human nature; and let us try to recompense her in kind by admiring her generous self-surrender, and her brave, humble magnanimity in choosing to be the handmaid of those old magicians, instead of a minor enchantress within a circle of her own.

The handmaid of Raphael, whom she loved with a virgin's love! Would it have been worth Hilda's while to relinquish this office for the sake of giving the world a picture or two which it would call original; pretty fancies of snow and moonlight; the counterpart in picture of so many feminine achievements in literature!

Before Hawthorne is censored for sexism, it must be reflected that the inventor of Miriam—whose genius is of a far more robust and violent type—to say nothing of Hester Prynne's admiring creator (who with her dark-haired "Oriental" beauty and mastery of art is Miriam's counterpart, not Hilda's), and the male author who lamented what Rappaccini made of his daughter and what Aylmer did to his wife, is criticizing not Hilda or women at large but the Anglo-American gender protocols that mandate such insipid heroines.

Miriam's sketches also reveal her personality. She shows Donatello two sets of sketches and both reveal aspects of her personality. One set of sketches show images of common life, but in the other set of sketches there is the idea of woman "acting, the part of a revengeful mischief towards man." Miriam explains to Donatello that they are ugly phantoms that stole out of my mind; not things I created, but things that haunt me.

Because she is an expressive artist and because she has had experience of sin, it is Miriam who pinpoints the central problem which all expressive artists, including Hawthorne, face. Since the world is sinful, individual artist, need to first of all confront the issue of its ever-present reality without any shade of falsification or the cushion of escapism. Given the inevitable presence of negative realities in themselves, and in their world,- when the expressive artists create, they have to cope with the deepest of anxieties for they can never take it for granted that their art will reinforce the principle of goodness, and not end up celebrating or enacting the triumph of evil. Miriam criticizes Guido's painting of Michael destroying the devil precisely because it does not capture this particular fear and anxiety of the artist, the risk that he needs to take when he attempts to create. "With what half-scornful delicacy he sets his pretty sandal foot on the head of his prostrate foe! But, is it thus that virtue looks the moment after its death struggle with

evil? No, no, I could have told Guido better ... the battle never was such a child's play as Guido's dapper Archangel seems to have found it."27 She goes on to say that if she were to paint the painting she would have done it differently: "The picture would have its share of truth I assure you, ... but I am sadly afraid the victory would fall on the wrong side. Just fancy a smoke blackened, fiery eyed demon, bestriding that nice young angel, clutching his white throat with one of his hinder claws; and giving a triumphant whisk of his scaly tail, with. . .

Hilda is also shown to be the ideal spectator of art. "No other person, it is probable, recognized so adequately, and enjoyed with such deep delight, the pictorial wonders that were here displayed. She saw--no, not saw, but felt - through and through - a picture; she bestowed upon it all the warmth and richness of a woman's sympathy; not by any intellectual effort, but by 'this strength of heart, and by this guiding light of sympathy, she went straight to the central point, in which the master had conceived his work."38 The accuracy of Hilda's eyes is related to the accuracy of her moral perception. She is equated with doves all through the novel, and has to keep Virgin's lamp alight. After her inevitable encounter with sin, her moral stand point and aesthetic vision are both seen to be inadequate. After witnessing the murder of the Model, Hilda not only loses the gifted simplicity of vision, but also loses her enjoyment of art. "For the first time in her life, Hilda now grew acquainted with that icy demon of weariness who haunts great picture galleries." Hawthorne uses Hilda's disillusionment to pinpoint the limitation of most great art in face of sin. 232 The love of art ... if art had not strayed away from its legitimate paths and aims, it ought to soften and sweeten the lives of worshippers ... But, of its own potency, it has no such effect, and it fails, likewise, in the other test of its

spiritual value which poor Hilda was now involuntarily trying upon it. It cannot comfort the heart in affliction, it grows dim when the shadow is upon us.

Of all the paintings, it is only Sodoma's painting that is discussed in detail. In this picture, Christ is depicted as worn out, tired, exhausted and utterly lonely. But despite all this, the son of God remains divine. By presenting Christ's Divinity, Sodoma has shown that it is possible to conceptualize and create the image of the highest good even in the midst of most intense suffering. This, as Hawthorne says, cannot but inspire the suffering humanity. In short, the ideal artist in Hawthorne is to be inspired neither by imagination, nor by empiricism, but by sympathy - an almost religious feeling which will enable him to recognize and depict the suffering and guilt of humanity without losing sight of that which is good 234 and just. And when it is able to achieve this effect, then like Sodoma's painting, it is able to reconcile "the incongruity of Divine omnipotence and outraged suffering humanity." The hallowed picture shows that art at its best performs the same function as the " most eloquent words of the preacher and the prophet" for it brings the "deeper mysteries of Revelation closer to man's heart."44 Hawthorne's praise of Sodoma's painting of the Christ on the cross helps us to understand that in the final analysis Hawthorne's ideal of sympathy is a . secularization and humanization of the message contained in Christ's sacrifice for fallen humanity for on the cross Christ identifies with all sin the and sinners and is therefore able to redeem all sinners from sin In the Ha~hornian version sympathy also brings about a feeling of oneness with others which can then empower action towards inclusive well being.

Hilda ends the novel a kind of morally absolute bigot, with a preference in her distress for the pious simplicity of an art below the aesthetic level of the Old Masters

Hawthorne emphasizes her consolation by Sodoma's fresco of Christ bound to a pillar, a painting whose union of truth and religious beauty is to be preferred to works of ornamental sensuality, even if they are by Raphael. She refuses to countenance any ambiguity in the story of Donatello. She becomes, very nearly in so many words, the proverbial angel in the house:

Another hand must henceforth trim the lamp before the Virgin's shrine, for Hilda was coming down from her old tower, to be herself enshrined and worshipped as a household saint, in the light of her husband's fireside...

Hawthorne was perhaps not a feminist, but neither was he a fool. Like all great artists, he was of his time and out of it. Surely some part of him was as horrified as Hilda and Kenyon by the corruptions of the Old World, and as insensible as they are to the corruptions of the New. Surely some part of him thought that domestic values of hearth and home, companionate marriage's assurance of middle-class stability amid Enlightenment upheaval, a good solution to the problem of how to hold together a society in the absence of church-and-state domination.

But Hawthorne writes stories and novels with anything like the reverential piety of Sodoma's fresco. Hardly: he was an artist of baroque design and mystifying symbolism—like his heroine Hester, he was an artist-with-a-capital-A fallen among the moral iconoclasts. So, like all great artists, he differed not only from his world, but from himself. Hilda possesses this power briefly, but surrenders it—out of cowardice, we may be invited to think—after her first encounter with sin. She bows to Puritanical certitude instead of artistic amplitude; and her type lives on today in the seemingly indefatigable

thinks of those who expect from art a therapeutic session, a moral sermon, a positive representation, or a literal account of the way things ought to be.

Kenyon takes a different lesson from Donatello's maturation-through-sin, the lesson of the felix culpa, the fortunate fall, the sin whose consequence is our active struggle for—rather than passive inhabitation of—the good. On this reading of events, evil is necessary, even beneficial, a goad and stimulant to the good, without which we slide into moral sloth and, presumably, aesthetic torpor:

> Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin, then,—which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe,—is it, like sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his? (54)

Hilda is horrified by this:

> Do not you perceive what a mockery your creed makes, not only of all religious sentiments, but of moral law? And how it annuls and obliterates whatever precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us? You have shocked me beyond words! (64)

Is it a fortunate fall that *The Marble Faun* is such a mixed achievement. Its generic instability does not bother me—I am almost always ready to praise classic or contemporary experiments, not so much in mingling genres, but in combining incongruous modes of representation. If this practice has become routinized with the contemporary institutionalization of magical realism, it still reflects, I think, our actual

experience of a world consisting of many emotions, many places, many agencies, many orders of experience, and many ways of life.

But Hawthorne's travelogue goes on too long. Some of it is by-the-numbers tourist observation, just notebook-derived descriptions of place without integration into the novel's thematic whole or stylistic texture. The novel resembles those domiciles it sometimes describes—a hovel built out of stone and marble scavenged from ruins. Hawthorne's American distaste for aspects of Italian culture—which, despite my nominal "ethnicity," I largely shared on my own and only visit to Italy in 2004—is sometimes acute, as here in his rueful acknowledgement that post-classical Rome has no reality for the tourist:

> Rome, as it now exists, has grown up under the Popes, and seems like nothing but a heap of broken rubbish, thrown into the great chasm between our own days and the Empire, merely to fill it up; and, for the better part of two thousand years, its annals of obscure policies, and wars, and continually recurring misfortunes, seem also but broken rubbish, as compared with its classic history.
>
> The present city is connected with the famous one of old, it is only because we find it built over its grave. A depth of thirty feet of soil has covered up the Rome of ancient days, so that it lies like the dead corpse of a giant, decaying for centuries, with no survivor mighty enough even to bury it, until the dust of all those years has gathered slowly over its recumbent form and made a casual sepulcher. But at other times, it is

haughty middle-class disgust, often verging on crude racism, unseemly in itself.

The novel's lengthy dialogues on art, anticipating later works by Wilde, Mann, and Proust, are by contrast wonderful. Hawthorne's realist portrayal of an Anglo artist colony in Rome, when the classical forms of visual art remained viable, and when an unprecedented number of women were adopting them, is historically fascinating. The characters' discussions of the relative merits of painting and sculpture or the principles of the visual arts also held my interest; It was disappointing when they faded in the novel's desultory second half. Consider, for instance, this quarrel between the sculptor Kenyon and the painter Miriam:

> I used to admire this statue [i.e., The Dying Gladiator] exceedingly," he remarked, "but, latterly, I find myself getting weary and annoyed that the man should be such a length of time leaning on his arm in the very act of death. If he is so terribly hurt, why does he not sink down and die without further ado? Flitting moments, imminent emergencies, imperceptible intervals between two breaths, ought not to be incrusted with the eternal repose of marble; in any sculptural subject, there should be a moral standstill, since there must of necessity be a physical one. Otherwise, it is like flinging a block of marble up into the air, and, by some trick of enchantment, causing it to stick there. You feel that it ought to come down, and are dissatisfied that it does not obey the natural law.(71)

"I see," said Miriam mischievously, "you think that sculpture should be a sort of fossilizing process. But, in truth, your frozen art has nothing like the scope and freedom of Hilda's and mine. In painting there is no similar objection to the representation of brief

snatches of time,—perhaps because a story can be so much more fully told in picture, and buttressed about with circumstances that give it an epoch." (61)

As Susan Manning points out in her afore mentioned introduction, Hawthorne was, like most antebellum Americans, new to the extensive study of the visual arts—it was in Italy that he attended his first exhibitions, and he had a hard time reconciling himself to Italian Renaissance painting, preferring stolid Dutch realism. The Marble Faun is the journal of a self-education—perhaps that is its real narrative—but we can perhaps discern an implication in Miriam's elevation of painting over sculpture on the grounds that the former offers more story and more suggestiveness and less marmoreal idealism: if ambiguous narrative is the criterion of artistic achievement, then literature out ranks the visual arts entirely.

Manning observes that in *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne begins to pursue, instead of a symbolic and emblematic style, a more self-sufficiently artistic one—a proto-aestheticism in the Flaubert-Pater-James-Conrad-Joyce-Woolf line that treasures the materiality of language as it incarnates the materiality of the object world for each of their own sweet sakes:

One of the great interests of the book...is that it allows us to see Hawthorne's writing moving away from the surface dichotomy which Melville had identified in his 'Mosses' review, and groping toward a 'painterly prose'; a movement, that is, from describing or implying a generative relationship between art and reality to embodying it in form and language which anticipated (and indeed strongly influenced) the experiments in prose of Henry James.

Hawthorne loses his way at the novel's midpoint when Kenyon goes to the countryside to visit Donatello at the estate of Monte Beni. This interminable pastoral ramble, though, does have a few beautiful moments in this beautifully written work. Kenyon's reflection on the wine of Monte Beni, called Sunshine, is almost too perfect an allegory for *The Marble Faun*:

> This invaluable liquor was of a pale golden hue, like other of the rarest Italian wines, and, if carelessly and irreligiously quaffed, might have been mistaken for a very fine sort of champagne. It was not, however, an effervescing wine, although its delicate piquancy produced a somewhat similar effect upon the palate. Sipping, the guest longed to sip again; but the wine demanded so deliberate a pause, in order to detect the hidden peculiarities and subtile exquisiteness of its flavor, that to drink it was really more a moral than a physical enjoyment. There was a deliciousness in it that eluded analysis, and—like whatever else is superlatively good—was perhaps better appreciated in the memory than by present consciousness. (84)

Inadvertent or not, Hawthorne could not have written his own advertisement more aptly, even if authors tend not to advertise the pauses for thought required by their work's subtlety and moral strenuousness.

Chapter Four

Narrative Strategies in *The Marble Faun*

The Marble Faun, written on the eve of the American Civil War, is set in a fantastical Italy. The romance mixes elements of a fable, pastoral, gothic novel, and travel guide. One of Hawthorne's most revealing statements on the technique of writing occurs in "Passages From a Relinquished Work":

> I had immensely underrated the difficulties of my idle trade; now I recognized that it demanded nothing short of my whole powers, cultivated to the utmost . . . . No talent or attainment could come amiss; every thing, indeed, was requisite; wide observation, varied knowledge, deep thoughts, and sparkling ones; pathos and levity, and a mixture of both, like sunshine in a rain-drop; lofty imagination, veiling itself in the garb of common life; and the practised art which alone could render these gifts, and more than these, available. (10: 416)

A rather striking observation of the passage is the quintessentially Hawthornesque juxtaposition of opposites -"deep thoughts and sparkling ones; pathos and levity"- and their resolution into a "mixture of both." Another (and somewhat analogous dialectically) is the dictum to express abstract and elevated thought in terms that are concrete and mundane.

Hawthorne's philosophy of composition is most saliently revealed in his distinguishing among literary genres. Although discussion of the semantic intention behind calling one thing a "Tale," another a "Romance," and referring to another as an

"Allegory" might seem to dwell only in slippery abstraction, there is—at least in Hawthorne—a vital difference between these and their counterparts of a more realistic fiction. In the "Preface" to The House of the Seven Gables, for example, Hawthorne claims for the romance "a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material" which is not appropriate for the novel.

The danger that Hawthorne saw in this narrative strategy, then, concerned the separation of the author and his work from the "magnetic chain of humanity," an independence that often results in what Mellicent Bell has called a "spiritual self-centeredness" (Hawthorne's View 5). This excessively autonomous self can be found in both the shorter and the longer fiction: the "Unpardonable Sin" that Ethan Brand commits obtains from this dislocation, as does Miles Coverdale's aloof perspective as character in and narrator of The Blithedale Romance. Only through love can the artist or visionary redeem himself and his art or project, and so the would-be social reformer Holgrave is joined with Phoebe in The Blithedale Romance, and the artist Kenyon with Hilda in *The Marble Faun*.

To understand any author's philosophy of composition, it is useful to begin with the premise that how one writes is dependent upon how one reads or expects one's readers to read. The "Preface" to *The Marble Faun* addresses a "Gentle, Kind, Benevolent, Indulgent, and most Beloved and Honoured Reader," and although the narrator has never "personally encountered" such a reader, he yet maintains "a sturdy faith in his actual existence" (4: 1–2). Leaving aside the unintentionally ironic male assumption (as Hawthorne's readers would have been mostly women), the preface

establishes the parameters of fiction and prescribes the methodologies that the reader is to use in reading the ensuing narrative.

The most central element of all is the dialectic between fact and fantasy, from which obtains the "poetic or fairy precinct." Echoing as it does all of Hawthorne's previous prefaces and introductions, this dialectic or ambiguity remains the most vital and central element in understanding his literary theory. As Hawthorne's realm of the romance lies between the Actual and the Imaginary, so in a reader-response aesthetic the location of meaning resides in a "neutral territory" between the reader and the writer.

Narrative Strategies in *The Marble Faun* the narrator describes the "natural smile" that erupts over Miriam's face even as she justifies the sullen expression of a self-portrait she shows to Donatello in her studio. Donatello comments: "'Let it shine upon the picture! There; it has vanished already!'" (4: 49). Between his imperative to capture the smile and his observation that it is already gone lies her change of expression, and this dynamic exists only in the mind's eye as we imagine or "see" the scene as a continuous flow comprised of discontinuous fragments, much like the frames of a film. Often, then, the reader must supply what isn't stated, and even as the narrator apologizes for his apophases, he more frequently calls attention to a kind of para-apophasis as an apology for his narrative.

Confessing that to cite real-life nineteenth-century American and European artists and sculptors with whom the main (fictional) characters go on a moonlit walk would be a pleasant task but also one "not easily manageable, and far too perilous," the narrator concludes that such allusions would strike "where they were not aimed."

Later, he similarly admits that "Unless words were gems, that would flame with many-coloured lights upon the page, and throw thence a tremulous glimmer into the reader's eyes, it were vain to attempt a description of a princely chapel" (4: 133–34, 345).

More challengingly, they implicitly question language qua language, and this philosophical inquiry is one that is woven into the plot. In the very beginning of the novel, the resemblance is made between the young Italian Count Donatello and Praxiteles' famous statue of a faun. Much later, after this resemblance is understood to be more than coincidence but the enduring presence of racial/ethnic traits (with Southern Europeans understood to be lower on the human totem pole than Northern Europeans and thereby more ethnic and natural; and with Donatello, as a count, to have preserved in his blood a pure and natural noblesse), Anglo-American Kenyon requests Donatello to call the animals of the forest. Donatello (naïve, primitive, and proud of it) happily complies, and his voice becomes a sound "of a murmurous character, soft, attractive, persuasive, friendly." Kenyon postulates that this "might have been the original voice and utterance of natural man, before the sophistication of the human intellect formed what we now call language." Sensitive to the pathos, but forbearing "to analyze it, lest . . . it should perish in his grasp" (4: 248), Kenyon responds to a language which is pre-rational and atavistic. Indeed, his musings echo the narrative musings in the first chapter, where the narrator suggests that the Faun of Praxiteles may represent "a poet's reminiscence of a period when man's affinity with Nature was more strict" (4: 11).

Similarly, when Kenyon and Donatello look from the tower of Monte Beni upon the "grand hieroglyphics" of the surrounding landscape, Kenyon is uncharacteristically mute and unable to preach: "'Only begin to read it, and you will find it interpreting itself

without the aid of words'" (4: 258). Allowing the material to speak for itself, however, is often not typical of Hawthorne's style. Despite Hawthorne's and his characters' protestations that the most achieved art is subtle and "suggestive," we find in this work rather frequent authorial intrusion and interpretation—leaving the reader at times little to do but swallow the supplied moral whole. When Hilda catches the simultaneous reflections of herself and the portrait of Beatrice Cenci in the mirror, she is horrified at the similarity of expression and hides her face in her hands: "'Am I, too, stained with guilt?'" Rather than letting the question stand (and compel the reader to provide the answer), Hawthorne immediately answers: "Not so, thank Heaven!" (4: 205). Less intrusive but no less didactic are those scenes in which the characters themselves become the hermeneutists.

Just as Hawthorne, the persona, projects himself into the narrative as a character (such as in the "Postscript"), so the characters step out of their fiction to function as commentators. Immediately after Hilda's tower is described above the roof tops of Rome, Miriam says to Hilda that "'in your maiden elevation, you dwell above our vanities and passions.'" Later, when she visits Kenyon's studio, she extracts a moral from the material and art of sculpture: "'As these busts in the block of marble, . . . so does our individual fate exist in to limestone of Time'" (4: 53, 116).

The person most frequently called upon to perform this quasi-authorial function is Kenyon. Himself an inveterate allegorist and Anglo-American male (and thereby an appropriate mouthpiece for Hawthorne), he sees in Donatello's climb to the owl tower an emblem of "the spiritual experience of many a sinful soul," in the "serpentine" grape vine's imprisonment of its supporting tree a symbol for the Temperance Movement, and

in the cathedral windows an emblem that religious truth must be "viewed from the warm interiour of Belief." Kenyon is equally skilled at literary exegesis.

After hearing Donatello recount the myth of his progenitors, Kenyon interprets and reduces it into a simple moral: "Whether so intended, or not, he understood it as an apologue, typifying the soothing and genial effects of an habitual intercourse with Nature" (4: 253, 291–92, 306, 246). Given the narrator's observation of the discrepancy between intention and reception, the reader is invited to question the provided summation of Kenyon as reader of the myth. Even further, as Kenyon is so often conflated with and assumes a quasi-authorial voice, the reader may be similarly cued—whether the narrator or Hawthorne "so intended, or not"—to remain as skeptical of the narrator's explications as we are of Kenyon's.

The most important interpretation that Kenyon provides concerns Donatello's fate, and, by extension, the very novel itself, of which he himself is part: "'It seems the moral of his story, that human beings, of Donatello's character, compounded especially for happiness, have no longer any business on earth, or elsewhere.'" But reality is far too complex to fit neatly into this simplistic conclusion, and after Hilda refuses to accept the provided moral, he offers another and tells her to "'take your choice!" (74)

Hawthorne's "allegory is made into a testing ground for the constantly changing values of the modern world" (Becker 170), and no one view point can adequately address them. Because of this Argus-eyed vision and because his allegory is "so fluid and subjective," Hyatt Waggoner humorously suggests that "If Bunyan had read Hawthorne, he might have put him in one of his own allegories and called him Mr. Shaky-faith" (187).

Indeed one of the more interesting Iserian interstices that one encounters in reading *The Marble Faun* involves the shifting narrative perspective. At one extreme, the narrator characterizes himself as simply an editor and "raconteur" who gathers and pieces together the story from the scanty material he is provided with. From this limited perspective, he admits, "Many words of deep significance" have been lost and "scattered to the winds," and were he to insert his "own conjectural amendments" to cover these deficiencies, he might "perhaps give a purport utterly at variance with the true one." Nonetheless, he declares that "unless we attempt something in this way, there must remain an unsightly gap, and a lack of continuousness and dependence in our narrative; so that it would arrive at certain inevitable catastrophes without due warning of their imminence" (92–93). Thus, the narrator both disqualifies himself as absolute authority and qualifies his text as fiction. But the very limitations that this posturing suggests are used by Hawthorne to advantage. When the guilt-driven Miriam shouts to Hilda to "'Pray for us,'" the narrator hides behind his ignorance to forestall condemnation upon Hilda for being insensitive to her friend's call: "Whether Hilda heard and recognized the voice, we cannot tell" (4: 177).

Quite a different perspective is taken when the narrator becomes not only an omniscient narrator, but a Freudian omniscient narrator, and peers into the minds and hearts of his characters to discover subconscious thoughts of which they themselves are unaware. When Kenyon responds to Miriam's too-emotional appeal for his friendship with the presentiment that she would eventually resent this confidence, the narrator locates this feeling in the pre-conscious: "whether he were conscious of it or no, [it]

resulted from a suspicion that had crept into his heart, and lay there in a dark corner" (4: 129).

Depending upon the immediate needs of the fictive thread, then, Hawthorne's narrator can become either a common observer or a psychoanalytic Paul Pry, with the reader suspended between the two extremes and left to negotiate between action and thought, between what is explicitly stated and what is merely implied. Like the romance that is being narrated, even the narrative perspective itself resides in a neutral territory of perception. Granted the dependence of the text upon the reader to realize its potential, different readers will, of course, bring different experiences and perceptions to bear in decoding it (Iser 280). This Hawthorne realized, and he does accordingly present several debates in which conflicting readings of the world and its representations in art are offered.

One of these involves the "many stories about Miriam's origin and previous life," which the narrator simply catalogues—"heiress of a great Jewish banker," "German princess," "the offspring of a Southern American planter," "the lady of an English nobleman"—and leaves it (until the "Postscript") to "the reader to designate them either under the probable or the romantic head" (4: 22–23).

The characters themselves also enter these debates, but while they attempt to find resolution and to supply a single meaning and moral, they are unable to do so, and so the narrator frequently steps in to resolve them. On looking from the battlements of Monte Beni, Kenyon and Donatello look up at the shifting clouds and "tumbling vapours" that the thunderstorm has brought, and they project their would-be lovers upon them. Kenyon's "very heart" is moved by what he perceives to be a reclining feminine figure

(Hilda—the reference which the reader is implicitly directed to supply), while Donatello explicitly declares the figure and face to be that of his love-interest, Miriam.

The narrator then steps in to effectively erase the tablature and leave the mists yet undecipherable: "the two gazers thus found their own reminiscences and presentiments floating among the clouds" (4: 266). It is interesting to notice the words and ideas employed—"reminiscences and presentiments"—for this is rather similar to the concepts and terms that Iser employs to describe the process of reading as an act which negotiates between the past and future and elides them into a present and ever-shifting meaning. Hawthorne's art "pulls us into a constant awareness of artistic processes so that the act of picturing rather than the picture itself becomes dominant" (Clarke 133, original emphasis), and this act is reader-dependent.

On their pilgrimage among the "hills and valleys" of the Tuscan countryside, Kenyon and Donatello stop into a cathedral and offer antithetical interpretations of the Christ figure in the stained-glass windows. Kenyon declares, "'It is divine Love,'" but his companion insists otherwise: "'To my eyes,' said Donatello stubbornly, 'it is wrath, not Love! Each must interpret for himself'" (4: 306).

Nonetheless, Hawthorne does suggest that there are certain parameters within which any interpretation must reside, and a point beyond which the reader-observer must not tread. When, for instance, a young Italian artist captures via a sketch Hilda in her "strange sorrow" as she stands before da Vinci's Joanna of Aragon, he renders her with a blood-spot on her otherwise white robe. Insisting upon "the stainless purity of its subject," he titles his later, finished portrait "'Innocence, dying of a Bloodstain!'"

Although there may be conflicting readings, then, one must not actually rewrite a "text" to the extent of textual violence. It has a certain authority and integrity that should not be violated. Given the indeterminate, interactive flexibility that Hawthorne's "workshop method" suggests, the "Postscript" of The Marble Faun is perhaps best read as an apologia and a final confession that the requirements of narration have proven too great for the material endeavored. Indeed, the "demands for further elucidations" makes the "Author" (narrator) "sensible that he can have succeeded but imperfectly, at best, in throwing about this Romance the kind of atmosphere essential to the effect at which he aimed" (4: 463).

Even so, the preceding and final chapter of the story proper anticipates these unanswered questions and attempts to stymie the very probing bewilderment that necessitates the "Postscript": The gentle reader, we trust, would not thank us for one of those minute elucidations, which are tedious, and, after all, so unsatisfactory, in clearing up the romantic mysteries of a story. He is too wise to insist upon looking closely at the wrong side of the tapestry, after the right one has been sufficiently displayed to him, woven with the best of the artist's skill, and cunningly arranged with a view to the harmonious exhibition of its colours. If any brilliant or beautiful, or even tolerable, effect have been produced, this pattern of kindly Readers will accept it at its worth, without tearing the web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how its threads have been knit together. (4: 455)

This passage becomes most curious when we remember that Hawthorne himself at the narrative tapestry and obviates how it has been "knit together" through the metafictive apparatus that he weaves into the story. What are we to make, then, of his

defense that "any narrative of human action and adventure . . . is certain to be a fragile handiwork, more easily rent than mended" (4: 455)? As Hawthorne's material and technique are best understood in terms of the neutral territory, so are his observations that discuss this technique: the "Postscript," like his numerous prefaces, is a para-fictive document that straddles real life and the story world. When in the "Preface" he claims to "make [his] most reverent bow, and retire behind the curtain" (4: 2), we should remember that he is still there, and apt to peek from behind it.

This perforation of the fictive veil works both ways, a point that Emerson complained of when he said that Hawthorne "invites his readers too much into his study, [and] opens the process before them. As if the confectioner should say to his customers, 'Now, let us make a cake'" (qtd. in Martin 51). Although Hawthorne similarly objects that "to impale the story with its moral" is like "sticking a pin through a butterfly—thus at once depriving it of life" (2: 2), we have seen that such protocol of obviation is a vital element in his compositional technique and releases his fiction into a new life—suspended between the Actual and the Imaginary. Critics have eagerly offered their own readings of Hawthorne's philosophy of composition on the writer's behalf, particularly during the heyday of New Criticism.

Unabashedly ahistorical and dated as many of these works are, they offer useful close readings of how Hawthorne represented and discussed the writer's craft in his work. All references to Hawthorne's works are to The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. It should be noted that Iser's phenomenology of reading applies to all texts—fiction and nonfiction alike. I am extending his analysis to the realm of metaphor.

This alliance of England and Germany is all the more telling when we remember that Coleridgean thought (which plays a prominent role in Hawthorne's aesthetics) derives from German philosophy. A more crucial and sustained geographic duality concerns not Italy and Germany, but Hawthorne's "divided loyalties" between the Old World and New. 218 While celebrating "the democratic benefits won in the split with England," Hawthorne yet regretted "the loss of cultural and aesthetic values accompanying that split."

Apophasis is a rhetorical type in which one alludes to or even emphasizes something by denying that it will be mentioned. Like the "The Custom-House" surveyor who discovers the scarlet letter and the accompanying parchment, the narrator of The Marble Faun becomes interested in the history of his characters by the "imperfect" bust of Donatello. The presence of a real-life artifact invites the imagination to provide it with context and meaning

Chapter Five

Summation

Nathaniel Hawthorne's Marble Faun, or the romance of Monte Beni (1860), instantiates and reinforces a particular protestant, perhaps American protestant, view of Rome; this is a city profoundly corrupted by a myriad of slaughters, weltering in its old crimes, a city with no future, vile – yet also disarmingly beautiful. 'Error', taken in various connected senses, is a recurrent term in this book. The characters go astray in their ramblings through the city. Also prominent is 'error' in the sense of a specific sin or crime. Rome as a place, imbued with the errors of the past, predisposes people to err, it seems. Yet other dangers were perhaps more truly threatening to the Anglo-Saxon visitor, seduced by the experience of wandering through a city filled with objects whose aesthetic power is rooted in sinfulness and corruption. Even the 'errors' of Catholicism might be strangely appealing.

There comes to the author, from many readers of the foregoing pages, a demand for further elucidations respecting the mysteries of the story. He reluctantly avails himself of the opportunity afforded by a new edition, to explain such incidents and passages as may have been left too much in the dark; reluctantly, he repeats, because the necessity makes him sensible that he can have succeeded but imperfectly, at best, in throwing about this Romance the kind of atmosphere essential to the effect at which he aimed.

Hawthorne designed the story and the characters to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still to be so artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere, that some laws and proprieties of their own should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged.

The idea of the modern Faun, for example, loses all the poetry and beauty which the Author fancied in it, and becomes nothing better than a grotesque absurdity, if we bring it into the actual light of day. He had hoped to mystify this anomalous creature between the Real and the Fantastic, in such a manner that the reader's sympathies might be excited to a certain pleasurable degree, without impelling him to ask how Cuvier would have classified poor Donatello, or to insist upon being told, in so many words, whether he had furry ears or no. As respects all who ask such questions, the book is, to that extent, a failure.

Nevertheless, Hawthorne fortunately has it in his power to throw light upon several matters in which some of his readers appear to feel an interest. To confess the truth, he was himself troubled with a curiosity similar to that which he has just deprecated on the part of his readers, and once took occasion to cross-examine his friends, Hilda and the sculptor, and to pry into several dark recesses of the story, with which they had heretofore imperfectly acquainted him:

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that Miriam was suspected of connection with some plot, or political intrigue, of which there may have been tokens in the packet. And when Hilda appeared as the bearer of this missive, it was really quite a matter of course, under a despotic government, that she should be detained."

The book has a central crime that can be seen as the climax of the book. All the main characters are changed through this event, even though most of them are not personally connected to the crime itself. The perpetrator, Donatello, is completely changed, from a human depiction of a faun, a careless and conscienceless creature, to a mere shadow of himself. He is riddled with guilt and remorse. Miriam, the reason for the

crime, is lost in depression and completely disappears. However, one of the more impressive changes takes place in Hilda, the innocent bystander, who cannot deal with what she has seen.

In *The Marble Faun*, the product of a sojourn in Rome, Hawthorne seem to have reversed a progressively narrowing treatment of the effect of the past .*The Scarlet Letter* he deals with puritan theology; in *The House Seven Gables* a family curse and in the *Blithedaale Romance* the effects of Coverdale's self-created past in his last completed work however he takes the past of all in Rome; in short he copes with a length of time and complexity of events unusual in his writings experience. Hawthorne's reaction to Rome complicated by his daughter Una's illness was mixed. He never as he put it felt the city "pulling at his heart strings" as if it were home.

Italy would seem to resent to Hawthorne not only the depth of the past he deemed necessary for the flourishing of romance but also a neutral territory this time completely divorced from his reader's experience. It can be said however that while the marble faun is hawthorns attempt to come to terms with the immense variety of the Italian scene he was not completely successful. In his preface he once again declares that the story is to be fanciful and is to convey a thoughtful moral rather than a present novelistic, realistic picture of Italian customs. He inveighs against the common place prosperity and lack of antiquity in the American scene, a lack that satisfies the kind of reforming zeal pictured in Holgrave but mitigates against the writer of romance.

Hawthorne broadens his canvas in another way as well instead of presenting one or two characters he gives the reader four Donatella presumably the living twin of sculptor Praxiteles Marble Faun Miriam Schaeffer the mysterious half Italian painter

pursed by the ill-fated brother Antonio, Kenyon the American sculptor and Hilda the new Italian copyist. Donatello's double is not found elsewhere in the romances in fact he seems to be male version of both phoebe and Hilda, unlike the two women however he comes in actual contact with evil and thereby loses his innocence whereas Hilda's and phoebes experiences are vicarious. Perhaps the nearest comparison in dimmesdale but the minister is portrayed after he chooses to hide his guilt not before he has sinned in Donatello's case.

Hawthrone examines the idea of fortunate fall demonstrating that Dontello grows in moral understanding after he murders the model a movement that seems to validate Miriam's secular interpretation of the fall as necessary to the development of a soul more than it validates Hilda's instinctive repudiation of the idea .for some critics such as Hyatt Waggoner and Richard Foggle ,the Felix Cupla or fortunate fall is indeed the theme of the marble faun crews however emphasizes hawthorns unwilling ness to confront the problem nothing that Kenyon is made to accept Hilda 's repudiation without questions .in the final analysis Hawthorne does indeed seem reluctant to examine the ramifications of the theme.

This project is an attempt to examine the fictional art and forte of Nathaniel Hawthorne with a special focus on his literary achievement and also spiritual sufferings, by projecting him not only as an American novelist and short story writer but also a new England Puritan disapproving severe and harsh codes of the Puritan morality and a psychological of human nature. Medium for pursuing poetic truth; his novel especially as a tale of human frailty and sorrow by pouring all the passion of his sensitive and lonely heart into his fictional composition. It finally attests to the fact that the outraged suffering

humanity must learn to live with the blackness that lies everywhere beneath us. Key human suffering, Puritan morality, poetic truth, sensitive heart.

The study attempts to examine the fictional art and forte of Nathaniel Hawthorne with a special focus on his literary achievement and also spiritual development attained through experience of sin, guilt and sufferings, by projecting him not only as an American novelist and short story writer but also a new England Puritan disapproving severe and harsh codes of the Puritan morality and a psychologist delving deep into the study of human nature. It studies and reveals how Hawthorne used fiction as a medium for pursuing poetic truth; that is the truth of human heart and used his novel especially as a tale of human frailty and sorrow by pouring all the passion of his sensitive and lonely heart into his fictional composition. It finally attests to the fact that the outraged suffering humanity must learn to live with the blackness that lies everywhere beneath us

The Marble Faun is about man's lapse from Primal innocence and his possible regeneration. As Kenyon asks, "Did Adam Fall, that we might ultimately rise to far loftier paradise than his?" (Hawthorne 854). It is concerned with the way in which nature and spirit, innocence and evil, time and nature and spirit, innocence and evil, time and eternity may be conquered and reconciled in a moment of incarnation. It is the story of a murder in which an innocent young man falls into sin and rises into maturity.

The perfectionistic values which had been the basis for Hawthorne's tales and novels are in *The Marble Faun* formulated explicitly as myth in the history of the Monte Benin. The characters in this last major novel are measured against the perfectionist possibility of gaining greater humanity. As the novel opens, each of the four characters is in a state of withdrawal from the active, time-affected world, out of touch with society,

and out of sympathy with other peoples; Donatello in his Arcadia is too animalistic to be called fully human; Hilda lives in an angel's untouchable world; Miriam broods in the dark cave of bitterness; and Kenyon lives in the cold marble world of art. Each must, if he is to reach a higher from of being, first enter a period of self-scrutiny, become fully aware of his own ignominy and as Donatello finally does, emerge from self-centeredness to commit himself in love to other mortals.

It may be said that *The Marble Faun* deals with the effects of the sin of murder rather than the murder itself. It suggests that the knowledge of the human heart is composed of anguished ambivalences. Its theme is spiritual development through sin and suffering. The outraged suffering humanity must learn to live with the blackness that lies everywhere beneath us.

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Encapsulation of a Woman's Psyche in the Realm of Reality:

A Study of S. J. Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep.*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Encapsulation of a Woman's Psyche in the Realm of Reality: A Study of S. J. Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Sabarna S. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Encapsulation of a Woman's Psyche in the Realm of Reality: A Study of S. J. Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Sabarna S

THOOTHUKUDI **SABARNA S.**

OCTOBER 2019

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Encapsulation of a Woman's Psyche in the Realm of Reality: A Study of S. J. Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep*** analyses the psychological turmoil the protagonist undergoes due to her loss of memory and how she tries to rebuild her life and her identity with an indomitable feminine spirit in spite of her being oppressed by her male counterparts.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on S. J. Watson as unique American novelist and the general characteristics of his works and gives a glimpse of the novel *Before I Go to Sleep*. .

The second chapter **Trauma: Explorations in Memories** deals with the critical analysis of the character of the protagonist as she goes through a turbulent phase of her life, how she experiences trauma as she makes conscious efforts to retrieve her memories. .

The third chapter **Feministic Realm of Reality** discusses the role of two women with different cultural boundaries and their struggles to assert their own feminine self amidst hardships in the patriarchal society.

The fourth chapter **Deconstructing Devotedness** deals with the multifaceted dimensions of love. It analyses the love relationships in the novel love by applying the deconstruction theory.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It restates the significance, relevance and consequence of key terms employed in the topic statement.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature, with its perfect reproduction of life is an ideal medium into which the writer infuses his own feelings, be it is prose or verse. It pictures the society, voices out one's opinion, with a soul aim to achieve. Joseph Conrad in the preface to *The Nigger Of The Narcissus,* commends on the significance of the writers and the writing texts in human life. "My task which, I am trying to achieve is by the power of written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is before all to make you see. That and no more, and it is everything" (16).

Steve John Watson resigned from his job in the National Health Service just before his fortieth birthday to pursue his writing dream. The UK Physics graduate, Steve John Watson made the decision to downsize his flourishing National Health Service in London while dabbling with writing by the side, until he decided, that " to be truly happy in myself I could need to stop thinking of my writing as a hobby and give it the space and time that increasingly thought it deserved" (Watson 3).

In 2008 Watson was accepted into the Faber academy's first six month 'writing a novel' course, a program that covers all aspects of the novel writing process. His debut novel Before *I Go to Sleep* became an international bestseller in 2011, and was turned into a film Starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth in 2014. In one of his interviews he explains how he manages between work and writing career. Steve John Watson does not have a conventional background as a writer:

> I loved every moment of being on the course, and really can't praise it highly enough! I met, and learned from, some wonderful writers, and I made some lifelong friends. I learned everything from how to capture the essence of a character how to write the synopsis and pitch your

> book to an agent but it was also incredible just to surrounded by people who took their writing as seriously as I did, and who understand what the writing life involves. (Janine 5)

Despite studying science, fiction was his first love. He resigned from his full time job and took on a part time junior role. There are trivial sacrifices. But he felt happy doing something he loved.

Finally, Steve John Watson chose his career as a writer and reached great heights. Life can be unpredictable, but by making the right choices one can enjoy the moments that matter. Charles Dickens affirms this idea about life, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest I go to than I have ever known." After the eighteen months of struggle Steve John Watson completed his book *Before I Go to Sleep*.

Literature is said to be the mirror of life. Literature when interwoven with the fields such as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology is a discipline where in language is used as a medium of expression so as to interpret man; existence and culture, personality and individual differences. There is a very strong correlation between literature and psychology because of the fact that both deals with human beings and their reactions, perception of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations.

David Lodge in his work *Consciousness* explains the meaning of literature as one of the most significant means to obtain knowledge concerning man his life, his unique experiences and the idiosyncratic values "...we will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology"(10).

A highly capable writer with his mastery over language and human minds shapes his ideas and emotions into an imaginary situation or a character. Hence, Literature is a brain of humanity. Britain, being the major influence of the world, since ages, exerts a greater impact in the field of English Literature is a vast treasury, which of brilliant verses, highly dramatic plays, and interesting novels that sparkle and dazzle due to the skillful treatment of splendid authors. The sands of British Literature have enormous foot prints left by authors from Chaucer to present day. An innovative study of each work reveals different dimensions, making the study more useful.

Steve John Watson originally working in the National Health Service (NHS) as an audiologist, Watson is an English scribbler. S. J. Watson, who is legally called Steven Watson, was born in an English village called Wordsley, located to the north of Stourbridge, West Midlands, in the United Kingdom. For his Ordinary level, Watson studied at Buck pool School, and later at the Stourbridge-based King Edwards College wherein he took Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics.

S. J. Watson, who is a quadragenarian, went to the University of Birmingham for his undergraduate degree, wherein he pursued Physics. For his Master of Education, Watson enrolled at the University of Southampton wherein he majored in audiology. He relocated to corporate London hard on the heels of his graduation where he served as an audiologist in several London-based medical facilities, most notably a national neurological hospital. He is still a London resident.

S. J. Watson, who has confessed that he is a homosexual and has been in an civil partnership with a high-profile NHS official since April 2011, describes his teenage as a tumultuous phase of his life. As a teenager, he was grappling with his sexual orientation. His parents separated their ways while he was still schooling at the

university. Worse still, he was battling neurosis and underwent a medical procedure on his brain during his young adult life.

S. J. Watson, who describes his background as neither poor nor affluent, has loved creative writing since his formative years. Even then he had second thoughts about pursuing writing as a profession. He considered seeking financial stability via his audio logical profession and put his writing ambitions on ice though he still wrote down spur-of-the-moment thoughts. He sought his own demotion from a senior position to a mere junior clinician, which involved three working days, so that he could spare time to write.

In early 2009, S. J. Watson signed up for a novel writing course spearheaded by the Faber Academy. He drafted about twenty novel manuscripts before abandoning them definitely. One of those manuscripts attracted the attention of a literary agent and soon became a literary gem.

There are more than 145 editions of S. J. Watson's debut book. The first edition was initially published in April 2011, entitled *Before I Go to Sleep*, and this standalone book is shelved under mystery, psychological and literary thriller, contemporary, adult fiction, and crime genres.

Another early book published by S. J. Watson is titled *Second Life.* This book has over 65 editions; the first edition was originally published in 2015. This standalone novel is shelved under the psychological thriller and mystery genres. Christine Lucas is the featured protagonist in the novel *Before I Go to Sleep* while Julia is the featured protagonist in the book named *Second Life.*

Christine Lucas is a middle-aged wife who is yet to recover from a tragic incident that left her with memory loss. Christine, who is amnesiac, has a spouse called Ben and both are in a twenty-year-long marriage. Conversely, protagonist Julia

has an addictive personality. She has a sister called Kate, an adopted son named Connor, and a husband called Hugh who is a surgeon. Christine and Hugh are unable to have children of their own.

In the first book by S. J. Watson, *Before I Go to Sleep*, protagonist Christine often forgets that she is married; thinking that she is still single, she is always surprised on waking up in the mornings and noticing her husband beside her. Exactly what transpired during the accident and what about her condition is the underlying mystery inside the novel. Her journal entries and her husband's narration do not help her in joining the dots.

In S. J. Watson's second book, *Second Life*, Kate is murdered while in Paris by her boyfriend. She got in touch with him through an online dating website; angered by the incident, Julia uncontrollably starts looking for her killer, jeopardizing and risking all that she holds dear. She gets the system login of the site that Kate frequented and thus sinks into the murky waters of online dating.

S. J. Watson's debut book has clinched and been nominated for many literary awards. In 2011, it won the New Blood Dagger, a literary award proffered by Crime Writer's Association (CWA) to a notable debut author. In 2011, it clinched the National Book Award, in the Thriller of the Year category. It was shortlisted for the CWA Steel Dagger award in 2011. In 2012, it was nominated for the Macavity Award in the Best Fiction Mystery Novel category.

In 2012, it was nominated for the Anthony Award in the Best First Novel category. It was nominated for the Barry Award, also in the Best First Novel category. Also in 2012, Watson clinched the French literary award called SNCF Priz du Polar in the Best Crime Novel category. Watson won the Crime Zone Award (Dutch literary prize) in the Debut of the Year category.

There is a film adaptation of S. J. Watson's debut novel; the film retains the book's title and was produced in late 2014. The director is Rowan Joffe; the starring actors are: Nicole Kidman who appears as Christine Lucas, Colin Firth who appears as Ben Lucas, and Mark Strong who acts as Dr. Nash.

The best books penned by S. J. Watson are *Before I Go to Sleep* (2011), *Second Life* (2015), *Blackwood Bay* (2017), *Double Take* (2018). These novel could be considered as psychological thrillers. Historical background for his novel *Before I Go To Sleep* is just about an incident he came across in his life. Watson shares this in one of his paperback interviews:

> I was reading about a man called Henry Molaison who suffered severe amnesia he underwent operation when he was 27. He died at the age of 82, and for all that time could form no new memories. I was struck by the image of that old man waking up and looking in the mirror, fully expecting a 27-year-old to be gazing back at him. I realized how vital our memories are to our sense of self, and from that seed the whole novel began to grow. I decided to tell the story in the first person, from the point of view of someone who has severe amnesia. That presented some tricky technical challenges, particularly as I edited the book. I had to keep a close eye on the things my character knew at any given time, and the things he didn't. (The Guardian)

Other contemporary British writers of his age are Sacha Noam Baron Cohen, J.K Rowling, Neil Geiman, E.L James, Elizabeth, Paul Adam, Paula Hawkins and Jeffrey Howard Archer.

Sacha Noam Baron Cohen is an English actor, comedian, screenwriter, director, and film producer. He is known for creating and portraying many fictional

satirical characters, including Ali G, Borat Sagdiyev, Brüno Gehard, Admiral General Aladeen, Erran Morad, and multiple others. In most of his routines, Baron Cohen's characters interact with unsuspecting people, in documentary style, who do not realize that they are being set up for comic situations and self-revealing ridicule. His other works include *Voicing King Julien XIII* in the Madagascar film series (2005–2012) and appearing in *Talladega Nights*: *The Ballad of Ricky Bobby* (2006), *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), *Hugo* (2011), and *Les Misérables* (2012).

J.K. Rowling is best known as the British author of the *Harry Potter* series, the bestselling book series in history with more than 400 million copies sold and one of the most popular movie series of all time. She also writes novels for adults, including crime novels under the pen name Robert Galbraith. J.K. Rowling lives in Edinburgh with her husband and three children.

Neil Richard MacKinnon Gaiman is an English author of short fiction, novels, comic books, graphic novels and nonfiction. Gaiman's first novel *Good Omens* was published in 1990. The 1996 novelisation of Gaiman's teleplay for the BBC mini-series *Never Where* was his first solo novel. In 1999, first printings of his fantasy novel *Stardust* were released. This novel was highly influenced by Victorian fairytales and culture. *American Gods* became one of Gaiman's best-selling and multi-award-winning novels upon its release in 2001.

E. L. James, is a British author. She wrote the bestselling erotic romance trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey, Fifty Shades Darker, and Fifty Shades Freed*, along with the companion novels Grey: *Fifty Shades of Grey* as told by Christian and Darker and under the name Snow queen's Ice dragon the Twilight fan fiction *Master of the Universe* was the basis for the *Fifty Shades trilogy*. In 2019, her first book which is

not a part of the *Fifty Shades trilogy*, *The Mister*, was published, to negative critical reception.

Paula Hawkins Zimbabwe-born British author, is best known for her best-selling psychological thriller novel *The Girl on the Train* (2015), which deals with themes of domestic violence, alcohol, and drug abuse. The novel was adapted into a film starring Emily Blunt in 2016. Hawkin's second thriller novel, is *Into the Water.*

Paul Adam born on 1958 in Coventry is an English writer of novels for both adults and younger readers. He studied Law at the University of Nottingham, then chose career in journalism, working both in England and Rome He has written eleven critically acclaimed thrillers for adults and the Max Cassidy series of thrillers for younger readers about a teenage escapologist, the first of which, *Escape from Shadow Island*, won the Salford Children's Book Award. He has also written film and television scripts. *An Exceptional Corpse* (1993), *A Nasty Dose Of Death* (1994), *Toxin* (1995), *Unholy Trinity* (1999), *Shadow Chasers* (2000), *Genesis II* (2001), *Flash Point aka Oracle Lake* (2003), *Sleeper aka The Rainaldi Quartet* (2004), *Enemy Within* (2005), *Knife Edge* (2008), *Paganini's Ghost: A Mystery* (2010), *Jaws of Death* (2011), *Attack at Dead Man's Bay* (2012), *Dixieland* (2013).

Jeffrey Howard Archer is an English novelist, former politician, and peer of the realm. Before becoming an author, Archer was a Member of Parliament (1969–74), but did not seek re-election after a financial scandal that left him almost bankrupt. Archer wrote his first book, *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less,* in the autumn of 1974, as a means of avoiding bankruptcy. *Kane and Abel* (1979) proved to be his best-selling work, reaching number one on *The New York Times* bestsellers list. His other notable works are *Only Time Will Tell (2011), The Sins Of The Father (2012),*

Best Kept Secret (2013), Be Careful Of What You Wish For (2014), *Mightier Than The Sword (2015), Cometh The Hour* (2016), *This Was The Man* (2016).

As for the origins of psychology, it could be stated that earliest origins of psychology are found in the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers about the nature of life, particularly in the work of Aristotle use the term psyche to refer to the essence of life. This term is translated from ancient Greek which means 'mind', but it is closely linked to the word 'breath'.

The meaning of psychology in Literature is explained by Wellek and Warren as follows: "By 'psychology of literature', we may mean the psychology of the writer, as type and as an individual, or study of creative process, or the study of psychological types and laws present within the works of literature or the effects of literatures upon its readers" (Julia 35).

Contemporary literature is defined as literature written after World War II through the current day. Contemporary writers reflect a society's social and political viewpoints, shown through realistic characters, connections to current events and socioeconomic messages. Writers illuminate the societal strengths and weaknesses to remind society of lessons. But Steve John Watson chooses a different genre in his novel *Before I Go to Sleep.*

A story that is more interested in the "why" rather than the sheer mechanics of "how" is more attuned to what makes a soul damaged potentially beyond repair falls under the large umbrella of psychological thriller. Psychological thriller is a genre with in crime fiction that can and does encompass myraid subgenre, making it difficult to classify it in definite terms.

Psychological novel is about human mind that deals with emotions and feelings. It centres on the psychology of human beings. It is a work of fiction in which

the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the characters are of equal interest than in the external actions of the narrative. In a psychological novel the emotional reactions and internal states of the character are influenced by and in turn trigger external events in a meaningful symbiosis.

This emphasis on the inner life of characters is a fundamental element of a vast body of fiction: William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is perhaps the prime early example of it in a dramatic form. The psychological novel reached its full potential only in the 20th century. Its development coincided with the growth of psychology and the discoveries of Sigmund Freud who is the founder of psychoanalysis.

On the other hand, although it is a very complicated term to define, psychology can be described as "the science that systematically studies and attempts to explain observable behaviour and it is relationship to the unseen mental process that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment "(13).

Psychological thriller is a thriller narrative which emphasizes the unstable or delusional psychological state of its characters such as "dissolving the sense of reality". Psychological thrillers incorporate elements of mystery, drama, action and paranoia. The literary devices and techniques that are used in psychological thriller are plot twists and unreliable narrator. In psychological thrillers, characters often have to battle in a struggle. Amnesia is a common plot device used to explore these questions. A psychological thriller is subgenre of a thriller in which the element relates to mind or the process of the mind. They are mental in nature rather than physical.

Before I Go to Sleep is a psychological thriller about a woman suffering from anterograde amnesia. She wakes up every day with no knowledge of who she is and the novel follows her as, she tries to reconstruct her memories from a journal she has

been keeping. She learns that she has been seeing a doctor who is helping her to recover her memory, that her name is Christine Lucas, of 47 years old and has got married leaving behind a son. As her journal grows, it casts doubts on the truth behind this knowledge as she determines to discover who she really is.

Before I Go to Sleep is an exceptional thriller. "A terrific first novel – well written, genuinely settling and psychologically very plausible" (Harris 23). Upcoming chapters deal with critical analysis of the events that take place in the novel. Certain tragic events erase memory of the protagonist, Christine Lucas, leaving her life in mystery. Her thirst for her lost identity and the struggles she faces to get back her identity is compared with the Indian novel *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande. Jaya and Christine sail on the same boat in quest of their identity in a patriarchal society, despite surviving in difference cultural boundaries.

Sufferings she faced to get back her identity was portrayed beautifully through the incidents she came across. Finally she overcomes the obstacles and reached her goal in life. Identity and Love are the two phases of Christine's life. Love of Mike has placed Christine in a precious position. His extremist love is analysed by the application of deconstruction theory.

This project aims to delineate the psyche of an American woman through the protagonist, Christine Lucas who struggles hard to regain her lost memory. The psyche of an unconscious woman who has undergone a traumatising experience and recovered after twenty years is discussed at length. It traces her efforts to establish her identity in the feministic realm of reality. It analyses how her life is oppressed by the obsessed man who pretends to be her husband. In her life of challenges, love of Ben is deconstructed and replaced by the love of Mike. It also portrays how boldly Christine faces the challenges and the changes that occur in her life's path.

Chapter Two

Trauma: Explorations in Memories

Novels are written for experiencing the aesthetic pleasure which the writer explores from the perception of the spectator. The intention lies in confirming the law of art, which in harmony lifts the soul into realm of the beautiful. Depicting high ideas, thereby exerting an influence for good is a herculean task, which has been worded and extended to readers through the art of voicing out the opinions, Lionel Shriver praises the novel *Before I Go to Sleep* as "A deft, perceptive exploration of a fascinating neurological condition, and a cracking good thriller" (3).

Before I Go to Sleep is divided into three parts. The first part of the novel is in the present, beginning as Christine Lucas wakes in a strange house with a strange man, only to learn that she suffers memory loss and that this is her home, her husband. Later, a doctor gives Christine a journal in which she has been writing down her memories and events that have taken place in the course of her day over a two week period. The second part of the novel is this journal. The last part of the journal is the evening of the day that begins in part one.

The novel contains one main plot and takes place over the course of a single day. In this plot, Christine Lucas wakes to learn that she has a memory problem and she is given a journal that tells her what has happened to her over the course of two weeks and some of the memories she has recovered in that time period. These journal entries introduce a mystery in Christine's life that comes to a climax on the day that began in the first part of the book. The main plot comes to a satisfactory conclusion at the end of the novel.

Before I Go to Sleep is the debut novel of the English writer S. J. Watson. In this novel, Christine Lucas wakes every morning thinking she is a carefree, twenty

years old, women with a bright future ahead. In reality, Christine is a forty-seven years old woman who suffered a terrible attack eighteen years ago that has left her unable to retain memories. However, with the help of a doctor who specializes in memory disorders, Christine begins to keep a journal that helps her piece together her past and how she ended up as she has. *Before I Go to Sleep* is a thriller that leaves the reader guessing until the final sentence.

Christine Lucas wakes in a strange bed beside a man she does not recognize. In the bathroom, Christine finds pictures taped to the wall of herself as a much older woman and the man in the bed who tells her he is her husband. Christine is shocked and frightened, especially when a glance in the mirror tells her that the pictures are accurate even though she is convinced she is only twenty-five, not forty-seven. The man in the bed tells her that he is her husband Ben, that they have been married for many years, and that she had an accident that has left her unable to retain new memories.

After Ben leaves for his job as a teacher to a nearby school, Christine receives a call from a stranger who tells her that he is Dr. Nash, a man who has been helping her attempt to recover some of her memories. Dr. Nash picks Christine up and takes her to a local park where he explains their work together and shows her a journal she has been keeping for several weeks. Dr. Nash explains that Christine asked him to read the journal a few days earlier.

Christine begins to read the journal. The first few entries introduce Christine to her husband, Ben, and the work she has been doing with Dr. Nash. In these early entries, Christine learns that she and her husband went for a brief visit to a park and the sight of fireworks caused her to have a flash of memory that included a woman she instinctively knows as her best friend. The memory takes place at a party when

both women were in college. In this memory, the woman prepares to introduce Christine to a man with whom she thinks she may be compatible. Christine becomes frustrated when she cannot recall the woman's name.

A few entries later, Christine learns that Dr. Nash took her to a home she previously shared with her husband. In the kitchen of this home, Christine has a memory of an afternoon tryst with her husband. This memory makes Christine feel happy because she had been frustrated before when she could not remember anything about her husband. This one memory expands later to help Christine recover the memory of having written a novel in her past. Christine asks Dr. Nash about this and he gives her a copy of her novel along with a press clipping he has found. As Christine looks at the press photo, she suddenly recalls having had a son named Adam. However, when Christine asks her husband about her child, she learns that he was killed in Afghanistan.

As Christine struggles with the loss of her child each day that she reads about it in her journal, she becomes aware of lies Ben has told her over the past few weeks. Dr. Nash makes excuses to her about this, but Christine struggles to trust Ben. Then Christine remembers the name of her best friend and learns that she has left a number for Christine at the facility centre where she lived for years after her injury. Christine meets her friend and is given a letter from Ben explaining why he divorced her several years ago. Christine is touched by the letter and decides to tell her husband everything. Christine has reached the end of the journal. Comforted by what she has read, Christine prepares to go on a short vacation with her husband. However, when they arrive at their destination, Christine realizes that Ben has taken her to the same hotel. That was the scene of the attack that left her with her memory loss.

In Ben's luggage, Christine finds several pages from her journal and discovers that they hold the secret to her current circumstances. It turns out that Ben is not Ben, but a man named Mike with whom Christine had a brief affair eighteen year ago. With this knowledge, Christine suddenly remembers the attack, that Mike did this to her. Christine fights valiantly when mike comes into the room and somehow she survives, memory intact. However, no one knows if she will still remember after she falls asleep.

Work of literature in many cases exhibits a high level of similarity in themes and styles. While exercising their literary creativity, authors and critic may borrow ideas and structures form pre existing or contemporary works. Clifford Geertz affirms his idea about critical analysis. "The point of literary criticism in anthropology is not to replace research, but to find out how it is that we are persuasive" (Rampell 17).

Christine has an inability to retain memories for longer than a twenty-four hours period. This problem stems from some sort of injury Christine suffered eighteen years prior to the beginning of the novel. For some reason, Christine can make and retain memories while conscious, but when she enters deep sleep all these memories are lost. Therefore Christine has not been able to form new memories and retain them for eighteen years, and sometimes she wakes having lost memories multiple years before her injury. "Memories define us. So what if you lost yours every time you went to sleep? Your name, your identity, your past, even the people you love- all forgotten overnight. And the one person you trust may only be telling you half the story" (17).

Christine's situation leaves her extremely vulnerable. However, she has a supportive husband who clearly loves her and is patient enough to explain the situation each morning and helps her deal with her unique circumstance.

Still confused and uncertain about her situation, Christine sits down with a journal she has been told that she has been writing to learn about her immediate past. However, Christine does not recognize the writing in the journal, is not even sure she can trust what she has been told. This alerts the reader to the fact that Christine, through a fault not her own, is an unreliable narrator in this first person narration.

In the beginning section of her journal, Christine learns more about the techniques Dr. Nash is using to help her recover her memory. Dr. Nash is an ambitious doctor who hopes that helping Christine with her unusual type of memory loss will help propel his career. However, this ambition also leaves the reader somewhat skeptical of Dr. Nash's true motivations.

On an outing with her husband, Christine learns some details of her past, including the car accident that led to her injury. Christine also learns that she and Ben never had children, something that leaves Christine saddened by lost opportunities. That same night, Christine remembers attending a party as a university student with someone whom she instinctively knows as her best friend. This memory is strong and shows both the reader and Christine that she is capable of recovering memories of the years before her accident. This memory also seems to prove that Christine has other people to care her deeply. By leaving the reader wondering where these people are now.

On a visit to a previous home, Christine has a strong memory of her husband. This memory leaves Christine with the impression that she once loved her husband very much. Christine is excited by this memory because she has been left confused and frightened by the fact that she could not remember her own husband. Now Christine feels more secure in her dependence on her husband due to this memory.

In these entries in her journal, Christine tells herself and the reader how she has begun to retrieve more and more memories. Among these memories are details of an afternoon of pleasure with Ben and the fact that she once wrote a novel. Ben has already told Christine that she has a Ph. D in English, although he told her that she was working as a secretary the day she was injured. This confuses Christine when she learns that she once wrote and published a novel, but then she begins to think that perhaps Ben has kept this information from her because he does not want to cause her grief. However, this does not appear to be the only thing Ben has lied about and will not likely be the last.

Christine later learns that she is a mother, but that her son has died. This news deeply grieves Christine each time she reads it. However, the reader will notice that as the journal entries continue, Christine seems to deal with the news more and more easily, suggesting she is beginning to remember the truth and it does not hurt as much.

Christine appears to make another breakthrough when she wakes with the memory of a sexual encounter with Ben the night before. Christine has never remembered anything from one day to the next before, suggesting that she is improving. However, Christine herself is not sure if this is really a memory or simply a dream. Important about this incident, besides the suggestion of improvement in her condition, is the face of the man she sees in the memory.

The memory Christine has in which she is being attacked is very significant. This attack is by an unseen man, someone who is clearly passionately connected to Christine in some way that has led to this vicious attack. The reader wonders if this could possibly be how Christine received her brain injuries that left her so terribly dependent on those around her. Later, Christine becomes convinced that Ben is lying

to her, that she was never in a car accident. This causes her go in search of answers, but only leaves her with more questions.

In these sections of the journal, it is clear that Christine is remembering more and more of the attack that led to her brain injury. Dr. Nash fills in some of the blanks, telling her where she was found and about her recovery. It is clear that what happened to Christine was devastating, leaving her unable to care for herself for most of the past eighteen years. Christine has some small memories of this time period, but they are dark and confusing, memories that centre around her son and two strangers who visited her in the hospital. A visit to the psychiatric hospital makes it clear that Christine's memory was drastically worse than it is now. The fact that Christine has made so much progress is a good sign, but does not necessarily mean that she will ever recover all her memories. In fact, Christine has begun to experience moments of complete memory loss even during the time period in which she has been able to retain memories.

The unreliable narrator becomes clear in these journal entries. Christine has begun to doubt herself, to doubt whether her memories are really memories or manifestations of her imagination. Christine remembers the name, Ed and believes he might be her attacker, but learns that Ed is really Dr. Nash's first name. Later, Christine imagines a romantic link between her and Dr. Nash but is rebuffed when she kisses him. It is clear that Christine is still struggling with reality and her mind's attempts to fill the blanks of her memory.

The fact that Ben divorced Christine at some point in her past is a strange revelation. The reader cannot imagine why a man who divorced his wife would return to take on the burden of caring her in his home. Why Ben divorced Christine and why he came back are mysteries that remain unanswered at this point in the book, leaving

the reader wondering if Ben has some other nefarious plan of which Christine and the reader are still unaware. Perhaps finding Claire now will help Christine find answers to some of these problems.

Christine has found and learned a few new things about Claire. Claire's phone call is a shock to Ben and he becomes quite angry, suggesting some sort of tension there. Christine jumps to the conclusion that Ben and Claire have had or are having an affair. This seems plausible and is later confirmed by Claire.

However, the scenario Claire describes does not completely support the reaction Ben has when he learns that Christine has talked to Claire. It is clear that something odd is happening there. Christine's meeting with Claire reveals that Christine had been having an affair in the weeks before her attack. This leads Christine to feel a great deal of guilt and a great deal of compassion for Ben. This information also creates a list of suspects for the reader as to the identity of Christine's attacker. The attacker could be a spurned lover or it could be a husband momentarily blinded by jealous and later overwhelmed with guilt. The reader is suddenly quite cautious when it comes to Ben, wondering if Christine's decision to tell him the truth about Dr. Nash and the journal is a good idea. Not only this, but the reader cannot help but notice that this entry is the final in the journal, but the reader knows nearly a week has passed since that last date. The reader must wonder what happened over that week and where the bruise on Christine's head came from.

In this final section of the novel, the narrator returns to the present day. Christine has finished reading her journal and finds herself wondering what happened on that Friday. Christine does not know if she told her husband, but later discovers she did when she drops hints about the journal and the doctor. Christine feels content

with her life, feeling as though she is making progress and that she has the full support of a man she loves deeply.

Throughout the novel it has been clear that Christine is not a reliable narrator because she is reading her story along with the reader. This is made even clearer when Christine finds pages that were torn from her journal that reveal not only that her husband lied to her, but he is not her husband at all but the man who beat her so severely. As a result, she has been left brain damaged and unable to retain memories for eighteen years. Christine, however, proves to be a very strong, very courageous woman when she fights off her attacker and saves her own life. The author leaves the reader with a final question that Christine cannot and therefore does not answer at the end of the novel. Will Christine retain all she has remembered on this night? The reader hopes that she will, but past events suggest that she likely will not. No matter what happens with her memory, however, Christine has her family back and that could be enough.

Themes are the central focus of the story or narrative. Themes express the intended lesson, conclusion, message, or point of view of the author. Themes connect all the parts of the story such as character, plot, conflict, setting and events. C. S. Larin calls theme "the heart of a story" (56). Working definition for "theme" one that captures all the important points discussed above and that. It is a story's soul.

Three important themes that deal with novel *Before I Go to Sleep* are identity crisis, duplicity and love. Christine's trauma made her loose her memory that leads her life into a disaster. Because of her accident the two men take charge of her life by which she loses her individuality and identity as an independent woman in society.

Trust is the basement of marriage. In this story Ben and Christine are not truthful to each other. They both have an illegal affair without knowing each other.

Their behavior brings in the themes of duplicity. Characters in the novel act against marriage ethics that broke the intimate relationship between them.

Love is the main theme that moves the character inside the novel. In this S. J. Watson comes out with different stages of love. Parental love, Christine longs for her mother's love. Christie forgot all her motherhood memories with Adam. And finally, Love between Mike and Christine is considered as the illegal love affair. But without love Mike will not take Christine from the warning house.

Chapter Three

Feministic Realm of Reality

The term 'Feminism' differs from person to person. Chaman Nahal in his article, 'Feminism in English Fiction', defines feminism as:

> Made of existence in which the women are free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome: whether it is the husband or a father or the community or whether it is a religious group, ethnic group. When women free themselves often from dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of Feminism materialises (17).

Feminism is an umbrella term for a range of views about injustice against women. There are disagreements among feminists about the nature of justice in general and the nature of sexism, in particular, the specific kinds of injustice and wrong women suffer; and the group who should be the primary focus of feminist efforts. Nonetheless, feminists are committed to bringing about social change to end injustice against women, in particular, injustice against women as women.

In an effort to suggest a schematic account of feminism, Susan James characterizes feminism as follows:

> Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretation of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single

philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program (576).

Identity is a much debated term in postcolonial literature. The historical, cultural and ideological circumstances prevalent in the alien and native societies enmesh the protagonists. They become victims of despair and loneliness as they feel the people around them asking them, 'Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here? perplexity of the protagonists caused by the binary opposition results in identity crisis. Columas establishes, "identity is a multilayered dynamic process rather than an inborn trait that cannot be helped. Identities are partly given and partly made" (178).

Christine's quest to find out her real self could be compared with that of Jaya's quest for identity. Geographically and culturally apart these women exhibit their innate feminine perspectives in their journey of life.

That Long Silence is the novel by Shashi Deshpande. She is an Indian novelist. Her novels present a sensitive and delicate portrayal of Indian womanhood with focus on the predicament of women and her concern for the crisis in the life of her protagonists. The attitudinal postures of Deshpande confine to the theory of Julia Kristeva that " the consideration of feminism as marginality offers the position and not the essence, as they exhibit the courage to transcend the marginality and active their epicentric participation in life"(4).

S. J. Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep* is a psychological thriller. His novel presents a psychological thinking of a woman in her teens. Her suffering in regaining lost memories during her adulthood stage and her thirst to find her lost identity are realistically portrayed by the novelist. "The central character, Christine, is beautifully

drawn. It's hard to imagine a more compelling, believable and sympathetic portrayal of a damaged human being" (Hayder 2).

Shashi Deshpande deals with the struggles of women in bound Indian tradition and about male dominated contemporary society. Indian tradition is totally different from the English tradition in London. Western people have different culture and less traditional boundaries. But they too are suppressed by male domination. They control women's independence in society.

Deshpande presents the struggle of women to find and preserve their identity as wife and mother. Deshpande doesn't want her writing to be called feminist writing because she feels her novels are not a man verses woman issues at all. She portrayed the new Indian women and her dilemma in the tradition bound, male dominated Indian society.

Being a woman herself, she sympathizes with women and her main apprehension is for human relationship. *That Long Silence* depicts the women world in an authentic, realistic and credible manner. "In childhood a woman should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband's and when her husband dead, under her son's, she should not have independence" (17).

As an Indian woman it is common to have many traditional boundaries, in a patriarchal society. And in culture they all have certain rules and regulations to carry on throughout their life. But in the novel *Before I Go to Sleep* the story is set in London and the people follow Western culture and tradition. In that S. J. Watson portrays, Christine Lucas as a suppressed woman because the dark man who handles her as a toy and moulds her identity as a typical house wife.

Shashi Deshpande has presented in her novel modern Indian woman's search for the definition of the self in the society. She portrays her heroine in a realistic manner. She deals with the women psyche which is turned to feel inferior and as a burden on the family. Her heroines are courageous enough to revolt against the marginalization of women by men and society. S. J. Watson depicts an American woman, Christine Lucas, who is longing for getting back her erased memory and her quest for identity is the outcome of the novel. Finally, Watson represents the courage of the woman who survives in the society with her memory disorder.

Marriage is still a social necessity, where women seek security and men seek respectability. Jaya and Christine Lucas are the victims of both of their societies. Their journey is toward self-actualization, realization and quest for their identity. Both the novels are similar because of the situations and circumstances their female protagonists face in their respective lives to find their identity. Jaya suffers silently for the sake of family. Inside her marital life she suffers alone to find her identity.

Christine reflects Jaya at many instances. Christine had her own identity in the beginning of the novel but after the accident she loses her memory about the past events. More than twenty years Christine lives in an unconscious state. Every morning she blooms like a new flower with no memories. After her recovery she researches her identity from her past twenty year events. That gave her thirst to analyse herself.

God created human beings and categorised them as men and women, with a few basic differences in body and mind and introduced an element of irresistible attraction between the two sexes to help the process of procreation and survival of species. The question of man- women relationship did not exist in the barbaric age. It came into practice along with the dawn of civilization, when men began to live in

groups, and later formed families, first matriarchal and then patriarchal, and then arise the question, primarily to determine the fatherhood of every new born baby.

It is because of the invention of the institution of marriage which in turn sowed the seeds of the slavery of women. The transition from barbarism to social life had its own advantages. It also compelled that individual should repress his instinctual behaviour and thereby minimize the chances of his life of pleasure. The resultant suffering is shared more by women, because of the social norms and moral codes of society.

From the child, every woman has her own dreams to achieve in her life. Life is full of twist and turns. No one knows what life holds for everyone in their next stage of life. It is like a sea with mysteries and unrevealed secrets. Every woman has a dream to achieve her goal. But in their teens they were caught in the trap of marriage. Because of marriage their dreams, hopes, and beliefs were shattered. Men may think that marriage is a challenge that every woman should overcome in their life. But marriage holds many things that are unknown to men. They hold commitments, responsibilities, sacrifices, bearing children and at last they change themselves like an anchor which holds the family ropes together.

Jaya, as the wife of Mohan undergoes numerous struggles in her marriage putting herself within the traditional mould. The novel speaks of Jaya's disappointment in marriage life and her sufferings in isolation. Shashi Deshpande describes Jaya's marriage life in the image of pair of bullocks, suggesting husband-wife relationship, as they perform their duties mechanically.

Western and Indian culture are extreme contrasts as far as the societal boundaries are concerned. Particular groups have evolved to develop into civilized

societies and have accepted contrasting norms, culture and trends that differentiate them from other societies. Although evolution has not stopped and it will continue forever, it has resulted in the construction of the modern society by placing the traditional society behind the picture. In traditional societies men have always been unquestionably superior making women feel that they are being treated far less than men, having them being punished more often and feeling as if they are to play a submissive role. Campbell describes how women are expected to "... walk behind their men when they are together in public and show them respect" (Campbell 113).

Christine Lucas, wife of Ben Wheeler lives in London. Christine leads her life in Western culture with her lovable husband. As a common husband, Ben did not restrict her within certain boundaries. He supports her as a friend to achieve her dreams. But accident turns her life miserable. In case of that she shuts down herself in the dark pit of hell. After that her life turned mechanical without any moments.

Women are crushed in the hands of men. Jaya is dominated by her husband Mohan and because of that she cannot continue her writing career. She never has an identity of her own. To Mohan, a woman sitting before fire, waiting for her husband to come home and eat her food is the real strong woman, but to Jaya it is nothing more than despair:

> He wanted his rice fresh and hot, from a vessel that was untouched. She had just finished her cooking and was waiting, hoping, perhaps that he would not be too late, for it wouldn't do to allow and as for lighting the fire again, that was unthinkable. (15-16)

Waiting makes a man restless but for a woman the game of waiting starts quite early in her childhood. Women are blamed unfeminine and unnatural if they break the social system and so they are enforced to adhere to be termed feminine.

Christine wakes every morning thinking she is a carefree, twenty years old woman with a bright future ahead. In reality, she is a forty seven years old woman who suffered a terrible attack twenty years ago that has left her unable to retain her memories. She wakes up in a strange bed besides a man whom she does not recognize. The man in the bed tells her that he is her husband Ben, that they have been married before many years. "I need to anchor myself. I close my eyes and try to focus on something, anything, solid. I find nothing. So many years of my life, I think it's missing" (24).

Mike is the man who is acting like her husband and tries to build her past life according to his wish. He partly revealed the incidents which he wanted to let her know. Cunningly, he hides many other secrets like her past love, life style, marriage, child and mainly her identity. Her confusion suppressed her mind and made her weak. Her journal helps her to seek the truth behind that dark man Mike. Her twenty years life span was spent in her unconscious state and her writing career was burnt because of her illegal affair with Mike. Her identity and personality are totally squeezed. "With the whole pat blank. In limbo, balanced between possibility and fact. I'm frightened to discover my past. What I have archived and what I have not" (24).

Through Jaya's character, Deshpande has expressed the ambivalent attitude of an educated independent Indian woman, who can neither reconcile herself to a new situation. When her husband ignores her and crush her ambition in life nor cast off her husband simply just because the husband is like a sheltering tree as she cannot afford

to live without him. But in Christine's life 'husband is like a sheltering tree' verse is accepted. Ben stands like a sheltering tree in Christine's life. With the help of the husband she explored her inner talent as a writer and achieved her goal. She developed her individuality among the male dominated society. Ben cares for her like a child and guides her in the path of success.

Jaya realizes that silence is the key to happiness. She learns to suppress her own wishes and act according to her husband's wish. Women's identity is not shaped individually but in relation to others around them. Men learn self-reliance and self dependence while women learn to take care of others and themselves. "A man is conditioned to it right from the beginning, a woman learns through experience" (Panwar 4).

As an Indian woman, Jaya suppresses her feelings and emotions not to cause inconvenience to her husband and sacrifices her pleasure. Women, thus adopt a life style that binds with others. In Christine's life, she was not denied equality from her husband. He treated her as a better half, as if she is from heaven to lead his life in a beautiful path. "You always seemed so confident, and intense. You would sit for hours, surrounded by books, just reading and taking notes, sipping from cup of coffee or whatever " (64).

Equality for women is not women's issue. When women fulfil their potential, everyone gets benefited from it. Equality means better politics, a more vibrant economy, a work force that draws on the talent of the population and a society. Christine was more independent than other Indian women. As an independent woman, she takes care of herself and her own needs. There is no need to depend on others. She takes her own decision in choosing her path in life. Christine had her own opinion and

believes that she was not afraid to express. She is not a princess waiting in a tower for someone to save her. She has the power to tackle the situation of her own.

After her marriage, Christine published her first novel *The Morning Birds* when she was twenty seven years old and then she was working on her second novel when she lost her memory. "Dr. Nash says about her novel. You were working on your second novel when you lost your memory. Your first was published. It was a success. I would not say it as a best seller, but it was certainly a success" (101).

Her relationship with Mike made her life unsuccessful. She too turned like a common woman. She lost her independent character and became more dependent even for small things. She missed her precious gift, her identity as a writer was robbed from her memory because of that accident. Christine imprisons herself in her throw back memories and walks through the inner self of her mind. Her mind washed out every past incident and left her alone like an empty vessel. "Yes, you don't rely on Ben as much you did on, me?" (38). Christine's fate made herself suffer in the dark world.

Christine's trauma made her travel in search of her identity. Jaya and Christine sail on the same boat in search of their identity. Identity means a lot to them and that defines who they are.

To please her husband, Jaya appears to be a contented house wife married to an apparently caring man with two normal healthy children. Other than family bond, Jaya had two more note worthy things, Jaya's writing career and her friendship with Kamat, her neighbour. Kamat, unlike Mohan, is not a good looking or well groomed man. He is neither wealthy nor socially distinguished. Jaya feels attracted towards him due to his intelligence. She freely shares and exchanges her ideas with him.

Once after her marriage when Jaya was on the threshold of acquiring name and fame Mohan displays his intolerance about a particular story written by Jaya. She knows well that the writer in her could not come to light because of her husband. Jaya did not want to annoy Mohan and take the risk of turning her martial life into a disharmony life. To satisfy Mohan's ego and expectation, Jaya is forced to curb her own creative genius. "Looking at his still face I had been convinced, I had done him wrong. And I had stopped writing after that" (87). She is both smothered and burdened with her own silence.

When Christine recovers from her eighteen years unconscious world she started searching herself inside her. That made her more curious to read her unfolded pages in her life. Her unread pages of life were scribbled by Mike. Her identity was sealed and kept out of his sight and he made her life. Her journey towards the search of her lost identity underwent many miserable things which she can't bear. Inspite of her strong will power she faces many pains and sufferings to revive her lost memories.

Dr. Nash is the only good soul in Christine's life. He helped her to recover her memories. Dr. Nash is clearly an ambitious man who has helped her recover the past memories without the knowledge of Mike. He helps Christine with her memory back up by taking her to places where she once had lived her life, hoping it will inspire new memories.

The biggest thing Dr. Nash does to help Christine, however, is that he asks her to begin writing in a journal. Journal, that helps Christine to look back on her days and see what she has remembered. This journal helps Christine keep track of the things her husband has been telling her and eventually she realized that he has been

lying. "I'm sorry Christine, ' he said. I'm sorry. But I'm doing everything I can, and I think I can help you. I really do. You have to believe that" (130).

Her loneliness is symbolised by a clock mantel piece in the house. "clock mantel piece chimes" (33). It is an ancient clock piece which reflected her state in life. Without any memories Christine is like a mantel piece that has been kept for merely decoration. Day and night clock circles around the numbers. Likewise Christine wasted her half of the life in the dark side of her adulthood. She spends more than fifteen years in the warning house without knowing her identity. Christine forgets her writing career.

Later Jaya begins to write light humorous pieces about the travails of middle class house wife under an assumed name. But her stories do not impress the readers and the reason being, lack of strong emotion, according to her neighbour and friend Kamat. Kamat unlike Mohan is a bitter critic and tells her how she could make them "forceful and hiding" (123). Though Kamat knows fully that Jaya is capable of writing better stuff, he openly scoffs at her writing style.

Jaya suppresses her creative genius only to satisfy Mohan's ego and suffer silently. She has deliberately censored all the anger from the story which she had made mostly impersonal. Moreover Jaya seems to approve her husband's opinion when she argues with Kamat. But Kamat cautions her "Beware of this 'women are the victims' theory of yours. It will drag you down into a soft, squishy bog of self pity. take yourself seriously" (147).

At one moment when Jaya recollects her father's death and becomes emotional, she finds herself in Kamat's arms. Kamat tries to console her. Jaya responding to his touch comes unconsciously closer to him. But Jaya overcomes her

desire only to safe guard her marital relations with Mohan. She feels heart broken when Kamat suffers alone, unattended and dies suddenly. Though she witnessed it she could not pay homage to her well wisher and friend. She remains passive and helpless at the sight of his suffering.

Ben was not like a typical Indian husband. He gave space to his wife to achieve her dream as a writer. But she broke the marital ethics and she was in affair with Mike. She undergoes tricky hide and seek game with Mike in order to explore her hidden pages of life. Her friendship and physical intimacy with Mike clashes Christine's image as a wife and as a mother. Her mother's advice in love and relationship remaind her about the ethics of marriage. So that she decides to end her affair with Mike, but he refused to believe that she no longer wanted him. Her affair burned her adulthood life into ashes. She finally decided that identity is the main part of life and she escapes from Mike. Finally she reached Ben to know about her identity.

Whatever, the world may be modern or traditional. There are some people like Kamat and Dr. Nash. They stand like a ladder for women to reach their success. Their quest for identity voyage came to the conclusion. They decided their own lives and made their decision in the right path. They both search and research their identity in their own lost world. Finally, Christine and Jaya established themselves as a writer and show their own identity to the society.

Chapter Four

Deconstructing Devotedness

'Deconstruction' is the term coined by the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is an approach to understand the relationship between text and meaning. Deconstruction as a theory emerged in the early 1960s. However, it became a literary sight in the late 1970s. Its major proponent is Jacques Derrida. It is build against the backdrop that, a text has single and stable meaning. The theory attacks the general notion that, the author has an autonomous interpretation, and therefore calls for the death of the writer or his absolute silence, as no text has a fixed meaning.

Deconstruction is a term used in contemporary philosophy, literary criticism, and the social sciences, denoting a process by which the texts and languages of Western philosophy appear to shift the refocus and complicate the meaning when read in light of the assumptions and absences they reveal within themselves.

Subjects relevant to deconstruction include the philosophy of meaning in Western thought, and the ways that meaning is constructed by Western writers, texts, and readers and understood by readers. Though Derrida himself denied deconstruction was a method or school of philosophy, or indeed anything outside of reading the text itself, the term has been used by others to describe Derrida's particular methods of textual criticism, which involved discovering, recognizing, and understanding the underlying and unspoken and implicit assumptions, ideas, and frameworks that form the basis for thought and belief.

Hence, deconstructionists believe that the meaning is produced by the reader while they communicate with the text. In fact, they argue that the writer himself does not understand his artistic frame work as the writer, and write under the influence of

some super natural beings that inspire them. It implies that every reader or critic arrives at their own distinct meaning after relating to a text. This further reveals that; a text has multiple meanings embedded inside it at its period of composition; which can only be discovered or unveiled by close reading.

As per the Deconstruction Theory by Jacques Derrida, " the process of reading which unravels the way insane categories are used to suppress different perceptions and behaviours, and it over returns the opposition between illness and health"(73).

The novel *Before I Go to Sleep,* centres on Christiana Lucas, middle aged women who suffers memory loss after a traumatic event. She wakes ûp every morning with no knowledge of who she is and the novel follows her as she tries to reconstruct her memories from a journal. She has been consulting a doctor who is helping her to recover her memory, that her name is Christiana Lucas, who is 47 years old and married. As her journal grows it casts doubts on the truth behind this knowledge. She tries to trace the history of her past memories. Christine's situation leaves her in the issue where she cannot trust anything, including the people around her and her own body.

Christine, who was once a very independent person, must now rely on a man who calls himself her husband. A doctor who is highly ambitious to tell her the truth about her progress, and a friend who has betrayed her in the past to tell her what kind of a person she was in the past and she might be now. It is a difficult situation for Christine, causing her to question who she can trust, wondering if she can even trust her own words, her own memories. She comes to know about her routine while she was reading her journal. The novel concludes by removing the twisted knot inside her memory and her reunion with her husband and her son Adam.

Paul de Man, an influential deconstructionist, "insists on the impossibility of making the actual expression coincide with what has to be expressed, of making the actual signs coincide with what is signified." In other words, language cannot express reality, emphasize in places on how language is used rather than what has been given in the text. Deconstructionists insist on how the writer has twisted his diction. They do not consider what the writer has said; because to them, what he has said can be changed at any time. It can be decentred because it is not transcendentally signified.

Ben and Christine got married in 1845 when she was 27 years old. They both have an idyllic relationship. As a husband, he supports Christine in all her ways. He helped her to achieve her dreams as a writer. "you were working on your second novel when you lost your memory. Your first was published. It was a success. I wouldn't say it was a best seller, but it was certainly a success" (101).

Her first novel was named as *The Morning Birds*. She was working on her second novel when she lost her memory. She lived as an independent woman in the society and she had her own identity. She balanced both her roles as a mother and a writer. Eventually she got a good husband who helped her financially, economically and also maintained the friendly relationship. Claire asserts, "I thought it would be a good idea if you got out of the house. Gave yourself space. A few hours a week, away from everything" (274).

In the mean time she falls in love with the man whom she met regular in the cafe. They both have intimate relationship. That continues for several months without the knowledge of Ben. After that she met with an accident and she lost her memory completely. She was just 29 years old at that time and Adam was just three years old.

Christine has lost what defines herself, what defines who she is, what she is, and where she will go in the future however, Christine finds ways to deal with this loss of self, bring herself back from the darkness and looking into the future with hope. "I want to remember my past. I want to know who I am. Who I married. It's all part of the something" (29).

Christine struggles to remember her past, struggles to retain a memory more than few hours. When Christine begins to have flashes of memory which she had recorded in her journal, most of these memories surround people who she loves. Christine remembers her best friend, Claire, first. The memory is centred on a party, where Claire introduced Christine to Ben, the man to whom she would be married and bear a son with.

Later, Christine remembers the child to whom she gave birth, the little moments in a mother's life that make the struggle of motherhood so worth it. It is love that brings on these memories, love of the people in Christine's life who matter the most before her injury. S. J. Watson portrays Mike as a creator of tragedy in Christine Lucas's life and the villain throughout the novel. He makes her move according to his will by using her amnesia disease as granted. Mike disguised himself as Ben, her original husband.

Deconstruction is often positioned as the opposite of construction: it is taken simply to refer to 'breaking things down' the unravelling of a text's assumptions and the overturning of hierarchies. Derrida's approach consisted of conducting readings of texts looking for things that run counter to the intended meaning or structural unity of a particular text. The purpose of deconstruction is to show that the usage of language in a given text, and language as a whole, are irreducibly complex, unstable, or

impossible. Throughout his readings, Derrida hoped to show deconstruction at work.

As per the novel, Mike is a cheater who cheated Christine as Ben. And he is the one who is the cause of her memory loss. With the help of the Journal Christine came to know about her past mysteries. Day by day her Journal grows, her trust on Mike got diminished and slowly truth comes out of darkness to light. Dr. Nash, who is the neuropsychologist helps her to bring back her memories.

David B. Allison is an early translator of Derrida and states, in the introduction to his translation of *Speech and Phenomena*: signifies a project of critical thought whose task is to locate and 'take apart' those concepts which serve as the axioms or rules for a period of thought, those concepts which command the unfolding of an entire epoch of metaphysics. 'Deconstruction' is somewhat less negative than the Heideggerian or Nietzschean term 'destruction' or 'reversal'; it suggests that certain foundational concepts of metaphysics will never be entirely eliminated. There is no simple 'overcoming' of metaphysics or the language of metaphysics. That is reversal of the situation that is destructing the orginal story and reviewing it from reader's point of view.

The novel *Before I Go to Sleep* may be viewed in a manner absolutely contrasted with the general criticism offered by other critics. Man VS Man that is Ben VS Mike. Both Ben and Mike had played a major role in Christine's personal life. Ben was the husband and Mike was in an illegal relationship with Christine as she is not in a position to remember the details. Ben should have more responsibility than Mike towards Christine. After her injury Ben divorced her and left her alone in the warning house. Dr.Wilson works at the psychiatric hospital where Christine lived for seven years in the aftermath of her attack. "The bedroom is strange. Unfamiliar. I

don't know where I am, how I came to be here. I don't know how I'm going to get home" (17).

Christine lives with a man who calls himself her husband for four months. For all those months, this man tells Christine that she was injured in a car accident, that they have been married for many years, she was an overly qualified secretary, not a novelist, that they never had children and then that she had a son who died during the Afghanistan war and he died as a proud soldier.

Christine has no way of remembering them and comparing these details to the truth until she begins writing them down in a journal. Soon, Christine begins to see the lies, but she allows herself to believe that they were told for her benefit, to protect her from the grief of the truth. Mike loves Christine very much and she is everything to him. He has a fear of losing her and he had no idea of leaving her at any circumstances. His inner fear made him hide her past from her sight. So that he himself hid behind Ben:

> Ben goes on. 'I teach in a secondary school nearby. I am the head of the department now.' He says it with no hint of ride 'you had to give up work. After your accident. You don't do anything.' He must sense my disappointment. 'You don't need to . I earn a good enough wage. We get by. We're OK.' (26).

Christine struggles with the loss of memory and she searches herself inside her. Throughout the novel, Christine expresses shock at her own body. Christine wakes up every morning thinking that she is only twenty years old, or even younger, but later she discovers that her body is forty-seven. Even as Christine begins to remember more and more about her past, about her friends, about her family, and the

attack that left her so terribly brain damaged. She fails to accept the idea that she is no longer in her teens. In that critical situation Ben gave lame excuses and escapes from the life of Christine. He divorced Christine and leaves her at warning house more than twelve years. Then he never turns to the warning house.

In that case Mike uses the situation to take care of her illness. He moved to a new house and set up everything like they both are husband and wife. He changed everything for her. He changed himself as a responsible man, he cooked daily for her and he went to a regular job. For his lovable soul Christine he created a mini beautiful world inside the house.

Christine cannot retain a memory for longer than a single day. Once Christine enters deep sleep, all the memories she has regained in a day of living are wiped clean and she begins again from her blank memories the following day, making the same memories and struggling to hold on to them. For this reason, Christine is deeply depended on the people around her. This makes it easy for Christine to fall for lies.

In his essay Structure, Sign, Play in the Discourse of Human Science, Derrida firstly describes the idea of free play, which is a decentering of systems within the systems themselves. Centering of systems is supposed to limit free play, yet this centering of system, designed to give coherence to the system, is contradictory because it is there by force of desire, not by any fundamental principle. The basis of a structure comprises of historic pattern and repetition that can be observed through historical record, and these patterns comprise of a series of substitution for the centre. The moment of substitution, which Derrida called "rupture" is the moment when the pattern or repetition reasserts itself through decentering and recentering the structure, an example of free play disrupting history.

Three major critiques of decentering, Heidegger, Freud and Nietsche use the language of metaphysics to breakdown, critique, deconstruct the principles of metaphysics itself. The development of concepts gave birth to opposing sides.

For discursive psychologists the focus on intentionality is in terms of identifying it as something being done by participants the hitherto 'inner feelings', such as intentions and attitudes, becomes part of the focus of analysis, rather than being enrolled as some kind of explanatory framework. Offering a self as fixed in some way, as possessing particular intentions or attributes, does particular business, as does the suggestion of fixity in others.

Discursive psychology shows that it can be a way of doing blaming, justifying, and for psychologists it can be a way of 'kicking away the textual ladder' of replicating logo-centric transcendental signifiers. The problem is that as psychologists, we are so used to things like attitudes and intentions in an explanatory way that needs strategies to overcome this.

Mike is the one who takes care of Christine in his house at North London, after her accident. Psychological love of Mike towards Christine is the main theme dealt within the story. Love is the most precious thing on the universe. Loving someone and having them back is the most important thing in life.

Love encompasses a range of strong and positive emotional and mental states, from the most sublime virtue or good habit, the deepest interpersonal affection and to the simplest pleasure. That reflects the human kindness, affection and compassion, as "the unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another" (23).

Charles Dickens affirms the idea that "Loving heart is the truest wisdom" (89). Likewise Mike has loving heart who longs for Christine's love. The only thought of Mike is besotted and to have Christine forever in his life. His character is

considered as a psycho throughout the novel because of his vengefully blind love towards her. Love is blind it is a universally accepted verse.

As a husband Ben is lost as he doesn't take up his responsibilities of a husband. During her meeting with Claire, Christine learns that Claire had an illegal sexual relationship with her husband during her recovery. Thus the author reveals the real face of Ben behind the mask. Because of Ben's decision Christine faces lot of struggles in her empty world. Her memories were robbed and she imprisons herself in her dark world. So, her adulthood days were burnt into ashes. Christine has been unable to retain new memories and lost her individual identity:

> There are two of me, now, in the same body: one is a forty-seven-year-old women, calm, polite, aware of what kind of behaviour is appropriate and what is not and the other is in her twenties, and screaming. (34)

Mike is a real man. He accepted her flaws and understands her like her mother. He shows more affection and care towards Christine. "I know but don't worry Chris. I'll look after you. I'll always look after you. You'll be fine. Trust me"(21). Mike is referred to as Ben during the bulk of the novel because he has told Christine that he is her husband Ben. Mike is a man with whom Christine was having an affair in the months before her attack in the hotel in Brighton.

A few weeks before her attack, Christine ended her affair with Mike, but he refused to believe that she no longer wanted him. Mike lured Christine to a hotel in Brighton and attacked her, leaving her for dead. Christine survived the attack, but suffered such devastating head injury that she can no longer retain memories for significant amount of time.

Over the years, Mike has watched over Christine, keeping note of her progress when the real Ben divorced Christine and moved on with his life, Mike felt that this was a cruelty and he decided to take up the responsibility of her. Christine has been seeing a doctor secretly and has contacted her friend Claire. Mike takes Christine to the same hotel where he previously attacked her.

Mike has two sides in his character, one end he had happiness, infatuation, passion, which motivated his love for Christine and the other end he welled up jealous, danger, fear, anger and violence that arises out of fear of losing her. He behaves like a common man but he has his own inner strength of character. When she was with Mike she too falls for Mike's care and affection that she noted in her journal. "When there is nothing else between us but love, we can begin to find a way to truly be together" (270). Mike gave her the mother's feel and he takes care of Christine throughout the day inside his hand. Mike shows her a fake world but her real world was worse than being fake. Mike cared for her in all possible her ways, but Christine struggles between love and her own identity:

> 'No more secrets,' I will say to my husband. 'None. I love you, Ben, and I always will. We have wronged each other. But please forgive me. I am sorry that I left you all those years ago to be with somebody else, and I am sorry that we can never know who it was I went to see in that hotel room, or what I found that but please know that I determined to make this up to you now'.(290)

Mike was more affected inside his mind that made him behave like a psycho. Psychoanalytically, a psycho will have aggressive drives. When a person in that state they are not aware of that, they do they struck in unconscious level. Mike is a dark

man who believes his love for Christine overshadows the need for the truth. Mike wants Christine to love him the way she implied she might do, not love another man someone else's child. Love is an important theme in this novel, it is love that causes Christine to remember her past and inspires her to keep fighting to hold on to those memories.

Mike is more truthful to Christine. But he uses duplicity to win her back, but his love is violent, and leads Christine down to a path that nearly leads her to her death. That one thing which investigated his temper is the fear of losing her. It is also love that has placed Christine in her precious position with Mike, a different kind of love, but love nonetheless. Without love, Mike would never have taken Christine from warning house and pamper her like a child.

Chapter Five

Summation

The human mind the manipulating factor of the entire human body, is controlled by invisible forces, both divine and earthly, which shape a person's personality. The moral, ethical and societal elements jointly comprise the inner soul. The stable psyche an individual enjoys and his untumultuous life are directly correlated. Hence, the examination of the factor which contribute to the psychology of a human being is of vital importance in the current scenario of degrading psychological conditions.

Literature, an ideal medium that disseminates the outward appearances in the shred of reality, best magnifies the collective spirit of the society. A novel or any work of art with a purpose imprints, its impact more deeply on the hearts of people, than those written for pleasure. Hence, the literature which illuminates the internal self of humanity, or a particular race in general, ought to have as in depth study, to delivered the effect which the author intends.

Political and social forces always make this imprint on literature. Especially in America, where the democratic process brings the people into immediate familiarity with and evokes sensitive response to cultural forces, the literature had responded quickly to such pressures. Many themes reappear in different forms during different literary periods. The search for identity, individualism, freedom, moral struggle and rebellion vs conformity were the burning issues of the period that preoccupied the minds of Americans.

According to the Western concept, contemporary literature is reactionary in tendency. Most often, the writer reacts and opposes to the happenings around him. Chinua Achebe's *The Novelist as a Teacher* talk about this: "He is in revolt against society which in turn look on him with suspicion, if not hostility" (181).

Contemporary Literature ironically reflects on a society's political, social and individual's opinion and criticism. It reflects the recent trends in life, culture, style etc. These things often exchange and so the flow of the contemporary literature is fluid.

American Literature mirrors the societal injustice upon the women by men, and the strained psychology they suffer as a result. The psychology literature details the powerful influence of man towards woman in personal relationship. As literature throws the light upon the truth of life, it deals with the suppression and the isolation of woman with much intensity. All these strains of domination culminate into a comprehensive whole in the novel, *Before I Go to Sleep.*

Steve John Watson resigned from his job from the National Health Service just before his fortieth birthday to pursue his writing dream. The UK Physics graduate, Steve John Watson made the decision to downsize his flourishing National Health Service in London while dabbling with writing by the side, until he decided, "that to be truly happy in myself I could need to stop thinking of my writing as a hobby and give it the space and time that increasingly thought it deserved" (76).

S. J. Watson has carved with utmost perfection, the internal selves of the American woman, and presents the problematic life of Christine because of her strained relationship with a man who claimed himself to be her husband which resulted in losing her identity and pushed her into the dark side of life. In suffering,

her psychology was neatly drawn by the Watson. That's the main reason to deconstruct her love towards Mike than Ben.

This project studies the psyche of Mike, by contrasting it with that of Ben. Mike's is considered as a psycho. He hid himself behind Ben because of his violent and biased treatment towards Christine. However, Christine is the cause for the degradation of her own mind. Christine who scorns herself for the sinful life she leads, has a sinful self hidden beneath the faithful Ben.

Since the novel begins with the description of Christine's piteous state in the unknown place it is evident that the prime purpose of the novelist is to showcase the isolated life of Christine. Therefore, the penetration into the internal self of Christine, to figure out the cause for her destruction, gives a new dimension to the studies in American Literature.

A young woman wakes up in bed next to a man. She doesn't know the bed. She doesn't know the man. The woman is young and single. The man is much older. And he is wearing a wedding ring. Things, however, soon take a sinister turn. The young woman scurries to the bathroom, shuts the door and stares into the mirror:

> The face I see looking back at me is not my own. The hair has no volume and is cut much shorter than I wear it; the skin on the cheeks and under the chin sags; the lips are thin; the mouth turned down. I cry out. The person in the mirror is me, but I am twenty years old. Twenty five. More. This isn't possible. (7)

The young woman does not know who she is. She wracks her brain, searching for clues. With growing dread she realizes her mind is blank, her past a mystery. This

is life beyond mere confusion or disorientation. Watson presents a character existing in a condition of perpetual now-ness, a present without context, a life without history.

Christine Lucas is suffering from various kinds of amnesia, where she forgets everything as soon as she wakes up. Slowly, she learns that her memories gave up on her due to a traumatising incident in the past. Then the young doctor's interest in Christine's case makes her learn her past in pieces for which she is not very grateful about. Gradually, she maintains a journal which reveals a lot of secrets that do not make proper sense. When she tries to put the pieces together they do not fit. She does not understand whether her memory is failing her or the person she trusts with her life is fooling her.

Memory is the main theme of the novel. Christine's journal shows how Christine begins each day with little memory of the past twenty or so years of her life. Eventually a picture emerges: Ben, Christine's husband and caretaker, isn't being entirely honest with Christine. He omits certain details when he tells her of their past, and as her therapy starts working and Christine begins to recall bits and pieces of that past, she grows more and more confused by Ben's omissions.

Christine's life plays hide and seek with her memory and with the identity. The identity she had in the beginning of her marital life is lost because of her strained affair. Her chained confusion with the present life made her life miserable. Quest for identity is the main issue that every woman deals with in her life. Whatever culture they follow they all have a thirst for their identity.

The two novels *That Long Silence* and *Before I Go to Sleep* are compared for the study of the cultural boundaries between Western and Indian culture and the sufferings that Jaya and Christine faced to achieve their identity.

Identity is a much debated term in postcolonial literature. The historical, cultural and ideological circumstances prevalent in the alien and native societies enmesh the protagonists. They become victims of despair and loneliness as they feel the people around them asking them, 'Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here? perplexity of the protagonists caused by the binary opposition results in identity crisis. Columas establishes, "identity is a multilayered dynamic process rather than an inborn trait that cannot be helped. Identities are partly given and partly made" (178).

In an effort to suggest a schematic account of feminism, Susan James characterizes feminism as follows:

> Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretation of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program (576).

Western and Indian culture are extremely contrasted tactics in a society. Particular groups have evolved to develop into civilized societies and have accepted contrasting norms, culture and trends that differentiate them from other societies. Although evolution has not stopped and it will continue forever, it has resulted in the construction of the modern society by placing the traditional society behind the picture.

Christine's trauma made her travel in search of her identity. Jaya and Christine sail on the same boat in search of their identity. Identity means a lot to them and that defines who they are.

When Christine eighteen years of abyss recovers from her in the unconscious world she started searching herself inside her. That made her more curious to read the unfolded pages of her life. Her unread pages of life were scribbled by Mike. Her identity was sealed and kept out of his sight and he made her life. Her journey towards the search of her lost identity underwent many miserable things which she can't bear. Her strong will power faces much pain and sufferings to backup her lost memories.

At one moment when Jaya recollects her father's death and becomes emotional, she finds herself in Kamat's arms. Kamat tries to console her. Jaya responding to his touch comes unconsciously closer to him. But Jaya overcomes her desire only to safe guard her marital relations with Mohan.

Christine's friendship and physical intimacy with Mike clashes with Christine's image of herself as a wife and as a mother. Her mother's advice in love and relationships reminds her about the ethics of marriage. So that she decides to end her affair with Mike, but he refused to believe that she no longer wanted him. Her affair burned her adulthood life into ashes.

They decided how they should lead their life and took right decision. They both search and research their identity in their own lost world. Finally, Christine and Jaya put their anchor as a writer and show their own identity to the society.

Charles Dickens affirms the idea that "Loving heart is the truest wisdom" (89). Likewise Mike has a loving heart who longs for Christine's love. The only thought of Mike is besotted and to have Christine forever in his life. His character is considered as a psycho throughout the novel because of his vengefully blind love towards her. Love is blind it is a universally accepted verse.

Identity and Love are the two phases of Christine's life. Love of Mike has placed Christine in a precious position. His psycho love was justified by the application of deconstruction theory.

Hence, deconstructionists believe that the meaning is produced by the reader while they communicate with the text. In fact, they argue that the writer himself do not understand his artistic frame work as the writer, and write under the influence of some super natural beings that inspire them. It implies that every reader or critic arrives at their own distinct meaning after relating to a text. This further reveals that; a text has multiple meanings embedded inside it at its period of composition; which can only be discovered or unveiled by close reading.

As a husband Ben lost his responsibilities. During her meeting with Claire, Christine learns that Claire had an illegal sexual relationship with her husband during her period of recovery. Thus the author reveals the real face of Ben behind the mask. Because of Ben's decision Christine faces a lot of struggles in her empty world. Her memories were robbed and she imprisons herself in her dark world. So, her adulthood days were burnt into ashes. Christine has been unable to retain new memories and lost her individual identity. Mike has two sides in his character, one end he had happiness, infatuation, passion, all that made him to love madly and the other end he hold jealously, danger, fear, anger and violence that brings fear of losing her.

> 'No more secrets,' I will say to my husband. 'None. I love you, Ben, and I always will. We have wronged each other. But please forgive me. I am sorry that I left you all those years ago to be with somebody else, and I am sorry that we can never know who it was I went to see in that hotel room, are what I found that but please know that I determined to make this up to you now.'(290)

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Carnivalistic Vision of the World: A Study of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

SABEETHA K.

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Carnivalistic Vision of the world: A Study of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Sabeetha K. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Guide

25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Carnivalistic Vision of the World: A Study of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Sabeetha K

THOOTHUKUDI **SABEETHA K.**

OCTOBER 2019

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PREFACE

Saul Bellow, the man of great literary excellence reinvigorated the English language and gave voice to the most memorable characters in the canons of American Literature. The project entitled **Carnivalistic Vision of the world: A Study of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King***. He adopted many spiritual techniques which also include the journey in transcendence.

The first chapter- **Introduction** holds the biography of great American Novelist – Saul Bellow who had the rare combination of gifts that promise to keep him permanently in the American Consciousness both as a personality and as a writer.

The second chapter **Plot Construction** narrates the summary of the novel *Henderson the Rain King.*

The third chapter **Identity Crisis** includes Bellow's idea on self identity of individual and how he struggles to identify himself is portrayed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter **Journey in transcendence** reveals Bellow's views on transcendentalism, and shows that though Bellow admired the idealistic thinking of Transcendentalism, he understood the pragmatic nature of man, and the need to survive as well as create.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project

Chapter One

Introduction

Saul Bellow is regarded as one of the most celebrated authors of the 20th century most resourceful writer for all times. He is one of the most erudite and intellectual writers of the second half of the twentieth century, belongs to the humanist wing, as he is a unique spokesman for humanitarian values and ideals in American literature. Since his appearance on the literary scene the mid forties, Saul Bellow, recipient of the 1976 Nobel Prize for literature, has left his mark on the international literary world. His writings, which combine prophetic wisdom with human comedy, have always elicited extreme reverence or condemnation.

In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started a movement known as Transcendentalism. Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which urges resistance to dictates of organized society. Nathaniel Hawthorne who influenced Herman Melville, is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's two greatest 19th century poets were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. American poetry reached its peak with such noted writers as Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost and E.E. Cummings in the 20th century. Mark Twain was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James was notable for novels like *The Turn of the Screw*.

Bellow has been a most persevering chronicler of America's restless search for a definable self, articulating more common needs and ills of American society at large. Bellow's fiction typically address the meaning of human existence in an increasingly impersonal and mechanistic world. Writing in a humorous anecdotal style, Bellow often depicts introspective individuals sorting out a conflict between

Old world and New world values while coping with personal anxieties and aspirations.

Each of his novels feels the pulse of its decade, exposing the social and intellectual issues at hand. None of his works allow for easy identification or rejection. As a consequence, none have gone uncontended the controversies they address seem to beckon our response. American novels of quest lay emphasis on the nature of human freedom. The heroes of quest novels do not balance between their fear of being entrapped into some fixed forms of existence, and that of having an amorphous identity or no identity at all.

Critic Nathan A. Scott speaks of their various forms of philosophical recoil into the ivory tower, into sensibility, into disgust, into nightmare, or into tragic catharsis. The problem for the contemporary novelist has been and is still the formidable task of deciding what fiction might say or be after the modern period of radical experimentation ended with the virtual rejection of language and literature itself.

Saul Bellow is perhaps the foremost among a handful of postwar novelists to have successfully thrown over the preoccupation of the moderns with cultural and religious dissolution, metaphysical loneliness, romantic agony, and estrangement. And he has been the foremost enemy of those derivative postwar novelists who, unable or unwillingly to question the existentialist foundations of the modernist orthodoxy they inherited, have found the permanent home in the wasteland or its neighboring ghettos.

Likewise, he has condemned the other popular literary alternatives to modernism the clever but sallow comic celebration of absurdism, the navete of shaky,

hastily refurbished neo humanism or the pseudo literary muck raking naturalism of yet another group.

Bellow has sought to steer a moderate course between the excess of disappointed idealism and nihilistic rage characteristic of much modern literature. Though the antiseptic and corrective device of parody, he has held up for our scrutiny the false intellectual assumptions behind modernist ideologies concerning death, absurdity, mass society, estrangement, and stoicism, while at the same time he has turned upside down the reasoning of the wasteland ideologists, lawrentian primitivists.

Hopefully, *Henderson the Rain King* has helped to liberate postwar fiction from the self-pity of modernism as successfully as Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* helped to liberate late nineteenth-century realistic fiction from the pathological excess of Gothic horror and romance.

The centre of Saul Bellow's fictional universe was Chicago, where he grew up and spent most of his life, and which he made into the first city of American letters. Many of his works are set there, and almost all of them have a Midwestern earthiness and brashness. Like their creator, Mr. Bellow's heroes were all head and all body both. They tended to be dreamers, questers or bookish intellectuals, but they lived in a lovingly depicted world of cranks, con men, fast-talking salesmen and wheeler-dealers.

In novel *The Adventures of Augie March*, published in 1953. *Henderson the Rain King* and *Herzog*, Mr. Bellow laid a path for old-fashioned, supersized characters and equally big themes and ideas. Mr. Bellow said that of all his characters Eugene Henderson, of *Henderson the Rain King*, a quixotic violinist and pig farmer

who vainly sought a higher truth and a moral purpose in life, was the one most like himself.

At the same time, some of his novellas and stories were regarded as more finely wrought. All his work, long and short, was written in a distinctive, immediately recognizable style that blended high and low, colloquial and mandarin, wisecrack and aphorism. Mr. Bellow stuck to an individualistic path, and steered clear of cliques, fads and schools of writing.

Saul Bellow was a great admirer of, among others, John Cheever, William Fulkner, Ralph Ellison, Cormac Mccarthy, Denis Johnson, Joyce Caroll Oates and James Dickey. Mr. Bellow grew up reading the Old Testament, Shakespeare and the great 19th century Russian novelists and always looked with respect to the masters, even as he tried to recast himself in the American idiom. A scholar as well as teacher, he read deeply and quoted widely, often referring to Henry James, Marcel Proust and Gustave Flaubert.

But at the same time he was apt to tell a joke coined by Henry Youngman. While others were ready to proclaim the death of the novel, he continued to think of it as a vital form. Fiction is the higher autobiography, Mr. Bellow once said, and in his subsequent novels, he often adapted facts from his own life and the lives of people he knew. *Humboldt* was a version of the poet Delmore Schwartz; Henderson is based on chandler Chapman, a son of the writer John Jay Chapman.

With *Henderson the Rain King* in 1959, Mr. Bellow envisioned an even more ambitious canvas than that of *Augie March*, with the story of an American millionaire who travels in Africa in search of regeneration. Mr. Bellow, who had never been to Africa, regarded that novel as a turning point. *Augie March*, he said later, was a little unruly and out of control; with Henderson he had full command of his creative

powers. *Henderson* was followed in 1946 by *Herzog*, with the title character a Jewish Everyman who is cuckolded by his wife and his best friend.

Bellow's warty, thronging thrilling style is in place throughout *Henderson the Rain King*, and short of opening the book at random, one seems to describe and embody the joy of reading Bellow with its own zany, energetic figuration. Right out of the gate there's hokiness, a reflexive corniness leave in to Bellow to leap from self-rebuke to the cosmos in the span of a single clause but also a raw exhilaration. This sentence falls early in the book, as Eugene Henderson plods out into the African bush, in search of relief more than salvation.

Bellow's characters always seem afflicted, pecked by their mistresses and wives and parents and children. Henderson is a brute, a buffoon, an egotist, and a lunatic: he can get away from anything except from himself. And that's where this book, this sentence, and Bellow in general all seem to excel, in these drastic, cosmic, Whitmanesque expansions. The key to the sentence is in its metaphor: the stars that flame 'like oranges'.

It's that shuttlecock that passes so relentlessly between the metaphysical the mystic and the mundane, that defines him, that makes him, so much more than a boring novelist of the self. This sentence is filled, of courses, with tension: with exploding gas and mild sky; the exotica of the African prairie and the homeliness of domestic life. Bellow had never been to Africa when he wrote *Henderson the Rain King*, and it's easy to see in these thrilling descriptions the egotistic congratulation of a writer inventing the very cradle of civilization of beauty, and beyond the limits of the speaker's own boundless self-regard, Bellow gives something else, legitimately ecstatic.

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Bellow's first novel owes a large debt to the wasteland modernism that he would explicity reject during the late 1940's. *Dangling Man* is an existentialist diary that owes much to Fyodor Dostoevski's Notes from the Underground. The demoralized protagonist Joseph is left "dangling" as he waits to be drafted during World War II. A moral casualty of war; he has no sense of purpose and feels weary of a life that seems boring, trivial, and cruel. Excessively self-conscious and critical of those around him, he spends most of his time alone, writing in his journal. He can no longer continue his past work, writing biographical essays on philosophers of the Enlightenment.

Bellow's next novel, *The Victim*, also depicts a passive protagonist who is unable to overcome his victimization. As Bellow admitted, the novel is partially modeled on Dostoevski's *The Eternal Husband* and uses the technique of the doppelganger as Dostoevski did in *The Double*. Bellow's novel presents the psychological struggle between Asa Leventhal, a Jew, and Kirby Allbee, his Gentile "double". Aderelict without a job, Allbee suggests that Leventhal is responsible for his grim fate. Leventhal ponders the problem of his guilt and responsibility and tries to rid himself of his persecuting double. Despite his efforts to assert himself, he is still "dangling" at the end of the book still a victim of forces that, he believes, are beyond his control.

The short novel *A Theft* was published in 1989. *A Theft* is a detailed exploration of the soul of the heroine. Clara Velde was brought up on old-time religion but has led a disorganized life, including disappointing love affairs, suicide attempts, and four marriages. Her fourth marriage is not successful, and she is actually in love with "an old flame," Ithiel Regler, a Henry Kissinger-like high-powered adviser to statesmen. For Clara, transcendent love between her and Ithiel is

symbolized by an emerald ring that he gave her years ago. When this ring is stolen, Clara finds herself in a troubling search for it and experiences a kind of spiritual quest as well. She feels a special sense of kinship with herself possessed au pair girl, Gina.

The Adventures of Augie March is the novel in which Bellow found his voice. Augie, its picaresque hero, declares himself "a Columbus of those near- at- hand", by which he means a discoverer of new fictional territory, since he himself narrates his adventures. The "reality instructors" and "Machiavellis of small street and neighbourhood" that Augie delights in portraying, most of them Jewish, come from Bellow's childhood and youth in immigrant Chicago. The freedom he seeks from their "get real" outlook is the freedom Bellow himself sought. " Look at me!" Augie cries in the final paragraph, " going everywhere"; by which he means, as Philip Roth puts it, " going where his pedigreed betters would'nt have believed he had any right to go".

It is not only those near-at-hand that Augie depicts. Bravura episodes are set in Mexico, in Paris, in Depression-era boxcars. Chief among reality instructors is Augie's brother Simon, a thinly fictionalized portrait of Bellow's brother Maury, "the totally American brother", the totally Chicago brother. "Maury overpowered me", Bellow later confessed, " and in a sense he let me to write *The Adventures of Augie March.*

For Bellow, Chicago was "one of the terns that expressed the depth of our penetration into the physical world". The power of the city "lay in things and the methods by which they were produced". The Chicago sections of *Humboldt's Gift*, the funniest of Bellow's novels, offer a wide range of character types, including real and wannabe gangsters, high-powered academics, vengeful wives, femmes fatalism expensive lawyers with particular relish, partly because he suffered so at their hands.

Tomchek is too important for Charlie citrine, the novel's narrator "He wouldn't put you in his fish tank for an ornament" Pinsker, hired by Charlie's shrewish wife, Denise, who is bleeding him dry, is known as" Cannibal" Pinsker, "that man-eating kike". Both are "completely at home in the fallen world", a world Charlie, like Bellow, both attracted to and deplores. "Chicago with its gigantesque outer life," Charlie declares, "contained the whole problem of poetry and the inner life in America".

The non-Chicago sections of the novel, involving the poet Von Humboldt Fleii, author of *The Closing of the American Mind*, a bestselling polemic against trends in university education. To some, the novel's portrait of Bloom as Ravelstein is a betrayal; to others, it is as much what Bloom would have wanted as the narrator's portrait of Ravelstein is what his friend Ravelstein is what his friend wants. Ravelstein is a homosexual, as was Bloom, whose sexual orientation was known to friends and colleagues, though not to the wider public. Ravelstein dies of Aids, or complications from Aids which Bloom may have died from as well. According to Bellow, the novel was, in effect, solicited by Bloom, just as Ravelstein solicits Chick, the narrator, a biographer of sorts, "to do me as you did Keynes, but on a bigger scale...Be as hard on me as you like." For Chick, as for Bellow, "it was up to me to interpret his wishes and to decide just to what extent I was freed by his death to respect the essentials".

Bellow was drawn to larger-than-life figures and his fiction is as filled with theme as the novels of Dickens or Balzag are. Ravelstein is last of their number,a brilliantly funny and eccentric character, as exotic and colourful in the grey academic landscape of Chicago's Hyde Park as the flocks of escaped parrots who nest in its back alleys and tall shrubs." You don't easily give up a character like Ravelstein to death," is the novel.

Henderson the Rain King, Saul Bellow's fifth novel published in the year of 1959, tells a story mainly about Henderson who is an American millionaire. Besides his great wealth from the family heritage, Henderson is in good health and has a beautiful wife. Despite all of these, the hero suffers an unbearable spiritual crisis and all aspects of his life turn into chaos.

In addition, there is a ceaseless voice crying "I want, I want" in his deep heart. In order to find some remedy for the rest of his life and seek the truth and wisdom of life, Henderson leaves America and takes a travel to the remote continent of Africa which is a symbolic of nature. In Africa, Henderson, totally immerse himself in the primitive scene of Africa and goes to two tribes named Arnewi and Wariri respectively.

Upon reaching Africa, Henderson splits with his original group and hires native guide, Romilayu. Romilayu leads Henderson to the village of the Arnewi. Where Henderson befriends the leaders of village. He learns that the cistern from which the Arnewi get their drinking water is plagued by frogs thus rendering the water unclean according to local taboos. Henderson attempts to save the Arnewi by ridding them of the frogs, but his enthusiastic scheme ends in disaster.

Henderson and Romilayu travel on to the village of the wariri. Here, Henderson impulsively performs a feat of strength by moving the giant wooden statue of the goddess Mummah and unwittingly becomes the Wariri Rain King, Sungo. He quickly develops a friendship with the native-born but western-educated Chief, King Dahfu, with whom he engages in a series of far-reaching philosophical discussions. The elders send Dahfu, to find a lion which is supposedly the reincarnation of the late King, Dahfu's father.

The lion hunt fails and the lion mortally wounds the king. Henderson learns shortly before Dahfu's death that the Rain King is the next person in the lion of succession for the throne. Having no interest in being king and desiring only to return home, Henderson flees to the Wariri village. Although it is unclear whether Henderson has truly found spiritual contentment, the novel ends on an optimistic and uplifting note.

The novel *Henderson the Rain King* seems to be a culmination of Bellow's stylistic and thematic development. First, Bellow introduced his first non-Jewish protagonist as the central focus of the novel. The introduction of a non-Jewish hero in Henderson the Rain King, illustrates a change and development in Bellow's moral point of view. It indicates that Bellow did not confine himself to the traditional Jewish perspective of his earlier novels any longer, but instead, was willing to concern the broader issues of American culture, Secondly, numerous critics abroad and at home have analyzed Bellow's life and his works, but little attention has been paid to his concept of nature, for most of his works are set in cities.

Bellow's heroes are identifiable; they have names, families, jobs, with the one exception of Henderson, they live in familiar environments-large cities such as New York and Chicago. They are American, often Jewish intellectuals, sometimes immigrants from Central Europe, always very intelligent. They all sense the disintegration and erosion of the self and society. They recognize that many of the cultural, social, and intellectual foundations of the contemporary world are crumbling.

In Bellow's novels, therefore, the individual is seen in conflict with society and with himself. But Bellow remains well within the humanist tradition. Indeed he is conscious of the chaos of the world and of the arbitrary quality of civilized society; he perceives contradictions, paradoxes, even inhuman monstrosities in everyday

activities, but he sees escape as a refusal or an impossible or an impractical society and civilization. Whatever their drawbacks, are still the only solution mankind has been able to come up with; and as a result western society, the western megalopolis, is where man must learn to survive.

Bellow shifts the responsibility for failure or success to man, the individual and by doing so he asserts his dignity, affirms his potentialities, and exalts the nature of man. Man is shown as capable of altering his condition. Bellow's heroes suffer defeats, certainly; but their salvation is in turning those experiences, which could be disastrous, into acceptable stances. Bellow's heroes do not take passivity, resignation, or self-pity for an answer.

They are victims of society but also of their own sense of right and wrong, and they engage in a constant process of self examination. They never find fully satisfying solutions to their dilemmas, naturally, but they all travel some distance on the way to self-knowledge, mostly through their enormous resilience and the merciless irony with which they confront life.

Everywhere in his fiction, Bellow affirms the existence, meaning, and value of the ordinary. He works in the tradition of realistic social and psychological literature. Even though there is a large amount of fantasy in *Henderson the Rain King.* Henderson's commonsense and deep sense of humor prevents the novel from being diffused into utter improbability. Because they are human, the characters remain real and because Henderson views them critically and humorously, the circumstances and humorously; the circumstance and the locales retain an air of plausibility that is characteristic of Bellow.

Chapter Two

Plot Construction

In the novel *Henderson the Rain King*, Eugene Henderson is a millionaire, eccentric, powerful and physically big built, suffer from apparently irrational violence. He finds himself before his trip to Africa, to be living in a world of Masquerades and attempts to learn the violin, like his father. Whenever he is with the violin he insists to maintain and follow discipline and he believes that this would help him find angels and heaven, "I thought if I discipline myself, eventually the voice of angels may come" (29). The search of Henderson involves the search for a higher reality.

The search that Eugene Henderson undergoes can be represented as the search for a meaning outside the ordinary material life. The search is made to know and experience transcendentalists' thoughts of the high order. An individual who yearns for something nobler may not be satisfied with the idle life he leads. The life that Henderson's life appears ordinary. Hence he undertakes the search. The experiences in his life compel him to undertake the journey of quest through Africa.

Henderson's wife Lily never fulfills his expectations. She is found to be neglecting her duty as wifeand mother. She often gets engaged in the task of drawing and creating portraits. This excessive involvement makes her neglect the duty to her daughter, Ricey. Ricey gets dismissed from school. Henderson had to accept the dismissal. It is a great shock to him and soon he has another shock, the death of Miss Lenox who is his friend and neighbor. Lily has little emotional response to these happenings at home and she only involves in establishing her paintings. Henderson is an onlooker and a witness of these Happenings which makes him reflect:

> And I though, "oh, shame, shame! oh, crying shame! How can we? Why do we allow ourselves? What are we doing? The last little room of dirt is waiting, without, too, will out windows, so for God's sake make a move...you will remain, too, will die of this pestilence. Death will annihilate you and nothing will remain while something still is...now! For the sake of all, get out. (37)

Henderson realizes that many things are going out of his control and so he wants to seek something beyond his family life. Life on earth forces him to undertake a journey to know and experience something better and nobler. He hears of Charlie Albert who is going to make a trip to Africa with his wife and he decides to go with them to Africa. He informs Lily of the journey and begins to make preparations. He acknowledges that though he did not have any specific job at Africa, he wishes a remedy for his situation and hence he undertakes the trip. He has a vision and he cannot rest.

The journey that Henderson undertakes suggests deeper significance and interpretation. The Arnewi tribe and others living in the interior parts of Africa only appear as agents to promote consciousness and awareness in Henderson. Romilayu leads him through the area and they reach the plateau of Hinchagara and finally arrive at the bed of the river Arnewi. The people who live here are known as Arnewi and are named of the river. They are a gentle tribe consisting of people who worship cattle. He is disturbed by thoughts of his wife and children. Slowly these thoughts vanish from his memory and he continues his journey. He is introduced to Itelo, the prince who could speak in English. Henderson learns that the other person who speaks in English is Dahfu, the Wariri king. Henderson is introduced to the tribe, queen and

others. He learns that the people are very affectionate to their cattle but the cattle leave the place one by one. The cattle go in search of water because none of the cattle touch the available water source. Henderson takes up the charge of inspecting the water service so that he could make it convenient for use. He goes to the place with the prince and finds it full of frogs. They appear strange and infectious hence it remains un-used.

Henderson decides to solve the problem through western technology he becomes eager to implement the task. During his initial attempt he has a chance meeting with the tribal queen, Willatale. The acquaintance with the queen creates an awakening in his mind and soul:

> I don't know whether it's her general appearance or the lion skin or what I feel emanating from her...anyway, it puts my soul at rest...Oh, really, I was becoming, this is simply great. This is simply great. This is a big moment for me. The skies are opening up. It's a great privilege to be here. (71)

Henderson decides to use the bomb technology hoping that one blast will kill all the frogs. The bomb that he makes gives adverse effect, instead of removing the frogs, the reservoir is blown up and Henderson leaves the place in shame. Because his work was a flopped one. Henderson can be interpreted as tests that one has to undergo in order to attain perfection in the journey of consciousness and awareness of the self. This anecdote in the novel, of the frogs, signifies the evils that are to be eliminated in the process of purification.

The failure makes him uneasy. He leaves the Arnewi area with a great weight in his heart. He proceeds towards the place where the Wariri people live with their King Dahfu. Romilayu accompanies him and Henderson tells him not to reveal the

details about the bomb and its outcome to anyone. They travel a long distance and reach the dwelling of Wariri people.

Henderson has not become familiar with the atmosphere and people. In the course of his journey, he sees a lot of dead bodies. He spends the night in a hut with Ramilayu and in it he finds a dead body. The presence of a dead body, uncared for, seems a puzzle to him, hence quits the area. He gets permission to meet Dahfu. He walks quiet a distance to meet Dahfu and he is escorted by the Wariri men.

The journey he undertakes makes him realize the truth that the life he leads is an ordinary life the same as every other human being. Therefore he is eager to modify his personality. He wants to become a man with the knowledge of the higher truth. The tribal king Dahfu awakens him to the consciousness of Being, which is the existence of man and Becoming which envelops the existence of man existing with the knowledge of the higher reality. He seems to be Henderson's real teacher. He throws various questions to Henderson:

> ...What kind of traveler are you? Oh...that depends, It remains to be seen...You have to be very rich to take trip like this...that some people find satisfaction in Being. Being others were taken by with becoming. Being people have all the breaks. Becoming people are very unlucky, always in a tizzy...having to make explanations...if I had really been capable of the alert consciousness which it required I would have confessed that becoming to come out of my ears. Enough! Enough! Time to have Become. Time to Burst the sprit's sleep wake up, America. (136)

Henderson spends more time with the Wariri tribe. He is introduced to the priest and the other ceremonies they perform. Later, he has the opportunity to witness

all the practices of the Wariri tribe. They are rituals for the rains. It involves the lifting of a wooden goddess, Mummah from one place to another. They also dance with the skulls.

Henederson takes part in the rain-making ceremony of the Wariri tribe and is successful in bringing rain and for this act he is raised to the position of SUNGO or Rain King. Then he becomes a pupil of Dahfu and goes with him on a hunt of another believed by the Wariri tribe the reincarnation of Dahfu's father. The lion that has been trapped kills Dahfu. Henderson learns that he has to replace Dahfu, as king, so she flees to America with a lion cub in which is the spirit of Dahfu.

The story can be interpreted as a journey of the hero towards a spiritual quest. It narrates the attempts of the hero, who tries to escape from modern civilization in-order to find or seek the fundamental truths related to life. Henderson the protagonist perceives the American modern civilization and its contemporary western society as a spiritual desert like that expressed by T.S. Eliot in his poem the Wasteland. Eliot's sterile Wasteland is portrayed as a desert, vainly awaiting the arrival of the hero who will revive it with healing waters. Likewise Henderson is a hero interested in making remarkable changes in the life of the people whom he meets.

Henderson meets two different tribes in Africa that offer him varied responses to experience. The Arnewi tribe is portrayed as gentle and passive accepting everything with a lot of patience. The other Wariri are aggressive and violent. They dominate, struggle and impose their ideas on the world. The difference between the two tribes is explained in terms of luck.

The Arnewi are victims of their own destiny. The gentleness of the tribe gets expressed in its highest form through Willatale their queen. Henderson arrives at the

village and thinks it to be very old, later he comes to know that he has arrived at the source of life and truth. It appears to be paradise.

The queen leads an absolute serene life and gives certain ideas about life, she says, "Gruntu-molani," meaning "you want to live," "man wants to live," "you have the life force". He observes her to be a woman who seems to be sustained effortlessly by the rhythm of life. Her idea about man makes Henderson realize that there exists an active force in man and the goal of his life is to experience and know this life force.

The discovery of the life force in Henderson is made possible through his meeting with Dahfu. Dahfu pictured as one who is physically and spiritually noble and Henderson considers him to be a visionary and a savior. Dahfu expresses ideas related to mind and body. He says that the mind is more important than the body, "The spirit of the person in a sense is the author of his body" (200). Dahfu carries out an experiment with the lion to which Henderson submits reluctantly. Dahfu asserts that he had gained power because of the lion and he asks Henderson to descend into the lion pit. Henderson thinks that by attempting to imitate the beast he could develop his spirit. Though skeptical Henderson fears losing Dahfu's respect and he undertakes the action and roars like the lion.

Henderson listens and observes Dahfu's directions, "Henderson Sungo, Do not be afraid. Let go of yourself". Dahfu further encourages him thus, "Open those magnificent mixed eyes. Oh, give more sound Better, better...strike, strike, strike, Feel it...you will recover humanity later, but for the moment be it utterly" (225). Henderson feels the beast.

Henderson gives a terrible roar that brings about a great transformation within, "And so I was the beast. I gave myself to it, and all my sorrow came out in the

roaring. My lungs supplied the air but the note came from my soul" (225). The anecdote represents the idea that once when the animal nature in man is given outlet the inner force of the soul, the self can be felt.

One has to know and experience a terrible change in order to feel the presence of the soul and the distinction between good and bad in man. This awareness in Henderson is created in him through Dahfu, the king of Arnewi tribe. Henderson further adds, "I had a voice that said, I want! I want! It should have told me she wants, she wants, he wants, they want, and moreover it's love that makes reality, reality. The opposite makes opposite" (241).

Henderson's thoughts reflect his concern for mankind. The thoughts are not self-centered. Henderson takes upon himself leonine qualities. Henderson has boldness and he faces the lion. He faces death which helps him to transcend the fear in him and remove his ego. Thus King Dahfu serves as the initiation to Henderson to know the mysteries of Nature. Dahfu counsels him, "Nature is a deep imitator. And as man is the prince of organism he is the master of adaptations...artist of suggestions...is his principal work of art, in the body, working in the flesh, what Miracle! What triumph; Also what disaster! What tears are to be shed" (221). Henderson learns multiple truths from King Dahfu. Later Henderson is taken to the lion hunt by Dahfu where Dahfu is killed. This incident reveals to Henderson the truth regarding death and its reality. Death is inevitable and man is to endure it. He is to accept all truths regarding life and is to accept the pleasantness existing in life.

There seems to be an euphoric image imparted in Henderson The Rain King: "Henderson's plane has landed for fuel in Newfoundland we see him joyfully running around it in the snow, carrying the cub and an orphan child...traveling alone

to America, leaping, leaping,pounding and tingling over the pure white lining of the grey Arctic silence" (54).

The anecdote reveals to important facts to Henderson. It is that Henderson has realized and has undergone the experience of death. He has learnt the truth that death is the final end of life. Therefore he feels liberated and attains an awakening that sends him running here and there, a picture typical of one who has attained spiritual enlightenment.

Henderson the Rain King lends itself to innumerable interpretations. The idea concerning spirituality and moral consciousness seems to be apparent in the text. The journey that Henderson takes can be represented as a spiritual journey and this becomes possible only when one exists with moral consciousness.

Man is supposed to exist in this world not only with individual consciousness but he is also considered to be smothered by multiplicity of other consciousness which he confronts in his day-to-day life. A closer inspection shows that the ultimate plane of operation for individual consciousness is not psychological or existential but cosmic. Therefore it is possible to proceed towards greater cosmic consciousness when the empirical distinctions between the psychological or existential are obliterated. The work explores new possibilities for the expression of human sensibilities transformed and charged with new potentialities.

Henderson the Rain King begins with interrogation. The protagonist asks himself as to what made him trip to Africa. Many explanations are given by Henderson as to why he undertook this trip and the major reason being that he wanted to shun his previous identity and past. Henderson lands in Africa and meets Dahfu and Romilayu. The conversations reveal an understanding or consciousness of the ultimate reality.

The tribe serves as an agent motivating Henderson to attain the consciousness of the self. The final scene of joyful dancing by Henderson in Newfoundland highlights the change in Henderson. The dance signifies the process of self awareness. In his search for a way out of the moral and spiritual chaos of his time, Henderson drinks deep at the spiritual springs of nature, myth, allusion and philosophy. He successfully attempts a rich synthesis of existence and non-existence, of individual being, developing a rich cosmic vision.

In this novel Bellow has depicted simultaneously picaresque construction and metaphysical concentration. Eugene Henderson is the first person narrator who is a seeker of grandeur in a mythic intensity through symbolic method. The novelist has attempted to color religious imagination by giving Henderson lessons of philosophic idealism. Henderson seeks for the identification of the self and other cosmic forces surrounding it. Henderson finds many inadequacies in his world, life and cultural therefore he undertakes a trip to the primitive culture to discover something about himself and the wider cosmic realities by which he can modify his social role.

Henderson the Rain King the final idea that results out of this quest is a sort of realization that the self's nature is extreme pure consciousness which cannot be affected by the changes or accidents that occur to the body, the mind and the world which change and pass.

Henderson attempts to liberate his protagonist from the domination of external forces of society, of state and of cosmic powers. His purpose is to set the hero's authentic self free from the shackles of the unauthentic self. Bellow believes that the capacity to contemplate can lead an individual towards the capacity to know the idea of real freedom. Hence the individual can achieve the true source of freedom. This thinking would make obvious the existence of the absolute spirit. The physical body is

depicted as an agent of the spirit and its mirror. It appears a means in which the spirit is embedded in the body as an ingenious memorandum. Bellow's vision in the novel is likethat of an incarnate who vouchsafes his character's physical, mental and psychic make-up, in individual, in cosmic and as well as teleological spheres.

Chapter Three

Identity Crisis

In *Henderson the Rain King*, Saul Bellow creates a latest racial discourse which serves to support American ethnicity through a negative portrayal of Africa and its people. American ethnocentrism has the lead in Saul Bellow's representation of the Africans in *Henderson the Rain King*. Bellow puts the Africans at the bottom of the ladder of the human race through a process which helps his protagonist Henderson assert identity. Henderson leaves to Africa full of uncertain feelings about his past and what he wants to do at the present. His colonial enterprise in Africa allows him to achieve self-fulfillment through de-civilizing and dehumanizing the Africans.

The latest colonialist ideology of Bellow in *Henderson the Rain King* necessitates special techniques to detect it. Emphasis is laid on the rhetorical modes of Bellow's work in order to reflect the hidden levels of Bellow's colonialist ideology and racialized discourse of Africa and its people.

These modes are produced and reproduced in the author's discourse. To expose Bellow's latent racial politics of representation there is a need for Said's 'contrapuntal reading' as a way to expose the deep colonial implications hidden in the text. Such reading helps reveal the other dimension that remains unspoken in the story.

Edward Said's 'strategic location' in the text is also dealt with " a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about" (20), in order to unveil Bellow's masked colonialist ideology in the novel. Bellow's presence in the text is indisputable and makes it essential to read the text from a postcolonial perspective. It is essential to examine *Henderson the Rain King* through the prism of David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire*.

Spurr's book suggests some rhetorical modes that are appropriate tools for a 'contrapuntal reading'' which will help assess Bellow's work from a postcolonial perspective. Spurr offers twelve rhetorical modes present in journalism, travel writing and imperial administration. He devices separate chapters to discuss surveillance, appropriation, aesthesticization, classification, debasement, negation, affirmation, idealization, insubstantialization, naturalization, eroticization, and resistance.

Henderson the Rain King will be read only as a humanistic text or as a whimsical fantasy. Spurr believes that tracing colonial discourse is the key to disclose the colonialist theses in travel writing and imperial administration. It operates through the rhetorical features.Spurr's definition of the colonial discourse emphasizes language as an important factor in the identification process:

> "Literary works once studied primarily as an expression of traditional historical process of colonization. The particular languages which belong to this process, enabling it while simultaneously being generated by it, are known collectively as colonial discourse," (79).

In retrospect, colonial discourse refers to the language that is used strategically to serve the colonizer's hegemonic purposes. It is a tool of subversion that reflects the colonizer's desire to master. Bellow employs particular association of traits to cast the Africans as ethnically sexual and exotic beings. Bellow's American ethnicity is a prominent feature of his works. Americanism had a pervading influence on him because his father was all for.

Bellow criticizes the outcomes of post World War II in a modern American life. His interest in the suffering of Americans as a result of the war and modernism abounds profusely within *Henderson the Rain King*. The text is highly charged with humanistic concerns of the fallen conditions of the American man.

He sympathizes with Eugene Henderson who belongs to a privileged class endowed with language, education and wealth. 'Eugenie' is a Greek word which means a good offspring. The name implies one of the good backgrounds or lineages. Henderson has a displacement that compels him to venture into Africa.

Henderson's experience with the two African tribes, the Arnewi and Warri, that he encounters in his trip is rich in features of hegemony and is masked by fantasy about people and place. The American centrality is high in scale when juxtaposed against his depiction of a peripheral Africa.

> "Henderson is solipsistic. His interest in Africa springs from his narcissistic needs. The main reason is that he feels worthless. His other reason for leaving to Africa is his need to face his life: "But if I am to make sense to you people and explain why I went to Africa I must face up to facts" (3).

Henderson decides to leave behind his civilized, but chaotic, American society in search of self-assertion in the abyss of Africa. Donald W. Markos states that Henderson often seems to stand as a symbol for America itself an American in need of change. This symbolic function mirrors the primacy of Bellow's ethnocentrism in the text. Frank Farley theorizes that America is a 'T country' because its culture encourages the risk- taking explorer.

The way Henderson ventures into the unknown suggests that he is a seeking person who likes risk, change, intensity, complexity and novelty, things that are indicative of his American identity. Henderson, in his quest, resembles Bellow who was a great believer in the quest for the essential self and has turned to sexual and mystical teachings to discover his own self.

As a matter of fact, Bellow has a special affection towards Henderson. He uses his characterization to diffuse details of his own life in the novel, such as his psychological, social and marital struggles. Henderson and Bellow can be considered more or less the same person. Eusebio L. Rodrigues hints by saying that Bellow has been accused of writing a solipsistic fiction, dominated by the consciousness of an individual who is presented uncritical and who, in important respects, may be Bellow himself.

He needs to recognize the 'Other' as savage in order to identify himself as civilized. This fact creates the savage/civilized dichotomy that is necessary to the colonizer's existence. Spurr highlights the essentiality of this difference in the colonial relationship: "The colonizer's traditional insistence on difference from the colonized establishes a notion of the savage as the 'Other,' the antithesis of civilized value" (7).

Henderson's attachment to the principle of class as definer of the person's position in society is both bourgeois and colonialist ideology. It is situated at the heart of race purity. Class is important to him as a means of social division and segregation: "When it came time to marry I tried to please my father and chose a girl of our own social class" (4). He also bombastically states, "For or when it comes to struggling I am in a special class" (68). Class is the criterion by which he classifies and judges people. He describes the African Mtalba, the queen's sister, as "typical of a certain class of elderly lady" (71). He demands to be judged by the same criterion. He asks Itelo, the prince of Arnewi about the tribe's opinion of him. The black man is using the white man's rhetoric. Henderson puts words into Itelo's mouth to highlight his own superiority.

The elements of comedy also manifest themselves in Henderson's peculiarity of cloth, inappropriate behavior, and disproportionate body size, hilarious dramatic sense of events and absurdity of behavior. Circumspectly, Bellow infuses such elements from the beginning to cloud suspicions about his protagonist's real intention.

When Henderson ponders over his fallen conditions, he dramatically cries listing all what he thinks is important to him in life, "my parents, my wives, my children, my brutality, my teeth, my face, my soul" (3). He describes how he ridiculously spends the afternoon on a ladder to shake out books for money which his father used as bookmarkers.

Henderson admits it is charitable of his father to forgive his enormous bodybuilding. He is sarcastic. He absurdly narrates how he once fell off a tractor while drunk and ran himself over and broke his leg. He brags about the way he embarrasses his wife, Lily, with his inappropriate cloth and eccentric attitude: Furthermore, his sudden and impulsive departure to Africa in quest of identity does not present a serious image of him; he appears rather comically impulsive.

In Africa, he becomes absurdly attached to his white helmet by ridiculously making meticulous adjustments to it all the time. He uses it as a hiding place: "My white helmet, with passport, money, and papers taped into it, fell off" (64). Bellow deploys this comic aspect to trivialize the seriousness of Henderson's ethnic prejudice against the Africans and mask his manipulation of them as a means to escape his crisis of identity.

Henderson's quest for assertion of identity in Africa compels him to degrade the natives through racial 'othering' and stereotyping. The rhetorical modes implied in *Henderson the Rain King* are revealing agents of his 'othering' and stereotyping of

the Africans. They expose his masked colonialist ideology. One of the rhetorical modes evidential in *Henderson the Rain King* is Spurr's surveillance.'

By surveillance, the colonizer masters 'gaze' over landscapes, bodies, interiors and persons as suggested by Spurr. It involves inspection, scrutiny, observation and examination in a way that makes the colonizer feel powerful. This visual observation provides Henderson with knowledge of the colonized. It reflects his colonial knowledgeable position.

In the colonial world, to know is to control. Spurr emphasizes the hegemonic nature of surveillance: "To look and speak to not only implies a position authority; it also constitutes the commanding act itself" (14). It gives the colonizer the sense that the colonized are manageable. This colonial achievement is valuable to Henderson's identity. Surveillance is an essential part of Henderson's colonial relation to the Africans. His visual observation determines the nature of his relation to the Africans as well as helps reconstruct his identity.

His first practice of surveillance is of landscapes. Henderson invokes Romilayu, a native guide, "to show him uncivilized parts of Africa. There are very few of these left" (281). His remark sounds imperialistic because it corresponds to the colonizer's dream to find undiscovered lands. He describes the African landscape with a colonial imaginative eye that grants him knowledge and authority. In the colonialist discourse, "nature is opposed to culture and civilization" (156). Henderson's Africa is depicted as exotic and untamed. Henderson's geographical and environmental surveillance of the landscapes denotes American superiority over the humble nature of Africa: With a commanding imaginative eye, he lessons the significance of the land by minimizing its size.

This belittling is pertinent to the colonizer's desire to control the land. The sense of mastery which Henderson feels at first sight initiates him to place savagery next to delicacy in his perception and description of landscape: This ambivalent attitude towards nature is part of Bellow's masked racist strategy. The isolation and anti-quity of the place fascinates him when he first arrives at the place of the Arnewi: "And besides, the antiquity of the place had struck me so, I was sure I had got into someplace new" (53).

This image suggests the Africans isolation from civilization and the advanced world, making them a special breed to his colonialist eyes. The act of isolating the colonized makes the colonizer appears powerful and in control which means that the landscape is fertile for his civilizing mission. Henderson's observation of the primitivism of the place: "This is a very primitive part of the world. Even the rocks look primitive" (282), is exaggerated in expression.

Primitivism is the very reverse of modernization. Henderson's sense of American modernization surfaces by emphasizing the primitivism of Africa. This indication of the place as well as its people as primitive "grants dominion over the earth to more advanced people; the land shall belong by natural right to that power which understands its value and is willing to turn it to account" (156). In this case, Henderson is such power when he practices his dominance through surveillance.

Henderson is proud that "it was all simplified and splendid, and I felt I was entering the past-the real past, no history or junk like that the pre-human past" (46). Ambivalence surfaces are simplification is a reductionist strategy to facilitate invasion, penetration and appropriation. Henderson is appropriating history in a colonialist manner. His crisis of identity that resulted from the chaos of modern life in America impels him to deconstruct the Other's identity as a way to overcome his

crisis. Bellow situates the Africans in a pre-historic status which indirectly demeans their culture and subsequently honors his.

It is a central element in the constitution of the self in opposition to the 'Other". Henderson is really entranced by the prehistoric effect of the place: "I've visited some of the oldest ruins in Europe and they don't feel half as ancient as your village" (55). He also compares its antiquity to that of Egypt: "the last plague of frogs I ever heard about was in Egypt.

"This reinforced the feeling of antiquity the place had given me from the very first" (59). He likes to believe that the place is beyond geography and history. By locating Africa beyond geography and history, Henderson enhances his civilized image and highlights the Africans' savageness.

.The fact that Bellow's African land is given no name deepens the sense of fantasy about the place and allows Bellow to legitimize his colonial fantasy. Said rationalizes: "For there is no doubt that imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away" (55).

This fact accounts for Bellow's reliance on imaginative geography. It helps him fantasize Africa and its people. Thus imaginative geography is a projection of his fantasy of Africa which might involve misrepresentation. This fantasy about the place being beyond geography and history significantly saves Henderson from any skeptical and polemical notes against his reproduction of Africa and its people. Ellen pifer assumes that beyond history and geography is a mechanism of salvation.

Henderson's journey to a place beyond history and geography is a kind of liberation from the restrains of conventional time and space. Henderson's Africa does not abide by rules. His journey is thus an escape from rationality. In short, by placing

Africa beyond history and geography. Bellow places Henderson in a free zone thus allowing him the liberty to flaunt his superior ontological position and use the African as a medium for his colonial desire. Henderson's imperial response to Africa extends from place to climate. His surveillance of the African weather reinforces indirectly his American ethnicity.

Although Henderson does not refer to the American weather, his contradictory feelings towards the African weather show that he is unconsciously comparing between it and the African weather. Henderson initially praises the hot weather of Africa: "To begin with, the heat was just what I carved. Much hotter than the Gulf of Mexico" (43).

Henderson's craving for heat in the first quote contradicts with his description of it as baking in the second quote. This contradiction creates an ambivalence that confuses the readers about his feelings towards the matter. The ambivalence exposes his attachment to his American ethnicity and helps mask the colonialist ideology in the text.

Henderson's surveillance of the African's human habitations provides him with a feeling of power over the place and its inhabitants, "it was within a courtyard and, like all the rest of the houses, round, made of clay, and with a conical roof. All inside seemed very brittle and light and empty. Smoke-browned poles were laid across the ceiling at the intervals of about three feet and beyond them the long ribs of the palm leaves resembled whalebone" (62).

As a colonialist author, Bellow strives to assert his ethnic American identity by thriving on oppositions. The Africans in *Henderson the Rain King* are made to feel inferior and treated as inferior in a way that enhances the colonizer's self-image. As

long as Africans judged by Bellow's American values, it remains a culturally diverse sphere that exists beyond his American comprehension.

His colonial discourse about them is shaped about by the relation of power. Binaries are deployed to show dominance of the superpower. Further, the interplay of response to the other in terms of identity and difference operates with different degrees of complexity in *Henderson the Rain King* and account for ambivalence is apparent in the text.

Saul Bellow is a creature of his ethnocentric American culture regardless of his attempt to mask that. It took Bellow some time to drop his mask and express freely his racist ideology against certain nations.

Chapter Four

Journey in Transcendence

A large part of American fiction since the end of Second World War is concerned with the themes of estrangement and alienation; western society- 'the affluent society' is seen as living in an age of anxiety caused by apparent death of God and the discontinuity of tradition. The individual suffers a loss of self, sees nothing in life he can hold on to expect, in the extreme cases, total absurdity; he becomes a victim, sometimes a rebel, often an antihero. Much of that fiction gives the readers very negative, apocalyptic view of the universe.

Typical of the new, more formally educated generation of American writers, Saul Bellow is keen to embrace the mainstream of American literature tradition, the nineteenth century American Transcendentalism, to be specific, at the core of his work. Bellow's transcendental outlook can be best described in *Henderson the Rain King* for the reason that the novel is strongly colored by the main conception advocated by most transcendentalists especially R.W. Emerson.

What distinguishes Bellow from the many other contemporary American novelists is the tension he manages to create between the actual world and the trust he puts in man. He does not exclude from his fiction the violent, chaotic, corrupt, and dangerous world he sees out there; he plans his characters firmly in it. But he does not describe the situation as totally hopeless and absurd; nor does he gives an interpretation of history as ineluctably leading to utter destruction. Sarcasm and nihilism is not his cup of tea. Reason, human reason, is still of paramount importance to Bellow, for it enables man to understand. In addition Bellow affirms his belief in man, and according to the central characters in his latest novels, man will survive if he

believes, even among the most pedestrian facts of everyday in what is fundamental, lasting and essential.

Henderson the Rain King is Bellow's only novel that does not choose city life but natural scene as its main setting. Quite a lot of descriptions of the primitive natural scene can be found in the novel which is a big difference from his other works. In addition, Bellow has employed 'nature' as a key element to transcend to protagonist from the state of crisis and chaos to a peaceful and orderly one. According to famous critic Irving Marlin, novel *Henderson the Rain King* is "important in theme and important in structure, important for what they reveal about contemporary reality and for what they demonstrate about itself and its much-healed-crisis" (69). It is no wonder that critics consider *Henderson the Rain King* Bellow's first mature work.

There is no doubt that nature has been a central topic of western and non-western philosophy for thousands of years. Also, the Transcendentalists view of the nature plays an important role in the movement. Emerson's book *Nature*, published in 1d836 made a tremendous impact on the intellectual life of America. Emerson's definition of nature is a broad one. To him, nature is the fundamental context of our lives and the way things are. Philosophically, Emerson asserts, the universe is made up of nature and the soul, or nature and consciousness. Nature for Emerson was a theory of the nature of things how are; it was a guide to life, a foundation for philosophy, art language, education, and everyday livings.

'Trust thyself' Emerson wrote in *Self-Reliance*, by which he meant to convince that man's possibilities to develop and improve himself are infinite. They also held that the ideal kind of individual was self-reliant and unselfish. With the assumption of the inner goodness of the individual, Emerson took the individual's moral development as their concern more than social progress. In *Philosophy of*

History, Emerson wrote "progress is not for society, progress belongs to the individual" (123). Emerson's emphasis on spirit or soul also made a great influence on Saul Bellow. Bellow himself in an interview was worried of people's loss of soul in modern life: in the modern world people were losing the sense of what is meant to be a human being and to have a soul. After examining Bellow's major novels, Pifer Allen observed, "this deepening faith in the inmost self or soul is, then what foster Bellow's vision of life, and ultimately of literary creation, as a religion enterprise" (3).

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the leader of American Transcendentalism, emphasizes the important influence of nature up mind: "the first in time and the first in importance of the influence upon the mind is that of Nature" (60). According to Emerson, people need to go back to nature to restore their reason and faith. For nature is a site for an epiphany, in which the individual human disappears in the currents of the Universal being. Nature is the place where people come to their senses and repair the trauma in their mind. All these classic conception of nature and soul can find expression in Bellow's favorite novel *Henderson the Rain King*. The real focus of the novel is on capturing the process of Henderson's spiritual quest for the harmony of his mind in the setting of nature.

As to Henderson, a change of place may offer a cure for his mental crisis and disorderly life first tries to go to Europe, spending a year in France, but the results of European trip are dismal. He realizes that only Africa an unindustrialized place, has largely escaped the ravage of materialism of the twentieth-century America. With untamed nature, Africa has the healing power of the twentieth-century chaos and people's feeling of alienation. It is a binary opposition of America. It is a symbol of nature. Thus it becomes the only ideal place that can relieve the madness and disorder.

Henderson is inspired by the mysterious natural scene. The exposure to natural scene makes him realize the beauty and grace of nature. The experiences in the two tribes help him gain the wisdom of life and help him overcome the anxiety over death. Henderson's realization of the totality of life symbolizes that he is mature in mind. Thus, his journey in Africa is a journey to nature and the depth of soul. In other words, Henderson's journey in Africa is a successful journey in transcendence.

According to the process of the story, the novel *Henderson the Rain King* can be divided into three parts: Henderson's life in America, Henderson's journey in Africa and his return to America. Among the three parts, the second one is the important in the sense of Henderson's Transcendence be possible. Henderson's journey in Africa transforms him from a 'giant shadow' to a whole man, from a 'pig' state to a 'lion' state and from the chaotic state to a peaceful one. So Africa in the novel is not only the main background of the story but also an ideal locate for the protagonist's pursuit of truth and order. Africa has been a very fertile literary setting for authors both of British and America. Of course, the use of Africa as setting in the novel is closely related to the type of story and the author's intention. In the novel *Henderson the Rain King*, the reason for Henderson's leaving for Africa is to leave things behind and wake the sleep of his spirit.

The things Henderson wants to abandon are the things that of the twentieth-century western world: industrialization, materialism, and estrangement from nature. Compared with America, the vast and mysterious continent of Africa is the only unindustrialized place that has largely escaped the ravages of materialism. Africa in the novel can be seen a in binary opposition to the modernism and industrialization of America. It is a symbol of nature. Bellow employs African setting to criticize the emptiness of modern life in America and offers a way for the protagonist's

transcendence over anxiety and contradiction. With untamed nature, Africa has the healing power of the twentieth-century chaos and people's feeling of alienation. Thus it becomes the only ideal place that can relieve the madness and disorder that haunts an individual's mind.

Through his African journey, Henderson has reconnected him with nature and put himself at the peace with his mind. At the conclusion of his journey, Henderson is able to face his life with confidence instead avoiding it. In this sense, Henderson's spiritual exploration ends in success. The Africa here is not a geographical continent but the product of Bellow's imagination. In other words, it is symbolic and imaginative. In comparison with Joseph Conrad and Ernest Hemingway's Africa in their works, Bellow's Africa symbolizes nature and spirit is more obvious. Africa described in the novel *Heart of Darkness* written by Joseph Conrad is mysterious, wild and dangerous. Conrad refers to the continent of Africa as the heart of darkness which is the implication of hopelessness in the novel more than once.

> I looked around, I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so dark, impenetrable to human thoughts, so pitiless to human weakness (166).

Although Africa in the novel *Heart of Darkness* also has symbolic meaning, it is constructed as a dark place without any civilization and represents the darkness of human nature as well as the evilness of colonialism. Ernest Hemingway is another important author who frequently chooses the Africa as the background of his works. Actually, Hemingway travelled to Africa twice once in the mid-1930s and another in the mid 1950s. His first journey to Africa became the basis for *Green Hills of Africa*

and inspired his two other excellent short stories, "The Happy Life of Francis" and "Macomber and the Snows of Kilimanjaro".

A number of critics have noted Bellow's indebtness to Conrad and Hemingway, but unlike Conrad and Hemingway's Africa is neither a symbol of the darkness of human nature nor just a hunting place. In the novel Bellow criticizes Hemingway's concept of Africa through Henderson's speech: "a man goes into the external world, and all he can do is shoot it? It doesn't make sense" (94). Instead Bellow's Africa has to be regarded as an astonishing feat of creative synthesis. It is a world complete unto itself, a fantastic and yet entirely credible world, an alchemic fusion of Bellow's anthropological reading, his inventive skill, and his imaginative daring as novelists.

To the same effect, the Africa in the novel is neither a geographical continent nor the Africa of anthropologists. It is a metaphysical Africa conjured up by Bellow based on travel documentaries he might have seen and his knowledge of anthropology. Bellow never had been to Africa before the publication of the novel. His journey only happened after the year of 1959 when the novel came out. Although he is deeply influenced by Conrad and Hemingway, Saul Bellow did not confine himself to the two literary predecessors but was eager to embrace the mainstream of American transcendentalism. The background of Africa in the novel is not to entertain readers or to satisfy their curiosity but to offer a perfect place where Henderson can be inspired and guided to the truth.

Henderson's journey in Africa is not only a journey in nature but also a journey to the depth of his own soul. As Henderson says to himself, "the world is mind, travel is mental travel. May be every guy has his own Africa" (275). For without it, Henderson cannot find a remedy for his spiritual crisis and sheds the

excesses of his own moral and the excess of the materialism of the America. Also without it, Henderson cannot return to the whole community with a balanced and peaceful mind. Henderson's journey to Africa is indeed a successful one, for it helps.

Henderson undergoes a renewal of his spirit and realizes the totality of life. In this sense, the continent of Africa first of all serves as a symbol of spirit which plays a key role in Henderson's Transcendence. There is no doubt that the journey in Africa benefits Henderson a lot. The inspiration from nature, the wisdom of life from the two tribes especially his encounter with the King Dahfu all help Henderson gain a second chance of life instead of avoiding it and dreaming of death. Henderson's imitation of the lion Atti is, in one hand a necessary step for Henderson to overcome the anxiety over death, and a way for him to connect to the divine universe through the power over the soul. In the beginning of the novel *Henderson the Rain King*, the purpose of Henderson's visit to Africa is to leave "certain things behind and wake the sleep of spirit" in order to avoid the death of his soul. (45)

In the end of the novel, Africa proves to be able to offer Henderson a rebirth of his own soul. So Henderson's journey is a journey in transcendence which enables him back to nature and to shake off the excesses of modern America. Henderson's spiritual exploration can be seen partly as Bellow's exploration in his writing. In an interview with a newspaper in 1964, Bellow observed that Henderson, an absurd seeker of high qualities, was most like himself of all his characters, and the novel *Henderson the Rain King* is his favorite novel. (189)

Bellow's arrangement of Henderson's journey to burst the spirit's sleep and his final successful transcendence can be seen as a proof of Henderson's as well as Bellow's attempt to seek high qualities in the universe. As Emerson asserted:

> Men are convertible. They want awakening. Get the soul out of bed, out of her deep habitual sleep, out into God's universe, to a perception of its beauty and hearing of its call and...your prosy, selfish sensualist awake a god and is conscious of fore to shake the world. (278)

In "The Over Soul", Emerson stated that sources of nature are in man's own mind. Emerson said in "The American Scholar" that the nature is the opposite of soul, answering it part to part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. And its laws are the laws of his own mind. Emerson also placed emphasis on the importance of individuality.

Although Bellow values individuality as his transcendental predecessors, he abandons it in the novel because he considers it as undesirable burden keeping people from love. Henderson's story suggests Bellow's faith in mankind's potential in transcending himself by achieving a harmonization of mind and nature; in the affirmation the value of the individual but avoid the over glorification of the self; and in possibility of establishment of a society based on union of people and their love. Bellow's acceptance and of nineteenth century American Transcendentalism in the novel Henderson the Rain King can also be seen an exploration during his journey to render the highest justice to the visible universe, to find in that universe what was fundamental, enduring, and essential.

Chapter five

Summation

Saul Bellow is regarded as one of the most celebrated authors of the 20th century most resourceful writer for all times. Bellow's multicultural background aided his remarkable intellect and added richness to his literary works. He was awarded several prizes for his work including the Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes in 1976. His fiction includes blistering criticism of post World War II life in modern America. It has been claimed that he is one of the greatest humanistic authors of his time. He is also an ardent socialist who believes that it is the rights of the individual.

Saul Bellow concerns about humanity and advocacy of individuality are dualistic in nature as they include certain races and exclude others. His portrayal of the suffering of some human beings remains incomplete because it makes an 'Other' of some nations, a colonial practice objected to and exposed by postcolonial literary.

The stream of racism and prejudice against the Africans and Arabs which runs throughout in *Henderson the Rain King* contradicts Saul Bellow's humanistic claims. This stream marks Bellow as a racist. In many ways, a postcolonial reading of Bellow's works helps expose his presumed humanistic presentation which demeans the Africans and Arabs if Palestine, in favour of the Americans and the Jews. It discloses his colonialist ideology.

This ideology is caused by a personal ethnic identity crisis. He oscillates between his American and Jewish identity. The quest of identity reveals an inferiority complex that tries to hide behind American identity yet embraces Jewishness. James Atlas's contradictory views of Bellow's ethnicity are quite illuminating in this regard.

The powerful eminence of Bellow's Jewish ethnicity supersedes to a large extent the American in *Henderson the Rain King*. The most important theme in

Henderson the Rain King is the search for meaning. At the beginning of the novel, fifty five year old protagonist Eugene Henderson suffers a midlife crisis after the unexpected death of Mrs. Lenox, a woman in his employ.

This prompts some long overdue soul searching in the hot-tempered Henderson, who travels to Africa in hopes of discovering a land that has been untouched by the modern world. He hopes to connect with nature at a primal, visceral level and to his voyage, he tries to sum up his life, only to discover that if he doesn't change things will only get worse.

The soul searching of Henderson takes him flying to Africa and temporarily abdicating all responsibility for his children for Henderson to realize just how important his family is to him. His journey of self-discovery is really an opening of possibilities, as he allows himself to express his deepest feelings, to believe himself worthy of love and to connect with others at a meaningful level.

The concept of the self involves a journey of consciousness. Many are the ways that one can adapt to know the authentic self. The self or the inner light is a perennial presence in man. It enhances the personality of the individual and motivates one to know what is right and wrong. It also develops better understanding and promotes adjustment, acceptance of life as it exists and enhances peace and harmony.

Today's world of materialism only creates hurdles in the realization of the self that shapes one's personality. Any individual can exist with the consciousness of the self even in the world of materialism. This consciousness can be related to the mind through which an individual may have a number of revelations related to the principle of morals showing great concern in the welfare of others and the society. The revelations can be made through various means and it could also be a series of experiences.

Henderson's search for meaning is inspired by a death early in the novel: that of Mrs. Lenox, a woman who cooks breakfast for Henderson and his family every morning. Mrs. Lenox suffer a heart attack in the middle of an argument between Henderson and his wife, Lily. Assuming that his shouts caused Mrs. Lenox heart attack, Henderson flees to Africa, where he travels the continent, struggling to come to terms with his own mortality, Dahfu, the philosopher-king of the Wariri tribe, notices this fear of death and urges Henderson to overcome it. Dahfu encourages Henderson to spend some time with a lioness, Atti, that Dahfu captured for Henderson, overcoming his fear of Atti is equivalent to overcoming his fear of death itself.

Henderson success in this endeavor puts him on the path to self – transcendence, allowing him, at age fifty five, to completely remake his personality. Once Henderson conquers his fear of death, he is free to return home and to express the love that he was never able to before.

Most of the characters in *Henderson the Rain King* descend from just three different families. First, Eugene Henderson, a fifty five year old millionaire who has been married twice and has five children. Then there is Dahfu, the king of the Wariri tribe, with his sixty seven wives and his small army of children. And then there are Willatale, the queen of the peaceful Arnewi people, and her sister Mtalba, the young woman who wants to marry Henderson.

Both Dahfu and Henderson are the patriarchs of large, complex families, but their parenting styles are very different. Dahfu is far more concerned with the number of children he has and how well this number reflects on his virtility than he is about the children themselves. Henderson, meanwhile, abdicates some of his authority over his children.

Henderson is disappointed when his daughter Ricey kidnaps an African American baby, and he lets his second wife, Lily, take charge of the household when he travels to Africa. In the end, however, he does learn how to express love, which he always used to ridicule. His problem was that he had poor self-esteem, which made his feel unworthy of love. His transformative experience in Africa changes this, making him a nicer, happier man.

Henderson the Rain King contains three major elements: grotesque comedy, which hardly ever seems comic; fantasy and adventure in central Africa, an Africa deliberately distorted so far from reality that one half expects to meet Tarzan and his faithful Wariri on any page, and a solemn quest for "the great principles of life" for spiritual peace, happiness and communion with truth and deity.

All three elements are mixed thoroughly together, with Henderson writing a supercharged prose unlike anything over recorded in print before, with conversations between Henderson and various black characters so stiff, portentous and pompous they pass all under glorifies life, love and nature to very title purpose. Henderson wandering around Africa lamenting his sins and weeping copiously, performing feels of strength and being hailed as the sacred Rain King of a primitive tribe, sees himself not only as a comic figure, but also as a heroic one.

Henderson the Rain King has yet to be recognized as the miracle of creative alchemy that: it is a novel in which Bellow has forged and welded together a wealth of artistic material into a world complete unto itself. This fictional world, a real unreal world into which the reader is transported, has been fashioned from Bellow's studies in anthropology, his profound involvement with William Blake, his propensity to introduce literary and topical allusions and, above all, his fascination with the ideas and methods of Wilhelm Reich.

Bellow's imaginative energy, manifest especially in the speed and farcical exuberance of the language used, that has set all these elements spinning together. The axis of this whirling world is the Reichian thrust of Henderson's quest for humanness. Bellow's critical stance in the *Henderson the Rain King* was formulated in a series of seminal essays on modernism, many of which were developed before and during the writing of the novel. The three basic ideas that emerge from these essays are that, the modern movement to obliterate the unity of the nineteenth century self was launched.

The result of such thinking, says Bellow, was the creation in modern literature of a creature whose outlines are uncertain, and destroyed such a creature was haunted by reductive Freudian mythology concerning his nature and convinced that his likelihood of survival in mass society is very slender.

Estranged from the corrective experiences of everyday life, this underworld quester becomes precious in his response but drown in cultural self pity as he attempts to flee the contaminated sewer of western culture. Second, there is his angry denunciation of those postwar novelists of the moderns, fail to question the accuracy of this weltanschauung in the postwar world, and continued to write increasingly inartistic works.

Third is the observation that the postwar novelists have done little to rescue literature from the unresolved modernist dichotomy which derived warring impulses of the defeated romantic idealism and a subsequent nihilistic rage, an impasse from which, he claims, it has barely moved in forty years.

Henderson the Rain King, though a parody, is Bellow's serious attempt to restore faith in the self and existence by rendering the laughable and pass the absurdities of absurdism, the banalities of historicist thinking, and excesses which

have produced both rampant individualism and excessive disappointment with 'self' and 'civilization'.

Bellow presents Eugene Henderson, a burlesque of the absurd, victimized artist-hero violinist and pig farmer. Henderson is middle aged, menopausal social outcast. A direct parody of the Hemmingway stoic or narcissist, he is metaphysically earnest, introspective, bumbling egocentric, alienated from his wife, family, and society.

Henderson is more than just a parody of the qualities of solipsism, morbidity, self-abasement, and self-aggrandizement wherever they appear in literature. Within Henderson are subsumed all the great questing heroes of western literature; Moses, whose burning bush miracle Henderson cannot quite duplicate; Daniel, who flirted even more heroically with lions; John the Baptist, who also had a romantic predilection for desert places; Atlas, who supported an entire globe, not just a mere bridge; Don Quixote, whose windmills remind us of Henderson quest for transcendence; and finally Ahab, the ultimate existentialist, who was also hypnotized by fear of death. All Bellow's heroes begin by trying to throw off responsibility and the chaotic weight of the world, but love for mankind finally brings them back to the business of living in the real world, even when real seems chaotic and destructive.

Bellow's disapproval of the intense allusiveness, recreated mythologies, and maze like symbolism of the modern novel is also manifests in *Henderson the Rain King*. Bellow also parodies intellectual sophistication and allusiveness in delightful ways. Mimicking the pretentiousness of Eliot and Joyce, who tried to combine in individual works the whole western literary heritage.

Bellow throws in large doses of archetypal zymology borrowed right out of Fraser, misquotes liberally from the bible, refers to Jung, Freut, Sartre, and

Wordsworth, offers tied bits from obscure quack psychologists, and makes numerous references to Whitman and William and William James. The deep reader might indeed be aware of taking all of these red herrings serious.

Bellow's attempt at parody of the worst excess of the modern novel and its hero is not the act of a light-minded humorist. If he debunks the excess of modernist self-pity and the stylistic formulas of the modern novel, it is in order to restore to the Anglo-American novel a measure of health, sanity, and truth about human existence. Though the stylistic formulas and metaphysical assumptions of the modern novel are made of fun of, the view points are nevertheless retained and refurbished for further use by the surgery of Bellow's moderating and analytical intelligence.

Parody in *Henderson the Rain King* functions to restore moderation and good sense to the twentieth century novel which Bellow has diagnosed as having lost its ability to assess truthfully the possibilities of life. And if he appears to be making fun of Dahfu and Reich with their unbounded transcendentalist belief in the power of the imagination of transforms man and the universe, it is because he believes that irresponsible unbounded romantic individualism lies at the heart of the pain and disappointment in life itself which scare modern literature.

The quest in Henderson is magnified into an odyssey. No longer confined to New York or Chicago, it takes place in the jungles of America and Africa. The protagonist descends into the heart of darkness and returns not with an awareness of horror, but with a radiant confidence in man and in human possibility. *Henderson the Rain King* is the first fully realized work of Bellow's maturity. It is Bellow's first novel of which one can say that no other writer could have conceived it, much less written it. Bellow himself has said his own favorite among his writings is *Henderson the Rain King* the absurd seeker of high qualities. Richard Chase says the novel is

really a romance; Keith Opdahl goes even further and says that Bellow's novel represents a waking dream. It is, in spite of Bellow's warnings to deep readers in search of meanings, his most symbolic and meaningful book.

David Galloway refers to the book's connection with the grail tradition, with the journey through a wasteland, a cleansing with rain, the cyclic death and resurrection of the king. But Henderson's quest is a more personal one than this. He says to Itelo, "Your Highness, I am really on a kind of a quest" (65) and his quest, as it turns out, is for his double, Dahfu, and what Dahfu can give him, so that the traditional form of the quest is built on to the pattern that Bellow has used in earlier novels, while Henderson is a parody of the earlier heroes.

Henderson the Rain King is regarded by many critics as the most active book of the American Jewish writer. Saul Bellow's distinguished work relates a story of a man suffering from a disconnection with the natural world that consequently leads to a disconnection with other people. This modern American character, Gene Henderson, has achieved economic stability, but has difficulty communicating with people.

Henderson feels inadequate in his relationships, he maintains a philosophic, soul-searching side that runs far deeper than that of most people. Thus he realizes that in an age of madness, to expect to be untouched by madness is a form of madness. But the pursuit of sanity can be a form of madness, too.

Henderson has come to recognize this insidious form of madness in urban industrialized American culture. He struggles in a quest for the meaning and essence of life through his physical and spiritual journey in ancient uncivilized Africa. Henderson the Rain King travel to Bellow's imaginary Africa to get rid of an internal voice that perpetually whispers in him to get more, and in that mysterious land, he

regains the innate divinity that is neglected in his homeland-America. His quest for redemption, for salvation, is similar to Tommy Whilhelm's.

Both heroes begin as alienates, both are prepared during the progress of the novel for a partial return to community. Both have to learn to plunge into the here-and-now, to seize reality as it is. But Henderson the Rain King is a comic version of the quest, a romance-satire on the American quixotic self who rebels against life's terms and, like Augie, demands a special fate. His dissatisfaction is shown in his violence against everything, and in his ego-emphasis but he himself is inarticulate about it.

This dissatisfaction is the cause of his inner voice, and of his drunken cries that, there is accurse on this land there is something bad going on. Something is wrong. There is a curse on this land. It is not just the land that is cursed, however. Henderson seeks answers to the same questions about the significance of human existence and action that had tormented his brother protagonists.

Bellow is critical of those who criticize the humanity in a routine and fashionable manner. At the same time Bellow is also against those who dogmatically assert human greatness. If the stink is real then it cannot be claimed that in reality the apparent piece of shit is a concentrated musk which when diluted would result in fragnance. Such proofs or assertions are similar. What is needed is action and self correction. The cause of humanity can be championed in individual's action and not through dogmatic assertions.

Bellow's Heros chief preoccupation is how to learn to resist societal norms and moral values and dogmas without alienating from society: the two heroes Eugene Henderson and Augie March are representatives of post-war America with its growing materialism, consumerism, conformity, and mass culture. The English

literary critic Malcolm Bradbury claims that these negative phenomena taken together threaten the liberal self.

The novels represent the dialogue between alienation and accommodation, the battle of determinism and free choice, the coalescence of selflessness and selfhood. The heroes face the problem of how to create a unique self within a mechanical money-oriented mass society which exerts a leveling influence on a individual, and where the individual undergoes his personal effacement and consequent degradation.

These stages can be traced in Henderson's life journey. At the first stage, he is shown in conflict with himself and society. Henderson recounts his life and reflects on the reasons of his going to Africa: "What made me take this trip to Africa? There is quick explanation. Things got worse and pretty soon they were too complicated" (3). He admits behaved like a bum. The Hero's life in a society of material excess leads to hidden depression, rage, and finally to the conclusion that he is not fit to live among people.

He seems to hate both society as it is and himself for not being able to oppose it by becoming better. Henderson argues unreasonably with his second wife Lily, alienates his son and daughter, refuses his tenants heat during the winter, fires a gun at their cat, raises pigs from with his only pleasure comes from is their annoying presence to family and neighbors', harasses in a dozen other ways his family, friends. acquaintances, and community.

All these examples prove him to be a spiritual impotent. He perceives himself to be a failure, understands that his behavior is irrational and unacceptable but is unable to put any effort to change it to the better. At this stage of his life, Henderson has no inner strength to resist the negative influence of society upon him, reject its values because he has absorbed its features, and is therefore at war with himself.

The Hero suffers a poverty of the soul. Again and again, he hears an inner voice that spoke there said, "I want, I want, I want! It happened every afternoon, and when I tried to suppress it got ever stronger". Henderson's acts are meant to show that he is fully capable of altering his condition and that he assumes full responsibility for the dilemmas and conflicts of his life. Unlike those characters in twentieth-century fiction who are crushed by deterministic forces.

Henderson is aware of the dignity of human condition, demonstrates that it still exists, and proclaims his faith in it. Through his characters, Bellow not only exalts the nature of man, but also portrays the carnivalistic vision of the world in an exuberant manner. Bellow is not a champion of humanity in a foolish or hypocritical sense. Humanity does have its weaknesses. It is a known fact. It is displayed and therefore broadcasted in everyone of us.

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Epiphany of Cosmopolitanism as a Leitmotif in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Epiphany of Cosmopolitanism as a Leitmotif in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Sahayamary. S during the year 2018-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Epiphany of Cosmopolitanism as a Leitmotif in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfil ment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Sahayamary.S

Sahayamary.S

Thoothukudi

October 2019

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Epiphany of Cosmopolitanism as a Letimotif in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*** aims at analyzing the impact of Cosmopolitan in the lives of parsi community. Rohinton Mistry is the prolific of parsi novelist who has thrown significant light on the way of life of their dwindling community.

The first Chapter **Introduction** maps out the history of Indian English fiction that traces the story of a changing and emerging India. Indian fiction is a product of the multilingual, multicultural socio his-torical milieu.

The second Chapter **Depiction of Parsi Culture** devouts to an analysis of the Parsi community and its struggle in the time of migration and settlement in our country. It also focus on the problem of immigration and immigrants novelist of Parsi community.

The third Chapter **Decline of Cosmopolitanism** deals with the theme of cosmopolitanism and its impact among the parsi community. How the author deals with the recurring theme in all his novels. It also examines the culture ,literature, politics, history.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** an attempt has been made to make a postcolonial reading of mistry fiction. His techniques in handling Mumbai atmosphere. He also probe the negative propaganda. Also portray the theme of immigration.

The fifth Chapter **Summation** sums up the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Political fiction, more than any other work is forced and structured by the environment. It is evaluated against the background of the major historical events, forces and ideas. In other words, a political novel cannot be viewed in isolation, as an autonomous body, independent of the socio-cultural contexts of its production. It is now widely acknowledged that the spatial and the material conditions influence a production of text, its meanings, its effects and also its later evaluations and interpretations.

The relationship between the text and its historical context becomes dynamic that an understanding of text the requires an understanding of its context. So a proper evaluation of a political novel demands of an investigation of its background in which it is shaped and structured. It can be seen in the literature of other countries that a great experience serves as a good reservoir of literary material, which assumes significance, beyond mere political reality.

In this regard Harish Trivedi comments that:

> Over the last ten or fifteen years, politics has been taken out of government capitals and cabinets to inhabit not only clubs and coffeehouses but even the kitchen and the bedroom. In a spectacular semantic explosion of the word politics has gathered to itself an astonishing variety of new meanings and pervaded each and every area of human activity. (The American Political Novel 11)

The French Revolution of 1789 or Russian Revolution of 1917 though chiefly in character has very strong social concerns. It will not be valid to compare those

revolutions with other national movement. Unlike these revolutions the Indian revolutions were not violent. Under the leader ship of Mahatma Gandhi our national movement became a collective expression of the desire for political change. Literary writers have been much beholden to history and have made its use in their works for their advantage.

The novels of the early phase are placed in India of pre-independence days while the recent writers of the new generation are concerned with the post-independence era particularly those of 1970's and 1980's have shed off their preceding counterpart's obsession with idealism. Trouble and tribulation of the modern man fascinate them as they consider themselves as the product of the same society wrenched by the perils, pressures and problems of the contemporary life. Literature reflects the socio-cultural of the reality. Political motif has been very prominent in Indo English fiction right from its origin. Most of the novelists used freedom struggle as the backdrop of their narrative.

The pioneering figures in Indo English fiction are Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, generally known as the 'Big Three', an epithet coined by William Walsh, a noted English critic. It is through their effort that Indian fiction gained International status and the universal recognition. Walsh considers them as representatives and trendsetters of the hitherto undefined and ill-organized of Indo English ficton in his observation:

> It is these three writers who defined the area in which Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main these, freed the first models of its characters and elaborated its peculiar logic. (The Big Three 27)

One of the major political events in India during the first half of the twentieth century has been the culmination of the freedom struggle into the achievement of independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. India, before and after independence, had a different picture to protect to the world. Rohinton Mistry stands as a link between the old masters like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao. The older group of novelists attempted to hold on to tradition and they consciously wrote on various themes pertaining to social change, social justice. whereas Rohinton Mistry's character struggle to break free from the clutches of communal violence and political issues. Man in relation to his milieu was the subject in the novel of the writers of the early phase whereas novelists of later period opened new vistas, such as man in relation with the political setting. K.S. Ramamurthi puts the observes that

> All the themes which were destined to find a place in the Indian English novels of the later years had been very well anticipated and exploited in the earlier novels. (274)

The new writers share a tendency to probe into the human mind. Rohinton Mistry's novels are set against the socio-political backdrop of the country and also deal with man's quest for identity socio-political relationship, East West conquest and preoccupations with Hindus and Hinduism. Mistry's novels are a microcosm of life itself, the life which he keenly perceived around his community. Mistry has enjoyed appreciation and accolade from critics at home front as well as universally.

Mistry is always looked upon as an author who is having a great concern for his society and he is very keen to bring out all the follies and shortcomings of the system before his readers. This writing style of Mistry gives him a figure of iconic author. Mistry

has been described as a genius by a leading British newspaper and a true literary Map Maker (The Independent). His writings are the outcome of his passion for reading a variety of great authors like Chekhov, Joyce, Bellow, Updike and Naipaul. Though living in Toronto for the last 27 years, Mistry has remained deeply rooted to his native place, India. Mistry is interested in the vast pattern of interconnections between individuals and community in the form of memory and spatial locations. All his four books are set in Bombay in which he recreates and brings out the close attention to detail of a homesick exile.

Unlike many writers of the South Asian Diaspora, Mistry doesn't engage in extreme debate instead his stories are careful, patients accounts of people trying to find answers in a world that seldom offers any. Rohinton Mistry's works seeks to evolve a vision that involves both the community-centered existence and their involvement with the wider national framework. Mistry, renarrates the history of his community and country as it has been in the post-Independence era. This re-narration of history in a way depicts consciousness of anxieties and aspirations, risks and problems of existence of individual, communal and national issues.

Mistry has successfully exploited some historical points of post- Independence era through the various narratives woven in the novel. The preoccupation moves increasingly closer to contemporary times as Mistry tackles it in all his three novels. Mistry foregrounds aspects of national politics and integrates them into the main plot of his narrative. The latter half of twentieth century has been ambivalent in its attitude towards history. The intermingling of history and fiction can be distinguished in Mistry, Salman Rushdie and Sahgal's novels. Nayantara Sahgal could not keep herself off the prevailing

changes and the developments as she stated in an interview in the Journal Indian Post: "History, more than politics, acts as the trigger for me. That is the peg on which I hang everything else." (5)

Rohinton's novels focus on themes relating to age difference between life-partners (married couples), domestic violence, women exploitation, superstitions, political influence in social life of people especially that which affect Parsi community, sex crimes, parental influence on child's love relationship and married life.

Through his novel *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry criticizes Jawaharlal Nehru's temperament, his alleged political deceitfulness, his influence on his daughter Indira that, according to some people, spoiled her marriage life and her relationship with her husband Feroze Gandhi, who was a Parsi and also deals with the Bangladeshi war with Pakistan. and secondly, in *A Fine Balance*, Indira Gandhi's declaration of a State of Emergency which affects the livelihood of the protagonists. and finally, in *Family Matters*, the impact Hindu fundamentalist agitation and the post-Babri Masjid riots had on the life of the ordinary Indian.

Again a story of spoiled filial relationship dealt with in the short story The Exercisors from the collection entitled Tales From Firoz Baag, where a begrudged mother, Mrs. Bulsara, destroys and ruins the nascent love between her son Jehangir and his girlfriend Behroze. She fulfilled her treacherous motive through emotional blackmailing, bickering and by hiring services of a guru to persuade Jehangir that Behroze is trying to snare him through seduction and will ruin his life. As any other author of Diaspora Rohinton Mistry's writing reflects the crisis of Self Identity and

aspects of Political events. The following lines of Mistry in an interview of Toronto's international festival of authors which shows the pain of immigrant author:

> Going to Canada, faced with the reality of earning a living and realizing that although I had, up to that point in my life, Read books and listened to music that came from the west, there was a lot more involved in living in the west. I felt very comfortable with the books and the music, but actually living in the west made that same music seen much less relevant in suddenly brought home to me very clearly the fact that I was imitating something that was not mine, that made no sense in terms of my own life, my own reality. (Round Table Conference 5)

Mistry is a writer with a deep insight into human psyche, even all the political changes and up down is painted with all reality by him. He is a great artist with pen and he has poured all his emotions on paper with all the reality into it, be it the political affairs of India, or the religious issues. A conversation between a middle class Family in India about the corruption in the government from his third novel, *Family Matters* shows Mistry's grip over Indian Political affairs: "Corruption is in the air we breathe, this nation specialized in turning honest people into crooks right chief.

The answer, unfortunately is yes" "The country has gone to the dogs and not well bred dogs either but pariahs". "May be the BJP and Shiva Sena coalition will improve the things "said Jal" one should give them a chance Yezad laughed "If a poisonous snake was in front of you, would you give it a chance? These two parties encouraged the Hindutva extremists to destroy the Babri mosque?" "Yes, but that was_' "And what about

all the hatred of minorities that Shiv Sena has spread for the last thirty years." He paused to take a long swallow of his scotch and soda." (2)

Mistry has chosen Bombay as a background for all his novels and short stories. Mistry's characters live in the place, which is dark and dusty, and their lives are also filled with tragedy and difficulties. At the same time Bombay is also portrayed as an interesting city and is being loved by his characters especially in *Family Matters* Mr. Kapoor the owner of Bombay sports emporium and Yezad's boss is crazy about Bombay, he is ready to do anything for his loving and dear city.

Even during discussions with Yezad, Mr. Kapoor expresses the pain and grief of partition thus: Sometimes, when Mr. Kapoor spoke about 1947 and Partition, Yezad felt that Punjabi migrants of a certain age were like Indian authors writing about that period, whether in realist novels of corpse filled trains or in the magic realistmid night muddles. All repeating the same catalogue of horrors about slaughter and burningrape and mutilation. (4)

Rushdie's childhood position within Bombay's minority Muslim population, meanwhile, locates his Indian identity within a community increasingly constructed as other to the nation. However, each writer's location within minority communities intersects with and is complicated by a privileged socio-economic position which further destabilizes Sahgal's uncharacteristically simplistic view of the migrant's distance from the texture of daily life. As Homi Bhabha, himself a Bombay-born Parsi explains, the Parsis are a privileged minority within Bombay, and constitute a generally well-educated, professionally employed and relatively economically secure group. However, flourishing under British rule, but remaining detached from the composite national identity being

forged by the nationalist movement. According to Bhabha, "Parsis experiences are the anxiety of not being authentically Indian" (DissemiNation 140).

Rohinton Mistry is the only Indian writer in English who has the privilege of his all novels short listed for 'The Man Booker Prize'. Rohinton was born and brought up in India and he belongs to the Parsi community and migrated to Canada in 1975. Rohinton Mistry embarked his journey as a writer with short stories which brought him two Hart House literary Prizes. Later on, his eleven short stories were published under the title Depiction of Social, Cultural and Political India in the Novels of Rohinton Mistry.

In his novels, Mistry depicts the Indian socio economic and political life as well as Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs beliefs and religion. His characters develop gradually from particular to general, depicting their idiosyncrasies, follies and foibles, from individual to family and gradually widening into the social, cultural and political world. His novels have a leisurely pace without ever losing the reader's interest and attention. The characters change and develop subtly and totally engross the reader.

Mistry's characters and background revolve round the story of Mumbai. His works propose to look at the anguish Parsi way of life and also wrapped up in thick coverings of Parsi ethnicity with the essence of Parsi spirit. His stories mostly concerned themselves with the tribulations and the specific quality of Bombay Parsis. In his book Tales from Firog Baag, a collection of short stories, he describes the daily life of Parsi residents in an apartment in Bombay. Mistry explores the relationship of Parsis in their community, their cultural identity and uniqueness of their community living.

Simultaneously he throws light as well as embraces the attempt to reconcile or unite different or opposing principles, practices, or parties of dispersed Parsi experience.

His characters represent the Parsi Community, whose identity has been historically problematized. It is a progressive community with a glorious past and a dismal future. He attempts at giving details about the lifestyles and culture of the Parsis wherever he gets an opportunity in his fiction. Commenting about this Silvia Albertazzi states that:

> First of all, he tries to show the uniqueness of the Parsi Community by focusing on their way of living and their cultural heritage. Then, he stresses the diasporic nature of Parsi Social and historic experience,seeking the justification and the sense of his own story of migration in the perspective of the Parsi 'double displacement. (276-277)

Rohinton Mistry is an expatriate Indian-Parsi writer who lives in Canada. Mistry is a member of the Zoroastrian Parsi community whose ancestors were exiled by the Islamic rulers from Northeastern Iran. Rohinton frequently uses Parsi culture, Parsi names, Parsi characters and Parsi language in his novels.

As a Parsi and also a immigrant in Canada, he look at him as a symbol of double displacement and this sense of displacement is a recurrent theme in his literary works. His historical situation includes development of new identity in the nation to which he has migrated and a complex relationship with political and cultural history of the nation he has left behind. Generally Indian Diaspora suffers from a sense of triple displacement. They lose their native place and they enter into an alien language and find themselves among people whose culture and codes are different and sometimes offensive to their own.

Nayantara Sahgal has questioned the capacity of migrant novelists to write insightfully about the Indian nation, its history and politics thus: They are not affected by

the raw winds assailing India or - which is more crucial - by the texture of daily life. They are not encumbered by the nitty gritty of carving out a continuity from difficult, sometimes unpredictable circumstances, with gaining an inch of breathing space at a time in the on-going process of building a nation that has only in recent times become a nation. They live in circumstances so materially and psychologically removed from those of their countrymen on the subcontinent as to give them almost nothing in common - least of all an identity - connected with hailing from the same piece of territory on a map. They are reacting to the pressures and concerns of an environment that is not Indian, and are fashioning identities of choice not of history (Some Thoughts on the Puzzle of Identity 90).

As a chronicler of Parsi community, Mistry is keenly aware of his community's predicament. In the recent years, a large numbers of young Parsis have chosen to migrate to the West, Mistry also belongs to them and hopes to recover a life of comfort and pride. All the works of Mistry foregrounds the heterogeneity of identity within Parsi Community and the dynamic nature of Parsi community itself. Mistry is well-versed with all the under currents of Indian politics. As his novels are closely linked with the social and political back ground, there has been a wide spread growth in his writings. If one read Mistry's novel from the political point of view, he can realize that his knowledge on Indian politics is not at all far though he had left India thirty years back and settled in Canada.

Chapter Two

Depiction of Parsiculture

Family Matters is the story of a Parsi family and their attempts to care for an aged and infirm patriarch. Characters are caught in a complex web of actions and reactions in their dealings with each other and with the wider world they inhabit. Physical corruption and the inevitable change and loss accompanying mortality are linked with the social and political corruption characteristic of modern Bombay, and with the moral corruption of characters who often for laudable reasons, perpetrate deceits and engage in subterfuge. For example, Yezad Chenoy uses his family's precious housekeeping money to gamble on the illegal lottery, the *Matka*, making losses they can ill afford. Yet he does so in the hope of meeting the increased expense caused by the arrival of his Parkinson's-raddled father-in-law who, in his turn, has been ousted from his home by the devious of an embittered stepdaughter at her wit's end.

Yezad's attempts to influence his ecumenical employer to stand for election on an anti-communalist, anti-corruption ticket backfire in tragic fashion. The cost of such actions is investigated as part of the novel's interest in moral ambiguity and causality, means and ends, which often centres on the distinction between duty and free will. In this it recalls the strictures of Kantian ethical philosophy, and, emphasizing the text's hybridity, the Zoroastrian injunction to good thoughts, good words, good deeds. The question of how to identify the good course of action in a world seemingly devoid of moral absolutes casts a shadow over the best intentions. Mistry explores the inevitable fragmentation of such ideals in practice and the overlapping, and sometimes contradictory, compulsions of duty to family, to community, to the Zoroastrian faith, and

civic duty. What is revealed is a Parsi community whose response to its glorious past and attenuated status in postcolonial India is fundamentally split between an urge for physical and imaginative escape and a hidebound orthodoxy that, ironically, echoes the purist agendas of the very Hindu nationalism that threatens it (Morey 2003, 60-1).

The agents to discuss immigration are Yezad and his sons. Yezad's life in Bombay like that of millions of other Bombayites /Mumbaikars is full of the stress and strain of a daily commute to work on overcrowded trains and the far from adequate salaries and insalubrious working conditions. Given this context it is not difficult to see why he should yearn for the dream of immigrating to Canada, even though he had been turned down by the immigration authorities many years ago. Ironically the man who had interviewed Yezad and Roxana and had turned them down, had been an ethnic Indian. He had been extremely rude to them and at the end of the interview Yezad had let him have it back with,

> You sir, are a rude and ignorant man, a disgrace to your office and country. You have sat here abusing us, abusing Indians, and India, one of the many countries your government drains of its brainpower, the brainpower that is responsible for your growth and prosperity. Instead of having the grace to thank us, you spew your prejudices and your bigoted ideas. You, whose people suffered racism and xenophobia in Canada, where they were Canadian citizens, put in camps like prisoners of war- you sir, might be expected, more than anyone else, to understand the more enlightened Canadian ideals of multiculturalism. But if you are anything to go by, then Canada is a gigantic hoax. *(*219)

This is the first instance of anti-Canadian discourse in Mistry after the early critiquing of Canadian multiculturalism in "Squatter", "Lead Kindly Light" and "Swimming Lessons" in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. However, it is not clear why it is a xenophobic second-generation Indian immigrant who is indicted, rather than a white Canadian. It can safely be presumed that there are many more of the latter variety than of the former (Bharucha 2003, 185). If Canada is critiqued here, even if indirectly, Bombay in spite of all its shortcomings is clearly celebrated in this text. Her multiculturalism, notwithstanding the post-Babri Masjid riots is lauded by Yezad's boss Vikram Kapur,

> Bombay endures because it gives and it receives. Within this warp and weft is woven the special texture of its social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance generosity. Anywhere else in the world, in those so-called civilized places like England and America, such terrible conditions would lead to revolution (136).

"What does one make of this beautiful city of seven islands, this jewel by the Arabian sea, this reclaimed and, this ocean gift transformed into ground beneath our feet, this enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony [...]" (138). The sly insertion of 'the ground beneath our feet' only lends further substance to the suspicion that Mistry is needling Salman Rushdie here.

Mistry is in many ways bearing witness to the last grand stand of the Parsi Zoroastrians in India. He had noted their rites and rituals and their eccentricities in his earlier texts, in this one he extends this to writing about the old myths and legends of ancient Iran. Using the device of oral narrative, Nariman Vakeel becomes the story-teller

in this book and the audience who listen to his tales about ancient Iran are his young grandsons. Through these myths, Mistry appears to be making the point that it is important for human beings to remember their origins. As the double play of the title suggests, family is important both as the site of primary loyalties filiation and the locus of tangled and often unresolved issues. Family in the novel comes to have both positive and negative connotations.

The Chenoy-Vakeel-Contractor family unit is already fractured by loss: Coomy and Jal Contractor's own father dies young and they are unwillingly swept into a new domestic arrangement when their mother seeks the security of a marriage to Nariman Vakeel, who, in turn, carries with him the whiff of scandal and divided loyalties owing to his liaison with a non-Parsi, Lucy Braganza. Nariman reluctantly yields to the marriage with Yasmin Contractor and adds a daughter of his own, Roxana, to his newly acquired stepchildren, leading to longstanding jealousies and resentment about favouritism.

Family can be protective spaces, but they can also stifle with a blanket of over-protectiveness: Yezad's older sisters fiercely resent anyone vying for a share of their brother's affections; and even the well-meaning Roxana fusses over her sons, Jehangir and Murad, worrying at the slightest sign of the inevitable childhood coughs or stomach upsets. Yet, sinister examples of parental control are at work too, nor only in Mr Vakeel's interdiction against Nariman marrying for love, but also toward the end of the novel when Yezad, tossed by events back to a literal and racially-based understanding of Parsi uniqueness, effectively re-enacts the same prejudicial injunctions when dealing with his eldest son's first serious relationship.

Family and its expected loyalties can be as much an offensive weapon as a shield against threatening joutside forces. As a counterpoint a touching relationship develops between Jehangir and his incapacitated grandfather. As Nariman's body fails him, so his need for emotional and sometimes physical support increases. Of all the Chenoys, Jehangir is most able to provide the sustenance Nariman requires (Morey 2003, 61-2). Jehangir soothes his troubled grandfather at night when the unbidden memories plague him, and even helps him with basic bodily functions when he lapses into an increasingly childlike helplessness as the illness progresses. Parkinson's and osteoporosis are only two of the many examples of what one might call bodily corruption, which mark *Family Matters*.

Characters are furnished with a full complement of ailments: Coomy's brother Jal is partially deaf and wrestles with a malfunctioning hearing aid; the increasingly choleric Yezad develops angina; and Jehangir has a delicate digestive system. Issues of mobility versus immobility, decay and mortality are explored through Nariman's fate. From a life lived fully through the body, he comes to exist solely in the life of the mind. As he thinks back on his blighted love for Lucy, Nariman struggles to perform .the simplest tasks which become the most acute manifestation of the labours of other characters, such as Roxana and Yezad, struggling everyday to make ends meet, or Coomy fighting vainly to hold back the tide of bitterness she feels for the old man she blames for her mother's untimely death.

Coomy and her brother-in-law, Yezad, actually share several psychologically significant traits. They both baulk at the unpleasant physical realities of caring for a prostrate, paralysed relative: Coomy is sickened by his bodily effluvia, and Yezad refuses

to touch the bedpan on which Nariman is now reliant. Their revulsion is of a piece with their obsessive desire to exercise control over their environments and, by extension, their destinies. Yet, in different ways, this urge is every bit as damaging for these two figures as it was for the warring women, Lucy and Yasmin, whose battle for control of Nariman sends them over the edge: literally, as locked in struggle, they plunge to their deaths from the roof of Chateau Felicity. Thus, the corruption and breakdown of family life inextricably linked to the physical. Yet it is also connected to that other corruption infesting the social space and political institutions of Bombay (Morey 2003, 62-3).

The moral taint that everywhere affects Bombay life also increasingly makes its presence felt in the lives of Nariman's family. The most glaring example of this is Coomy's devious plan to foist her stepfather on the already financially constrained Chenoy wing of the family, and the even more underhand measures she takes to keep him there. Yet, other, less overt instances of dishonesty also typify characters' dealings with each other and, sometimes, with themselves. Jehangir's capitulation to his classmates' entreaties to turn a blind eye to their mistakes, and so earn a few much-needed extra rupees for the family's essential purchases, betrays that faith placed in him as homework monitor by his teacher, the lovely Miss Alvarez, so here Jehangir's classroom takes on a metonymic relationship to society and nation. Although he wants to help Miss Alvarez fight corruption in his own, small way, Jehangir is eventually compromised and becomes part of it. Likewise, Yezad succumbs to temptation and removes money from the worn but neatly labelled envelopes containing savings from staple items such as "Milk and Tea," "Water and Electricity," to place bets on the Matka (Morey 2003, 64). Both Yezad and Jehangir, in their different ways violate Yezad's father's example of that scrupulous

Parsi honesty for which the community is celebrated. After relating the tale of his father's heroism, Yezad, somewhat ironically, warns his sons: "Remember, people can take everything away from you, but they cannot rob you of your decency ... You alone can do that, by your actions" (226).

However, Yezad, and the generation that comes after him, are, in a sense, victims as well as inheritors of standards set in other times, and in other contexts. The myth of Parsi honesty and integrity is an ambiguous one, both inspiration and burden. The complicating factor, and what prevents *Family Matters* from being simply a text lamenting moral decline, is that both Yezad and his son act as they do for the best of reasons: to secure extra funds to cover the increased cost of looking after Nariman with his expensive medicines.

In fact, moral ambiguity in motivation is at the heart of the novel. *Family Matters* repeatedly returns to questions of means and ends, and the negative outcome of the well-intended act. A number of situations lend themselves to a kind of double construction, according to the discrepancy between what characters think their actions will achieve and what the end result actually turns out to be: Roxana innocently suggests employing the incompetent handyman Edul Munshi to fix Coomy's ceiling, thus setting in train events that will lead to both their deaths; the same to frighten Mr Kapur into running in the forthcoming municipal election is suggested by the eminently sympathetic Vilas; while Yezad suggests that real Shiv Sena goondas may be better equipped for the task than Vilas's verbose actor friends. Most intractable of all, perhaps –and the sequence of events that appears to initiate all the Chenoy family's subsequent troubles- is Nariman's inability to give up his relationship with Lucy Braganza, even after his marriage to Yasmin. Lucy

follows him to his new family home, takes a job as an ayah with a neighbour in order to be near him, and repeatedly threatens suicide. Time and again Nariman follows her up to the roof of Chateau Felicity and dissuades her from jumping. Despite his efforts to calm his former lover, Nariman finds himself yielding to the promptings of old emotions as well as the concern he feels for Lucy in her distressed obsession (Morey 2003, 65-6). At one point he allows himself to wonder whether Lucy's perseverance is the result of untidying love or a desire for retaliation. As he hurts his family, his actions can be seen as selfish rather than benevolent.

Such moral complexity gives a new twist to Mistry's perennial concern with the idea of goodness as understood in Zoroastrianism. Each of his works contains a reference to the prime requirements of the Zoroastrian faith "munashni, gavashni, kunashni": good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Characters orient themselves, and to an extent are judged, according to this triple injunction. *Family Matters*, however, complicates the picture by raising the question of what exactly these good thoughts, words and deeds might consist of. Yet in the world inhabited by Yezad and his family, the notion of good is adulterated and evil is immanent in humankind. Good and bad permeate one another, partly through those ageless human proclivities vengeance, pride and intolerance. Coomy's unhealthy resentment may have festered for years, but she does have a legitimate grievance. Coomy feels guilty about what she has done, as does the younger Nariman when confronted with the proof of what his continued infatuated with Lucy is doing to his family, and Yezad spends much of of the second half of the novel tortured by guilt over his overt activities until he finds that religion an conveniently be made to bear the burden of a multitude of sins. Certainly, Coomy has chosen to interpret her

mother's unhappy marriage and death in a certain way, as her lonely life, blighted by bitterness and an unforgiving attitude towards Nariman, make abundantly clear. The great question of the novel is who is to blame for Lucy and Yasmin's fatal fall? Which is answered in Jehangir's epilogue at the end:

> all the confusion was due to one word in her sentence:
>
> did she say 'he' or 'we'?"
>
> What do you think she said?" I inquire meekly.
>
> Oh, I know what she said. She said, 'What did we do!' But there were other people gathered around. Some of them heard, 'What did he do!' and they claimed it incriminated Nariman.(477)

This is significant as a point about how actions have consequences which reverberate down the years, but which people can interpret as they wish. Thus, characters in *Family Matters* are seen largely to choose their own fates. Yet they do not do so arbitrarily. Each is burdened by an acute sense of duty: to family, to employer or to the city as a whole (Morey 2003, 67).

The only saving grace of the epilogue is Jehangir's description of his grandfather's death, a year after his return to Chateau Felicity. No longer handicapped by lack of funds, the Chinoys had employed professional help to look after Nariman. But starved of the tender, personalised attention of his daughter he had developed bed-sores and died in considerable pain from them though he "didn't make a sound despite the agony he was going through" (*Family Matters* 430). In one respect, those of Yezad's actions which seem most questionable-taking the household savings for gambling, temporarily pocketing the protection money, setting the fake Shiv Sena thugs to frighten

Mr Kapur-are all motivated by a notion of duty: the long-term duty to provide for his family. Likewise, Coomy is forced to choose between the duty to look after her incapacitated stepfather, and her sense of duty to the memory of her biological mother, for whose death she holds him responsible. She chooses the latter and lies that her ceiling has collapsed in order to absolve herself of her duties to Nariman. In neither case, however, could Yezad or Coomy wish that others would behave towards them with the same kind of deception and evasiveness as they themselves have employed (Morey 2003, 68).

The sense of loss indicative of contemporary Parsi culture in India is clearly articulated: "To think that we Parsis were the ones who built this beautiful city and made it prosper. And in a few more years there won't be any of us left to tell the tale" (*Family Matters* 404). For Yezad the issue is one of purity. He comes to view "the purity of this unique and ancient Persian community" (*Family Matters* 127) as being under threat from miscegenation, and ponders on the ritual gestures of the dastur at the fire-temple, valuing "the cumulative grace of generations and centuries ... encoded in blood and bone" (*Family Matters* 333).

The psychological importance to the orthodox of the unique, untainted Persian blood, which is felt to distinguish Parsis from the surrounding community, should not be underestimated. The orthodox are against the mingling of this blood with any other. Yezad becomes a kind of Zoroastrian fundamentalist, imposing his racial and cultural obsessions on everyone around him. He is an active member of an orthodox Zoroastrian association, attempts to inflict draconian menstruation laws on his wife, and rails against Murad's non-Parsi girlfriend. The punishment he advocates for Parsis who dare to

cultivate inappropriate relations with non-Parsis –excommunication and public humiliation- is similar to the Hindu nationalist forces he has previously despised (Morey 2003, 73)

In each of his novels, Mistry interrogates and often challenges the complacencies and orthodoxies of those secular and religious elites who run the nation and seek to shape it in their own image. His characters seek patterns and shapes in the chaos of everyday lives slowly falling apart, sometimes by raiding fond memories, sometimes by reversion to the primal consolations of religious and ethnic identifications, and sometimes, more profitably, by sifting what is valuable in the past and filtering out prejudices which tie them down.

Mistry's Zoroastrian background informs each of his texts, providing both the subject matter and the coordinates by which his protagonists understand their encounters with the outside world. The Zoroastrian principles that inform their lives also direct their responses to the moral dilemmas they face. The Parsi world also impacts on Mistry's style, complicating its inherent hybridity. Nilufer E. Bharucha has commented of the Parsis: "As a diasporic people, they have perfected the art of existing in a state of liminality, partaking of different cultures yet ultimately retaining for themselves the refuge of their formative ethno-religious identity" (2000, 82). Mistry's style appears to have evolved its characteristic features –the measured clarity of the European novel leavened by the dialogic energy of eastern storytelling traditions – to deal with the multiple interpellations of conflictual ideologies. Ultimately, Mistry's fiction offers the satisfactions of recognition to those familiar with the machinations of postcolonial Indian politics and the position of the Parsis as a vulnerable minority, and to general readers who

may know little about the background, but who can identify with the characters, their experiences and life choices (Morey 2004, 173-6)

Family Matters has enabled Mistry to rise above the usual postcolonial resistance to the other and surface into the deeper waters of humanism- though not deracinated or shorn of political concern (Bharucha 2003, 202-3). The miniature Parsi world is now enriched by the literary prowess and emotional maturity of a writer at the height of his writing talent. Foregrounded here are the problems of not just the ageing of Nariman Vakeel, but those of an ageing community. In that sense we could look at Nariman as a metaphor for a geriatric community on the brink of extinction.

Despite all the references to fanaticism, religious intolerance and historical injustice, Mistry is less concerned with public events than with the lives of individuals and families, their personal tragedies and social lives, it is because his strength lies in his capacity to invoke transparency, his dexterity at erasing the boundary between life and artifice. Unfortunately, melodrama disrupts the transparent familial scenes, as in the climactic moments where Nariman is on his deathbed, surrounded by his family, and Daisy arrives to fulfil a promise she made years before that she would play the violin for him as he lies dying. Though the scene is redeemed by restraint and understatement the prose does not rise above its situation (Kanaganayakam 2002, 920).

Mistry's novels concern family life within an Indian Parsi social frame whose intertext is often Western, that is, is not South Asian anymore. In *Family Matters*, the obvious structural device is *King Lear*: Nariman is a Lear figure who gives his house away to children who will not look after him. Only one daughter, Roxana, remains loyal, and her act of taking him in is nearly as costly as Cordelia's refusal to lie. The intended

readership is that of the West: even the way characters use language is sometimes foreign to India. When both the intertextuality and the texture of the language responds to the expectations of Western readers, they are reassured that the foreigness of the novel hardly matters.

Realism in the way Mistry uses it parades its capacity to reflect the real, but that is a far cry from asserting that it is the real. Unlike the general reader, the critic knowledgeable about Indian life and the Indian reality that experimental fiction attempts to encompass may have difficulty with Mistry's work, finding its reality, beyond its Parsi family, nothing more than a plot device (Kanaganayakam 2002, 921). Does Mistry's novel seek an illusion of the real or depicts the reality of India? It is this realization of the deep disjuncture between the historical home and the present reality of homelessness that the Parsi subject in Mistry's fiction takes with him to Canada, his new home outside India which he has re territorialized as his third space. The ethnic Parsi's positioning in yet another diaspora (Gabriel 2004, 29) in Canada further emphasizes the instability of national identity, a concept that is premised on the illusion of a single, primordial land. The double diaspora in Mistry's fiction disturbs the ontological certainty or stability of home, and thus undermines the nationalist narrative of Canada.

Chapter Three

Decline of Cosmopolitanism

Etymologically the word 'Cosmopolitan' is derived from the Greek word cosmos (world) and polis (people) which describes a universal love of humankind as a whole, regardless of nation. It stands for citizenship of the world. It refers to a taste or consideration for cultures besides one's own culture of origin. As far as cosmopolitanism is concerned it contains that all humanity belongs to a single moral community. The idea is that all human beings, regardless of their affiliation, belong to a single community and that community should be cultivated.

Different versions of cosmopolitanism envision this community in different ways, some focusing on political institutions and others on moral values and some others on relationships and still others focusing on shared markets or forms of cultural expression. "The philosophical interest in cosmopolitanism lies in its challenge to commonly recognized attachments to fellow citizen, the local state, parochially shared cultures and the like". (Kant's System of Rights 8) It emphasizes the unity of humankind by its division into different states and people. It argues that humans are designed by Nature to be sociable and live in harmony. According to Kant, "all rational beings are members in a single moral community". (Kant's System of Rights 43). They are parallel to citizens in the political sense in that they share the characteristics of freedom, equality, and independence and they give themselves to the law.However, human beings common laws are the laws of morality which are grounded in reason.

Cosmopolitanism believes that there is a burden on all the people to cultivate and improve humanity as a whole and to provide enrichment in the best way that they can.

These things tie into the idea of brotherhood and how the human race is one entity that humans must all band together to support. In addition, it claims for equal protection of the environment and against the negative side effects of political development.

In Family Matters, Bombay has not only been treated as a native place where Rohinton Mistry was born but as a cosmopolitanism city which is a cultural meeting place ready to accept all sorts of people who are displaced from their natural habitat or birthplace. There is an instance in the novel, where it is called a religion. "Bombay is much more than a city. Bombay is a religion." (361). In this passage, Mistry demonstrates Cosmopolitanism and humanity of a Bombay in general. Despite all its fanaticism and corruption, Bombay provides a shelter to all those who rift into the city, regardless of caste, ethnicity and religious affiliation.

People not only share their home in Bombay, but even in places like Mr. Kapur's shop they also celebrate all festivals, as a means of acknowledging unity in diversity. He goes to an extent of praising Bombay thus: The beautiful city of seven islands, this jewel by the Arabian sea, this reclaimed land, this oceangift transformed into ground beneath our feet, this enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and check by jowl in peace and harmony this diamond of diversity, this generous goddess who embraces the poor and the hungry and the huddles masses, this dear, dear city now languishes- I don't exaggerate like a patient in intensive care put there by small selfish men who wanted destroy it because their coarseness cannot bear something so grand so fine. (215)

In the novel, Mr. Kapur expounded on the virtues of a society and the advantages of celebrating festivals of all faiths and religions. Moreover, there is an argument

proposed by Mr. Kapur, which would be the message to the so-called displced, alienated and marginalized people. Kapur's powerful opinion proposes a sense of belongingness that restores the life of the marginalized. One more condition is essential and that is a strong sense of trust. Mistry suggests to approach the destination of human's desire with an open mind without high expectation and by having a sense of acceptance. In this, there are people who are ready to reach out and help one another. This phenomenon is clearly elucidated in the novel when people reach out to help one another as in the train incident:

> Whose hands were they, and whose hand were they grasping? Hindu, Muslism, Dalit, Parsi, Christian? No one knew and no one cared. Fellow passengers, that's all they knew. By seeing this, my eyes were filled with tears of joy, because what I saw told me there was still hope for this great city. (160)

Mistry gives different kinds of description about the city of Bombay in his Family Matters. The hope for the city of Bombay is revealed at severalcircumstances in the novel but soon it was shattered down in the name of politics. The ShivSena is still around in Mistry's novel, but this time in thepost-Babri Masjid Bombay where the pan-Indian militant Hindutva of the BJP has augmented the religious chauvinism of Shiv Sena. The focus has thus shifted from the 1970's and the years of Emergency under Mrs. India Gandhi, to more recent times in 1990's.

The reality captured in the novel is of Bombay, which was renamed as Mumbai in 1995 by the Shiv Sena. Mistry's political consciousness and shrewdness pleads to compare with another diasporic book, Salman Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh which

delineates Bombay's troubles and shameful time in the hands of politically motivated people.

The Maharastrian state elections of 1995 took place against the background of anti-Muslim sentiment consequent to the civil unrest which had followed the destruction of the Babri Mosque event. At the polls Shiv Sena depicts himself as "the defender of Hindus" (106) and won enough support to form a coalition government with the BJP (Bharathiya Janata Party). This success represented the culmination of thirty years of activism by the Shiv Sena in Bombay. This is fuelled by its charismatic and ruthless leader, the Senapati, Bal Thackeray. It had been seen as the organization which develops from a cadre concerned with employment opportunities for Maharastrians speakers to have a major role in the Hindu nationalist movement on the metropolitan stage.

In order to attract the broad spectrum of the Bombay population, they raised a banner of Hindu majoritarianism or Hindutva which is led by Shiv Sena to exploitthe inevitable consequences in terms of inequality, rooting capitalist development in the city.This movement of the Shiv Sena in Bombay politics is described by Novy Kapadia as the"criminalization of politics and the politicization of crime, so rampant in India in the last decade of the twentieth century". (The Politics of Survival and Domination 274)

The novel is set in the city of Mumbai, where Mistry was born and grew up, and tells the story of a middle-class Parsi family living through a domestic crisis. Parents-children relationship starts even before the birth of children and continues even after the death of parents. Parents start thinking and dreaming of their child before its birth and continue to influence its life even after its death. Through one family, Mistry conveys everything from the dilemmas among India's Parsis, Persian-descended Zoroastrians, to

the wider concerns of corruption and communalism. Some of the action takes place in Chateau Felicity, a flat inhabited by a 79-year-old, Parkinson's stricken Nariman, who is the decaying patriarch and a widower with a small, discordant family consisting of his two middle-aged step children, Coomy (bitter and domineering) and Jal (mild-mannered and subservient). When Nariman's sickness is compounded by a broken ankle, Coomy's harshness reaches its summit. She plots to turn his round-the-clock care over to Roxana, her sweet-tempered sister and Nariman's real daughter and that's where the problems start.

Roxana, who lives a contented life with Yezad and her two children, Murad and Jehangirin a small flat at Pleasant Villa takes up the care of Nariman like a dutiful daughter. The inclusion of a new member in an already stuffed house soon becomes evidently painful, both physically and emotionally for Roxana's family. As loathing for Nariman's sickness increases and finances of the already strained household go bust, inundated by the ever increasing financial worries, Yezad pushes himself into a scheme of deception involving Vikram Kapur (his eccentric and sometimes exasperating employer at Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium).

Two terrible incidents occur, which turn the plot and the lives of the characters topsy-turvy. In a simple but lucid and moving manner Mistry shows the different perspectives and the attitudes of parents and children relationship in his *Family Matters*. A mother keeps her unborn child in her womb for nine months, after the birth of the child parents bear all the hardships of bringing it up with pleasure. A mother would gladly lie in a wet bed so that the child can sleep comfortably. But the world undergoes a sea change when the children have to look after their aged parents.

Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters* is a touching account of the helplessness, misery, suffering and hardships of parents in old age and heartlessness and callousness of children. The main problems of parents in old age are elaborated through the protagonist, seventy nine year old professor Nariman Vakeel. A widower Nariman Vakeel lives in a seven room old flat with hisstep children Coomy and Jal. Despite suffering from Parkinson's disease and protestations ofhis step children Nariman Vakeel insists on going for vesperal walk. In utter disregard on his movements, Nariman Vakeel uncurls his ageing and frail limbs and leaves the apartment. When Coomy asks him, "How many people with Parkinson's do what you do?," he raises off her fears by saying, "I'm not going trekking in Nepal. A little stroll down the lane, that's all". (3)

Nariman Vakeel retorts that dangers lurk indoors as well as outdoors. Coomy accuses Nariman Vakeel for behaving irresonsibily. Being irritated of Coomy's scolding, Nariman Vakeel says that "In my youth, my parents controlled me and destroyed those years. Thanks to them, I married your mother and wrecked my idle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I won't allow it" (7) It is the perfect canvas to explore the politics of the individual in relation to the community. In Mistry's earlier fiction, characters like Sohrab in Such a Long Journey and Dina Dalal in A Fine Balance emerge as strongly individualistic people who struggle to carve a personal, individual space for themselves within the family. In the case of Sohrab, his rebellion is against his father's dreams for his future, to which he finally realizes the older man only wishes his wellbeing.

In the case of Dina Dalal, her rebellion is both that of a disempowered woman and a sister against a wealthy and manipulative brother. However, it is only in Family Matters that the question of the private space of individual identity is fully

explored through the many instances of conflict between individual desires and duties towards the family or community.The first and foremost of these is the tragic story of Nariman Vakeel. He is forcefully separatedfrom his Christian girlfriend by his parents and their well-wishers and forced to bend to the general demand of the community. This is presented as submissions of his will to a greater extent and it is well reflected in Nariman Vakeel's life thus: "No happiness is more lasting than the happiness that you get from fulfilling your parent's wisher". (13).

Eventually Nariman accepts the separation from Lucy out of weariness and a sense of futility of an unequal struggle with their families, which defend them in the name of society. Nariman's parents perceive education as the cause of sorrow: "Modern ideas have filled Nariman's head. He never learned to preserve that fine balance between tradition and moderness. (15)

The theme of compulsion exercised by the family is repeated in a different context with Jal, Nariman's stepson. Nostalgia is a recurrent theme in Mistry's *Family Matters*. This nostalgia is generally for a past way of life, forever lost to the main characters. It is occasionally manifest in the idealization of religious rituals which are seen as a way to preserve the past and prevent the disintegration of the family and the community. It also takes the form of reminiscing about childhood which is seen as a more stable and reassuring world than the present. These reminiscences, presented in the stories of various characters in both the short stories and the novels, are linked to the changed circumstances of the Parsi community following Independence. This politico-cultural nostalgia helps to create a sense of loss about the changed circumstances of the characters in both domestic and public spheres.

Mistry clearly underlines the fact that parents are seen as burden in indian society. In his youth Nariman Vakeel had been in love with a Goan girl, Lucy Braganza. One evening thirty six years ago he had capitulated to his parents that he end up his relation with Lucy. This relation is replaced in the form of Yasim, a widow with two children and this is how Nariman Vakeel had found himself the husband of Yasmin and father of Commy and Jal. Although he had accepted them, Yasmin wanted them to keep their biological father's surname, as otherwise it would be like rewriting a history. Coomy's resentment is heightened by the fact that it is the second class children like her and Jal who have to bear this responsibility while the first class child like Roxana, has escaped by virtue of her married status.

However, Mistry does give Coomy her due and tells us that she loves her little sister, who rescues them from their danger. Roxana's little world in Pleasant Villa is hit by the calamity of Nariman Vakeel's sudden arrival. Here Mistry shows Roxana's obsessive concern for her son's health, which means keeping them at the slightest sign of a cold. On such days Roxana's son, Jehangir would keep himself busy with jigsaw puzzles and engage himself by reading Enid Blyton books. The jigsaw puzzle has been used by Mistry as a central idea of Family Matters. Jehangir's act of fitting together in the jigsaw puzzles symbolizes his attempt to work out the quarrels and the power politics that rocks his family which he wishes would live together in happiness and harmony. Roxana'sresponse toward her father's presence seems lovable, but at the same time intolerable.

Roxana brings out her sense of love and hatred reflects her puzzling attitude toward her father thus:"She bent down to kiss him. His pungent odour repelled her, but

she fought the impulse to move away. She wondered how well they had been looking after him" (105) The focus throughout is on the struggles of the family, their binding ties and the trials they have to suffer through. Mistry's humanism reveals itself in the depiction of a family who are closer and loving in spite of all their differences. There are shades of King Lear in the novel.Nariman Vakeel himself says,"To .so many classes I taught Lear, learning nothing myself. What kind of teacher is that, as foolish at the end of his life as at the beginning?" (190).

Nariman is banished by Coomy, who is the custodian of all her stepfather's retirement money. Nariman Vakeel, the elderly patriarch, like King Lear, is forced to seek the generosity of his progeny Roxana, who welcomes him in spite of her tight space and resources. The ailing patriarch has only this to say, "Can care and concern made compulsory? Either it resides in the heart or nowhere" (116)

The novel stresses on take care of the old people and it is not only a measure of our humanity but a means of grasping it thoroughly. When Yezad loses his cool over the need and the cares of Nariman, Roxana reminds him of Gandhi's teachings "that there was nothing nobler than the services of the weak, the old, the unfortunate" (278). Then, Yezad also comes to realizethat, with death, helping one's elders through it is the only way to learn to take on one's own.

As Roxana watches her nine year old son feeding 79 years old grandfather, the boy wiped a stray grain of rice from his lips. Roxana felt she was witnessing something almost sacred. There is a subdued note of optimism at the end of the novel. There are trying situations, there are trials and ordeals but the ties of the family ultimately survive.

Charles Foray puts that: "*Family Matters* can be difficult, and Mistry doesn't shy away from showing, in all their roughness, the real truths about them." (The Times 12)

Meanwhile, as the weakening Nariman tries not to be a burden to Roxana, he mumbles in his dreams night after night, which gradually reveals the pain and secrets at the heart of the family. Mistry uses the device of flashback in italics to reveal the painful past of Nariman. Nariman's proposed three week stay at Pleasant Villa prolongs as coomy pushes Jal into wrecking part of their apartment so that they will have the perfect excuse of not taking their step-father back. Meanwhile, Roxana's family reverts to survive with low income. Yezad comes out with doomed plans to raise money to fill the almost empty envelopes Roxana keeps in a drawer from which to pay the family expenses.

The sense of guilt and failure become Yezad's constant companions and prompt his fanatical return to religion. As a result, they dispose their apartment at Pleasant Villa for forty lakhs and use a part of the amount to repair Chateau Felicity where they finally move along with the bedridden Nariman. A year aftermoving into Chateau Felicity, Nariman dies with a calm expression on his face. There are quitea few sub-plots revealing the encroachments of a vicious, corrupting world. The troubles in Roxana's house are paralled in the city of Bombay, ruled by the gangsters like Shiv Sena, who oppress Muslims as they preserve India from Western festivities and morals.

Mistry juxtaposes a politically distanced migrant and a socially committed local activist to stage his anxious negotiation of the tension prevails in the state. Kapur is politically informed about and passionately interested in the city's past and present identity. Kapur's limited sense of belonging, locates him between being a stranger and a

Bombayite in the city. Mistry therefore locates Kapur as a migrant caught between elsewhere in secular Bombay and hiscontemporary experience of the violently parochial Mumbai.

Mistry is concerned that his attempts to represent India's contemporary socio-political crises are, in themselves, an insufficient contribution to secular resistance within the nation. On the other hand, Kapur's intension is to demonstrate the cosmopolitan and the underlying humanity of a Bombay. Despite all its fanaticism and corruption, it provides a heaven to all those who drift into the city, regardless of caste, ethnicity and religious affiliation. Hansen similarly observes that "many Bombayites lamented the loss of the old name which was associated with the older experience of Bombay, the dreams of Bombay as a metaphor of India's diversity, the imaginings of modernity" (58).

In Family Matters, Mistry consolidates the characterisation of Kapur, who being politically active and responsibly attached to Bombay's contemporary politics. The newly elected Shiv Sena's municipal government decides to dissolve the Srikrishna Commission, which investigated the post-Ayodhya riots in Bombay. In view of future, Kapur resolves to prefer in the next municipal election. Kapur's commitment to resist the Shiv Sena's narrow minded politics is explicitly comes under the notion of duty. While Yezad concerned about his job in the shop, he suggests that Kapur should not interfere with anything towards the political issues. On the other side Kapur prefers to define his duty in terms of opposing Shiv Sena's political ideology and also by defending his beloved Bombay.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

The Parsis have always played a pivotal role in the arena of Indian English literature but the endeavour to map the Parsi cultural space was deeply felt and noticed in the works of some prolific novelists like Bapsi Sidhwa, Farrukh Dhondy, Firdaus Kanga, Boman Desai, Dina Mehta and above all Rohinton Mistry. They are some of the prominent novelists who exhibit ethno-religious minority traits in their writings. The Parsis by their affinity with the British and their inherent anglophile penchant kept themselves away from the mainstream Indian culture after the Partition. The sharp decline in population made them frightened and the rising communal disharmony has intensified their community consciousness more than ever before. In this regard one eminent critic A. K. Singh comments:

> "Their works exhibit consciousness of their community in such a way that the community emerges as a protagonist from their works through on the surface these works deal with their human protagonists". (66)

Rohinton Mistry's third novelFamily Matters (2002) is also highly appreciated and welcomed after the success of his magnum opus *A Fine Balance* (1995), which has already added a new feather to Misrty's cap by winning several major international literary awards. In his third novel Mistry, in the vein of his first novel *Such a Long Journey*, largely confines himself again to the domestic upheaval of a Parsi family that he knows best and portrays it with utmost authenticity. This bulky but most compassionate narrative written in a simple language portrays the story of four generations of a middle

class Parsi family of Bombay; the first comprises the father of Nariman Vakil, second comprises of Nariman Vakil and his wife Yasmin Contractor, third generation includes Jal, Coomy, Roxana and Yezad Chenoy and finally, the children of Yezad and Roxana; Murad and Jehangir.

Family Matters is a tale of true representation of the harsh realities and selfish nature of the characters who express individual idiosyncrasy in relation to family, community and society. In the words of a famous critic Linda L. Richards who while praising the novel remarks,

> " Mistry's most recent novel; *Family Matters* is brilliant. It manages to be warm and familiar, while for North American readers, at any rate fragrantly exotic.Mistry has portrayed the Mumbai city as a protagonist in Family Matters likewise his earlier two novels . He recreates ...close attention to the details of homesick exile." (Jha 155).

The narrative elaborately delineates the city with its cosmopolitan modernity as a theme, it carves out a small section of the city where the action takes place, focuses on the gloomy and pessimistic aspects of the city existence and most importantly introduces a character Mr Kapur who personifies the city. Mr Kapur elaborately describes

Bombay endures because it gives and it receives. Within this warp and weft is woven the special texture of its social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance, generosity. Anywhere else in the world, in those so called civilized places like England and America, such terrible conditions would lead to revolution" (152). Again Mistry's penchant for the old city comes through the voice of the same Mr. Kapur

> This beautiful city of seven islands, this jewel by the Arabian Sea, this feet, this enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony, this diamond of diversity, this generous goddess who embraces the poor and the hungry and the huddled masses, this Urb Prima in Indis ...(160)

The novel *Family Matters* is the representation of the degradation of moral and ethical values in different spheres of the post modern cosmopolitan societal life with its growing materialism and prevalent features of corruption and cheap politics. Mistry raises his voice for several universal issues in his last two novels, *Family Matters* crosses the boundary of nation, ethnicity and times by taking up the thematic issues such as geriatrics, family bondage, human relationships, death and theme of belongingness. Nilufer Bharucha comments that Mistry has transcended both the self and the others .The self being the persona of the writer and also his Parsi self the being the wider world. Here all three have come together in an epiphanic moment that speaks across the national, ethnic and gender boundaries, with a voice that cannot be denied.

Through the domestic crises of one middle class Parsi family, Mistry conveys everything from the dilemmas among Indian Parsis as a marginalized community to the wider concerns of corruption and communalism. This novel *Family Matters* like his first one presents Shiv Sena as a Hindu fundamentalist force fully involved in rioting, looting and burning the poor and the innocent people. Hussain, a peon is a tragic victim of the Babri Masjid riot. His wife and children were killed in riot. In Hussain's own utterance:

"In those riots the police were behaving like gangsters. In Muslim, they were shooting their guns at innocent people.

> Houses were burning, neighbours came out to throw water. And the police? Firing bullets like target practice. These guardians of the law were murdering everybody! And my poor wife and children...I couldn't even recognize them" (148).

These fundamentalist Husssain forces used to unleash terror over people's minds. The novelist wails over the ruthless and oppressive measures taken by these religious fanatics. They are responsible for ruining the multicultural and multilingual peaceful coexistence of the nation. It speaks volumes about how a religious minority like Parsis gets crushed under the sense of insecurity. Yezad sums up the attitude of the Shiv Sena as: "South Indians are anti-Bombay, Valentine's Day is anti-Hindustani, Film stars born before 1947 in the Pakistani Part of Punjab are traitors to the country" (32)

. Mistry puts in practice the negative propaganda and the politics of cultural terrorism through the delineation of this communalism. Coomy in the course of the novel also points out the dangers lurking home and abroad. Here she mentions the incident of burning down of an old Parsi couple by Hindu extremist mobs, under the erroneous notion that some Muslims had been given shelter in that residence.

Jal, in the course of the novel, emphasises the Minority Parsi community's predicament as he says "Just last week in Firozsha Baag an old lady was beaten and robbed inside her own flat. Poor thing is barely clinging to life at Parsi General" (5).The prevalent corruption in India has become a theme of this narrative " Corruption is in the air we breathe. This nation specializes in turning honest people into crooks".(30)

Another theme in the novel is that of immigration. Parsees emigrate to foreign countries for the monetary security. In this regard V. L. V. N. Narendra Kumar writes:

> The Parsees Prefer the West since it offers unlimited scope for growth and prosperity. Dislocation is part of the Parsee psyche. Exiled twelve hundred years ago, they came to India. Now they are migrating to west in search of greener pasture. Thus there is double migration' in case of Parsees" (14)

However, *Family Matters* endorses Indian secularism. In the depiction of the religious milieu of the nation *Family Matters* incorporates people from more religions than the other two Mistrian fictions. Chenoy family represents Parsis, Mr Kapur is a Hindu, Hussain is the representation of Muslim, Lucy Braganza is a Christian and there are references of Jains in the plot of the novel.

The novel also refers to several festivals from different communities like Diwali, Christmas, Id, Navroze, Baisakhi, Buddha Jayanti, and Ganesh Chaturthi which prove the basic foundation of national integrity. Readers find catch a glimpse of secular India through the character of Mr. Kapur who embodies Indian secularism. He promotes secular accommodative Bombay as his religion. He opens his shop on Christmas Day not for business but to promote peace and harmony. offers free sweets for Christmas, decides to celebrate all religious festivities in his shop and employs a Parsi manager and a Muslim peon. *In Family* Matters even the Christian school promotes secularism by banning cricket teams based on religion as they promote communalism.

Through Yezad's dream of emigrating to Canada, readers can find some autobiographical elements of Rohinton Mistry. —Mistry also experiences alienation like all emigrant Indians. Through the character of Yezad, Mistry expresses his wish to come

back to India. In his narrative show the difference of emigration in case of Nariman and Yezad. Nariman's emigration is "An enormous mistake. The loss of home leaves a hole that never fills" (240) . But for Yezad, Mistry's version is His dream for an end to this apeman commute had led him to apply for immigration to Canada. He wanted clean cities, clean air, plenty of water, trains with seats for everyone, where people stood in line at bus stops and said please, after you, thank you. Not just the land of milk and honey, also the land of deodorant and toiletry .

Yezad ultimately decides not to emigrate to Canada and tears the letters, forms and photocopies related to emigration as he is turned down by a Canadian-born Japanese immigration official who refers him as people rejects the application when Yezad fails to answer some stupid and tricky questions relating to ice hockey. His fantasy about the new land is dissolved and he is rather stuck in a retail job that's beneath him, his college degree worthless in a world where only computer skills are in demand.

Yezad is desperate to get out of his poverty so he tries to convince Mr. Kapur to involve fully in politics so that he can take the opportunity to run his shop alone. In his mad persuit Yezad hires a couple of people who pretends to be gangster of Shiv Sena, a Hindu fundamentalist organisation to threaten Mr. Kapur. But later on when some real Shiv Sena activists arrived to Mr. Kapur with their modest demand to retitle the shop name from Bombay Sports Goods Emporium to Mumbai Sports Goods Emporium. This time Mr. Kapur goes furious and is murdered. His vicious widow gets fired on Yezad

The theme of generation gap is perfectly shown by Rohinton Mistry through Yezad who curses his sons as they become more secular, Westernized and eager to hug and embrace a non-Parsi girls.Nariman's father blames books for Nariman's so called

odd behaviour of falling in love with Lucy Braganza, a Goan. Nariman's father feels, Too many books. Modern ideas have filled Nari's head. He never learned to preserve that fine balance between tradition and modernness. and he also condemns the priest who performed a Navjyot ceremony for the son of a Parsi mother and non-Parsi father

> it was renegades like him who would destroy this three-thousand year old religion; that Zoroastrianism had survived many setbacks in its venerable history. . .the ignorance of mischief making priest was anything butit was poison for the Parsi community (32).

Roxana grits her teeth, pours her love on everyone and tries to keep peace in the family. Jal is now more benign. He invites his step father back home when financial condition is strengthened. He plunges in the depth of repentance after the death of Coomy, the only rays of his life. Then he invites the Chenoy family to move in with him. Chenoys sell their apartment. When Nariman is lying in his death bed Daisy arrives to fulfil a promise by playing violin for him. Eventually Nariman dies.

Rohinton Mistry appears to be deeply concerned about the marginalized Parsi existence which is severely threatened under the impact of modernity and is best exemplified in this narrative through the incidents of late marriages, prohibition of inter caste marriages, low birth rate, high death rate, strict family planning message, generation gap and several other reasons. The novel even engages in an elaborate discussion on the slow but steady decline of the Parsi race. It also chalks out a strategy that can be adopted to prevent the extinction of the Parsi race.

Thus the novel does not end with Hindu Parsi reconciliation rather it is a propagation of the Parsi religion. The author foregrounds the Parsi community and the

Zoroastrian faith. Family matters in a particular way in *Family Matters*. It is not merely a Parsi family that Mistry is ultimately interested in but the family of man.

Mistry's writings will be a perennial source of inspiration for the Parsis to preserve the identity in future. His narratives seem to be a constant battle with the changing time and pace of modernity to preserve the customs, traditions, heritage, rituals, ethics and language which will serve for the coming generations to understand the Parsi world. The microscopic Parsi community of Family Matters is a miniature India and macro humanity rendered artistically into a finely woven tale of universal import by the novelist. Thus Rohinton Mistry with his scholarly acumen develops and intermingle various themes through the texture of his three narratives for the readers to satiate.

Chapter Five

Summation

A brief survey of Mistry's novels proves that the novelist has adopted an unorthodox approach with a touch of deep understanding to the microscopic analysis of human nature's puzzle. This introspective probing of human mind, its complexities and the inexorable quest for the self, make the novel timeless. They throw light on what is unique and universal simultaneously. A vision of nationhood, the value of freedom of an individual and that of a nation, the futility of violence are reflected in his novels.

Through Mistry's novels he insists the truth that challenges of time demand a reorientation of values and unless a nation accepts this truth, it has very little chance to survive. Mistry analyses various political events with his intelligent perspective and portrays the major characters of his novels as the imitation of the martyrs. Thus his novels stand as a reflection of the post-independence generation. His novels range from factual and emotional autobiography to fictionalized autobiography. This examination of Mistry's work focuses primarily on *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1996) and *Family Matters (*2002).

Mistry's first novel, *Such a Long Journey* comes under the second chapter, gestures towards the notion of political detachment from local and national issues. It pictures the individual's strive to place themselves in the society and role of the artist in negotiating myths of nation. Mistry foregrounds aspects of national politics and integrates them into the main plot of his narrative. However, many of these issues are developed in Family Matters, published eleven years later. Such issues are concentrated well in A Fine Balance and Family Matters because they act in many ways as companion texts. While

they approach questions of national identity and belonging from different perspectives, complementary it represents Bombay in the late 1970's, early 1980's, and 1990's.

However, in Family Matters, because of the more intimate nature of his fictional terrain, state politics affect the main narrative only towards the end. Through the examination of Mistry's fiction it is framed by what Radhakrishnan terms "accountability and by the tensions between the individual's struggle for identity and his continuing political responsibility towards the nation". (18).

Family Matters reveals Mistry's continued anxiety regarding India's secular inclusivity and Bombay's open cosmopolitanism. With this anxiety in mind, Chapter four extends the relationship between the familial conflict and conflict with the political leaders of the nation in order to resist the disasters. The novel focuses on issues of home and belonging, hegemonic and exclusionary constructions of home, as it is imagined by nationalist discourses and by diasporic subjects.

The novel *Family Matters* demonstrates how diasporic subjects are suitable for defense against the construction of their identities as illegitimate in the public domain. Therefore by focusing on Mistry's novels, it explores the representation of political transformation in India during 1970's to 1990's.This dissertation analyses the basic and seriousness of life and how political disturbances affect the smooth functioning of an ordinary man's routine life.

Mistry's novels are concerned with the experience of existence of an individual, communal and national issue. he is fully aware of the several drawbacks of India's social and political life, which are distinct in his novels. Politics form an important subtext to the main action of all the three novels of Rohinton Mistry. Also the theme of neglect also

can be seen in the novels like *Such a Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance* and *Family Matters*, but vary in its perspective. Although it pictures The aspects of national history, especially as it relates to the fate of the individual's in post-Independence India.

The narratives of *Family Matters* grow simultaneously more intimate and more closely concerned with the inner life and complex experiences of the protagonists, while paradoxically, also more concerned with contemporary social and political contexts. In Mistry's novels, one can easily find interconnectedness of various themes like theme of nationalism, alienation, oppression, human-relationship, fear and temptation.

The homelessness of Ishvarand Om in the city makes them victims of the central government's plans for a city beautification project. It is endorsed by people of the middle class such as Nusswan Shroff and Mrs. Gupta, the manager of Au Revoir Exports. But ordinary people have absolutely no idea of the misery of the absolute poor, the dispossessed and the disempowered. Unlike these two protagonists, Dina Dalal becomes victim and servant to her brother's family and is left to fend for herself. Dina's relationship with the two tailors is at first one of distrust and tyranny as she forces them to work long hours without knowing that they go without food. She forbids Maneck, a nice Parsi boy from socializing with them. But the barriers gradually disappear as they all get to know each other. The bond between the four becomes stronger after their horrific experiences at the construction plant. Dina Dalal allows the tailors to sleep on the terrace of her tiny flat. But this promise of happiness is soon to be destroyed.

When Maneck returns to Bombay eight years later, the city is in the throes of a new form of madness, the killing of Sikhs in the wake of the Prime Minister's assassination. Even though this proof of human madness saddens him, it does not shatter

him as much as discovering the fate of Dina and the tailors does. It is, for him, the final proof of the chaos of the world. The Theme of Communitarianism along with the politics in Mistry's novel is a fine documentation of the human dimensions of the Emergency. Mistry could have made the tailors inhabitants of the city who suffer from such torture. But bringing people from the village allows him to document new areas of the varied sub – continental social reality, poverty, prejudice and caste oppression in the villages.

The two tailors, who represent common humanity as they endure the consequences of all the political measures decided in the higher echelons of power, are Om and Ishvar Darji, Chamaars turned tailors from the country side. The madness of communal riots has surface again and again in post-Independence India. Beyond the causes of riots, the politics of rioting demands a reassessment of the politics of identity within multicultural, secular India. The political theme of Family Matters is expressed through the figures of Yezad and his employer, the idealistic Mr. Kapur and their lives.

Mr. Kapur has dreams of reforming the city, making it safer for the ordinary citizen. From the time of his first appearance, he talks of contesting the Municipal elections in order to deal with lawlessness in the society against the fundamentalist Hindutva agenda of Shiv Sena. The political and cultural nostalgia helps to create a sense of loss about the changed circumstances of the characters in both domestic and public spheres. All of Mistry's texts play with the boundaries of the private and the public. Most of Mistry's main protagonists, such as Gustad and Yezad, inhabit the two realms simultaneously, while testing the boundaries of both. The public world is the world of the ordinary citizen which consists of friends, acquaintances and the professional space of work where these adult relationships are forged. Themes of politics, history and

community are integral to the life of Mistry's characters. The private world is the space of the home and the family, inhabited mostly by women and children.

Mistry's fiction concentrates on the theme of age factor. The relationships between and across generations is a major concern in his novels, whenever Mistry discusses the private realm of the family and the household. The private world is where the family gathers. Mistry's fiction, consists of the world of the old and the young. Women dominate the private realm with their nurturing attention and the hard labour through which the stability of the family is ensured. It is through ordinary people and events that the novel tackles the immediate consequences of the society. Their tragic-comic fates are apt illustrations of the absurdity of human existence, where human will have no power over the illogical course of events. Both Om and Ishvar are presented as fully rounded human characters. Om is impulsive, easily irritated and always has to be called back to practical reality by his uncle.

Early in the story, when they learn of the massacre of the family, Om dreams of Dalit's revenge. He has to be persuaded of the impracticality of this scheme by Ishvar. Mistry recognizes the significance of religion and ritual in the construction of human identity. He, therefore, makes use of religion, ritual and the responses to these as a central theme in his fiction. In fact, rituals and religious beliefs become the markers of ethnic, racial and communitarian identitites.

Rohinton Mistry is not just a fiction writer,he is a philosopher who finds meaning indeed, perhas a divine plan in small human interactions. This beautifully paced, elegantly expressed novel is notable for the breadth of its vision as well as its immensely appealing characters and enticing plot.

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Commemoration of a Gruesome Memory: A Study of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Commemoration of a Gruesome Memory: A Study of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Santhana Meenakshi P. during the year 2018- 2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the project entitled **Commemoration of a Gruesome Memory: A Study of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death a Foretold*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

P. Santhana Meenakshi

Thoothukudi **Santhana Meenakshi P.**

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Commemoration of a Gruesome Memory: A Study of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.** Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of the prominent writers from Latin America. His works capture the vital life of his native soil. He was awarded Noble Prize for literature in 1982.

The first chapter **Introduction** introduces the biography of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, his contemporaries and discusses the general characteristics of his works.

The second chapter **Social and Psychological Reality** decodes the folly and pathos of human life with respect to psychological dimension. It also discusses the depiction of Magical elements as a part of reality.

The third chapter **Ridicule on Religion and Authority** throws light on how Religion and Authority fails to undertake their duty. It questions the legal system of Latin American countries' inability to maintain law and order.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** focuses on the narrative techniques employed by Gabriel Garcia Marquez with special reference to the chosen novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Latin America encompasses the whole area that includes all of the Caribbean islands and the mainland that stretches from Mexico to the southernmost tip of South America. Latin America has a very long history, dating back to Columbus discovery of the territory in the late fifteenth century. Latin America is mainly occupied by Spanish and Portuguese immigrants. Latin American culture is derived from European conquerors and the native tradition of the inhabitants.

When the Spanish and Portuguese arrived in Latin America they over-rode the population of native inhabitants. The colonists replaced native religions with Catholicism. They also strengthened the class system that already existed. The upper class included whites from Spain and Portugal. While the mixed blood race known as mulattos, worked as slaves. By 1830 most of the Latin American colonies gained autonomy.

Latin American literature aligns itself with the history of the region. The origin of Latin America is typically divided into four periods the colonial period, the independence period, the national consolidation period and the contemporary period. Latin American literature during colonial period reflected the Spanish and Portuguese roots and consisted, primarily of didactic prose and chronicles of events. During independence movement of early 1880's, the Latin American literature reflected patriotic themes in poetic form. The consolidation period brought Romanticism followed by Modernism. Finally short stories and drama forms were introduced in Latin American literature. By mid twentieth century, Magical realism became the prominent feature in the works of many Latin American writers.Magical Realism is

an aesthetic style of fiction in which Magical elements are combined with the real to encompass the political, cultural and other untold realities.

The term 'Latin America' was first used by a Chilean politician Fransico Bilbao in a conference in Paris in 1856 and in the same year by a Columbian writer Jose Maria Torres Caicedo in his poem 'Two Americas'. Latin American literature comprises of oral and written literature of Latin America with special emphasis on Spanish, Portuguese and other indigenous languages of the America. Latin American literary scope confines itself to the national literatures of South and Central America, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico and parts of the West Indies.

Latin American literature was the only literature which the world responded fully to the last great Utopian Moment in the western history. Authors gained reputations and soon translations began to appear. Latin American literature established itself as one of the world's best literature. After World War II, Latin American savored increase in economic prosperity and new found confidence gave raise to Literary Boom.

The key terms in discussion of modern Latin American fiction are the 'Boom' and the 'new novel'. The 'Boom' is a term to define the sudden explosive growth in the popularity of Latin American fiction. The writers of the Boom displayed an interest in Latin American societies. The prime goal of Boom writers is to depict the complex Latin American political and economic structures. The growth of the new novel lies culminating in the success of Boom. The crucial decade of Boom is recognized as 1960. Ronald Christ in the foreword to Jose Donoso's *The Boom in Spanish American Literature: A personal History* refers, "To a 'sudden flowering of

writers' in the sixties, who won a greater deal of attention because they began, almost at once, to be translated into foreign languages and to put Latin America."

Critics generally agree that three main impulses were responsible for the phenomenon of Boom first and foremost the political circumstance especially the Cuban Revolution in 1959. The triumph of Cuban Revolution has attracted the attention of the world to concentrate on the socio, political and cultural situation of Latin America. Secondly the unprecedented quality of writing produced at that time, and lastly the key role played by the rise of publishing houses, both in Latin America and in Spain. The basic character of Post-Boom literature was the tendency towards irony and the use of magical realism.

Jorge Luis Borges was an Argentine poet, essayist, short-story writer and translator. His works hold a prominent position in world literature and his works are considered to be among the classics of twentieth century. His best-known works are *Fictions* and *The Aleph*. His works have contributed to philosophical literature and the fantasy genre. Critics mark Jorge Luis Borges writing as the beginning of Magic Realist Movement in Latin America. The Boom writers like Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cartazar followed his woks as their inspiration.

Pablo Neruda was the most important Latin American poet of the century. He was a Chilean poet, diplomat and politician. In 1971 he was awarded the Noble prize for literature. He first published his poems in local newspapers magazines published in the Chilean capital, Santaigo. His first book of poems *Crepusculario* was published in 1923. Pablo Neruda poems include *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair*, are subtle and elegant in tradition of symbolist poetry. His verse style made him famous and from then on he devoted himself to verse.

Julio Cortazar was an Argentine novelist and short-story writer who combined existential questioning with experimental writing techniques in his works. He is one of the founders of Latin American Boom. He has been labeled as "modern master of the short story". Cortazar's Masterpiece *Hopscotch* in1963 is an open-ended novel. *Hopscotch* was the first of Latin American Boom novel to gain international attention. Cortazar is known for his other novels *The Winners* in 1960 and *The Manual for Manuel* in 1973. His characters search for open doors, which will lead them to the other side. But cortazar's quest ends in failure and his characters never reach the other side. On the other side he took strong political stands and expressed them through literature and essays.

Jorge Mario Vargas Llosa, a Peruvian-Spanish writer, critic and most prominent figure in the Spanish speaking world. He is the youngest and most individually rebellious among the Boom writers. His literary production is an interpretation of Peruvian reality. As a realist writer, Jorge Mario Vargas Llosa expresses concerns regarding militarism, inner workings of society, class structure, process of urbanization, and the political system. His renowned works include *The Time of the Hero* in 1962 and *Conversation in the Cathedral* in 1969. Vargas Llosa has established himself as one of Latin America's leading literary figures and received wide critical appreciation and critical reception.

Gabriel Jose de la Concordia Garcia Marquez is one the literary giants lived in twentieth century. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born on 1927 in Aracataca situated in a tropical region of Northern Columbia, Latin America. He was the son of Gabriel Eligio Garcia and Luisa Santiaga Marquez. Garcia Marquez lived with his maternal Grandparents in Arcataca. His grandfather Colonel Nicholas Ricardo Marquez Mejia was an earnest admirer of Simon Bolivar and he narrated the stories of civil war.

> My grandfather the colonel was a liberal. My political ideas probably came from him to begin with because, instead of telling me fairy tales when I was young, he would regale me with horrifying accounts of the last civil war that free-thinkers and anti-clerics waged against the conservative government.

His grandmother Dona Tranquilina Iguaran Cotes equally inspired young Marquez with stories of omens, ghosts, and supernatural powers "treated the extraordinary as something perfectly natural" which played a huge role in shaping Garcia Marquez's literary career and imagination.

Garcia Marquez took up law from the National University of Columbia. He began his career as a journalist for the Columbian newspaper El Espectador and worked as a foreign correspondent in various places like Rome, Paris, Barcelona, Caracas and New York. Garcia Marquez was a multi faced intellectual, novelist, short story writer, essayist and script writer. He also served as a political commentator. Marquez's vast literary outputs include fictions, non-fictions, and collection of short stories.

Garcia Marquez was a best known exponent of a literary style "Magical Realism". Columbian landscape is centered in understanding the peculiar behavior of Marquez's characters. He creates a fictional village named Macondo in most of his works. Marquez explores the life of inhabitants of Macondo who are driven by elemental passions like lust, greed, thirst for power and often are thwarted by crude societal, political or natural forces. Themes of power, suffering and sensuality are some of the most prominent features in Marquez's works. Solitude is the major theme which constantly surfaces in Marquez's fiction. An aesthetic appraisal of his work

offers a deep insight into political and social themes. Marquez's journalistic experience was indeed an essential part in his writing. Marquez, himself stated that journalism kept him contact with reality.

The Cuban Revolution ushered some hope of change in Latin American politics. Marquez began working for Cuba and supported Prensa Latina. Garcia Marquez met Fidel Castro, the Cuban Revolutionary. And eventually became Fidel Castro's trusted political friend. Marquez's friendship with Castro resulted in, Marquez's political maturity and that brought changes in the literary practices. Marquez's writing was an attempt to revise or re-envision the Latin American history. Memories and reminiscences play a vital role in Marquez's writing. Marquez's highly praised novels which won critical acclaim and widespread commercial success are *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1967, *Autumn of the Patriarch* in 1975, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* in 1981 and *Love in the Time of Cholera* in 1985.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is one of the rare works of fiction that exist on many levels simultaneously. Rich, dreamlike elements are combined with tragicomic incidents and narrated in a poetic style. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* set in the fictional town of Macondo, and narrates the story of the Buendia family, commencing with an incestuous union, dire consequences are fulfilled in a birth several generations later. Many incidents like civil wars, the intrusion of American business interests, a massacre of striking banana workers have a historical basis in the history of Colombia in particular and of Latin America in general. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* opens with the history of isolated town:

> At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clean water that ran along a bed of polished

> stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point. (1)

On mythical level, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* enacts a fable of human development from loss of primal innocence through the rise and fall of civilization. Marquez clearly states that true story of Latin America cannot be captured through purely realistic techniques, but requires a surreal and hallucinatory approach to communicate the essence. After the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* Garcia Marquez was recognized as the principal exponent of magical realism tradition.

The Autumn of the Patriarch in 1975 is divided into six sections, each one retelling the story of a Caribbean dictator, who had ruled for so long that no one could remember a time when he was not in power. Marquez described the book as "a poem on the solitude of power," painting the lead character as an eternal dictator. Marquez based the fictional dictator on many real-world figures, like Colombian dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla and Spain's Generalissimo Francisco Franco. *Autumn of the Patriarch* explores theme of pride, authority, paranoia, and the way poverty and hopelessness lead to the rise of dictators.

Love in the Time of Cholera in 1985, Marquez addressed the complexities and nuances of man-woman relationships and the unquenchable spirit of passion that refuses to submit gracefully to the coming of old age. *Love in the Time of Cholera* is a celebration of life over death, love over despair and health over sickness. *The General in His Labyrinth* in 1989 Marquez pictures the last months in the life of Simon Bolivar, South America's legendary liberator and Colombia's first president.

Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was published in 1981, when Marquez was active in Colombian politics. His close friend Fidel Castro was the first reader of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. It stands as a testimony which captured the nuances of life in a realistic and magical tone. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* Marquez experimented with the narrative framework, describing the same incident from multiple perspectives and generating suspense over the outcome of an incident when conclusion is known from the opening paragraph. In 1982 Marquez was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature.

The entire novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is narrated by the unnamed narrator considered as protagonist's close friend. The narrator can be identified with the man Marquez himself. "I returned to this forgotten village, trying to put the broken mirror of memory back together from so many scattered shards"(5). The novel uncovers the mystery murder of the protagonist Santiago Nasar, who was murdered by the twin Vicario brothers named Pablo and Pedro. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was in the form of testimonials of eyewitnesses of the townsfolk. The characters of the novel recollect their own versions about the incident.

The story of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is an in-depth look at the final moments leading up to the murder of Santiago Nasar. The narrator recalls from his memory and the memories of others who he interviews. "In the course of the investigations for this chronicle I recovered numerous marginal experiences, among them the free recollections" (43). Santiago Nasar's final day of life and his murder by twin brothers Pablo Vicario and Pedro Vicario. From the beginning the narrator states Santiago's death was foretold and it was a series of inexplicable coincidences that lead to Santiago's murder.

The narrator of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* combs over every detail of Santiago's last day of life. The day before Santiago's murder, Santiago and his friends namely Cristo Bedoya and the narrator, celebrated the marriage of Angela Vicario with a newcomer to the town named Bayardo San Roman. Angela is from a poor family, and when the Vicario's family met Bayardo and learns his intentions to marry Angela. The whole family pressures Angela into the marriage against her wishes. Angela confesses to her close associates that she is not a virgin. They teach Angela to fake her virginity.

> They taught her old wives' tricks to feign her lost possession, so that on her first morning as a newlywed she could display open under the sun in the courtyard of her house the linen sheet with the stain of honor. (38)

On the wedding night, Angela sets off with Bayardo to their new home brought from widower Xius. Being honest Angela decides to tell Bayardo the truth. Upon learning the terrible truth of Angela's virginity, Bayardo returns Angela to her family. When pressured by the family to reveal the individual who claimed her virginity. Angela utters the name of Santiago Nasar. "She nailed it to the wall her well-aimed dart, like a butterfly with no will whose sentence has always been written. "Santiago Nasar," she said" (47).

The twin brothers plan to kill Santiago Nasar to restore the family's honor.That morning, before the dawn Pablo and Pedro Vicario set out on their mission to kill Santiago Nasar. However they do not hide their intentions. The Vicario brothers freely speak out their plan of murdering Santiago Nasar, to almost everyone in the town. When no one acts to stop or warn Santiago Nasar about the impending

danger, the Vicario brothers chase Santiago Nasar and stab him down to death in front of the main door of Santiago's house.

The novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* deals with diverse themes of honor and sexual morality. The lamentable plight of women is depicted in the novel by women characters. It also deals with diverse themes and one of the important theme is honor. The concept of marriage is portrayed as a matter of convenience and a venue to showcase one's wealth. The narrator highlights the role of society in Santiago's murder. The real perpetrator of the crime is society, despite the whole community know that Santiago was about to be murdered by the twin Vicario brothers, the people of the community turns deaf with not even a single person to warn about the disaster.

The journalist style of narration is more apparent in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, which occupies a unique position among Marquez's other works. The lucid style of writing, use of accurate words and expressions are characteristic features of the novel. Marquez depicted the folly and pathos of human life in a charming way. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is one of the greatest works produced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was awarded Noble Prize for Literature on 8 December 1982. The Noble Prize was presented by Professor Lars Gyllensten of the Swedish Academy. Gabriel Garcia Marquez delivered a noble acceptance speech titled "The Solitude of Latin America"

> I dare to think that it is this outside reality, and not just its literary expression, that has deserved the attention of the Swedish Academy of Letters. A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that

> nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, of which this roving and nostalgic Colombian is but one cipher more, singled out by fortune. Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our Solitude.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez died of pneumonia at the age of 87 on 17 April 2014 in Mexico City. Then Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos mentioned "One Hundred Years of Solitude and sadness for the death of the greatest Colombian of all time". The former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe Velez recalled "Master Garcia Marquez, thanks forever, millions of people in the planet fell in love with our nation fascinated with your lines". The world mourned for the loss of the Literary giant. The next chapter focuses on social and psychological reality in Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.*

Chapter Two

Social and Psychological Reality

Marquez's concern for social reality and common human passions of love with respect to psychological dimensions is depicted in *Chronicle of a DeathForetold.* Marquez experimented with a narrative technique of a detective genre in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, it is considered as half-fictional and half-journalistic work that deals with a gruesome murder. The novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was based on a real life incident that took place in 1951, when the political scenario of Colombia was disturbed. It was a period of prolonged bloodshed and massacre of La Violencia.

In 1951 Cayetano Gentile, a friend of Garcia Marquez was murdered in the name of honor killing at the small Colombian town of Sucre.Marquez in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* relates honor killing to the general atmosphere of violence in Colombian towns. The novel foregrounds the role of small town in Colombian society in the act of manslaughter. The act of homicide was nothing uncommon or unnatural in Colombian towns at that point of time is evident in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.*

The twin murderers Pablo and Pedro are not burdened with the whole responsibility of the gruesome murder of Santiago Nasar, but they are represented as victims of the society they belong to. The entire community has to be blamed as it fosters an attitude of machismo that pushes the twin brothers Pablo and Pedro to revenge Santiago Nasar who was charged for deflowering their sister Angela. The twin brothers Pablo and Pedro, hint the whole town people that they are waiting to kill Santiago Nasar "we're looking for him to kill

him" (54). But not even the town's mayor Don Lazaro Aponte felt the necessity to stop the brothers from committing the heinous crime, or to warn Santiago Nasar about the impending danger. The prevailing social code of machismo prevents the townsfolk to see criminal side of the act as honor killing.

> But most of those who could have done something: to prevent the crime and still didn't do it consoled themselves with the pretext that affairs of honor are scared monopolies with access only for those who are part of the drama. "Honor is love". (98)

The nature of the subject matter and the title of the book *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* 'chronicle' or 'cronica' in Spanish is an old method of recording events or history in which the story element is intact. In Latin American countries, 'chronicle' was a valid genre for conveying important events that stands between journalism and literature.

Garcia Marquez uses 'chronicle' or 'cronica' as a form in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.* Marquez had deliberately broken the traditional one dimensional narrative in which the authority of one voice is unequivocally established. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Marquez registers many versions of a single event or situations that are juxtaposed by a non-committal narrator in order to blur the question of authority. The narrative also foregrounds the unstable nature of journalistic and historical truth.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold opens with the description of Santiago Nasar's dream about trees and his feeling of being covered with the bird's excrement:

> He'd dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit. (1)

Placida Linero the protagonist's mother gained a good reputation from the town's people as an "accurate interpreter of other people's dreams" (2), but she fails to interpret her son's dream. The possibility of a miraculous power is undercut by an ironical skepticism.

The customs of the Nasar's to keep the guns at one place and ammunitions in another may be strange but nothing magical in the sense. Divina Flor is the daughter of Santiago's head cook. When Divina Flor was grabbed by Santiago Nasar before leaving the house to welcome the bishop, she senses the hand of Santiago Nasar as "frozen and stony, like the hand of a dead man" (12). The proprietress of the milk shop Clotilde Armenta's impression about Santiago Nasar when he appeared in the dawn of early morning dressed, in his special attire to meet the bishop "He already looked like a ghost" (13).

Marquez uses literary devices to create an atmosphere of apprehension and foreboding. With the portents of death Marquez suggests the grim of violence, while Santiago sleeps with the gun in the pillow, and the house cook Victoria Guzman chops rabbits with the knife and threatens Santiago using the same knife. Placida Linero misinterpreted the dream of Santiago "Any dream about birds means good health" (4). She fails in her reputation as a good interpreter of others dream. The bird's excrement is used as a symbol to suggest the blood that Santiago Nasar is about to shed.

The common people are enthusiastic about the occasional visits of the bishop and they throng to greet him with the fattest roosters, capons and huge stacks of firewood. Santiago Nasar was also excited about the bishop's visit so he dressed himself with shirt and pants of white linen cloth so that he may get a chance to kiss bishop's ring. Placida Linero rightly commented the attitude of bishop "He'll give an obligatory blessings, as always, and go back the way he came. He hates this town" (6).

The bishop flatly ignores all the sincere offerings. Santiago Nasar's mother, Placida Linero rightly foretold the event that, the bishop hesitates to get down from his boat and he thinks it below his dignity. The bishop passes the village by giving a mechanical blessing to the people gathered on the dock. The bishop's visit has been termed as "fleeting illusion" by the narrator's sister Margot. Marquez takes a dig at the snobbery and hypocrisy of the religious leaders.

> On the upper deck, beside the captain's cabin, was the bishop in his white cassock and with his retinue of Spaniards. The bishop began to make the sign of the cross in the air opposite the crowd on the pier, and he kept on doing it mechanically afterwards, without malice or inspiration, until the boat was lost from view and all that remained was the uproar of the roosters. (16)

Garcia Marquez equally criticizes the priest of the town Father Carmen Amador, who was more concerned about the bishop's arrival than about the life of a young man. Father Amador was earlier informed about the threat about Santiago's life by Clotilde Armenta. Father Amador ignores the news as he

eventually concentrates in welcoming the bishop. The callousness shows that the author has little respect for religious leaders who preach compassion and fellow-feeling, the qualities they themselves are devoid of.

Strange things are associated with Bayardo San Roman that can be noticed in the expression of the townspeople wonder and amazement tinged with little jealousy at the newcomer of the town. The man is rich, handsome and immensely gifted in many respects. Bayardo is considered as a representative of the outer fashionable world. He came to the town with an intention of marrying somebody, his exceptional knowledge in all walks of life and his ability to defeat the best swimmers is commendable by the town's folk. People of the town started to like his honesty and generosity. "People like him a lot", the narrator's mother, Lusia Santiaga praised the act of Bayardo's religiosity by receiving the communion going down his knees and conducting the communion mass in Latin.

Bayardo's family arrives in the town and ends all the gossips about his origin. He was the son of General Petronio San Roman, a hero of the civil war and a mulatto woman named Alberta Simonds. The narrator of the *Chronicle of a DeathForetold* gives a sensible account of his first impression about Baryardo when he first met him after hearing from his mother.

> He seemed attractive, indeed, but far from Magdalena Oliver's idyllic vision. He seemed more serious to me than his antics would have led one to believe, and with a hidden tension that was barely concealed by his excessive good manners. But above all, he seemed like a very sad man to me. (27)

Baryado San Roman might be strange and mysterious with his idiosyncrasies but there is nothing fantastic or magical about it.

The death of widower Xius out of grief by selling his house in which he had lived with his beloved wife for more than thirty years is strange but nothing uncommon. Greed for money makes men fallible. When Baryado offers Xius an incredible heavy amount of ten thousand pesos for the farm house, the old man Xius could not resist his temptation. The transaction proves fatal and the old widower cannot bear the questions of his own conscience. With the house the man Xius sells his sweet memories of his wife that had kept him stout and healthy. The spiritual death of widower Xius occurs at the moment he gives in to the forces of temptation, his physical demise takes place after two months.

Santiago Nasar calculates the cost of the extravagant wedding and compares the floral decorations at the church with the same of fourteen first class funerals. It was a consciously employed literary device by the author to enhance the atmosphere of premonition. Santiago goes on to sum up the cost in his mind and discusses it with the affluent bridegroom who agrees with the figure and informs that it is just the beginning.

> Santiago Nasar was a man for parties, and he had his best time on the eve of his death calculating the expense of the wedding. In the church he estimated that they'd set up floral decorations equal in cost to those for fourteen first-class funerals. That precision would haunt me for many years, because Santiago Nasar had often told me that the smell of closed-in flowers had

> an immediate relation to death for him and that day he repeated it to me as went into the church. (42)

The narrator of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* recalls the moment when Santiago Nasar declared that he doesn't want any flowers in his funeral, and for him the smell of flowers is always associated with death. The grim irony is uttered by Santiago Nasar "I don't want any flowers at my funeral" (42). Indeed his funeral takes place the very next day and the narrator witnesses that there are no floral tributes.

Santiago Nasar was a frequenter to the brothel of Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, house of mercies. And his favourite pastime was to confuse the identities of the mulatto girls there by his adept art of disguise. He had an assiduous mechanical skill. It is Santiago's whimsical frivolity in his relationships with women that makes the accusations of Angela Vicario believable to the townsfolk. The epigraph of the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* "the hunt for love /is haughty falconry" was quoted from the poem by the great medieval Spanish- Portuguese poet Gil Vicente, underlines the violent and predatory aspect of love. Analyzing the quotation from Gil Vicente by Garcia Marquez, Gene H. Bell Villada comments:

> From the start it is hence hinted that *Chronicle* will tell of the romantic chase as well as of human pride and power. Each of the two romantic males in the book are in fact characterized initially as arrogant and haughty.

The narrator warns Santiago Nasar's mad passion for Maria Alejandrina Cervantes relating to the theme of dangerous and elusive love "*A flacon who*

chases a warlike crane can only hope for a life of pain" (65). The novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* has elements of a moving tragedy a hubristic portrayal of Santiago Nasar was natural on the author's part.

Behavior of the dogs after the death of Santiago might seem strange but they are howling for food. They have already fed by the guts of three rabbits that Victoria Guzman was cutting into pieces for lunch. But their hunger for food makes them go arrogant at the smell of the blood leads them to react wildly. "the dogs, aroused by the smell of death, increased the uneasiness"(73). Santiago's mother astonished at the sudden turn of events, aggrieved beyond measure and overreacts at the barking dogs. She orders them to be shot. The aberration by Placida Linero shows how violence breeds violence.

The manner in which autopsy was carried out was magical in the sense that it defies all reason. The autopsy was held in absence of Dr. Dionisio Iguaran, the town's local doctor and without any medical experts.It was wondered how the mayor of a town can order autopsy to be performed by a priest Father Carmen Amador, who entered celibacy without completing his medicine degree. The old aged priest recalled the situation in his interview with the narrator "it was as if we killed him all over again after he was dead," (72).

Santiago's autopsy was also symptomatic of the sacrilegious treatment that corpses were subjected to in small towns of Colombia during La Violencia. The case of finding a medal of the Virgin of Carmel from within the stomach of Santiago was really strange and it was clinically verifiable can such things remain intact for so many years in the same place. This incident strengthens the

interpretation of Santiago as a Christ figure "It looked like a stigma of the crucified Christ" (76). In critic Stanley P. Baldwin's opinion:

> Perhaps this little token of goodness symbolizes the intangible goodness that Santiago carries inside himself like a medal. Further, the stab wound in Santiago's right hand resembles one of the wounds of the crucified Christ. Even if Santiago took Angela's virginity, the Vicarios make him a sacrificial lamb, just as Christ was. In order for the town to maintain its stability, it must uphold its code, and under the terms of that code, Santiago must die. Santiago's sexual experience does not undermine the Christ figure reading.

The smell of Santiago's blood that sticks to everything and everybody in the town was related to human psychology. It was undoubtedly more lasting and unbearable for the perpetrators of the horrendous crime. "They asked for lots of water, laundry soap, and rags, and they washed the blood from their arms and faces, and they also washed their shirts, but they couldn't get any rest" (79). Pedro Vicario's inability to have a wink of sleep for eleven months was the harrowing sense of guilt. A faulty and stagnant social code compels the twins Pablo and Pedro to take revenge upon Santiago Nasar for deflowering their sister Angela Vicario, but inwardly they are shattered and appalled at the detestable nature of the deed.

Baryado can snatch away the house from the old widower Xius with his power and money to please his would-be wife Angela, but he cannot buy happiness through his marriage which turns out to be a disaster. Baryado San

Roman returns to his deserted wife twenty- three years after the humiliating confusion of the wedding night. Human mind is a very vulnerable thing and Angela Vicario's tenacity in writing letters to her husband goes unanswered for seventeen years. One August Baryado return's back to Angela carrying with him a bundle of unopened letters which he received from Angela. This amount of care is possible only if he retains some tender feelings for his distressed wife.

The *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was a ritual reenactment of the original murder that gets a further support from the general festive atmosphere of the novel. It opens with the preparations, for the bishop's visit for a small Colombian town. The Bishop's visit to Latin American towns is considered as one the important ceremony. The rest of the novel describes about the grand wedding of Bayardo San Roman and Angela Vicario that occupies the mental space of the townspeople.

There are diverse interpretations about the ending of the novel. Santiago walking more than a hundred yards to reach the kitchen door from the main door after being mortally stabbed by the Vicario brother's might be an exaggeration on the author's part, but this is to commensurate with the strange stature as a tragic hero. In the history of tragedy, the heroes have often been shown to perform tougher jobs to command respect and admiration. Marquez uses the same technique to highlight Santiago as a tragic hero. The narrator strongly hints that Santiago Nasar was not the person who deflowered Angela. "My personal impression is that he died without understanding his death" (102).

There was no proof that Santiago is the person responsible for Angela's loss of virginity, Santiago dies completely flabbergasted as the reason of fatal

punishments. Secondly the Vicario brothers kept on telling people for quite some time that they are going to kill Santiago, but nobody feels to warn Santiago or his family about the rumor. These two mysteries are not cleared by Marquez in his *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and further, Marquez states that the entire community holds the responsibility for the murder as it was the matter of ludicrous code of honor.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold contains less magical elements and more reality. Magical realism is an important feature in almost all of Marquez's work, the employment of Magical realism is presented through dreams and omens. The supernatural is depicted as part of reality. The ostensible magical elements in the novel contribute to make the picture of a small Colombian town vivid and realistic. The setting comes alive with the lucid details about the people's beliefs and superstitions, age-old conventions and dead habits.

Marquez's indictment of such society for its anachronistic cult of machismo comes from a reformatory zeal which was often thwarted and throttled in real life by the reactions of the society. Marquez takes the role of the narrator by himself and puts together the testimonies of various people regarding the crime twenty seven years after the incident and gives a quasi-journalistic account of his friend's death. Garcia Marquez decoded the folly and pathos of human life with parallel to reality in his novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The upcoming chapter focuses on Marquez's ridicule on Religion and Authority who fails to do their duty.

Chapter Three

Ridicule on Religion and Authority

Garcia Marquez's pseudo-journalistic novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* unleashes a wide barrage of social criticism through the devilishly act of murder. Garcia Marquez ridicules the government, the church, and the honor in masochism to bring attention to the absurdity of belief systems that Latin American communities follow. And the people's blind belief on religion and government turns out to be the key aspects of contemporary social and political issues.

Marquez portrays the official authoritative figures in the government with extreme ridicule in order to expose hypocrisy and the problem of a power imbalance both in historical and contemporary sense. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is the story of a murder. Marquez projects the themes of honor and fate cautiously, using the town's hesitation to prevent Santiago Nasar's murder despite foretold warnings. Marquez portrays how honor and fate flaw Colombian culture and their belief system. Marquez effectively creates a fictional situation that highlights how deeply rooted philosophies can lead to danger.

Garcia Marquez ridicule's the role of religion with the names of his characters in the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Almost all the characters in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* have names that either mean or signify something. The name of the protagonist, Santiago was the name of the patron saint of Spain, known as 'Matamoros' or 'Moor slayer'. Nasar is the name often connected with Moorish connotations. Santiago's father Ibrahim Nasar is an Arab, "Ibrahim Nasar came with the last Arabs at the end of the civil wars" (9). Santiago's mother Placida Linero was from Hispanic ancestry. The name of Angela's father 'Ponico Vicario' is equated to

Pontius Pilate, a Biblical character responsible for crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* Ponico Vicario forced his daughter Angela to marry Bayardo San Roman. Garcia Marquez gives the name Angela to a woman who is impure when Angela stands for purity. Marquez brings in the element of irony to glorify Angela's inner purity of mind. Maria Alejandrina Cervantes a harlot is named after Mother Mary. The murderers are named after Spanish counterparts 'Peter' and 'Paul', the apostles as Pedro and Pablo respectively. The characters name serve as means through which Marquez make allusions to Christianity.

Religion comes under severe criticism in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The hypocrisy of religious authorities is brought to spotlight. Garcia Marquez mocks the unresponsive and lethargic church. Religion turns as a catalyst for the crime. By exposing the hypocrisy of church authorities, Marquez asks to reevaluate the blind faith on church and religion. Garcia Marquez's aloof representation of the elusive Bishop, whose mere thought arrival was the cause for much celebration, creates a symbolic and human way of visualizing the absence of God. The role of religion in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* plays an integral part in the main event of the novel.

The society featured in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*had close ties to Catholic religion. The wedding ceremonies of Latin American people are conducted in Catholic churches. The reception is hosted in their house yards. Spanish brides include orange blossoms in their bouquet and veils to symbolize happiness and fulfillment in the marriage. On their wedding day the Spanish bride is dressed in black silk dress to show their devotion until death.An important part of the Catholic religion is the belief that a woman's virginity should be kept preserved till her marriage. "Angela Vicario dared put on the veil and the orange blossoms without begin a virgin

would be interpreted afterwards as a profanation of the symbols of purity" (41). The demonstration of strong Catholicism is Angela's secret that she wasn't a virgin.

The significance of church is greatly stressed in the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.* Church plays an important part in the lives of many Latin American communities. The excessive preparations are made for welcoming the bishop. Santiago Nasar had contributed loads of woods as offering to bishop. Irony is visible in the belief system of Latin Americans. The town's people eagerly wait for the bishop to get off his boat and bless the town. But the bishop flatly ignores the town.

> There were a lot of people at the dock in addition to the authorities and the school children, and everywhere one could see the crates of welt-fattened roosters they were bearing as a gift for the bishop, because coxcomb soup was his favorite dish. At the loading pier there was so much firewood piled up that the boat would have needed at least two hours to load it. But it didn't stop. It appeared at the bend in the river, snorting like a dragon, and then the band of musicians began to play the bishop's anthem, and the cocks began to crow in their baskets and aroused the other roosters in town. (15)

The author Garcia Marque seems to say that the presence of spiritual authorities does not make any significant change in the lives of common man. Both the religion and church appear to take a big role, but in a negative sense. The town is still revolving around communal values set hundreds of years ago. The people of the town lack strength to overcome the values and adjust it to the present day societal values.

The communal values revolve around religious events, maintaining the honor of a family and virginity of a woman before her marriage. Although church's betrayal is versatile, the bishop's arrival symbolizes its failure most clearly. Everyone including the priest Father Carmen Amador did not prevent the murder because he was focused on the bishop's arrival. "My first thought was that it wasn't any business of mine but something for the civil authorities" (70). The bishop passes the town by giving a "fleeting blessing" without getting down the boat. Marquez has no further explanation for the fact why the bishop hesitates to get down from the boat. But the indifference in the bishop's attitude goes against the catholic doctrine of love and forgiveness.

While Father Carmen Amador is portrayed as godly and pure within community, his actions and thoughts are very much contradictory. Religion was supposed to be a positive center but instead they appear hypocritical. The bishop destroys the hope of happiness of the people. The type of hypocrisy is further emphasized with Father Carmen being the main perpetrator in the autopsy. "Had a few instruments for minor surgery available and the rest were craftsmen's tool. But despite the havoc wrought on the body" (74).

The autopsy was conducted by Father Carmen Amador as per the order of the town's mayor Colonel Lazaro Aponte. Marquez mocks both the authority and religion with the manner in which autopsy that was carried out, without the assistance of a local doctor."THE DAMAGE from the knives was only a beginning for the inclement autopsy that Father Carmen Amador found himself obliged to do in Dr. Dionisio Iguaran's absence" (72). Father Carmen had demolished the body altogether, up to the point where it became unrecognizable. Marquez severely criticize Father Carmen Amador that he should be repentant to call himself a catholic, as he disrespected a

human corpse. The amount of respect that church has upon a body and soul is clearly invisible in the actions of Father Carmen.

The town does not have a true leader to guide its people in a positive direction, but instead the town follows old traditional values set by the past and a hypocritical church. The town does not do anything to prevent evil, but rather waits for evil action to occur and then wait for the right moment to react. The code of honor is an important principle in the lives of town's people and that same code of honor is responsible for the murder of Santiago. Pablo and Pedro after committing the murder seek shelter in church to save themselves. They declare that they are innocent and the act of murder was committed to regain the lost honor of Angela Vicario:

> THE LAWYER STOOD by the thesis of homicide in legitimate defense of honor, which was upheld by the court of good faith, and the twins declared at the end of the trial that they would have done it again a thousand times over for the same reason. It was they who gave a hint of the direction the defense would take as soon as they surrendered to their church a few minutes after the crime. They burst painting into the parish house, closely pursued by a group of roused-up Arabs, and they laid the knives, with clean blades, on Father Amador's desk. Both were exhausted from the barbarous work of death, and their clothes and arms were soaked and their faces smeared with sweat and still living blood, but the priest recalled the surrender as an act of great dignity. (48- 49)

The autopsy was a massacre that dismembers, distorts and hastens the final dissolution of the murdered body. It confirms the status of Santiago Nasar as victim. It

also serves to expose how far the role of religion has been internalized. Santiago Nasar was murdered for someone's evil act.

Marquez strikes a parallel between Santiago Nasar and Jesus Christ. Both Christ and Santiago Nasar are inheritors and representatives of the patriarchy. Both of them are victims of the same patriarchy. Both had Semitic ancestry and like Jesus Christ, Santiago Nasar was pinned onto a wooden door and stabbed and sent to a pathetic death without trial. Santiago Nasar was murdered for the town's sins. Just like Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the cross for the sins of men. The apparent paradox is central to the perpetuation of culture which demands sacrifice of a beloved son. Garcia Marquez proposes a strong critique on church in the episode of autopsy through the metaphor of inept interpretative bungling of Father Carmen Amador:

> Seven of the several wounds were fatal. The liver was almost sliced in pieces by two deep cuts on the anterior side. He had four incisions in the stomach, one of them so deep that it went completely through and destroyed the pancreas. He had six other lesser perforations in the transverse colon and multiple wounds in the small intestine. The only one he had in the back, at the level of the third lumbar vertebra, had perforated the right kidney. The abdominal cavity was filled with large clots of blood, and in the midst of the morass of gastric contents appeared a medal of the Virgin of Carmel that Santiago Nasar had swallowed at the age of four. The thoracic cavity showed two perforations: one in the second right intercostal space that affected the lung and another quite close to the left armpit. He

> also had six minor wounds on his arms and hands, and two horizontal cuts: one on the right thigh and the other in the abdominal muscles. He had a deep stab in the right hand. The report says: "It looked like a stigma of the crucified Christ". (75-76)

Religion in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* takes a big role for the murder of Santiago Nasar. The town represented by Marquez is still entrenched around communal values brought some hundred years ago. The people of the town lack strength to overcome the values and adjust it to the present day customs.

Garcia Marquez questions the authority and representatives of legal system with Colonel Lazaro Aponte. Garcia Marquez establishes a platform to criticize the method of which Aponte came to acquire the job. "The mayor was a former troop commander with no experience in matter of law" (73). The community is unable to turn away Aponte from his power, and his inaction leads to community's failure. Marquez calls for the communities of Latin America to re-examine their governing systems and contemplate whether the citizens or the military is benefited.

Marquez exposes decorated heroes as bullies and abusers of general public. More poignantly Colonel Lazaro Aponte was revealed with a long string of missteps and failures throughout the unraveling of plot that truly calls into question does he posses leadership quality. Colonel Lazaro Aponte when informed about the news that the twins Pablo and Pedro are waiting to kill Santiago Nasar, he was not bothered about informing Santiago or felt the necessity of stooping the brutal act. He fails to the arrest twin brothers. Aponte did his part of the duty by disarming the twin brothers. Finally after the crime was committed Aponte exclaimed that the crime

could not have taken place because he himself disarmed the twins, "It can't be, because I took them away from them before sending them home to bed" (111). Then he realizes that the twins had brought two new knives to accomplish the murder.

Garcia Marquez tackles the idea of honor in masochism, a cultural heritage steeped in absurdity, by billing the murder as honor killing and using masochism to justify the crime. The community's definition of honor has a large impact on the brother's view of masochism. Through the super imposing definition of honor by the society that permits killing as a "legitimate defense of honor" and the community creates a hostile environment that breeds discontent. Marquez uses the stubbornness of the society by clinging to the old traditions along with the subconscious repercussions that emerge as a result in order to reveal the widespread acceptance of masculine honor.

The narrator highlights the society's role in Santiago death. The real perpetrator of the crime is the society. The society did nothing to save a fellow human being. Despite knowing that Santiago Nasar was about to be killed, most of the people did not bother to warn him. Caught up in the web of their routine lives, they took Santiago's murder as a melodramatic occurrence bringing in some drama in their lives. Even Father Carmen Amador and Colonel Lazaro Aponte, people with the responsibility to maintain order in the society, conveniently forgot to help Santiago. The colonel as the mayor of the town fails to maintain order and decorum in that situation. He promised to take care of the situation but again fails to do his duty. "He promised to take care of it at once, but he went into social club to check on a date for dominoes that night, and when he came out again the crime had already been committed" (111).

The young magistrate is the only anonymous character in the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* emphasizing the lack of imbrications in the network of relationships which structures the town. Nevertheless, even he cannot be a purely disinterested observer despite his nominal unconnection with the community and society. He is yet imbedded in the same culture and is the same subject of prescriptions and prejudices.

Gabriel Marquez challenges many core beliefs of a community in shock through *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Marquez embarks on a quest for a better life through rejecting and reevaluating the traditional roles of government and military, established ideas of honor, and organized religion as to call for contemplation of current situations. The next chapter focuses on the narrative techniques employed by Garcia Marquez in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

New social, political and literary theories have emerged resulting from post-modern debates that cover a wide variety of disciplines like art, architecture, literature, film, sociology, communication, philosophy etc. Post-modern potency is marked in the cultural, intellectual and aesthetic domains. The term 'Post-modern' was used in Latin American literary criticism and in the Anglo- American literary debates in the 1930's and 1940's. The main analysis of Post-modern got force mainly in the 1960's.

Postmodernism has been arguably the most contentious of cultural movements. It was born out of both a continuation and a rebellion against the modernism movement. The term "postmodernism" was coined by Arnold J.Toynbee and was later on used to convey the dissatisfaction with the modern architecture. However it soon gained momentum and formed its own language, philosophy and theory.

Post-modernism cannot be understood by ignoring modernism. Modernism originated from the thought of 'European Enlightment' that began in the middle of 18^{th} century. The term modernity was used to donate the type of society that arose in the west during the enlightment. Modernism appreciates human intellect as the significant strength and identifies this strength as the basis of a scientific mentality.Post-Modernism can be described as a particular style of thought. It is a concept that correlates the emergence of new features and types of social life and economic order in culture, called modernization, post-industrial, consumer, media, or multinational capitalistic societies.

Post-modern literary writers have been greatly influenced by various movement and ideas taken from post-modern philosophy. Post-modern philosophy tends to conceptualize the world as being impossible to strictly define or understand. Post-modern philosophy argues that knowledge and facts are always relative to particular situations and that it's both futile and impossible to attempt to locate any precise meaning to any ideas, concepts and event.

The prominent Postmodernist writers are Thomas Pnychon, John Barth, Kurt Vonnegut, Salman Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Umberto Eco etc. Post-modernist writers break away from all the rules and seek alternative principles of composition confirming their thought content of existentialist thought. The Postmodern writers seek to capture human situation in is most concentrated form and rend to employ a form which can fully assimilate human existence, which is capable of accommodating the meaninglessness, purposelessness and absurdity of human existence.

Postmodern writers employ various devices like fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, contradiction, permutation, discontinuity, randomness, excess, short circuit etc. Postmodern writings manifest chaotic condition of the world in equally chaotic technique and form. Postmodern novel is often a parody of a quest. In postmodern literary text, the idea of originality and authenticity is undermined and parodied. Postmodern literary text does not pretend to be new and original, but uses the old literary forms, genres and kinds of literature and art, kitsch, quotation, allusion and other means to recontextualize their meaning in a different linguistic and cultural contexts to show a difference between the past and present as well as between the past and present forms of representation.

Postmodern literature is part of socio-cultural and historical development and can be seen as specific way of a depiction of the postmodern life and culture. It shows a crisis of identity of human being and its struggle for legitimization in a hypocritical society. Postmodern literary work often questions its own fictional status thus becoming metafictional. Metafictional means that a literary work refers to itself and the principles of its construction using various techniques and narrative devices. Simplistic understanding of metafiction is that 'metafiction is a fiction about fiction'. Metafiction, metafictional elements, and metafictionality are dominant features of a postmodern literary work.

Another important aspect of a postmodern literary work is use of intertextuality. The term "intertextuality" was coined by a Bulgarian theorist Julia Kristeva, she expresses a connection between the texts through various devices and techniques. Intertextuality is not a single mechanical connection, but rather a creative transformation of the referred texts in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Julia Kristeva dervices her theory of intertextuality from Michael Bachtin's idea of a "polyphonic novel" open to various voices and interpretations and understands a literary text as part of other literary text in the history of the literary tradition.

Postmodern literary work uses postmodern parody, pastiche, and radical irony. Postmodern parody was theorized especially by Linda Hutcheon. The main aim of postmodern parody is not to mock the parodied author or style for its own sake, but this parody lacks mocking, ridiculing aspect. Postmodern parody emphasizes a difference between the past and present. This critical aspect, Hutcheon views manifests itself especially in the use of irony. By re-writing, transforming and changing the motifs and styles from the parodied literary works, postmodern parody gives an alternative vision of reality, history and a position of different social, ethnic

and other minority groups which forms a playful and creative alternative to the official version of history or reality as depicted in traditional literary works or through traditional narrative techniques and styles.

Postmodern parody is closely connected with pastiche. Postmodernism rejects strict definitions and especially in a postmodern but also other works of art it is difficult to delineate strictly parody and pastiche since they overlap and are rather inseparable. Parody, pastiche, imitation and intertextuality are closely connected with radical irony. Radical irony does not necessarily manifest itself on the verbal level, but also on the level of a text as a whole, in the juxtaposition of different styles creating an ironic effect, or in the use of travesty or burlesque as part of the parodic mode. Promod K. Nayar in his *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: from Structuralism to Ecocriticism* points out how for Terry Eagleton, Postmodernism was: "A style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation"(48).

Chronicle of a Death Foretold is considered as a postmodern masterpiece. The story of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is an attempt to piece together the fatal day when Santiago Nasar is murdered, for having seduced and deflowered Angela Vicario, who is disowned by her outraged husband, Bayardo San Roman. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is written in the vein of popular literary genre of postmodernism.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold helps in reinstating what Linda Hutcheon, in her phenomenal work *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* calls "the presence of the past." According to Linda Hutcheon the most important concept of postmodernism is to see the past with critical eyes. Marquez's narrator comes back to

his hometown in order to reconstruct the events that led to the death of his friend Santiago Nasar. " I returned to this forgotten village, trying to put the broken mirror of memory back together from so many scattered shards" (5). Garcia Marquez's narrator is not the omniscient narrator of the past. On the contrary, the narrator of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is an indecisive, subjective and hesitant narrator who finds it difficult to analyze the past incidents from an objective point of view, simply because the recollection of facts pertaining the murder gets tinged with the personal knowledge that the narrator has of all parties involved.

The narrator of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* tries to pierce through the veil of mystery that shrouds the death. The narrator is the close friend of Santiago Nasar. The narrator is searching for answers after twenty seven years of the incident. The narrator can be considered as a journalist, historian, detective and a judge. The critical revisiting of the past incident makes the narrator and the reader question the validity of the accounts of the eye-witnesses after such a long time has elapsed and more importantly it questions the notion of history and journalism as being a narrative that is true and absolute recounting of past. The probing of past was a reflection of the probing of all the other constructs that were supposed to provide mankind with certain absolute truths.

The suspicion of the absolute that could never be challenged was conveyed by Jean Francois Lyotard, who in his ground breaking work *The Postmodern Condition* established that " Knowledge was a commodity, whose acquisition leads to power" (51). States Promod K Nayar in his *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: from Structuralism to Ecocriticism*The knowledge was generated as a sense of identity and of self therefore it was this body of knowledge that even generated the meta-narratives that governed social and cultural conduct. To Lyotard, the knowledge

was never objective or apolitical as it created and disseminated dominant ideologies. In postmodern text *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* a reader could sense a definite shift from the meta-narratives which were totalizing and homogenizing in nature to narratives that were small, local or heterogeneous.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* there is a fragmentation of the narrative where in multiple perspectives of all the townsfolk are provided as no single perspective can be considered real and complete. The meaning derived by the reader then became "the" meaning. The real, the unreal, the fantastic, the credible, the facts, the fiction all such boundaries gets blurred and the result is a work of magical realism, fabulation, pastiche and parody.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold contains multiple narratives. The amalgamation of facts, feelings, imaginations and memories of all characters whom the narrator investigates in order to arrive at the crux of the death of Santiago Nasar. All of these narrations are peppered with several surreal and fantastic descriptions about the day of death and weather of that day.

> Many people coincided in recalling that it was a radiant morning with a sea breeze coming in through the banana groves, as was to be expected in a fine February of that period. But most agreed that the weather was funereal, with a cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove was falling. (2-3)

This makes the reader realize that in the narrator's world both reality and fantasy coexist.The postmodern technique of fusing the ridiculous and real and thereby

creating an alternative reality, attained perfection under the hands of Garcia Marquez who had achieved world recognition for his extra ordinary use of Magical Realism.

Marquez's treatment of time in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is marked for its significance. The narration shifts through various time frames, rapidly drifting between the past and the present with the relative comfort and ease. The novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* starts in the morning and the events of the plot do not unfold in a straight forward manner, but rather move back and forth in time. While chapter one starts at half past five in the morning and Santiago Nasar was killed by half past seven, between an hour and thirty-five minutes."ON THE DAY they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on" (1).

Postmodernism succeeded in demolishing the distinction between high and low culture. Nothing was to be canonized or treated sacred because everything was a mere replication or simulation of the original. Jean Baudrillard, the biggest exponent of postmodernism believed that due to the barrage of media images in our lives, Nayar states that "we only know the image of the real" (49). As Hutcheon states, postmodernism resulted in the "transgressing of previously accepted limits: those of particular arts, of genres, of art itself" (9). Critic Ruben Pelayo states that the narrator of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is Marquez himself, therefore providing the readers with a meshing of autobiographical elements with fiction. The novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* brings different discourses that of journalism and fiction together.

According to Linda Hutcheon, one of the main features that distinguish postmodernism from modernism is the fact that it "takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement". One way of creating this double or

contradictory stance on any statement is the use of parody, citing a convention only to make fun of it. True to the features of the postmodern literature, even the act of creating literary text and the philosophers who influenced in their creation are commented upon. The narrator while reading the judge's summation of the case observes:

> The judge's name didn't appear on any of them, but it was obvious that he was a man burning with fever of literature. He had doubtless read the Spanish classics and a few Latin ones, and he was quite familiar with Nietzche, who was the fashionable author among magistrates of him time. (100)

The fact that the narrator while trying to find whether his friend was actually deserving for such punishment tries to piece together the details of the fatal day through two sources, one through eye witnesses who were there when the tragedy took place. And with the documents that are left behind by an instructor who doesn't appear on the scene but has an important presence in the text.

Irony the most avidly used technique by the postmodern writers, irony has been suffused into *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* to make it multi-faceted. The title *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* makes a mockery of the process of chronicling as the story line operates in a circular manner the novel begins and ends with death.*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is not a record of facts, but rather a collection of opinions and individual perceptions about the incident, arranged in a random order. The story is not recorded in chronological order either. Marquez pushes the envelope with his own deconstruction of the entire traditional way of presenting a murder investigation. Each and every character in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is aware that

Santiago Nasar is going to be killed. "There had never been a death more foretold" (50). However no one bothers to warn the unfortunate protagonist. An element of irony comes when the religious authorities turn blind to Santiago's murder. Use of Ironic elements in the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* clearly suggests it as a postmodern novel.

Garcia Marquez's title *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* operates on two levels, the death has been foretold to the readers at the onset and the brothers Pablo and Pedro who would be avenging their sister Angela's honor, informs everybody in the town about their intention of killing Santiago. The other irony is the elusive question whether Santiago Nasar was destined to die." But no matter how much they tossed the story back and forth, no on cold explain to me how poor Santiago Nasar ended up being involved in such a mixup" (20).

The logic behind honor killing becomes absurd when paradoxically, seventeen years after the death of Santiago Nasar, the couple Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roman responsible for Santiago's death reunite. The truth like the exact narration of chronology of the murder remains outside the reader's grasp. Borland, explains this dimension that this is a deliberately ploy adopted by Marquez because for him the important aspect of this novel, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was not to explain what happened rather to help the readers come to an understanding of what has happened.

Postmodernist novels had started the trend of defying the expectations usually associated with the main characters of the novel. Marquez uses the same technique in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* the reader may view *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as a parody or mock tragedy, where the protagonist Santiago Nasar is fated to die. The complexity of the text lies in the categorization of Santiago as the hero. Throughout

the entire novel one can't help but realize that Santiago was not the typical hero. Santiago Nasar was not even a hero but an ordinary man who had his own fears, own faults and own flaws of character.

Marquez deliberately tantalizes the readers with various people's impression of Santiago Nasar in order to maintain the curiosity and confusion of his readers. Narrator states "By his own merits, Santiago Nasar was merry and peaceful and openhearted (6). Victoria Guzman, Santiago's cook contradicts the view of narrator by stating that Santiago reflected his father Ibrahim Nasar to her. Beyond the inversion of narrative technique and the characterization of the hero, even the traditional path of love is turned upside down in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.*

The narrator mentions that Angela Vicario was never given the privilege of falling in love as she was brought up in a strict patriarchal society and at the beginning she was deserted by her husband Bayardo San Roman. She is forced to marry Bayardo as nobody in Angela's family view love between the couples as a pre-requisite to good marriage. Angela's mother Purisima del Carmen states "Love can be learned too" (34). However, Bayardo falls in love with Angela at first sight, but even Bayardo's love is unable to overcome his wife's lack of virtue. Ironically, Angela after being abandoned on the doorstep of her parent's house by Bayardo, Angela realizes that she has fallen in love with Bayardo San Roman.

Marquez in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* provides the readers with multiple readings. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* reinforces its important feature of being comfortable with the self reflexivity, temporal, disorder, fragmentation and irony, the cornerstones of cultural and literary phenomenon called postmodernism. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is an attempt to understand a complex phenomenon that has left all

the critics divided in their opinion of whether to praise or to criticize it. The *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* which uses most postmodern techniques is purely a postmodern novel. The next chapter sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Latin American culture is a mix of various cultural expressions from different regions. Latin American literature comprises of oral and written literature of the Latin America with special emphasis on Spanish, Portuguese and other indigenous languages of America. Latin American literary scope confines itself to the national literatures of South and Central America, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico and parts of the West Indies. When Latin American colonies began to declare independence from Europe, a desire arouse among writers to create their own literature that accurately reflected the lives and concerns of native Latin Americans.

Specifically Spanish written works are designated as "Spanish American" or "Hispanic-American" literature. Brazilian literature is excluded from the group of Latin American literature because it is majorly produced in Portuguese language. Latin American writers started to document their own national histories placing emphasis on significant events that shaped cultural and social identities. During 1960's Latin American literature emerged as one of the world's best literature. Latin American literature gave birth to the literary genre Magical realism. Magical realism is known for its supernatural elements in realistic narrative. The two key terms in discussion of Latin American fiction is 'Boom' and the 'new novel'.

Garcia Marquez's fictional techniques and preoccupations were shoved by his grandmother Dona Tranquilina Iguaran Cotes, and his grandfather Colonel Nicolas Marquez Iguaran. Marquez began his career as journalist in El Universal then he moved to Bogota, where he became a reporter for El Espectador. Garcia Marquez applies journalistic style of narration in most of his novels and it is a prominent

feature in his literary discourse. Marquez combines the journalistic style of narration with other literary techniques like Magical realism and Symbolism.

The journalistic style of narration offers literary richness to his works. Sensuality is central theme in Garcia Marquez's work. His writing is an attempt to revise or re-envision Latin American history. The Colombian landscape is central in understanding the peculiar behavior of his characters. Marquez's international reputation reached the peak in 1982, when he was awarded Noble prize in literature. Garcia Marquez is considered as the most prominent figure in Latin American literature. Garcia Marquez was recognized as the principal exponent of magical realism tradition.

Garcia Marquez brings a different taste in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* through his unique way of narrating the story with the bundle of events that lead up to the death of Santiago Nasar. The narrator acts as both the witness and an omniscient character. Through the eyes of the narrator, the reader is able to follow the non-linear narrative and collective information about the chain of events that occurred on the day of the murder. Garcia Marquez employs the idiosyncratic method of delineating the story to spice up the mystery of Santiago's murder. Moreover the recurring foreshadowing of the murder promotes the construction of suspense in the novel.

One of the most outstanding features in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is the point of view that Garcia Marquez uses to narrate the story. The narrator, narrating the story of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is unnamed friend of Santiago Nasar. The narrator narrates the story of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* in first person narrative. Yet he blends everyone's thinking and their views. Foreshadowing is typically achieved through the authors implication that an event is about to happen. The entire

story of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is built on the foretelling of Santiago Nasar's murder. Santiago himself dreams of birds and trees the night before he dies. Throughout *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* the characters refer to dreams and visions they have that are related to Santiago's impending murder. Garcia Marquez references to dreams and vision contribute to the surrealistic tone.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold foregrounds the role of a small town in Colombian society, in the act of man slaughter. The novel centers on the assassination of the protagonist, Santiago Nasar. By a pair twin brothers named Pablo Vicario and Pedro Vicario to save the honor of their sister, Angela. Fascinating occurrences abound in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* perhaps the most incredible of all is the series of events surrounding the assassination. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* consists of five chapters that relate the story in a generally chronological fashion.

'Chronicle' or 'Cronica' in Spanish is an old method of recording events or history in which the story element is intact. Garcia Marquez major accomplishment in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is maintaining the reader's interest despite the fact that its denouement is announced in the first line. Garcia Marquez had deliberately broken the traditional one dimensional narrative in which the authority of one voice is unequivocally established. Marquez also uses literary devices to create an atmosphere of apprehension and foreboding.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold has diverse men and women personalities like Santiago Nasar, Placida Linero, Pablo Vicario and Pedro Vicario, Angela Vicario, Pura Vicario, Maria Alejandria Cervantes, Father Carmen Amador, Colonel Lazaro Aponte and the Narrator. Among all other characters Santiago Nasar, Angela Vicario and the Narrator play a crucial role in unfolding the novel. Maria Alejandrina

Cervantes, a sex worker is depicted as strong and independent. She is portrayed as a more dignified women, she is independent, strong and sincere in her own way.

Santiago Nasar, the protagonist of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is described as flirtatious, charming and rich. His status as a rich man gives him an aura of invincibility. Yet, he is murdered in a brutal way, for something which he may or may not have committed. The narrator convey in a subtle way, his belief that Santiago may not have been the one who brought disrepute to Angela Vicario.Santiago is at times picturised as a victim by the narrator, the victim of a cowardly society obsessed with outdated gender codes and prejudices.

Angela Vicario's plight symbolizes the plight of woman in general. Brought up in a male-chauvinist society according to the patriarchal norms, her dreams and desires are suppressed by her own family. Going against her friends instructions, she declares to her husband Bayardo San Roman about her secret that she is not a virgin. And finally she attains the love she longed for from her husband Bayardo San Roman. Her life seems to find fulfillment at the moment when Bayardo comes to Angela's house with all the unopened letters that she had send him during her solitude. The patriarchal ideology gets reflected when Marquez states that Angela finds fulfillment when Bayardo comes back to her.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Marquez deals with diverse themes. One of the most important themes is honor and sexual morality. The honor of the woman is considered as something protected at any cost. Hence, the entire community and even the legal system support the Vicario brothers for their outrageous act. The concept of marriage is portrayed as matter of convenience and venue to showcase one's money and power.

The theme of machismo plays a huge role in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Bayardo San Roman is depicted as a man with macho attitude. He doesn't hesitate to send Angela back when he gets to know that she is not a virgin. His masculine pride is reflected by sending Angela back to her home. Twin brothers avenging for their sister Angela's honor is regarded as their duty. Only then the brothers will be considered as men. The marriage of Bayardo and Angela becomes a public affair with the entire town is invited. Religion comes under severe criticism in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The hypocrisy of religious authorities is brought to the spotlight.

Confusion and uncertainty are also part of the novel. Marquez creates an aura of uncertainty throughout the novel. This is done primarily by giving the accounts of different people regarding the day of murder. The conflicting views regarding the climate create confusion. While Colonel Aponte and Placida Linero assert the day was rainy, others like Pablo and Pedro Vicario contradict that it was not rainy. The ultimate uncertainty is that of the real man behind Angela's misfortune. It is never made clear whether it was really Santiago Nasar or somebody else whom Angela wanted to protect. This confusion is transferred to the readers as well. Marquez leaves it unsaid in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold.*

The class question comes to the forefront in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The prominent factor that makes Santiago Nasar stand out of status as an upper middle class man. The narrator highlights the society's role in Santiago Nasar death, which fails to save a fellow human being. The narrator is trying to purge himself of his guilt of not having done anything to save his friend. He seems to attain a cathartic relief by writing about the incident.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the rain, the bellowing of the boat, the sound of the hens and dogs, and smells become recurring motifs as sense of perceptions. The confusion about the state of weather is seen throughout the novel. The sounds of boats, animals and hens create a clamorous mood. The smell of death pervades throughout the novel. In several places the narrator, talks about Santiago's smell pervading at the entire village, bringing unpleasant sensations in the village. The motifs serve as essential components to sustain the gloomy, ghostly aura of the novel.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold is not arranged chronologically. The narrator moves back and forth in time. Flashback is used as a technique in narration of the events. The *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is journalistic and fictitious at the same time. The narrator played the investigative- journalist manages to blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, objectivity and subjectivity.

The lucid style of writing, along with the accurate use of words and expressions are characteristic feature in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. With a limited number of words, Marquez has managed to capture the nuances of the life of Latin American people. The folly and pathos of human life is depicted in a charming way by Marquez. His love for the characters is evident in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, which makes it as one of the masterpieces by Garcia Marquez. Marquez proves his genius quality of writing in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, it engages the reader till page and at the end it is purely a thought-provoking novel.

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Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict in Anita Desai's

Where Shall We Go This Summer

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Savitha R. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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I hereby declare that the project entitled **Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer*** analyses the life and cultural assimilation of immigrant people.

The first chapter **Introduction** gives a short introduction on Indian literature, the biography of Anita Desai and the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Illusion and Reality** deals with the brutal realities and harsh human life.

The third chapter **Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict** discusses the modern life full of violence and commotion, extreme feminine sensitiveness of Sita and exhibition of psychological conflict.

The fourth chapter **Marital Discord** deals with the discovery of self and feeling of failure, suffering from despair and depression causing marital problems.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and ultimately projects the emancipation of women.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

The emergence of women novelists in Indian English literature took place as early as the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After independence, they could make solid contribution to Indian English fiction. The post-Independence period, has brought to the forefront a number of noted women novelists who have enriched Indian English.The woman has been the focus of many literary works in this period. Writers like Kamala Markandaya, NayantaraSahgal, Ruth PrawerJhabvala, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have achieved recognition in recent times.

Problems of women which were till now in the periphery have now shifted to the centre. Through the eyes of these women writers, one gets a glimpse of a different world till now not represented in literature. Women, who were till then treated as second class citizens were assigned their due place in their novels. These novels present a picture of the impact of education on women, her new status in the society and her assertion of individuality. The works of Indian women novelists like Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande can be compared with those of the Canadian novelists like Margaret Atwood and Margaret Lawrence. All these writers write of life as seen by women and life as affecting women.

Anita Desai probes the irrational which surfaces in human relationships and expresses a dimension of existential doubt. She exhibits a deep concern for feministic principle. She also examines the creative process. She tries the technique of discovery of her creative potentialities while revealing the thematic material. In all her writing the spirit of humanism and her love for humanity is explicit.

Anita Desai was born in Mussorie on 24th June 1937, to a Bengali father and German mother. She began writing fiction at the age of seven and published small pieces in children's magazines. She was educated at Queen Mary's school first and at Miranda house, later at Delhi University, where she took her B.A. degree in English literature in 1957. Anita Desai got married to Ashwin Desai, she has four children. She has been living in various cities, Calcutta, Bombay, Chandigarh, Delhi and Poona. The life of people in these cities finds expression in her novels. Anita Desai wrote her first novel *Cry The Peacock* in (1963) which was considered by the literary world to be a poetic piece of great lyric quality. Her other novels are *Voices in the City* (1965) *Bye - Bye Blackbird* (1971) *Where Shall We Go this Summer.*

Anita Desai undoubtedly holds a prominent position among the contemporary writers of Indo – Anglican fiction. She is a bold and experimental novelist with a new sense and vibrant richness. Much attention is given to the emotional crises of her protagonists who live in a chaotic society. She delves deep to find out the factors responsible for such a despair and attempts to suggest solutions to overcome it.

As a woman writer she does not profess to be a feminist and yet she voices the fears and concerns, the hopes and aspirations of her characters in her own artistic way. She is deeply fascinated in exploring the social structure through the central characters in her novels. She is a minute observer of the society existing around her, perceiving everything minutely and delicately so that the situations can be presented in a poetic style.

Anita Desai's novels are certainly reflective of socials realities, but she does not dwell like others on social issues. She delves deep into the forces that condition the growth of a female in this patriarchal male dominated society. She observes

social realities from a psychological perspective without posing herself as a social reformer. Her novels are studies of the inner life of characters and her talent lies in the description of minute things that are usually unnoticed.

Anita Desai is one of the most significant fiction writers. She finds place in book- review, journals, interviews and seminars. In critical literature on Indian writing in English, Anita Desai is seldom obliterated. It is a humble venture to analyse flashback, diary-entries, self- analysis, ruminations, rumbling of dialogues and descriptions of places and people. Looking inward in her characters, Anita Desai also explores the intricate facts of human experience bearing upon the central experience of psychic tensions of characters.

Anita Desai is a minstrel of the human heart, an artist shaping the contours of her inner world. She is concerned exclusively with the personal tragedy of individuals. Hardly interested in social conditions and political events she explores the layers of her character's mind and brings to the surface, by the suppression of nonessentials, various shades of human psyche. She brushes aside unimportant things on the part of the individual and gives us fleeting thoughts with razor like sharp awareness of the futility of individual's existence. Thus, most of her characters are overcast by shadows and half- shadows, half- revealed and half -concealed.

Anita's chief concern is human relationship. Most of her female protagonists are sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. Her preference for the inner world with the language of the interior is a reference to both form and subject. She builds her plots and people and style so as to produce the effects she has in mind. Mostly her characters in novel after novel are studies in inadequate love relations.

Her best known novel *In Custody* published in 1984 , is a novel set in Delhi. Deven Sharma is the main character of *In Custody* which takes place in India. The story spans the period between the 1980s and 1999, a time when customs and attitudes were changing in India. Deven lives a discontented life with his wife Sarla, and their young son. The book deals with the search for meaning in life. Traditionally, Persian and Urdu poets are engaged in the mystical life and meditating on God.

Bye – Bye Blackbird showcases the life of the immigrants, who suffer a mixed feeling of love and hate towards their adopted country, in an alien society. It examines the plight of Indian immigrants in London. The author explores the adjustment and feelings that the individuals from India face there. In the novel, identity crisis is portrayed through these three characters named Dev, Adit and Sarah.

The Village by the Sea is a young adult novel first published in London in 1982, while the U.S. version was released in 1984. The book tells the story of two Indian siblings, Lila and Hari, as they try to improve life for their impoverished family. The novel deals with poverty, hardships and sorrow faced by a small rural, community in India. The novel won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, a British book award, in 1983. It mainly deals with family, responsibility, poverty, trust, promises, and dealing with adversity.

*Where Shall We Go This Summer*portrays the emotional and temperamental chasm between the pairs of lovers. The natural flow of affection between the lovers, is very often intact but more frequently it is blocked due to misunderstanding, lack of adequate forbearance. The central theme in the novel is Sita's repugnance and disgust at the thought of the birth of her fifth child. She is an experienced keen eyed mature

mother. She knows the joy of motherhood and is comparatively contented. But she is emotionally hurt in the recent years; her shock comes from modern town culture.

The strain involved in the earlier childbirths was not felt but being hurt in several ways this time she is not prepared for the delivery of the child. She is afraid that different nurses and doctors will offer indignity to her person. The process of hospitali- sation and the details of the procreative procedure are repugnant even in their mental picturing to Sita. Therefore she seeks to escape from this predicament. The theme of this novel is a very complex one but very delicately handled by the novelist.

Sita is of course affectionate to her husband, she has a deep concern for his problems, but she has an unquiet mind. Unable to compromise with her husband, she leaves for the Island Manori. Once she leaves her husband she feels very sorry for having abandoned him. She thinks he will suffer without being able to look after their children properly. His boys at home must have worried him, while he was at work in the factory which was not without its problems either. He looked worn much older than his years. Nor could he stay here resting as she was doing.

But Sita is often despondent and unhappy and fails to satisfy her husband by a show of natural affections, and emotional and affectionate reassurance, so frequently needed to make life pleasant, she regards the assurances as false. It simply did not exist for her and should not make it exist. So she did not speak any words of love or reassurance to him. Free flow of love and sympathy make marital life heavenly but Anita Desai's ladies being born with higher sensibility fail to provide them.

Thematically Anita Desai makes a minute study of the undercurrent feelings between the husband and wife. Thus the husband is irritated by Sita's exaggerated

concern about the welfare of the helpless eagle being attacked by crows. He rejoices in Sita's discomfiture at the outcome of the incident. "They've made agood job of your eagle", said her husband coming out with her morning cup of tea, " Look at the feathers sticking out of that crow's beak, He laughed".

Because of this standing difference between the two, Sita does not open her heart to her husband and maintains a certain reserve, which is the inherent seed of permanent discord of a subtle and minor type between the two. The deep psychological insight of human nature that Anita Desai possesses reminds one of the traditions of George Eliot. The novelist brings out this point all through the book and frequently refers to Sita's "wanting and not being given. What she wanted" and refers to her face. "It was the face of a woman unloved a woman rejected". The theme of love rejected or not understood characteristics most of her novels.

Feminism emerged as a movement for the emancipation of women and their struggle for equal rights. Indian women's struggle is centered on emancipation from the prejudices governing her position as wife. This involves declaring women's rights without any dispute to the standard of values. Women's emancipation continues to take an important place in patriarchal society. Women have faced many problems and the issues of discrimination in Indian history. They are subjugated by male dominated Indian society. As Virginia Woolf observes. "The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself"Anita Desai's novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer* exposes the emancipation of Sita who tries to escape into senseless lonely life.

She is known for her susceptible portrayal of the inner feelings of her female characters. Her novels explore anxiety among family members and the estrangement

of middle – class women. She has devised a stylized pattern and she has created new concept in her novels. Anita Desai possesses one of the healthiest and psychologically most balanced minds in the realm of Indo – Anglican fictions.

The feminist consciousness or sensitivity is the consciousness of victimizations. As a philosophy of life, it seeks to discover and change the more subtle and deep seated causes of women's oppression. It opposes women's subordination to men in the family and society. It is a global and revolutionary ideology. A feminist is one who is awakened and conscious about women's life and problem. The women novelists and poets such as Anita Desai, ShashiDespande, Jai Nimbkar, and poets like Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande and others have raised the voice against women's oppression.

Desai's female protagonists belong to the upper class of urban India. Economic independence is not an important issue for them. Yet all of them directly or indirectly question the accepted codes of a patriarchal society. They refuse to unquestioningly accept the rules ordained for them by traditional social conventions. To them even seemingly benevolent institutions like marriage or the joint family can become farcical or coercive. The women in Desai's novels reside in a world of delusions like the cocoon of childhood. They do not possess homeostasis or the capacity to adjust and adapt easily and naturally to a changed set of circumstances. Consequently many of them meet a very violent unnatural end.

Chapter Two

Illusion and Reality

Anita Desai undoubtedly holds a prominent position among the contemporary writers of Indo – Anglican fiction. She is a bold and experimental novelist with a new sense and vibrant richness. From her novels, it is clear that she,

> possesses one of the healthiest and psychologically most balanced minds in the realm of Indo – Anglican fiction and the sanity of her tastes and attitudes, is almost exemplary, a point worth emulation for her fellow religionists in the fieldof writing. (Tripathy. J.P 1)

As a woman writer she does not profess to be a feminist and yet she voices the fears and concerns, the hopes and aspirations of her characters in her own artistic way. She is deeply fascinated in exploring the social structure through the central characters in her novels. Anita Desai differs from other Indian novelists such as R K Narayan, MulkrajAnand, BhabaniBattacharya, Raja Rao in her set of language and style that she employs to portray the inner crisis and tension existing in the life of a character.

Where Shall We Go This Summer depicts the inner – outer world of its female lead Sita. The husband – wife alienation, temperamental incompatibility, feeling of despair and loneliness are recurring themes in the novels of Anita Desai. This novel deals with the discord in the family of Raman and Sita because of their failure to adjust themselves. Both of them differ in their attitudes of life. One is matter of fact, practical and the other highly emotional given to sentimentality making

much of even ordinary incidents. Sita, the heroine suffers mental agony like Maya, in *Cry, the Peacock* or Monisha in *Voices in the City.*

This powerful work of fiction represents the predicament of a lonely married woman who aspires to triumph over the chaos and suffering of her rather unusual existence. This is a deeply engrossing and disturbing novel with an inner fury which reflects the problems of life in this modern society.

Sita, a sensitive, over – emotional, middle aged woman, saddled with her four children and pregnant for the fifth time feels alienated from her husband and children because of her high strung 'sensibility and explosive emotionality'. She is fed up with her life and could not tolerate the violence she sees in daily life. Her introversion and inability to adjust with the society makes her feel alienated and this alienation is quite natural and dispositional. Raman, on the other hand is a 'practical' man always sane, rational and passive. Raman fails to understand his wife Sita as he is made of different stuff. The marital discord results chiefly from the dichotomy between two irreconcilable temperaments and diametrically opposite view points represented by Sita and her husband Rama.

Part One of the novel begins with the arrival of Sita and her two children Karan and Menaka to the island. She occupies the house in Manori. The reason for her coming to Manori is to achieve the miracle of keeping her baby unborn. She is much agitated over even ordinary events of life. Her morbid fear of the people in the city and the emotional alienation from her husband led her to the island. She considers the world wicked and full of destructions and does not want to give birth to her baby in this cruel world.

Part two of the novel describes her life before marriage in the island. She spent her childhood with her father in a big house in Manori. As her father was a freedom fighter, he did not remain in one place and at last when freedom was achieved, they settled down in Manori. Everybody in the island had great respects for him. He set an ashram in his house and many followed his ideals and principles. He was considered to be a legend in Manori with his new ideas and magic cures. The people of Manori had immense faith in Sita's father and approached him for all their problems. As Sita's mother had deserted them, it is her father who took care of Sita, her sister Rekha and brother Jeevan. The children lived in the midst of the crowd, as their house would be always crowded by men and women who come to their father for medicines.

Part three of the novel is a continuation of the first one. Her initial enthusiasm that the island will work miracles on her is slowly waning. Her children, who lived in the city comfortably, could not adjust with the life in the island, accuse Sita and regard life on the island as madness. They want to escape from that island to their 'beloved' city. So, Menaka without the knowledge of Sita writes a letter to Raman to come and take them home. When Raman arrives, Sita is reluctant to leave the island and after much conflict, Sita goes back to Bombay to live with her children and husband. Her expectation of a miracle in the island did not happen and she joined her family in the city. Sita and Raman are the two different poles where there is no attraction but repulsion always. Raman is an ordinary man who has a practical commonsense approach to life. But Sita is a woman who gets disturbed easily and fails to adjust with her family and society.

Anita Desai tries to show the anxiety of Sita who suffers because of her biased attitude towards life. Sita is over-sensitive who finds herself confined in the urban life

after leading a carefree life in rural area under the protection of her father. The artificialities, fast pace and harshness of city life nauseate her to such an extent that she longs to go back to island where she has cherished all the delicacies of rural life and where she thinks her roots are. After being taken away from her father and her place, she feels the void and expects more love and care from her husband Raman.

> She feels insecure and finds everything wrong with Raman. He had nothing more to give her, or he was just unaware of her needs and demands. He raised his hand and stroke Karan's hair with a gentleness she herself ached to attract, and stared at him, bored into him with her eyes, wanting and not being given what she wanted. (132)

Sita craves for love from Raman and wants him to pamper her like her father, whereas, Raman who is pragmatic in his approach fails to understand her. Sita unable to understand this, continues accusing her husband and dislikes her kids for being like their father – practical and insensitive. She is a bit abnormal and introvert. She wants to escape from the brutal realities and harsh human life. She forgets that life is one part full of violence, suffering and pain.

Treasons, betrayals and treacheries are mixed up with pleasure, joy and happiness to colour it. She is not satisfied with her present life that she decides to leave for Manori. Raman tries to enlighten her mind about the 'contraries' in life, saying "other people put up with it – it's not so – so insufferable." (143) But she lacks courage, practical knowledge and wisdom which make others believe that "life must be continued, and all its business... why can't you? Perhaps one should be grateful if life is only a matter of disappointment, not disaster." (143.)

Sita always prefers to live alone with her husband away from his friends and relatives. She could never tolerate Raman's friends visiting them, for she feels 'applied' and 'frightened' by the guests. Their guests were his business associates who according to Raman are pleasant and tolerable. He regards them with little humour and with restraint. But to Sita, "they are 'nothing' – nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matters. Animals" (47). She uses harsh words about her guests and calls them "pariahs... in the streets, hanging about drains and dustbins waiting to pounce and kill and eat" (47).

She never got used to anyone, either with his friends or with his relatives. When they lived the first year of their married life with his family in Queens Road, she had great problem in getting along with his relatives and even after moving to this new flat in the city, she has not changed.

She is a symbol of nature and cannot adjust with the mechanical world. She seems to be an 'odd one' where she is alienated from her family and society. She is upset by the sight of crows feeding on a young eagle. Immediately she rushes for a toy gun of Karan and uses it on the crows to keep them away from the poor eagle. Her childish behavior that she has exhibited in this incident throws light on her innocent nature. She failed in her attempts to save the eagle from the crows and later when Raman came to know about this, he took it lightly. In the morning, there was nothing on the ledge but some feathers and stains of blood. Raman said, "They've made a good job of your eagle. Look at the feathers sticking out of that crow's beak." (41).

Raman seems to have a very 'practical' view of life and nothing disturbs him in anyway. His nature is exactly opposite to that of Sita's who takes anything and

everything seriously. She feels that the outside world is filled with cruelty and destructions. For her, the city is nothing but a place of madness where children enact scenes from movies, fight with each other, even the grown ups quarrel in the road side dumps. She is shocked when she sees the destructive element in her children's behavior. She watches Menaka, her daughter crumble a sheet of new buds and unable to bear the sight of such destruction shouts at her. She is upset when Meneka destroys her paintings which she has drawn with great care and were really good too.

Sita as a symbol of nature finds herself a stranger in that atmosphere. She feels disturbed by this chaotic and violent society. She finds fault with everyone around her and even with her own children and husband. She feels that the world around her is not moving according to her whims and fancies and can no more offer security to her. As Jasbir Jain remarks, "whole aberrance of life in Bombay is triggered off by the violence around her." (79).

The husband wife alienation forms the basis of the novel as Raman and Sita differ a lot in their temperaments. Sita always accuses Raman for his lack of understanding and Raman, could never understand the emotional state of Sita and he considers her deeds as immature and foolish ones. Sita appears to be a woman of contradictory thoughts. She is a woman of complex character and even Raman her husband could not understand her. She does not want her child to be born in this violence filled society. She says that she does not want her baby to be born.

When Raman asks her about abortion she shouts "mad! You're quite mad. Kill the baby? It's all I want. I want to keep it, don't you understand." (35) Raman is totally confused with her words and says, "You just said you don't want it. Now you say you do want it. What's up? What's up?" (35) Raman is an ordinary husband who

like any other man has great care for his family. He is indeed an affectionate husband who cares for his wife and this is evident in his reluctance to send Sita to Manori. When she wants to escape to Manori, Raman with all care for his wife and baby says,

> You must stay where there is a doctor, a hospital, and a telephone. You can't go to the island in the middle of the monsoon. You can't have a baby there. (33)

Sita loses all feminine, all maternal belief in child birth. She does not want her child to be born in the chaotic, violent society. She fears it as one more act of violence and murder in the world. Srivastava observes:

> The incident in which a number of crows assault and kill an eagle becomes symbolic of Sita's own plight amid violence so much prevalent in society. (36).

Her neurotic fears and anxieties make her aware of the violence around her that she wants to escape to her island where, she believes a miracle could happen. When Raman, as usual asks the question, 'Where Shall We Go This Summer', Sita immediately responds 'to Manori' and

> fed up with the dreary metropolitan life in Bombay and tormented by the 'paranoiac' fear of her fifth and reluctant pregnancy she leaves for Manori islet off the Moris mainland. (21 – 22)

Sita's character can be evaluated in the light of her childhood experiences. She is a motherless child and she experienced partiality, neglect, indifference right from the beginning of her childhood. Sita's father has no time for his children and especially Sita did not get even a drop of his love and care. It was Rekha, Sita's sister who was close to his heart. She always has a doubt about Rekha and her relationship

with her, for there is no resemblance between the two sisters. When she learns that Rekha is not her sister from Jivan, she is upset that "his words had dropped on her skin like acid"(79).

Sita always feels discarded and unwanted. Her much suppressed emotion in her childhood is responsible for her perturbed mental state in future. The indifference of her father, alienation from sister, lack of love and care from her mother has made many psychological changes in her. Soon after their father's death the family disintegrates, Rekha leaves, without even shedding a drop of tear, Jivan vanishes without any sign and only Sita remains to marry Raman.

Family plays a vital role in the growth and development of individual and broken homes definitely has its worse effect on an individual. Sita is one such victim who because of her bitter experiences in her childhood alienates herself from everything around her.

Raman criticizes her for her wrong doings and tries to draw her attention to the trauma and tensions she has caused her family. When Raman prepares to leave Manori, she mends her ways and follows his footprints.

> She lowered her head and searched out his footprints so that she could place her feet in them, as a kind of game to make walking back easier, and so her footprints, mingled with his. (150)

The magic and charm of the island has vanished and instead of silence and peace Sita experiences unrest. They are frightened by the threatening weather and feels that her visit to the island is an act of madness. She realizes that, "life in Bombay is the reality, the island represents a stage world, an act of imagination, of make belief, a world which collapses on close contact." (87)

> Sita is forced to accept the reality and she is confused .how could she tell, how decide? Which half of her life was real and which unreal? which of her selves was true, which false? All she knew was that there were two periods of her life, each in direct opposition to the other.(153)

She is unable to achieve temperamental compatibility with her husband at home and now in Manori she is unable to achieve the same with her children. At last wisdom dawns on her and she wants to return to reality. She had come to the islan

> ...in search of some magical solution. But she realizes that there cannot be solution to man's indifference in the pervading menace around, she chooses to return and face life. (158)

Finally, Sita realizes that illusion and reality are two sides of life and they cannot be separated. Anita Desai in her interview observes that in order to survive in the world, one has to compromise with life:

> of course if one is alive, in this world one cannot survive without compromise, drawing the lines means certain death and in the end, Sita opts for life – with compromise. (21)

Unlike Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*, Sita neither commits suicide nor kills anyone but she simply gets compromised with her destiny.

As Hariom Prasad observes:

> Sita has come to accept the prosaic nature of life which runs through difficult human situations in different ways. She finds the courage to face life, in the end, with all its ups and downs. (119)

Sita's character has been portrayed in such a way that it represents the predicament of a modern married woman in the society. She initially escapes from reality and later reconciles to the circumstances.

Desai's heroines often act violently but in this novel there is a positive change. Sita reconciles herself to her lot. She strikes a perfect balance between her inner self and outer world. Her alienation is neither temperamental nor environmental. Ramachandara Rao rightly observes: "The novel may, thus, be seen as a parable on the inability of human beings, to relate the inner with the outer, the individual with the society." (59)

Anita Desai's novels are certainly reflective of socials realities. But she does not dwell like others on social issues. She delves deep into the forces that condition the growth of a female in this patriarchal male dominated society. She observes social realities from a psychological perspective without posing herself as a social reformer. Her novels are studies of the inner life of characters and her talent lies in the description of minute things that are usually unnoticed.

Chapter Three

Feminine Sensitivity and Psychological Conflict

The Indian novels bring forth the micro cosmic India caught in the crucible of traditions, conventions and social changes. Anita Desai added a new concept to the Indian English fiction. Her works are different from those of other Indian women writers: Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Jhabvala and NayantaraSahagal. In Markandaya's fiction, the stress is on the rural background; in Jhabvala's, the social background is more important; in Sahagal's the focus is on political and social awareness. But in Desai's novels, it is the exploration of sensibility, the inner workings of the mind that assume significance. Anita Desai is interested in the psychic life of her characters and her novels reveal that her real concern is with the exploration of human psyche. *Where Shall We Go this Summer* brings forth the agonized self and feminine sensitivity of the protagonist, Sita. Feminism is a world-wide cultural movement to secure a complete equality of women with men in the enjoyment of all human rights- moral, religious, social, political, educational, legal, and economic.

The feminist consciousness or sensitivity is the consciousness of victimization. As a philosophy of life, it seeks to discover and change the more subtle and deep- seated causes of women's oppression. It opposes women's subordination to men in the family and society. It is a global and revolutionary ideology. A feminist is one who is awakened and conscious about women's life and problem. The women novelists such as Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jai Nimbkar, and poets like Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande and others have raised the voice against women's oppression. Anita Desai has written by and large about women characters. She is preoccupied

with the theme of incompatible marital couples. The novel *Where Shall We Go ThisSummer* presents an incompatible marital couple in the form of Raman and Sita.

About the psychological conflict in their human mind Usha Rani remarks:

> The psychologists believe that every individual has an intrinsic nature which is the outcome of different factors, and it is unique in itself. These different states of mind produce different reactions in different situations. (16)

Any undesired situation in the life of a man produces a psychological conflict in his mind. The protagonists of Desai are not free of these mental agonies. They often come in clash with the outside life, with others at individual level or with the society at large. With the passage of time and experience their mental perspective changes and it produces a psychic strain in them. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* is replete with the instances of psychological conflict.

Psychological conflicts are innate and natural processes of the mind. The conflict occurs when individuals perceive their thoughts, views, attitudes, goals and interests contradicted by other individuals or social groups. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer* Desai delineates Sita's feminine sensitivity and the other factors leading the psychological conflict in her. Sita lives in the metropolitan city, Bombay, with her husband Raman and her four children. She is pregnant for the fifth time. She finds modern life full of violence and commotion. The incidents which upset her are the fighting of cook and her ayah, ayahs quarreling on the streets, breaking of buds by Menaka, and tearing the paintings to strips and dropping them on the floor by Menaka. All these instances upset and frighten Sita. She decides to leave Bombay and

go to the island Manori to save her fifth child from the din and bustle of metropolitan life.

She doesn't want to give birth to her child in such atmosphere. Noting Sita's reaction to the surrounding incidents, M.A. Waheed rightly remarks: "Sita is estranged from her husband and children because of her emotional reactions to the incidents that occur to her in society"(155). The eagle- crows fight which reveals extreme feminine sensitiveness of Sita. The eagle is struggling to save himself from the attack of crows. Looking this scene, she decides to save the eagle from the attack of crows. She shouts for her sons and asks Karan to bring the toy gun. While fetching toy gun Karan falls down and his chin is cut; but Sita ignores it and she herself fetches the toy gun and shoots it at crows. This shows how she is eager to save the eagle. They reach to eagle to see whether it is dead or alive. The older boys declare it as dead. Next morning there is nothing on the ledge but some feathers and some stains of blood. It indicates that the eagle is eaten by the crows. Raman with his morning cup of tea tells her, "They've made a good job of your eagle." (37) She replies to him "perhaps it flew away." (37) But she is sure that it might not have flown away. Through this episode, Anitá Desai reveals Sita's feminine sensitivity. This episode symbolizes Sita's conflict with her husband and her struggle for supremacy.

At a deeper psychological level, eagle is the symbol of Sita and Rama is the symbol of crows that attack on the helpless eagle. Sita's desperate effort to save the eagle from the attack of the crows is her fight against the masculine values represented by her husband, Raman. On this eagle- crows fight episode Dr. M. Maini Meitei, aptly remarks: Sita's words " perhaps it flew away" against her husband's caustic remark that her eagle has been eaten by the crows, suggests the future course of her action following her defeat and loss of identity. (35-36)

After this incident Sita's urge to leave Bombay and go to Manori increases. She hurriedly packs and leaves for Manori Island in complete defiance of her husband's hostile and hypocritical world. She returns to her father's island, charmed by him. This is, indeed, her last effort to try to save her identity by showing her faith in her father's magic world. The marital life of Raman and Sita is not smooth. Desai has presented marital disharmonies as they exist in Indian male dominated traditional families. The marital disharmony results from the conflict between two irreconcilable temperaments and two diametrically opposed view points of Sita and Raman. Sita finds her life dull and monotonous. She anticipates Raman to be the life lover, making her realize how valuable she is to him.

Raman however, does not fulfill her wishes. Raman focuses his energies on his business and becomes an escapist. He has his own morals, and standards. Consequently, the temperaments of Sita and her husband remain poles apart. Sita is quite disgusted with the friends and businessmen who come to meet Raman. She remarks about them: "They are nothing—nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter. Animals."(43) Sita's psychic balance is disturbed.

Over Sita's behavior Dr. M. Maini Metei remarks: " Sita is a hypersensitive, introverted personality and a pessimist." (31) When Raman does not fulfill her wishes, Sita feels marital dissatisfaction with her husband. The root cause of marital discord between Sita and Raman lies in the fact that Raman marries Sita not out of love but " out of pity, out of lust, out of sudden will for adventure, and because it was inevitable married her." (89) After marriage Sita lives with Raman's family members for some days. But she feels uncomfortable with her in- laws. Noting Sita's condition, Raman comes to live in a small flat. But here too "people continued to come and be unacceptable to her." (45) She is fed up with her husband, a businessman, whose

complete lack of feeling brings her to the verge of insanity. She spends almost all her time on the balcony, smoking , looking out at the sea. Sita not only hates Raman for his lack of feeling but also derides the "subhuman placidity, calmness and sluggishness" (43) This strange behavior of Sita is the exhibition of psychological conflict created in her mind. In the long –run the husband – wife relationship is dragged into difficulties that come out in the form of identity crisis, for both Raman and Sita stand for binary oppositions.

B. Chitra remarks:

> The novels of Anita Desai catch the bewilderment of the individual psyche conformed with the overbearing socio- cultural environment and the ever- beckoning modern promise of self- graduation and self-fulfillment.(216)

Sita becomes the victim of socio-cultural and family atmosphere and loses her psychic balance.

Desai's novel spans an extensive range of issues. Her intention is to see her women characters as human with their weaknesses and potentialities who are indeed caught in the web of their own compulsions. Her novels have been examined as the manifesto of feminist predicaments and anxieties and creative release of the feminist consciousness. Her feminism cannot be considered as anti- male because her women desire man's love, affection and crave for the bliss and thrill of life which are ever denied to her. She perceives the dilemma of fair- sex and visualizes life of a female as a series of obligations, compulsions and commitments.

In addition to existentialist reality of life she evokes the sentiments and sensibilities of women for their role, status and respect in society. She minutely

observes the emotional world of them. She sets herself to voice the mute miseries and homelessness of millions of women, particularly married, tormented by existentialist problems and predicaments. She focuses on how her heroines in the contemporary urban milieu are bravely struggling against or ultimately submitting to the relentless forces of absurd life.

Desai throws light on the life, inner-climate and strained relationships of female which hamper their normal growth. She delineates the women characters that are non- conformist and anti- established and do not effort to get attuned to the social values and human bondages. They are mere cog in the machinery called society. They feel observed and trapped when society imposes its norms on them and demand conformity and on refusal by them ostracized them. Her characters play this existential drama but none of them outlines the situation. She has explored various aspects of feminine psyche which include their isolation that leads them to the verge of neurosis. A. Hariprasanna, in his critical security of Desai's novel rightly argues:

> Her novel is concerned with the emotional world of women, revealing a rare, imaginative awareness of various deeper forces at work and a profound understanding of feminine sensibility(81).

Desai's female protagonists belong to the upper class of urban India. Economic independence is not an important issue for them. Yet all of them directly or indirectly question the accepted codes of a patriarchal society. They refuse to unquestioningly accept the rules ordained for them by traditional social conventions. To them even seemingly benevolent institutions like marriage or the joint family can become farcical or coercive. The women in Desai's novels reside in a world of delusions like the cocoon of childhood. They do not possess "homeostasis" or the

capacity to adjust and adapt easily and naturally to a changed set of circumstances. Consequently many of them meet a very violent unnatural end.

Where Shall We Go This Summer exhibits the disintegration between family members and the loneliness, isolation and the disturbed mental psyche of the middle class woman Sita. Sita, a sensitive, over- emotional, middle aged woman, saddled with four children, feels detached from her husband Raman and her family and undergoes intolerable mental agony because of her high strung sensibility. She has a "dry worn face' (17) which has assumed "the aged stillness" (18). Owing to her mental condition, she continually broke apart into violent eruption of emotions (19). She feels suffocated by the vegetarian compliance, solidity and unimaginative way of life of her husband and his people. As a result of her experience of her boring and monotonous life she never got used to anyone.

> ...she could not inwardly accept that this was all life, that life would continue thus, inside this small, enclosed arena, with these few grey, dull-lit empty shell. I'm waiting. She agreed- although for what, she could not tell: for the two halves of this gray egg- world to fall apart and burst. (54)

Desai admits in her interview with Ramesh K. Srivastava:

> It is a long story about a woman packing up, shutting the house and going off with her three children to spend a holiday in their shack on Manori. Her husband busy in his own life seems hardly to notice their departure, leaving her frozen in anger at her neglect and loneliness. On the island she wonders about the beach, sleeps under the eashrihas,

concentrating upon this loneliness with such intensity that burns away,

burns her up leaving a cool, gray detachment like a flake of ash where her heart has been. (215)

The novel exhibits Sita's predicament and her imbalanced psyche status: She stands up to say 'No' to the dull tedium of a meaningless existence and ends up by realizing that 'Yes' is the sensible word to accept, face and live life. She resents her fifth pregnancy. In order to give birth to her fifth child by revoking the magic, she goes to Manori, her maiden home. The island house deserted for twenty years symbolizes her temperamental condition. As Vimala Rao aptly suggests:

> The island concretizes the feeling of isolation of Sita. She returns into itas into a womb with an obsessive desire to recapture once again her childhood, innocence and purity....Obviously, her own frustration with her life in Bombay drives her in her desire to provide her unborn infant with a world-that is uncorrupt. (50)

The strain involved in the child-birth earlier was not felt, but being hurt in several ways she feels herself not prepared for the delivery of the child. Therefore, she seeks an escape from the predicament. Her stay on the island awakens her to life's reality. And finally she chooses to accept the routine of her existence. Sita's mental, moral and emotional issues oscillate between the two polarities of 'Yes' and ' No'. Atma Ram observes, " the novel dramatizes two kinds of courage : struggle between the positive No and a potent yes" (76).

The betrayals, treacheries, confusions and compromises lead her into intense suffering. Her anxiety, concern and pessimism produce emotional outburst and she undergoes a search for an escape to be alive to sensitivity. Her arrival at Manori has given her a new life, a new awareness and a new consciousness. She visualises the

world of her dreams once again. She intensifies her desire where shall we go this summer? and her decision to go back to the Island of Manori after twenty years is in quest of the lost innocence. Not only Sita is longing in her heart to go to the Island but the Islanders are also waiting for a person for twenty years in whom they can see the image of her father. But they felt disappointed to see her. There are impossible expectations on both sides. Naturally she is unable to maintain conformity with the established norms of society. Though she tries to encounter it she misses to communicate her reaction against every incident. Thus she is left like a stranger longing for a life of primitive world.

Sita's rebelliousness can be traced back to her childhood experience. UshaPathania rightly remarks:

> ...their experiences and interactions during this formative period when combined with their congenital hypersensitivity contributes towards their inability to establish and maintain harmonious inter-personal relationship in later life. (106),

Sita'sfather , a public figure, admired and rewarded by the people, is too far off and formidable person for Sita to approach with filial affection. UshaBande rightly comments:

> This experience breeds feelings of worthlessness. Sita cannot corroborate her father's dubious way. It seeps down her psyche as a bad human experience (107).

Attachment or belongingness is a subjective feeling in which an individual experiences personal involvement. The most damaging situation for Sita is complete

want of parental matrix. Hypocrisy and partiality apart, her father cannot provide her a home. As Sita does not have a home, she has no feeling of belonging.

> Belonging ...means a subjective feeling of one's personal involvement to the extent that one feels himself to be an integral and indispensable part of the system . (63 - 64).

Where Shall We Go This Summer is a subtle psychological study of a woman's personality which is at war. At a deeper psychological level Sita's quest for her identity is an outcome of her husband- wife relationship and her unusual childhood. Sita realizes that her own marriage and all other relationships are based on compromise, duties and selfishness only, and this is the cause of the ugliness, discord, incoherence, clashes and increasing violence in life.

By temperament and upbringing Sita's root is in tradition represented by her father and Manori Island. Her sudden encounter with Bombay following a hasty marriage to Raman threatens her. The betrayal of her unconscious inclination to preserve and uphold traditional values of an integrated life in face of the chaotic values of modern city civilization is at root of her unhappiness and dissatisfaction. The values she represents are rejected in modern waste-land.

Sita feels lost in her husband's family. She must restore her damaged self esteem, so she tries to attract attention by being plantative and complaining of her restlessness. She openly rebels against all social and familial norms in order to feel triumphant. She rebels against the vegetable existence lived by women in Raman's family. Initially, it is only a verbal attack, and then she takes recourse to a more flagrant disregard for this way of life by taking to smoking. Shocking them thus Sita enjoys a sense of superiority. Raman is startled when she describes his business

associates as animals, her outburst vexes Raman. The strange and overtly insensitive nature of Raman causes serious libidinous problems for Sita. The whole situation is to aggravate her introverted nature that finds a kind of wish fulfillment in an evocating manner. In her state of perversion Sita gets pleasure out of the sight of strangers.

The sight of the foreign tourist, who wants to go to Ajanta without knowing which direction he has to go, attracts her attraction much to the annoyance of Raman. To her, the foreigner is an example of courage that Raman lacks. Another such situation is presented by the sight of young Muslim woman in the lap of an old man in Hanging Gardens, an unworldly sight, a perfect work of art. This can be signed out as a situation having intense psychological pressure on Sita. A psychological clue to this particular fascination of Sita for strangers is three fold. Firstly for Sita such encounters are uncommon and are not a dull repetition of her routine life. Secondly they are the source of diversion from monotony and boredom and thirdly these incidents provide her emotional satisfaction which she lacks in her personal life. Sita's mind at such moments is governed by pleasure principle. Freud adds:

> Hate, too rages unrestrainedly; wishes for revenge, and death wishes against those who in life are nearest and dearest parents, brothers and sisters, husband or wife, the dreamer's own children-are by no means uncommon. (365)

R.K.Srivastava remarks,

> The incident in which a number of crows assault and kill an eagle become symbolic of Sita's own plight amid violence so much prevalent in society, by giving birth to a child, she would only contribute to violence of the world (36).

The symbolic situation of the eagle-crows fight reveals very subtle personality clash between Raman and Sita. K.P. Ambeker has observed the use of bird symbolism.

> Sita sees herself as a wounded eagle. The crows represent the callous society joyously searching and pecking at something on the ledge
>
> below the balcony of her flat. It is an eagle, injured and unable to fly. She is infuriated at the crows and tries to drive them away with the help of a toy gun. But Sita knows that the wounded eagle has really no chance of survival against the attack of crows, though she does not admit it openly. (2003)

Sita's desperate effort to save the eagle from the attack of the crows is her fight against the masculine values represented by her husband. Again the scimitar beaks are a symbol of phallus, and the attack of the crows with them is suggestive of male chauvinism unleashed against the female instinct. Sita's weak defence against her husband's caustic remark that her eagle has been eaten by the crows suggests the future course of her action following her defeat and loss of identity. She hurriedly packs up and leaves for Manori Island in complete defiance of her husband's hostile and hypocritical world. This is indeed her last effort to try to save her identity by showing her faith in her father's magic world. Perhaps she is searching for a great revelation or a miracle to happen.

Sita's final moment of realization comes ironically not when her husband is with her but at a time when he has given up her. T.S. Anand points out:

> Her desire to bear the child and return with Raman to the land signifies her return to life, community and society, inspite of the debased

> dullness of life, the calamity, the lies and moral buggery odium, the detritus of wrong and sorrow dropped on every heart, for existence is not possible in an insulted stage of being rather existence implies being with other. (100)

Sita's compromise with life constitutes a sure step forward to recognize reality. The awareness that life is not meant to be shunned but to be experienced, is significant. Participation is the act of living that leads to the acceptance of a fuller responsibility.

Sita swallows her semiotic urges to determine her subjectivity through her compromise. BidulateChowdhary comments:

> Sita is the only heroine of Mrs. Desai to understand and sccumb to the world ' only cannot', the only compromising link between the prose and passion of her life. Her reaction proves that it is very difficult for a woman, however modern to get rid of the situation she is once placed in. Inspite of her dislike to the ways of the world, to the traditional life of royalty, she resumes her return journey to adjust to the role of a wife and mother. Hence she accepts defeat, crumbles her passion and mingles with the prose of life for betterment of human relationship. (77)

The decision to return to Bombay or accompany her husband through life's trials appears right because the men in most of Desai's novels are practical, down to earth, considerate and above all sane unlike the women, who in most cases exhibit a tendency to go insane under the light pressure

Chapter Four

Marital Discord

Anita Desai examines the strained relationship between husband and wife from the viewpoint of a woman who is incapable of seeing anything beyond the family and the limited arena of domestic ties. Sita, a middle-aged woman, accompanied by two of her children, Menaka, a sharp, temperamental young girl, and Karan, a restless little boy, arrives there in a mood of desperation and doubt, the island house, deserted for twenty years, soon becomes an apt metaphor for her condition. The house here is linked with the pale and melancholic psyche of Sita. She has the desire to set the house right but she discovers, to her amazement, that the house is in a sorry and awful state.

S.P.Swain comments:

> The house, besides exposing the battered and fractured self of Sita, projects her wish to withdraw into an isolated and illusory world of impregnable silence and muted movements." (32)

She is forced to go to Manori for reasons, which are real and valid. First, unable to bear the anguish of another pregnancy, her fifth, she "has bolted from Bombay in a building epiphany of terror, leaving Raman, her husband, in pain and despair." (227). She has come there " in order not to give birth", " in order to achieve the miracle of not magic once, worked miracles of a kind." (31) Secondly, Sita is unduly critical of people around her and finds a vast majority of the people leading lives full of boredom: " They are animals- nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex, money matter animals." (47) Her life with Raman and her four children does not offer her any sense of enjoyment and fulfillment. She is unable to bear the violence and destruction around her- the gossip and quarrelling sessions of the servants, the

fighting among the children, and civilization's ridicule of her effort to protect and preserve. "To certain people there comes a day when they must say the great Yes or the great No." (37) Such a day has come for Sita, and she says 'No'. She has not been able to adjust the complacent routine of life and has longed for the sensitive approach in others.

It is not only the complacency and the violence of the life around her that afflicts her but also the violence in the world at large:

> They all hammered at her with cruel fits- the fallen blocks, the torn watercolors, the headlines about the war in Viet Nam, the photograph of a woman weeping over a small grave, another of a crowd outside a Rhodesian jail; articles about the perfidy of Pakistan...They were hand- grenades all, hurled at her frail goldfish- bowl belly and instinctively she laid her hands over it... (47)

Raman is not " an introvert, nor an extrovert- a middling kind of man, he was dedicated unconsciously to the middle way." (47) He is a reasonably affluent businessman All through their married life they had preferred to avoid a confrontation. All that 0they had done, he now saw, was to pile on the fury till now when it exploded. (33)

On the contrary, Sita has a subjective personality whose peculiar trait lies in her inwardness, introversion and the consequent psychic odyssey. As a housewife, the most vital link – the mother – is missing in her life. Her desperate need to belong and her shocking isolation makes her revolt, against her existence, and in the process, she undergoes a split in her personality. Feelings of horridness and waste, futility and nothingness grow upon her. She is yet to attain consummation as a human being. She

feels alienated not only from her husband but from the children too: " They had betrayed her." (137)

The relationship between Sita and Raman is disrupted because of their inability to understand each other. Raman is condescending and sympathetic towards her. The fifth pregnancy throws Sita into tantrums. She does not want it nor is she prepared for an abortion. She cries, tosses clothes, cigarettes, and books into the suitcases.

UshaPathania finds differences in the mental attitudes of Sita and Raman:

> Sita is a dreamer and a romantic visionary, whereas Raman is a down-to-earth realist...Raman, on the other hand, favors sanity, rationality and an acceptance of the norms and the values of the society. He is an average, busy, practical man of the world who avoids extremes...He does not understand what Sita means when she describes her friend and relatives "as pariah you see in the streets". (36)

Sita, being subjective in her preoccupations, has no solid grasp on outer reality. The most common place, ordinary day-to-day happenings make her react sharply and vehemently. D.S.Maini comments on her mind:

> Several symbolic little scenes of her bruised life are flashbacked in succession- the lone young eagle set upon and torn ribbons by an assembly of raucous, rasping crows, the tearing up of the sketches by the cold, clinical Maneka who'll have none of her mother's sympathy or advice.(228)

Raman has considerable capacity for accommodation and compromise. But Sita's melodramatic manners disappoint him and his children. She shows scant regard

to orderliness, neatness and tidiness. Raman is a man with a high sense of responsibility; hence he compromises and continues his relationship with her. He finds her unreasonable at times, but he cannot afford to disrupt their tenuous relationship for the fear of insecurity and scandal. Sita fails to appreciate all this. Being self - centered and vain, she does not comprehend:

> Her husband with a greater capacity for accommodation than most had – even in the society with a truly remarkable capacity for accommodation, as long as it made for comfort, for security, continuity and safely from change or scandal had grown, over the years, immune to the shocks and suspicions she contrived to create. (130)

Anita Desai's women respond to the sensuous and sensitive, violent and vicious circumstances and react neurotically to the overpoweringly enveloping existential problems. The arrival of Sita in Manori is an escape from the harsh realities of her world, of the world of Bombay, the world of the fifth pregnancy, the differences with her in- laws, husband and the violence. D.S. Maini says:

> The mad idea of containing the baby in the womb for keeps is surely one of the classic cases of regression and retreat from reality in Freudian psychology. It's a variation on the death-wish in her – a theme explored more eloquently in *Cry, The Peacock.* (228).

At first, Sita's wish to come to Manori sounds ludicrous and mad. But through this mad craze she does succeed in asserting her individual identity. Her flight is also symbolic in that it indicates her inability to connect herself to the outer world. When Raman discovers this, half humorously, he remarks: "So you're running away like the board runway wife –in a film."(36). But Sita is in no mood to cut jokes. She is

serious about it. She reports: "It can happen in real life, Raman," she said." I will go. I am leaving tomorrow. On the island it'll be different." (36). She has no love, charm, affection, and understanding for the cloistered life in Bombay. The beauty and the sinister charm of the island beckon her to a more meaningful and satisfying existence. " She wants to offer herself and her unborn child an alternative life- a bewitched life," says B. Rao. (55).

The visit of Sita to the island for a second time after twenty years of her life on the main land is a sort of discovery of self and a feeling of failure. There was a time when "She had grown afraid of it, been relieved to leave it and come to the main land with Raman." (57-58). Now after two decades the tide has turned. She is sick of living with Raman a life of

> dull tedium, of hopeless disappointment... She had no longer the nerve or optimism to continue. No, she refused to walk another step. She would turn, go back and find the island once more.(58).

Sita, too, realizes her rashness. Her arrival at the island coincides with the arrival of the monsoon. The island is incessantly lashed by the fury of the rain. Maneka and Karan feel miserable there. Sita is disappointed that the island cannot offer her even the bare necessities of life. She realizes for the first time that her life in their flat on Napean Sea Road is comfortable. It is a mistake to come to Manori. She cannot face even her children who have no sympathy with her and her foolish adventures:

> Whenever she turned or looked up, she saw them staring at her, watching her as though waiting for her to break down and admit failure...she realized with a painful sloughing- off of disbelief, it was

> life in their flat on Napean Sea Road that had been right and proper, natural and acceptable; it was this so called " escape" to the island that was madness. (102).

Thus, Sita, ignored by Moses, the caretaker, and affronted by Maneka and bothered by Karan, keeps chain-smoking and blowing her Bombay memories in an effort to muffle the aces of the void within.

Sita's elder Rekha, who became a leading artist of the All India Radio, would sing in dainty voice and the chelas would join in, singing the refrain and clapping in unison. Thus, the devotional songs, rhymes and music in this novel act as powerful unifying force. It also reveals the high moral standards of our society during the infancy of our days of independence. Sita recapitulates those singing session:

> ... She heard Rekha, in the attic that was the prayer room, singing as if she were the bird that heralded the day. She could picture to herself her father's face as he leant against a bolster and shut his eyes in ecstasy, sipping in the finely distilled wine of that pure voice. (77).

The art of singing in the purest voice of devotion, that Rekha possesses binds her in spiritual unification with her father, which Sita could never do, since she could not sing in any manner, not to speak of any comparison with Rekha. Thus Anita Desai shows that, to attain the communication and love of one's parents one requires some gifts or abilities, and the mere bond of blood cannot gain love in a special way.

Music and its impact on the characters, people and the nation forms an important constituent of the structural pattern of the novel. Rekha's closeness to her father does create jealousy in the heart of Sita. When Jivan, her brother, told her that their mother " didn't die- she ran away, to Benares",(83), she became frantic,

especially mentally. She began to visualize the condition of lonely women in Benares. She fails to understand why her mother left the family:

> Why had she left three children- Rekha ...Jivan, the quick, clever, unscrupulous and irresistible boy, and Sita? Why had she left her husband whom they called the second Gandhi?... Did she not agree with them? It was a fevered time, this haunted time, but, like fever, it naturally ebbed...washed it away, leaving the barest residua of curiosity in Sita. (86-87).

Sita's attempt to connect the past with the present enslaves her. However, much she tries, she cannot forget her father. " He had cast an illusion...His chelas were the first to be caught, then the villagers, most inescapably the women." (100). The effect of this illusion on Sita is so profound that, after twenty years, she comes back to the island, where her father had exercised this illusion.

Like her brother Jivan, she also feels herself a fugitive, a fugitive from the violence, tension, social amd family maladjustment and an indifferent husband. She, like Jivan, runs away from Bombay, from responsibilities and comes to Manori. Like her mother, she also runs not to Benares, but to Manori. Like her father, who prefers to live a life of a fugitive in Manori after independence, she also prefers to live in Manori, leaving behind her a humdrum life. Unlike her sister, she has not received any music in her life to soothe her ruffled feelings, nerves and mind. Therefore, part 2, like a flashback in a movie, gives causes for the societal responsibilities and behavior of Sita. Sita ruminates about her decision to come to Manori:

> Knowing that, accepting that, she knew it was because ordinary life, the everyday world had grown so insufferable to her that she could

> think of the magic island again as of release. If reality were not to be borne, then illusion was the only alternative. (101).

Sita's return to Manori allows her to see the face of reality in this world of illusion, and she realizes that in essence there can be no running away from reality. The magic of island, if it had even existed was " now buried beneath the soft gray-green mildew of the monsoon, chilled and choked by it." (103). When Sita decided to leave Bombay for Manori, she was suffering from despair and depression. Her past was so oppressive that it did not allow her to live a happy conjugal life. Here, in Manori, in 1967, her childhood is recreated; many dark hidden crevices are illuminated, and the land is shorn of all its magic, charm and glitter. Sita felt a spasm of fear at her bravado, her wild words, and her impulsive action that had flung them alone onto this island surrounded by wild seas. "It was no place in which to give birth. There was no magic here- the magic was gone". (112).

K.Meera Bai's comment on her plight is apt:

> But what Sita has to learn is that even the island is not totally cut off from the sea and the mainland. Like Maya, Sita too fails to perceive that the folly lies in her own self and that her flight to the island is nothing but an attempt to free from her own self. Maya withdraws into her own self because of the necessity to keep the albino astrologer's prediction a secret. She is imprisoned in her private hell. Sita's withdrawal indicates her rejection of the life available to her.(174).

Sita decides to laugh, to indulge in some symbolic rituals, to establish a new approach to life, a life of affirmation. She takes a ritualized mud bath:

> Miriam... found Sita on the floor with Karan, the pail of mud overturned between them, chuckling and laughing as she helped him roll and pat and mould and stack it in childish shapes.(113).

The only " one happy moment" she can recall in a married life of protracted drift is the

> fatally anemic- or fatally tubercular. Pale, you see, so white. Her head...lay in the lap of an old man. Much, much older then her...I felt as if I were gazing at a painting, or seeing a vision- and he kept caressing her face, and she lay still smiling.(146).

They were like a work of art. But, Raman protests:

> Yet your happiest memory is not of your children or your home but strangers, seen a moment, some lovers in a park. Not even of your children. (147).

However much Sita tries to reconcile herself with Raman, the temperamental incompatibility persists. She longs for love, the love of the young woman with an old man in the Hanging Gardens. She would like to fashion herself like them. Alone. Deep in love. Encumbered by children. "Children only mean anxiety, concern – pessimism. Not happiness. What other women call happiness is just- just sentimentally." (147). She is confused and Desai symbolically conveys it:

> "Oh," she said, muddling her hair with her hands, muddling the sand with her feet, suddenly anxious to close this conversation and resume the silence of the past. Perhaps I never ran away at all. Perhaps I am only like the jellyfish washed up by the waves, stranded there on the sandbar. I was just stranded here by the sea, that's all. I hadn't much to

> do with it at all, she sadly admitted, with that black, stripped truthfulness that she could never color or coat. (149).

Sita identifies her quest for undifferentiated life in the jellyfish and with this identification, she realizes that all reality is existence, that there is no reality beyond the one that one lives. She has learnt patience and courage to face life with all its ups and downs. Her final return to normal humdrum existence is suggestive of her sanity and courage and the teasing ambiguity of life. (111).

Sita resolves her existential dilemma. She decides to save Raman and her children from disintegration and chaos. She realizes that there are no values outside life and that an autonomous self can evolve only when the self flows out to the world in an effort to relate, belong and participate. The story of Sita seeks to unravel the inner mystery of life, to discover the energy that nourishes spirit and discards pettiness, horror and hypocrisy of everyday life. The theme of marital discord gains depth and meaning in *Where Shall We Go This Summer.*

Sita begins to see things from another perspective. She, for the first time in their married life, steps into the shoes of Raman and realizes the worries and anxieties that must have made him tense and anxious about her and the unborn child. The two boys at home must have also given him a tough time while she was relaxing at the island. She suddenly admires him for his courage and determination to shoulder his responsibilities so ungrudgingly. She runs a factory that is not without its own problems but he does not bother her with all these tensions. She concedes his superiority over her and is overwhelmed with deep sense of respect and admiration for him.

Raman knows it for the time that Sita has never been happy even for a moment in his or their children's company. Sita is astonished to know that Raman could never guess, " her distress at the tedium and ugliness of a meaningless life."(145). Now Raman does not want to impose himself on her and keep her tied to him by way of a meaningless relationship. For Sita this release comes as a surprise. She feels herself free, all emptied out and tired, drama drained, passion spent. Suddenly she is overpowered by a desire to follow him, " Knowing she would follow him, follow the trial of footprints she had laid out for her. Like the freed sea- bird at evening, she wheeled around and began to circle about and then dropped lower and lower towards her home." (150).

Raman is also not happy in releasing her in snapping their relationship. Sita sees new charm and goodness in Raman and "thought how nice he really was, how much the nicest man she knew...Together they walked up the stone steps to the grove".(151). The cracks are sealed, the creases are removed and a new glow is imparted to their relationship gains strength and depth. Sita shakes her head angrily at the confusion, that muddle, that her life has been for the last twenty years. Here on the island she becomes aware of the real worth of her relationship with Raman.

About the fate of the fifth child, she explained: It is born. It lives. It compromises. It accepts dullness, mediocrity; either closes its eyes to or else condones destruction, ugliness, and rottenness. In other words it leads an ordinary life of the kind its mother tried so desperately to change only to find she could not. "Perhaps, if it is true that the child in the womb is affected by its mother's thoughts and actions during that period, it will inherit from her a kind of restless, a dissatisfaction of the spirit..." (97-98). It shows how the marriage of two dissimilar persons, with strong inclinations, views, and mind- sets, tells upon the unborn infant.

Marital discord is a lack of adjustment and synchronization in the marriage. It symbolizes a breakdown in the commitment and co- operation of the married couples. Usually, marital discord originates when enmity develops between the partners through internal and external manifestations like constant finger pointing, physical aggression, antagonism, and so on. It is a process that begins before physical separation and continues even after the marriage is legally ended. Marital discord is a very effective stressor that can prompt individuals to enter mentally disturbed stages or engage in behavior that will lead them to have psychotic or hysteric manifestations. It is a significant predictor of subsequent delinquency and depressive symptoms for married couples.

It is evident that marital problems are more likely to cause depression than depression causing marital problems. Marital discord is as old as the organization of marriage itself, even if it has diverged from time to time and from person to person. In the pre- industrial period, men and women who came jointly into marriage shared intellectual values, mutual dedication, belief and hope, which subordinated the interests of the individuals, resulting in the smooth relationship of the family. There were many tensions in their marital relationship, women did suffer untold miseries, but the ethical and religious convictions, economic belief and the fear of social condemnation kept them together. Anita Desai has highlighted marital discord as a serious concern in her works. She is involved in the problems of marital discord and the insincerity, the faithlessness and the soul- destroying, grinding process of compromise. Anita Desai highlights how the lack of ability to put one's soul and convey freely one's fear and agony result in the snapping of communication between husband and wife. Unusual attitudes, individual complexes and fears add to this distancing between husband and wife resulting in conjugal disharmony.

Desai bravely puts forth the fact that in society, marriages usually pursue the jungle law of the survival of the fittest and being physically stronger, man survives. In her novels, marital discord is reflective of the social parlance. Excessive bondage and high level of restrictions imposed on a girl who recently parted from her parents hit her psychology leading to excessive frustration. This frustration emerges out in different forms like suicidal tendencies, non- adjustments, marital discords, psychological irritation and many more. Hence society and its restricted canvas play a great role in dealing with the girl's psychology. As Desai is a perfect artist, her novels naturally offer a wide variety of social, cultural and psychological interpretations. The issues which have been treated largely in her novels are love, marriage, divorce, social taboos and inhibitions, cruelty and violence towards the female sex, problem of rehabilitation after divorce, extent of liberty and freedom to the female sex, recognition to the female sex and crisis of conscience and values.

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 result in the snapping of communication between husband and wife. Different parameters that are attitudes, individual complexes and fears added to this gap between the husband and the wife resulting in familial and marital fissures. Raman and Sita have irreconcilable temperaments and attitudes to life. The ill- assorted couple of Raman and Sita are confronted with the same problem of husband-wife discord. 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. Sita is a nervous, sensitive middle-aged woman with explosive and emotional reactions to many things that happen to her, she always wants to escape reality and does not want to grow up and face the responsibilities of adult life. On the country, Raman represents sanity,

rationality and an acceptance of the norms and values of society. He is unable to understand the violence and passion with which Sita reacts against every incident. His reaction to his wife's frequent outburst is a mixture of puzzlement, weariness, and fear and finally a resigned acceptance of her abnormality. Sita 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 and patients. Even after marriage, she remains lonely.

Her husband fails to fulfil her expectation. As a result, there is marital discord, tension between husband and wife. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* may thus be seen as a parable on the inability of human beings to relate the inner with the outer, the individual with society. It emphasizes the universal need for human ties when Sita awakens to the fact that even sky and earth try to meet each other near the horizon. Neither sea nor sky was separate or contained – they rushed into each other in a rush of light and shade, impossible to disentangle. Sita's frustration with her husband can be compared to the mythical characters Rama and Sita. The mythical Sita delivers twins and cherishes the idea of protection to extend the dynastic descent whereas Anita Desai's Sita resists the idea of delivering a child.

Holding her breath, she admitted that destruction might be the true element in which life survives, and creation merely a freak, temporary and doomed event. But now she realizes that escapism is no answer to life's problem: She had escaped from duties and responsibilities, from order and routine, from life and the city. But now she is convinced that life must flow on and she too must have courage to flow on with the current of life. Life must be continued, and all its business- Menaka's admission to medical college gained, wife led to hospital, new child safely brought forth, the

children reared, the factory seen to a salary earned, a salary spent. Sita is not very happy for having made a compromise, which she takes to be her defeat. But married life, is a perpetual compromise and any compromise or sacrifice for a greater good vindicates one's victory and greatness. Only by connecting extremes one can arrive at an acceptable path in life. This is the positive solution that the novel offers to the present day temperamental maladjustments and consequent alienation.

Chapter Five

Summation

Feminism emerged as a movement for the emancipation of women and their struggle for equal rights. Indian woman's struggle is centered on emancipation from the prejudice governing her position as wife. This involves declaring women's rights without any dispute to the standard of values. Women's emancipation continues to take an important place in patriarchal society. Women have faced many problems and the issues of discrimination in Indian history. They are subjugated by male dominated Indian society. As Virginia Woolf observes it: "The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself" (72). *Where Shall We Go This Summer* exposes the emancipation of Sita who tries to escape into senseless lonely life.

Anita Desai is distinguished for her portrayal of psychological insight and feminine sensitivity through her female character. As she puts it:

> She had come here in order not to give birth. An explanation she had repeated to herself and her husband so often that, instead of acquiring lucidity ---'Ah! Oh, now I understand!'--- it seemed steadily more strange, mistaken. Yet she had arrived, she was on the island, in order to achieve the miracle of not giving birth. (28).

Anita Desai depicts the sufferings of Indian middle- class women through the character of Sita. She does not want to face responsibility of a family woman and so wants to escape from realism. Her inability to adjust with society makes her feel isolated. She experiences strange aloneness and restiveness in her life. She finds her

life dull and tedious. She is fed up with her life and she always spends her time standing on the balcony and looking out at the sea. But Raman is a realistic man and he is very busy in his business. He pays much attention to his business without caring his wife. He does not fulfill her wishes and ignores her feelings. She is dissatisfied with her husband and she has marital friction with him. Anita Desai here presents marital disharmony which is existing in tradition bound male dominated Indian society. As R.K. Gupta comments:

> The marital discord between Raman and Sita is based on the conflict of values, of principles, of faith even, or between normal, double social standards and the iconoclastic temperament of uncompromising honesty. (109).

Sita feels herself dull dreariness and hopeless dissatisfaction in her life. She finds her surroundings too horrible and nasty to survive with. The incidents such as fighting of her children with one another, ayahs quarreling on the streets, tearing beautiful pictures to pieces by Menaka make her unhappy. These activities appear to her as mad and meaningless. It paves a way for psychological conflicts and problems into her mind.

Sita hates Raman for his lack of feeling and she scorns the subhuman placidity, sluggishness, and the routine life in her family. She remains restive and discontented with her monotonous domestic life. She often sits alone smoking gas if waiting for someone. "She sat there smoking, not even looking at the sea any more, till he exclaimed, 'Bored? How? Why? With What ?' and could not begin to comprehend her boredom" (32). Her trip to Manori is the result of her wish to indulge in dream rather than to face reality. She isolates herself from the daily activities as a

homemaker. She thinks that illusion is only alternative to escape from the existed rules of family and society. Her frustration and havoc atmosphere in Bombay drive her to the island, Manori. After sometime she realizes that her effort from the harsh reality of the world proves to be failure.

Sita came to Manori after twenty years to fulfill her desire. She could not get any satisfaction in the island and she is unable to achieve compatibility there. She experiences turbulence and conflict instead of tranquility and harmony. She initially escapes from reality later settles to the situations. As Hariom Prasad puts it: "Sita has come to accept the prosaic nature of life which runs through difficult human situations in different ways. She finds the courage to face life, in the end, with all its ups and downs" (119). Sita has passed carefree life on the island under the control of her father. Sita's father is a freedom fighter. Her mother runs away to Benares. She is denied the standard life of a normal child. She lives a weird life in the island of Manori. She is suspicious of her father's relations with her step sister Rekha. She loses her faith on life and develops in her mind unrealistic attitude towards life. As R.K. Gupta puts it:

> Sita's condition is symbolic of the unrealized loneliness of a modern woman, in the grab of a wife, a mother and a daughter. Her insanity is the direct result of clash between the hypocritical outer world of her wedlock and her inherent honesty that resists any opportunistic compromise. (111)

Anita Desai presents the depressed condition of highly perspective and emotional women besieged by seclusion. She portrays the familial dissonance in traditional Indian families and the silent suffering of women in a largely patriarchal world. She

analyzes the complex nature of female protagonists who resist against a patriarchal concept of regularity.

Where Shall We Go This Summer is also a study of marital discord. In this novel the husband is a successful business-man-practical, realistic, a matter of fact commonplace having a rather pragmatic view about life. Sita wants to create the miracle of not giving birth to her fifth child in this violence torn world. She goes to the island of Manori where she feels alienated. Like many other literary artists Anita Desai is only analysing the absurdity of the situation in which man is situated, the gulf between man and the world he is living in. Desai is interested in the private rather than the outer world of the characters.

Writing is not an act of deliberation of reason or choice it is a matter of instinct silent and waiting, Desai's characters are peculiar and eccentric rather than common. The minor and incidental characters are picked up by her from real life. The major characters are not from real life. They are entirely imaginary or an amalgamation of several different characters. Most of her female protagonists are sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* belongs to this category. Desai uses the technique of flashback and stream of consciousness in some of her novels. She has been left free to employ simply the language of the interior. Her preference for the inner world with the language of the interior is a reference to both form and subject. She was able to transcend the problem of tradition by developing her power of vision to guide her in her choice of form and subject. Her use of English as medium has always helped her to express clearly and naturally.

Anita Desai is a conscious craftsman and works for her effects with caution and care. She builds her plots and people and style so as to produce the effects she has in mind. It does not mean that the subconscious and the unconscious are not brought into play. However her art is not without blemishes.

Mostly her characters are studies in inadequate love relations. Men are as a rule worldly, pragmatic, rational, unemotional, devoted to work and business, undemanding and unresponsive to the dictates of the heart. Women are the human species, gifted with deeper emotional, artistic powers, romantic, passionate, demanding confiding to their secret souls all their disappointments. Some extraordinary, legendary father figures get established in the textures of books, a sort of male- giants besides whom the protagonists are diminutive dwarfs. Most of them are impressive and unforgettable.

The focusing on the inside is replaced by concentration on external spectacle and action. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* takes the readers to the wonderland of miracle and mystery. This is not a more escapist indulgence in dream and vision. Exploration of the possibilities to transcend reality and phenomenon is a mighty psychic effort and only proves how chained and tied man is.

Anita Desai by selecting characters from life and studying them with humanistic interest has enriched the reader's knowledge and awareness of his culture, tradition and the modern circumstances. Her knowledge of psychology has helped, in her skillful study of the emotional life of her characters and their alienated circumstances, she has also tried to picturize the characters who are ever in search of new values. They find themselves misfit in the traditional order and they try to create new values. These values are worth striving for, according to them. But the waves of

life bring them back to the traditional values. They accept the reality and they try to learn to live with the traditional values. Anita Desai has thus been successful in finding an abiding solution to the sufferings of mankind- not in escapism but in acceptance, a willingness to face things courageously.

Her central theme is the existential predicament of an individual which she projects through incompatible couples. Very sensitive wives and ill- matched husbands. Anita Desai is a mute observer perceiving everything minutely and delicately. Whenever she creates a typical situation she gives it a perfect poetic treatment to every detail. Though her characters are self- conscious of the relatives around them, they carry with them a sense of loneliness, alienation and pessimism. She deals with the dislocation of normal life, recklessness of behavior and morbidity of temperament, maladjustments in family life of contradictions. She dives deeply, darkly and silently: she tries to work out the inconsistencies and dichotomies of the Virginia territories of modern life-style. She adds a new dimension turning inward into the deep- depths of the human psyche to score out its mysteries, turmoil and chaos inside the mind of her characters. The imagination of the novelist is horrified by emptiness of modern life, a sense of insecurity surrounds the milieu of her fiction as is the case with Saul Bellow's or Margaret Atwood's. Since she spotlights the complexities of human nature, distortion of personality and an infinite variety of individuals, we have to search out reality of life in such individuals.

She makes an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things through imagery and symbol. Anita Desai selects from the vast amount of material and presents it significantly as if she has the psycho- analytical approach to the problems of modern life. With the help of flashback technique and interior monologues she captures the inner qualities of life in her fiction.

Being a woman novelist she sides more intensely with the heroines of her novels, yet very honestly she studies the heroes too. She does not associate with any feminist movement as she makes it clear that her concerns as an artist is with individual men and women. But she is chiefly interested in exploration of psychic depths of her characters, most of whom react against the absurdity of life or the existentialist problems. She concentrates on characters rather than social milieu. She never creates common characters but gives extremity of despair to her characters who are basically existentialists. Symbolism is a device to give meaning and relevance to a work of art. It is associated with expression. Anita Desai is very much liberal in the use of symbols. She does so either consciously or unconsciously. In this way her use of symbols beautifies the narration of stories and provides life to the situation of character. And in few cases it compensates for other deficiencies in conversations.

Anita Desai is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in social and political realities. In her fiction there is an effort to discover and then to underline and finally to convey the significant ones. Her protagonists are persons for whom aloneness alone is the treasure. Most of them are women characters. They are all fragile introverts. Anita Desai is a rare example of an Indo- Anglian writer who achieves that difficult task of bending the English language to her purpose without either a self conscious attempt of sounding Indian or seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English. She deals with humanistic themes. The theme that is dealt with by Anita Desai is search for values. Anita Desai's treatment of the emotional life of the characters ranks her among the foremost humanistic writers of the modern age.

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Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* as a Hegemonic Feminist Fairy Tale

A project submitted to

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in partial fullfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* as a Hegemonic Feminist Fairy Tale** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi in partial fulfillment of the requirements affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Shruthi A. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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25/10/2019

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* as a Hegemonic Feminist Fairy Tale** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Shruthi.A

Thoothukudi **Shruthi A.**

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PREFACE

Gail Carson Levine is an American author of young adult books. Her first novel, *Ella Enchanted* (1997), received a Newbery Honour in 1998. The story is in the form of the modern fantasy. It is filled with a combination of adventure, excitement, romance, and mystery. It addresses many specific feminist issues. The female characters are narrated as strong, self-conscious women who see things far too rarely in the fairy tale genre. The story is narrated in Ella's voice as a strong and resilient character, who was able to break the spell.

The project entitled **Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* as a Hegemonic Feminist Fairy Tale** analyses Levine's attempts to redefine the version of *Cinderella* of passivity, to Ella of combat.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on Gail Carson Levine's life, works, style and her predominant place in the realm of American Literature.

The second chapter **The ideal feminist fairy** focuses on Ella's quest for self-sufficiency, and analyses how the spirited, independent, and honest, Ella battles with a sharp tone and mischievous actions to the unpleasant characters around her.

The third chapter **Ella's socially-positive characterization** provides the most significant and unique analysis of how Ella's positive character helps smash her "curse of obedience" with her own self in existence by self-confidence and courage.

The fourth chapter **Ella's renouncement** shows how Ella relinquishes her spell to achieve what she wanted.

The fifth chapter sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Gail Carson Levine is an American author of young adult books. Her first novel, *Ella Enchanted*(1997), received a Newbery Honour in 1998. Gail Carson Levine is arguably one of America's best contemporary authors.Many scholars focus on recurring themes in her writing, such as magic and magical creatures, love and marriage, and strong female leads.

Levine writes fairy tales featuring princesses, dragons, elves, fairies, and modern renditions of traditional themes. Although she sometimes bases her novels on such familiar stories as *Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty*, the characters in books such as *Ella Enchanted* and *The Princess Tales* are decidedly ultramodern in their outlook.

Gail Carson Levine has received numerous awards, including the Newbery Medal Children's Honor Book for fiction in 1998, Black-Eyed Susan Award in 1999,Iowa Children's Choice Award in 1999, and California Young Readers Award in 1999. Levin's novels are noted for the thematic depiction of romantic relationship; often marriage. Common messages from her books include the importance of kindness, selflessness, self-confidence and courage in the face of danger.

Levin's capacity for self-awareness, that complicated yet compelling ability to reflect, analyze and respond to the world. This capacity is found somewhere outside the self, an ability to look at one's own reactions, thoughts and emotions. She explores the implication of this self-awareness by contrasting her perspective with that of many early modern contemporary authors. *Ella Enchanted* weaves Cinderella's familiar plot with important themes for young readers. Though powerless

to defy the fairy's curse of absolute obedience, Ella is a medieval miss who does not easily accept her servitude. Spirited, independent, and honest, she battles back with a tart tone and mischievous actions to the unpleasant characters around her. Ella is a believable modern heroine who could shed her castle clothing, skip over the moat, and slip into the crowds at the mall.

Gail Carson Levine born on September 17, 1947 is an American author of young adult books. Her first novel, *Ella Enchanted*, received a Newbery Honor in 1998.Levine grew up in New York City, New York. Her parents were supportive of both Levine and her sister's creativity, and were artistic themselves. Levine grew up in Manhattan, and loved to explore her neighborhood. While she dearly loved to read, acting was her passion, and she considered a career in that field. She did not think about being a writer until after she began another career.

Levine acted throughout high school and majored in philosophy at New York's City College, where she received her B.A. in 1969. She spent the next 27 years working for the government of the state of New York, mainly as a welfare administrator, helping people find jobs.She married David Levine, whom she met in college, and worked for a welfare office, where she helped people who needed work. It was after this time that Levine began taking writing classes and workshops, and discovered her love of writing. She began with a play that her husband, a jazz pianist, helped her put together and continued from there. She wrote a great deal that was initially rejected by publishers.

Levin take's a class in writing and illustrating for children, Levine discovered that she enjoyed writing far more than illustrating. Thus in 1987, she began writing,

but over the next nine years, all of her manuscripts were rejected. During this time she took writing classes and joined writer's groups.

Levine's success of her adaptation of the Cinderella story into *Ella Enchanted* continued telling fairy tales with a twist in what would become her *Princess Tales* series. Levine also runs writing workshops for children in her community. In her workshops, Levine created a number of exercises for the students, which led to the development of her non-fiction book *Writing Magic: Creating Stories That Fly*, a book for children about writing.

Her first published novel was *Ella Enchanted*, which was accepted for publication by HarperTrophy. The book was published in 1997, and in 1998, it received a Newbery Honor, it would later be the inspiration for the 2004 film of the same name. The success of *Ella Enchanted* made it possible for Levine to retire from government work and pursue writing full-time. *Ella Enchanted* was filmed by Miramax and released in 2004; *The Two Princesses of Bamarre* also optioned for film by Miramax; many of Levine's books have been adapted for audio also.

Ella Enchanted tells of a girl who is cursed at birth: she is unable to disobey the commands of other people, no matter what they are. When the condition becomes too much to bear, Ella runs away in search of the thoughtless fairy who originally cursed her. Her journey leads only to a job as a scullery maid for her new stepmother, where she finally overcomes her curse.

In 1999, she published her second novel, *Dave at Night*, an inspiring work about her father's own experience of growing up in an orphanage in New York City during the 1920s. Dave Carlos lives at the Hebrew Home for Boys because his father died in an accident and his mother is unable to raise him alone. Each night, the

rebellious boy climbs over the orphanage wall and explores the nearby streets of Harlem, where he befriends an elderly fortune teller, listens to jazz music, and learns how to dance the Charleston.

The Wish, Levine tells a story set in the modern world. Wilma Sturtz is an eighth-grader in New York City. Her two best friends have left her school and she is feeling lonely and unwanted. When she gives up her seat on the bus to an eccentric old woman, the women grants her one wish. Wilma wishes to be the most popular student at her school. Very soon she is being invited to parties and dances, but the wish only lasts until the end of the school year. Renee Steinberg, writing in *School Library Journal*, called *The Wish*an enjoyable, thought-provoking, and absorbing selection.

Levine continued to write fantasy novels, beginning with *The Two Princesses of Bamarre*, an original fairytale that revolves around the really strong and close sisterly relationship between two very different sisters as one must conquer her fears in an attempt to save the other.Bamarre is set in a fairy-tale kingdom where Princess Addie and Princess Meryl live in the castle of their father, the king. While Meryl is an independent girl, Addie is less so. When Meryl comes down with a serious illness called the Gray Death, however, Addie takes it upon herself to discover the cure and save her sister's life. Donna Miller, writing in *Book Report*, found *The Two Princesses of Bamarre*tobe "a lively tale with vivid characters and an exciting plot. Also in the fantasy genre came *fairest*, a novel inspired by the story of Snow White and set in the same world as *Ella Enchanted.*

The Fairy's Mistake is the first story in a two volume set of six stories called *The Princess Tales*, two years after her Newbery Honor Winning novel *Ella*

Enchanted, The Fairy's Mistake follows along the same lines by taking the well-known fairytale *Diamonds and Toads* and turning it on its head. The story focuses on identical twin sisters Rosella and Myrtle, Whose respective reward and punishment end up doing exactly the opposite of what was intended.

The Fairy's Mistake her six short stories reinvent traditional fairy tales, looking to fill gaps in logic. As Levine says, *InSleeping Beauty*, the prince falls in love with the princess when he knows only three things about her: she's pretty, she's a princess, and she doesn't snore.

The Princess Test is a story based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Princess and the Pea.* In Levine's version, the familiar tale is turned on its head, with a blacksmith's daughter proving that she is as delicate and sensitive as any girl of royal blood. A *Horn Book* contributor wrote that "fans of funny fairy tales will have some laughs" over Levine's book, while a critic for *Publishers Weekly* maintained that Levine's heroines defy fairy-tale stereotypes.

In *Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep* Levine gives the prince a real reason to kiss Sonora even though, after 100 years, she's covered with spider webs! Keeping with this genre, Levine also wrote a picture book, *Betsy Who Cried Wolf*, adapted from Aesop's fable of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf.* In 2010 she released a second picture book titled *Betsy Red Hoodie*, an adaptation of the fable Little Red Riding Hood.

Levine also wrote an illustrated novel for young readers called *Fairy Dust and the Quest For the Egg*, which was published in 2005 by Disney Press as the cornerstone of the new "Disney Fairies" franchise. The novel explores the world of Never Land of Barrie's and Disney's *Peter Pan* and the community of fairies who live

in the area of the island known as Fairy Haven. Familiar characters such as Tinker Bell and Captain Hook appear in the story, as well as original characters. The book was followed in 2007 by a sequel, entitled *Fairy Haven and the Quest for the Wand*. Another sequel, *Fairies and the Quest for Never Land*, was released in 2010.

Ella Enchanted, a novel-length retelling of 'Cinderella'. *Ellà Enchanted* At her birth, Ella of Frell was the unfortunate recipient of a foolish fairy's gifts the "gift' of obedience. Ella must obey any order given to her, whether it's hopping on one foot for a day and a half, or chopping off her own head! But strong-willed Ella does not tamely accept her fate. Against a bold backdrop of princes, ogres, giants, wicked stepsisters, and fairy godmothers, Ella's quest to break the curse once and for all and discover who she really is as sharply funny as Catherine, Called Birdy and as richly poignant as Beauty, and has all the marks of a classic in the making.

In Levine's hands, the tale of a sweet, beautiful girl who slaves thanklessly for her evil stepmother and -sisters became the story of a rebellious, unremarkable-looking young woman, Ella of Frell, cursed to obedience by a daffy fairy. Levine's Ella transcends the traditional damsel-in-distress role. Though condemned to obey her exploitative stepmother and -sisters, she battles back, runs away, and goes on a quest to get the spell lifted. She battles ogres and befriends elves and giants.

Though Ella, like Cinderella, eventually finds herself whisked out of servitude to a cruel stepfamily by marriage to a prince, the love story builds more slowly, allowing readers to invest in the relationship between kind, stalwart Prince Char, heir to the throne of Kyrria, and the clever, scrappy heroine. Their romance becomes both motivation and canvas for her personal journey, as she chooses to resist the growing mutual crush between herself and Char out of fear that the spell could be used to

induce her to betray him or the kingdom. In the end, it's Ella who breaks the curse and fulfills her own destiny she's not waiting for anyone to rescue her.

The author employs many magical themes in the story including different groups of people and creatures who speak five different languages: Gnomic, Abdegi, Ogresse, Elfian, and Ayorthaian. Ella tries to learn as much as she can about each language because she realizes the connection that exists between relationships and languages.

The story is from the modern fantasy category. It is filled with a combination of fantasy, adventure, excitement, romance, and mystery. The characters in the story are primarily good, or primarily bad. Lucinda is "taught" about this change by the "good" fairy, Mandy. Lucinda realizes her mistake in bestowing the gift of obedience to Ella, but she is not able to undo her mistake.

Levine plays her debut expansion of the Cinderella story as a straight-well, nearly straight-romance, sloughing off its layers of Freudian symbolism and creating a lively, stubborn heroin to keep the action tumbling along. Lucinda, an extraordinary foolish fairy, bestows on baby Eleanor the gift of obedience, condemning her to a childhood in which she's compelled to follow every order, no matter how casually given. By the time she is a teenager, Ella has perfected the art of turning any imprecision in a command back on its giver, with the help of her fairy-godmother and also her family cook, Ella keeps her curse a secret, along the way she is sent off to finishing school with the cruel daughters of her simpering stepmother –to-be, launches a fruitless quest to beg Lucinda for release, and falls in love with Prince Charmont.

She derails their courtship, realizing what a danger she would be to him, but can't pass up a last chance to see him. From that point, the story follows its traditional course, with masked balls, pumpkin coach, and glass slipper. When the prince entreats her to marry him, Ella fights an agonizing internal battle and driven by love, breaks the curse at last, delightedly screaming refusals over and over before melting into his arms. This refreshing take on one of the world's most popular fairy tales preserves the spirit of the original but adds plenty of humorous twists and a spunky, intelligent female leads.

Chapter Two

The ideal feminist fairy

Levine characterizes 1997's ideal woman, through a "playful spirit" and a pretty, depth-appreciating, socially conscious individuality, has just been discussed. Her writing style provides so much more than a story about magic, fairies and the power of love. But she also describes Ella in ways that might be interpreted as stereotypically playful. The Cinderella tale has been preserved in the popular imagination through its literary forms specifically, the English translation of Charles Perrault's 17th-Century French *Cendrillion* such that the fairy tale's folk origins have been obscured.

But these sorts of absurd outbursts and fantasies, the stuff of a playful piece of children's literature, are easy to dismiss as superficial appeals to an individualistic American audience rather than thoughtfully engrossing challenges that Levine makes Ella spunky so that the fairy tale heroine conforms to a modern standard of femininity and reifies a contemporary American power structure, not as part of some anarchistic attempt to undermine the way individuals' imaginations subconsciously submit to a power structure.

Ella is cursed with obedience in Levine's attempt to create a version of Cinderella the passivity, no longer a chosen docility but rather a magically imposed obedience, might present less of a problem in relating to the protagonist. Levine simultaneously reinforces a contemporary superstructure. She draws attention to the inescapable hegemonic force through the way that Ella's curse enmeshes her in grappling with issues of power. Ella rejects a certain type of power to be dangerously oppressive. Levine also struggles with her own story's perpetuation of hegemonic

standards through how Ella as a character represents a certain contemporary ideal. *Ella Enchanted* as a feminist fairy tale for children has been inherited from a history of confusion surrounding the oppressive way we label femininity and childhood. Children's literature has been a didactic tool for hegemony.

This novel is a retelling of the classic Cinderella fairy tale. Ella's curse of obedience is a hell of a lot more intriguing than the damsel in distress-and-rags act like the traditional Cinderella.*Ella Enchanted* Portrays the Traditional European Fairy Tales and also it takes place within a patriarchal monarchy. Levine attempts to promote more equal gender roles in *Fairest* by endowing both male and female monarchs with authority. And this novel explains the passivity that bothered many classic fairy tales. Ella is cursed to be obedient, which constrains her without making her personality obedient. In fact, Ella is defiant and stubborn. She fights her curse and she loopholes. And exactly that's the feminist backbone of the story.

Feminists usually oppose traditional fairy tales because they support the thinking of a patriarchal society by encouraging girls to behave like the stereotypical helpless woman and wait for a charming prince to take charge and save them from whatever it may be that they need. In response to this, Levine has tried to reshape the motives of fairy tales for girls especially in the feminist movement.

Ella Enchanted addresses many specific feminist issues, especially fighting the "curse" of obedience, the importance of female friendships and an independent woman. The female characters are strong, self-aware women who see things far too rarely in the fairy tale genre. The story is narrated in Ella's voice; Ella is a strong character, especially when she is narrating the main conflict at the end of the story

when she finally breaks the spell. It's the perfect balance between strong female characters and still finding true love.

Ella Enchanted's fairy tale frame in favour of focusing on Ella's quest for self-sufficiency, but this fairy tale inheritance carries substantial weight in a consideration of *Ella Enchanted* as subverting thought patterns that conform to hegemonic expectations. This novel makes hegemony visible where the stereotypical fairy tale form for which Perrault will serve as an emblem cloaked and thereby reinforced hegemony.

Levine cannot extract herself or her story from the feminist issues of the Cinderella story and *Ella Enchanted* must establish Cinderella's enmeshment. The version of the Cinderella tale Disney has preserved in American imaginations is more or less the version written down by Charles Perrault. Perrault's version has so pervaded the culture that it stands out as the clearest reference for Levine's Cinderella embellishments of glass slippers, domestic servitude, and a fairy godmother.

Ella Enchanted conforms to the traditional gender stereotyping by expressing Ella's enchantment of obedience as a "gift", but it eventually resists the stereotype that women should be obedient and submissive. When Ella saves her love, Prince Char, from what she views as a curse and breaks free of the spell placed on her by relying on her own strong will she proves her power. *Ella Enchanted,* is dismissively imagined stereotype of a fairy tale, are possible only in response to this Over-exposure. As a reimagining of the Cinderella story, *Ella Enchanted* necessarily engages in a history of challenging and defining women's roles.

Though she dismissed the Cinderella elements of her stories, Levine has discussed the way that *Ella Enchanted* grew from an impulse to make sense of the

Cinderella tale. The story is set in an imaginary, medieval kingdom called Frell. A roaming fairy named Lucinda gives Ella the gift of obedience at Ella's birth. As a result, Ella has to do everything she is told, no matter what harm it might cause to her or others. As the plot moves forward Ella is compelled to leave home to try and find Lucinda and ask her to lift the curse. Along the way she also falls in love with Prince Char. For varying reasons, depending on the version, Lucinda refuses to lift the curse. Further difficulties arise as Ella continues her quest. That's the main body of the story.

The Cinderella element is relevant mainly to the last quarter of the novel where actual elements from that story the slipper, the ball appear in the story, although the evil step-sisters and fairy godmother are present throughout the narrative. All of the female characters are strong, self-aware women things seen far too rarely in the fairy tale genre. The novel is narrated in Ella's voice. This makes it easy to see how strong Ella is as a character especially at the end on the novel.

Feminists often denounce traditional fairy tales because they perpetuate the ideals of a patriarchal society by encouraging girls to behave like proper princesses and wait for charming prince. *Ella Enchanted* addresses several specific feminist issues, specifically negotiating and fighting the burden of obedience, the importance of female friendships and, of course, learning to save our self.

Ella's struggle against hegemony comes to the forefront in the climatic shoe-fitting scene, when Ella's inherited Cinderella legacy of small-footedness as well as sweet submissiveness coalesce and get dealt with in terms of Levine's ideal protagonist's relationship with power. Ella fits into the shoe, but focuses more on the

struggle to say no for the ramifications of fitting into the shoe than on the superficial fact of that perfect fit.

Ella Enchanted vivid with details ranging from Elvish and Gnomish languages to customs at a Giant's wedding. This novel an immensely entertaining in the final part of the novel Levine ties everything together, artfully blending empowerment with a happy- ever after ending fit for a traditional fairy tale. *Ella Enchanted*, rebels against its own fairy tale form in surprising ways. Certainly, the rebellion of the titular protagonist seems obvious Ella exclaims that "nothing should be dictated" to a prince and fantasizes about wreaking havoc in a finishing school (154). When she is at finishing school she proves to be very intelligent and kind and makes true friendships.

Ella uses her intelligence and wit to escape many dangerous situations caused by her curse. She escapes an ogre infested forest along with other challenges at finishing school and saves many people she loves along with herself. Ella's final struggle requires her to change a condition within herself, which proves to be the hardest thing she has ever done to change her self-perception. Relationships grow over realistic amounts of time because Ella and Areida spend all their free time together, making each other laugh, helping each other with schoolwork. Char and Ella write letters to each other for months, sharing experiences and confiding secrets.

Ella is very stubborn, which completely defies gender stereotyping of the timid, submissive princesses of traditional fairytales. Ella's obedience aspect as a curse, Levine clearly makes a theme of the importance of free will out of it; especially When Ella breaks free of it in the end. Ella actually allows for the possibility of saying yes without danger. She embodies an ideal of small-footed femininity, but more importantly she shows that she can be allowed to embody this old fashioned

femininity legacy because she has struggled against it to embody a new femininity ideal. Levine develops a world that is feudal but dependent on contemporary social structures. In *Ella Enchanted*, active work plays an essential role in both the disruption of balance and in its restoration.

Levine constructs the happy conclusions by attaching epilogues; nothing ever goes wrong for Ella. Ella's parents-in-law welcomed her joyfully to their royal family. Ella and Char maintain a safely distant, though interested, relationship with Sir Peter, while her stepfamily stays away. Ella and Areida never fail to visit each other, and Mandy lives at the palace to watch over Ella and later her children. Ella's family is complete and completely free of affliction.

Levine does not state that her heroine's happiness implies perfection for everyone, nearly all characters remain static in the conclusions, indicating they have achieved as much happiness as would ever have been possible. Sir Peter and Olga become wealthy again, with Char keeping their victims out of serious trouble. Lucinda's future is not revealed, but she manages to give Char and Ella a more practical fairy trinket as a wedding gift, that, propensity for big magic reassert and it will not trouble the kingdom of Kyrria.

Ella declares her decisions were a delight after the curse. She loved having the power to say yes or no, her course is already mapped out for her and every other character by the ideal conditions set up in the finishing part of the novel. Ella maintains no contact with her stepfamily, feeling no familial obligations to them. Since her name has been cleared, and she is loved by her family, she needs neither his good opinion nor affection, so she does not invest in their relationship. Ella refuses to become a princess or to stay home when Char travels, functioning as the Court

Linguist and Cook's Helper. The heroin embraces active work in her career and family. Ella puts effort into her family and friends by sharing laughter and time with them.

Ella's choices reveal the work conditions that Levine associates with the ideal. The need for patriarchal leadership is maintained, though the typical assignment of active and passive work roles according to gender is subverted. Ella depends on an infrastructure of servants to do the housework, but they perform work that requires training and aids their kingdoms.

The end of the novel is much more emotional. Char wants to marry Ella, of course, realizing that Ella is cursed, leaving her no choice. She rocks back and forth in a chair, trying to resist obeying and thus putting them all in danger. She thinks of all the times she's been forced to be obedient. Her childhood self, shoveling cake into her mouth through tears because Mandy mindlessly order to eat the cake nearly being eaten by ogres who just had to tell her to stay, her mother's necklace being snatched away by Hattie, and being put in countless other dangerous or humiliating situations that she had no control over.

She clamps her hand over her mouth to stop the consent the curse is trying to force her. She swallows the words and keeps rocking, seeming about to collapse. But instead, she goes deep inside herself and finds her strength. She pushes through and saves herself. She finds her voice, and she breaks the curse through her own sheer strength of will which is incredibly powerful.

The curse being broken means she is free to marry the person she loves. But she declines the title of princess or queen. She instead takes up the title Court Linguist and Cook's Helper. She slides down the royal banisters with the prince. She and Char

have children, but she refuses to be left at home when he's travelling. She comes along, and Mandy takes care of the kids. But most of the times, she delights in making decisions. She takes joy in saying no and that's a feminist happy ending of the novel.

Chapter Three

Ella's socially-Positive Characterization

Ella was just hours old, a fairy cursed her with the gift of obedience, but, as Ella tells us, "Instead of making me docile, Lucinda's curse made a rebel of me" (5). In this re-vision of "Cinderella," Ella tells her story in a voice that is at times strong and at times uncertain but always determined and always believable. The mother's presence at the beginning of the story situates it in matriarchal tradition. Ella's mother dies early in the story, and on her deathbed, she addresses Ella as precious and tells her that she loves her. This affirming statement is the last Ella's mother speaks to her, sustaining her and strengthening her for what is ahead.

Ella goes to a tree to wish for her mother's recovery, wanting to make the wish "where it would have the best chance of being granted" (9). During her mother's funeral, Ella escapes to a weeping willow tree to cry out her grief. That is a very powerful haven for Ella. It is here that she first meets Prince Charmont, who has also escaped the crowd to mourn her mother's death more privately and to find Ella.

Mandy, Ella's fairy godmother refuses to use big magic because of its unpredictable ramifications. In contrast, Lucinda flaunts her use of big magic with disastrous results. In addition to highlighting the responsibility inherent in the use of magic, Lucinda's gifts call into question the desirability of many of the elements of traditional romance ideology. Ella's gift of obedience is indeed a curse, the newlywed giants are distraught as a result of her gift of being together always, and Ella's father becomes even more absent after he and Dame Olga are given the gift of eternal love.

Breaking stereotypes regarding appearance and a respect for diversity are evident in *Ella Enchanted*. Mandy does not fit the common image of a fairy. When Ella finds out that Mandy is her godmother she muses, "She couldn't be a fairy. Fairies were thin and young and beautiful. Mandy was as tall as a fairy was supposed to be, but who ever heard of a fairy with frizzy gray hair and two chins?" (24). On the other hand, Lucinda, who is not a very good fairy, does look the part. She is "tall and graceful, with huge eyes, skin as unblemished as satin, lips as red as pomegranate seed, and cheeks the color of early sunset" (121).

A gnome has the power of prophecy, and an elf is able to look inside Ella to judge her worth and character. Ella voices respect for the powerful, positive ways these women wield power. Ella is adept at mimicking and learning languages, adding strength and power to her voice. She calms a young gnome in the royal menagerie and later subdues a group of ogres through her use of language. While seeking Lucinda to ask her to remove the curse, Ella comes upon a group of elves. Interdependence is obvious as they "cobbled together a language understood by all" (91). Ella's voice is strong and her agency is apparent.

Her subjectivity accentuates the absurdity of being sent off to finishing school to learn to embroider, dance, write, sing, and employ proper manners. The prince believes that the school teaches "*paltry tricks*" and that Ella will be made "*lessadmirable*" (84). Ella takes advantage of his comments to discuss agency. She says, "It is helpful to know the proper way to behave, so one can decide whether or not to be proper" (108). Ella thus subverts patriarchal positioning. The finishing school serves as a mirror to help us explore how preposterous are many of the behaviours and characteristics deemed appropriate for young women.

The prince and Ella's father stand in opposition as models for male behaviour. In *Ella Enchanted*, male as well as female roles are explored, and the father serves as a foil to the prince. Ella's father is always absent: away for her birth, away for her mother's death, and away during her debasement in servitude. He is unfeeling and self-centered. In contrast to a pervasive acceptance of diversity, her father pejoratively refers to the elves as 'greenies' (69). He views Ella as a mere object as evidenced when he loses his fortune and tells Ella that he will have to sell her in marriage.

Char is everything the father is not. He is kind, considerate, and sensitive to others' feelings. He is smart and steady. He is also a man other men admire. He looks forward to his first military duty and is viewed by the older men under his command as a "toiling prince" (113). He also helps us see that being a king is a thankless job rather than a position of glamour and adventure. He is sent to a neighbouring country for a year, as is customary to foster amenable relations, and while he is there, he writes to Ella about the monthly chants in which the people engage. He admires their sense of community and wishes it for himself. Char displays many characteristics that are typically masculine, but he also exhibits characteristics that reflect feminist concerns.

Standard elements of the "Cinderella" plot are included in this re-vision: cruel stepsisters, forced servitude, and falling in love with the prince. Hattie is a cruel stepsister who figures out that Ella must do what she is told and orders Ella to work for her and to give her things, yet Ella does not acquiesce meekly. She puts mice and toads in Hattie's bed and even takes her wig in retaliation. When Dame Olga realizes that Ella's father was penniless when he married her, she forces Ella into servitude. Ella also falls in love with the prince, but this is not a love-at-first-sight-based-on-

beauty love. Ella and Char become friends, correspond through letters for a year, and eventually come to love each other.

When the prince professes his love for her, Ella realizes that her curse could jeopardize the entire kingdom, and she vows to refuse to marry him. This text is an example of the difficulty of writing outside romantic discourse, yet the ending re-visions gendered roles. When Char asks her to marry him, Ella is dressed in rags and covered in cinders. He understands that she is distraught about something and assures Ella, "You needn't be Ella if you don't want to be" (223). This opens up multiple subject positions for her. Because Ella must overcome her curse to refuse him, she ends up breaking the curse. Mandy explains, "You rescued yourself when you rescued the prince" (228). Although the story reflects romance ideology, it ends with happily ever after with a twist.

Ella's magically-induced obedience may be interpreted as Levine's judgment against a constraining society. Levine characterizes Ella as a heroine grappling with magically-induced obedience. Levine imagined Ella as cursed with obedience so that the character would conform more to Levine's personal ideal of a worthwhile heroine. In rejecting a certain sweet form of femininity, Levine creates a version of femininity which still conforms to contemporary standards.

The way Ella appreciates beautiful material objects such as the candle-holder her father shows her and the pottery the elves show her in the forest is easy to interpret as vapidity. Ella's focus on exterior beauty extends beyond the superficial, however, and encompasses the way that Ella's character leads toward understanding Levine's ideal female as appreciating interior value. Ella's appreciation of beautiful objects and the handsome prince Char coincides with an appreciation of their

similarly-perfect interiority. The fact that these levels of perfection tend to coincide as with the fact of Ella's inherited small-footed beauty might be problematic, but Levine makes efforts to demonstrate such parity of interiority and exteriority only exists as a useful fairy tale simplification.

Levine demonstrates how Ella gets disabused of a presumed conflation of beauty with magical goodness. Ella initially doubts that Mandy is a fairy in terms of superficial preconceptions about the glamor of magic: "She couldn't be a fairy. Fairies were thin and young and beautiful. Mandy was as tall as a fairy was supposed to be, but who ever heard of a fairy with frizzy gray hair and two chins?" (24).

Ella's prejudice about fairies associated prejudices about superficial appearance along the lines of fairy tale ideals gets disabused through Mandy. Nevertheless, Levine continues to portray Ella as beautiful and the evil stepsisters as fat and disgusting in a way that seems to reinforce notions of superficial appearance indicating something deeper. Levine makes this devaluing of ugly and fat women more acceptable to modern readers by presenting the fat stepfamily as disgusting, fat because their appetites are an extension of their avaricious natures.

Levine indicates Ella's worthiness of a high social position in how Ella does not desire such affluence. Whereas Hattie admits she wishes to be queen (76). Ella never expresses a desire to be a princess and indeed rejects the title of "princess" when she finally does marry Prince Char (231). Levine hence uses Ella's rebellion to indicate a worthiness of a certain sort of elevated power, co-opting rebellion as a type of conformity to American individualist character. Not only does Ella reject titles in

an indication of her worthiness of them, Ella similarly rejects beautiful objects in an indication of her worthiness of possessing them

After Slannen offers Ella the Agulen piece, Levine has Ella immediately narrate thoughts of propriety. Ella evidences a notion of the family-level patriarchal influence by commencing her acknowledgement of proper behavior with her father. Ella's specific father-figure brings an element of the monetization of power into Levine's text, since his profession as a merchant has so consumed his identity for Ella that the lesson she takes from her father is an Agulen was worth a great deal.

Ella's father has not only taught her a pragmatic understanding of money, but he has forced her to attend finishing school as well, an extension of his powerful influence. Ella has also internalized this female-enforced aspect of patriarchal influence. The way that Ella performs an initial rejection of the elves' gift draws on the lessons of proper behavior for young women which the female instructors have imparted on the young pupils in finishing school.

Though Ella performs propriety, Levine draws attention to this propriety as a performance rather than a genuine submission to polite society with how Ella narrates this performed rejection. The repetitive, alliterative wording of this phrasing emphasizes the word manner. In this emphasis through repetition, Levine communicates the notion of manners as a form of senseless repetition. Such manners, imparted by fellow women but undertake under the enforcement of the family-level patriarch of Sir Peter.

Though Ella's narration demonstrates a thought process in which she acknowledges the patriarchal influences working on her, Ella's actions do not conform to the propriety she espouses. In spite of recognizing that the gift is valuable

and she ought to reject it out of politeness, Ella's "hands closed around it." Such passive wording emphasizes a disjoint between Ella's thoughts and her actions. Compelled to conform superficially to the standards ingrained in her through her upbringing in a patriarchy, Ella nevertheless evidences an innate rebellion against those social constraints in how her body reacts with respect to her love for the pottery pieces. Rather than a vapid impulse to possess a pretty thing, Ella's desire to have the pottery represents an intelligence-evidencing character trait.

Ella knows how to behave properly, but part of what makes her a modern heroine is the fact that she finds these socially-ingrained rules of propriety less fulfilling than the behavior which Levine's imagined world values more namely, playful spirit. Ella has inherited an ideal interiority. Part of this ideal interiority is the ability to recognize how and when beautiful exteriors evidence beautiful interiors, and when such exteriors are misleading performances. Society has tried to separate Ella from her embodied, inherited perfection, but she proves her virtue by letting that genuine impulse happen.

Though exterior beauty matches interior value in the pottery, the exterior performance of rejecting a gift represents a fancy performance of proper behavior that Ella's acceptance of that gift dismisses as an unnecessary embellishment. Ella expresses a notion of a shifting understanding of propriety, and the way that society's standards ought to be understood and responded.

Levine has Ella recognize that conforming to society's standards for her can be useful, as well as that mastering domestic skills produces a gratifying sense of accomplishment. Because she thusly demonstrates appreciation of her finishing school skills after having accepted the piece of pottery, Ella does not just reject the

social structure in which she exists. She instead interacts with the standards to which she is held in a way that draws attention to the ambivalent frustration and accomplishment in possessing skills that an oppressively structured society values, and which can allow for advancement within that society. The ambivalence, somewhat apparent in Ella's hands closing around the pottery in a disconnect from her thoughts of propriety, gets emphasized later when Ella mockingly displays her finished skills to Char. Ella alarms Char when she tells him that finishing school, though "wearisome," has left her with "many accomplishments" (106).

Representing her conformity to a sort of femininity not held as ideal by the positive icon of power, Ella's ability to perform propriety alarms Char and makes Ella behave uncharacteristically for a moment. Responding to Char's alarmed questioning of whether she's proud of her finishing school talents, Ella recognizes that proper behavior does not serve her in a beneficial interaction with the prince: "I nodded solemnly. I wanted to make him laugh again" (106). Ella initially refers to finishing school talents as "paltry tricks" (84, 85).

Distancing herself from seeing her superficial talents as truly valuable, Ella evidences alarm with the subconscious recognition that such skills might actually be considered valuable. This alarm makes Ella resort to her contemporary female virtue of the queen approved "playful spirit." Ella reflects a contemporary society understands of femininity in which "paltry tricks" of manners matter less than genuine and playful spirit.

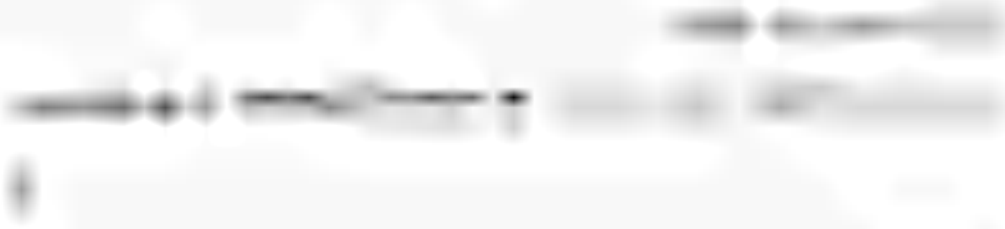
Rather than a rejection of female standards of behavior, *Ella Enchanted* represents a shift of what those standards are. Recognition of conventionally feminine "accomplishments" alarms Ella because she exists as a facet of Levine's imagination

in which rejection of those forms of femininity is being framed as the actual evidence of female accomplishment. The notion that the "paltry tricks" of behavior which society deems valuable should only be considered useful to the individual if she understands that she might use those "tricks" strategically. Propriety ought to be performed, but only by those with enough depth to recognize such propriety as superficial.

Ella's admiration of the pottery represents a humble appreciation of inward value similarly present in Ella's valuing the prince as a friend that proves her depth. Levine represents the external and socially-determined value of objects and people as less important than the also impressive interiority which Ella's narration foregrounds. Ella appreciates the pottery for its evidence of the potter's artistry. Levine proves Ella worthy of the elite position whose title Ella disdains with emphasis on this innate and genuine respect for art. After narrating her appreciation for the pottery, Ella tells Slannen, "They don't look as though someone made them. They look born" (94).

Levine demonstrates Ella's sincere appreciation of the craftsmanship and beauty of the pieces characterizes Ella as worthy of possessing them. Ella recognizes not just external beauty, but the way that this external beauty represents an inner talent. Levine gives the reader evidence of this talent through Ella's descriptions imagining each piece of pottery as living creations (93-94).

The fact that Ella accepts such a valuable gift in spite of her superficial performance of a polite denial of the gift suggests that Ella's ability to appreciate and love art carries social value great enough to stand in for high monetary value. Ella imagines the art as living creations before expressing her understanding of them as having been "born" so that Levine might emphasize that Ella's words make external



Chapter Four

Ella's renouncement of big magic

Ella's curse of obedience represents a compulsion to be a docile and submissive female. Cinderella cannot but be contained by the male-dominated society in which she struggles to accumulate male approval. Similarly, Ella cannot but be contained by her magically dictated obedience. But Ella's relationship with structures of power comes from an unwillingly-obedient perspective which makes that obedience visible as a curse.

When Ella resists obedience, she experiences a "desperate struggle" in which each passing moment causes "breathlessness, nausea, dizziness, and other complaints" (7). Levine portrays the complex psychological ambivalence underlying this distaste for compliance, which coexists with awareness that submission could be easier; in the form of Ella thinking about her complete obedience when ordered to be happy about it:

> I knew I was happy only because I'd been ordered to be, but the happy happiness was absolute. I still understood why I had always hated her Lucinda's gift. But I was glad nonetheless. I imagined future come to commands, awful ones, ones that would kill me, and I glowed at the idea of obeying them. For the first time since Mother had died, I was free of fear. (128)

Though still aware of the danger inherent in her obedience, Ella enjoys surrendering to an existence in which she can no longer worry about that danger. Ella has been commanded into a completely passive position; the appeal of not resisting

becomes evident. The comfort of Ella's surrender parallels maternal comfort, in how Ella's freedom from fear in her doubly-cursed state exists "for the first time since Mother had died" (128). Ella's fearless obedience means a complete lack of control over her own fate and a relinquishing of even the imaginative control implicit in the ability to worry over that fate. The previously-resisted obedience becomes passive, and Ella temporarily relinquishes control so that Levine's story may demonstrate the righteousness of the difficult struggle against obedience.

Ella's passive satisfaction from relinquishing her internal rebellion against obedience becomes most obvious when Mandy frees Ella's emotions from that happy obedience: "I began to sob from relief mixed with sadness. I had been a begging puppy and a delighted slave, yet I hadn't felt cursed since I met Lucinda. Now I did again." (140) Happiness with obedience frees Ella of fear, and losing that passive happiness makes her sob in recognition of the struggle that has returned. Fundamentally a way of feeling, obedience's curse depends on the obedient person's ability to recognize that such submission depends on relinquishing internal agency and becoming emotionally passive about her fate.

Ella's narration when commanded to be happy with her obedience calls it a "gift," whereas her narration upon returning to her emotionally-independent state reverts to recognizing the obedience as a curse. The cost of feeling submission as a "gift" is dehumanization the "begging puppy" and "delighted slave" references remind readers that by submitting to her curse Ella had occupied shameful categories; not only does Ella define herself as a nonhuman "begging puppy," but she also recognizes that she has occupied the offensive myth of the "delighted slave". Levine has Ella notice how resignation to the oppression represented by her curse feels

freeing. Her narrative acknowledgment of why Ella sobs emphasizes the emotional attachment that the oppressed might have to their passive roles.

Ella's curse contributes to the enjoyable playfulness of her narrative. In addition to demonstrating the real-world psychological resonance of female obedience, Ella's curse also contributes to aligning the protagonist with Levine as a female who wields the magic of language. Ella must focus on the way others can and do use words to control her as a form of self-preservation.

Ella empowers herself against the literal magic of her curse with a subversive linguistic magic; Ella's words are greater even than Lucinda's magic. Not only Ella'snarration contains her story and explain experiences as that of a fairy tale but also Ella's greatest triumphs over ogres and ultimately over her own obedience come from this facility with language.

The explicitly magical association Levine makes with the power of words becomes most evident when Ella coaxes the ogres into falling asleep and, having realized that she has appropriated the ogres' magically-convincing manner of speech, "almost laughed and broke the spell." (102) Words have the power to control in Levine's world, and even the obedient Ella can appropriate that power to fight her subservience to otherswords. The magic of Ella's words is a skill a self-professed "knack for languages." (64)

Levine rejects externally-imposed and imagination-inhibiting control of thoughts and actions by her characters' rejections of "big magic." The unwittingly-curse-laying fairy Lucinda ultimately sees the error of her reckless spell-casting attempts to impose perfection and renounces "big magic." (195) this renouncement of "big magic" precludes even the possibility of Lucinda undoing the curse of obedience,

and forces Ella to rely on herself rather than on a magical external solution to the problem of her obedience.

Ella is not allowed to escape her obedience by appealing to the force which created that obedience. Levine presents the imposition of a magical demand that the world conform to one's whims "big magic" as dangerous in a way that "small magic that can't hurt anybody." (28) Mandy's understanding of big versus small magic effectively speaks to the issue of hegemonic constraint in the real world; in terms of the imagined world Levine creates, the message against attempting to control others gets reduced to the following lesson: big magic is bad.

Levine's judgment against the dangers of big magic initially comes in terms of Mandy encouraging Ella to "use her imagination" about the ramifications of the seemingly-miraculous ability to make the universe conform to one's wishes (26). Big magic hence represents a superstructure of power, capable of controlling and affecting everything imaginable. Though big magic is all-encompassing, imagination allows individuals to escape the acceptance of and dependence on this force which constrains with its all-encompassing influence. When considered for all its sweeping ramifications on the way people think and function, this "big magic" force, Mandy guides Ella and by extension, as dangerous.

Levine's representation of the absent figure of Ella's father makes it possible,*Ella Enchanted*engage more with the issue of male power than the power affirming foundational version by Perrault. Sir Peter orders Ella to do things without knowledge that the curse will make Ella comply, but he forces compliance without magic such that his paternal influence exists as an external force of dominance

separate from the internal struggle of Ella's curse. Forcing Ella to go to finishing school, the angry Sir Peter represents a frightening enforcer of male dominance:

> Angry, Father reminded me of a carnival toy, a leather fist attached to a coiled spring used in puppet shows. When the spring was released, the fist shot out at a hapless puppet. With Father, it wasn't the fist that frightened me; it was the spring, because the spring determined the force of the blow. The anger in his eyes was so tightly coiled that I didn't know what would happen if his spring were tripped(35-36).

Since he does not know about Ella's magical obedience, Sir Peter's thoughtless wielding of power speaks to the way which the entitled male might make commands with the expectation that they be obeyed, with no thought to what disobedience might cost those in subservient positions. The specific metaphor of the carnival toy makes Sir Peter's means of enforcing his will explicitly violent. His anger over the prospect of disobedience gives the family patriarch's whims the force of violence. He need not command Ella, even, because he draws on Ella's fear of his anger to bend her to his indomitable will.

Ella calls her compliance with his demand that she go to finishing school "a taste of obedience without an order, and I didn't like it any better than the Lucinda-induced kind." (36) Sir Peter's power extends beyond the curse of obedience, but that curse compounds the way Ella understands the threat. Mandy warns Ella not to let Sir Peter learn that Lucinda has cast a spell on Ella to make her obedient because she recognizes the compounded danger of an already-powerful man gaining absolute certainty of Ella's compliance: "He likes to have his way too much. He'd use you." (37)

The threat of Sir Peter as a spring-loaded fist resonantly dramatizes a wary perspective toward a father's violent potential to enforce his will. By making this metaphor, Ella consider the dominance imposed on Ella as violence, and makes the prospect of submission to abstract dominance an issue of existing under a constant threat. Threatening, ever-present violence thus aligned with a family patriarch makes for a text in which the frightening inescapability of hegemony has concrete representation.

Another way that Levine makes Sir Peter's complicity in oppressing Ella visible comes in the specific contrast with how Ella appeals to her father where Perrault's Cinderella character could not. Levine does not preclude the possibility of appealing to the father: "Father. I hated to ask him for anything, but he was the only one who could help. I would write to him." (171) Ella's reluctance to admit her father's dominance and ability to control the family makes her reluctant to write to him.

Ellahate'sher father because she resents being reminded of the obedience her father can exhort even without magic. Proud of whatever self-sufficiency she might be able to eke out of her cursed life, the obedient Ella would rather not ask for "anything" from the frightening wielder of non-magical power unless he is the only one to help.

Perrault's Cinderella faces the opposite challenge to writing to her father, in the awareness that the family patriarch's rightful dominance that had been co-opted by a domineering wife, rather than Ella's awareness that the patriarch's dominance might serve her ends but require her to acknowledge that dominance in a painful

reminder of his power as patriarch. Levine's father figure, made aware of the situation, abandons his daughter to servitude:

> My servitude pained him, but not enough to return him to the arms of his odious, though beloved, wife. He wrote, "When I find a husband for you who is rich enough to satisfy me, you will be released from my Olga. Until then, I urge you to be, as always, my stalwart daughter (189-190).

Ella faces a greedy and domineering man whose awareness of the situation only exacerbates the evils Ella must face. Sir Peter's absence mocks his "Stalwart daughter" by reminding her that he could save her from servitude, but does not care enough about his daughter to become a positive presence in her life. Ella appropriates that possibility as a means to deter her true love, Char, but Sir Peter proves the plausibility of Ella's made-up scenario in his letter and thereby provokes a literal collapse for the distraught character:

> I fell back on the bed, laughing wildly. Father would make my letter to char come true. He would marry me off to ancient man who would soon die and leave me enormously wealthy. The irony! I couldn't catch my breath.Tears ran down my face, and I didn't know whether I was laughing or crying (190).

The avaricious strategy Sir Peter employs, of seeking out marriages to compensate for an impoverished state he has brought upon himself, gets demonstrated as such in his courtship of Dame Olga. Ella bears witness to this second courtship and marriage of Sir Peter's strategic manipulation of a wealthy woman.

In addition to the extended narrative demonstration of Sir Peter's manipulation of Dame Olga, Ella also learns, from Mandy, that Sir Peter had similarly manipulated Ella's mother: "Until she was his wife, Sir Peter was very sweet to Lady. I didn't trust him, but she wouldn't listen to me. Her family didn't approve because he was poor, which made Lady want him even more, she was just that kind-hearted." (37). Sir Peter uses women. The very possibility of his marrying wealthy women to attain respectable social status suggests that women might possess higher status than men.

Perrault's version did not acknowledge this possibility. Though women allow for him to preserve his wealth and status, the fact that Sir Peter so adeptly manipulates women makes him a reminder of the cunning way that a man might coerce a woman to do what he wants whether through paternal violence or through romantic manipulation.

By emphasizing Ella's father as a domineering family patriarch, Levine makes it impossible to ignore the fact that the story's protagonist suffers under an oppressive patriarchy. Sir Peter controls and constrains Ella in a frightening and frustrating reminder of Ella's involuntary submission. Ever-absent, ever-greedy, ever-capable of manipulating Ella's mother figures; Sir Peter's static character represents an inescapable hegemonic presence.

Ella ultimately frees herself of the curse and finds a happiness in which her father's absence no longer threatens her through her necessary obedience to it, though Sir Peter still exists and still possesses his characteristics as an embodiment of avaricious human capacity to manipulate others. Ella's freedom from the familiar threat of her father represents Levine's message that manifestations of an oppressive

structure might be escaped on an individual level, even if the controlling body represented by Ella's father must itself remain.

Ella Enchanted communicates that an oppressive and frightening enforcer of power will always exist and can, at certain points, be genuinely inescapable, but that ultimately this oppressive force can be dealt with, set aside and controlled. *Ella Enchanted* allows to understand how to subvert the ever-present structure of power that Sir Peter represents by becoming an independent heroine like Ella. However, the means of this independence Ella's marriage to Charenmeshes Levine's text in yet another higher level of patriarchy.

Though Levine avoids making Prince Char an appealing love interest for his royal status alone, she still defines her characters as deferent to the patriarchal world he embodies. The benevolent royalty in *Ella Enchanted* represents an acceptable superstructure of power, a superstructure Ella chooses to preserve in the climactic, curse breaking moment when she rejects Char's marriage proposal in order to save him from sharing her curse.

Levine represents Kyrria as more worth saving than either Ella as an individual or the personal happiness that might come from marrying Char. Just because the notion of deference arises in relation to Levine's royalty, does not mean that Levine promotes unthinking or blind deference.Rather, the reminders of an inherited royalty in *Ella Enchanted* carry associated reminders of the necessity that such wielders of power prove their worthiness of this inherited responsibility.

Levine's Kyrria represents a benevolently-led society, and hence merits preservation for the way it serves the individual. In Levine's version of the Cinderella story, acceptance of a pre-existing, male-headed governing structure comes only after

journey from awed deference to questioning insubordination and finally to self-sacrificing love has been outlined in the reader's imagined experience through Ella.

Levine's Prince Char may be a more round and amiable individual in comparison to his counterpart in Perrault's Cinderella story, but Char's characterization nonetheless relies heavily on references to his father.

Recurring comparisons between Char and his father, even when the father is absent, bring the notion deference to a male figurehead into the text even as traditional conceptions of royalty. But this absent presence, of the governing patriarchy, represents the more influential, more powerful, and more positive counterpoint to the oppressive powers Ella faces on a personal level, through her curse and her father.

An exploration of the way Levine defines Char and his parents, and the overall goodness of Kyrria as a kingdom worth saving will make this optimistic understanding of Levine's royalty more clear. When Prince Charmont first appears in her story, Ella provides the following description of him:

> Although the prince was only two years older than I, he was much taller, and he stood just like his father, feet apart, hands behind his back....looked like his father, too, although the sharp angles of King Jerrold's face were softened in his son. They each had tawny curls and swarthy skin.... (12)

Levine emphasizes the prince's royalty through his father. Characters' literal inheritance represents the oppressive, power reinforcing structure of the Cinderella tale Ella Enchanted itself inherits. Though the first comparison Ella makes in her

description of Char involves herself her age and height in respect to the prince every sentence in this paragraph includes some form of comparison between the prince and his father the king.

Char reflects Ella's intimidation by her proximity to a royal person, an intimidation inexorably tied to a sense of the prince's inherited position of power. Ella's description of Char's posture expands like his father to describe the powerful stance of a man .Char resembles his father in bearing as well as in physical likeness, and this inherited aura of nobility overwhelms Ella's initial description.

Even in mourning, the prince exudes authority and confidence that Levine allows Ella to interpret correctly as connected to the way that a prince might have the power to review the fairy tale country and effect institutional change. Ella's recognition of this authoritative bearing in Char recurs throughout *Ella Enchanted*, and suggests that Levine believes there to be some validity to the idea of royalty being an inherited, noble, and characteristic.

Ella'spreoccupation with seeing Char in terms of his father in this initial presentation of Char's character reflects Ella's mindset at this early point in the novel, in which she has yet to grow confident enough with herself to question Char's princely identity. A journey toward questioning the structure of power represented by a royal identity can be seen in the way that Ella's relationship with Char develops. In commencing their epistolary romance, Ella confronts the initially-intimidating powerful title Char holds:

> I have many questions, most of them impertinent. When you were a boy, did you study with other children, or did you have tutors all to yourself? I suppose you were wonderful at all your subjects but were

> you? Who took care of you when you were small? When did you discover you were a prince and would someday be king? What did the knowledge mean to you? (162)

Ella's questions draw attention to the fact that social hierarchy merits interrogation; even if those in power relate to their subjects thoughtfully and benevolently as with the royalty in *Ella Enchanted*the very fact that people can control one another as Ella's curse makes her painfully aware means that there is always a danger of becoming compliant to a freedom-restricting system. By having Ella ask Char about his status as future king, Levine reminds readers that such elevated status ought not to be accepted without thought.

Ella literally interrogates the prince in her letter so that readers engrossed in her words might similarly question the people who wield power in their lives. Ella's initial deference for authority fades as she becomes familiar with Char and allows herself to question presumptions about aloof and perfect royalty, but her confidence in their relationship never fully erases her initial awed deference toward the prince and her implicit understanding as the noble character as inherently superior.

Ella prefaces her questions with the recognition that they are "impertinent," and the letter itself gets represented within Ella's self-conscious narration in which she worries about how to address the letter without seeming "childish" to the prince (162). The prince may deserve to be interrogated about his inherited eminence, but he still merits respect as a fellow individual and a fellow adult.

When Ella draws attention to the fact that hierarchy might be questioned, she also draws attention to the correct wielding of power Char represents. The "softened" angles of the king's features Ella notices on first seeing Char represent a softened and

more personable sort of authority, more a servant of the people than an inaccessible icon of power that the eponymous money of King Jerrold's Kyrriaimplies the king to be. Char's soft personality gets demonstrated in a couple of instances of the prince literally lowering himself to the same level as common laborers: When the seller began screeching that everyone would trample his precious tomatoes and melons and lettuces, Char had us right the cart; vegetables (113).

Power may be inherited and its structuring influence on society perpetuated, but Char's softened and amiable presence suggests that such a structure can be considered optimistically, as benevolent and progressing away from the sharp dictates of a negative connotation of power. He insisted on paying for the vase. He said it never would have happened if not for him. Then he apologized for knocking into me! (199)

Written interactions, like the excerpt from Areida's journal that Ella reads, bear noting because of the extra emphasis placed on Ella's magic book Ella and Char's epistolary romance provides the most insight into Char's character. Not only does Ella write Char interrogating him about his inherited royal status, she also uses his handwriting to infer the merit of his character.

Upon receiving Char's first letter, Ella notes that "Char's hand was large and round, the letters evenly spaced, each fully formed completely unlike my crabbed, spiky writing. His showed a balanced, honest nature, while Areida used to say mine proved me imaginative, impulsive, and always in a hurry" (173).

Ella explicitly defines the written word as an essential way of attaining insight into a person's character. Ella's connection between the way she perceives Char and the written representation it also defines Char as balanced and honest, an ideal

Chapter Five

Summation

Levine's selected point of view that capture the complex workings of the mind. Reflecting on her writing, she supposes that her attempt was to simulate the integrative work of a mind perceiving and reflecting, drawing upon fantasy, fairytale, conscience, belief or assumption, experience and response and then reshaping them both as narrative, holding one thought against another for the effect of affinity or contrast, evaluating and rationalizing, feeling compassion, talking offense. Since Levine's endeavor is simulating the integrative work of the mind, it should come as no surprise that the refrains from employing any form of directly omniscient narration.

Levine's work may be seen as part of the American manifestation of this new wave. *Ella Enchanted* engages in a dialogue around feminist ideas around fairy tales no obstacle to interpreting the work as critically engaging with issues of gender and power.*Ella Enchanted* reinforces an American structure of power, but the fact that a subversive feminist analysis is possible at all marks *Ella Enchanted* as more than a pandering commercial attempt. As Bottigheimer points out, "Fairy tales' marketability is a key element in their history." (107)

Ella of Frell was the unfortunate recipient of a foolish fairy's gift the "gift" of obedience. Ella must obey any order given to her, whether it's hopping on one foot for a day and a half, or chopping off her own head. But strong-willed Ella does not tamely accept her fate. Against a bold backdrop of princes, ogres, giants, wicked stepsisters, and fairy godmothers, Ella goes on a quest to break the curse.

Ella transcends the traditional damsel-in-distress role. Though condemned to obey her exploitative stepmother and sisters, she battles back, runs away, and goes on a quest to get the spell lifted. She battles ogres and befriends elves and giants. Though Ella, like Cinderella, eventually finds herself whisked out of servitude to a cruel stepfamily by marriage to a prince, the love story builds more slowly.

Ella is a heroine brave, smart, sure of herself, certain of her opinions, and astonishingly good at languages. She's so handicapped by Lucinda's gift that she needs many strengths to offset it. The critical inner voice the self-critic that made painting an unhappy experience for Levine is very quiet when she writes, she has said. This doesn't mean that writing is always an easy or happy process. Some days, or some projects, are easier than others. Still, she loves being an author.

She learned about revising her work, and she learned the importance of sticking with a story and trying to finish it, even if the writing is difficult. Most of Levine's published work involves fairy-tale themes, and the stories take place in invented worlds. When Gail Carson Levine begins a book, she doesn't always know the ending. While writing Ella, for example, she didn't know what cause or motivation would be sufficient to drive Ella to break the curse she thought it might happen through her relationship with Hattie. As it turned out, the motivation was something and someone else.

Writers often experiment with ideas or themes that have attracted them in other books. For example, one reason for the many languages spoken in *Ella Enchanted* is Levine's admiration for *The Lord of the Rings*. Because she loved the way J. R. R. Tolkien created and used languages in the Rings trilogy, she wanted to try something similar in her book. Once she got started, she worked hard to make each of the languages spoken in *Ella Enchanted* very different. So Letters are an

important element in *Ella Enchanted*. Ella learns a lot from the letters that appear in Mandy's magic book.

Ella has a special talent for language, mastering Ogreese this awesome hypnotizing ogre language so completely that she is able to control them using their own spells. Her classmate from a neighboring country is mocked for speaking with a strange accent, and Ella responds by learning her friend's native language so they can make fun of the bullies without anyone else knowing. Even after *Ella Enchanted* was published, Levine continued to take the writing class that had gotten her started. She also participated in groups with other writers. Levine helps her middle-school writing students by encouraging them to explore new ideas. She talks a lot about that little voice in a writer's head, the self-critic, and says our inner voice is the enemy of creativity.

Levin's protagonists and other characters live through the consequences of choosing between oppression and sacrifice, and of responding to oppression through submission, resistance or complicity. In each story, the heroine undergoes character development as the plot advances through her choices surrounding work, and her humanitarian impulses grow.

Another part of Ella evidencing her worthiness of her eminent status comes in how she takes care of others. The mothering instinct manifests itself as a conserved female virtue in *Ella Enchanted*. Ella's magical, fairy-made book simultaneously represents Ella's privileged fairy tale inheritance and the way that such an inherited identity preserves an ideal of maternal caretaking.

Ella's magic book is a particularly salient emblem that helps us identify with Ella by positioning a book as the protagonist's primary need. Levine's fairy tale book

vindicates the elves to Ella in a manner similar to how *Ella Enchanted* itself was Levine's way of vindicating the passive Cinderella to modern readers with an obedient heroine who resents that obedience as a curse. The self-reflexive nature of the fairy tale story Ella reads gets emphasized when Ella later shares her book with an elf in her world: "Slannen opened it. 'The Shoemaker and the Elves' returned as the first story. He roared with laughter. 'We're so tiny in here! The elves can fit inside a shoe!" (92).

Ella's elves, rather than being tiny human helpers, are "the same height as humans," green people who trade with humans on equal terms rather than providing secret and unacknowledged help (91). By contrasting the reality of the elves in Ella's world with the fairy tale version of the elves also within Ella's world, Levine draws attention to the way that fairy tale retellings might approach the truth by explaining troubling details of servility and submissiveness, but reminds that these stories are entertaining escapes from reality. Levine effectively cautions us against taking her story too seriously.

The way characters respond to Ella's book seems to indicate Levine is encouraging Ella's story as such, and to appreciate its explanation of the Cinderella character's submissiveness without extrapolating too far in connecting the Ella character to reality. But Ella's book also draws attention to the way that Levine's story might be problematic in the way it addresses Ella's submissiveness. Ella's magic book provides Ella with a means for monitoring on her loved ones such that her reading experience makes her a passive observer and a selfless caretaker in her world. Such an identity undermines the non-passive, vindicated Cinderella heroine Levine meant to create in Ella.

Preceding Ella's first exposure to her book's version of *The Shoemaker and the Elves* the magic book shows Ella several illustrations of her loved ones. By seeking comfort in her magic book, Ella returns to a conventionally passive characterization, dependent on others' lives to give joy and value. Engrossed in her magic book, Ella enjoys watching the lives not just of those she cares about Mandy and Char but also a threat which his recent witnessing of Ella's obedience to an ogre has made him mistakenly believe applies to the general populace rather than just Ella.

She focuses outwardly on the book of fairy tales and true representations of her loved ones rather than inwardly on her own cursed life. Ella's caretaking instinct, and her humble setting aside of her own desires to serve others, further manifests itself in concern for Char when he gets rope burn rescuing her from ogres. "I wanted to examine the burn more closely, but I continued. Manners Mistress knew your father's opinion about everything" (107). In this instance, refraining from fussing over Char's burn demonstrates awareness of the type of attention he prefers; amusing him rather than nursing him actually appeals to Char's needs and wants more effectively, and represents how Ella is an ideal female partner for him.

Ella does not indulge her personal impulse to display concern, but rather does what she knows will be appreciated. Levine characterizes Ella as an ideal female partner with an innate and sacrificial concern for others as sincere as her related recognition of interior value. Passive femininity thusly seems to creep into Ella's characterization. But the broader characterization of Ella in which such a passive role might be chosen emphasizes the fact that Levine's text advocates for a female's right to behave as she chooses, whether that behavior conforms to typical femininity or not.

Ella's choice to enjoy reading in her magic book and taking care of her loved ones ought not to be seen as oppressive just because these choices conform to

stereotypical female roles as a passive caretaker. Ella proves herself the thoughtful sort of rebel who chooses to be proper only when it suits her. Part of a modern conception of an empowered young woman is that she has the freedom to choose to be romantic and feminine. "Among an earlier generation of women, the wish was to be able to do everything men could.

Ella's choice to marry Char and become a "Court Linguist and Cook's Helper" reflects Levine's decision to empower Ella with "the power to say yes or no" (232). Modern fairy tales allow female desire to express it "unashamedly" in stereotypically feminine manners, and hence Ella must be allowed the same pleasure she provides and lose herself in a book. In Levine's book, however, the conclusion of Ella's fairy tale story conforms to a characterization of Ella as a passive caretaker in a way that might bother.

Ella writes that "My contrariness kept Char laughing, and his goodness kept me in love" (232). Char's happiness in the marriage comes in terms of being amused by Ella, whereas Ella frames her own happiness around a romantic notion of Char's "goodness." Such a framing of the wedded happiness of Char and Ella makes Ella minimize her own importance in respect to her husband. Levine may not have intended to emphasize a gendered binary in which the female provides trivial amusement whereas the male provides a deep emotional connection. But the way that the parallel structure of Ella's contrariness keeping Char laughing and Char's goodness keeping her in love creates an unavoidable comparison between contrariness and goodness, and between the effects of laughing and being in love.

Char's goodness and Ella's contrariness, Ella orients that contrariness with the claim that she "loved having the power to say yes or no, and refusing anything was a special pleasure" (232). But the final sentence still concludes with the fairytale

"happily ever after" (232). The qualified nature of this conclusion, oriented as it is in Ella's contrariness, undercuts the conformity of the tale to the standard fairy tale form: "And so, with laughter and love, we lived happily ever after" (232). But the preceding emphasis on how Ella seems to understand that laughter and love in gendered terms might not be satisfied with this seemingly-progressive fairy tale conclusion.

Such dissatisfaction might be assuaged with reference to how Levine creates an ideal femininity which is outwardly-focused and generous while simultaneously contrary. The book's conclusion contains these fundamental aspects of Ella's character, so it becomes possible to defend Ella's conformity to a modern ideal. Because Levine characterizes Ella such that the Cinderella figure's previously positive feminine traits. Ella's perfect femininity becomes productive rather than merely constraining. Ella's ostensibly constraining virtue of obedience and inherited fairy tale legacy coalesce to reflect on the inescapability of that constraint rather than merely reproducing it.

Ella's narration where Levine has the protagonist self-consciously reflects on her own age. Ella's oppressed character experiences conflated valences of oppression as a young woman, and her journey toward self - sufficient maturity culminates in her claiming to be "old enough" to propose marriage to Char in a framing of age in which Ella defines her age for herself such that Ella's youth and femininity get empowered simultaneously in *Ella Enchanted's* climactic final scene.

Whereas Platt's essay on Ella Enchanted implies that Levine might be prepared to break out of Ella's fairy tale legacy. Levine did not erase the Cinderella tale's sweet docile protagonist, but rather explained it in contemporarily-sympathetic terms, through a curse of obedience. Similarly, Levine does not erase the inherited

constraint of the slipper or of the notion of an ideal femininity. Levine's story demonstrates how the glass slipper is unbreakable. Literally "The slipper didn't break" (152)

The Cinderella tale and imagine a world in which the slipper and its associated superficiality is irrelevant, but we cannot imagine a fairy tale world as such without some form of conventionality. Platt glosses over the fundamental conflict of ostensibly-progressive contemporary fairy tales in lauding *Ella Enchanted* for its progressive positioning as a text which reflects contemporary ideals. He recognizes that fairy tales are "complex symbolic acts intended to reflect on mores, norms, and habits organized for the purpose of reinforcing a hierarchically arranged civilizing process in a particular society" (48).

Platt confronts neither the way that this reflection conserves a confining structure of power nor the nuances in a feminist interpretation that may arise by examining the way that power structures are similarly reinforced in the Perrault-derived source text of Ella Enchanted and the re-imagined fairy tale of *Ella Enchanted* itself. Looking at Levine's text in the context of a fairy tale legacy allowed for an analysis of the book in terms which give due consideration to the complexity of the theoretical possibilities underlying engagement with the text.

Ella Enchanted proves that playing in a book can be worthwhile. Ultimately, distinctions between child and adult, like distinctions between male and female and between elite and folk, are false and inhibiting constructions; a postmodernist understanding of a world in which the distinctions of high and low have vanished should also disintegrate age and gender categories feminist material represents a positive bastion for burgeoning feminists, *Ella Enchanted* makes you to engage in a salient dialogue around issues of power and gender. Gibson says that "playfully,

though nonetheless seriously, celebrates the reality of the illusion, the very art of representing entire worlds" (Gibson 86).

Levine's fairy tale conclusion presenting Ella the individual as deferent to Kyrria the kingdom, but another problem exists in the fact of how Ella's wedded happiness makes for her ultimate "happily ever after." The problem lies not in that Ella chooses to pursue wedded happiness with a nuclear family. Rather, the issue is how Levine has Ella understand that wedded happiness. Ella provide an epilogue in which she defines the "happily ever after" of Prince Char and Court Linguist and Cook's Helper Ella (231).

Ella's abilities are not flashy or violent, and she is very far from perfect. It's important to keep in mind that flaws and competence are equally important when fleshing out a complex female character. Ella's free will was magically stripped away at infancy. The massive, implications of this are explored beautifully within the novel, but the biggest side-effect of growing up will-less for Ella at least is that she becomes stubborn, strong willed, and, ironically, fearless. Instead of letting her curse beat her into submission, Ella becomes the most self-possessed woman imaginable.

Levine believes in fantasy world, which proceeds from her view of the mind. Each human life is a short lived existence, at the Centre of which is memory and mystery. In her works, Levine captures how our experiences compound, forging and connections in our minds in the form of memories. These memories reflect what is more important to us. Sometimes these memories come from painful circumstances, leading us to behave in ways others cannot understand.

Levine demonstrates the value she places on the mind byincarnatingthe meaning of memory, mystery, and fantasy in her novels. And by so doing, she

beautifully implies how a mindful life may be best lived. Levine's fairytale novel's high lights the role our minds play in understanding and living within the reality. In Levine's writing contains Ordinary items and occurrences, creating beauty from the quotidian and reviving a new appreciation for each detail of life. And she imbues her novels with her humanism, creating mysterious.

Her novels help remind of the fragility of humanity and of the important role imagination plays in our own minds for empathy and for showing mercy. In rendering universal truths the novel founded on the aesthetics of imaginary world, then rises into Modernism, style, evocative Expressionism, allegorical symbolism and transcendent vision.

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Claustrophobic Portrait of Women in Doris Lessing's

The Golden Notebook

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(REG. NO. 18APEN33)

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Claustrophobic Portrait of Women in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Thebora Arnika. S during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Claustrophobic Portrait of Women in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thebora Arnika . S

Thoothukudi **Thebora Arnika S.**

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Claustrophobic Portrait of Women in Doris Lessing's** *The Golden Notebook* analyses the multifaceted role of a female political figure in the contemporary society.

The first chapter **Introduction** introduces the chosen writer Doris Lessing discussing the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Plot Construction** deals with the summary of the novel.

The third chapter **Psychic Integration** explores and reflects the fragmentation of self and society with reference to the novel *The Golden Notebook.*

The fourth chapter **Female Bonding and Fragmentation** examines the splintered nature of women as vulnerable and potentially powerful creatures and their journey towards discovering their self.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up and highlights the narrative style and all the aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Doris Lessing was born on 22nd of October 1919 in a British family as Doris May Taylor in Kermanshah, Persia (now Iran). Her father, Captain Alfred Tayler, previously an army man, was a clerk in a bank while her mother, Emily Maude Tayler, was a nursemaid. The family moved to Zimbabwe in the hope of increasing their income through maize farming. But unfortunately, this reaped no benefits for the Tayler's.

Doris Lessing's mother was a strict woman and in the anticipation of raising a prim and proper daughter, enforced a lot of rules and regulations in the house. Lessing was sent to a convent school and then later to an all-girls high school in the capital of Salisbury. Lessing, however, dropped out of school by the age of thirteen and thereafter started self-educating herself. She left her home two years later in the hope of an independent life away from her mother's stern tenet. She was employed as a nursemaid where she involved herself in reading various topics such as politics and sociology. Later she moved to Salisbury and started working as a telephone operator. It was then she met and married her first husband, Frank Wisdom with whom she also had two children. She had begun writing by this time; a passion that would soon become her life long career.

After her divorce in 1943 Lessing joined a communist book club named 'Left Book Club'. Gottfried Lessing was a main member of this group who Lessing married later on. They had a son, Peter, who remained with Lessing after her second divorce in 1949. She moved to London where she began her professional career and published her first novel *The Grass is Singing*. Although a more notable work by Lessing was

published in 1962 her novel *The Golden Notebook.* She also wrote two novels using a pseudonym 'Jane Somers'. Her purpose was to reveal the hardships faced by new authors in their efforts to get their work printed. *The Diary of a Good Neighbor* and *If the Old Could* were eventually published in England and the United States in 1983 and 1984. The following years also saw some good novels by Lessing such as *The Good Terrorist* in 1985, *Under my Skin* in 1994, *Walking in the Shade* in 1997, and *The Sweetest Dream* in 2001.

Lessing's books were mainly fictional and can be sub-categorized in three diverse themes; The Communist theme which lasted from 1944 to 1956. The Psychological Theme started from 1956 to 1969 and then Sufism, to which she was introduced to by 'Idris Shah', who was a good friend and teacher. She has won over fifteen awards for her contribution to the English Literature. These include the Somerset Maugham Award in 1954, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 1995, Order of the Companions of Honor in 1999, the David Cohen Prize in 2001, S.T Dupont Golden PEN Award in 2002 and the most honorable 'Nobel Prize' in 2007. She also received an honorary degree from Harvard University in 1995. Her latest book is called *Alfred and Family.* Lessing has announced this book to be her last and final work.

Lessing's first published book *The Grass is Singing* is about a white farmer and his wife and their African servant in Rhodesia. Among her most substantial works is the series *Children of Violence* a five novel sequence that centers on Martha Quest who grows up in southern Africa and settles in England. *The Golden Notebook* in 1962 deals with a woman writer who attempts to overcome her obstacles by her writings. It is considered one of the most complex and the most widely read of her novels. *The*

Memories of a Survivor in 1975 is a prophetic fantasy that explores psychological and social breakdown. A master of the short story, Lessing has published several collections, including *The Story of a Non-Marrying Man* in 1972 and *Stories* in 1978. Her African stories are collected in *This was the Old Chief's Country* in 1951 and *The Sun Between Their Feet* in 1973.

Lessing turned to science fiction in a five novel sequence titled *Canopus in Argos: Archives* in 1979. The novel *The Diary of a Good Neighbor* in 1983 and *If the Old Could* in 1984 were published pseudonymously under the name Jane Somers to dramatize the problems of unknown writers. Subsequent novels include *The Good Terrorist* in 1985 about a group of revolutionaries in London, and the *Fifth Child* in 1988, a horror story, to which *Ben in the World* in 2000 is a sequel. *The Sweetest Dream* in 2001 is a semi-autobiographical novel set primarily in London during the 1960s, while the parable- like novel *The Cleft* in 2007 considers the origins of human society. Her collection of essays *Time Bites* in 2004 displays her wide- ranging interest, from women's issues and politics to Sufism. *Alfred and Emily* in 2008 is a mix of fiction and memories centered on her parents. Krouse said,

> Very few people really care about freedom, about liberty, about the truth, very few. Very few people have guts, the kind on which a areal democracy has depend. Without people with that sort of guts a free society dies or cannot be born. (452)

A contemporary of Doris Lessing, Ray Bradbury became a full-time writer in 1943, and contributed numerous short stories to periodicals before publishing a collection

of them, *Dark Carnival*, in 1947. His reputation as a writer of courage and vision was established with the publication of The *Martian Chronicles* in 1950, which describes the first attempts of Earth people to conquer and colonize Mars, and the unintended consequences. Next came *The Illustrated Man* and then, in 1953, *Fahrenheit* 451, which many consider to be Bradbury's masterpiece, a scathing indictment of censorship set in a future world where the written word is forbidden. In an attempt to salvage their history and culture, a group of rebels memorize entire works of literature and philosophy as their books are burned by the totalitarian state. Other works include *The October Country*, *Dandelion Wine*, *A Medicine for Melancholy*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, *I Sing the Body Electric*, *Quicker Than the Eye*, and *Driving Blind*. In all, Bradbury has published more than thirty books, close to 600 short stories, and numerous poems, essays, and plays. His short stories have appeared in more than 1,000 school curriculum "recommended reading" anthologies. And he deals with racism and modernism in twentieth century.

Ray Bradbury's work has been included in four Best American Short Story collections. He has been awarded the O. Henry Memorial Award, the Benjamin Franklin Award, the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America, the PEN Centre USA West Lifetime Achievement Award, among others. In November 2000, the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters was conferred upon Mr. Bradbury at the 2000 National Book Awards Ceremony in New York City.

> Bradbury said, "The great fun in my life has been getting up every morning and rushing to the typewriter because some new idea has hit me.

> The feeling I have every day is very much the same as it was when I was twelve. In any event, here I am, eighty years old, feeling no different, full of a great sense of joy, and glad for the long life that has been allowed me. I have good plans for the next ten or twenty years, and I hope you'll come along."

Derek Walcott was a Caribbean poet, playwright, writer and visual artist. Born in Castries, St. Lucia, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 "for a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment." His work, which developed independently of the schools of magic realism emerging in both South America and Europe at around the time of his birth, is intensely related to the symbolism of myth and its relationship to culture. He was best known for his epic poem Omeros, a reworking of Homeric story and tradition into a journey around the Caribbean and beyond to the American West and London.

Walcott founded the *Trinidad Theatre Workshop* in 1959, which has produced his plays and others since that time, and remained active with its Board of Directors until his death. He also founded Boston Playwrights' *Theatre at Boston University* in 1981. In 2004, Walcott was awarded the Anisfield-Wolf Lifetime Achievement Award, and had retired from teaching poetry and drama in the Creative Writing Department at Boston University by 2007. He continued to give readings and lectures throughout the world after retiring. He divided his time between his home in the Caribbean and New York City.

Dame Muriel Spark, was a prolific Scottish novelist, short story writer, and poet whose darkly comedic voice made her one of the most distinctive writers of the twentieth century. In 2008 The Times newspaper named Spark in its list of "the 50 greatest British writers since 1945". Spark received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1965 for *The Mandelbaum Gate*, the Ingersoll Foundation TS Eliot Award in 1992 and the David Cohen Prize in 1997. She became Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1993, in recognition of her services to literature. She has been twice shortlisted for the Booker Prize, in 1969 for The Public Image and in 1981 for Loitering with Intent. In 1998, she was awarded the Golden PEN Award by English PEN for "a Lifetime's Distinguished Service to Literature". In 2010, Spark was shortlisted for the Lost Man Booker Prize of 1970 for The Driver's Seat.

Spark received eight honorary doctorates in her lifetime. These included a Doctor of the University degree from her alma mater, Heriot-Watt University in 1995; a Doctor of Humane Letters from the American University of Paris in 2005; and Honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London, Oxford, St Andrews and Strathclyde. Spark grew up in Edinburgh and worked as a department store secretary, writer for trade magazines, and literary editor before publishing her first novel, *The Comforters*, in 1957. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, published in 1961, and considered her masterpiece, was made into a stage play, a TV series, and a film.

Anthony Powell and wrote most of his first novel, Blindness. He studied at Oxford University and there began a friendship and literary rivalry with Evelyn Waugh. Green left Oxford in 1926 without taking a degree and returned to Birmingham to engage in his family business. He started by working with the ordinary workers on the factory

floor of his family's factory, which produced beer-bottling machines, and later became the managing director. During this time, he gained the experience to write Living, his second novel, which he worked on during 1927 and 1928. During World War II Green served as a fireman in the Auxiliary Fire Service and these wartime experiences are echoed in his novel Caught; they were also a strong influence on his subsequent novel, Back. Green's last published novel was *Doting* in 1952, this was the end of his writing career. In his later years, until his death in 1973, he became increasingly focused on studies of the Ottoman Empire, and became alcoholic and reclusive. Politically, Green was a traditional Tory throughout his life.

The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, said to have been rejected by a dozen publishers, was the first book Moore published under his own name, and it was followed by nineteen subsequent novels written in a broad range of modes and styles, from the realistic to the historical to the quasi-fantastical, including *The Luck of Ginger Coffey, An Answer from Limbo, The Emperor of Ice Cream, I Am Mary Dunne, Catholics, Black Robe, and The Statement. Three novels—Lies of Silence, The Colour of Blood, and The Magician's Wife* were short-listed for the Booker Prize, and The Great Victorian Collection won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

After adapting The Luck of Ginger Coffey for film in 1964, Moore moved to California to work on the script for Alfred Hitchcock's Torn Curtain. He remained in Malibu for the rest of his life, remarrying there and teaching at UCLA for some fifteen years. Shortly before his death, Moore wrote, "There are those stateless wanderers who, finding the larger world into which they have stumbled vast, varied and exciting, become confused in their loyalties and lose their sense of home. I am one of those wanderers."

Ronald Dahl's first published work, inspired by a meeting with C. S. Forester, was *Shot Down Over Libya*. Today the story is published as *A Piece of Cake*. The story, about his wartime adventures, was bought by the Saturday Evening Post for $900, and propelled him into a career as a writer. Its title was inspired by a highly inaccurate and sensationalized article about the crash that blinded him, which claimed he had been shot down instead of simply having to land because of low fuel.

His first children's book was *The Gremlins*, about mischievous little creatures that were part of RAF folklore. The book was commissioned by Walt Disney for a film that was never made, and published in 1943. Dahl went on to create some of the best-loved children's stories of the 20th century, such as Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda and James and the Giant Peach.

He also had a successful parallel career as the writer of macabre adult short stories, usually with a dark sense of humour and a surprise ending. Many were originally written for American magazines such as Ladies Home Journal, Harper's, Playboy and The New Yorker, then subsequently collected by Dahl into anthologies, gaining world-wide acclaim. Dahl wrote more than 60 short stories and they have appeared in numerous collections, some only being published in book form after his death. His stories also brought him three Edgar Awards: in 1954, for the collection *Someone Like You*; in 1959, for the story *"The Landlady"*; and in 1980, for the episode of Tales of the Unexpected based on "Skin".

The Golden Notebook consists of alternating section: there is a framing narrative called "Free Women", narrated in the third person and featuring a character named Anna Wulf. Anna writes four notebooks: one black, one red, one yellow and one blue. The novel alternatives between describing Anna's life experience and revealing the content of the different notebooks. It eventually features a section from a fifth notebook: the golden notebook. Anna Freeman Wulf is an Englishwoman who moves to the African colony of Rhodesia in 1939, just as World War II is breaking out. During her time in Africa, she becomes involved in Leftist politics and builds a close-kit circle of friends who are also involved with the cause.

Anna is involved in a romantic relationship with a man named Max Wulf but has ambivalent feeling for him thought out. As the war is ending, Max and Anna decide to have a child together, Anna get married in 1945, and their daughter, Janet is born in 1946. Anna and Max get divorced when Janet is still a baby, and Anna returns to London to live as a single mother and work as a writer in Africa. The novel draws on her own experience and ends up selling very well, giving Anna enough money to live off. Anna also becomes active in working for British Communist Party.

Upon her return to England, Anna ends up living with a woman named Molly, who is also a single mother. Molly has also been raising her son, Tommy, after getting divorced from her husband, Richard. Anna also becomes romantically involved with a married man named Michael, whom she loves very much and has a five-year relationship with. In 1954, Anna's relationship with Michael ends and she also leaves the Communist Party after growing increasingly disillusioned. The frame narrative opens in 1957, with all of this part events gradually begin revealed through the contents of the notebooks.

The black notebook focuses on Anna experience with the reception and adaptation of her novel. The notebook focuses on her experience with Communism, while the yellow notebook contains a narrative called "The Shadow of a Third", which seems to be a thinly fictionalized account with Michael. The blue notebook resembles a journal, in which Anna records memories and reflections. In 1957, Anna is trying to help Molly and Richard with their adolescent son, Tommy. Unfortunately, Tommy attempts to commit suicide and is left blind as a result.

The suicide attempt and Tommy's subsequent strange behavior prompt Anna to reflect on her life and her purpose in writing. She is feeling anxious about writing a second novel, but she is unsure of how to proceed. By the time Tommy recovers, Anna's own mental health is becoming increasingly disturbed. After her daughter goes to boarding school and Anna is left alone, she becomes involved in a destructive affair with an American screenwriter. This relationship pushes Anna to the brink of mental breakdown, but this result in her eventually being able to begin her second novel. The scene in which she writes the first line in that novel reveals that the frame narrative itself is a larger piece of fiction, written by Anna herself.

Anna eventually decides that she needs to find work, and the novel ends with her telling Molly about her plans to work as a marriage counselor and teacher. By this point, Molly is planning to remarry. The novel ends with the two women calmly going about their everyday lives.

Chapter Two

Plot Construction

The Golden Notebook tells the story of Anna Wulf as she explores four separate, fragment stories of her life recorded in four separate notebooks attempting to combine them together into one golden notebook. *The Golden notebook* is divided into six sections. Five sections are further subdivided into a story line and into entire from the notebooks of the protagonist Anna Wulf. Anna is visiting with Molly Jacobs as the story opens. The two friends live in London. Anna Wulf and Molly refer to themselves as free women because they are not tied down by social conventions. Molly is an actress and Anna are a writer. Richard Portmain, Molly's ex-husband, arrives to talk about Tommy, Molly and Richard's son. Molly and Richard were divorced after a year of marriage, and Tommy has been living with his mother. There is a mention of Richard's second wife, Marion, who is very unhappy with Richard's blatant extramarital affairs.

> It doesn't matter if you fail. Why are you so arrogant? Just begin.... I'm going to give you the first sentence then. There are the two women you are, Anna. Write down: The two women were alone in the London flat. (610)

Molly, Richard and Anna are concerned about Tommy. He is almost twenty years old, and sits on his bed always thinking. Richard, a very successful businessman, has offered Tommy a job in one of his international corporations. Molly, Anna and Richard point out the differences between Richard and the women but also the subtle differences between Molly who is outgoing and a dilettante in the arts and Anna, who is subdued, introspective, and a true artist. Tommy appears and turns down his father job offer,

explaining that he is trying to determine who he is. Tommy has been influenced by his mother and Anna but he is not like them, and he does not want to be like his father because Richard is completely defined by his job.

Richard and Tommy leave without anything being resolved. Molly and Anna discusses Anna's writers block. Anna has published a bestselling novel, frontiers of war. Now Anna writes only in notebooks that she does not want anyone to see. She has become frustrated by the traditional novel and to experiment with writing that is somehow more truthful. She hopes her journal writing show her how to do this. Anna returns home and begins to describe her notebook. Anna has four different notebooks: black, red, yellow and blue.

The black notebook contains Anna's reflections about her novel and her experiences living in southern Rhodesia the experiences that inspired her novel. In this notebook, she has recorded her thoughts and communism and the different relationship she had while in Africa, where she lived during World War II. Anna's friend Paul Blacken Hurst and Jimmy McGrath are both in the military. Anna is also friend with Mary Rose a young African woman, and Willi Roddey, refugee from Germany. Although Anna and Willi are being living together, Anna states neither she nor Willi really like one another.

On weekends, the group of friends drives out to the Mashopi, where they get very drunk and discussed politics. Parts of their discussions involve the racial situation in colonized Africa. Mrs. Boothby, the wife of the hotel owner is threatened by this and

bans Pau from the kitchen. When she catches Jackson, who has worked for her fifteen years, the group of friends leaves and never returns to the hotel.

The yellow notebook begins as if it were a novel, the main characters of which are Julia and Ella. Ella works at a women's magazine. Ella's boss Patricia Brent, is editor of the magazine. At a party, Ella meets Paul Tanner a psychiatrist. Paul is married, and he and Ella begin an affair that will last five years. Ella feels that Paul is the first man she has ever loved. As the story in the yellow notebook continues, Ella's affair with Paul disintegrates. Paul goes to Nigeria, and Ella expects Paul to ask her to join him. He does not. While pondering her story in the yellow notebook, Anna mentions Michael, a man with whom she is having an affair. It seems that Paul represents Michael.

The blue notebook's entries recount Anna's relationship with Max who is Anna's ex-husband and the father of Anna's daughter, Janet. Anna also writes about Mrs. Marks, the therapist who Anna began to see when she could no longer write. The blue notebook then switches back and forth between Mrs. Marks and Michael, and then to news accounts of the day-war, peace talks, and the Cold War between the United States and Russia. The first section of Lessing's novel ends with the suggestion that Anna's therapy sessions with Mrs. Marks are over that Anna will be able to write again.

Molly telephones Anna because she is concerned about Tommy. When Anna hangs up the phone, she hears footsteps and sees Tommy, who wants to talk. While she listens, Anna feels that Tommy is accusing her and Molly for the way they have influenced his life. Tommy reads parts of Anna's notebook without asking permission,

and then leaves without achieving any resolution. Later, Molly calls Anna and tells her that Tommy has shot himself in the head. He is in the hospital and is not expected to live.

In the black notebook, Anna records attempts by movie and television producers to buy the film rights to her novel. However, the directors want to make changes to the story, and suggest that it could become a romance. Another producer wants to set the story in England rather than in Africa and change the racial components to differences in class and wealth. Someone else wants to turns the novel onto a musical. Anna turns down all of these offers. Although she could use the money she believes she must stay true to her story.

The red notebook entries begin as Anna meets with a group of writers who are the members of Communist Party. She is disturbed by what is happening in the party. Many members disregard reports that Stalin is a murderer because they do not want to face the failures of the Communist system. As a result, no one is willing to criticize Stalin, though many members realize that what they are writing and publishing is not based on the truth. Their inability to openly admit this makes Anna angry with them and with herself.

> The red notebook begins with Anna's involvement with the communist Party in England. Most of the entries in this notebook are about Anna's reflections on Communist philosophy or her frustration with the way that philosophy is put to work. (97)

The yellow notebook returns to Ella, who is depressed because Paul has left her. Ella's boss Patricia suggests that Ella go to Paris to interview the editor of a French magazine. In Paris, Ella realizes how much Paul has hindered her life. She had, without

being aware of it, become dependent on Paul. While she considers herself a free woman, Ella realizes she is not much better off that any of the sad married women who she meets, women who have lost themselves in meaningless and unfulfilling marriages women who are not free. On the fight home, Ella meets an American doctor, Cy Maitland and the next evening she invites him for dinner. Cy is married and has five children. After dinner they end up in bed. Ella is surprised by her objective stance with Cy. She is not emotionally involved and therefore is able to sexually satisfy him without the need to love him or even be sexually satisfied by him. Her satisfaction only stems from his. She feels more in control this way.

In the blue notebook, Anna records that she feels tensions between her role as a mother to her daughter and her role as Michael's lover. Michael is jealous of Anna's attention to her daughter, so Anna tries to schedule his visits at times when her daughter will not need her. Also, Anna sense that Michael is about to end their affair. Nevertheless, on an evening when Michael is supposed to come see her, she dresses herself in an outfit that he likes and prepares dinner for him. Michael does not show up and shortly afterward ends the relationship. Anna attempts to record all the details of her life in this journal as simply and as honestly as she can. She focuses on writing about one day to see if she is capable of capturing the reality of her actions through words. By the end of the day, when she rereads her entry, she draws lines through it, canceling it out paragraph, a synopsis of the day, listing only the barest details without any reflection. Neither version satisfies her.

Tommy does not die, but his gunshot wound leaves him blind. Although he seems to be adjusting well, Molly and Anna sense that this is not truly the case. It seems as if

Tommy is happy with his new situation and is using it to punish Molly and Anna. He has also developed a strong intuitive sense that allows him to read Molly's and Anna's minds. The women become uncomfortable around him, unable to speak confidentially with one another. Molly feels trapped by him. Anna feels guilty. She worries that Tommy shot himself because of something he read in her notebooks.

Meanwhile, Richard's second wife, Marion, stops drinking and spends every day with Tommy. Tommy, in turn, encourages Marion to become stronger and to make decisions for herself. Richard does not like the effect Tommy has on Marion and calls Anna for help, telling her that Marion has all but abandoned her children and him. Richard feels hurt, but he is also somewhat relieved. Since Marion has left him, Richard decides to divorce Marion and marry his secretary, Jean.

In the black notebook Anna recounts a memory. While at the Mashopi Hotel, Paul has gone hunting, at Mrs. Boothby's request, for pigeons so she can make a meat pie. The group of friends goes with him but is later sickened by the smell of blood and death. In another section, Anna has pasted published reviews of her novel up in her house. All the reviews are from Communist publications. They all find fault with her work but encourage her to continue writing so she can improve.

The red notebook tells of new hope in the Communist Party following the Stalin's death. Members are energized with thoughts of refurbishing the Party. Anna becomes enlivened at first and then becomes disillusioned as nothing really changes. The story of Ella continues in the yellow notebook. Ella promises herself that she will not go to bed with a man unless she can potentially have romantic feelings for him. Nevertheless, she

continues to sleep with men she does not care for. Ella and Julia discuss the cost of being free women. Men are aroused by them because they are not their wives, but neither Julia nor Ella get any deep sexual satisfaction from their affairs because they are loveless encounters.

> From this point of the novel "the third," previously. Paul's wife; then Ella's younger alter ego formed from fantasies about Paul's wife; then the memory of Paul; becomes Ella herself. As Ella cracks and disintegrates, she holds fast to the idea of Ella whole, healthy and happy. The link between the various "thirds" must be made very clear: the link is normality, but more than that — conventionality, attitudes or emotions proper to the "respectable" life which in fact Ella refuses to have anything to do with. (463)

There is a change in the style of writing in the blue notebook. Anna records only very dry details, such as the date of her birth, her maiden name, and other details of her life. In another entry, Anna states that she is a new type of woman, one that has never before existed. She feels cracks developing inside of her. This means her new personality is ready to emerge, she tells Mrs. Marks. It is at this point that Anna defines how she has divided her writing in the notebooks. The black one is meant to focus on Anna Wulf, the writer. The red one is devoted to politics. The yellow is an exercise in making up stories that reflect real experiences. The black one is like a diary.

Anna writes that she is losing her hold on who she is. Words are no longer making sense to her. If words have lost their meaning, then she, as a writer, is also losing

meaning. She starts to feel that she is nothing, and this frightens her. Marion moves into Molly's house. Marion takes Tommy to a political rally, during which they are arrested. Richard and Molly want Anna to talk to Marion and Tommy because Richard is embarrassed by the news coverage of the story and Molly is concerned for Tommy's safety during the protests. Anna agrees, though she has no idea what to say. When she gets to the house, she first meets with Marion before meeting with Tommy. Anna says things and reacts as if she were watching herself from a distance. Anna does not know why, but Tommy miraculously drops his hostile stance against both herself and Molly. Richard and Molly visit Anna later, asking how she persuaded Tommy to change his attitude.

The black notebook contains a recurring theme, Anna's novel being turned into a disastrous movie. The entry ends with the statement that Anna is closing this notebook, and will not write in it any longer. The red notebook contains information about Jimmy, one of Anna's friends from her earlier years in Africa. Jimmy tells Anna a story about Harry Mathews, a British teacher and Communist who becomes obsessed with Russia. Mathews learns to speak Russian and compiles a detailed history of Russian Communism. He believes the post-Stalin Communist Party officials will ask him to help guide them in their search for a new identity for the Party, though this never comes to pass.

Then Anna records several ideas for future short stories and novels that she hopes to write, all dealing with relationships between various types of men and women. This is a departure from other entries in the red notebook, which formerly focused exclusively on politics. The blue notebook records a very long entry about a new man in Anna's life,

Saul Green. Saul is a disturbed man, and he uses women and then hurts them when they become emotionally affected by him. Saul and Anna enter into an affair, which drags Anna further into a mental breakdown. With Saul, Anna loses her connection with reality. She moves in and out of different personalities, much like Saul does. Her emotions swing from depression to euphoria. She suffers from recurrent nightmares. At the end of the blue notebook, Anna states that she has bought a new golden notebook and will lock away her other four notebooks. When Saul sees the new golden notebook, he asks for it. Anna refuses to give it to him.

Anna becomes further detached from herself and her surroundings and states that sanity is based on enjoying the simple pleasures of the senses, which she is no longer able to do. She tells Saul that they are not good for one another and that she is not strong enough to make him leave. Saul says she must write and forces her to try. He provides the first sentence of a new novel that she will write. This sentence is the first sentence in Lessing's *The Golden Notebook.* Anna decides to give the golden notebook to Saul and recites the first sentence that he will need to use to begin his own novel.

Anna, in an attempt to reconnect with the world around her, develops a voracious appetite for newspapers. She cuts out articles and pins them to the walls. Soon, the main room of her flat is covered in newspaper clippings. She is surrounded by words, but language cannot capture the world, and it can no longer express her feelings. She continues to sense that she is going mad but knows that when her daughter comes home, Anna's role as a mother will bring her back to sanity. In the meantime, she allows herself the freedom to flounder. Molly calls one day and sends an American named Milt over to rent one of Anna's rooms. Milt is stronger and more confident than Saul, but in many

ways, he reflects Saul. Milt stays with Anna for a short time. At first, he tears down all the newspaper clippings so Anna will not go mad, then he tells her that he cannot make love to her. He leaves shortly afterward, when Anna suggests that he should go.

The novel ends with Molly and Anna discussing Molly's upcoming wedding to a businessman who has a lot of money. Molly's fiancé is only mentioned in passing, and he is never named. Molly states that Tommy, her son, has taken over his father's business. Anna will no longer write, she says, and she has accepted a job counseling married women. The two women part with a kiss.

Chapter Three

Psychic Integration

The Golden Notebook is a study in non-linearity as well as an important theme reflecting fragmentation of self and society. It explores, among other themes, mental illness, individualism and alienation, relativity of truth, dreams and psychoanalysis, feminism as well as language failure as a means of communication. It also presents a review of communism and the Communist Party in England touching on the demise of political idealism. Finally, it conveys fear of the threat of nuclear conflagration. The themes, styles and genres incorporated in this novel make it a mixture of modernism and post modernism.

The novel recounts the story of Anna Wulf, a female writer suffering from and try in not to succumb to mental illness, the four notebooks in which she records her life during the years 1950, and her attempt to tie them together in a fifth, gold-colored, notebook which covers the year 1957 or 58. The black notebook relates Anna's experience in Southern Rhodesia, before and during World War II, which inspired her best-selling novel *Frontiers of War*. Anna also logs her financial gains from publishing her novel, reviews about it and offers to make it into a film.

The red one explores her experience as a member of the Communist Party in England. The yellow one is her attempt at writing another novel; *The Shadow of the Third*, based on the painful ending of her own love affair. The blue one is Anna's personal diary. Most of the notebooks end with newspaper clippings. The notebooks are interspersed with segments entitled *Free Women* narrating the current lives of Anna and Molly, Anna's friend, their children, ex-husbands and lovers during the years 1957

The novel begins with an episode from *Free Women* followed by excerpts from Anna's black, red, yellow, and blue notebooks, in that order. This pattern is repeated four times. After the fourth time, there is a section from the gold-colored notebook followed by a fifth and final section from *Free Women*. This structure creates non-chronological, overlapping sections that interact with rather than follow one another. As a forerunner of postmodernism, with its space for "play" due to absence of linearity and different incorporated genres such as diary, autobiographical elements, novel within novel and pastiche of newspaper clippings, this novel shows that Lessing has been influenced by Bakhtin's concept of the "Chronotype" and his view of the novel as a baggy monster.

At the beginning of the novel, Anna's identity is completely fragmented: she cannot integrate her four separate notebooks into a single story, and she feels that society has split up into groups that no longer understand one another and have resorted to a "blind grasping out for their own wholeness." (96) Just like Anna's mind, the novel itself is fragmented, as the reader must constantly switch between Anna's four notebooks and disjointed thoughts within each of them. She feels that she has become multiple people and, at times, struggles to remain herself, like when she repeats, "Anna, Anna, I am Anna" (236) on the train ride home, after noticing the palpable misery and detachment of the commuters that surround her a symptom of the capitalist division of labour that reduces each worker to just one function.

Meanwhile, other characters in the novel are "multiplied": in different notebooks, many characters have two different names, and many of the same names refer to different characters the implication is that nobody can ever be a single thing. Similarly, during her tumultuous relationship with the exiled American screenwriter Saul Green, Anna finds

herself unable to predict which version of herself or Saul will show up in any given situation or argument. When she begins to confront her madness, she dreams about "alien personalities" "invading" her body and then entering others' bodies herself to gain their perspective which hints that these "invasions" might not be sinister, but rather a metaphorical solution for society's fragmentation.

Just as she tries to hold herself together, Saul frequently seems to be fighting to control his own body, and during his lengthy rants, he repeats "I, I, I, I," as though shouting his identity aloud in order to pin it down. And yet words, Anna notes repeatedly, inevitably fail to capture reality: not only do her notebooks never reach the truth of who she is or what she feels, but she realizes in agony that she is "cracking up" because words stop meaning what they are supposed to and language begins to break down.

This fragmented structure conveys fragmentation, which Lessing declares in her 1971 preface is the main theme of the novel. The mental breakdown that Anna suffers is perhaps due to the compartmentalization of her fragmented life in the division of the four notebooks conveying her feeling that there are so many Anna's, each living a separate life from the others. Hynes states "When the parts won't mesh, Anna knows panic ... because races, sexes, Anna's won't come together."(107) This obviously has its roots in the fragmentation of society after World War II and upheaval of values and conditions of life. 'The point is,' said Anna ... 'the point is, as far as I can see. Everything is cracking up." (25)

Anna's attempt to draw everything together in the gold-colored notebook at the end of the novel is on the one hand the final phase of Anna's mental breakdown, and on

the other, her attempt to overcome fragmentation and madness. Anna writes the gold-colored notebook in first person but Saul Green finishes it. After it, as

> Lightfoot stated the novel ends with a final section of *Free Women*. Her use of the gold-colored notebook represents Anna's abandonment of the fragmentation of the four notebooks as she integrates and records the whole of her awareness in this beautiful new notebook, which suggests the aspiration for creating a golden age." (280)

Anna recounts the way she views her personal life, her feelings and relationships with her daughter, friends, associates, and lovers in the blue notebook. It is here that Anna's mental illness is most vividly reflected. She reflects her feelings of disintegration with "chaotic babbling" which seems to frighten her so she stops writing about her inner struggle. The blue notebook ends with black crossing lines and newspaper clippings as if Anna is denying her own life and turning it into impersonal news.

> here she is lucid enough to see and to write out her sense that she is approaching insanity.... her panic is acute when she sees herself tempted to go in one of two directions: on one hand is the possibility of willing madness of yielding entirely to the pull of schizophrenia; on the other hand she can pull herself into balance by selling out by adopting the view that nothing really matters and that the only sensible thing is to give up and stop caring about making the outside meet the inside, the man the woman, the public the personal, the head the heart, the morally social the morally aesthetic. (103)

Lessing indicates her acceptance of Foucault's opinion about madness. In his book, *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault expressed the belief that what society terms 'madness' is not necessarily real madness. It may actually be just the influence of social forces on the meaning of, and responses to, deviant behavior that challenge the dominant discourse. In her 1971 preface to the novel, she describes several personalities, among them: "Mr. I'm-Mad-Because-They-Say-I-Am". She goes on to say:

> Anna and Saul Green the American 'break down'. They are crazy, lunatic, mad—what you will. They 'break down' into each other, into other people, break through the false patterns they have made of their pasts, the patterns and formulas they have made to shore up themselves and each other, dissolve. (117)

Hynes states that Lessing then proves her point of view through her protagonist. "Anna is driven … toward impossible and come off it, but because she knows all about what others common sense would dictate and will not admit its necessary validity." (107)

This mental breakdown Anna suffers is the result of the chaos and upheaval caused by the Second World War in the twentieth century. In its wake, the whole society suffered a disintegration that may have affected artists most of all. "Anna, the protagonist, is a woman who reflects the upheaval of modern life to an extraordinary degree through the variety of her life's involvements as depicted in her notebooks." (277) Through her, Lessing describes the alienation she has observed in the twentieth-century society and individuals.

Lessing also blurs the line between "facts" and "fiction" in *The Golden Notebook*. The *Free Women* sections are written by Anna in the third person and describe her life

and that of her friend Molly Jacobs in 1957 or 58. Lessing waits till almost the end of the novel to implicitly indicate that *Free Women* is the novel Anna subsequently wrote. Saul Green writes the first sentence of Anna's novel: "The two women were alone in the London flat" (554). The first sentence of the first *Free Women* section of *The Golden Notebook* is: "The two women were alone in the London flat" (25).

> It is a fiction based on the fragmented lives of herself and her friends, but altered to demonstrate the danger of simply repeating cyclically their patterns of disintegration rather than breaking out of those forms of consciousness. (280)

Anna tries to escape reality through turning it into published novels such as *Frontiers of War*; and novels she does not intend to publish because they are chaotic such as *The Shadow of the Third*; or by jumbling it in the notebooks, disregarding the timeline of the events and dreams she is recounting. Yet, she insists that she cannot capture reality in her notebooks.

Anna conveys her near-crackup by narrating and analyzing her dreams. This is related to another important theme in *The Golden Notebook*: psychoanalysis; a new intellectual insanity not because she lacks what many would call the common sense to recognize the interest of the twentieth-century society. Lessing used this technique to allow her antagonist a way of exploring her inner self and revealing her deepest fears.

However, Lessing vehemently denies that she has written with the intention of presenting a feminist bible. She insists that she describes women as they really are, as they talk together when alone. She describes in her novel what women really wish for, not to hone a weapon in what was termed the 'sex war' in the sixties but as an honest

expression of real women. In fact, The Golden Notebook conveys that single-minded obsession leads to mental disorder, if not madness. Lessing believes that feminism is a sort of obsession that leads to madness defeating its own cause. In that she agrees with Spivak who believes that stressing feminism is acknowledging patriarchal concepts, and accepting that feminists need to negotiate to snatch some of women's rights from a dominant discourse that will remain undisputedly patriarchal.

Lessing deals in a much subtler manner with the issue by touching on androgyny. Roberts states that Anna's "asked whether the artist was androgynous; whether a woman author had to keep her femininity apart from her writing and wear it in her life like a sort of disguise; whether you could perfect both the life and the work." (61)

Lessing seems influenced by the Sufi idea of "Wholeness" or "Oneness" which Nancy Topping Basin translates into 'androgyny' in her essay "Androgyny or Catastrophe: The Vision of Doris Lessing's Later Novels". Lessing considers that androgyny would allow women a freedom transgressing conventional boundaries of gender role which will be reached through recognizing that gender difference is a social myth and not a biological fact. Lessing conveys this idea through Anna Wulf and Saul Green's exploring their individual mind and each other's minds throughout their affair. Through the process, they create androgynous personas that finally break their writer's block as they accept their duty as writers to free the collective consciousness of their society of its false view of the difference between genders.

In the novel, Lessing discusses language failure as means of communication. Anna feels that "real experience cannot be described" in words. In the Red Notebook, she links her own feeling that "words lose their meaning suddenly" to "novels about the

break-down of language, like *Finnegan's Wake*" (272). Nearing the end of the novel, she faces this idea and decides that trying to communicate is better than giving up without a fight: All right, I know you are there, but we have to preserve the forms, don't we? And perhaps the condition of your existing at all is precisely that we preserve the forms, create the patterns have you thought of that? (549)

"Fictional" Anna reflects the belief that words are not capable of conveying one's thoughts adequately towards the end of *Free Women*. However, unlike "real" Anna, she decides to give up:

> I don't know why I still find it so hard to accept that words are faulty and by their very nature inaccurate. If I thought they were capable of expressing the truth I wouldn't keep journals which I refuse to let anyone else see except, of course, Tommy. (565)

Lessing touches on communism in England through Anna's red notebook. It is a narrative in first-person that shows Anna's disillusionment with the British Communist Party. She remembers discussions where intelligent members of the party would admit among themselves that some of the doctrines of communism are ridiculous & would defeat their own ends. However, they would still adhere to them out of loyalty. After a while, the narrative is abandoned in favor of clippings on global violence, especially that linked to the Soviet American cold war reflecting the end of "idealistic politics" era. The red book ends with an account of Anna's friend and fellow ex-Communist Harry Mathews, in his settling into marriage, paternity, school teaching reflecting the futility of it all.

> As the red book ends, she still clings to the faith that her exertion "matters," but senses that the lessons learned by herself and her mirror-friend Molly will likely be ignored by Molly's son, Tommy. (108)

As a forerunner of postmodern, *The Golden Notebook* discusses the fear of life annihilation through mass destruction weapons. Haustra states

> "Anna's writer's block is a symptom of more than too rigid a view of herself as author or the fragmentation of society around her. The reasons she is unable, and refuses, to write another novel are so complicated and deep-seated. However, the reason most immediately apparent to the reader is Anna's fear of what she perceives as increasingly imminent, large-scale doom." (213)

Anna explains to Mother Sugar "It seems to me that ever since I can remember anything the real thing that has been happening in the world was death and destruction. It seems to me it is stronger than life" (216). This image of "death and destruction" stifles Anna's creativity because she feels it is too larger than life to ignore in her writing but believes that if she wrote about it she will make it more common place than it already is as reflected by a hairdresser's description of the "H Bomb Style": the 'H' is for peroxide of hydrogen, used for coloring. The hair is dressed to rise in waves as from a bomb-burst, at the nape of the neck" (219). This flip attitude makes her think of Einstein's warning: "There emerges, more and more distinctly, the specter of general annihilation" (222).

The Golden Notebook shows, a transitional text between modernism and postmodernism expounding on potential possibilities for the authorial and female subject. On the one hand, like traditional modern novels, it narrates the story of an individual

even if it also narrates the story of the society and historical context of this subject. On the other hand, it shows a tendency towards postmodernism through its treatment and presentation of this subject. As Krouse states "By refusing to define the subject in one way or the other, the Golden Notebook makes it difficult, if not impossible, for critics to call it, simply, 'modernist,' or postmodernist". (40)

The same applies to the way that *The Golden Notebook* alludes to Joyce. Joyce, in contrast to Woolf and Lawrence, is referred to directly rather than implicitly. The two main female characters of *The Golden Notebook*, Molly and Anna, share the names of Joyce's two great female characters, Molly Bloom of *Ulysses* and Anna Livia Clarabelle of *Finnegan's Wake*. Moreover, Anna refers to Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* by name in the red notebook in relation to communication language and words. In the blue notebook, she refers to *Ulysses* linking Joyce's representation of Leopold Bloom defecating to her attempt to record her menstruation. However, *The Golden Notebook* challenges Joyce: "it takes him to task for the underlying assumption within (*Ulysses* & *Finnegan's Wake*) that language can be controlled by an author, whether through changing its emphasis or the *Golden Notebook* refuses to endorse any such aspiration. Thus, *The Golden Notebook* works as a response to and break from modernism and not just an extension of it." (51)

The Golden Notebook features extensive themes that describe twentieth century London society, particularly the role of women and artists in that society. In her 1971 preface, Lessing chooses to expand upon what she considers the main themes of the novel. However, she fails to cover the whole scope of the novel, partially proving Barthes "death of the writer" concept. Yet, this reading of the novel proves it is only a partial death as it takes what Lessing claims about her novel's main theme of fragmentation and

explore other themes that the novel offers such as mental illness, individualism and alienation, relativity of truth, dreams and psychoanalysis, language failure as a means of communication, and fear of nuclear conflagration, all of which are in some way or another related to the fragmentation of society.

Fr. Carey describes the novel saying: "*The Golden Notebook* unfolds not like a traditional novel but like a motion picture in which a series of disparate though overlapping images are flashed on a screen in the form of the notebooks. These images are held together by the commentary of the *Free Women* sections." (233-34) It is this pastiche of different images, genres and styles balanced by the more traditional novel *Free Women* that put *The Golden Notebook* between the modern and the postmodern preventing critics from simply categorizing it as one or the other.

Chapter Four

Female Bonding and Fragmentation

The novel *The Golden Notebook's* strength lies not in its arrangement of the several notebooks which make up its narrative and certainly not in the purely literary quality of the writing, but in the wide range of Mrs. Lessing's interests, and more specifically, in her attempt to write honestly about people in the modern society.

Ever since *The Golden Notebook* was published, the unique construction of it has caused dense criticism and disputes. Many scholars considered it a feminist classic and made it a staple of the feminist movement instantly upon its publication, but the author herself was personally against the idea and worries that her readers will therefore overlook the novel's inner theme which is much more complicated and fail to appreciate its artistic feature as well. Of course, *The Golden Notebook* does belong to the feminist canon but it is equally a part of the psychosocial nature of the woman as a human being.

While Lessing was trying to examine the splintered nature of the woman as a vulnerable yet potentially powerful creature, she unwittingly promoted an entire generation of people who were anxious to discover what postwar society would hold for them. Along with this unprecedented freedom came unprecedented confusion, exacerbated by mass consumerism and heady idealism.

Her sense of this fragmentation is such as to demand of her a more coherent, a more unifying life than has been possible through dedication to communism. As an enlightened, liberal white, Anna is scarcely as involved in the fight for racial justice as

other characters; while as a sensitive, intelligent, and idealistic young woman, she cannot assimilate the inconsistencies and pettiness of communism.

Although party membership and activity can be a meaningful commitment, Anna discovers that it is too limited a commitment, too narrow in its rewards and too dishonest in its demands upon the individual, to remain for long the kind of commitment she needs for her own life. Again, she must move on to a further level of commitment, that of an open and free acknowledgement of her sexual nature, before she is able to move to what I believe is her ultimate and most lasting commitment, to verbal communication through writing for a public audience.

In *The Golden Notebook,* the key issue was human relationships, especially the relationships between men and women as a key image of modern humanity or inhumanity. Sexual liberation, from the female side, and sexual restructuring, from the male, were necessary. But in 1969, Mrs. Lessing said: "I'm impatient with people who emphasize sexual revolution. I say we should all go to bed, shut up about sexual liberation, and go on with the important matters." (85) The incredibly difficult question of male-female relationships becomes "going to bed", and sexual liberation seems an act of conscious choice, whereas before the very question of liberation raised all the familiar problems of identity and will– that's free women's problems.

The Golden Notebook opens with a conversation between Anna and Molly in the summer of 1957, after a separation. These two women are close upon forty, and they're articulate upon all sorts of matters. Besides, this opening conversation, there are three other brief sections of dialogue between them, each preceding extract from the four

notebooks, and a concluding conversation – five in all. And what these two experienced women say is often explosive. "The two women were alone in the London flat". (129) It is a sunny spring day, the windows are open, and men are delivering milk and selling fresh strawberries from the country in the street. Tommy, Molly's son, is in this room upstairs. It is a cheerful opening scene, but two reasons for uneasiness soon appear: Tommy is a problem, and Anna, with a successful first novel promising a literary career, seems unable to write.

As Anna and Molly remember and reflect upon their lives and opinions, the two women find many things rather odd. Molly is particularly sensitive to the oddity of things. At the end of the book, when Molly and Anna are looking at the roads ahead of them, it is Molly who says, "It's all very odd, isn't it, Anna?" In the twentieth century, social possibilities are greater and the image of the "free woman" – often promiscuous, often intellectual, priding herself on being emotionally undemanding but often seen none the less as "castrating"– has been established in fiction by men and women authors alike. Then, what, in the third quarter of the twentieth century, are the advantages, the opportunities, and the handicaps of women determined to be free?

Anna has earned her income in the past; it derives from the royalties of her successful first novel; so, for a time at least, she can work at what she pleases, regardless of pay. The heroine and her friend, Molly seem to be conventionally "emancipated", particularly in the areas of sexual morality and their ability to move freely through what is always an explicitly masculine world.

Then, does these "free women" really lead a happy life? Actually not. In the novel, Lessing presents a psychological world of the modern free women to the readers through her unique narrating techniques and the character's self-analysis. From without, from the point of view of society at large, Anna and her friend Molly seem to lead "free lives, that is, lives like men" (302). Anna is, in every accepted social sense, free: from financial pressures and domestic ones, from the blindly accepted restrictions of conventional morality, from traditional class-definitions, from inarticulateness, ignorance, stupidity. However, she is, for exactly these reasons, to men an appropriate object for casual lust: when their wives go to the hospitals to have babies, they expect to be welcomed to Anna's bed. Her "freedom" thus becomes a means for her victimization.

Anna's own self-perception, she is bound by her physical nature as a woman; every month her period makes her "feel helpless and out of control" (176). Her emotions limit her possibilities: particularly the diffuse and irrational sense of guilt which she shares with women in general; and, even more emphatically, her felt need for love and protection. As for men, Molly and Anna "remain interested in men with a curiosity that is almost archaeological; as if there were so few good ones left that it is necessary to hunt for them amid the ruins (384)." A complaint frequently made about *The Golden Notebook* is that its failure to depict any emotionally adequate men amounts to a serious falsification of actuality. But the paucity of good men helps to focus the problems of good women – "good" in quite a new sense. "For women like me," reflects Ella "integrity isn't chastity, it isn't fidelity, it isn't any of the old words. Integrity is the orgasm" (333). Ella, like Anna, experiences orgasm only with men she loves. And love is, for a woman, part of wholeness – integrity in the root sense.

The world of *The Golden Notebook* is a female world but its feminism gains no sense of closeness or blindness. On the contrary, it is boldly revealing the inner world of the contemporary female intellectuals. Through the complicated relationships between the heroine Anna and her lovers, it further reveals the predicament people faced in with the modern society thus drawing our attention to the seriously in balanced relationship between men and women.

Among so many men Anna has engaged with, the only one who is meaningful to Anna is her lover Michael. Anna has lived together with him for five years. She is so deeply committed to Michael that she is willing to do anything for him. But this affection is as well self-contradictory. "We are happy together most of the time, then suddenly I have feelings of hatred and resentment for him" (259), because he always "makes some crack about the fact I have written a book – he resents it, makes fun of my being 'authoress'; He is ironical about Janet (Anna's daughter), that Anna "put being a mother before loving him" and warns her that "he does not intend to marry her" (407). His words and behaviors make Anna feel a kind of coldness and displeasure. When he feels that he should leave, he leaves resolutely, as if it is an unimportant experience. Anna knows that sooner or later Michael will leave her but she tries to ignore this fact. She has enjoyed transient happiness but suffered deeper misery and helplessness.

Actually, what Anna desires is not that excessive. She didn't ask for marriage. What she wants is only a kind of steadiness and true love. However, before Anna's sincerity, Michael flinched. He's afraid of bondages, responsibilities and the loss of his freedom. The crux of the relationship between Anna and Michael is not individual but social. The cruelty of war makes people faithless and the establishment of Socialism

enables people to observe problems existed in the capitalistic society with a keen insight. The feminist movement makes these relationships all the more complicated and controversial. Actually, it is a faithful portrayal of the psychological crisis in the western world in 1950s. Under such conditions, there could only be opposition and animosity between men and women, without a common basis for people to get along harmoniously.

So, after longtime observation and consideration, Anna finally draws such a conclusion: "the resentment, the anger, is impersonal. It is the disaster of women in our time. I can see it in women's faces, their voices, every day, or in the letters that come to the office. The women's emotion: resentment against injustice, an impersonal poison. The unlucky ones, who do not know it is impersonal, turn it against their men" (238).

Now that the crux has been found out, how to solve it becomes another problem. Though sensible woman like Anna endeavors to fight against it, how about the result? In the male-dominant culture, men and women have conflicts in their interests. Women look for security and protection while men refuse the role which women entrust on them. Anna has realized this divergence and knows that the pains she suffers can never be remedied as the problem can never be solved. In the modern society, women need men's understanding as well as sincerity. Upon this foundation, Anna and Saul experienced joys and relaxation, and so the hatred, fears between them disappear as well.

Saul admitted that "men had pressure on them to be successful or get married" (241). This pressure again buttons up the strongest emotion they've ever felt and disposes of it. Just as Anna says: "That's what's wrong with us all. All our strongest emotions are buttoned up, one after another" (254). Nevertheless, the harmonious state between Anna

and Saul is transient since subconsciously, both of them still fears about the "shackles" of the opposite sex. It is this fear that make everything abnormal and ugly, and which cannot be cured by any psychoanalyst. But after all, they are making efforts to overcome it and will never give up. It is, to a certain extent, quite like the human society, though there're so many obstacles and turn-backs, people still take pains to make progress thus pushing the whole society to advance.

Anna's problem, her writing block, leads her obviously enough to a psychoanalyst of this interesting woman doctor, whom Anna and Molly call Mother Sugar, Mrs. Lessing draws a fascinating portrait. The sessions with her expose both private and public neuroses. In other words, Doris Lessing "grasps the connection between Anna Wulf's neuroses and the public disorders of the day" (376). The world has changed so much. Now it is a world with nations, systems, economic blocks, hardening and consolidating; a world where it would become increasingly ludicrous even to talk about freedom, or the individual conscience. Shut in, besieged, surrounded by madness, frustration, sickness, inadequate, furtive sex, gated with hyena-like journalists howling outside, with nuclear bombs in production, with marches and countermarches, with threats always looming – under such a chaotic environment.

In order to remain self-integrity, an individual person has no choice but be more and more alienated and isolated from this turmoil day after day, thus forming a common psychological crisis in today's western world. In Anna's personal experience, one responds to felt limitation by fragmentation. Women have long been accustomed to divide their lives into compartments; Anna's mode of keeping things separate, isolating

parts of her experience in individual notebooks, although more complicated, literary, and self-aware than that of most women, has the same meaning.

She replies to the threat of chaos, which makes freedom meaningless, by creating limited orders, necessary, but necessarily false; recognizing their falsity, she sees herself therefore as an enemy of possibility. But communicating in this way, Anna is paradoxically exercising the very quality mentioned above as impossible in our world, the freedom of the individual – the freedom to fight, to "push boulders", to write for others, to work responsibly to improve the world, to try to eliminate personal and social chaos, to see oneself as one really is.

The world moves toward its destruction, the political and social scene reflecting the unsureness of individuals: in a sense this is the novel's subject. But it does not feel important either, except as a weighty demonstration of the urgency of the heroine's efforts toward self-discovery. Only this exploration of her own inner life matters. So, in *The Golden Notebook*, for Ella, Anna's alter ego, this sense of isolation continues beyond the vicarious act of writing out, as a form of therapy, her emotions and sense of isolation. Again, and again, she finds nothing to write but patterns of defeat, death, irony.

She refuses these; she fails to force patterns of happiness of simple life; but she finally finds it possible to accept the pattern of self-knowledge which means unhappiness or at least a dryness, and by searching in this negative pattern, she can, she hopes, twist a positive pattern into shape. And by conceiving of a man and a woman, "both at the end of their tether", "both cracking up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits" (275), a "new kind of strength" is found.

The self-knowledge which seems to be at the heart of Mrs. Lessing's theme in *The Golden Notebook* is clearly, then necessary for mental equilibrium and emotional stability, and is, at least in the case of Anna Wulf, capable of being gained through a psychological and mental descent into hell. Through writing, public writing, such as a novel, not private writing, such as the notebook Anna is able to relate meaningfully again to the world and to those she knows. Although others can be committed to other causes, writers as Anna must, in Lessing's words, recreate "warmth and humanity and love of people" in their writing. Knowing was an "illumination". The re-affirmation in new and original terms of existing values, or, where old traditions have decayed, a passionate search for new ones, is surely one of the major tasks of the artists. As Abrams said:

> The most disappointing feature of fiction since the war is that so few writers have gone beyond merely stating the problems, the search hardly ever begins in earnest – or, where it does, usually peters out in defeatism, personal despair or mere cleverness. And yet, one cannot help asking, when has there been an age which more desperately needed novelists to undertake the task? (235)

Doris Lessing realized that she must get beyond the mere formulation of contemporary problems and attitudes and the necessity for search is certainly recognized. In *The Golden notebook*, the heroine has lived through the same years of frustration and disillusionment and experienced the same restlessness, but the fact that her formative years were spent in Africa gave her a certain detachment, strengthened by the disciplined viewpoint which she gained during her period of attachment to the Communist Party. She had, in consequence, a clearer idea of what she was about than many of her English

contemporaries. Besides discovering the problems, she always endeavors to find a solution.

Therefore, the notebooks contain the seed of possibility, for they record not only fact but its imaginative reshaping. Anna's diaries, written in these different colored notebooks, each corresponds to a different part of herself. The black notebook – about Africa, about her writing, about her finances – offers the truth of feeling, dominated by what Anna comes to consider her "lying nostalgia" for the past. The truth of social perspective shapes the red notebook, about Anna's relation to the Communist Party; the yellow one, for fiction, offers the truth of the imagination; the blue, a conventional journal, provides the truth of detail.

Here, language is for Anna the only conceivable means to freedom. Her experience produces dead ends, defeats touching nothing but hopelessness; yet writing about experience can redeem it. It is through this disintegration that Anna is able to discover a new "wholeness" which she writes about in the final notebook – the golden notebook! The fact that Anna as a free woman finally choose the way for her self-salvation should not be taken for a kind of attachment to the male gender thus drawing the conclusion that the feminist movement has suffered a thorough failure. In fact, it is Anna's effort to search for a new "wholeness" or a perfect personality after experiencing the disintegration.

At the end of this novel, in one chapter of The Golden Notebook, Anna hears such a new strong voice:

> But my dear Anna, we are not the failures we think we are. We spend our lives fighting to get people very slightly less stupid than we are to accept truths that the great men have always known. All our lives, you and I, we will use all our energies, all our talents, into pushing that boulder another inch up the mountain. (413)

Here, the author borrows idea from the legend, adopting an optimistic conception to observe what cost her and the whole human society for their progress and advancement. May be in the eyes of those utilitarianisms, this quest can do nothing to improve people's living conditions, not to mention opening a road for women's liberation, but it isn't difficult to figure out a kind of noble spirit which is deep rooted in the western intellectuals. Though, the quests on all the aspects of life turn out to be futile, people still remain hope for the future. It is right this spirit that Lessing has entrusted to Anna and all the explorers for the human society.

Chapter Five

Summation

Doris Lessing has always been a writer interested in the future. Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* is a radical work, whose character nonetheless derives from and is encompassed by literary tradition. Doris Lessing set out to write a novel that was neither morally deformed by the politics and mores of its own reality nor was forced to process the deformity through modernist techniques.

But if *The Golden Notebook* is a consciously traditional text, its forebears are Tolstoy and Stendhal and Chekhov, not Jane Austen or George Eliot. The evasiveness of the English novel has nothing in common with Lessing's personal and political realism at all. Of the English novelists, only D.H. Lawrence can be found – though found strongly – in the make-up of *The Golden Notebook*, and something of the loathing and rejection Lawrence inspired was to be Lessing's, too.

The Golden Notebook's radicalism lies not in the author's intention to break with or rebel against past forms, but to take breakage itself – or "breakdown", her preferred word – as her subject. That subject is made concrete in the person of a writer, Anna Wulf, who cannot write. In creating Anna, Lessing created also a distinction of which the book itself fell foul when it came out in 1962. In this novel the artist is not potent but bankrupt. Anna can't write because, as she admits, what she writes isn't true.

"The parochialism of our culture is intense," Lessing wrote in her 1971 preface to the novel, in which she confesses that although she believed she had a balanced and indeed humble view of the value of literary criticism, over the hostile reception to *The*

Golden Notebook she "lost it". "There is no doubt that to attempt a novel of ideas is to give oneself a handicap." The narrative's remarkable construction, through which its ambitions "to talk through the way it was shaped" are so brilliantly realized, was when it first emerged – subjected to precisely the reductive reading against which it militates.

If *The Golden Notebook* has one unmistakable theme, it is the danger of uncoupling the personal from the universal, of seeing the subjective as inimical to even undermining of objectivity. The novel's extraordinary achievement lies in its demonstration of subjectivity as elemental, as a life force whose containment, as Anna Wulf has discovered, causes human identity to collapse. "Nothing is personal, in the sense that it is uniquely one's own. Writing about oneself, one is writing about others."

Early critics and readers of *The Golden Notebook* did not see things this way at all. They saw a book by a woman about a woman, and in "personalizing" the novel enforced the very limitation against which it warns. Even though the failure of Marxism is one of *The Golden Notebook*'s great subjects, Lessing admits that the intelligent early readings of the text came largely from Marxist critics, who were able to "look at things as a whole and in relation to each other".

Lessing resisted the labelling of *The Golden Notebook* as a feminist novel, though she conceded that it was written "as though the attitudes that have been created by the Women's Liberation movements already existed". Hence the misunderstandings by her critics: "some books are not read in the right way because they have skipped a stage of opinion, assumed a crystallization of information in society which has not yet taken place". In fact, what Lessing concerns herself with in the novel is the adjustment of the

relationship between men and women as it was being lived in the contemporary era, not its distillation as "opinion". This adjustment was many-faceted, infinitely complex, and her great achievement – like Lawrence's in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* was to posit the individual, male and female, as a structure through which evolving forces and historical currents pass.

In a sense *The Golden Notebook* begins where Lawrence left off, with the idea of "free women" – a phrase Lessing uses as the title of the novel's freestanding interior text. Like him, she writes intimately about sex, parenthood, creativity, work, belief and politics, and like him she does so not through people with enormous power or importance in the world but through a concept of intelligent private life that acts as a prism for these larger forces.

The idea of the notebooks, however, is what makes Lessing's vision even more radical than Lawrence's and it remains of great significance to 21st-century readers. As a paradigm of the modern self, the set of different-colored notebooks belonging to the writer Anna Wulf continues to serve the novel's themes of compartmentalization and breakdown half a century on. These notebooks represent the strain to personality of unintegrated consciousness, and it remains as characteristic of female experience now as then that what Lessing calls the existence of "false dichotomies and divisions" the self as fragmentary and compartmentalized and thus as potentially dishonest in and of itself damages individuality and its status in culture. The artificial-personal supplants the universal-personal; truth becomes intermittent and fractured, calling for madness,

breakdown and disintegration of personality in order for division and falsehood to be swept away.

The different notebooks can no longer be written in: only the book of synthesis, the golden notebook, has a future. This compelling idea, so classical in its interpretations of violence and change, continues to offer a valid way of thinking about who we are and why. Indeed, the modern reader may find *The Golden Notebook* far franker, more open, more intellectual and more politically and personally revolutionizing a text than its first readers did. She may find it more necessary, or even perhaps more shocking, for it makes the age seem prim and puritanical and half-witted by comparison, not to mention more parochial., so I doubt this would come as any surprise to her at all.

Racism is not a central topic in *The Golden Notebook* but the problem is mentioned when the protagonist, Anna, talks about her successful novel "Frontiers of War" which concerns race relations and forbidden love in southern Africa. Doris Lessing —herself growing up on a farm in Rhodesia-experienced racism and developed like Anna a strong resistance towards suppression and exploitation of the black natives.

"Golden Notes" is a form of fragmentary form, multiplicity of narrative. It can't be expressed. It can be called a literary masterpiece that conveys the golden truth to the reader through a seemingly complicated, disorderly, multi-personal form layout. The post-modernist writers are logical, closed, and Coherence and so on are very resentful. As the original uncertainty is based on the uncertainty of the plot, Golden Notes has become one of the outstanding novels of post-modernism in the UK.

The novel liberates from the traditional narrative development and replaces space time with psychological time, breaking the time and space. The boundaries of the novel, the frequency of the narrative is repetitive, such as Anna's past in the past–the description of the black notes and the blue notes all in the dreams of Anna; the emotional life of Anna and Michael in the blue notes, Anna and Michael in the yellow notes, the story of Ella and his lover is reconstructed to re-deconstruct the inner heart. Through the fragmented time narrative, the author highlights the most important moments in Anna's life, which makes the reader feel confused.

The structure of the novel is a study in non-linearity as well as an important theme reflecting fragmentation of self and society. It explores, among other themes, mental illness, individualism and alienation, relativity of truth, dreams and psychoanalysis, feminism as well as language failure as a means of communication. It also presents a review of communism and the Communist Party in England touching on the demise of political idealism. Finally, it conveys fear of the threat of nuclear conflagration. The themes, styles and genres incorporated in this novel make it a mixture of modernism and post modernism.

The time of the whole novel extends in a non-linear way. The author shattered and completely mixed life between the protagonist Anna 1940 and 1957, bringing readers into Anna's life scenes to learn about Anna. The story evolved in Anna's short life segment. The stories of the four small sections of the four notes are completely inconsistent, have no logic, and are not controlled. In the fragmentation of time, Anna

describes her experience in Africa, the crisis of faith, the emotional life, the role of mother, self-deconstruction and self-deconstruction.

In traditional novels, writers usually focus on the development of the plot and the end of the closed style. Postmodern art is in the eyes of Lyotard "rejecting the graceful form of comfort and the unanimity of the taste-this kind of unanimity will make the public share the memory that can't be obtained. It seeks a new form of performance, the purpose is not to obtain a sense of pleasure, but to produce a more intense sense of impossibility.

The multiple narratives reflect Anna's suspect "freedom". The novel's divided-ness enacts the apparent incompatibility of the different needs that she is "free" to recognize. The multiplicity is both liberating and desperate. It gives Anna a kind of versatility, allowing her to be true to her different ideas about herself. It also expresses her frustration and sense of fragmentation: parts of the various notebooks are crossed out, lines of narrative suddenly halted, personal reflections displaced by horrified transcriptions from newspapers.

Material is drawn, conventionally enough, from the author's life. Anna records precise memories of her early adulthood in an unnamed country that is clearly Southern Rhodesia, where Lessing grew up. In Part 2 of her autobiography, *Walking in the Shade.* Lessing has made sometimes startlingly clear how directly she took characters and episodes from her life. Yet in the novel, these are deliberately wrenched out of recognition, made authorial by being turned into the material of Anna's experiments in private writing.

The idea of a novel containing multiple narratives is hardly new. What was - and is extraordinary about *The Golden Notebook* is the use of multiple narratives that all in some sense belong to the same character. Even the third-person narrative is so intimate with Anna's thoughts, so often the transcription of her perceptions, that one might say that it belongs to her. In a self-reflexive turn near the end of the novel, it is found that the opening sentence of "Free Women" has been suggested to Anna by Saul as the beginning of her next novel. So perhaps this has been written by her as well as about her.

The Golden Notebook is a device, but also structures the plot of the novel, which takes Anna beyond the division of herself into four books, four narratives. Anna finally writes the golden notebook, where she is reconciled to her different stories of herself. "It's been necessary to split myself up, but from now on I shall be using one only". The notebooks dramatize what is missing from "Free Women", the framing narrative about these modern women as conventionally told.

In the novel's final section, "Free Women 5", Lessing gives us its quiet, bathetic conclusion. Anna ends up working as a marriage guidance counsellor. Given the number of married men with whom she has had affairs, you might think the irony almost too much. But the ordinary story has to be tied up, neatly. It has to contain, to hold in, the tumult of those other narratives.

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Issues of Immigrant Life and Cultural Assimilation in Bharthi Mukherjee's

Desirable Daughters

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Issues of Immigrant Life and Cultural Assimilation in Bharthi Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Vinitha R. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Issues of Immigrant Life and Cultural Assimilation in Bharthi Mukherjee's** ***Desirable Daughter*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Vinitha R

Vinitha R.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Issues of Immigrant Life and Cultural Assimilation in Bharthi Mukherjee's** ***Desirable Daughters*** analyses the life and cultural assimilation of immigrant people.

The first chapter **introduction** deals with a short introduction about Indian literature and about the biography of Bharthi Mukherjee discussing the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Life of an Immigrant** deals with the issues of immigrants and their sufferings to hold their identity.

The third chapter **Cultural Assimilation** discusses about the dreadful hindrance of the protagonist and her assimilation between Hindu tradition and Western culture.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techinque and Style** deals with the author's narrative, technique and style.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and ultimately projects the hardships of immigrant people as a result of cultural assimilation.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

"That's why Literature is so fascinating, Its always up for interpretation, and would be a hundred different things to a hundred different people. It's never the same thing twice" (*Snow Like Ashes 20*). The seed for Indian literature in English language was sown during the period of the British rule in India. Day by day that seed had grown and blossomed into a green tree abundant with fragrant flowers and ripe fruits. The fruits were tasted not only by the natives but were equally enjoyed by the foreigners. In modern times, it is protected by a number of writers who are getting awards and privileges all over the world.

The beginning of the English literature movement in India was the first three decades of the 19th century and it was a slow incubation. Before the arrival of British in Indian, English was considered as a foreign language. English Language influenced several fields such as education, literature and medium of communication, to name a few. Indian English Literature refers to works by Indian writers who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the many regional and native languages of India. English literature originated in India speaks of their own cultural heritage and value systems. It provides an opportunity to make a deep dive in Indian consciousness and sensibility.

Indian writers, poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists have been making crucial contributions to the world literature since Pre-Independence era. It had attained self-sufficient status in the kingdom of world literature. This movement has continued to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the picture of life in India.

There are critics and commentators in England and America who appreciate

Indian English novels. Indian novelists had generated many creative literary works and their works are the greatest contribution to the world literature. Their works considered the issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, and individual consciousness. Novelists prove their inner creative desire in English language, which is truly an alien tongue for them. Indian novelists overcome the difficulty of writing in a foreign language. They develop the individual style for themselves by learning the nuances of the language. English is not an alien language. It is the language of our intellectual makeup like Sanskrit or Persian.

In the elite and the middle classes, English has obtained a rare benefit and popularity in India. It is used by writers to give shape to the conflicting situations and issues that challenge the human soul. It expresses the innate talents of the writers. The writers made conscious effort to express the conceit and change of an individual's consciousness through the language. They aptly proved the expansiveness and spirit of the Indian English movement.

The struggles for independence had huge impact on the sense of national consciousness among the literary profession. The freedom struggle showed images of the awakened Indians to regain their freedom from the British. The writers were able to grow their point of view, which ultimately helped to motivate and guide the masses. Thus the action on religious aestheticism was replaced by concerns on socio-political issues.

The joy of attaining the Independence was suddenly spoiled by partition of 1947. The horrors, tragic consequences of partition like the large scale migration, careless robbery and merciless slaughter were portrayed by the writers in their works which captured the interest, and imagination of the readers. The Indian English novels began to prove its mark in the global literary scenario. The Post Independence writer's

themes were East-West conflict, multi-culturalism, social realism, gender issues, and comic aspect of human nature, ecological concerns, magic realism and diasporic writings.

Indian writing in English has commended liberal approval in both home and abroad, is now in its full swing. It has designed a new track, a new vision —a vision that is filled with unwavering faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites etc. The works of the Indian loyalists of English fiction revealed that their works were not an imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit.

The history of Indian English Literature is one and a half centuries old, and many writers contributed to the different genres. The novel as a literary form was new to India, and it was influenced by the British writers in the nineteenth century. The novel as a clear genre of literature, has witnessed extraordinary growth in contemporary society. The novel offers greater flexibility and freedom, it opens up new view of experimentation in artistic creativity. This freedom and flexibility of novelistic communication attracted a number of creative talents to the field.

In novelistic discussion mostly, history, politics, and social life became tools that explain deep shades of life. The novel, roughly defined as a long story in prose, is primarily an entertainment, presenting a realistic picture of life. The Indian novels in English established itself as a part of Indian literature and claimed its unique identification. Though the novels were more refined in the later years, fiction was actually the last to arrive on the Indian literary scene. The development of the Indian English fiction can be divided into two phases: the pre-independence period and the post-independence phase.

A pioneer of this literature movement was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The first of

the Indian English poets are Henry Vivian Derozio, Madhusudan Dutt, Aru and Toru Dutt, and Manmohan Ghose. Kashiprasad Ghosh is considered the first Indian poet to write in English. The first book written by an Indian in English was *Travels of Dean Mahomed,* a travel narrative by Sake Dean Mahomed published in England in 1793. Sake Dean Mahomed was an Indian traveller, surgeon and businessman who was one of the most notable early non-European immigrants to the Western World. He introduced Indian method of cooking and shampoo baths to Europe and he offered healing massage. He was also the first Indian to publish a book in English.

Shoshee Chunder Dutt the first writer of fiction was a Bengali author, historian, poet, and uncle of Romesh Chunder Dutt. He also wrote under two pseudonyms: J.A.G. Barton and Horatio Bickerstaffe Rowne. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote *Rajmohan's Wife* and published it in 1864. It is the first Indian novel written in English. Chattopadhyay wrote thirteen novels and many serious, serio-comic, satirical, scientific and critical treaties in Bengali. His works were widely translated into other regional languages of India as well as in English.

In the beginning, however political writing in the novel or essay format was dominant in Raja Ram Mohan Roy's works. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered by many historians as the Father of the Indian Renaissance. In 2004, Roy was ranked number 10 in BBC's poll of the Greatest Bengali of all time. Kisari Mohan Ganguli translated the *Mahabharata* into English, the only time the epic has ever been translated in its entirety into a European language. Dhan Gopal Mukerji was the first Indian author to win a literary award in the United States. An outstanding Indo-Anglian writer Aurobindo Ghosh whose poetic magnum composition is *Savitri,* an epic. In prose his most effective work is *The Life Divine* outlining his metaphysics in a rich language.

Some of Rabindranath Tagore's works were originally written in English. Author of the profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse of *Gitanjali*, he became in 1913 the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. He is sometimes referred to as the Bard of Bengal.

Another Indian writer in English was Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India who rendered familiar things with an essence of colour and romance. *The Golden Threshold, The Bird of Time* and *The Broken Wing* are her important works. Jawaharlal Nehru's prose works, *The Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History*, are his famous works.

In the genre of novel, three early writers made a mark. Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie, Untouchable, The Big Heart* and other novels are about the underprivileged in India. R.K. Narayan has become famous for creating the imaginary Malgudi as the locale for most of his novels. He has a humorous manner and an eye for the comic in the world around him. His works include *Swami and His Friends, The Dark Room, The Guide, Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Man Eater of Malgudi.*

Raja Rao is a good short story writer and has written only four novels but they are significant. They include *Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope*, and *The Cat and Shakespeare*. Besides the legendary Indian English literary personalities like Rabindranath Tagore or R.K. Narayan, later novelists like Kamala Markandaya wrote *Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury, A Silence of Desire, Two Virgins*. Manohar Malgaonkar was an Indian author of both fiction and nonfiction in the English language. He was also a big game hunter, a civil servant, a mine owner and a farmer. His works are *Distant Drum, Combat of Shadows, The Princes, A Bend in the Ganges* and *The Devil's Wind.*

Anita Desai's works *Clear Light of Day, The Accompanist, Fire on the*

Mountain, Games at Twilight have been shortlisted for the Booker prize three times. She received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, from the Sahitya Akademi India's National Academy of Letters. She won the British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea*.

Nayantara Sehgal has ceaselessly captured the spirit of an independent India struggling to break away from the British and establish a distinct identity. She was awarded the 1986 Sahitya Akademi Award for English, for her novel, *Rich Like Us*, by the Sahitya Akademi. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* granted with the Padma Bhushan in 1974. But he returned the award in 1984 in protest against Operation Blue Star in which the Indian Army raided Amritsar. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India. Bhabani Bhattacharya's works *So Many Hungers, He Who Rides the Tiger, Music for Mohini* are other Indian novelists famous for their writing in English. In his mid-thirties Bhattacharya began writing fiction set in historically and socially realistic contexts.

During the 1980s and 1990s, India had emerged as a major literary nation. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* had become a rage around the world, winning the Booker Prize. Other Indian English Literature novelists of the contemporary times include V.S. Naipaul, Shobha De, G. V. Desani, Ananthanarayanan M., Arun Joshi, O.V. Vijayan, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor and Amitav Ghosh. Vikram Seth wrote a novel in verse. *The Suitable Boy*, is equally famous for amazing advance he got from his publishers. Upamanyu Chatterjee has made a name for himself as a leading modern nolvelist.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* won the 1997 Booker Prize and became an international best-seller overnight. Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Kiran Desai's *Strange Happenings in the Guava Orchard*, Sudhir Kakar's *The Ascetic of*

Desire. Ardeshir Vakil's work *Beach Boy* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* are some other famous writers of Indian origin. The mid-20th century Indian literature in English had witnessed the emergence of poets such as Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, Keki N. Daruwalla and Gieve Patel.

Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-born American writer explored the internal culture clashes of her immigrant characters in the award-winning collection. *The Middleman and Other Stories* and in novels like *Jasmine*. Bharati Mukherjee, a native of Calcutta, attended schools in England, Switzerland and India, earned advanced degrees in creative writing in the United States and lived for more than a decade in Canada, affording her a wealth of experience in the modern realities of multiculturalism. She wrote in an autobiographical statement for the reference work *Contemporary Authors* in 2005. Mukherjee's work features not only cultural clashes but undercurrents of violence.

Mukherjee's early novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*, both published in the early 1970s, are novels about the isolation of Indian expatriates. A reading of *Days and Nights in Calcutta* reveals that there is a strong autobiographical element in *A Tiger's Daughter*. Tara Banerjee, like the Bharati Mukherjee of *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, is an outsider in India because of her decision to leave the subcontinent, to live in north America and to marry an American *mleccha* (outcase) husband. On her return, Tara sees India through the eyes of a Western imagination rather than through her own childhood eyes. Her sense of alienation in Calcutta is symbolized by her regular visits to the Catelli-Continental Hotel, from where she views the turmoil of Calcutta from the safe heights of a tourist, cut off from the "real" India which seethes below her. Tara is no longer able to feel a part of her family, who belong to an old Bengal which is now lost to her, nor is she able to feel at ease with her old friends

who, like her family, belong to a Calcutta which is rapidly fading, and who, in their different ways are as isolated as Tara from the beast beneath them. On another level, *The Tiger's Daughter* is an interesting response to E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India.*

The theme of expatriation and isolation which is handled with such assurance in *The Tiger's Daughter* is again treated in her second novel. In *Wife*, Dimple Dasgupta is married off to a young engineer, and soon finds herself emigrating to America. She finds her new life impossible to adjust to, and her attempts to become American-to learn to speak American-English by watching the television, for example-cause her to question her own cultural values, and even her own happiness. These are questions she might never have asked herself in Calcutta, and had she done so and found herself equally disillusioned, her solution, the novel suggests, would probably have been suicide. The infidelity and the murder which brings the novel to its shocking close are the alternatives with which Dimple's American experience has provided her.

Darkness is an important landmark for Mukherjee. It is in this book, her first collection of stories, that she begins to exchange the robes of an Indian expatriate writer for the new, but not borrowed robes of a North American writer who is an immigrant. The specifically Canadian stories in this collection continue to explore the painful world of the expatriate she writes about in *Wife*—indeed the story "Visitors" is a re-working of the essential elements of that novel. Other stories explore North America through the alien voices of its various immigrant cultures—Italian, Latin American, Sri Lankan, as well as Indian. With *The Middleman and Other Stories* Mukherjee's exchange of mantles is complete. In these stories, sometimes with anger, often with violence, sometimes with comedy, often with tenderness,

Mukherjee gives voice to the "other" within North America. The result is a broader, more detailed portrait of the North American immigrant experience than *Wife* or even the impressive stories in *Darkness* provide. "The Management of Grief" which deals with the sorrow of the bereaved relatives of the victims of the 1985 Air India disaster, is perhaps the most moving story in the collection. The horror of that tragedy is dealt with in harrowing detail in Mukherjee's second nonfiction collaboration, *The Sorrow and the Terror.*

After a gap of fourteen years, Mukherjee made a welcome return to the novel form with the publication of *Jasmine*, which explores female identity through the story of an Indian peasant woman whose path takes her from the Punjab, to Florida, to New York, to Iowa, and as the novel draws to a close she is about to set off for California. With each new move the protagonist reinvents herself with a new name—Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase, Jane—and with each new name she moves closer to her dream of being an American, of belonging to the New World. Jasmine's ongoing journey is an effective device which highlights her rootless position and her search for identity. The move to California, which resonates with hope and invests her with the aspirations of America's early pioneers, suggests that Jasmine has finally found her identity in America, which, perhaps more than any other country, can contain her many identities without contradiction.

In *The Holder of the World*, her most accomplished work to date, Mukherjee turns her attention to one of the founding novels of the postcolonial American canon—Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.* Reversing the usual binary opposition between occidental and oriental texts, Mukherjee presents Hawthorne's novel as one which has been written out of a knowledge of India. And in doing this Mukherjee has written herself (as an American whose roots are in India) into her text

perhaps more effectively even than in the seemingly autobiographical *The Tiger's Daughter*. The novel is also interesting for the way it very subtly parodies the Western construct of India as a nation and the perception of Indians as a homogenous group.

In Mukherjee's most recent novel, *Leave It to Me*, some of the themes of her earlier fiction—notably identity and dislocation—are again important. And as in *Jasmine*, the central character of this novel goes through a series of incarnations as she is abandoned in India by her American hippie mother and Eurasian father, raised in Schenectady, New York, by her adoptive Italian-American parents, and then (in classic road movie style) moves to San Francisco to look for her birth mother. This novel is Mukherjee's most American work: an enigmatic and alarming meditation on the consequences of the America's recent past—the hippie culture of the 1960s, Vietnam—rather than a novel of dislocation in the diasporic sense of her earlier fiction. In this novel Mukherjee's shift from immigrant diasporic writer to multicultural writer is complete. However, it may be that Mukherjee has moved too far. Few of the characters are as convincing as those who populated her earlier works, and at times the level of coincidence works against this novel—as when, in a moment of epiphany, Debby reinvents herself as Devi Dee, without realizing that she has taken the name of the goddess after whom the Indian village of Devigaon, where she was born, is named.

The Tree Bride is very different from Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*, a brilliantly woven, thoughtful and intelligent story of three upper-class Calcutta, India-born Brahmin sisters, renowned for their beauty, brains wealth, and privileged position in society. It was an eloquent, lovingly painted portrait of a family steeped in ancient culture and conservative tradition that adapt to all that modern education and

technology can offer. *The Tree Bride* is a one-person narrative of British history in India. A great deal of detail has gone into recreating the British men who left their homeland to fulfill what they believed was a higher purpose of instilling order and discipline in foreign lands.

The history lesson is long, sometimes tedious and sometimes boring. Mukherjee with her insightful understanding of human nature and deep psychological analysis never really succeeds in bringing the dead British men to life. But she does shine with her evocation of the city of her birth, the Brahmin society's snobbery and in capturing the intricacies of Tara and her namesake the tree bride. *The Tree Bride* weaves its way in and out of continents and timelines.

Bharati Mukherjee is a writer who is at her best when she draws on her experiences of the Old World while writing with insight about the New World to which she now belongs. Her more recent books, particularly *The Holder of the World*, confirm that hers is an original voice at the cutting edge of American immigrant multicultural literature.

With her husband, Clark Blaise, Mukherjee wrote *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, *The Sorrow and the Terror* and *The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy*. Mukherjee also wrote several works of social analysis, including *Political Culture and Leadership in India*, an assessment of leadership trends in West Bengal. She won Canada Arts Council grant, 1973 and 1977; Guggenheim fellowship in 1977; National Book Critics Circle award in 1989; Pushcart prize, 1999. She makes use of Indian phrases alongside English words and have tried to reproduce a blend of the Indian and the Western cultures.

> One time you mentioned the loneliness inside of marriage and I did not understand what you were saying. Two people are together; they have

> come from the same place; they share the same values, the same language. Practically speaking, they are the two halves of one consciousness. They eat the same food; they have a child; they sleep in the same bed, how can they be lonely. (40)

This project paper is on Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters.* In *Desirable Daughters* three Calcutta-born sisters follow the differing paths. Tara, Padma, and Parvati belong to a wealthy Brahmin family presided over by their fond father and a traditional-bound orthodox mother. The girls are at the same time overly controlled by a society with little consideration for women. Their following rebellion will lead them in different directions, to different continents, and through different circumstances that strain yet ultimately strengthen their relationship. Moving effortlessly between generations, Mukherjee weaves together fascinating stories of the sister's ancestors, their childhood memories, and dramatic scenes from India's history.

This paper discusses the novel *Desirable Daughters* that belongs to that genre of American literature which deals with issues of immigrant life and cultural assimilation. The second chapter deals with the issues of immigrant life.

Chapter Two

Life of an Immigrant

Bharati Mukherjee is considered as Third world feminist. She concentrates on problems and issues of South Asian women particularly India. Her basic concern is to describe the problems of cross cultural conflicts faced by Indian women immigrants. Her works concentrated on immigrant's sense of alienation and dislocation to discover psychological transformation mostly among women. Her writing discusses about the condition of Asian immigrants in North America, and also the changes taking place in South Asian woman in a new world. Among Indian women novelists she occupies an outstanding place.

Mukherjee's texts spread through the identity politics. Her works *Wife*, *Jasmine* and *The Holder of the World* travel through the changing identities of Diasporic women, both in present day and past. Her novels are making a reality of self. Immigration brings quest for the definition of self and search for identity in the action of tradition and modernity.

America can be divided into two categories of immigrant writers. The first one is willing immigrant writers and the second one is unwilling immigrant writers. The willing immigrant writers are settled in America from Europe and Asia and who have made it their home. The second category was of American origin whose forefathers were brought to America in some slave trip. But Bharati Mukherjee considers herself different from other European writers for a various reasons.

Bharati Mukherjee has been acknowledged as a voice of expatriate—immigrants sensibility. Women of her novels faces many problems due to immigration. They also fight for their rights as a woman and then as an individual. Mukherjee women characters are the victims of immigration. Bharati Mukherjee's

tries to create a new relationship between man and woman based on equality, non-oppression, non-exploitation. Male is considered as a representative of the patriarchal society. Woman is preparing herself for her own gravitational force without the patriarchy society. Bharati Mukherjee's novels are also based on this concept. Her female characters suffer from double colonization, one by the patriarchy and the other by expatriation.

Her novels and short stories *The Tiger's Daughter, Wife, Jasmine, The Tree Bride, Darkness* and *The Middleman and Other Stories* are centered on female protagonists. She explored the internal culture clashes of her immigrant characters in the award-winning collection *The Middleman and Other Stories*. She realized the problems and difficult situations of emerging class of new women who have western education and conscience and conservative norms and values.

Mukherjee takes in hand, the theme through diasporic consciousness and immigrant experience of the migrant women. Mukherjee deals with doubt of their supernatural relating to identity and the wound of dislocations at multiple levels. Indian society is full of the impact of patriarchy and it varies from western society. Indian expatriate writing reflects the perspective of someone caught between two cultures. Migrancy and dislocation, either consensual or conflictual is a global and trans-cultural necessity.

In Bharati Mukherjee's earlier novels, diasporic transmigration meant new opening and release from the grip of convention bound society. In her novels, the principle character who are attached with their own native culture and homeland and suddenly misrate abroad are denied their identity. They face the problems of assimilation .

Bharati Mukherjee's novels and stories talk about young women shaped by patriarchal culture. Mukherjee voices out her immigrant experience in America in the guise of the newcomers from the Caribbean, the Middle East, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Mukherjee considers herself as an immigrant writer and her works are a part of her process of becoming and creating a new identity. She explains her convictions about a writer's responsibility in *Desirable Daughters:*

I am inventing an America for myself. I am writing on America that has not been written about. The frontier is up there, in front of me. I am pushing it back all the time. This is what makes the new stories so different. They are a natural outgrowth of where I am. I feel it is the writer's business to write about his or her environment, whatever that may be. (*17*)

Tara Chatterjee is the protagonist of *Desirable Daughters*. It is a story of a traditional family and of an American woman who has broken with the tradition in many ways but still remains tied to her native country India. In the novel, immigrants are required the immediate cultural denial that was revealed by Bharati Mukherjee. Tara is extremely suffering with cultural displacement and fragmentation. Despite her inner trauma she accepts and adopts the new culture. She could not fulfill the characteristics of an Indian Woman. She does not adjust herself within the ordinary gender role of a mother and wife. The traditional setting of Tara ensures her to calculate that she is badly torn between the double place and culture that brings her nothing else than the scattered identity. She always reminds her native life style and also extremely aware of her cultural differences. Her San Francisco home seems as a sad home.

She says:

> I am not the only blue jeaned woman with Pashmina shawl around my shoulders and broken down running shoes on my feet. I am not the only Indian on the block. All the same, I standout, I am convinced. I don't belong here, despite my political leanings; worse, I don't want to belong. (79)

In *Desirable Daughters*, the creation of identity is revealed as a regular process, forever converting and never truly total. Tara belongs to global world having wealth, brain, beauty and an honoured life as the wife of a Silicon Valley entrepreneur. She is a woman migrant in this novel. She moves abroad after marrying Bish Chatterjee, and reaches America submerged in Indian culture presenting the behaviour of the representative Indian wife. She says: "In our first months in Palo Alto, Bish was the same. At least until he was told by a mean-mouthed cashier at a supermarket to back off and asked by a waiter at a Pizza Hut to take his business elsewhere" (71).

Tara remembered her parent's activities that the clothes for the laundry were counted and even checked. She remembered how her father did re-adding and rechecking the bills. In the first month stay in Palo Alto, Bish, her husband, continued the same practice of re-adding, checking, calculating the totals in the bills. This was not at all liked by workers in the establishments like the supermarket or the eatery like Pizza Hut. He was told by a cashier in a supermarket not to do it. A waiter at a Pizza Hut told him to take his business elsewhere. This shows that the practices that was routine in India and was not considered objectionable, was considered objectionable and out of the way in America. The sense of alienation is noticed. Eventhough they lived in America they never forgot their own tradition.

When she was in India, she followed Indian tradition, culture and values.

Catholic Nuns directed her during her education so she had led a secured life. Then she tries to hold American culture. In the new culture she tries and affords to assimilate as best as she can. She is aware of being different and tries to blend in the multicultural population of San Francisco. She does not explain her situation to American friends of how static and classified Indian identity is.

> The dusty identity is as fixed as any specimen in a lepidopterist's glass case, confidently labelled by father's religion (Hindu), caste (Brahmin), sub-caste (Kulin), mother- tongue (Bengali), place of birth (Calcutta), formative region of ancestral origin (Mishtigunj, East Bengal), education (postgraduate and professional), and social attitudes (conservative). (78)

Whenever she meets strangers of Indian origin she is on the actively explains manners, names and importance. Bishwapriya Chatterjee and Tara had left Calcutta decades ago. Tara and Bish wanted divorce. After their divorce she is liberated from Bish and transition into a new identity. "For ten years I kept the graduation photo of Bishwapriya Chatterjee, my husband-, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur on our nightstand. It earned my not unenthusiastic acceptance of him as husband " (7).

That was the image of the morning and he last icon of the night. She adored him from morning to night, the first act of worship to the last before going to sleep. There were changes of the houses even they changed the countries but the portrait remained the same during all these ten years of her worship of her husband. Now that has stopped as she had obtained her divorce from him. "They have no idea of the wealth I came from ... and the money I now control. To them, I am single mom raising a boy and halfway teaching school" (27).

In Indian family they did not easily get divorce from their husband but here

Tara got divorced. So her family members are worried about her situation of being a single mom. Tara's family does not have any idea about how wealthy Tara is. For them, she is a single mom. She is single mother raising her son. They have no idea why Tara has got the divorce. Tara has remained in Atherton but her independence of and her strong confidence made her a free woman. The fact is that she has alienated herself from the domestic housewife. After her divorce she adopted in a new sexual identity that does not create any clash in her previous self-insights.

Tara becomes close with Andy. She was rather worried about Andy's size. They belonged to different racial and cultural groups. He was Hungarian-American and she was Indian-American. He belonged to that tradition with which Tara's tradition did not match absolutely. She feared about his size. Both of them were exotics to each other, they did not have any familiar moves to depend on. Her interest for him was not approved by any common bond. Yet she felt attracted towards him privately. This was her alienation from the native culture and her urge to be assimilated into other culture.

She is in the problem of identity crisis as she is tossed between her American and Indian identity. Tara knows very well about her restrictions of culture, it is hard to come out of her culture and tradition even in abroad. She also understands that it is impossible to come out of her past, and the circumstances and anxiety of an isolated self in an unfamiliar nation. She decides to be against her community. She lost her own identity of community because of her position of immigrant woman. She has lost meaning in her life. She does not share her feelings towards any one and she stands alone and also fails to explain how much she is distressed. She says: "When everyone knows your business and every name declares your identity, where no landscape fails to contain a plethora of human figures, even a damaged consciousness, even loneliness, become privileged commodities" (34).

Tara belongs to the Indian Bengali Brahmin culture but she is multicultural. She followed American culture being an immigrant American. The two fold identity of Tara is always at path point creating destruction in her personal life as an admirer and follower of both the cultures, Indian and American, although Tara is so crucial about the Indian practices and customs such as dowry system, child marriage and the custom of more than one wife at the same time.

Tara lives with a Hungarian carpenter so she is influenced by Hungarian culture. She belongs to more than one culture. She was finally acquainted to live among the people of different cultures such as India which is her native land, America where she lived with her first husband, Hungary where she has relationship with Hungarian carpenter. Tara marries Bishwapriya Chatterjee by her parent's desire. After marriage her life is not going smoothly and she decides to walk out of her marital life. She believes in adjustment policy of life, it shows that she is an extra-modern, protector and the rebel. After her divorce she decides to have relationship with Andy when she works in a pre-school as a volunteer. She enjoys her life with Andy.

As a divorce settlement, she sends her son with his father. Tara returns to her father's house for comfort, finally. In America, being a Bengali immigrant, she feels the sorrow of her divorce and marriage, she says: "When I left Bish after a decade of marriage, it was because the promise of life as an American wife was not being fulfilled. I wanted to drive, but where would I go? I wanted to work, but would people think that Bish Chatterjee couldn't support his wife?" (82).

Tara left Bish because she was not satisfied in her married life as an American wife. Her assimilation with the American culture was complete. After ten years of marriage, she found that her life was stagnant. She could not satisfy her desires such

as driving and working on her own. She felt as if caged. She wanted to be independent and self-reliant like every other American wife.

Eventually Tara turns back to homeland. It reflects her attachment with her homeland, and search for identity in her homeland which is lost by her migration to America. Tara, the protagonist says, "I finally yielded to that most American of impulses, or compulsions, a roots search" (17).

Thus, the woman protagonist is rich with her American identity. However, she identifies her Indian roots. She turns back into the past, she feels the various emotional moments spent with her great grandfather and her three sisters. The novel discusses the truth that Indian expatriates are always aware of their reputation and status in both cultures. Tara confesses that "If we're unhappy, we're expecte to suck it up for the kids sake or our reputation. We worry what our parents will think, even when they are halfway around the world and we're middle aged adults." (162)

Desirable Daughters seems to be the autobiography of Bharati Mukherjee. Likewise Tara, the protagonist has also two sisters, Padma and Parvati. "Sister's three are we . . . as like as blossom on a tree. But we are not ..." (21). "Three sister's blossoms on one flowering tree"(20) is applicable to Padma, Parvati and Tara. After the marriage of the tree bride Tara Lata, after a period of eighty years, Padma was born and after an interval of three years Parvati and Tara were born. Padma in New York, Tara in San Francisco and Parvati in Bombay were settled in their various careers — Padma Mehta a TV Personality, Parvati, a house wife in the house holds of a corporate magnet. Their Indian roots are clearly mentioned and that indicates their belonging to the old traditional social life in the Indian culture.

Padma is the elder sister . She has married a businessman namely Harish Mehta, who is non - Bengali and they have age difference of twenty years between

them. Now she is resident of New Jersey (Montclair). She is T.V. hostess of a television program of India, held in Jackson Heights, Queens, run by her Indian lover, Devanand Jagtiani (Danny).

Tara and Padma are the youngest and oldest of the three daughters. The imbalance of their marriages and the paths of their immigration have made them strangers. Padma's reaction to Tara's divorce has hurt Tara. Padma repeatedly stated that Tara's divorce brought shame to the Bhattacharjee family. People confused Padma Mehta with Zubin Mehta and other famous Mehta's. Such was the gap between the two. Both were assimilated in the American culture but in totally different ways.

Tara is totally Indian in her dresses, attire, and in her cuisine and occupation who lives in New Jersey. Once she remained with her partner as being married couple, now she lives alone without his support and fame. Tara as usual believes in her life that nothing can touch a Bengali Brahmin from Calcutta, but the presence of Chris Dey who is illegitimate son of Ronald Dey and Didi. He is murdered in California before he meets any members of his mother's family. Abbas Sattar Hai impersonates Chris to get close to Tara and Rabi. Hai creates disturbances in her life and ruins her certain assumption.

Andy was concerned for both Tara and Rabi. He has met Chris Dey in order to keep away from both Tara and Rabi. According to him, Rabi was passing through a critical delicate phase of his personal development. Andy wanted Tara not to go to the police as that would complicate the matter. She promised him that she would not approach the police. Even then she went to the police. Jack Sidhu who is a sikh who works at the San Francisco Police Department, and he specializes in Indian affairs. He investigates the man claiming to be Christopher and discovers that he is an imposter. He suspects that Tara's family is in danger from the Dagwood gang. Jack took her

case and assured her of making inquiries in the matter. She was now depressed. She wanted to discuss these developments with Andy. Tara was obliged to both Rabi and Andy. She had to attend Rabi's school. She therefore postponed the discussion with Andy till her return from school. Tara is independent in her actions and decisions. She is a tough American as a woman, as a mother, and as a divorcee.

She knows the fact that her sister, Padma loves Ronald Dey, the Christian doctor. She was also confident of the strict Brahmin Bengali principle. She is fully confident of the fact that in India, particularly within the hold of a thorough cultural background, it is not just challenging but impossible to allow as well as approve anything that is out of control.

> But Ronald Dey was not possible. Daddy had not yet sanctioned someone for Didi to marry. And whenever that time did come, it would not be with a Christian, no matter what his social status and brilliant prospects. Therefore I must be wrong. Therefore, Ron Dey slipped under the most refined radar system in the world: Hindu Virgin Protection. (31-32)

Parvati, her another sister is completely Indian in her whole cultural practices as she allows her husband's relatives for weeks at her luxurious flat with its breath taking view of the city. But for Tara all her treatment to the relatives, servants, and drivers seems very funny and inconvenient as she presents herself much more modern in her attitude and follows the American way of life style. She believes that her sisters lead very stressful life and make her life uncomfortable for unwanted things. So whatever Parvati does is because of her Indian bend of her mind and she doesn't care for American practices while as Tara shows herself as the most modern lady among all her sisters who doesn't care these ways of displaying Indian life style and she is mean

to adopt the practices of American culture.

Tara's second sister, the flexible middle sister Parvati had made a love match. Parvati wrote to her father that she had fallen in love. Now, she lives with her husband. The boy of her choice Aurobindo Banerjee and her two sons lived in a high-rise building on the Marine Drive in Bombay. The high-rise apartment, luxurious with a monthly rent of twenty five thousand US dollars and the fishermen's colony of tents, the poverty striking slum below and the sky scrapers overlooking the sea presented the two sides of Indian life the luxurious and the disadvantaged the high and the low, the contrasting opposites co-existing in India the Orient.

"According to Parvati, our father in his mountain retirement was fast becoming one of them" (203). Tara's father had retired to the mountain residence in Rishikesh. He maintained his daily routine observing the regular rituals and his spiritual meditations. That made him balanced. This is the result of the disciplined systematization of life in the third stage in an Indian life style and in the same manner in New York too. Simple living was the direction followed in daily habits, diet and dress and that is why he was so quick and active in spite of his age. The advantage of Indian way of life is clearly indicated as the reflection of the culture of the East.

She does not like all that her other sisters do because of their Indian attachment. Bharati Mukherjee revealed the cultural limitation for women in India. But Mukherjee's women have capacity to change the people around them and themselves. The female characters in this novel represent that they have created multiple identities due to their circumstances. Tara, the protagonist is able to live with multiple identities.

Tara wants to find her identity in America without destroying her own identity. She tries to lead her life in America with Indian tradition. It is toughest

process of her life but she faced that problem as an immigrant woman. Her ancestor Tara Lata Gangooly was saint and freedom fighter. In each generation of women in her family, she finds something new and inspiring. Thus she realizes that family ties are important for strengthening one's identity.

Tara wants to erase the past that is false, hypocritical and superficial. She challenges everything that is fake and unnecessary. Tara's sisters do not respond her move and tries to reconnect with her. She easily understands others and accepts them. She accepts her former husband with a new understanding. She also accepts her son Rabi's homo sexuality, Mukherjee suggests that in a multicultural society, one must learn to be open and transform accordingly without losing one's original identity.

Her narrative is an awesome one. Its shows her maturity of treatment and characterization of the immigrant's experience rather than the nostalgia of expatriation. Mukherjee in all her works brings out the quality of this immigrant experience. Mukherjee's novels have a female centrality. She portrays the transformation of women when they pass through the process of immigration. True to life, her women protagonists deal with the problems of loneliness, unhappiness and alienation. Mukherjee is interested in writing the lives of Third World women who are liberated from the chains of constrictive patriarchal society. These women refashion their lives, realize their selves and get an inner sense of liberation.

Mukherjee is very critical of Eurocentric feminism because of its inability in dealing with the problems of Third World women and also for homogenizing women's issues with no reference to cultural specificities. In her fictional world women are always accompanied by men in their pursuit of freedom, independence and individualism.

The novelist provides the three female characters as the three choices for an

Indian woman to follow. Padma and Parvati stick to the safer zones, but Tara moves to risky and challenging role of life, so she is given more importance than other two sisters. Bharati Mukherjee's heroines are bold and confident. They have the strong potentiality for adaptability and live in the firm ground of reality and accept the bitter truth of their life.

(Having dealt with the problems are immigrant faces in general it becomes inevitable to consider the most dreadful hindrance an immigrant faces (i.e.) Cultural Assimilation). The next chapter contrasts the Indian outline with western culture, thereby relating the cultural differences an Indian has to cope up with inorder to gain an identity in American society. The idea is explicated through the protoganist Tara.

Chapter Three

Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation may involve either a quick or a gradual change depending on circumstances of the group. Full assimilation occurs when members of a society become indistinguishable from those of the dominant group. Whether it is desirable for a given group to assimilate is often disputed by both members of the group and those of the dominant society. Cultural assimilation does not guarantee social alikeness. Geographical and other natural barriers between cultures, even if created by the dominant culture, may be culturally different. Cultural assimilation can happen either spontaneously or forcibly. A culture can spontaneously adopt a different culture. Also, older, richer, or otherwise more dominant cultures can forcibly absorb subordinate cultures.

Desirable Daughters start with the story of five year old Tara Lata who is going to marry a thirteen-year-old boy from a neighbouring village, but he is bitten by a snake and dies the night of the ceremony. According to custom, she is considered cursed. Her father, who is a Sanskrit scholar and Brahmin saves her by asking her to marry a tree. It's an idea to escape from her unhappy life as a widow. It assumes that she is united with God, leading a life of purity, sainthood and lifelong virginity. Her father protects her from the custom of society. After her marriage, Tara Lata becomes the tree bride and a family legend. She was never being a wife of human bridegroom but she lives as a wife of tree not a widow, that's what needed by her father and by her family members.

> The Tree Bride, the aged virgin who did leave her father's house until the British dragged her off to jail, the least known Marty's to Indian freedom is the quiet Centre of every story. Each generation of women

> in my family has discovered in her something new. Even in far-flung California, the Tree-Bride speaks again. I've come back to India this time for something more than rest and shopping and these gin-and-lime filled evenings with my mirror self. (289)

Tara Lata had participated in freedom struggle of India and also helps the poor people. She lived in her father's home for seventy years, and she did not leave until shortly before her death. She is arrested by British authorities and in her police custody she was died. It becomes a doubtful death for Mishtigunj people where she lived her life. Over the years, people have searched unsuccessfully for the tree where Tara Lata's father, Jai Krishna Gangooly, buried her gold dowry.

Jai Krishna's son by his ninth wife is Tara Chatterjee's grandfather, so she feels a connection to the Tree bride. *The Tree Bride* is narrated by Tara Chatterjee who is the narrator of *Desirable Daughters* also. Tara Chatterjee reveals that when she was growing up in Calcutta with her two sisters, her mother told her the story of The Tree Bride. In her bottom of heart she believes that some connection is there between Tara Lata and her own Life. Tara Chatterjee leaves her husband after her ten years of marriage life and for some time she is connected with Andy. She faced lots of problem because of her husband. After some years of separation unexpectedly bomb blast had happened in her home, Bish was injured and Rabi and Tara escaped from that incident. Then she decides to move to her native place. She wishes to know about her Ancestors.

Bharati Mukherjee explains Hindu tradition and western culture dominates the landscape of *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*. In *The Tree Bride* Tara Lata lives her life serving others and is role model of Hindu Virtue. In Hindu tradition people give more importance to caste and the social status of bride and bride groom.

Desirable Daughters has also followed these features of Hinduism and caste system. In *Desirable Daughters* Tara's older sister, Padma, whom she calls Didi, meaning "sister" had a Christian friend named Poppy Dey when she was a teenager. Poppy's Brother Ronald was extremely handsome. As a child, Tara knew that Didi loved Ronald, but she also knew that Ronald was a Christian from a lower caste. His status made the marriage between Didi and Ronald impossible. Didi whole heartedly connected with Ronald though she rejected him for the reason of her family tradition.

Tara obeys her parents and follows through with her arranged marriage to Bish who belongs to same caste and tradition. And her sister Parvati breaks Hindu culture and tradition by marrying her lover. This act happened in America which shows the clash between Hindu tradition and American culture. Tara was a dutiful wife and mother for ten years. But she breaks tradition and turns her back on Hindu culture when she divorced Bish and sees other men. After the divorce she becomes more westernized in her dress and behaviour. In Hindu culture it was that a father should give away his daughter in marriage before she reaches adolescence and if the father is not able to do so he is considered useless and undeserving.

> We have to stop living in a place that's changed on us while we've been away. I don't want to be a perfectly preserved bug trapped in amber, Didi, I can't deal with modern India, it'schanged too much and too fast, and I don't want to live in a half-India kept on life-support. (19)

Bharati Mukherjee declares that in the process of splitting and cultural dislocation man seems to lose his meaning and purpose in life. In the process of migration, the immigrants can neither adopt alien culture nor can leave their culture of home and finally a new hybrid culture comes to flourish.

In America, Tara always feels herself guilty of lavish spending and

conspicuous luxury, "I'm feeling just a little alien and uncomfortable, atinge of not belonging, in the midst of such welcoming comfort and I think it must be the way Bish feels" (24).

Love, to Bish, is the remainder of providing for parents and family, contributing to good causes and community charities, earning professional respect, and being recognized for hard work and honesty. Love is indistinguishable from status and honors. "I can't imagine my carpenter, Andy, bringing anything more complicated to it than, say, fun. "Love is having fun with someone, more fun with that person than anyone else, over a longer haul " (25).

Tara however enjoys her love-life with Andy because she feels that there is something exotic, something that disobeys the set norms and structures. Tara diverges away from Indian traditionalism and allows herself to be physically involved with Andy. Her dislocation from cultural codes fragments her once again. Tara defines her relationship with Andy. "We were exotics to each other, no familiar moves or rituals to fall back on. He interpreted my fear as shyness. He was not my first American lover, but he was twice the mass of any man I'd ever known, a bear-man" (78). Thus, loneliness brings a greater isolation in the life of Tara and she feels alienated in American society. In India the details of religion, caste, sub-caste, mother tongue, place of birth are all integral part of man's personality and one cannot dare to go beyond them.

The creative traditionalist father secures his daughter's place in the world by a fiction of marriage and goes for a metaphysical settlement. This is the point of conjunction between Tara of *Desirable Daughters* and Tara Lata of The Tree Bride. The abjectness of life in a showing fact of the modern world finds answer in the celebratory romance of the past rooted in native soil.

Tara moves from her native place to America because of her marital life. Afterward she is westernized, independent woman from the American point of view, but she is a wicked female and family disgrace from the Hindu perspective. She is both an Indian and American. She blends each culture to create her identity. She is tired of explaining India to Americans, but communication is not easier with her family. Her status as a divorced woman in America places her in the edge of both worlds. Her son Rabi destroyed his life through the culture of America. He lacks his identity and he becomes a gay because of growing up in a society like America. Tara does not build up her son in a right path. Both of them abused their tradition and caste system. Finally they move to their won native place for search for their identity.

Tara is travelling all over the world, yet she declares, she never changed the world. Tara Lata saves her father from loss of reputation by accepting the mythical wed-lock to a lifeless tree. Mukherjee gives a scorching detail of the dark side of the traditional Bengali society in the following:

> Older aunts shush her. She is paying for the sins of a past life, they explain. God is letting her off lightly. She is being saved from the fate of despised ghar-jalani, a woman-who-brings-misfortune-and-death-to-her-family, by the quick thinking of their wise, god-fearing patriarch. (15)

Tara Lata house was dedicated for the sick and poor people. She was fixed with her father's house and was silent as a tree. She spent her entire life in Mist Mahal. She speaks with the tree planted in the mansion for the next sixty years. Tara Lata considered higher spiritual plane by people. When a word spread out to the common bundle that she had donated her gold jewelry to Gandhi's Salt March, high regard turned to great respect. Years later, she became a goddess, prayed by unmarried girls

who seeks husband and by the women seeking sons. Marriage of a child at the age of five is a brutal tradition, widely practiced in those days. Getting a child married to a tree to prevent a lifelong widowhood was another common shortcoming of the patriarchal society.

The Tree Bride is symbol of self- sacrifice. The story serves as opposite to the life of Tara, the heroine who misbehaves the boundaries laid for her. At one place, Tara says that the Tree Bride has become the model of selfless saintliness while "My story was different, perhaps an inversion" (280). Tara Lata is a lifelong virgin and her house always opened for beggars, the sick, and then to the young soldiers fighting the Raj. She had transformed herself from the unfortunate Tree Bride to 'Tara Ma', saint and freedom fighter. Mukherjee's picture of Tara's quest comes to climax in Mishtigunj, Bangladesh, at Tara Lata's home.

In the epigraph of *Desirable Daughters*, Mukherjee evokes tradition — both as impossible to follow, and as a felt necessity. The epigraph to the novel, a Sanskrit verse adopted by Octavio Paz and translated by Eliot Weinberger that provides an insight in an immigrant's quest for identity and authenticity of oneself. At the end of the novel Tara takes Rabi to Tara Lata's home in Mishtigunj. She shifts the story back to 1943, when the Tree Bride is sixty-eight. The wounded are taken to Tara Lata home after defying the British. Tara Lata records the atrocities the people suffered for a reporter, who betrays her. The police blame her for leading an insurrection and take her from the house. She is later killed. As Tara and Rabi walk through the remains of the house, she is able to hear the events from the day of the arrest. Tara tells Rabi, "Remember this. It's a miracle"(310). *Born confused* story is about Dimple Lala who was born in America to India immigrant parents like *Desirable Daughters* Rabi, he also born in America but his own native is India.

Both of them grow up in collapsed culture and tradition because of their parent's identity. Here both characters explore the cultural assimilation. Dimple Lala was a sixteen year old Indian-American. She has a desire on photography and one day hopes to make money from it. Her parents want to follow their tradition. But she does not obey her parents so they are worried about their daughter. Dimple doesn't bother about her parents, she moves her life in her won desire. It's really very pathetic situation for her parents as they are worried about their cultural assimilation.

Rabi, the son of Tara Chatterjee and Bish is a great example for cultural assimilation. He was a school student when his parents got divorce. After the divorce, Tara moves to San Francisco with Rabi. Rabi spent his time with both of them, in his free time he goes to his father's home. Therefore he never gets guidance from his parents to improve his life. He is grown up in a typical situation and he was also affected by American culture as well as by Indian culture. He is aware of the fact of cultural assimilation. He regrets his attitude but he could not come out of his problem.

One day Tara has to meet Rabi's teachers at a conference. At the conference Rabi's teachers are very happy with his progress. She discovers that Rabi has written a play about an Indian family. She visits the counselor, who gives her a letter from Rabi admitting that he is gay and the play is about him. After hearing this news Tara is shocked . She advises her son by saying how she loves him more than anyone.

Tara was worried about the behavior of Rabi who speaks with a strange young man. The man claims that his name is Christopher Dey and he is the illegitimate son of Ronald and Didi. He says that Parvati gave him Tara's address and asks for an introduction to Padma. After Chris leaves, Rabi takes his side calling Didi cruel and selfish. He also accuses of the three sisters of secretly hating each other.

Tara and Rabi stayed with Parvati in Bombay when Rabi was ten. He was

asked to go to the beach below, where children were playing, because he was bored. He was warned that the people on the beach were all thieves and murderers. To alleviate his boredom, Rabi became attached to Parvati's two dogs. But one night, Rabi walked into the kitchen and was badly bitten by one of the dogs. Parvati told Tara that the kitchen is the dog's domain at night, and protecting it is their nature. Parvati's first thought was to save the dogs by taking them with her to complain to the manager. One dog is now dead, and the other has severe arthritis. From that time he hates Parvati because she never bothered about him when the dog bit him. She only considered that dog. It was irritating to Rabi that's why he hates her.

One day Tara confronts him about leaving school with Chris. He lashes out at her, calling Parvati a liar. Tara believes he never forgave Parvati for the dog bite. He lashes out against his mother and Hindu custom. He accompanies his mother to India and reconnects with family and culture.

Bish is one of the creators of CHATTY, which is a technological bandwidth his company controls. He is extremely wealthy and influential. He is also very traditional. But in America he lacks his clarity of father role. He only focused on his company and his growth of wealth. He doesn't care about his wife and son. He leaves them but often he met his son. If he was in Calcutta he was never doing these things, he only focused on his family and tradition. Through his behavior he assimilated his Indian culture.

Andrew Karolyi who was called as Andy and he was a constructor and Tara's boyfriend at the beginning of the novel. He is a world traveler who follows the teachings of Buddhism. Andy leaves Tara after she breaks her promise to him and continues to investigate Christopher Dey. He becomes a suspect after Tara's house is bombed. He is released, but only after being affected by the media. Because he was

insulted in America. He traveled everywhere that's why his culture is assimilated.

Bharati Mukherjee not only intends to expand America but to change it, adding the minority point of view, not clear cut assimilation but transformation, a fluid interaction between origin and modernity or in other words, in between hyphenation and assimilation. She believes that if a nation is able to accept and acknowledge immigrants as their own nationals, then there will be no hyphenation but sure assimilation, no sense of alienation but a sense of belonging and satisfaction on having achieved the transformation.The next chapter deals with narrative and technique style of novel.

Chapter Four

Narrative technique and Style

The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances-as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting, stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. (Barthes 237-272)

The first person point of view is also called internal or figural focalization. In a first-person narrative the story is presented by a narrator who is also a character within the story. It may be by a leading character hero or heroine or subsidiary character or different characters narrating different sections of the story. The narrator reveals the plot by referring to this viewpoint character as "I" or, when plural, "we".

Desirable Daughters is narrated from the first person point of view. Tara, who is the central character of the novel, narrates the story of the lives of three sisters. She narrates details of her life in America and her past in India. Tara is one of the sisters of a traditional Bengali Brahmin family and she narrates their own course of voyage towards their destiny. These sisters, Padma, Parvati and Tara and their ways of life are a mixture of traditional and modern outlook. Padma lives her life as an immigrant of ethnic origin in New Jersey and Parvati is married to a man of her choice and lives a luxurious life in the smart locality of Bombay. Tara desires to move forward in life and to design an identity for herself, she holds the liberated ways of American culture.

The setting of a narrative is the general locale and the historical time in which

its action occurs is the particular physical location in which it takes place. *Desirable Daughters* takes place mainly in Calcutta, India, California and New Jersey. The historical novel takes its setting and some of its characters and events from history. The term is usually applied only if the historical milieu and events are fairly elaborately developed. All historical narrative seems to take up some position at a point in the scale between the demonstration of limited relationships between discrete events, and the implication of some vast, non-human design. The rhetorical aspect of historical narrative is important.

Tara is narrating the history of her family. She begins the narration with the story of her ancestral namesake, Tara Lata, the Tree Bride of Mishtigunj. In this introductory chapter of the novel, she retells the story set in India over eighty five years ago. This introduction takes the reader into the past and also serves the purpose of exploring some traditional aspects of Indian culture. The second chapter takes the reader into the present life of Tara in California along with her past memories of Calcutta. The story moves with the ease from past to present, from India to America and from Calcutta to California. The reader moves with Tara from past to present and it often becomes difficult to distinguish between them. Mukherjee's mastery is in handling the story of the past and present at the same time and making what has happened and what is happening equally interesting by filling the new concept of time and space.

> I have told my Calcutta stories many times, and Americans seem to find them endlessly amusing, and appalling. And yet, until last year, I'd never really understood what I was revealing or what I was suppressing. I was going for the effect, Tara, No! the easy approval. Oh, Tara, you're so brave! I married a man I had never met, whose

> picture and biography and bloodlines I approved of, because my father told me it was time to get married and this was the best husband on the market. (26)

Mukherjee keeps the spirit of language by relating it to the everyday speech. She changes words, grammatical structures and syntax to suit the character. Tara, an assimilated immigrant in America is comfortable in expressing herself at both the places; India and America. She can freely use Indian expressions and even communicate in Bengali whenever she requires. At the same, she uses American slang expressions with her American friends. Whereas her sister Padma,, enjoys being an immigrant of ethnic origin in America and speaks a mixture of Indian and American English.

In classical Greek, "mythos" signified story or plot, whether true or false. In its central modern significance, a myth is one story in a mythology, in a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group. When Tara Lata is going to marry a thirteen year old boy, at the night of ceremony he is bitten by a snake and dies. That time her father Jai Krishna Gangooly marries her to a tree because of saving his daughter from their culture. Here the myth is if she marries a tree she will not be widow. She was silent like a tree and the grave little girl became a somber young lady. "In a community intolerant of unmarried women, his Tara Lata had become an unmarriageable woman" (12).

Verbal irony is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts. Such an ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with the implication of a very different attitude or evaluation. Bharati Mukherjee uses the verbal irony. The title of novel *Desirable Daughters* seems to have an ironical sense. In Indian

society especially in the overprotected patriarchal families, daughters are not at all desirable for they bring only trouble.

An allegory is a narrative in which the agents and action, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived not only to make sense in themselves, but also to signify a second, correlated order of persons, things, concepts or events. The author inserts an excessive amount of allegories to allow the audience to go back in time, with the main character Tara, to her childhood stories. The main motif of the story from the beginning is about The Tree Bride Tara Lata, who rebelled against violence with love and purity.

A motif is an element, a type of incident, device, or formula which recurs frequently in literature. The author starts and ends this novel with the legend tale of Tara Lata, the Tree Bride. The meaning of this story was used throughout to compare the main character to the legend she was named and related by. The author shows a sensitive side of the main character linking her to her cultural roots.

Morality plays were the dramatized allegories of the life of man, his temptation and sinning, his quest for salvation, and his confrontation by death. The hero represents mankind, or everyman; among the other characters are personifications of virtues, vices, and death, as well as angels and demons who contest the possession of the soul of man.

Suzanne Ruta points out in her review of *Desirable Daughters* in the Women's review of books that the novel is "a mix-and-match morality play." While morality plays typically revolve around Christian themes, Mukherjee weaves elements of such themes into her novel. According to M.H. Abrams in A *Glossary of Literary Terms*, a morality play is a "quest for salvation, in which the crucial events are temptations, sinning, and the climatic confrontation with death" (104). Tara faces

the temptations of western civilization and is judged as sinning in her relationships with different men and her pulling away from her family. She faces death in the explosion that destroys her home as she attempts to reconcile with Bish. This confrontation with death leads her back to her roots and the story of her namesake, Tara Lata. Her journey to India shows her the way to redemption.

Desirable Daughters blends mystery with thriller. The term mystery novel is "used to designate a work in which mystery or terror plays a controlling part" (78). According to William Harmon's *A Handbook to Literature*, Mukherjee begins the mystery when Christopher Dey appears at Tara's home, claiming to be her illegitimate nephew. Tara takes on the role of detective as she observes the young man and researchers his claims.

After Tara contacts Ronald Dey, the novel takes on aspects of a thriller, which is a subgenre in which people find themselves "in dangerous situations from which they must extricate themselves" (208). Through a series of revelations and two suspicious deaths, Tara finds that she and her family is the target of a gang from Bombay. The thriller framework ends with the explosion that destroys Tara's home and sends her on a mission of self-discovery.

"The goddess exacts payment in mysterious ways" (13). In *The Tree Bride* while Tara Lata's bridegroom dies by snake, the bridegroom's father scolds her to Jai Krishna "you will arrange posthaste for the dowry cash and the dowry gifts to be brought on board, Jai Krishna babu. What you do with your wretched girl, the killer of my son, I make your business" (13). On that time Jai Krishna wants to heal his wounded heart. His daughter's fate behind the horoscope gets revealed . She is not a woman cursed by a goddess and is shunned like an outcast by her community. In mysterious way Jai krishan decides to arrange a marriage between Tara and Tree to

escape widowhood. Only Tara is considered as a "Tara Lata the virgin, the untouched, who opened the house to beggars, then to the sick, then to the young soldiers fighting the Raj" (35).

The Hindu caste system is an important element of *Desirable Daughters*. The caste system is part of the Vedic tradition and dates back thousands of years. The Vedas are holy books associated with Hinduism and were a part of an oral tradition before they were written down two thousand years ago. Karma and dharma are the two Vedic laws that guide the spiritual journey of Hindu followers. Dharma is the code of conduct that individuals must follow based on the scriptures. Karma determines how a person is reincarnated. The caste system is based on dharma and the conduct that was necessary for different traders.

According to tradition, people are born into a caste, and the only way to change one's caste is through reincarnation. Castes were originally based on four different occupations. While there are four main castes, there are actually thousands of subcastes. The four main castes are Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. The Brahmin caste was the priestly class, and the Kshatriyas were warriors and nobility. Vaishyas were farmers and artisans, and the shudra were servants and tenant farmers. Those born outside the caste were untouchables, or pariahs. Marriage between castes was forbidden, and caste determined how people interacted and what occupations they held.

In *Desirable Daughters*, family of Tara belongs to Brahmin caste, they did not allow inter caste marriage. They strictly followed their rituals of caste. Tara's oldest sister, Padma fell in love with Ronald, who is handsome but he belongs to Christian family from a lower caste. His status made the marriage impossible. According to Brahmins they came from priestly class so they never allow marrying a

person from lower caste.

The clash between Hindu tradition and Western culture dominates the landscape of *Desirable Daughters*. Tara explains that the expectations of caste and family of Hindu traditions determine whom they marry and their social circle. The novel begins with the child bride Tara Lata, who is married to a tree after her groom dies before the ceremony. A widow is considered cursed, and the wedding to the tree is necessary to preserve her status. Tara Lata lives her life serving others and is a role model of Hindu Virtue.

unburdened by a time consuming, emotion-draining marriage and children, never having to please a soul, she grew up and grew old in a single house in an impoverished village in the poorest place on earth, and in that house, the world came to her. She lived there seventy years and gradually changed the world. (17)

By contrast, Parvati breaks with Hindu culture and tradition by marrying for love and doing so before her older sister marries. This act of rebellion takes place in America, which shows the clash between Hindu tradition and American culture. Despite her scandalous marriage, however, Parvati has a traditional Indian life in Bombay. She hosts her relatives and focuses on caring for her husband and family.

Didi or Padma, breaks with tradition before either of her sisters. She has a romance with the Christian Ronald Dey, and she lives with a gay man in New York as a young woman. Unlike her sisters, however, Padma keeps all of her youthful indiscretions a secret, even from her family. As a married woman, 'Didi manages to become an influential television personality and Bengali role model in New Jersey. Unlike Tara, she chooses traditional Indian dress and focuses on traditional Hindu values in her public persona.

Rabi has his own identity crisis as Tara has hers. Rabi acts out in the first part

of the novel. He resents his mother's family, and he sides with the imposter. His outbreaks of anger, however, come from his struggle to accept his identity. He fears that he will be a disappointment to his parents in admitting that he is gay. Once he reveals his identity to his mother, however, Rabi improves their relationship. He stops acting out and resenting his Indian relatives. By the end of the novel, Rabi enjoys exploring faith and the scriptures with his grandfather in India. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Bharati Mukherjee has been acknowledged as a voice of expatriate-immigrants. She reveals that all her novels are mainly focused on feminist views and also on problems and reactions due to immigration but that problems are not because of immigrants but because of the women characters whose fight for their rights as a women and then as an individual. Mukherjee's women characters are the victims of immigration. Bharati Mukherjee tries to create a new relationship between man and woman based on equality, non-oppression, non-exploitation. Here male is considered as a representative of the patriarchal society. Woman is preparing herself for her own gravitational force without the patriarchy society.

Tara positioning is different from Padma in the sense where Padma is hyphenated immigrant. Mukherjee vociferously talks against the states of a hyphenated immigrant because the hypen marginalizes the Asians as minorities. Parvati symbolizes the traditional life of an Indian woman with a western orientation. Each one traverses her own path of immigrant life quite happily but often has a nostalgic past which continues to linger on the immigrants as talking about the society to which she belonged. Tara says:

> To be Calcutta bhadra lok, as we Bhatta Charjees were, was to share a tradition of leadership of sensitivity of achievement, refinement and beauty that was the envy of the world. That is legacy of the last generation of Calcutta high society, a world into which we three sisters were born and from which we have made our separate exists. (22)

Parvati is conscious of the Indian tradition and Indian's socio-cultural identity.

Parvati alludes to Aunt Bandana's love of Bengali tradition and laws of Mance. Aunt Bandana wants a suitable Bengali girl for her fourth son, a good Hindu Brahmin family settled in California. They are indeed good Indian family but not Indian citizens. Aunt Bandana's two main requirements are "that the girl be an American citizen or green card holder who can legally sponser her husband's immigration to the United States, and that she be a Brahmin" (107).

Desirable Daughters shows the destiny of the three sisters Padma, Parvati and Tara. Padma and Tara separated from their native land and settled in America. Their stories interlink with the story of *The Tree Bride* who has lifetime virginity because of her bride groom's death, so she has lived as a selfless saint. These two stories bring out the cross-cultural encounters. Padma and Tara both have become assimilated in the American culture. Their traditional culture was broken. The physical and psychological transition from the past to the present is highlighted in *Desirable Daughters*, Padma in New York, Parvati in Bombay and Tara in San Francisco.They have become desirable and though separated with the cross- cultural experiences, continue to emerge as charming Bhattacharjee girls.

Tammi. L. Coles reviews *Desirable Daughters* as,

> "It is like an earthquake, isn't it? one minute everything is steady, and the next without warning. It's all fallen down." Desirable Daughters carries the reader into Indian culture by setting up a compelling family secret that, as secrets often do, comes back to nip at the heels of one sister.

Though Tara's eyes Mukherjee gives a good and often humorous view into modern and traditional Indian culture.

The main character Tara suffers culture displacement and she tries to adopt new culture. While she lived with her husband Bish she always think about her native Land and her family and without her knowledge sometimes she followed her Indian culture.

Her expectations of living in America was a collapsed one. She never thinks about worst side of the immigrant life. She does not follow the American culture but she utterly tires to adopt that culture. Even she did not express her feeling to American friends. After the divorce between her and Bish she searches her new identity. As a single parent she grows her son. After her divorce she is involved in a new sexual identity that does not create any clash in her previous self-insights. She has the two men relationship in her life who symbolizes two branches of cultures and her difficult cultural situation.

After her divorce she is connected with Hungarian American Andy. Both of them belong to different racial and cultural groups. Here she never expresses her divorce to her own family because it's against her Indian culture. Another cultural disaster is her affair with Andy. These doings assimilate her Indian culture, because of her immigrant life she does these things against her culture.

She faced the problem of identity crisis as she lives between America and India. Tara never crossed her culture in India because she knows about her restrictions but in abroad she does not follow her culture. In an unfamiliar nation she encounteres the circumstances that she does not know and how to tackle problems. She decides to be against her community. She lost her own identity of community because of her position as an immigrant woman. She has lost meaning in her life. She does not share her feelings towards any one and she stands alone and also fails to explain how much she is distress and the blessing of their individuality.

Tara returns back to homeland. It reflects her attachment with her homeland, and search for identity in her homeland which is lost by her migration to America. Tara, the protagonist says. "I finally yielded to that most American of impulses, or compulsions, a "roots search" (17).

Desirable Daughters is compared with *The Tree Bride* written by Bharati Mukherjee and *Born Confused* written by Tanuja Desai Hidier. Both these novels are written in the theme of cultural assimilation. Tara connected her life with history of Tara Lata, who followed Indian tradition in difficult situation of life but Tara never followed her culture, she does cultural assimilation, because of her immigrant life. In the same way *Born confused* story is about Dimple Lala who was born in America to Indian Immigrant parents like *Desirable Daughters* Rabi, short for Rabindranath, who also was born in America.

Here both characters explore the cultural assimilation. Dimple Lala was sixteen year old Indian-American. Her parents want to follow their tradition through her activities, but she does not obey her parents so they are upset of having her as their daughter. Dimple doesn't bother about her parents she moves her life in her won desire. It is really a very pathetic situation for her parents as they are worried about their cultural assimilation in India.

Desirable Daughters is narrated by first person point of view. The novel takes place mainly in Calcutta, India, California and New Jersey. In the beginning Tara starts to narrate with history of her family. She begins with Tara Lata, the Tree Bride of Mishtigunj. She retells the story set in India over 85 years ago. This introduction explores some traditional aspects of Indian culture. The second chapter takes the reader

into the present life of Tara in California along with her past memories of Calcutta. The story moves with the ease from past to present, from India to America and from Calcutta to California. The reader moves with Tara from past to present and it often becomes difficult to distinguish between them. Mukherjee's mastery is in handling the story of the past and present at the same time and making what has happened and what is happening equally interesting by filling the new concept of time and space.

Mukherjee keeps the spirit of language by relating it to the everyday speech. She changes words, grammatical structures and syntax to suit the character. Myth takes an important role in The Tree Bride story. This Myth helps Tara to escape from her custom of culture. Bharati Mukherjee uses irony, allegory, motif and style like morality play, miracle play and thriller. It also has the theme of Hindu caste system, identity and cultural assimilation.

G. Messersmith reviews *Desirable Daughters* as:

> Mukherjee is a absolutely brilliant up to this point and manages to the full of potentially melo dramatic material in sensitive, believable manner. The opening sequel,"The Tree Bride" is a very magical and dramatic historical opening chapter. With her simplicity, Mukherjee offers a fictional feast, rich in culture detail and endess complication of love and belonging.

Tara as a newwomen travels into the new world with ful energy and vitality. Mukherjee seems to portray the how for the first generation protoganist getting assimilated into the American melting pot is difficult. Tara faces many social restrictions directly and indirectly. It is rather very strange that a women who was brought up in a rigid principled society like that of India could absorb the modern trends and accept such

things like her songs gay sexuality and her own live in relationship. Throughout the novel the protagonist is longing for a new identity. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

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Marginalized Voices in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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OCTOBER 2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Marginalized Voices in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Yasmin Chithara U. during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Guide

25/10/2019

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Marginalized Voices in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

U. Yasmin Chithara

Toothukudi **Yasmin Chithara U.**

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PREFACE

Arundhati Roy is one of the greatest Indian novelists. She was awarded the Booker prize in 1997 for her novel *The God of Small Things*. This project entitled **Marginalized Voices in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*** analyses the women as marginalized subjects who are oppressed physically, socially, culturally and economically and explores the voice of marginalized people in the Indian society.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on Indian Literature. It also deals with Arundhati Roy's biography and her works and her contributions of a novelist. The highlighting feature of each work is mentioned.

The second chapter **Tale of Sufferings** deals with the plight of Indian women, their great suffering, anxieties, their humble submission, persecution and undeserved humiliation in male dominating society.

The third chapter **Marginalized Voices** discusses the role of Marginalized Women and Subaltern to intensify the trauma faced by the marginalized people of India and through the significant characters of Ammu and Velutha.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** shows the use of literary devices like simile and metaphor, alliteration, repetition and rhymes by Arundhathi Roy which brings several meanings to her writing style.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapter.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, "literature" is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. Literature represents a language or a people's culture and tradition. But, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artefact. Literature introduces the reader to new worlds of experience. One can learn about books and literature; enjoy the comedies and the tragedies of poem, stories, and plays; grow and evolve through the literary journey with books.

Ultimately, the reader may discover meaning in literature by looking at what the author says and how he or she says it. In academic circles, this decoding of the text is often carried out through the use of literary theory, using, a mythological, sociological, psychological, historical, or other approach. Whatever critical paradigm use to discuss and analyze literature, there is still an artistic quality to the works. Literature is important to the reader as it is universal, and it affects: Even when it is ugly, literature is beautiful.

Generally, literature is divided into two kinds, namely Fictional and Non Fictional literature. Fictional literature is imaginary composed writing or works of art that is meant to provide information, education and entertainment to the reader. In other words, fictional literature is based on the writer's imagination rather than reality. Non-Fictional literature is factual writing or written work that gives fact that can be proved as it provides real places, events, characters, times or reality rather than imaginary things. Examples of Fictional literature include plays, poems, short stories,

novels, oral literature, and songs. Examples of Non-Fictional literature include autobiographies, biographies, essays, diaries and journals, magazines, newspaper, subject, text books such as in Geography, History and Civic Education.

Literature refers to any single writing of intellectual value. Literature is a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature can be classified into variety of system, like language, national origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. Literature is something written with soul that lasts through the ages because it speaks to a subliminal level.

The body of world literature contains most available knowledge about humanity, beliefs, self-perception, philosophies, assumptions and interaction with the world at large. Some of life's most important lessons are subtly expressed in art and learn these lessons only pause to think about what read.

History, anthropology and religious studies provide a method of learning about the culture and beliefs of others. It allows the readers to experience the cultures and beliefs of others first hand, from the inside looking out. The only other way to have such a personal understanding of others beliefs is, to adopt them.

Indian Literature is one of the oldest and richest literatures around the world. The Indian Constitution recognizes twenty two official languages. Each language has its regional literature. The first Indian literary work was a collection of Sanskrit hymns that was of orally transmitted.

Indian Literature is not only part of Commonwealth Literature, but also as R.K. Dhawan observes "a great significance in the World Literature" (5). Today, a number of Indian writers in English have contributed significantly to modern English

literature. In early times of British rule, the novelistic writing, indeed the Indian English dramas and Indian English poetry, had tremendously arrested attention of the native masses. Though India was under the British rule, still, English was adopted by the Indians as a language of understanding and awareness, education and literary expression with an important means of communication amongst various people of dissimilar religious. Every possible regional author was dedicated in their intelligence to deliver in the 'British mother tongue' highly erudite and learned as they were even in such periods. Ram Mohan Roy who heralded the Indian Renaissance and Macaulay who suggested English language education in India were probably aware of what was in store for the Indians in terms of literary awareness. Moniga states that today it "has won for itself international acclaim and distinction" (213).

Indian English literature is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history begins with the works of Michel Madhusudan Dutt followed by R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao who contributed to Indian fiction in the 1930s. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who are of Indian descent. It is frequently referred to as Indo Anglian literature. (Indo Anglian is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with Anglo- Indian). As a category, this production comes in the broader realm of postcolonial literature – the production from previously colonised countries such as India. The history of Indian literature is the historical development of writings in prose or poetry, which aim at providing education, entertainment and enlightenment to its readers, as well the development of the literary techniques employed in the communication of these pieces.

Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838–1894) wrote Raj Mohan's life and published it in 1894; it is the first Indian novel written in English. Raja Rao (1908–2006), an Indian philosopher and writer, authored *Kanthapura* (1938) and *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) which are Indian in terms of their storytelling qualities. Kisari Mohan Ganguli translated the *Mahabharata* into English, the only time the epic has ever been translated entirely into a European language. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. He had become India's first Nobel laureate for his poetic works in *Gitanjali*.

R. K. Narayan (1906–2001) contributed over many decades and continued to write till his death. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to the way Thomas Hardy used Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), was similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India, but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with division of caste, class and religion.

Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie, who born in India and now living in the USA. Rushdie, with his famous work *Midnight's Children* (Booker prize 1981, Booker of Booker 1992, and Best of the Bookers 2008), ushered in a new trend of writing. Anita Desai, who was shortlisted for the Booker prize three times, received a Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* and a British Guardian prize for *The Village by the Sea*.

Recent writers in India such as Arundhati Roy and David Davidar show a direction towards contextuality and rootedness in their works. Arudhati Roy, a trained

architect and the 1997 Booker prize winner for her *The God of Small Things*, calls herself a "home grown" writer. Her award winning book is set in the immensely physical landscape of Kerala. Then she became a non expatriate Indian author of the biggest selling book. She is also a political activist involved in human rights and environmental causes. Next Davidar sets his *The House of Blue Mangoes* in southern Tamil Nadu. In both the books, geography and politics are integral to the narrative.

Arundhati Roy is one of the best-known representatives of the contemporary generation of Indian writers who wrote in English. She was born in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. Her mother, Mary Roy, a Malayali Syrian Christian and Women's Rights activist from Kerala and her father Rajib Roy, a Bengali Hindu tea plantation manager from Calcutta. When she was two, her parents divorced and she returned to Kerala with her mother and brother. For a time, the family lived with Roy's maternal grandfather in Ooty, Tamil Nadu. When she was five, the family moved back to Kerala, where her mother started a school. She attended school at Corpus Christi, Kottayam, followed by the Lawrence School, Lovedale, in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu. Then she studied architecture at the school of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, where she met architect Gerard de Cunha. The two lived together in Delhi, and then Goa, before they separated.

Roy returned to Delhi, where she obtained a position with the National Institute of Urban Affairs. In 1984, she met independent filmmaker Pradip Krishen, who offered her a role as a goatherd in his award-winning movie Massey Sahib. Later, the two married. They collaborated on a television series on India independence movement and on two films, Annie and Electric Moon. Disenchanted with the film world, Roy did various jobs, including running aerobics classes. Roy and Krishen eventually separated. She became financially secure with the success of her novel *The*

God of Small Things, published in 1997. Roy is a cousin of prominent media personality Pranoy Roy, the head of the leading Indian television media group NDTV. She lives in Delhi.

Roy worked for television and movies. She wrote the screenplay for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1989), a movie based on her experiences as a student of architecture, in which she also appeared as a performer, and Electric Moon (1992). Both were directed by her husband, Pradip Krishen, during their marriage. She attracted attention in 1994 when she criticized Shekhar Kapur's film Bandit Queen, which was based on the life of Phoolan Devi. In her film review titled "The Great Indian Rape Trick", she questioned the right to "restage misrepresentation both her life and its meaning" (13).

Roy began writing her first novel, *The God of Small Things*, in 1992, completing it in 1996. The book is semi-autobiographical and a major part captures her childhood experiences in Ayemenem. The publication of *The God of Small Things* catapulted Roy to international fame. It received the 1997 Booker Prize for fiction and was listed as one of The New York Times Notable Books of the year. It reached fourth position on The New York Times Bestsellers list for Independent Fiction. From the beginning, the book was also a commercial success: Roy received half a million pounds as an advance. It was published in May, and the book had been sold in 18 countries by the end of June.

The God of Small Things received seller reviews in major American newspaper such as The New York Times "a dazzling first novel," "extraordinary", "at once so morally strenuous and so imaginatively supple" (16) and the Los Angeles Times remarked that: "a novel of poignancy and considerable sweep" (18) and in

Canadian publication such has the Toronto Star states that: "a lush, magical novel" (19). It was one of the five best books of 1997 according to time. Critical response in the United Kingdom was less positive, and the awarding of the Booker Prize caused controversy; Carmen Callil, a 1996 Booker Prize judge, called the novel "execrable", and The Guardian called the context "profoundly depressing" (21). In India, the book was criticized especially for its unrestrained description of sexuality by E. K. Nayanar, the chief Minister of Roy's home state Kerala, whom she had to answer charges of obscenity.

Roy has written a television serial, *The Banyan Tree*, and the documentary DAM or AGE: A Film by Arundhati Roy (2002). She contributed to *We Are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples*, a book released in 2009, that explores the culture of peoples around the world, portraying their existence. The royalties from the sale of this book go to the indigenous rights organisation Survival International. She has written numerous essays on contemporary politics and culture. They have been collected by Penguin India in a five volume set.

In October 2016, Penguin India and Hamish Hamilton UK announced that they would publish her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, in June 2017. The novel was chosen for the Man Booker Prize 2017 long list and was nominated as a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction in January 2018.

Roy was awarded the 1997 Booker Prize for her novel *The God of Small Things*. The award carried a prize of approximately US$30,000. She donated the prize money she received, as well as royalties from her book, to human rights causes. Prior to the Booker, Roy won the National Film Award for the Best Screenplay in 1989, for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*, in which she captured the anguish among the

students prevailing in professional institutions. In 2015, she returned the national award in protest against religious intolerance and the growing violence by right wing groups in India.

In 2002, she won the Lannan Foundation's Cultural Freedom Award for her work "about civil socialist that are adversely affected by the world's most powerful governments and corporations" in order " to celebrate her life and her ongoing work in the struggle for freedom, justice and cultural diversity" (87). In 2003, she was awarded "special recognition" as a Woman of Peace at the Global Exchange Human Rights Award in San Francisco with Bianca Jagger, Barbara Lee, and Kathy Kelly. Roy was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize in May 2004 for her work in social campaigns and her advocacy of non-violence.

In January 2006, she was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award from an India's Academy of letters, for her collection of essays on contemporary issues, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, but she declined to accept it "in protest against the Indian Government are toeing the US line by violently and ruthlessly pursuing policies of brutalisation" (2). In November 2011, she was awarded the Norman Mailer Prize for Distinguished Writing.

The works of Arundhati Roy are challenging and richly reward the critics who explore their depths. The relevance of the study lies in the fact how power operates and hegemonic forces always remain active through different agencies in order to contain the subvert forces when they suffer threat to their existences. Arundhati Roy in her novel – *The God of Small Things* as well as her collection of essays and speeches – The Algebra of Infinite Justice, An Ordinary Person's Guide Empire, The Great Indian Rape Trick-I, The Great Indian Rape Trick-II, In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones and her interviews has effectively presented such prevailing practices in

society. The study proposes to look into how *The God of Small Things* creates a world and succeeds in articulating social oppression. Arundhati Roy's fresh perspective on age old traditions created waves as rebellion against the social injustice meted out to the downtrodden and to the women. *The God of Small Things* is read as a book, a book which becomes the voice of all those who are relegated to the margins of the society.

More than sixty years have passed since India gained its political autonomy, but the fact remains that the lower classes and women living in Indian society are yet to witness freedom in a truer sense. Inspite of continuous representation, legislations and revolution, the weaker sections of the society continue to suffer and the powerful and the privileged, though hypocrites and law breakers are rewarded. The study proposes to explore the maltreatment meted out to the subalterns in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. It will highlight the various ways in which the rights and privileges of both these classes are generally ignored or cancelled out even in the present era of postcolonialism.

In the intervening years, Roy has used her celebrity status in India to write instead in defence of causes she believes in to become, "a writer for the victims of modernity". Almost unique among intellectuals, Roy publicly excoriated the Government for its launch nuclear tests in 1998 in a long and passionate essay The End of Imagination, simultaneously in India and Pakistan. Roy certainly is a feminist as she tries to end evil in this world. She is interested in keeping her readers well informed. She questions very legitimacy of conducting these nuclear tests at a time when the millions of Indians suffer conditions of object poverty and live in unhygienity of shanty towns. She is calling out the leaders, not only of India, but also of the world, to reconsider the consequences of what they are doing to the earth and

its peoples. All these actions, of course, are in the names of progress and national defence. She is truly a feminist in real sense.

In1999, Roy pointed her sharp pen against the Narmada dam, under construction in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat in another highly critical essay entitled "The Greater Common Good". Roy wrote the essay to express her solidarity with the extraordinary people fighting an extraordinary war as she puts it in her dedication and to stir the innermost conscience of the intellectual world. She turns out to be a feminist when she undertook a lot of painstaking research to tell the sad tale of the people and the environment devastated by the project.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that Roy has strength and a passionate sense of justice. Roy's works catch out attention on social issues and injustice. If Roy holds anything specifically, it is social vision, a vision which has a little room for the suppression and exploitation of the individual by society, of woman by man, of untouchables by touchable, of children by elders and political pawns by political parties. She was wholly committed to the voiceless millions of her country and became their voice at a huge risk to herself.

The story of "*The God of Small Things*" revolves in a small town named Ayemenem, now a part of Kottayam in Kerala. This novel depicts about the childhood experiences of fraternal twins Rahel and Esthappen from their age of seven in 1969 till they reunite when they turn to be 31 in 1993 whose lives were destroyed by the love laws, where in it speaks about who should be loved and in what proportion. Most of the story is written at the viewpoint of the seven years old of her experience. In this novel, she has captured the caste system, communication and the Syrian Christian life in Kerala. The novel depicts how small things in life, affect people's lives and behaviour.

The novel begins with the story of Ammu who desperately wants to get away from her ill-tempered father and finally she gets away to stay with her aunt in Calcutta and there she marries a man, who assists in the tea estate. But her marriage becomes unsuccessful and she returns home with her twin children, Estha (boy) and Rahel (Girl). On her return, apart from her mother and brother, they have their aunt (Baby kochamma) who is her father's sister staying with them. Ammu's brother gets married to an English woman, whom he fell in love with at college and they have a daughter named Sophie. The novel revolves around these characters and the life they live and disaster that follow in their lives.

The central theme of the novel is "small things" of the novel's title. They are the things that make up the fabric of day to-day life. Love and other emotions, the beauty of nature, the proper use of one's gifts and talents these are small things that make life meaningful to each person. This is in contrast to the big things politics, cultural norms, status, and money, which are sadly what many people get caught up in and fixated on. Especially in the Ipe family, the big things are viewed as important, but it is the small things that lead to tragedy.

Another main theme of this novel is about family, it explores the relationship between brother and sister, mother and child, grandparent and grandchild, aunt and niece or nephew, and cousins. It looks at the ways families are forced to stick together and also how they fall apart. Unconditional family love is a major issue on the table here. Sometimes they feel obligated to love their family members on the other hand, just because they are related to someone doesn't mean we will love them or that they'll have we back. Just like in real life, family relationships in the novel can be complicated, confusing, and frustrating.

Arundhati Roy does not present a sequential narrative in *The God of Small Things*. Rather, the chapters move about in time and place reflecting memories, reactions to current happenings, and thoughts about the future, often from different viewpoints, some childlike and some adult. This is now people mentally process life's events, after all, with memories of the past influencing the response to the present and both creating ideas about the future. In thinking about one's life' story, the mind bounces around instead of following a linear path, and perceptions of reality can change radically from childhood to adulthood.

Reading the novel is not unlike eating an orange; piece by piece the central events are revealed and digested until the whole is understood and appreciated. What is helpful to know from the beginning, however, is that there are two general time frames, in which the major events occur: the past and present. The past is December 1969 and the present is1993. In the past the twins Rahel and Estha are seven years old and experience many traumatic events, ending with their separation. In the present they both are alive and together again. In both the past and the present, they are based at the family home in Ayemenem. Generally, chapters alternate between the past and the present. The next chapter deals with the plight of Indian women, their great suffering, anxieties, their humble submission, persecution and undeserved humiliation in a male dominating society.

Chapter Two

Tale of Sufferings

The notion of Feminism emanates from an intense awareness of a woman about her identity as a woman. It is a philosophy that stands against the stereotyped definitions of masculine and feminine and it aims at placing women in their right and just perspective. Feminism is not concerned with a group of people it wants to benefit but with a type of injustice it wants to eliminate. It is thus a movement which is against unjust or unfair action towards women rather than the perception that there is violation of another's rights or of what is right, lack of justice with treatment of women in society. It analyzes the reasons for women's oppressions and achieves women's Liberation.

Feminism may be a term that incorporates the basic elements of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies. It motivated by the experiences of women in relation to their social, political and economic situation. Gillis says: feminism challenged the "second wave's paradigm as to what is, or not, good for females" (32). Feminism at a social level focuses on eradicating gender inequality that dominates the women. Some writers view feminism as beyond the surface issues of sex and gender. Feminism activities emerged from within diverse communities. They basically concentrate on the intersection between gender and sexuality with other social identities of race and class.

The God of Small Things portrays the truthful picture of the plight of Indian women, their great suffering, cares and anxieties, their humble submission, persecution and undeserved humiliation in male dominating society. It shows the women's marathon struggle for seeking the sense of 'identity' in a totally averse and envious society. The social structure of an average Indian woman is full of ups and

downs. It can be very clearly seen in some of the women characters like Ammu, Mammachi, Baby kochamma, Rahel and Margaret Kochamma.

The God of Small Things is a feminist text foregrounding many invisible barriers which patriarchy has continued to raise in women's way to gain parity with men. One of the key issues which very often figures in contemporary feminist discourse is the patriarchal powers within the household, the society and the economy. Banerjee says that "in spite of a number of face-saving laws made by the State, practices like dowry-based violence or female foeticide are carried on with impunity within the household" (7). *The God of Small Things* deals with the transgression of "love laws", which has been operating within the family and the society since immemorial, and its terrible consequences. Kate Millet points out that one of the most potent and powerful institution of patriarchy is family as it "affects control and conformity" (55).

In the novel there are four generations. The novelist does not say about the women in the first generation. Aleyoooty Ammachi is Pappachi's mother. She continues to live in an oil portrait besides her husband Rev. Ipe's painting. While Ipe smiles Aleyoooty Ammachi looks more hesitant. Baby kochamma and Mammachi belong to the second generation. Baby kochamma is the daughter of Reverend E. John Ipe, who is the priest of the Mar Thomas Church. He had seven children but only two of them survived. Baby is one of those survivors, and the other is her brother, Benan John Ipe. Her real name is Navomy Ipe but everybody called her baby. She falls in love with a handsome, young Irish monk, Father Mulligan at the age of eighteen.

The young girl and the intrepid Jesuit both were showcasing an infidelity towards Christianity. Baby enters into a convent in Madras after becoming a Roman Catholic with special dispensation from the Vatican. She hopes that it would provide

her opportunities to be with Father Mulligan. The love affair did not materialize. She is sent abroad for studies and two years later she returns with a diploma in ornamental gardening. She does not however forget Father Mulligan. Moreover she tries to remain in contact with him who too stays in touch with her. He had begun studying Hindu scriptures to denounce them intelligently but the study eventually leads him to a change of faith. He becomes the Vaishnavas and joins an Ashram North of Rishikesh. He writes to her every Diwali and sends greeting card every New Year.

Baby preserves those things. Father Mulligan dies. The death of her beloved does not turn her to a widow like living. She is more concerned on lotteries, loves makeup and enjoys watching colour TV. In course of time she totally discards her gardening skill. And now she behaves like a teenager at the age of eighty three. She is snobbish in all sense and pretends that she has great knowledge of literary sense. She strongly believes in theory that a divorced daughter had no position anywhere at all. A divorced daughter from an inter community love marriage is outrageous. Marriage was simply unbearable to her. That's why she never tolerated the presence of Ammu and twins in her house. Baby takes drastic steps of conversion in order to meet a man of her choices and dislikes Ammu for similar reasons. She allows her brother to have illegal relationship with unfamiliar women but frowns upon Ammu for thwarting the ethical boundaries of the family. This shows that Roy does not present her female characters as ideal ones. She is neither exploited by the man nor devastated by the customs in the society.

Mammachi is the wife of Pappachi, an entomologist. She has been a silent sufferer from the beginning of her marriage life. Though she is not frustrated in love like Baby but she is an unhappy character. She is like a doll in the hands of Pappachi. Her husband has a very poor opinion about her. In the beginning Roy presents a

pathetic picture of Mammachi's life. Roy observes "Mammachi was almost blind and wore dark glasses when she went out of the house. Her tears tickled down from behind them, trembled down from behind them and tremble along her jaw like raindrops on the edge of a roof" (5).

The frustrated and unsatisfied marriage life of Mammachi shows the reader a different tale of woe. Her husband is seventeen years older than her. He is a respectable man in society and a notable entomologist. He is a very jealous husband. Mammachi takes lesson in violin when her teacher praises her he becomes sad and abruptly discontinues her lessons. Every night he beats Mammachi with a brass flower vase. One day Pappachi bet Mammachi with brass vase, Chacko had come to Ayemenem for summer vacation and he saw Pappachi beating Mammachi and he strode Pappachi to room and twisted his hand back. This episode creates hatred in the mind of Pappachi and he never touched or sought any help from Mammachi.

Mammachi shows indifferent attitude towards Margaret kochamma. She shows female jealousy for woman whom her son had loved and married. She never met Margaret but looked down upon her. She is unkind towards the workers of the factory paradise pickles and preservers. But she is meek with Chacko. She has a separate entrance built for Chacko's room, so that the object of his 'need' would not have to go traipsing through the house. Mammachi is not crafty as baby kochamma but her mind is hardly less pervert than that of baby kochamma. She subscribes to the logic and ethics of the male chauvinism in Toto. Her conservative idea turns her inhuman, nasty and brutish. In the novel the characters of Mammachi and Baby Kochamma suffer due to the institution of marriage.

Their pathetic state guide's their apathy towards Rahel. In this regard, Debjani Gangulay rightly comments:

> Mammachi's own marital experience has not enabled her to empathize with her daughter's brutalized married life. Rather, she sees Ammu's failed marriage as just retribution for her daughter who dared to marry outside her community. Her firm emotional investment in the hierarchies of class, caste and gender is illustrated at several points in the novel. Like a young bride who couldn't believe her good fortune. (22)

The third generation of women characters is Ammu and Chacko's alien wife and mother of Sophie Mol. Like the other "Mombattis" of the book she also suffers and loose her dreams in a male dominated society. After the marriage with Chacko her life becomes more frightful and more insecure than before. She has to undergo unbearable grief and sorrow. A chain of misfortunes make her life sad and gloom.

Margaret is working as a waitress in a cafe in London when she first meets Chacko. Like Ammu, she leaves the house of her parents "for no greater reason than a youthful assertion of independence" (240). She has an ardent desire to be good and gentle lady with enough money. So she has to face with the real world. One day when Chacko comes to cafe, she all of a sudden is drawn towards him like how Ammu was drawn towards Baba.

Margaret and Chacko have an intimate relationship and both of them get married without their family's consent. Marriage between Chacko and Margaret took place "Without her family's consent. Without his family's knowledge" (246). But this untraditional rebellious marriage as a bad luck did not prosper in a fruitful way. To crowd the effect, Margaret's parents refuse to see her. Her father dislikes Indians as

he thinks Indians as sly and dishonest people. He could not believe that his daughter marrying such a man. Moreover Margaret also feels fed up with Chacko and she divorces him and gets married with Joe. Though Margaret is a tragic character she partly tortures and is mostly devastated and harassed by her own fickle mind and incapable conduct.

Ammu is the central character of the novel. Her tragic story, right from the beginning to the end arouses our sense of pity and catharsis. Her tragic tale begins in her childhood. As a little girl Ammu has to endure some unbearable nightmarish experiences. She and her mother Mammachi suffer from the cruelty of her father. Pappachi used to beat Ammu and her mother Mammachi with a brass vase.

Ammu is deprived of higher education because according to Pappachi, college education is not useful for a girl. This shows the truthful portrayal of the women of the society who find nothing but the step motherly treatment in a male dominated society. In an atmosphere entirely different, she feels like a captive in a big Ayemenem house. She helps her mother in house works and waits for marriage proposals. She becomes the victim of frustration due to sudden disruption of education. She wants to fly freely in the sky.

Ammu escapes from Ayemenem and she goes to Calcutta to spend summer with a distant aunt and ends marrying a Bengali Hindu there. She marries him as she does not want to go to Ayemenem. Ammu shows her strength of mind not only in marrying the man of her choice but also in divorcing him when the choice proves eventually wrong. So the Beautiful, young and Cheeky Ammu was twenty-seven years old then, but "in the pit of her stomach she carried the cold knowledge that for her, life had been lived. She had one chance. She made a mistake. She married the wrong man" (38).

Her husband whom she loves is an alcoholic and even makes her smoke. As he neglects his duty, he is threatened with dismissal by his manager, Mr. Hollick and acquiesces in to his proposal to go away for a while and send his wife to his bungalow to be 'looked after'. Her husband puts his proposal before his wife. This extreme humiliation creates a sense of great hatred in the heart of Ammu. In a scuffle, she hits her husband with a heavy book and leaves the place with the twins Estha and Rahel. She goes to Ayemenem and tells her father the story of the reason for her divorce but her father does not believe her. Her parents are indifferent to her and her children. She is given a step motherly treatment in her own house. She imagines her twins "like a pair of bewildered frogs engrossed in each other's company lolloping arm in arm down a high way full of hurtling traffic"(43).

Ammu challenges the androcentric notion of the society which avoids the surname after divorce. Estha and Rahel have no surname because Ammu is considering reverting to her maiden name, though she feels that choosing between her husband's name and her father's name does not give a woman much of a choice. Law does not give a daughter any claim to property. Though Ammu does as much work as Chacko, the latter feels free to declare the factory as his own.

As a mother, Ammu loves her children. She is concerned about their innocence which makes them willingly to love people who do not love them. She not only wants to impart them bookish knowledge but cares to teach them correct manners too. The rebel in Ammu does not permit her to remain contented with motherhood and divorcehood. So she proceeds to reclaim her body.

Estha, Rahel and Ammu dwells on the theme of betrayal in such a way that it covers the entire gamut of human relationship:

> 'It just goes to show', Ammu said, that you can't trust anybody. Mother, father, brother, husband, best friend. Nobody . With children, she said (when they asked), it remained to been. She said it was entirely possible. For instance, that Estha could group up to be a Male Chauvinist Pig. (83)

The other factor which stirs her is the dream of the one armed man and suggests her that it is no use seeking perfection in life, the small and powerless peoples like her can satisfy themselves with the little time provides them. The preferential treatment shown towards Chacko's ex-wife and their daughter is openly displayed in front of all, throwing Ammu and her twins in complete isolation. This is a severe blow for Ammu to bear too. The arrival of Margaret Kochamma proves Ammu's sexual desires.

The real tragedy in life of Ammu starts when she comes in contact with Velutha, a Parayan. Ammu loves Velutha from childhood not for his exceptional talents but for his fiery spirit of protest. Velutha's return after many years makes her take a fatal decision to "love by night the man, her children loved by day" (77). The secret love goes for thirteen days until it is reported to Mammachi by Velutha's father and compounded by the accidental death of Sophie Mol. When the relationship is revealed she is tricked into her bedroom and locked. Velutha is implicated in false cases of attempted rape, kidnapping of children and murder of Sophie Mol. After Sophie's funeral Ammu goes to police station to set the case right.

After four days of the funeral, Chacko assumes the role of a defender of morality and asks Ammu to pack up and leave. The punishment is unjust as it ruins

three lives for the supposed offence of one. Ammu is separated from her children as Estha is returned to her father and Rahel alone was permitted to live in Ayemenem but Ammu is not allowed to visit her frequently. Desperately wanting to have a good job in order to bring her children with her, she tries a number of jobs and dies alone in the Bharat lodge in Aleppy where she has gone for a job interview. After her death the church refuses to bury her on several counts. So Chacko hires a van to transport the body to the electric crematorium.

Ammu is such a tragic character that even het last rite is not done properly with traditional rituals. Ammu, the tragic character is tortured and abused by police, family and politics. It is not only the men folk responsible for her tragic plight but mostly the women characters like Mammachi and baby kochamma who may be called the real culprits to engender sufferings in Ammu's life.

The fourth generation of women characters is Rahel and Sophie Mol. Ammu's daughter Rahel deserves our attention too. The story deals with her life only to the age of thirty one and most of the stories belong to her childhood. She is deserted by father, separated from mother, neglected by her maternal uncle, grandmother and grand aunt. The neglect accidentally results in a release of the spirit. She grows independent, daring and capable of thinking initiative.

After finishing schooling, she gets herself admitted into a college of Architecture in Delhi. The decision is taken not out of interest in Architecture but because she wanted to stay away from Ayemenem where she is unwanted. During her stay at the school of Architecture she meets Larry McCaslin and marries him. The decision of marriage is hers, it is not taken under ideal conditions because she knows that there is no one to arrange marriage and pay dowry for her. Her marriage is also like that of her mother and uncle.

Larry is an American research scholar. He is not a male chauvinist but the marriage proves prosaic. He values her but fails to understand her. Rahel refuses to continue her relationship with him. To her marriage is not a yoke so she breaks it soon. She does not feel shame or moral weakness for the divorce. The divorce does not leave her depressed. She works as a waitress in an Indian restaurant in New York. And then she serves as a night clerk in bullet-proof cabin at a gas station outside Washington.

Rahel has a great sense of responsibility for her brother Estha, who is a part of her own self to her. As soon as she receives letter from Baby Kochamma that Estha has returned, she leaves her job and goes to Ayemenem. When Rahel casts her eyes on her grandmother's pickle factory, she is wonderstruck to see the disorder, "an ambiguous, unclassified consistency"(15), the way things have been arranged in Paradise Pickles and Preserves: "Looking back now, to Rahel it seemed as though this difficulty that their family had with classification ran much deeper than the jam-jelly question" (30-31). Unlike her divorcee mother she has no burden of children with her. But she has to look after her brother, Estha whom traumatic experiences of life have turned speechless. She because of mental and psychological tortures, has become an abnormal character; that even creates a breach in her merry and jocund marriage life; that makes her a rebel student during her school days; that makes her so mad that in a fit of sexual passion, she even goes to the extent of making an illicit or incestuous relation with her own brother Estha.

The very first section of the novel gives a clue as to how society deals with its transgression:

> Perhaps Ammu, Estha and Rahel were the worst transgressors. But it wasn't just them. It was the others too. They all broke the rules. They

> all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much. The laws that make grandmothers grandmothers, uncles uncles, mothers mothers, jam jam and jelly jelly. (31)

Sophie Mol is a pivotal character in the novel. Sophie's character comes through the way in which particularly Estha and Rahel perceive her. She is the half English, half-Indian daughter of Chacko and Margaret kochamma. The twins do not particularly like her because she makes them feel inferior. Other members of the family, particularly Baby Kochamma, constantly compare them to Sophie in ways that makes her seem better.

Rahel and Estha dislike her based on the preconceptions about her rather than she really is. Sophie actually wants to be friend with the twins, and that she is the one who feels left out. She tries to win them over the best way she knows. She gathers up presents and gives them. She also tries to win the heart of the twins like insulting Chacko and baby kochamma. She also begs to tag along with them when they decide to run away. This decision proves to be fatal for her. At the end Sophie Mol, a human, sensitive and fundamentally lonely little girl, dies at the immature age of nine, by drowning in a river. The death of Sophie Mol diminished into background and the refrain "Love Laws" starts occurring as leitmotif, as the story progresses. There are many transgressions of Love Laws in this novel but the same mode of transgression is dealt with differently in case of different individuals.

Roy's *The God of Small Things* is a feminine creation of unique nature. The novel clearly shows the untold miseries and the undeserved sufferings of women who have to bear the brunt of male domination silently and meekly. She transcends the ordinary concept of feminism. The novel examines the feminist

jealousy between woman and woman, the plight of woman in a male dominated framework. Roy shows how a woman in a patriarchal set up yearns for pleasure and happiness and a life far from the shackles and constraints. She is like a free bird that wants to fly freely in the open skies. But all of a sudden, her wings are cut down by the callous society and thus she is pulled down to this earth where she has to grovel in the lowly dust. The next chapter discusses the intense trauma faced by the marginalized people of India through the significant characters Ammu and Velutha.

Chapter Three

Marginalized Voices

Marginalization is an approach used to study literature, giving emphasis to the voice of marginalized people in the society. Marginalized people are socially, politically, economically and legally deprived of their 'rights' as human beings in every sphere of life and society. Untouchables and females are considered as marginal entity in the society.

The God of Small Things depicts the life of Indian society. The setting of the story takes place in Kerala. The story tells that communism or even religions which teach about the equal human rights, cannot change discrimination and patriarchy in society. Gaytri Spivak states that the term subaltern is commonly used in a general sense to represent "subordinated classes and peoples" in short marginalized groups and the lower classes (4).

The purpose of exploring how Roy fictionally constructs marginalized female voices can be reached by studying and comparing three main female characters in *The God of Small Things*. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Ammu centering on their different ways of relating to Velutha, the male hero of the novel. These three women relate to and respond in different ways to Velutha, who is a Paravan; the lowest caste among the untouchables. Depending on how they relate to him, the different aspects of their characters are revealed.

The main characters in this novel are Estha and Rahel. They are twins. Their grandfather is the owner of a company from Christian high class (touchable). But their mother marries a Hindu man, which means she must change lower class (untouchable). Max Weber states that the social class is divided into three layers the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. The highest level is held by

educated and wealthy family (37). This includes Pappachi family. They belong to the high social class which has different life styles, attitudes, educations, and opportunities in the society. The next class is lower class (untouchable). The person who belongs to the lower class cannot touch the high class. They are usually uneducated. They are not allowed to work in high position. The novel portrays the lives of untouchables through Velutha, a paravan. In Indian society paravan is considered as lowest caste.

The first and eldest of these three characters is called Mammachi, Ammu's mother, (her full name is Soshamma Ipe). She is from a Syrian Christian family and wife to the late Pappachi, (his full name is Benaan John Ipe), who hits Mammachi regularly with a brass-vase, leaving 'crescent shaped' scars on her skull. She has one daughter, Ammu the black sheep of the family and a son, Chacko, a Rhodes-scholar, educated in Oxford. Mammachi starts a small business by making pickles and jams in her kitchen, a business her son Chacko soon takes up after his divorce from Margaret. He takes over Mammachi's pickle factory and referring to the factory as "..... my factory, my pineapples, my pickles" (57).

Mammachi thinks highly of her family as well as of herself and has an almost obsessive habit of ranking every person she ever meets, which normally ends up with them being situated somewhere down below her in the hierarchy of her mind. Towards her husband, she displays the mentioned idealized 'suffering wife' attitude, submits herself to him, accepts her fate and projects her repressed anger at other people, for example at Ammu, her rebellious daughter.

The second character, Baby Kochamma or Navomi Ipe, is Mammachi's short but voluminous sister-in-law and Ammu's aunt, much feared and loathed by Ammu's children. She embodies a mixture of wilfulness and adaption towards her family's

customs and traditions, but most of all she is a significantly shrewd lady and a master in the skill of manipulation and conspiracy. Sadly in love for her whole life with an unattainable Irish monk, she ends up an old maid living in her father's house, where she, among other things, is in charge of the formal education of Ammu's twins.

Ammu is the unruly daughter of the house, who manages to escape her abusive father and suppressed, wretched mother by hurriedly accepting a marriage proposal from a Bengali Hindu man during a visit to a distant relative in Calcutta. Her future husband works as a tea estate assistant manager up in Assam and seems like an acceptable match in Ammu's eyes but unfortunately he turns out to have severe alcoholic problems. After a couple of years in an increasingly dreadful marriage she divorces him and moves back to Ayemenem with their two children, Estha and Rahel, "to everything that she had fled from a few years ago. Except that now she had two young children. And no more dreams" (42).

Ammu is most unwelcome when she gets back to the house in Ayemenem and her father does not believe her when she tells him about how her former husband wanted to sell her like a prostitute to save his own skin. Mammachi, who has put up with years and years of beating and humiliation, is also quite discontent with her rebellious, and now also divorced daughter, and Baby Kochamma despises her more than anyone else because she feels that Ammu is "quarreling with a fate that she, Baby Kochamma herself, felt she had graciously accepted. The fate of the wretched Man-less woman" (44-45).

During these circumstances Ammu falls in love with Velutha, who works as a carpenter in the pickle factory, and their love story is the centre of this novel. Velutha is a Paravan, the lowest kind of the untouchable outcastes. He lives with his father and brother in a small laterite hut nearby the Ayemenem house where his father

has been working for many years. Velutha is extremely gifted with his hands. As a boy he makes intricate little boxes and other minute toys out of dried palm reeds that he brings to Ammu "on his palm . . . so she wouldn't have to touch him to take them" (72).

Mammachi persuades Velutha's father to send Velutha to the untouchable's school to learn how to read and write. Velutha also manages to obtain some training in carpentry through a workshop in nearby Kottayam held at the Christian Mission Society by a visiting German carpenter. He finishes his school at the age of sixteen and is by then also a trained carpenter, despite his caste. Velutha works as a carpenter and mechanic in the pickle factory and around the Ayemenem house, maintaining and mending everything from clocks and water pumps to the bottle machines in the factory. "Mammachi with her impenetrable touchable logic often said that if only he hadn't been a Paravan, he might have become an engineer" (72). Chacko says that Velutha "practically runs the factory" (264). These quotes reveal that Velutha has achieved an extraordinary position after all, despite being a Paravan and it is obvious to see that he is marginalized and subordinated.

Roy depicts the house of Velutha, the paravan as

> . . . dark and clean. It smelled of fish curry and wood smoke. Heat cleaved to things like a low fever . . . Velutha and Vellya Paapen's bedding was rolled up and propped against the wall . . . a grown man could stand up straight in the centre of the room, but to along its sides. (208)

Being a Paravan and an untouchable the society he lives in still regards him as inferior and unclean. Roy gives a somewhat euphemistic picture of his status when the narrator shows how Velutha appears in Ammu's dream: "He left no footprints in sand,

no ripples in water, no image in mirrors" (206). This is a reflection of the subaltern position of the untouchables in the old days that Mammachi tells her grandchildren about, the days when

> paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint... They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed. (73-74)

He secretly becomes a member of the communist party and participates in a political march (organized by the Marxist labour Union). Eventually he crosses the most forbidden line of all, that of having a relationship with a touchable, upper-caste woman. So being born a Paravan, Velutha transgresses many of the lines that society expects him to stay behind. All the same, in many ways Velutha is the most oppressed and downtrodden of the main characters in the novel despite being a man. Ammu's marginalization is also quite obvious as she is a divorced woman with two children to take care of.

Ammu's brother, Chacko, reminds her children that their mother has no 'locus standi', no legal rights to inherit the factory or the house for instance. Intentionally or not, he pronounces the word 'Locust Stand I', making it sound like Locust, a grasshopper, perhaps implying that their mother is more or less a kind of parasite in the Ayemenem household. In the end, she is in fact literally kicked out of her parent's house by this very same brother.

If Ammu is alienated, her children are even more so. They are "Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would even marry" in the eyes of

Baby Kochamma (44). Their vulnerable position makes Ammu very protective towards them and even if she is "quick to reprimand" them she is "even quicker to take offense on their behalf" (42). Even though Ammu is disregarded and perhaps even despised by her family, she is also sometimes feared by them because they can sense an 'unsafe edge' in her, being "a woman that they had already damned, who now had little left to lose, and could therefore be dangerous" (44).

This fear makes them show her the respect of keeping a distance to her, especially on the days when the radio played Ammu's songs. Rahel ponders over this 'unsafe edge' and this 'air of unpredictability' that surrounds Ammu: "It was what she had battling inside her. An unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber" (44). This quote illustrates the opposing forces that Ammu carries inside her; as a mother she strives to love and protect her children at all cost but as an individual she is desperate to break free from and rebel against the smug, ordered 'world' that surrounds her. Ammu is, like Velutha, a transgressor of boundaries, a person unwilling to submit to the role models presented to her.

Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are both Syrian Christians, a proud minority group in Kerala of around twenty percent a large number of Christians for an Indian state, who believe themselves to be "descendants of the one hundred Brahmins whom St.Thomas the Apostle converted to Christianity when he travelled east after the Resurrection" (64). In the social hierarchy of Kerala, they are 'upper-caste Syrian Christians', separating them from the lowlier 'Rice-Christians' who like Velutha's grandfather joined the British colonialists Anglican Church encouraged by a little food and money.

However, the minority position of the Syrian Christians does not mean that they are degraded or downtrodden by the Hindu majority. They are, by and large, the wealthy, estate-owning (pickle-factory-running), feudal lords" (64). Mullaney states that they are so to speak "remnants of the old colonial elite" and descendants of "those Indians who were part of the steel frame of British in India, the Indian Civil Service" (33). Chacko also explains this to the twins saying "though he hated to admit it, they were all Anglophiles. They were a family of Anglophiles" (51). And as such, the Ipe family is somewhat on the edge in postcolonial, communist Kerala.

This position becomes particularly clear in the case of Baby Kochamma, who develops a strong fear of the communists and a fear of being dispossessed. The question of identity permeates *The God of Small Things* since the whole Ipe family has this problem of 'classification', symbolized in the novel by Mammachi's banana jam. The banana jam was banned illegal by the Food Products Organization because it "according to their specifications . . . was neither jam nor jelly. Too thin for jelly and too thick for jam. An ambiguous, unclassifiable consistency."(301). Perhaps this anxious feeling of not belonging anywhere, of having a vulnerable social and financial standing (the factory was not profitable) contributes to Mammachi's and Baby Kochamma's extreme reactions to Ammu's and Velutha's social transgressions.

The Syrian brand of Christianity was in fact like the banana jam, an ambiguous mix of Christianity and casteism (stemming from Hinduism) and perhaps this explains why Mammachi initially pretends to be liberal and modern by encouraging Velutha to go to school, whilst in the end of the story she overtly acts in accordance to the caste system and calls him a pariah dog.

When the factory owner Chacko, reveals his intentions to organize the factory workers into a union, Comrad Pillai, the Local Communist leader says that "Comrade,

you cannot stage the revolution for them. You can only create awareness. Educate them. They must launch their own struggle. They must overcome their fears" (265).

Roy seems to be aware of the problems connected with representing individuals from diverse socio-economic habitats. Spivak would perhaps argue that Roy is erring when she, as a middle-class, educated woman and author, seeks to give voice to the oppressed. However, Spivak might nevertheless approve of Roy's intervention due to that the author is most likely acting out of a 'scrupulously visible political interest' which Spivak feels sympathetic to and welcomes as a kind of strategic essentialism. There are other critics who definitely acknowledge Roy's potential to represent the 'hitherto silent'. Anita Singh sees the novel as

> A discourse of the marginalized and subordinated as it crystallizes the issues of atrocities against all those dispossessed of an identity or a speaking voice. The writing subject itself Roy belongs to the rank of the hitherto silent. The act of authorship is an act of retrieval as well as an act of liberation. (133)

It could be worth noting here that women's voices have indeed been marginalized in postcolonial India. Ketu H. Katrak has pointed out that even though India's national leader Mahatma Gandhi did much to mobilize women in the nationalist movement through passive resistance, "which feminized the usually masculine struggle against the colonizer", he never intended to "confuse men's and women's roles" and "challenge patriarchal traditions that oppressed women within the home" (395-96).

Thus after independence, the women who had struggled for freedom alongside with the men, found themselves back in their traditional roles as primarily

mothers and wives. Furthermore, Gandhi often used symbols from Hindu mythology, intended to serve as role models for women. Katrak continues:

> The notion of female suffering in the Hindu tradition is dangerously glorified through such use of mythological models. The subconscious hold of socialization patterns inculcated in girls through the popular mythological stories of the ever suffering Sita as virtuous wife, or the all sacrificing Savitri who rescues her husband from death are all part of the preparation for suffering in their roles of wives and mothers.. (398)

By using such myths as representations and role models for girls and women, Katrak says that: Gandhi extended an ideology where "female sexuality was legitimately embodied only in marriage, wifehood, motherhood, domesticity all forms of controlling women's bodies" (396). All these feminized role models are alive and well in present day India, and as every other postcolonial female writer, Roy has to address the expectations imposed upon women, as they are part of the overarching structures that influences everyday life. The fourth chapter shows the technical skill of Roy who uses literary devices like simile and metaphor, Alliteration, repetition and rhymes which explore the theme in her unique way of writing.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

Narrative technique is the method and device used by writers to narrate stories. It works upon specific uses of phrases, punctuations or exaggerations of description. Although every storyteller uses few foundational techniques every novelist employs of his own way of narrating the story. Although there are so many technical aspects of narrative technique but setting, plot, perspective, style, theme and character form the crux of any narration.

The God of Small Things explores the childhood experience of fraternal twins by adopting the Bildungsroman techniques as narrative pattern. It explores the themes of social discriminations, class relations and cultural tensions, Indian history and politics, forbidden love, betrayal, etc. The novel is rich from the point of narrative pattern and its techniques. Roy applies traditional, as well as, innovative techniques to build a story which reflects Indian consciousness. The literary techniques which she has used are still relevant and gained critical acclaim when the novel was published in 1997.

Roy says a great deal through her style. Her kind of writing lends itself extremely well to literary interpretation because it is possible to find several meanings in her writing that lie hidden behind her style. No interpretation of such a literary style can be final. Yet an endeavour must be made to go beyond the surface of her writing. The fact that, it is a woman writer that also becomes evident from her stylistic utterances.

Roy in order to narrate the novel, uses literary devices like de-familiarization, similes and metaphors, repetition of words and phrases, epigrams and paradoxes, irony, oxymoron, metonymy, synecdoche and pun. She also uses some sound oriented

techniques like rhythm, alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance, dissonance, etc. The content of Arundhati Roy's writing focuses on feminist perceptions, postcolonial dimensions, politics, literary tourism and Indian culture.

The God of Small Things gets its meaning from the following simile, "That Big God howled like a hot wind and demanded obeisance. So, Small God laughed a hollow laugh, and skipped away cheerfully. Like a rich boy in shorts" (19). The upper strata of the society always boast of its power and feels that it is their birth right to suppress the lower ones. The lower strata gleefully accepts its destiny and moves around. The basic element in the writings of Arundhati Roy is comparison and the novelty of these similes and metaphors. She uses her similes dealing with characters, incidents and minute observations of life. Basically, imagery is studied in the context of poetry but modern fiction writers like Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy have utilized the poetic mode in their fictional writing.

The use of similes can be seen in the art of characterization. As can be seen, "She imagined him dropping like a dark star out of the sky that he had made. Lying broken on the hot church floor, dark blood spilling from his skull like a secret" (6). These lines give a picture of Rahel, when she sees the painted dome of the church, and it seems marvelous to her. She thinks anyone, who could do such a job would be like velutha. This throws ample light on the fact that velutha is one of the most eminent persons in her eyes to do the job.

Roy portrays Ammu by using a striking simile in the following line: "Her face was set like stone, but the tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her rigid cheeks" (8). This simile describes the pathetic state of Ammu, who stands before a Police officer with her children and faces the ignominy of being called a Prostitute. She has lost her Velutha. The inappropriate word and the loss make her a stone and the

internal shame to be called a prostitute makes her tears roll down.

The simile which gives outer appearance of Baby Kochamma in her old age is, "Her eyes spread like butter behind the thick glasses" (20). This shows that the number on the glasses of Baby Kochamma is very high that's why those eyes looked like butter to the onlooker. In the novel, Rahel and Estha share a special bond which later turns out into incestuous relation that forms between the siblings as both want to fill the void created due to painful incidences of the past. The following simile reflects the beautiful bond between Rahel and Estha. "To Ammu her turns seemed like a pair of small bewildered frogs engrossed in each other's company, lolloping arm in arm down a highway full of hurtling traffic" (43).

Rahel and Estha are compared to gleeful frogs that seem to hop around the highways unaware of the dangers, which are always there to engulf them. They are small kids unknown to the fact what this society could do to them. Ammu, their mother becomes fiercefully protective because of their innocence. The following simile shows the bulky figure of Rahel's aunt "Inside the Plymouth, it wasn't easy for Rahel to see Estha, because Baby Kochamma rose between them like a hill" (62). This shows the enormity of the size of Baby Kochamma's body.

The comment of Ammu is enough to squeeze heart out of Chacko who always pretends to be a true Marxist but a easy going type bourgeoisie. "Her face was pale and as wrinkled as a dhobi's thumb from being in water for too long" (4). This simile describes the wrinkled face of Sophie Mol, who was described as an angel when she came to Ayemenem so she has lost her charm. A dhobi's thumb shows the existentialist thought.

Comrade Pillai who creates havoc in the life of characters of the novel tries to clean his slate with formal greetings to Estha, after his return to Ayemenem. "Estha

Mol, he would call out, in his high piping voice, frayed & fibrous now, like sugarcane stripped of its bark" (14). This shows that Comrade Pillai is now old and his voice is quite different from the time when he conspired with the Police officer or bluntly rejected Velutha when he asked for help or when he led the workers for a strike in the Pickles factory. This sugarcane like voice is a visual change.

The introduction of Sophie Mol proves to be the last nail in the coffin of already deteriorated condition of the twins. "Slowly faded, the loss of Sophie Mol grew robust and alive. It was always there. Like a fruit in season. Every season. As permanent as a Government Season. As permanent as a Government Job" (16). As permanent as a Government job is an existentialist thought. It has humour as well as satire in it. It is one of the most significant similes. It shows that Margaret Kochamma was never able to come out of the grip of sorrow after the loss of Sophie Mol.

The grip of sorrow is always there and haunts her. The incident which takes the life of Velutha has profound effect on Estha. The simile demarcates the effect. "Silence hung in the air like secret loss" (91). It shows the state of mind of Estha, whom an envelope of silence has taken in its grip. The reason behind his silence is the guilt of the single word he uttered. If he won't have nodded in affirmative on behest of Baby Kochamma in Police Station that the man who kidnapped them is Velutha, then he could have lived peacefully, without any sense of guilt.

But, the untimely utterances of Baby Kochamma about Estha, lead him to anger, which in turn spoil the showcase of good etiquette. And everything seems useless like gone bad pickles got rancid state. "To be borrowed and returned. Like Library books" (156). Estha comes with her mother, after her divorce, and then he is chosen to be sent back to his father, after the fall of Ammu. So, he is the one who is used as a shuttlecock and keeps in to and fro motion, is kept briefly and then returned.

"Inside her head, it was like drapes drawn across a bright day" (167).

Mammachi is blind and she is cut off from the outer world due to her blindness. "This knowing slid into him cleanly, like the sharp edge of a Knife" (177). Velutha when comes to know that Ammu has some place for him in her heart, the feeling struck him like a knife because he never expected love to comes from these quarters. The other type of similes used by Roy in her novel deal with observations of life. The following used of similes come under the category. "Inspector Thomas Mathew's Moustaches busted like the friendly Air Maharaja's, but his eyes were sly and greedy" (7).

The image of Maharaja gives a clear visual picture of a man. "The loss of Sophie Mol stepped softly around the Ayemenem House like a quite thing in socks" (15). It is like a quite thing in socks not in shoes which shows that it didn't make any sound. The grief is deep and it is settled in the hearts of people in Ayemenem House. 'The silence sat between grand nice and baby grand aunt like a third person" (18). Neither Rahel nor Baby Kochamma is able to forget the past.

There is nothing in between them which they would like to share. Rahel comes to see Estha, while Baby aunt expects her to take him away as soon as possible. But she rebels against such social structures and challenges marriage. In the novel the characters of Mammachi and Baby Kochamma suffer due to the institution of marriage. Their pathetic state guides their apathy towards Rahel. In this regard, Debjani Gangulay rightly comments: "Mammachi's own marital experience has not enabled her to empathize with her daughter's brutalized married life" (22).

Rather, she sees Ammu's failed marriage as just a retribution for her daughter who dares to marry outside her community. Her firm emotional investment in the hierarchies of class, caste and gender is illustrated at several points in the novel. "Like

a young bride who couldn't believe her good fortune" (22), Baby Kochamma is now here in the line to inherit the property and jewellery from Mammachi. It is by role of destiny that she gets it but is always conscious of the fact that she isn't the real inheritor, so the fear of losing is always present. "Shut it when you've finished with it', Baby Kochamma said, and closed her face like a cupboard" (29).

Vellya Paapen is frightened by the act of his son. To add to his misery, the out-burst gives extension to his superstitious nature and leaves him trembling with fear. "Velutha smiled when he saw the Marxist flag blooming like a tree outside his doorway" (212). He is a Paravan, the downtrodden, who always dreams that one day he would live in a society where there would be no discrimination due to one's caste.

Marxism is like a window in a dark room and he was happy to see a flag which seems like a tree that signifies the growth of Marxism. Arundhati Roy specializes in the dehumanizing metaphors like Rahel is like an exited mosquito on a leash. The Pale day moon is described as big as the belly of a beer drinking man etc. In the same manner irony too plays a vital role in the demarcation of true ironical sequences like, "Congratulations Chacko said, spoken like a true bourgeoisie" (61).

Here Chacko describes Ammu as a bourgeoisie because she thinks that blood on the beggar's hand is Mercurochrome. But, Chacko's character seems to be one of the upper class who claims that whatever is yours is mine and whatever is mine is also mine. "She's the sleeping partner" (102). Mammachi is described as the sleeping partner. This is the irony that the person who started the factory from point Zero, the person who brought it, where it stands now is then describes as sleeping partner. Ammu says: "we don't count, Rahel said, And Anyway he might change" (151). Rahel says of Estha that he might change from his attitude of a loving brother. And it's true that he changes and changes from a brother to a lover.

The repetitive nature of events has been categorized into three classes. The first form is where repetition experienced in short sequence. The second type involves repetition where the author introduces a new concept in the course of writing in one sentence and then keeps on repeating the idea on the following page or sentence afterward. The final form author uses same sound or a particular word in a single sentence.

The repetition of the name of Mammachi as 'Sosha' emphasizes the importance of Mammachi's factory: "Everybody just referred to her pickles and jams as Sosha's Tender Mango, or Sosha's Banana Jam. Sosha was Mammachi's first name. Soshamma" (58). The arrival of Sophie Mol has been used to show how repetition is being utilized in *The God of Small Things*. Massive preparations are made right from the time when the family decides to go to the airport to receive her. The children are eager to see her. "The rehearsals had been rehearsed" (136). It is the sounds from this statement that forms part of the repetition. It shows how much the family has prepared to receive her. The use of repetition as one of the stylistic device is used to emphasize the message being passed across. The use of repetition in Arundhati Roy's novel is very significant as it adds both emphasis and rhythm to its prose.

> My dearest Papa, I am well and happy in the service of our lady. But Koh-i-noor appears to be unhappy and homesick. My dearest Papa, Today Koh-i-noor vomited after lunch and is running a temperature. My dearest Papa, convent food does not seem to suit Koh-i-noor though I like it well enough. My dearest Papa, Koh-i-noor is upset because her family seems to neither understand nor are about her wellbeing. (25)

Here is repetition of the words 'My dearest Papa' and 'Koh-i-noor'. The Repetition of 'my dearest papa' shows the flattery as well as the constant pleading in the voice of Baby Kochamma to get favour. That is, she wants her father to bring her back from convent. Her joining of the Roman catholic church is to remain in the company of Father Milligan. But, gradually, when she feels that her endeavour would leave her no where close to him, she wants to return. The repetition of "Koh-i-noor" shows the high degree of greatness for herself, in accordance to baby Kochamma's grandfather's wills in which, he has described that of his seven grandchildren one is Koh-i-noor.

Roy has used rhymes to describe the complexity of the information and events that she is trying to pass across to the audience. Rhyme is also evidenced where the writer says "Not Old. Not Young. But a viable die-able age" (18-20). Rhyme is a stylistic style that is used to express the short and the long patterns through the unstressed and stressed syllable.

Arundhati Roy uses alliteration as a part of her narrative techniques. In her novel the use of alliteration has peculiar reason for their being. Each of the alliteration has some functions minor and major in Roy's scheme of things. The narrator says, "They knew the slippery stone steps (thirteen) before the slimy mud began" (203). The alliteration slippery stone steps give the musical quality to the narrative. It signifies that Rahel and Estha know the secret of the river and its surroundings. By the sibilant sound Roy is able to give a connection to the three words beginning with 'S'. She connects stones and steps and makes them slippery. Thus sound creates a unifying effect which she projects rhythmically in to her prose.

Second example of alliteration is, "Finger coloured fingers fought the ferns" (202). In an alliteration like this, the 'F' sound contributes to the form of the writing

which points to the author's experience. In this Roy is rather similar to Gerard Manly Hopkins in her use of alliteration. Another example to show Roy's prowess in the use of alliteration can be seen in the line, "She was hemmed in by humid hips . . ." (139). In this repetition of 'H' sound is a plan desired to create the sound patterns because there is little relevance in the term humid hips.

Rahel's "Real life was inside the van" (162). Rahel is sitting with the dead body of Ammu, so for Rahel, everything seems mechanical outside the moving vehicle But, here is a dead body which will never move or utter a word but is described as having real life. Arundhati Roy sprinkles malayalam words to add a new dimension to her narrative Thozhilali Ekta (66).

The description of Ayemenem in the novel causes many foreigners to explore the actual places in south India, which they visit in reality and compare with the description in the novel. In the context of the place, the writing has created the place. The use of Malayalam in this work of fiction makes the reader inquisitive about the language and in turn contributes in Literary Tourism. Thus, the critical acclaim Roy received for her first work of fiction can be called as a triumph of story teller's arts. Her writing is compared with the work of Salman Rushdie due to her use of narrative techniques.

To sum up, it can be stated that Roy effectively utilizes the consciousness and experience of a character in the service of the grand design. Roy uses the narrative techniques of narration in such a way that it provides better insights about the characters and adds graphic vitality to the aesthetic structure of the novel.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature represents the language or culture and tradition of a group of people. But, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artefact. Literature introduces the reader to new worlds of experience. Indian English literature is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history begins with the works of Michel Madhusudan Dutt followed by R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao who contributed to Indian fiction in the 1930s.

It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who are of Indian descent. It is frequently referred to as Indo Anglian literature. The history of Indian literature is the historical development of writings in prose or poetry, which aim at providing education, entertainment and enlightenment to its readers, as well the development of the literary techniques employed in the communication of these pieces. Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie, who was born in India and now living in the USA. Rushdie, with his famous work *Midnight's Children* ushered in a new trend of writing. Anita Desai, who was shortlisted for the Booker prize three times, received a Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* and a British Guardian prize for *The Village by the Sea*.

Recent writers in India such as Arundhati Roy and David Davidar show a direction towards contextuality and rootedness in their works. Arudhati Roy, a trained architect and the 1997 Booker prize winner for her *The God of Small Things*, calls herself a "home grown" writer. Her award winning book is set in the immensely

physical landscape of Kerala. Then she became a non expatriate Indian author of the biggest selling book. She is also a political activist involved in human rights and environmental causes. Next Davidar sets his *The House of Blue Mangoes* in southern Tamil Nadu. In both the books, geography and politics are integral to the narrative.

Explaining the genesis of *The God of Small Things*, Roy tells to one of her interviewers in Frontline that: "Writing *The God of Small Things* was fictional way of making sense of the world she lives in, and the novel was the technical key with which she did it" (106).

The second chapter portrays the truthful picture of the plight of Indian women, their great suffering, anxieties, their humble submission, persecution and undeserved humiliation in a male dominated society. It shows women's marathon struggle for seeking the sense of 'identity' in a totally averse and envious society. The social structure of an average Indian woman is full of ups and downs. It can be very clearly seen in some of the women characters like Ammu, Mammachi, Baby kochamma, Rahel and Margaret Kochamma. *The God of Small Things* is a feminist text foregrounding many invisible barriers which patriarchy has continued to raise in women's way to gain parity with men. One of the key issues which very often figures in contemporary feminist discourse is the patriarchal powers within the household, the society and the economy.

The notion of female suffering in the Hindu tradition is dangerously glorified through such use of mythological models. The subconscious hold of socialization patterns inculcated in girls through the popular mythological stories of the ever suffering Sita as virtuous wife, or the all sacrificing Savitri who rescues her husband

from death are all part of the preparation for suffering in their roles of wives and mothers.

Roy's *The God of Small Things* is a feminine creation of unique nature. The novel clearly shows the untold miseries and the undeserved sufferings of women who have to bear the brunt of male domination silently and meekly. She transcends the ordinary concept of feminism. The novel examines the feminist jealousy between woman and woman, the plight of woman in male dominated framework. Roy shows how a woman in a patriarchal set up yearns for pleasure and happiness and a life far from the shackles and constraints. She is like a free bird that wants to fly freely in the open skies. But all of a sudden, her wings are cut down by the callous society and thus she is pulled down to this earth where she has to grovel in the lowly dust.

Roy employs various literary devices, to intensify the trauma faced by the marginalized people of India. Hence, Roy's mastery over the art of writing contributes to the effective deliverance of the major theme of the novel, thereby proving herself as a novelist with a purpose, painfully concerned with the upliftment of the downtrodden. Marginalization is an approach used to study literature, giving emphasis to the voice of marginalized people in the Indian society.

The chapter deals with the Marginalized people who are socially, politically, economically and legally deprived of their 'rights' as human beings in every sphere of life and society. Untouchables and females are considered as marginal entity in the society. The purpose of exploring how Roy fictionally constructs marginalized female voices has been reached by studying and comparing three main female characters in *The God of Small Things*. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Ammu centering on their different ways of relating to Velutha, the male hero of the novel. These three women relate to and respond in different ways to Velutha, who is a Paravan, the lowest caste

among the untouchables. Depending on how they relate to him, different aspects of their characters are revealed.

The fourth chapter focuses on the use Narrative techniques which is used by Roy in this novel. Narrative technique is the method and device used by writers to narrate stories. It works upon specific uses of phrases, punctuations or exaggerations of description. *The God of Small Things* explores the childhood experience of fraternal twins by adopting the Bildungsroman techniques as narrative pattern. It explores the themes of social discriminations, class relations and cultural tensions, Indian history and politics, forbidden love, betrayal, etc. This novel is rich from the point of narrative pattern and its techniques. Roy applies traditional, as well as, innovative techniques to build a story which reflects Indian consciousness.

Roy, in order to narrate the novel, uses literary devices like defamiliarization, similes, metaphors, repetition of words and phrases, epigrams and paradoxes, irony, oxymoron, metonymy, synecdoche, pun, saying versus showing in her writing, flashback narrative technique. She also uses some sound oriented techniques like- rhythm, alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance, dissonance, etc.

All these feminized role models are alive and well in present day India, and as every other postcolonial female writer, Roy has to address the expectations imposed upon women, as they are part of the overarching structures that influence everyday life. Roy effectively utilizes the consciousness and experience of a character in the service of the grand design. Roy uses the narrative techniques of narration in such a way that it provides better insights about the characters and adds graphic vitality to the aesthetic structure of the novel.

The novel has diverse themes and it deals with subaltern issues like untouchability or marginalization, feminism, communist politics, children's issues, and language issues. Roy's perspectives on culture are of the subaltern, feminist and language. Roy's novel are of feminist and the subaltern, apart from politics. Then the novel also deals with the subaltern perspective and identity crisis.

Roy associates the title *The God of Small Things* to the character, Velutha. However, of course, the significance of this title is much wider than merely representing his character. The big things ever lurked inside even later on the thirteen nights they instinctively stuck to the small things. The major thematic concerns of Roy's *The God of Small Things*, apart from depiction of family life are: Ammu's criticism of tradition, society and marginality (both untouchability and woman's suppression). This novel speaks of politics and criticizes the communist government in Kerala. It speaks of marginality of caste and sex, and incest and the obscene and provides diasporic experience: dislocation and identity crisis. It is a technical tour de force and known for feminist English and linguistic inventiveness. Roy presents several different female characters in her novel.

The God of Small Things a representation of the subaltern women by Roy has been made more varied, merely by presenting the various portraits of women who, in spite of their oppression and marginalization, are not without responsibility. Ammu represents people who actually dare to do the "unthinkable," to transgress the very line that upholds the system of difference that casteism inherently maintains. She represents all those who have suffered due to transgressions against the "Love Laws" and gender-specific expectations imposed upon them. Ammu and Velutha are representatives of thousands of cross-caste relationships in the real India, a voice that resonates all over the world.

Thus, *The God of Small Things* often associated with several categories of literary fiction including feminist perception, postcolonialism, politics, literary marism and Indian culture, is a complete reflection of the life and sufferings of women and voiceless and the trauma of marginalized people of the Indian society.

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Mahesh Dattani's *Tara as* A Socio-psychological Study

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

THISMA.B

(REG. NO. 18APEN36)

PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Mahesh Dattani's *Tara as* A Socio-psychological Study** submitted to St.Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Thisma.B during the year 2019-2020, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Mahesh Dattani's *Tara* as A Socio-psychological Study** submitted to St Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title

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Preface

Mahesh Dattani's works deal with contemporary issues of the Indian society. He boldly expresses the exploitation of Indian women in his work as it is very much visible as the privileges are consciously or unconsciously propounded to the son in the Indian families. In *Tara* he has presented the usual reality of the woman playing second role to man. In the whole play, Dattani spreads the bitter truth of child abuse that prevails in the Indian society. *Tara* is narrated by Chandan, the male half of Siamese twin born in a Gujarati family. The unequal treatment or perceptions given to the individuals wholly or partly due to their gender prevails throughout the play.

Chapter one, **Introduction** deals with the overview of Indian Literature, Dattani's predominant place in the realm of Indian Writing in English, his life, works, and his style.

Chapter two, **Voice of the Voiceless** deals with the character analysis of Tara and the hardships she faces due to gender discrimination.

Chapter three **Penitence** deals with the theme of guilt that arises in Tara's household after her demise. Chandan and his mother develop guilt over Tara's early death. Bharati tries to amend her mistakes at last.

Chapter four **Precepts of Socio-Psychological Theory** focuses on the newer perspective of psychological aspect pertaining to Attachment Theory. This paves way for inter disciplinary research.

Chapter five **Summation** carries the findings of how female child in India suffers by social conditions and gender discrimination and dominance of female by male.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is the art of discovering something extraordinary about ordinary people, and saying with ordinary words something extraordinary.

-Boris Pasternak

Mahesh Dattani is one of the very famous Indian playwrights in English who indicates the oppressive nature of patriarchy and the one who highlights issues of gender and violence. Most of his plays deal with contemporary issues. As Dattani says "I am certain that my plays are a true reflection of my time, place and socioeconomic background" (Dattani, 2000) .His plays are controversial yet, are the classic concerns of world drama. His plays have a universal appeal. They could be staged anywhere on earth and they would draw full attention of the crowd. He creates his subject in such a way that it is both topical as well as appealing. His plays speak across linguistic and cultural barriers. He makes an abundant use of Indian mythology, rituals, traditions and contemporary problems that arise amidst themes like love, happiness, sexual fulfillment and problems of identity.

In all genres of English, drama always holds a special position down the history. The term Drama comes from a Greek word meaning 'action'. Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. It is a representational art, a visible and audible narrative presenting virtual, fictional characters within a virtual, fictional universe.

The word 'play' or 'game' was the standard term used to describe drama until William Shakespeare's time. Just as its creator was a 'play-maker' rather than a 'dramatist' and the building was a 'play-house' rather than a 'theatre'. The use of the term 'drama' in a more narrow sense designates a specific type of play dates from the modern era. There are different kinds of drama like Tragic Drama and Comic Drama.

The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception. It is a very influential and powerful medium in English literature because of its audiovisual medium of expression. Drama is a composite art in which the written word of the playwright attains complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stage and through that medium reacts on the mind of that audience. A play is an order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience that needs a real theatre and a live audience.

Drama is a manifestation of religious instinct of human beings in most of the countries of the world. In India or Egypt, China or Britain, it is deeply rooted in religious instinct of the people. In India dramas were enacted in the temples. It was a kind of religious activity or offering to God on various occasions, events and celebrations. It had been one of the finest expressions of Indian culture for ages. They were based mainly on religious scriptures, myths, legends etc. The followed the general structure of Drama: 'Virtue rewarded and vice punished'

which enabled them to inculcate ethics and values in the audience. The birth of Indian drama dates back to Pre-Christian era.

The origin of Indian drama is found in the Vedic period. The great sage and the architect of Indian drama *Bharat Muni* appeared approximately in the seventh century A.D. The journey of the Indian Drama begins from the Sanskrit plays. Indian tradition is preserved in *Natyashastra*, the oldest of the texts of the theory of drama. Natyashastra is a Sanskrit Hindu text of performing art.

Indian English drama exhibited its genius after a long time in the 20th century. The Pre Independence era witnessed the emergence of many significant playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, T.P. Kailasam, A.S.P. Ayyar, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Bharati Sarabhai who made a tremendous contribution to the evolution and development of the Indian English drama. R.N. Tagore and Sir Aurobindo Ghosh, the two great sage poets, are the first Indian dramatists of reputation.

The development of Indian English Drama had been staggering for over nearly two centuries. Right from the beginning of the twentieth century, the plays have been written and staged, but very few of them have met with thumping success on the stage.

In the history of Indian drama, Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh were the only two writers who had made contribution to Indian Drama in English. In his plays *like Chitra, The Post Office, The King of the Dark Chamber*, Tagore has tried to impart new values and symbolic significance to ancient Hindu myths and legends. They are not successful stage plays. Aurbindo's plays are regular

poetic plays. In his plays, *Perseus, the Deliver, Rodogune, Eric, the Veziers of Bassora* he used the blank verse of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, which sounds artificial and unnatural in the modern age. Hence these plays faced failure on the stage.

Indian Prose Drama in English also suffers from these very faults. Harindranath's *Five Plays*, A.S.P Ayyar's *The Slave of India* Asif, Currimbhoy's *The Tourist*, rise above ordinary conversation in their dialogue but are dull, drab, flat and artificial. There is too much of verbose, too frequent intrusion of colloquialism and wrong use of Indian phrases and idioms. Pratap Sharma is one of the raw Indian dramatists whose play *A Touch of Brightness*, is more successful dramatically. They are good acting plays. But there is too much of verbosity and irrelevancy in dialogue.

Gieve Patel's *Princess* is singularly free from these faults. He succeeds in giving his language a touch of the local idiom which therefore, is more refreshing and natural. It is a landmark in the history of Indian drama for in it the dramatist has successfully tackled the problem of dialogue. Nissim Ezekiel in his plays *Nalini* and *The Marriage Poem* is successful in his quality of dialogues. Another successful play by an Indian writer Santha Rama Rau is *A Passage to India*, a close adaption of the well-known novel of that name. She shows great dexterity in the handling of dialogue.

Girish Karnad(1938) an actor and film director is originally a Kannada dramatist who wrote *Tughlag and Hayavadana*. He successfully translated *Tughlag* and *Hayavadana* into English. *Tughlag* is a historical play which deals with life and times of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq of the fourteenth century

India. *Hayavadana* is based on the *Kathasaritsagara* tale which Thomas Mann used for his novel *The Transposed Head*. It is a bold experiment in the use of folk motifs.

In short, Indian literature continues to grow and flourish and this despite all the misguided and prejudiced and politically motivated campaign against English as a foreign language, which comes in the way of its growth. More Indians are writing in English than ever before, and the Indian writer is enjoying a much wider market.

Thus contemporary drama has, indeed, a bright future. Very recently Indian English drama has shot into prominence. Younger writers like Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan have infused new life into this branch of writing. Incidentally, both Dattani and Padmanabhan do not write on the traditional subjects. Dattani writes about mean, ugly, unhappy things of life.

Mahesh Dattani, one of the exponents of modern Indian drama, is a renowned playwright and an active theatre practitioner. He is responsible for successfully launching the Indian theatre in English. He has carved a niche for himself not only in India but also in the West with his British production of *Bravely Fought the Queen* under the aegis of Michael Walling's Border Crossings. Dattani's genius comes from the fact that he is versatile as an artist. This is the reason that he is India's first playwright writing in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award. The Sahitya Akademi Award citation says: [Dattani's work] probes tangled attitudes in contemporary India towards communal differences, consumerism and gender...a brilliant contribution to India drama in English. (Dattani)

Mahesh Dattani was born on August 7, 1958 in Bangalore. He is an Indian director, actor, playwright, and writer. He went to Baldwin Boys High School and then went on to join St.Joseph's College, Bangalore. He graduated in History, Economics, and Political science. He has post graduate degrees in Marketing and Advertising Management. Later, Dattani became interested in writing. He was also influenced by Gujarati playwright Madhu Rye's *Kumarni Agashi* and developed an interest in playwriting.

Mahesh Dattani began his career as a copywriter in an advertising firm. In 1986, he wrote his first full-length play, *Where There's a Will*. Since 1995, he has been working as a full- time theatre professional. He has also worked with his father in the family business. He is also a film director. Dattani's theatre group "Playpen" was formed in 1984 and he has directed several plays. As an author of more than 15 plays, he made his directorial debut with *Mango Souffle*. He also wrote and directed the movie *Morning Raaga, Dance Like a Man, and Ek Alag Mausam*.

Mahesh Dattani's works are as follows: *30days in September Dance Like a Man, Tara, Bravely Fought the Queen, On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, Seven Circles Round The Fire, The Murder That Never Was, Brief Candle, Where Did I Leave My Purda, The Big Fat City, Where There is a Will, Final Solutions and Dance Like a Man (1989)*.etc.

Dance Like a Man (1989) has won the award for the best picture in English awarded by the National Panorama in 1998 and Sahitya Akademi Award for his book of plays, *Final Solutions and other plays*. Sahitya Kala Parishad selected *Final Solutions (1997), Tara (2000) and 30 days in September (2007)* as best

productions of the year directed by Arvind Gaur. Over a career spanning twenty-five years he has written radio plays for the BBC.

The plays of Mahesh Dattani emerged as a fresh arrival in the domain of Indian English Drama in the last decade of the twentieth century. The plays have a great contemporary value. They are plays of today, writes John McRae in his introduction to Dattani's plays, sometimes as actual as to cause controversy, but at the same time they are plays which embody many of the classic concerns of world drama.

Dattani's plays are written for the stage. It is the visual quality and dramatic effect which are of paramount importance. Dattani accordingly suits his material to the space, reshaping and fine- tuning his texts constantly. Plays of Dattani have been quite successful on the stage and have captured the imagination of the middle-class audience.

Dattani's plays have a universal appeal. They can be staged anywhere in the world drawing full attention of the audience. More than that, he is able to merge the past and the present as well as geographical locations. The most significant contribution of Dattani is perhaps his use of language. Dattani uses in his plays the kind of English as spoken by people in India. It has been appropriately said that the starting point of many of the greatest plays in history is the family. This idea has been so with the Indian drama as also with European drama. Like Mohan Rakesh, Dattani takes the family unit as the locale of his plays. Human relationships and the family unit have indeed been at the heart of Dattani's representation.

The various plays that he has written deal with some issues prevalent in the society and exposes it most honestly, it is sometimes a cause, a point of view, a sense of contemporaneity and a social message too. His characters are rooted in the urban cosmopolitan setting of modern middle class India. Writing from the late 1980s, Dattani's plays, like Tendulkar's, question some of the norms and conventions of society. In the process interesting questions regarding gender and other issue like homosexuality, lesbianism, child sexual abuse, etc. are thrown up.

The best aspect of Dattani's plays is that, they represent the contemporary urban society. He represents his society in his plays and exposed the evils prevalent at the time in his plays. Dattani provides a platform for these issues, so that the people are aware of the fact that they are a reality and not just the fantasies of a playwright. Dattani's plays can be said to have been inspired by Ibsen, the Father of Realism. Ibsen dealt with a number of social problems in his plays like *The Pillars of Society*, which deals with an incompatible marriage and *The Enemy of the People* deals with political and municipal corruption.

In the same way Dattani handles every problem from gender issues to sexuality. In his play *Tara* he deals with the issue of gender discrimination, in *Thirty Days of September* he deals with the impact of child sexual abuse, in *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* he very boldly deals with the issue of homosexuality and in his award -winning play *Final Solutions*, he deals with the issue of communalism.

Gay relations and homosexuality are one of the issues that figure prominently in some of his plays. *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* deals with this sensitive subject. While the traditionalists consider such a relationship as something unnatural, obnoxious and even sacrilegious, the gays think otherwise. They are a happy and proud lot. They would even like to assert their true identity and sanctity. The wedding music heard constantly in the background in the final Act is an ironic commentary on the lives of these homosexuals for whom marriage can only be a doubly twice-four letter word. (*The New Indian Express*)

Dattani's achievement as a playwright depends on the fact that his plays are a slice of life. They present reality as it exists. He writes about what he observes and an excellent example of his observation is the play *Thirty Days of September*. Dattani wrote this play after being approached by the NGO-Rahi (Recovery and Healing of Incest). In this play he wished to show the impact of child sexual abuse for which he met seven or eight adult women who spoke to him about their childhood experiences where they were sexuality abused by their own family members. In *Tara*, he presents before the audience the problem that even in an urban family living in a metropolitan city like Banglore, the parents have their bias towards the son and the daughter is neglected even though she might be smarter than her brother.

There's no topic which has not been handled by Dattani in his plays. One has to just think of an issue and Dattani has a play on it. Dattani is not only a playwright but also a theatre practitioner like Badal Sircar and his written text comes out best when performed in the theatre. His meticulous direction adds wonders to his written text as Mahesh Dattani believes that his work is complete

only when it has been performed in front of the audience. In order to convey his message to the audience and the reader as well and to make them realize and accept that such things do happen in the society he does not restrict himself to using common Indian day-to-day abuses. While writing plays he explores both the masculine and the feminine self within him. This is why Dattani is held as a playwright of world stature.

A reading of Mahesh Dattani's plays brings to the fore many burning issues that beset the post-Independence Indian society. A Patient review of some of these social concerns will greatly help in understanding and appreciating both the playwright and his predominately middle-class characters. It can be stated that every one of these central thematic issues stem from the opposition between tradition and modernity in perception of matters relating to core human relationship like love, sex, marriage and even faith.

Discrimination against the girl child is handled boldly by Dattani in his play, *Tara*. The play deals with the courage and strong will of a handicapped Siamese twin who could have survived but for her mother's unwise and preferential decision to give up the extra leg to her twin brother, Chandan. Thus, Mahesh Dattani through his plays focuses on many contemporary social issues. "I write for my milieu, for my time and place middle class and urban Indian My dramatic tensions".(The Hindu)

Dattani's *Tara* is a two-act play first performed as Twinkle Tara at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, on October 23, 1990 by Playpen Performing Arts Group. Tara talks about the perpetuating nature of the victim's mother who prefers a healthy male child in the expense of the female conjoined twin.

Tara is not just the story of the protagonist of the play Tara. It is the story of every girl child born into an Indian family whether urban or rural. The situation is aggravated if the girl is physically challenged or there is any other physical or mental deformity in her. It is a bitter example of child abuse present in the Indian societies. Every girl child born in an Indian family does suffer some kind of exploitation and if there is a boy child in the family then the exploitation is very much visible as the privileges are consciously or unconsciously provided to the son.

Mahesh Dattani mentioned in one of his interviews to 'The Hindu', "I see *Tara* as a play about the male self and the female self the male self being preferred (if one is to subscribe to conventional categories of masculine traits and feminine traits) in all cultures.

The play revolves around fraternal conjoined twins Chandan and Tara who are surgically separated in an unequal manner, originally intended to favor the boy. Tara is unable survive due to the disadvantages in every way growing up. At last, she dies because of illness. Chandan suppress with guilt over Tara's early death and he moves from India to England. There he begins his new life to control his past and changes his name to the westernized moniker "Dan". The play starts with Chandan who is now called Dan feverishly typing a play in two acts about his long deceased sister Tara.

During one important exchange between Chandan and his mother Bharati who was complicit with the decision to sacrifice Tara's happiness and life in deference to the boy tells Chandan with reference to Tara. Chandan is guilty over the deprivation that Tara had to undergo on his behalf and he wants to

commemorate *Tara* by writing a play called "Twinkle Tara".

Tara is the protagonist of the play *Tara*. She enjoys the fantastic attention of her mother feels lost when her mother is institutionalized and betrayed when she finds out about her mother's role in the operation after their birth. Tara has been limned as female character with potential while her brother was not enterprising at all. Tara and Chandan's father is bent for securing the future for the boy. Her potentiality is scarified on the altar of gender. The play is a tragedy and portrays the struggle of ancient eastern civilization attempting to conform to modern, western values, and falling. Tara effectively serves its dramatic purpose to bring out the sincerity and inclination of a girl to prove her mettle in the world of male supremacy.

Improving Scientific literacy using information literacy skills interdisciplinary approaches and problem-based learning have permeated all disciplines, with a growing realization that multiple literacies are necessary to fully understand a given subject. The current frameworks for both scientific literacy and information literacy discussed in this chapter embrace the trends of interdisciplinary and trans disciplinary research in the sciences and have the capacity and elasticity to reflect the complexity of this collaborative research.

Literature and psychology are two branches of science that study human soul. Psychology researches human behaviors and their causes while literature depicts human behavior through fiction. These two branches of social science studying human behavior are interrelated and mutually beneficial. And the basic building block of the correlation between literature and psychology is a literary work. Literary works study human beings and describe their inner

world with all its aspects. The reason is that a literary work is at the same time a product of a certain psychological condition. A literary work supports psychology in terms of depicting human psychological conditions. At the same time, Jung noted, psychology also provides insights into literature by exploring mental processes.

A literary work benefits from psychology in terms of successfully presenting characters, expressing their moods, and bringing the reader into the psychological dimension of human reality. Psychology and study of literature meet in their focus on phantasies, emotions and human soul. Thus there exists a two-way relationship based on mutual interaction between literature and psychology, in the form of evaluation of a literary work with the resources of psychology and obtaining psychological truths from a literary work. Academic Ismet Emre (2006, p. III) gave the following explanation of the relationship between the two disciplines.

Besides literature and psychology there is no other branch of science which is engaged so much in the study of the relationship between human body and soul with its contradictions and dilemmas making effort to define the relationship in terms of certain rules to know the mysterious aspects of the human soul and its sub conscious areas by means of long and detailed journeys: at the same time both branches have been struggled in their existence between arts and science for about a century.

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others.[1] In this definition, *scientific* refers to the empirical investigation using

the scientific method. The terms 'thoughts', 'feelings', and 'behaviours' refer to psychological variables that can be measured in humans. The statement that others' presence may be imagined or implied suggests that humans are malleable to social influences even when alone, such as when watching videos, sitting on the toilet, or quietly appreciating art. In such situations, people can be influenced to follow internalized cultural norms. Social psychologists typically explain human behaviour as a result of the interaction of mental states and social situations.

The theory of attachment was originally developed by John Bowlby (1907-1990), a British psychoanalyst who was attempting to understand the intense distress experienced by infants who had been separated from their parents. Attachment theory is a concept in developmental psychology that concerns the importance of 'attachment' in regards to personal development. It is a broad idea with many expressions and the best understanding of it can be had by looking at several of those expressions in turn. The attachment behavior system is an important concept in attachment theory because it provides the conceptual linkage between ethological models of human development and modern theories on emotion regulation and personality. This attachment continues from the cradle to the grave.

This study focuses on how socio psychological theory with special reference to attachment theory works with the characters of the play. Though they are separated and Chandan has no high regards for Tara, the psychological bonding of the twins does not allow Chandan to be at peace after the death of Tara. Chandan is overcome by a high sense of guilt because of the early death of Tara.

The purpose of this analysis is bring out the postcolonial hegemony in the Indian society and to contextualize it in the perspective of housing literature.

Chapter Two

Voice of the Voiceless

And those who desire even a moment of freedom, find themselves hurled into space, doomed to crash with some unknown force. I no longer desire that freedom. I move, just move. Without meaning.

-Mahesh Dattani

Tara is a play about the gendered self, about coming to terms with the feminine side of oneself in a world that favours always what is 'male'. It is the story of a girl who wants to twinkle and shine, just like her name. Dattani uses the themes like gender identity, discrimination, middle-class life, revelation etc to give voice to the voiceless.

As,

> Theatre is not a mute and mechanical representation of social dynamics but it is a lively representation of the voices resounding in context of totality of human experiences that consciously or unconsciously affect the existing dynamics of human sensibility. Dattani, in the process of engineering the contemporary Indian drama by bringing it closer to the real life experiences, tried to articulate the voice of the oppressed sections of society whose identity is shrouded in the cover of myths and social prejudices. They have been dragged in darkness, doomed to survive in perpetual silence bearing the oppressive burden of hegemony of the elitist class. Dattani within the framework of dramatic structure tries to

investigate the identities of those who occupy no space in social order. (34)

Dattani as a playwright breaks the unity of place, time and action in the very beginning of the play to give voice to the unvoiced section of the society. It is a medium to reflect the mean, ugly and unhappy aspects of life. He has ignored the unities by the help of lighting along with the music effects to emphasise the action wherever he wants, at any level without any break for change of scene. It is the use of light and music, which gives the play the feeling of unity of action. Music is so well used that it creates and enhances the mood of characters. There is Fade music for past and flash backs and different music when Tara is hurt or when there is fight between Bharti and her husband or when the secret is revealed. Dattani very successfully uses all the resources of theatre to explore the typical Indian mind set which has from time immemorial preferred a boy child to a girl child.

Tara opens in London with Chandan, who is a playwright, recollecting his past, particularly, the childhood days he had spent happily with his sister, Tara. It is an investigation into the cause-and-effect pattern in the relationship between Tara and Chandan. Dan writes Tara's story to rediscover the neglected half of him, as a means of becoming 'whole'. Dan says: "I have my memories... But now I want them to come back. To masticate my memories in Mind and spit out the result to the world in anger". (CP 323)

Tara raises questions to the society that treats the children of the same womb in two different ways. It deals with the theme of gender discrimination and reveals a tremendous artistic amalgamation of Indian and Western cultures and

concerns. It is a sensitive play which shows the favouritism towards the male child in the upper middle class educated society.

The play centres on the emotional separation of the Siamese twins, Chandan and Tara Patel, who are born with three legs. The probability of the third leg's survival is greater with Tara as it is supplied by Tara's blood system. But their physical separation was manipulated by their father Mr. Patel, mother Bharati and doctor who decide to fix the third leg on to the male baby's body to favour the boy Chandan over the girl Tara. The decision was influenced by the maternal grandfather of children, a politician, who favours to make male child physically fit and complete. It is our cultural heritage that boy is always superior to girl.

This discrimination against the girl child by family members shows the mentality of the society. The leg that had survived only for two days with Chandan could have been accompanied Tara's forever. This operation to separate the twins at birth devastated Tara and leaves her crippled for life. It is tragic that the mother also supports in the act of attaching the third leg to the boy's body.

Dr. Thakkar belied his godly profession and led himself to be bribed by Bharati's father into becoming an accomplice in the bizarre act of severing the leg. He should have upheld his profession by denouncing the decision at his inception whereas he in a way took Tara's life by severing the leg. His wise decision could have given Tara a safe, secured and complete life. For doing this malicious act, the doctor was bribed with a plot of land in Bangalore by Bharati's powerful and political father.

The discrimination against Tara is multifaceted. First, Tara's grandfather, the politician decides to give the leg to Chandan. A politician is the paramount

symbol of patriarchy who always wants things to be done in his way. Tara's grandfather might have thought of bringing up his grandchild into politics as his successor and hence could not imagine him limp. Alternatively, he might have wanted his male descendant to be perfect rather than female. Hence, he went to the extent of using his influence to get Dr. Thakkar three acres of prime land for his clinic. Tara's mother has her share in this. She could have saved Tara but, due to patriarchal societal set up, in spite of being a woman, she consents to rob Tara of her leg.

After the surgery, Bharati is so affectionate to Tara. She begs Roopa to be her best friend. She goes on to say if Roopa promised to be Tara's best friend, Bharati would be grateful to Roopa and do whatever she wants in return. She in fact compels Roopa to promise her to be her best friend. However, one cannot resist the tendency to suspect her affection that 'how would have she treated Tara if the surgery had worked well and the leg fitted Chandan? Would she have behaved the same in that situation?'(CP 342) Whenever we see her affectionate talking, we are reminded of her share in the discrimination. As Jyothi Sharma reiterates this point, "what is actually a public display of attention on the part of the mother is actually a screen to shield her guilt". The third facet is Dr. Thakkar. He could have averted the surgery and saved Tara. But, he did not. After all, he is also part of patriarchy. Here a question arises naturally that whether he would perform the surgery if the situation were reverse.

In Dr. Thakkar, we see a corrupt patriarch who deliberates himself to be godlike. Patel, Tara's father comes in the next dimension. After the meeting with Dr. Thakkar, Bharati informs him about the decision made by them about the

surgery. He was not asked for any opinion and he did not dare to voice his protest strongly. He could not do anything. He neither protests nor comments boldly. Patel was afraid of the wealth of Bharati's father, which actually means that he was afraid that he would lose inheritance (CP 344).

Mahesh Dattani tries to suggest how females, to an extent, are responsible for their subordinate stature in the society. It is relevant in the light of the increasing incidents of foeticide, infanticide and widening gap in the sex ratio of male and female child. This play unearths many dishonourable tendencies which exist in the society even today. But the society comes around to fooling themselves into believing that we celebrate womanhood. *Tara* also does well to depict the dynamics of a family which deals with a situation that society does not define a precept for an ideal family. The fact that male self is being preferred in Indian society is obvious by the act that Bharti favours Chandan at the time of operation. It shows that a woman herself is the enemy of women.

The mother prefers the male child and thus strengthens the chain of injustice. Later on she tries to shed her burden of guilt by showing maternal love and concern for her daughter. When Chandan enquires her if she has any plans for Tara, Bharati says: "Yes. I plan for her happiness. I mean to give her all love and affection which I can give. It's what she deserves have can make up for lost "[CP p-349]. Bharati is quite much fearful about the future of her daughter. She determines to donate her kidney to give a new life to Tara which ultimately turns useless:

> It's all right while she is young. It's all very cute and comfortable when she makes witty remarks .But let her grow up. Yes, Chandan the world will tolerate you. The world will accept you- but not her! Oh! The pair is

going to feel when she sees herself at eighteen or twenty. Thirty is unthinkable and what about forty and fifty! Oh, God! [CP p-349]

Male domination as reflected in the role of Bharati's father who donates all his property and wealth to the male child further strengthened gender discrimination by not leaving a single penny to Tara after his demise. Mr. Patel and Chandan while talking:

PATEL. He [grandfather] left you a lot of money.

CHANDAN. And Tara? PATEL. Nothing CHANDAN. Why?

PATEL It was his money. He could do what he wanted with it. [CP p-360]

Mr. Patel, an emblem of male chauvinism, allows Chandan to enjoy greater preferences and Tara is left to enjoy the position of a subaltern. The fact that consciously or unconsciously all the privileges are offered to the son is obvious from Patel's planning for Chandan's education and future career. Even though Tara is more intelligent, he continuously favours Chandan when it comes to giving him higher education abroad:

PATEL. You are turning them against the whole world.

BHARATI. I am doing that.

PATEL. Yes! Look at the way you treat Tara. As if she is made of glass. You coddle her, you pet her, you spoil her, She's grown up feeling she doesn't need anyone but you.'

BHARATI. What you want me to do? Just tell me in plain simple words what you want me to do and i'll do it!

PATEL. Let go. Just let go. And let me handle them.

BHARATI. All right .You stay at home then! You stay at home and watch what they can do and what they can't .You remind them of what they can't be. It's easy for you to talk about their future and your plans. But tell them what they should do now .This day, this hour, this minute. Tell them! I want to hear!

PATEL. Chandan is going to study further and he will go abroad for his higher studies. BHARATI. And Tara?

PATEL. When have you ever allowed me to make any plans for her? [CP p- 352]

Later on Patel realises his mistake and guilty. "Yes, call me a liar, a wife beater, a child abuser. It's what you want me to be! And you .You want them to believe you love them very much" [CP p-354]

Again he tells Tara: "Tara, please believe me when I say that I love you very much and I have never in all my life loved you less or more than I have loved your brother. But your mother. . " [CP-p-354]

In a nutshell, Tara is more enthusiastic and full of spark of life with high aspirations which were not fulfilled owing to her handicapped state. Throughout the play she bears some kind of grudge against the society. She seems to have some kind of disliking with the outside world though her world consists of only her parents and her brother whom she was ever close to.

Tara, a feisty girl who isn't given the opportunities given to her brother [although she may be smarter] eventually wastes away and dies. Chandan

escapes to London, changes his name to Dan, and attempts to repress the guilt he feels over his sister's death by living without a personal history. Woven into the play is issues of class and community, and the clash between traditional and modern lifestyles and values. CP [p-319]

If she had been given moral support by her parents she might have shone like a star as her name signifies. Tara is killed by social system, which controls the minds and actions of the people. This makes her life a burden on this earth and consequently she loses interest in life:

> TARA. Oh! What a waste! A waste of money. What spends all the money to keep me alive? It cannot matter whether I live or die. There are thousands of poor sick people on the roads who could be given care and attention, and I think I know what I will make of myself. I will be a crier for those people. I. . . . I will spend the rest of my life feeding and clothing those . . . starving naked millions everywhere is talking about. May be I can start an institution that will . . . do all that. Or I could join Mother Teresa and sacrifice myself to a great cause. That may give . . . purpose to my . . . existence. I can do it. I can do it, can't I ? I will be very happy if I could , because that is really what I want. That really . . . . [with emotion].Oh! , bullshit! I don't care .I don't care for anyone except mummy! [CP p-370]

Mahesh Dattani has excellently revealed the issue of gender discrimination in this play. To look son and daughter with bias and discriminating eyes has been traditional and age old custom in India and Tara is a victim of this social system, which controls the minds and actions of the people. In Indian society, woman is

variously presented as a mother, wife, daughter and sister even goddess. But ironically in the patriarchal structure of an Indian family, Women and girls are trained to remain confined to kitchen and courtyard. Be it a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law or mistress all are dependent on man for financial and physical security. They were treated to secondary position in all walks of life. At every stage in the life –cycle, the female body is both the objects of desire and of control. Dattani gives the message that the final solutions comprise in the words like tolerance, generosity and respect for other human beings, which are the strength of Indian culture.

Gender hierarchisation comes in the way of science. The doctor was persuaded by an offer of some acres of land in Bangalore by Bharati's father who is an MLA. As Patel explains "A scan showed that a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was provided by the girl." (CP p-351). The leg with Chandan could survive only for two days, while it could have survived forever with Tara. It doesn't mean that Mr. Patel is devoid of fault. He is also a party to gender discrimination. He appears to be more concerned about the future of Chandan than Tara.

The surgery is done in Bombay. Thus, Tara is the victim of sex discrimination in patriarchal society. Patriarchy is a social system in which the male acts as the primary authority central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It is an unpleasant fact that a woman's life is always structured and governed by patriarchy since the olden days. Dattani seems to assert that the power of wealth often joins hands with power of patriarchy for the subjugation and oppression of the women in our society. Tara's grandfather uses his political and economic power to convince the doctor for giving the third leg to

Chandan instead of Tara. The Trinity of patriarchy, capitalism, and political power join forces together against the existence of a girl. It has been attributed: Tara centers on the emotional separation that grows between two conjoined twins following the discovery that their physical separation was manipulated by their mother and grandfather to favor Chandan over Tara.

Dr. Thakkar is bribed by Bharati's father to operate the Siamese twin according to his wish and though he earns notoriety to the name and fame of doctor who is deemed as next to godliness for healing the wounds and pains of the aggrieved and diseased. Patel's Father-in-law plays a villain role in this play and is responsible for the imbroglios, gender bias and class discrimination encountered by his family. Bharati's father bribes Dr.Thakkar to carry out surgery in favor of Chandan since he believes that a male should always be given better opportunity than a female. He leaves money only for his grandson, Chandan and not Tara. He becomes responsible for bringing bitterness between Bharati and her husband, Patel.

The Siamese twins in this case have an interwoven identity and have a great impact on each other, mentally and biologically in their evolution. With the demise of Tara, Chandan experiences a sense of identity crisis. Mahesh Dattani has very deftly dealt with the fate awaiting the girl child. The social norms, economic standards and cultural factors have been responsible for the injustice against the girl child. All these factors combine to create the social system in which the girl child has to live and die. Tara is killed by this social system which controls the minds and actions of the people. The trauma of coming to know the role her mother had played in her life and the discrimination becomes too much for her. Tara's potentiality was sacrificed at the altar of gender as a girl child in the Indian Society. In India, girls

repeatedly prove themselves in every field in spite of the deep rooted gender discrimination that prevails among even the affluent and educated people living a so-called modern life in the metro cities.

Though motherhood is the experience of women, the institution of motherhood is under male control and the physical situation of becoming a mother is disciplined by males. This glorious motherhood is imposed on a woman who is been hardened. The drama has two sides with respect to the time frame-the past and the present with respect to time, occasion and the statement applicable to different characters Bharati and Dan.

They are distant in time and space. Tara is not to be treated as a girl who is physically handicapped by the very fact that she was born with the gender she has. She appears to be very much right when she highlights potentials, energies and intelligence of her own that are greater than her brother's.

Among the twins Tara is repeatedly referred to as 'freak'. This term has been conventionally used to refer to a person who has something unusual regarding their appearance or behaviour. The older usage of the word refers to the state of being physically deformed, or characterized by rare diseases and conditions. The word 'freak' here represents the state of women, who are marginalized. Tara's leg is callously separated from her to render her twin brother.

Tara gets hurt at the remark as it holds no true value. Even Patel ignores her future prospects and the need to engage her in any meaningful endeavour. She is forced to conform to the stereotype of the Indian Woman-devoid of any intellect, deemed fit only to perform mechanical household chores. In other words, a domestic

animal which can be cared for but not regarded with respect.

Tara quips at this: "The men in the house were deciding on whether they were going hunting while the women looked after the cave". (CP p- 389) She highlights the plight of women who were presumed to be suitable for the domestic domain only. The play as a whole thus depicts the relegation of the relevance of women and her upper edge whenever it does assert itself in a male-dominated society. Mahesh Dattani states:

> Those who survive are those who do not defy the gravity of others. And those who desire even a moment of freedom find themselves hurled into space, doomed to crash with some unknown force. I no longer desire that freedom. I move, just move without meaning. (CP XIII)

There is a heated argument between Bharati and her husband over the issues of love and care of their children. Tara is dearly loved by her father, but Patel has lofty expectations from his son. Patel blames Bharati for turning their children against him. He gives love and affection equally to both the children. But his wife wants to prove that she loves Tara more than him.

The Grandfather and the Mother here, represent a tradition that prefers the male over the female. They are the archetypal successor or prototype of a cultural progeny. The woman has always been hailed in philosophy but in practice she is treated as an object to be overlooked. The conflict between illusion and reality is yet again echoed here. The context also serves as a satire on the self-sufficient Indian male for whom to accept anything feminine is beneath his dignity, and an indelible question mark on

his masculinity.

In *Tara*, the deformity of the woman is caused by the man, and caused in order to complete the man. This is the reason why Tara approaches her end more quickly, and it is not owing to her inferiority. Her state also symbolizes the predicament of girls in Indian families who are made to forsake their chances of getting educated as the edification of the boys become a priority. The death of Tara has a more powerful impact than her existence.

Dattani establishes that mother and daughter relationship is ultimately subordinated to the directives of patriarchy. Bharati's love for Tara is pure and unceasing, but her maternal love is marginalized as a woman and her subalternity compels her to sacrifice her maternal love to cope up with social expectations. The patriarchal code pushes mother-daughter relationship on the periphery. It makes obvious that women's lives are organized and manipulated by patriarchy in all ages, all culture and all countries by establishing values, roles, gender perception and prescribe unequal means to achieve the 'wholeness' for women. Thus *Tara* has given voice to the unvoiced section of the Indian society.

After his death, Bharati's father leaves his property to Chandan. He does not give anything to Tara, though both of them have equal rights to claim his wealth. As Jyothi Sharma observes, "Male is the archetypal successor or prototype of cultural progeny". The other sex is voiceless throughout this play. Tara often raises some issues but, amidst of the domineering patriarchal voices, she becomes voiceless. Tara is killed by social system, which controls the minds and actions of the people (Fareed). Tara is the story of every girl child born in our society (Manikrao)

Chapter Three

Penitence

Guilt alone, like brain-sick frenzy in its feverish mood, fills the light air with visionary terrors, and shapeless forms of fear.

- Junius

Guilt is an emotion which most of us have felt at various times in our lives. It is amazing how quickly guilt can kick in for the smallest, most meaningless things. It can be draining and depressing and can rob us of our mental peace and energy. To overcome guilt and get rid of it, we need to clearly understand why we feel guilty. Everything has a purpose. The purpose of guilt is not to make us feel bad just for the sake of it. But to get our attention so that we can learn something from the experience and become a better person.

Tara is a beautiful girl. In any respect, she is not less intelligent than Chandan. When Tara and Chandan play, it is Tara who wins the game. Even Bharati accepts that 'Tara is a very nice girl.' She has many qualities than Chandan. Tara is a cunning and talkative girl.

As the play progresses, another interesting character Roopa, gets introduced. Roopa speaks Gujarati words frequently. She is an impertinent and extremely talkative neighbor of the Patel's. She teases Chandan, but he could not protect himself from her. But Tara teaches her a lesson indirectly. She has many hidden facts she knows for the time-being. When Tara thinks that Roopa many humiliate her, she says indirectly: "So how does it feel having one tit smaller than the

other?"(CP p-335) At that statement Roopa is stunned and comes under very sarcastic situation. She criticizes Tara's mother and leaves the place forever. She comments on how dissimilar the twins look:

ROOPA: Funny, you don't resemble each other.

CHANDAN: Not all to twins are pea's pods... Two peas in a pod that's something we aren't (336-337)

This description makes Roopa burst into laughter, much to the surprise of the twins. Roopa tells them that the imagery of two 'peas in a pod' is extremely hilarious. Bharati's unnecessarily bullies Roopa into developing a friendship with Tara and even tries to bribe her into spending more time with Tara is disgusting and demeaning. The interesting conversation between Bharati and her neighbor Roopa shows that Bharati is just ready to do anything for the sake of her unlucky child Tara's happiness. Mrs. Patel tells Roopa "you can watch whatever you want just be my Tara's friend".(CP p-336)

The decision taken by Mrs. Patel leaves Tara crippled for the rest of her life and her guilt gets revealed repeatedly throughout the play. She tries to compensate for this unfortunate decision (about their daughter) through her excessive concern for her. Her sense of regret is so deep that she agrees to donate her kidney to her daughter so that she may survive for a few more years. While conversing with her son, she tells him: "I plan to give her happiness. I mean to give her all the love and affection which I can live. It's what she... deserves. Love can make up for a lot". (CP p-349).

Bharati's excessive love for Tara results from her past guilt. She feels the pangs of her past guilt. She, allied with her father, did great injustice to Tara. Now she wants to give more and more love and comforts to Tara. It is because of this that she wants to give her own kidney to Tara when there is another donator available.

She wants to give a part of herself and craves satisfaction out of this. She shows her concern to the extent that she and only she love Tara. Nobody else! But Patel disapproves her idea of giving her kidney to Tara. So, she pretends that it will involve expenses. Mr. Patel disapproves her view saying that her father's wealth has always been her strength against him.

Bharati: (pleadingly) Why won't you let me do it?

Patel: (controlling) Need I tell you? Because I do not want you to have the satisfaction of doing it.

Bharati: I will do it!

Patel: You will have to obey me. It's my turn now. Bharati: I want to give her a part of me! (CP p-344)

Bharati tries to assert her moral superiority over her husband. She struggles hard to carve out her space in the family. Her final decision of giving her kidney to Tara may be seen as an act of expiation. She says that her deceased father is responsible for the inhuman act of denying the third leg to Tara. After her father's death, Bharati's condition grows worse.

She tries to make up through taking excessive care and immense exposure of her love for Tara and great concern for her future. This is also the result of her past grave blunder. She is quite conscious of her past wrong deed and feels full pressure of her guilt. Her efforts to compensate loss, caused to Tara by her, causes conflict with her husband and this ultimately leads her to the mental breakdown. Thus, Bharati keeps striving to construct her maternal love until she undergoes mental breakdown. As a result, she gets hospitalized. Tara wants to see her personally, but her father doesn't allow her to do so. Hence, she begins to hate him thinking Bharati wants to tell her something concerning her father.

Mr. Patel's conversation with his children brings out the playwright's purpose:

> A scan showed that a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was provided by the girl... The chances were slightly better that the leg would survive on the girl. Your grand-father and your mother had private meeting with Dr. Thakkar. I wasn't asked to come. I couldn't believe what she told me-that they would risk giving both legs to the boy. The doctor had agreed... It was later I came to know of his intention of stating a large nursing home-the largest in Bangalore. He had acquired three acres of prime land-in the heart of the city from the state. (CP p-354)

> Your grand-father's political influence had been used... Chandan had two legs for two days. It didn't take them very long to realize what a great mistake they have made. The leg was amputated. A piece of dead fish which could have might have-been Tara (CP p-378).

It is necessary to pinpoint that a kind of change can be witnessed in Bharati's view especially about patriarchal notion. She feels disillusioned. Patel still nurtures the patriarchal ideology. He bothers much about Chandan's future career. He doesn't seem too much bother about Tara's future career. Besides gender discrimination, the play offers a study of psycho-philosophical dimension integrated in the text.

Tara, the unlucky-girl who has not been given enough opportunities like her brother, finally dies. Chandan attempts to repress the guilt he feels over Tara's death. His sense of trauma and anguish is so intense that at the end of the play, Dan apologizes to Tara thus: "Forgive me, Tara, Forgive me, For making it my tragedy" (CP p-380). Chandan explores his psyche as well as his sister's after her death.

Tara dies in a shock when she learns that it is her mother Bharati who is involved in the conspiracy of her unfair separation from Chandan. Though Chandan physically survives this trauma, he can never lead a peaceful life. He migrates to the suburbs of London, changes his name and attempts to create a new identity.

Chandan changes his name to Dan. He leaves to abroad in order to forget his past. But he suffers with his twin, therefore he decides to create his new identity as Dan through which he symbolizes that Tara is his half that he doesn't want to leave behind. He neglects his own personal history to get over his guilt with what happened to Tara.

Just as the lowest portion occupies a major portion of the stage; the memory of guilt haunts and dominates Chandan's personality. It is to deny this that he creates his alter-ego Dan. His being a Diaspora, this causes another divide in his self. The identity of the Diaspora caught between his native culture and foreign culture as signified by Chandan and Dan. Our culture is so rich with tradition, and that's a great advantage and disadvantage a swell. (CP p-324)

Chandan also tries to write his auto biographical play, though a futile attempt:

DAN: Give me a moment and the pain will subside. Then I can function again. Yes. The material is there. But the craft is yet to come. Like the amazing Dr. Thakkar, I must take something from Tara and give it myself. Make capital of my trauma, my anguish, and make it my tragedy. To masticate them in my mind and spit out the result to the world, in anger. [Slowly, as if in a trance, picks up the typed sheets and starts Tearing them as he speaks].My progress so far, I must admit, has been zero .... (CP p-379)

Dan receives an acute pain and develops psychological trauma. The play also can be deemed as the tragedy of human self. Dan realizes wretchedness and misery of his existence which is the outcome of the crime done to Tara. His soul is aching. Tara has in her brother an affectionate, caring, sensitive and companionable brother, and she herself passes through various moods and feelings during the course of the drama. Sibling rivalry is absent in their relationship. The death of Tara to Chandan is more than the loss of a sister. It is the loss of his own self which makes him a cripple in the real psychological sense. The memories of his dear sister haunt him throughout his life.

The pathetic confessions of Dan by the end of the play "forgive me Tara, forgive me, for making it my tragedy"(CP p-354) is the manifestation of Dattani's own anguish at the exploitation of an innocent girl. There is an unprecedented development in the field of science and technology. It has blessed mankind with speed, pleasure and perfection. If we look at the other side of coin, we shall come to know that it is also used to cause suffering and pain in the lives of many people. After all, it is the man who operates the machine for his own motives and desires.

Here, the twins are in a state of depression owing to their predicament but utilize a curtain of sarcasm and wit to shield the same. Man cannot accept the woman's intellect, and gets intimidated by her intelligence. Tara's victory at the card game is seen as thorough cheating and Chandan is ashamed to admit her victory. Chandan and Tara are not only conjoined twins, but they share a unique male-female personality. Chandan presents the male side and Tara, the female side. Together they make a force of love and communion though separately they are weak and dependent. He, on his part, is determined to take care of her future.

While discussing Tara's future with his mother he affirms, "Tara is my sister. Everything will be fine" (CP p-349) Dan introspects on the injustice meted out to his sister: "She never got a fair deal. Not even from nature. Neither of us did. May be God never wanted us separated. Destiny desires strange things. But even God does not always get what he wants. Conflict is the crux of life" (CP p-330).

Chandan - Dan sees her as a good business woman as she cheats at cards; not attributing it to her business acumen, but to her shrewdness. Tara gets hurt at

the remark as it holds no truth value. Even Patel ignores her future prospects and the need to engage her in any meaningful endeavor. She is forced to conform to the stereotype of the Indian Woman-devoid of any intellect, deemed fit only to perform mechanical household chores. In other words, a domestic animal, which can be cared for, but not regarded with respect.

Tara quips at this: "The men in the house were deciding on whether they were going hunting while the women looked after the cave."(CP p-328) Tara is a play of a girl that suffers under the traditional of the society. "It is a play which flings a very harsh and rugged satire on the male-dominating society that believes in of upgrading the male-child in place of a female one and shows us how technologically enhanced equipments are used to subjugate the woman. Dattani establishes that it is not machine, but human motives that matter much. He holds red torch against pitfalls of advancement of science and technology. He also takes a rational look at theatrical tradition of home and abroad.

Chapter Four

Precepts of Socio-Psychological Theory in Tara

A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other

- Charles Dickens

The Socio-Psychological Theory asserts that individual and society are interlinked. This means, an individual strives to meet the needs of the society and the society helps him to attain his goals. Through this interaction, the personality of an individual is determined.

The Socio-Psychological theory is the contribution of Adler, Horney, Forman and Sullivan. This theory is also called as Neo-Freudian Theory because it differs from the Freud's psychoanalytic theory.

According to this theory, the social variables and not the biological instincts, are the important determinants in shaping the individual's personality. Here, the motivation is conscious, i.e. an individual knows what are his needs and wants and what kind of behaviour is required to meet these needs. Thus, the theorists believe that socio-psychological factors, i.e. the combination of both the social (family, society, wealth, religion) and the psychological factors (feelings, thoughts, beliefs) play an important role in shaping the personality of an individual. It is the society from where the individual inculcates the cultural values and the social norms, which helps him in shaping his personality and influences his behaviour according to the external situations.

The Patel family is well off but all the members of the family undergo either physical or psychological trauma. The situation of the family shows that no member of this family though talented has higher status in the social environment. They are rich, they have all the comforts and they afford every expensive medical treatment. All these features of their lifestyles do not make them great individuals but they are rather representative of the commoners, men in the street and women at home type people. They are the ordinary, lovely, and downtrodden persons. They do not belong to the upper crust of the social strata; they do not form the creamy layer of the social environment. They are the subalterns existing the life at lower level.

But the physical and psychological sufferings of the family represent the ailments of all those who are discriminated against on account of gender bias. They emphatically bring out the fact that every individual has the female self but this inner female self too is treated unfairly. The articulation of pains, sorrows and sufferings and pangs of the subalterns finds its echoes in Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara*.

As a result of Socio- psychological pressure on the characters there is a sense of guilt which has eroded Bharati's confidence and she suffers from the bonds of frequent breakdown. Her husband suffers on account of his status in the family in which her wife does whatsoever she wants leaving no space for her husband. The twins suffer from both physically and psychologically. Nobody contacts them, nobody visits them, and nobody comforts them. The twins are ridiculed, jeered at, taunted and humiliated quite often. They are socially cut off. They are excluded because they are the freaks of the freaks. Mr. and Mrs. Patel destined themselves to be in sorrow and misery and they are left only with guilt. The parents ruined the lives of their children; they failed miserably as the family is broken beyond repair

The psychic scars as noticed in the minds of the four major characters of the play *Tara* claims to have discrimination between the male and the female genders is simply a tall and hollow claim which is baseless. It is a prejudice totally opposed to what is stated in the claim. The woman is pushed to the subordinate position and she is so much marginalised and oppressed by the social forces that her psyche is scarred, wounded, scorched and burnt.

Bharati's mind-set is the focus of the dramatic action of this play. Bharati cannot oppose the social forces, she cannot give up the customary prejudices that discriminate against the girl child. The patriarchal society made her an enemy of her own female child. She becomes a victim of the social customs and traditional gender prejudices. Bharati tries to compensate her guilt with over protective conduct and towards and excessive showering of her on Tara but this is more or less the cover up, pretence. Bharati, the mother is presented to be very much worried and anxious about her daughter Tara's health later. She is then protective of her daughter. She wants Tara to have friends. She wants to donate her kidney to Tara but she is forbidden to do so by her husband, Mr. Patel. Bharati was trying to be even protective of her daughter Tara but that was too late.The irony of the situation is that the same woman, Bharati is the main cause for Tara's bad health. This has left a scar on Bharati's psyche.

Though authoritarian, Mr. Patel is a caring husband and is genuinely worried about his wife's depression and its recurrence. At the same time his harshness forbids her form donating her kidney to Tara. "Because I do not want you to have satisfaction of doing it". He says again, "No, I don't want to give her the satisfaction of confessing."(CP p-371)

Mr. Patel too suffers and becomes more aggressive towards his wife and his children. He is unfair to Bharati, neglects Tara and is rather possessive of Chandan his male child. Bharati becomes more possessive of Tara but Mr. Patel as well as Bharati feel insecure and isolated. Chandan too feels the same insecurity on account of his attachment to Tara. The individual's crisis in the social set up is presented in *Tara*, a play by Mahesh Dattani.

The dramatisation of relationship between Mr. Patel and his wife Bharati, Mr. Patel's relationship with his son Chandan and his daughter Tara, his relationship with his parents and his in laws bring out the various stands of man woman relationships in the play. Bharati's relationship with her father and her daughter as well as the intimacy of relationship between Tara and Chandan.

The man woman relationships in the Indian societies, the challenges faced by the physically challenged individuals in the Indian society and the status of the girl child issues treated by Mahesh Dattani in his play *Tara* which reflect the dramatist's social vision.

Chandan's psyche is scarred as he holds himself responsible for Tara's death and he is suffering from scarred psyche. It becomes unbearable for Chandan to live in India after Tara's death and later his mother's death. He too has scarred psyche from the sense of guilty conscience. Chandan's emotional crisis is mainly presented in the play quite graphically. The mode of presentation of action is predominantly psychologically and emotionally charged. It analyses the social as well as the psychological issues involved. Dan begins with his confession as he is anxious to reveal his innermost self his emotional turbulence.

Dan in England makes the presentation of the network of relationship in this play. Mr. Patel appears rude, harsh, heartless and rather authoritarian. His concern

for Chandan is transparently noticed in the play. He appears to be harsh and rather authoritarian in his ties with Tara, his daughter. He too declares that he loves Tara as much as his wife Bharati does. He is separated from his parents and therefore he feels isolated. His relations with his father in law are opposed to his wife Bharati's relations with her father.

Tara's psyche is scarred because of the forced unethical and unscientific operation carried out by the surgeon Dr. Thakkar. Mr. Patel suffers because of his sense of guilty conscience after his sister's and his mother's deaths. Everybody has one or other cause for his or her scarred psyche. Tara professes to be the champion of Tara's case but it is not for the sake of Tara but it is more herself that she professes too much to be protective and possessive towards Tara. Roopa ridicules Tara and it is indicated in the play that Prema and Nalini join her in expressing their attitude towards Tara's artificial leg and her limping is almost unsympathetic. "She is real freak of nature all right" (C.P p-328) sums up the social attitude towards the physically challenged persons.

The scars are produced on Bharati's, Mr. Patel's and Bharati's son Chandan's minds. Their psyche gets scarred and scorched. Chandan who has changed his name to Dan in London is never free from the scarred psyche. Dan suffers actually and painfully and experiences the inward psychological conflict and traumatic sufferings. Chandan feels his existence to be wretched as well as miserable. His soul begins to ache. His mind gets disturbed. His painful confession just demands forgiveness from Tara. Mr. Patel is separated from his parents because he has married Bharati, a Kannad speaking woman. Bharati and Mr. Patel remain separated psychologically though not physically.

There is a psychological tense which is more troublesome to these characters. Mr. Patel feels that he has done injustice to his parents and that has made him an authoritarian patriarch and he has done no justice to his wife Bharati. In her own way Bharati suffers on account of sense of guilt in which she has been involved by choosing to be partial and favourable to her son rather than to her daughter.

The clash between traditional and modern lifestyles and values is powerfully presented in the dramatized conflicts between the genders, the twins and their parents. The transgression of margins is highlighted through the mother's partiality to male child. The prejudiced attitude of favouring the male child caused untold sufferings and ultimate death to Tara. All these separations, these operations, these boycotts and similar circumstances have caused scars and wounds on all four major characters of this play.

The attributes of the attachment theory could be tested against the character of *Tara*. The attachment theory is a branch of socio psychological theory with four basic characteristics. They include a safe haven, a secure base, and proximity maintenance and separation distress. These four attributes are very evident in the relationship between a child and his or her caregiver. The first attribute is creating a safe haven. Ideally, the child can rely on his or her caregiver for comfort at times whenever he or she feels threatened, frightened or in danger. For example if a child is given a toy that he or she does not like, he starts crying and his mother would remove the toy and hug the child so he would stop crying. Tara at the beginning of the play finds her home and the members of the family to be her safe haven. She had incredible trust on her family.

Second, creating a secure base. Here the caregiver gives a good reliable foundation to the child as he goes on learning and sorting out things by himself.

For example a child would ask questions to his mother about why his dad got sick and cannot play with him at the moment.

Third, is to maintain proximity. This means that the child aims to explore the world but still tries to stay close to his caregiver. For example a teenager discusses peer problems with his mother.

The Fourth is separation distress. This means that the child becomes unhappy and sorrowful when he becomes separated from his caregiver. For example an infant cries loudly when his mother leaves for work. In many cases, twins have been known to possess an emotional condition that rise above the other siblings. For the surgically separated twins in *Tara*, that emotional bond similarly exist, but is forcibly separated by Bharati and her father, Patel. As Chandan notes: "The way we started in life. Two lives and one body in one comfortable womb. Till we were forced out and separated". (CP p-381)

Home in *Tara* is a reflection of the society and how parents blindly give in to the notion of gendered preference. The concept of a girl and a boy had led to the major destruction of Patel's family. Parents have complete authority over their children and they do not give them any reason for their actions and decisions. Patel did not want the children to know about the reason of their separation because it is a gendered preference and the children will not be able to stand it because it will hurt them so much. Nevertheless, they could not hide it from them and when they came to know about it, Tara and Chandan were shocked. Tara died while Chandan migrated to London.

Nature has discriminated against Tara as she happens to be the weaker of the two. The members of her own family and chiefly her mother Bharati and her grandfather have deliberately discriminated against Tara fully deprived her of the second leg which is her due. Tara does neither twinkle nor sparkle brightly in the Indian culture and society because gender discrimination on social economic, and religious grounds. That is the social environment which is mirrored in the play. What the dramatist desires to present is the vision of the Indian culture and society which has remained unchanged since times immemorial to the present times which is highly influenced by socio psychological precepts. This is the dramatist's great contribution to Indian English drama.

Mahesh Dattani concentrates on the issue of the status of the girl child in the Indian culture and society through Tara's life and death which is highly influenced by socio psychological pressures. The beliefs, the attitudes and the prejudices which are deeply rooted in the Indian culture and society have taken Tara's life. The Indian psyche has killed Tara and as well as creates a great rift in the mind-set of the other characters. The collective attitude in Indian culture and society has plucked her life. Her life dissipates and ends on account of the discriminatory decisions taken by her mother Bharati, her father and Dr. Thakkar because of socio-psychological trauma which the whole family undergoes because of the prejudiced society.

The study analyses the socio-psychological tensions of these four characters. All the three the mother Bharati, the father Mr. Patel and the brother Chandan have suffered immeasurable continuous sense of guilt because of socio-psychological norms which are created as a result of the pressure created by the society. Each of

these three characters seeks an outlet for this socio psychological pressure. The sufferings of Tara's have moved them to this stage.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Women empowerment begins at home.

- Alex

Mahesh Dattani is a man of multi-dimensional personality. He is described as one of India's best and most serious contemporary playwrights writing in English. Besides being a playwright and a director, Mahesh Dattani adorns the mantle of a teacher with equal ease. He teaches theater courses at the summer session programmes of the Portland University. All his plays address social issues, not the very obvious ones, but the deep-seated prejudices and problems that the society is usually conditioned to turn away from. His plays deal with gender identity, gender discrimination, and communal tensions.

Gender inequality is obviously an urgent problem in the world. Despite the fact that its volume much decreases, it still exists and makes a lot of people suffer from its consequences every day. And there are many reasons leading to gender discrimination which cannot be solved easily. However, with education and progressive thoughts of people, there are also reasons to trust in the future for gender inequality to be stopped. Then, hopefully, people can live in fairness no matter what gender they are.

The mother-daughter bond is quite powerful. A woman's relationship with her mother affects all other areas of her life. In fact, the connection between a mother and her young girl is one of the most imprinting childhood experiences. As such,

mothers teach their girls by example what it means to be a loving, kind woman that grabs life by the horns. Therefore, all other relationships of a woman and the way she will eventually raise her own children is heavily influenced by the relationship with her own mother. As children, we often do not realize how much our mothers have done for us and the important role they continue to play in our lives. For all the wonderful things our mothers have done for us, they deserve so much more than just a giant thank you.

Bharati dotes on her daughter Tara; she insensitively attributes a piece of her daughter to the son. The conflict between illusion and reality is yet again echoed here. The actual public display of attention on part of the mother is actually a screen to shield her guilt. The context also serves as a satire on the self-sufficient Indian male, for whom, to accept anything feminine is beneath his dignity, and an indelible question mark on his masculinity. Even Dan acknowledges the same, as he writes the play. Though the craft of the play is his, he has to borrow the material from Tara.

In *Tara*, the deformity of the Woman is caused by the Man, and caused in order to complete the Man. The playwright utilizes the motif symbolically as well. This is the reason why Tara approaches her end more quickly, and it is not owing to her inferiority. Tara also symbolizes the predicament of girls in Indian families who are made to forsake their chances of getting educated as the edification of the boy becomes a priority.

Tara presents the bizarre reality of women playing a secondary role to man and the idea of female infanticide. Tara, as daughter, experiences the maltreatment and partiality from her parents. In fact, the purpose of this play is to illuminate the minds of female gender not to give preference to a male child over a female child.

Through this play, Dattani stresses the women of the nation to look back at their journey of life. They must be like Tara and become women in real sense. The play also humbly suggests the mother not to become upset at girl's birth, not to treat their girl children contemptuously, and not to stop them from scaling newer heights in their life to come.

The play enthrallingly questions the role of a society that treats the children of the same womb in two different ways. It shows the status of women in the 21st century. Though women repeatedly prove themselves to be successful in every field, the deep rooted gender discrimination continues among even the affluent and educated people living in a so-called modern life in the metropolitan cities. It enquires how women are not made to think or decide what to do but simply submit to the wishes of man. Women as mothers, wives, daughters, and as sisters turn out only to be women, submitting to their wills and losing their own identity.

Both Mr. Patel and Bharati are involved in the working of patriarchal norms, but though Bharati has changed because of her sense of guilt. Dattani gives value to both sides of the human life, giving equal importance to the Feminine and the masculine gender. The author has a completely differently abled world, a world of real abilities and possibilities in his mind for the disabled. That is the reason why play ends with both of them whole and complete with two legs each, because they are finally, in his memory, beyond nature and society.

All family life is full of struggles. Family values are a sham made up of compromises and middle class morality is only a facade. There is always a power structure within families, and also struggles for power. The parents fighting for their children are a normal behavior. In this particular case, Bharati has to construct her

maternal love for *Tara* not just as an act of wrong but also to assert her moral superiority over her husband, to carve out her space within the family. Thus maternal love becomes an instrument, not a natural state of being, or evens an end in itself. It is a weapon against Patel and the expression of a desire to compensate *Tara*. Thus, family cannot be considered as a site for love and caring and protection. Every relationship is a site for conflict. It can be called a conflict for control and power.

However, what the "forced harmony" (CP p-371) of family life can do and does is to put in danger quietly and completely all chances for individual growth and fulfillment. We have also seen that the play is about notions of normality. Everybody yearns for a normal life, yet no one is normal.

Normality and ability stunt the growth of each and every one in society. However, we can only react in a particularly senseless manner to physical disability and this creates cracks and breaks in families leading to great stress and breakdown of what is meant to be primary support structure for all of us.

Tara can thus be read in different ways but ultimately Dattani's view seems to be how the "forced harmony"(CP p-371) of lives is so tense with changeable and so close to worry that the surfacing of even one memory can tilt the balance completely change the paths into that of collision and self-explosion. The family holds the audience together but usually at great cost. There can be no sense of tragedy here, only that of identity of everyday life.

Such moments can only be earned beyond the level of everyday life, beyond language, beyond time in the silence of the hug that ends the play, the feminine and

the masculine of the twinned self-meeting and merging on an even footing.

The play shows patriarchal power and common life style of Indian society. Because of the quarrel between a husband and wife, a child has to suffer a lot. It showcases importance of male – child in Indian society. Generally, we all know about culture and tradition of India. Multiple religions are there in India. The society however is patriarchal. So it is natural that man is in the centre, and importance, are given to male in India. Dattani is an intelligent writer to show different aspects of the society. Dr. Thakkar's role is also suspicious in the play. As we know that role of doctor is like God. But here, Dr. Thakkar does not behave like a doctor. He takes bribe for the risky surgery in which he gives more importance to Chandan. Two legs are given to Chandan as planned. It leads to tragedy in Patel's family.

Dan is a victim of angst due to his feeling of guilt associated with the tragedy of Tara. But there is something mutually redeeming in them as there is "the grace of the relationships exist not in their separateness but in their moving in co-ordination or interdependence" (CP p-385).

When Tara wastes away and dies, Chandan is guilt ridden and escapes to London changing his name to Dan .It is an escape mechanism on his part to hide his guilt. But that doesn't help in any way as Tara is a part of him and she is more than just a sister to him. Mentally and psychologically he continues to be in a state of disillusionment. Guilt ridden he tells his father, "Tara has been dead for six years and Mummy has gone as well. there is nothing left for me to come back to" (CP p-372). Finally when the secret is exposed Bharati dies in distress as a psychiatric patient. Patel exists in his own world and Dan in his new 'avatar' attempts to atone for his loss by writing the tragedy of his life.

The play depicts the lives of Indian middle class families. As Dattani discusses it that men are in centre in India. Construction of gender is not the same in Indian society. As we all know that, problems are there in all family. But some problems are not natural it is created by people around. Mr. Patel is a strange character, he hates Tara in many ways because of his own rigid belief that a woman is not as important as a man. Female problems are magnificently discussed in the play. The importance of male child is shown by Dattani in the play, *Tara* in a striking way.

Dattani thus by using themes like gender identity, discrimination, middle-class life, revelation etc., has beautifully shown the agony of a girl in typical Indian society. Also, in this play we can see him experimenting with the stage.

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