

Transition from Trauma to Acceptance in a Liminal Space: A Study of Anne

Enright's *The Gathering*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

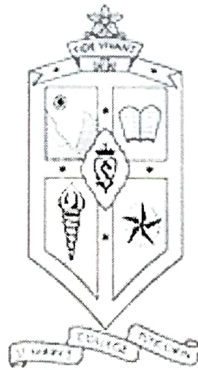
For the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

ABINAYA J

(REG. NO. 21SPEN01)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

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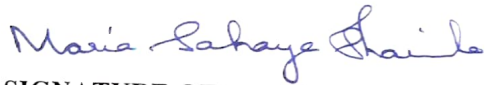
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Transition from Trauma to Acceptance in a Liminal Space: A Study of Anne Enright's *The Gathering*** 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 and is a work done by Abinaya. J during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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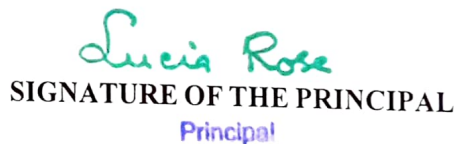
SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Transition from Trauma to Acceptance in a Liminal Space: A Study of Anne Enright's *The Gathering*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

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ABINAYA J

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PREFACE

This project entitled “**Transition from Trauma to Acceptance in a Liminal Space: A Study of Anne Enright’s *The Gathering***” discusses about the traumatic experience. Veronica’s favourite brother Liam was sexually abused by the landlord. She reveals the truth to her entire family. Through her writings she came out of trauma.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the Irish Literature and the contemporary writers during that period. It introduces the author Anne Enright, her works and her achievements in the field of literature. It also delineates the general idea of *The Gathering*.

The second chapter **Childhood Trauma** elucidates how the condition of being a paranoid and a solitary affects the children, through an explication of the protagonist Veronica.

The third chapter **Rage, Recollection and Rituals as Stimulators of Recovery** examines Veronica’s road to recovery through the five stages of grief denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** explicates the role of the narrative style, stream consciousness, in illuminating the intensity of tragic wounds caused by traumatic memories and her journey of processing grief.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

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.

English Literature emerged with the beginning of the history of English people. It refers to all the literary works such novels, short stories, poems, fiction, non-fiction and plays composed in English. The earliest works of English literature mirror the life lived by the people of that region at that specific period. For instance, all the changes undergone by the English society from the earliest to the modern time have left their imprints on English literature.

Grenvillle Kleiser, *Dictionary of Proverbs* in that book Oscar Wilde says about literature is “Literature always anticipates life, it does not copy it but molds it to its purpose. The nineteenth century, as we know it, is largely an invention of Balzac” (217). In the *Total Literary Techniques* book by Himmele from the view of C.S. Lewis “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 (18).

Irish literature comprises writings in the Irish, Latin, English languages on the island of Ireland. The earliest recorded Irish writing dates from the

seventh century and was produced by monks writing in both Latin and early Irish, including religious texts, poetry and mythological tales. There is a large surviving body of Irish mythological writing, including tales such as *The Tain* and *Mad King Sweeny*. The English language was introduced to Ireland in the thirteenth century, following the Norman invasion of Ireland. Although Irish has been used as a literary language for more than thousand and five hundred years, and modern literature in Irish dates as in most European languages to the 16th century Gaelic revival cultural movement. Modernism and renewal are also represented by several writers not of Gaeltacht background.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland produced some of the finest writers of English language literature on Earth, from Jonathan Swift to Bram Stoker, from Oscar Wilde to James Joyce and many others in between them. Totally four Irish writers have won the Nobel Prize for literature. They are W.B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney.

As the twentieth century drew near in Ireland, a new nationalist cultural revival stirred. It came to be known as the Irish literary renaissance and would change modern Irish history, but first it had to make sense of the Irish past. In 1878, Standish James O'Grady, considered by his contemporaries as the father of this revival, published *History of Ireland: The Heroic Period*. In literary terms, this period saw a renaissance in Irish drama and poetry in particular and a move away from realism. The greats namely, Wilde, Yeats and Joyce offered signposts to the past while more contemporary writers, including Roddy Dolan, Flann O'Brien and Jamie O'Neill, shone a light on lesser heard Irish voices.

Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continue internally heard only by the

one held captive. Many recent studies advert to the increasing problems in terms of mental health by children and adolescents which is linked to an early childhood trauma experience. Revealing the person's psychology behind his or her behaviour in adulthood therefore requires, more often than not, elaborating on the person's experiences gained in childhood. Because trauma challenges one's mental health, it is probable that children who experienced a traumatic event and did not verbalise this experience will either develop adult psychiatric disorders or they will carry the trauma with them during their entire lives. As difficult as it can be to acknowledge the impact of one's trauma, everyone can work towards recovery.

Trauma is something every single individual might develop in the course of his or her life. Humans who are capable to experience happiness and grateful moments, can also feel and remember the undesirable ones. In its more general definition, in the work *Unclaimed Experience- Trauma, Narrative and History* Cathy Caruth underlines: "Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (121).

The word "traumatic" was explained for the first time in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1656. Its etymology shows that 'trauma' comes from Greek and means 'a wound; a hurt; a defeat'. Until the very late 19th century, trauma was used to describe serious physical injuries in medicine. From the late 19th century onwards, the scope has been extended to trauma in psychology and psychiatry, whilst the meaning was extended to a mental injury, an injury of one's psyche. Trauma can thus be either physical, emotional or psychological.

The first step towards healing lies in acknowledging that there is aftermath after a traumatic event. Without this acknowledgement, one cannot proceed further. There are different ways to process the trauma and soften its aftermath. The aim of the specialists is to help the patients live, as far as it is possible, 'as before.' It is, however, to the utmost importance to verbalize the experience. It is significant to know that these people are not alone, that someone else might have gone through the same, or similar things as they have.

The bereaved person comes to a realization that death is an inevitable part of life and accepts the painful truth that his or her beloved one had to die at some point in life. Such realization is, according to Rohr, liberating. Grieving is a process which is concluded by integration, which means that the person accepts that the loved one is gone and is not coming back ever. Only a person who acknowledges the pain and sadness and does not avoid it can process it and, in the end, overcome it.

James Joyce was a major pioneer in the use of stream of unconsciousness. The term was first used by the psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology*. Many thoughts do not often take the form of a language. People usually think without uttering words with concepts instead of words. William James, an American Philosopher and psychologist, compares these thoughts to river as, "The stream of thought is like a river. On the whole easy simple flowing predominates . . . But at intervals an obstruction, a set-back a Log-Jam occurs, stops the current, creates an eddy, and makes things move the other way" (42). Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying* uses stream of consciousness to transfer ideas, thoughts, and perspectives inside the characters head to the mind of the reader: "The lord can see into the heart, if it is his will that some

folks have different ideas of honesty from other folks, it is not my place to question his degree” (10).

Joseph Victor O’ Connor was born on September 20, 1963 in Dublin. He is an Irish novelist. His first novel *Cowboys and Indians* was on the shortlist for the Whitbread Prize. In 2002, he wrote the novel *Star of the Sea*, which the economist listed as one of the top books of 2003. His 2010 novel, *Ghost Light* is loosely based on the life of the actress Maire O’ Neill. O’ Connor’s latest book, *Shadow play* published in 2019 Costa book prize in the novel category. Before success as an author, he was a journalist with the “Sunday Tribune Newspaper” and “Esquire magazine”. He is a regular contributor to Radio Teilifis and a member of Irish artists association Aosdana.

Emma Hannigan was born on September 25, 1972 and died on March 3, 2018. She was an Irish author and blogger, best known for writing about experience of suffering from cancer. *Designer Genes*, her debut novel, which draws on her experience of illness, was published in Ireland in 2009. A dozen books followed her debut, including novels and memories. *The Pink Ladies Club* was on the shortlist for the Eason Irish popular fiction book of the year category of the 2011 Irish Book Awards. Her last book, *Letters to My Daughters* reached the top of the Nielsen Book Scan bestseller list in Ireland at the end of February 2018. All profits from the book will be donated to the Irish Cancer Society.

Paul Murray was born in 1975 in Dublin. He is the author of three novels, including *An Evening of Long Goodbyes*, which was short-listed for the Whitbread First Novel Award and the Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award. *Skipper Dies* (2013) was long listed for the Booker Prize, and was a finalist for

the National Book Critics Circle Award. *The Mark and the Void* (2015) was joint winner of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse prize, and named one of *Time's* top ten fiction Books of the year.

Emma Donoghue is best known for her fiction, Dublin born author. She studied at university college Dublin in the late 1980's before traveling to the University of Cambridge to complete a Ph D on the concept of friendship between men and women in the eighteenth-century English Fiction. She has written five short story collections and eight novels, including *Frog Music* and the internationally bestselling *Room*. She later won multiple awards and was finalist for both the Man Booker Prize and the Orange prize, and Emma also earned an Academy Award nomination for her screenplay of the film adaptation.

John Banville was born on 1945 and he is an Irish novelist, short story writer. He was born in Wexford, where he received his secondary education at St Peter's College. He worked successively as a clerk and journalist before becoming literary editor of the Irish Times. His fiction is characterized by an allusive, ironic style and a preoccupation with its own processes. Common themes throughout his work include loss, obsession, destructive love, and the pain that accompanies freedom. *Long Lankin*, a collection of stories, appeared in 1970. Its concluding novella, "The Possessed", was drawn on in Banville's first novel, *Nightspawn* (1971), whose narrator becomes a character in his own plot. *The Sea* (2005), a meditative novel about a man who returns to the marine setting of a childhood trauma after the death of his wife, won the Man Booker Prize.

Anne Enright was born in Dublin, Ireland, and was educated at St Louis High School, Rathmines. She won an international scholarship from Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific in Victoria, British Columbia, where she studied for an International Baccalaureate for two years. She then completed a BA in English and Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin. She began writing in earnest when she was given an electric typewriter for her twenty first birthday. She won a Chevening Scholarship to the University of East Anglia's Creative Writing Course, where she studied under Angela Carter and Malcolm Bradbury and completed an MA degree.

Enright was a television producer and director for RTE in Dublin for six years and produced the RTE programme *Nighthawks* for four years. She then worked in children's programming for two years and wrote on weekends. She began writing full-time in 1993. Enright lives in Dublin, having previously lived in Bray, County Wicklow, until 2014. She is married to Martin Murphy, who was director of the Pavilion Theatre in Dun Laoghaire and now works as an adviser to the Arts Council of Ireland. It is Murphy who is credited with helping Enright when she was weakened with illness. They have two children, a son and a daughter. Her first creative work, a collection of short stories called *The Portable Virgin* in 1991. The book won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature. Two years later, she quit her job and devoted her full energy to writing. She began writing full time in 1993. Her notable works are *The Wig My Father Wore* (1995), *What are you like?* (2000), *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* (2002), *The Gathering* (2007), *The Forgotten Waltz* (2011), *The Green Road* (2015).

Enright has published half a dozen novels, many short stories and a non-fiction work called *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood*, about the birth

of her two children. Her writing explores themes such as family, love, identity and motherhood. Her first novel is *The Wig My Father Wore* was published in 1995; the book explores themes such as love, motherhood and the Catholic Church. The narrator of the novel is Grace, who lives in Dublin and works for a tacky game show. Her father wears a wig that cannot be spoken of in front of him. An angel called Stephen who committed suicide in 1934 and has come back to earth to guide lost souls moves into Grace's home and she falls in love with him.

Damien in stumbles wearing a trench coat, a cigarette clamped in his teeth. What move he in today? Columbo? The Big Sleep? He looks out at us through his hangover and witches, as if every move where a jump cut from *A Bout de Souffle*. (120)

Enright's second novel, *what are you like?* was published in 2000. It is a story about a twin girls called Marie and Maria who are separate at birth and rose apart from each other in Dublin and London. It looks at tensions and ironies between family members. It was shortlisted in the novel category of the Whitbread award. Her third novel, *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*, an Irish woman who was the consort of Paraguayan president Francisco Solano Lopez and became Paraguay's most powerful women in the nineteenth century. Enright's fourth novel *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood* (2004) is a collection of candid and humorous essays about childbirth and motherhood. In this novel, the narrator quotes that, "The past continuous- always, always, in the past. Or, at least, all the time. Mammy, didn't you always use to?" (53).

Enright's fourth novel, *The Gathering*, won booker prize in 2007. A positive review in *The New York Times* stated that there was no consolation in *The Gathering*. As Enright traces the line of betrayal and redemption through three generations her distinctive intelligence twists the world a fraction and gives it back to us in a new and unforgettable light. *The Gathering* is a daring, witty, and insightful family epic, clarified through Anne Enright's unblinking eye. It is a novel about love and disappointment, about how memories warp and secrets fester, and how fate is written in the body, not in the stars.

Enright's "unflinching look" at that territory caught the attention of the judges for the 2007 Man booker prize, who awarded *The Gathering* with Britain's highest literary honour. One of Enright's inspirations for *The Gathering* was the juxtaposition of family as a source of pride in Ireland and also as "a very lonely place." Enright's meditation on memory melds past and present to tell the story of a large Irish family and the suicidal death of one its members. The author's writing style turns experimental, surreal, and earthy, has been compared with that of Don DeLillo, John Banville and Patrick McCabe, among others. The exploration of domestic between mothers and daughters is a recurrent theme in her work, and one that has been favourably compared with the novel of Anne Tyler.

Enright's interest in giving a voice to what has been silenced and repressed by history is matched by playful experiments with form and unreliable narrative and an unerring honesty. Her seventh novel *Actress* was selected for the long listed for the women's prize for fiction 2020. It tells the story of a daughter detailing her mother's risk to fame in late twentieth century. A scene in *The Gathering* is set in the foyer of Belvedere Hotel. In 2008, Enright

published another collection of short stories, *Taking Pictures*. Each story has a little that suggests a snapshot of life which predominantly focused on women's experiences.

Enright's richly detailed prose combines honesty and subtle humour to portray enthralling stories of family relationships, repression, and emotional turmoil in contemporary Ireland. The stories are written in Enright's usual style brutally honest, cynical and sometimes disturbing but nevertheless delivered with her trade mark deadpan humour, along with moments where real love and healing shine through and lift the darkness.

Enright's writing has appeared in several magazines and newspapers including "The Dublin Review", "The Irish Times", "The New Yorker", "The Guardian Granta", "The Paris Review" and "The London Review" of books. In 2011, the Irish academic press published a collection of essays about her writing, edited by Claire Bracken and Susan Cahill. Taoiseach Enda Kenny appointed Enright as the inaugural Laureate of Irish fiction, Enright promoted people's engagement with Irish literature through public lectures and creative writing classes.

Enright's *Disliking the McCanns* published in "The London Review of Books" tells a tale about Kate and Gerry McCann, the British parents of the three-year-old child Madeleine McCann, who disappeared in suspicious circumstances while on holiday with her family in Portugal in May 2007. Although *The Gathering*, received mostly favourable reviews of its publication, sales of *The Gathering* had been modest before it was named as one of the six on the Booker Prize shortlist in September 2007. The novel traces the narrator's inner journey, setting out to derive meaning from past and present events, and

takes place in Ireland and England. Its title refers to the funeral of Liam, an alcoholic who took his own life in the sea at Brighton.

The story opens up with the death of Liam Hegarty, a young Irish man who has drowned at sea. His nine siblings gather together for his wake. His closest sibling, Veronica, main protagonist of the story and the events are told through her viewpoint. Veronica wonders why her brother Liam resorted to alcohol as a means of coping before his eventual suicide. She begins to reflect on her family history and goes through the stages of what made Liam suicidal. Veronica highlights the idea that the seeds for her brother's death "were sown many years ago" (13). She blames it on her grandmother, Ada Liam and her younger sister Kitty went to live with when they were younger. Though married, Ada was engaging in an affair with her ex-lover, Lambert.

One day, Veronica walks in and witnesses Liam being raped by Lambert. However, Veronica is not clear whether it was Liam or herself who was being sexually abused and thus idea of her an unreliable narrator is conveyed. Veronica believes that this experience Liam endured led him to lead a life full of despair and what is eventually led him to kill himself. The story explores more feelings about her childhood as she goes on to collect Liam's body and arrange for his funeral. At the same time, Veronica's own marriage is disintegrating as it is revealed her husband has left her for another woman. Eventually, the story ends with Veronica dreaming of escaping her life but instead she buys a ticket to return home. Veronica thinks that the reason for his alcoholism lies in something that happened to him in his grandmother's house, and uncovers uncomfortable truths about her family.

Chapter Two

Childhood Trauma

Trauma in early childhood can be harmful. Early childhood trauma generally means trauma between birth and age of six. A child's brain grows and develops rapidly, especially in the first three years. Young children are also very dependent on the caregivers for care, nature and protection. This can make young children especially vulnerable to trauma. When trauma occurs early it can affect a child's development. It can also affect their ability to attach securely, especially when their trauma occurs with a caregiver.

Childhood trauma can occur when a child witnesses or experiences overwhelming negative events in childhood. Many childhood experiences can overwhelm a child. These can occur in relationships such as abuse, assault, neglect, violence, exploitation or bullying. Therefore, the environment in which people spend their formative years plays a significant effect in the development of their personalities. In her book *The Drama of the Gifted Child* Alice Miller pointed out that,

Experience has taught us that we have only one enduring weapon in our struggle against mental illness: the emotional discovery and emotional acceptance of the truth in the individual and unique history of our childhood. (15)

Several events that occur during a person's formative years may have an impact on their life later on. If kids are raised in a healthy environment, they could have numerous happy memories from their childhood. Their daily activities are as usual. Also, they have opportunities to obtain their goals. If they

have a positive personality development, they are able to solve their own problems. That will have a favourable impact on their lives. In contrast, those who experience adverse childhood environments, such as living in a family with divorced parents, being seriously unwell, or seeing domestic violence, typically struggle to develop their personalities. They could run into extremely challenging issues that stun them. They don't discuss their issues with anyone else. These circumstances depress them and have a bad impact on their lives. In her book *Emerging with Wings: A True Story of Lies, Pain, and The Love that Heals*, Danielle Bernock pointed out that,

Trauma is personal. It does not disappear if it is not validated. When it is ignored or invalidated the silent screams continue internally heard only by the held captive. When someone enters the pain and hears the screams the healing can begin. (27)

Children may develop a fear of people, withdraw from society, or harm someone else as a result of experiencing major negative occurrences and being unable to resolve their issue. Children will carry these issues into adulthood because they feel defenceless and helpless in a frightening world. As a result, they frequently find it difficult to trust others and become socially isolated. For instance, they might develop paranoia and isolate themselves. Some paranoid signs could result from emotion that is suppressed, denied, or projected feelings.

People who are paranoid can be recognised by their defining attitude, which includes a great deal of mistrust and hostility towards others. This problem has persisted for a very long period. They tend to bear grudges by unforgiving insults and slights, also they have a negative point of view and lack faith in others and unjustified doubts about the loyalty. In other words, paranoid

people prefer to hold onto their own disagreements negatively about their individuals. It occurs as a result of their irrational distrust to every part of their lives.

On the other hand, solitary is the other condition that appears after experiencing serious bad event. This condition may appear when people isolate from their life from the society. *The New Personality Self- Portrait* in the work Oldham says that “Individuals with solitary personality style have small need of companionship and comfortable being alone” (5). They enjoy being alone and generate ideas from the internal sources. Solitary individuals can coexist with others, even get married or have children a few intimate associates. However, they require more alone time as they are not being capable of meeting the emotional requirements of others. *The Gathering*, is one of the most fascinating stories to tell about the phenomenon of persistent childhood trauma. The book demonstrates how a character’s life years later was impacted by persistent early trauma.

Veronica is the protagonist of the book *The Gathering*. She is an example of someone who encounters childhood traumatising experience. She consequently experiences the ongoing childhood stress that her entire life, influences. She develops paranoia and a paranoid personality as a result of those painful experiences. Veronica’s closet sibling Liam was only eleven months younger for her. Veronica claimed that she loved him the most and that they “talking about anything and everything” (Enright119).

When he was nine, Liam was sexually abused by a man who was a friend, a lover and a landlord of his grandmother Ada, in whose house they used to spend a plenty of time. Veronica claimed that Liam was never able to live in

a normal life and that he lived in various pits. The use intake of alcohol was Liam's coping strategy, meaning that is the way which helped him to cope with his trauma. Alcohol eventually wrecked him. Veronica was uncovering Liam's traumatic past for the fact he committed suicide. Because of this kind of childhood experiences, she turns out to be a person who is paranoid.

The following are some signs that an individual is paranoid. The paranoid typically harbours unforgiving grudges by refusing to forgive slights or insults. The individual has an unfavourable opinion or persistent suspicion, mistrust, and unfounded doubts about people's loyalty. This seems to be the result of a negative childhood experience. The main character Veronica shows this symptom. Her difficult childhood condition acts as a source that makes her paranoid. As a paranoid, she has a negative judgement and copious mistrust to other people even her immediate family like her mother, sister and husband. The character has a negative opinion towards her mother. Enright view may be considered as evidence.

My mother had twelve children and – as she told me one hard day – seven miscarriages. The holes in her head are not her fault. Even so, I have never forgiven her any of it. I just can't . . . I have not forgiven her my sister Margaret who were called Midge, until she died, aged forty-two, from pancreatic cancer. (Enright7)

The text demonstrates how very unsupportive her childhood was. She was required to reside in a large family with numerous siblings. She experiences some issues and develops internal conflict as a result of living in a large household. She most likely experienced a lack of affection since there are so

many kids to look after. Her situation compels her to be alone and take care of herself. Her mother grows incredibly angry over this situation. This rage may be characterised by the phrase “I don’t forgive her” (Enright7) which is frequently used. This implies that the character is resentful of her mother for every slight and insult she has ever committed against her life.

The main character harbours resentment towards her mother. She says her mother has destroyed everything her family and her life. She puts her kids through a lot of pain. She has held onto this opinion for a very long time, and it affects how she interacts with her mother. She is griping about her mother obtaining reason. The quote that follows demonstrates this:

I am saying that, the year you sent us away, your dead son was interfered with, when you were not there to comfort or protect him, and the interference was enough to send him on a path that ends in the box downstairs. That is what I am saying, if you want to know. (Enright 213)

Veronica suppresses her hatred towards her mother. The internal struggle in her life became more and more repressed. She reveals all of her mother’s flaws. In the scenario, the character’s profound disappointment in her mother’s carelessness is conveyed through the atmosphere. It is clear from her speech that the character holds her mother responsible for the turmoil in their home. She blames her mother for all of her brother’s problems. Her perspective on her mother and way of thinking are both impacted by this grief. The mother is powerless to care for and safeguard her kids. As a result of this impairment, the character and her brothers experienced a number of difficult times when they were young by themselves. She experiences stress and develops paranoia

as a result. The protagonist continues to judge her sister negatively. Her connection with her sibling is not good. It is evident from how they engage with one another. It shows the state of a dysfunctional household.

You never told me I was beautiful. Or something worse: You stole my best hairband in 1973. Family sins and family wounds, the endless pricking of something that we find hard to name. None of it important, just the usual, you ruined my life, or What about me? (Enright 210)

It shows the state of a dysfunctional household. Veronica sibling never told that she was beautiful which implies there is no love or affection in the family. Family members never give any attention to each other. They never care and congratulate her for every positive thing done by the other members of the family. It seems that the children in the household often have a quarrel between each other and they accuse others based on their own beliefs and judgement. This setting describes a bad environment of a dysfunctional household. They develop biases as a result of this environment, which puts them at odds with others. They frequently assert that someone else is to blame for all negative things.

Each and every instant is without meaning due to the absence of the family's confidence on themselves. It appears that some unfavourable factors typical within the family. Their friendship is worsened by this circumstance. Veronica doesn't feel secure and comfortable in her family. The character's ongoing trauma is not only brought on by just existing in a hostile environment but also from the childhood sexual assault. The Protagonist, Veronica Proclaims that, "But it is a very strange picture. It is made up of the words that say it. I

think of the ‘eye’ of his penis, and it is pressing against my own eye” (Enright 221).

From the above lines shows how the experienced of sexual abuse in Veronica’s childhood period has influenced her much. The word “eye” describes the character’s anxiety about the dangerous circumstance she must deal with. Her entire existence is impacted by this condition. She creates her own issues with other people, particularly men. The protagonist grows suspicious of her spouse. She constantly has doubts about her spouse without any valid reason. She says that:

It was children that did for us, at least for a while. I think he stopped hating me after I left work. Of course, Tom would say he never hated me, that he loved me all along. But I know hating when I see it. I know it, because there is a part of me that wants to be hated, too. There must be. (Enright 180)

The above mention lines represent how her extensive mistrust of her spouse affects her daily actions. She doesn’t believe her husband, as evidenced by the way she behaves and thinks. Her mentality and way of thinking are influenced by the circumstance and one can know from these lines that Veronica has lack of communication with her husband. She makes assumptions on her own point of view. As a result of this she automatically dismisses all options for addressing her husband’s perspective. The rejection builds internal conflict to her life and by generating negative assumptions she constructs her own conflict.

The character has more internal problems than she does with others. She continues to hold her opinions despite not fully understanding why. Consequently, their connection as a whole couple becomes wholly blocked. The

protagonist questions her husband's devotion. She accuses her spouse for having another woman. She maintained her negative point of view without any proof. It can be seen from the following lines:

Here it comes – the four o'clock wake-up call. It creeps into me and I wake to the slow, slick, screaming heebis- jeebies. What are they? He is sleeping with someone else. No that isn't the four o'clock call is a much older, more terrible, thing. I cannot feel the line of my skin along the sheet. (Enright 133)

From this, a reader can understand conflict between the character's feelings and thoughts regarding her spouse. She believes her spouse to be unfaithful. The unfavourable point of view can be seen from the utterance "he is sleeping with someone else". These remarks demonstrate her doubts regarding the loyalty of her spouse. Despite the lack of evidence, she is certain that her husband is dating another lady. When she speaks, the internal struggle can be seen:

I am swinging an inch or so off the mattress, and I do not believe in my self – in the way I breath and turn – I do not believe in Tom beside me: that he is alive (sometimes I wake to find him dead, only to wake again), or that he loves me. Or that any of our memories are mutual. So, he lies there, separate, while I lose faith. (Enright 133)

The protagonist exhibits tension within herself, according to the utterance. They don't respect one another and never share with each other. She investigates her ideas and comes up with several charges against her spouse. The couple's confidence and trust are destroyed by these accusations. She therefore doubts

her husband's loyalty even though she cannot to prove it. The character's disapproval extended not just to her immediate family, but it is also done to people who completely strange for her. She accuses people particularly men, based her own judgement. "I have never trusted men who pray. Woman have no option of course but what do men think about, when they are on their knees? I do not think it is in their nature to pray: they are too proud" (Enright 65-66).

She thinks that men act so hypocritically in everything they do. They are too arrogant, to be able to worship. This phrase explains the opposing view point. She thinks men never make themselves look bad. This trust leads her to think that men never pay attention to the religious activity. They are con artists who cover their faces with masks. This unfavourable viewpoint constantly occurs in her life. The character's point of view develops and causes a struggle within. She consistently believes that there is no goodness in men's lives. These thoughts affect her personality and makes her paranoid become worse.

A bad upbringing led to her to suppress all negative feelings. She consequently tends to be wary of people. She creates a suspicious feeling to the loyalty of people. Conflict results from this circumstance within the persona. It has an impact on how she develops her connection. The conflict is evident in the character's exploration of her feelings towards her mother, siblings, and spouse. She keeps her deep anger and hatred all along her life. She assesses others solely based on her personal judgement. She frequently maintains a safe space from others, which brings paranoid in her life.

Individuals who tend to avoid social interaction and spend their time alone are said to be solitary. The protagonist of this book is more preoccupied with her fantasy world than with the actual world. Because of the traumatic

experiences she had as a kid, she struggles to have faith in others. This circumstance has the result that the character avoids sharing her emotions and thoughts. She would rather be left alone. She never expresses her opinions. She keeps her issues to herself. By exploring her thoughts and feelings, she deals with all of her issues on her own. It is evident from Veronica's words:

None of the messages relayed: the whispered conference in the hall, don't tell Mammy, because 'Mammy' would- what? Expire? 'Mammy' would worry. Which seemed fine to me. It was, after all, of her own making, this family.... woman should be asked to bear. (Enright 9)

According to the book, Veronica suppresses her negative emotions. She has to keep her issues private. Veronica is torn apart internally by this situation. The statement "don't tell Mammy, because 'Mammy' would- what? Expire? 'Mammy' would worry" (Enright 9), which supports to explain how she suppresses her disappointment from the past. Nevertheless, she wishes to share her problems but has no one with whom to do so. It demonstrates how the family structure forces kids to find their own solutions to issues. The kids must mature without their parent's guidance. This circumstance prompts the character to being a solitary person. Veronica went through some difficult times as a kid, which makes the impact on her demeanour as a teenager. She used to suppress her emotions and push herself to forget her issues. The protagonist says that, "Children do not understand pain; they experiment with it, but you could almost say that they don't feel it, or do not know how to feel it, until they are grown" (Enright 129).

It is evident from the above lines that Veronica has been dealing with pain ever since she was a young kid. She attempted to suppress her painful childhood memories and tried to forget it all, as a child. Many years later, this deed still has some repercussions on her life. The setting refers to the state of feeling helpless in her childhood. The character is conscious of her suffering but chooses to downplay it. She is shielded from the effects of this hurt. Also, this circumstance makes Veronica to keep her problems alone without sharing to other people. Childhood trauma has an impact on Veronica's attitude and conduct which can be explained such as,

There are long stretches of time when I don't know what I am,
or what I have done - nothing mostly, but sometimes it would be
nice to know what kind of nothing that was. I might have a bout
of cleaning around four. It is the only way I know to make the
day end. (Enright 38)

The above lines explains that, the character prefers to be alone and it describes her tendencies to explore everything on her own. She likes to begin her tasks when other people take a sleep and she has a doubt in herself. She lacks the self-assurance to face her life. This condition makes her difficult to create an excellent socialisation with another person. These actions helps her to live and persist in her comfort zone. She finds that spending time alone helps her to forget about her current circumstances. She felt more at ease being by herself and changed her focus to alcohol. Her tendency to avoid interaction with other people is evident when she says that "I think about nothing - there is nothing to think about. And then I think about a drink. Nothing messy. A fierce

little naggin of whiskey, maybe, or gin. I float towards it in my nice Saab 9.3 - towards the idea of it, flowering in my mouth” (Enright 25-26).

Veronica experiences internal conflict when she attempts to run away from reality. She makes the decision to ignore her suffering. She exerts effort to delete it entirely. As a consequence, she consumes alcohol to soothe her pain. The protagonist attempts to conceal her suffering. She has a heavy burden in her mind and makes an effort to forget it all. By spending time alone, she is able to lessen her suffering. She rejects her real life and invents a world of her own in her mind.

The overanalysing character of Veronica, displays her solitary nature by rejecting any social interaction. She likes to be by herself. Her surroundings and parents put a lot of pressure on her in her childhood. These pressures make Veronica to keep her issues to herself and never confide to anyone. Her personality and relationship with other people are impacted by this. *The Gathering* illustrates the effect of chronic childhood trauma.

Veronica has the sensation of disappointment, rage, and hatred caused as a result of her childhood trauma. She experiences internal conflict as a result of this condition. She can't rely on people around her. Based on her own perceptions, she develops some prejudices and assigns responsibility to others.

Through this novel, it is clear that chronic childhood trauma brings drastic on victim's life. Veronica was suffering the consequences of her childhood trauma for thirty years, by repressing those agonising memories. Change came with Liam's death. Veronica felt the need to begin with writing a diary, therefore, writing down her story. Furthermore, she had a support from her family, which helped on her journey towards recovery. Even though she

needed to be alone for most of the time, she had someone to rely on in case of need. She could concentrate on her process of healing even thanks to her husband who let her the space for doing so.

Moreover, she made a decision to confide the secret and tell what happened in her grandmother's home to the rest of the family which was a huge step ahead. Also, what indicated that she was slowly healing is also the fact that she could finally sleep peacefully at the Gatwick hotel and she did not need to drink. Veronica did heal from her childhood trauma and she did so by facing her past and by writing a traumatic narrative.

Chapter Three

Rage, Recollection and Rituals as Stimulators of Recovery

Liminal space is a place of transition, a threshold between two points, signaling the end of time or space, and the beginning of another. These spaces exist in the real world as physical locations, but are also presented in our cognition and psychological experience, often related to major life changes and periods of uncertainty. Many people will admit to being depressed before they will talk about being lonely. They fear being judged as unlike able a loser or weird so they don't discuss about their sense of aloneness alienation or exclusion. Many people are lonely even though they have acquaintances and activities.

The characters portrayed in *The Gathering* may be explicated through the five stages of grief described by Kubler Ross. The analysis emphasizes on the significance of liminal space, how it offers different reactions and experiences to the bereaved in the aftermath of grief itself. This trajectory, of the stages of grief and the liminal space, will be explored through the protagonist, Veronica, in *The Gathering*. People find themselves deeply thrust in grief, followed by traditional rituals, due to the loss of their dear ones. This causes them to wander through unknown depths of sorrow, here, liminality guides them through such unaccustomed stages of grief. Kübler-Ross's theory examines and defines grief through five stages: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

The Gathering is about the Hegarty family coming together in Ireland for Liam Flaherty's wake and burial after his passing. The non-linear application of the Five Stages of grief allows for a more complex situational narrative in the liminal zone. Veronica Hegarty's journey through grief after her brother committed suicide and shows how, for the most part, she chooses to deal it alone. Veronica is given a liminal

place where she can write a biography of her grandma and use memories to process her grief. The unreliable heroine of Enright's novel fabricates a bio-fictional past while coping with her bleak present. It focuses on the stages of grief, which enables a deeper understanding of Veronica's personal journey through grief, and how she encounters her own version of closure. The prominent themes in the novel such as grief, ritual and tradition will be explored using Kubler Ross's theory of the Five Stages of Grief. The stages of grief were postulated by Kubler Ross in 1969 in *On Death and Dying*, and later revised in 2005. She explains that these stages were not designed to be "stops on linear timeline in grief" but were designed to help people "frame and identify" their feelings (7). This trajectory can be clearly documented in *The Gathering*, where Veronica navigates through each stage, to varying degrees, in a non-sequential manner, as she narrates Liam's death, his wake and funeral. The theory of liminality compliments and aids in unbinding the stages of *The Gathering*, which opens with Veronica's encounter with personal grief experienced on account of her brother, Liam's death. Liam had died from suicide in Brighton, England, and Veronica was burdened by the overwhelming task of delivering the news to their mother. Reluctantly, she enters the Hegarty house and is repulsed by its very fabric. She notices the size, the layout, and the smell. Veronica prepares to relay the news of her brother's death to her mother: "I turn my face towards her and ready it to say the ritual thing" (Enright 6).

The novel frequently refers to ritualistic words and expected facial expressions, thus demonstrating the importance of traditional practices at the time of grief. When she hears the news, Veronica's mother hits her, demonstrating a mother's grief who has lost her child. Her initial silence is followed by a sound that is described as "terrible sound comes out of her. Quite soft" (Enright 9). Her mother accepts the news of Liam's death as her brief denial and anger subside. Again, Enright uses facial expression to

display grief when her mother faces her: “so that I can witness her face; the look on it, now, and the way it will never be the same again”. (Enright 9) As Veronica watches her mother’s portrayal of grief, she rages against the unjust role she plays, and she is angered by the duties she has already performed, stating that she “will die of unfairness” (Enright 10).

Following in a non-linear pattern of Kubler Ross’s model, Veronica seems to have passed into the second stage of grief, where anger takes over denial. The first phase seamlessly flows into the second, where Veronica’s denial is overtaken by her anger due to the circumstances in which she finds herself. In this phase, Veronica resents that she is “the one who has to drive over to Mammy’s and ring the doorbell and put myself in a convenient hitting position” (Enright 10). While her siblings escaped the chore. She is even angered at her dead siblings: “I am in a rage with every single one of my brothers and sister, including Stevie, long dead, and Midge, recently dead, and I am boiling mad with Liam for being dead too” (Enright 10). The anger experienced at the time of grief need not be logical or even relevant to the current circumstance. Kubler Ross explains that anger is a necessary stage which helps in keeping other feelings at bay, until one is ready to deal with them. The specifics of identifying Liam’s corpse from a distance, from which she spares her mother, may be the cause of Veronica’s rage.

Veronica remembers how she acquired the necessary dental documents, information on height, hair color, and a tattoo marking that their mother might not have been aware of. Veronica believes that she is “the one who loved him most” and that her mother would “cry no matter what son he was” unlike the pain she, herself, feels as “the one who has lost something that cannot be replaced. Veronica’s anger eases as she realizes her own grief must be set aside momentarily, to perform an act of tradition

circumstances observes that, “I must go over and touch her. I must take her by the shoulders and lift her gently up and away . . . I will do all this in deference to a grief that is biological, idiot, timeless” (Enright 11).

This kind deed of giving sweet tea to those who have experienced a shock as part of a ritual shows how some rituals can bring comfort to people even in the most trying of circumstances. By suppressing her rage, Veronica permits her mother’s grief to take central stage and has accepted the concept of maternal priority, in which a mother puts her child or children before herself.

Veronica as a representative of the Hegarty family, is given duties like formally identifying Liam’s corpse and arranging for his return, which draws her into the murky world of funeral etiquette and bureaucracy. She chooses a particular type of coffin without consulting her family because she feels it is her decision: “because I am the one who loved him most” (Enright 23). She lets her mother know where she’ll be going so, she can attend to the official identification of Liam’s bone. Grief totally occupies Veronica’s senses, snatching her out of her routine and expelling all memories of typical performances and expectations. When she observes that her husband has taken control of looking after their kids and their house, she starts to embrace the concept of the liminal space provided by the planning of Liam’s funeral:

There is something wonderful about a death, how everything shuts down, and all the ways you thought you were vital are not even vaguely important . . . Your eldest daughter can remember the inhaler and your youngest will take her gym kit with her, and it is just as you suspected most of the stuff you do is just stupid, really stupid. (Enright 27)

This brief respite from responsibility is also a way for Veronica to slip back into stage one of the grieving process, which is denial and isolation. Kubler Ross *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Grief* in that book he explains the theories that denial or “partial-denial” can be found creeping into all stage of grief, to be replaced with “partial acceptance” (35–36). Veronica exploits her liminal space further by isolating herself when she learns of Liam’s death. This space comforts her in such a way that instead of acknowledging the death, it allows her to partially deny it, as she is encompassed in the liminality of it all. In this context, Bridget English explains that: “In her liminal state Veronica can order and make sense of her life and Liam’s” (178). She is removed from her deteriorating marriage and the demands of motherhood. Without this isolation, Veronica may not have been offered the time or opportunity to attempt the close recollection of the past as much as she does in these solitary moments.

Throughout the novel, Veronica uses these isolated periods to examine the past and to write down an account of her grandmother’s life based on her imagination. The airport road is often her destination when she drives alone. Later in the novel, London’s Gatwick airport pulls her into its environs. This suggests a yearning for escape and for leaving the past behind, which is the very opposite of what she is attempting to do in the chronicling of her grandmother’s life.

Veronica marvels at the fleeting moments of travel that brought her to Brighton where she begins the process of repatriation. She ponders whether her journey to Brighton was a journey after all, as it seemed anti-climactic with the process of bringing back Liam. Hence, the movement of the train seems to

contradict the stillness of death. During this train journey, the author alludes to Irish funeral traditions when Veronica shows discomfort with the idea of a wake in the family home, followed by her contempt for the dingy atmosphere of her childhood house. She reminisces the front room and tells her sister Bea that the carpet in their house compliments the corpse with its dark, gloomy colours. Sensing Veronica's reluctance to have a traditional wake, Bea yields to guilt trip: "It's how Daddy would have wanted it" (Enright 42). This statement causes Veronica to acknowledge that this tradition is one which means a lot to the Irish, especially her father who had a rather traditional outlook to such practices. She thinks she would rather "eat shit" than sit in the front room with neighbors, with Liam's coffin in the corner, saying "One less. One less" and listening to anecdotes of her brother's life: "Oh! He was desperate – that is what we will say" and how he was "sensitive" and "not able for this world" (Enright 44). Veronica sees these interactions as the foibles of traditional Irish funerals and not a ritual in which she wants to partake. She remembers her grandfather's wake, when she was eight years old, and how she was forced to view his corpse, reposed in his bed. Veronica seems to think Liam surrendered to the expectations from the older people who were part of their lives. She realizes this fact, of how Liam fulfilled such norms, only once he is dead. Veronica's acknowledgement of Liam's practices of rituals demonstrates the first symbolic entrance into the third stage of grief of bargaining.

A deeper comprehension of her own part in her brother's death and, consequently, her own grief, has been made possible by Veronica allowing the trauma to enter the liminal space of grief. The arrival of Lamb Nugent casts a gloomy aura over this poignant time of loss. When Veronica sees Nugent, a

tenant and a friend of her grandparents, kneeling in prayer with rosary beads in hand, she says she has never believed men who worship. In Veronica's recollections and in her accounts of her grandmother Ada's life, he is a persistent, menacing presence. He seems to be an important character in the story of Liam's life and passing, which might be preventing her from going through the normal stages of grief. Her recollections of her first visit to a wake are ones of suffocating rituals and forced grief. She briefly breaks the darker themes with a gentler recollection of Ada's tender lingering over her husband's corpse, but quickly returns to the thread, which is related to the denial or bargaining stage of grief. "Nugent was there all along" (Enright 66). Nugent's role interplays between her memories of her grandfather's death and her present with Liam's death. This memory seems to drag her feet through grief itself as she processes her loss in different frames due to the responsibilities that she has held as an adult. Despite a shift towards a more secular society, Irish funeral customs continue largely the same and include a wake, a removal, a mass, a burial, a post-funeral gathering, and frequently the month's mind. Each of these rituals takes the mourners through liminal stages while bringing with it its own traditions.

Veronica's non-linear path through grief makes this clear. The return of Liam's body, the funeral, and the wake all show how she experiences grief and veers between liminal states as she progresses through the various phases. Veronica's disdain for the Irish traditional wake once again surfaces when she is informed about the time required for the repatriation of the body; this will not bode well with "all the cronies who will flock" to the family home, where they can "feast on Liam's poor corpse" (Enright 74). The use of the word "feast" is

a play on the tradition of the food and drink offered to the mourners who visit the wake and of the idea that such gatherings are fodder for those who enjoy the macabre elements of a funeral, under the guise of *communitas*. Once again, at the Brighton funeral home, Veronica enters a liminal space, unaware and unintentional. She refers to it as a ‘hinterland’ which is decorated in pastels, with office furniture and housing a “laminated catalogue of coffins” (Enright 74). As she flicks through the brochure, she is performing a role, as she already knows what coffin she will choose. She feels the need to express interest in the options. Liam’s gentle touch on her arm moves her, as he leads Veronica away from his body: “He is the person who comes after you have seen the worst thing. He is the rest of my life” (Enright 75).

Veronica allows herself to contemplate the circumstances that envelope Liam’s death: “I should play this the way it happened – I should start at the place where Liam walked into the sea – because there is an order to these things that has to be obeyed.” (Enright 76) This statement refers to how she projects Liam’s death in a linear form, following the sight of his body. Until this point in the story, she restrained from considering his suicide as the anti-climactic end of his life. In the liminal surrounding of Brighton’s prom, in the neighborhood where her brother’s body was discovered, she feels that “Liam is in the air” and notes the presence of people, walking along the seaside paths: “The living, with all their smells and holes” (Enright 76). As she gasps, she smells the fresh air from the Brighton beach, at the same time: “the open tang, the calling, and the smell of the sea. Such a miracle” (Enright 76). These diverse scents reflect the extreme emotions one is subjected to when grieving. Standing across the sea, where Liam breathed his last, Veronica considers the depth of both, Liam’s life

and compares it with hers, “a smaller life, alive” than Liam had “walking out in the darkness; blood and whiskey into salt sea” (Enright 78). She sees his suicide as “more heroic than not to be” (Enright 74). Here, the reader observes how she enters the fourth stage of grief: depression, the stage grief hits the hardest. When she gets back to Ireland, she considers how she could have helped Liam.

Veronica notices a certain pattern in the way he left his existence behind. She remembers numerous instances when she turned away from him “In his later, drinking years, I left him every time he arrived” (Enright 124). She acknowledges that she left him before his addiction became apparent, at a time when she just glared and walked away, not just in the later years “walked away” (Enright 124). When Veronica admits “she is depressed soon after the funeral, her depression reaches its peak the horrors” (Enright 133). She has left the liminal space where her daily chores were suspended and is “back to school runs and Hoovering and ringing other-mothers for other-mother things”, but underneath it all “everything was sad” (Enright 133).

By yielding to feel this sadness and experience depression, Kubler Ross asserts it will leave “as soon as it has served its purpose” (22). When she considers the particulars of Liam's death, Veronica at last permits herself to cry. She considers the following three details regarding her brother's passing: that he had put stones in the pockets of his pants to make them heavier, that he was wearing a hi-vis jacket, and that he was not wearing any underwear or stockings. She experiences emotions that finally enable her to deal with and accept the past when her underwear is missing. This is where the final stage of grief, acceptance, comes into play.

According to Kubler Ross, this period is “not to be viewed as forgetting your loss, or diminishing your grief, but as an acceptance of reality and understanding that this is now a perpetual reality” (25). Liam’s wake opens with a comparison drawn between the Irish and British attitudes to funerals, reminding the reader of the liminal space the Hegarty family now occupies as a result of the event that outlines the novel.

The British, I decide, only bury people when they are so dead, you need another word for it. The British wait so long for a funeral that people gather not so much to mourn, as to complain that the corpse is still hanging around. There is a queue, they say on the phone. They do not gather until the emotion is gone.
(Enright 182)

The delay in Liam’s funeral infuriates and upsets Veronica. She resents the British system and deals with the dull staff involved with the process; she realizes she needs to be prompt and must “get on with things” (Enright 182). Dell’ Amico’s work “Anne Enright’s *The Gathering* deals with trauma, testimony, and memory “suggests that these small moments of uncertainty represent Veronica’s heightened awareness of a “serious matter left unattended” (65). The gloomy aura of death, the delay in the repatriation of the body and the fact that Veronica had to manage the procedures all by herself, leaves her in a state of void. Although she tries to manage the circumstances, the void seems to pull her to a state of uncertainty with various things. The state of uncertainty yet again represents how Veronica has entered her liminal space, where she dutifully returns to the family home to sit with her mother, and occasionally a female sibling. Veronica anticipates the family reunion and the drama that will

inevitably ensue: “They are waking up. They are coming back.... A hosting of the Hegartys. God help us” (Enright 187).

On the day of the wake, Veronica reluctantly prepares to partake in the rituals associated with the viewing, feasting and storytelling: “I am expecting the house to be crammed” (Enright 192). When she learns that there is only a handful of neighbors, she thinks to herself that this should not be surprising: “Who’s going to come and look at a dead body in your living room, when there isn’t even a decent glass of wine in the house?” (Enright 192). As she enters the house, she seems to detach herself by thinking about re-carpeting her own house. She then comes to her senses and realizes she is looking at Liam, reposed in his coffin: “The room is almost empty. There is no one here I can talk to about children’s lungs or carpet colours, about weaves and seagrass or percentages of wool. Dead or alive. Liam does not care about these things” (Enright 193).

She has pivoted, in one moment, from denial to acceptance, from thinking about redecorating her house, to accepting that her brother is laid out before her. She notices that Liam is dressed in a navy suit and blue shirt “like a Garda” and realizes that this must have been supplied by the Brighton undertaker as it was not her brother’s style. Veronica comments on the appearance of her mother when she enters the kitchen, responding to mourners paying their respect.

In due course, her mother has accepted Liam’s death and, after the prolonged wait for the return of her son’s body, Veronica sees how it has “as they say, ‘hit her’. Like a truck” and she notes that this acceptance has afforded “a peacefulness to her” (Enright 197). As neighbours offer their condolences, with their short anecdotes and “ritual words”, her mother repeats the mantra of

the grieved, who must acknowledge the words offered to them: “‘Yes’, says Mammy, again. ‘Thank you. Yes’” (Enright 197). Veronica greets her mother and is surprised to be granted with a kiss to her cheek and a “hazy kind of love in her voice – for me, the table set with food, for everyone here” (Enright 197). This shows how the rituals and traditions which surround the wake and funeral are a great comfort to the bereaved. Grief can occasionally change how we remember the departed. While memories of darker times are frequently airbrushed out, the presence of mourners may cause memories and tales about the deceased to be less heavily edited.

The aforementioned passage explains how Liam’s life might not have been understood without the recollections sparked by the wake. Veronica realizes she needs some alcoholic escape: “I want to get drunk. Suddenly. This is a calamitous thing to want, but it cannot be denied.... ‘We need a bottle of something. Is there a bottle, for after?’” (Enright 204). Because of the books continuous back and forth between the past and present, it is possible to read Veronica’s grief and her analysis of earlier traumas in a non-linear fashion. After five months, Veronica is still having trouble coming to terms with Liam’s passing. She struggles with her memories and their falsity, but she is aware that she must confront the truth: “I owe it to Liam to make things clear” (Enright 223).

Veronica needs to process Liam’s death at her own pace, although she has admitted his fate as it was. She drives the airport road again, allowing her car to “go where it wants, which is North, as always” (Enright 237). With aircraft flying overhead, Veronica ignores the road home: “I go to the airport instead and, after a little while, I get on a plane” (Enright 239). She needs some

isolation that can be accessed by entering the liminal space. Kubler Ross suggests that the journey to finding acceptance affords the chance to “live again, but we cannot do so until we have given grief its time” (28). By boarding a plane and escaping her daily routine, Veronica is causing her sorrow at the moment. Veronica requires this liminal place in order to process her grief at her own pace. By boarding a plane and escaping her daily routine, Veronica is causing her sorrow at the moment. Veronica requires this liminal place in order to process her grief at her own pace.

The Irish funeral rites and traditions, in many ways, allow for a space to process grief. Veronica embraces the laughter as it offers a break from the darkness of the day. Enright uses a non-linear narrative to illustrate the five phases of grief, which inadvertently supports the Kubler Ross theory. Instead of being just a theory within a theory, the author of *The Gathering* has given the liminal area a concrete rationale. Veronica uses the liminal space made available to her by her grief to figuratively flee from her routines, enabling her to move through the stages of grief at her own speed. Each member of the Hegarty family deals with grief in a unique manner, with Veronica opting to mix the past and present to speed up her own journey through her grief's non-linear stages. With their dependence on hidden memory and her analysis of their significance, the rituals and customs associated with Liam's wake gave her the liminal space to process her grief.

Bridget English work *Laying Out the Bones: Death and Dying in the Irish Novel* asserts that Enright's book explores the trauma that a family can experience as a result of repressing sorrow and that “the past must be re-examined, the pain exposed, before grief can be overcome” (204). However, the

mourner's new existence without the deceased must be given time and space for grief to settle in. The phases of grief can help with the transition from the liminal to the post-liminal states and give flexibility in how memory, trauma, and depression are dealt with. Although there was some criticism of Kubler Ross's model, it opened a narrative that continues to this day, albeit with a more fluid depiction of how people experience loss. *The Gathering* by Enright demonstrates how the non-linear method of grieving is essential for helping the bereaved accept that some narratives do not have clear endings. Enright has given the reader an immersive experience as they travel through the liminal space provided by the Irish funeral and wake by allowing Veronica to go through each stage of mourning. The narrative is expanded and the realities of life before and after the loss of a loved one are increased by the subtle changes between the phases of grief.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

Narrative techniques are the methods that writers use to give certain artistic and emotional effects to a story. Stream of consciousness is a narrative mode of method that attempts to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind of the narrator often by incorporating sensory impressions, incomplete ideas, unfinished thoughts, usual syntax and rough grammar. It attempts to give the written equivalent of the character's thought process, either in the loose interior monologue or in connection to his or her actions. Stream of consciousness is characterized by associative leaps in thought and lacks some or all punctuation. In stream of consciousness the speaker's thought processes are more often depicted as overheard in the mind.

In this style of writing, the writer's transition between ideas using loose connections that are often based on a character's personal experiences and memories. The idea is that this technique helps writers convey the experience of human thought more accurately than they could by using a series of ideas connected with clear logical transitions. Stream of consciousness, in contrast seeks to portray the actual experience of thinking, in all its chaos and distraction it is not just an attempt to relay a character's thought, but to make the reader experience those thoughts in the same way that the character is thinking them.

The Gathering is narrated by the main character, Veronica Hegarty. The first person narrative of her family's history and the events leading up to and beyond her brother's suicide are framed by her thoughts, feelings, opinions, and prejudices. This is an intentional stylistic technique employed by an author whose work is largely about the unreliability of memory and how

point of view affects history. By giving Veronica, a woman in the throes of a minor breakdown, the responsibility of exploring the secrets of her family's past, Enright makes a point about the elusive and subjective nature of both memory and family relationships. Liam Harte observes that Veronica's narrative is "the story of a self-formed burden of a trauma that has remained cognitively unprocessed" (Enright 54).

The story of *The Gathering* focuses on Veronica's internal conflict. With her brother, Liam's suicide, she encounters a deep emotional and psychological crisis in her own life. Enright has used the stream of consciousness to depict the psychological struggle of Veronica who is trying to cope up with the loss of her brother. The loss of a sibling and the psychological struggle exposes Veronica to the hard truth of the past which she expresses through her narrative. She remembers the 'callousness' of her mother as she neglected the younger children due to her repeated pregnancies and constant miscarriages. This neglect is 'roaring inside' her and the readers experience her pain through an illumination of her thought process. Veronica recalls the incidents that had happened during their stay in their grandmother's house in the late 1960s. Possibly the fateful incidents that took place there had laid the foundation of Liam's after events of life. The powerful reminiscences bring her back to their dark and mysterious past. While recollecting and reliving the past, the occasional and episodic memories encountered by Veronica prove fatal to her as she slowly becomes 'alienated' in her own present world.

The novel centers on fundamental, universal issues like how memory functions and inspires reflections on the causes of evil and potential afterlife experiences. Veronica, the main character and the storyteller, is fervently trying

to comprehend how and why Liam's life ended in suicide. She starts to think back on her early years, spending time with her numerous brothers and sisters while also attempting to bring her family members back together after her unhappy marriage. Enright perfectly employs the stream of consciousness to mirror the memories of her past haunting her mind. Veronica's narrative shifts to the past when the book begins, revealing that she had travelled there to attend the funeral of her favorite sibling, Liam. She connected the blurred feelings to her childhood memories. When she is eight years old, her daydreams raise questions and concerns about possible mistreatment at their grandmother's house. "I would like to write down what happened in grandmother's house the summer I was eight or nine, but I am not sure if it really did happen" (Enright 1).

The narrative shifts to the narrator's mother, Maureen. She recollects that even her mother can't recall the name of her own daughter. Her mother had twelve children among them seven miscarriages. Veronica is unable to pardon her mother for these pregnancies and losses. Her unforgiving nature which is a characteristic outcome of trauma is brought about with much intensity by the technique of stream of consciousness. "My mother had twelve children and as she told me one hard day- seven miscarriages. The holes in her head are not her fault. Even so, I have never forgiven her any of it. I just can't" (Enright 7).

This thought process highlights the helplessness of the victimized Veronica. The stream of consciousness technique employed by Enright illuminates the various factions of the traumatized internal self of the protagonist of which memories about her dead siblings occupies a prominent part. Veronica can't forget her elder sister Margret, she died at the age of forty-

two due to pancreatic cancer, Bea is her beautiful and drifting sister and Ernest, is her first brother who was a priest in Peru and then she remembers Stevie; “who is a little angel in heaven” (Enright7). Her eleven siblings are Margret, Bea, Ernest, Stevie, Ita, Mossie, Liam Kitty, Alice and the twin Ivor and Jem. She explores her feelings that her mother hits her for the first time. Veronica introduces herself that her name is Veronica and she is thirty-nine years old. She calls her mother as “My sweetheart mother. My ageless girl” (Enright 8).

The best usage of the stream of consciousness may be seen when Veronica’s thought process is flooded with imagination about Lambert and Ada. Veronica recalls about the love affair between Lambert and her grandmother, it began with the night, “Lambert Nugent first saw her grandmother Ada Merriman in a hotel foyer in 1925” (Enright 13). Lambert first saw Ada in a hotel for the first time Veronica imagines would have passed between them at night. Ada is wearing a blue dress, it was raining near foyer. Ada is described as “fantastic woman” (Enright17) with perfect and contagious manner. She again imagines a rush of romantic feeling passing between them. Veronica sees her grandmother’s wedding picture. The marriage took place during low veil. She was a pure and looks more beautiful, but Ada marries Lambert’s friend Charlie Spillane because of his richness. “She did not marry Nugent; you will be relieved to hear. She married his friend Charlie Spillane. And not just because he had a car” (Enright 22).

Death plays a major role in ransacking the internal peace of Veronica, which is best expressed to the readers through the use of stream of consciousness technique in the novel. As soon as Veronica walks inside the home, she starts seated on the mattress, which had a rough blue comforter

covering as her late sibling. “He is the youngest of us, the easiest and best loved” (Enright 24). She informed the death to many of her living siblings. When their mother heard this news, she was shocked. Jem conveyed this news to Ivor, Ivor to Mossie’s wife then Ita tells it to father Ernest. Bea volunteered to care for her mother while Veronica had to travel to England to handle Liam’s corpse the way, she began bawling and thinking about the love and loss of Liam. “Bad news, about Liam” (Enright 23).

Her stream of consciousness flows through Ada and Charlie, her grandmother and her grandfather Charlie. When Charlie went to see his future bride at the Belvedere hotel, he drove the car towards O’Connell Street at 10.30 p.m., Charlie’s vehicle, which was painted a deep gray, arrived at the hotel. Veronica used to perch in the front and watch the mice which were running through the car’s engine as a child. Charlie disliked starts and endings equally. Ada had never met Charlie before when he seized her. Ada eluded Charlie’s grasp and got away. Ada was breathing when Lambert entered the room; she was on the opposite side. Actually, Charlie’s visit to the hotel to pick up Lambert from there was the actual cause. She claims:

This is the car that lived in Ada’s garage when I was child, a Bullose Morris, with a cracked old hood, like the hood of a giant pram. By the time I saw it, there wasn’t much of it left, even the doors were missing. I used to sit, in front of the seat and listen to the mice running through the engine, in the stillness of the summer afternoons. (Enright 30)

Veronica considered her grandparents encounter to be a positive experience. Her grandfather’s future and her grandmother’s history are both

altered by it. Lizzy, Lambert's younger sibling, was Lizzy. She came there to meet Lambert. She died due to "over lungs hard with disease" (Enright 35). All the people Veronica encountered in her life and the impact they created in her life, occupy the major part in her recollecting process. Veronica recalls about the characters of her daughters Rebecca and Emily, how each and every character made her feel is best elaborated through the writers' use of stream of consciousness. Rebecca who is so dippy and kind, or Emily, the cat, the Daddy's girl; a bit hopeless, a bit cold, and her Hegarty-blue eyes the place where my heart founders most . . . and they are asleep, I start to prowls. (Enright 38)

Tom, who had a nice home and a beautiful car, was married to Veronica. They were working class people. This didn't make her happy. She had very little satisfaction in her marriage. The frenzy, the dread which the characters feel as they recall their past can never be expressed by any other technique so intensely as stream of consciousness. Enright has made the right choice to convey emotions.

Some ancient impulse of my mother's means that she wants the coffin brought back to the house before the removal, so Liam can lie in state in our ghastly front room. Though come to think of it I can't think of a better carpet for a corpse, as I say to Bea; all those oblongs of orange and brown. (Enright 42)

When told from the viewpoint of the victim who has lost her loved one, the pain is best injected into the hearts of readers. Veronica's thoughts turn to her late father, Mr. Hegarty, a gentlemanly man who passed away from a heart attack in 1986. Her grandmother, in her opinion, spoiled both herself and her brothers. While Ada was sent to remain with Veronica, Liam,

and Kitty in Broad Stone after leaving her parents. The youngest surviving children of her mother were in need of care. She talks about Ada and Charlie's existence when she, Liam, and Kitty were with them. There, she was lonely. She recalls the times when they went to church to light lamps and express gratitude for escaping the bus driver, Veronica states that,

So, it was with a sense of pious elation that we gave thanks for our deliverance at the altar of St. Felix by lighting a candle each and then, when we could find no slot for our pennies, lighting two or three more, until a priest marked kitty's upper arm with a ring of bruises, giving us, as he held on to her, lecture on wickedness that was dense with rage. (Enright 50)

Tormenting thoughts about her brother torture her unmindful of the place she is. While still on the train, the narrator closes her eyes and experiences a past memory of her sibling Liam. He was a clever boy and kind towards other people, for their weakness and hopes. Liam was surprised when Veronica's older daughter Rebecca was born. Drink made him a vicious person. Veronica states, "Drinking was not his problem, but it did become his problem, eventually, which was a relief to everyone concerned" (Enright 54).

According to Cathy Caruth, her work "Unclaimed Experience- Trauma, Narrative and History" talks about the traumatic experience "suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it" (208). The opening sequence of *The Gathering* foreshadows this structural device. Veronica's traumatized state she writes, "this is how I live my life since Liam died. I stay up all night. I write, or I don't write. I walk the house. Nothing settles here. Not even the dust" (Enright 29).

Her brother's suicide unleashes a feverish restlessness that results in her insomnia. In a metaphor for bringing death into life, Enright's narrator conducts a ghostly existence, waking when everyone else is asleep. Her life takes on the structure of a narrative attempting to recuperate traumatic experience, in that she conducts that life between night and day, or metaphorically between death and survival.

"And once, my brother's voice saying 'Now. Now'. I listened for him again, but he was gone" (Enright 39). Liam's ghostly utterance, "Now. Now." serves as a reminder that the novel is narrated, primarily, in the present tense. The reader is obliged to navigate the impossibility of Veronica "hearing voices in bursts and snatches," and writing about hearing those voices, simultaneously. To write in the present tense involves either recasting the remembered past as present, and thus dislodging it from the time in which it occurred, or constructing something imaginary. Her lived experience and her narration of it are merged in a way which is uncomfortably impossible, and this discomfort corresponds with her fitful state in the present. Ironically, what her writing in the moment illustrates is precisely her inability to live fully and healthily, in the present.

Her present is characterized by a compulsion to write in it, and not to occupy it. This can also be seen in her avoidance of the present by sleeping during the day and waking, and writing, at night. Another of the symptoms of her traumatized present state is her refusal to sleep with her husband. "My husband is waiting for me to sleep with him again, and I am waiting for something else. I am waiting for things to become clear", (Enright 37) she admits. As this reading of the novel reveals, the present simulated by Veronica

through her narration is one in which things never become entirely clear. Therefore, the reader of the novel is implicated in this “waiting,” and while Veronica manages to set down an approximation of what happened, the clarity she hopes for, and that the reader hopes for remains beyond what can be simulated within the present of her narrative. Midway through the novel, Veronica writes,

Over the next twenty years, the world around us changed and I remembered Mr. Nugent. But I never would have made that shift on my own – if I hadn’t been listening to the radio, and reading the paper, and hearing about what went on in schools and churches and in people’s homes. It went on slap-bang in front of me and still I did not realize it. And for this, I am very sorry too (Enright 172).

The letter of Veronica, notably rendered in the past tense, Enright draws an overt link between the individual trauma at the center of her fiction and that of the nation. In the novel, Veronica’s memory of what Lambert Nugent did to Liam is triggered by the public revelation of analogous crimes that occurred country-wide. While there is a slight conflation of the individual and national trauma in Veronica’s mind, in that the revelation of the one lead to the remembrance of the other due to the equivalent nature of the individual crimes, she separates them in the final sentence, and refers to what took place on a national scale when she professes “and for *this*, I am very sorry *too*”. Veronica is voiced, here, with a present tense apology that reaches beyond what happened to Liam, and which has significance within the context of Ireland’s recent traumatic past.

Veronica, Liam, Lambert Nugent and their chorus of peripheral characters conduct between them a small-scale fictional drama that at least partially performs what may have happened in an incalculable number of Irish homes, churches and institutions over the last century. The memory and the apology are held apart by a shift in tense, and are therefore symbolically separated, given that the apology cannot reach back and alter anything that is of the past.

Veronica has been haunted by the events of this particular summer, but she has not addressed the influence they have had on her life. Recognizing the pain Liam was trying to escape initiates her own reexamination of their past. The narrative is written from the present, recounting events and interactions from the past, but the past is disordered; recent past and events from before she is even born are confused, dislocated from their sequence.

The diegetic chronology of the novel is roughly five months from the opening event of Veronica's delivery of the news of Liam's death to her mother, and the final event of Veronica's delivery of the news of Liam's death to her mother, and the final event of her return from an attempted flight from her marriage with the intentions of sharing with her family.

Memories about funerals are the most traumatizing ones, where the distress she experienced within, which is more intense than the external display of distress, can best be illuminated by stream of consciousness. Veronica describes her grandfather's existence in great detail once more, and she recalls attending his funeral in 1968. She talked about the incident with her grandpa. Charlie passed away when she was eight and Liam was nine. Liam grabbed his lifeless hands as he passed away "It must have been the February of 1968. I was

still eight, Liam was nine, eight, that you can say goodbye all you like, but someone is dead they're not going to say anything back, so Liam had to stiff-arm me up past the neighbors reciting the rosary on the stairs" (Enright 60).

Veronica's stream of consciousness flows through the day before Liam's death, at that time Rebecca was eight and Emily was six. They asked about their father Tom to Veronica. She says that she led a happy life with Tom, they loved and married. Tom loves his daughters. "How did you meet Daddy?" says Emily, my rival. "And then what happened? . . . Then we had you." (Enright 69-70)

The narrator recalls that she and Liam spent the summer working in London. She had a love affair with Michael Weiss. Michael changed her mind to tell a lie that her grandmother as a prostitute. She believes,

When I was in college, I decided that Ada had been a prostitute-the way you do. It must have been around the time she died...he pointed out, it was just as possible that she had been a nun...But I think he said something true about Ada or about the distance between me and Ada. (Enright 84)

Veronica recognized that Ada suffered a lot in her life. She controlled her feelings and laugh before others. Ada's "life was very hard" (Enright 89). Her imagination turns towards the sink of Ada in Broadstone. The sink was "a red plastic mesh pad for the rough work, a dense green cloth for the close work and a sponge for finishing up" (90).

During the Christmas season, when she was spending time with Ada, her thoughts turned. Ada's acquaintance, the priest Frank Duff, approached the door. By accident, Veronica learns that he had a relationship with Ada. Frank

Duff “who was the actual head of the actual legion of Mary, a religious organization dedicated in 1967, to inanity and making of tea” (Enright 91). He came forward to wish Christmas greetings to everyone. “God bless now. Happy Christmas to all your brood” (Enright 91). Frank Duff spent his early years rescuing prostitutes off the street of Dublin. He was a clever man and organized missions. He was taking out of girls “from brothels, and buying off their madams, and taking them on retreats” (Enright 92).

Veronica attempts to talk about the incident from her youth. But she is unable to give her mother any details. “I never told Mammy the truth. I never told any of them the truth” (Enright 207). She remembers her final year of college, when several of her housemates were employed in London. She considered the separations that occurred between her and her sibling “The problem with Liam was never something big. The problem with Liam was always a hundred small things” (Enright 124).

Veronica shares a reflection on spirituality and a recollection of Ada sewing in the living room of her home. She had slept on Ada's bosom that day. “I remember the curve of her back; her hands, dropped in her lap; the pick and; lift of her fingers as she teases the thread through”. (Enright 230) Veronica admired the house of her grandmother when she was eight,

The sofa behind her is a dark red, overlaid with a tangle of cushions, though Ada does not lean back into them. The two Turkish rolls with tassels at the end, from the set of some seraglio at the Gate Theatre; a red velvet round cushion with loose smocking around the rim, like the thread on a fabulous, fabric car; a series of little logs, their covers made out. (Enright 231)

Enright uses symbols to amplify the trauma which the characters undergo much stronger. The symbols used in the novel *The Gathering* consists of ghost of Liam, religion, and Grandfather's mustache. The first symbol is ghost of Liam represents Veronica is haunted by Liam's presence, hearing his laugh or his voice, expecting him to be there and then realizing that he's dead. She believes that she hears his voice and even sees his face at his wake making her crazy, with the finality of his death and plagued with guilt. Veronica loved her brother as one is supposed to love their brother and his tremendously, but what haunts Veronica is not his death, but what she believes to be the cause of his death, the abuse he went through as a child, and of which she kept silent.

The second symbol is religion, a motif presents in the novel. Veronica remembers herself praying and going through religious phase in her childhood. Veronica doesn't believe in heaven and believes hell to be emptiness, nothingness. And also, the third symbol is Grandfather's mustache. Veronica's grandfather Charles died when Veronica was a child. Her grandfather was the only man she knew with a toy on his face, the mustache which moved, dazzled and distracted. The stillness of the mustache is the sign of his death to the little girl.

The Gathering relies heavily on flashback, a literary device used to present action that occurred before the beginning of the story. Veronica, the narrator says that before she can tell her brother's story she must start "long before he was born". The past events conjure some imaginary, some real appear in the story the way memories often do, at random and in no logical order. The past and present merge to create a family history that is ever evolving, given the fact that Veronica involves her grandparents, her parents, and her children in

Liam's story. Using the literary device of flashback allows Veronica to take the reader to 1925 to 1968, put them in a hotel lobby or her grandmother's house and see what sees in her mind's eye.

Undoubtedly, a novel like *The Gathering* is repulsive and extremely gloomy, but Enright had no other hues from which to frame a moment of societal and personal collapse, or, as Veronica describes it, drowning. Things are drowning under a weight of shame, but if it's true that the reworking of identity is a necessary part of how trauma is elaborated, and it is also true, narration serves as the first move in that direction. This is where the healing process begins, in the act of storytelling, in coming to terms with the overwhelming burden of the shame Veronica is referring to. She has accomplished this by finally sharing her family's story.

This technique of 'recollection' has been used to develop the characters widely and to expose them explicitly to the readers with relevance to the present scenario. The 'past' is reinvented to represent and understand the 'present' more genuinely. In *The Gathering*, Anne Enright has fittingly developed the technique of 'recollection' in an intensely complicated narrative and represented the Irish culture. The storyline chiefly focuses on the protagonist, Veronica Hegarty's search for her identity amidst the chaos of a dysfunctional family and society.

Enright's *The Gathering* also explores how a person's memories affect them in the present. She examines how childhood experience affects adults, years after later. In Veronica's case, she is left to wonder if the dark secret she and her brother share is responsible of his suicide. Veronica's childhood memories do not stir warm feelings. Her father had been harsh. Her mother was

weak. Her siblings, except for Liam, were either cold or distant. When they get together for Liam's funeral, Veronica has a very little to say about them that is positive. Stream of consciousness technique takes a penetrating look beneath external surface appearances to probe and explore the inner depths of the character's consciousness, and so, discover the subjective reality of the individual character.

Veronica is affected psychologically and physically. The reason is that her thought and memories are reflected the inner psyche of the narrator. Veronica's sufferings are reflected after the separation from her parents. She expressed her conflicted feelings for the women and also how her married life is unsatisfied explains through her stream of consciousness. The 'past' is reinvented to represent and understand the 'present' more genuinely. In *The Gathering*, Anne Enright has fittingly developed the technique of 'recollection' in an intensely complicated narration.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature is any collection of written work, but it is also used more narrowly for writings specifically considered to be an art form especially prose, fiction, drama and poetry. Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment, and can also have a social, psychological, spiritual or political role.

Trauma or traumatize means a traumatic event which involves a single event or experience; it involves the feelings and emotions. Essentially, past trauma and traumatic memories affect the mind of the characters. Confusion and insecurity cause trauma; typical causes of psychoanalysis trauma are sexual abuse, employment discrimination, police brutality, bullying, domestic violence, and particularly childhood experiences. Significantly, childhood trauma can lead to violent behaviour. Psychoanalysis trauma are caused by catastrophic events, war, treachery, betray and sexual abused. Trauma is personal and cannot be ignored or invalidated, leading to increased mental health problems in children and adolescents. It is probable that those who did not verbalize their experience will develop adult psychiatric disorders or carry the trauma with them. Everyone can work towards recovery.

Irish literature comprises writings in the Irish, Latin, English and Scots languages on the island of Ireland. Anne Enright's writings are not autobiographical. She has spoken repeatedly about the writers she admire and has learned from. She has openly acknowledged her debt to, and fondness of borrowing from James Joyce. Joyce's words such as "dappled" or "angle poise" frequently feature in her writing and the influence of Dubliners is evident not

only in her short fiction but in *The Gathering* as well. Ana- Kaina *Understanding Anne Enright*, she puts it Joyce “did not throw a shadow, he cast a great light in Irish Literature” (2). Enright’s fiction has not been shaped only by literature, rather it was shaped by her experiences she got from her education and early career in radio and television. Her narrative strategies often include techniques from the televisual medium, such as fast cutting, rewinds, fast forwards and closeups.

The Gathering focuses on the theme of memories, family secrets, and death. The novel expresses the protagonist’s feelings in her childhood and her memories along with her brother. She expresses how she suffered in her childhood and also after her marriage. Her only companion was her brother, Liam. When he died, the narrator felt a lot. The novel revolves around the theme of love and loss. The novel mainly focuses the inner psyche of Veronica, the protagonist of the novel. Even her daughters also were not ready to love her. Her only source of comfort was her brother and his death was the major cause of her mental agony.

The title of the novel explains the gathering of the family members to say goodbye to Liam, the gathering of the Hegarty family with all their imperfections and dishonesty; Veronica who is on the brink of a breakdown, Ernest who is hiding that he no longer priests, or a twin sister that had a surgery to remove the family nose. They all gather around their suffering mother, who, as Veronica realizes, loves some more than others, her being the one her mother barely notices the discovery of a new Hegarty Liam left behind and on whom all want to clear their consciousness for any misbehavior towards Liam.

Enright also explores how a person's memories affect them in the present. She examines how childhood experiences affect her adult, years later. In Veronica's case, she left to wonder if the dark secret she and her brother share is responsible for his suicide. Veronica is tortured by past and she cannot forget it. Veronica does not stir her warm feelings. Her father had been harsh and her mother was weak. In her adult life, relationships fare no better. Veronica is uncomfortable with her relationships with her children. Veronica thinks that the reason for his alcoholism lies in something that happened to him in his grandmother's house, and uncovers uncomfortable truths about her family.

Trauma in early childhood affects a child's development and ability to attach securely, especially when it occurs with a caregiver. Childhood trauma is caused by negative events, such as abuse, assault, neglect, violence, exploitation and bullying. Children's formative years can have a positive impact on their lives, but those who experience adverse childhood environments may struggle to develop their personalities. Child abuse is one of the most common forms of trauma caused by unsupportive childhoods, but it is rarely reported due to fear of being ashamed and lack of understanding of how to express fear and grief. Children may develop a fear of people, withdraw from society, or harm themselves due to negative experiences, which can lead to paranoid and social isolation.

Paranoid people are characterized by mistrust and hostility towards others, a negative point of view, and lack of faith in others. Solitary individuals need more alone time because they are unable to meet the emotional needs of others. *The Gathering* tells the story of persistent childhood trauma and how a character's life is impacted by it, leading to a new identity as an adult. Veronica

experiences childhood trauma and develops paranoid due to her closeness to her closest sibling Liam. Liam was sexually abused by a friend, lover and landlord of his grandmother Ada and alcohol was his coping strategy. He eventually committed suicide by drinking alcohol and drowning in the sea when he was thirty-nine years old.

Veronica is paranoid due to a negative childhood experience, which leads to unforgiving grudges and mistrust of others. She experienced a lack of support and internal conflict due to living in a large family, leading her to be alone and taking care of herself. She holds her mother responsible for the turmoil in their home and blames her for her brother's problems. Her perspective on her mother and way of thinking are both impacted by his grief. The narrator's family is dysfunctional, with no love or affection, and the children often have a quarrel and accuse others based on their own beliefs and judgment. They develop biases and assert that someone else is to be blamed for negative things. The character is unable to feel secure and comfort in her family due to unfavourable factors and trauma from childhood sexual assault.

Veronica has a lack of communication with her husband and makes assumptions based on her own point of view, leading to internal conflict. She questions her husband's devotion and accuses him of having other women without any proof. She assesses others solely on her own judgment and maintains a safe space from others. She was a solitary person as a child, suppressing her emotions and trying to forget her painful memories. This has had a lasting impact on her life, making her feel helpless and shielded from others. Chronic childhood trauma can have a negative impact on people's lives, leading to bad relationships with their partners, family, friends and others.

Veronica's process of healing was not a direct one, but she was able to write down her story and have support from her family. She also made a decision to confide the secret and tell what happened in her grandmother's home to the rest of the family, which indicated that she was slowly healing. Veronica did heal from her childhood trauma by facing her past and writing a traumatic narrative.

Liminal space is the place a person is in during a transitional period, and can be physical, emotional or metaphorical. Kubler- Ross's theory examines and defines grief through five stages: isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. *The Gathering* is about the Hegarty family coming together in Ireland for Liam Flaherty's wake and burial after his passing. Veronica Hegarty's journey through grief after her brother committed suicide is explored using the theory of the five stages of grief. Veronica is given a liminal place where she can write a biography of her grandma and use memories to process her grief. The stages of grief and how Veronica encounters her own version of closure are discussed in the following.

Veronica's mother's grief demonstrates the importance of traditional practices during grief. She passes into the second stage of grief, where anger takes over denial. Anger is a necessary stage of grief that helps to cope with other feelings until one is ready to deal with them. Veronica accepts the concept of maternal priority and chooses a particular type of coffin without consulting her family. She embraces the liminal space provided by the planning of Liam's funeral. She also uses her liminal space to examine the past and write down an account of her grandmother's life, often using the airport road as her destination. This suggests a yearning for escape and leaving the past behind.

Veronica acknowledges Liam's practices of rituals as a symbolic entrance into the third stage of grief of bargaining. Veronica allows the trauma of her brother's death to enter the liminal space of grief through the arrival of Lambert Nugent, who is a menacing presence in her recollections and accounts of her grandmother's death and her present with Liam's death dragging her through grief in different frames due to her responsibilities as an adult. Irish funeral customs include a wake, a removal, a mass, a burial, a post funeral gathering and frequently the month's mind. Each of these rituals mourners through liminal stages while bringing with it its own traditions.

Veronica finally allows herself to cry after considering the details of her brother's death including stones in his pants, a hi-vis jacket, and no underwear or stockings. She requires a liminal place to process her grief at her own pace, causing her sorrow at the moment. She also uses the liminal space provided by the Irish funeral rites and traditions to process her grief, mixing past and present to speed up by her journey. These are the griefs are included in this novel.

Narrative techniques are used to give artistic and emotional effects to a story, such as stream of consciousness, which is characterized by associative leaps in thought and lacks punctuation. Stream of consciousness is a style of writing that uses loose connections to convey the experience of human thought more accurately than logical traditions. Veronica Hegarty's first person account of her family's history is framed by her thoughts, feelings, opinions and prejudices, highlighting the unreliability of memory and how point of view affects history. Veronica's exploration of her family's past highlights the subjective nature of memory and family relationships.

In *The Gathering*, Veronica's viewpoint is used to tell the first person narratives in a stream of consciousness style. She travels through time, discovering the tragic past of her family. To get to the heart of the matter, she travels back as far as her grandparent's generation.

Her daydreams raise concerns about mistreatment at her grandmother's house. As revealed by stream of consciousness the unforgiving character of Veronica is a consequence of trauma. Veronica recalls the characters of her daughters Rebecca and Emily through stream of consciousness. Enright's narrator conducts a ghostly existence between night and day, attempting to recover from traumatic experience. Memory and apology are separated by a shift in tense, symbolically separating the past from the present.

Enright uses symbols to amplify the trauma of the character, such as ghost of Liam, religion and grandfather's mustache. The ghost of Liam symbolizes Veronica's fear of his death, while religion symbolizes the abuse he went through as a child. Veronica believes in heaven and hell, and her grandfather's death symbolizes his death. *The Gathering* uses flashback to present action that occurred before the beginning of the story, merging past and present to create a family history that is ever evolving. It also explores how memories of childhood influence people in their present, with Veronica's dark secret causing her brother's suicide.

The book contains the situation of the families gathering, Veronica's memories, the flashback of Ada and Charlie, the funeral arrangement of Liam and also the family secrets. Veronica is creating as much as she is recollecting. The novel is centered on a wake for a man who has died early because of alcohol. The book closes with a wake. It is a powerful scene soaked in anti-

climax and bitterness. Enright offers pictures of middle age, marriage and mourning, mistakes and the difficulty to bring back to life the past.

Enright uses these characters to illustrate the blessed and cursed bonds of family and how time and its passage affect them⁰. By giving Veronica a woman in the throes of a minor breakdown, the responsibility of exploring the secrets of her family's past, Enright makes a point about the elusive and subjective nature of memory and family relationships.

The main aim of the project is to study the impact of Liam's death on the protagonist Veronica. Because of that incident she gets into the traumatic stage. She takes liminal space for to recovery from her brother's death. During the liminal space she did not believe anyone. She takes space for her recovery. Enright exposed towards the end of the book that Veronica also experienced traumatic event when she was a child and that Liam was not the only one who took a traumatic incident from his childhood into his adulthood. At the end she accepted that she has gone through traumatic stage and she recognized herself during the liminal stage.

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**Govind's Quest for the meaning of life in
Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistake of My Life***

A Project Submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

Affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

In partial fulfilment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

ANAMIKA.M

(REG.NO.21SPEN02)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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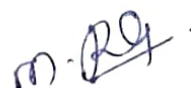
CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the project entitled is submitted *to* St. Mary's college (Autonomous), **Govind's Quest For The Meaning Of Life In Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes Of My Life*** 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 and is a work done by Anamika.M during the year 2021-2023, and that is has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Govind's Quest for the meaning of life in Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life*** is submitted St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirement 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.

APRIL 2023


ANAMIKA.M

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

Chetan Bhagat, a rising star in the contemporary modern Indian literature, is a multitalented personality. He is a novelist, columnist, public speaker and a screenplay writer. Additionally, he received Society Young Achiever' award, Publisher's Recognition award and Film fare Award for Best Screenplay. Chetan Bhagat's the third novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life*.

The project entitled, **Govind's Quest for Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistake of My Life*** shows to the youth icon and aspiration.

Introduction focus on the Indian literature, contemporary author works and the biographical details of Chetan Bhagat's and the abstract of the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life*.

Economic Instability focuses on middle class society young people lack of money and sacrifice the dreams and desire.

Gender Discrimination talks about the rich and poor people leading the life style. The religion based dominated the people.

Narrative Technique and Style talks about the author writing style reached to convey easy of readers.

Summation sums up all the important aspect of preceding •

Chapter – I

Introduction

Indian English Literature may be defined as literature originally in English by writers who are Indians by birth, heritage or nationality. It has developed into an important part of world literature in English. This achievement of worldwide stature becomes all the more laudable and significant because of the miscellaneous limitations under which the Indian English writer has to write. Apart from the ethical pull of all literary practice in which the external characteristic of reality has a secondary task, the Indian English writer is also faced with a distinctive socio-linguistic back. It is because of the fact that, English is not a foreign language in India; it is only the language of scholarly make-up and not of emotional make-up.

In shaping Indian English Literature the role of English is very central. Though English was not the native language its practicality outsmarted other Indian languages. Hence English has become an essential part of Indian life. It is as an outcome of its association with England, Indians started writing in English which lined the way for the surfacing of Indian English Literature. Today we see that Indian English Literature is striding towards advancement by leaps and bounds. It is being taught as a separate discipline in almost all the University of India is also being read and enjoyed in every nook and corner of the world.

At present, Indian English Literature has fascinated the scholarly and critical consideration in the Indian and foreign universities. It figures as a paper in many universities in India and syllabi of Indian English Literature are given in many American and Commonwealth Universities. The constructive development in the dominion of Indian English Literature is the increasing interest of Indian English writers in the Indian literary and critical tradition. What finally establishes Indian English Literature is not just an overflow of English Literature rather it is the feeling of Indians – in the choice of subject, in the quality of

contemplation and the presentation of emotions and above all the innovative application of language.

Indian English Literature is chiefly a phenomenon that arises out of the British arrival in India. The absolute scope of Indian English Literature is an outcome of the urgencies ensuing from this encounter. Indian English Literature is no longer a follower following the course of its British counterparts, but it has engraved a new lane of its own and a new image that is replete with constant trust and anticipation, myths and traditions, customs and rites, that our enormous country has preserved in her bosom since time immemorial. It has come out of its prime and started yielding fruits of Indian outlook.

Indian English Literature has come a long way ever since it commenced its journey. It is being increasingly recognized as one of the authentic voices of India. Srinivasa Iyengar elaborates in *Indian Writing in English* that “Indian English Literature was once ‘a tool’ in the hands of the leaders of the Indian renaissance ‘to rouse the prostrate nation’, to ‘protest against the evil of foreign domination’, has now grown ‘into a creative akshay patra, amuda surabhi’”. (703) The works of great masters are not a replication of English literary pattern but very much original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. They have given a new facet to English Literature. Their permanent impression on the pages of history is powerful and stable.

The Indian English writers have been giving expression to their innovative spirit in the choice and implementation of narrative technique. Conscious efforts have been persistently put in, mainly by major Indian poets and novelists, in shaping Indian English Literature into a fit vehicle to express the vital creative urge, impact of the West and present intellectual tradition of literary theory. Indian English Literature has been triumphant in reflecting a realistic image of the Indian narrative tradition, a portrait colored neither by an exaggerated sense of native attachment nor by unjustified cynosure. Indian literature has been

highly praworld for itnovelty, radical new approaches to the skill of storytelling and reworking of language. While the older generation continues to create literary masterpieces, a newer generation of writing talent has emerged, making sure that the wellspring of imagination in the country has not run dry.

New writers are continuously budding. This suggests that English has come into the soul of India. After independence, works of several Indian writers are published and commended abroad and are winning awards in full competence with native English authors. Indian English Literature reflects India's extended and dreary journey from the traditional, secure, stationary island to turbulent vibrant ocean of modernity.

Post-independence writing in English has stood the trial of the moment and the test of time. It has got ample significant applause and quite a share of critical condemnation. It flourishes in novelty, glamour, humor, satire, hybridization, slangs and new coinages. The acknowledgement of Indian writers abroad gave them greater self-confidence, broadened their vision and sharpened their power of self-scrutiny. The post-independence writers wrote about the quick, communal and political changes that took place. Such changes evoked a diversity of reaction from writers. M.K. Naik aptly describes this in his *A History of Indian Literature* as: Writers included nostalgic idealisation of the immediate past of the days of freedom struggle, a strong desire to re-discover one's roots in the ancient Indian ethos as also to examine this ethos afresh in the light of westernisation and satirical comments, both on darker side of the freedom movement and its aftermath and the decline of values in all spheres of life in the present. (191-192)

The Indian experience of life is articulated variously by different writers through different genres – poetry, prose, drama, fiction and short stories. No writing develops in a void. Themes, forms, suppositions, outlooks, and even rhetorical techniques are determined and

given direction by the socio-cultural forces that form the environment in which the writer lives, and to which he or she reacts.

An ample number of novelists, on the literary sphere, have given vent to their artistic urge in no other language than English and earned credulity to create Indian fiction as a major force in the world of fiction. Of all the genres, fiction is considered to be the most socially-oriented because it represents human associations in its diverse aspects. It is the readiest and most suitable way of representing experiences and thoughts in context of time. It articulates most broadly the cherished social awareness of the society in which it is born and evolved.

Indian English Literature in general and the Indian English fiction in particular made its debut in the Thirties. Since the Thirties, the Indian novel written in English has become the trend making voices on the native soil, which lead the progressive thoughts and experiments in the novel writing. The Thirties has been an era of experiment and expansion of Indian English fiction. This is the period when Indian English fiction acquired autonomous existence in the intricate body of Indian English Literature, providing as it were a direct access to the Indian mind and heart.

Indian fiction during the early period mainly dealt with the problems in India at that time. They focused upon the National Movement for political independence. This was unavoidable because of the long years of struggle and sacrifice. Some novels emphasized on the subjugation of the individual in a merciless society. They brought out the misery of the lower castes and classes of India and made an appeal for social change. Professor Iyengar speaks about Indian English novelists' preoccupation with social life as: "Social life in a country of the size of India is so full of vagaries and varieties that the novelist with an observant eye and an understanding heart will find the material spread out before him to be literally inexhaustible". (327) After independence the Indian writers looked at the Indian panorama from the post-colonial point of view. There were new anticipations, but the social, economic,

religious, political, and familial tribulations that were submerged in the flood of the national movement appeared and attracted notice of the creative writers. The partition, the communal riots after partition, the problem of casteism, the suppression of women and the poverty of the illiterate masses became the main points. Slowly the focus moved to an individual's exploration for identity that is pitted against unpleasant social conditions.

The literary giants of early Indian English Literature are Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand. They presented caste system and its harms. They highlighted the injustice done to the subjugated and the margins. After them, writers like Bhabani Battacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, and Khushwant Singh have added more to the Indian novels in English. G.V. Desani, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, and Upamanyu Chatterjee are a few novelists who have contributed further to the corpus of Indian novels. They have set an innovative style in Indian Writing. At Present, the works of sarnath Banerjee, Amitav Ghosh, Mulk Raj Anand, Vikram Seth, Khushwant Singh, Aravind Adiga, and many more have left a permanent impression on the readers of Indian fiction in English.

Sarnath Banerjee was born in Calcutta and lives and works in Delhi, India. His first novel, published by Penguin Books, India, was commissioned as a part of a fellowship awarded by the Mac Arthur Foundation, Chicago and marketed as India's first graphic novel. His novels are mostly talks about the centre of every day Indian experiences. Often anecdotal and autobiographical in nature, they are imbued with a rich, distinctive sense of humour. Banerjee describes himself as a recorder of a rapidly changing India. A theme that runs strongly in his work is the loss of architecture and history that comes with a developing country's reach for modernisation.

Amitav Ghosh (born 11 July 1956) is an Indian writer. He won the 54th Jnanpith award in 2018, India's highest literary honor. Ghosh's ambitious novels use complex narrative strategies to probe the nature of national and personal identity, particularly of the people of

India and South Asia. He has written historical fiction and also written non-fiction works discussing topics such as colonialism and climate change. Ghosh holds two Lifetime Achievement awards and four honorary doctorates. In 2007 he was awarded the Padma Shri of India's highest honours, by the President of India. In 2010 he was a joint winner, along with Margaret Atwood of a Dan David prize, and 2011 he was awarded the Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis festival in Montreal. He was the first English-language writer to receive the award. In 2019 *Foreign Policy* magazine named him one of the most important global thinkers of the preceding decade. Amitav Ghosh's writing deals in the epic themes of travel and diaspora and history and memory political struggle and communal violence, love and loss, while all the time crossing the generic boundaries between anthropology and art work.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in 1905 in Peshawar in present-day Pakistan. A pioneer of Indian writing in English, he gained an international following early in his life. His novels *Coolie* and *Untouchable* set an entire generation of educated Indians thinking about India's social evils that were perpetuated in the name of religion and tradition. These and other early novels and short stories brought into sharp focus the dehumanizing contradictions within colonized Indian society. Through his writings he revealed that in addition to the foreign colonialism of Britain there existed layers of colonialism within Indian society. This internal colonialism stood in the way of India's transition to a modern civil society. While exposing the overarching divide between the British and a colonized India, he reveals an Indian society creating its own layers of colonizers and colonized thereby rendering the fledgling Indian nationalism an extremely problematic concept. Mulk Raj Anand received the International Peace Prize from World Peace Council. Sahitya Akademi Award, "Padma Bhushan" and Lever Hulme Fellowship are some of the awards and accolades during his long literary career. The Library of Congress has more than one hundred and fifty publications by and on him in its collection. Vikram Seth is an Indian novelist, poet, and travel writer, best known for his epic

novel “A Suitable Boy” Vikram Seth CBE, FRSL is an Indian novelist and poet. He has written several novels and poetry books. He has won several awards such as Padma Shri, Sahitya Academy award, Pravasi Bharatiya samman, WH smith Literary Award and Crossword Book award. The themes of loss, longing, and power of music. Vikram Seth has created a deeply moving story about the strands of excitement that run through all our lives. The book is about the pain of violinist. An Equal Music by Vikram Seth is a classic in every sense of the world. He wrote medium sized novels using verse form and interior monologue. Respectively in the Golden Gate and an Equal Music. Verse form was used to show the fast life of the Californians, and for describing the dull lugubrious life of western musicians. He used an appropriate prose form interior monologue.

Khushwant Singh was a novelist, politician, journalist, and lawyer from India. He was born in Hadali, Punjab, which is now part of Pakistan, on February 2, 1915. He is noted for his wit and passion for poetry. He was a man of many talents who devoted himself with equal fervor and dedication to the Indian judicial system, journalism, and Indian literature. He started his professional career as a lawyer in Lahore High Court and worked for 8 years, before joining the Indian Foreign Service. He continued in the service for a few years before embarking on a career in journalism and mass communication. In 1951, he was hired as a journalist by All India Radio, and in 1956, he was transferred to UNESCO's Department of Mass Communication in Paris.

Aravind Adiga began his journalistic career as a financial journalist. He was also a former correspondent for Times Magazine in India. His articles appeared also in Financial Times, Independent and Sunday Times. Adiga is the fourth Indian to win the man Booker prize 2008. Aravind Adiga uses the postmodernist and narrative technique.

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, and screenwriter. Chetan Bhagat's novels are adapted into successful movies. Most of his views are focused on youth and issues based on national development which occupies the most important part in the society. He also plays the role of motivational speaker which wonderfully working out by grasping the minds of young generation with good deeds and thoughts. He is one of the most successful authors and his novels awarded as best-selling novels. He quit his banking career in 2009 in order to bring changes in the society. He decided to lead his whole life as a writer. Chetan Bhagat has introduced some unique trends in the Indian English literature. He has focused the interest of the youth and has written about their aspirations. He has attempts to guide their ripe energies into proper direction. There is no surprise if the readers acclaim him as the youth writer. His novels touch an emotional chord of the third generation. This displays the ambition of the youth, mixed with fears and tinged with tears. His men and women observe morality in the warm heartedness of the human relations. Therefore, they take life for pleasure.

He is not only considered as an author by the readers but also considered as the youth icon. Many of the young Indian readers are inspired by his humorous way of depicting stories. He is also a good columnist and he writes many columns for many leading newspapers. According to Chetan Bhagat, novels are the tool of entertainment through which he expresses his views and opinions about the society and the national development. All his views are addressed through columns of newspapers. His column writing points out the happenings within our country are triggered even in the parliament. Since, the time India opted to go global, sweeping, social, economic, political, the technological changes have molded the face of India.

Chetan Bhagat born in New Delhi in a middle class Punjabi family on 22, April 1974, His father is an army man and his mother a Government employee. Major part of his education was done at Delhi. He had done at Delhi. He studied in army public school of Dhaulakaur. Then he chose to do mechanical Engineering at the Indian Institute of technology IIT, Delhi. After

pursuing engineering he took over as a management programmer which was offered by the Indian institute of management IIM in Ahmadabad. Later he got married to Anusha Suryanarayanan in 1998. She was his fellow student at IIM. He went to Hong Kong and worked as an investment banker. He went all along with his family and worked there for eleven years. Later he shifted to Mumbai and started writing and become a writer. By chance or choice all the novels of Chetan Bhagat have numbers in the title which is associated with one another. His works are *Five point someone* (2004), *One night @ the call center* (2005), *The three mistakes of my life* (2008), *2 states* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *What young India wants* (2012), *Making India awesome* (2015), *One Indian girl* (2016).

His fourth novel is named as *2 States*. This novel shares about his own life experience on whatever he has gone through. It is an autobiographical element of Chetan. The novel is about how a couple coming from two different states in India and how they face their hard times to convince their parents to approve their marriage. The specialty of the novel *2 States* begins with the place where the novel of *Five Point Someone* begins. This shows how Chetan Bhagat's novels are interconnected. This novel projects the spirit of nationalism. It is based on the social and amorous Endeavour's of two main characters Ananya Swaminathan and Krish Malhotra. *Revolution 2020* (2011) is by Chetan Bhagat is the story of three childhood friends named Gopal, Raghav and Aarthi. Gopal and Raghav are childhood friends, Aarthi is Gopal's friend. Gopal is from a poor family, Raghav, belongs to a middle class family and Aarthi is from of bureaucrats and highly placed politicians. After failing in both the IIT-JEE and AIEEE examinations, Gopal is forced to move to Kota to undertake them again. However, Raghav scores highly in these tests and joins the IT. Gopal is completely surprised when he comes to know about how Aarthi and Raghav have formed a romantic bond. Gopal again fails to pass the AIEEE. Gopal father cannot bear his son's repeated failure and eventually dies. Due to past debt totalling nearly two lakhs, Gopal makes a deal with a MLA to start an engineering college

on his father's disputed land as the like the story goes on. His motivational essays and speeches were compiled as a book to portray the message what young India really wants. And the recent novel of Chetan Bhagat is *Half Girl Friend* here the character, Madhav Jha, a rural Bihari boy gets admission in a prestigious Stephens college in Delhi through sports quota. Riya Somani, a rich Delhi businessman's daughter also gets admission in the same college. Madhav develops love feeling for Riya. Both get separate and become unfriendly because of Madhav's misbehaviour. A year later she gets married to one of her cousin. Madhav, with no interest in working with renowned bank, gives up his job offer and returns back to his village. There he helps his mom, who runs a public school in Bihar. They fight for funds, infrastructure etc., Later on they come to know from MLA that Bill gates is coming to Bihar to fund some schools and if they succeed in impressing him, he may fund their school. Madhav, decides to prepare a speech for Bill Gates in English, he lacks confidence as he cannot speak fluent English. Madhav accidentally meets Riya once again in Patna. By the way Chetan Bhagat won many awards and recognitions like "Society's Young Achiever's" award in 2004, "public Recognition" award in 2005. This story is based on 3 friends living in Ahmedabad in western India. At the initial level, the story was published in the Gujarati language after seeing the book going out of stock publishers start selling the same book in different languages. The story begins with the Chetan Bhagat receiving an email from a person named Govind. Which he mentioned that he had committed three big mistakes of his life and that he wishes to commit suicide.

The writer gets terrified when he raised the email and contacts one of his old teachers regarding the email. He tries to do some research about the guy and finds out that Govind is admitted to The Civil Hospital of Ahmedabad. Chetan Bhagat goes to Gujarat and meets Govind at that hospital. Govind starts telling a story in flashback. Three friends Ishaan, Govind and Omi left in the small town of the Ahmadabad.

Ishaan is a cricket player. He wants to join the Indian cricket team but unfortunately, he couldn't, Govind is good at maths but belongs to a poor family. That's why he couldn't get admission into an engineering college. But Govind doesn't feel bad about it. Because he doesn't want to work under someone else. He wants to start his own business. The third friend Omi doesn't know what to do in his life. He has no goals and no plans for the future. His father has a priest. But Omi doesn't want to be like his father. Once, the three friends decide to meet and discuss. Govind gets an idea to open a sports store and focus mainly on cricket products. With the help of Omi, they can get a store instead of the temple for rent. As Ishaan was so much into cricket, he acquires more customers by giving tips to them about cricket. The store gets a boost start because of Govind as he was a business-minded. Govind realizes that the store is going well so, they decided to buy a shop in a shopping mall. For the expansion of business, Ishaan also starts giving cricket coaching in a compound. And to help Ishaan Govind started to maths tuitions. Ishaan has a sister named Vidya. The first Mistake of his life, investing all his and his friends' money in single project. She was preparing for the entrance exam. So, Ishaan requests Govind to teach mathematics to his sister. Vidya gets attracted to Govind and starts falling in love with him. She also confesses her love for Govind by a card. After some time Govind also starts falling in love with Vidya. The After some time, on Vidya's birthday, they both come close and share some deep intense moments. They cross their limits.

This was the second mistake of his life. "The mistake of falling in love with his friend's sister. Omi has an uncle whose son got killed in a Hindu-Muslim riot. So, Omi's uncle turns furious and decides to burn the Muslims. His men Ali's mother and father too. Ishaan, Govind, and Omi hide Ali in a building. Omi's uncle and his men reached building somehow, and orders Ali to come out as he was Muslim. Govind thinks to save Ali but realizes that he also may die. Govind becomes selfish. A few seconds later he decides to save Ali but it was too late. Ali gets hurt on his wrist by a knife thrown by Omi's uncle.

This was the third mistake of Govind's life. If he hadn't been selfish, he could have saved Ali without hurting him. But one day Govind and Vidya came to Ishaan and apologize for their mistake. Ishaan forgives Govind and they both meet each other. Ali's wrist recover and he starts playing cricket just like before. This novel is happy Ending.

Chapter-2

Economy Instability

The society which is reflected in Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is the lower middle section of society of India. The setting of the novel is the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat with the lower middle class people, their aspirations and issues. The exact setting depicted in the novel is Belrampur in which the story of the present fiction takes place. The people depicted in the fiction belong to the lower middle class background. The three main characters Govind, Omi and Ishaan are friends. They are young men of about twenty five years of age. They belong to poor families. They run a cricket shop where they sell cheap cricket equipment which the children of the lower class people use for playing cricket in the surrounding area. They also sell school stationery, candies, chocolates and peppermints. The chief protagonist Govind is the son of a woman who sells homemade Gujarati snacks whose husband left her ten years ago. Omi is the son of the priest of a local temple. Ishaan's father works at a telephone exchange. Various characters in the fiction face on more hardship of life. Both Govind and his mother work to meet their expenses of life. Govind's mother, as mentioned earlier, is a Gujarati snacks seller and Govind gives Maths tuitions to earn extra income. His mother has already sold all her jewellery in tough time till she succeeded in her Gujarati snacks business. Omi's father is also not paid well for his duty as a priest. Even the salary of Ishaan's father is also very limited. The children of the area study in a municipal school which has very limited facilities. The school has very low standard of education and infrastructural facilities.

The society and the people depicted in the fiction replicate the actual low class Indian society. The people are observed in the fiction quarrelling over small matters. They dispose

garbage on the streets. Govind describes the actual condition of his area at the beginning of the novel as:

As I entered the by lane, two people fought over garbage disposal around the crammed pol.... there are things about my small town neighbourhood that I want to change. In some ways, it is way behind the rest of Ahmedabad. For, one, the whole old city could be a lot cleaner. The new city across the Sabarmati River has gleaming glass and steel buildings, while the old city finds it difficult to get rubbish cleared on time (8).

They are habituated to gossips. They keep themselves busy working-out stories from the small incidents of others' life. The narrator of the story Govind gives examples like people consider that Omi became stupid because a cricket ball hit his head. People gossip that Ishaan did not run away but he was thrown out of National Defense Academy. Govind's mother believes as believed by many of the women in the Pol that Govind's father left her and her son and settled with another woman because of the astrological change of position of the planets. She consults various astrologers to know which planet caused her husband to move out and when the position would change that might make her husband's return possible. The people described in the fiction are having mentality. Once, Govind goes to a book stall with Ishaan's sister Vidya, the shop keeper who is an old man raised his eyebrow. He asked him about the girl. Govind consider this as the reason why people think "Ahmedabad is small town despite the multiplexes. He takes it as the mentality of the people". (85)

The parents of the young characters are described as over expecting guardians of their children. Govind's mother wants him to do engineering whereas Govind is interested in doing business. She does not like Govind wasting time in giving tuitions or watching cricket with friends all the time. Ishaan's father wanted him to join the Indian Army. He passed the

tests and he was getting training but he ran away and came back to home. He does not have good terms with his father. His father does not like him wasting time in watching cricket matches all the time. “She finished Class XII. She is dropping a year now to prepare for the medical entrance. You don’t need maths to become a doctor. No, but the entrance exam do. And she is awful at it. you are the best man, who else can I trust?”(39).

Ishaan’s parents want his sister Vidya to get an admission to the medical college, so she is studying the complicated theories of Maths which she does not like. Omi’s parents expect that he would be a priest sometime, but Omi does not want to do that. The school boy, Ali’s parents want him to study sincerely rather than playing cricket, though he has all the potential to become the best international cricketer. In all these cases the actuality of the lower middle class people comes to the surface. Most of the lower middle class people of India expect their children to become successful in life by choosing their career as per their parent expectations. Engineering and medical are the most favourite branches which most of the parents prefer to opt for their children for years together. This typical contemporary Indian middle class mentality of parents for their children is reflected in the novel in considerable details.

The other aspect of contemporary middle class reality of the Indian society is exemplified in novel with a variety of young characters. The young characters like Govind, Ishaan, Omi and Vidya throw light on the typical mentality of lower middle class youth of India. They are the actual representations of the contemporary Indian directionless young generation which has high aspirations in life but life gives them no opportunities to fulfil those aspirations. Govind wants to do business and become a big businessman someday. He faces constant shortage of money to start his business. He starts a small business of cricket equipment with the partnership of his friends, but when he takes some high risk in business, he is ruined by a natural calamity and all his dreams turn into ashes. Ishaan wanted to be an international

cricketer but he could not become so because he did not get proper training or chance to perform. He feels that he wasted all his valuable years for cricket but the end result is zero. Omi is influenced by the non-secular and opportunist religious and political forces and he is still a directionless young man.

He cannot understand what to do in life. He has no job or work that would help him earn money. He is even not interested in becoming a priest of his ancestral temple. Vidya is a Bombay type of girl. She feels that she is a modern girl. She wants to do a course in PR and become free from the suffocating middle class life. She develops the physical relationship with her tuition teacher. All these young characters in the present novel represent the reality of the middle class youth mentality. They have higher dreams in life but they cannot fulfil their dreams due to many reasons like money, opportunity, motivation or luck. Due to modernization and globalization, the thinking level of the new generation has considerably expanded but they cannot accept the limitation. So their life so they face inner emptiness and frustration in life.

Chetan Bhagat has depicted the lower middle class hardships of the people of contemporary Indian society in the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* in considerable details. The characters described in the fiction reflect lower middle class scenario of contemporary India. The variety of people in the present fiction belongs to lower middle class background. They have their individual and common issues in life. They experience a sort of hardship in their life. The chief cause of their hardship seems the limited income resources. Shortage of money is a constant cause of the hardship in their lives. For example, the chief protagonist Govind wants to be a big business man but he has to give Maths tuitions to the local children to supplement his mother's limited income from her small business of Gujarati snacks. Due to limited income resources, Govind's dreams are not immediately fulfilled. Even the parents of his two friends Ishaan and Omi also have limited income resources. Govind expresses his and his friends' family condition as:

I am easily poorest of the three, even though Ishaan and Omi aren't particularly wealthy. Ishaan's dad works in the telephone exchange, and while they have lots of phones in the house, the salary is modest. Omi's dad is the priest of the Swami-bhakti temple. Which actually belongs to Omi's mom's family for generations? And that does not pay well either. But, still, they are a lot better off than me and my mom. My mom runs a small Gujarati snacks business, and the little bit of money I make from tuitions helps us get by, but that is about it (5- 6).

Poverty of lower middle class people is reflected in the novel. All the major characters in the fiction have to do compromises in their aspirations in life because of the poverty prevailing in their life. The poverty of Govind's family can be well understood by his following expression: "We frequently had months where the choice was to buy either rice for our consumption nor black pepper for the Papads".(39) It is observed in Indian middle class social scenario that those who have money are respected much and they are given more importance. This is true in the case of Govind's family. Ever since Govind's father left him and his mother, their economic condition became so poor that his mother had to sell her ornaments also. It is not apparently depicted in the novel but the following expression of Govind reveals the fact how people used to behave with them when they did not have money and how they got importance from them when they started earning money. Govind says: "With money came not only things like coolers and sofas but also the most important stuff-respect. Shopkeepers no longer avoided us, relatives re-invited us to wedding and our landlord's visit did not throw us into turmoil". (11) Omi's father is a priest of the local temple and he is not paid well. Ishaan's father works with a low designation at a telephone exchange. The economic condition of the parents causes considerable hardship in their children's lives. Govind has to start a small

business and also sell school stationery, candies, chocolates and peppermints. He has to give tuitions to supplement his mother's income. He has high aspirations in life to be a big business man he has guts and enthusiasm to do that also but the only obstacle is shortage of money which stops him do fast progress. He knows that he has to struggle for many coming years to save enough money to reach his goal. He is shown very calculative characters who keeps eye on every penny he earns. That gives him constant mental pressure to save money by doing many compromises in life. Ishaan had all the guts and potential to be a national cricketer but could not become one due to his poor family back ground.

The father-son relationship between Ishaan and his father is full of tension. Ishaan keeps lying on the couch all the time watching cricket matches on the TV and keeps eating too much which his father does not like. Children like Ali, having all the potential to be national pride, are not promoted by their parents for their talents because of the poor economic condition. When Govind, Ishaan Omi go to Ali's home to convince his father to send Ali for extra cricket coaching, Ali's father says:

Cricket coaching? No, Thanks, we are not interested.... Look above, look, there are cracks on the ceiling. There is this room and one other tiny room that I have taken on rent. Does it look like the house of a person who can afford cricket coaching? (64).

The writer has drawn the realistic picture of the lower middle class poverty and its effect on the people and their lives because of the low income resources. The writer seems realistic when he depicts the hardship of the characters due to the shortage of money in their life. Money, as it is mentioned earlier, is one of the root causes of the middle class hardship in contemporary Indian society. Even after many decades of independence, the condition of the lower middle class people has not experienced any conspicuous change. The country has developed to the extent that it has touched the red surface of the Mars, yet millions of

poor people are still struggling hard for ensuring two meals a day. The children of the lower middle class people are studying, as shown in the novel, in government schools which have no basic facilities of education. The same is the condition of the public health sector in most of the lower middle class localities of the country.

The people have many unsolved problems of drinking water, electricity, road and drainage in almost all parts of the country. The main roads and central areas of towns and cities seem developed, but the condition of the interior parts of the same town or city is still hopelessly shocking. The hollow ness of the development of the country is exposed by the hellish situations in which the lower middleclass people live. The political forces use them or their vote banks, the religious forces use them for their charity boxes and communal forces use them for their supremacy. The lower middle class of the population of the country has been an instrumental for the growth and development of all but the irony is that the same class is not able to taste the fruits of any development.

The novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* throws light on such a lower middle class society which is devoid of some of the basic necessities of life. People face many hardships of life. They have many personal and social issues in life. The hospital, in which the chief protagonist Govind was admitted, does not have caring doctors. The municipal school depicted in the novel is not equipped with the required facilities. The municipal school, wherein the children of the lower middle class people study, does not have much of the basic facilities for imparting education. A reference is found in the novel that the teachers in the schools do not perform their duties sincerely. Most of the schools lack the facility for sports education and infra-structure for sport activities.

The lack funds are money for the overall development of the children. The older city is dirtier than a newly developed one. Heaps of garbage are found on the streets. People quarrel over small matters. They are busy, as mentioned earlier, with made up gossiping. The houses

are very small with one or two rooms with almost no furniture. The people have their personal problems in life. Govind's father had an extra-marital affair and he left Govind's mother. The young boys do not have any job or work at hand. They waste much of their time watching cricket matches on the television. The parents are shown worried about the future of their children.

Ishaan's father wants him to do something rather than waste time and energy in watching cricket match on the television. Govind and his friends Ishaan and Omi start a small business of cricket equipment and stationery but they have a very tough time running it. They purchase a bigger shop in a newly constructed mall in new city area, but it collapses in the earthquake and they have to suffer great loss. The corruption of the civil contractors in new construction works in the developing cities is exposed with the incident of the earthquake.

I rubbed my eyes, what was this? Nightmares? I stood up and went to the Window. People on the street ran haphazardly in random direction. Govind, my Mother screamed from the other room, hide under the table. It is an earthquake (105).

The location of the novelist Gujarat. So some of the characteristics of typical Gujarati society and the Gujarati people as reflected in the novel. Govind's mother runs Gujarati snacks business. The typical Gujarati snacks like Khakhara, Khaman, and Dhokla are considered the typical Gujarati snacks. She has a very good market in her area so it reflects on the food habit of the contemporary Indian society, especially Gujarati society. The people of the area go to cheap restaurants for tea and snacks. One such restaurant mentioned in the novel is Gopi restaurant. The people of Gujarat are business minded and they prefer business more than jobs with steady salary and stability. One such reference is found in the novel that the central character Govind is very good in Maths. He is the topper in the school. He can be considered an engineering material, but he is not interested in further studies of engineering. He is more

interested in doing his own business. Here, one can observe the typical mentality of the Gujarati people of the contemporary scenario who prefer to do business more than a job. The writer has pointed out small or big habits and behaviour patterns of the people of the lower middle class society by describing various real life incidents and situations in the present novel.

Political forces which keep disturbing the peace and harmony of contemporary Indian society. The society of Belrampur, depicted in the present fiction, is heterogeneous in nature wherein Hindus and Muslims live with conspicuous religious tension. The Hindus and the Muslims in Belrampur keep some distance from each other because of some religious biases. The Hindus generally do not turn up to the Muslim area and the Muslims avoid turning up to the Hindu area. One reference is observed in the novel that even the Muslim children avoid coming to Govind's cricket shop to purchase balls which is located in the temple premise and they get such things purchased by the Hindu children. The narrator Govind says: "we had few Muslim customers. Most of them used other Hindu boys to make their purchases". (29) The characters like Bittoo Mama and Parekh-ji represent the prevailing non-secular and dirty.

Our Scripture tell us not to harm others Parekh-ji said. They teach us acceptance of all faiths, even if those faiths do not accept us. They teach us patience. At the same time, the scripture also tell us not to bear injustice. The Gita tells Arjun to fight a virtuous war (43).

The society which is depicted in the present novel does not represent the ideal of unity in diversity. The people do not experience social harmony in the story. The communal differences constantly keep on disturbing the peaceful environment of the society. The extremist political and religious forces like Bittoo mama and Parekh-ji keep on burning the flame of communal tension in the society for their cheap concerns. The society represented in the novel is found divided into the Hindu dominated and the Muslim dominated areas of society. People are fed

up with then on-secular thoughts and arguments constantly by the so called authoritarians. Bittoo mama wants to become a famous politician and he uses religion as an instrument to reach his goal. He wants more and more young people to join his party which is based on Hindu concerns. He keeps poisoning the ears of people against the Muslim people. Even Parekh-ji keep son provoking the sentiments of the common people with anti-secular arguments to strengthen his political agenda.

The end results are that the society experiences hellish situations like Godhra sabotage and post Godhra communal riots. The people are stabbed to death or burnt alive in public. It hardly makes any difference to millions of Hindu people or even to Lord Ram Himself whether Ram Temple is built on the very birth place of Ram in Ayodhya, or somewhere else or nowhere but it makes a lot difference to so many opportunist politicians. The revengeful mind set results in to violation of social peace and harmony at regular intervals all around India and the innocent people have to suffer a lot. The writer Chetan Bhagat has reproduced a realistic picture of contemporary lower middleclass Indian society in the present novel. The glimpses of the actualities of the lower middleclass sentiments and issues are embodied in the novel. The writer has sincerely worked on representing the ground reality of the contemporary scenario of the present middle class society in the novel. The writer happened to pass two years in Ahmedabad from the year 1995 to 1997 for his management studies in IIM-A, so he has close association with Gujarat and the people of Gujarat. His observations regarding the contemporary lower middle class people of the city of Ahmedabad are presented in this novel. In spite of the lack of certain literary standards and deficiencies of writing novel and certain silly errors in the story, the present novel seems to be the writer's deep hearted effort to represent the actual picture of the contemporary lower middle class Indian society.

Chapter -3

Class discrimination

India is called the largest democracy in the world and Indian are proud to be called so. It is a country where people have freedom to express and the right to elect their representatives. These elected representatives are supposed to work for the welfare of the public. It is believed that a political system without parties is a ship without rudder. The presence of parties is essential in strong political system because in every democracy, the existence of parties, groups and association represent diverse cross sections of the populace which is a must for proper ideal functioning. In the current scenario the wide spread disillusion in our political system is quite evident. The poverty, unemployment, poor literacy level and unequal distribution of wealth indicate the inefficiency of our political system. Marxism calls into question the social system of living conditions which is built solely for the maintenance of the status quo and to support the privileged position of bourgeoisie.

This is witnessed in the novel *Three Mistakes of my life* as people in India are stratified on the basis of caste, creed, religion, economical status and so on. Literature, being a mirror of the society, has often reflected this class warfare quite profoundly and abundantly. Societies are not divided only into proletariat and bourgeoisie but there are numerous other subdivisions too. Every single aspect of man's life is an expression of his class. Their language, food, dress, the ways of living, sleeping and eating speak about their class.

Three Mistakes of My Life is a realistic exposition of class difference betwixt two opposite strata of society between which gap is impassable wide and it is still widening. Being an Indian, Chetan brings out the overwhelming enthusiasm of typical Indian in the novel. Though the novel gathers momentum when a tragedy strikes in the form of the 2001

Gujarat earthquake and the 2002 Godhra riots, both these calamities expose the chinks in the armour of the friendship between the boys. They also throw open the can of worms that brought to light the tainted Hindu-Muslim hatred, one of the darkest chapters in the history of India and Particularly Gujarat.

Whenever the caste issue is raised, it is alleged that it is a nefarious design to divide an otherwise united Hindu community and a problem that is internal to it. How is it a 'Hindu problem' when Islam, Christianity and Sikhism in Indian are equally bedevilled by it? (10).

Class discrimination is falsely considered a natural way of human life on earth that cannot be abolished. Class is a human construction arising from man's lust for the possession of power. Money, being one of the biggest sources of power, is used for the division of human beings and societies into various classes and the maintenance of these classes. *Three Mistakes of My Life* is an exposition of working class in India juxtaposing high class people of India and their life. It highlights the class stratification in Indian society and in the sub-continent, presenting Govind as the working class hero.

In the prologue of this novel, the protagonist confesses in the tone of depression he is from a poor family from Ahmedabad.

This E-mail is a combined suicide note and a confession letter. I have let people down and have no reason to live. You don't know me. I am an ordinary boy in Ahmedabad. What are the doctors saying? I Said. Nothing .It is a government Hospital. What do you expect? (Prologue XVI).

Next I called the civil hospital. However the operator did not know about the case and there was no facility to transfer the line to the ward either. Rich people get proper medical facilities and treatment in India but poor people to go government hospitals where state of the art medical facilities are not properly used, sometimes unavailable and sometime inaccessible.

This sense of difference is explicitly conveyed in this novel. When Govind Patel, the proletariat admitted to a civil hospital, the writer is informed about it by Professor Bansant. There comes the reality in Government hospitals. Cricket is a passion for Ishaan and billions of dollars are profited by Cricket board in India and other related firms and organization every year. As the three friends of the novel belong to poor family, from working class family, they are not able to go and watch cricket match once in their life time. A cricket match in India attracts at least thirty five thousands audience in average. Forty nine International grounds are there having the capacity from twenty thousand to sixty seven thousand.

Middle class and rich people frequent seasonal cricket festivals like Indian Premier League and International One-day cricket matches in India but poor boys like Ishaan whose father is a Government employee, Omi whose father is a priest in a Hindu temple and Govind whose mother is working for a daily wages can watch those matches only on televisions. That too, Govind and Omi have to watch in his friend's house as the facility is absent in their house. This is a pathetic situation of working class people in India. Govind says, the match was in Vadodara, just two hours away from Ahmedabad. But we could not go- one because we didn't have money; and two because I had my correspondence examination in two days. (74)

In all facets of life, inequality is widely prevalent in India. People of working class have to put their heart and soul to uplift their status to some extent to be recognized in the society. The protagonist, Govind and his friends are in low strata of the society. Govind clearly expresses his position comparing himself with his friends. The poorest of the three even though Ishaan and Omi aren't particularly wealthy. Ishaan's dad works in the telephone exchange and while they have lots of phones in the house, the salary is modest. Omi's dad is the priest of the Swarnibhakthi temple, which actually belongs to Omi's mom's family for generations. And that does not pay well either. But, they are a lot better off than me and my mom.

Govind's mom runs a 'Gujarati snacks business' (25) and Govind's runs a tuition centre from which he generates a little bit of money to support his family. There is a significance difference between the living conditions of Govind and Parekh-Ji, a senior leader of a political party. "It is the grandest house in Gandhinagar" (33), whereas Govind's, who represents working class, house is not even properly ventilated. He says, "I switched on the tube light inside. The homes in our pol required light even during daytime". (11)

Bittoo Mama wants all the three friends to meet Parekh-Ji and takes them to him. Parekh-Ji house is the grandest house in Gandhinagar. Parekh-Ji is a symbol of bourgeois. Bittoo Mama tells "He heads the biggest temple trust in Baroda." India stands 8th on global list of millionaires but there is still poverty that stifles Indian economy. Poverty line is fixed to measure and to alleviate poverty. There are three components in poverty line, food consumption, expenditure for non-food items such as education, conveyance, clothing, house rent and behaviourally determined expenditure. India is two countries into one, India of Light and India of darkness. It is largely based on the living conditions of people in the country. Parekh-Ji's house is the grandest and luxurious whereas Govind's house is very simple even without proper ventilation. It is seen by all the three when they go for a meeting in Parekh-Ji's residence. It is the grandest:

We reached Parekh-Ji's residence at around eight in the evening. Two armed guards manning the front gate let us in after checking our names. The entrance of the house had an elaborate rangoli, dozens of lamps and fresh flowers (41).

Higher education is of vital importance for a country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge based society of the 21st century. There is a growing size and diversity of higher education sector particularly in terms of course, management and geographical coverage. Research says there is inequality of educational opportunities in India with the help of National Sampling

Survey Organisation (NSSO). In many of the Indian states, incidents of rural poverty and urban poverty are at its high level. This becomes an impediment for poor to pursue their education. This educational inequality is evident in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* as the protagonist Govind struggles to study Engineering in a good college as his mother's wish. Govind studies in 'Belrampur Municipal School' hundred meters down Nana Park. It is not with high standard learning as private and other kinds of schools in India.

Private and other kinds of education are affordable and accessible only to rich people like Parekh-Ji who has studied in 'Cambridge, and then Harvard. (34) He has played for Cambridge college cricket team but Govind studies in 'correspondence' course as his family situation demands him to play a role of bread winner for his family. Govind describes the situation of his school as: "I studied as much as I could. Our School was not Oxford and emphasis on studies was low with more teachers bunking classes than students". (15)

Though Ishaan is passionate towards cricket, he comes only as a local player and is not able to play even for a college team. As Parekh-Ji is afford to education in England, he plays for Cambridge college team. In Economics the term poor is the person who has less purchasing power and rich is one who has more purchasing power. A person with less purchasing power is deeply affected because he cannot afford Goods and services which rich can afford and its safe to say without that he cannot changes his life style and standard of living. Poor rich gap can be indifferent forms some of the fields where the gap exist are educational, income, life style, housing requirement, food needs. Poverty is a major hurdle for Govind's higher education. Even though he is talent, yet he is not able to afford engineering degree as his mother's wish. Chetan brings out a desolate gloomy realistic image of it.

Govind is not able to study for Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) entrance examinations owing to his familial circumstances and his aspiration to become a prosperous business man. He says: "My love for business began when I first started tuitions. It was amazing

to see money build up. With money came not only things like coolers and sofas but the most important stuff-respect”. (11) Unless a person has money in India, no one respects. Money plays a very important role and it gives recognition to an individual in the society. It is power and capital. Govind says after starting earning money from his tuitions. Govind is more realistic. He says, “My dream was more realistic .I would starts low and then grow my business from a turnover of thousands, to lakhs, to cores and then to hundreds of crore”. (12)

The concept of class struggle will not arise but for the fundamental issues of inequality of means and social status in the society. All men are born equal irrespective of race, colour, gender, religion and status. Sometimes people are classified geographically that severs for victimization of an individual. There is such a kind of difference depicted in *Three Mistakes of My Life*. Though the protagonist belongs to ‘Old city’ and he is proud of it, there is no common provisions of basic infrastructures and amenities for common good but the New city is relatively luxurious and grand. Govind does not defend being called a small-town-person as it is a real India.

Religious violence in India includes acts of violence by follower of one religious group against followers and institutions of another religious group, often in the form of rioting. Religious violence in India has generally involved Hindu and Muslims. Despite the secular and religiously tolerant constitution of India, broad religious representation in various aspects of society, the root causes of religious violence often run deep in history, religious activities, and politics of India. India has witnessed several religious conflicts throughout history. Some events are very aggressive and brutal in nature. There is conflict and this is a power struggle. Muslims are said to be minorities and Hindus are the real descendents to rule. Sectarian politics plays a destructive role to suppress the minorities.

In *Three Mistakes of My Life*, religious violence is quite clear and the root cause is in directly expressed. Parekh-Ji is a Hindu political leader and he is very powerful. Bittoo Mama

is a staunch follower of Parekh-Ji. He organizes meeting where the three friends go and listen to the speech given by the politician. He says Hinduism should be a way of life. He is a symbol of saffron politics in India that wants to carry the nation to the pinnacle of glory, through organizing the entire society and ensuring protection of Hindu Dharma. Some sectarian groups and political parties politicize the Religion for vote bank .It is claimed by the Hindus that 430-year-old Babri mosque in Ayodhya was built over the birth place of the ancient deity Rama. The site is indeed a Hindu monument before the Mosque was built there. This is reflected in Parekh-Ji's speech. He wants the crowd to think about the situation and he explains.

And right now, I see injustice again. Hindus being asked to compromise, to accept, to bear, Hindus asked for the resurrection of one temple .Not any temple, a temple where one of our most revered gods was born. But they won't give it to us. We said we will move the mosque respect fully, round the corner. But no, that was considered unreasonable. We tried to submit proof, but that was suppressed. Is this justice? Should we keep bearing? (43).

Ishaan says to Govind that it is politics, 'pure simple politics'. In the meantime Parekh-Ji continues his speech bringing out the power struggle which started roughly thousand years back between Hindu and Muslim and he justifies his stand.

Parekh-ji continued: I don't even want to into who this country belongs to. Because the poor Hindu is accustomed to being ruled by someone else- 700 years by Muslims, 250 years by British. We are independent now, but the Hindu does not assert himself. But what makes me sad is that we are not even treated as equals .They call themselves secular, but they give preference to the Muslim? We fight for equal treatment and are called? (43).

The most brutal terrorist are Muslim, but they say we are hardliners. More Hindu kids sleep hungry every night than Muslim, but they say Muslims are downtrodden. 'Look above', Ali's dad said and pointed to the roof, 'look, there are cracks on the ceiling. There is this room and one other tiny room that I have taken on rent. Does it look like the house of person who can afford cricket coaching?'. (64) Omi is horrified at the idea of eating in a Muslim home. Omi repeats Parekh-Ji's words when the three friends are asked to come to the secular party's office. He strongly believes that people listen to Parekh-jī because somewhere deep down 'he strikes the cord, a common cord of resentment'. (69) Class antagonism and social discrimination have always been a part of societies from the dawn of human history. Chetan Bhagat has delicately brought into light with his character. Though Omi's argument with Ali's father that surprises Ishaan and Govind, they have difference of opinions. Govind says fight is created and Ishaan says it leads to another and so on. It cannot be stopped by man. The comparison with Chimpanzees and a husband-and-wife life bring are conciliatory mechanism to all the war fares between groups. Chetan is realistic and practical in this view and leads for a reconciliation to fight for power.

You know I used to teach zoology in college, Ali's dad said. And I once read about chimpanzee fights that may be relevant here. Chimpanzee fight? Yes, male chimpanzees of the same pack fight violently with each other – for food, females, whatever. However, after the fight, they go through a strange ritual. They kiss each other, on the lips (74).

So that means if politicians fuel a fire, there is no fire brigade to check it. It sounds harsh, but Omi is right. People feel inside. Just by not talking about it, the differences do not go away. The resentment brews and brews, and doesn't come out until it is too late (71).

Hindu- Islamic relation began when Islamic influence first came to be found in the Indian Subcontinent during the early 7th century. Hinduism and Islam are two of the world's

three largest religions. Hinduism is the socio-religious way of life of the Hindu people of the Indian Subcontinent. Islam is strictly monotheistic religion in which the supreme deity is Allah. Conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India has a complex history which can be said to have begun with the Ummayyad Caliphate in Sindh in 711. Chetan is straight forward in his depiction of the 2002 Gujarat Riot. He said in an Interview to The Indian Express, "Nobody can deny what has happened in Gujarat." The aftermath of the Partition of India in 1947 saw large scale sectarian strife and bloodshed throughout India. Since then, India has witnessed sporadic large scale violence sparked by underlying tensions between sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities. These conflicts also stem from the ideologies of Hindu extremism versus Islamic extremism. The burning of a train in Godhra on 27th February 2002 which caused the death of 58 Hindu pilgrim and religious workers returning from Ayodhya is believed to have triggered the Gujarat violence in 2002. This has been very carefully presented in *Three Mistakes of My Life*. Bittoo Mama, a staunch believer of Hinduism, sends his son Dhiraj to Ayodhya with Kar Sevaks. He is burnt in the incident of Sabarmati Express.

At least fifty people died and more than a dozen injured when miscreants set fire to a bogie of the Sabarmati Express near the Godhra station in Gujarat on Wednesday Morning. The channel dialled in a railway official from Godhra on the Phone (214).

'The mob had Muslims. They had an argument with Hindu Kar Sevaks and burnt everyone – women, children,' the tea vendor said. (215) Bittoo Mama wants retaliation to his son's death. He wants Ali to be killed but he is in control of the three friends Govind, Ishaan and Omi. Bittoo Mama and his supporters go street by street in search of the boy. Muslims are brutally assaulted and killed. Their houses are burnt. The frenzied mob with Bittoo Mama reaches the Old Bank office where Ali is protected by the friends. In an attempt to save Ali's life, Omi is unfortunately killed. "Fire dotted the neighbourhood skyline. The weather didn't

feel as cold as a February night should". (231) Bhagat says about describing the communalist riot. It is clear by the conversation between Bittoo Mama and Parekh-ji that the attack on Muslims has political influence.

It is clear by the conversation between Bittoo Mama and Parekh-ji that the attack on Muslims has political influence. After a thorough analysis, it becomes clear that the political system is riddled with lack of account ability, entry of criminal into politics, the dominant influence of muscle power and money power, the pernicious influence of religion and caste, oppression of marginalized groups. Govind, the working class boy, is disappointed and dejected with his failures though he is talent and determined. He goes for a suicide attempt and saved. Once he clearly understands his position. He says,

Talent is the only way the poor can become rich. Otherwise, in this world the rich would remain rich and the poor would remain poor. This unfair talent actually creates a balance, helps to make the world fair I said. I reflected on my own statement a little (20).

Chapter-4

Narrative Technique and Style

Chetan Bhagat has been acclaimed as one of the best-selling novelists of the Indian fiction. He has written about modern Indian youths and their need in his novels. He says that novels are entertainment tools through which one can express his views and opinions about society and the youth. His novels are based on day-to-day happenings in the Indian society so ultimately he has written the problems of Indian society in a humorous ways. He has handled the modern situation in proper manner. His characters easily get involved in friendship and love and suffer a lot. He takes upon the sensitive issues which concern to the society in his novels ranging from romantic love story to a shocking condition of the Indian multiculturalism. Bhagat, in the novels describes about the Indian culture and trend using different narrative technique and style. The study of narrative technique and styles are used in *The three mistake of my life*.

Any narrative as a technique of delineation has two overlapping aspects, one refers to content, or the assemblage of material and the nature of the connections implied. The other is rhetorical. It is the mode of presenting the narrative to the reader, or audience. As the realm of narrative technique is quite vast and endless, an attempt is made to limit the study to the use of various modes like humour, simile, metaphor, irony, symbolism, personification, hyperbole, repetition etc. as found in the *The Three Mistakes of My Life* of Chetan Bhagat. Thus, humour is generally used by all the creative artists to provide a variety to the texture and also to relieve the atmosphere of tension and gloom. It helps the author to intersperse comic relief in an otherwise serious plot. Instances of humour abundantly abound in the novels of Chetan Bhagat. Most of them are available in *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. In the novel Bhagat describes how Omi becomes stupid. Govind, Ishaan and Omi are good friends. Govind is more interested in business and

Ishaan, in cricket. Omi always stays becomes stupid “because a cricket ball hit him”. (8) Govind also makes a comment on Ishaan who wastes his time in playing and watching cricket. He says, “Ishaan is not ran away from the NDA but he was thrown out of it”. (8) Govind and his friends sometimes eat at Gopi, a vegetarian restaurant. Omi eats too much food. Ishaan says to him, “That is your tenth chapatti”. (13) and warns him that all that food is bad for him. Govind says, “People like Omi are no profit customers, there is no way Gopi could make money of him”. (14) Bittoo mama is a great follower of Parekh-ji. He invites Omi and his friends at Parekh-ji’s residence for political meeting. All the guests follow the meeting protocol and dress in white or saffron. Ish looks odd with his skull and crossbones, black Metallica T-shirt. Govind says, “Everyone had either grey hair or no hair. It looked like a marriage party where only the priests were invited” (40). Vidya, the younger sister of Ishaan is preparing for medical entrance exam. She hates maths most and said to Govind between an electric shock and a maths test, I will choose the former. She is even ready to do anything-difficult thing instead of maths study. She says, “I heard some people have to walk two miles to get water in Rajasthan, I would trade my problems for that walk, everyday”. (45) Ishaan is a cricket freak and wants Ali to play in Indian team. Once these trios go to Ali’s house where they tell his father to send Ali regularly for cricket and maths coaching. Ali’s father offers them dinner. Govind and Ishaan take its advantage but Omi being priest’s son does not eat at Muslim’s house. Ali’s father feels Omi may like non-veg, so he asks him, “Sorry I can’t offer you meat, and this is all we have today”. (65)

But instantly Omi says to him, I don’t eat meat, I am a priest’s son. These friends open a shop at the premises of Swamibhakti temple where they sell stationery and cricket materials. Once due to slow time in business they sit outside of the shop. On seeing Bittoo mama, Omi signals Govind to bring tea for him but suddenly mama says, Get something to eat as well. Govind thought about the money required for the snacks. He says, “Who

the fuck pays for mama's snacks?". (76) Bittoo mama always attends Parekh-ji's political and religious meetings Bittoo mama always attends Parekh-ji's political and religious meetings and inspires youngsters to come there. He asks Govind, as he wants him to be there. Govind says that he is agnostic and does not want to attend the religious-political meeting. Mama tells him that he takes very less rent of their shop so they owe him something. Govind replies that given the situation the rent they pay is fair. After hearing Govind, he says, "Look at his pride! This two bit shop and a giant ego." (77) They even allow women to keep their children into the shop when latter go Govind and his friends try everything to lure customers to purchase the materials from their shop.

Babloo is one of such children who come with his grandmother at the temple's premises. Ishaan allows him to sit and watch cricket match. Ishaan gets excited and kisses the TV when Harbhajan Singh takes a wicket. Babloo tells Ishaan, Don't watch the TV from so close. Ishaan childishly tells him, "Don't listen to grown-up all the time. Nobody went blind watching TV from close. Don't people work on computers?" (123).

Simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things. The language of a novelist has to be different in order to be attractive and appealing Ishaan is a good player during his school days and plays district level matches. Ali is a Muslim boy who takes admission in the same school where Ishaan learns. Kids tell Ishaan that Ali hits only sixes. Govind remarks on Ali that he looks "like the school has his worthy successor" (28). The novelist tells Ali's ability of playing cricket just like Ishaan. Omi and his friends attend the religious meeting at Parekh-ji's house. All the guests other than Omi and his friends are priests. They wear white or saffron colour dress; have grey hair or no hair. The party looks like a marriage party where only the priests were invited. Most of them carried some form of accessory like a trishul or rudraksha or a holy book. All these guests divide into two groups of saffron and white

“like shoal of fishes”. (30) and sit down in two neat section. At the party, all the guests are in dress code but Ishaan wears T-shirt, which has a picture of skull and crossbones. Govind and Ishaan look like the protagonists of those ugly duckling stories in their mismatched cloths. Vidya is Govind’s student at coaching class. She always does different things than study. Once she wears a T-shirt, on which ‘fairy queen’ words are written. Govind is confused and thinks how can she wears such a T-shirt. The novelist says such thoughts in Govind’s mind may come, as Vidya does not look “like a cute ragdoll in those cloths” (62). Vidya tells Govind her desire to take admission Vidya tells Govind her desire to take admission in Mumbai. She blames her parents for not allowing her to go outside of the house. Govind cannot tolerate her childlike attitude. He tells her to think by her nice, big, oiled brain that is not pea sized “like birds”. (64) Govind invests money in new shop at Navaragpura. An earthquake comes and shatters Govind’s aim of becoming a businessman. He runs from his house towards new city to see his shop’s condition.

All most all the buildings are damaged. He sees new city areas “like satellite suffered heavy damage”. (66) Ishaan and his friends take Ali to Australia to give him cricket practice. They admit Ali at a cricket coaching class and go at Bondi beach for enjoyment where they see hundreds of beautiful women. Looking Govind starts loving Vidya and their love grows day by day. Vidya does not like Govind’s tour of Goa and Australia, as she does not want to keep herself away from him. Govind without caring for money makes her a phone call from Australia. Thoughts of meeting Vidya make him uneasy. He says when he reaches Ahmedabad the name of Vidya rings “like an alarm in his head”. (105) It shows how Govind’s love for Vidya cannot stop him from thinking about her. Love keeps him reminded of her. Govind and Vidya make sex many times. Vidya is frightened when period comes late to her. She tells Govind that it does not happen with her in past. She asks him if she is pregnant. After hearing the ‘pregnant’ word from

Vidya, the sweat erupts on Govind's forehead "like he had jogged thrice around the ATIRA lawn". (118)

Metaphor is a figure of speech, which makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics. Pandit-ji sells cricket materials to Govind and his friends. He settles in Ahmedabad as he is forced to leave Kashmir. Kashmiri's are fair in color. He starts panting due to the weight of trunk he carries to Govind's shop. Bhagat uses the metaphor "rosy red" for Pandit-ji. He depicts "Pandit-ji's white face a rosy red". (118) Chetan Bhagat uses conventional metaphor for describing relation between father and son. Ali is born to Naseer from his first wife. His second wife does not take Ali's care. Ishaan wants to test Ali at the hands of Australian players at Goa. Ali's father comes to railway station to say Ali good-bye. Ali's father says to Govind, "Ali is a piece of my heart" . (135)

Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words passion, especially as Gujarat is a dry state; people here get drunk on food " . (7) Ishaan is a cricket freak who leaves NDA and takes cricket coaching. He is the best player at his school and plays district level matches. Ishaan tells Govind that he wants to apply for insurance job. One cannot imagine that a champion batsman of Belrampur will become an insurance salesman. Govind ironically says to Ishaan, "When he had no life ahead, he wanted to insure other people live". (14)

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea, or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. Parekh-ji, a political leader, uses religion for

political purpose. Hindu people respect him. He is a great supporter of Ram temple at Ayodhya. He takes the help of idol and scripture to change people's mind towards Hinduism. He says, "Our scriptures tell us not to harm others" (42). Parekh-ji again inspires his followers by saying, "The Gita tells Arjun to fight a virtuous war" (43). Here also Gita is given the role of human being who orders Arjun to fight a war. Govind wants to become a businessman. He moves towards his aim by booking a shop at a mall but an earthquake shatters his hope by collapsing his booked shop. Govind says he never cries when India losses a match, when he cannot join engineering college and when he barely makes money for the first three months from business. But that day when "God slapped my city for no reason" I cried and cried. (109) Here God is personalized as human being.

Repetition is a device to make the same claim twice in succession. This mode gives emphasis on the statement made. Bhagat in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* describes about religious politics. He says Muslim and Hindu, after the fight should come together. That means reconciliatory mechanisms are important. Govind says in India steps are not taken to resolve the problems after the conflicts. He says, "Yes, so that means politician's fuel a fire, there is no fire brigade to check it". (71)

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Bhagat also presents the symbol of national integrity in the novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. Omi is a strict follower of Hinduism. But when Hindu- Muslim riot takes place in Gujarat, he comes forward and saves Ali, a Muslim boy. While dying he says to Bittoo mama, "He is a good boy mama, he didn't kill your son. All Muslims are not bad". (244)

Although no vernaculars could be observed in the book to make it funny in the slapstick sense, the very style of writing makes it really funny and entertaining. Bhagat narrates many problems of India which faced during the period between and that was worst of all. Bhagat

points out toward the India's present scenario in which many types social problems are inherited as conservative mentality of parents, lack of sports education or infrastructure in schools, drift between religions, castes and lack of awareness, foresight and ideas due to lack of quality education, extremism in politics and hypocrisy among public, politicians, and everyone alike. Bhagat writes about modern education system that prodigies and talented folks are mostly unrecognized and all that dies away as unharnessed potential, and the author further says about the students' prejudice about certain subjects and losing interest as Ish's sister, Vidya hates maths and says that I get disgusted, nauseated, and depressed by it and Vidya further states:

Between an electric shock and a math's test, I will choose the former. I heard some people have to walk two miles to get water in Rajasthan. I would trade my math's problems for that walk, every day. Math is the worst thing ever invented by man (45).

The writing style simply catches our mind and several one-liners, Witty metaphoric comparisons and unique usage of words with examples plucked from lives of all of us living in the sub-continent did have us bowing down at the same time munching at the food for thought Bhagat provided. A few things that he wrote in the book are such that, we might always have it in our mind, but then never have we ever managed to phrase that situation out into a clever statement. At times, he feels just so right. There are many things that make Chetan Bhagat a wonderful writer targeting Indian youth. Bhagat's writing is not the same H2G2, where enjoying the humor means inclination to something, is not the same as fantasy writers, who spend a large portion of their publications just explaining the jargon and commodities that they imagined, and neither is it like those philosophical but anecdotal ones' who are a part of the growing India.

The way he managed to put the un-phrased thoughts sitting in the minds of many of us. Bhagat has got good knack of mixing humor with his dialogues and describing things. This is

noticed in all his novels. Particularly, about how the girls think, behave, express and how poor men souls get perplexed about them! Again he strikes the right pulses of younger generation. Bhagat chose the time line of the story properly and integrated the real life incidents with the story very well. The incidents like Bhuj, Gujarat earthquake, the historic India vs Australia second test match in which India won after being asked to follow on, 9/11 incident and the Gujarat carnage. In the story of Gujarat earthquake Bhagat narrates the scene of the earthquake of 26 January and its devastation enroute. Govind, the narrator of the story, tells that two years of scrimping and saving, twenty years of dreams-all wiped away in twenty seconds. And now the agnostic narrator, Govind, becomes atheistic and says that may this was God's way of saying something that we should not have these Malls. We were destined to remain a small town and we shouldn't even try to be like the big cities. Bhagat further gives a description of a test match India v/s Australia in Kolkata, 11-15 March 2001.

Bhagat points out to the lack of sports education or infrastructure schools in India and there is only monotonous books, pathetic teachers, result oriented study and kids prefer to read text books than play cricket. The author tells in this chapter that sport teaches the team work, passion, discipline and focus. Bhagat further goes into the dark phase of politics and religion and that is told in an uninteresting way. Though Chetan talks of the IIT's and call centres, he does so with a rather unique panache, his words decipherable even by the common man. Bhagat takes a detour from familiar territory this time, quite literally, to cover the nuances of the colourful small town India. With each new book Mr. Bhagat is trying to toughen his social Criticism.

His *Three Mistakes of My Life* a pun of sorts, this being his third novel. But this time he is tackling a far more controversial theme. Set in the Western state of Gujarat soon after the bloody sectarian riots of 2002, it deals with issues of tolerance and the confusion Mr. Bhagat Believes that young Indians feel about religious values as Bhagat states: India is a very religious

country, and older people have extreme views on religion. The narrative has been very juicy and content suited the choice of youngsters. But even for the older guys, it just looks like the story of gone days. Bhagat has always been famous amongst youth and this novel is very much contemporary India, easily related identifiable by the urban youth. Bhagat has carved a niche for himself in the literary world with his style and he involves himself in the narrative totting up authenticity to a novel to be based on real events. Excluding the death of several people during riots the story otherwise has a happy ending. The novel's most interesting lines are these when Bhagat narrates the love story between Vidya and Govind and they go to market to buy guide books for former's exam as writer writes: What is this? Vidya said as she tried to lift the book with her left hand, she couldn't. She used her hands and finally took it six inches off the ground. "No seriously, what is this? An assault weapon?"(86). Chetan Bhagat shows that merely an attractive pay package and a comfortable ambience do not make a good job. The novel also presents a critique of consumerist culture which is being promoted by big multinationals through massive advertising. It also highlights the superficiality and hollowness of a self-centred and hedonistic lifestyle. One can find meaning and fulfilment in one's life only if one discovers a purpose for one's existence that is larger than one self.

Bhagat chronicles the lives of middle-class kids in big cities. It is a winning formula that has sold three million books in India used by Bhagat. Bhagat's runaway success underscores two facts about Indian readers: that they are hungry for stories about people like themselves and that the demand for home grown literature for young adults is vast. As traditionally we have seen that Indian publishers have concentrated on domestic literary fiction, importing mainstream potboilers, historic epics and romances from the west. But, today, Bhagat has changed the scenario and now the industry is publishing mainstream contemporary novels setting close to home and industry is focusing on literature for young adult's readers. As more and more of the population gets into the reading habit, it is easier for them to read and enjoy

books that are written about them and for them. Bhagat introduces about a new or modern India's scenario and gives a description of such type India which has changed with globalization. The author says that now Indian has got such western civilization and they mingling with them in fashions, in trends and leaving the traditionally uniform and culture as we can see in youth generation. Bhagat has written his three novels about the modern India's rural and urban area. Bhagat's novel '*The Three Mistakes of My Life*' has a simple narration with far deeper meaning. This narration is about cricket, religion, and business, and it is light treatment against a serious backdrop. The book has the narration of story of three boys in Gujarat who decide to start a sports shop. Bhagat says that Gujarat is the only state where Businessman is considered ideal husband material. The first phase of the book is simply boring and it take us back to the memories of his first two books on how the three guys have fun and the times they meet and so on, and also the introduction of the city Ahmadabad is very short and no descriptive, surely the author does not pick up the nerves of the spirit of Small towns in this small town story.

Thus, Chetan Bhagat in his novel, *The three Mistakes of My Life* has tried to present the different narrative technique and style. He has used simile, metaphor, personification, repetition, hyperbole etc. In the novel the author has given stress on humour and other techniques. Govind, Ishaan, Omi and Vidya used figurative language. Bhagat is successful in making the reader happy. New readers who don't know the literary language can also enjoy the writing style of Chetan Bhagat. Bhagat has succeeded here in describing all the things in beautiful manner. He has also succeeded in keeping the readers stick to novel up to at the end.

Chapter -5

Summation

Chapter one explains literature is considered to be an art of work. It can also creative writing, imaginative which express an artistic value. And it reflects the human nature which helps us to understand people's ideas, thoughts, feeling, and also connecting with different religions and societies. It has major impact on the development of the society. And it shapes the Civilizations, exposed, justice and changes political system. It allows us to analyse and examine our lives which give deeper meaning to understand the issues and situations. Indian English literature is the body of the work written by the Indian writers in English language. It produces variety of vernacular language including Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu as well as English. The Indian literature tradition is the oldest tradition in the world. There are many themes in Indian literature. They are mythological themes, epic theme, and social themes. India is one of the most religious and traditional diverse nation.

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, and screenwriter. His novels are adapted into successful movies and his views are focused on youth and issues based on national development. He quit his banking career in 2009 to bring changes in the society. His novels touch an emotional chord of the third generation, showing their ambition, mixed with fears and tinged with tears. He is also a good columnist and writes many columns for leading newspapers. His columns point out the happenings within our country are triggered even in the parliament. Chetan Bhagat's story is based on three friends living in Ahmedabad, India. Ishaan is a cricket player who wants to join the Indian cricket team, Govind is good at maths but belongs to a poor family, and Omi doesn't know what to do in his life. They decide to meet and discuss, and Govind gets an idea to open a sports store and focus mainly on cricket products. Ishaan also starts giving cricket coaching in a compound, and Govind starts to give maths tuitions to help Ishann. The story was published in Gujarati after seeing the book going out of stock. Govind

made three mistakes in his life: Investing all his and his friends' money in a single project, falling in love with Vidya, and hiding Ali in a building. Omi's uncle orders Ali to come out, but Govind is selfish and decides to save Ali. Ali is hurt by a knife thrown by Omi's uncle.

Govind and Vidya apologize for their mistake, leading to Ali's recovery and happiness.

The Second chapter Economic Instability talks about Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is the lower middle class people suffering with Economic instability. Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a novel about the lower middle class people of India. The three main characters are Govind, Omi and Ishaan, who are friends and run a cricket shop selling cheap cricket equipment and school stationery. Govind's mother is a Gujarati snacks seller, Omi's father is a priest, and Ishaan's father works at a telephone exchange. The children of the area study in a municipal school with limited facilities. The society and people depicted in the fiction replicate the actual low class Indian society, with people quarrelling over small matters and displacing garbage on the streets. They are habituated to gossips and keep themselves busy working-out stories from the small incidents of others' life. The parents of the young characters are described as over expecting guardians of their children, with Govind's mother wanting him to do engineering while Govind is interested in doing business. Ishaan's father wanted him to join the Indian Army.

Economic Instability explores the typical middle class mentality of lower middle class people in India. It focuses on Ishaan, Ishaan's sister Vidya, Omi's father, and Ali's father, who all want their children to become successful in life by choosing their career as per their parents' expectations. The novel also highlights the typical mentality of lower middle class youth, such as Govind, Ishaan, Omi, and Vidya. The protagonists in the novel represent the reality of the middle class youth mentality, who have high aspirations but cannot fulfil them due to lack of money, opportunity, motivation, or luck. They are influenced by non-secular and opportunist religious and political forces and cannot understand what to do in life. Chetan Bhagat has

depicted the lower middle class hardships of the people of contemporary Indian society in the novel.

Govind, Ishaan, and Omi all have limited income resources and have to compromise in their aspirations in life due to poverty. Govind expresses his and his friends' family condition as being the poorest of the three, while Ishaan's dad works in the telephone exchange and Omi's dad is the priest of a Swami-bhakti temple. The poverty of lower middle class people is reflected in the novel, with those who have money being respected and given more importance. Govind's expression reveals how people used to treat them when they had no money. He has high aspirations to become a big business man, but has to struggle to save enough money to reach his goal. Ishaan's father works with a low designation at a telephone exchange, and the economic condition of their parents causes considerable hardship in their children's lives. Ishaan has potential to become a national cricketer, but cannot become one due to his poor family background.

Economic Instability depicts a society in Belrampur, India, where Hindus and Muslims live with conspicuous religious tension. The characters like Bittoo Mama and Parekh-ji represent the prevailing non-secular and dirty, and the society is divided into the Hindu dominated and Muslim dominated areas. This causes communal differences to persist, leading to hellish situations like Godhra sabotage and post Godhra communal riots, where people are stabbed to death or burnt alive in public. Chetan Bhagat has written a realistic picture of contemporary lower middleclass Indian society in his novel, which reflects the actualities of the lower middleclass sentiments lack of economy and issues. He passed two years in Ahmedabad for his management studies, and his observations are presented in the novel.

The Second chapter Economic Instability talks about the lack of economy instability of the middle class people. The protagonist of the novel Govind Patel was very interested to study the IIT Engineering college but he was not join that the IIT college. The main reason is lack

of money problem. So, Govind was join the arts college. The economy status are lacking and not fulfilled dream. Next another important character Ishan was cricket player. He was interested to play a cricket and watching to cricket match. But the lacking of money not going to participate national and international matches, Ishan studied the school days not important of the sports. So Ishan was not developing the life. The middle class youths are sacrificing our desire and dreams. The main reason of lacking money. The money are less in the income and not fulfilled the dream. So this chapter talks about the economic problem of the life. This novel through the characters are lead the life very sacrifice our dream the reason is lacking money.

The third chapter Gender Discrimination talks about the class discrimination. The class discrimination means the rich people and poor people lived in their society. The rich people attitude of dominated the poor people. This chapter talks about the difference in the rich people are high level in the politics. But the poor people only need for our vote. The rich people house are very big and beautiful ventilation for anytime but poor people house are not big, lacking of fundamental facilities. The religion based are dominating the people. The place of Gujarat more occupied the Hindu peoples. So the majority people are dominated the other religion people. India is the largest democracy in the world, with people having freedom to express and the right to elect their representatives. Marxism calls into question the social system of living conditions, which is built solely for the maintenance of the status quo and to support the privileged position of the bourgeoisie. *Three Mistakes of My Life* is a realistic exposition of class difference between two opposite strata of society, with the caste issue being a nefarious design to divide an otherwise united Hindu community and a problem that is internal to it. Class discrimination is a human construction arising from man's lust for power. Money is used to divide people and societies into different classes. *Three Mistakes of My Life* is an exposition of class discrimination in Indian society and the sub-continent, presenting Govind as the working class hero. The protagonist confesses in the prologue that he is from a poor family

from Ahmedabad. The protagonist, Govind and his friends are in low strata of the society, but they are able to watch seasonal cricket matches in their friend's house. This is a pathetic situation of working class people in India, as they have to put their heart and soul to uplift their status to be recognized in the society. Parekh-Ji, a senior leader of a political party, is a symbol of bourgeois and heads the biggest temple trust in Baroda. India stands 8th on the global list of millionaires, but poverty still stifles the Indian economy. The poverty line is based on three components: food consumption, expenditure for non-food items, and behaviourally determined expenditure. India is divided into two countries: India of Light and India of Darkness. Parekh-Ji's house is the grandest and luxurious, while Govind's house is simple. Higher education is essential for building knowledge based societies, but there is inequality of educational opportunities. *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a story about educational inequality in India, highlighted by the protagonist Govind's struggle to study Engineering in a good college. He studies in Belrampur Municipal School, which is not with high standard learning as private and other kinds of schools in India. Govind describes the situation of his school as low with more teachers bunking classes than students. Ishaan and Parekh-Ji are both passionate cricket players, but are not able to play for a college team. Poverty is a major hurdle for Govind's higher education, and he is not able to study for the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) entrance examinations due to his familial circumstances and his aspiration to become a prosperous business man. The concept of class struggle will not arise unless for the fundamental issues of inequality of means and social status in the society. All men are born equal irrespective of race, colour, gender, religion and status.

The conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India has a complex history, beginning with the Ummyyad Caliphate in Sindh in 711. Since then, India has seen sporadic large scale violence sparked by underlying tensions between sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities. These conflicts stem from the ideologies of Hindu extremism versus Islamic

extremism. Omi is right that people feel inside and don't talk about it until it is too late. The burning of a train in Godhra on 27 February 2002 is believed to have caused the death of 58 Hindu pilgrim and religious workers returning from Ayodhya. Bittoo Mama, a staunch believer of Hinduism, sends his son Dhiraj to Ayodhya with Kar Sevaks, who is burnt in the incident. Bittoo Mama and his supporters go street by street in search of Ali, who is protected by his friends. After a thorough analysis, it becomes clear that the attack on Muslims has political influence, with the dominant influence of muscle power and money power, the pernicious influence of religion and caste, and oppression of marginalized groups.

The fourth chapter narrative technique and styles talk about the narrative technique and styles. The Narrative techniques in writing are the literary methods of using plot setting, theme, style, and characters to create details that can be visualized by the reader. The writer used the writing style are reached to the reader and analysis of our narration. Narrative technique is the way which a writer convey what that want to say to their reader and the methods that they use to develop a story. The style refers to the way a writer tells a story. Some writing techniques associated with style are metaphors, similes, hyperboles, imagery, alliteration and personification. This chapter deals with technique and styles. The author use more innovating ideas simple narrative and vast meaning are including this chapter. Chetan Bhagat is a best-selling novelist of Indian fiction who has written about modern Indian youths and their needs. His novels are based on day-to-day happenings in the Indian society and take on sensitive issues such as multiculturalism. He uses different narrative techniques and styles to describe the Indian culture and trend. Humour is used in Chetan Bhagat's *The three Mistakes of My Life* to provide a variety to the texture and to relieve tension and gloom. In the novel, Omi becomes stupid due to a cricket ball hitting him. Govind and Ishaan are friends, but Govind is more interested in business and Ishaan is more interested in cricket. Bittoo mama invites Omi and

his friends to Parekh-ji's residence for a political meeting. The three friends are going to the hotel. Ishan looks at the odd with his skull and crocodile.

Bittoo mama invites Omi and his friends to Parekh-ji's residence for a political meeting, where all the guests dress in white or saffron. Vidya, the younger sister of Ishaan, is preparing for a medical entrance exam and is willing to do anything-difficult instead of maths study. Ishaan is a cricket freak and wants Ali to play in Indian team. Ali's father offers dinner, but Omi refuses as he is a priest's son. The friends open a shop at the premises of Swamibhakti temple and sell stationery and cricket materials. On seeing Bittoo mama, Omi signals Govind to bring tea, but he refuses. Mama inspires youngsters to come to Parekh-ji's political and religious meetings, but Govind is agnostic and does not want to attend. Simile is a figure of speech that compares two things. Ishaan is a good cricket player and Ali is a Muslim boy. Omi and his friends attend a religious meeting at Parekh-ji's house, where all the guests are priests. Ishaan wears a T-shirt with a skull and crossbones. Govind and Ishaan look like the protagonists of ugly duckling stories in their mismatched cloths. Vidya tells Govind her desire to take admission in Mumbai, but Govind cannot tolerate her childlike attitude. Govind invests money in a new shop, but an earthquake destroys it. Ishaan and his friends take Ali to Australia to give him cricket practice and go to Bondi beach for enjoyment. Ishaan and his friends take Ali to Australia to give him cricket practice. Govind starts loving Vidya and their love grows. Vidya does not like Govind's tour of Goa and Australia, but when he arrives in Ahmedabad, the name of Vidya rings like an alarm in his head. They make sex and Vidya is frightened when her period comes late. Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. Chetan Bhagat uses metaphors to describe relationships between father and son, such as Ali's father saying he is a piece of his heart.

Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning. Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in

such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning. Personification is a figure of speech in which non-human objects are given human attributes. Parekh-ji is a political leader who uses religion for political purpose, using idols and scripture to change people's minds towards Hinduism. Parekh-ji, Govind, Bhagat, and Govind all use repetition to emphasize their statements. Bhagat argues that Muslim and Hindu should come together after the fight, while Govind suggests that politicians fuel a fire and there is no fire brigade to check it. All Muslims are not bad. Parekh-ji uses religion to change people's minds towards Hinduism, while Govind uses repetition to make the same claim twice in succession. Bhagat suggests that Muslim and Hindu should come together after the fight.

Bhagat's novel *The three Mistakes of My Life* presents symbolism as a way to signify ideas and qualities. Omi is a strict follower of Hinduism, but when a Hindu-Muslim riot takes place in Gujarat, he saves Ali, a Muslim boy. Bhagat narrates many problems of India, such as conservative mentality, lack of sports education, drift between religions, castes, lack of awareness, foresight and ideas due to lack of quality education, extremism in politics, and hypocrisy among public, politicians, and everyone alike. Chetan Bhagat is a wonderful writer targeting Indian youth. His writing is not the same H2G2, where enjoying the humor means inclination to something, nor is it like those philosophical but anecdotal ones. He has a good knack of mixing humor with dialogues and describing things, particularly about how the girls think, behave, express and how poor men souls get perplexed about them. He chose the time line of the story properly and integrated real life incidents with the story. Bhagat narrates the Gujarat earthquake and its devastation, describing two years of saving and dreams being wiped away in twenty seconds. Mr. Bhagat's third novel, *His Three Mistakes of My Life*, is set in Gujarat after the 2002 sectarian riots. It deals with issues of tolerance and confusion among young Indians about religious values. The narrative is juicy and content suited the choice of youngsters, but even for the older guys, it looks like the story of gone days. The novel has a

happy ending, except for the death of several people during the riots. Chetan Bhagat's novel has sold three million books in India. It highlights the superficiality and hollowness of a self-centred and hedonistic lifestyle and the need for home grown literature for young adults. Bhagat has changed the scenario by publishing mainstream contemporary novels setting close to home and focusing on literature for young adult's readers. He also introduces a new or modern India's scenario and gives a description of such type India which has changed with globalization. Mr. Bhagat's third novel, His *Three Mistakes of My Life*, is set in Gujarat after the 2002 sectarian riots. It deals with issues of tolerance and confusion among young Indians about religious values. The narrative is juicy and content suited the choice of youngsters, but even for the older guys, it looks like the story of gone days. The novel has a happy ending, except for the death of several people during the riots. Chetan Bhagat's novel has sold three million books in India. It highlights the superficiality and hollowness of a self-centred and hedonistic lifestyle and the need for home grown literature for young adults.

Bhagat has changed the scenario by publishing mainstream contemporary novels setting close to home and focusing on literature for young adult's readers. He also introduces a new or modern India's scenario and gives a description of such type India which has changed with globalization. Chetan Bhagat's novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is about cricket, religion, and business. It follows three boys in Gujarat who decide to start a sports shop. Bhagat has used different narrative techniques and style, such as simile, metaphor, personification, repetition, hyperbole, and humour. He has also succeeded in making the reader happy and keeping them stick to the novel until the end. Finally the four chapters are analysed of this chapter.

Summation of this chapter included the previous chapter shorten analyzation. He becomes the icon of youth.

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Entrapment at Home and Abroad in Anita Desai's

Fasting, Feasting

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

Affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

By

ANISHA.B

(REG.NO. 21SPEN03)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the project entitled is submitted, **Entrapment at Home and Abroad in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*** 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 and is a work done by Anisha.B during the year 2022-2023, that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
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St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



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Director
Self Supporting Courses
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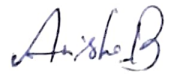
SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Entrapment at Home and Abroad in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*** is 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.



ANISHA.B

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the Indian literature, Indian writers have been making great contribution to the literary world at national and international level. They focus on Indian culture, tradition, race, politics and self-identity. Anita Desai is a prominent writer in Indian English literature. She has contributed extensively to Indian English literature.

The second chapter **Feminism perspective** deals with the alienation of middle class women and also the sufferings and agonies of women. Anita Desai is post independent feminist writer who occupies a unique place in the history of Indian English fiction. She has been immensely successful in creating new images in her works from a feminist perspective.

The third chapter **Psychic Turbulence of Women Characters** deals with sensitive handling of characters and gives us a sympathetic insight into her women characters. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Desai's fiction is lively description of the agony of her female protagonist. Whatever they feel in their heart appears like a picture before our eyes.

The fourth chapter **Narrative techniques** deals with imagery, memory, flashback techniques. One is reminded of Anita Desai's characteristic way of making her internally turbulent protagonists find expression through association with external surroundings.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters. The women characters are entrapped at home and abroad and their psychic turbulence is apathy brought out by Anita Desai.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for preparation of the project.

Chapter one

Introduction

Indian literature refers to the body of works 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. The word “Indian Literature” refers to works written both inside and outside the Republic of India, before and after 1947, on the entire Indian subcontinent. Indian literature, which among the oldest forms of literature, has served as a model for other cultures. The phrase alludes to ancient literary work written in several Indian languages. Literary work used to be transmitted orally in earlier time. Indian authors have portrayed the Indian experience through western literary genres like essays, short stories, novels, plays and fiction. Urbanization, industrialization also increased Indian writers' awareness of their surroundings. As Indian writers started to challenge certain institutions and custom, science and reason played a significant role in modern Indian literature produced new gods in their existing culture, the gods being man and nature, rather than criticizing themes of pre-modern Indian literature, which were focused on themes of otherworldliness. Indian literature made future of India’s independence a major issue during the Indian renaissance which stated in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Indian -English writer, Raja Rao became an expatriate even before the country became free. G.V.Desani was born in Kenya, lives in England. India and USA; and Kamala Markandaya married an English man and lived in Britan (ref.Mehrotra 180,186, 226). Nirad C.Chaudhuri preferred England as his views were not accepted in India. Salman Rushdie’s “Imaginary Homelands” encompasses the world over. Indian English literature has transcended the barriers of petty classifications and has almost become part of the main stream English literature. Writers like

Rushdie and Naipaul, have manifested the global exilic condition. IndoEnglish writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Tharoor, Amithav Gosh, Vikram Seth, Sunetra Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai and Hari Kunzru have made their names while residing abroad. The non-resident writers of India have explored their sense of displacement – a prominent theme in exile literature. The exploration not only deals with geographical dislocation but also sociocultural sense of displacement. Their concerns deal with the immigrants, refugees and other exiles. This exilic condition gives rise to sense of displacement and rootlessness. They suffer from psychic trauma and haunting presence of their lost homeland-the land of their birth – and also suffer from the anguish of reinventing home in the land of their choice’.

Feminism is an interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality as understood through social theories and political activism. Historically, feminism has evolved from the critical examination of inequality between the sexes to a more nuanced focus on the social and performative constructions of gender and sexuality. Feminist theory now aims to interrogate inequalities along the intersectional lines of ability, class, gender, race, sex, and sexuality, and feminists seek to effect change in areas where these inter sectionalities create power inequity. Intellectual and academic discussion of these inequities allows students to go into the world aware of injustices and to work toward changing unhealthy dynamics in any scenario. Feminist political activists campaign in areas such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, fairness, social justice, and workplace issues such as family medical leave, equal pay, and sexual harassment and discrimination. Anytime stereotyping, objectification, infringements of human rights, or intersectional oppression occurs, as a feminist issue.

Indian women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian literature. Indian English literature has developed over a period of time and writing in English did not start in a day. Indian literature is not only about novels, it is also about poetries and short stories. Before the rise of novels, several women writers composed songs, short stories and small plays. It is still believed that women are the upholders of the rich Indian tradition of fables, storytelling and more.

In the past, the work by the Indian women authors has always been undervalued because of some patriarchal assumptions. Indian societies gave priorities to the worth of male experiences. In those days, women used to write about a woman's perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic arena. In the 19th century, more and more women actively participated in India's reformist movement against the British rule. In the 20th century, women's writing was considered as a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writings of Indian English literature.

Majority of the Indian readers comprising both male and female read the novels of the Indian women authors with certain expectations. Only the women novelists of India are capable of conveying the messages of feminism in an Indian way. Following are the famous Women Writers in Indian English Literature are Sarojini Naidu, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamla Das, Shobha Rajadhyaksha, Indira Goswami, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Chitra Banerjee Divakruni, Bharati Mukherjee, Toru Dutt, Meena Alexander.

Sarojini Naidu was the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the governor of a state in India. Her collection of poetry was published in 1905 under the title "Golden Threshold". She published two other collections also "The Bird of Time", and "The Broken Wings". Afterwards, "The Magic Tree", "The Wizard

Mask”, and “A Treasury of Poems” were published. In most of her poems she induces the spirit of nationalism. Arundhati Roy is one of the most celebrated authors of India, best known for her novel ‘The God of Small Things’. The novel won the 1997 Booker Prize for fiction and it was one of the bestselling books at that time. She was awarded with the ‘Sahitya Academy Award’ in 2006, for her collection of essays, ‘The Algebra of Infinite Justice’ but she refused to accept it. Jhumpa Lahiri has achieved international applause for her writing which mainly deals with non-resident Indian characters, refugee issues and problems people face in overseas lands. Mira Nair directed a film based on her first novel ‘*The Namesake*’ in 2006. Her book ‘*The Lowland*’ was a nominee for the 2013 Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award for Fiction.

Kamala Das was the first Indian woman writing in English language, who talks about the sexual incidents of Indian women. Her first book of poetry, ‘*Summer in Calcutta*’ was famous in Indian English poetry. She wrote primarily of love, its faithlessness, and the resulting distress. Her second book of poetry, ‘*The Descendants*’ was even more open. She was nominated and shortlisted for Nobel Prize in 1984. She was awarded with the Sahitya Academy Award, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, Kent Award for English Writing from Asian Countries and many more. Shobha Rajadhyaksha also known as Shobhaa De, is an Indian columnist and novelist. She has come to be celebrated as the “Jackie Collins of India”. She mostly deals with the issues concerning the contemporary society. She also focuses on the different faces of the metropolitan Indian society. She tries to project the large society as a whole throughout her characters. Indira Goswami was honoured with the ‘Jnanapith Award’, which is the highest literary honour. Her work focuses on women and different aspects of Assamese society. Her most famous works are *Pages Stained with Blood*’ and *The Moth Eaten Howdah of Tusker*. Kiran Desai the second Indian to win a Booker Prize in 2006, for her book *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai also won enthusiastic reviews for

her debut novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava orchard*. She is the daughter of Anita Desai and her work is motivated by globalization, and the consequence of the country's development on all social classes. Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian novelist best known for her book *That Long Silence* in 1990 and the Padma Shri award in 2009. Anita Nair: She is an Indian-English writer whose novels are keenly woven on the thread of human nature and values; with a female oriented element. Her 'Mistress' was included in the list for the 'Orange Broadband Prize' for Fiction.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning author and poet and her work has been published in more than 50 magazines, including the 'Atlantic Monthly' and 'The New Yorker'. Her important works include *Palace of Illusion*, and *Mistress of Spice*. She was awarded the American Book Award for *Arranged Marriage*. Bharati Mukherjee is the author of seven novels and two short story collections, and co-author of two books of non-fiction. She is also the winner of a National Book Critic Circles Award. Toru Dutt was an Indian poet who wrote in English and French. Her famous works are 'Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers', 'Bianca', 'the Young Spanish Maiden', 'Ancient Ballads' and 'Legends of Hindustan'. Meena Alexander is an internationally acclaimed poet, scholar, and writer. She is a distinguished Professor of English at Hunter College and at the CUNY Graduate Centre in the PhD program in English at New York City. Her famous works are *House of a Thousand Doors*, *River and Bridge*, *Quickly Changing River*, 'The Shock of Arrival: Reflection on Postcolonial Experience', *Nampally Road*, *Manhattan Music* etc.

Anita Desai, an Indo- Anglican writer focuses die problems of the immigrants and the pain they undergo as expatriates in their exile condition. Being alienated, they suffer from identity crisis: the search for their roots and long for a sense of belongingness. Not only does Anita Desai but also her daughter Kiran Desai, Booker Prize winner, delves similar aspects in her novels. Anita

Desai is a dominant writer in the twentieth century Indo-Anglian fiction. Anita Desai was born on June 24, 1937 in India to a German mother and an Indian father. Although she now resides in South Hadley, Massachusetts, teaching writing at Mount Holyoke College, she is a member of the Advisory Board for English in New Delhi. Desai writes in English, saying. "I first learned English when I went to school. It was the first language that I learned to read and write, so it became my literary language. Languages tend to proliferate around one in India, and one tends to pick up and use whatever is at hand, it makes one realize each language has its own distinct genius." Her family spoke German at home and Hindi to their friends. Desai while she grew up, during World War II, could see the anxiety her German mother was experiencing about the situation and her family in Germany. After the war when she realized, the Germany she had known was devastated, her mother never returned there, nor had any desire to return. Anita herself did not visit until she was an adult.

Anita Desai's novels from *Cry, the Peacock* to *The Zig Zag Way* are "a study in the depth and persistence of human affliction, inexorable sensitive and loving and compassionate as her protagonists are" (Swain 56). Existential conflict in Desai springs from the self craving for the fulfillment of certain psycho-emotional needs, from the desire to overcome the horror of separateness, of powerlessness and of listlessness. Escape, withdrawal and a denial of reality seem to be prominent primitive survival strategies among the protagonists of Anita Desai. Her protagonists are emotionally malformed and socially isolated. Most of her protagonists adopt the existentialist heroic posture necessary to face the ordeals of life. Her themes are original and different from those of his counterparts, she is "engaged in exposing the labyrinth of the human mind and in indicating the ways to psychological fulfillment" (George 160). She records the dilemmas faced by the Indian urban individuals. She portrays and analyses human relationships in the context of emotionally related kin which is a fertile area for research.

She unravels the mystery of the inner and psychic life of her characters. Desai has brought out ten full-length novels of varied length, innumerable short stories and a couple of write-ups. In a short period of time she has aroused a lot of critical attention. Anita Desai's chief concern is human relationship. Her central theme is the existential predicament of the individuals project through the problems of the self in an emotionally disturbed milieu. Her protagonists carry with them a sense of loneliness, alienation and pessimism. Solitude and self-exploration are the recurring themes of her novels. Desai adds a new dimension to the genre of Indian fiction in English by probing the unquestionable existential concerns of her protagonists. She is obsessively occupied with the individual's quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that provide spiritual nourishment to the estranged self in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world. The search for identity on the part of the existential self in Desai assumes a socio-psychic dimension. The protagonists in Desai's novels do not shy away from the assaults of existence. Existential heroes, face their problems single-handedly with courage and determination.

She has written *Cry the Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye, Bye Blackbird* (1971), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Fire on the mountain* (1977), *In Clear Light Of Day* (1980), *A Village by the Sea* (1982), *In Custody* (1984), *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988), *Journey to Ithaca* (1995), *Fasting Feasting* (1999), *The Zigzag Way* (2004). In addition to novels, she has written books for children, numerous short stories that have been collected into anthologies, and essays. Desai has received many awards, including the Royal Society of Literature Winifred Holtby Prize (1978), the Sahitya Akademi of India Award (1979), the Guardian Award for Children's Fiction (1982), the National Academy of Letters Award, and three nominations for the Booker Prize. She has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, Smith, Mount

Holyoke, and MIT; she is also a member of the Royal Society of Literature and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Desai and her family currently live in the United States.

Fasting, Feasting (1999) is a novel in two parts. The first part is set in India and is focused on the life of Uma who is the overworked daughter of Mama and Papa. She is put upon by them at every turn, preparing food, running errands. In the early part of the novel we see her struggling at school. She is not very bright but loves the sisters who teach and appreciate her. Finally she is made to leave school and server her parents. We meet many interesting characters through her; Ramu-Bhai a travelling bon viveur who tries to show Uma a good time. He is banished by his parents. Another character is the religious Mira Masi who tells Uma all the tales of Krishna and takes her to the ashram allowing her to escape her mother's domination for a time. Uma's parents attempt to marry her off on two occasions; on the first occasion the chosen man fell for Uma's younger sister, Aruna. On the second occasion a marriage took place but it turns out that Uma's new husband already has a wife. She lives with his sisters while he lives in another town spending her dowry on his ailing business. Uma's father quickly spirits her home. We are also told of the episode of Anamika's (Uma's cousin) sad fate. She has won a scholarship to Oxford but her parents insist that she get married. She does and fails to please her husband by providing him with children. He keeps her for a time as a servant but eventually she dies by burning. It is strongly hinted that her in-laws killed her. The final scene of the first part of the novel, is the immersion of Anamika's ashes in the sacred river. We are left with great sympathy for Uma and her simple kindness as she survives as best as she can in a not altogether friendly world.

In the second part of the novel, we meet Arun, Uma's privileged brother. He is attending college in America and during summer holidays he lives with the Pattons an all American family. Again, plot is not complex or intricate. The events are told in a serial manner as Arun encounters

them. Of note is his intense dislike of American food and cooking methods. He is dismayed at the behaviour of Melanie, the daughter who is deeply troubled and suffering from bulimia. Although Mrs. Patton seems to care about Melanie, she does little to help. While apparently close, the family are actually distant from one another, something very different from Arun's experience of family life in India. Arun spends most of his time alone and isolated. The advantages of living as a migrant are the privilege of having double perspective, experiencing diverse cultural mores, the leverage provided by the networking within the diasporic community and more. On the contrary these advantages make the diasporic Indians of the second generation encounter the predicament of dual identities. "Such ambivalence produces existential angst in their psychology. The world simply refuses to become less complex" (Amit 8).

The Indian writers of the first generation have already established their credentials by winning literary awards and honours. The ranks of second generation of Indian writers have raised enormously and many have won recognition. Meera Syal, has successfully represented the lives of first and second generation non-resident Indians in the West in her novels. Sunetra Gupta has shown the pleasantness and unpleasantness of intercultural relationships through characters like Moni and Niharika in her novel *Memories of Rain* and *A Sin of Colour*. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* illustrates the lives of both first generation and second generation Indian migrants in the US. The big issues like religious intolerance and racial discrimination are no longer the main concerns of these writers. They are more interested in small things of the current world. Little, unacknowledged things gain enormous importance in changed circumstances. It is here that the differing reactions by Indian, Western and diasporic characters towards similar situations are found to differ only superficially. It means that the inner needs of all human beings are the same. Alienation is part of the experience of the Indian diasporic and even if people are at

home in any part of the world it does not mean that they will not become victims of the sense of alienation. Increasing acceptance into the host society does not indicate that the diasporic characters can feel at home. Social alienation is replaced by metaphysical alienation.

The researcher in chapter one introduces Indian writing in English and prominent Indian women writers placing Anita Desai as one. In chapter two, Feminist Perspectives, the female ideology and resistance of patriarchy is dealt. The chapter three, psychic turbulence of women character, deals with trauma and psychic conditions of the women characters in the novel. Chapter four Narrative Technology, highlights the narratology and techniques used by Anita Desai in the novel. Chapter five summation sums up the all the chapters. The hypothesis of the dissertation is the contradictory nature of the title “Fasting”, “Feasting”. Why the protagonist endures all sufferings patiently? . Why she sacrifices her longing for her MamaPapa?. What would be the solution of freedom to these characters?.

Chapter two

Feminist Perspective

Feminism, the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Although largely originated in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. Throughout most of Western history, women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, to study, or to participate in public life. At the end of the nineteenth century in France, they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and, in parts of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Even as late as the early twentieth century, women could neither vote nor hold elective office in Europe and in most of the United States (where several territories and states granted women's suffrage long before the federal government did so). Women were prevented from conducting business without a male representative, be it father, brother, husband, legal agent, or even son. Married women could not exercise control over their own children without the permission of their husbands. Moreover, women had little or no access to education and were barred from most professions. In some parts of the world, such restrictions on women continue today.

Feminism refers to the belief that women should have the same rights, power and opportunity that men have. The demand of feminists is women's control over their own lives. Feminists consider that male authored texts have obtained double standards in their treatment of male and female characters. Feminism in the Indian context is a by-product of the western liberalism in general and feminist thought in particular. The indigenous contributing factors have been the legacy of equality of sexes inherited from the freedom struggle, constitutional rights of

women, spread of education and the consequent new awareness among women. The Indian woman caught in the flux of tradition and modernity saddled with the burden of the past but both to castoff her aspirations constitutes the crux of feminism in Indian literature. In literary term it participates in a search for identity and quest for the definition of the self. Anita Desai is a post independent feminist writer who occupies a unique place in the history of Indian English fiction. Her distinguished literary career spans more than three decades. She is known for her sensitive portrayal of the inner feelings of her female characters. Her novels explore the tension between family members and the alienation of middle class women and also the sufferings and agonies of women. A close study of Anita Desai's works reveals her struggle for female autonomy played out against the backdrop of the patriarchal culture pattern. Her writing can be viewed as a self-conscious reaction to overwhelming masculinity for the analysis of society in general. She has been immensely successful in creating new images in her works from a feminist perspective.

Fiction by Anita Desai provides "insights, a wealth of understanding, a reservoir of meanings and a basic of discussion. Through women writer's eyes we can see a different world" (Dhawn, 10). Anita Desai who is undoubtedly one of the major voices states: "writing is my way of plunging to the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover, and to underline and convey the true significance of things" (Dalmia, 4). The analysis of Desai's novels would unfold not a totalitarian ideology of their unified goal or a metaphysical absolute; rather it will reveal a prospect of achieving a feminine consensus where each novel voices her story. The transformative power of Anita Desai's novel lies in her taking up the task of revealing the process of self-awareness at work in feminine psyches. Her novels are an engrossing study in the progression of women from feminine to female as stipulated by Elaine Showalter. Her women characters are sensitively portrayed and therefore, are best appreciated in their

psychological depths. Desai's feminism is not the same as haling man or abandoning families and relationships or indulging in lesbianism, etc. As a feminist she wants women to be accepted as responsible human being.

The novels of Anita Desai are basically female oriented. She probes into their problems, be it of a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother or a wife. Her female figure appears as a victim in a patriarchal, and patrilineal and father dominated Indian family. Anita Desai depicts the Indian woman as a fighter, a victim, a heroine and in later novels ultimately a winner because of her indomitable spirit and attitude of compromise. She has portrayed both kinds of women – those who are symbols of growth and change, those who are powerful means of withdrawal, regression, decay, death and distraction. She declares that a woman is a being. She is not an appendage a subordinate of man. Rather she is an autonomous being, capable of trial and error, finding her own way to salvation. We come across such women figures in the novels by Anita Desai, who are consciously trying to come to terms with themselves as individuals. Their voice is now gradually becoming audible and there is definitely a protest in their own voice. There is a clear tone of resentment and a pressing demand for freedom from traditional fetters which have been imposed on them and their gender.

Anita Desai has added a new and significant dimension to the fiction and to the portrayal of the sufferings of women. The thing which distinguishes Anita Desai from other novelists is her preoccupation with the study of the inner world of the individual, particularly the undeserved miseries and untold sufferings of the women who are ruthlessly persecuted and rendered vulnerable, alienated and helpless. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala deals with the social background; Kamala Markandaya stresses on the several contemporary problems social, cultural, economic, political; Nayantara Sangal is absolutely devoted to social and political problems, whereas Anita

Desai's main concern as a novelist is to explore the unfathomable depths of the mind which is always deceptive and seldom presents in the action: "Her fictional milieu is mostly overcast by shadows and half-shadows, mist and fog, a world half revealed and half concealed, partly real and partly fictitious. Her central theme is the existential predicament of an individual which is projected through incompatible couples-acutely sensitive wives, and dismal, callous, un-understanding, ill-chosen husbands"(3). In other words, Desai prefers the inner reality to the outer, the insight to the sight. Her search for truth is related to the search for the soul-the inner life-and in the life of the body-the outer life. Her notion of life is richly influenced by Virginia Woolf who observes: "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (4).

In the days of Adam and Eve, inequality of sexes was not known but down the ages women have been relegated to an inferior position in the social set-up. From being the very incarnation of Power (Shakti) and Knowledge (Gnyan), women came to be held only as a child-bearing machine and their horizons have been supposed to be confined only to their familial role. Chiefly the blame was put on men and it was believed that male-domination does not allow women to flourish freely. But in recent times there have also been sensitive writers who have taken a humanist approach to the situation. They have taken a holistic view of the issue and have discovered that it's not only male-chauvinism that has caused havoc but also female-reluctance to face the challenges and even female apathy that is responsible for this disparity. In the last couple of years, *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapoor, and *Fasting, Feasting* by Anita Desai are two attempts to take stock of the situation from this viewpoint. Primarily the story of human hungers, *Fasting, Feasting* merits appreciation from a feminist point of view. Like all women writers, Desai is not only sensitive to women-question but also all 'criticism of life' from her pen can be finally seen as gynocriticism

(Showalter 4). Feminism is one of the prominent themes in Indian Women's writing in English and in other Indian languages. Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* shows, apart from many other things, how women have to lead a life of suffocation and undeserved sufferings-both physical and mental in a male dominated patriarchal framework; how life in such a callous family trundles on at a slow pace under the prying eyes of the parents; how a girl child craves for parental affection but in the end gets nothing but frustration, isolation and unhomely treatment and, above all, how the neglected child slowly develops the horrible sense of trauma and other associated psychosomatic diseases. A thorough study of the persecution meted out to women in this novel reminds us of *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy where the same discriminating attitude is found in the case of Ammu, Margaret Kochamma, Baby Kochamma (in her early childhood life) and Rahel. But while the protagonist, Uma in *Fasting, Feasting*, is a meek, docile and a passive sufferer, Ammu in *The God of Small Things*, jets her fury and resentment and breaks the age old rule of ethics: "Who should be loved, and how. And how much" (Roy 2).

The *Fasting, Feasting*, divided neatly into two parts, takes us to the centre of an extremely orthodox Indian family on one hand, and an unusually whimsical family in Massachusetts on the other. Apart from the head MamaPapa, Uma, Aruna and Arun form the Indian family whereas the family in Massachusetts consists of Mr. and Mrs. Patton, Rod and Melanie. Arun forms the link between these two families, which are socially, nationally and culturally different. Desai simply points out the emotional and human affinity that makes the two families one.

Comparatively speaking the number of protagonists spread over the world of *Fasting, Feasting* is very limited. Mama Papa with their two growing daughters initially and then a son's entry quite late into the family form the typical Indian family with traditional mind and modern living. A few close relatives; some friends and well-wishers; some servants, a few neighbours, do

make their appearance now and then sometimes directly and at other times indirectly. But most of the other personae are merely presented through the coloured glasses of these characters in absentia. The researcher focuses on dreams and desires of these people and how far they succeed in realizing them. Here the word dream refers to all those happy expectations, desires and ambitions of life about which these people constantly think and strive to realize them. As hope springs eternal in human breast, I firmly believe that it is only our hopes and dreams about the future which make our present life look bright and cheerful. However tough and rough our present may be, this future phenomena of dreams and ambitions always lend it a substantial strength to sustain all the ups and downs of life.

Primarily *Fasting, Feasting* is the story of Uma, who happens to be the most subdued- rather crushed member of the Indian family. Uma is like a catalyst whose presence is never noticed, never appreciated and yet whose absence may make all the difference. Uma is a woman lost in the jungle of duties sometimes to her MamaPapa, another times to her brother Arun and at still other times to her sister Aruna. She is expected to be an obedient daughter, an affectionate and motherly sister and everything but an individual. As a young girl, Uma has her dreams, her desires, but when her dreams come in conflict with the comforts of her parents, it is she who has to sacrifice and she does. At the outset itself the novelist presents the contrast that exists between the colourful, happy life of her parents and her own dull and dreary existence:

Uma flounces off, her grey hair frazzled, her myopic eyes glaring behind her spectacles, muttering under her breath. The parents, momentarily agitated upon their swing by the sudden invasion of ideas-sweets, parcel, letter, sweets settle back to their slow, rhythmic swinging (Desai 5)

The Atharva Veda says: The birth of a girl, grant it elsewhere, here grant a boy (vi, 23). If this could be the prayer of an age when the condition of women was relatively better and they were granted an almost equal status in the society, we may very well imagine the poor lot of women in other ages. Even Educated parents show their primitive, rustic face today when it comes to choosing between daughter and son. Girls are not only less preferred but also they are more burdened with responsibilities. Women are expected to take care of their siblings. A woman is never allowed to be a child, right from her childhood she is supposed to act as a mother to her younger brothers and sisters. Since the birth of her baby brother Arun, Uma has been trained to sacrifice her private pleasures at the altar of familial responsibilities. Much like Virmati of *Difficult Daughters*, Uma is forced to nurse her kid brother, even when she is herself a child:

When Mama came home, weak, exhausted and short tempered, she tried to teach Uma the correct way of folding nappies, of preparing watered milk, of rocking the screaming infant to sleep when he was covered with prickly heat as with a burn. Uma, unfortunately, was her clumsy, undependable self, dropping and breaking things, frightenedly pulling away from her much too small, too precious and too fragile brother (Desai 17-18).

Desai brings into focus parental apathy which scars the daughters permanently. First it is parents craving for a boy that hurts the daughters because it makes obvious the truth of the accidental birth. Had the parents been given a choice they would never have liked to face the ignominy of giving birth to a female child. Then it is their ecstasy at the birth of a son that makes the wounds even deeper, beyond cure. Papa celebrates the birth of Arun as he had never done the birth of Uma and Aruna: Papa, in his elation leaping over three chairs in the hall, one after the other, like a boy playing leap-frog, his arms flung up in the air and his hair flying. ‘A boy!’ he screamed, a bo-oy! Arun, Arun at last!’ [...] (Desai 17). Feminists maintain that women are not mentally different

since birth. The female-child is only biologically different but the parochial society conditions it into being a woman: “One is not born but rather becomes a woman,” says Simone de Beauvoir. She continues, “No biological, psychological, economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in the society, it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine” (Beauvoir 445).

Uma becomes a victim to the tendency of society to condition a girl-child to submit to the norms of the patriarchal set-up. Desai as a true humanist puts the blame not only on men who are suffering with the complex of male-superiority but also on women who oppress their own kind. It is not only the male chauvinist that acts as the antagonist force but also apathetic female does more harm in terms of the loss of woman-soul. Uma is reduced to the status of a domestic help. All this because her mother has to fulfil her role of, “Papa’s helpmate, his consort” as “After all Uma and Aruna and the ayah were there to stand in for her at Arun’s cot” (31). No efforts to cow down the already docile spirit of Uma are spared. She is denied the pleasure of ordinary living. If she once enjoys a cheerful evening out with Ramu Bhai, she has to bear her mother’s curse: [...] “Quiet, you hussy! Not another word from you, you idiot child!” [...]. “You, you disgrace to the family- nothing but disgrace, ever!” (53)

“Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society,” say the feminists (De Beauvoir 445). Twice MamaPapa try to get Uma married, and twice it is that she is put to much humiliation and disgrace. When both the attempts end in fiasco, it is accepted that Uma has to remain unwed all her life and with a heavy heart her parents accept this burden. Though she never rebels, never utters a word of complaint, she is certainly not an unfeeling brute. She suffers silently, and solace does not come even from the most expected quarters her mother. To make the matters worse Mama also looks upon her as an object of laughter.

Uma's sister Aruna is married off into a respectable family and moves to Bombay. Her brother Arun goes to Massachusetts to pursue higher education but Uma is left behind to serve her parents untiringly, to become the object of their barbs and to live a life of desolation. In this apathetic, friendless world Uma finds refuge in her childhood memories when she was still studying in school. Those were the golden days of her life, never again in her life she gets to taste such bliss as she had experienced then. Whenever she finds her present aimless existence too dreary to tolerate, she escapes into that world again. She has carefully preserved the Christmas cards and snapshots belonging to that period and the very sight and touch of these thrills her with ecstasy:

She runs her finger along the gilt crosses and embossed poinsettias, and reads through she plays the with merry fragments little jingles of ribbon that make and lace, her smile: they are so loving and bright with goodwill and friendship, she binds them all up again with string and stows them away like treasure-to her they are treasure. If anyone were to touch, their magic would be somehow defaced: that is how she feels about them (Desai 98-99).

Mama herself has no time for her family and home because she is always busy attending kitty parties and club meetings but when Mrs. O' Henry invites Uma to a coffee party, much hue and cry is raised. Even a single phone call invites the wrath of Papa: "Costs money! Costs money!" he kept shouting long after. "Never earned anything in her life, made me spend and spend, on her dowry and her wedding. Oh, yes, spend till I'm ruined, till I am a pauper" (Desai 146). In India, woman is considered to be an: "embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge" (Everett 76). MamaPapa are deaf and blind to the needs of their daughter. They forget that Uma is not a body but a soul as well. They, however, feel that if she is kept occupied with one

or the other work, she shall not get time to think about her personal dreams, she shall not cherish dreams at all: All morning MamaPapa have found things for Uma to do. It is as if Papa's retirement is to be spent in this manner sitting on the red swing in the veranda with Mama, rocking, and finding ways to keep Uma occupied (Desai 133).

The dreams of a free existence are not unknown or unimagined for Uma. The fact that Moyna Joshi is pursuing a career in Delhi, incites in her an aspiration to make a career, to leave home and to soar high. But her wings have been so badly and pre-maturely clipped, that she can simply flutter her wings, but cannot fly. Aeons of dumb, docile existence renders women incapable to act. They are trained simply to show obeisance to the orders of their rulers. They sulk, they struggle but they are never freed of their meaningless existence as secondary to their masters:

These troubling, secret possibilities now entered Uma's mind-as Mama would have pointed out had she known whenever Uma was idle. They were like seeds dropped on the stony, arid land that Uma inhabited. Sometimes, miraculously, they sprouted forth the idea: run away, escape. But Uma could not visualise escape in the form of a career. What was a career? She had no idea. (Desai 131)

The novel is certainly Uma's story, but Uma is a helpless member of an orthodox family that is again set in the parochial society. The patriarch happens to be the unchallenged ruler here. He holds the rein and commands all members and all activities inside the family. He has to cater only to the physical needs of the members, emotionally they are not expected to be alive. It is supposed that all members must ally their joys with the happiness of the patriarch. Like a truly devoted servant they are expected to work for his comforts and instead of expecting gratefulness from his side, they should rather feel privileged to serve him. Engels in his *Origin of Species* points

out that the very concept of family is based on the presumption that wife belongs to husband. He says that the Latin word 'family' means the total number of slaves belonging to one man. The woman is 'given' in marriage and then she becomes 'his' to command. This sense of belonging is not mutual husbands don't belong to their wives. Papa believes in the concept of male-superiority and is immodest enough to flaunt it at every opportunity. He is the very epitome of malechauvinism. Feminists all over condemn this attitude which holds men as 'absolute' and women as 'subjects.' This is precisely what we see in MamaPapa's family. Papa exercises his authority at every little opportunity. Every activity, every moment of life is well within the grip of Papa. A family outing on Sunday evening turns out to be more of an exercise under the strict control of Papa and less of a pleasure trip.

Papa has two daughters but the desire for a son keeps troubling the patriarch. When Mama becomes pregnant for the third time, she has two grown up daughters and out of shame she wants to abort it. But the very thought that women have a right over their bodies is considered preposterous in a patriarchal society. This is what Kate Millett calls in *Sexual Politics* "whereby one group of persons is controlled by another" (Millett 23). In a male-dominated society, women must always be prepared to allow their husbands to use their bodies for whatever purpose they desire. The perfect oneness of MamaPapa is disturbed when Mama refuses to oblige. But the tyrant wins again:

Mama was frantic to have it terminated. She had never been more ill, and would go through hellfire, she wept, just to stop the nausea that tormented her. But Papa set his jaws. They had two daughters, yes, quite grown-up as anyone could see, but there was no son. Would any man give up the chance of a son? (Desai 16).

The irony of all this lies in the fact that the woman forgets all humiliation that she was subjected to. After the birth of the son, Mama again becomes one with Papa. Not only does she forgive the patriarch but also she joins him in his elation at the birth of a son. Mama takes pride in the fact that she has bred a son and for this heroic exploit she is ever grateful to the husband: He had not only made her his wife, he had made her the mother of his son. What honour, what status. Mama's chin lifted a little into the air, she looked around her to make sure everyone saw and noticed. She might have been wearing a medal (Desai 31).

Feminists, all over, blame not only male-possessiveness and chauvinism but also female reluctance, easy acquiescence and lethargy for the bad shape that women-existence is in. Male-gods are the unchallengeable legislators of a patriarchal society and women join them in their pride which makes the matters worse. Mama leaves all thinking and decision-making part for Papa. She simply obeys him and takes pride in her servility. This is quite common on the Indian scene but Desai explores the essential oneness of two apparently different cultures. In India Mama shows mute obedience to Papa and follows all his whims and caprices meekly and in Massachusetts, Mrs. Patton shows similar servile attitude. In a country of supposedly strong and independent women Mrs. Patton has made compromises over every small matter. She is not free even in her choice of food. An ardent vegetarian, she has meekly taken to non-vegetarian food because Mr. Patton feels that that is the only kind of food. All her life Mrs. Patton yearned for vegetarian food but out of fear of disturbing the peace of her home, she did not do anything about it. Though she actually despises meat, in her effort to maintain equilibrium in this strained atmosphere, Mrs. Patton pretends as if she enjoys eating meat prepared by her husband. She confides in Arun: "I've always hated eating meat-oh, that red, raw stuff, the smell of it! I've always, always disliked it-but never could-never knew how-you know, my family wouldn't have liked it "(Desai 179).

She loves vegetables and fruits and finally when she discovers a food-companion in Arun, she is rejoiced no end. This leads to another imbalance in her life. She starts enjoying shopping at the food mart and develops an abnormal flare for it. The lady seems to be craving for an opportunity to shop for food, as Mr. Patton and Rod eat meat only and Melanie has taken to nuts and candies as fish takes to water. When she reminisces about the good old days when she had to buy a lot of food for her family, she seems like a little girl talking about her most cherished dream: “You should have seen the way I’d load a shopping cart when the children were small. I’d have Melanie sitting up here on the shelf, and there’d be such a heap of groceries under her, she’d have to stick her feet right up on top” (Desai 196). It seems that the lady has been starving for real food, and when she gets someone to shop for she makes the most of it. She wears T-shirts with the legend “Born to Shop” and seems in full control of the situation while in the market. It is hard to believe that at home she is the same, lady with her “tentativeness and timidity” (183). The seemingly independent woman was so much in awe of her husband that she is “apologetic and deceitful” when gingerly she announces her decision to “give vegetarian food a try” (185). Though the cultures, the setting, the socio-familial values are different, the reaction of the patriarch is everywhere the same. Mr. Patton’s reaction to his wife’s vegetarianism is one of indifference, “as if he had simply not heard, or understood” (185). Arun notices this oneness: “his father’s expression, denying any opposition, despair, all seem to him a mirror reflection of it” (186). In contrasted affinity we find the subversive forces working against women both in the parochial Indian society as well as the comparatively free Western society.

Melanie Patton is again a study in psychology. Like Uma she also becomes the victim of parental indifference. Her need and thirst for a little love and affection is as intense as that of Uma but unfortunately it is as much in vain as that of her Indian counterpart. On the Indian scene a

normal, healthy Uma becomes a patient of Globus hystericus (Hysteria) and on the Western side the in satiated desire for parental affection and attention, makes Melanie a victim of anorexia(eating disorder) and bulimia(illness caused by eating too much) . The novelist writes:

Then Arun does see a resemblance to something he knows: a resemblance to the contorted face of an enraged sister who, failing to express her outrage against neglect, against misunderstanding, against inattention to her unique and singular being and its hungers, merely spits and froths in effectual protest. How strange to encounter it here, Arun thinks, where so much is given, where there is both licence and plenty (Desai 214).

Melanie's alienation from her family, points out the essential hollowness of the so-called developed world. Despite all efforts on the part of Mrs. Patton, Melanie remains hungry biologically as well as emotionally. She herself does not know what she wants and keeps venting her anger on her poor mother.

Apart from Uma and Melanie, Mira Masi, Mama, Aruna and Anamika make the feminist study complete by presenting various aspects of feminism. Mira Masi is the prototype of an Indian widow: “[...] Quite alone, safe in her widow's white garments, visiting one place of pilgrimage after another like an obsessed tourist of the spirit” (Desai 38). All these women have their own hungers (fasting) and all of them crave for a little satiation (feasting). Aruna is what feminists label a truly ‘feminine’ woman. She has no ambition apart from winning a suitable coveted groom for herself by dint of her beauty and coquetry. Since Anita Desai is concerned more with the “exploration of the inner sensibility rather than the outer world of action” (Iyengar 392), all her characters merit interpretation from the psychosomatic perspective. As a child Aruna has been a mute witness to her father's hilarity at the birth of a male child. His shameless display of

ecstasy had one effect on Uma and altogether different effect on Aruna. Her show of beauty and her coquetry are simply a result of that impact. It is her unique way to show her superiority, it is what may safely be called her self-assertion. This superiority complex becomes strong and takes root as she enters into marriage with Arvind and moves on to a better, richer and more fashionable world of Bombay. The hurt left on her heart since childhood, pushes her towards the quest for a flawless world. The novelist herself writes: Clearly Aruna had a vision of a perfect world in which all of them-her own family as well as Arvind's-were flaws she was constantly uncovering and correcting in her quest for perfection(Desai 109) .

Not all women are Aruna, most of them are born with a stamp of ill-luck on their foreheads. The tragedy of such women is caused by the fact of their birth in a patriarchal society which fails to respect women as individuals. The lot of women is no way better than that of tragic hero-even the most perfect of them is crushed and doomed. However, there is one clear difference-in women's case 'Hamertia' happens to be no fatal flaw of their own but the bare fact that they belong to the female sex. Anamika-the lovely, intelligent and modest cousin of Uma-presents an example of sheer sacrifice of young, talented lives at the altar of the norms of a male-dominated society. Anamika has all that it takes to go places:

She was simply lovely as a flower is lovely, soft, petal-skinned, bumblebee-eyed, pink-lipped, always on the verge of bubbling dove-like laughter, loving smiles, and with a good nature like a radiance about her. Wherever she was, there was peace, contentment, wellbeing (Desai 67).

She is not only lovely but also good at studies. She wins a scholarship to Oxford but her parents look upon the letter of acceptance as a trump card which shall be useful in their search for a

husband for her. It is this letter of acceptance only that brings about her nemesis. Her scholarship wins for her a husband, who is not only superb but he is also aware of his superbness. He does not care a straw for Anamika. He has a mother-fixation and has no time or attention to waste on his wife. Marriage according to Kate Millett is a game of “power-politics.” Men marry, not because they need a companion or a soul-mate but because marriage gives them a licence to show power. Thus politics enters into marriages. Anamika is also an instrument for her husband “to enhance his superiority to other men.” (Desai 70).

Though there is no love for her, he does not waste time before impregnating her as a means to crush her even more. But the pregnancy ends in abortion as she is beaten by the mother-in-law. The agony of a woman who is trapped in a wrong marriage is not realised by members of her own race. Though Anamika is experiencing hell, even her own parents do not interfere, neither do they want her back in their home. Anamika’s sad saga is a strong statement against a cruel, apathetic society which does not care for lives, instead it gives more importance to its customs and rules. Uma, in her innocence, keeps hoping that Anamika shall be sent back to her mother and all will be well. But she is reproached by her mother with these words: “You are so silly, Uma. How can she be happy if she is sent home? What will people say? What will they think?” (Desai 71).

It is this fear of society that leads to the loss of many unfortunate lives. It is this unwillingness to act that results in Anamika’s death-rather murder at the hands of her husband and mother-in-law. It is the irony of this unfeeling society that even her death fails to cause a stir or to shake the souls in slumber. They are resigned to their lot. Desai’s tone becomes satirical here: What the husband said was that he had been away on a business trip and returned only that afternoon on hearing the news. What the mother-in-law said was that she always had Anamika sleep beside her, in her room, as if she were a daughter, her own child. Only that night Anamika had insisted on sleeping in her

own room. She must have planned it, plotted it all. What Anamika's family said was that it was fate, God had willed it and it was Anamika's destiny. What Uma said was nothing (Desai 151). A promising life is reduced to ashes and people who form society still talk instead of taking action. This lethargy and inertia on the part of women has contributed a lot towards the atrophy.

Fasting, Feasting is an indictment against men who believe in holding their women in their grip, it is a statement against women who take pride in their servility, it is again an indictment against men who trade in marriages as a means of increasing money and power, it is a strong criticism against women who, like fish, devour their own frail sisters, above all *Fasting, Feasting* is a plea from a woman in favour of her less fortunate counterparts. It is a strong statement against male-chauvinism, female apathy and reluctance and it is a woman's voice for freedom and emancipation.

Anita Desai chiefly puts the blame not only on men who are suffering with the complex of male superiority but also on women who oppress their own kind. In the novel Uma is presented as the most subdued and crushed member of the Indian family. Uma is the oldest of three siblings. As a child she is quite normal despite the dictatorial attitude of her father. There is nothing more painful for a girl than the pressure to grow up even before she has enjoyed her childhood. To feminists, women are not mentally different since birth, as Simone de Beauvoir writes: "One is not born a woman; one becomes one" (23). The patriarchal set-up has been plotting against woman's rights since her birth. The conditioning begins at home and women are supposed to walk from mother's womb into mother's shoes. Uma is still a child when her baby brother Arun, the precious son is born. With the birth of the son, things become worse for Uma. Arun becomes the central force in the family. Uma is burdened with the responsibility of Arun. Since then life becomes an arid journey in a desert for Uma. She is "a woman lost in the jungle of duties – sometimes to her

Mama, Papa, at other times to her brother Arun and at still other times to her sister Aruna. She is everything but an individual”(26) .

As a young girl, Uma has her dreams, her desires but when her dreams come in conflict with the comfort of her parents it is she who has to sacrifice and she does. Her parents turn deaf ears to the needs of their daughter Uma and consider her only a body, not a soul. Uma is even denied the pleasure of ordinary living. If she enjoys the cheerful evening out with Ramu bhai, she has to bear her mother’s curse. In short, Anita Desai presents woman as an embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge. In *Fasting, Feasting* from a feminist perspective .The novel deals with a very sensitive story depicting the human values through her characters, namely, Uma , Aruna , Arun and the Patton family. She concentrates on the unequal treatment given to women seeking education and alternatives to marriage and motherhood and successfully portrays the predicament of women in the patriarchal society.

Chapter three

Psychic Turbulence of Women Characters

Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* is an unforgettable novel. It has a number of memorable characters, depth of theme, vivid imagery and many interesting episodes. Anita Desai displays a deep psychological insight into the social situations of which all her characters are products. The novel is a kaleidoscope of a number of tinges and shades that colour our existence. This paper attempts to study the novel in depth and come up with a critical assessment of the characters. The story revolves around an upper middle-class lawyer's family. The lawyer is not named but he is painted so vividly that he becomes a symbol of millions of faceless Indians who live similar lives, dominate their families and deny them their freedom. The family also has a wife who is a docile creature and agrees to everything Papa says. She enjoys her secret pleasures when she goes to play mummy at the neighbours. The husband and wife, MamaPapa, PapaMama, as they are called, become like siamese twins, inseparable, after he retires. The retired life led by this couple mirrors that of many Indians. Mama and Papa have two daughters, Uma and Aruna, and one son, who was born quite late and named Arun (the name that had already been kept for him but which had been changed to Aruna when the second child was a girl). Arun is heaped with so much attention and affection that he feels suppressed and the minute he gets time, he escapes into his comic book world. He is suppressed and forced to eat food he does not like. His education, his tutors and the academic burden on his frail shoulders leaves him exhausted. He does not learn how to communicate with people, nor how to express his feelings. When he goes to America for higher studies, he does not mix with anyone. The concern that Mrs. Patton (with whom he goes to stay during summer break when the dormitories have to be vacated) shows for him scares him. He sends insipid formal letters regularly to his MamaPapa. Their letters and concern when it reaches

him through aerogrammes makes him shudder. Tentacle-like, they touch him even there. He feels that his life is always controlled by others, his family.

The viewpoint of characterization the novel is not very significant because it is marked by a thematic predominance and similarity of life spectacle both in India and America. The plot hinges round Papa Mama whose identities are so blended that they are not shown as separate individuals. They are types and flat characters representing most of Indian middle class parents and their lives. The character of Papa is predominant, Mama yields to him most often and does everything to suit his interest and pleasure. At no stage there is a misunderstanding or skirmish, even mild in form. They are two halves of one piece as per Indian philosophy of husband-wife relationship. The family is over scrupulous in taking care of the food of Papa, the mother peeling segments of orange and giving them to Papa to eat. The birth of Arun makes both the father and the mother more dignified and elevated. The character who frequently comes up for description during the action of the novel is Uma, although she does not dominate the action. She is the eldest child of the family although in physical and mental qualities she suffers from mediocrity, she is a dull student and does not succeed in the examination and seeks promotion in the class.

Feasting, Feasting reveals how we become victims of sentiments; we believe what we do not see touch and hear. Mama, and Papa, Melanie and the Patton parents. Bakul uncle and Leela Aunty are all victimized and disgusted with what is unreal-the world of sentiments rather than of sense. Uma, an abject scholar, found the rationality and the functional school convent impressive. She despised and bitterly loathed the atmosphere at home.

This atmosphere did not succeed in bringing out the best in her. At every failure the nuns clucked and shook their head and wrote notes to Papa recording sorrowfully that they would have

to hold her back: At the sight of her record book, she wept with shame and frustration. One is touched by the sense of pity reading about a girl who fails over and over again without being motivated to grow up to the success and approval that the others enjoyed. Being an introvert, she accepts her failure readily. Which is unhealthy in the process of perceiving the self-image. There is a gradual fall in her self-rating both about herself and others around and an unexpressive demand is raised by putting full faith in the nuns as her saviour. Her unhappiness grows with her simultaneous growth in her poor self-esteem. She is not realistic and practical in her attitude because of which she fails to atone for the denials and failures. Uma's personality is contrasted to Aruna, her sister, who is an extrovert and believes in tough mindedness and pleasures in life. Unlike Uma. She over-Simplifies internal sources of information such as emotions and sensation and reveals interpersonal agreement with a wide range of social and afflictive activities. In Uma, we find social avoidance, feeling of social confidence. Surprisingly, Uma experiences a greater depth and Variety of emotion with which Arun and Aruna Remain untouched, Whatever emotion Aruna experiences she Makes a verbal display of it whereas Uma avoids the expression of the intensity of her emotional experiences: There were so many marriage proposals for Aruna that Uma's unmarried state Was not only an embarrassment but an obstruction. Here was Aruna visibly ripening on the branch, asking to plucked: no one had to teach her how to make samosas or help her to dress for an occasion. When Aruna said to her laughing. "Uma. Why don't you cut your hair short? Like Leela Aunty? It will suit you, you know" she retorted "Tchh! What silly ideas have." and was not only annoyed but hurt as well: she had caught the mockery in Aruna's tone. (When they were younger. And Uma had brought back those report cards from school filled red. Aruna had watched in silence while Papa thundered and Mama complained, and waited for a decent interval before proffering her own report card, satisfyingly blue and green and collected their

praise. Had ended in disgrace, she had listened to Mama's storms of temper, saying "I told you she was no good didn't and looked sympathetically at Uma. But now a certain mockery was creeping into her behavior. A kind of goading. Like that a sprightly little dog will subject a large dull ox. Uma's ears were already filled to saturation with Mama's laments and Aruna's little yelps of laughter were additional barbs. (Desai 88)

Uma is denied Ramu, her dream lover. The world of nuns. The holy atmosphere of knowledge, this haunted her life like a strong sensation. This loss of love objects elicits the labour of mourning, the struggle between libido attachment. No sooner the struggle of ambivalence, under pressure of confrontation and reality grows, there is a gradual analysis of the libido towards new objects in the form of Dr. Dutt who needs Uma to supervise the dormitory given to the nurses working in her hospital and also towards Mrs. Henry who needs an assistant in arranging fun parties. The melancholy and the loss become so internalized that the symptoms of self-hatred, latitude, guilt, and feeling of unhappiness become apparent to the reader. Mama and Papa force her to maintain an impersonal and business-like relations with few people around like the Mali and the cook which in contrast make Uma invest much emotional meaning in all her possession. No sooner the "sense of being unloved" is communicated, she opens her cupboard and considers her belongings. She looked through the collection of her cards. Of bangles, and of handkerchiefs and a small cloth-bound book she won at the Christmas Bazaar: "She reads slowly, for lack of practice, and she is conscious that she may be interrupted at any minute, called away. But she will read a poem or two and find the pleasure they deny her." David F. Rics and Alden Wasman in their book *Mood and Personality* describe this sensation as despairing cry for love." The state of "unloving" makes them punish their own selves in order to prevent parental punishment. This sensation of being a sufferer of the greatest injustice in the world torments them. Uma, thereby, is not concerned

with affairs outside themselves (parents and herself) rather she is more concerned with herself and her relation to her parents. She projects her unhappiness by shutting her room:

She knows that when she shuts the door MamaPapa immediately become suspicious. But she defies them to come and open it. She stands waiting for them to shout, or knock. Minutes pass and she can picture their faces, their expressions, twitching with annoyance. With curiosity, then settling into stiff disapproval. (134)

To compensate for all denials and unsuccess. She finally takes refuge in complete devotion to work and duty, treading gingerly through life. Her ideal is the ideal of industry but the sense of accomplishment comes not through fulfilling ambitions but by being serious in work. Sudhir Kakkar in his book *Analytical Study of Childhood in India* writes: "an Indian child is encouraged to continue to live in a mythical, magical, world for a longtime. In this world, objects, events, and other persons do not have an existence of their own, but are intimately related to the self and its mysterious moods. Thus, objective. everyday realities loom or disappear, are good or bad, threatening or rewarding helpful or cruel, depending upon the child's affective state; for it is his own feelings at any given moment that are projected on to the external world and give it form and meaning. Uma's estrangement from pleasure is the grinding joylessness with which she penetrates into her physical world, mute by choice. Her emotions do not become linguistic things.

Surged with "anger emotions." she avoids interacting with her parents, fearing that it might be additional in damage. The sense of emotions makes a person cope with two distinct things. He or she has to cope with the emotions inducing situation and at the same time has to bare the burden of the experience of the emotion itself. The sense of awareness of the situation makes Uma focus her attention to avoid the intensity of the emotion by seeking refuge in her private room but

generally despair is born when she realizes that she has no control over the situation. Her paralysis of self-deprives her of the beauty of interpersonal relationships yet, she goes on woodenly participating in the drama of existence. She accepts a life with men in which she is a victim of their needs and indifference. Her resentment is expressed through anger and is a part of the sense, which makes her identify the men who exploit her. Knowing that her future is stationary, she keeps on moving in infinite space of pointlessness and meaninglessness. Her emotional turmoil is devastating to her attitude to life but this is no concern for her parents who are much absorbed either in togetherness or in the wellbeing of their son Arun.

Mama's incessant orders, Papa's 'scowls' and 'humps,' Aruna's jibes, Arun's evasive tendency further shatters Uma's psyche and quickens disintegration. Uma's marriage to repulsive Harish further stigmatizes her as ill-fated, making her "an outcast from the world of marriage"(Desai 99). Realizing the sense of perennial tension, Uma now looks for mutual understanding from the far off land of America where Arun is studying but she is deprived once again. Uma's problem is further intensified whenever Mira masi appears-her announcement that she is made for Lord Shiva challenges her grammar of participation in the life of the community. Interpersonal disagreement makes her value her privacy but lowers her social self-esteem. She knows no language to negate what Mira masi so confidently declares with surgeon-like precision. There is no apparent manifestation of her desire to enjoy and engage in the social affiliative activities of conjugalities, yet in privacy her social rejection thwarts her peace of mind. This inhibition is described as: "Introverts are more in touch with emotions although they do not display them outwardly. . . The more introverted person's behaviour is inhibited but experiences greater depth and variety of emotions. "Uma's personal dimension and social dimension of self-esteem represses her confidence and gradually negative evaluation and social rejection sets in, making her

highly sensitive of her subjective discomfort. The same is true of Melanie, the adolescent daughter of Patton family who lacks language to express her resentment given by her parents. Unlike Uma, she eats candy or ice-cream and tries to hide her sickness. No determined attempts are made to stop her from "poisoning herself". Arun describes her plight: "This is a real pain and real hunger but what hunger does a person so stated feel?"(Desai 227). Melanie is the western form of Uma who feels the same unwantedness and agonizing loneliness. Her loneliness is given vivid details and her world of sense draws a cover over her world of sensation because of which her eclipsed living is not apparent to her parents. As a mark of hostility, she avoids eating whatever is cooked by her mother and also avoids any attention when she vomits helplessly in the bathroom: "Melanie's sickness is described pathetically: She can scarcely drag the cassette player along. Going in to her room, she slams the door. He thinks he hears her crying but it could be the singer, in agony" (Desai 207). Victimized by her mother's indifference, Melanie unconsciously is killing herself. Unlike Uma who cannot make an open revolt, Melanie's parents realize her psychological sickness when she is found unconscious on a picnic trip and is at once sent to an institution in Berkshire. The psychological treatment makes her accommodative and she now enjoys playing tennis, baking cookies, and has become obedient. She can now stomach cereal, bread, butter, milk, boiled carrots" without throwing up." Mrs. Patton ventilates her remorse by cleaning her Oom on her knees.

The neglect of Uma and Melanie leaves behind a memory of pain and questions how the world of sensation and sense can only beget mutual warmth and genuine love. John Dewey in *The Aesthetic in Experience* describes the elemental form of the world of senses and sensations as is mathematically accumulated in *Fasting, Feasting*: "The first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it. No creature

lives merely under its skin; its subcutaneous organs are means of connection with what lies beyond its bodily frame, and to which, in order to live, it must adjust itself, by accommodation and defence but also by conquest. At every moment, the living creature is exposed to dangers from its surroundings, and at every moment, it must draw upon something in its surroundings to satisfy its needs. The career and destiny of a living being are bound with its interchanges with its environment, not externally but in the most intimate way”(6)

The primary concern of middle-class parents is to get the daughter married off. After that, their responsibility seems to be over. Parents seem to be in hot haste to dispose of their liabilities as soon as possible. “It was as if their mothers had been tending them in their flowerpots just for this moment” (Desai 67)

Marriage is a lottery in which prizes are very few. Uma’s cousin Anamika is talented and beautiful and even wins a scholarship for further studies at Oxford. But the traditional parents use the letter of acceptance as a medal for enticing grooms rather than allowing further studies. Anamika’s life at her in-laws’ becomes a trauma because of her husband’s tacit support to his mother and the apathetic attitude of her parents. Mama, in a typical Indian woman’s vein, feels: “How can she be happy if she is sent home? What will people say? What will they think?” (Desai 72). This fallacy, widely spread in society, proves to be the undoing factor for Anamika who meets a violent death. Our shallow religious feelings are exposed at the ceremony of immersion of her ashes after her sad death. We can muster up all our strength and resources to ensure a smooth entry of the departed soul into Heaven, forgetting our apathy to her plight while living-passing through a thousand hells each moment till the last breath. Uma’s pointed question to Lila Aunty: The letter-the letter from Oxford-where is it? Did you? Did you burn it? Or, have you kept it as a trophy to be shown to posterity?” The realistic lines show that Uma is not a mute, dull insensate thing But

a quiet, sensitive and keen observer of false values being flaunted in society. Isn't it high time we looked for genuine human values?

Sometimes the worst enemy of a woman is another woman- a rival, a despotic mother-in-law (Anamika's or Mrs. Joshi's) or even a selfish, cold and unfeeling mother like Mama. Mrs. Joshi is able to brave the fury of her circumstances because Mr. Joshi gives her a lot of love and compassion.) After the death of the old tyrant, Mrs. Joshi proceeds to assume charge with great aplomb' (Desai 133).

Here again Desai is not implying that the un-burnt brides and the well-settled ones may live a content life. In this regard, she portrays the story of Aruna, Uma's smart and pretty younger sister who makes a discreet choice and marries "the wisest, [...] the handsomest, the richest, the most exciting of the suitors who presented themselves" (Desai 102). Aruna's marriage to Arvind who has a job in Bombay and a flat in a housing block in Juhu, facing the beach is just a like a dream-come-true. Yet to live that dream-life fully, she transforms herself and desperately seeks to introduce change in the lives of others. She cuts her hair, takes her make-up kit wherever she goes, and calls her sister and mother as "villagers" once they refuse to accept her sophisticated and flashy style of life. For that reason, she avoids visiting her parents' home and the rare occasions of her short visits are spent in blaming the untidiness of the surrounding and the inhabitants. Even she goes to the extent of scolding her husband when he splits the tea in his saucer, or wears a shirt, which does not match, with his trousers.

In this way, Aruna's entrapment is different from the rest. She has liberated herself from the customs and dominating home rules that bind the rest of the characters like Uma and Anamika. Yet, in negating those codes, she ensnares herself in her mad pursuit towards a vision of perfection.

And in order to reach that perfection she needs to constantly uncover and rectify the flaws of her own family as well as of Arvind's. When none other than Uma sees through the entrapment of Aruna, she feels pity for her:

Seeing Aruna vexed to the point of tears because the cook's pudding had sunk and spread instead of remaining upright and solid, or because Arvind had come to dinner in his bedroom slippers, or Papa was wearing a t-shirt with a hole under one arm, Uma felt pity for her: was this the realm of ease and comfort for which Aruna had always pined and that some might say she had attained? Certainly it brought her no pleasure: there was always a crease of discontent between her eyebrows and an agitation that made her eyelids flutter, disturbing Uma who noticed it. (Desai 112).

While Uma, Anamnika, Aruna present the female versions of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, Arun pictures the male version of it. Unlike his sisters, right from his birth, Arun desists eating the food of his family which is symbolic of its values. Much to the dismay of his father, he shows his preference for vegetarian food. Simply because it revolutionised the life-style of his father, Arun cannot be forced to eat non-vegetarian food. This, of course, is a cause of disappointment for Papa:

Papa was always scornful of those of their relatives who came to visit and insisted on clinging to their cereal and vegetable-eating ways, shying away from the meat dishes Papa insisted on having cooked for dinner. Now his own son, his one sol, displayed this completely baffling desire to return to the ways of his forefathers, meek and puny men who had got nowhere in life. Papa was deeply vexed (Desai 33).

Nonetheless, Arun cannot fully come out of the clutches of Papa, especially, in terms of his education. And ironic enough, it is education, which instead of offering the desired autonomy, paves way for Arun's entrapment. Papa, in order to give "the best, the most, the highest" (Desai 121) education for his son, takes charge of Arun's life from his childhood. Although Arun's school examinations are over, Papa cannot allow him to go to his sister's house in Bombay during holidays, since he has planned that time for taking up entrance examinations and preparation for sending applications to go abroad for "higher studies"(Desai 123). However, in the eyes of Aruna, her father's manic determination to get a foreign scholarship for Arun, is actually on account of his unfulfilled dreams, which he tries to impose on his son. That is why, when the letter of acceptance from Massachusetts finally arrives, it stirs no emotions in Arun:

Uma watched Arun too, when he read the fateful letter. She watched and searched for an expression, of relief, of joy, doubt, fear, anything at all. But there was none [...]. There was nothing else-not the hint of a smile, frown, laugh or anything: these had been ground down till they had disappeared. This blank face now stared at the letter and faced another phase of his existence arranged for him by Papa (Desai 125).

As a reviewer rightly observes, "With a deft touch, Desai shows us that MamaPapa's ambitions for Arun are as stifling as their lack of ambition for Uma, [...]." From America, Arun's letters come just to indicate his endurance and survival. His messages are diluted, and are devoid of any emotion and substance. "The most personal note he struck was a poignant, frequently repeated complaint: "The food is not very good" (Desai 126).

The ties, though invisible, are so overwhelming that even in a country that feasts on individuality, Arun fails to manifest his identity as an individual. Caught in the prison house of his own family's food habits, he can neither nourish the alien food nor develop a sense of belonging with Patton's family that shelters him during his vacation. The smell of the raw meat being charred over the fire by Mr. Patton for steak or hamburger is loathsome for Arun. Conversely, Mr. Patton fails to understand why Arun really refuses to eat a good piece of meat. While Mrs. Patton sympathizes with Arun, and gives him the vegetarian food items, particularly tomato slices and lettuce on bread, Arun finds them detestable too. Because he thinks that "in his time in America he has developed a hearty abhorrence for the raw foods everyone here thinks the natural diet of a vegetarian" (Fasting, Feasting 171). Hence when Mrs. Patton, quite satisfied with her job of a host, watches him eating with pride and complicity, Arun ate with an expression of woe and a sense of mistreatment. How was he to tell Mrs. Patton that these were not the foods that figured in his culture? That his digestive system did not know how to turn them into nourishment? (Desai 188-89)

Where Mrs. Patton's daughter, Melanie, bluntly says she finds the food revolting, and refuses to taste it, Arun has to helplessly eat it. Melanie, however, suffers from bulimia-a disorder in which overeating alternates with self-induced vomiting, fasting, etc. Her bulimia, along with her mother's frenzy for buying food items to fill the freezer, signifies the consumerist society that she hails from, where excess becomes the malady. This seen in contrast to Rod, the fitness fanatic, who spends all his time and energy in jogging, baffles Arun who wonders that "one can't tell what is more dangerous in this country, the pursuit of health or of sickness" (Fasting, Feasting 208). He apprehends that like Melanie, who eats, vomits and lies on her vomit most of the time, the people

of her country too, go through an inexplicable pain and a real hunger. Yet he cannot reconcile his mind to the unanswerable question: "But what hunger a person so sated can feel?" (Desai 227).

Anita Desai, in portraying the stories of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, presents one version after another; each contributing together to a master version, and each simultaneously subverting the other towards an open and contingent version. Accordingly, in the story of Uma, we find her unattractiveness leading to her eventual entrapment. Yet, if we pass a final verdict on this account, we would be proved erroneous since Desai presents the versions of Aruna and Anamika, Uma's appealing sister and charming cousin, respectively. Beauty cannot offer them escape from entrapments; in truth, it is rather their good looks that victimize them. Further, if we think again that it is Uma's lack of education that has led to her entrapped situation, Desai presents us the subversion of Anamika, where foreign scholarship fetches her an equal match but fails to provide her the required escape, it suffocates and kills her literally. In like manner, if as Uma thinks, "A CAREER. Leaving home. Living alone" (*Fasting, Feasting* 134) would bring in the necessary freedom from entrapment, Desai presents us the story of Arun, who leaves home, lives alone for a career but feels the pangs of entrapment despite it.

Also, in providing a male version through the story of Arun's entrapment, Desai negates any feministic verdict based on the other female versions of entrapment that is likely to put the blame on the patriarchal, male-centered society. Thus, Anita Desai, often described as one of the finest writers of this country, has moved from her earlier, typical way of sympathizing with her characters, females especially, to a different level of sensibility now. Where it would be easy to presuppose her overt feministic concerns in a novel like *Cry, the Peacock*, it would be unwise to approach her *Fasting, Feasting* with any such preconceived notions. Desai herself speaks out in a recent interview that she has been deliberately shifting her focus from female characters to male

characters. She rather feels she needs to address and voice out themes which concern males too. She says: Specially in my earlier work I found myself addressing the same things over and over again: very much about the life of women, specially those women who are confined to home and family, also the solitude from which a person can suffer even if living within a big family or surrounded by crowds. But after several years and several books I began to feel suffocated myself by the confinement of these subjects. I felt I was limiting the territory to such an extent that it created a kind of suffocation even for me. So I deliberately opened the doors, to widen the canvas, and started writing more about male characters and their lives, because I felt they had a wider experience of the world, and I could address a greater variety of experiences.

Finally, if we consider the male version represented by Arun and the female versions constituted by Uma, Anamika and Aruna as Indian versions, Desai offers American versions to counter them. The story, thus dangling between two countries and cultures shows to prove through the characters of Uma and Arun, and their counterparts Melanie and Rod, that attempts of escape from entrapments can only be temporary, illusory and self-destructively futile since entrapments through familial knots are ubiquitous, all encompassing and universal. And perhaps the salvation comes when one accepts entrapment of one kind or another envisioned as an inescapable fact of life. Another significant character of Indian group is Mira-masi the universal type of the Hindu widow most unwelcome in her father's as well as father-in-law's house. Mira-masi is introduced as most coveted creature to Uma though most unwelcome to Mama because she does not use the pots in her kitchen nor does she eat food prepared by the cook. She halts at Uma's house between two pilgrimages and her gossip about families was a social factor in her. The anti-social element in her is her religion. She takes the single vegetarian meal in a day like all widows. She was rapidly growing old: "Her face began to look muddy and was streaked with deep lines like a river bed that

has run dry, and her hair was turning thin and grey.” She puts on widow’s white garments and is so devoted to her Lord that she carries her image with her and, when lost, does not take rest without finding it. Her devotion is so strong that she is able to get the missing image in a shop at Benaras. Ramu is a minor character, a family cousin who is avoided by Papa Mama as a gutter but who is humorous and domineering and almost invincible in his ways. He is most welcome to Uma because he brings some relief to her. Mira-masi regards him as an “English-speaking, meat-cating, polluted outcast from Bombay.” His clowning pleases Uma. He has the knack to take Uma out of the house and entertain her in a hotel on food, music and dance

Mrs. Patton has decided to take Arun and Melanie to the swimming hole after many days of sunbathing. In a few phrases of suggestive imagery, Desai has drawn out the vibrations of youth going on in Mrs. Patton. The colours chosen, for example, mauve, plaid sunsuit, blue sandals, roguish smile, very pink lipstick may be suggesting the salubrious effect of sunbathing resulting in her sunlit mood that morning. Arun takes one of the baskets from Mrs. Patton's hand and earns a "radiant, lipstickish smile" (and Melanie walks away from him!) At the swimming hole, Anun averts his gaze from Mrs. Patton at the same time he is afraid to enter the water: a Catch 22 situation, locked between Scylla and Charybdis! But as soon as He becomes aware of Mrs. Patton casually removing her sunsuit, slipping it off her hips and shoulders," (Fasting, Feasting 224) he plunges into the water to save himself from embarrassment. It is the plunge in the water which opens out another world of possibilities to him and he glances surreptitiously at Mrs. Patton's supine body when he swims ashore and picks up his towel.

Being vexed by gnats and mosquitoes he takes a walk down a path in the jungle where he finds Melanie lying in the dirt of her own vomit. When he tries to talk to her, she repulses him and vomits more, deliberately. It appears as if Melanie hungers more for an intimate concern rather

than empty words. When he places his hand soothingly on her shoulder, it is he who recoils at its nakedness: "This is a real pain and a real hunger. But what hunger does a person so sated feel?" (Desai 227)

Mrs. Patton's words (when she finds them together): "My Lord..." "Dear Lord" are significant in two ways. First, because she probably realises that she has neglected her daughter far too long. Secondly, seeing Arun in such close proximity to her daughter, she realizes perhaps that she has certain responsibilities other than sunbathing and swimming) She learns. This awakens motherly/matronly feelings in her. She becomes mature from that moment onwards, "She no longer lies in the yard, sunbathing. She has never offered to take Arun shopping. . . She dresses in skirts and long sleeved blouses. ... She talks of taking lessons in yoga or astrology" (Desai 230).

When Arun presents her the shawl, she "puts her hand to her neck to hold the ends of the shawl together" (Desai 231), showing once again that a motherly change with some aroma of the East has come into her. It seems to me that the East has come to the rescue of the West and has brought about the maturation of Mrs. Patton. It may also be observed that the soothing touch of Arun has begun the healing process of Melanie about whom encouraging reports come from the neurology centre. The solution to our problems lies in our application of human values. Whether an India of scarcity or an America of plentitude, the currency of values can be tested on the anvil of experiences which point towards a human touch, a loving concern, not money or speed, otherwise society will produce fractured personalities (Uma or Arun or Melanie) innocent souls caught in the crossfire between changing values and imposing traditions. The innocent victims of false values seem to be doomed to perennial fasting whereas sycophants, false faces with false values, seem to enjoy everlasting feasting. A soothing touch or loving concern is far more valuable than the most expensive therapy on earth. East or the West, Loving concern is the Test. Mrs. Patton

learns; having reached the apex of speed and luxury, she decides to soar no higher and to slow down, to climb down. But the million-dollar question is: Will people like Mama and Papa learn? Probably no, because their wheel of ambitions has yet to reach the top: they have still other worlds to conquer, and hence they may not relent, condescend or stoop to learn.

The novel is full of delicate, elegant characters who face the ups and downs of life and survive, *Fasting, Feasting* begins with a shawl and tea being packed in India to be sent to Arun in America, and ends with the shawl and tea reaching Arun in America. What hurts the Indian sensibility is the fact that the gifts receive a very cold irritated reception in America. Arun looks at the gifts and passes them on to Mrs. Patton, hoping MamaPapa will never guess what happened to their gifts. Arun looks at the presents.

With its innumerable wrappings of brown paper and string, each bearing the mark of his sister's clumsy and impatient care, providentially catching him at the Patton's before he moves out and back to the campus . . . the parcel contains a large packet of tea and a brown wool shawl, both calculated to help him through the coming winters what has been not calculated is that he has no extra space for them in his suitcase. . . . He picks up the box of tea in one hand, the folded shawl in the other. One is heavy, the other light, one is hard the other soft. A lop sided gift. He holds them, trying to find the balance. (Desai 229)

He finds no balance, neither does he understand the concern behind the gifts. He reacts to the calculations made to catch him. "Providentially" He finds the gift "lopsided--he craves balance. What Anita Desai aims for is also a balance between the East-West ethos. The gift is sent by MamaPapa and reaches Mrs. Patton. She is touched by the gifts "Why, Ahroon," she stammers,

"this is just beautiful. Thank you, thank you," she repeats and puts her hands too her neck to hold the ends of the shawl together (Desai 231).

When Arun opens out the shawl, he experiences something quite uncanny. "An aroma arises from it, of another land; muddy, greasy, smoky, ashen. It swamps him like a river, or like a fire" (Fasting, Feasting 231). Arun's reaction is not of love for one's land, as though a frightening familiarity threatens to catch and, subdue him again. Why, one wonders, does Arun react like this- he is a beloved son of devoted parents. The answer is in the lopsided aspect of this love. Their love has stopped him from growing and being himself. He has always felt controlled by them. His liberty is valuable to him whatever he does with it. So the gift does not please him. He feels he is being pursued even here. Their arranging for his stay with Patton's had also made him feel that he was controlled remotely. Passing the gift on to Mrs. Patton, he relieves himself of the invisible bondage. With the shawl wrapped around her, Mrs. Patton feels the warmth of India. The couple, MamaPapa, swinging in the veranda. In India will never know of the warmth felt by Mrs. Patton, sitting alone in the porch halfway round the world. The novel attempts to recommend adaption and humanly concern. To make the world a better place. The shawl wraps both the families together. The one in the East and the other in the west. The affinity between the opening and closing scene shows the unique bonding together of scenes, theme, plot and characters.

Anita Desai's sensitive handling of characters gives us a sympathetic insight into her characters, who are real life and blood people, We look deep into the likes of Uma, Aruna, MamaPapa, Mrs. Patton, Melanie and Rod. The swing on which MamaPapa sit, the river that flows by are permanent binding rhythmic forces behind the drama of events before us.

Chapter four

Narrative Techniques

The word "technique" is derived from Greek word "techniko techno" meaning an art. Technique in fiction includes almost everything that goes into making the novel. Simplistically speaking, technique includes everything that the novelist uses for narrating his story. The foregoing study of the theme and technique in the novel of Anita Desai leads us to draw certain inferences. The aspects of theme and technique in Anita Desai's novels are not isolated elements. They are inter-related at many levels of structure and texture. In order to convey her theme, the novelist judiciously uses character, situation, dialogues, and other element in relation to the plot. Desai's experiments with non-traditional materials and technique give her a distinct position among the Indian English novelists. Her fondness for quotes from various writers serves a definite purpose. Desai's style or technique of delivering the thematic thrust is the vital agent. Language is the main element of her narrative style. Her use of language and dialogues is one of the features of her artistically conceived novels. In different novels Desai has adopted different narrative strategies in keeping with the demands of her themes. In all her novels, Anita Desai uses the memories of the past as a method of evaluating the individual's relationship with the present. Nostalgia thus becomes a narrative technique in her novels. The journey backwards is both a medium of self-knowledge and a mechanism to confront the harsh reality. Her protagonists are caught in adult life and it is from a particular stage in their life that they try to relate their past to their present.

Images have always played a prominent role in Anita Desai's fiction. Right from her maiden novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), to her latest published work, *The Zigzag Way* (2004), imagery has continued to colour the mindscape of Desai's characters, providing a multiplicity of

meaning frequently ironic-lending additional momentum to the central denouement in her works and ensuring over-all tonal impact in the respective novels. For instance, sexual overtones are suggested through a powerful employment of animal imagery in Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*; desolation, desertion and destruction through fiery imagery in *Fire on the Mountain*; an overweening sense of escapism and alienation through the forceful, outlandish image of an island in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and post-war devastation and existentialist isolation, indelibly underlined through the journey motifs in *Baumgartner 's Bombay* and *The Journey to Ithaca*. Desai's use of metaphor in *Fasting, Feasting* 'swing'. As self-conscious tools of craftsmanship, deliberately employed in the novel.

In *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) she examines family life in two contrasting cultures and draws two different worlds-Indian and American. Appropriately the novel is divided into two parts. The novel is a third-person narrative. The omniscient narrator 'shows' as well as 'tells' while projecting the themes. Desai does not use the chronological narration. In this novel Desai uses quotes from the Bible, Hindu devotional songs, American catchphrases frequently to lend local colour to her narrative. These enable her to capture the very spirit of the atmosphere she wants to create. Thus language is an important component of Desai's narrative design in this novel. She uses it adroitly as a tool to serve her thematic purpose and project her vision. Through the technique of contrast Desai builds up images of two worlds, in every sense poles apart. Melanie who is cloyed with rich food is obviously intended to be a foil for Uma who hardly gets to eat any delicacies. While Melanie "feasts", Uma obviously "fasts". Uma is shackled by traditions and obligations but Melanie is free as a bird. These contrasts are, however, merely superficial. Deep down, they are both famished. Fasting and feasting, as Arun learns, are merely the two sides of the same coin. *Fasting, Feasting* is a carefully balanced novel of contrasts: between foods; between Indian family

life and American family life; as well as between East and West in a broader sense, between lack and excess; and, between lack of ambition (for Uma and Melanie) and too much ambition (for Arun and Rod). But, what the novel ultimately reveals are the similarities rather than the differences.

Anita Desai portrays the plain girl Uma in direct contrast to the naughty and fashionable girl Aruna. Uma serves her parents throughout her life; works according to the finger-hints of her parents and sacrifices her own ambitions at the feet of her mama-papa. She can't attend even a tea party according to her own wish. On the other hand, Aruna was somewhat more stylish than Uma. At fourteen, she revolted against the blue cotton tunic and white hair ribbons. Ribbons were replaced with little shiny plastic clips and clasps. She took her time, showed her reluctance to decide, played choosy but made the wisest choice of the most handsome and the richest man for marriage while Uma had dismayed failed to make the good marriage. Everything was of her choice- the reception hall, jewellery, dancing music, cocktail party, elaborate sarees, and groom's Maharaja's style turban. Her married life was also like a dream because her husband Arvind had a job in Bombay, bought a flat in Juhu, facing the beach. She became fonder of makeup. Thus it is a contrast presented by Desai between Uma, the plain older daughter and ambitious and successful sister Aruna. One enjoys life fully before and after marriage and another sacrifices her life at the feet of her God-like parents serving them throughout her life.

One of the most distinctive parts of Desai's technique is her lyricism. She is often considered as a lyrical novelist as the language used by Desai is of special type. She quotes poems after poems in her novels and words come as spontaneously from her pen as music from a musical instrument. Poetry has been used by Desai as a fictional technique right from the beginning of her career as an author. Her lyrical language often separates her from other Indian-English writers.

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. 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. Her novels are based on the texture of a rich and splendid medley of images which is functional rather than decorative. These images don't conflict or contradict each other but are in perfect harmony and accord with the nature of the character's alienation. Zoological, metrological and colour images add to the aesthetic beauty and textural density of her novels. Her images give poetic colouring to the problems of her alienated self. Anita Desai uses various techniques to make her work impressive. One of the most important parts of her style is to use stream of consciousness technique. Desai makes frequent use of flashback technique recalling the past happenings and experiences. Her success in making use of techniques isn't on the same level in all her novels but there are obvious limitations. When there is stream of consciousness, there is lack of actions. It enables the quality of a given state of mind to be investigated so completely by means of pursuing their end that we don't need to wait for time to make the potential actual before we can see the whole.

Perhaps the most memorable metaphor employed in the novel under study, is that of the "the swinging" of the parents. The action in the novel. Though using a third person narrative. The imagery of the swing in the novel has multiple significance. First of all, it defines the gregarious relationship of the parents: the ever-inseparable father and mother, exemplified in the coinage "MamaPapa," frequently mentioned in the work: MAMAANDPAPA. MamaPapa. PapaMama. It

was hard to believe they had ever had separate existences, that they had been separate entities and not MamaPapa in one breath (Fasting, Feasting 5). The swing also suggests a to-and-fro movement which precludes the possibility of any other kind of creative dynamism, like in an automobile, which could take them any further, from the immediate scene. Like the phonal and the antiphonal verbal combination in the very phrases, MamaPapa" and "PapaMama," the swing suggests not only a fixity of relationships but a stasis in respect of the collective relationship they bear to the world. In short, the swing connotes a deceptive dynamism, as what it can offer is little more than a dynamic stasis, surely an ironic, paradoxical paradigm. Even more significantly, the swing is essentially something of a toy, primarily meant to delight only children. In the novel, however, it is precisely the children who are not associated with the swing, thereby underlining certain essential or latent immaturity and lack of development on the part of Uma's parents. It also powerfully suggests a reversal of roles as far as the parents and children involved, are concerned.

Perhaps the only moment of joy Uma experiences in her youth is the fleeting hours she spends with Ramu. The harmony they strike in their attitudes towards each other are conveyed through a kind of echoing verbal harmony as in the following instance: "Oh, Ramu-bhai," she hiccups, you are so-o fun-ee! "I am so fun-ee," (Fasting, Feasting 51). He sings the line, improvising to the tune of "My Darling Clementine". I am a bunn-ee. "Ramu!" Uma squeals, spluttering into her glass. "Hop, hop, hop!" warbles Ramu, making his fingers dance backwards. "Funny bunny, funny bunny". Uma is choking with laughter. She has laughed so much, she has tears in her eyes (Fasting, Feasting 51). It should be noted here that aural imagery is intentionally employed by the novelist on this occasion, as the phrases hiccups," "sings, 'squeals,' warbles' and sings' again-all pertain to a certain boisterous kind of harmony above the daily tenor of life the youth involved here find, in each other's company. If Uma's joy in the company of Ramu is

conveyed through a celebrative metaphor of music and dancing, Mira-masi's bliss in the divine presence is communicated through a similar imagery in the novel. The swing figures almost like a leitmotif in the novel, for it figures at all the most significant contexts in the narrative. At one point, Aruna's indecisive, restless state of mind is conveyed Anita Desai through the metaphor of the swing: "Aruna simply swung her foot, toyed with her braid and rippled with an inner momentum"(Fasting, Feasting 72). Yet the swing is a symbol, standing for union and harmony, however fleeting the moment of such unions may be. It stands for the harmony 'MAMAANDPAPA.'" In a rare moment, after having failed to make it in marriage twice, Uma collapses on the lap of her mother in the swing, in the absence of her father, and finds a fleeting moment of solace and acceptance.

While, on the one hand, the post-1990 Indian English fiction has made significant progress in the direction. Of occupying a commendable place in the post-colonial Literature, on the other hand, it has gained considerable range and depth in the thematic as well as technical explorations. Apart from the various technical innovations and new thematic use, it is the variety of approaches and experimental modes that have added new dimension to the Indian English fiction. Anita Desai have been immensely successful in creating new images in their latest works. *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), Desai's latest novel marks a departure from all her earlier major works. Perhaps she intends to make it altogether a different work from all her earlier novels. Much of the elements like the deep psychological insight into her characters, the neuro-psychic analysis and the serious reactions of her woman characters against the unacceptable situations are completely missing. The first striking feature of the novel is that the plot is laid bare in the most simple and lucid manner without any trace of complexity. It appears a simple long story in a straightforward narrative structure.

The novel, thus, has the plot laid in the simplest mode and the language has clarity and vividness as a result of which words twinkle like the clear and crystal ring of telephone. The entire narrative structure is built in concrete words which are mostly monosyllabic with simple diction and precise description. The narrative becomes all the more clear and excitingly moving when Mrs. Desai comes to reveal the excitement of the father at the birth of their much desired and much expected son.

Arriving home, however, he sprang out of the car, raced into the house and shouted the news to whoever was there to hear. Servants, elderly relatives, all gathered at the door, and then saw the most astounding sight of their lives-Papa, in his elation, leaping over three chairs in the hall one after the other, like a boy playing leap-frog, his arms flung up in the air and his hair flying. 'A boy!' he screamed, a bo-oy! Arun, Arun at last!' It turned out that when a second daughter had been born, the name Arun had already been chosen in anticipation of a son. It had had to be changed in disappointment, to Aruna (Fasting, Feasting 17). There is obviously something in the language that goes deep in mind of the readers like a lump of lead into the water. Much like her use of language, Desai's art of characterisation is made through the same vivid and lucid structure of her language. What strikes most in her presentation of characters is the fact that each one of the characters appears alive and intimate; they appear full-blooded and living like the figures on screen and this is achieved chiefly through her language. Apart from the clarity of language, it is the device of contrast of time, situation and characters that adds to the structural organization of the novel.

Being a subjective and psychological novelist, she is often forced to peep in the inner recesses of the psyche rather than in the outer spectacle of the world. She is more occupied with somber than the frivolous side of life. An undercurrent of irony, satire and sarcasm often surfaces in the pages of her novels and speak of their minimal presence in the artist's genius. In her moral

and psychological preoccupation her talent comes close to that of George Eliot. She developed the art of psychological novels in Indian writing in English. Life is all motion and all motion leads to destruction, so the source which activates human beings also destroys them. All the characters in the novels are striving towards a proper vocation. She develops her own unique style and technique still this gifted genius had various problems and difficulties in getting her novels published in the beginning years. Thus my paper has clearly shown almost all the distinctive and touching techniques, features and characteristics found in the novels of Anita Desai.

Chapter five

Summation

The first chapter Introduction, opens with review on Indian Literature, and the origins, works achievement of the Indian author, Anita Desai. Indian writes have been making great contribution to the literary world at national and international level. They focused on Indian culture, tradition, race, politics and self-identity. Many Indian writers have made their own place in the world literature. Today Indian writing in English has to be viewed in a global context. Indian fiction in English emerged out of almost 8 to 9 decades. Harvesting of novel has been begun in 1930s with great writers R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. They were followed by new generation novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rashid, Geeta Mehta, Anita Desai, Shobha De and Arundhati Roy. They explored various subjects. All of them have earned considerable fame for their fictional contribution. Indian women novelists explored female subjectivity to establish an identity. Out of them Anita Desai is one of the prominent Indian women novelists in English. She is one of the most popular, world famous and best novelists. She has enriched Indian fictions at large. She holds a unique place among Indian writers in English. The entry of Anita Desai gives the birth of an era which promises a new deal for Indian English fiction. She is foremost Indian novelists of post-independence era. She is one of the most prominent writers in Indian English. Anita Desai is very popular and sensitive novelist in India. Her popularity can be seen the increasing number of researchers taking up critical studies of her works in the universities in India and abroad. She is an honorary fellow at the University of Cambridge. She has been a fellow of Royal Society of Literature in London. She has been an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is often considered as a psychological novelist and a feminist she deals with the major themes of self –identity, isolation, inner struggle, man woman relationship

marital discord, lack of communication and mental problems of women which lead them towards insecurity. The female characters are unsatisfied, unhappy, with failures and frustration. They try to escape from their cages and in the process get themselves mentally bruised. Female characters in her novels are chief protagonist. Her treatment of female characters, her feminist approach, analysis of gender sexuality and subjectivity are seen in most of her novels. In this respect her novels are different from other Indian novelists: Nayantara Sehgal, Kamala Markandaya or Ruth Jhabvala who concerned with politics East West encounters and traditions. Desai's concern is with psychic life of her characters.

The second chapter Feminist perspective deals with the alienation, sufferings and agonies of women. Anita Desai is post independent feminist writer who occupies a unique place in the history of Indian English fiction. She has been immensely successful in creating new images in her works from a feminist perspective. The transformative power of Anita Desai's novel lies in her taking up the task of revealing the process of self-awareness at work in feminine psyches. The novel *Fasting, Feasting* focuses on a sense of deep rooted pathos over the plight of mankind and particularly women. The novel deals with a very sensitive story depicting the human values through her characters, namely, Uma, Aruna, Arun and the Patton family. Anita Desai presents woman as an embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge in *Fasting, Feasting*. *Fasting, Feasting* of Anita Desai are basically female oriented. She probes into their problems, be it of a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother or a wife. Her female figure appears as a victim in a patriarchal, patrilineal and father dominated Indian family. Anita Desai depicts the Indian woman as a fighter, a victim, a heroine and in later novels ultimately a winner because of her indomitable spirit and attitude of compromise. She has portrayed both kinds of women – those who are symbols of growth and change, those who are powerful means of withdrawal, regression,

decay, death and distraction. She declares that a woman is a being. She is not an appendage a subordinate of man. Rather she is an autonomous being, capable of trial and error, finding her own way to salvation. We come across such women figures in the novels by Anita Desai, who are consciously trying to come to terms with themselves as individuals. Their voice is now gradually becoming audible and there is definitely a protest in their own voice. There is a clear tone of resentment and a pressing demand for freedom from traditional fetters which have been imposed on them and their gender.

The third chapter focuses on Character, Anita Desai's sensitive handling of characters gives us a sympathetic insight into her characters. *Fasting, Feasting* is a feast of characters and stories. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Desai's fiction is lively description of the agony of her female protagonist. Whatever they feel in their heart appears like a picture before our eyes. Anita Desai not only portrays the pen-portrait of her protagonist's emotions and feelings but she gives the lively description of the events in the novel. Her use of lively words, solid action, visual images arrest the mind as if it were in a painting. As the scene of exploitation over Anamika has been given live description by the author in *Fasting Feasting*. So far as the characterization of Desai is concerned, it is unique. Her characters are neurotic females, highly sensitive but sequestered in a world of dream and imagination and alienated from the surroundings with consequence of their failure or unwillingness to adjust with the reality. Her characters build a large spectrum. A writer's mind is unfolded to the readers gradually with the progress of dealing with psychological aspects of characters has to employ a certain design by which the inner working of the protagonist's narrative. Her each character is the representative of her ideology that is suffering woman struggling for her identity. Her women are from every class and age of society. She grasps the glimpse of her age in her characters. Hence, Anita Desai is expert in her character- delineation.

One is reminded of Anita Desai's Characteristic way of making her internally turbulent protagonists find expression through association with external surroundings.

The chapter four Narrative Techniques deals with different techniques used by Anita Desai. 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. 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. Her novels are based on the texture of a rich and splendid medley of images which is functional rather than decorative. Thus language is an important component of Desai's narrative design in this novel. She uses it adroitly as a tool to serve her thematic purpose and project her vision. Through the technique of contrast Desai builds up images of two worlds, in every sense poles apart.

The chapter five summation, sum up the previous chapters. The title of the novel is contradictory highlighting the two characters Uma and Melanie. Both the characters suffer and long for freedom. Fasting refers to Uma who is deprived of her education, failure in marriage and sacrifices her life for her MamaPapa. Melanie on the other hand is a spoilt child leading a life of plentiful. Feasting refers to this character who feasts on food only to bring it out. Her frustration towards life and longing to get freed is beautifully deprived with love, care in abundance but it only chokes him. He longs for freedom and leaves to America only to be got trapped in another hand from MamaPapa to Mrs Patton.

All the characters in the novel are victim in a way or the other. They feel entrapped either at home or abroad. They long for freedom which could be got only from the society. The stigma and taboos of them the desired freedom.

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Reconstructing Identity: Akhila as a 'new woman' in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements

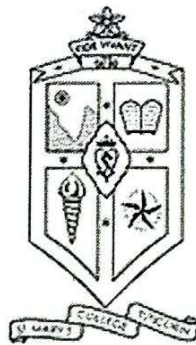
For the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

Bill Tony Lauret S.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN05)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

April 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Reconstructing Identity: Akhila as a 'new woman' in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*** 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 and is a work done by Bill Tony Lauret S. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director

Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Reconstructing Identity: Akhila as a 'new woman' in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



Bill Tony Lauret S.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Reconstructing Identity: Akhila as a 'new woman' in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*** analyses the struggle undergone by the protagonist, Akhila in the constructive patriarchal society

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with Indian women writers and their emergence. A short biography of Anita Nair and the general characteristics of her works are discussed.

The second chapter explores **Memory and Narrative** as a collusive strategy in Anita Nair's novel *Ladies Coupe*, which helps in development of the plot.

The third chapter **Victimization of Womanhood** portrays the subjugation of woman characters, both major and minor, in the novel *Ladies Coupe*. Patriarchy plays a major role in victimizing woman.

The fourth chapter **Re-Constructing the 'Self'** brings out the thirst of the characters in the novel for a radical change in the conservative patriarchal society. It shows the reconstructed identity of Akhila as a new woman.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Literature stands for the best possible verbal representation of real-world feelings, emotions and passions. The glory of civilization is well reflected in literature. The Vedas highlight the glorious era of Indian history from early writings. Literature is treasured from our ancestor's past; without it, we are unable to define the fascinating presentation. So, without literature, we are unable to express life. According to Thomas Huxley, Books are the currency of literature, but only the counters of science. The books that have been written in English are simply listed chronologically as English literature. Without considering the author, we cannot think of a book.

The growth of English literature contributed to the development of the novel, an extended narrative in prose fiction. Novel was not very common in early English literature; it was a pleasure reserved for the royal classes. Consequently, the significant contributions of outstanding literary artists led to the widespread and universal accessibility of novels.

Novels did not initially exist in the current form that we see them today. In *A Short History of the English Novel*, Diana Neill writes that,

The English novel, like the English language is a rich and flexible instrument which had developed casually through the centuries, making its own laws, breaking them, borrowing from abroad, now here now there, absorbing every fresh idea, rarely jettisoning an old one, and branching out afresh at the whim of every master hand which has gone to its shaping (16)

The word novel originated from the Italian word, 'novella' which was a short tale in prose. The development of novel also owes much to the picaresque narrative which was another important forerunner of novel. In novella only a story was narrated and later on with the emergence of picaresque narrative in 16th century Spain, the story was presented in the form of episodes. The most important instance of picaresque narrative is *Gil Bias* by the Frenchman Le Sage.

The novel took shape the way it does today only recently in English history. It first appeared in England in the early 18th century. Daniel Defoe published *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 and *Moll Flanders* in 1722. These are the only two novels that are recognized as the first true novels of incident, despite the fact that both of them were based on the model of picaresque narratives. The actual book was written by Richardson and Fielding. The English novel's founder, Richardson is known for his novel *Pamela*. The novelists of the eighteenth century were unaware of the more subtle implications and virtually endless potential of their form.

There has been a lot of debate about the definition of novel, and numerous academics have provided various definitions. Samuel Johnson's definition of novel is the easiest and most straightforward one. He described a novel as 'just, a small tale, generally of love' in his Dictionary from 1755. However, this definition did not fit the characteristics of novels, which were later taken more seriously and gained popularity by almost completely replacing long verse narratives. The definition given in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is much close to the characteristic of the novel as it says: "A fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity" (361).

Despite the novel's late arrival in literature, it took off quickly and blossomed in the second half of the 19th century. The novel met the demands and needs of a middle-class society and accurately depicted the various social, historical and regional conditions. As commercial circulating libraries gained popularity in the eighteenth century, professional novelists gradually had more opportunities, and today's public library system provides readers with simple access to novels.

A story, whether made up or true, has always been the foundation of a novel. People can't help but read stories because they are a source of enjoyment for all ages and historical periods. Even though it is based on a fictional story, a novel deepens our understanding of life's realities. A novel provides a vivid representation of a particular aspect of life. The novel's depiction of life broadens our comprehension of it and improves our ability to make judgments. It also highlights the value of close relationships, the need to feel and share other's suffering and joy, and the discovery of one's true self. The novels which tell us about realities of human experience are George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Henry James's *Portrait of a lady*, William Golding's *Lord of Flies*, Graham Green's *The Heart of the Matter* and so on.

The novel gained popularity as soon as it was published in the west, but what is even more surprising is that Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Raja Mohan's wife*, his debut book, was also a success in India. An Indian novel can be identified by the way it very naturally and without any deliberate artistic intent, captures the spirit of being Indian. Despite the fact that British writers occasionally wrote about India, their works were far less accomplished than those of their Indian counterparts because they did not express any sense of Indianness or the Indian spirit in their writing.

Both in English and in India, the circumstances that contributed to the rise of the novel were remarkably similar. The novel as a literary form dates back to the 18th century in England, and the impact of western culture on India led to significant changes in the social, economic, political, and literary spheres. K.S. Ramamurti rightly says in the book, *The Rise of the Indian Novel in English* that,

The social conditions as well as intellectual climate which favoured the rise of the novel in eighteenth century England had not been very much different from those which favoured the phenomenon in nineteenth century India. (21)

In eighteenth century India, a focus on education led to the opening of more and more schools, the education of women, the emergence of periodicals and journals, and the development of prose as a powerful form of expression. Similar political changes, such as the establishment of a stable government, led to numerous social reforms in nineteenth-century India.

Along with Lord William Bentick's initiatives, the high-spirited reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy also worked to awaken society. The treasure of English literature has become more valuable with the inclusion of Indian literature. The Ramayana and Mahabharata, two of Indian literature's greatest epics, can be compared to Homer, the great Greek poet, and his epics *Odyssey* and *Illiad*, represent the oldest tradition of storytelling. The Puranas are not only the oldest but also the greatest epics in all of literature from India.

The emergence of prose and the appearance of journals and periodicals in the majority of Indian languages were the factors leading to the rise of the novel in India between 1818 and 1850. The rise of the novel in India was not a sudden event; rather, it was the result of a long process that involved numerous changes throughout the

nation's history. The first novel in India in Bengali was, *AlaterGharerDulal* by Pyari Chand Mitra, was great forerunner of Indian social novel. The worth of Indian novels as a medium for promoting female education can be very rightly judged by the words of Jasbir Jain who rightly observed in the book, *Feminizing the Political Discourse Women and the Novel in India (1857-1905)*:

Several novels of Bankim Chandra and his counterparts contain references to women characters writing letters or reading letter giving indication of a level of literacy which should encourage the development of the novel. The novelist has often targeted a female audience whether it is for the purpose of moral education. Conduct or entertainment like Mitra there were other who began writing initially for a female readership. (81)

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, a Bengali-language novelist and poet, is credited with writing the first Indian novel in English. After publishing *Raja Mohan's Wife*, he only wrote Bengali novels, but Bankim is still well-known today as K.S. Ramamurti points out in his book, *Rise of Indian Novel in English*,

He is remembered even today as the father of Bengali Novel and as the first Indian to write a novel in English. His *Raja Mohan's Wife* was the first and only English novel he wrote and it appeared as a serial in the Indian field of 1964. (p. 39)

The novel *Govinda Samanta* by Lai Behari Day is thought to be more important because it introduced the shift from romance to formal realism, even though Bankim's work technically introduced the genre 'novel' in India.

The emergence of women novelists was a significant event not only in India but also in western nations because it signaled the start of a time when women were

promised a new life of their own. The identity that women had lost in a society dominated by men is sought to be restored by women in their own writings as Simone de Beauvoir rightly observes in *The Second Sex* :

The women of today are in a faire way to dethrone the myth of femininity: they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways, but they do not succeed in living completely the life of human beings. (28)

Both in India and in western nations, male authors despised women novelists. Because they portrayed women in their writings as inferior and unimportant. Male writers failed to recognize the value and talent of a woman as a writer. Women writers gained respectability over time as a result of literature's acceptance of them. Women authors produced a large body of work that was feminized and displayed their creative brilliance to the world. Women novelists made a significant contribution to the growth of the novel as a form of self-expression because it was only through them that women's experiences could enter literature.

Similar to other countries, India's unfavourable social conditions—which did not improve despite the constant efforts of social reformers—and a lack of educational opportunities led women writers to take up the fight for the emancipation of women, in their hands as K.S. Ramamurti points out in *The Women Novelists* :

The battle for emancipation was not over and this battle was taken over by a few educated women themselves who, in their effort to communicate to the world their own bitter experiences as women as well as their ideas of social reform turned writers. (63)

Indian women have started to realize how inferior they are as the feminist movement grows in the west. The major Indian feminist writers are Anita Desai,

Anita Nair, Gita Hariharan, Kamala Das, Kamla Markandaya, Nayantara Sehgal, Namitak Gokhale, Manju Kapoor and Attia Hossain. Through their novels, they have done remarkable good for womanhood. Indian feminist authors have taken on the challenge of portraying women as the undervalued group in society.

Anita Nair is a well-known Indian author of English. She was born in Kerala in Mundakottakurissi, close to Shornur, on January 26, 1966. She wrote her first book, a collection of short stories titled *Satyr of the Subway*, while serving as the creative director of an advertising agency in Bangalore. She later sold the book to Har-Anand Press. The Virginia Centre for Creative Arts awarded her a fellowship in recognition of the book.

Nair's second book was released by Penguin India and was the first work by an Indian author to be published by Picador USA. Her books have been released internationally in a number of languages. Her books *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe* have been translated into 21 different languages, and she is a best-selling poet and writer of fiction. Before moving back to Kerala, she received her education in Chennai. There, she received a bachelor's degree in English language and literature. She resides in Bangalore with her husband and son. *Mistress*, her most recent book, is from Black Amber.

Nair is one of India's outstanding female writers. She uses wit and humour to expose the conditions of women. Her books, articles, and cookbooks cover every aspect of female life. Anita Nair, in contrast to many other Indian authors who have achieved success in the west. She not only resides in India but also has her books published there.

Nair is widely regarded as an effective practitioner of fiction genre among the various Indian authors who write in English. *The Better Man* (1999), *Ladies Coupe*

(2001), and *Mistress* (2005) are some of her well-known works. Vivid language and descriptions, in her novels captivate the reader. She is, without a doubt, one of the best writers in English today, and she is well-known throughout the world. Her poem was included in an anthology in 1992, which was her first publication. She has been consistently publishing for the past seven years. She regularly contributes to the Times of India and a number of other magazines. Among Nair's early commercial works were pieces she penned in the late 90's for the Bangalore Monthly Magazine (now called "080" Magazine) in a column titled "The Economical Epicurean".

As a novelist, she is more interested in the inner lives of people than in the social life they participate. In other words, she tends to prefer presenting psychologically defined characters which focuses on social and political issues. She depicts typical middle-class Indian families carrying on with traditional ways of life. Majority of her works highlight the struggle that Indian women face in maintaining their sense of individuality as women while tackling the complexity of contemporary Indian culture from a female perspective.

Nair's first published work is *Satyr of the Subway & Eleven Other Stories*, published in 1997, is a collection of short stories. It is a short story collection published by Alka Paperbacks, India and sold to Philippe Picquier France, NeriPozza Italy and Swiat Poland.

The Better Man, Nair's first novel has also been published in Europe and USA in 2000. It announces the arrival of a major new talent. This is a debut novel of uncommon sophistication, written with remarkable ease and restraint and rich in social detail. It demonstrates great strength and style and is rich in sensuality, myth, and metaphor. It tells the tale of a man who, upon reaching retirement age, is compelled by circumstances to return to his ancestral home. He rejoins his tyrannical

father, whom he ran away from so quickly and far, and whom he holds responsible for his unsuccessful life. Nair follows this man's psychological and physical journey to a final, life-affirming but destructive act with tempo, humour, and a vivid evocation of contemporary India. A long-repressed man learns in this passionate but introspective tale that the respect of others is useless if you don't respect yourself. Anita Nair has proved her mettle by fathoming the deepest recesses of man's psyche and pulling it out neatly on the surface. *The Better Man* is reflective of the moral fiber of society. Besides being a statement of courage, it is a victory of human will over human experiences.

Nair's second novel *Ladies Coupe* (2001), has turned out to be an even greater success than her first. She puts a question here, 'can a woman stay single and be happy, or does a woman need a man to feel complete?' It is the story of a women's search for strength and independence. In 2002, it was elected as one of the five best books of the year in India. It is about women's conditions in a male dominated society, told with great insight, solidarity and humour.

Nair is the most promising writer and a force to be reckoned with. She has established an audience for herself with her second book. Her second novel, *Ladies Coupe*, is even better than her first, *The Better Man*. *Ladies Coupe* is women-centric novel without taking a feministic tone. She handles characters with flexibility, while gently guiding and prodding them to tell their own story; never controlling them - *The Better Man* has a male protagonist and a man's worldview, whereas *Ladies coupe* has a female protagonist and a woman's worldview.

Nair's poetry collection, *Malabar Mind* was published in 2002. Landscapes and mindscapes are explored with a rare fluid ease in Nair's debut collection of poems, *Malabar Mind*. This collection of poems, which was written over a decade, covers a

wide range of topics, including love, failure, humour, irony, lust, hope, and anguish, as well as beaches, crows, bus journeys and hospitals.

Where the *Rain is Born - Writing about Kerala* (2003), is a collection of poem, which Nair has edited. This anthology offers a tantalising glimpse into the rich and varied layers of experience that Kerala has to offer through a combination of essays, short stories, poems, and extracts from published works in both English and Malayalam, including enduring favorites like Chemmeen and The Legends of Khasak.

Set in God's own country, her novel *Mistress* (2005) tells the tale of entangled lives through the prism of the navarasas, or the nine emotions. Here, kathakali plays a significant role. Every chapter, which is based on a single emotion, and deals withwith a lovely description of the emotion's portrayal and its subtler nuances. She bases this book on a Kathakali performance. The thrills and tribulations of racial overstretch and migratory problems serve to highlight the richness of Koman's backstory, whose emotional texture is sensuous as well as sorrowful. This story is filled with detailed descriptions of mythical tales, facial expressions, and Kathakali positions. Without having to look away from the page, the reader learns about and participates in the dance. The reader receives knowledge of a magical art form from *Mistress*.

Akhila, the main character in *Ladies Coupe* and an unmarried woman in her forties, awakens one day with a 'fight-or-flight' mentality. She travels from Bangalore to Kanyakumari in a train's ladies coupe(a separate, second-class section that was present on the majority of overnight Indian trains until 1998). She took on the role of family head after her father's demise many years ago. She has given up her desires in order to provide for her family's needs and wants as a breadwinner and martyr.

Akhila is about to board a lengthy train trip for an unspecified reason when we first meet her. She is a 45-year-old working single woman with a precarious status in Indian society. The other women in Akhila's coupe are initially interested in her situation but, as time goes on and she shares more about her life, they begin to question whether or not a husband would make her life complete.

Each woman shares their own tale of childhood and marriage, including grim circumstances that highlight lost liberties and unfulfilled love, as their train chugs through the Indian countryside. There is no overall ladies coupe; rather, there is a separate female-only carriage on trains. Women who are either travelling alone or in silence prefer this compartment because it is secure and quiet.

The protagonist, Akhila, decides to travel in a women's coupe to learn more about herself. She comes from a traditional Brahmin family. She held a position as a tax clerk. Her development from a girl to a woman is narrated in this book. She was the oldest, of her four siblings. Except her, all of her siblings got married. Her younger sister Padma lives with her because, in Padma's opinion, a woman should never be left alone lest she wander off. Akhila desires a solitary existence.

Janaki, a fellow traveller in ladies coupe, has been married for 40 years out of the six women. Her husband is totally dedicated to her. She talks to Akhila about her wedding day, daily activities, and boredom from being married for so long. She talks to Akhila about her relatives, her arguments with her son, who appears to have teamed up with his wife's family, and her current predicament.

Sheela is a teenager who is young. After her maternal grandmother passed away, she is returning home. She is pleased that her suffering was ended by death. Sheela shares stories about her Ammamma, or grandmother, with the women.

Margaret Shanti is a chemistry teacher. She makes chemical comparison to people. She is married to the principal of the school she teaches in. Her marriage was based on love. Her husband persuaded her to have an abortion when she became pregnant. Their relationship started to become stressful at this point. Margaret's husband was a strict enforcer of rules at the school, and his students feared him. Margaret, on the other hand, was sympathetic and enthusiastic. They fought over their opposing points of view. Margaret's husband was constantly criticizing her. She ultimately decides to exact justice. She manipulates him into increasing his intake, abandoning his diet and conscious lifestyle, and ultimately turning him into a food hog. He sags, moves slowly, and loses control of the situation. Margaret is at peace with herself now after having done all this.

Forty-year-old Prabha Devi has a son and a daughter. Her father initially opposed her being born, but he eventually came to accept it. Her mother made sure that she had a flawless home. At the age of 18 she was married to Jagdeesh. She and her husband took a trip to New York. She was left dumbfounded at the confidence of the western women. She made the decision to update her appearance. She began putting on western attire, including high heels. However, her husband's friend has started making advances towards her because of her modern appearance. Prabha Devi was utterly terrified. She shrouded herself and withdrew. She resumed wearing her saree, awaiting the arrival of her husband, and giving birth to her kids. Life resumed being monotonous. She makes the decision one day to reinvent herself now that her kids are adults. She picked up swimming, which gave her more self-assurance. She underwent a complete transformation.

Marrikolanthu was raised in a low-income household. She and her mother turned to the chettiar, a wealthy man, for additional help after her father's demise. Her

mother worked in the kitchen and was entrusted with raising Sujata Akka's son, the grandson of the chettiar. Marrikolanthu was a young child at the time. Sujata Akka began to love her as time went on, and she occasionally received small gifts as a result. She developed into a young lady. She was raped one day by the Chettiar's relative. Sujata Akka felt bad for her but was powerless to help. Mariakolanthu discovered she was pregnant. She tries to have an abortion before starting a new job as a servant. Her mother's illness and other factors have forced her to accept work with the chettiars once more. Sujata Akka, who was extremely lonely, needed her a lot. She finally accepted her son after her mother passed away.

Akhila speaks in the novel's final section. She believes she can survive on her own. Nobody is necessary for her. As she listens to the women's stories, she is drawn into the most private moments of their lives. The protagonist of *Ladies Coupe* is Akhila, who is dissatisfied with her life because she sacrificed her youth to care for her mother, younger sister, and two younger brothers after the untimely death of her father. Even though she has protected everyone's lives around her, she continues to be single, unmarried, abused, and frustrated. The rest of the story revolves around the impact of the five women in Akhila's life as she purchases a ticket to Kanyakumari and finds herself in the ladiescoupe with them. In the end, Akhila is able to resolve a lot of her difficult questions regarding the world of women and social norms.

The title, 'Reconstucting Identity: Akhila as a 'new woman' in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*' defines how the protagonist Akhila wants a radical change in the society which is fully patriarchal. The chapter 'Memory and Narrative' deals with narratology used by Anita Nair in various aspects of Akhila's life, where she looks back into fragments of herself and her life through flasbacks, which serves as a major factor of combining narrative through memory. The chapter 'Victimization of Womanhood'

portrays how the female characters are victimized through the clutches of patriarchal society. The chapter 'Re-constructing the 'Self'' brings out the thirst of women to reconstruct an identity for herself and thereby, the society, through which she gains the identity of new woman.

Chapter 2

Memory and Narrative

Every fiction narrates a story and so every novelist follows his or her own method of form not only in narrating it but also in following it from the beginning to the end. Therefore, the story becomes the basic structure and the way of narrating it is one of the essential parts of the structure. Every fiction has a set pattern as its basis without which no writing, however good it might be, can never be treated as a writing at all. Content and form, being very indispensable parts of this pattern, are essentially connected to each other. Moreover, one becomes incomplete without the other

Every novelist may narrate a story in the first person or in the third person. If it is in the first person, the narrator becomes one of the main characters of the story and as such, the narration becomes subjective. If it is in the third person, the narrator becomes a detached one and he may or may not have any relationship of any kind with the characters of the story. If the third person character happens to be a hero or heroine, or any other character important to the action, it is he or she who narrates what has happened in the past. If he or she is a choral character, he or she provides comments to the happening involving the main characters. However, such a third person narrator need not be the writer himself. This is what Roland Barthes also endorses in *Introduction of Structural Analysis of Narrative*:

The narrator may or may not be one of the characters of the novel. The readers should not get confused by thinking that the narrator is the writer himself. Both the narrator and the character are two different paper beings, which the writer uses as his strategy to tell stories (245).

The novelist selects human life with all its varieties, clothes it with an eternal beauty through his skills of writing and imagination, and provides it with an artistic form for the enjoyment of readers. There are many modern Indian novelists, both men and women, who are good at using different narrative techniques in the narration of their stories and the delineation of their characters.

In *Ladies Coupe*, following Chaucer's example in his *Canterbury Tales*, Anita Nair uses the same narrative technique. Six travellers in a ladies coupe share their painful personal and marital experiences with one another, much like each traveller to Canterbury did. Anita Nair, unlike Chaucer, did not adopt a beginning, middle, and end for the order in which the stories are told. This book is divided into six parts, each of which tells the story of the protagonist Akhila and her fellow passengers as they travel by train to Kanyakumari. Each of the six stories is distinct from the others and is told in the first person by the affected woman and in between each woman's narration Akhila's memories of her life plays a vital role in the decision she took at the last. But the way by which the novelist has made each one narrate their familial and marital tale to the other looks more like the case study of six women than a single story involving all the six women.

Memory, when it appears in the form of what is sometimes referred to as the voice of the past, interacts with, participates in, and ingratiate itself into social and cultural spaces, communities, and even political belief, thought, and ideology trends through a variety of interconnected processes that result in a complex medial and material representation. The relevance of memory, its presence, and the dynamics of its

manifestation and influence in contemporary social and cultural discourses must be examined and understood in order to comprehend the world as it has been and as it is now from this perspective of ‘the past in the present’ or to read it critically. Therefore, special attention is needed to address the growing importance of memory as an academic issue, as a critical category in modern social thought, and as a recurrent theme in current humanities and social science research.

Nair establishes her unique and independent identity against all odds of life by using the narrative technique of Akhila’s memories and those of five female travelling companions. By narrating their experiences and enduring difficult familial and marital situations, the author hopes to give Akhila the courage and confidence she needs to live independently without any obligations. Regarding Anita Nair’s new kind of technique, Mohini Khot in her article “Journey of Self-discovery: The Growth of Akhila in Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*” expresses her view saying that

The novel *Ladies Coupe* not only presents the narratives of other characters but also gives an account of Akhila’s life, pivotal character around which all others get connected with one another. . . . Though the presentation of the narratives is ideal, it looks like very cinematic in technique. It follows flash back, and gives summing up of each woman passenger’s essential familial and marital experience, which is quite commonly seen in the lives of women in contemporary Indian society (16).

The narration starts with Janaki’s family’s situation and ends with Marikolanthu’s story. Anita Nair draws out the truth that a woman’s status is the same everywhere,

married or not, from the stories of all six women. In a patriarchal, traditional, and culturally biased world, it is up to women to make decisions that will benefit them.

Nair begins her novel with the introduction of the protagonist Akhila at night in a railway station with the saying, “this is the way it has always been: the smell of a railway platform at night fills Akhila with a sense of escape” (Nair 1). Akhila is all alone boarding the train leaving for Kanyakumari and the readers are kept in the dark regarding her feeling ‘a sense of escape’. Such a beginning creates interests and anxiety in the readers to know more about Akhila. It is not said why she has boarded the train and why she has come out of her house and taken her railway journey as a kind of escape.

Her bitter familial life is the cause for her escape and it is made known only from her narration to her fellow women travellers in the ladies coupe through her chance of meeting. Akhila, a single woman, sacrificed her personal happiness for the welfare of her entire family. She is a 45-year-old spinster who has never put her own needs before those of her family and their welfare. She was prevented from considering having a married life or a separate family due to her strong sense of duty to her family and her position as the oldest daughter. Although she was in love, she was unable to consider getting married to him, because her lover was younger than her. She moves forward, makes decisions, and is resolute in everything she does. She discusses her family life at work.

In the ladies compartment, the protagonist happens to meet a set of five women who are strangers to one another but who are also sailing in the same life situation to that of Akhila. Not knowing the familial and marital predicament of other women, she begins the story to start moving when she innocently asks them, “I want you to tell me whether you think that a woman without any one to protect her can manage to live her own life

without much” (Nair 6). Instead of answering her directly, each one begin to narrate their own story so that Akhila can listen to it and decide their own course of life accordingly.

Memory, and the recalling of memory, occurs everywhere. It manifests vividly and influences to a great extent many diverse cultural practices and methods of production, in medial organization and representation, visual and aural performance, cultural and public memorabilia, religious observances, ritual commemoration of past events within communities, and even as remnants of counterculture propaganda. As conscious practice, it occurs within bodies of spatial and structural phenomena, even in case of ‘common place’ embodiments of culture like architectural enterprises such as public buildings, plazas, parks, and memorials for that matter, and in pop/street art or graffiti. Memory’s presence in public culture can be observed in the form of commemoration through coin and stamp issue by governmental agencies and as public celebrations and holidays and also in the form of other memorials which may include landmarks or art objects such as sculptures, statues or fountains which embody and monumentalize a particular historical event, or even a specific period of time in the past.

Akhila remembers how lifestyle changed when her father dies, the family’s responsibility falls on her fragile shoulders. While caring for her family, her own needs are shelved and put in cold storage. The narrator elucidates: “When Akhila’s father died, two things happened; Sundays became just another day of the week and Akhila became the man of the family” (Nair 75). She painfully remembers how her mother so easily loaded her with the burdens of the family:

Amma had Akhila to replace her husband as the head of the household. Amma had her Akhila. Akhilandeswari. Mistress of all worlds. Master of none. What

Akhila missed the most was that no one ever called her by her name any more. Her brothers and sisters had always called her Akka. Elder sister. At work, her colleagues called her madam. All women were madam and all men sir. And Amma had taken to addressing her as Ammadi [...] So who was Akhilandeswari? Did she exist at all? If she said, what was her identity? (Nair 84).

It is in this hazy and misty blur of self-confusing thoughts that Akhila's resilient self begins to take form and shape. At long last, her 'entombed desires' surface and she decides to carve out a life of her own.

Akhila comes to the realization that even after multitasking in her career and family for the past sixteen years, life has passed her by. In her office, where 24 people work, she is actually the only single person. Her psyche is affected by life's hardships. She understands that motherhood, marriage, and raising children offer countless opportunities. It gives a reason to live, she thinks. She becomes aware of the fact that she has been having life 'without dreams':

And she had nothing in common with them. What would she understand of a father's anguish when his child was persistently ill? Or a mother's joy when her child took its first step? The world of the householder was not hers. From the Gurukala stage of life, she had moved directly to the Vanaprastha. And she wanted no part of someone else's Karmiflow. (Nair 85)

One learns about Akhila's physical desire, which conflicts with social expectations for women of her station, from her memories in the book. "For years, she had worked in a government job, commuting daily by bus, where the lecherous hands of some of her traveling companions made her aware, to her shame, of her young body and physical

yearnings” (Nair 148). Changing her habits to travel by train gives Akhila a stable monotonous life, empty of desire, but, even as she has resolved to turn away from her ‘wanton senses’ and to ‘remember who she is’ socially. Her memory also brings the first positive determining event of her adult life: her meeting with younger man Hari. The romance that develops between them is made possible by the unsaid commuter train rules and flourishes daily as a result of the extra time provided by their commuter status. Even though she also loves Hari and has dreamed about this escalation, Akhila cannot allow herself to be seen as a desirable woman when Hari first expresses his interest in her as more than a friend. As the station approaches, signifying the end of their time together, Akhila becomes increasingly upset, she uses it to shut down her options with him:

She heard herself say... ‘Stop it, Hari. Don’t say anything more, you’ll ruin everything’ ...From the corner of her eye, she could see the station approaching. ‘Let us forget we had this conversation’ ‘Just think about it. That is all I ask.’ His voice ran through the platform, startling everyone. Akhila pretended not to hear him and walked away as fast as she could.
(Nair 153)

Anita Nair keeps her audience guessing while also making them curious about the reason why Akhila is travelling alone by night train to Kanyakumari without a guardian. Without losing interest in the book, she forces her readers to read the first eight chapters. Only in the ninth chapter, when Akhila provides the reasons for her actions, and reveals the primary motivation behind her behaviour. The readers then learn about her true position in her family. Karpagam, a childhood friend, and Padma, Akhila's younger married sister, have compelled her to make a choice on her own. Without them,

Akhila would not have chosen to abandon her responsibilities, take care of her own interests and desires as a strong independent woman, and find a suitable place to live away from her family. Then Anita Nair forces Akhila to recount the events that motivated her to leave her home. Anita Nair introduces Karpagam with the goal of inspiring Akhila to discover her own uniqueness and gender identity. Karpagam's appearance is crucial for the plot to develop as a result.

Akhila encountered Karpagam in a super market after a period of twenty five years. After exchanging greetings, their conversation turned on their status in life. After hearing the predicament of Akhila and her unmarried status even after forty five years, Karpagam created confidence and hope in the heart of Akhila by narrating her own pathetic story. Karpagam informed Akhila that she was a widow and a mother. But in her appearance and dress code, Karpagam did not look like a widow. She did not wear the traditional white sari as a symbol of her widowhood. Neither was Akhila's friend bothered about the traditional society and the relatives. Karpagam continued to appear as if she were still a blessed married woman living with her husband. Without losing hope and confidence, she was leading the life of her own for the well-being of daughter. Without losing hope and confidence, she was leading the life of her own for the well-being of daughter.

I live alone. I have many years now. My daughter who is just twenty three does as well. We are strong, Akhila. We are as we want to be. . . . You build a life for yourself where your needs come first. . . . I don't care what my family or anyone thinks. I am who I am (Nair 202).

Karpagam's defiant stance against tradition and family to live a life of her own with her fatherless daughter inspired Akhila to leave the house.

Nair brings in another character Padma, her younger sister, to make Akhila become stronger and firmer in taking a decision for a life without any responsibility. Akhila started narrating her relationship with Padma to fellow women travellers. The heroine of the novelist had to forgo everything for the sake of family and her younger sister. Even after her marriage, Akhila had to support Padma financially. However, Padma's appearance was very deceptive. The younger sister of Akhila was very selfish and exploited the lonely and unmarried status of Akhila to the advantage of herself even after marriage. She did not either become grateful to or permit Akhila to get married and live alone away from the family because if Akhila left her and the house, Padma would lose her security. Moreover, Padma was quarrelsome and showed loveless attitude towards sister.

Nair has describes Akhila's state of mind as she boarded the train. The ninth chapter of the book contains the author's explanation of Akhila's decision to leave her family. By creating a new avatar as a woman of individuality and independence, Nair provided a long-lasting solution to Akhila's problems in the previous chapters. The author only made it possible after Akhila learned about the difficult familial and marital experiences of all five of her fellow female travellers. Nair has also made Akhila feel satisfied with the success of her quest for establishing her identity when Akhila describes her feeling, "She has no more doubts about what her life will be like if she lives alonebut at least she has got the chances to make an effort to find out that kind of life and this is what she wants to have now" (Nair 7).

Due to the fact that the lover was younger than Akhila, did not want to acknowledge his feelings. She also found him attractive, but her perception of society and its traditions led her to permanently end her love for Hari. At Kanyakumari, Akhila has achieved independence and no longer feels the need to stay true to social or familial norms. The protagonist feels free to do whatever she wants, including having sex with any man. As a result, she starts to feel more like a woman, and this dominance manifests itself when Akhila has a sexual relationship with a boy named Vinod. She is driven to make a choice by this sexual gratification

Anita Nair's method of structuring the entire novel is something unique and different from that of other novelists. The beginning is not the beginning because it has not begun with the familial experiences of Akhila at home and the main reasons for her to come out of her house. Its beginning starts at the railway station and then only comes her experiences at home in the form of narration to the fellow women travellers. Each chapter is allotted to the unhappy familial and marital experiences of each of the five women whereas Akhila's chapters alternate between theirs.

Anita Nair has used a train journey as her literary device and begun her novel with the train journey of Akhila to Kanyakumari. It is mainly to bring out Akhila's mode of self-discovery because "In a piece of literature, the journey motif is a distinctive idea or theme that is elaborated" (Irwing, n.pag.). Akhila boards the train and finds herself in a ladies coupe. This is the compartment in a train, exclusively meant for women who want to travel alone, safe and quiet in the company of other women travellers and begins her journey of self-discovery. Through this journey, Akhila's meeting of some other five

women and sharing not only her plight with them but also theirs, Akhila goes through a process of development and gains greater insight into things of life pertinent to women.

Nair's introduction of five other women who have experienced innumerable familial and marital problems is mainly to bring out those of Akhila and create self-confidence in her that she can also lead a life of independence for her own welfare. This shows Anita Nair's technique to keep the story moving without any hitch. All the six women of misfortunes get acquainted with one another and start narrating their events which have affected their minds, bodies and hearts during their lives. Anita Nair has exploited the form of picaresque novel and changed the action from physical to intellectual. She has replaced the physical action through her dialogue. Though all six women confine themselves in a small coupe, their action is minimal but their minds have no bounds, their thoughts wander anywhere and everywhere. Thus they are able to interact with one another and explore very vital human relations. Akhila's experience with them serves as a better guide for her to understand life.

The female characters created by Anita Nair are realistic because real women like Janaki Prabahkar, Sheela Vasudevan, Margaret Paulraj, Prabha Devi, and Marikolanthu can be found in all spheres of society. Each one tells Akhila about their painful personal experiences in an effort to help Akhila understand that women's lives are the same everywhere, regardless of social status. Only the woman who feels particularly impacted by her familial and marital relationships should decide how to permanently get out of such a situation. The painful experiences of these five women and Akhila's eventual realization of her future independence serve to highlight this theme. Each woman's experiences are described, bringing out their unique personalities. This is what Paul

Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* has said as, “The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character” (86).

The first woman to tell her story of woe is Janaki Prabahkar. She is the oldest of the six women and has been married to her husband for forty years. She has been a confused mother and spoiled housewife. She dislikes the way her husband dominates everyone, even his married son. Sheela, a teenager, is only fourteen years old, but because her grandmother is dying, she has already been given a great deal of life experience. She tells the story of her interaction with her grandmother, who encourages her to be authentic in everything she does and believes. She is not interested in living only to satisfy other people. Then Margaret Shanti, a chemistry teacher, enters and tells the story of her traumatic marriage. Despite being a modern woman, she had endured all forms of torture, including abortion, due to her family’s strict religious beliefs. However, she has also been successful in guiding herself-centered and arrogant husband towards the right path.

Prabha Devi describes the way she and her husband both lived in comfortable homes with all the modern conveniences. However, she feels unfulfilled by her traditional way of life. She is content, though, with the sedation that attending her swimming lessons provides for her restlessness. The final one is Marikolanthu, a victim of rape as well and social class system, as she comes from a lower social class. The characters created by Anita Nair come from all social classes and do not belong to one particular group. The real-life equivalent of what has happened to these characters is happening to women. No incident that actually happened to one of Anita Nair’s

characters has been fictionalized. But she has shown her skill in characterization and her mastery over language.

Anita Nair has also used two mode to explain the story's events. 'She has followed Diegesis mode to describe the childhood period of Akhila, the death of her father, and her work in the Income-Tax department. She has used Mimesis mode to describe the marriage of Padma. What she has described is about real life happenings to women and their attempts to establish their identity. For having done so, she has followed a pattern and she has become very successful in her attempt. Being a woman, she has explained all the problems of modern women from the point of view of a woman.

The study and analysis of the variances in the styles of narrative of this novel reveal the breaking and bonding of familial and marital relationship. She has focused on the awareness of her women and their predicament. Her women want to be recognized as a human being with an independent social image rather than as women with slavish attitudes. All women, irrespective of their generations, should realize that they have very important roles to play in supporting and sustaining their families. In doing so, they need not surrender their will and individuality. Protecting their physical and psychological selves is an essential prerequisite for keeping each one's self-preservation intact.

Chapter 3

Victimization of Womanhood

The term 'feminism' can be defined as the political activity of women for women who believe that the biased gender conditions that they confront can be shifted to better ones, state Carole Mac Cann and Seung-Kyung Kim. Both scholars add that feminist theories usually provide tools to investigate gender bias, then develop the knowledge of oppression and strategic resistance against women's subordination. It is observed that the definitions of feminism vary across settings, but the significant words, oppression and resistance, are shared and remain unchanged.

More specifically, Lane traces feminism's origin to Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 manifesto, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in which feminism is seen as a counter discourse that aims at alleviating female suffering and challenging negative stereotypes imposed on women, particularly the ones that characterize them as inactive, inferior, innocent, or emotional. As a counter discourse that combines post colonialism with feminism, postcolonial feminism offers a critique of feminist theorists in western societies, especially their tendency to misrepresent and universalize experiences of women in formerly colonized societies. Good examples of contemporary feminist experts criticizing European feminists and colonial discourses include Kirsten Holst Petersen, Anna Rutherford, KetuKatrak, Anne McClintock, GayatriChakravortySpivak, and Chandra TalpadeMohanty.

The history of feminism is divided into three waves of feminism. The first-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity from 1910s to 1950s. It primarily focuses on gaining the right of women's suffrage. This phase gave more importance for women's fight for equal contract and property rights. Second-wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity beginning in the 1960s to 1980s. It was

connected with independence and greater political action to improve women's rights. Third wave feminism is a feminist movement that began in the early 1990s. While second-wave feminism largely focuses on the inclusion of women in traditionally male dominated areas, third wave feminism seeks to challenge and expand common definitions of gender and equality.

Today, unlike the former movements, the term 'feminist' has received significance by the female population. The main issues were prefaced by the work done by the previous waves of women. Women are working to end violence against women in our nation as well as others. Many post-modern Indian women novelists are interested in exploring the feminine consciousness of the women characters, their evolution towards an awakened conscience, and how eventually this leads to enrichment of their inner self in a male dominated society. There are many good writers who have left an indelible imprint on the readers of Indian fiction in English. The highly acclaimed women writers are Anita Desai, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Geeta Mehta, Gita Hariharan, SudhaMurthy, Kamala Das, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande, Amrita Pritam, Manju Kapur, etc. Among these writers, Anita Nair is one of the most prominent women writers in Indian English.

In literature, women are mostly seen as a problematic category signifying the dichotomy of male or female; as the other or object, women have not been accorded the subject position which is determined by the forces that control it and is a locus of conflict and tension. The term 'subject' should be understood first in relation to agency as to how a woman sees her role and worth in life and the socio-economic environment to which she belongs. Second the term has to be understood in relation to gender hierarchy as well.

‘Subjectivity’ on the other hand, means taking the perspective of the individual self and not anything outside the self’s experience. It further means that one’s experiences and perceptions about life of utmost importance and the person who has attained such agency is said to have a subject position of his/her own. The term – together with agency, self-determination and autonomy, is sometimes understood as synonymous with the rest, but these are, in fact not inter-changeable. The common ground that tags these is that they all define a woman’s desire for control over her own body and most important in her life. Subjectivity suggests the capacity for agency, freedom, individually and power but constrained and regulated by the traditional ideology norms of a patriarchal society.

This chapter focuses on the feministic point of view of Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*. The depiction of her excellent women characters and the feminist tone in her novel make Anita Nair one of the most outstanding female Indian novelists in English. Nair recounts the stories of six women who are travelling together in a ladies coupe of a train. Mainly it depicts the crisis of social norms and inner urge for freedom. “Akhila forty-five, single and working as a clerk, has been brought up in a conservative family of Tamil Brahmin” (Nair 2). As the novel opens, she is seen at railway station, on a journey to Kanyakumari. As the story unfolds, we come to know about her past. Akhila bears the burden of her family after her father’s death. Her father was shown as an autocratic person, symbolizing regressive masculine power and her mother a prototype of her age-old submissive Indian woman. Her brothers and sisters grow up and get married and they hardly think about Akhila’s needs and aspirations. She has never been able to live a life of her own or passes an identity of her own. “She was always an extension of someone’s identity; daughter, sister, aunt....Akhila wished for once someone should see her as a whole being”(Nair pp 201-202). On her way to

Kanyakumari, Akhila meets five different women – Janaki Prabhakar, Prabha Devi, Margaret Paulraj, Sheela Vasudevan and Marikolunthu. Though, they meet for the first time they share their life's experience with each other. Even though they differ in age, educational background and cultural upbringing, their stories have a common thread, the tragic predicament of Indian women in a patriarchal social order.

Janaki, the oldest of the six women in the Coupe, grows up in the traditional family of being groomed into an obedient daughter, a loyal wife and a doting mother. She has been looked after all her life by men. "First there was my father and brother; then my husband. When my husband is gone, there will be my son, waiting, to take off from where his father left off. A woman like me ends up being fragile. Our men treat as like princess" (Nair pp22-23). She recognizes the futility of being an obedient wife and a caring mother and the need to assert self-identity and freedom to live one's own life.

The youngest of the six is Sheela, fourteen-years-old who talks about the female child abuse by men. Sheela felt ashamed and hurt at the unwanted touching of Hasina's father Nazar as:

One Sunday afternoon when Sheela went to their house, rushing in from the heat with a line of sweat beading her upper lip. Nazar had reached forward and wiped it with his forefinger. The touch of his finger tingled on her skin for a long time. (Nair 66)

When once Nazar knotted the bows in her sleeves, "She saw the hurt in Hasina and her mother's eyes" (Nair 66). After that Sheela took the right decision that "She would never go to Hasina's house again" (Nair 66) as a means of her self-protection. Through this character, Nair has brought out the ill-treatment of women, even if she is a child, by men.

Margaret Shanthi, is a successful Chemistry teacher, entangled in an unhappy marriage with Ebenezer Paulraj, the principal of the school she works in. He is demanding, self-centered and indifferent towards his wife. Margaret would like to divorce him, but does not do so because she is afraid of society. Her way of taking revenge is to feed him oily food and make him a fat and dull person.

Prabha Devi is an accomplished woman whose embroidery was done with stitches so fine that you could barely see them, whose 'Ideas were light and soft', and who "walked with small mincing steps, her head forever bowed, suppliant; womanly" (Nair 170). Prabha Devi forgets how it is to be her and that's when she learns to strike a balance between being what she wants to be and being what she is expected to be.

The most heart-rending tale is that of Marikolunthu, thirty-one years old and an unwed mother who is a victim of a man's lust: her poverty forcing her to do things that violate traditional social, moral injunctions. Now, she is a mother to an illegitimate child. She has experienced poverty, rape, lesbianism and physical torture. "I was a restless spirit warped and bitter. Sometimes I would think of the past and I would feel a quickening in the vacuum that existed within me now" (Nair 266).

Akhila's one night in the ladies coupe and her interaction with the five women, helped to realize that she had given the society an unnecessary power of ruling her life. Towards the end of the novel Nair presents Akhila's inner 'self'- the one could live a life for herself. "Look at me, she would tell them. Look at me: I'm the woman you think you know. I am the sister you have wondered about. There is more to this Akka. For within me is a woman I have discovered" (Nair 270). Now Akhila started to live a life for herself.

The other issue that is more often than not highlighted in this novel is oppression towards women. The issue is analyzed through postcolonial feminist theoretical

framework. Postcolonial feminism is a form of feminism that developed as a response to the fact that feminism seemed to focus solely on the experiences of women in Western cultures. Postcolonial feminism explores women's lives, work, identity, sexuality, and rights in the light of colonialism and neocolonialism. Mohanty in her influential article *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* first published in 1991, criticize Western feminism on the grounds that it is ethnocentric and does not pay attention to the unique experiences of women residing in postcolonial nations. Women in postcolonial nations face simultaneous oppressions; being colonized subjects while at the same time being women oppressed by the patriarchal society they are in. This is clarified by Mohanty when she stated that women suffered double colonization, first as a colonized subject and second as simply being a woman by patriarchy. Moreover, Gayatri Spivak in *In Other Worlds* writes,

The matter of fact is that postcolonial women to remain passive and continue to bear male oppressive environments. These women seek to emancipate themselves through education, struggle, and hard work. The postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women in the name of preserving their cultural values..... Postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with deplorable plight of women in postcolonial environment. (86)

In Nair's novel, the characters face some deplorable state of oppression by the men and their society. Akhila is the only unmarried adult character in this novel. Being an unmarried woman brings a lot of challenges to Akhila as she struggles with her role as the head in the family and also dealing with the continuous negative perception of people regarding her status. She has always sacrifices her needs in order to cater her family, since the father passed away, as seen in this excerpt; "What about

you? You've been the head of this family ever since Appa died. Don't you want a husband, children, and a home of your own? In their minds Akhila had ceased to be a woman and had already metamorphosed into a spinster" (Nair 77).

Akhila longs for a marriage and having a family of her own. Unfortunately, her mother, or Amma, and her younger siblings have never asked her if she wants to get married. It seems to Akhila that her femininity has been limited by making her the provider of the family. As the eldest sister, Akhila has always put the need of her Amma and younger siblings first. She provided the dowry for her younger sister so that she could get married; funded her sibling's studies and, basically, every aspect of their life. On the surface, Akhila is the 'man' in the family, which is traditionally reserved for the patriarch. She seems to be the most agentic character throughout the novel, who, is oscillated between the masculine provider and feminine receiver. However, she does not get the recognition of being the head of the family. This is due to the patriarchal system where the husband/father are considered as the most important members in a family. Akhila felt neglected as her Amma and siblings never seem to care about her dreams as stated by Alice Cherian in her article, *Indian Feminism in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe and Mistress*, "she is expected to be an obedient daughter, affectionate and motherly sister and everything but an individual." In brief, while Akhila is not suffering physically, she is certainly being oppressed mentally by her family and society. She has put aside all her needs for the sake of her mother and siblings. Not only that, she has lost her sense of self as she has been living as someone else in order to please them.

Janaki is another character who experience patriarchal domination in her life as seen from this excerpt;

I am a woman who has always been looked after. First there was my father and brothers; then my husband. When my husband is gone there will be my son, waiting to take off from where his father left off. Women like me end up being fragile (Nair 22)

Janaki fits in the role of a 'good wife' in Indian culture. In Indian culture, the image of an ideal or a good wife is represented by the mythical Goddess, Sita. She is the wife of Rama in the ancient epic of Ramayana. According to C.V Abraham, male discourse has popularized the image of Sita and constructed the image of female subjectivity to the 'pathivrata' which means dutiful and faithful wife. These 'female virtues' play a significant role in setting the social role of a woman. A woman is always someone's mother, wife, daughter or sister. A woman must also be obedient to the patriarch in her family. Prem Chowdhry in *Women of India: Colonial and Postcolonial Periods* rightly observe:

One of the dominant images of woman that has survived through history is that of the chaste woman/wife..... It continues to gain popularity, particularly in popular cultural forms, which project this image as quintessentially that of an Indian woman and as an intrinsic part of Indian culture(pp 110-11).

In the case of Janaki, she admitted that her sheltered life caused her to be fragile and dependent on other people especially the males. It is impossible for her to live on her own terms as it is culturally accepted by society that a woman must always be obedient and follow everything the husband/father said. This situation shows how patriarchal system and cultural belief shape the roles of men and women. Just like Sita, Janaki is the typical obedient wife to a husband, with less voice in the family. She is expected to be obedient by her husband and society in general as it is the 'ideal' image of a wife and mother in Indian society.

Margaret Shanti is the chemistry teacher who teaches at a high school where the principle is also her husband, Ebenezer Paulraj. They were married out of love until one day, Margaret felt trapped emotionally by her egocentric husband as seen from this excerpt; “What’s the point of working for a doctorate? Do your B.Ed. so you can become a teacher and then we will always be together. Long hair doesn’t suit you. Cut it off. You’ll look nicer with your hair in a blunt bob” (Nair 105).

Margaret used to be a high achiever and also an independent woman before she married her husband. After her marriage, she found out that Paulraj was self-absorbed narcissist man who constantly put her down so that he would feel better in comparison. She cannot make her own decisions on every aspect of her life as she had to get her husband’s approval first. She cannot change her hairstyle, or pursuing her dream to get a Ph.D. as her husband would disapprove. In order to please him, she obediently followed his desires even though she silently protested his actions. The last straw that broke the camel’s back is when Paulraj asked her to abort their unborn baby. She reluctantly succumbed to his request and that was the starting point when she realized that Paulraj had gone too far with his self-ego and that she had sacrificed many things for his sake. Paulraj is the product of patriarchal system, embedded for generations in a rather conservative society as shown in Ramayana when Lord Rama tells his mother: “A woman attains the highest heaven merely by serving her husband..... With her only interest the welfare of her husband, a woman should constantly serve him—this has been the dharma of women from ancient times, this is what the Vedas and the Smritis say” (180). Male domination continues even in the contemporary world. No matter what the husband does, he is to be respected and worshipped by the wife. A wife cannot question the husband’s misconduct or she will be regarded as a bad wife. A wife’s role is to serve and please her husband even

though she has to swallow her own feelings. Margaret has suffered under her husband's domination as he always asks her to fulfill his wishes without taking her opinion into consideration. Clearly, Paulraj has asserted his power to control Margaret through the patriarchal system.

Then Nair brings out the struggles of Marikolanthu as a woman from the lower caste. Marikolanthu works at the Chettiar's house. As a growing young woman, she often attracts the attention from the males namely the Chettiar sons and Murugesan himself. Murugesan took upon himself to rape her as he thought that as a relative to the Chettiar, he could do anything on her as mentioned in this excerpt; "...if the Chettiar's sons can feast on this body of yours... remember I'm a relative, even if only a poor one, and I'm entitled to their pickings before anyone else." (Nair 239)

Marikolanthu suffered from physical and also mental oppressions. Rape is used as a medium to 'put her on the ground' or a way to silence her. The words 'feast' and 'pickings' show Murugesan's assaultive view on Marikolanthu as a woman. She is regarded as a sexual object whose sole function is to please the men's sexual need. Hence, her female body has been commodified into a tool to suppress her. This does not only show as agencyless but also as a victimized female as well. Among the others, Marikolanthu is the most tragic character as she is uneducated and comes from the lower caste. Her social position makes her sufferings unquestionable. She is not only oppressed by the patriarchal system but also by her culture. Being a woman in a lower caste does not give her the same privileges received by other women from the higher class. She is always regarded as a property or a voiceless commodity that can be exploited by men. While people like the Chettiar family and Marikolanthu do not socialize together except for the purpose of work, the males from the upper class do not find any restriction in manipulating and sexually abusing the body of women like

Marrikolunthu. Patriarchal system creates a belief that females are powerless compared to men. Marikolanthu is one of the victims of patriarchal system. Her suffering is unheard as she does not have a voice in her society. The lower caste people are expected by society to serve the upper class, which gives the upper class people an upper hand towards the lower caste. In this situation, Murugesan used his status to sexually abuse Marikolanthu knowing that nobody believed what he did. As the matter of fact, people will blame Marikolanthu for someone else's crime.

It is true that the gender issue is intermixed with sex role stereotyping in our society due to the lopsided interpretation of masculinity and femininity. In the age old tradition of women accepting their subordinate position and perpetuating it by passing it on to their daughters as well, Akhila is taught what it means to be a good wife by her mother words "there is no such thing as equal as marriage. It is best to accept that the wife is inferior to the husband. That way, there can be no strife, no disharmony" (Nair 14).

So, Akhila is at stake while Karpagam says, "Whatever you think you want to, live alone. Build a new life for yourself where your needs come first"(Nair203). Santhosh Gupta opines in her article entitled "*The Epistemology of Inequality*" that women need to "look for new role models, to ask their own questions' and create a knowledge system of their own. Giving importance to the ground root of experience the body she looks at the femaleness of the female body"(143).

Akhila is aware of her bodily needs too. Her dreams of sensual pleasure confirm this. She too wants to be loved and desired, and finds happiness in being touched by an unknown hand when she is on the bus. Her affair with Hari, a boy much younger her to her, gives her the feeling of being a sensuous woman. She is deeply in love with Hari, but refuses his proposal of marriage for fear of public censure. In the

darkest room of her life, only Hari is the ray of happiness but she sacrifices that relationship too. Shunned from everywhere, she begins to think of her identity and a sense of non-fulfillment envelopes her. The act of drawing attention to her body is in defiance of the male-prescribed norms in Indian society, where a woman, married or not, is not expected to openly talk about her sexual relationship. Women have every limited freedom and even less control over these four constitutions of the self, i.e. the body, emotions, intellect and the mind.

In the case of Akhila, the beginning of the subject-position and awareness of selfhood is evident when she gives importance to her own physical desires not because she is lustful but because she too is a human being. So, she decides to undertake a journey to Kanyakumari which serves as an escape from the patriarchal world. From this it is proved that Akhila wishes for openness to embracing change. Her prime objective behind taking this journey was thus to get time to think for herself and to liberate herself of all the customary Tamil Brahmanical life had bounded her to.

The sexual pleasure that Akhila had with the unknown man has paved way for her to discover her true self. She experiences the pure sensations that have been denied to her for years. As a result, she emerges as a new woman that is manifested in her body language. Also, the newfound freedom and liberty gives her self-assurance which is visible in her energy and liveliness. This shows that Akhila is a 'new woman' who has evolved from her cocoon with her new found courage to liberate herself from the traditional customs. In the words of Malashri Lal in *The Law of Threshold*:

For the 'new woman,' the courage of her convictions is all she can rely upon. In repudiating convention and the protections offered to her, she has also separated herself from other women who habitually authenticate their

passivity by giving value to a common belief of socialization. Being outside the complicity that indirectly supports the ongoing patriarchal arrangements, the woman outside the threshold has to devise a world of her own. (20)

One of the primal and seminal concerns of feminism is to declare that a woman is a being. A woman is not the 'other', she is not an appendage to man. She is an autonomous being, capable of, through trial and error, finding her own way to salvation. Marriage proves to be another trap and woman feels like a caged animal. It obstructs her growth as an individual. Her fear of losing herself in the dark mysterious universe is dispelled by the understanding that the dark holds no terror if one can believe in one's self and if one accepts the responsibility for one's life.

Akhila's phone call to Hari connects her to missed emotional part of life after arriving to the final decision that after all she can live alone and manage well independently, respectively. In a nutshell, it can be deduced, 'Where there's a will, there's a way.'

Chapter 4

Re-constructing the 'self'

Culture is an important aspect for the construction of any society. Social interaction plays a vital role in construction of any culture. Culture gives the social identity for a group of people, based on which a person can make his or her individual identity. Culture is a base of Society which is combination of customs, rituals, and idea for behavior, belief, values, attitude and the meaning of behavior. Culture differs from one another society and community.

Patriarchy generally refers to the hierarchical power relation in which men are dominant and women are subordinate. The subordination of women is explicit in many ways, in both private and public spheres, where women are denied rights and access to many things that are easily available to men. Patriarchy as a concept/tool helps in the critical understanding of the status of women in any society. According to the eminent gender historian Gerda Lerner, patriarchy manifests and institutionalizes the domination of men over women and children within the family, and extends its influence over the public sphere in a society. In spite of patriarchy having common features across societies, it acts differently in every society, combining with other dominant structures. In India, this nexus between patriarchy and the caste system has been found to be historically exploitative and mutually feeding off each other.

Anita Nair's engrossing novel *Ladies Coupe* raises the questions about the role of women in contemporary India. India suffers from a system of gender-role stereotyping that exist under patriarchal social organization. Patriarchy, in its different forms, paves way to repress, debase and humiliate women through the images represented in cultural and traditional forms. The novel *Ladies Coup* deals with such

gender issues by questioning the ideology of man's patriarchal role in a traditional society, and also implies the existence of an alternative reality. The novel throws light on Indian women living under oppressive patriarchal system whose role are restricted as wives and mothers. Woman's role is limited to reproduction and recreation regardless of her own desires and needs.

Through *Ladies Coupe*, Nair shares the experience of various female characters. She places her protagonist, Akhila, in a cross-cultural scenario. She explores the immigrant sensibility, duality and flexible identity. Her characters come from all the parts of the India with divergent social, religious and cultural preoccupations. Nair explores the multiplicity of themes, through which the character's struggle to outgrow traditionally inherited cultural values. Her women characters are docile creatures who believe in wrestling with their own problems rather than trying to dominate their male counterparts.

Akhila, whose life has been taken out of her control, is forty-five years old 'spinster', daughter, sister, aunt and the only provider of her family. The story is told in first person by Akhila, the protagonist, who is at first presented as a sympathetic figure as she sacrifices her dreams to maintain a modicum of normalcy for her sister and two brothers after her father was struck by a passing commuter bus. She becomes a woman who has always been the backbone of a demanding family until the day she gets herself a one-way ticket to a resort town, a journey that will ultimately make her a different woman. Nair writes, "So this then is Akhila. Forty-five years old. Sans rose-colored spectacles. Sans husband, children, home and family. Dreaming of escape and space. Hungry for life and experiences. Aching to connect" (Nair 2). Akhila is trying to escape from her own life at the stage, through making a journey of a new kind, away from the family burdens.

The lead protagonist of the novel was born in a conservative Hindu Brahmin family of South India which is full of customs and tradition to be followed by women with lot of restrictions even from her childhood. She followed all the norms told by her mother such as obeying elders, following rigid rituals, blending with the atmosphere, and accepting male domination. “A woman is not meant to take on a man’s role”(Nair 14). She believes and behaves so, till the day when her father dies in a road accident. Very soon she was situationally forced to take up her father’s job as a clerk in the income tax department and thereby take the role of a man by becoming the sole breadwinner of a big family. “When Akhila’s father died, two things happened: Sundays became just another day of the week and Akhila became the man of the Family” (Nair 75).

As a young lady she sacrificed everything for others livelihood, whereas, her own kith and kin refuse to understand or empathize with her emotions. They, instead, always check over her activities by pointing out her living styles curbing her space and freedom of choice by interfering into her personal affairs commenting and criticizing her. This is clearly evident from Akhila’s sister Padma’s words: “She is so smart when it comes to office duties, but at home... she paused ... why, my seven-year old Madhavi is better housekeeper than she is” (Nair 163).

She felt alienated within her own family and longed for personal care and concern. Meanwhile, she fell in love with a man named Hari, who is younger than her age. She did not accept him as she was afraid of the society’s comments and criticisms. She, at one point, realizes that she was just being utilized by all the people around her. This very thought makes her. Thereby, she unfolds her mind and decides to oblige to her own choice of freedom. So she wanted to totally get away from the

space of house. She wanted to live alone and away from the clutches of life which the society has framed. "Of sitting with her back to her world, with her eyes looking ahead. Of leaving, Of running away. Of pulling out, Of escaping" (Nair 1).

Janaki, one of the passengers, the eldest of all from her experiences of life she learns to love her husband from her experience. She accepts the fact that woman is inferior to man and need somebody to look after her. So, she is always dependent on some or the other men throughout her life. First her father, then her brother, later her husband and now her son. According to her, the prime duty of woman is to look after and maintain her household chores. This is what make her a better mother, wife and a good daughter in law. Thus, she had become the queen of the household chores. With all constraints and difficulties in her life, she tolerated things which came on her way of life. Despite all these, she too dreamt and longed to live her independent life on her own.

Women like me end up being fragile. Our men treat us like princesses. And because of that we look down upon women who are strong and who can cope upon women who are strong and who can cope by themselves...I think I was tired of being this fragile creature. (Nair pp 22-23)

Another passenger is a girl who is in the age of fourteen. She is studying in the 9th grade and her ability to think beyond her age seems a distinct quality. She knew the tactics of understanding and perceiving others thoughts. She has experienced the bitterness of sexual harassment by her friend's father and knows how to escape from the clutches of it by her mental maturity. She was able to perceive things beyond her age. This is clearly evident when she understands the wishes of her grandmother and wanted to fulfill it during her last rites. "Sheela knew Ammamma did it so that even if

she were to die in her sleep, she would do so looking her best. Her children, of course, dismissed it as assign of age and its concurrent eccentricity” (Nair 68).

Margret Paulraj, who is travelling with Akhila, is a well-educated Chemistry gold medalist and a school teacher, fell in love with the principal of the school, Ebenezer Paulraj, where she was working with. Her husband dictated terms both in his school and at home. She was not allowed to pursue her Doctorate degree. Instead, she was asked to take up what she needs to be for working in a school. He takes command over her and she obliges to all his orders. She was instructed to cut her long hair into short hair as he felt that long hair looks appropriate and said that it doesn’t suit her. She needs to fulfill his sexual desires, but was asked to abort the baby. Thus, the stress accumulated brought a drift between the couple which turned love into hatred. She then took revenge by feeding him oily and fatty foods and made him obese and thus broke his confidence to nothing. Finally, as a result of that he became very much dependent on her due to his ill health. Her word clears this: “But first, I had to persuade Ebe to let down his defenses. To open his senses and taste buds to me” (Nair 132).

PrabhaDevi, was born rich and had a perfect childhood. She looked pretty and is well versed in all the works she does such as cooking and needle work. She was married to a rich diamond merchant’s son. In one of hers visits to the West, she tried to adopt their culture and pride struck her. This brought dispute to the couple. Later she realizes her mistakes and she rectified it and thus learnt to balance life. Since, then on she lived a satisfied life. “She was a good wife and an excellent mother. What more could a man ask for?” (Nair 184).

The last was Marikolunthu who lived beyond her age and life. Being born in a poor family she was forced to assist her mother who is a maid in Chettiar’s house. She

was sexually abused by Chettiar's distant cousin Murugesan and gives birth to an illegitimate son, Muthu. She withstood and tolerated all these in order to raise her brothers and son. She works as a maid, like her mother, in Chettiar's house to look after their grandson later was misused by Chettiar's son too. She, then, worked as a maid for two lesbian lady doctors and later was lived as Lesbian partner too. Her poverty and continuous blows in her life made her bite her teeth and a life without listening to any comments made by society. "For so long now, I had been content to remain sister to the real thing. Surrogate mother, surrogate lover. But now I wanted more. I wanted to be the real thing. All I want to be was Muthu's mother" (Nair 268).

Apart from these five characters, Akhila's old schoolmate Karpagam also influences her a lot and convinces her to live a life she wants to live. Karpagam a widow wears Kumkum and colourful sarees even after the death of her husband.

I don't care what my family or anyone thinks, I am. Who I am and I have as much right as anyone else to live as choose. Tell me, didn't we as young girls wear colourful clothes and jewellery and a bottu? It isn't privilege that marriage sanctions. The way I look at it, it is nature for a woman to want to be feminine. It has nothing to do with whether she is married or not and whether her husband is alive or dead. (Nair 202)

All these incidents clearly indicate that all women characters of in *Ladies Coupe* undergo great conflict between the societal norms and self-empathy in various dimensions of life. They all live in dilemma without knowing how to escape or get rid of these unknown humiliations of self. They also tolerate the shameful experiences impair of perseverant and adjustable. These women need to fight back for their rights courageously, empowering themselves to reach greater heights to lead a confident and comfortable life. Moreover, they need to strive and work hard for their own

upliftment to gain independence and freedom by changing and altering certain norms in the society to live a life of their choice within the boundaries of the consciousness.

Akhila is a new woman who challenges the traditional notions of patriarchal society. She has lot of awareness and consciousness of her low position in the family and society. So, she tries to improve it, she chooses to protest and fight against the accepted norms. She is even ready to face the consequences of her choice. She has chosen to live alone without any hindrance from her family. Her protest is not only for equality but for the right to be acknowledged as individual. She doesn't like to be controlled by her family, neither by her brothers nor by her sister. She wanted to be authoritative to make decision for herself. She can get her own identity and self-respect.

This creates tension between herself and her brothers. Her brothers try their hard to make her change her decision. Between the discussion, Akhila says, "I don't have to explain my actions to any one of you. I don't owe you anything. I hope I have made myself clear to you?" (Nair 206). To which Akhila replies this, her brother's reply "You don't owe us anything. Instead, we owe you our lives" (Nair 206). It shows that her brothers are now showing the real face of male chauvinism. They want to show that they owe Akhila and Akhila has to follow them, and she doesn't have any right to be decisive. They also say that she can't cope difficulties in her life alone because she is a woman. They also add that she is older than them and requires support from them. At this situation, Akhila retorts: "I know I can. I did once before when you were children. Now I can for me, for Akhilandeswari. Nobody's daughter. Nobody's sister. Nobody's wife. Nobody's mother" (Nair 62).

Akhila has a volley of questions which she tries to find answer from her co-passengers who have seen more life, and have experienced the basic realities of living

with husband, baby, home and mother-in law. Akhila's circumstances enable her to think that a woman could live by herself and that marriage is unimportant. She wonders how her co-passengers, despite their settled lives are living on margin. Most of them are void in their life; they have stories to tell innumerable cries. Akhila is curious to know about the experiences of being married and if there was any danger in living alone.

The stories of her co-passengers generate desire upon life for Akhila, a life she wants to live on her own. Staying alone in a sea-resort at Kanyakumari gives her ample of time to re-evaluate and re-assess her desires. Discovering a woman within her, she decides to cast aside all that the society would say. She doesn't forbid the boy in his twenties who tries to flirt with her. What makes it more significant is that she takes his hand in her's and invites him to her room. She realizes the fact that the biddings of her body are in no way connected to her family. She allows him to rave and gaze over her body with the windows open and lights on. The energy she has, is to unite in a catacomb of sensation and she determines to renew the bond. She decides to end her bondage and begin anew life. The yearning to connect the lives of communication she has swapped.

Most of the characters in *Ladies Coupe*, seem to find the ray of happiness only when they become aware. This awareness is created only when one looks at one's self. This witnessing of one's self can make them stress free. Akhila not only has witnessed everything but also given a serious look at her soul. Her decision to break that long silence and her desire to think of Hari suggests Anita Nair's commitment as a novelist that the understanding in life does not mean regretting lapses rather a sort of purgation from pure blindness she suffers long.

Like Akhila, Margaret, Prabha Devi and Marilokanthu are also struggling against patriarchal society. From the story of Margaret Shanti, it is obvious how women are dominated by man-power. Her story demonstrates how a woman could manipulate to get her own way. Margaret's husband Ebenezer Paulraj is the worst example for male chauvinism in the novel. He is like the colonizers who are unable to see and praise the worth of the women, who are like the colonized. A vain and arrogant poseur, he has changed her into a position of submissive silence, making her to be an unremarkable, average kind of woman. As he was the principal, his subtle cruelty to children was repeated in his treatment of his wife.

Initially Margaret does not understand the deep-rooted egoism in Ebenezer Paulraj due to her extreme love for him. Ebe is simply a male chauvinist when he takes the power to ask Margaret to abort the baby off. Not only in that, but he continues to thrust upon this supremacy over her in deciding her higher studies, career and even simple things like choice of food and her hair dressing for he says, "what's the point of working for a doctorate? Do your B.Ed. So can become a teacher and then we will always be together. Long hair doesn't suit you. Cut it off. You'll look nice with your hair into a blunt bob" (Nair 105).

Tired of subaltern position in his house, Margaret finally takes her life into her own hands. She gathers her forces with supreme will power and turns the tables on him. Having learned from his constant mind games to get thing his way, she takes revenge by inventing the game that would render him to her. She compares herself with water which can be understood from the following lines:

Among the five elements that constitute life, I classify myself as water.
Water that moistens. Water that heals. Water that forgets. Water that
accepts. Water that flows tirelessly. Water that also destroys. For the

power to dissolve and destroy is as much a part of being water as wetness is. In the world of chemicals, water is the universal solvent. Swayed by the character of all those who take it over. But just because I'm familiar, I'm not typical. That was the mistake to be made. He dismissed me as someone of no significance. So I had no other recourse but to show him what the true nature of water is and how magnificent its powers are. (Nair 96)

Margaret compares herself with water, one of the five elements that this world is made according to Hindu mythology. Water has a lot of qualities like moistening, healing, accepting, destroying many things in the universe. Margaret also has such ability to adjust things. As Ebe becomes more and more egoistic, domineering and hypocrite, Margaret is unconsciously compelled to teach him a lesson. She chooses flattery as the weapon to bring down Ebe's self esteem. She flatters and flatters and feeds him with fatty food since dawn till night, till fat finds its home on him, and turns him into a fat man, a quiet man and an easy man who seek for her food and sex and every way she knows. The character of Margaret shows that the woman can vanquish a domineering man.

In patriarchal society, parents are more concerned about the boys than girls. Nair has chosen the character of Prabha Devi to emphasize this issue. Her father was waiting to have a male child be born but she was born. They accept her, rear her well and make arrangement of her marriage with the son for a rich merchant. Prabha Devi's husband Prabhakar is not a conservative husband but their family likes a traditional daughter-in-law. She doesn't want to define herself within a more mechanical and monotonous life of a homely wife and a mother. She is not satisfied with this life and craves for something more. Moreover, she feels guilty for her viles

upon her husband's friend Pramod and tries to come out of it. She activates her self-actualization by learning swimming on her own out of great desire.

Marikolanthu is the most pathetic woman among the six. She is the realistic picture of the humble and miserable peasantry woman on whom male oppression is forced on heavily and left unquestioned. Even as a girl she is denied to be sent to the town school as her mother says, "It's not just the money but how can I send a young girl by herself.... there is too much at risk" (Nair 215). To ensure her mother's fear, her childhood innocence is destroyed when Murugesan attempts physical brutality on her. When she is found pregnant, her mother and Sujata, the daughter-in-law of Chettiar, regret it as they just feel it is too late to insist Murugesan to marry her. Her mother is least bothered about her feelings but worries that no one will marry her. Even when the matter is taken to the Chettiar's son Shridhar, he with reluctance says, "The girl must have led him on and now that she is pregnant she's making up a story about rape" (Nair 245). For her mother and Sujata, a woman's protection lies in her husband, as Sujata says, "But if she has a job, that will replace a husband's protection" (Nair 246). But Marikolanthu is able to raise the question within her about so called 'Husband's protection'. She is sure that neither her mother nor Sujata had their husbands look out for them, but for them, "a fulfilled woman was one who was married" (Nair 246).

For Marikolanthu, nothing is crueler than a man raping a woman and so she finds little fault in the missy's love for each other and experiences a kind of content and happiness to give her love for Sujata, more than her husband does. Marikolanthu never wants to tie up her life with a husband. Till she is thirty-one she lives alone and wrestles with life, making a living of her own. She neither wants to rely upon her brothers nor wants a penny from Sujata or her husband but decides to make her living

of her own working as a servant maid in a house. She defines her as an independent woman. The aversion she has towards the physical brutality attempted on her, also evokes a strong aversion for her son Muthu. But at the end she feels ashamed for having rejected him. As Indira Devi observes, in the end she decided to measure happiness as Muthu's mother. Marikolanthu's greatness lies in her struggle for emancipation in spite of being poor and illiterate. She can be called an Indian version of Ibsen's Nora.

The metaphor of the journey is further developed into the metaphor of the destination, Kanyakumari, a seaside town with the great vista of the meeting of three seas i.e. The Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. The openness of the scene symbolizes the range of possibilities open to Akhila, the Akhila who was wrapped in her family situation in a small land-locked town in Tamil Nadu now sits gazing at an azure sky and playing with the sand. Three oceans meet and mingle at her feet, she realized with exhilaration. Her realization of her own independence is an epiphany.

The novel comes to an end by comparing Akhila with Goddess Durga, as Shakti, indicating the potential of womanhood. From an image of absence and silence to one of confrontation and assertion, Akhila has come a long way shedding the patriarchal image of women's silence and an absence, as imperfection and incompleteness. Having discovered her true self in shared love, Akhila experiences a sense of pure sensation. The new woman in her is manifested by her body language. She exults in her new found identity and liberty. She cannot make her exuberance. This can be better understood from the following lines:

And so it was with Akhila. Elderly spinster. Older sister. Once the breadwinner of the family. Still the cash cow. But Akhila is certain that she

won't let her family use her any more. Look at me, she would tell them. Look at me: I'm the woman you think you know. I am the sister you have wondered about. There is more to this Akka for within me is a woman. I have discovered. (Nair 270)

Akhila comes to the state of full realization about her identity and life. Once she was the elderly spinster, older sister for her family. She used to be the breadwinner for her family. She was like a cash cow which gives milk enough to sell. She was a source of income for her family. Her family had used her too much. They only liked her to earn much money and bring home. But Akhila turns to be bold and is determined that she won't let her family use her any more. Reaching the sea-shore, she finds that there is one woman in her inner soul. Akhila is fully grown up to a full realized woman one who decides what to do and what not to do in her own life. She is thinks to begin a new life for the first time according to her principles and desires.

Her interaction in the *Ladies Coupe* with the five women-Janaki who had a happy marriage though it was an arranged one, Margaret Shanti who had suffered from the agony of an unhappy marriage, Sheela, a teenager who had the ability to look beyond things, Prabha Devi, who after years of marriage learnt to strike a balance and Marikolanthu, the woman different from all the four women who did not succumb to the norms of the society just to gain a right place in the social order, helped Akhila realize that she had given the society superfluous power of ruling her life. These women and their stories helped Akhila find the answer to her biggest question "Can a woman stay single and be happy, or does a women need a man to feel complete?"

There was a time when a woman needed a man for protection but today she needs man for companionship, she needs a partner who would share her ups and

downs. She is not in need of a breadwinner but in need of someone with whom she can share the bread. Thus listening to the lives of various women in the coupe, Akhila gets down at Kanyakumari as an empowered woman to rediscover her 'self'. She decides that she has to live for her not for others. Ultimately, she breaks the chain of patriarchy which have haunted her for nearly a decade. She empowers herself and makes a call to Hari, her past lover to make a new life with him not to be her ruler but her companion.

Many patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that the male lineage inherits the property and title. Here, the female alternative is a matriarchy. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of a range of different cultures. The analysis of patriarchy and its effects is a major topic within the social sciences and humanities. Nowadays, patriarchy is a well-known term. It possesses everyday resonance, when used in casual conversation or a descriptive sense, whether, in English or any of the several languages spoken in the Indian sub-continent. At its simplest, the term means 'the absolute rule of the father or the eldest male member over his family'.

In brief, all characters in the novel struggle with conflicts from patriarchal system and also culture. The impact of patriarchal oppression is very significant in the novel as the characters live in a patriarchal society which allows men to have control over women. Akhila, Janaki, Margaret, and Marikolanthu are the victims of this belief created by society. Patriarchal system is used as a tool to foreground the idea that women must not challenge a man's authority and that women must always abide by the cultural norms. Culture also plays an important role in empowering the patriarchal system as it serves as an unwritten doctrine to segregate the roles of men and women.

There are many things that are allowed to men but not to women, be it educational rights, social rights and many others.

Women in post-colonial India boldly defy such delimiting roles and assert self-dignity and personal freedom. They are to pen their basic physical and emotional needs and acts un-inhabiting to satisfy them. The train journey in fact symbolizes a journey away from family and responsibilities, a journey that will ultimately make them conscious of their self-esteem and dignity. It is a journey towards self-discovery Akhila travels with the question that has been haunting all her adult life. She meets five women characters in the novel and travels with the same question. This wonderful atmosphere, delicious, warm novel takes reader into the heart of women's life in contemporary India, revealing how the dilemmas that women face in their relationships with husband, mothers, friends, employees and children.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* brings into focus the issue of self-realization. Though Anita Nair is not a feminist, her stories portray the sensibilities of a woman, how a woman looks at herself and her problems. Anita Nair has very nicely, identified the concept of 'New women' in her novel. Akhila is a special character, who creates her own existence in Ladies Coupé. It deals with new woman who wants to create her own existence without following the order of social custom and gender discrimination. The novel highlights some elements of existentialism. Anita Nair takes a great effort to uncover women characters in order to establish their self-identity, self-discovery and finally their existence. This concept of 'New women' brings freedom and responsibility.

All the six characters on the basis of their freedom as a human being choose the way they want to live their life. They were all in the situation where they were to

prove that they can take some serious steps in order to change their life and also to show their individual identity. Akhila, protagonist begins her journey for self-discovery. She starts her journey to Kanyakumari without seeking permission from her family members. She realizes that she as an individual is free to take decisions on her own to change her life. Prior, she realizes that she has lost her own identity and is living life for others, she wants to know what is her real desire and existence so she asks question to herself that: “Did the feel of rain on her bare skin send a line of goose bumps down her spine Did she sing? Did she dream? Did she weep for reason? Other female characters also get their path of self discovery”(105).

Chapter 5

Indian Women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian Literature. They are known for their bold views that are reflected in their novels. Female novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Anita Nair have chosen the problems and issues faced by the modern women in today's male dominated society as the main theme of their works. In India, the woman writers have portrayed the plight of Indian women in their novels.

Anita Nair's works reveal the struggle of female autonomy played out against the patriarchal cultural pattern. Her characters have a negative self-image and aversion to the domestic life, leading to solitary confinements and reluctance to face reality. Her writing is a self-conscious reaction to overwhelming masculinity.

In Anita Nair's ambivalent novels, the desire to love and live conflict with the desire to withhold oneself and find harmony. She strives to achieve a more authentic way of life than the one that is offered to her readers in all of her novels. Akhilandeshwari, a single woman, is the subject of the novel *Ladies Coupe*. Until she buys a one-way ticket to the coastal city of Kanyakumari, she has never been permitted to live her own life. She is adamant about escaping the restrictions imposed on her by her conservative Tamil Brahmin upbringing.

This novel *Ladies Coupe* examines the role of women in contemporary post-colonial India, which suffers from a system of sex-role stereotyping and oppression under patriarchal social organization. The novel questions whether the role of Indian woman, as a representative of other women living under oppressive patriarchal systems, in relation to culture, should be wives and mothers, or if her role is limited to reproduction regardless of her own desires and needs.

The novel follows Akhila's journey of self-discovery and her attempt to re-establish contact with a man in order to gain autonomy and an independent identity. Despite her efforts, the novel's conclusion reassures her that she still remains a part of a society of both men and women who must interact productively. The ending of the novel complicates a previous passage concerning Hari, suggesting that life might toss forth a second chance and that the second chance, she ultimately desires, is not just happiness or to recuperate her compromised past, but the very specific future and very circumscribed hope to rekindle her romance with Hari. Akhila does not burn up any tracks or forge a new path at all, but simply returns to a significant point in her past, if armed with revelatory self-knowledge and fresh hope to revise a significant chapter of her life. The story of Hari suggests that the same players revolve around her life, and that what lies ahead of her has not changed much.

Each chapter of the novel is devoted to one of the women's stories. What comes under speculative pressure in Nair's novel is the opposition between ideological appearance represented in a mythical and metaphysical understanding of the material world and reality represented in the material oppression of women of low caste and their sexuality. Akhila is not given the opportunity by her family to get married and have a family, rather she is expected to provide Brahmin traditions. Though Akhila is still called a spinster, Marikolanthu was raped and, unsurprisingly, she was to be blamed for it, as she was wandering without a companion at late hours.

Akhila is a feminist character who is determined to move through her relatively unchanging world. She finds her own middle path between patriarchy and freedom, choosing certain constraints of society while abandoning others in order to pursue a love relationship. To wrest the reins of her life back, she must return to the

railway station. As the train is bound to its tracks, she is part of a controlled and regulated system which continues to delineate her life. Similarly, while the safe space of the coupe was dominated by female voices of strength and support, its passengers have to disembark into a society that regulates and passes judgment. The coupe is limiting as well as liberatory, so its solution to women's oppression cannot lie in separatism and the only space in which women can articulate their autonomy and agency or question those traditions which systemically oppress.

Nair's novel explores the intimate feelings of her women characters through vivid descriptions of their Indian lives and the pleasure they take in something as simple as enjoying a forbidden fruit. Akhila, the protagonist, chooses to travel in a ladies coupe to discover herself. She belongs to a conservative Brahmin family and is upset when she sees a signboard at the ticket counter that reads 'ladies handicapped and senior citizens'. Five women of different ages and backgrounds came together in a coupe to share their private moments about their childhood, husbands, sons and lovers.

Nair is a simple artist who uses different social issues in her works. She highlights the importance of education, gender equality, nature of politics and class system in the day to day life. The experiences and incidents in the novel are structured according to configurations of socio-political power that history, class, patriarchy, caste and multiple relationships. The configuration of colonial influence tops the conglomerate of power-blocks because of its wide economic and cultural implications.

Nair discusses how women survive the male dominated society by their wits. All the women are winners in their respective spaces. They are given to understand and realize their inner power, using their innate strength; they challenge their male

counterparts and emerge as winners. The six women featured in *Ladies Coupe* have reached an understanding with their independence.

They are capable of overcoming societal challenges. They believe that a woman is just as capable as a man. The women of the modern era think differently, and Nair's *Ladies Coupe* illustrates this. Overall, Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* is a profound exploration of the minds of the female characters. She portrays her women as having a lot of strength. They fight for a distinct zone and are conscious of their strength. They persevere through their trials and discover the answer to the fundamental question of why they are alive in a patriarchal society.

Akhila constantly asks her fellow passengers, who have lived longer and are more familiar with the fundamentals of living with a husband, a child, a home, and a mother-in-law, for the answers to her many questions. Due to her circumstances, Akhila comes to believe that marriage is unnecessary and that women can live independently. The state of individual life suddenly strikes Akhila. Akhila is led to believe that other women are just individual psyche patterns of consciousness as a result.

Each woman, in some way, in *Ladies Coupe* denotes a gender in one way or another, each of these women gives Akhila advice on how to defy social norms and learn about herself. All of them were the companions of her journey, both physically and psychologically. In each of the stories, it is clearly seen that all the five women have been victimized by the male-dominated society and each of these women have struggled, at some point, in their life to establish their own identity. Some failed, some succeeded and some managed to stay 'afloat'.

It is not sure if Akhila found the answers to all the questions that have haunted her for so long, but one thing is sure that by making an effort to find her answers,

Akhila found a lot more than what she was searching for. The novel is humorous, witty, serious, light-hearted and thought-provoking. Status of contemporary Indian women is the focus of this novel and of general concern to Anita Nair. The novel provides an intriguing glimpse into a small group of contemporary Indian women of different generations. This novel is good in answering the question 'Is a woman vulnerable?' rather than "Can a woman stay single and live happily?". Nair narrates stories of six women who are very much different in their age, social status etc., but all being Indian women.

Nair conveys her protagonist's dilemmas with freshness and charm that makes her story more than just the predictable feminist homily it might appear. She is particularly good on the domestic details such as lazy Sunday lunches, a family row, the sights, sounds and smells of a busy railway station, which makes up her characters lively. It evokes the experiences that are drawn from everyday life and across the social strata. Nair's tale is light enough to relieve the medium of a long journey and yet filled with the incantatory power to bum up tracks, to seek a new destination.

Ladies Coupe focuses on the inner strength every human being possesses. It is the story of a woman's search for strength and independence. Her style is involving and each life account is poignant. Anita Nair is a fine writer with a great sense of character, vivid knowledge of south Indian culture and an eye for telling detail. Her strength as a writer lies in bringing alive the everyday thoughts, desires and doubts. These women's life stories give an insight into the experiences of married Indian women, of the choices they make and the choices made for them.

The coupe becomes a metaphor for a Utopian world that is liberated from patriarchy, one that is not characterized by false binaries. Hence, the conscious action taken by Akhila at the end of the novel, an action that aims to overcome the

contradictions that are characteristic of the 'traditional' world and its essential determinant: that is, alienation. The repressive forces are varied in their manifestations, leading them to revolt against the social norms and male - dominant society. The final outcome of this process of an awareness of repression and a sense of revolt leads the characters to certain resolutions that are bold and lead them to happiness. The whole process finally leads one to an exploration of the dilemma of the new woman who is caught between traditionalism and modernity.

Women in post-colonial India, boldly defy such delimiting roles and assert self-dignity and personal freedom. They are to pen their basic physical and emotional needs and acts uninhabiting to satisfy them. The train journey in fact symbolizes a journey away from family and responsibilities, a journey that will ultimately make them conscious of their self-esteem and dignity. It is a journey towards self-discovery. Akhila travels with the question that has been haunting all her adult life. She meets five women characters in the novel and travels with the same question. This wonderful atmosphere, delicious, warm novel takes reader into the heart of women's life in contemporary India, revealing how the dilemmas that women face in their relationships with husband, mothers, friends, employees and children.

Throughout the novel, Akhila is portrayed as an emerging new woman. The concept 'New Woman' is a feminist idea that emerged in the late 19th century and had a profound influence well into the 20th century. In 1894, Irish writer Sarah Grand used the term 'new woman' in an influential article to refer to independent women seeking radical change. In this novel, Nair shows Akhila, the protagonist, as a person who wants to bring a radical change into the conservative patriarchal society.

Because, even though Akhila was considered as a provider she was not allowed to take life decision on her own.

Thus, Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* brings into focus the issues of self-realization and how woman wishes to reconstruct the ethics of society. Though Anita Nair is not a feminist, her stories portray the sensibilities of a woman, how a woman looks at herself and her problems. As a writer, she shows her existential inclinations by raising such question. She recovers the existential concepts of freedom and responsibility in all these characters by giving them freedom to come out of the world of emotional and physical trauma and to live their life which is full of happiness, to realize their own strength and to change.

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**Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*: A Study on the Struggle of
Widow's Survival in the Partition Era**

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 LITERATURE

by

ELNA HEDWIGE J

(REG. NO. 21SPEN06)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

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Five	Summation	
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*: A Study on the Struggle of Widow's Survival in the Partition Era** 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 and is a work done by Elna Hedwige J during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE


SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR
Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*: A Study on the Struggle of Widow's Survival in the Partition Era** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basic for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

April 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

J. Elina Hedwige
ELNA HEDWIGE.J

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water*: A Study on the Struggle of Widow's Survival in the Partition Era** explicates the internal sufferings of widows who have an urge to live a happy life but the society restricts them from doing so, blaming them as the cause of their husband's death. This thesis studies how they are treated and come to light.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with literature, Pakistani literature and also about the author Bapsi Sidhwa's life and her other works in brief.

The second chapter **Plight of Widows** elaborates the sufferings of Chuyia and Kalyani whose lives were ransacked by the tormenting impact of the shackles of widowhood and how they were unable to escape this torture due to its societal implications.

The third chapter **Resistance and Rebellion against the Manacles of Widowhood** shows how good triumphs over evil, through the portrayal of Chuyia's liberation from widowhood with the help of the embodiments of goodness, Shakuntala and Madhumati, under the guidance of Sadananda, who acts as a tool for her salvation.

The fourth chapter **Cultural Hegemony** employs Antonio Gramsci's theory of Cultural Hegemony to delineate the discrimination against widows, the unvoiced factions of the Pakistani society.

The chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the proceeding chapter

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is defined as writing that employs artistic expression and form and is thought to be of merit or significance. It includes prose, fictions, drama, poetry and non-fiction genres such as autobiography, diaries, memoir, letters and essays. It also includes non-fictional books, articles or other printed information on a particular subject. As Robert Louis Stevenson says, “the difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean” (Stevenson 158). It represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. It attempts to provide entertainment, enlightenment or instruction to the reader. Literature becomes the vehicle of the thoughts and feelings of the common man. It reflects the society and portrays the values, morale, and the attitudes, which prevails in the society.

The nature of Pakistani literature soon after independence aroused controversy among writers due to its being centered heavily on the negative events related to the independence movement. According to Gilani Kamran, Pakistani literature was expected to take a new direction along with the new state of Pakistan at this point, but did not immediately meet this expectation. Saadat Hassan Manto, a prominent writer of short stories of South Asia, produced considered to be progressive in its tone and spirit. According to several critics it had not only evolved its own identity but also had played a significant role in documenting the hardships and hopes of Pakistan in the latter part of the twentieth century. Pakistani literature’s main official platform is the Pakistan Academy of Letters, whose work is overseen by a Board of Governors.

Pakistani-English literature emerged as a distinctive field of postcolonial literature in the early decades after the partition though things seem astonishingly different in this case where women writers seemed to dominate Pakistani-Anglophone literature.

There was a time when women writers used pen names to avoid social judgements and moral policing in male dominated Europe and America, and some of the most famous names were Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Emily Dickinson, who tried to avoid sexist rebukes from then traditional western societies. With the first wave of feminism finally reaching the lofty goal of universal suffrage, Virginia Woolf still needed to write *A Room of One's Own* (1929) to express the desires and needs of female writers.

Feminism is a movement that seeks to equalize the status of men and women. Feminism has reached women from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Pakistani fiction writers have portrayed the same thing because they mostly try to paint an ideal picture of women having equal rights with their men. In doing so, they demonstrate the psychological development of women, which can be seen in the development of various female characters. Pakistani female writers have been more active in this regard than male writers. "I feel if there's one little thing I could do, it's to make people realize: We are not worthless because we inhabit a country which is seen by Western eyes as a primitive, fundamentalist country only. . . I mean, we are a rich mixture of all sorts of forces as well, and our lives are very much worth living." (Massachusetts Review 523)

Sara Suleri Goodyear, whose untimely death shocked and saddened the literary community, served Pakistani English fiction with her acclaimed memoir *Meatless Days* (1989). Her memoir, written by a brilliant artist and perfectionist in prose, dealt with her divided life between two worlds, her native home and her later home, and intertwined personal and national history. *Meatless Days*, regarded as an important work in Postcolonial English literature, describes Pakistan's journey from partition to the 1980s and, in Kamila Shamsie's opinion, remains the most important book from

Pakistan. *The Rhetoric of English India*, a scholarly work by Sara Suleri, is also regarded as a significant contribution to colonial cultural studies.

Though Sidhwa laid the groundwork for Pakistani-English fiction, it was Kamila Shamsie who established it as one of the world's most promising literary genres. Belonging to the subcontinent's intellectual elite and following in the footsteps of Attia Hossain and Muneeza Shamsie, Kamila has dominated the Pakistani English novel since the publication of her critically acclaimed novel, *Kartography* (2004). Kamila's fiction deals with contemporary geopolitics, as well as issues of war and immigration, and she has successfully attempted to redefine the paradigm of Postcolonial Literature. Her novels *Home Fire* (2017) and *Burnt Shadows* (2009) drew readers from outside the country and challenged the notion of strictly "local literature."

Before She Sleeps (2018) author Bina Shah has successfully demonstrated that Pakistani writers are not afraid to go off the beaten path. Bina Shah is regarded as one of the most recognizable feminist voices in Pakistani-English fiction, heavily influenced and highly regarded by Margret Atwood for her masterpiece *Before She Sleeps*. This novel tells the story of women who refuse to sleep with multiple men in order to have more children in order to meet the needs of a society that has lost the majority of its male population due to war. With its creative intensity and imaginative power, the story reminds us of Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Fatima Bhutto, a member of the country's political elite with a troubled past, is equally appealing and thought provoking in her fiction and non-fiction. Her novel *The Shadow of Crescent Moon* (2013) was nominated for the Women's Prize for Fiction, and her family history *Songs of Blood and Sorrow* (2010) received positive reviews. Her second novel, *The Runaways*, explores the concepts of migration and exclusion the demonization of minorities and fundamentalism, and how this segregated world

disrupts the lives of ordinary people. Fatima, the granddaughter and niece of two former Pakistani prime ministers, is an outspoken opponent of corruption, fundamentalism, and the militarization of Pakistani society.

Moni Mohsin, the author of *Diary of a Social Butterfly* (2008), is one of the most promising writers in Pakistani-Anglophone literature. Moni Mohsin has been extremely productive since the publication of her first novel, *The End of Innocence* (2006), and her writings, particularly *The Diary of a Social Butterfly*, have captivated both readers and critics. Her social satire *The Diary of a Social Butterfly* revolves around the social life of a snobbish yet amusing woman Butterfly who has a unique ability to create humour amidst Pakistan's most turbulent days. Moni's prose elicits uncontrollable laughter with Butterfly's misspellings, literal translations, and incorrect pronunciations in her most famous work of fiction. Moni Mohsin has been a regular contributor to leading Pakistani newspapers.

Uzma Aslam Khan, along with her contemporary Kamila Shamsie, has become one of the most prominent names in Pakistan English fiction, with novels such as *Trespassing* (2003) and *The Miraculous History of Nomi Ali* (2019) helping to establish her as a leading figure in contemporary Pakistani-English literature. Uzma Aslam Khan's novel *Trespassing* deals with a wide range of issues, and her skill as a storyteller helps to tie them all together. It attempts to expose Western powers' dangerous involvement in the East and its disastrous consequences. Khan's set in the Andaman Islands novel *The Miraculous History of Nomi Ali* is a successful attempt.

Bapsi Sidhwa was born to Pakistani Zoroastrian parents Peshotan and Tehmina Bhandara in Karachi, Pakistan on August 11, 1938. She is an important author of Pakistani origin who writes in English. She is of Parsi Zoroastrian background and has depicted Parsi life, customs and the Zoroastrian religion in great detail in most of her

works. She is Pakistan's leading diasporic writer. She was born in Karachi into an eminent family. But soon after her birth, her family moved to Lahore. Basically, she belonged to Parsi community which she has described with such warmth and humor in her novels. Furthermore, belonging to Pakistan's Anglicized elite, they also spoke English at home too. This multi lingual, multi-cultural background is pivotal to Sidhwa's work. She was brought up in Lahore. Sidhwa's childhood was difficult. When she was two years old, she contracted Polio which paralyze her leg and affected her entire life. She was a solitary and lonely child. Her parents were advised by the doctors not to send her to the school because of Polio. She spends her time daydreaming and listening to stories told by servants. So, she claims to have had a rather boring childhood.

As a young girl of nine years, Sidhwa witnessed firsthand, bloody partition of 1947 in which seven million Hindus were uprooted in the largest, most terrible exchange of population that history has known. The partition was caused by a complicated set of social and political factors including religious differences and the end of colonialism in India. Without a word of protestation or preaching and without histrionics, Sidhwa has written one of the most powerful indictments of the riots which occurred during the Partition.

Bapsi Sidhwa is an award-winning Pakistani lady novelist striving above all to bring women's issues of the Indian subcontinent into public discussion. She had a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliff or Harvard in 1986 and she was a visiting scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation center, Bellagio, Italy in 1991. She is the author of five internationally acclaimed novels and one of the Pakistan's most prominent English fiction writers. Though she was born in Pakistan, she has also the American Nationality. Sidhwa was the recipient of Sitara-I-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest national honor in arts

bestowed upon a citizen in the year 1991. She has received the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Writer's Award in 1994. She has worked on the Advisory committee to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on women's developments and has taught at Columbia University, University of Houston and Mount Holyoke College. She was the Fanny Hurst retire-in-residence at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts and serves on the Board of Directors of INPRINT in Houston.

Sidhwa has five internationally acclaimed novels to her credit. A survey of her novels reveals that they chronicle the history of the Indian subcontinent, with particular focus on the lives of women. Sidhwa as a diasporic writer focuses her attention on history and particularly colonial and postcolonial history of Indian subcontinent in her novels. She has chronicled India's history from the days of the raj in *The Crow Eater* and *Water* to that great event of the sub-continent that resulted in the separation of India and Pakistan the partition in *Cracking India* to the rise of religious fundamentalism and also the problems faced by expatriates abroad in *American Brat*. *Water* in 2006, which is based on Deepa Mehta's film. All the five of her novels present her views on life as a Parsi, Punjabi, Pakistani and above all a woman. Sidhwa was seven when she witnessed the partition of India in 1947. The partition was caused by a complicated set of Social and Political factors including religious differences at the end of the colonial rule in India.

Sidhwa's works are notable for their use of literary resources. Furthermore, Sidhwa's writing style differs from that of other writers because Sidhwa possesses exceptional writing abilities such as resourcefulness, imagination, and life experiments. Sidhwa's stylistic devices emerge at different linguistic levels. Sidhwa's novels are reactive experiments in which she combines fantasy and reality. All of the stylistic devices used by Sidhwa in her works create cohesion and coherence, i.e., they make a

text sensible. She employs stylistic devices in such a way that her style deviates from language norms and differs from the styles of other writers as well.

Sidhwa's world became books when she had no acquaintance. She read *Enid Blyton*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Aunt Mame*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Pickwick papers*, *P.G. Wodehouse* and so much more. This influenced her, taught her the narrative structure and characterization and later fashioned her writing. So, a grim childhood, loneliness and isolation, circumstances somewhat similar to that of Emily and Charlotte Bronte, at Haworth a small, bleak town in Yorkshire, inspired Bapsi Sidhwa to become a writer.

Sidhwa wrote her first two novels in virtual isolation. At that time there were only two Pakistani English novelists of note, Ahmed Ali who had written his *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) before partition and Zulfikar Ghose who was the ex-patriot, who had never lived in post- Partition Pakistan, and had written *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967), the only one set in the country. The tradition of publishing English fiction in Pakistan was very limited. Sidhwa, with the help of an American friend managed to place *The Bride* with an American agent, but for years could not find a publisher.

Bapsi Sidhwa novels dealing exclusively with the Parsi community *The Crow Eaters* (1978) stands out as the most account of Parsis as individual and as a community. The very title *The Crow Eaters* says about a Parsi family, the Junglewallas, the protagonist sets out from Central India to Lahore in order to make fortune. Sidhwa describes Faredoon's rise as a migrant entrepreneur in Lahore with a great deal who is driven by a desire to become rich and lead a prosperous life. There is a visible comic strained in the novel however it is diluted with deep emotions and pathos. The adventures of Freddy seem to be cast almost having episodic structures. They are infused with laughter, sexual course, hilarity and wit.

The second novel of Bapsi Sidhwa is *The Pakistani Bride* revolves around a girl named Zaitoon, who goes through many ups and downs in her life. At a very young age she loses her parents during the Pakistan and India partition. Later on, the same day she was adopted by a guy named Qasim who witnessed the whole scene. So, Qasim and Zaitoon started living in Lahore. Then they travelled to northern area where they meet an American woman Carol who was married to a Pakistani businessman but was having an affair with another woman. They helped them reach their destination. Later Zaitoon gets married, Qasim leaves her and goes back to Lahore. Zaitoon's husband had an ego centered personality where he abused his wife due to male dominating society and the pressure of his family made him torture Zaitoon so she ran away from him. The whole tribe starts looking for her so they could kill her in front of everyone to bring back their family pride. The ending brought tears into the reader's eyes and smile to their lips where Zaitoon growing up all pampered like a flower and ended up living a nightmare life. This book highlights many issues of the society which include, the mistreatment of women, gender equality and male dominance in the society.

The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* otherwise called as *Cracking India* talks about the war that happened during the Partition of India in 1947. The political and social upheaval engendered by independence and partition included religious intolerance. The novel is told from a first-person perspective Lenny Sethi, a Parsee child who is about 4 years old when the novel begins. Lenny and her family plan to quietly endure the partition that transforms Lahore, India into Lahore, Pakistan in August 1947. The novel operates as a coming of age novel describe the parallel growth and formation of identity within the protagonist, Lenny, and therefore the country, Pakistan. The story is told in the present tense as the events unfold before the young girl's eyes, though moments of an older Lenny looking back are apparent. As Lenny becomes more aware, she must

confront a reality increasingly reduced into categories and labels. However, publishers feared that an American audience might mistake the unfamiliar name for a drug pusher. In fact, the *Ice-Candy-Man* is a Muslim Street vendor drawn like many other men by the magnetic beauty of Ayah, Lenny's nanny. Lenny observes the transition of the *Ice-Candy-Man* through the roles of ice cream vendor, bird seller, cosmic connector to Allah via telephone, and pimp. This last role shows the devious methods which some, particularly politicians, will sink to in order to survive. *Cracking India* calls for the recollection of old, caked wounds in order for them to be healed.

In *An American Brat* Pakistani born novelist Bapsi Sidhwa reveals with a humorous yet the freedom and profound sense of loss that make up the immigrant experience in America. The novel focusses on the history of Pakistan especially the years of the tyrannical rule of general Zia-ul-Haq. While dealing with history she puts into her novel fictional characters from her own Parsi community, which has a chequered history of migration and take us into the history through the actions and reactions of those characters regarding their experiences in Pakistan and America. In *An American Brat*, she describes the story of a young protagonist Feroza who straddles between two distant cultures and civilizations. In the process of negotiating with the two cultures she experiences a sense of disenchantment, gains a deeper grasp of her diasporic status in America and finally develops a persona willing to adapt herself to western American cultural parameters but at the same time retains her selfhood.

Water, Sidhwa's novel, was released in 2006 by Milkweed Editions. This novel is based on Deepa Mehta's screenplay *Water*, which tells the story of Hindu widows in the first half of the twentieth century. The novel is about the child Chuyia, Little Mouse, who was married at the age of six and widowed at the age of eight. According to Hindu tradition at the time, she is rejected and sent to a widow ashram with her head shorn

and her life dedicated to sorrow. In the ashram, she must choose between good and evil in order to survive. Sidhwa describes the widow's life and situation. Sidhwa wishes for widowers to have a dignified life. She wishes for their happiness and well-being. Therefore, the novel *Water* presents life with the light of hope.

Chapter Two

Plight of Widows

Bapsi Sidhwa scripted the subject of widowhood in deeply in her novel. *Water* has been exalted at international level as it successfully gives a touching account of how womanhood is victimized in India. It also looks into the ways women are targeted and fettered by social institutions and crushed under the patriarchal system leaving them always at the receiving end. The novel comprehensively represents a powerful and significant cultural challenge to the patriarchal values and practices of persecution, subjugation and maltreatment of widowhood which have been going on for a long time in the country.

Sidhwa insightfully invokes the history of the 1930's, a period charged with the immense excitement and passion for India's freedom. Gandhi summoned both men and women to cast off their fear and join their fellow people in setting India free. The 19th century had already witnessed a visible trend towards social reformation in the movements like the Brahmo Samaj which argued for equal rights for women, launched protest against child-marriage and encouraged for the remarriage of widows.

Apart from Mahatma Gandhi, other reformers like Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) also raised the voice strongly in favour of Hindu widows and tried to legitimize their remarriage on the basis of scriptural authority. In the one of his essays "The marriage of Hindu widows" (1855), he contended that through Manu has prescribed a life of celibacy for widows, Narad and Parashar permitted their remarriage under special conditions (Vidyasagar 31). Another reformist, Dayanand Saraswati (1824-85) an Indian philosopher, who founded the Arya Samaj, too advocated for the marriage of widows for the continuations of a healthy race.

Water was subjected to controversies when it was in the process of writing. Its radical and daring content indicts the upper caste Brahmins and pillars of Hindu religious practices of exploiting vulnerable and helpless women and perpetuating insidiously corrupt prescriptions for widows. Sidhwa rereads with uncanny grasp the oppressed and exploited condition of women in India of the 1930's and invokes the grave and endemic issues of child-marriage, widowhood and poverty against the background of the tumultuous and increasingly clamorous movements for independence.

The novel tells the stories of a widows who reside in the ashram: the youngest child widow eight year old Chuyia; the fair and silent woman Kalyani, who tries to live a pious and humane life untouched by her sordid exposure to prostitutions. The stories of these both widows bring forth, the buried portion of Indian history of the 20th century that secretly subsumed women's double colonization.

The novel opening with a prologue, constructs the past life and background of Chuyia in her childhood, the idyllic life among flora and fauna, eating copious amounts of gooseberries and playing with her clay dolls. Chuyia knew exactly where she would find some ripe gooseberries. She packed up her toys and pushed the box against the wall of the neglected thatched hut that lay at the far corner of their compound. The forest came right up to the wall and seemed to possess the hut with a shower of flowering branches and a thick tangle of creepers. Her attachment to the natural world made her a keen observer of her surrounding where she became the part of the forest:

The squirrels darted up and around the trees, playing their own little games with the sparrows. Chuyia's ears picked up the rustle of fecund vegetation and of unseen insects inhabiting it. All of her senses became

steeped in the forest's wild beauty – her pulse slowed to match its deep green rhythm, and her heart was at peace. (Sidhwa 22)

In the Indian society, a woman's identity is governed by her male relative, her father, husband or a son, at different stages of her life. She is under the protection of her father in her childhood, she comes under the shadows of her husband in her youth and in her old age she is secured by her sons. That is to say, each phase of a woman's life is destined to pass under the shadow of man around her at that time, "A girl is destined to leave her parents' home early or she will bring disgrace to it. She is safe and happy only in her husband's care" (Sidhwa 14).

Reinforced by the "power of discourse" and "discourse of power" the scriptures are cited to justify the subjection and subjugation of women. Obviously, Bhagya is intimidated by her husband's "words of wisdom" and this is the "power of discourse", endemically appropriating the patriarchal dominance: "Outside of marriage the wife has no recognized existence in our tradition. A woman's role in life is to get married and have sons. That is why she is created: to have sons! That is all!" (Sidhwa 15).

After a long debate between Somnath and Bhagya, the girl child, Chuyia, is pushed into marriage to a man old enough to be her father. She is cast into bridal fineries, her wrists full of jingling bangles, haldi uptan ritual performed over her little body. All the rituals performed by them show the common rituals of Bengal and Bihar. The narrative vividly describes the customs during the marriage.

For example, as the bride, borne in a palanquin, and the groom in elaborate headgear made their separate ways to the wedding hall, the Bengali women ululated to draw attention to the wedding ceremony in keeping with tradition, a conch was blown to accompany the 'oolu-ool (26). The wedding takes place at a village temple. All

guests are required to stand outside the temple to witness the formal marriage, with the exception of the priest and the wedding couple. Sidhwa's description conjures up images that linger in our minds:

Bhagya couldn't place her daughter, who was seated next to the groom and looked like a miniature doll. Hira Lal sat cross-legged, the sacred thread visible across his bare chest, within the graceful folds of his white dhoti. Chuyia's sari was tied to a long stole that was wrapped around Hira Lal's neck and shoulders, and they were made to stand. Agni was present the groom and his bride walked seven times around a pattern on the floor. (Sidhwa 27)

Chuyia enjoys her marriage ceremony and continues to live her life as she did before marriage. But this happiness does not last long, Chuyia's married life now takes a tragic turn into widowhood even before the marriage life is constructed. The novel focuses on the rituals that Hindu culture forces us to accept in the name of tradition. After the death of her husband, she ceases to be a person and passes into a state of social death. Because a woman is primarily regarded as a vessel for reproduction, where her social death also signals her sexual death. She is pushed to the margin of the family's functioning social unit and is estranged from reproduction and sexuality. Astonishingly Chuyia faces the situation of being a widowhood before even living her life:

Before Chuyia could object, the woman drew down her skirt and pulled her blouse up over her neck, saying, you can't wear colours or stitched clothes, and threw them to one side. She hunkered down and removed the girl's silver anklets with quick, sleight-of-hand movements, concealing them on her person. Chuyia stood naked as the day she was born, staring at her clothes vibrate little red-and-blue heap. (Sidhwa 42)

Sidhwa juxtaposes two diametrically opposed images performed on the innocent girl to betray the inherent subjugation and suppression of growth of Chuyia. The dation of rituals coaxes the dormant sensibility of a person and makes her realize the condition of a girl child who falls to the trap of divine as well as social destiny. The novelist strikes at the hideous aspect of Hindu religious beliefs. In fact, Chuyia has not done anything wrong, but the so-called superstitious religious belief makes her responsible for her present condition.

She is compelled to abandon the warmth of her family home and is banished into the cold and calculative precincts of a widow's ashram. It is an environment of forced confinement where married women, on the death of their spouses, are left to rot as faceless members of society, with no choice but to leave their marital or parental homes at whatever age it may happen to them.

The narrative of *Water* draws our attention to the feudal pattern of power relationship in the religious pietistic environment of Rawalpur. A large community of widows live in a dark, sullen and confining enclosure where the discoloured walls are suggestive of the sapped and colourless lives of these widows. Their desperate urge for little happiness remained unheard and unfulfilled; and their human spirit is deadened. Chuyia, recently arrived in the Ashram, looks inquisitively around her "The walls were pockmarked with patches of brick that showed through the crumbled cement and flaking whitewash. Every instance of architecture appeared to be a crumbling, slowly disintegrating shell of once stalwart structures" (Sidhwa 47). Chuyia feels extreme estrangement and alienation. In the Ashram she develops a new surrogate kinship. Her introduction to the rest of her surroundings begins with the curious gazes of her fellow widows at the Ashram. The widow's need to conglomerate, seek companionship and

build collective strength to their forced isolation makes this place all the more meaningful:

They sat companionably close; the one all angular and withered with age, the other into bloom of robust childhood. Shakuntala was struck by how appropriate they looked together-similar in their innocence and in their vulnerability, they completed a circle. The very young and the very old belonged together. She let the yellow curtain fall. (Sidhwa 56)

Chuyia believes that her stay is a temporary one and her mother will take her back. At a later point she acknowledges the fact that this will not happen, but she is unable to give up all hope Chuyia feels momentary happiness in an “oval portrait of a pink-cheeked English girl, clasping a bouquet of flowers in her white hands. She had luxuriant chestnut-brown hair, crowned by a flaming red cap. Chuyia touched the shabby frame and prayed to the image to take her home” (Sidhwa 57).

Sidhwa’s use of a child-widow as protagonist is more than a positing of innocence versus ingenuity. “Didi, where is the house for the men widows?” (97). Chuyia questions the system; she wants to know why there are no male widowers and why only women are subjected to this regime. Chuyia’s arrival brings about sudden changes in the Ashram. Her sweet innocence lends a freshness to the routine monotony and harshness in the lives of the inmates. Shakuntala’s maternal instincts are aroused, Kalyani also sees in her a young innocent friend with whom she can get back in time, to her adolescent days-talking, laughing etc. Even Madhumati is not untouched by the presence of Chuyia. Chuyia’s hysterical cries stir in Madhumati a tinge of compassion: “You poor child. How I feel for I was also young when my bastard husband died! Come! Sit here” (Sidhwa 52).

Chuyia entering into the ashram symbolizes exclusively “reserved” women’s domain a widow’s ashram - their dwelling, sanctuary and refuge where society has relegated them to be, “In our shared grief we’re all sisters here, and this ashram is our only refuge, says Madhumati to the little Chuyia over their first meeting. Further she tells her “Our holy books say. A wife is part of her husband while he’s alive Right?” (Sidhwa 52).

In comic pathetic overtones Sidhwa drives home the big gulf between man’s world and the woman’s world. The discrimination against women is implemented by the patriarchal society that always thrived on double standards. Ironically, women themselves subscribe to the old fashion of Hindu patriarchal practices and in a formal criticism on Chuyia.

The environment of the Ashram links Chuyia’s life with other widows and also a vicious network that practices hypocrisy in overtly making the Ashram appear as a place of religious pietistic practices for the widows but covertly thrives on the practice of prostitution. The persona of Madhumati is like two sides of the same coin: her acts of violence on the widows is the ugly face of patriarchy. As a matriarch of the house, she only imitates the patriarchal stance.

Water portrays sweet reminiscences, sorrowful memories and dreams, and reflects human values. Shakuntala, Bua and Kalyani add a sense of meaning to Chuyia’s life through their demonstrations of love, caring and bonding. Each one seeks, with every passing day, a strength in her belief that someday a sense of emancipation will arrive.

Kalyani, the principal focus of the novel, is presented in picturesque images of lightening, and the finer rain that stirs “fecund scent of water on parched earth” (Sidhwa 105). Rain after hot Indian summer is always welcomed with celebration and hooraying

a season of love and joy, music and dance that brings itself to creatures upon the earth. Kalyani's heart blooms out in joy and in harmony, and with her excitement come the rejuvenating showers of rain. Kalyani and Chuyia dance happily with the rhythmic cheerful songs as narrative vividly describes:

Laughing at him, Kalyani stepped out into the rain and, spreading her arms, rotated slowly. She reached her hands out to Chuyia and clasping each other's crossed hands, faces uplifted to the onslaught of water and wind, they whirled faster and faster as Kaalu ran around them barking excitedly, nearly losing their balance with giddiness they fell, laughing against each other, and held on fast as the terrace undulated in a crazy dance beneath their feet. (Sidhwa 105-06)

Nature's bounty, benevolence and beauty for some moments fill the lives of the widows with joy. No amount of pain or oppression could deprive them of experiencing this happiness. This moment stirs Narayan's memory of his first contact with Kalyani when heavy rain poured down upon him from Kalyani's roof. This love tends Kalyani to have a life. This transforms her soul. Rain of the season drenches and quenches her deprived and parched soul, and Narayan, who is an opponent of caste oppression and supporter of Mahatma Gandhi's "passive resistance" movement against the British Colonial rule has deeply fallen in love with Kalyani.

The lashing monsoon storm harmonized with the tumultuous passions spinning within him, and graced him with an exhilarating sense of invincibility. His joy quickened his stride, broadened his smile, and he burst into his home soaking wet, smiling stupidly. He was smitten --- in love with Kalyani! He wanted to shout it to the world. (Sidhwa 106)

Kalyani, Chuyia and Shakuntala are the only women in the Ashram to traverse the internal and external atmospheres. All three embody three different states of being. Kalyani's youth and beauty are prostituted for the living of Ashram. Chuyia's defiance and childhood too allow her some mobility which permit her to examine the prevailing tradition and custom sanction her an intellectual mobility. Kalyani who has allowed herself to be prostituted finds the muck climbing up her lotus petals. As she tells Narayan, quoting from the Gita that her life like lords, which even though it grows in sludge is above it "Learn to live like a lotus untouched by the filthy water" (Sidhwa 152). The longing for Narayan sweeps Kalyani's heart, the narrative discloses the secret life of Kalyani with subtlety:

Kalyani had somehow learned to compartmentalize her life. Her childhood was in one box, and occasionally she opened it and let the happy memories spill out. Her meetings with Narayan were locked up in another box she kept close to her heart and opened frequently. (Sidhwa 152)

The novel dwells on the sustaining power of poetry, quotations from Hindu Scriptures and the lessons contained in the epics. For example, when Narayan recites Kalidasa to Kalyani, she comes back to the Ashram and teaches the same words to Chuyia. There is also another example in which Shakuntala reads the story of Dushyanta from Mahabharata, and what is interesting to note here is the way in which the widow Shakuntala draws an unusual and yet entirely appropriate lesson for Chuyia from the story.

The other widows in Ashram are Kunti and Snehlata, who are serving menial jobs. None of them can recall exactly how long they have lived there but that they were

very small when they came after their death of husbands, the old men they were married to. As Kalyani described her past dark days which is similar to those of Chuyia:

With three daughters on his hands, her father had been anxious to marry them off. Word of Kalyani's beauty had spread, and she was married off to the highest bidder, a man of sixty, when she was six. Her husband had become ill and Kalyani had accompanied him to the ghats. He had died a few days after they had come to Rawalpur and the widowed child had been dumped at the ashram. Kalyani said she had also fought and screamed like Chuyia at first, but had soon realized that it wouldn't do her any good. (Sidhwa 156-57)

In the Ashram widows religiously perform bhajan and they chant for the gods, listening to sacred text like pravachan and observing fast monthly. The widows tacitly accept of taking advantage of Kalyani's life since she brings the money for their lord and Kalyani appears to accept her own functionality without any complaints. Unlike the elaborate marriage rituals that mark a woman's entry into legitimate sexual activity, the rituals marking the renunciation of the widow's sexuality are simple but deeply humiliating and traumatic, the most visible being the breaking of bangles and tonsure, making them wear white saree with a bare shoulder or shaving of the head. These enforced signs of widowhood signifying symbolic restraint or castration along with the effacement of colour from her garments and taste from her food, are the ways by which the society reiterates its power to control a widow's sexuality.

A determined Narayan contemplates a secret meeting with her beloved Kalyani. Using Chuyia as a go-between, Narayan sets up a clandestine rendezvous. They meet and ride in a horse buggy through the British Cantonment area in secluded privacy. He confesses his undying love to Kalyani and informs her of his secret plans to elope with

her. Narayan conveys this matter to his mother without any hesitation that the woman he wants to marry is a widow. As expected, his mother is shocked and cried and said, what will the people say! but he is convinced that his father is broadminded enough to accept his decision and persuade his mother's consent. A breathless Kalyani confesses the secret wedding plans to Chuyia who is overjoyed at the prospect of a wedding feast where one can indulge in eating all the forbidden delicacies to one's heart's content.

Narayan's accidental meeting with Kalyani and the blossoming of irrepressible love and desire put the reader on and for a star-crossed tragedy. The love story is wonderfully woven into the morbid existence of the Ashram. The characters in the Ashram all of whom happen to be women are portrayed with the intense sensitivity that is possible only by an author of Sidhwa's calibre.

Kalyani leaves the Ashram with Madhumati's insults buzzing her ears. She bathes on the ghats and meets Narayan in the cent temple. A passionate Narayan proposes to her. Upon consent Narayan takes her on a boat ride to his father's home. The boat ride is described in most ethereal terms:

The sounds of the dholaks and of firecrackers popping travelled the calm waters of the grew-brown ganga to kalyani and Mayan in their small boat. They were headed toward the ghats of the city. Kalyani sat behind the oarsman, facing Narayan. A gentle breeze stirred in her hair and blew wisps into her warps. After a while, she wet her hand and ran it over the unruly tufts of her badly cut hair to smooth it down. (Sidhwa 195)

The boat takes a bend in the river, a bulky white mansion becomes visible that reflected a different architectural era, rose like an "ungainly galleon from a bed of rock" (Sidhwa 198). Narayan gesturing towards the mansion says "that is my house" Narayan's 'house' to Kalyani is a knell of death.

An ominous chill crossed through her blood and drained the colour from her face. Kalyani turned her eyes to Narayan and in a deathly quiet voice she asked, “What is your father’s name?” ‘Dwarkanath... Seth Dwarkanath” (Sidhwa 198).

Dwarkanath is the depraved rich to whom Kalyani is sent by Madhumati. The moment marks a sudden shock in life of Kalyani. She is totally devastated. Mystified Narayan cannot understand her shocked reaction since she is reluctant to reveal the ugly truth. The meeting of Narayan with Dwarkanath to get to know the truth further reveals the depravity of the rich man. He speaks with remorsefully though patronizingly. “But you cannot go through life being so idealistic. So, you have found out She’s not a goddess. Don’t marry her-keep her as your mistress”. (Sidhwa 201)

Back at the Widow Ashram, Madhumati tells Kalyani to get ready to go with Gulabi. But like a bird that has once stepped outside the cage, Kalyani is no longer willing to pawn herself. She knows she has no place in the ashram. Despairing of ever finding happiness or a real life of respectability, she returns to the ghat and decides to drown herself and thus “Ma Ganga had claimed her daughter”. (Sidhwa 205)

The suspense, excitement and trauma create a climate of intense restlessness in all the characters of the novel. The proximity with Chuyia and the presence of Narayan in the lives of Kalyani and Shakuntala brings about a transformation. The love of Narayan gives courage to Kalyani, makes her fight for her human rights. Until a revelation turns everything upside-down and drives her to a tragic death.

Narayan is shocked when his father tells him that he need not marry a widow but could keep her as a mistress as he himself has been doing. That father that he has idolized exposes his feet of clay. Disgusted by his debauchery. Narayan leaves home and boards the crowded train that Gandhi is travelling in, thus exchanging one father figure for another.

The narrative does not allow the happy closure of a widow's marriage but like the early novels on the subject probes the reason for Kalyani's action. It succeeds in making apparent the helplessness of a woman trapped within the social grid when she has neither the means nor the opportunities of standing by herself in defiance of the community or society. Without the protection of a male, she is merely an object of exploitation, whether inside or outside home or the Widow Ashram, by men or by colluding women.

It is play of power economy and gender which subjugates the women. Narayan points out to Shakuntala, after Kalyani's death, that it is chiefly economy which made the law-makers of the ancient ages demarcate such roles for men and women. Keeping a widow in the house would be expensive and would mean responsibility, so they were sent to widow's ashram: "One less mouth to feed, four saris, one bed to let somewhere a corner saved for another widow. There is no other reason. Disguised as religion, it's just about money". (Sidhwa 209)

The next and last victim of the cunning conspiracies of Madhumati is vibrant and vivacious Chuyia who is sent away with Gulabi, a pimp, under the pretext of being returned to her parents, as the next prostitute for Narayan's father. Shakuntala thwarts the evil design of Madhumati and takes upon herself the task of rescuing Chuyia ensuring that the adolescent's life remains safe and protected. The novel ends on a scene when Shakuntala hands over Chuyia to Narayan who is a part of procession for India's freedom led by Mahatma Gandhi. The ending would be seen as symbolically suggestive of the hope for women's emancipation from the perverse form of patriarchal control.

Water mainly focuses on two women Chuyia and Kalyani trying to break the corrupt cycle of orthodox superstitions, to get rid of the yoke of oppression, and to lend dignity to widows. The narrative becomes expressive of a graph of attitudes from

passivity, modesty, subjugation, fear acceptance and resignation to the empowered traits of curiosity interrogation, imagining, defiance and determination. The novel seems to identify three major power structures responsible for the victimization of widows. First of all, it is ideological aspect, in which the priestly class interprets selected holy texts to subjugate women and widows. Secondly, the patriarchal hegemony of rich landlords and gentry, who with their overt and hypocritical concern for institutionalized widows, never fail to exploit them for their own physical needs in a callous manner. Lastly, it is the socially empowered women themselves who have no qualms of conscience in tyrannizing over their own less fortunate sisters. The success of novelist lies in juxtaposing the beauty of nature with the sordiness of the man-made world. The death of Kalyani, has also been read as a refusal by the author to face the volatile issue of widow prostitute remarriage.

The metaphorical and metonymical use and multilayered connotations of the river are integral to the plot. Besides reflecting the shifting moods of the characters and the twists in the narrative in tandem with the change in nature, the river operates at once as a regenerative element as well as purifying agent; it is the resting place for tired bodies, the last sip for the departing soul and a site of rituals for both marriage and death it is a source of hope where Chuyia floats a boat to carry her home and of hopelessness when it bears both Kalyani and her death.

Bapsi Sidhwa has given a depth and an inner life of the woman who suffered in the patriarchal society and mainly the hopelessness life of the widowhood.

Chapter Three

Resistance and Rebellion against the Manacles of Widowhood

Today's world is a delicate place where good and evil are constantly at work, creating choices and distinguishing individuals. The idea that there are no bad or evil people is correct because no one desires or plans to be evil; there are only those who are lost in the search for good. In the novel *Water* there are many instances in which we can see good overcoming evil. The novel portrays the life of widows in the partition time. *Water* sets a great example in showing the life of women after their husband's death in describing their lives in the widow's ashram. It has a wide portrayal of all the widow's remembrance about how their happiness life turned into a misery one.

In this novel one can clearly get the idea of good winning over evil where Shakuntala stands for the good cause whereas Madhumati portrayed to be evil. But her evil intention makes a good fortune to ashram. Madhumati uses a transgender named Gulabi who is a right hand to Madhumati takes up women for prostitution.

The persona of Madhumati is like two sides of the same coin: her acts of violence on the widows is the ugly face of patriarchy. As a matriarch of the house, she only imitates the patriarchal stance. Madhumati is the caretaker of the ashram who also took charge of the ashram when the widow became sick and, "through a shrewd combination of charm and gumption" (Sidhwa 86), established herself as the ruler of the house when the widow died. The other widows deferred to her and accepted her leadership even though she was only twenty four years old at the time. What is more, Madhumati had persuaded an influential client to bring pressure to bear on her husband's family, and they had been forced to relinquish a part of her inheritance as a donation to the ashram temple.

The description of Madhumati evokes in the reader the image of a woman thrashed by the circumstances of her life and yet who would like to exercise her authority. She is tuned in only to the fulfillment of her cravings for opium and in the delicious food which is prohibited to widows. It is Madhumati who inducts Chuyia into widowhood. Through her we learn the rules of the game of an ashram of that period, the hierarchy, the pecking order, the mystifying compromises, the helplessness that Hindu widows had to endure the rigid power structure. The narrative describes all this vividly were:

Madhumati hobbled precariously to the takth, her accustomed perch in the courtyard, and sat down heavily on the weathered planks in contrast to the stringy widows, Madhumati had an abundance of slack flesh that made her look much older than her fifty-odd years, and though she wore the same drab white sari as the other widows and her grey hair was as closely cropped to her scalp, she was clearly the ruler of the dilapidated ashram. (Sidhwa 51)

The most virtuous character in the novel is Shakuntala, whose role becomes more important towards the end. It is not fair to see Shakuntala's portrayal, as the novelist highlights the social and psychological contradictions confronting individuals who seek solace in the religious values that are responsible for their oppressed state. On the other hand, it is in the vast paradigms Hindu religious value that Shakuntala's isolation as a widow as well as her devotion to God is comprehensible. One might say that seeking solace in God is not a contradiction confronting her but an alternative choice. This devotion enables her to spiritualize herself. Her tender affection towards Chuyia is one such manifestation of Shakuntala's persona.

Shakuntala is the strongest and most intriguing character in the novel. She demonstrates agency, solidarity and courage. Of all the widows in the ashram, she is the only literate one. She maintains a stern reserved aura of her own. She has a questioning mind and often asks questions about religion and position of women in Indian society and the changing political scenario to the priest whom she serves as an attendant. Like the mythical Shakuntala who took her lessons from the saint who had adopted her, she looks for the emancipation to the kind old priest who enlightens her on the true spirit of the Hindu Scriptures. It is he who enlightens her about the widow Remarriage Act which prompts her to setting Kalyani free from the rigours of the widow's ashram and gives her the choice of an alternative life much against the wishes of the other inmates. Sadanand explains it to Shakuntala, "a law was recently passed which favors widow remarriage" (Sidhwa 185).

Sadananda is a Hindu priest who came long ago in ministering the flock of widows. When he was appointed for the first time he was overwhelmed by their "proximity of bodies, ripe beneath coarse, loosely-spun saris" (95). He was a person who craved for human body where a widow's shoulder will be covered in one side where this person wants to bury his face in the collarbone of those shoulders. Sadananda is a well respected person among the widowhood. He will read Ramayana in a soothing voice and all the widows will listen to him keenly.

Sadananda was a great help to Shakuntala in knowing about the laws imposed for widows. When he saw her confused face and asked what was worrying her. So, he went and asked, "is something troubling you?" (Sidhwa 184) and Shakuntala asked "Panditji, is it written that widows should be treated badly?" (Sidhwa 184). This question of hers bring a change in the life of Kalyani. And so Sadananda replies:

The Brahmanical tradition in the stri-dharma says a widow has two options: she can commit sati and mount her husband's pyre, or lead a life of self-denial and pray for her husband's soul. In some cases, if the family allows it, she may marry her dead husband's brother. (Sidhwa 184)

Shakuntala, who had earlier accepted the strictures of widowhood as the norms given in the Dharma Shastras, learns from Sadanand and Gandhi the need to seek inner truth. Her decision to defy norms and be the agent of change is based on her realisation of the dignity of life, and her acts of freeing Kalyani and Chuyia indicate the growing awareness of a woman's subjectivity.

The novel takes up a position to reveal that widows should also have a normal life than being specially treated in the name of customs and superstitious belief. The widows presented in the novel had their own past which represents their happiest life but in contrast the present explains the miserable life they are leading just because the cause of their husband's death. In this chapter one can analyze, how Shakuntala brings light to an eight year old child by saving her from a big Disaster. This chapter also shows the evil practices Madhumati had done for Kalyani and made her life come to an end.

Kalyani became a widow when she was nine years old when her sixty year old husband died. She was also not aware of what's happening to her and was confused when her head was shaved. The reason she was married with a sixty year old man is that her father was destined in getting his three daughters married because their mother had died at their young age. So that person bid a higher amount to marry Kalyani and so her father married her to him. His sudden death caused Kalyani to become a widow

where she lost her entire happiness of her life. This was a turning point in her life made her to cross through many troubles.

When Kalyani started her life as widow her childhood life came to an end. After some days, the head of the ashram, Madhumati, let Kalyani grow her hair and so Chuyia asked the reason and Kalyani asked her not to be so curious over everything. Kalyani saw the gleaming face of Chuyia and proclaimed that she would know it when she becomes an adult. Chuyia started wondering how an adult life would be:

They didn't shave your head? Chuyia asked. They did, but Madhu-didi let me grow it back. Why? Chuyia asked, running her fingers through Kalyani's silky strands. You're as inquisitive as your namesake, aren't you? Kalyani who spoke to Chuyia said in a dismissive tone of voice, 'you will understand when you're older'. The mechanizations of the adult world were a mystery to Chuyia so she just said, Madhu-didi is kind to you. She likes you. (Sidhwa 157)

The above expression of Chuyia made Kalyani uncomfortable as she is the one who made her life the worst. The kindness Madhumati showed towards Kalyani was an utter fake one because she used her to be the profit of ashram by sending her to prostitution and gained money through it. The ultimate motive of Madhumati was to keep Kalyani young and beautiful so that she could run her ashram.

Domestic violence refers to all acts of gender-based physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Women are more likely to be sexually assaulted or exploited as children, adolescent girls, and adults, both within the family and in the community. Violence is a universal scourge that threatens everyone's life, health, and happiness. Domestic violence refers to women being abused by current or former male intimate partners.

In this novel a woman is being abused by her own head of the ashram who sends her to prostitution to bring forth money to the other widows. A widow ashram is a place where all the women who lost their husbands are sent to this ashram and to live a separate life by not indulging with other people because they are considered to be unholy where, “outside of marriage the woman has no recognized existence in our society” (Sidhwa 15). They live a desperate life where they have to sacrifice many things like food, entertaining things etc. But Kalyani lost her life being a pawn to ashram.

The crux of this novel is the confrontation where a Hindu Brahmin delves into a sexual relationship with a Hindu widow in the partition period. It became a long practice to send a long section of women, mainly the widows into prostitution. The widows have been excluded from the society and confined to a particular place. The voices of widow’s struggles had always been kept under strict vigil. Women who lost their husbands are detained from participating in the productive activities. The law never granted any right to women, more so the ones without their legal masters, the husbands. Therefore, they are exploited because there is no to concern about them. Once they are left in ashram, they have no contact with anyone.

Widows were easy victims and a social eyesore in the society where it led to adultery, illicit relationships, increase in prostitution were often associated with young widows. Likewise in the novel, Kalyani was the youngest and beautiful widow who was sent to prostitution in order to have money for the ashram. The one who sends her to prostitution will be the head of ashram with the help of her friend Gulabi:

The eunuch, Gulabi did not walk; she sashayed. Hips swaying, arms moving sinuously as she progressed, Gulabi sang and hummed all the way along the dark alley. Despite her girth and musculature, Gulabi was

surprisingly graceful. What she lacked in feminine beauty, she more than made up for in ornate dress. She wore a white blouse with shiny red trim, a cuff bracelet and multiple ornaments in her black hair. (Sidhwa 83)

Madhumati was a good person until she was married. She was raised up as a son by her father and was called to be the Queen Bee because she had a kind heart were used to give all the money to the beggars and widows. Her heart became the worst when she was married to a bastard who was a horny person. She exclaims, “he went! Straight to heaven! Bastard! Pleasuring himself in heaven....and me, stuck in this hell!” (Sidhwa 85). Another main reason for the change of character of Madhumati is that a two-bastard raped her for a week, where she was shorn and beaten to death and was thrown away like that, and it was Gulabi who rescued her from that tremendous situation.:

Madhumati began to cry. I don’t know what would have happened to me if you hadn’t found me. We were fated to meet, so I found you, said Gulabi. This didn’t appear to please Madhumati. Whether we were fated to meet or not, I was fated to live, she corrected. (Sidhwa 86)

Men are labeled as independent, active, rational, and others. On the other hand, women are identified as being dependent, passive, feeling, sensitive, irrational, and others. In this novel Shakuntala is a character who takes up a role in bringing light to Chuyia and Kalyani. Shakuntala, the enigmatic, quiet, and reserved, whenever she gets angry even Madhumati leaves her alone; she is a very devout Hindu lady who seeks the guidance of Sadananda, a forty five year old and good-looking priest. Pilgrims flock to the river’s ghats to hear Sadananda read scriptures; he is the man who awakens Shakuntala to the reality of widow’s plight by telling her that the superstitions that have caused their misery are no longer acceptable.

Shakuntala was born in a surprise where her parents four sons where they welcomed her as Goddess Lakshmi who brings of prosperity and happiness. She was a talented person and can read up everything. Shakuntala was married to a young widower where both of their horoscopes matched perfectly. She was thinking about the wedding feast she could have on her wedding but the present situation stopped her from thinking that because, “What a paltry thing to deny an old woman, Shakuntala thought, and then her mind settled on a clutch of paltry things that were denied to widows in order to preserve their purity” (Sidhwa 174).

The main problem started when Shakuntala wasn't able to give birth and was hated by her mother-in-law. But desperately she longed for a child. Her husband got ill and dead where her life after that turned into a bitter one. It is said that, “the good fortune that had marked Shakuntala's life like some charmed talisman came to end with her husband's death” (Sidhwa 175). She thought of ending her life as her in-laws treated her so badly and she was so fury in her.

Her only useful role, that of wife and producer of sons, was gone forever.

She was not only viewed as responsible for her husband's death, but also a threat to her husband's family and, most of all, to that of her dead husband's spirit, simply because of her vital women-hood and sexuality.

After a year, Shakuntala had found a peaceful home that is Ashram.

Though being able to read and write she had an independent position in the ashram. (Sidhwa 176)

Kalyani's meeting with Narayan, a good and attractive man from an upper-class family, and their subsequent love affair, depicts a conflict between superstitious beliefs and Gandhian liberal ideology; on one side, Narayan, a follower of Gandhi and his philosophy, is standing to accept a widow as his bride, while on the other side of the

fence, along with Kalyani, which is trapped in the clutches of orthodoxy, Narayan's parents, Madhumati, and other widows are standing and attempting to disrupt the lover's path.

Sidhwa has attacked the evil traditions prevalent in society as rotten stuff of history in the Kalyani and Narayan affair episode. Chuyia, their messenger, arranges their meeting; in this episode, readers find a refreshing and entertaining break from the depressing theme of widows' plight. Unfortunately, Chuyia soon after discloses the secret of Narayan Kalyani affair and their wedding plan to Madhumati while massaging her legs; upon hearing it, Madhumati goes ballistic and cuts Kalyani's hair off so that her attraction is diminished; she is locked up in her room, though Shakuntala unlocks the door over the protest of other widows. Through this act of rebellion by widows, Sidhwa demonstrates that the exploitation of women has reached its apex, and those who have been crushed as a result of bad traditions are ready to fight against all of society's evil traditions.

Madhumati scolded Gulabi saying, 'Giving widow a forbidden food!' and so Chuyia said, 'So what? I'll eat a hundred puris at Kalyani's wedding'. 'Whose wedding?' asked Madhumati in a childishly sweet voice. 'Kalyani's wedding', Chuyia replied innocently. 'And when is her wedding?' asked Madhumati. 'Don't know', Chuyia replied simply. Madhumati snorted, 'she'll get married over my dead body! Widows don't get married'. (Sidhwa 166-67)

Kalyani, sensing liberty, breaks free from the clutches of orthodoxy and walks out of the house; her departure, followed by her bath in the Ganges, represents her soul's liberation from a long slavery of the sinful life. She finds Narayan waiting for her in the deserted temple; he agrees to marry her and takes her to his home across the river

after the marriage, but their ill-fated love story ends when she recognizes the gates of the portico and asks the full name of his father with suspicion. Narayan perplexed replies, and Kalyani demands to go back without answering his questions.

Kalyani turned her eyes to Narayan and in a deathly quiet voice she asked, “what is your father’s name?” “Dwarkanath... Seth Dwarkanath”. The blood chilled to ice in Kalyani’s veins and turned her body numb. She commanded, ‘turn the boat around’. Narayan asked ‘Why? What happened?’ but Kalyani just repeated to ‘turn the boat around’. Torn between the need to make him understand why she had to turn back and not wanting to reveal the ugly truth, she was at a loss. ‘Ask your father’, she said simply. (Sidhwa 198-99)

Later, his father admits to using her as a harlot where he asks to Narayan, “so you’ve found out she’s not a goddess. Don’t marry her—keep her as your mistress” (Sidhwa 201). Deeply disappointed, abandons his parental home to join Gandhi. The ill-starred love story of Narayan and Kalyani takes another tragic turn when Narayan arrives at the ashram to take Kalyani with him but discovers that she has drowned in the river out of grief. The one which deeply wounds Narayan about his father is that when he proclaims about their sayings of holy text which says:

His father said, “Narayan perhaps you are not aware of this. Our holy texts say Brahmins can sleep with whomever they want, and the women they sleep with are blessed”. Narayan’s face was a dark cloud of confusion. He tore his father’s hand from his shoulders. ‘I have also studied our scriptures where God Ram told his brother never to honour those Brahmins who interprets the holy texts for their own benefit’. (Sidhwa 201)

Madhumati makes an abhorrent decision, sending Chuyia with Gulabi as the next harlot for Narayan's father; Shakuntala runs out to prevent the worst, but arrives at the shore on Chuyia's return. Shakuntala is walking through town with a traumatised Chuyia on her arms when she learns of Gandhi's visit to the railway station; she dashes through the crowd to be blessed by Gandhi. In despair, Shakuntala runs with the train, pleading with passengers to take Chuyia with them so that she can be cared for by Gandhi; in her last-ditch effort, she spots Narayan and hands over Chuyia to him; the train departs with Chuyia under Gandhi's blessing.

The novel concludes on a happy note where Chuyia is liberated with the help of Shakuntala and is now under Gandhi's protection.

Thus, the whole chapter revolves around Madhumati who is portrayed as an evil figure in the life of widows whereas Shakuntala showers goodness on each and every widow and brought a bright light in the life of Chuyia by saving her from Madhumati. Sadananda being a priest with erotic mind in women's body his goodness is shown beyond his evil thoughts. Shakuntala gets to know about the favorable laws imposed for widows, where remarriage is legal, through the help of Sadananda and so she decides that Kalyani live her life happily rather being a whole life profit maker to the ashram.

Chapter Fourth

Cultural Hegemony

Hegemony stands for dominance especially a social group over others. Hegemony transforms into an ethnocentric dynamic in this sense. A cultural framework is essential to preserve hegemony. In addressing with the destinies of the key characters, Chuyia and Shakuntala, the novel's narrative demonstrates an ethnocentric inclination. The feminist concerns of Bapsi Sidhwa are prominent in her writings.

According to Gramsci, hegemony is a condition in which a fundamental class exercises political, intellectual, and moral leadership within a hegemonic system anchored by a shared worldview or organic ideology. The execution of this role on the ethico-political as well as the economic plane entails the execution of a process of intellectual and moral reform that results in a transformation of the previous ideological terrain and a redefinition of hegemonic structures and institutions into a new form. This transformation and redefinition is accomplished through the rearticulation of ideological elements into a new worldview, which then serves as the unifying principle for a new collective will.

This new world view, which unites classes into a new hegemonic class, constitutes the new organic ideology of the new hegemonic class and system. However, it is not a worldview imposed on the subaltern group as a class ideology by the new hegemonic class. Furthermore, the previously dominant world view is not completely replaced in the ideological terrain transformation. Rather, the new world view is created or shaped by the aspiring hegemonic class and its consensual subalterns from existing ideological elements held by the latter in their discourses.

To talk about postcolonial feminism, Bapsi Sidhwa is one such exceptional English fiction writer from Pakistan who has contributed to the literature abundantly.

The novel illustrates the struggles and misery of widows in Indian society of 1930s. The book *Water* by Bapsi Sidhwa is given a support by Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony. The analysis of language as a weapon of hegemony is conducted using Critical Discourse Analysis Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony is applied to the study of hegemonic cultural standards that prevent bereaved women from leading a fulfilling life. The theory examines how class division shapes the existence of women, mainly widows and women from lower socioeconomic groups, in light of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Water*.

The novel is set in India in 1938, against the backdrop of Mahatma Gandhi's rise to power and the anti-colonial campaign. When India was under British colonial administration, the custom of marrying minors to elderly men was popular. The novel concentrates on the internal and external sufferings of the Brahmin widows. It discusses the massive cultural revolution and how society controls the everyday lives of the forsaken widows, as well as the external world's dread, scorn, and disdain for them, and how the widows are forced into prostitution for a living. The novel is about the treatment of women, particularly widows, as things or possessions. If their husbands died, widows were subjected to a Hindu custom that required them to devote the rest of their lives in renunciation at a widow's Ashram where the widows reside.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the role of cultural and societal structures in establishing hegemony over the lives of women, particularly widowed women. The novel carries the settings of pre independence colonial India during 1930. The novel opens with Chuyia running over a puppy in the midst of forest which shows her purity of childhood age. On the contrary, Chuyia's father decides her to get married to a forty four year old man to bring Grace to the family. But unfortunately, the old man dies in two years which brings a great obstacle in Chuyia's life. Where Chuyia is left

with three options, one is to burn with her husband's body, marry the brother of husband or to live a piteous life in the widow's ashram. Leaving for the third option makes her to wear a white sari and eat simple and less than the needs of survival. Being a widow, Chuyia is restricted from doing many things like going to her parent's house, eating her favourite sweets etc. Life at the widow's ashram was so difficult that every widow has to dance up in the temples for straight six to eight hours for their daily meals. Their lives are doomed by sickness and starvation.

The novel is set in the era of 1930's during the partition and Mahatma Gandhi arising against the patriarchal society. The traumatic experience depicted in the novel is where another protagonist named Kalyani a widow loses her life from being a widow. Bapsi Sidhwa intends to address this issue as an important one on what is really happening in the society in name of culture. The author also uses this Chuyia who is an eight year old girl to break the rules of the ashram. This examines the subject of widows in colonial Indian society and seeks to break away from tradition. Sidhwa's work is notable for its emphasis on traditional, cultural, and religious hegemony.

Chuyia a six year old girl who lives with her parents in a village near the Bihar Bangladesh border, has been used to illustrate a key feature of cultural hegemony. Her childhood and carefree life come to an end when she marries Hiralal, a forty four year old widower. In the beginning of the novel, a demonstration of gender discrimination is witnessed when Chuyia's father Somnath, a poor Brahmin priest, dismisses his wife's worries about Chuyia's age with this authoritative passage from the Shastras, "In the Brahmanical tradition, said Somnath, a woman is recognized as a person only when she is one with her husband" (Sidhwa 14). Chuyia's carefree life came to an abrupt end when her husband died. Chuyia was supposed to live in the Ashram according to ancient customs which is a house for widows. Then there were significant plot twists in her

fate. Chuyia's existence was reduced from that of a human to that of mice in the true sense of the term by the merciless influences of culture and society uniting against her.

Gramsci gives a detailed discussion of how the phrase "cultural hegemony" is defined. According to him: "it is an alliance between the intellectual and aristocratic elites to uphold a moral framework by which they exercise influence over the people and therefore trap them. Antonio Gramsci coined the notion of "cultural hegemony" to describe the power balance between various social classes. The concept of cultural hegemony by Gramsci exposes a force that operates via culture. Its goal is to control both individual and group submissions. The victim has no influence on the lives and situations they are forced to endure in under this type of subjugation. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, refers to the ruling class's authority and dominion over the populace. Its purpose is to persuade the lower classes that the ruling elite's objectives are the concerns of all classes. Rape, and wife beating are all widespread in these patriarchal socioeconomic systems. They can retain control over men via socio ethnic domains such as nations and tribes.

Women, according to feminists, are the most downtrodden and oppressed creatures on the planet. Patriarchal and societal pressures mistreat, victimize, and marginalize women emotionally as well as physically. In the novel *Feminism is for Everybody* the author says, "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (bell hooks,12). These difficulties become emblems of suppressed women's tragic lives. These issues determine the imprisoned experiences of women in uneducated tribal communities who force them to live terrible lives.

Bapsi Sidhwa's works provide a comprehensive view of the many roles that women played during the partition period. Sidhwa has portrayed her character so well that she does not appear entirely empowered or completely victimized. Sidhwa seeks

to capture a wide range of human emotions in a culture that strongly believes in women's restriction and isolation. It shifts patriarchal hegemony from masculine dominance to cultural hegemony and looks beyond the problems imposed by patriarchal authorities. Its goal is to raise awareness about the severe cultural and religious constraints that Hindu widows face. The Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used to articulate widows' inferior status in Indian society. Widows are regarded as "unlucky". They are not permitted to attend social-religious ceremonies. The concept of cultural hegemony was developed by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci in response to Karl Marx's theory that culture's prevailing ideology mirrors the ruling class's views and goals. To emphasize the hardship of women in colonial India, a feminist perspective is taken in connection to Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony, in which women are treated as victims of socio-economic catastrophe.

The novel depicted the plight and mistreatment of Ashram widows. The wealthy Brahmin imposed strict restrictions on widows, such as prohibiting them from wearing garments other than white, prohibiting them from eating fried food, prohibiting them from participating in any festivities, and most importantly, prohibiting them from remarriage because they think, "to even think of remarriage is a sin" (Sidhwa 171). This research reveals the social position of widows who are mistreated under the guise of religion, with their shadows even depicted as unlucky. They are regarded as foreboding. The novel exemplifies the interconnected elements of hegemonic philosophy of tradition, culture, gender, and problematic themes such as marginalization stereotypical beliefs, patriarchy, religion, poverty, and child prostitution that exist in Indian society. Women are born to serve males, whether they are their husbands or fathers, according to Indian tradition. Women do not have their own individuality.

“Cultural hegemony refers to domination or rule maintained through ideological or cultural means. It is usually achieved through social institutions, which allow those in power to strongly influence the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldview, and behavior of the rest of society” (Cole,1). The systemic brutality is visible in the novel’s scenario of underprivileged women who are forced to earn an income by selling and degrading themselves by singing and dancing at temples. The narrative shows the society’s duplicity, unfairness, and hypocrisy against women in the guise of traditional religion.

The theory of cultural hegemony is clearly exposed in the novel where in the same religion there are conflicting circumstances which happens within the rich and poor people. This story mainly depicts the life of women which change because of widowhood. The novel mainly shows the discriminatory practices and attitudes towards widows, which are still retained in the contemporary Indian society. This portrays the forbidden theme of widow’s sexuality in a different way.

The first instance one can witness is when Chuyia’s father tries to arrange a marriage with an old man who comes from a noble brahmin lineage. He feels so respected in giving his daughter to such a respected family in spite of their age difference. The only belief Chuyia’s parents had on them is that they will take care of their daughter so well. The Brahmins believe whatever their scriptures say, ‘in Brahmanical tradition, a woman is recognized as a person only when she is one with her husband. Only then does she become a sumangali, an auspicious woman, and a saubhagyavati, a fortunate woman’ (Sidhwa 14). It is said that whatever might be the age, a woman should be married to get recognized in this society.

There is also class discrimination in their tradition where brahmins are only allowed inside the temples and other class people are expected to be outside of the

temple. Chuyia's wedding took place inside the temple while the people of lower classes watch the wedding from outside.

With the tradition of brahmin culture, once a woman is widowed, she is no more respected as a person in the society so there is no place for her in the community and she is viewed as a threat to the society. This thought evoked here is that a women's sexuality and fertility which is valued highly is now converted into death as a potential danger to the morality of the society.

In our society, widows were treated so badly even they are not considered to be humans in the eyes of women. Even widows are also women but they are considered so worthless because it because of them their husbands died and they were called as unholy. In the novel, when Kalyani gives a bath to Kaalu he escapes from her she tries to catch her and during that time she bumps on a married woman and she shouts at her saying, 'what filth!' (Sidhwa 72). She hissed with an ugly expression and again saying, 'you have no shame' (Sidhwa 73). Then she elaborately scolds her saying:

You have no morals! You are a widow, and yet you run around like you are an unmarried girl? Then she yanked her arm away as if she'd been stung and hissed, you've polluted me. I have to bathe again! She retraced her steps to the river. (Sidhwa 73)

Narayan falls in love with Kalyani who is a widow but unfortunately in his society marrying a widow is not accepted even they consider it to be an evil one. The author has portrayed it beautifully where a typical brahmin mother opposes her son who wishes to marry a widow. One can analyze how a woman treats a woman without showing any humanity on her. She asks about her like is she brahmin or belongs to our own caste but when she comes to know the fact, she is a widow her expression changes to anger and then she yells at him saying:

Hai Bhagwan! You're serious! How will we show our face to the world?
Weeping and wiping her tears on her sari, she scolded him, Gandhi has
turned you into a lunatic! Marry a widow? How can you even think of
it? It's a sin! You should know that! (Sidhwa 162)

In many ways Narayan tries to convince his mother saying 'it is not as terrible
as you think, Ma—old ways and ideas have changed. Raja Ram Mohan Roy says
widows should get remarried' (Sidhwa 162). The mother of Narayan bursts out and
poses a serious question asking 'and Raja whoever—what does he know about our
traditions?' (Sidhwa 162) and weeps to God asking him to show a way.

Madhumati being a widow she doesn't care when locking up her in the room
without food and water. Being a woman too she doesn't care about the feelings of
Kalyani who is earning to unite with her lover. The reason is also because of their
traditional scriptures in which it says:

The foremost Sanskrit text in the orthodox tradition, a widow's head is
shaved, her ornaments removed, and she is expected to remain perpetual
mourning. She is to observe fasts, giving up eating "hot" foods in order
to cool her sexual energy, avoid auspicious occasions because she is
considered inauspicious and to remain celibate, devout and loyal to her
husband's memory. So, "to think even think of remarriage is a sin".
(Sidhwa 171)

This chapter hence highlights the colonial Indian society's two-faced ideals and
arrogant hypocrisy in the 1930s, particularly with regard to women and widows. It
explains how religious practices and social structures reinforce patriarchy's power and,
in particular, its control over society's dominant classes. These powerful classes were
described in colonial India as attempting to alienate women in order to prevent them

from becoming self-sufficient. This chapter highlights the different challenges that these marginalized and underprivileged women face in everyday life. The results and findings suggest that this combination of critical discourse analysis and transitivity can be executed in a literary analysis to identify hidden concepts and themes such as uneven gender positions in a male dominated environment.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature is a reflection of life and has a social context. Writers have always used literature as a means of combating established social norms and traditions, hypocritical reactions, outmoded customs, and the political system. The sensibility of a writer reacts sharply to social contradictions, and it expresses itself most eloquently and effectively in the literature he creates. It is said that literature, even religious literature, has never been socially insensitive. Literature is rooted in the reality of its time and strives to change it. A sense of social responsibility can even be found in the world's oldest literature. Women's issues have always been a prominent theme in literature.

Pakistani literature in English has emerged visibly and globally in the last two decades. It is difficult to determine the precise date of its origin: it is thought to have originated in colonial India and has a close association with British colonialism. Pre-Partition and Post-Partition Pakistani English literature can be broadly divided into two eras. Pakistani literature flourished with Pakistan's independence, but it only gained wider attention in the 1980s. Because of the importance of their writings, Pakistani English writers have gained worldwide literary attention. Through this one can observe multicultural surroundings in Pakistani English literature developed by writers living within Pakistan's geographical borders and by Pakistani Diaspora writers, not only because the writers represent different cultural backgrounds or because there is no other way of reflecting pluralist society like in Pakistan, but also because these writers reach beyond ethnolinguistic, historical, religious, and geographical confines in their works.

In Pakistan, widowhood is a very challenging experience for women. To use a local metaphor, when a woman becomes a widow, it is as if the protective chadar on her head has been removed and the status of dependence has been thrust upon her. The

majority of the survival issues that widows face are linked to poverty, and two-thirds of the poor live in rural areas. Poor women who lack land and productive assets spend the rest of their lives on the periphery of society. Those who do have assets can be taken advantage of by the strong male culture, particularly in rural areas. They are also the victims of prejudice and abuse on social and cultural levels.

Social suffering can also be found in the responses of institutions and programmes to problems through intended and unintended consequences. Thousands of women went missing during the 1947 partition. The governments of Pakistan and India agreed to search for such women and return them to their families. Despite the fact that the majority of the abducted women had been abused during the partition process, some of them were treated with compassion. After being abandoned, such women remarried and had children. During the exchange process, both governments demonstrated a high level of insensitivity to the current situation of such women. Some of them were forcibly sent to their original locations without their consent.

Bapsi Sidhwa is a prominent writer in favour of woman sufferings who voice out for women. Bapsi Sidhwa's research is an attempt to conduct a stylistic analysis of selected works from a linguistic standpoint. As a result, the emphasis is on identifying the stylistic devices that present linguistic peculiarities in the author's writings. Sidhwa's language aims to improve verbal communication. The use of literary resources is evident in Sidhwa's works. Furthermore, Sidhwa's writing style differs from that of other writers because Sidhwa possesses exceptional writing skills such as resourcefulness, imagination, and life experiments. Sidhwa's stylistic devices emerge at various linguistic levels.

Bapsi Sidhwa has carved a niche for herself in the realm of Asian women's writings through her thematic preoccupations, well-constructed plots and memorable

characters, narrative techniques, and language. Her novels reveal her affectionate admiration for her own community as well as compassion for her characters, who are physically and psychologically repressed women. She has established herself as a powerful writer with enormous talent. She has the ability to present even minor domestic occurrences with universal appeal and to present historical events in a lively manner.

Bapsi Sidhwa does not speak about women's liberation from a Western perspective that emphasizes women working alongside men in administrative, legal, and industrial fields, and that proposes a life without men as well. On the contrary, she wishes to restore women's status and dignity in ancient India. Though her female protagonists oppose male dominance and work to dismantle monopolies of power, they do not seek antagonism in man woman relationships but rather equal partnership with men. As a result, Sidhwa connects the liberation of her female characters with that of men in all of her novels. The liberation of Zaitoon is associated with Major Mushtaq in *The Pakistani Bride*, and Chuiya's liberation is possible with Narayan in *Water*.

Although Sidhwa is not the only Pakistani writer of fiction in English, she has the most consistent publication record and the most widespread international reputation. Without making exaggerated claims, Sidhwa is largely responsible for the creation of Pakistani fiction in English. When she began writing in the late 1970s, there was no established national tradition on which she could draw, in contrast to her counterparts in India, Africa, and the West Indies, who had a colonial literature to reinvent. After all, Pakistan is a post-colonial nation with no distinct colonial past.

Bapsi Sidhwa has depicted women's plight and exploitation in patriarchal society very realistically. Men establish their masculine powers and thus fulfil their desires by brutally assaulting women. Men, as aggressors, feel elated and victorious,

whereas women suffer the agony and humiliation of the atrocities committed against them. However, as a novelist, Bapsi Sidhwa discusses women's emancipation.

Water, a novel by Bapsi Sidhwa, sheds light on the plight of Hindu widows who are forced to live in squalor after their husband's deaths. The plot of the novel sparked much debate and controversy in India. It does deal with society's hypocrisy in viewing them as an object of contempt while exploiting them. Sidhwa rebuked society's double standards, which excluded widows but allowed widowers to remarry.

The novel *Water* depicts the tragic life of a child-widow who is expected to follow religious fundamentalist structures until the end of her life. The irony is that the youngster is completely unaware of the slipknot around her neck. She is the victim of a cruel tradition. Although a few people, such as Narayan, who represent idealists appear to be breathing fresh air, they are unable to make a significant or tangible change in a society riddled with unjust rituals.

In the *Water*, Bapsi Sidhwa has given us an inside look of the lives of women who have left their husbands and are now paying the price because a tradition-bound society believes that it is because of the woman's ill deeds and sins their husbands die. Sidhwa's novel contains a lovely irony. During the day, from the rising of the sun to its setting, widows can be seen bathing in the holy Ganga, reading holy scriptures, chanting religious songs before the idol of God, and eating simple meals, but at night when the sun withdraws to its abode and darkness spreads all over, these figures in white can be seen crossing the river for the nocturnal calls and have high respectable men of the society with them, considered to be the custodians of religious and traditions.

Sidhwa brings all of this to our attention, as well as the question of what sin is and who is the sinner. A widow relies on prostitution to make ends meet. She is compelled to do so. However, the absence of a highly regarded social figure raises

serious concerns. To avoid any immoral deed from the widow's society, numerous rules and regulations have been enacted by society. However, men take advantage of this physical advantage. The pain and suffering of these widows cannot be expressed because they are suppressed.

Water focuses partly on the physical agony of females who are denied proper clothing and food, and entirely on the mental agony that they suffer in silence. Nobody wants to suffer, but when there are no other options, a woman must suffer silently. How can we expect Chuyia to protest child marriage when she is only six years old, when it is essentially her parents' responsibility to protect her from the tentacles of social evils? The sole right, religiously preserved for males, is the right to indulge in and enjoy carnal pleasures, whereas women are merely subjugated to man's blind passion.

Water takes place in 1938, when India was still under British colonial rule and children were commonly married to older men. When a man died, his widow was forced to spend the rest of her life in a widow's ashram, an institution for widows to atone for the sins of her previous life that allegedly caused her husband's death. Chuyia is an eight-year-old girl who has recently lost her husband. She is placed in an ashram for Hindu widows to spend the rest of her life in renunciation. She befriends Kalyani, who is forced into prostitution to support the ashram, Shakuntala, one of the widows, and Narayan, a young and charming upper-class follower.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* deals about the sufferings of the widows who were outcasted. It shows the internal sufferings of eight-year-old child who is abandoned from family and left alone in the widow ashram. The child yearns for a happy life with her parents but the tradition of their society has deprived her from having a merry life. Being married to an old man and his sudden death brought misery Chuyia's life. Another protagonist of the novel is Kalyani, who also became a widow in a small age

has been a profit maker to the ashram. The head of ashram made her to go prostitution and earned money through it for running the ashram needs. She fell in love and plans to elope with him but it will be in vain when a truth revealed to her about her lover's father name. In the very end she takes away her life by falling into the river realizing that she can no more live a peaceful life in this society.

The novel keenly shows the side of good winning over the evil. In this novel the protagonist is treated as a sex object to make money for the ashram needs. They see widows as a whore who satisfy the needs of man's pleasure. The evil character in this novel is Madhumati the head of ashram who sent another widow to prostitution in order to get money. The good eye person, Shakuntala will try every means to save her from this situation and to give her a happy life. Shakuntala is a quiet and reserved type of widow. She is caught between her hatred of being a widow and her fear of not being a sincere, dedicated widow. Sadananda, a gentle-looking priest in his late forties who recites the scriptures to the pilgrims who throng the ghats of the holy city. Madhumati is a person who dominates the entire woman hood and controls the life of Kalyani by forcing her into prostitution. Being in a class-conscious society, she could not raise out her voice as she is not even considered to be a human in the eyes of other people. The chapter shows how the good one wins against the evil and brings light to the protagonist. It also depicts that goodness also prevails among the evil people.

Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony says about the cultural dominance in the society by the ruling class people who manipulate the culture of the society. Their beliefs and explanations, perceptions, values and more has been said that the ruling class will have their own cultural norms. As in the novel *Water* the ruling class in the Brahmin society who highly dominates the lower-class people. It is mainly the woman who is treated badly. If her husband passes, they blame woman for their

death and treat them as an omen. The worst is, when it comes to widow where they are considered to be a whore and they treat them in a very lower level.

According to Bapsi Sidhwa, the terrible consequences of India's partition affected everyone, but women suffered far more than men. Sidhwa draws our attention to the fact that India's partition has a geographical and political background, but men brutally abused women of other religions. Women who were victims of gang rape were rejected by their own families because they were polluted by men of other religions. This group of women is referred to in the society as "fallen women". Because no one was willing to hire them, like Madhumati who turned another woman for prostitution to satisfy their stomach's hunger. Some women, like Kalyani, committed suicide in order to preserve their family's reputation. Physical violence during the partition had a significant impact on the mental state of women.

This thesis is titled as Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water: A Study on the Struggle of Widow's Survival in the Partition Era* where this novel highlights the miseries of widow in the partition era. The widows were considered to be an omen and they were kept separated. The novel *Water* talks about the womanhood particularly the state of widows' who are treated so badly inspite of the colonial period. The story sets in the era of Partition time which expresses the revolutionary impact of Gandhian ideals in his reformist commitment to widows remarriage and emancipation. Thus, whole project gives a deep understanding of how lives of widows are shaped once they are separated from their families.

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JASINTHA S.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Thematic Study of Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta*** 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 and is a work done by Jasintha. S. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.




SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **A Thematic Study of Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "J. Jasinthra". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

JASINTHA . S

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PREFACE

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with Indian Literature, contemporary writers of Authors and biography of Sudha Murthy. The general characteristics of her works and hypothesis of the research are discussed.

The second chapter **Domestic Violence** deals with the theme of Domestic violence and the problems faced by the protagonist in the novel *Mahashweta*.

The third chapter **Feminism** portrays the feministic issues faced by the female character of the novel *Mahashweta* and the empowerment of the protagonist who resilient to live independently.

The fourth chapter explores the theme of **Culture Consciousness** in *Mahashweta*. The novel highlights the problems faced by women in India in the name of culture.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Life is reflected through literature. Literature is often referred to as a true reflection of life since it depicts how people interact on a social, political, cultural, and behavioral level. Literature in addition to influencing, inspiring, and delighting us, it also teaches amuses, and unquestionably fulfils the specific goal of helping us understand life. Numerous literary genres, like poetry, prose, novels, travelogues, fables, fantasy, epics, parables, short stories, essays, non-fiction prose, etc., are examples of the vast amount of literature that has been written. With advancements achieved in practically every literary genre over the course of over 200 years, Indian English Literature has grown into a substantial field of literature.

The body of writings by Indian authors who write in English and whose native tongue may be one of the several Indian languages is referred to as Indian English Literature. It is linked to the works of people from the Indian Diaspora as well.

The works of Indian authors in English language that were published in India during the British era are referred to as Indian English Literature. There were a select few Indian writers who transitioned to writing in English after learning the colonial tongue. Sake Dean Mahomet's *The Travel of Dean Mohomed*, is the first book written by an Indian in English, was released in 1793. *The Persecuted* by Krishna Mohan Banerjee, the first drama ever written in English, was released in 1831.

In 1864, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* published the first Indian book in English. One of the earliest writers and social reformers in India, Raja Rammohan Roy produced largely reformist works. Raja Ram Mohan Roy published a number of pamphlets in English supporting the nationalist cause of Indian

independence. In 1821, he also released *Brahmonical Magazine* in English. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was another writer credited with writing *Raja Mohan's Wife* the first Indian novel in English. His Bengali works were also translated into English. After these two writers, the Indian literary scene was dominated by the trio, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan. It is accepted that these Trio's established the solid foundation for Indian English novel.

Writers like Khushwant Singh, Arun Joshi, and Anita Desai dominated the 1950s. With books like *Cry the Peacock* (1965), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), and *Clear Light of the Day* (1980), Anita Desai established herself as an accomplished Indian English woman writer. She is mostly recognised as a psychological novelist. Other well-read books of the time included *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh and *The Apprentice* (1974) by Arun Joshi. The distinct narrative style of the novel and the use of magic realism technique and the Indian words in English gave a new dimension to Indian English literature. The 1990s onwards has witnessed the rise of many important Indian writers, who have taken Indian English literature to greater heights. These writers are Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy. Modern Indian English writers have freed English from the baggage of colonial legacy and Indianite it to suit their own cultural needs. They have secured a unique style and status for Indian English variety.

The hopes and expectations that Indian women perceive themselves to have fit within the bounds of Indian socio-cultural and ethical commitments. English proficiency and mastery are thought to be solely accessible to writers from the elite, bright, wealthy, and highly educated classes. As a result, creative writing is frequently associated with elite socio economic strata and is seen as being removed from the realities of everyday Indian life. But that is untrue. The emergence of feminist or

women-centered perspective, which aims to portray and re-evaluate their experience, from the point of feminine sensibility and female identity, is a significant trend in contemporary Indian English fiction.

Numerous Indian women writers also began as creative writers who questioned eminent, long-standing patriarchal dominance. They have established their value in the world of literature both qualitatively and numerically, and they still freely express their creativity today. Readers of Indian English fiction have been profoundly influenced by the writings of Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Chitra Divakaruni Banerjee, Geetha Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Namita Gokhale, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, and many more.

Defining, establishing, and protecting equal political, economic, and social rights and opportunities for women in India are the goals of feminism in the country. It is the fight for women's rights inside Indian society. Feminists in India advocate for gender equality, including the right to equal pay for equal work, equal access to health care and higher education, and equal political rights. In India's patriarchal society, feminists have also battled against culturally specific problem namely inheritance laws. The objectives of feminism in India are to define, develop, and defend equal political, economic, and social rights and opportunities for women. It relates to the struggle for women's rights in Indian culture.

Sudha Murthy is a prolific fiction writer who is well known for her social activism and contributions to Kannada and English literature. She has written several books, mostly with Penguin publishers that employ fictional stories to express her philosophical beliefs on generosity, hospitality, and self-realization. Her parents and maternal grandparents raised her. Her first significant work, *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* (2004), *Wise and Otherwise* (2005), is historically based on her

early experiences. In addition to earning an M.Eng. in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Science, Murty also earned a B.Eng. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the B.V.B. College of Engineering & Technology (now known as KLE Technological University). TATA Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO), India's largest automaker, selected Sudha Murty as its first female engineer. She founded the Infosys Foundation in 1996 and has served as its trustee and a visiting professor at Bangalore University's PG Center ever since. She worked as a professor at Christ University as well.

Numerous publications, including novels, non-fiction, travelogues, technical books, and memoirs, have been written and published by Sudha Murty. All important Indian languages have been used in the translation of her writings. She also writes columns for newspapers in Kannada and English. She is a recipient of many awards. Chennai's Sri Raja-Lakshmi Foundation presented the Raja-Lakshmi Award in 2004; In 2006 Padma Shri Award, the fourth-highest civilian honor in India. She also won the R.K. Narayana Award for Literature in 2006. She has published children's books, technical books, travelogues, collections of short tales, and books for adults. Her books are translated into major English languages. The works of Sudha Murthy frequently address feminism-related issues. Sudha Murthy characters in her stories challenge the male-dominated culture even though she doesn't directly criticize it. Her protagonist come from middle-class backgrounds. They behave in a submissive, shrewd, and selfless manner. The negative effects of globalization on today's youth are highlighted by Sudha Murthy from a broad perspective.

The writing of Sudha Murthy combines elements of traditional and contemporary Indian culture. She is a talented writer, multilingual, well-known author, and business owner worth millions. The writings of Sudha Murthy combine a number of themes.

Her works delve deeply into the complicated human psyche. In today's creative writing by female novelists, Sudha Murthy's projection of characters displays a new reality that is revolutionary. She is not a dogmatic feminist who insists only on problems pertaining to women. She has written about how, in the age of globalization, both men and women must fight for their own survival. Studying the fictitious universe, topics, and tactics she uses will be a worthwhile and creative activity.

The current study makes an effort to concentrate on Sudha Murthy's fictional universe with a concentration on themes and devices. As the first female computer scientist and engineer, Sudha Murthy started her career and she is the founder and chairman of the Infosys Foundation and business. She has founded numerous orphanages, started a number of rural development initiatives, and backed the campaign to provide computer and library facilities to all Karnataka government schools. At Harvard University, she has established the "Murthy Classical Library of India". In a brave move, Sudha Murthy gave government schools access to computers and libraries. She had a penchant for teaching computer science. She was given the "Best Teacher Award" by the Bangalore Rotary Club in 1995.

The novels of Sudha Murthy in English are, *The Dollar Bahu* (2003), *Gently Falls The Bakula* (2003), *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* (2004), *Wise and Otherwise* (2005), *The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories* (2006), *The Old Man And His God* (2006), *Mahashweta* (2007), *The Bird with the Golden Wings* (2009), *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* (2012), *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2012), *House of Cards* (2013), *The Mother I Never Knew* (2014), *Something Happened on the Way To Heavens* (2014), *The Magic of the Lost Temple* (2015), *The Serpent's Revenge* (2016), *Three Thousand Stitches* (2017), *The Man from the Egg* (2017), *Here, There, Everywhere* (2018), *The Upside Down King* (2018), *How The*

Sea Became Salty (2019), *The Daughter From A Wishing Tree* (2019), *How The Onion got its layers* (2020), *Grandparents Bag of Stories* (2020), *The Gopi Diaries* (2021), *The Sage With Two Horns* (2022).

Dollar Bahu is the novel about the Gauramma, her Dollar Bahu Jamuna and her other simpleton Bahu Vinuta. Between Jamuna's Dollars and Vinuta's selfless devotion, Gauramma always finds her favour with the dollars and ignores what is truly priceless Vinuta's devotion and selfless love.

Gently Falls the Bakula is the about the protagonist, Shrimati and Shrikant who belong to two hostile communities and fall in love. The best thing about the book is its character depiction. Sudha Murthy's writing critique home where many of us have seen this happening in and around us. The story is simple, follows a single plot and focuses on the two main characters only.

How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories, It is a collection of twenty-five semi-autobiographical short stories is simple and touching and packed with values. Funny, spirited and inspiring, the book teaches a valuable lesson about the importance of doing what you believe is right and having the courage to realize your dreams.

The non-fictional work, *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute of life* is a collection of fifty vignettes of the real-life incidents of Sudha Murthy where she encounters ordinary people and extraordinary minds during her travels, and which left a profound impression on her. Fifty vignettes showcase the myriad shades of human nature. Contents in the book include stories ranging from a man who dumps his aged father in an old-age home after declaring him to be a homeless stranger; a tribal chief in the Sahyadri hills who teaches the author that there is humility in receiving too and how a sick woman remembers to thank her benefactor even from her deathbed.

The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories, is a collection of children's tales by Sudha Murthy. In this collection of stories from Indian folklore, Sudha Murthy retells them from her memory of her grandparents. She tells the story of the clever and naughty princess who will only marry the man who asks her a question she cannot answer. She also tells the stories of kings, misers, wise men and foolish boys in this collection of hilarious and instructive stories which she loved from her days as a young girl.

The Old Man and His God, discovering the spirit of India. It is told simply and directly from the heart, it is a collection of snapshots of the varied faces of human nature and a mirror to the souls of the Indians. There are stories about people's generosity and selfishness in times of natural disasters like the tsunami; women struggling to speak out in a world that refuses to listen to them and tales of young professionals trying to find their feet as they climb up the corporate ladder.

Mahashweta is an inspiring novel of courage and resilience in a world marred by illusions and betrayals. This is the story of Anupama whose marriage falls apart when she is diagnosed with leukoderma. Overcoming the social stigma of a married woman who is left by her husband, she moves to Bombay where she finds success, respect and rebuilds her life.

The Bird with the Golden Wings, A poor little girl is rewarded with lovely gifts when she takes pity on a hungry bird and feeds it all the rice she has, but what happens when the girl's greedy, nosy neighbour hears the story and tries to get bigger and better gifts for herself. The greed of becoming rich and powerful turns to be the most disastrous wish of her life. The story is well crafted to convey the message of the writer. "The greedy and selfish desires will always destroy you." This, in fact, is a very true lesson of life which we all want our children to learn.

The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk is a collection of heartwarming experiences of Sudha Murthy, written as she walks the roads of rural urban India. She weaves the everyday life of men and women in India into short stories and each story has a unique takeaway that you'll never forget. The title story is a story about Sudha Murthy's visit to Odisha and about the poor tribal's she met there.

Grandma's Bag of Stories, is a collection of twenty two short stories brings forth memories of a grandparent spinning tales around animals and mysterious characters. The story starts with Anand, Krishna, Raghu and Meena arriving at their Ajji and Ajja's house in Shiggaon. They spend the summer listening to the their Ajji as she opens her big bag of stories. She tells stories of Kings and cheats princesses and onions, monkeys and mice and scorpions and hidden treasures.

House of Cards portrays the clash of the simplicity of village life and complexity of city life. This is the story of Mridula, an energetic yet simple village girl who moves to Bangalore after her marriage to Sanjay, a doctor. The story is about there is a family life, and how they rise in status in the city, but begin to find differences in their relations.

The Mother I Never Knew comprises two novellas that explore two quests by two different men- both for mothers they never knew they had. The book is a poignant and dramatic book that reaches deep into the human heart to reveal what we really feel about those losses to us.

Something Happened on the Way to Heaven, is an inspiring real-life story is edited by Sudha Murthy. It is a collection of twenty memorable true-life stories handpicked by Sudha Murthy from a writing contest by Penguin Publisher.

The Magic of the Lost Temple is heart-warming, charming and absolutely unput downable. Nooni, a city girl, comes to her grandparent's village to spend her summer

vacations. She is surprised at the pace of life in her grandparents. But she quickly gets used to the gentle routine there and involves herself in a flurry of activities, including papad making, organizing picnics and learning to ride a cycle, with her new-found friends. Things get exciting when Nooni stumbles upon an ancient fabled step well right in the middle of a forest.

In *The Serpent's Revenge*, Sudha Murthy reintroduces the fascinating world of India's greatest epic, *Mahabharata*, through the extraordinary tales in this collection, each of which is sure to fill you with a sense of wonder and bewilderment. Many of the tales in this book stand out – the story of Chandrhasa, that of Babruvahana (Arjuna's son who kills his own dad), the golden mongoose, the story of Duryodhana's good brother Vikarna and Ghatotkacha's son Barbarika.

Three Thousand Stiches is a collection of eleven short stories that draw from Sudha Murthy's real –life experiences, as an individual and as the chairperson of Infosys Foundation. The book narrates many stories the rescue and rehabilitation of three thousand devadasi's in Karnataka.

In *The Man from the Egg* is an unusual tale about the trinity Sudha Murthy weaves enchanting tales of the three most powerful gods of India – the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. This book is a collection of wonderful short stories, crisp stories that take us on a magical journey to a land of gods, demigods, asuras, rakshasas, handsome valiant princes, beautiful strong willed princesses, learned sages, proud kings and a lot more.

Here, There and Everywhere is a celebration of her literary journey and it is her two hundredth title across genres and languages. Bringing together her best-loved stories from various collections alongside some new ones and a thoughtful introduction, here is a book that is, in every sense, as multifaceted as its author.

The Upside –Down King is a collection of twenty-three short stories based on Indian mythology. It is divided into two halves- Tales from the life and lineage of Lord Ram, and tales from the life and lineage of Lord Krishna. After every tale there is also description of the place which is known for that story.

How the Sea Became Salty is the first chapter book in Puffin’s Chapter Book series. The book is set a long time ago, in a time when the sea’s water was supposedly sweet and indeed drinkable. It narrates the tale of how the sea came to be salty. It is suitable for very young readers and is a perfect way to introduce them to the beauty of Sudha Murthy’s writing.

The Daughter from Wishing Tree, is tales about woman in mythology. It is the fourth book in Sudha Murthy’s popular mythology series. It is divided into three parts and consists of twenty-four stories. The stories are about the important roles that women have played in Indian mythology. Apart from the famous ones like Sita, Ganga and Draupadi, there are many other lesser known characters like Ashokasundari, Shakambhari, Karambha etc.

How the Onion Got its Layers is a story which seeks to answer several questions related to the onion, like its many layers and why it brings tears to the eyes when cut. India’s favorite storyteller brings alive this timeless tale with her inimitable wit and simplicity. Dotted with charming illustrations, this gorgeous chapter book is the ideal introduction for beginners to the world of Sudha Murthy.

The Gopi Diaries is a series of three books for children about a dog called Gopi. In Gopi’s voice, the first book, “Coming Home”, begins with Gopi going to his new home, and tells the story of how he settles down with his loving, human family .How Gopi sees the world around him and what he thinks of the people in his life give the story a truly unique flavor. The second book, “Finding Love”, Gopi has now grown

up from a young pup to an adult dog. He narrates how he loves spending time with his favourite humans, the mischiefs he does, and how content his life. Third book in the Gopi Diaries series, the little pup of *Coming Home* and the stronger, bigger, more mischievous Gopi of *Finding Love* grows up in the third book and has new adventures, new interests, a new dog-person in his life-the charming Nova-and brings a new family into the world.

The Sage with Two Horns is stories ranging from quarrels among gods and the follies of great sages to the benevolence of kings and the virtues of ordinary mortals. Murty says there is a powerful force in the universe that can be called by any name.

The novel *Mahasweta*, This book addresses the stigma associated with leukoderma, a skin condition that causes a patient's skin to turn pale white. The protagonist of the book, Anupama enact as 'Mahashweta', who appears in the classic novel *Kadambari* by Banabhatta. Although Banabhatta had a joyful conclusion, such a scenario is not always the case in real life. Mahashweta in this tale turns white with skin disorder while the 'Mahashweta' of *Kadambari* wears white to bring her beloved, Pundarika, back to life. The link is only with white colour. Anupama is a stunning college student with a flair for the drama. She comes from a modest upbringing, but she organises plays to earn money for good causes. She seduces Dr. Anand, an attractive man, with her charms.

Anand is a wealthy man and Radhakka, his widowed mother, is a cunning woman. Girija is his sister. Anu, on the other hand, has two stepsisters, a bad stepmother, and a poor teacher father. Anand's proposal is made when Sabakka, Anu's stepmother, is trying to arrange for her to be married off to her brother rather than her own daughter. Radhakka accepts this below status proposal because she would rather have a

daughter-in-law from her own community than be picky and have one imposed on her.

When the lad meets the girl formally, the girl's father, Shamanna, Radhakka, and the mother of the groom learn about his financial restrictions, and Girija now believes she has a rival for Anand's affections. Shamanna and Anu are delighted by the lavish wedding (paid for by the groom), but Sabakka and her daughters find it distasteful. Yet like the protagonists in Sudha Murty's books, this one likewise views her husband as her most prized possession. Anand will soon travel to London to further his higher education. Before joining her husband, Radhakka wants her daughter-in-law to perform the Deepavali devotion to the Goddess of Wealth.

Girija spends out with her own friends, leaving Anu alone because the former is too afraid of her mother-in-law to be friends with her. As if loneliness weren't lonely enough, she unintentionally learns that Girija is a promiscuous woman who keeps birth control in her purse, and her attempts to counsel the sister-in-law only lead to reprimands from the mother-in-law (who invariably trusts her daughter). Anu's foot receives a direct strike from a hot coal during Deepavali, leaving a white patch that doesn't go away. Anu visits the skin specialist in secret because she doesn't dare discuss it with her in-laws because of her low status in the family.

Leukoderma or "vitiligo"(Murthy 49) is confirmed, and he informs her that the scorching of her skin was really a coincidence and that the idea that it was inherited had not yet been proven medically. He administers her some medication while claiming that it was his best attempt and that neither the promise of recovery nor the duration of recovery were under anyone's control. She is reluctant to tell Anand.

Sadly, the condition is not remedied, and Radhakka, who is incredibly ignorant, believes that people who visit dermatologists do so to receive treatment for sexually

transmitted diseases or venereal diseases, sees her on her subsequent visit. Before Anupama rolls down the stairs and reveals her unlucky white patch, the secrecy of her visit almost proves Radhakka's assumption.

Anupama endures numerous taunts and insults before being reduced to an untouchable and unspeakable being. Radhakka makes her travel to her parents' house before she may join Anand. Apparently, she will not find anyone to comfort her there either. Additionally, Sabakka thought that Anu's presence in their home after marriage may put off potential husbands for her daughters.

Ironically, ignorant villagers spread false information about her. Her letters to Anand go unanswered. The planning for step-sister Nanda's wedding reveals Sabakka's partiality, but its postponement causes trouble for Anu. When Anu learns that Anand decided not to respond to her letters, her anguish intensifies. Due to Shamanna's transfer, their village has changed. Anu visits the village goddess temple on the suggestion of the school ayah only to learn about the proverbial final straw a chat in which Radhakka said she was seeking for a girl from her own circle so that she wouldn't be cheated like the last time.

The actress who performed in plays that she act in stages with exclusively joyful endings encounters tragedy and that, too, in real life. She contemplates suicide from a ledge on the hillside of the Goddess temple after hearing further claims that Anand is in India attending his sister's wedding to a wealthy man while he is not looking for her.

Nevertheless, common sense overrides her and she realises that if Girija, who has her own set of morals, can marry into a wealthy family and become respectable, then why can't she, who is such a wonderful and well-behaved person? Anu comes home after having a change of heart and goes to Bombay, where her former college

roommate Sumithra lives with her husband Hari Prasad. She is welcomed by the pair despite the white patch. In spite of his initially worshipful demeanour, Hari treats Anu like his own sister and looks for work for her. Anu recalls that she had never worn lipstick until she saw the receptionist, Dolly, touch up hers during the interview. She obtains a clerical position because she is already overqualified, commutes a considerable distance, and makes friends with the female coworkers who are unconcerned about her condition or her past. She then leads a contented and self-assured life.

Leukoderma is not a barrier to blood donation, as implied by Dolly's accident and Anu's blood donation (of course, the transfusion is immediate and direct, as in Indian movies). But, in practise, blood is obtained from a blood bank after being cross-matched (which is independent of the blood types of the donor and recipient) by donating replacement blood. Anyway, Anu helps Dolly while she is in the hospital. Anu must leave Sumi's without telling anyone house after realising one day that Hari has bad intents towards her. Dolly suggests that she stay with them, but with the caveat that Anu prepare her own meals because she is a devout vegetarian. Anu accepts a position as a Sanskrit Lecturer at a nearby institution at Dolly's recommendation. She is also more than willing to encourage her students' antics. Dolly gets married and relocates to Australia, leaving Anu to take care of her house on her own without having to worry about paying rent.

Anu has an accident and is taken to a hospital where she is treated by post-graduate physician Dr. Vasant, a Kannadiga. As the son of a 'Sanskrit teacher'(Murthy 108), he is more acquainted with Anu thanks to his love of the language. Dr. Satya, a friend and roommate of his, dating Dr. Vidya. The severity of Vasant is contrasted with Satya's upbeat demeanour for the reader. When Vidya

dumps him in favour of getting married to a “more eligible” (Murthy 111) man, the latter’s jocular behaviour is not intended to endure. Jaundice, which was brought on by consuming unclean food, heightens his sadness. Anu offers to prepare meals for him and tend to his medical needs.

Satya’s perception of her during his stay shifts from one of an unlucky woman to one of a person who can see above her flaws. As he recovers, he thanks her for aiding him like “a sister” (Murthy 114) would have done, to which she strongly protests for the obvious reasons. When Satya discusses not marrying the person one loves on the final day of his stay, Anu shares her experience with him and argues that failing occasionally makes a person more mature. She compares herself to a tree that shares its fruit with others and expresses how she feels fulfilled by this act of selflessness.

In the life of Anand, He is willing to leave his wife since he loves beauty so much. Despite this, he resists physical urges. He is struck with remorse when, one day in England, he sees a husband taking care of his wife who is disabled. He goes back to India and establishes a practise in his enormous estate. He moves into Girija’s room since he feels uneasy in his own. He discovers a love note from her partner there and realises his error. When he discovers that his mother was aware of the affair the entire time but chose to ignore it, he is horrified. Girija is revered, whereas the community had ostracized Anupama for a patch. He sets out in search of Anupama.

Shamanna has passed away, and Anu sends money for the funeral ceremonies. The same stepmother who formerly viewed her as a terrible omen is now kindly writing to Anupama solely because she needs her for financial support. Vasant wishes to practise in his home town despite the fact that his parents have long since passed away to aid the residents in battling illness. He has an exquisite sense of beauty, both

the enduring beauty of nature and the beauty found in a decent person. He wants Anupama to help him realise his ambition since he is intrigued in her.

Anand travels from village to hamlet looking for Anu. Anu, with Vasant's assistance, arranges for her theatre company to present *Swapna Vasavadatta* at the International Medical Conference, complete with an English commentary. Anand goes to the show at his friend's suggestion and discovers Anupama is the production director. He meets her after making a significant effort to obtain her contact information. She expresses her decision to end their relationship clearly. She has no desire to return to the village, encounter prejudice, or interact with the family. When the book comes to a close, Anupama's students choose Mahashweta character that Anu acted in the beginning of the novel as their upcoming performance.

The hypothesis of the dissertation is, Does the protagonist of the Sudha Murthy fight the patriarchy as in her other novels? Is physical beauty essential to be prominent person in the society?

Chapter Two

Domestic Violence

The most prominent and prosperous women writers of the modern era, Sudha Murthy's works paint a realistic portrait of the socioeconomic and psychological challenges Indian women endure. She has portrayed the inner voice of women and their roles in the legal system in her works. Her works resonates the genuine longings, dreams, hopes, anxiety, disappointments, and psychological experiences that many women have gone through. She sculptures the great detail to depict dependency and the struggle to live independently.

The women in India before their marriage were expected to rely on their male members of their family, especially their father and brothers; after marriage, they were expected to rely on their husbands or sons. Their position was weakened by this custom in order to preserve the family line. Women are not allowed to make use of the opportunities of education and sophistication. There are only a small number of nobility ladies; the lives of most women are not worthwhile. The atrocities that have lowered the status of women in Indian society include child marriage, infanticide, and dowry killings. In several sectors, women's positions of improved after the Independence.

If we pay close attention to the situation of women in family life, they are pathetically dependent. Mistreated both within and outside the family and are powerless. Women are empowered in contemporary India by obtaining education, yet this is not entirely true when in reality. For many women, marriage is one of the most horrifying forms of oppression. It disempowers women while empowering men. Women have historically been limited to the home to take care of their husbands,

raise their children, follow orders from their in-laws, and carry out various household chores. They have been relegating the position and devoting themselves to the improvement of the family.

Mahashweta, a novel by Sudha Murthy, is among the best examples of domestic violence. She cleverly focuses on the real issues that women confront in society and in their family relationships, as well as how they deal with such issues. The researcher discusses the role of the educated woman in a love marriage, her life of subjugation to her husband, mother-in-law, and stepmother, in the novel *Mahashweta*. The protagonist, Anupama suffers domestic abuse. From Vedic period to Digital period era women undergoes a series of humiliations and betrayals.

“Even though the female child is stronger than male child at birth as adults it is the man who becomes oppressor and woman who suffers”.

(Murthy 1)

For women like Anupama, life on earth is far from ideal. She overcomes several obstacles in her journey to success. She showed up as poverty, the difficulty to locate her mother when she was a little child, problems with her stepmother, a poor father who was a teacher, a dominating mother-in-law and sister-in-law, and an intelligent but insensitive husband. As her name suggests, Anupama was a unique woman who could not be compared to others in terms of her beauty or temperament. Although she is stunning, smart, a great playwright, and a talented stage actor, she is from a low socioeconomic household. The conditions for women like Anupama are far from ideal. Throughout her quest for achievement in life, she overcame a number of challenges. Radhakka, Anand's mother was aware that her son might wed an Englishwoman because he intended to pursue his higher studies there. People could view her as having a big heart if she grants Anand's request because she is bringing

an impoverished girl into the family. They were more willing to degrade Anupama because of money and material gratification. When he learns about Anand's proposal, Anupama's father is pleased. Sudha Murthy displays the impoverished father's pitiful financial situation in front of a mother-in-law of his daughter.

Over the ensuing several months of her marriage, Anupama was Content. Anupama was urged by Radhakka to remain behind so that she might participate in the Lakshmi Puja two months from now. Due to her anxiety and the strained connection between them, Anupama never told her mother-in-law about Girija's unlawful behavior. Anupama's issues began on the day of Lakshmi Puja when she noticed a white area on her leg and later learned from a dermatologist that it was leukoderma or vitiligo. She missed having complete independence because she could only leave the house in the car. In order to go to the skin doctor, she had to lie to Avva. Her mother-in-law caught her doing it. They treated her like an object, and Anupama felt miserable as a result. In just one day, she had descended to the level of a servant. After completing her day's work, the servant may return home and sleep, but where would she go? To the home of her father? Where could she find generosity and confidence? However her husband is not present at this time. To her father's residence she sends a message.

Anupama is forced to think about killing herself because of the societal stigma associated with being a married woman living with her parents, her stepmother's constant jabs, and the isolation brought on by her skin condition. Getting married is risk. It is impossible to foresee the outcome in advance. Finding the ideal partner is a question of luck. she had bad luck with this. Both her marriage and her career had been destroyed by a tiny white spot. Sudha Murthy conveys the painful experience in a wonderful way. Anand is a physician. He was more knowledgeable about the

illness, but he wasn't yet ready to comprehend Anupama's emotions. Anand receives numerous letters from Anupama, but he never responds.

Anupama anticipated reassuring words from Anand. When he travelled to India for his sister's wedding, he didn't appease her or even get to know her. He breaks the pledges he made to them when they were married in front of the revered Agni. Anand is an oppressor because he is drawn to Anu's physical allure. He is aware of the personality of his mother and family history of Anu, yet he maintains his composure. Anu is given courage by the doctor because he is aware of the sickness; he does not treat Anu as his wife but rather as a patient. Although a successful doctor, he was a bad husband. He takes her mother's remarks at face value. Anupama was treated like a lovely item, yet they neglected to value her emotions. Anu's stepmother caught her before marriage for no other reason than that she is more attractive than her stepsister.

“Let us not educate her further, it might become difficult to find a husband for her Besides, she will not support us. She has to marry and go to somebody else's house” (Murthy 20).

Poor Anupama worried for three years and endured Sabakka's shame as a result of not getting her daughter married. She moves into Sumitra's home and lives there for a year until discovering Hari to be the true man and moving into Dolly's home. Anupama was injured in an accident and received medical care from Satya, a friend of Dr. Vasant's, and the wonderful doctor. Due to Anand's commitment to the marriage and their deep love for one another, even in the west where divorce was simple, Anupama was left alone and vulnerable to poverty and loneliness. Eventually, Anand realised his error and remembered what he had said before the sacred fire during the wedding ceremony. After a protracted search, he finally locates Anupam,

but she rejects him. Anupama had not been melted by Anand's mental instability. When they got married, itself he knew that she didn't have this illness; but he did not tell his mother. Because she came from a poor background, his mother and sister did not like her.

Even domestic pets receive loving care and attention when they are ill. After the marriage, Anupama became completely dependent on Anand. She wishes to hear a few words from him to comfort her. His words would have given her both physical and emotional strength. Anand concerned for the future of his unborn daughter, but he was not aware that Anupama was also someone else's daughter; he never bothered about Anupama's current circumstances.

Until death does apart, marriage is a commitment that lasts a lifetime, for better or worse. She was no longer the 'Mahashweta' battling for her Pundarika in the play that had brought them together. The genuine success of a marriage depends not on flimsy things like those, but rather on the husband and wife's love and understanding of one another.

“Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana am I to him; Just as the creeper depends on a tree emotionally I depends on him”

(Murthy 151)

Mahashweta is a moving account of bravery and fortitude in a world tainted by deceptions and betrayals. The victims of the prejudices that continue to rule society today can find comfort and hope in this moving story. In the novel the protagonist Anupama's fairytale marriage to Anand falls apart when she discovers a white patch on her foot and learns that she has leukoderma. Abandoned by her uncaring in laws and insensitive husband, she is forced to return to her father's home in the village. The social stigma of a married woman living with her parents her stepmother's

continual barbs and the ostracism that accompanies her skin condition force her to contemplate suicide. Determined to rebuild her life against all odds, Anupama goes to Bombay where she finds success, respect and the promise of an enduring friendship.

External beauty has a distinct place in society. This fantastic tale does a fantastic job of highlighting this amazing reality. Although the novel *Mahashweta* is written in a very straightforward manner, it has a very powerful message. The book describes how women can succeed and lead decent life even when the odds are stacked against them. Women are marginalized by society when their outward attractiveness is occasionally tarnished. Anupama, the protagonist of this book, is a successful and attractive young woman whose beauty turns into a burden when she develops leukoderma. Although leukoderma is a cosmetic condition, it has affected many people's lives and damaged their minds, as well as those of many others in society. The firm stance adopted by Anupama, who triumphs against all challenges and finds calm in the task she has always liked to do.

The novel *Mahashweta* was a relatable work of art that was written in a very straightforward but very effective way. It was an easy book that hit home with our conscience without becoming overly didactic. The book was both inspirational and current. In a true story, Sudha Murthy describes how a couple's life was improved as a result of her book. That might be the best aspect of writing. The author never knows, but their words might encourage a lifeless spirit to begin living again or cheer up a dejected heart. The writer feels simply out of this world when they learn of such situations, as if a part of their purpose for being on earth has been accomplished. The words reach people in the remotest parts of the world. A special regard should be given to the novel's portrayal of relationships between a wife and a husband. A patient's and a doctor's relationship. The interactions between the male and female

characters in a relationship were absolutely wonderful. So, it had the impression of being an excellent book that would help readers understand things more clearly and raise their level of awareness.

In our country, leukoderma was a very feared condition—not because it was incurable or contagious, but rather because it detracted from a person's external beauty and was mistaken for leprosy. In the story, Anupama was left to fend for herself without any moral or financial support, and what an illustrious life she makes of it. She eventually refuses to move in with her husband even after he recognises his error and wants her back in his life.

Sudha Murty wanted to emphasise a few aspects through the book *Mahashweta*. The fallacy that leukoderma is an infectious or genetic illness. Marriage conflicts should always be taken seriously. We should never take our loved ones for granted in life.

Marital abuse is perpetrated on the women. The educated woman Anupama is essentially a scholar of Sanskrit, who suffers domestic abuse. In addition to her leukoderma suffers from a sequence of humiliations, betrayals, and isolation in marital life. She finds herself and her bravery thanks to a middle-class woman, whose abrupt leukodermal illness destroys their physical look and attractiveness and tests their moral fortitude. She is knowledgeable about the novels published in Sanskrit by the eminent author Bana Bhatta. During her undergraduate years, she performed in it, directed it, and translated plays written in Sanskrit. In order to sell tickets to the play called *Mahashweta*, which she hosts and performs in, she seeks to meet Dr. Desai. Dr. Anand, a friend of Dr. Desai, is introduced to the woman. Anupama and Anand are drawn to one another. Dr. Desai gets Dr. Anand to purchase tickets. He attends the performance and is astounded by Anupama's playing, voice, and sincerity. She

performs the part of 'Mahashweta', the play's protagonist. Anand chooses to wed Anupama and talks to Dr. Desai's brother-in-law Shrinath about it. Anand's plan would not work because of the socio-economic and positional differences among the two households, according to Shrinath, who disagreed with Anand. Anand is from a prosperous family. His late father was a well-known and prosperous builder. Radhakka, his mother, is a highly protective and authoritarian woman. Only because Anupama was an honest and gifted actor agreed to wed her. He is well-off and accomplished in both his academic and professional endeavors. Anupama is the economically disadvantaged daughter of a schoolteacher that class discrimination compares to in-laws, cause mistreat Anupama. She only finishes her education with the aid of grants.

After Anupama's mother passed away, Anupama was raised by her grandma. Her father married Sabakka, a second wife who has consistently treated her with contempt. Nanda and Vasudha, her stepsisters, mistreated her there itself the domestic violence in her own house reflects. She really felt that being married to Anand would relieve all of her pain. She is unaware that Anand has prioritised her physical appearance. She is oblivious to the fact that Anand values her outside beauty more than her own self-worth. Sudha Murthy depicts an arrestee torturing herself in order to maintain her dignity in order to draw the attention to portray Anupama suffering from the aesthetic condition leukoderma. The only mention of Dr. Anand in the book is in relation to a young guy who falls head over heels for a poor girl and marries her based only on outward appearance.

Anupama's triumph of life on her terms defying conventions, marriage vows and social conventions and even disease. A marriage is a commitment for better or worse, till death do us part. Does every marriage meet with the same fate? Well not

always mostly when marriage vows are broken, it was believed that there were major contentions which could not be resolved. In spite of uniting in a lifelong bond the partners separate. But it's hard to imagine a small white patch leading to the dissolution of a marriage. Certainly, Anupama, the central character in the book *Mahashweta*, experiences it. The feminism theme in the novel makes highly intriguing.

“Men have been dominant as recipients, interpreters and transmitters of divine messages, while women have largely remained passive receivers of teachings and ardent practitioners’ religious rituals. Attitudes developed around patriarchal interpretations of religious belief have defined and shaped the social and cultural contexts of Indian women resulting in their disempowerment and second class status.”

- (Virginia Saldanha 2016)

Indian women work to fulfill themselves; they reject the need to be defined or distinguished in relation to males; they band together to dispel the myths of feminism, motherhood, and marriage; and they provide as an example of how independence was, at best, a gradual journey. The need of the hour was a reassessment of what exactly the Indian woman wants. She makes the decision to reject man's deliberate control of her. She chooses to take charge of her own life and body, including the choice to have an abortion if necessary. She also desired the grace and tenderness traditionally associated with femininity. She essentially wanted the best of both worlds, or everything.

Consideration of liberty as a process of growth understood as a holistic, cultural process, the development of man and woman as a whole, was one method to reconcile these seemingly incompatible ideals. Even in the west, the liberation of

women has been incomplete and contradictory. Not only were there limits to resources, human absorption capacity, inequity, and exploitation, but people were also actively oriented towards a greater idea of love, joy, and sympathy for fellow humans and they wanted to transcend the bureaucratic society of programmed consumption.

The true impact of studies on women will be judged in years to come by the realisation they give to women that they don't need to compete with anyone and can simply march alongside men as equal partners, sharing experiences and aspirations. This would require the gradual restructuring and organisation of social forces as well as the mobilization of political will in favour of the common good. The ultimate goal was to establish a new global economic, political, and cultural environment that would ensure the independent growth of every human being.

Chapter Three

Feminism

Out of the many issues that make up her writing repertoire, the condition of women remains the most highlighted one. Sudha Murthy wrote about feminism and the concept of equality for women in the choices they make and the lives they lead. The significant thing is not the content but the timing of her revelations. She spoke about women issues and highlighted their plight when it was not in vogue'. She drew the attention to things which had been socially acceptable, in fact a prerequisite, of the Indian middle class society and its women. Most times, her work refrains from being sermonizing or instructing the reader what needs to be done to improve the lot of women. She doesn't believe in the chest thumping and slogan screaming kind of feminism. Her stories and characters portray the world as she sees it, without bothering to impact a change but, in a very subtle and understated way, achieving just that.

Mahashweta of Sudha Murthy started this book with the dedication "All those women in our country who suppress their feelings and suffer silently because of the leukoderma, and may be impregnated with hope and bravery" (Murthy 14) to build up trust and a positive atmosphere not only for those who have leukoderma, but also for all women. Leukoderma is a cosmetic disease that spreads over the whole body with white patches on the skin. While not heredity, contagion, poor presumption or the compensation for the last birth, but some of the people affected are ashamed and alienated in society. Even women are judged by the beautiful attractiveness instead of intelligence, talent or some other extra strength of the women, and discard them if anything happens about their marvelous appearance. This is how the life of *Mahashweta* protagonist Anupama occurred.

Mahashweta, on the other hand deals with a very strong titular character. The novel begins on a note that resonates so strikingly with the feminist sentiment. On the

very first page, the male protagonist Anand is introduced. He is a doctor and is involved in the delivery of a girl child in the opening pages of the story. When the child is born, the seasoned and elderly nurse at the hospital delivery room has thoughts that stand true universally, more so in the Indian context.

Prabhavathi got lost in thought for a moment. Even though the female child is stronger at birth than the male child, it is the man who becomes the oppressor, and the woman who suffers, as adults. Why did this come to pass? She didn't know the answer — she just knew it was a real life reality. (Murthy 1)

On one hand we get to see the perspective of a female in the above lines on the other even the male counterpart Anand, in this scene, acknowledges the predominance of women in certain parts of life. He is found musing about the strength of character of a woman who gives birth to a child despite the obvious pain and troubles.

"Both parents play equally significant roles in the birth of a child. But at the moment of birth- the moment of truth- the only reality is the mother."

(Murthy 2).

Sudha Murthy has been able to bring out this gender distinction very vividly in all her works. *Mahashweta* is a testament of her understanding of the middle-class Indian society. She herself says that the novel could be placed anywhere in India, but she chose the Karnataka backdrop because she herself grew up in that and is deeply familiar with its nuances.

The female protagonist Anupama is a uniquely talented character. "What an apt name, thought Anand. She was truly incomparable".(Murthy 9) When a mesmerized Anand finds out the name of the girl who has taken a liking to base on her beauty. Her resilience and strength shines through all that she does. *Mahashweta*,

another name for goddess Saraswati, is also significant for Anupama because not only is she wise and talented but also has to deal with an affliction, leukoderma, which leaves ugly 'white spots' on her skin.

Anupama is immensely beautiful and an exceptional actress. Her beauty ensnares Anand and results in their marriage in the novel.

Anand looked up from his notes and was stunned to see a young girl standing before him of extra ordinary beauty. Over the years he had met countless girls, but he had never seen anyone so appallingly beautiful. She looked like an Apsara with her lovely large eyes, exquisite complexion and face framed by long, jet black hair. She was wearing a blue bordered green cotton saree and a blue blouse. Rich dimples emerged in her eyes, as she grinned at Anand. The expression on her face suggested she'd been used to such a reaction.

(Murthy 8)

Her only flaw in the marriage market is a poor background. Her qualities far outnumber the flaw that she might possess. She is well- educated and independent, which is how she catches the eye of Dr. Anand, an up and coming doctor. He is mesmerized by her beauty and talent on stage.

Anupama is the daughter of Shamanna, a school teacher and her mother had passed away at a young age, when she was just a baby. Shamanna remarried. His wife Sabakka bore him two daughters. There is obvious bad blood between Anupama and her stepmother.

His wife Sabakka, Anupama's stepmom, had categorically told her husband, "Do not allow us to educate her further. It will be hard to find

a husband for her. She does not help us, she has to get married and go to somebody else's house one day" (Murthy 20).

Anupama's beauty and qualities are in sharp contrast to the plain features and rawness of her step sisters. Anupama's initial decision of not getting married also earns the ire of her step mother. Sabakka's anger knew no bounds, This Apsara won't get married herself and insists on destroying my girls' lives! This when the Patils, who had seen Nanda for marriage with their son rejected her in favour of Anupama whom their son had seen performing in a play.

When Dr. Anand, who has amassed quite a wealth, is entranced by Anupama and wants to marry her, Sabakka is not too happy. She tells Shamanna that a daughter should be married off amongst equals. Dr. Anand's mother, Radhakka, is a tough nut to crack. She always wanted a match among equals but when she realises that Anand is enamoured and that Anupama is pretty to look at, she decides to neglect her economic background.

Radhakka had been lost in thought. She couldn't think of any plausible arguments against it. And on what basis does she refuse to consider this match? The only downside was the poverty of Anupama. Yet, as a justification for her opposition, she could not cite that; people would find her selfish. She wondered what stand she was supposed to take. If someone as pretty as Girija admitted she looked good, who boy wouldn't want Anupama? If Radhakka turned down the proposal, Anand would probably argue about it with her. What if he insisted on marrying the child, no matter what she was saying? She'd lose sight, and that was her last wish. Then another thought hit her. What if Anand went to England without marrying, and took an English woman as his wife back home? The very thought caused Radhakka to burst in a sweat. How will a woman in a foreign country preserve the customs and practices

that her ancestors transmitted and were inextricably woven into the fabric of their lives? She was thinking about family, babies, heritage, and grandchildren and was shivering. Getting a poor girl like her daughter-in-law would definitely be better than finding one from another country. If it did, she couldn't bear to talk of the guilt.

What she cannot compromise on, is her standing in the society, so she decides to shoulder all expenses of the wedding. For Shamanna, this is a match made in heaven. Even Anupama cannot believe her luck as she gets to marry someone she loves from the moment she laid eyes on him. If not anything else, Anupama was wise beyond her years and understood that love alone did not suffice in the world.

As Mahashweta, when she had talked of love at first sight, she had been speaking from her own heart. However, she was a practical girl, well aware of the situation. Given the difference in the backgrounds, she knew that it would be unrealistic on her part to dream of a life with Anand. She was the eldest daughter of a poor village school teacher, and destined to struggle all her life. She was aware that Anand was favoured by Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. Though she herself had the blessings of Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning, Anupama's life had never been an easy one. Reaching out for a star in the sky would only lead to disappointment. (Murthy 19)

Two months into the marriage Anand has to leave for England for further training. He wanted to take Anupama along but Radhakka's prime motive for getting Anand married was that her daughter-in-law would be able to sit in for the Lakshmi puja, which she herself could no longer perform as she was widowed. Hence, Anupama is asked to stay back and join Anand later after Diwali puja. Anand goes away and Anupama is left with Radhakka and Girija, her sister-in-law. Radhakka

doesn't bother her much until she does as she is asked and behaves as she is expected to as her bahu. Yet, adjusting to the new environment is testy for Anupama. She had been an independent, confident woman before marriage and had stayed all alone, away from family for her studies. She was in the habit of carrying out her own chores. All this had to stop once she got married. Anupama could not go out without taking the car and the driver and never without her mother-in-law's permission. Before her marriage, she had been a free bird and had gone wherever she pleased. Now, she felt as if she was locked up in a gilded cage.

But the most unnerving part of her staying with her in laws was her dissociation with the world of art which was her very life blood. "Aren't you acting in their play?" "Which play?" "Chand Bibi". Now that you are at home, I thought you would go for the rehearsal. I am surprised you don't even know about this. Sundaramma, who had overheard their conversation exclaimed, They're out of the question. Radhakka will never allow her nanny to act. Imagine girls coming onto the stage from respectable families! Things can not continue like they did before the marriage. If her daughter-in - law goes on like that, Radhakka will suffer a heart attack. (Murthy 42)

Anupama left with a sinking heart. And this was their perception of such a magnificent art! This meant that she could never perform or sing henceforth. Her only intention was to be decorated and shown as an achievement, a symbol of their standing in society. She had never expected to live this kind of life. Her only ray of hope was that such opinions would not be kept by an intelligent person like Anand. (Murthy 42)

Girija is another difficult person to deal with. She is envious of Anupama due to her beauty and looks down upon her due to her background. Anupama accidentally

finds out about the promiscuous character of Girija but she could not confront her owing to her own newness in the family and Radhakka's blind love for Girija.

On the day of the Pujan, a chunk of burning coal falls on Anupama's foot but she does not let it be known. After a few days, the wound heals but is replaced by a white spot. Anupama is perturbed by its appearance. She fears that it might be leukoderma. Women who had this affliction were not looked upon favourably by the society. The lack of knowledge about causes and treatment of the malady made it scary. No one wanted to marry a girl with leukoderma. In addition to looking ugly, a woman affected with it, it was believed, had a greater chance of passing it onto her children. People often mistook leukoderma for leprosy and hence the apprehension. Anupama had to keep her condition under wraps and somehow find a way of leaving the house unaccompanied in order to see a dermatologist. It proved to be a difficult task as a driver and a car were always assigned to her when she had to go out, keeping in mind the position of Anand and Radhakka in the society.

Anupama had seen many leukodermic people, but had hardly given them a fleeting thought. Things were different now though. She asked God what wrong she had committed so that she could be punished. She had never hurt anybody so far as she can recall. So why did this curse hit her? She prayed that God would prove her fears to be unfounded. Anupama knew she had to be extremely careful and keep a secret of her question. Yet how does she go to see the doctor without anyone else finding out about it? The driver had been told to take her out in the car if she wanted to go out. And if she went to the hospital, her mother-in - law would probably mention it to the driver. She should not contact her family physician — that would encourage the tragedy, and even more so (Murthy 48)

It was a sorry state where a woman like Anupama, who was accomplished in every sense of the word, had to keep a medical condition hidden from others. This says a lot about the position of women in our society. It was heart-breaking as she belonged to an educated family and was married into one. She, somehow, manages to escape to a renowned dermatologist in the city and consults him. He confirms her worst fears and tells her that although the live coal that fell on her foot didn't do it but she did suffer from leukoderma. Anupama breaks down and cries. The doctor suggests a line of treatment which was to be followed religiously if at all she wanted to have a chance to get rid of it. The doctor was mindful of the stigma attached to the affliction and thus tried his utmost to dissipate the fears of Anupama.

The doctor was aware that tiny white patches such as this had broken many relationships, broke lots of hearts, and broke many commitments. The social effects of their affliction overwhelmed most patients who knew that they had leukoderma. He didn't try to stop her crying he believed that she could handle her emotions and worries the best way (Murthy 49).

It so happens that Radhakka finds out about Anupama's visit to the dermatologist one day, by accident, when she sees her walking out of the clinic. Radhakka was in shock. She could not believe that, without her knowledge, her daughter-in-law was visiting such a place and that too! She'd always considered her daughter-in-law a plain and submissive child. Anupama had never in any way crossed her, by word or deed, making this breach of trust unbelievable (Murthy 51).

The skin doctor had assured Anupama that leukoderma wasn't anything like leprosy and that it could be cured with constant care and medication. He had asked her to feel free to question him if in doubt. When Radhakka finds out, the reaction

went beyond the expectation of Anupama. Radhakka is appalled to see the white spot and despite Anupama's entreaties that she had developed this condition after Laxmi Pujan, Radhakka claims that Anupama might have had the affliction even before marriage and that she tricked Anand into marrying her by hiding her condition. "Since when have you had this white patch?" "From just few days back." Oh! Are you sure it wasn't there before the marriage? Don't lie to me. Anand is far too naive and you took advantage of him. You deceived him into marrying you for his money. Anupama protested. Radhakka's verbal onslaught had left her shaken to the core (Murthy 53-54)

Radhakka was supported by Girija and Narayan, the family priest, to the hilt. Girija was already envious of Anupama and had had an altercation with her when Anupama had got wind of her promiscuous activities. Narayana kept telling Radhakka, This is a bad disease. She cannot perform any pooja now. It must be the result of a sin from her previous life (Murthy 54).

Whatever she said, Anupama could not stop them from projecting her as the vamp, the deceiver. Her last hope was Anand. She was sure that Anand, who knew that she did not have the spot before or even after marriage, would support her. She was also confident that Anand being a doctor would side with science and put his mother and sister in the right place by letting them know that leukoderma was nothing to be feared of. Anupama was ostracized in the house. She could not have her meals with the family. No one bothered to talk to her. She was confined to her room.

Anupama engulfed in a sense of misery. She realized in just one day that her status had sunk below that of a servant. After finishing the day's work the servant may go home and sleep. Yet where does she want to go? To her dad's house? That was unthinkable. In Lakshmi Nivas, she had never felt relaxed but it had been her home until the day before. Not any more! After all, a home doesn't consist of only the four

walls — there must be intimacy and happiness, too. And where will she be calling home? Where will she find courtesy and confidence? Avec Anand? But how will she make it to England? She knew none of the answers to any of the questions which plagued her. Anupama was no longer allowed to do any homework and she started feeling embarrassed and suffocated (Murthy 56).

Meanwhile Radhakka called upon Anupama's poor father Shamanna and blamed him for cheating them all. She said that she could accept them being poor for her son's happiness but hiding this affliction was a deliberate act of deceit and both father and daughter were a part of it. 'Was a mistake?' Shamanna was anxious to know why he was urged to receive a telegram. Apart from the fact that you deceived us and took advantage of our goodness nothing is wrong. You're a bad teacher at the school and your daughter looked so innocent. Dr Desai was vouching for you all and we believed him. We conducted the wedding at our expense despite being the family of the groom, because our Anand said he liked Anupama. In return, you gave us a wonderful lesson of gratitude,' Radhakka sarcastically commented (Murthy 57).

Do tell me what happened, please. I can't believe what you're trying to tell me. If I made an error please forgive me. Anupama is very young. She is a child that is without a mother. Forgive her kindly in case she has erred. Treat her as your daughter herself. I'll make sure she's acting obediently and you won't have any reason to complain again. We're no doubt poor but we didn't try to cheat you. Our testimony is to God. If so, call on your witness to explain everything that's happened. Your daughter had a white patch that you hid so Anand married her. (Murthy 57)

He was asked to take Anupama back to her paternal home and keep her there till she got better. The poor man had no choice but to do as he was told. Anupama assured him that what Radhakka had said was not true and that she had got the disease

quite recently, but to no avail. Anupama was brought back home, to the utter shame and inconvenience of her poor family. Her step mother was livid with rage as this development was sure to mar the marriage prospects of her already plain looking daughter.

Anupama has never felt any love for Sabakka. The girl was a living reminder of the first wife of her husband, the woman who had shared love with Shamanna before Sabakka came into his life. But in her heart she knew Anupama's never going to deceive anyone. Sabakka was not incapable of love, and her affection was evoked by all motherless children except Anupama. Anu was beautiful and intelligent unfortunately though her own daughters were not. And she had just returned home in disgrace when Sabakka had thought she'd been well rid of her. The scandal could affect the marriage talks with her Nanda. How long did Anu stay with them? Might she live there forever? The idea of seeing her face daily upsets Sabakka even more. (Murthy 61).

Anupama wrote repeatedly to Anand but failed to elicit a response from him. For three years, she lived in her village with her father and step family. The only thing that did happen was that her step-sister Nanda's engagement broke off as word about Anupama's affliction spread. One of Anupama's friends from her college and theatre days, Sumithra, was getting married to Hari, an engineer by profession. She had invited Anupama to her wedding which she decided not to attend owing to her own sorry state. She wanted very much to be a part of Sumi's happy occasion but knew deep down that her affliction would make her an unwelcome guest at her dearest friend's wedding. As more and more people had come to know about her malady, the realization that her presence on auspicious occasions was not acceptable had dawned on Anupama. Having suffered a deep betrayal of trust in her own marriage, Anupama

had only best wishes for her friend's new phase in life. Sumithra was a plain looking woman but very close to Anupama right from their college days. Anupama wished that she would get lasting happiness in her own match.

She prayed later this night for the happiness of Sumi: let your husband be a man who only showers joy and love for you. It's better to have an understanding husband than one who is just beautiful and rich. It's a chance to marriage. The outcome can not be predicted in advance. It's a matter of chance to find the right match. Through this, I was unfortunate. Can you be luckier? (Murthy 65).

After her marriage Sumi moved to Mumbai with her husband. She kept inviting Anupama to Mumbai, to forget about whatever was wrong with her life and start afresh. By that time Anupama had found out that Anand had come back to India for his sister's wedding. He had not tried getting in touch with her. Anupama thought it unfair that someone like Girija, who had lived life in promiscuity had found a good match and she herself had been shunned by her husband and family through no fault of her own. She had also found out that Radhakka was on the lookout for a match for Anand too. This final piece of information broke her heart. She contemplated suicide. Her mind was now in the making. Yet she somehow couldn't bring herself to move. It held her back by some unseen power. Anupama had been thinking about Girija and her loose morals. She had married into a wealthy family with wealth and the love of her parents, and was a valued member of society. Anupama was better in behaviour, looks and disposition than Girija, but a small white patch pushed her to her death. Was it fair? That she had white patches wasn't her fault. Why, then, had she to die? No-one would know even though she died. Society on the whole will be taking Anand's side and sympathizing with him. Eventually she had found the true Anand.

He'd cherished and married her for her elegance. He wasn't willing to accept her if her beauty got married in any way.

Others would take sympathy on him and he would find it intolerable. Why would she die for a husband who wasn't even interested in her. Though he had spoken of a union that could sunder only death, it was a tiny white patch that separated them. He had taken his marriage vows in the presence of Agni, before hundreds of people. Nevertheless, he had betrayed her and his loyalty to her. She recalled a line from one of her plays, 'Why did God give men strong arms and a lion's courage?' 'So that he can rescue helpless, distressed, and forsaken women' was the answer. But Anand had failed to take the opportunity to come to her assistance.

She was seized with misfortune on all sides. Shamanna's health was fraying, there was no peace at home, she was being ostracized in her village, and people had got to know that she had been abandoned by her husband, all this weighed on her more and more and she decided to end her own life. But something rooted deep inside her stopped her from this moment of weakness. She got courage from the realization that none of it was her fault. She had lived an exemplary life till then and could continue to do so. The finality that Anand had forgotten about her and decided to move on, made up Anupama's mind. With her new-found confidence in herself, she gave up the cowardly thought of ending her own life.

Anupama climbed down the steps. Whatever the circumstances she found herself in, she would meet the challenge head-on, and win. She was now ready to face the world, determined to stand on her own feet and build a new life for her. She looked back and prayed to the goddess Give me the courage to live no matter what happens and started walking home(Murthy 79).

Anupama made up her mind to accept Sumi's invitation and go to Mumbai to try her luck and turn a fresh leaf in the monotony and sadness that her life had become. She was a firm believer in the power of love and happy endings and she wasn't ready to give up just yet.

As a student, she had always acted in plays that had a happy ending. She would tell Sumithra, I do not want to play the tragic heroine, Sumi. I want to show the audience the joy, the happiness, the magic transformation that love and beauty can bring. I believe in happy endings.

She was received warmly by Sumithra, although her husband Hari was awed by Anupama's beauty but she didn't feel too self-conscious because he made it a point to treat her like a sister. She stayed on in their one bedroom apartment and requested Sumi and Hari to get her a job.

Sumi, please try to get me a job as soon as possible. I have been idle for the last three years, and I am going mad. Appa has a lot of financial worries and I must take up a job so that I can support him(Murthy 81).

In a month or so, Hari procured for her a job as an office assistant and for the first time in years, she had a sense of self. She started regaining her confidence too. Although her income was not much, it was enough to get by on. She made it a point to send half her salary to her father, who had suffered enough on her account and was now getting old and frail. He had the responsibility to settle his other two daughters too, which was proving to be an uphill task. Anupama's natural goodness charmed everyone at the office. Anupama's trust started to blossom with financial freedom. She had been friends with a lot of the girls who were working with her. They were from different backgrounds and even different regions of the country, and lived in various parts of Bombay. None ever spoke about her skin patches or her history.

Anupama had also started to recognize her situation, and look beyond it. Now behind her was the worst time of her life. Every day, she and Dolly traveled to and from work together, and over a period of time they became good friends (Murthy 84).

She was good at her work, hardworking, ready to learn and eager to help others. One time she even saved Dolly's life by donating her blood to her when she met with an accident. She stayed with her in the hospital overnight. Things were looking up for Anupama, she had started forming her own relationships of friendship and trust. Sumi and Hari had been good to her. But, as it inevitably happened in Anupama's life, as it does in the life of many single women throughout the country, normalcy was too good to last. Once when she came back from work and Sumithra was still at office, Hari tried to take advantage of her. She was appalled when he said that they could carry out an affair right under Sumithra's nose, without her being any the wiser. Anupama was repulsed. Not only had she been accepted by Sumithra when her own people had abandoned her, she had also considered Hari as a brother and could not understand how he could even think about her like that. She did not feel it fine to burden Sumithra with the knowledge of her husband's evil designs, so she decided to move out of their apartment under the pretence of having used their hospitality and kindness for far too long. She requested Dolly to arrange for an accommodation for her. Dolly offered her a room in the bungalow which had been passed on to her mother from family as an inheritance.

Once there, she could finally lead her life on her own terms. She got wind of a post of a Sanskrit lecturer in a college lying vacant and she happily took that up, as that was a job she loved. Anu was sad for a while after she left her old job and joined the college. She missed her colleagues, but as a lecturer she soon became confident

and selfassured. She had removed her Mangal sutra—it had weighed down on her heavily, in more ways than one.

The Sanskrit classics and enacting them on stage had been her life before marriage. And now she got to teach them to the younger lot and direct the plays. She had started earning well and had been supporting her father too by sending him a steady amount every month.

Plagued by worry for his other daughters and the social plight of Anupama, Shamanna's heart gave away and he passed on. Shamanna had been a good father to her. She had never known her own mother but he had given her the freedom to study at college despite Sabakka's obvious discomfort. The events of Anupama's life put all her relationships under scanner and scrutiny. Shamanna was weak and indecisive, mostly steered by his wife, he couldn't tolerate the social disgrace of abandonment that Anupama was facing. Theirs was not a very sharing relationship.

It had always been more of a bond of duty with her father than passion. She'd send half her salary to her father when she got a job in Bombay. I never felt like returning there. She never shared with him about her difficulties either. Her dad had mixed emotions about her. He was glad Anupama had become economically stable and settled down. But he was an old-fashioned man; and he felt she would return to her husband. He believed that the ultimate sanctuary of a woman should be the house of her in-laws single women in society were not respected. Shamanna was worried about her being gossiped by people, and this would reflect on him. He wrote to her repeatedly to plead with Anand to take her back, and not get upset about him. After the emotional trauma that she had endured, Anupama found such advice distasteful. She nevertheless knew that Shamanna cared for her deeply.

After his death, on a completely fake entreaty by her stepmother, Anupama kept sending the money to her, not because she felt any connection with them but because she felt obligated to care for her father's family. But all her emotional connection with her village and her previous life was lost after that.

This period in her life, when she becomes completely independent and confident, shows the true strength of her character. She is respected by her students and peers. She looks after her family and is close to her friends. All of this, she achieves despite suffering from leukoderma. Nobody, at her office and later at the college, cares about her affliction. She is loved, respected and accepted for the qualities that she possesses. Her leukoderma had spread to her arms and face too but that did not stop her from being who she was.

Dolly gets married and moves to Australia with her husband but her mother and she decide to leave the bungalow with Anupama for as long as she wanted to stay there without rent. Around this time, Anupama is in an accident and fractures and hurts her leg. When she is taken to the hospital, she is unconscious. At the hospital, she is tended to by Dr. Vasant. He finds out that she is a fellow Kannadiga when he and the police constable open her purse to ascertain her identity and he finds a book of Kannada plays in Sanskrit there. He is a voracious reader and lover of arts. He takes to the beautiful Anupama and soon they become friends. Vasant and Satya are room-mates and fellow doctors. While Vasant wants to set up a clinic at his village and help out the poor and needy, Satya is more flamboyant and wants to earn the big bucks by setting up practice in the lucrative part of the town.

Both of these young doctors take an instant liking to Anupama. Vasant and Anupama share a common interest in reading and arts, so they have loads to talk about. Once when Satya falls ill, Anupama cares for him, keeps him at her own house

and cooks for him on Vasant's request. Satya had watched Anupama during his stay there. He always thought of her as a lovely yet unfortunate lady, and had compassion on her. Yet he felt different now. He saw that she was still smiling and willing to help; she wasn't the least concerned about the white patches in her body that spoils her beauty. She is still an enigma for the two friends. What they see is a highly confident, respected, down to earth college lecturer, who is revered and adored by her students, what they want to get at is what made her the woman she was. In a world that wasn't easy on single or abandoned women, her reluctance to conveniently label her relationships also amazes them. Satya, I told you how every person should support another; nothing more and nothing less. I don't like getting trapped in convenience relationships. I don't want to be a 'sister' or 'girlfriend' to anyone. If two men can be friends and two women can be friends, so obviously a man and a woman can only be friends. It was really rare for her. She reveals her life's story to Satya during his stay with her for his recuperation.

Anupama acted in a play called *Mahashweta*, when I was in college. Anand saw me on the stage, and loved me. Despite our status differences we married. I am of a poor family and from the beginning my mother-in-law was indifferent to me. Anand went abroad for further studies a few months after our wedding and I was about to join him when I formed a white patch on my foot. The indifference of my mother-in-law changed to cruelty because she accused me of having suffered this affliction before marriage. She said I had manipulated Anand, tricked him into getting married to me, and threw me outside the building. I wrote my husband a few letters but he never responded. As a heroine he had loved the 'Mahashweta'. But when I formed this white patch in real life, and became a true 'Mahashweta', the White One, he couldn't handle it. He did not consider this 'Mahashweta' acceptable. Much like

you throw away old clothes and buy new ones, he was remarried to by my in-laws. No-one has bothered about me to this day. Their lives are definitely better than mine. You have to thank your stars for only failing in love, not in marriage. Marriage is a lifetime commitment, and I know the pain it causes far too well when someone refuses to respect that commitment.

Anupama was so sure that a logical mind like Anand would understand her predicament and would be her saviour in the face of this adversity which had so unexpectedly sprung up on her. She believed that his training as a doctor will make him stand up to his mother and sister, that he would be able to convince them that leukoderma was not a contagious disease as many believed, that it wasn't genetic and that it could be cured with constant care. But what happened surprised the reader as much as it came as a shock to Anupama. This highly trained doctor turned out to be a shallow human being for whom beauty was just skin deep. He was repulsed by her disease and angered at fate for giving him those cards. He did not even deem it fit to reply to any of Anupama's letters. He was the only one who knew that Anupama did not have this affliction before marriage but he did not come to her rescue and let Radhakka treat her like dirt. He abandoned her when he should have stood by her. It is clear that he was a regular male who was just taken in by the beauty of the face. He had loved her independent spirit only until he could get her to marry him. Deep down he too was a conservative man who did not have the courage or depth to foray beyond the looks of a woman.

Anand had always had a weakness for beauty. It inspired him to always choose the best of everything. The financial status of his family had only served to encourage his predilection. Anand had felt then that he was the luckiest man on earth. Anupama was not just his wife; she was the index of his pride. When Anand had first

found out that she had leukoderma, he was filled with revulsion. In a way, he was far worse than even Radhakka, who at least did not hide behind false liberalism. She was what she was, no pretences. Anand, on the other hand, could have been the anchor that Anupama sought and expected instead he turned out to be a pathetic excuse for a human being who did not possess even a shard of compassion or decency. In his quest for perfection and beauty, he failed to see the gem that Anupama was. He convinced himself that he was doing nothing wrong in abandoning her to her plight. He rationalized his decision of not coming to her rescue, for not honouring his marital vows and for not being the better half that a woman expects.

The letter from Anupama had come a few weeks ago but Anand had not replied. Anand has begun to rationalise. Anupama is the best doctor who treats him. I'm going to wait to see what happens. I can't call avva, and ask her to take Anupama back. She is old-fashioned and she will not change once she makes up her mind. And in a situation like that it is better for Anupama to be with her parents rather than avva. Anupama will certainly conquer all of the obstacles she faces. Didn't she sell a thousand-rupee ticket to an outsider like me? And hasn't she had the courage to stand before thousands of people and create scenes of sorrow, of passion without feeling awkward? It is best if she is dealing with the current situation on her own. After some time I'll write to her, once everybody's calmed down. She'll feel better about that too.

True , Dr. Ananad had not remarried even after the constant pressure that Radhakka maintained on him but he had not even tried to contact Anupama in all the years that had gone by. He had no idea how she was faring or whether she was alive or dead. Two years after coming to India, he came across letters for Girija, his sister, from a boy called Vijay. These letters clearly showed their illicit relationship before Girija's marriage. When he confronted his mother with these facts, he was shocked to

find out that not only did Radhakka known about it all, she and Girija had covered it all up too. He realized that Anupama knew about it too and yet she hadn't spoken or done any ill to either Girija or his family even when she was ill-treated and had reasons to retaliate.

Suddenly, in a different light, Anupama appeared to him. His questions and fears about how he treated her came back. Indeed, Anupama contracted an affliction that affected her beauty from outside, but she was still pure in the heart. This was just because of one white patch that she was shunned and discarded. On the other hand, Girija had a sordid affair in society and at home before her marriage.

After this realization hit home, Anand tried looking for Anupama and her family. He found out that his father had been transferred to another village and when he reached it he found that Shamanna was long dead. He could not find the whereabouts of his wife or daughters. He realized that he had missed his chance of reconciliation with Anupama. He was rich, successful and a name to reckon with in the society, but he was very far away from being a content and happy man. His life could have turned out differently if he had been man enough to support his wife.

But at the end of it all, our Mahashweta chose herself. She chose to be the person she had become. She had once been the moony eyed teen and adult who had believed in love and its power. She believed that love did overcome anything that life might spring up. She had faith in commitment and sacrifice. "Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, am I to him? Just as the creeper depends on a tree, emotionally I depend on him (Murthy 151) I cannot live without him and for his sake; I am ready to renounce everything. Let society say anything it wishes, I do not care. By the end Anupama turns out to be true 'Mahashweta'. She is empowered and believes in herself. She isn't a cynic who would turn away from the concept of love

and sacrifice after what she had to go through in her life. Yet she finds contentment without a male figure in her life. She loves the same plays and stories that she did when she herself starred in them, and yet the import of those classics have changed for her. She has drawn courage from art, literature and books. She recognizes that just because she did not have a fruitful relationship in her marriage, doesn't mean that the concept of marriage is flawed. She is fortunate enough to come across men like Vasant and Satya too, for whom beauty isn't just skin deep.

Chapter 4

Cultural Consciousness

Sudha Murthy's novels capitulate to the reflection of Indian consciousness that presented through legendary episodes, characters, their experiences and the related situations etc as a collection of procedure. Her acquaintance of feminine arena in India and its culture is splendidly dominated in *Mahasweta* facilitating to put across an abnormal standpoint of Indian Diaspora making a frank verbal paintings. The novel furnishes mixed and sundry ideas prevailed in orthodox Indian society and conscientious firmness of a modern Indian female.

Contextualizing Indian consciousness in Sudha Murthy's is a serious and comprehensive attempt to investigate the Indian consciousness constructed in Sudha Murthy's *Mahasweta*. The representation of the predicament and anguish of the women has become a moral responsibility both for writers and readers. This gender centric approach as a mechanism to expose the humiliation of humanity is helpful to expand the frontiers of human thought.

The representation of women in regional writings for the constraint of language fails to draw the attention of a wide community of readers and social thinkers. In the present paper the efforts have been made to construct the voices of females with the canons of socio religious socio economic and socio psychological dimensions of feminine oriented social practices. The comprehensive study of the *Mahasweta* in English will be helpful to explore new dimensions of Indian literature in the post colonial argument.

The novel, is one of the best works by Sudha Murthy which unlocks a chance for an analysis using Indian Consciousness in relation to the feminine issues. The theme of the novel may be too simple. The couple, both educated, is shown from a

different viewpoint allowing the reader to brainstorm as he reads whose thoughts are having no structure. In the novel we find that the opening is all about their physical passion. The writer makes their first encounter pushing to a leap of thoughts. It is no doubt a strange episode between reality and fantasy experienced by the future couple and the reader. While deconstructing her themes, it traces and analyzes the various contradictions which rather demolish the traditional structures instead of holding them together in a single string. But the writer may have made it a spot of breakthrough to the flourishing ideas in reader's mind, some of which may be identified and the rest may be unidentified.

The situations followed also refer to Indian sensibility. Sudha Murthy relates the legendary moment to the present moment in the novel. The depth and the potentiality of the protagonist heightened through the mention to the Indian classics, who with her verve, accumulated through her traditional daily life. It generates a light of the reality that the writer might be communicating as the supremacy of an Indian female. The novel contains the situations of paradox.

In the novel protagonist Anupama is introduced as a brilliant actress and an outstanding student who even has familiarity in Hindustani classical music by Dr. Desai to Dr. Anand. She is well versed in Sanskrit novels written by the grand scholar Bana Bhatta. Those works are translated and dramatized by her. She even takes the front role in the play *Kadambari* because of which Dr. Anand is attracted to her good looks as well as capacity as an artist. Everyone "the entire audience was spellbound." (*Mahasweta* 15) Likes her show extremely and admires her a lot. It is not an overstatement given by Dr. Desai in praise of her talent and that can be comprehended when the affluent bridegroom who happens to see Anupama's play and is interested to wed her.

The superior manner and courage in the character of the protagonist is subsided once she marries to Dr. Anand and she merely lives for the love of her husband without considering anything about her career. The educated girl like Anupama who wants support her father after getting her job and who even actively participates in fundraising programmes to help the poor and needy, merely resigns to a humble daughter-in-law of an affluent family with a domineering mother-in-law and an arrogant sister-in-law with an only intention to impress her in-laws family. In the story of *Mahasweta* the mother-in-law Radhakka is shown as ruthless, authoritative and typical of Indian traditional sensibility. Thus the family which generally provides security and status to a girl after marriage is in very much contrast to the stark and painful misfortunes that Anupama experiences in the novel and that allows Sudha Murty to draw the attention to the suffering of the patient with a cosmetic disease named leukoderma while presenting her as a human being who torments herself to maintain her dignity. Dr. Anand 's reference in the novel is limited to an infatuated young man who marries a poor girl based on her bodily beauty but not the inner character of her.

The boldness of Dr. Anand that he shows to marry a poor girl like Anupama misses in the course of time who even fails to find the whereabouts of her for almost three years immediately after a few month of their marriage. Absence of her husband, the domineering and superstitious mother-in-law and the white patch on her leg on the day of lakshmi puja that cause of "a red-hot piece of coal fell on Anupama's foot severely burning it" (*Mahasweta* 45) that ruin her life after marriage. When she knows that she has an attack of leukoderma, gets panicked and tries to get treatment secretly from a dermatologist, but it results in to a futile effort. Anand's deaf ear to her plight makes her lament endlessly. But Anupama never tries to approach and

question him for his indifference towards her though she feels that marriage is a lifelong commitment.

Anupama realizes that Dr. Anand has a weakness for beauty and out of infatuation only he marries Anupama to exhibit her as the index of pride. Then only she moves to Mumbai and tries to find her own life. Dr.Desai, who is the friend of the protagonist father and a well wisher of Dr.Anand's family is not all shown anywhere in the novel taking any responsibility in rehabilitating their married life, though he is the main character in arranging the marriage.

As doctors by profession Dr.Anand and Dr. Desai may take major role in the life of the protagonist but is undermined in the novel from the very beginning itself. Through their characters Sudha Murthy may give some exposition to the fate and trauma of leukoderma patients at societal level. With the advancement and expansion of science and technology, ethical vigor of human society has not increased. It has indeed decreased. Man has conquered the outer world through study, experiments, job, quality life style but not the inner world. There is lot of variation shown in Anupama's character in *Mahaswetha* that is shown as a typical of all the victims of leukoderma in Karnataka. It exposes many superstitious beliefs of people whose prejudices govern the society even today. But in Mumbai she is again emerges into a different individual who does not consider what people talk about her. The objective of the protagonist in the beginning of the novel to become matured educated individual is thus marred by her need to be accepted by her husband and family undermining the character of Anupama, as a multifaceted character who deteriorates into an individual who suffers psychologically due her physical ailment as the novel progresses.

At macro level there is no mention of any solution suggested to the victims of leukoderma in the society from the writer's point of view though the individual suffering is explored at micro level. The novel has an impact on the readers because the approach of the issues are Indian. We have our past glory, heritage, golden history and cultural achievement which have not been continuing up to contemporary time. That hardly realize our present barrenness. We have not carried forth the tradition to present time. We bask in our past achievements and do nothing. We have become stagnant the contemporary feature of India in each and every field against the backdrop of a large and glorious past. In the opening of the novel, there is an incident experienced by the future couple. The novel sets up as a classic and mythological episode throughout the work and the chief characters – Anupama, Anand - start revolving around it. The episode stresses the need to uphold truthfulness, honesty and faithfulness in their relation. All the claims seem to be fortunate, once the novel is understood from the point of view of the female protagonist who claims to have all the qualities required for any idealistic Indian lady. It seems that in Indian culture the bride has a restricted connotation, symbolizing modesty, subordination and the superiority of in laws is acknowledged communally; Therefore the theme can be stated as the opposition between reality and idealism and dissent of reality. To be precise the text criticizes submission to dishonesty and flattery in opposition to truth and reality.

This dominant ideology can be supported by the evidences which can find when studying the text. On the one hand, she maintains that she is not affected by any kind of feelings and yet remains a prey to the idealistic chains. This shows that she is defending its true and unaffected manifestation against the feminine world that is under the pressure of the masculine world and she is maintaining the male protagonist

of being unkind, dishonest and unfaithful. On the other hand, the novel reveals a woman who is not satisfied with the reality she finds and shows her qualities in comparison to the highness; she is honest and Godly but the woman is affected by the tragedy. Subsequently she reveals the tension existing between truth and dishonesty which is the main theme of the novel as well. However there are also some points that annul the priority of these privileged items of the binary opposites. First of all as mentioned earlier the supremacy of truth vs. dishonesty is acknowledged, however she continuously feels agitated and desperate; Anupama has not the ability to accept the reality as it is, and the revelation of the reality is so tragic to her.

As a result there comes up a doubt about the benefit of reality over dishonesty. It seems that honesty that is considered a virtue is gaining negative dimensions therefore indeterminacy is aroused: it is better to reveal the truth and cause such disastrous effects on an individual or is it better to distort the reality and conceal it or at least reveal it in a milder way. It seems that in case the truth (either lack of beauty or reality) was revealed more mildly rather than faithfully it would have had better ends; maybe the lady would have been able to recover the truth in a gradual process later on, so could have been able to come along with it. Furthermore, because they do not disclose the reality but they rather make it softer and easier to accept; if this reality is truth, they show it in a way that is easier for the woman to accept and if this reality is beauty they help her look more beautiful, and consequently give her a better impression. So it seems the text itself deconstructs the supremacy of truth vs. dishonesty by discovering a new virtue that seems to be prior to the virtue of honesty that is saving an individual from absolute despair by revealing her a calm version of reality. In better words the text deconstructs itself through questioning the validity of moral standards in different contexts.

A novel, *Mahaswetha* shows human being's self exploration comes only after a severe suffering but not as a normal individual. There is a lot experience of emotional trauma on the part of the protagonist to refine as an individual. Ideas in the novel mainly focus issues like love, marriage, divorce, social taboos and inhibitions, indifference towards the victims of disease like leukoderma, problem of rehabilitation after abandoned by the family, extent of growth and recognition as human beings and crisis of conscience and values by the fellow human beings.

Chapter Five

Summation

Chapter one Introduction deals with Indian English literature, which is considered to be a reflection of life. It reflects human nature which helps us to understand people's ideas, feelings, thoughts, religions, and society. The brief explanation of the introduction to Indian English literature and the writers who contributed to it like Khushwant Singh, Arun Joshi, and Anita Desai dominated the 1950s. Sudha Murthy is a prolific fiction writer who is well known for her social activism and contributions to Kannada and English literature. Contemporary writers of Sudha Murthy were also noted along with their notable works. A biography of Sudha Murthy, the Indian author who is also the Founder of the Infosys foundation was the inspiration for women empowerment. Her numerous works are listed in chronological order which plots out its summary to portray the thematic view of Sudha Murthy's works. Most of her themes are based on feminism showcase through her novel characters. She wrote both fictional and non-fictional works.

The notable work *Mahashweta* was written by Sudha Murthy in 2007, It portrays Anupama's character as breaking the stereotype of females. The novel *Mahashweta* is a summarized and thematic study of the novel followed by chapters on Domestic violence, feminism, and cultural consciousness.

The chapter two, Domestic violence deals with the violence faced by the protagonist. Feminist writer Sudha Murthy focus on the difficulties and challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. In the novel, *Mahashweta* author throws light on the marital abuse perpetrated on the Anupama. Instead of trying to escape the domination that has been forced on her by social humiliation and prejudices, she

maintains her honor above keeping her unhappiness together. In the novel, Anupama has struggled the domestic violence from her stepmother, in-laws, and friend's husband. The Stepmother blames whatever bad happens to her own daughter that is only because of Anupama, her husband's daughter. Anupama's in-law Radhakka and Girija was the dominant characters who were so cruel to Anupama as typical mother-in-law in stories. Anupama's sufferings of facing domestic violence and how her resilience from it is explained in an analytical view of the theme of domestic violence.

The chapter three deals with feminism. How feminism manipulates the lower state of women in society and how the women seek way to eradicate the suffering of women. The novel *Mahashweta* deals with the alienation of middle class women and their agonies. The true impact of studies on women will be judged in years to come by the realization they give to women that they don't need to compete with anyone and can simply march alongside men as equal partners, sharing experiences and aspirations.

The protagonist, Anupama emerge as an empowered women by the end of the novel chapters as Sudha Murthy Like her play character Anupama turns out to be the true 'Mahashweta' the character she enacts in the play. She is empowered and believes in herself. She finds contentment without a male figure in her life. She as feminist recognizes that just not depending on male is not fruitful relationship.

The fourth chapter explores the theme of Culture Consciousness in *Mahashweta*. Thematic analysis of the novel highlights the feminism using Indian Consciousness. The representation of women has become the regional writings. This chapter serves as the voices of female issues. Sudha Murthy used Indian Culture as

portraying the culture of Karnataka and its neighbourhood. As per in the Indian culture widow should not do Pujas that shown in Radhakka character.

The fifth chapter summation sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The protagonist in Sudha Murthy's novel patriarchal society, as her female character in other novel. Anupama, the protagonist always depend on her father until her marriage and later she depend on her husband's love when the patriarchal society pulls her down she started to evolve from it and search for self-identity.

The study makes it clear that physical beauty is not essential to be a successful person in the society. The inner beauty of being confident to face life with courage is essential factor. In Sudha Murthy's novel *Mahashweta*, the protagonist Anupama was affected by leukoderma which marginalized her in the family and the society, but her self-confidence made her survive with courage and form a identity for herself.

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A Child of Two Lands In No Violet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

Affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

In partial fulfilment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

JESSY BRIGHTLIN

21SPEN08



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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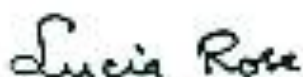
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled is submitted **A Child of Two Lands in No Violent Bulawayo's We Need New Names** 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 and is a work done by Jessy Brightlin. B during the year 2022-2023 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE


SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR
Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, *A Child of Two Land in No Violent Bulawayo's We Need New Names* is submitted to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirement 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.

APRIL, 2023

THOOTHUKUDI


JESSY BRIGHTLIN, B

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PREFACE

This dissertation titled **A Child of Two Lands in No Violet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*** is an unflinching and powerful story of a young girl's journey out of Zimbabwe and to America.

The first introductory chapter deals with the growth and development of African literature and its objectives.

The second chapter entitled as Diasporic Experience, deals with Zimbabwean refugee who leave their country because of poverty and lack of economic instability.

Then the third chapter is entitled as Identity crisis, deals with the relationship between the individual and society.

The fourth chapter, Political Instability deals with the theme of politically corrupted society it historically explains the higher class domination towards the ordinary people

The last chapter Summation is a short report of what is presented in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature is everything that has been written in manifestation of culture. Hence, there are terms such as research literature and the literature of civil rights. In the past, literature has not been captured in written media. In the case of indigenous people, the traditions and culture has been transmitted in terms of stories, myths, rituals and speeches, orally at least by indigenous people. Attempts have come up with a diversity of approaches that one can hardly talk about possible shift out some of the criteria scholars have applied in order to demarcate literary text to non-literary texts.

Literature is one among the fine arts, like music, dance, painting, and sculpture as it is mean to give aesthetic pleasure other than any utilitarian purpose. Literature communicates experiences, in other words, the experience which lived in the author's mind must again live in the reader's mind. Literature consists of written products, often restricted to those deemed to have artistic or international value. Literature is a term which has variably included in all written work. Etymologically is the term derives from the Latin, *litterate* term which means writing formed with letters, but interwind with the roam concept of culture: learning or cultivation. Literature can be classified as fiction or non-fiction and poetry or prose; it can be further distinguished according to major form such as the novel, short story or drama; and work are often categorised according to historical periods, or according to adherence to certain aesthetic feature or expectations.

Literature can imply an artistic use of words for the sake of art alone traditionally, Africans do not radically separate art from teaching. Rather than write or sing for beauty in itself, African writers, taking their cue from oral literature, use beauty to help communicate

important truths and information to society. Indeed, an Object is considered beautiful because of the truths it reveals and the communities it help to build.

Definition of the word literature tends to be a circular. As an art, literature might be describe as the organisation of words to give pleasure. Many stories and poems dealt with war, truth psychology and human emotion, but literary text make us feel like we see something about these things that we didn't see as clearly or didn't feel as intensely. According to Cannolly, literature is an art of writing something that will read twice. Sandner reveals that, literature is a kind of murderous weapon by which language commits suicide.

Poetry emphasizes the aesthetic and rhythematic qualities of language such as sound and symbolism. In prose applies ordinary grammatical structure and the natural flow of speech. Literature can also be classified according to historical periods, genres and the political influences. Drama in literature indeed for performance. The history of literature follows closely to the development of civilization. The primary genre of literature was of ancient Egypt, which reflects their hymns and players. Different historical periods are reflected in literature.

African literature is the body of literary work produced in different languages in African continent. African literature consists of body of work in different languages and it is written by African about African using common African settings and themes that are conveyed through the common African vehicle of proverbs. The literature of African languages have received little scholarly attention, because of western bias in favour of literature in European language. The best known literature in African language include are Yoruba and Hausa in West Africa, Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu in southern Africa, Somali and Swahili in east Africa.

African women although receiving less notice from scholars and historians, have been producing literature alongside African men. Women oral artists and performers continue to create oral literatures. In the early twentieth century, African woman such as Lillith Kakaza and Victoria Swaartboo, who were wrote in Xhosa, and Violet Dube working in zulu produced works of in African language. Since the early nineteenth century West Africa used Newspapers that served as vehicles for expressing nascent nationalist feelings. This literary endeavour in Africa is the result of the agony and crisis in the soul of the African to become a scapegoat in the hands of colonials.

After the World War II, more African writing were published by west African writers such as Wole Soyinka, Acooner, Camera Late, Mongo Beti, Ben Okri and Ferdinand Oyonto. From East Africa, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Okot and p'Betek contributed. From East Africa, such as, Nandine Gordimer, Dennis Brutus and others wrote about the horrendous rule and enslavement of their race by Europeans and other continent. Woman literary work in Zimbabwe has also been encouraged on by Tsitsi Dangarebga her novel generation writer is distinguished as local based and writing in diaspora, which is growing and exploring new writing style using English language.

Theme in the literary traditions of contemporary Africa are worked out regularly with in the structures laid down by the imported religious Christianity and Islam and within the struggles between traditional and modern, between rural and newly urban, between genders and generations. The oral traditions is clearly evident in the popular literature created by literary storytellers who are manipulating the original materials as oral story tellers do, and at the same time remaining faithful to the tradition. Some of the early writers sharpened their writing abilities by translating works into African languages, other collected oral tradition; most experienced their apprenticeships in one way or another within the contexts of living oral traditions. Africa boasts the rich historical states of many prominent kingdoms and

empires. Over the years, the country have gained self-government and improved in literature. It has produced influential and notable writers. Chief among them is Nadine Gordimer, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Charles Mungashi, Yvonne Vera, Masimba Musoda, Chenjera Hova, Chimmer Chinodya and No Violet Bulawayo.

Nandine Gordimer (1923-2014) was a South African writer, political activist and receiver of the 1991 Nobel Prize in literature. *Burger's daughter* (1979) is the story of a woman analysing her relationship with her father, who is a victim to the antiapartheid movement, which is a system which segregates people on the basis of ethnicity, racism and caste. In *July people* (1981) Gordimer images the bloody South African revolution, in which white people are murdered after black people begins a revolution against the apartheid government.

Tsitsi Dangaarembga (1956) is a Zimbabwean author and Filmmaker. She spent a part of her childhood in England. She is the first black woman to win the German peace prize. She won her first taste of success with her novel, *Nervous Condition* (1988). *The Book Of Not* (2006), which won the African section of the Commonwealth writer's prize in 1989 and is considered one of the twelve best African novels ever written.

Chenjerai Hove (1956-2015) was a Zimbabwean poet, novelist and essayist who wrote both in English and Shona. His novels offer an intense examination of the psychic and social costs to the rural population, especially of the war liberation in Zimbabwe. He had received several awards, some of them are: NOMA award for publishing in Africa in 1983 for his poetry *Up in Arms* (1982). Then he won Zimbabwean Literary Award in 1988 and second NOMA award in 1989 for her novel *Bones*.

Yvonne Vera is Zimbabwean novelist, short story writer, art and administrator. She is also an award winning author from Zimbabwe. She took theme such as rape, incest and infanticide and gender inequality in Zimbabwean before and after country's war of

independence with sensitivity and courage. Her first published book was a collection of short stories, “why Don’t You Cssrve Other Animals”, which was followed by five novels: *Nehanda*, *Without A Name*, *Under the Tongue*, *Butterfly*, and *the Stone Virgins*.

Shimmer Chinodya (1957) is a Zimbabwean novelist, who also won common wealth writers prizes of African region in 1990 for her novel *Harvest of Thorns* (1989). 2007 National Art Merit Awards out Standing Fiction Book for *Strife* (2006). Critics consider his internationally acclaimed novel as ‘*Comingofage*’ story and other emphasize it as a political novel about a tale of Zimbabwe fight for independence.

No Violet Bulawayo is Zimbabwean author and aspiring filmmaker is one of the world’s most prominent people. She is helping narrative history with one of the earliest forms of storytelling. She was born and raised in Zimbabwe a year after independence from British colonial rule and now lives in the United States. She was originally named by her parents as Elizabeth Zandile Tshele but she pen named her as No Violet Mhka Bulawayo. The reason for her naming is at the age of eighteen months she lost her mother. As a consequence, she grew up with the sense of missing her and to overcome this. In College, the writer decided to adopt the pen name, No violet Bulawayo as a way of honouring her and identifying with her. Her mother’s name was violet. ‘No’ means ‘with’ in the South African language, Ndebele. Bulawayo is the city of her people and where she grows up. During her immigrants life in America she misses her homeland so she add the name of her place in her name, to satisfy the separation.

She was born on 12 October 1981, in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe and now attended Njube High and Mzilikazhi High School. Then she moved to the United States for higher education when she was eighteen. She began her college education in the United States: Studying at Kalamazoo valley Community College. She earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in English from Texas A and M University- Commerce and southern

Methodish University respectively. In 2010, she completed a Master of fine Arts in Creating Writing at Cornell University, where her work was recognised with a Truman Capote Fellowship. She was a living author.

No Violet Bulawayo was shortlisted for the 2009, J.M. Coetzee judged studzinski award for her short story, “snapshots”. Her first published story, *The Watcher*, was published in Munyori literary Journal in 2009. She later won the 2011 Caine Prize for African writing for her short story, *Hitting Budapest*. No violet Bulawayo short story *Hitting Budapest* which serves as the opening chapter for the shortlisted novel and it was slightly reworked as *We Need New Names*, won on July 11, 2011 Caine Prize, which is known as African Booker, the Caine prize is awarded annually for a short story in English by an African Witter. TSchool he winner receives ten thousand dollar and a residency at Georgetown University. “Hitting Budapest” is the story about group of children who starved of hunger in shanty paradise. The starvation and empty stomachs makes them to steal guavas from the neighbouring place Budapest. In it Bulawayo illustrates the cruelty of poverty and the difference between the rich and poor people. It makes the children to admire of Budapest and desires to live here and make them to hate of their native place paradise and decided to leave the place.

No Violet Bulawayo is the first black African female and first Zimbabwean to be on the Man Booker Prize, a literary prize awarded for each year for the best original novel, written in English language and published in the United Kingdom, shortlisted for her novel *We Need New Names* which was released in 2013. It gets immediate acclaim from the critics and won many awards, such as Estalat Prize for Literature and Hemingway foundation PEN Award, the National Book Award’s 5 under 35, the Guardian First Book Award and the Barnes and the Nobel Discover Awards. The book is an up close and personal view of the costs president Robert Muagbe’s thirty three years power had on the

country, told through the eyes of the country. The book takes place during Zimbabwe's political clampdown in the early 2000s. Critics suggest that the title of the novel is taken from the debate of the Mugabe long life performance as a Prime Minister, issue even though the debate is entitled as *We Need New Names*.

The Zimbabwean novel, particularly to the extent that the selected texts are concerned, is to accept that the reader will be confronted with narratives that seek to expose the suffocation and untenable existential conditions suffered by the people of Zimbabwe. Often, these novels appeal to the consciousness of the reader while at the same time offering a resistance to the status quo. In these novels, subjects find themselves suffering losses of place and all the security that comes with it. They engage in mobility to other places in order to become what they cannot be at home, that is to taste freedom, to participate meaningfully in the economy, to be free of political persecution, and to have a fair chance at realising their dreams. They engage in mobility because nothing is clearer to them than the hope that things are better elsewhere. But even in the elsewhere, some of the subjects find that particularities that caused them to flee their places of origin still persist. They realise that it is not automatic that they will "belong". Although vastly different, they soon come to realise that the new spatial setting, just like the place of origin, is fraught with challenging particularities. The novels selected for this study present intranational and transnational migrations. There are other Zimbabwean novels that could have been considered, but to include them would result in a potential duplication of ideas, making the thesis unwieldy.

At the age of 18, she left her native country and went to Kalamazoo, Michigan, to live with her aunt and attend college. Moving to the US, she was supposed to follow what the generation of her parents considered a meaningful career and become a lawyer, but there she took her first creative art class at 18, giving voice to her the passion for

storytelling, which she inherited from her dad and from her whole cultural background. She completed a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Cornell University where she received the Truman Capote Fellowship. She was also a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, where she now teaches.

Despite what one might think, *We Need New Names* did not come out of an autobiographical inspiration: Bulawayo was born and lived in a much more liveable Zimbabwe than the one Darling and her friends experience and her position as a migrant “wasn’t as dramatic as Darling’s”(6). What actually pushed her into writing her novel, was the need to connect to her homeland in a moment in which she could only witness from the outside, through phone calls, blog, and social media, what was happening in her country, so that telling the story of Darling was “a kind of catharsis”(7) and a way of coping with frustration and pain.

Although Bulawayo never specifies the time and place in which her novel is set, the reader is able to recognize in the episodes told by the young narrator some historical events taking place in Zimbabwe during the first decade of 2000. Not giving a name to the country where Darling lives, is not meant to indicate the irrelevance of the latter, but rather it is conceived as a strategy aimed at universalising Darling’s experience. Her story is far from being disengaged from the country she inhabits and at the same time, it is like that of many other little girls who are children of failed states. Due to the impact that the political vicissitudes have in the protagonist’s life, it is useful to briefly recollect the main historical events to which the author refers in *We Need New Names*, in order to thoroughly understand the implications they have. Zimbabwe was one of the last colonies of the British empire to gain independence, which came in 1980 and Darling and her friends belong to the second generation of the so-called born-frees. At the election held in the same year, the ZANU party led by Robert Mugabe came out victorious.

In 1987 Mugabe erased the office of Prime Minister and turned Zimbabwe into a presidential republic; from that moment, he dominated the political scene until the coup of 2017, revealing more and more his authoritarian tendencies. During the 1990s poverty increased, health conditions deteriorated leading to a massive spread of HIV and the discontent for Mugabe's government grew, triggering repressive reactions against demonstrations of disapproval. In 2000, a referendum aimed at empowering the president's position failed, and meanwhile, the oppositional movements grew stronger, organising themselves into one party, the MDC, Movement for Democratic Change. The success of the opposition in the constitutional referendum gave Mugabe the opportunity to accuse them of being supported by Britain and to deploy the anti-colonial rhetoric in order to reclaim the lands stolen by the colonial dispossession. This operation went on in the following years, under the excuse of land redistribution, using white farmers and black farm workers as the scapegoat to blame for the drastic downward of the economy, avoiding the government to assume any responsibility for their own failures. Between the 1990s and 2000s, the increase of poverty went along with the spreading of informal economy and illegal housing in urban areas, which the government decided to erase with a massive campaign of urban cleansing.

Political corruption, hyperinflation, crumbling public services are the main features of a highly militarized and authoritarian post-independence regime, in which human rights are dreadfully ignored. The situation of many Zimbabwean citizens is thus tremendously precarious, characterized by unstable and insufficient livelihood, galloping spread of AIDS, lack of food, education and job perspective, which forced people to migrate either in neighbouring countries, such as South Africa, or even overseas towards the USA, where they have to constantly negotiate their own identity with the condition of illegal foreigners. This is the image that Bulawayo tries to portray through the experience and voice of a 10-

year-old girl, the most innocent victim of a state which failed in providing proper life, worthy future and, we could add, dignity for its citizens.

The novel *We Need New Names* is narrated by Darling, a young girl in a shanty town in Zimbabwe, who watched her community was bulldozed, the men were leaving for better jobs and lives in south Africa, the women staying at home under tin plated roofs to scrape for food and watch the children and all things are happening in the name of revolution. Darling and her friends, Bastard, Godknows, sbho and eleven years old Chipso who has been pregnant by her grandfather, live in an overcrowded shack place called paradise. Schools have been shut and many teachers have left the country. To pass the time and of poverty Darling and her friends hunt for guavas in wealthy suburbs and play game called fine Bin Laden, while they dream of leaving the country. They witness friends beaten to death for fighting against Robert Mugabe's party. And they witness journalists come to film the funerals.

Darling is a young girl living in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s. After her family's home was bulldozed in the midst of political disturbance, she with her family members and many more are forced to set up a village called Paradise. Darling spends her days with her friends, playing games and going into Budapest to steal guavas. Sometimes an NGO comes to drop off clothing, toys and food. On Sunday's Mother Of Bones, the women who takes care of Darling while her father works in south Africa and her mother sells goods and takes Darling to a church congregation that meets on top of mountain called Fambeki, led to prophet Revelations Bitchington Mbororo. Darling and her friend process the harsh realities of society around them through their games and conversations, such as wondering about the gender of their friend Chipso's baby, making up to be who killed a young man named Bornfree for his political involvements and arguing over which world powers they get to

be when playing county games. Darling's father returns, sick with AIDS, and she must care for him for a time, which she hates because it takes her away from her friends.

Then, quite suddenly in the winter of 2008, Darling moves to America to live with her Aunt Fostaline and her family in Michigan, as she told her friends she would someday have to do throughout the first half of the book. Darling adopts American culture quickly but misses her homes and friends. She sometimes behaves inappropriately, such as disciplining and hitting someone else's child while at the wedding. Darling lives a normal high school student's life: dabbling in porn, going for joy rides with her friends and taking on two part time jobs to save money for community college. However, her connection to Zimbabwe always nags at her as she grows further apart from her friends and family; worsen by her inability to return for a visit because she has already overstayed her visa. In a climatic movement, chipo accuses her a abandoning her country and tell her she can't call Zimbabwe her country any more. The novel ends with her uncle telling that they have found Bin Laden, which cause Darling to remember a game she and her friends used to play.

The choice of child-narrator is also a narrative device through which we can analyse more than one formal and stylistic element of the novel. First of all, the characteristic underlying the whole book is an episodic plot structure, for which each chapter could somehow stand on its own since the told episode concludes and resolves itself within the chapter and it is unlikely referred to in the following ones. We can argue that this is exactly the way in which children experience the events of their life, conceiving each moment as delimited and defined on its own. This doesn't mean that memory plays no role in the unfolding of the story; on the contrary, in more than one occasion, the linearity of the narration is suspended by the remembrance of a past event.

In *We Need New Names*, the deployment of a child-narrator and point of view emphasizes the different attitudes with which adults and children navigate the moment of

crisis they are living, giving prominence to the children's resilience and strength. But through the almost lyrical voice of the omniscient narrator, Bulawayo explains how adult men and women as well react differently to their common predicament. Men in the novel have been "disempowered" as they are no longer capable of providing a livelihood for their families. Even in a patriarchal society, masculinity is undermined by the failure of the state that confined them to a shanty town, where they have no other occupation but playing draughts, living an idle life.

Memories are often recalled by simple material objects, such as a picture or even a piece of furniture, which trigger an emotional association and enable Darling to tell us a significant moments of her past – including historically significant events, that the readers have to identify by himself, as they are not presented as such and openly named. The narrator also informs us about the past by means of the dream that the reader is actually supposed to interpret as the surfacing of painful memories, too painful and traumatizing to be told while awake. While Darling is growing up, memories come to her mind with higher frequency and even the smallest element of her everyday life can be charged with emotional power. This is surely telling of Darling's interior conflict and emotional split, due to her living in between her past and her present, her homeland and her adoptive country. In the second section, the child becomes an adolescent and the narrative itself is affected by the growth of the protagonist/narrator, with the emerging of a slightly more tangled storyline. As well as on the broader structure and plot of the novel, the voice of the child narrator has a considerable impact on the narrative style and the language. Regarding language, it is employed as a very powerful tool of self-definition and self-making, so much so that, in this chapter I will only analyse some stylistic features of the narration, not yet going into the broader issue of vernacular and naming practices.

Bulawayo is part of the country's born free generation which gain a promise of a golden future after a fall of white rule. But she depicts that it is the fake promise and reveals it through the suffering faced by her novel's character which is born after Independence and shows the effect of failure in post-colonised country. Her works had been numerous anthologies, Boston Review, Callaloo and Newsweek. She has been work on a memoir project. She was a stanger fellow at Stranford University from 2012 to 2014 and a Hodder fellow at Princeton from 2016 to 2017. She also teaches at Stranford University as the Jones Lecture in Fiction.

There are countless themes in this novel such as poverty, stealing, kids play, religion, false prophecy, political, AIDS, destruction, death, emigration, cultural dislocation, conflict longing, mental dysfunction, illegality and alcohol addiction. The novel is episodic plotted one with each of the eighteen named chapters discharging from pages to pages of something unpredictable. Each successive chapter presented a new story that simultaneously arise curiosity. No Violet's use of English Language is simple yet very admirable. There are also no inverted commas concealing dialogue, so it is difficult to understand for the people who are not aware of the background of the story. There are few Non-English words in the novel too, generally stemming from the Ndebele language and the novel has Ndebele sensibility to it.

The writing is more engage in the Zimbabwe setting where the protagonist Darling is extroverted in the beginning but everything is changed when she leave for United States which is a new environment, where she become introverted and quite. No Violet's writing has certain characteristic that delivers a great effect on the readers mind; she used repetition of words which gives extra emphasis to the meaning of the word. It was called by Nkiacha as witty word repetition. She also used French language. Her humour sense is very well

delivered through the novel and makes the sack in the novel is filled with humour and she is very creative in her writing.

The book also contains the most skilful prose poetry and it entertain the reader and makes them to admire her writing. Bulawayo's use of texting, Skype Conversation and Facebook in the novel contributes it as a contemporary novel, and it was very impressive because it is the first African novel spoke about these thing.

CHAPTER TWO

DIASPORIC EXPERIENCE

The international movement of people into a destination nation where they are not citizens or natives is known as a diaspora. The term "migrant" or "immigrant" refers to those who cross national borders while migrating. Because of its extreme poverty, bloody conflicts, and environmental stress, many people have fled and relocated to Africa. The history of African immigration is distinct from that of other immigrant groups, just as African life in America has played a distinctive role in the development of American culture. Beginning in the latter half of the 20th century, African immigrants began to arrive; this migration is frequently referred to in history as the fourth generation migration. This trend started following Africa's decolonization, or the end of colonial rule there. Originally these immigrants come with sole purpose of advancing themselves before returning to the respective countries. But majority of the immigrants never return.

We Need New Names portrays the entry of new immigrants into the United States and the experience of diasporic individuals. She imagines their journey to America, their effort to adapt to the local way of life, and the terrible conditions that illegal immigrants face. She discusses home going syndrome, roots, alienation, and cultural identity through immigrants, themes that are common in immigrant fiction. The novel's lead character is Darling. She embarks on a journey to the US in order to live with her aunt on the traveller's passport and continues to live there illegally after the visa's expiration date. Immigration to this idealised nation has a long history, beginning in 1680 when the colonial immigrants started to migrate to the United States at first. Bulawayo's novel portrays the immigrants around the 1960s and till to the present. Many immigrants imagined a lot about America before they enter there and their American dream is described through Darling's word;

Who doesn't know that the U.S.A. is the big baboon of the of the world? I feel like it's my country now because my aunt Rosaline lives there, in Destroyedmichygen. Once her things are in order she'll come and get me and I will go and live there also. (49)

Darling, the main character, fits the definition of new immigrants at the start of the twenty-first century. This book explores whether the novel's immigrants are able to assimilate and are going through rites of passage, to use a phrase coined by ethnographer Amold Van Gennep. The term has now been thoroughly incorporated into anthropology, literature, and popular cultures of many modern languages. When a person quits one group and joins another, it is referred to as a "rite of passage" in English translation.

The story centres on the life of a young girl named Darling who lived in a shanty town called paradise is a fictionalised description of Zimbabwe. Moving from the home makes Darling, Chipi, Bastard, Godknows and other friends find ways to enjoy themselves by making games and routing towards the Budapest, the neighbourhood town to steal guavas where it occur plenty. In their games, we can found the children's dream of leaving their shanty town Paradise for prosperity and for big cars and of fancy houses, but it's largely seen as a game. Then in a sudden shift, Darling is moved away to America by her Aunt Fostaline and the second half of the book follows her life there as she fights with an American where she faces complexity of life and it is less attracting than she had imagine. She was affected by Paradise's archaic society, which had nothing in the way of technical advancement. As she transfers to Michigan, she comes into direct contact with digital technology and succeeds there. Since her aunt and uncle, who are immigrants themselves, are unable to provide directions, television and the internet become her main sources of knowledge, assisting her in fitting in. Despite her lack of overt belief in the superiority of

that culture, she notices American society quickly and throws open her arms to embrace the unfamiliar and study it. Early in her move, she says that she has;

Decided the best way to deal with it all is to sound American, and the TV has taught me just how to do it. It's pretty easy; all you have to do is watch Dora the Explorer, The Simpsons, SpongeBob, Scooby Doo. I also have my list of American words that I keep under my tongue like talismans, ready to use: pretty good, pain in the ass, for real, awesome, totally. Skinny, dude. The TV has also taught me that if I'm talking to someone, I have to look him in the eye, even if it is an adult, even if it's rude. (193)

Though Darling accepts this form of popular culture, she does it outwardly. She uses these Americanisms to protect her from the unfamiliar world, but still American culture remains as a thing, which does not understand to her. She confused about her challenges in American society, constantly seeing herself as outside it trying to fit in. She fails, because her aim for America is not what she faces here, rather than create an identity for herself. Her only relationship with digital technology is informative and helpful to her in new land. In Darling's case the presence of digital technology does not help her to become an American. However, her culture and herself dominates her, and she is affected by her home going syndrome and fully filled with nostalgic feeling; these things act as a barrier to her, to become an American. In these situations the internet becomes absorbing enough to remove the need for actual communication or parenting. While aiding them with information necessary to flourish in the new country, increased access and connectivity do not provide the migrants a way to stay truly connected to their homeland. Rather it separates them distantly and makes them opposite to their culture.

When our children were old enough and we told about them about our country, they did not beg us for stories of the land we left behind. They went

to their computers and Googled and Googled. When they got off. they looked at us with something pitty and horror and said. Jeez, you really come from there? (249)

The examples above demonstrate how second generation immigrants are doing and how first generation immigrants are doing the worst. The second generation of migrant children, who have naturally assimilated American culture, seem to have been completely engrossed in social media and the internet, making it difficult or impossible for them to maintain relationships with their parents or their past. And just as Aunt Fostaline and Uncle Kojo both found comfort and happiness in reconnecting with friends from their own countries, the first generation of immigrants who are not served by the internet differs from this second generation of immigrants. Yet, this meeting is not ongoing and limitless and does not extend to the internet environment.

Their travels around America, they receive calls from family members who offer guidance and make requests. Darling also receives calls of similar nature from her homeland, which causes her to reflect on her own home. It demonstrates how tragically full of longing and unrealized hopes her experience of immigrant life was. This chapter focuses on Darling's traumatic immigration experience and how it affects her life and causes her to fight with her identities while trying to figure out who she is in the United States. During her phase of sense of belonging, socialisation, and assimilation, the immigrant Darling has difficulties similar to those experienced by other immigrants around the world.

Also, the protagonist is harmed by her conflicting heritage and culture. Through the locations she moves to, the change in her life is discussed. Darling joyfully departs from Paradise, her native country, in order to live a happy life in America. Her one and only goal is to leave this shanty town Paradise, which is rife with hardships and destitution. Even though she had fun and plays there all day, the hard reality of an empty stomach, a broken

family, and social disintegration force her to leave. He initially perceives everything in America as being unfamiliar to her and completely different from her Paradise. The surroundings at her new home are unfamiliar to her. She first confronts a significant hurdle due to the climate. She becomes aware of the beauty of the hot weather in Paradise as a result of the chilly weather in America. She begins to contrast her new environment with her previous one, and she keeps doing so throughout her time in America.

She searches for her native country in America but finds that it is not like her homeland or her people. The new America doesn't do anything new for her. It demonstrates that her desire of moving to America has failed because the local weather forces her to spend the entire day indoors. In Detroit, where she is surrounded by an unfamiliar environment, she initially expects and things everything will turn good as she desires and continues her life. It is winter when Darling arrives to Detroiters and she was unaccustomed to snow, she hopes to see a known and familiar landscape when it melts,

Once the snow is gone it will be possible to go outside and see what this Detroit is all about. Maybe I will finally see things that I know, and maybe this place will look like ordinary at last. I will go out there and smell the air, maybe catch some grasshoppers and find out what kind of strange fruits grow on all these big trees. (159)

Her relocation to the United States physically cut her off from her familiar home, Paradise, but her memories of the past have never left her. She continues to think about her former Paradise. She is unfamiliar with the weather in America because she has no prior experience with the weather in her new environment. On their route to the wedding, Darling explores other sites as well, and is astounded by the contrast between the roads in Zimbabwe and America as she is by the absence of ordinariness in the countryside;

We are just driving stretches and stretches of maize fields, which make me keep expecting to see horse bent double, voices of women urging with one another with song. There are always moments like this, where it almost looks like the familiar things from back home will just come out of nowhere, like ghosts. (163)

It shows how the new place is alien to her and makes her to think the new atmosphere as a ghost like place. She always expects to see physical materialisations of memories she has get from her beloved Paradise appearance. Through the immigrants life in this novel we learn about illegal immigrants and their suffering. The sufferings in their Homeland make them to flee to other land in this novel we come across many illegal immigrants, such as Darling, Aunt Fostaline, Uncle Kojo and Tshaka. Their only aim is to come out of the nostalgic suffering about their homeland and helps their relatives who are in their home town by earning here. They come to the new place, America like new born children and the new place satisfies their hungry and provides variety of food. Indeed they struggle with the weather, language and the strangers and spend their days in silent. Because it shows America is not their country and they can't able to use their own language and they speak rarely and speak to themselves or with their communicants. English remains an inadequate outlet to them, talking in English with true expression is not possible to them. In one of the chapter, *How They Left Bulawayo*, depicts that,

Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambition are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain crossing borders. Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing to all over, to countries near and far, to countries

unheard of, to countries whose name they cannot pronounce. They are leaving in droves. (145)

It displays the worst aspects of Zimbabweans' historical past. In this instance, they are leaving Zimbabwe, an African country that has suffered horribly from more than thirty years of maltreatment and neglect under the rule of Robert Mugabe's authoritarian regime. The place many of them are hoping to flee is the United States. This novel simply tells the story of the protagonist, Darling, who has a desire of starting a new life with her Aunt Fostaline, as told by the young narrator, Bulawayo. Darling becomes estranged from her friend and family as a result of her new life in America. As a result of American life having betrayed her goal and preventing her from speaking about "My America," she has cut off all communication with them. To prevent her wistful thoughts, she stops writing whenever she talks to them about America and begins to tell them lies about it.

With time I stopped writing altogether. I just started putting it off, telling myself I'd write tomorrow, next week, in a couple of weeks, I'd write in a month, I'd write soon, and that was it, before I knew it I'd lost touch. But it didn't mean I would forgotten about them, I missed them, missed them very much. (188)

Even though she is in America, she cannot stop thinking about and searching for her birthplace, therefore she now quits communicating with them in an effort to alleviate her anguish from nostalgia. The guava fruit that Darling brought from home makes her feel cherished, and a dualistic mind-set develops in her thoughts. On the one hand, it symbolises starvation and conjures up the disgusting picture of Budapest youngsters grabbing guavas, but on the other, the very smell of the fruit conjures up homesickness. She is proud of herself and her relationships with them, but she does not express any desire to go back to Paradise and reunite with everyone.

Darling stays there illegally against American policy with a visitor's visa that will expire in a few months because she is an illegal immigrant, giving her an indefinite existence within the culture. She expresses to Aunt Fostaline her desire to see her family and friends in her native country. She rejects and says, if she leave she will not able to return to the United States. The status of immigrants worldwide is reflected in Darling by Bulawayo. They were residents of a land in the middle of nowhere, the inhabitants of nowhere. As a result, just like Darling, all immigrants in the United States are experiencing a liminal period in which they reflect on their problems from the past and present.

In *We Need New Names*, Darling reflects on her life in the chapters that are set in the United States. She occasionally considers and criticises her life in the United States, and she occasionally thinks back on her former life in Paradise. Darling's emotional observations are reflected in the associations between the names of the locales. She imagines what life might be like in the United States while struggling in Paradise, but her imagined "My America" does not feel like my America (150). This demonstrates the stark contrast between the life she leads in Kalamazoo and Detroit and what is expected of her. Darling is broken and ruined in Detroit before moving on to Kalamazoo, which is known for its illusions that appear real but are not. In reality, she discovers that the United States is a mirage since nothing goes as planned. Too many immigrants who leave their country of origin experience this kind of circumstance.

Later on in the book, Darling becomes an adult and starts working to save money for Community college. Even after a few years have gone, she continues to express her dissatisfaction with the life she leads in the United States. "when I'm not working at the store, I have to come here, even though I don't like the idea of cleaning somebody's house, of picking up after someone else, because in my head this is not what I came to America" (263). She believes that America is still with her, therefore she struggles to accept how

different her life has become. Her dream for America is not as suffering in paradise her dream is a happy life that is the thing she not get from Paradise, but now she remains as same as in Paradise.

Despite the fact that she works in a menial position here, she is intelligent and an excellent learner. The situation of African Americans in America is reflected in Bulawayo through the character Darling. They can only obtain school visas in America, and due to the regulations, they are not permitted to open any businesses. As a result, their only option for surviving in the country is to work in menial jobs. "We had wanted to be: doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers. No school for us, even though our visas were school visas. We know we didn't have money for school to begin with, but he had applied for school visas because that is the only way out" (107). This shows the condition of lower class people who were not able to attain their dream in the authority society which only favours higher class people.

After visiting America Darling misses everything in America, even though she got plenty of food and home for shelter with all comfort. She feels hungry by losing her friends, although she felt hunger in Paradise her friendship with her friends doesn't makes her to feel worst like this because they were together and she is at home and everything is sweeter than desert. It reflects that she is alienated in the new world. Although her past life is filled with poverty and hardships, she only reflects positivity on her life. Darling is constantly betwixt and between Turner two different cultures and lives liminal and temporally trapped in between the idealised past in Paradise and the future oriented my America.

With regards to a sense of home in Darling's mind she has only two, she says. "There are two homes inside my head: home before Paradise, and home in Paradise; home one and home two" (191). Each time period in Zimbabwe's history that is referred to as "home" is distinct from the others. What is notable that United States is not mentioned at

all and this add to the sense that the United States as non-place. In fact Darling never accepts there as home: “In America, roads are like devil's hands, like God's love, reaching all over, just as the sad thing is, they won't really take me home” (191). Even though she has lived there for a while, she never recognises it as her home and it continues to appear to her as a non-place. It demonstrates that there is a place that she displays, but symbolically none live there since she is liminal because she is not present in her current life due to her constant reflection of the past. In this book, the terms "home" and "home-country" are used interchangeably. Despite the fact that she speaks English fluently enough to interact with people regardless of their native accent and colour, Darling feels foreign in America. Bulawayo itself experiences this kind of conflict, which she describes in an interview as,

It shouldn't be challenging, especially I speak English everyday but for the reason it is. May be it is because I trained myself to arrive at English through my language always, through some interior translation. I think obsessively about every word, every sentence, I can't just drop it on the page, but the reward is that I end up with a language that tries to be textured. I must also always say that as roundabout... the final product is a language that is my own allow me to say what I mean. (90)

Throughout her time in the United States, Darling has had existential communist moments and has felt a kinship to other Zimbabwean immigrants. Even though none of these three characters are related to Darling, they are given the familial names Uncle kojo, Aunt Welcome, and Aunt Fostaline. When Aunt Fostaline invites them and others over, they make Zimbabwean food and sing and dance to music from their homeland. During one of the occasions Darling thinks that, “The reason they are my relatives now is they are from my country to it's like the country has become a real family since we are in America, which is not our country” (161). Because they may relate to one another in communal

culture independent of the framework of their new country and shared mutual culture with other Zimbabweans. Darling experiences communities with the Zimbabweans she considers to be her actual family.

At the end of the novel Darling is still a teenager, but it does not matter what age she is as she goes through her own remembrance of her Paradise. She fantasizes nostalgically about her homeland, and this is something which continues up until the very end of the novel. She has a melancholic and nostalgic attachment to her past life, she continually thinks fondly back to her past in Zimbabwe. But the question is then is it possible for Darling to reincorporate into American society? The reality is that she is still in Kalamazoo, America so the ending of the novel is interesting it does not conclude with the present but rather the past, consequently has neither conclusion nor resolution. It suggests that it is impossible for her to incorporate into American society as she is psychologically and melancholically attached to the traces of her past. Rather to cooperate into society she remains silent as an outsider.

Through Darling, Bulawayo shows many of the immigrants in the world remain as existential outsider experiences as homelessness and a sense of not belonging. Darling is homeless in that she does not feel at home in the United States and her Paradise is just a memory. What is more, she does not feel like she belongs in her own present and rather reminisces about her past. By reminiscing about a traumatic memory from and of the past, she is in fact temporally out of the time because although the memory pertains to the past and not to the present it transcends chronology, as it is a troublesome break from time and thereby has no time. It is rather a frozen moment outside of time. She is therefore existential outsider in that she does not belong to anywhere and also lives through the imagined traces of her past memories. Thus United States continued to be a non place for the illegal immigrant Darling and she continues to stay in liminal phase, as an existential outsider.

All of *We Need New Names* might be interpreted as a fictionalised representation of what the immigration experience is like for many people now around the world. It's possible that their ancestral cultures are too dissimilar, and as a result, many people get marginalised. Darling returns to a melancholy devotion to their history towards the book's conclusion. She is inhaling as she thinks back to her former existence in her beloved Paradise. She looks at her own country distantly as an immigrant because she is located in America. As Hallemeier argues, this does not make the story an explanation of Africa to America, but offers a perspective of what home means while being elsewhere, allowing migrants a second point of reference from which they refract their gaze. Darling's gaze towards her country is also changed like the white people and it was accused by Chipo, when Darling says, "I know it's bad, Chipo, I'm sorry. It pains me to think about it, I say, and but last week I saw on BBC" (285).

As a diaspora, Darling is unable to comprehend how the natives feel about their situation. Even though it is difficult for those who reside outside of Zimbabwe to comprehend what is actually happening there, they assumed that this was the case due to outside meddling, such as when Darling obtained information about what is happening there from the BBC. And it painful being away from home, the distance will give such clarity of vision about life to them. Of course, things prove to be more difficult that just getting on the road and rolling, it was illustrated by Chipo to Darling and says that now you to become like the Whitish people and forget that it is your country. Chipo says they, "You think watching on BBC means you know what is going on? No you don't my friend"(295). Her words make Darling to feel guilty about herself. The immigrants flee out of the country because of poverty but now the desperation of distance makes them to suffer a lot and they are not happy.

Strangely, the prospect of returning full-time is never brought up; rather the inability to take temporary vacations due to visa problems. Darling's mother has enough money to purchase a home in Budapest with internet and satellite TV even though Aunt Fostaline sends money to her sister. Darling is committed to staying in America. Aunt Fostaline is popular among the departing population. Darling and even the tragically absurd Tshaka, who hasn't been in fifty years, don't believe they can make a difference in any manner. Even with the privilege of receiving an education abroad and having ample financial means, their only real alternative is to leave the country, but they never choose that route. It demonstrates their inability to return home and the fact that they are alone there after a long absence. Everything will change, and everything will appear to them as something new. As a result, the immigrants attempt to adapt in their new country. Like how Aunt Fostaline incessantly exercises, transforming her African physique into the ideals of America. Uncle Kojo becomes an alcoholic because he feels bad for his son, who left him to join the army. To express her gratitude and affection for him, Tshaka Zulu, also known by the name of the legendary warrior, spent his days. Tshaka, who names over the phone a litany of grandchildren he has never seen them whose pictures line the walls of his room. Their life makes them to realise that America is not their land.

With this novel, Bulawayo gets the chance to thoughtfully examine the concepts of home, roots, and identity, demonstrating the validity of Pasura's claim that the myth or idea of returning to one's nation of origin is one of the common characteristics of diaspora. Her portrayal of immigrant life in this book is crucial for educating immigrants worldwide about their situation in a strange country. Also, immigrants from Zimbabwe who are fleeing their nation in great numbers badly require it. She gives the public the necessary awareness by writing about it.

Zimbabwe is emerging from a difficult decade where everything broke apart in a way that made these themes of poverty and diaspora obvious and it provided a soundtrack to Zimbabwe life, “terrible place of hunger and things fall apart”(26). The novel's portrayal of immigrants teaches us immigration to America is considered as an act of forced migration. It should be noted that because Darling is compelled to leave the shanty Paradise, the majority of Zimbabwean diasporic communities also constitute forced migration. Yet when she encounters an America divided along racial and social lines, her expectations of the country are turned into nightmare realities.

Bulawayo's novel entertains the readers a lot because of its dominating theme about immigrant's life. And the attractiveness towards immigrant's life is explained by Edward Said as, that migrant literature forms an interesting and important branch of study. Migrants, almost by definition, occupy a space between two cultures, between past and present, thus naturally complicating ideas of barriers and sides, and speak from a place of multiplicity.

CHSPTER THREE

IDENTITY CRISIS

This chapter explores the relationship between the individual and society, and the role external social forces such place, community, and language play in individual identity formation. In NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, the child narrator, Darling, is forced to flee her native Zimbabwe amid political turmoil, and finds herself now growing up and searching for identity in Detroit Michigan, USA. Despite her repeated attempts to “Americanise” and fit in, Darling finds herself in a state of perpetually ambiguous identity: no longer Zimbabwean, and never quite American, she finds her new American life shallow and meaningless.

There is no person whose will is strong enough to enable them to create their own identity free from all outside influences. The truth is that a person's identity is more of a complicated, experienced chimaera of the people, cultures, communities, and places from that person's background (292). The protagonist and narrator of NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Darling, grows up in a small, underprivileged, but happy Zimbabwean community, and as a result, her identity takes on the characteristics of that community's culture.

Forced to flee that culture to an idealised America during a dangerous period of civil unrest under the Mugabe regime, Darling attempts to reposition her identity as an idealised ‘American.’ She soon finds that an impossible feat, however, and despite her repeated attempts at transformation, fails to replace her Zimbabwean cultural identity with an American one. Instead, she finds herself in a perpetual limbo state of ambiguous identity: neither American nor Zimbabwean, she speaks neither English nor her native language, has a permanent home in neither Zimbabwe nor America, and appears to live a shallow and meaningless. Darling turns her back on her family, her friends, her country and her past,

and in doing so, she erodes a large part of her identity, which in turn, erodes a large part of Zimbabwe and Africa's identity.

In the novel and as in real life, language is a shared knowledge system which plays a role in perpetuating culture, shaping cultural identities and even determining social class. In the community of Paradise, English is revered as a powerful language, and the ability to speak it is a key to ascending in social rank. Despite being her junior, Darling looks down upon Mother of Bones when singing a hymn at church "because she doesn't know all the English words because she doesn't speak the right English because she didn't go to school" (32) yet ironically, Darling's English is frequently littered with such run-on sentences and repeated conjunctions.

The local priest, Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro, apparently uneducated, possesses a large name of four large words, and is the longest name in the story. Strangely and ironically, however, he must avoid long words due to a fear of "running into a word he won't know how to pronounce" (37), and keeps his language simple for his religious followers. Even apparently educated local and Chinese workers speaking multilingually are made fun of for lack of proficiency in English: "around the construction site the men speak in shouts. It's like listening to nonsense, to people praying in tongues; it's Chinese, it's our languages, it's English mixed with things, it's the machine noise" (45).

Darling and her friends further taunt the Chinese foreigners: "the fat man starts ching-chonging to us like he thinks he is in his grandmother's backyard. He ching-chongs ching-chongs and then he stops" (47). On their final trip to Budapest during the uprising, Darling's crew encounter a Zimbabwean security guard who seemingly attempts to heighten his social capital by speaking in long, convoluted and tautologous sentences using unnecessarily complex vocabulary for the contextual register: "I command you to immediately turn around and retrace your steps. Extricate yourselves from these premises

and retreat to whatever hole you crawled out of. Under no circumstances should I ever lay my eyes on you again, you follow?" (107). Despite the colonial history in Zimbabwe, English proficiency is still considered a key to transcending class structures and therefore a key marker of individual identity.

When Darling moves from Zimbabwe to America, her status as an English speaker falls drastically from being seen as at least semi-proficient to that of a lowly English student. This has an impact on both her identity and social capital in her new country. She regrets that the problem with English is

You usually can't open your mouth and it comes out just like that - first you have to think what to say. Then you have to find the words. Then you have to carefully arrange those words in your head. Then you have to say the words quietly to yourself, to make sure you got them okay. And finally, the last step, which is to say the words out loud and have them sound just right.
(195)

Darling Unable to join the fluent-English middle social class, she forms her own socio-lingual subgroup with her two other African expatriate friends, Marina and Kristal, and they engage in their own 21st century technological lingua franca, with elements borrowed from their new American culture:

Wt u doin?
nuthin. trynna study stupid bio...
lol, y is it stupid? I kinda lykit...
thts coz u wanna be a doc. nt feelin it...
wl u know my dad wants me to. n-e-ways wt u gonn do? (277)

Being moderately proficient, Darling and her Aunt Fostalina generally converse with each other in English. When a part of a conversation becomes extremely important,

however, and a speaker wants to ensure that their language contains no errors and they are completely understood, he or she drops English and their original language is used:

Darling, leave me alone, do I look like the immigration to you? She says. She is speaking in our language now, which means the conversation is over. When Aunt Fostalina switches languages like that, you know whatever was being talked about is finished. (191)

This is significant because in private conversation, Darling and Fostalina have their original language as a crutch to fall back on when the conversation becomes too important or difficult for the limitations of their English proficiency. Outside in the real world, however, this crutch is removed and they must persevere with the limited English they have, which would inevitably lead to many of their thoughts and opinions never being expressed or heard, further eroding their identity. Without the ability to speak their native tongue freely and frequently, and not completely proficient at expressing themselves in English, they lose a large part of their identity.

Aunt Fostalina's character delves deeper into the assimilation of the American identity and the way she wishes to be seen, as an American. It seems farcical and a mockery of living the American Dream. She starves herself in order to achieve the beauty standards she has internalized through media, tries to speak in the American accent in the hope that she will not be treated as the 'other' and hence with respect. Back home, she is perceived as a successful immigrant who has been successful in achieving the American Dream as she is able to send money to her family, but the reality is daunting. She is still treated as a 'foreigner' and hasn't been accepted by the society as one of their own. She has lost her true self in the hope of being socially accepted and treated as an equal. The imitation, the innate desire to belong to America gnaws away at her individuality and the narrative finds her struggling to comprehend and accept her position that she will always remain the 'other'. The employment conditions of illegal migrants are deplorable as is evident in the

narrative and describe that Darling and multiple other immigrants from different nations have to resort to all kinds of jobs in order to earn money. Their illegal status prohibits them from applying for positions that might be less exploitative and more aligned to their education and work experiences but they are never able to.

In *We Need New Names*, it is not only people who lose their identity: countries and entire continents do also. Darling describes the complex and confusing identity of Zimbabwe, itself renamed from Rhodesia, resulting from its colonial history and ongoing political turmoil.

There are three homes inside Mother and Aunt Fostalina's heads: home before independence, before I was born, when black and white people were fighting over the country. Home after independence, when black people won the country. And then the home of things falling apart, which made Aunt Fostalina leave and come here... There are four homes inside Mother of Bones's head: home before the white people came to steal the country and a king ruled; home when the white people came to steal the country and there was war; home when black people got our stolen country back after independence; and then the home of now. Home one, home two, home three, home four. (192-3)

Due its history of revolution and turmoil the national identity of Zimbabwe is entirely dependent upon the subject, and the time period in which they were born. The entire continent of Africa is also given complex and confusing identity markers. When Darling tells Americans she is from Africa, all they can say about the continent is apparently what they've learned about its problems from American mainstream media and television:

Africa? Is that where vultures wait for famished children to die? Where the life expectancy is thirty-five years? Where dissidents shove AK-47s between women's legs? ...where people run about naked? ...where they

massacred each other? ...where the old president rigged the election and people were tortured and killed and a whole bunch of them put in prison and all, there where they are dying of cholera.... yes we've seen your country; it's been on the news. (239)

With these perceptions, the African identity is relegated to a chaotic, dysfunctional, precolonial and almost “savage” place still in need of Western enlightenment, to use Conradian terms. Interestingly, a Conradian allusion appears late in the novel when Darling finds the Ivory map of Africa: “it’s an ivory slab the shape of the African map, and right in the center of it is carved an eye... when I saw the slab at Eliot’s... it felt like the eye was looking at me so the right thing to do was to steal the ivory map” (285-6). Several complex metaphors are at play here: during the scramble for Africa and subsequent colonial period, the ‘West,’ being white people, invaded and colonised African land under the pretext of ‘enlightening’ a dark place, however it is often argued that the ulterior motive for the scramble was the violent and forceful extraction of resources, most notably, the valuable white ivory. In his novella *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad uses a similar metaphor with an African map:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps... At the time there were many blank spaces on earth... but there was one yet - the biggest, the most blank, so to speak - that I had a hankering after. True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery - a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. (Conrad 4)

Despite the so-called ‘enlightenment’ occurring as Africa becomes more ‘discovered,’ the map actually becomes darker, symbolising Africa’s descent into a ‘place

of darkness' as its people are enslaved and resources stolen. When Darling found her ivory map, she stole it, just as the colonisers did to Africa's ivory during the colonial era. The violent pillage of Africa for ivory and its subsequent period of colonialism removed the existing African cultural identity, turning it into a place of darkness under the ironic guise of enlightenment. In *We Need New Names*, Darling herself has turned her back on her own African identity by moving to America and Americanising herself, and her stealing of the ivory map is a symbolic metaphor for her part in the erosion of her continent's identity.

Language is one of the markers of ethnic identity. Characters in *We Need New Names* infuse Ndebele words in their conversations. This is especially so when they are faced with oppression from the national government, which is coincidentally composed of mainly Shona-speaking individuals. The appropriation of language as a tool of resistance is evident in the novel during the demolition of the houses. The narrator, Darling, tells us that the adults were expressing their various reactions to their dislocation through *IsiNdebele*. In the novel, one of the characters, Gayigusu, says that: "I got this from the liberation war, salilwelilizweleli, we fought for this fucking lizwe mani, we put them in power, and today they turn on us like a snake, mpthu, and he spits" (66- 67). Writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o have acknowledged the power inherent in language as a tool of socialization or resistance. English, the coloniser's language, a legacy of colonialism in post-independence, becomes the language of dominance over the Ndebele by the government, which continues to dominate over the masses through neo-colonialism.

Conversely, local languages become markers of resistance to colonialism and its legacies. Evidence of both languages in the novel is a sign of code-mixing. When asked if the language of her characters expresses a confused mixed identity during an interview with Peschel (2015), Bulawayo said, "I wouldn't say it's a confused identity. I would say it's an identity that comes from negotiating two cultures. English came to Zimbabwe as with most

African countries through colonization.” She uses code-mixing in her writing to symbolise the new identity that has sprang up amongst the Zimbabweans as a result of their interaction with the European culture. She further adds that English was a language she encountered and used in school. She was more comfortable using her Ndebele dialect. Bulawayo concludes thus: Now, when it comes to me writing I'm juggling two languages, obviously, Ndebele is my ancient language, the language of intimacy. And as much as I'm fine with communicating in English it doesn't have that weight for me. But of course I have to produce a book that looks like English on the page. So it takes me back to that point of negotiating. And of course there is the love of language. I really want my language to be in my work. So I come to it through a process of translation.

In the novel, Darling and her friends mix English and Ndebele during their conversations. This is especially evident when they are conversing about very important issues like politics and migration. The children vent out their frustrations using words and phrases from the Ndebele language. An instance is when Sbho, one of the children, tells her friends that she would get married to a man from Budapest then he will take her to a much better place. When Godknows dismisses her, she puts him off, saying, “Well, I don't care. I'm blazing out of this kaka country myself” (13). Cultural hybridity has led to the code-mixing that is observed in the conversations the children and adults engage in. Darling's story begins in Paradise and reaches its climax when she reaches US and is unable to fit in the life over there, yearning to come back home yet afraid of facing the reality that her country is not her home anymore.

We stayed, like prisoners, only we chose to be prisoners and we loved our prison; it was not a bad prison. And when things only got worse in our country, we pulled our shackles even tighter and said We are not leaving America, no, we are not leaving. (293)

The American Dream, that all of her friends had when they were younger stands shattered as she realizes she will never be able to realise her full potential in ‘the land of abundance’ because it will never provide her with enough opportunities to actually establish a career or even achieve her life goals. The harsh truth faces her and she eventually realizes, “this place doesn't look like my America” (180). She feels entrapped in the new country where she becomes the object of ridicule, of mockery and is discriminated and differentiated against.

All the kids in Paradise dream of settling in the western nations that they have seen on TV and have heard about. Even the games such as ‘Country game’ everyone wants to be America or Canada or Australia and not countries like Nigeria or Cameroon or India. The hierarchy of the nations is quite evident even in the made-up games, a particular power order that is followed.

To play the country-game, we have to choose a country. Everybody wants to be the USA and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and them. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, and not even this one we live in. Who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things falling apart? (64)

Lastly, economic hardships have produced migrant identities. In the novel, the narrator shows us how poverty has pushed Zimbabweans to migrate to other locales within their country especially from rural to urban areas or from rich to poor neighbourhoods and vice versa. They have also migrated to other countries they consider as affluent like America and South Africa. This migration/exile is both voluntary and forced. The motivating factors of these migrations include poverty, censorship, ethnic warfare, and displacement by the government. Poverty is one of the most common causes of migrant identities. Joblessness in Zimbabwe has forced people to traverse borders in search of jobs.

Darling is one casualty of this condition. Her father leaves for South Africa to find a job. She is left with her mother who has to go to the border to trade so that she can provide for her child.

This results in Darling living with her grandmother, Mother of Bones. She hardly sees her mother. They live in a slum named Paradise. On her way to church Darling's description of her surrounding reveals the squalor that comprises their existence. As they pass, she says,

they pass tiny shack after tiny shack crammed together like hot loaves of bread. She is not wearing shoes because they are too small now and the other made-in-China ones that mother brought her from the border just fell apart, so she walks carefully and makes sure to lift her feet to avoid things on the dusty red path: a broken bottle here, a pile of junk over there, a brownish puddle of something here, a disembowelled watermelon there. (26)

From Darling's description, it is evident that the occupants of Paradise live in dehumanising conditions. It is this poverty that has made people migrate. Displacement by the government has also resulted into migrant identities. In the chapter titled "How They Left" Darling narrates the mass exodus experienced in Zimbabwe. Among the reasons that people emigrate is political strife in the country at that point in time. She resonates,

when things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky. They flee their own wretched land so their anger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands, the wounds of their despair bandaged in faraway lands, their blistered prayers muttered in the darkness of queer lands. (146)

Darling's sentiments foreground the subaltern status that immigrants attain in a foreign country.

Political instability forced many Zimbabweans to migrate, not only to other nearby countries like South Africa but also faraway countries like the U.S. Darling also leaves later to join Aunt Fostalina in Detroit Michigan. In expressing the immigrants' subaltern nature in diaspora, Darling observes that while there, "they will have to sit on one buttock because they must not sit comfortably lest they are asked to rise and leave" (2). Geography is a map against which identities in the novel *We Need New Names* are plotted. The writer presents us with three main identity categories namely: ethnic, national and diasporic, all affiliated with places. To begin with, ethnic identities as represented in the novel are affiliated to local geographies. The novel's geographic setting in the city of Bulawayo is deliberate because Bulawayo is home to the Ndebele.

The writer Bulawayo has named places in the novel in inferential ways. We can deduce that the novel is set in Bulawayo, which is Matabeleland due to roads like Mzilikazi as mentioned in the novel. King Mzilikazi is the founding father of the Ndebele kingdom, therefore the road was most likely named after him in commemoration of the great work he did for the Ndebele. Darling comments, "we are going even though we are not allowed to cross Mzilikazi Road" (1). It is ironical that Darling and her friends are not allowed to cross this road, named after their freedom fighter. They have been denied a privilege that came from the efforts of one of their ancestors, King Mzilikazi. Therefore, the geography of Bulawayo becomes the space within which Ndebele nationhood is performed and re-invented in relation to or opposition to Zimbabwean nationhood.

Identity is mostly a product of that individual's culture and community. In *We Need New Names*, the protagonist Darling's childhood identity is inextricably bound up in her Zimbabwean culture, and her community in Paradise. When she is forced to leave the country due to political turmoil, she attempts to reconfigure her Zimbabwean identity into an American one, however she soon finds herself in a perpetual state of identity limbo:

not really Zimbabwean, and never truly American, she finds her existence shallow and meaningless. Moreover, by leaving behind her African identity, she has also played a role in eroding both Africa and Zimbabwe's identity and reputation worldwide.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Political violence is a common thing used by both government and ordinary people around the world to satisfy their own goals. All the people around the world are aware of instability in political system and they well known that it not satisfy their problems. It makes the people to violate the rules and regulation in the society and also makes them to choose violence as a weapon to satisfy their demand. They believe this is the only thing to achieve and justify their demands. Most of the times the ruling government use this force to protect their country from rebels, enemies, outside invasion, other threats or terrorist attack, etc. Political violence can take a number of forms including genocide, human rights violation, war, police brutality and capital punishment.

This impact made Bulawayo to write this novel, Bulawayo, the diasporic writer return to her homeland, when she was passing through the slum area where everything is destroyed and the child was sitting on the rubble. This condition disturbed her a lot and confused her and she thought about the situation of the people and the reason about their suffering and who are they. She developed her thought in her novel through the character Darling. She revealed the horrible situation of the Africans life through the line, "there is dust everywhere from the crumbling walls; it gets into our hair and mouths and noses and makes as cough and cough" (66).

We Need New Names set in Zimbabwe after the 2005 Operation Murambatsvina. It focus on the experiences of Darling, a teenage protagonist who initially stayed in the slums of Bulawayo together with a young girl and adult evictees because their houses were bulldozed by a government as a result of Operation Murambatsivina meant the government's decision to destroy all the informal housing constituting the informal business

sector and all the shanty towns. In the operation the government destroyed neighbourhood in few hours and leaved more than three lakhs of people homeless. Bulawayo expressed the harsh realities of Zimbabwe through children's perspective.

The repetitive use of the word bulldozing is very purposeful as it highlights the insensitivity of government that destroys the property of its citizens which it should protect. This operation had made traumatic consequences. This shows the real happening in Africa and how the African people's dreams for independent and happy life are broken. And the people think that they put them in power but they turn them like a snake.

Bulawayo shows how the impact of the Operation was not physical but also psychological. And this incident affects Darling's life; she lost her nightmares because the past traumatic experiences of Murambatsvina disturbs her and makes her to fear repeatedly. Darling notes that:

Even if I want to sleep I cannot because if I sleep the dream will come, and I don't want it to come. I am afraid of the bulldozers and those man and the police. I dream about what happened back at our house before we come to Paradise. I try to push it away and push it away but the dreams coming like bees, like rain, like the graves at heaven way. (64)

Darling's dream foreshadows real events and this metaphorically refers to victims who troubled towards this type of government activities. Bulawayo's Darling is the symbolic of all the people her story relates to many people who faced this. And it is the story of everyone. She acts as a representative to reflect their suffering through this novel. And it shows that the history of this type of sufferings cannot be erased from the mind of the victims even the people who make them to suffer cannot able to push it away from them. It reveals when Darling says, "try to push it away the dream keeps coming!" (65). In *We Need New Names* we founds that the novelist illustrates that, this effects will be felt for

many years to come across and this operation has made people homeless and destitute. And the children in the novel, Darling and her friends Chipso, Stina, Godknows and Sbhoo are reminded their past happy life before bulldozing and it is described by Darling as,

We didn't always live in this tin, though. Before we had a home and everything and we were happy. It was a real house made of bricks, with a kitchen, sitting room and two bed rooms. Real rooms, real windows, real floors and real doors. Now all we have is this small bed that sits on some bricks and poles. (62)

Bulawayo presented the extreme poverty of the people living in slum as they do not have food to eat, clothes to use and human rights to use. From the very beginning of the novel we learn about the hunger of the people which is beautifully portrayed by the children in paradise. She portrays the cruelty of hunger as, “my stomach feels like somebody just took a shovel and dug everything out” (1). To cure their pain they need development through assistance and investment over several years. From this destruction we learn the anger of ruling party towards the urbanites who had voted for the opposition party, early in the 2002 presidential harmonised elections.

The political instability is revealed from the Chinese building a mall, by seeing it the children desire it may be building of schools or flats or clinic. But the Chinese man ignored and says, “We build you big big mall, big” (46). It shows the priorities of government, the country people were suffering without home and proper health care but it goes on the way to earn money by building malls and make business. The government had no concern to help the people. The children in the novel seek for education, accommodation and health care centre but the government's ignorance to the welfare of the people is shocking one. The government's attitude is described by Moyo and Malongwa as,

The government Look East Policy is problematic. Though it possibly has its own positive spins-offs for the country, the reality on the ground, from the ordinary person's perspective, points otherwise. This is to be expected given that it was a hastily conjured up, reactive and fundamentally desperate move in response to the acrimony with western countries. (28)

The children is not happy about the shopping mall, they were very aware about their condition because they are suffered by poverty. They need to send out the Chinese from their country they shouts as, leave our country and go and build wherever they come from, that we don't need your kaka mall. The children consider the Chinese as devil by eating other people they will grow strong and fat.

The name of Nomoviyo's child, Freedom is also the reflection of post-independence Zimbabwe which denies its citizens freedom as the child. Freedom is found dead, crushed under the ruined house during the operation. Therefore definition of freedom in post-Independence Zimbabwe is very political. Independence is a form of gift but it is only an abstract thing and not a practical one. And the love in the novel is created symbolically through the character's name such as Godknows, it reflects their resolution for suffering is only understand by God.

In this novel, the children in the Paradise are not allowed to enter and roam into the street of Budapest which is often guarded. It portrays the difference between upper class and lower class and the political discrimination which favours upper class. The people habited in Budapest are wealthy people but the people are not goodhearted people. It is revealed through a lady who instead of giving food to hungry children throws it into bin and proceeds to snap those pictures by laughing. Therefore they are seen as a form of dirt to be disqualified like their parents who have been drive out for supporting the opposition party and make them to dump in shanty Paradise.

After the votes, at the shack of Mother Love is filled with rebellion people, who have a great dream to change the present government and to make democratic Zimbabwe. But their dream never fulfilled under atrocity of government and it is reveal when the twenty five year old Bornfree Lizwe Tapera is murdered for supporting opposition party which again amount to an act of prohibiting them.

In Zimbabwe things were fall down, because of political instability in that country. The children are trapped in ceaseless quest for survival, they never go to school because the starvation and political crisis in country does not consider about the welfare of them. They spend their days like wanderers. In the beginning the children went to school but the crisis in the country makes the teacher to fly out from the country and the schools were closed. And the people suffered by hunger and illiterate. The children and the novel are neglected by their parents or they are busy in their duties. So the kids are largely undisturbed by adults they do not stay on the street full time but spend most of their time alone in minding their own business.

Economic instability in the country is the cause of political instability. The country's economy fall down and their currency become useless, so the government is forced to use American currency. It makes them to cross the border into Budapest and it induce them to escape from the deliberating poverty and in a way they assume new names and new statues and migration. Sbho, the prettiest girl child in the group says that, "I'm going to marry a rich man from Budapest. He will take me from Paradise" (12). Bastard, the bully of the group, dreams of Johannesburg, "I'm blazing out of this kaka country myself. He promises to go for bigger items when he gets older, he wants to graduate from a petty thief stealing guavas to a hardcore criminal going for bigger items. Then I will make lots of money. Come back and buy a house in this very Budapest" (13). Here, Darling's real possibility of escape is through her aunt Fostaline in America. Like this children many of the citizens of Paradise

escape from here in the past, through the dream of new names and roles in the dream of life, Godknows, uncle Kojo in United Kingdom who used to send family some goodies, like Darling's Aunt Fostaline in United Kingdom and her father in South Africa. All these things demonstrate their escape from unestablished Paradise.

The political intolerance in the country makes the people to lead poverty life. The people in this novel not even have good dress to wear. We can found it when Darling goes to public gathering such as Holy Chariot church in bare foot or in red tennis shoe on one leg and green high heeled shoe on the other. Darling used laundry soap which shows the death of the poverty, which the Paradise dwellers is contented with it. The division between bath and laundry soaps shows that they are washed off by poverty. Although the people are in suffering their faith for God is never lost Mother of Bones regularly goes to church with her granddaughter, Darling who lost her faith in God. Her description about God is “better no God, better no God then live like this, praying like this for things that will never come” (238). She is confused about Jesus. Fambeki Mountain's leader is Prophet Revelation Bitchington Mborro, a name which meant to unmask the people who play to the people in the name of God. There is no facility for the people there, the children bathed in the open indicating lack of facilities, the water source is communal. It also shows vulnerability of whole community which shares such facilities. If any contamination befalls the water source then everyone will be fall and doomed. It shows the dangerous life of people and the carelessness of Government and people.

Political violence is directly seen in the novel while some rebellions or rebel against the whites who settled in Zimbabwe. The rebellion people are attacking the whites and expelling them from their homes in Zimbabwe. They go about kicking down the gates and jumping over Durawall to get into yards, where they pounds on the doors, shouting for them to come out. “They were wild and chanting and screaming as, Strike fears in the heart

of white man! White man you have no place here, go back, go back! Africa for Africans, Africa for Africans! Kill the Boer, the farmer, the Khiwa” (118). It shows the conflict between the black and the white people.

The Africans were against the whites because they were colonised and dominated by them before independence, and now they took upon revenge on them by shouting. They have ruled a lot and now it is their turn to lead their country. They dragged them from their houses and beaten to death. The white peoples are not aware of their attack; here we find the racial discrimination between the blacks and whites. The blacks try to put the whites outside of the country and tries to finish the whole white race from there. And the black man says, “This is a black man country and the black man is in charge now” (118). Bulawayo also presented the pain of white people there and she shows the deep hatred of blacks towards the whites. She beautifully express their attitude, their faces are dark with anger and their shouting, their destruction and their chanting Africans for Africans. It shows how the black people act as liberal and brainwashed. They made land repossession from the occupied whites to the native blacks. Through their arrogance we learn that the white people and their property need close security from them. These discrimination between them affects the children and afraid of their behaviour and hides behind the tree leaves.

The political violence in Africa affects the human rights of the people they were not allowed to vote independently and if they vote against the government independently on the basis of their wish, it was not accepted by the government. This result is the consequences of Paradise people. They were not allowed to live freely as their wish and not even allowed to vote independently or express their thoughts. Bornfree, who raised his voice for rights and against the government, is brutally killed by his opposition party member. When Bornfree raised his voice against the system and makes the people realise the real development and induce them to make new government system. His rebellious

thought was not endured by the opposition party, so they took revenge by killing him and described as a terrorist. The opposition people caught him beaten and says,

Who is paying you? America and Britain? Why don't you scream for America and Britain to help now? Friend of the colonist! Selling the country to whites! You think you can just vote for whoever you want? Vote right now, we want to see, sell out! You want change, today we'll show you change! Here's your democracy, your human right, eat it, eat eat eat!..(144)

By doing like these the rebellions prove that if anyone talks against the government they too will meet the same end. When Bornfree's mother is crying out nobody helps and rescue her son, the people were ordered by the authoritarian not to help him. These incidents cause extreme fear in the mind of the people living in Zimbabwe. The main political parties were taking this matter for attention seeking from his death. His death is an unthinkable in African culture where the dead including those who might have been saintly in their earthly business, are expected to be respected. Bastard's rude reply to the BBC reporter it shows that the young children in the country also aware of politically sensitive subject in his country.

Political instability is also found in America, which is a new Paradise for Darling. Where children bring loaded guns to school and watch pornography instead of doing homework and lie that they are going to study while they go to partying and steal parent's cars for joy rides. And found everywhere police with weapon to spot and arrest the black youths as terrorist, it shows the superiority of the country. In America parent's neither do not care their children a lot nor maintain family relationship. Uncle Kojo and Aunt Fostaline faces lot of problems as they come from different part of America they get married but never tries to build bridges to connect their two worlds instead they settle with borrowed culture in the new land but it is not adequate to them. They always give the view that two

of them are individuals sharing the roof and not live as a family. Tk his son never asks about his suggestion, he himself joins the military even though he rejects Kate, Eliot's daughter attends one of the best school in America yet she is not happy and malnourished, she cannot eat the food still she has plenty of food in the fear of gaining weight which is being labelled by her society as ugly and her boyfriend neglects her in the past as she gained weight even though she was more beautiful. And the society reflects single parent family set up as fine for them but it affects their own children. It clearly seen in the life of Kate, Tk, Darling and other children of Africa and their suffering shows the impact of fatherless or motherless condition of offspring is loud and worst. Kate and Tk badly need their mother, Darling misses her father and awaits a long time for her father who leaves her homeland to South Africa and returns with AIDS. And some children suffer by missing both their parents.

Another type of political instability is seen for the citizenship of immigrants. Dumi, the immigrants married Stephanie, a white fat elderly woman for the papers to stay in America, still he doesn't like her and she has a son already. A guest at the wedding cimmments: "But the things people will do for the papers, my sister I tell you" (173). Political instability is found everywhere in this novel, for instance NaDumane's husband disappears, an allusion of political intolerance, it tries to silent the critical press. Aunt Fostaline's cousin, Na Sandi informs her son that Tsepang was killed and eaten by crocodile while crossing the Limpopo illegally to South Africa to run away from the hardships of home. All the above the political instability in their country follows them to the new world it induced them to change their identity for better world but some gladly assumes their countries names in patriotic pride but many left their countries in a bad mood do not have such sentimentality towards their countries.

However through the novel *Bulawayo* successfully highlighted the problems of people living in Zimbabwe especially in slum area. It explores the impact of 2005 Operation Murambatsvina which makes many to move from their country. She has depicted their bitter experiences of life related to their extreme poverty, starvation and famine as a result of political instability. She has condemned the politics of Zimbabwe especially the rule of President Mugabe who has been in parliament for since last three decades. Her unhappiness with the president is clearly reflected in an interview with Jill Coates as that there was a time when he was good for the country but now I feel like that the time is gone. It's sad that a country with such promise is forced on its knees because of its ruling party.

Through the child narrator's voice she effectively captures the condition of Zimbabwe which is political instable. From this political instability we learn things fall down and everything in the country is destroyed. It also shows the victory for one politically charged group which meant doom for the others. It doesn't require a political science professor to conclude that a political and economic thunderstorm is occurring and a quick solution for their sufferings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

The history of Africa begins with the emergence of Homo Sapiens in East Africa and continues their presence as a patchwork of diverse and politically developing nation States. In the early period Africa was ruled by monarch, later it was colonised by many countries such as Arab, British, Portuguese, France and America. Zimbabwe is one of the countries in Africa and it set in Southcentral Africa and it is considered as the first state in South Africa. English is the official language of Zimbabwe, though only two percentages consider it as their native language, mainly the white and coloured minorities. Most of the Zimbabwe population speaks Bantu languages like Shona spoken by Mashona people of seventy six percentage and Ndebele spoken by Matabele people of eighteen percentages. European culture and values indelibly shaped the urban and rural landscapes, Black Zimbabwe have assimilated more white Zimbabwe culture.

The recent history of Zimbabwe has been very controversial, corruption and scandal threatened the government and rivalries arise against the government. It brings economic devastation and deficiency and it ruined the life of native people. And money become worthless in the country, they started using American currency, Zimbabwe is plagued by the world's highest inflation rate, and people were suffered of poverty. The children never went to school because of political instability and poverty.

There is no individual whose will is so strong as to render them capable of fashioning their own identity independent of all external forces. Rather, a “person is a person because of other people”(292), and an individual's identity is more a complex, experiential chimaera of people, cultures, communities and places from that individual's past. In NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, the protagonist and narrator, Darling,

spends her childhood immersed in a small and poor, yet happy, Zimbabwean community, and her identity becomes a manifestation of that community's culture. Forced to flee that culture to an idealised America during a dangerous period of civil unrest under the Mugabe regime, Darling attempts to reposition her identity as an idealised 'American.' She soon finds that an impossible feat, however, and despite her repeated attempts at transformation, fails to replace her Zimbabwean cultural identity with an American one. Instead, she finds herself in a perpetual limbo state of ambiguous identity: neither American nor Zimbabwean, she speaks neither English nor her native language, has a permanent home in neither Zimbabwe nor America, and appears to live a shallow and meaningless, almost Kafkaesque existence. Darling turns her back on her family, her friends, her country and her past, and in doing so, she erodes a large part of her identity, which, in turn, erodes a large part of Zimbabwe and Africa's identity.

Through this novel she depicts the condition of future generation of Zimbabwe and illustrates the immediate need of change in the country. In an interview she says that the problem she deals in the novel *We Need New Names* is an immediate caution for the people and it not only the story of Zimbabwe, it is the story of whole world. Bulawayo is part of the country's born free generation which gain a promise of a golden future after a fall of white rule. But she depicts that it is the fake promise and reveals it through the suffering faced by her novel's character which is born after Independence and shows the effect of failure in post-colonised country.

The debut novel *We Need New Names* is about Zimbabwean society. It tells about the poverty as the result of political and economic instability in the country. And also highlights the cultural difference in two different countries faced by the illegal refugees. This study consists of four chapters such as Introduction, Diasporic Experience, Identity, and Political Instability. Then it gives detailed description of No Violet Bulawayo and the

highlights of her contemporary writers. It also provides the brief note on Bulawayo's only the novel *We Need New Names* and other works.

The second chapter entitled as Diasporic Experience, deals with Zimbabwean refugee who were leave their country because of poverty and lack of political and economic instability. They were leaving were in droves and droves. The protagonist Darling, her father, her Aunt, her friends and her friend's relatives and many other left their country to escape from the poverty. This chapter also illustrate the destruction of their dream in the new world. The new world is not the one they think it seems to them as a strange country. The protagonist Darling too faces this upset and the new world destroys her dream and she says it is not my America, from childhood itself she had a dream to lead a happy life in America. But in America she is surprised by its superficiality towards the Black people. She and other immigrants the cultural difference in the new country they cannot able to speak their own language and it makes their throat filled with pain. The novelist Bulawayo also provides the sufferings of illegal immigrants in the new immigrant world who can only live there by doing menial job because they need licence to begin a proper business. From this novel Bulawayo portrays most of the immigrants in America were illegal immigrants who were not ready to leave from America to their country which is destroyed. Even though she is in America, she cannot stop thinking about and searching for her birthplace, therefore she now quits communicating with them in an effort to alleviate her anguish from nostalgia.

Then the third chapter entitled as Identity Crisis. It's explores the relationship between the individual and society, and the role external social forces such place, community, and language play in individual identity formation. Darling identity takes on the characteristics of that community's culture. Forced to flee that culture to an idealised America during a dangerous period of civil unrest under the Mugabe regime, Darling

attempts to reposition her identity as an idealised 'American.' She soon finds that an impossible feat, however, and despite her repeated attempts at transformation, fails to replace her Zimbabwean cultural identity with an American one. Instead, she finds herself in a perpetual limbo state of ambiguous identity: neither American nor Zimbabwean, she speaks neither English nor her native language, has a permanent home in neither Zimbabwe nor America, and appears to live a shallow and meaningless. Darling turns her back on her family, her friends, her country and her past, and in doing so, she erodes a large part of her identity, which in turn, erodes a large part of Zimbabwe and Africa's identity. Identity is mostly a product of that individual's culture and community. In *We Need New Names*, the protagonist Darling's childhood identity is inextricably bound up in her Zimbabwean culture, and her community in Paradise. When she is forced to leave the country due to political turmoil, she attempts to reconfigure her Zimbabwean identity into an American one, however she soon finds herself in a perpetual state of identity limbo: not really Zimbabwean, and never truly American, she finds her existence shallow and meaningless. Moreover, by leaving behind her African identity, she has also played a role in eroding both Africa and Zimbabwe's identity and reputation worldwide.

The fourth chapter Political Instability deals with the theme of politically corrupted society it historically explains the higher class domination towards the ordinary people. This chapter explains about how the politicians in the country lose their promise and turn as an enemy to their own country people who had elected them as a politician to rule the country. But instead to satisfy their dream they joined hand with the previous coloniser who suppressed them. The protagonist is harmed by her conflicting heritage and culture. Through the locations she moves to, the change in her life is discussed. Darling joyfully departs from Paradise, her native country, in order to live a happy life in America. Her one and only goal is to leave this shanty town Paradise, which is rife with hardships and

destitution. Even though she had fun and plays there all day, the hard reality of an empty stomach, a broken family, and social disintegration force her to leave. He initially perceives everything in America as being unfamiliar to her and completely different from her Paradise. The surroundings at her new home are unfamiliar to her. She first confronts a significant hurdle due to the climate. She becomes aware of the beauty of the hot weather in Paradise as a result of the chilly weather in America. She begins to contrast her new environment with her previous one, and she keeps doing so throughout her time in America.

Summation is a short report of what is presented in the previous chapter. Besides these three major themes discussed, the other themes that can also be chosen to study are poverty, parental neglect, etc. Through this novel we learn about the failure of independent country and how the native itself turned as their enemy and join band with the previous enemy with whom they fought and got independent. And she shows it is the main consequence for the suffering of the people. And the people leave the country as a refugee without fighting against the situation by leaving their country in the hands of destroyer. It shows the lack of patriotism among the people. And we can found this lack of patriotism in many people including the protagonist Darling while her conversation with her friend Chipso, but some people were even left who love their country like Chipso and Bornfree and her movement. And it was illustrated by Bulawayo that she feels we need a constant introduction of new ideas, new personalities, new change, new breed and a new politics to carry as to the new height away from all this destruction. But the novelist never knows when all these happened, so she ends this novel without any solution. And the protagonist in the novel also remains in conflict whether to leave back to homeland for the change or to remain in America like many other immigrants. The story ends with the ambiguity note; it may suggest whether the new change will go to happen through the anger of illegal immigrant Darling towards her conversation with her friend.

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Elements of Diaspora and Identity in Kiran Desai's

The Inheritance of Loss

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

JEYADURGA. S
(REG.NO. 21SPEN09)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled is submitted **Elements of Diaspora and Identity in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*** is 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 and is a work done by JeyaDurga. S. during the year 2022-2023 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR
Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Elements of Diaspora and Identity in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*** is 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.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI


JEYADURGA. S

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Elements of Diaspora and Identity in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*** shows the light of identity crisis and how the characters suffered to achieve their own identity in the society.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the Indian Literature History, the biography of Kiran Desai and various aspects of her novel.

The second chapter **Diasporic Dilemma and Identity Acquisition** focuses on the identity crisis and consider their rootless existence as a kind of exile. The diasporic confusion of the characters in the novel is depicted.

The third chapter **Impact of Westernization** has contributed to the reemergence of a pan-Indian culture on new grounds. The influence of western culture on the characters of the novel is discussed.

The fourth chapter **Post Colonialism** the effects of colonialization become the root causes of the insufficiency of character among local people, and how their eastern character is lost as they try to fit in the western culture.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceeding chapters.

The research has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

The British colonialization in India, planted the seed for writing in English. The seed has now grown into an evergreen tree with luscious fruits, aromatic flowers, and leaves. The fruits are not only consumed by the locals but also by visitors who chewed and digested them. It didn't occur till after all the constant feeding, pruning, and caring. Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao, to name just a few, were among the gardeners who cared for the delicate plant day and night. It is protected in current times by a number of writers who are winning praises and awards all around the world. Indian English Literature is a sincere effort to showcase the increasingly uncommon gems of Indian English-language writing.

Indian writing has evolved from being a distinct and extraordinary native flare-up of geniuses to becoming a new type of Indian culture and voice in which India frequently converses. Since before India's independence, poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists from India have made significant and historic contributions to world literature. But, in recent years, Indian English writing has experienced enormous growth and success on the international stage. In the context of international literature, Indian English literature has gained an independent position. The topics covered in Indian Writing in English cover a wide range.

Recent Indian English fiction has been attempting to represent the Indian experience of the modern problems, even while this literature continues to reflect Indian culture, custom, social values, and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living abroad. There are English and American pundits and critics who enjoy Indian English novels. One of the most noteworthy gifts of English education to India, according to Prof. M. K. Naik,

is prose fiction. Although story-telling originated in India, the novel as we know it today was an import from the west. India has made a sizable contribution to international literature, which is mostly attributable to Indian writers who write in English. Their writings addressed and debated a wide range of topics, including nationalism, the battle for freedom, social realism, personal consciousness, and others. This literary movement established itself as a notable power in world fiction and was strengthened by the massive production of authors. This was accomplished by novelists who wanted to demonstrate their inner creative desires in English, a language that is truly foreign to them. The fact that these novelists overcame the challenges of writing in a foreign tongue and developed a unique style for themselves by learning the nuances of the language and incorporating the hues and flavors of the Indian subcontinent into it is to their credit.

English is not a foreign language to us, as Raja Rao memorably claimed in the preface to his book *Kanthapura* in 1938. However, English had been modified to suit Indian circumstances. Like Sanskrit or Persian before it, it is the language of our intellectual nature, but not of our emotional nature. Every one of us have an innate ability to speak both our native tongue and English. We are not able to write like Englishmen. No, we shouldn't. The fight for independence was a massive and historic movement that affected the entire country and had a significant impact on the literary community's sense of national consciousness. As a result, the clear explanation of the independence movement featured pictures of the awakened Indians who aspired to escape the oppressive and torturous rule of the British. In addition to these insights, the authors were able to spread their point of view, which ultimately assisted in inspiring and directing the general public. Therefore, worries about socio-political issues took

the place of the emphasis on religious aestheticism. The horrific and traumatizing division of 1947 immediately ruined the delight of achieving the lofty feat of achieving independence.

Indian English novels started to make a name for themselves in the international literary scene as writers began to depict the atrocities, tragic consequences, and partition in their works, such as mass migration, careless looting, and ruthless slaughter. The post-Independent writers' subjects included the East-West struggle, multiculturalism, social realism, gender issues, the comedic side of human nature, ecological concerns, magic realism, diasporic works, and similar topics. Only as Indians are, we able to write One day, our mode of expression will prove to be as unique and vibrant as the Irish or the American. The fight for independence was a powerful and historic movement that affected the entire country and had a significant impact on the literary community's sense of national consciousness. The horrors, sad results, and partition were depicted by the authors in their works, which piqued the reader's curiosity and imagination and caused the Indian English novels to start making a name for themselves in the international literary scene. Themes of the post-Independent writers included the East-West divide, multi-culturalism, social realism, gender issues, humorous aspects of human nature, ecological concerns, magic realism, and diasporic literature. In India, English has gained a rare privilege and popularity, particularly among the affluent and middle classes. It is being employed by authors more frequently to give form to the competing difficulties and problems that the human psyche faces. It has undoubtedly developed into a useful vehicle for expressing the writers' natural talents.

However, Indian English writers use it with amazing ease, and their ability to learn a foreign language to express the whims and foibles of a person's awareness in a universe all their own ably supports their expansiveness and vigor as writers. The corpus of work by

Indian writers who write in English language but whose native or co-native tongue may be one of the many Indian language is known as Indian English literature also known as Indian writing in English. Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, and Michael Madhusudan Dutt were all writers who contributed to its early history. In the 1930s, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan all helped Indian English fiction become more well-known. It is sometimes linked to the writings of Indian diaspora people who go on to write English language literature is commonly referred to as Indo-Anglian.

Early Indian writers utilized pure English devoid of any words from their own language to describe an experience that was fundamentally Indian. *Rajmohan's wife* was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and published in 1864, making it the first Indian novel to be written in English. *Govindan Samanta or the history of Bengali Raiyat* by Lal Bihari Dey and *Folk Tales of Bengal: Life's secret* by the same author were both released in 1874 and 1912, respectively. *The young Spanish Maiden* by Bianca the non-fiction body of prose-works in Indian English literature from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are extensive and divers, and it includes letters, diaries, political manifestos, articles, speeches, philosophical works etc. In addition to shaping the future of contemporary Indian, the speeches of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindra Nath, Chittarajan Das, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, and Subhas Chandra Bose, to name a few, also had an impact on the future of the English language in India. Before R.K. Narayan, M.R. Anand, and Raja Rao, Gandhi successfully challenged "the hegemony of standard English" in his 1910 book *Indian Home rule or Hind Swaraj*, which was written in an indigenous version of the English language. Both

Kantha pure and the serpent and the Rope, written by the Indian philosopher and author Raja Rao are uniquely Indian in terms of their storytelling abilities.

The Mahabharata was only ever completely translated into a European language once by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, into English. In addition to writing in Bengali and English, Rabindranath Tagore also translated also his own works in English. The first Indian novelist to receive a literary honour in the US was Dhan Gopal Mukerji. The autobiography of an unknown Indian, published in 1951, by non-fiction author Nirad Chaudhary describes his influenced and life experience. The poet, translator, publisher, and essayist P. Lal established R.K. Narayan made contribution over a long period of time and wrote up till his passing. In the sense that Graham Greene assisted him an English publisher, he was discovered by the author. Until the very end, Greene and Narayan were close friends. Narayan invented the fictional town of Malgudi for his writings, much like how Thomas Hardy utilized Wessex. Some blame Narayan for the parochial, aloof and restricted universe that he built in the face of the changing situation in Indian at the times in which the stories are set. Nonetheless, some people, like Greene, believe that they may vividly comprehended the Indian experience through Malgudi. A notable example of Narayan's writing style is his portrayal of small-town life and its experiences in Swami and friends through the perspective of the charming young protagonist Swaminathan.

Kiran Desai, an Indian -born American author, received the 2006 Booker Prize for her second book, *The Inheritance of loss*, which went on to become a world wide bestseller. Desai led a nomadic life that brought her from New York to Mexico and India as she worked on what would become her second novel. She published *The Inheritance of Loss* after working on it for more then seven years. The novel, which takes place in Indian in the

middle of the 1980s, centers on Cambridge-educated Indian judge who is enjoying his retirement with his granddaughter in Kalimpong, close to the Himalayas, until Nepalese terrorists cause havoc in their lives. The tale also includes the struggle of the judge's cook's son to survive in the united states as an undocumented immigrant. Critics praised *The Inheritance of Loss* as a perspective vividly descriptive critique of immigration, terrorism, and the global economy.

Kiran Desai was a featured author at the first Asia House Festival of Cold Fiction in May 2007. At the American Academy in Berlin, Desai received a 2013 Berlin Prize Fellowship. Desai is a resident of New York. Desai had been working on for more than ten years, according to her, was due out in 2018. As of 2021, Desai has not published any novels since her 2006 second novel, which won the Booker Prize. The American author Kiran Desai is an internationally renowned and prize-winning author who was born in India. She was born in Chandigarh, India, on September 3rd, 1971. She published her debut novel, "*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*," in 1998. *The Inheritance of Loss*, her second book, became a global hit after being written by her. Her two books, "*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*," which won her the Betty Trask Award in 1998, and "*The Inheritance of Loss*," which won her the Booker Award received praise from critics all over the world. She also won the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award for her books. She is an amazing woman who has the ability to perceive and comprehend life in diverse circumstances. Early in life, Kiran Desai experienced a variety of transformations and hardships. Kiran Desai's mother emigrated to the United States with her after her parents got divorced. At the time, Kiran was 16 years old. During Kiran's early years, she first enrolled at Bennington College in the US with the intention of becoming a scientist,

but she changed her mind and instead to concentrate on writing. She continued her schooling at Virginia's Hollins College.

Desai began writing "*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*," her debut book, after finishing the writing programme at Hollins College. Kiran has an incredible passion for writing. The idea that went into the book talks a lot about her ties to the nation and a strong sense of belonging. Her family gave her the best possible support for her work. According to Kiran, her father and brothers had a big influence on her creative output. She claimed in an interview that her father had predicted a Booker Prize. Her father confirmed to her that she had met him before departing for the award event in New York after she had said that she had. She described what took place. She is one of the most well-known female writers in the modern world. Kiran Desai became well-known right once after her 2006 book, "*The Inheritance of Loss*," won the Man Booker Award. Residents of a town in the northeastern Himalayas make up the story's cast of characters. A trade union award for professional writers, illustrators, and literary translators in the United Kingdom, the Society of Authors was founded in 1884. Desai received the "Berlin Prize Fellowship" from the American Academy in Berlin, Germany, in 2012. According to The Economic Times, Kiran Desai was named one of the 20 "most important" Indian women in the world in January 2015.

Kiran Desai, the daughter of author Anita Desai, is a natural storyteller. Her first novel, "*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*," published in 1998, takes readers on a fast-paced tour of a sleepy hamlet in the Indian region of Shahko. "*The Inheritance of Loss*" is a substantially more ambitious book than the preceding one in terms of scope and emotional intensity. Fundamentalism, alienation, globalisation, racial, social, and economic inequality, as well as morality and justice, are just a few of the significant problems it discusses. It takes the reader

on an emotional rollercoaster of negative emotions. The same year that Kiran won the Man Booker Prize for *"The Inheritance of Loss,"* she also won the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. The book is listed on the shortlists for the British Book Awards Decibel Writer of the Year, Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize, and 2007 Orange Prize for Fiction. Kiran Desai imparts the profound significance of writing. Writing contains a lot of feelings and underlying meanings in addition to words. She had a long history of being referred to as the talented offspring of illustrious author Anita Desai.

Two significant historical movements in India must be understood in order to fully appreciate *The Inheritance of Loss* are India's colonial domination by the British and eventual independence are the first. The British sought to break the Portuguese monopoly on trade with Asia at the end of the 16th century. The spice trade was the primary purpose of the British East India Company's charter. The British forces, whose primary responsibility had been to safeguard Company property, joined forces with Mir Jafar, the chief of the Bengali army, to remove Bengal's ruler in the middle of the 18th century. Jafar was then established as the monarch, serving as a British puppet. After realising their might and capacity to subjugate lesser Indian kingdoms, the British did so, and by the middle of the 19th century, they had established direct or indirect control over the entirety of modern-day India.

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was an effort to thwart the company's control over India in 1857. After the British crown officially annexed India and placed it under direct British rule, the Indian Civil Service was established (ICS). The British state officers initially presided over the Indian Civil Service, but in order to win over the people, these individuals were progressively replaced with Indian authorities. The Indian Independence movement, which was popularised by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress Party in the 1920s,

evolved during the next decades from a reform movement. British India was divided into Pakistan and India in 1947 when they awarded Indian independence. As India gained its independence, Jawaharlal Nehru of the Indian National Congress was appointed as its first prime minister. The Gorkhaland movement is the second political movement that informs the novel's background. The British drew India's border in Darjeeling after giving India independence in 1947, which resulted in many Nepalis currently living in India. Subhash Ghisingh started a movement in the 1980s that aimed for the separation of the present Indian state of West Bengal from Gorkhaland. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), a violent organisation founded in 1986, is largely responsible for the political strife in Desai's book *A Bend in the River* by V.S. Naipaul is among Desai's most significant literary precursors and influences in this genre.

Two characters talk about this book early on in *The Inheritance of Loss*, which depicts the tale of post-colonial, traditionalist Africa coming into contact with the contemporary world via an Indian merchant. The characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* blame the author for remaining mired in the past and unable to move past "colonial neurosis." Desai seeks to overcome these identified weaknesses in *A Bend in the River* in *The Inheritance of Loss* by showing how colonialism has evolved into a more specific but occasionally just as harmful kind of oppression and prejudice against Eastern nations as a result of globalisation. Almost 1,200 people died as a result of strikes and protests. One of the book's final episodes is a particularly deadly confrontation on July 27, 1986.

Several of the characters in the book are based on Desai's own family and background. Desai's paternal grandfather, who also served as a civil service judge, travelled from India to Cambridge University as an impoverished student. The lives of Biju and Sai are at the heart of

the narrative. Biju, an illegal immigrant from India who is the son of Sai's grandfather's cook, is an American citizen. Sai, an orphan, lives in the picturesque mountain town of Kalimpong with her cook, maternal grandfather Jemubhai Patel, and their dog Mutt. Her father was a Zoroastrian orphan himself, and her mother was Gujarati. These two points of view are alternated throughout the narration by author Desai. The novel's action takes place in 1986.

In contrast to Sai, an anglicized Indian child living with her grandfather in India, Biju, the other character, is an illegal alien living in the United States and attempting to start a new life for himself. The novel depicts tensions between the past and present as well as internal issues inside India. Desai writes about prospects for financial gain in America, rejection, and also amazement at the English way of life, as well as the squalor of life in India. Desai makes criticisms of prominent Indians who were viewed as being excessively anglicized and unconcerned with traditional Indian ways of life through the critical portrayal of Sai's grandpa, the retired judge.

Jemubhai Patel, a former judge, is so repulsed by Indian practices that he eats chapatis, a wet South Asian flatbread, with a knife and fork. Patel despises all Indians, including his own father, with whom he breaks off contact, and his wife, whom he leaves in his father's house after torturing her. Despite his schooling and assumed mannerisms, Patel is never wholly accepted by the Brits.

The major theme running throughout *The Inheritance of Loss* is one closely related to colonialism and the effects of post-colonialism: the loss of identity and the way it travels through generations as a sense of loss. Some characters snub those who embody the Indian way of life, others are angered by anglicized Indians who have lost their traditions; none is content. The next chapter deals with the sufferings of major characters in the foreign land and

their struggle for acquiring identity in the society. The chapter three highlights the impact of westernization in the novel and its characters. The major characters attracted by the western culture even their home town is India and theirs roots are Indian. The love for acculturation can be evidently seen in the novel.

Chapter Two

Diasporic Dilemma and Identity Acquisition

The word, Diaspora derives from the Greek origin, meaning to “disperse”. Diaspora is the voluntary or forced movement of people from their homelands into the new regions. It has also arrived in a new geographical and cultural context which serves as the meeting place of two cultures; the migrant and the host. The diasporic culture is an amalgamation of the two cultures. A member's adherence to diasporic community is demonstrated by the acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar historical background. Diasporic communities are created out of the merging of narratives about journeys from the old country to the new one. People from the first generation of migrants tend to recall the old country more than the children born to the migrants. A diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies within a smaller geographic locale. Diaspora can also refer to the movement of the population from its original homeland, on its causes such as imperialism, trade or labor migrations, or by the kind of social coherence within the diaspora community and also its ties to the ancestral lands. Some diasporic communities maintain strong political ties with their homeland; and other qualities that are typical in many diasporas as thoughts of return, relationships with other communities in the diaspora and lack of full integration into the host country.

The most recent, especially, significant diaspora, have been those of colonized people back to the metropolitan centers. Now, in such countries as Britain and France, the population is substantial with respect to minorities as diasporic ex-colonial people. In recent times, the notion of ‘diasporic identity’ has been adopted by many writers as a positive affirmation of

their hybridity. The theme of identity in diasporic writings does not merely an exercise in exploring multiplicities of locations but it also highlights the larger socio-political, economic and religious issues as global justice, cultural rights, self-determination and cosmopolitanism. In this connection, the diasporic traces are seen in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. The novel explores identity is a vital part of the personal lives of individuals in a society. It elaborates identity in terms of ethnicity, linguistics, cast system or sectarianism and eventually, it analyzes the fragmented identity of individual's belonging to the middle and lower class of the society.

The Inheritance of Loss addresses modern issues like sexism, racism, regional conflicts, economic inequality, class distinctions, fanaticism, terrorism, globalisation, multiculturalism, identity crisis, and alienation, but it also focuses on the low-class immigrants who live miserable lives in America and are treated with contempt. Desai makes a wonderful effort to address the root of pain in contemporary society. She frequently combines cultural settings to produce a complicated and perplexing backdrop for her characters. They are unable to describe themselves in a different, more positive way because they cling to a dubious or inaccurate identity. In India, western culture continues to predominate over Indian culture. In the days of colonialism, Indians who embraced the cultural hierarchy gave the impression that they much admired western culture. In the personalities of Jemubhai, Biju, and several more other characters, she delicately portrays this. He is raised in a colonial project and mindlessly adopts British culture. It depicts characters who are the subject of cultural conundrums, which ultimately cause them to feel alone and have an identity crisis

The storylines of Sai and Biju, who are both chasing an illusion, are intertwined in this book. Sai has her first feelings for her Nepali tutor Gyan, while Biju drifts from kitchen to cuisine in grimy Manhattan. Biju's fixation with leaving India in search of a better life serves

as a metaphor for Indian passion. Several characters in the book express a desire to leave their home nation because they think that life there may be safer, better, and more prosperous than it is in their own. The cook takes his son to America with his limited resources in the hopes of providing him with a brighter future. Biju aspires to settle down in a foreign country. He is only dimly aware that New York, a very large metropolis with buildings and cars and ample food for everyone, has limited space for immigration. Even Mrs. Sen, the judge's next-door neighbor, proudly claims that her child lives in the best nation in the entire world. Biju joins a throng of Indians rushing to get to the visa line at the American Embassy in New Delhi and dreams about the American Life as,

Biggest pusher, first place; how self-contested and smiling he was, he dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of a cat. I'm civilized, sir, ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, mam. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners, looked back at his own countrymen and women, immediately glazed over, and went dead. (Desai 183)

With the character of Biju, who longs for a better life and, of course, a Green Card in the US, the author explores the themes of dislocation, nostalgia, desire for home, and longing for identity. But even after receiving a visa, he is treated with extreme disgrace. Even the pronouncements made at the American consulate were beyond his comprehension. As a result, even before leaving the country, he feels alienated. Biju feels alienated in the host nation due to his race and color, just as the Judge does England.

The main character, Biju, fights for a secure identity while also dealing with numerous cultural problems. His predicament is even more pitiful because, unlike the Judge, he is an illegal immigrant. His basic rights as a worker are violated because he is there unlawfully. Biju

suddenly finds himself in a new universe, one in which compassion, empathy, and peaceful coexistence do not appear to exist. He spends his time switching jobs, putting up with horrible conditions, and evading American immigration authorities. He is compelled to work for extremely little pay and endures tremendous servitude from his employers since he is an illegal immigrant. Biju once makes a pitiful request of his present boss, Harish-Harry, to sponsor him for a Green Card since he is tired of the cruelty of his previous employers: "Without us living like pigs, says Biju, what business do You have? Paying us nothing because you know we can't accomplish anything and making us work all day and night since we are illegal are how you get your money. Why not support us so we can get green cards?" (Desai 188). Biju's longing for getting visas and visiting India pictures in his mind whenever he thinks of his home town as,

In spite of his desperation for a green card, Biju's heart is breaking for India and its comforting familiarity. He now has a significant gap in him caused by America. When Biju contacts his father in India on the phone, he vividly imagines the setting of Kalimpong, where his father resides. He can "picture all its many textures, the plumage of banana, the harsh spear of the cactus, the delicate motions of ferns," and "feel the pulse of the jungle, smell the humid air, the green-black lushness. (Desai 230)

He finally returns to India after robbing him of everything he had worked for. He returned to his home in the same undressed state that he arrived. The course of events is complete. He has travelled, but it has just depleted his fundamental resources. Biju realises towards the book's conclusion that he is a citizen of the nation whose influence he had questioned. Both Sai and the cook's son, Biju, inherit loss as a result of giving up what may

have been won, but that loss will turn out to be a long-lasting gain of enlightening knowledge. Despite their efforts at acculturation, the Judge and Biju remain were both perceived as outsiders in the fringe of the host country. The complex situation of Sai and her grandfather, who are foreigners in their own country because of their riches, education, and ability to communicate in their native tongue, is contrasted with Biju's negotiation of his identity as an illegal immigrant in a foreign city. Biju is a representation of the young, irrational guys from the Third World who, in their unwavering quest for financial success, neglect their own social mores and culture. Desai investigates the suffering of immigrants and universal feelings via BijJemubhai Popular Patel, a retired judge with a Cambridge education who resides in Kalimpong, experienced cultural problems and even lost his identity while travelling. He prefers to live according to British culture; hence he struggles to break free of the mental chains of conventional Gujarati and Indian thought. Between his days in a foreign nation and his slow and routine life in the dilapidated Cho Oyu house, he seems to be a man who is caught, caught between the past and the present.

According to Kiran Desai, immigrants held on to their cultural norms and religious beliefs so they "may not slip through the dirty divides between nations" (Desai 136). It's interesting to note that Biju, like many others, had fantasized of leaving India because of its sluggishness and lack of possibilities. She serves as an example of the negative immigration experiences. In his early years, Biju works as a server in New York. Nonetheless, he is alarmed by the plight of immigrants. He becomes overwhelmed by his role as a runaway, nostalgic memories, and racial persecution; he soon loses faith in the West Racial prejudice aggravates the traumatic experience of immigrants. He learns firsthand how Third World residents are exploited and degraded in the West through his interactions with working conditions and

immigration restrictions. But the cook was unaware of the specifics of Biju's foreign employment. He was happy with his son's accomplishments, not comprehending his true state at the time. Biju, who was caught up in this common situation, lacked both standing and an independent personality. He had to move from one job to another like a man on the run. Biju quickly came to the conclusion that those living in Third World nations were fighting an uphill battle to survive. Biju felt utterly alone while travelling because of his alienation, estrangement, shame, and bone-chilling cold.

The characters from *The Inheritance of Loss*, Jemubhai Patel's father, Popular Patel and his father-in-law, Bonabhai, Jemubhai Patel, Panela, Nimi, Lola, Noni, Mrs. Sen, Father Booty, Uncle Potty, etc. all generic characters, reflect the pain of transition and the younger generation includes Sai, Biju, Gyan, Pixie, MunMun, Harish Harry, Saeed etc. belong to the different cultural background. Nearly every character in the book struggles to find their own identity and has seen significant cultural change. Jemubhai has virtually nothing left and has forgotten who he is. Sai, his granddaughter encounters a dilemma regarding her identity. She speaks English and celebrates Christmas while she is a Hindu girl who is completely unaware of her religion. Biju suffers the embittered feelings of loss during his stay at America where he loses his dream of success and happiness in life. The cook has lost his love and association with his native culture as he feels regret for not being able to serve a white man like his father.

The Inheritance of Loss supports Kiran Desai's analytical and pragmatic approach to the matrix of immigrant experiences rather than being sentimental. The concept of establishing spaces in other cultures is a complicated phenomenon, and its numerous perspectives cannot be evaluated within the sympathetic socio-cultural dynamics. Assimilation and acceptance of variety are therefore crucial. As a result, an identity crisis exists constantly. People go to

America from all over the world to pursue their aspirations for a better life. She illustrates how some Indians degrade themselves in order to gain passage to America. They act like beggars and fabricate documents in order to obtain a tourist visa. They are willing to take the risk of dying and endure various forms of humiliation, but what they actually gain from the arduous voyage is the loss of freedom and human dignity. Desai's story sheds light on the shadow that lies behind affluence and advancement in the age of globalisation. The novel is summarized in Dr. Bhatt's compilation as follows:

In a generous vision, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, Desai presents the human quandaries facing a panoply of characters. This majestic novel of a busy, grasping time – every moment holding out the possibility of hope or betrayal – illumines the consequences of colonialism and global conflicts of religion, race and nationality. (Desai 161)

In the novel, Gyan points out Sai's belonging, as she does not belong to Indian culture, but at the same time is not part of the British culture either as Gyan Desai's message is perhaps that one should constantly learn from mistakes and that life is still worth living despite all of its hardships and difficulties. The material wealth and comforts that the west appears to give frequently draw people in. Although one's home country may be backward, impoverished, and illiterate, one can certainly still feel a feeling of identity and belonging there. She had effectively outlined the challenges encountered by her characters in their wish to find a green pasture in a foreign nation. Uprooting from one's native land and re-routing in an alien land is a painful process.

The chapter two of the novel describes the formation of Indian Diasporas. It presents the diasporic formation of the characters, judge and Sai. The diasporic thought of the judge

exists in alienated form by focusing on three key aspects; mentally paralytic, emotionally blocked and spiritually dead. However, the formation of diaspora of Sai is because of her British education. The colonial education makes her lose her native identity. Hence, they are keeping hybrid identity in the formation of the Indian diaspora. The chapter three describes the formation of diasporas in New York. This chapter is composed in three parts. The first part describes the formation of the Diasporic character, Biju, an illegal immigrant in New York. The second part portrays the formation of the diasporic person, Saeed. The third part delineates the formation of the diaspora Harish-Harry, a lawful permanent immigrant. Through the analysis the three types of immigrants, the researcher discusses that they should keep in-between space, hybrid identity in the globalized world. Biju is the son of the cook who leaves India in hope of better life in America finds out that he is not able to understand the foreign culture and, in the end, he is relieved back to India, where he despites his imperfections, finds security in well-known habits and customs.

The story is set in a small Indian town Kalimpong in North-East Himalayas where the author grown up. The novel shows not only the lives of the main characters but also the development of the region with growing social unrests of Nepali nationalists who are a large diaspora living in the region, and also the impact of such changes on the inhabitants of the region. The beginning of the novel introduces a retired judge who lives with his grand-daughter and his cook. The judge is an old man who was as a young bright man sent to Britain to become a judge to serve the British government. However, the British society of 1940's was not prepared to encounter foreign culture and young Jemubhai Patel had to face racist behavior which had devastating effect on his self-esteem. For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things,

and elderly ladies, even the hapless blue-haired, spotted, faces like collapsing pumpkins moved over when he sat next to them in the bus, so he knew that whatever they had, they were secure in their conviction that it was not even remotely as bad as what he had.

believes she will not be accepted by it. The cook, who is actually called by his name only once at the end of the novel, on the other hand represents a person from a lower class that follows Indian traditions but sees the Western world as something of a higher standard and is proud of his son Biju, who lives in New York:

the cook had thought of ham roll ejected from a can and fried in thick ruddy slices, of tuna fish souffle, Khari biscuit pie, and was sure that since his son was cooking English food, he had a higher position than if he were cooking Indian (Desai 17).

The sense of displacement is caused by loss of cultural connections with the place which further causes the loss of one's identity. This novel demonstrates this problem in the character of Judge who does experience of dislocation twice and both times he has a great influence on his behavior. The first time, the judge's experiences of dislocation happen when his parents decide to send him to England so he is able to work for the British government in India, this happens during the Raj period in early the 1940's. During his journey and his stay in Cambridge, he experiences a variety of events which shape his diasporic self and identity. From the beginning, he experiences many racial prejudices and he gradually starts to believe in them and these beliefs turn into his self-hatred:

He grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him found his own skin odd colored, his own accent peculiar. He forgot how to laugh, could barely

managed to lift his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth, because he couldn't bear anyone to see his gums, his teeth. They seemed too private. In fact, he could barely let himself peep out of his clothes for fear of giving offence. ... To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight may reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly (Desai 40).

The displacement and lack of cultural understanding caused the judge to live a very lonely life. He had no cultural connections with Britain and since he was not accepted for his otherness, his loss of self-esteem caused him also to lose his self-respect. He turned all his hopes to his studies but when he came to the Indian Civil Service entrance exam he was only ridiculed by the examiners. Later on, he found out that his performance was not sufficient to qualify for the ICS. However, since there were "attempts to Indianize the service". (Desai 117) and he was admitted at the end. Even though this event was very important for him, it did not improve his self-esteem as he still referred to himself as "one" when he was saying to his landlord "One is done. One is finally through". (Desai 117) After being accepted for the program he moved to a new boarding house with other students where he met his only friend in England: Bose. They had similarly inadequate clothes, similarly for lonely empty rooms, and similarly poor native's trunks; "...a look of recognition had passed between them at first sight, but also the assurance that they would not reveal one another's secrets, not even to each other" (Desai 118). As the judge met someone of the same cultural background, he immediately found a bond with his on the ground of the same cultural understanding.

Consciously, the judge began to adopt the new British culture and by doing so he began to consider himself more important than any other thing. He envied the English. He loathed Indians, worked as an Englishman with the passion of hatred and for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone--English and Indians, both (Desai 119). This illustrates his belonging to somewhere else; to find his place in the society but at the same time he does not identify himself with the society which does not accept him. He hates Indians because being Indian caused him great suffering in Britain so his working "at being English with the passion of hatred" (Desai 119) is really his attempt to belong somewhere, to merge into the society, to suppress his exoticism. Unfortunately, this effort only causes him to be hated by Indians as they sense his attempt to be superior to them and also by the British who do not fully accept him as he is still Indian. On his journey home "He sat alone because he still felt ill at ease in the company of the English" (Desai 119). This line is just evidence that even though he tries to become British he does not feel to be one. However, upon his arrival home he finds out that he does not belong to his culture anymore either. As "He was a foreigner – a foreigner – every bit of him screamed" (Desai 166-167). This feeling causes a great confusion to him. When his wife, is out of curiosity, steals his powder puff, which exhilarated his family, his confusion turns into hatred, as "any cruelty to her became irresistible, he would teach her the same lesson of loneliness and shame he had learned himself" (Desai 170). His cruelty is not restricted only to his wife but also to his family whom he refuses when they ask him for help. The clash of identity made the characters of the novel face internal conflict. The loss of identity transfers from one generation as a major loss. The next chapter analyses the influence of western culture among characters in the novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Chapter Three

Impact of Westernization

The main characters the judge, Sai, and Biju live in two worlds: the Indian class system and the Western world. The novel highlights the differences and similarities between the Nepali immigrants in India and Indian immigrants in the USA. The story of *The Inheritance of Loss* is about a teenage Indian girl, Sai, living with her Cambridge-educated Anglophile grandfather, a retired judge, in the town of Kalimpong a small town in northern India beside the Himalayas. Sai is the exact replica and the living personification of rootlessness in the contemporary society. When Sai's parents' love affair came to the notice of the Judge, Sai's grandfather he simply disconnected his relationship with his daughter. Her father an aspiring astronaut, who was about to be the first Indian to fly into space was killed in a road accident in Russia, making her an orphan. Before living wither grandfather, Sai lived in a convent school. Her convent made her a westerner and a foreigner in her own land. At the convent school, she learned English as well as Western values and appreciation of all things English. She is strong and ambitious.

Sai learns about her privileged life and she feels guilty. She falls in love with Gyan, her mathematics tutor, though he is from a lower class. But Gyan, the descendant of a Nepal Gurkha mercenary, hates the bourgeois life style of the judge and Sai. He considers Cho Oyu, the house of the judge as symbol of colonial hangover. He was astonished and surprised the way Sai was keen to celebrate Christmas. He burst out one day, "Why do you celebrate Christmas? You are Hindus and you don't celebrate Id or Guru Nanak's birthday or even Durga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New year." (Desai 163) To him Sai happens to be "a reflection of all the contradictions around her." (Desai 262) He thought that some people like Sai and the judge even after

independence still under the influence of colonial rule. He is caught between Sai's Love, but finally felt his association with a group of ethnic Nepalese insurgents is more important than his passion for Sai. The angry departure of Gyan indicates the permanent loss of Sai's love and also lover. Desai in a parallel narrative brings out the predicaments of Biju, the son of Sai's grandfather's cook, an illegal immigrant in New York. Most of the time, besides survival, Biju's main challenge is dodging the authorities, moving from one ill-paid job to another. His utmost desire in life is to obtain the green card in America. Desai deftly shifts between the first world and the third exposing the pain of exile, the uncertainties of post-colonialism and the aspiration for a better life.

Most of Desai's characters have been stuck by alienation or dislocation as mentioned earlier. "He retreated into a solitude. The solitude became a habit and it crushed him into a shadow" (Desai 39). The judge becomes a victim of double consciousness which means division of identity into several facets. "He envied the English He loathed Indians" (Desai 119). The Judge looks at the English as someone superior and this attitude puts him in a postcolonial dilemma that aggravates his ambivalent nature.

Jemubhai takes revenge on his early confusions and embarrassments in the name of keeping up standards. He wants to keep his accent behind the mask of silence. He works at being English with fear and hatred, but he wants to maintain a false pride throughout his life by concealing his real identity. The acceptance of cultural hierarchy leads to some enduring personal dilemmas resulting in identity crisis. He follows the British culture blindly. He gets recruited as an Indian Civil Service member and tries to become an official keeping up the British standards. It clearly shows his mindset that Britain represents a society superior to that of India. Homi Bhabha maintains that the powerful influence of a different culture will cause tension between the desire

of identity stasis and the demand for a change in identity; and mimicry represents as a compromise to this tension (Bhaba, 86). 'Mimicry of the center', as Ashcroft claims, is "the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become 'more English than the English'" (Ashcroft, 4). The same is the case with the judge. He studies hard only to get more acquainted with Western culture and tries to adopt the British standards in his daily life. He takes tea every afternoon, tries to speak English like a native speaker, covers his brown skin color with the powderpuff. He is always in a dilemma, a struggle of identity. All of his efforts to find a place among those who are in the center are futile. Though he holds a highly prestigious position like ICS, he has to work only to reinforce the domination of Britain.

Sai is also a victim of circumstances. She lost her parents in an accident in Russia when she was in a convent in Darjeeling. So, she has already tasted bitter feelings of separation and displacement. She arrives at the house of her grandfather, a retired Judge whom she has never met before. Sai's desire to achieve a kind of emotional bond with her grandfather, also fails, for he himself is displaced emotionally and physically. The tension between wanting to belong to his own native land and a foreign culture at the same time, is the usual post-colonial dilemma. The first evening when Sai was at Cho Oyu at her grandfather's home "she had a fearful feeling of having entered a space so big it reached both backward and forward" (Desai 34). Desai often uses the binary opposites like arrivals and departures moving in and moving out, hope and hopelessness all part of the postcolonial dilemma. Sai's displacement from the comforts of a convent school in Darjeeling to the lush, misty Himalayan region Kalimpong in North Eastern India, where a growing Nepalese insurgency is about to unravel her life further, brings a lot of havoc in her life.

In the case of Gyan, Sai's mathematics tutor, it is dislocation from Nepal that makes him ambivalent. He also faces the problem of identity as he loves Gorkhaland but does not fight for it. His love for Sai is also ambivalent and uncertain. The love between Sai and Gyan though flowers in the beginning, it dies when Gyan joins the insurgents and stops coming to see her. Eventually he felt that Sai is more English than native. He found out that she could speak only English and pidgin Hindi. She is confined to only high-class social circle. Her inability to eat food with hands, her fancy for English vegetables peas and beans and her fear of Indian vegetables makes him hate her. Her visits to temple are only to appreciate their architectural elegance and Gyan thinks that she should be ashamed of for her lack of nativity. Later they get alienated from each other because Gyan didn't like her colonial mannerisms.

Desai throws light on larger questions of rights and identities including those of women. She remarks on the subjection of women in India with special reference to the shattered relationship between the judge and his wife, Nimi. She has spent nineteen years within the confines of her father's compound. The judge always prefers to be treated like a Westerner. He left India to study in England when he was a young man. When he returned to India, he became a foreigner. But the future judge as student was isolated in racist England. But on his return to India, he finds himself despising his apparently backward Indian wife.

He wants to teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame that he had learned for himself. The anglophile judge could not digest the truth that his wife couldn't speak English. He forced her to learn it and when she learned no English, he thought it is out of her stubbornness. He used to ask her different names of English food and when she couldn't pronounce the name of the food, she was denied to eat it. Desai wants to demonstrate through the character of the judge, that the ridiculous Indians who couldn't be freed of what their broken souls learned became

self – haters. Most of the people in the postcolonial world lived with a clumsy promise of modernity.

The shared historical legacy and a common experience link these apparently contrasting characters. Desai refers to centuries of subjection by the economic and cultural power of the West. She felt certain moves made long ago had produced all of them. The judge's past is reflected through the stream of consciousness and flash back techniques. The judge always prefers to be treated like a Westerner. He left India to study in England when he was a young man. When he returned to India, he became a foreigner. Though he appears to be an Indian, behaves like a Westerner. The future judge as a student was isolated in racist England. But on his return to India, he finds himself despising his apparently backward Indian wife. "He would teach her the same lessons of loneliness and share he had learned himself". (Desai 170).

Kiran Desai finds how the poor and the jobless migrate to the western world for a better life but suffer a lot due to racial prejudice, exploitation, social oppression, alienation, displacement and disillusionment. Biju goes to America to escape the class system because he was born into the lower, or servant class in India. He has expectations that in the Western world he will be treated differently. However, he soon learns that America has its own type of confinement called economic enslavement. During his stay in the United States, Biju does not abandon his Indian identity. Biju has seen the underground society in the basements of America and has a more objective knowledge to assess the two cultures. His life in America illustrates the dismaying life of the illegal immigrants and their distressing experiences in a peculiar environment. Desai analyses in her novel how even in the post-colonial times people from colonized countries face destitutions in a country like United States which is renowned for democracy.

Biju landed in America to fulfill his father's dream with fake documents. The novel depicts Biju's fondness of modernity but the West reveals to him the disorderly and the uncivilized side. Biju is amazed to see Indians ordering beef in New York restaurants. This makes him disgusting towards this disorderly situation: "One should not give up one's religion, the principles of one's parents and their parents before them... You had to live according to something" (Desai 143). This repulsion is a little more obvious when later Biju becomes aware of his exploitation. He shows his anger to the boss but, he was fondness of modernity in the western society. In a foreign land he faces ill treatment and insult as an illegal immigrant. He was also paid every meager salary in spite of working for long hours. As an illegal intruder he moved from restaurant to restaurant for better pay and respect. Still he aspired for a green card though his dream did not become a reality.

Kiran Desai describes vividly the cognizant of socially and historically significant events taking place in the postcolonial era in her novel. She brings out the way insurgency Kalimpong has led to displacement of several people, and also throws light on how in the postcolonial situation the marginalized or the oppressed become the aggressor. In *the Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai describes the socio-political situation in Kalimpong due to the effect of colonization. This kind of situation influenced half-educated, young men like Gyan to take part in local political agitations in their search for better living conditions. He joins an ethnic nationalist movement mainly to vent his rage and frustration. "Old hatreds are endlessly retrievable," Desai reminds us, and they are "purer . . . because the grief of the past was gone. Just the fury remained, distilled, liberating." (Desai 81.)

Desai's novel showcases the view that multiculturalism is restricted to the cosmopolitan cities of the West but it could not provide any solution to the existing causes of extremism and

violence in the developing countries like India. It doesn't even suggest, whether economic globalization can pave the path to prosperity for the downtrodden. Desai's main idea is that profit could be distributed among nations, working together. The major theme running throughout the novel is the one closely related to the effects of colonialism and the scenario in post-colonialism period, the loss of identity and the way it travels through generations as a bitter sense of loss. Desai highlights most of the outstanding issues of contemporary society in her novel. Thus, Kiran Desai's self-confidence, committed views on terrorism and weaknesses of a poverty-stricken society are candid and bold. In addition, she focuses her attention on alienation, cultural clash, displacement, exile, exploitation, economic inequality, fundamentalism, globalisation, hybridity, insurgency, and immigration, loss of identity, loneliness, multiculturalism, poverty and racial-discrimination.

Kiran Desai brings the new idea for her novel by exposing the socio-political conflict Kalimpong. She narrates the insurgency activities in Kalimpong where the Indian Nepalese demanded a separate state for themselves during the 1980s. The Gurkha National Liberation Front has been formed mainly by the Indian Nepalese youth who are fed up with their minority status in a place where they are in the majority. They want their own country to manage their own affairs. The Gorkhas consider that it is their birthright to fight for a separate homeland as they and their forefathers have sacrificed a lot for India. Desai has highlighted this complex picture of terrorism and political self-deprivation as the worst political turmoil in the post-modern era. One of the major concerns in postcolonial literature is the problem of displacement and its consequence resulting in the loss of home. Uprooting from one's own culture and land, and the agonies of re-routing in an alien land are depicted in many postcolonial works.

The characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* often face the problem of identity and alienation, and become frustrated at the end. Even when they come back to their own country, like

the Judge in the novel, they develop a sense of distrust and anger. They remain in a state of confusion from which they find it difficult to come out. *The Inheritance of Loss* is a chronicle of loss that one has to face due to circumstances of one's life. Most of the characters, especially the chief characters have to face losses in life due to their diasporic existence. First of all, Sai, who has suffered the loss of her parents' death at an early age, is also bereft of love and affection from her grandfather, the Judge. The love story of Sai and her Nepali mathematics tutor, Gyan, suffers a blow with the Nepal uprising.

As a post-colonial novelist, Desai has depicted losses not only at the personal level but also in the larger ambit of the society. The novel even pictures the poverty-stricken tribal people of Zanzibar. In fact, poverty itself is a great loss of life. The natives of poor nations are also at a loss as they face poverty and ill-treatment in another country. The cook is badly treated by the Judge only because he is poor. All that he gets in lieu of his twenty-four hours of service is the little money that he spends on himself. The cook sometimes even had to tolerate the Judge's ill treatment. Once he grumbled that it is terrible to be a poverty-stricken man.

Loss can also be seen in Lola's life. She lives a quiet life with her sister Noni, but the tumult that arises in Kalimpong leaves a lasting impression on her. She mourns the loss of her husband. The Gurkha insurgents attack, Mon Ami and her property. They also humiliate her. Father Booty, another victim, is a Swiss, yet he regards himself as an Indian foreigner. His property has been confiscated by a Nepali doctor as Father Booty's visa is expired.

In this novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, young people lose their sense of inheritance, belonging, their culture and their original home. In fact, the loss is not only faced by one generation but by three generations. Longing is the emotion that the characters cherish in this novel. They

long for home, they long for love, and they long for acceptance but they could not fulfill any of them.

Multiculturalism is a characteristic feature of Indian society. Most of Desai's characters belong to different cultural backgrounds. She maintains cordial attitude to all cultures but mildly exposes the vanity and hypocrisy embedded in their attitude to life. Immigration is one of the most striking problems. Most of the Indians and the Third World Citizens face such problems in Europe and America. Biju, Saeed, Harish Harry, Saran, Jeeva, Rishi, Mr.Lalkaka and thousands of Africans, Latin Americans and Asians working in America and Europe experience a bitter struggle as immigrants. In fact, Kiran Desai has a passion for reforming the system to dispel the hardships of the migrant people. It is significant that the description of nature and landscape occupies a large chunk of the novel.

What Desai ultimately highlights is not just individual experiences, but rather the relations of recognition among immigrants, exiles, and foreigners. *The Inheritance of Loss* tells the story of two different kinds of Diasporas, namely the exploited immigrants in New York City and an aging, elitist cluster of Indians settled after retirement in a hill town. The characters belonging to both these types face the challenges of a globalized society that is fraught with increasingly separatist and nationalistic agendas. Desai's novel describes human migration and shows that it has always been part of the human experience. Her realistic portrayal of life in the two continents, diasporic on multiple levels, demonstrates a deeper understanding of the human condition. part of the human experience. Her realistic portrayal of life in the two continents, diasporic on multiple levels, demonstrates a deeper understanding of the human condition.

The Inheritance of Loss ridicules globalisation and its consequences. Images and descriptions which make a mockery of modernity abound throughout the novel. Biju, when he

reached India is immediately engulfed by the local eruptions of rage and frustration from which he had been physically remote in New York. For him and the others, Desai suggests, withdrawal or escape but they are no longer possible. She makes her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, a platform to pose questions on post-colonialism and globalisation. The novel has validation as its epicenter. Sometimes it's the West which is trying to globalize its ideals as in the case of the judge and Sai and his Westernized neighborhood. The loss of Father Booty, another important character in the novel, epitomizes the paradox of globalism. He has lived in India for forty-five years, and is a stranger to Europe. But he is not an Indian citizen--he is a visitor who has never applied for Indian citizenship and even has forgotten to renew his working permit. But he is a displaced person ordered into exile to his native country.

The Inheritance of Loss abounds in themes that make it an interesting social reading. As Desai is an eminent immigrant writer, her themes are of human deprivation, trauma, identity and indifference. In this novel she tried to dive deep into the sea of human psychology. Carmen Wickramanayake points out that most people envision relocation as a painful choice between assimilation and nativism. Desai explores both sides of the issue and ultimately challenges the desirability of assimilation and the wisdom of maintaining difference, inhabiting the margins, and avoiding, unapologetic participation in the Newworld. The novel unravels an unseen sensitive truth and fate of the people born to experience modern life as a continuous struggle while balancing equally the dignity and justice of their roots and their present existence.

Kiran Desai with her expatriate experience can comprehend the agony and suffering one needs to undergo when one attempts to settle down in an alien land. She believed that racial discrimination is an outcome of some selfish people's political ideology. With her vision and social consciousness Desai suggests that universal tolerance and mutual respect for one another can

certainly bring universal peace and harmony. *The Inheritance of Loss* highlights the basic human values like compassion and tolerance, while reverence surpasses the cultural, political and religious limitations. It is a thought-provoking novel. It clearly shows that Desai's critical intelligence is a part of her erudition and experience. It is evident that her novel encourages plurality of approaches to problems globalisation, modernity and value systems. The following chapter focusses on the post-colonial aspect of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Chapter Four

Post Colonialism

The emphasis on the effects of human control and exploitation of colonised people do their territories, postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural, political, and economic legacies of colonialism and imperialism. A critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and rhetoric of (mostly European) imperial power. There are many different approaches to postcolonialism, hence theorists might not always concur on a set of definitions. On a basic level, anthropological study can aim to get a better understanding of colonial life from the perspective of the colonized people, presuming that the colonial rulers are unreliable narrators. Postcolonialism looks more closely at the social and political power dynamics that support colonialism and neocolonialism, as well as the social, political, and cultural narratives that surround the colonizer and the colonized. In addition to using examples from anthropology, historiography, political science, philosophy, sociology, and human geography, this approach may also intersect with studies of contemporary history.

Colonialism is a loaded term that can apply to either a political system or the philosophy or worldview that underlies that system, postcolonial studies may occasionally be preferred to postcolonialism. Instead of simply identifying a system that follows colonialism, as the prefix post- may imply, postcolonialism (i.e., postcolonial studies) typically constitutes an ideological response to colonialist philosophy. Since postmodernism is a reaction to modernism, postcolonialism might be seen as a reaction to or departure from it. In fact, the word "post colonialism" was inspired by postmodernism, with which it shares several ideas and strategies.

All the characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* suffer from a sense loss and ambivalence that eventually leads them to question their identity. Jemubhai Patel, the former judge, is an

embittered person and he often lives in the past. In a flashback, we learn that when he was a young man, he was sent to Cambridge by his family to study law. But, in England, he was ridiculed for his accent. Young English girls held their nose as he passed insisting, he reeked of curry- this rejection fueled in his soul, a shame and dislike for his heritage, his culture and the color of his skin. "He retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow" (Desai 39). The judge, in fact, becomes a victim of "double consciousness"- a term coined by W.E. B. Dubois and used often in postcolonial discourses. "He envied the English---He loathed Indians" (Desai 119). The judge looks at the English as someone superior and this attitude of 'colonial hangover' puts him in diasporic dilemma that aggravates his ambivalent nature.

In an article "Solid Knowledge and Contradiction in Kiran Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*", David Wallace Spielman argues that the characters in the novel employ two main strategies- suppression and ambivalence- in order to protect their solid knowledge about what they believe to be true, from the confusing effect of contradictions (Desai 75). Therefore, Jemubhai prefers suppression in order to maintain his version of truth- the supremacy of the English culture: "To suppress his Indian past and elevate himself above others in his community, the Judge holds fast to what he has learned of performing English identity" (Desai 77).

In the case of Gayan, it is dislocation from Nepal that makes him ambivalent. He also faces problem of identity as he loves Gurkha land but does not fight for it. His love for Sai is also ambivalent and uncertain. Sai is also a victim of circumstances. She lost her parents in an accident in Russia. Her father was a space scientist, living in Russia, while she herself was living in Darjeeling in a convent. So, from the outset she has tasted bitter feelings of separation

and displacement. Romantically she decided that love must reside in the gap between desire and

fulfillment, in the lack, not the contentment. Love was the ache, the anticipation, the retreat, everything around it, but the emotion itself (Desai 2-3).

Sai arrives at the house of her grandfather, the retired judge, whom she has never met before. Her displacement from the comforts of a convent school in Darjeeling to the lush, misty Himalayan region of Kalimpong in North Eastern India, where growing Nepalese insurgency is about to unravel her life further, brings a lot of havoc in her life. The love between Sai and Gyan,

her math's tutor, though flowers in the beginning; it dies when Gyan joins the insurgents and stops coming to see her. Sai eventually goes to confront him, but the meeting ends in disappointment with the result that both of them get alienated from each other.

Sai desire to achieve a kind of emotional bond with her grandfather, the retired judge, also fails, for he himself is displaced emotionally and physically- the tension between wanting to belong to his own native land and a foreign culture, the usual post-colonial/diasporic dilemma. The first evening when Sai was at Cho Oyu at her grandfather's home "she had a fearful feeling of having entered a space so big it reached both backward and forward" (Desai 34). Desai often uses such binary opposites like arrivals and departures move in and move out, hope and hopelessness- all part of the diasporic problem.

The displacement of Biju, the son of the cook is more poignant than any other characters in the novel. He manages to get a tourist visa. Biju, who joins a crowd of Indians scrambling to reach the visa counter at the US embassy, is one of the most troublesome scenes in the novel. Eventually, Biju becomes an illegal immigrant in New York, does some odd jobs,

“Biju changed jobs like a fugitive on the run” (Desai 3). On the contrary, his father, back in India thinks that he is doing well and is proud of the fact that his son is in America. “He works for the Americans; the cook has reported the content of the letter to everyone in the market” (Desai 14). The irony of the situation is that for Biju America is a world of frustration and hopelessness. He was taken to America as a mechanic but ended up as a waiter in a restaurant. His friend Sayeed has a comfortable life in America. He has not been affected by the frustrations of an immigrant. While Biju is a lost man in the new world, Sayeed is very adaptable and can lead a life without any qualms. Biju’s longing for home is continuous from the beginning, while Sayeed never thinks of leaving America.

Biju was so restless sometimes; he could barely stand to stay in his skin. After work, he crossed the river, not to the part where the dogs played madly in hanky-sized squares, with their owners in the fracas picking up feces, but to where, after singles, night at the synagogue, long-skirted and sleeved girls walked in an old-fashioned manner with the old-fashioned looking men wearing black suits and hats as if they have to keep eir past with them at all times so as not to lose it. He walked to the far end where the homeless man often slept in a dense chamber of green that seemed to grow not so much from soil as from a fertile city crowd. A homeless chicken also lived in the park. Every now and then Biju saw it scratching in a homey manner in the dirt and felt aping for village life (Desai 81).

The two characters Sayeed and Biju are juxtaposed together to show the difference between two types of immigrants. Sayeed does not react to Biju with suspicion or hatred, like the Pakistanis that Biju had worked with. America is a ‘melting pot’ for Sayeed. But he is also

on the horns of a dilemma as there are conflicts in his mind about his identity. He explains why he does not eat pork, "First I am Muslim, then I am Zanzibari, then I will be American" (Desai 136). He is, in fact, not a true Muslim. He marries a woman just to get a green card. He, then tells Biju that he has met another woman, visiting from Zanzibar, whom he intends to marry-- "in four years I get my green card and ---out there---I get divorced and I marry for real" (Desai 318). He is prepared to go to any extreme to get a green card even at the cost of his self-respect.

Desai compares Biju and Sayeed to show how they handle the same dilemmas of an immigrant in an alien land. Sayeed seems to be more practical while Biju is very sensitive to such changes and resists the Western culture in which he is trapped in and longs for his home back in India. Desai seems to suggest that people like Biju faces repeated miseries and misfortunes and those like Sayeed learn to survive in a foreign culture without any qualms. Even the minor characters like Noni, Lola, Uncle Potty, Princess Mrs. San and Munmun are all exiles who are inheritors of loss. They are all affected by a sort of imbalance by leading a dual life which profoundly affects their thoughts and feelings. All are diasporic characters who are forced into contact with cultures in conflict. They are all trapped by their peculiar ambivalent environment that they are forced into. This, according to Radhakrishnan," leads to a loss of self-esteem; but more importantly, it leads to a loss of moorings and this is a greater loss because the characters are displaced at home. This makes home a diaspora and the loss of identity and self-esteem makes it a volatile space" (Desai 313).

Memory and nostalgia play an important role in postcolonial, diasporic literature. In this novel also, Biju, has nostalgic feelings about his childhood back in his village in India. The Jamun River and the men traveling downstream on inflated buffalo skins bring nostalgic thoughts of his childhood. Biju recalls his grandmother and how she has crossed on

market trips into towns and back, with a sack of rice on her head. He also remembers the hermit who also lived there,

waiting for the glint of another, an allusive mystical fish: "On Diwali the holy man lit lamps and

put them in the branches of the papal tree and sent them down the river on rafts with marigolds—how beautiful the sight of those lights bobbing in that young dark. When he had visited his father in Kalimpong, they had sat outside in the evenings and his father remembered: "How peaceful our village is. How good the roti tastes there! It is because the Atta is ground by hand, not by machine...and because it is made on challah, butter, and fresh milk still warm from the buffalo---" They had stayed up late. They had not noticed Sai, then aged thirteen, staring from her

bedroom window, jealous of the cook's love for his son. Small red-mouthed bats drinking from the hora had swept over again and again in a witch flap of black wings (Desai 103).

The judge's story is mostly told through his memory and brought on by his interaction with his granddaughter, Sai and her math tutor and lover Gyan. In a flashback, he tries to contrast his native Indian scene with that of his stay in England. But the difference is that his attitude is one of ambivalence. He starts his journey from Pulpit to London with the hope of qualifying himself for the ICS examination. He bought the old house from a Scots man who told him, "it is very isolated but the land has potential "for quinine, sericulture, cardamom, orchids (Desai 28). However, he was not interested in agricultural possibilities" but could live here "with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country" (Desai 29). By purchasing a house, the judge shows his desire to settle in his own country but he feels like a foreigner in his own country and this shows his sense of alienation.

After independence, the judge found himself on the wrong side of history. The judge's marriage to Nimi was a complete failure. He never had any soft feeling for his wife though her parents had paid for his education in England. He felt guilty after her death. "Now Jemubhai wondered if he had killed his wife for the sake of false ideals (Desai,210). Memory of those past events brings a lot of guilt feelings in him and that is one of the reasons for his loneliness and alienation. He realized to his surprise, that he was thinking of his own journeys, of his own arrivals and departures, from places far in his past. He has first left home at the age of twenty, with a black tin trunk just like the one Sai had arrived with, on which white letters read "Mr. J.P. Patel, SSS trathnaver". The year was 1939. The town he had left was his ancestral home of Pipit, and from Liverpool he had gone to Cambridge (Desai 35).

The Judge was vacillating between hope and hopelessness- hope to become an ICS and hopelessness regarding his sense of betrayal to his wife: "He thought of his wife. He was a one-month married man. He would return---many years from now---and then what? --- It was all very strange. She was fourteen years old and he had yet to properly examine her face "(Desai 36). When he reached England, he was confused and realized that England of his dreams was quite different from England of reality: "He continued to be amazed by the sights that greeted him. The England in which he searched for a room to rent was formed of tiny gray houses in gay streets, stuck together and down as if on a glue trap. It took him by surprise because he'd expected only grandness, hadn't realized that her too, people could be poor and live and aesthetic life" (Desai 38). Eventually, "he retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man and it crushed him into a shadow" (Desai 39). According to Uma Jayaraman.

It is in England that he developed an inferiority complex and shame on his own heritage and darker skin and he experiences bitterness over the background of his birth. The magnitude of this shame increases as days pass by and the harrowing scene of his civil service examination encapsulates it well. In it the judge is forced to recite a poem from memory, but his recitation, riddled with heavy accent, only manages to amuse his examiners: “when he looked up, he says they were all chuckling” (Desai 124). The judge’s inability to accept the real presence of his native culture and his “partial presence” (Bhabha 58), in the much-coveted British culture leaves him in the liminal position between borders with an irreversible sense of loss. His life became entrapped in a state of emotional violence within a space of displacement or Diaspora (9).

All immigrants especially in the beginning of their settlement are very much concerned about their safety and security in a foreign land. In the initial stages, they are dependent on their relatives or friends who are settled there years ago. In the case of Biju, he has neither relations nor friends who can support him. He has to fight his battle on his own terms. His relation with Harish Harry shows how much he is concerned about his safety and security in a foreign land. He was punished for a mistake that he has not committed. Harish Harry threw him out into the streets of New York mercilessly. He broke his leg and Harish Harry wants Biju to go back to India. Eventually, Biju became a broken man both emotionally and materially. Finally, he decides to return to India which is once again a harrowing experience. Back in India, he finds that the GNLFF struggle is in progress. His father does not know that his son is coming back to India for good. His father goes to Kalimpong to know about his son, from whom all forms of communication have stopped owing to the GNLFF agitation. He fears that his son is no more! Finally, when he reaches Kalimpong, Biju does not find his father. On

the way, he was attacked by some thugs who had robbed away whatever money he had and other possessions:

Biju sat there in terror of what he had done. Of being alone in the forest, and of the men coming after him again. He couldn't stop thinking of all that he had bought and lost. Of the money he'd hidden under fake soles in his shoes of his wallet. Suddenly, he felt an old throbbing of the knee that he had hurt slipping on Harish Harry's floor (Desai,318).

In The Location of Culture, Home Bhabha discusses the detrimental effects of migration and diaspora which call for gathering in a different place, far from what immigrants continue refers to as Home. According to him, the experience of migrating to a new land involves “gathering the signs of approval an acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines, gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present” (Desai, 94).

The characters in Desai's novel are negotiating the boundaries of their past, present, and future. Bhabha points out that “There is a simultaneous fracturing of identity going on here [in postcolonial/diasporic situations] in terms of both ethnicity and gender which is true of multiculturalism” (Desai,57). The term ‘hybridity’ is an important concept in postcolonial theory. It refers to the integration of two different cultures. What is hybridization? Bakhtin asks “it is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factors “(Desai,300). Bakhtin seems to have used the term: hybridity” as a positive, enriching and dynamic

phenomenon. But for Desai, the transformation is not necessarily a positive phenomenon, but may have far reaching psychological consequences.

Language is one of the central concerns of postcolonial literatures. Like other postcolonial writers, Desai too plays with the language, using local Hindi dialects and the so-called English. She uses the multi-leveled meanings of metaphor to capture the essentials of her characters in new thoughts and feelings. She often uses clichés and Indian stereotypes that have been promoted by the Hindi cinema. His use of Hindi language and songs and mention of Indian actors in the framework of the novel gives a touch of authenticity and local color to the story and the characters. For example, the use of Hindi words like “Namaste”, Dhanyawad, Shukaria etc. and sometimes vulgar, colloquial like “benthos’s” and other vernacular expressions are used effectively in the novel. Postcolonial writers often take liberty to have the flexibility of using the English language according to the situations where their characters are put in.

Salman Rushdie comments on how working in new Englishers can be a therapeutic effect of resistance, remaking a ‘colonial language to reflect the postcolonial experience. In his famous essay “Imaginary Homelands”, he explains that far from being something that can simply be ignored or disposed of, the English language is the place where writers can and must work out the problems that confront emerging recently independent colonies. Thus, post colonialism plays an important role in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. The final chapter highlights all the aspects dealt in previous chapters and offers the final findings of the study.

Chapter Five

Summation

The first chapter talks about Kiran Desai and her famous work *The Inheritance of Loss*. Indian author Kiran Desai was born on September 3rd, 1971. Her book *The Inheritance of Loss* won both the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award and the 2006 Man Booker Prize. She was named on The Economic Times' list of the 20 "most influential" Indian women worldwide in January 2015. Desai's first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, was published in 1998 and won the Betty Trask Award. Her second book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, won the 2006 Man Booker Prize and the 2006 National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award, making her the youngest-ever woman to win the Booker Prize at the age of 35. She was a guest on *Private Passions* and featured at the Asia House Festival of Cold Literature.

The Inheritance of Loss is a story of exiles at home and abroad, of families broken and fixed, and of love both bitter and bittersweet. It begins in the high North-Eastern Himalayas in Kalimpong, where an embittered old judge lives with his dog Mutt and his cook. Sai, his granddaughter, comes from a convent school to live with him, and it is a turbulent time, filled with dissatisfaction among the population of Indian-Nepalese who demand an independent country of their own. The judge's home is robbed by members of the Gorkhaland National Liberation Front, introducing the political struggle and the breakdown of the social fabric. Sai falls in love with her tutor, Gyan, and they fight to accept the natural love they have created.

The cook watches over them to make sure Gyan does not take advantage of Sai's good heart. Biju is an illegal immigrant in a foreign city, and Sai and her grandfather are strangers in their homeland due to their education, language, and wealth. They struggle to adjust to their new

environment and discover their true identity, as they are not accepted either by Westerners or their own country.

The second chapter describes to Identity crisis, and Diaspora. Diaspora is the voluntary or forced movement of people from their homelands into new regions, which serves as the meeting place of two cultures. It is created out of the merging of narratives about journeys from the old country to the new one. The most recent significant diaspora has been those of colonized people back to the metropolitan centres. In recent times, the notion of 'diasporic identity' has been adopted by many writers as a positive affirmation of their hybridity. Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* explores identity as a vital part of the personal lives of individuals.

The Inheritance of Loss examines identity in terms of ethnicity, linguistics, cast system or sectarianism and analyses the fragmented identity of individuals belonging to the middle and lower class. It also focuses on low-class immigrants who live miserable lives in America and are treated with contempt. Desai uses cultural settings to create a complex and perplexing backdrop for her characters, who are the subject of cultural conundrums and feel alone and have an identity crisis. The storyline of Sai and Biju is intertwined, with Sai having her first feelings for her Nepali tutor Gyan and Biju drifting from kitchen to cuisine in Manhattan. Biju's fixation with leaving India in search of a better life serves as a metaphor for Indian passion.

Biju joins a throng of Indians rushing to the visa line at the American Embassy in New Delhi, but is treated with extreme disgrace and alienated due to his race and colour. The author explores themes of dislocation, nostalgia, desire for home, and longing for identity. Biju is an illegal immigrant who is compelled to work for very little pay and endure servitude from his employers. He makes a request of his boss, Harish-Harry, to sponsor him for a Green Card due to the cruelty of his previous employers.

Biju Jemubhai Popular Patel is a retired judge with a Cambridge education who returns to India after robbing him of everything he had worked for. He is a representation of the young, irrational guys from the Third World who neglect their own social mores and culture in their quest for financial success. He struggles to break free of the mental chains of conventional Gujarati and Indian thought and is caught between the past and the present.

Biju is an example of the negative immigration experiences experienced by immigrants. He works as a server in New York and is alarmed by the plight of immigrants. He learns how Third World residents are exploited and degraded in the West. The characters from *The Inheritance of Loss* reflect the pain of transition and the younger generation includes Sai, Biju, Gyan, Pixie, MunMun, Harish Harry, Saeed. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is an analytical and pragmatic approach to the matrix of immigrant experiences.

It illustrates how some Indians degrade themselves in order to gain passage to America, but what they gain is the loss of freedom and human dignity. Desai's story sheds light on the shadow that lies behind affluence and advancement in the age of globalisation. Desai's message is that life is still worth living despite hardships and difficulties. Chapter two of the novel describes the formation of Indian Diasporas, with the judge and Sai being alienated due to their British education. Chapter three of the novel describes the formation of diasporas in New York, with Biju, Saeed, and Harish-Harry. The story is set in a small Indian town Kalimpong in North-East Himalayas, where the author grew up. It follows Biju, the son of a cook, who leaves India in search of a better life in America.

He finds security in well-known habits and customs, and the development of the region with growing social unrests of Nepali nationalists. Jemubhai Patel is a young man sent to Britain to serve the British government, but he faces racist behaviour from the British society. His cruelty

is not restricted only to his wife but also to his family whom he refuses when they ask him for help. The clash of identity made the characters of the novel face internal conflict. The loss of identity transfers from one generation as a major loss. The next chapter analysis the social status, poverty, and oppression faced by the characters.

The third chapter explores impact of westernized. Sai learns about her privileged life and falls in love with Gyan, her mathematics tutor. Gyan is from a lower class and hates the bourgeois life style of Sai and the judge. He is caught between Sai's love and his association with a group of ethnic Nepalese insurgents. Desai shifts between the first world and the third world, exposing the pain of exile, the uncertainties of post-colonialism and the aspiration for a better life. Most of the characters have been stuck by alienation or dislocation. Jemubhai takes revenge on his early confusions and embarrassments in the name of keeping up standards. He follows the British culture blindly and tries to become an Indian Civil Service member. Homi Bhabha argues that mimicry of the center is a compromise to this tension. The judge studies hard to get more acquainted with Western culture and tries to adopt the British standards in his daily life. However, his efforts are futile and he has to work only to reinforce the domination of Britain. Sai is a victim of circumstances, having lost her parents in an accident in Russia. She arrives at the house of her grandfather, a retired Judge, who is displaced emotionally and physically. Sai's displacement from the comforts of a convent school in Darjeeling to the Himalayan region Kalimpong in North Eastern India brings a lot of havoc in her life. Gyan, Sai's mathematics tutor, is ambivalent and uncertain due to his dislocation from Nepal. He feels that Sai is more English than native and is confined to a high-class social circle. Sai's visits to temples are only to appreciate their architectural elegance and Gyan thinks that she should be ashamed of her colonial mannerisms.

Sai is a victim of circumstances, having lost her parents in an accident in Russia. She arrives at the house of her grandfather, who is displaced emotionally and physically. The post-colonial dilemma of wanting to belong to one's own native land and a foreign culture at the same time is explored. Gyan, Sai's mathematics tutor, is ambivalent and uncertain about his love for her, but eventually dies when he joins the insurgents and stops coming to see her. Desai's novel explores the subjection of women in India, with a judge and his wife, Nimi, who have spent 19 years in the confines of their father's compound.

The judge is anglophile and wants to teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame that he had learned for himself. He used to ask her different names of English food and denied her to eat it when she couldn't pronounce the name. Desai wants to demonstrate that Indians who can't be freed of their broken souls become self-haters. For Indians, the influence of western civilization upon Indian culture still exists. In her book *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai depicts characters that are the subject of cultural conundrums, which ultimately cause them to become isolated and experience an identity crisis.

The dominance of western civilization over Indian culture is lingering phenomenon for Indians. Kiran Desai, in her novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* portrays the characters that are the target of cultural dilemmas, which lead them towards isolation and identity crisis at the end. Biju stands for the young crazy men of the Third World who dream of going to West for money making; unflinchingly, they sacrifice their own culture and social conventions. Through Biju, Desai explores the pain of the immigrants. This study attempts to show how diasporic dislocation can contribute to the reinforcement of the national and cultural identity in the age of globalization. Desai's *Inheritance of Loss* and has covered the split identities of individuals living in exile. It has described the Indian's experience of migration to America as it is opposite to the assimilative

experiences of the old generations. In this paper, the diasporic experience that has been presented is related to the new generations in terms of strong identities, who do not ready to put their self-respect at stake. It has also been found that the new generation has its own dreams to realize this very concept. The global world which, once, has used to bypass the immigrants, starts to give attention to the anguish of the new generation. Through the textual analysis of the novel, the researcher has found the major issues of diasporas, their post-traumatic stress result by search for identity that is hybrid one, leads towards identity crisis and the notion of home with the help of Brah's concept of diaspora. The researcher has concluded the who discussion as split identities are the outcome of various multi-cultural, socio-political, economic and ideological norms through the lens of diaspora. Therefore, the researcher has touched upon the massive and complicated issues of hybrid identity. So, the importance of dispersed diasporic identity that has been sparked and it will also be continued for the upcoming generation of the researchers.

The characters are all victims of the so-called 'diasporic dilemmas. However, in the final analysis like in the case of Biju the reader also finds some hope of 'true 'happiness in his supposedly reunion with his father. Though he has lost much materially and emotionally, there is a spiritual gain. It is pertinent that the novel like a foreshadowing opens with a poetic description of a serene and peaceful landscape dominated by the awe-inspiring beauty of Kanchenjunga in the North East Himalayas. Desai probably wants to suggest that life is worth living in spite of all the agonies and sufferings that it brings forth in this journey. People especially from third world countries are often attracted by the material prosperity, wealth and comforts of the west and embark on their voyage to achieve their dreams. However, in spite of the backwardness, poverty, and illiteracy in one's own land, one can derive a sense of belonging and identity only in one's own home land. Uprooting and re-rooting in an alien land is a painful process and Desai has

successfully depicted the dilemmas of her characters in their longing for true fulfillment in their lives. This study thus validates the title, Elements of Diaspora and Identity in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*.

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Probing Womanhood in Feminist Rewriting of Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*

A project submitted to

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

KESIYA S.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN11)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Probing Womanhood in Feminist Rewriting of Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*** 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 and is a work done by Kesiya S. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


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St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
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Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Probing Womanhood in Feminist Rewriting of Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

S. Kesiya

KESIYA S.

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PREFACE

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with American Writing and woman's writing during the twentieth century. A short biography of Anita Diamant and the general characteristics of his works are discussed.

The second chapter **Womanhood: A Thematic Analysis** deals with the stages of womanhood portrayed in the novel *The Red Tent*.

The third chapter **The Red Tent, an Analysis of Deconstruction through Jaques Derrida** illustrates Diamant's rewriting of the novel *The Red Tent*.

The fourth chapter explores the **Style and Narrative Techniques** of *The Red Tent*. Diamant used midrash, bildungsroman, matrilineal and patrilineal description.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

American literature is the literature written or produced in the area of the United States and its colonies. During its early history, America was a series of British colonies on the eastern coast of the contemporary United States. Therefore, its literary tradition begins as linked to the broader tradition of English Literature. Owing to the large immigration to Boston in the 1630s, the high articulation of Puritan cultural ideals, and the early establishment of a college and a printing press in Cambridge, the New England colonies have often been regarded as the center of early American literature. The religious disputes that prompted settlement in America were also topics of early writing. Puritan poetry was highly religious in nature, 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 great literature but to create hymns that could be used in worship.

It is likely that no other colonists in the history of the world were as intellectual as the Puritans. Between 1630 and 1690, there were as many university graduates in the northeastern section of the United States, known as New England. As in the mother country, an astounding fact when one considers that most educated people of the time were aristocrats who were unwilling to risk their lives in wilderness conditions. The self-made and often self-educated Puritans were notable exceptions. They wanted education to understand and execute God's will as they established their colonies throughout New England. The Puritan definition of good writing was that which brought home a full awareness of the importance of worshipping God and of the spiritual dangers that the soul faced on Earth. Puritan style varied enormously

from complex metaphysical poetry to homely journals and crushingly pedantic religious history. Whatever the style or genre, certain themes remained constant. Life was seen as a test; failure led to eternal damnation and hellfire, and success to heavenly bliss. This world was an arena of constant battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, a formidable enemy with many disguises. Many Puritans excitedly awaited the millennium, when Jesus would return to Earth, end human misery, and inaugurate thousand years of peace and prosperity.

Scholars have long pointed out the link between Puritanism and capitalism: Both rest on ambition, hard work, and an intense striving for success. In recording ordinary events to reveal their spiritual meaning, Puritan authors commonly cited the Bible, chapter and verse. History was a symbolic religious panorama leading to the Puritan triumph over the New World and to God's kingdom on Earth. The first Puritan colonists who settled in New England exemplified the seriousness of Reformation Christianity. William Bradford was elected governor of Plymouth in the Massachusetts Bay Colony shortly after the Separatists landed. He was a deeply pious, self-educated man who had learned several languages, including Hebrew, in order to see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty. Bradford also recorded the first document of colonial self-governance in the English New World, the drawn up while the Pilgrims were still on board ship.

Puritans disapproved of such secular amusements as dancing and card-playing, which were associated with ungodly aristocrats and immoral living. Puritan minds poured their tremendous energies into nonfiction and pious genres like poetry, sermons, theological tracts, and histories. Their intimate diaries and meditations record the rich inner lives of this introspective and intense people.

The first published book of poems by an American was also the first American book to be published by a woman, Anne Bradstreet. It is not surprising that the book was published in England, because of the lack of printing presses in the early years of the first American colonies. She preferred her long, religious poems on conventional subjects such as the seasons, but contemporary readers most enjoy the witty poems on subjects from daily life and her warm and loving poems to her husband and children. She was inspired by English metaphysical poetry, and her book *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* shows the influence of Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, and other English poets as well. She often uses elaborate conceits or extended metaphors. *To My Dear and Loving Husband* uses the oriental imagery, love theme, and idea of comparison popular in Europe at the time.

A number of accomplished revolutionary era women writers have been rediscovered by feminist scholars. Susanna Rowson was one of the America's first professional novelists. Her seven novels included the best-selling seduction story, *Charlotte Temple*. She treats feminist and abolitionist themes and depicts American Indians with respect. Another long-forgotten novelist was Hannah Foster, whose best-selling novel, *The Coquette* was about a young women torn between virtue and temptation. Rejected by her sweetheart, a cold man of the church, she is seduced, abandoned, bears a child, and dies alone. Judith Sargent Murray published under a man's name to secure serious attention for her works.

The eighteenth century American Enlightenment was a movement marked by an emphasis on rationality rather than tradition, scientific inquiry instead of unquestioning religious dogma, and representative government in place of monarchy. Enlightenment thinkers and writers were devoted to the ideals of justice, liberty, and equality as the natural rights of man.

The Transcendentalist movement was a reaction against eighteenth century rationalism and a manifestation of the general humanitarian trend of nineteenth century thought. The movement was based on a fundamental belief in the unity of the world and God. The soul of each individual was thought to be identical with the world, a microcosm of the world itself. The doctrine of self-reliance and individualism developed through the belief in the identification of the individual soul with God. Transcendentalism was intimately connected with Concord, a small New England town which is the west of Boston. Concord was the first inland settlement of the original Massachusetts Bay Colony. Surrounded by forest, it was and remains a peaceful town close enough to Boston's lectures, bookstores, and colleges to be intensely cultivated, but far enough away to be serene. Concord was the site of the first battle of the American Revolution, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem commemorating the battle.

The Romance form is dark and forbidding, indicating how difficult it is to create an identity without a stable society. Most of the Romantic heroes die in the end, as the sailors except Ishmael are drowned in *Moby-Dick*, and the sensitive but sinful minister Arthur Dimmesdale dies at the end of *The Scarlet Letter*. The self-divided, tragic note in American literature becomes dominant in the novels, even before the Civil War of the 1860s manifested the greater social tragedy of a society at war with itself.

The large cultural wave of Modernism, which gradually emerged in Europe and the United States in the early years of the twentieth century, expressed a sense of modern life through art as a sharp break from the past, as well as from Western civilization's classical traditions. Modern life seemed radically different from traditional life which is more scientific, faster, more technological, and more

mechanized. Modernism embraced these changes. In literature, Gertrude Stein developed an analogue to modern art. Stein once explained that she and Picasso were doing the same thing, he in art and she in writing. Using simple, concrete words as counters, she developed an abstract, experimental prose poetry.

American drama imitated English and European theater until well into the twentieth century. Often, plays from England or translated from European languages dominated theater seasons. During the nineteenth century, melodramas with exemplary democratic figures and clear contrasts between good and evil had been popular. Plays about social problems such as slavery also drew large audiences; sometimes these plays were adaptations of novels like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Not until the twentieth century would serious plays attempt aesthetic innovation. Popular culture showed vital developments, however, especially in vaudeville, popular variety theater involving skits, clowning, music, and the like. Minstrel shows, based on African-American music and folkways were performed by white characters using blackface makeup also developed original forms and expressions.

The American Dream is that any man or woman, despite of his or her background, can change their circumstances and rise as high as they are willing to work. Women are multifaceted and perform a significant role in society. Across the world women have their challenges to face in this man's world. Initially women were confined to domestic chores and kept within the four walls of the house. Gradually women started getting educated and as the rate of literacy in women increased there has been some progress. Women since ages have expressed their Feeling, thoughts, anger, experience and anxiety through their writing not only in English but also in other languages.

Women play a considerable position in the society from their birth till the end of life. Even after playing all her roles in an proficient manner in the modern society, she is considered feeble because men are still well thought-out as the strongest gender of the society. Even after lots of consciousness programmes, rules and regulations in the society by the government, a women's life remains more convoluted than a man. She has to take care of herself and family members in performing various roles of daughter, sister, daughter-in-law, grand daughter, wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and so on. In spite of her family responsibility, she is able to come out and do job for bright future of own, family and country. Though this has taken tremendous amount of time and effort.

Women's literature has often been defined by publishers as a category of writing done by women. Though obviously this is true, many scholars find such a definition reductive. The reason that makes the history of women's writing so interesting is that it has created interest in many ways and it is a new area of study. The tradition of women writing has been much ignored in the past due to the inferior position women have held in a male-dominated society. The obligation of women's literature, then, is to classify and create an area of study for a group of people marginalized by history and to explore through their writing their lives as they were while occupying such a unique sociopolitical space within their culture.

Women's literature presents a unique glimpse into the female American experience. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the country was in a period of transformation that included political, economic, social, and literary shifts. As the country emerged into the Industrial Revolution, female authors were forging a place for themselves in the literary canon. The feminist movement questioned the role of women in society, and female authors responded by creating works presenting strong,

self-reliant, intelligent women. America experienced vast changes between 1865 and 1912, as post-Civil War reconstruction.

The economic climate shifted from primarily agricultural to industrial as the country entered the Industrial Age. America created the first transcontinental railroad, drastically changing the shipping process and allowing people and merchandise to be transported easily and efficiently over long distances. Scientific advancement and the growth of education also began to affect the nation. Immigration expanded as people came into the United States in search of work and the chance at a better life, leading to mass poverty, poor working conditions, and industrial monopolies owned by the first American wealthy people, such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. The people fought against their industrial bosses through vigilantism and, eventually, the formation of the first labor unions.

Class struggle was rampant, and issues of racism blossomed as immigrants and freed slaves learned to live among one another. Women's suffrage fought against the limitations enforced by a patriarchal society and the idealism of the Cult of True Womanhood, which outlined expectations of women to be submissive, pious wives and mothers relegated to the home. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, as well as many other women, fought in the Women's Rights Movement. The feminist movement claimed a huge victory with the right for women to vote in 1920. Literature of the period reflects the many changes of the era, including the three thousand new words introduced into American English. New slang and dialects were represented in realistic writing, painting a picture of America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Women's literature gained widespread prominence by the end of the nineteenth century. Feminist causes and the expansion of education for women led to many more female writers than any preceding century. Despite living in a patriarchal society, female writers fought for acceptance in the literary community. In previous eras, women's writing were relegated primarily to writing for children and poetry. These works were characterized by sentimentality, morality, and depth of feeling considered works of feminine genres. During the nineteenth century, the women's suffrage movement reacted to the social, legal, and political inequalities placed on women. Women's literature reflects the feminist movement through theme, characterization, and situations. The works of Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman reveal women's individuality and speak out against oppressive social expectations of women. Louisa May Alcott created strong, self-reliant female characters presenting a new definition of the role of women in America. Feminine literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented readers with realistic views of women's intellect, desires, and potential ranging far beyond the limitations of submissive domestic life.

Women in the twentieth century were starting to embrace new independence and female writers wrote more novels than before. The women writers of this time period are a great inspiration for writers today, as well as an important part of history. The twentieth century spanned only hundred years, but it covered so many changes that humanity had never seen happen at such a rate. From flight, Women's Suffrage, two World Wars, going to the moon, the Civil Rights Movement, Reaganomics, and the invention of the internet. These books or short stories are highly varied for that exact reason. They are reflective of the decade the woman lived in.

Toni Morrison is an African American author who wrote in the twentieth century. Toni won the Nobel prize in Literature in 1993. She was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for this novel *Beloved*. *Beloved* is about Sethe, a former slave who escaped to Ohio. She endures such hardship and trauma in her life, so for those wanting to avoid triggers such as abuse. Toni Morrison is a master of creating vivid descriptions and characters, haunting stories, and revealing so much truth about the real world in her books. Virginia Woolf was an English author who lived between 1882 and 1941. Her most famous work is *A Room of One's Own*, published in 1929. *A Room of One's Own* is a book-length essay about women writers and the hardships they have suffered to be able to get to create their work. Alice Walker is an American writer who won the Pulitzer Prize for this book in 1983. *The Color Purple* is a poignant and heavy book about our protagonist Celie. She is an uneducated Black woman in the south in the early 1900s. She is married off to an abusive widower, but the strong women in her life help lead her to on a journey of self-discovery.

Sylvia Plath an American writer is known for *The Bell Jar* among other novels. *The Bell Jar* is about protagonist Esther Greenwood, who is leading a life filled with success and beauty, but drowning in depression. It is disturbing and holds no bars when detailing the things which Esther experiences with her depression. Harper Lee is an American author. She is best known for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and is one of the best known books by women writers in the twentieth century. It tells the story of Atticus Finch, a local lawyer, and his defense of a Black man against a crime he did not commit. Told through the eyes of Scout, his daughter, this is a timeless tale of racism, justice and injustice, and history.

Maya Angelou was an African American author and poet. Her most famous work is *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, a memoir of her childhood and early life. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou chronicles her early life through her vivid prose. The heart-wrenching events in Maya's early life shaped her world and made it possible for her to become a powerful woman to be known today. Kate Chopin is an author who is best known for *The Awakening*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1901. She is a great inspiration for female writers today, as well as an important part of history. *The Awakening* is about a young mother's journey of self-discovery. She is a painter, an artist and she never cared much about having children. Her journey takes her to an ebullition of emotion caused by a harsh and suffocating world. One of the female writers on this list that primarily wrote for children and tweens, Judy Blume was born in 1938 and is still living today. Her most famous work is *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. It is a coming of age story about twelve year old Margaret Simon, who has anxiety over moving to a new town and making new friends. But she can always talk to God, despite not having a religion.

Margaret Atwood is a female author of the twentieth century is well known for her work *The Handmaid's Tale*. The book is set in a dystopian society where young women, called Handmaids, are subjected to sexual slavery in order to bear children. The protagonist, June, is trying to flee the society to be reunited with her husband and daughter. Margaret Atwood's books are jarring, psychological thrillers. These writers were the contemporary writers of Anita Diamant. The main themes in the works of these writers were based on the upliftment and the empowerment of women. In most of their works the protagonist will be a woman and also the plot of the work circles around the lives and struggles of women in the patriarchal society.

Likewise Diamant's novel *The Red Tent* also a women centric fiction which displays the life of a biblical character Dinah and gives new life to the character and portrays her as a successful women in contrary to the bible where she was portrayed as an unethical women.

Anita Diamant is a novelist, journalist, essayist, and the author of five guidebooks to contemporary Jewish life. She was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in Newark, New Jersey until she was twelve years old when her family moved to Denver, Colorado. She graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a degree in comparative literature and earned a Master's in American literature from Binghamton University in upstate New York. In 1975, Anita moved to Boston and began a career in journalism, writing for local magazines and newspapers, including the Boston Phoenix, the Boston Globe, and Boston Magazine. She branched out into regional and national media like New England Monthly, Yankee, Self, Parenting, Parents, McCall's. Her feature stories and columns covered a wide variety of topics, from profiles of prominent people and stories about medical ethics, to first-person essays about everything from politics to popular culture, from pet ownership to food.

Her first book, *The New Jewish Wedding*, published in 1985, combined a contemporary sensibility, respect for tradition and for her readers. Her five other guidebooks to Jewish life and lifecycle events are *The New Jewish Baby Book*, *Living a Jewish Life*, *Jewish Traditions, Customs and Values for Today's Families*, *Choosing a Jewish Life*, *A Handbook for People Converting to Judaism and for Their Family and Friends*, *Saying Kaddish: How To Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead and Mourn as a Jew*, and *How to Raise a Jewish Child*.

Good Harbor, her second novel, explores the importance of women's friendships as a source of strength and support through the worst of times. Set in the seaside town

of Gloucester, Massachusetts, fifty nine year old Kathleen Levine, a longtime resident, is graceful, maternal, and steady, a devoted children's librarian, a convert to Judaism, the mother of two grown sons. But when she is diagnosed with breast cancer, which killed her sister fifteen years earlier — her life is thrown into turmoil. Frightened, lonesome for a friend to talk to, burdened by secrets, she meets Joyce Tabachnik and a friendship is born. Forty two year old Joyce, restless and funny, a freelance writer with literary aspirations, has just bought a small house in Gloucester, where she hopes to write as well as vacation with her family. Like Kathleen, Joyce is at a fragile juncture in her life. With her twelve year old daughter becoming increasingly testy and distant, she is also feeling a lack of connection to her husband. A mutual appreciation of books, a shared sense of humor, and the beauty of the natural world bring the two women together for long walks along Good Harbor beach. Slowly, they begin to share their personal histories and to realize how much they can learn from each other. Ultimately they wrestle with some startling secrets, and help each other to confront scars left by old emotional wounds.

Day After Night focuses on the experience of women who survived the Holocaust and in 1945 make their way to what was then Palestine, where they are locked up in a British internment camp. Set in 1945, in the summer immediately following the end of World War II in Europe, *Day After Night* tells the stories of four young Jewish women—survivors of four different kinds of hell. They make their way to the land of Israel where they confront an uncertain future haunted by the past. The protagonists Leonie, Tedi, Shayndel and Zorah — are interned when they arrive, locked up behind barbed wire fences in a place called Atlit, a prison camp run by the British, who ruled Palestine at the time. In Atlit, the women meet and befriend one another as they grapple with a new life in a new land.

Anita Diamant's vivid, affectionate portrait of American womanhood, follows the life of one woman, Addie Baum, through a period of dramatic change. Addie is The Boston Girl, the spirited daughter of an immigrant Jewish family, born in 1900 to parents who were unprepared for America and its effect on their three daughters. Growing up in the North End of Boston, then a teeming multicultural neighborhood, Addie's intelligence and curiosity take her to a world her parents can't imagine—a world of short skirts, movies, celebrity culture, and new opportunities for women. Addie wants to finish high school and dreams of going to college. She wants a career and to find true love. From the one-room tenement apartment she shared with her parents and two sisters, to the library group for girls she joins at a neighborhood settlement house, to her first, disastrous love affair, to finding the love of her life, eighty-five-year-old Addie recounts her adventures with humor and compassion for the naïve girl she once was. Written with the same attention to historical detail and emotional resonance that made Diamant's previous novels bestsellers, *The Boston Girl* is a moving portrait of one woman's complicated life in twentieth century America, and a fascinating look at a generation of women finding their places in a changing world.

Diamant began her career as a freelance journalist in the Boston area in 1975. Over the years, she has written for local, regional and national magazines and newspapers, including the *Boston Phoenix*, the *Boston Globe*, and *Boston Magazine*, as well as *New England Monthly*, *Yankee*, *Self*, *Parenting*, *Parents*, *McCalls*, and *Ms*.

Over the past few years, Anita has revised and updated three of her books about Jewish life. *The Jewish Wedding Now*, *Choosing a Jewish Life*, the handbook about conversion to Judaism; and *Saying Kaddish*. Anita Diamant is the founding president

of Mayyim Hayyim, Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center in Newton Massachusetts, a reinvention of the ancient Jewish tradition of mikveh, ritual immersion in water. She has received Clarion Award in 1981, New England women's press association, Best columnist award in 1982, Award of excellence 1983, awards from Massachusetts Division, American Cancer Society in 1987 and 1988, Boston Author's Club Book of the Year award in 1988.

Her best-selling novel *The Red Tent*, is a vivid retelling of the ancient story from a woman's point of view. Anita Diamant claims that the Red Tent in her book was fictionalized, but is rooted in research from Africa. Menstrual hut and moon lodge traditions shape women's understanding of the Red Tent as a women's power space. "The Red Tent celebrates both the onset of puberty (with a ritual that is nearly orgasmic) and menstruation." (Chacko). As per the reviews by the Los Angeles Times, "By giving a voice to Dinah, one of the silent female characters in Genesis, the novel has struck a chord with women who may have felt left out of biblical history. It celebrates mothers and daughters and the mysteries of the life cycle". *The Red Tent* had sold over two million copies, had been published in 25 countries and had been translated into 20 different languages. Worldwide the novel struck a cord with women who passed it on to family and friends, discussed it in reading groups and – in the case of rabbis and pastors – recommended it to their congregations. Whether that story is the story of the silenced and marginal biblical women, the story of female relationship and kinship, or the story of the sacredness and power of being female, the gynocentric novel's appeal seems to stem from the fact that it has broken the ideological boundaries set by the phallogentric and androcentric male canon to present women within an imagined female community, history, power and divinity. It is the

construction of such a utopian and different story, and the potential it might hold for female readers. The following are the reader reviews from the Amazon.com:

Holy moly ... I just finished reading The Red Tent... I am honest in saying that I could barely put this book down. It evoked emotion and vivid scenery that intrigues my mind. Just terrific. I can't wait to pass it on to friends. Tales of midwifery and love, passionate to the core. I would recommend this book to any woman, but essentially those that are intrigued by "life" and the miracle of birth. (LaVoyce)

I found the historical undertaking of what was a very matriarchal society among these women enthralling. The fact that women once upon a time were considered to be the source of life and therefore the source of power is something that I mourn being lost ... I think that when my daughter is older I would let her read this and I would also teach her to cherish the power in her... (Movie Lover)

I liked about this book was the whole "red tent" business. For Dinah and her fellow women, was a time of togetherness, rest and celebration – not a solitary almost shameful thing like it is today. I thought that was kind of nice... The Red Tent is a thought-provoking read that brings to life an entire "hidden" world of the women of the Bible... there is a sense of mysticism throughout the book ... Yet it is firmly rooted in the real world as well – the hot, dusty world of women who lived in an ancient time and who didn't really have a voice of their own. How lovely of Diamant to come along and give a voice to Dinah

– to help us modern beings learn and think more about those who came before us... (Jenners)

In *The Red Tent*, her first novel, Diamant transforms the brief but violent story found in Genesis 34 about Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, into a full-length work. Diamant says “I did not set out to explain or rewrite the biblical text, but to use Dinah’s silence to try to imagine what life was like for women in this historical period.” One does not need to be familiar with the book of Genesis to appreciate *The Red Tent*; Diamant carefully carries readers who are not familiar with the backbone of the story. In fact, those who are familiar with the story are often surprised by Diamant’s version: the author changes substantial portions of the Bible’s narrative, which focuses primarily on men and their relationships with God, in order to make her novel a story of women and their relationships with one another. *The Red Tent* goes beyond the traditional function of midrashim, because Diamant’s novel fills in the gaps of the Genesis story and removes the story from its religious context entirely. In Genesis, the stories of Jacob and his offspring are part of an evolving relationship between God and the descendants of Abraham, and Diamant’s narrative simply does not fit into this sequence of events. Diamant herself has stated emphatically that her novel is not a midrash, but simply a novel based on a biblical character.

Diamant says, that *The Red Tent* is not a translation but a work of fiction. Its perspective and focus by and about the female characters distinguishes it from the biblical account, in which women are usually peripheral and often totally silent. By giving Dinah a voice and by providing texture and content to the sketchy biblical descriptions, my book is a radical departure from the historical text. Thus she

acknowledges how her fictional text differs from the biblical text, and, as a fiction author, she does not expect her readers to accept her version of Dinah's life as the true version. Her intent in writing *The Red Tent* was to provide Dinah with an opportunity to speak, an opportunity not found in the Bible. Diamant seems interested in Dinah solely as a human character—not as a part of the Bible in need of exegesis or explanation. Regardless of its label, the novel's success is impressive. *The Red Tent* was first printed in 1997 with no advertising budget. It received few reviews in major newspapers or magazines and instead found its success through word of mouth, the loyalty of its readers, the support of independent bookstores, and help from clergy, some of whom even preached about *The Red Tent* from the pulpit. The novel went on to become a *New York Times* best-seller and Booksense Book of the Year 2001.

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant tells the story of the biblical character Dinah, Jacob's daughter and Joseph's sister. In the Bible, Dinah's story is only briefly mentioned. The story says that Dinah was raped by an Egyptian prince. Simon and Levi, two of her brothers, avenge Dinah by killing all the men in the city. After that, Dinah is never mentioned again. Diamant wanted to give a voice to the character of Dinah as well as her mothers.

In the prologue, Dinah begins the novel by explaining that she feels compelled to share her story in order to elaborate on the brief but violent footnote devoted to her in the Old Testament. She declares the vital importance of memory and remembering, and she laments that the stories of many women have been lost through the years. She alludes to the tragedy of her own story and her surprise that any mother would ever choose to name her child Dinah again. She closes with a Jewish blessing.

The novel begins with Dinah's mothers' stories. Dinah explains that because her father Jacob had four wives, she had four mothers: Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah. While Leah is Dinah's birth mother, as a child she learned from and loved her mother and "auntie-mothers." Before Dinah's birth, the women fulfilled their duties by bearing sons, but they longed for daughters. To them, daughters listened to their stories and shared them with the next generation of women.

Finally, Dinah is born to Leah. Dinah becomes close with Joseph, Rachel's son, because he was nursed with her. When her family prepares to move to Canaan, Dinah gets her first big adventure. She encounters huge lakes and Inna tells her she will only be happy living by near water.

On the way to Canaan, Dinah meets her cousin, Tabea, who is a daughter of Esau. This is the first time she has ever been around another girl her age. They part ways, but plan to meet up again in a part of Canaan called Mamre. There, Dinah meets her grandmother, Rebecca. Finally, she sees Tabea again, who is now a woman. Rebecca is furious to find that Tabea's first blood has been wasted and throws Tabea out of her tents. Dinah hates Rebecca for what she has done.

Dinah is very observant and watches her mothers, family, and surroundings very closely. She learns from Rachel and Inna how to be a midwife. She goes to Shechem with Rachel to attend a birth and falls in love with Shalem. Dinah marries Shalem, but her family is not happy. Simon and Levi accuse Shalem of raping Dinah. They go to Shechem and murder all the men while they recover from their circumcisions. Dinah is devastated and outraged. Through strength she has never known, she curses Jacob's tribe.

Dinah escapes to Egypt with Shalem's mother, Re-nefer. They discover that Dinah is pregnant and Re-nefer says she wants to raise the baby as a prince of Egypt. Dinah agrees because it is the best place for her child. While she and her son, Re-mose, are close when he is younger, they grow apart. Re-mose wishes to be rich and successful and has no time for his foreign-born mother. Thankfully, Dinah meets a midwife named Meryt, who becomes a close friend and mother-like figure. Dinah also becomes a successful midwife.

Dinah also meets a carpenter named Benia. They are attracted to one another, but Dinah makes no attempt to become his wife right away. Three years later, Meryt decides to move to the Valley of the Kings and takes Dinah with her. Dinah and Benia meet again. Benia declares his love for Dinah and they are married.

Dinah is called by her son to attend the birth of Zafenat Paneh-ah's son. While there, Dinah finds out that Zafenat Paneh-ah is really Joseph. The reunion is not happy because Re-mose has learned the truth about Joseph, his mother, and his father's death. Re-mose threatens to kill Joseph, but Dinah urges him to leave. It is that last time she ever sees her son.

Dinah returns home. Years with Benia happily pass, then one day Joseph comes to visit. He wants Dinah to go to Canaan with him because Jacob is dying. At first Dinah refuses, but then agrees. While there, no one notices Dinah. To them, Dinah is dead. But then she speaks to one of Jacob's grandchildren. The girl, Gera tells Dinah the story of hers. Dinah is happy to learn that her story has not been forgotten. She becomes certain that her story and the legacy of her mothers will live on.

Chapter one in the research deals with the introduction to the American literature and the evolution of women's writing. The chapter gives a short biography

of the author and the novel. Chapter two attempts to convey the theme womanhood, and the portrayal of the stages in womanhood in the novel *The Red Tent*. Chapter three explores the theory of Deconstruction by Jaques Derrida and points out the importance of rewriting in the novel *The Red Tent*. Style and Narrative techniques are portrayed in chapter four by depicting midrash, buildungsroman, patrilineal and matrilineal description. Chapter five renders the importance of rewriting in the novel.

Thus the research attempts to prove that womanhood was not celebrated in the Bible. The woman characters in the Bible were silenced because of the patriarchal society. *The Red Tent* was a story of a particular character Dinah in the Bible whose fate was a tragedy. But in the novel Diamant gave voice to the voiceless character Dinah in the bible. To analyze the employment of midrash in terms of matrilineage and patrilineage in the novel *The Red Tent*.

Chapter Two

Womanhood: A Thematic Analysis

Womanhood is one of the major themes in the novel *The red tent*. According to biology, a typical woman goes through five distinct life stages: childhood, puberty, sexual development or reproductive age, climacteric era, and post-climacteric or elderly years. Thus Diamant portrays these life stages effectively in this novel. The red tent in which women gather during their menstruation and childbirth to celebrate their womanhood and the beginning of new life is portrayed almost as a temple. There they gave offerings to the gods and goddesses and they comforted one another to share their pain and also their day to day incidents.

“In the red tent we knew that death was the shadow of birth, the price women pay for the honor of giving life. Thus, our sorrow was measured” (Diamant 58).

“In the red tent, the truth is known. In the red tent, where days pass like a gentle stream, as the gift of Innana courses through us, cleaning the body of last month’s life, women give thanks- for repose and restoration, for the knowledge that life comes from between our legs, and that life costs blood” (Diamant 188).

According to the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, roughly 450 times in a person's lifetime, half of the world's population goes through this inevitable biological event called menstruation. In the society menstruation is considered widely as dirty, sinful and embarrassing. Menstruation is typically a private, taboo occurrence for women. It is only publicly discussed among close friends and is whispered among female co-workers. Dinah is the daughter of Jacob, whose four

wives Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah are all sisters, as are their two handmaids. The narrator addresses the reader explicitly at the beginning of the book:

“We have been lost to each other for so long. My name means nothing to you. My memory is dust. This is not your fault, or mine. The chain connecting mother to daughter was broken and the word passed to the keeping of men, who had no way of knowing. That is why I became a footnote, my story a brief detour between the well-known history of my father, Jacob, and the celebrated chronicle of Joseph, my brother. On those rare occasions when I was remembered, it was as a victim.
(Diamant 1)

Diamant, a female author, has established that this is a story told by a woman, about women, and for women in the first few paragraphs of the prologue. Holly Blackford, who authored *The Wandering Womb at Home in The Red Tent: An Adolescent Bildungsroman in a Different Voice*, tells a story where Blackford prepares to survey a group of teenaged girls about their reaction to classical literature only to overhear their enthusiastic conversation about *The Red Tent*. Holly Blackford is a Professor of English at Rutgers University-Camden, where she teaches and publishes literary criticism on American and children’s literature. According to Blackford, Diamant’s book appeals to young women because it has a distinct tone from the more masculine canon that is imposed on them through the school curriculum. Those with female protagonists frequently have the main character being cut off from her family. To the contrary, *The Red Tent*,

“represents a girl’s point of view, as Dinah is growing up and discovering what womanhood means in her culture, but unlike in teen novels, the narration continues as Dinah grows older and wiser. She continues to develop in

perspective and insight until her death as a postmenopausal wise woman and midwife” (Blackford 76).

It is significant to note that *The Red Tent* is one of the few works of literature that discusses menarche, that is the beginning of menstruation. It provides a coming-of-age tale for young women. Menstrual blood plays an important role in the lives of the women of Dinah’s tribe as it enables procreation and the birth of future generations. Menstruation is linked to life and is therefore viewed as sacred and a gift from the goddess Innana. In Stephen King's *Carrie*, where the protagonist's menarche causes social embarrassment, is regarded as unclean, and serves as a reminder of the sin of women, may be the most well-known literary allusion to menstruation. Only Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* is recognized for offering prepubescent girl's a positive representation of menarche. While boys are often heralded and initiated into manhood, a young girl's transition to womanhood is hushed and even pitied. Menarche is undoubtedly a time of developmental crisis; a crucial time when body image, sexual identity, and self-worth develop. From a female viewpoint, *The Red Tent* discusses menarche as a rite of passage, a coming-of-age, celebrated by a complex ritual to mark this important turning point in the girl's life. In the novel, menarche is romanticized, although not in an unrealistic manner, rather with the type of dignity and honor that the moment deserves considering the physiological and psychological changes that take place simultaneously, as well as the miraculous ability for the female body to bear a child and give life. Dinah elaborately recounts the tale of one of her mothers, Rachel's first period, and revels in the subsequent party in the red tent with Rachel's sisters and her mother, Adah.

“Finally...Rachel bled her first blood, and cried with relief. Adah, Leah, and Zilpah sang the piercing, throaty song that announces births,

deaths, and women's ripening. As the sun set on the new moon when all the women commenced bleeding, they rubbed henna on Rachel's fingernails and on the soles of her feet. Her eyelids were painted yellow, and they slid every bangle, gem, and jewel that could be found onto her fingers, toes, ankles, and wrists. They covered her head with the finest embroidery and led her into the red tent. They sang songs for the goddesses; for Innana and the Lady Asherah of the Sea. They spoke of Elath, the mother of the seventy gods, including Anath in that number, Anath the nursemaid, defender of mothers'' (Diamant 29)

When Rachel had her first period all the women in the red tent they celebrated her and they gave healthy foods to her. The below passage is the description of Rachel's first period and the ceremonies taken place in the red tent.

"The women sang all the welcoming songs to her while Rachel ate date honey and fine wheat-flour cake, made in the three-cornered shape of woman's sex. She drank as much sweet wine as she could hold. Adah rubbed Rachel's arms and legs, back and abdomen with aromatic oils until she was nearly asleep. By the time they carried her out into the field where she married the earth, Rachel was stupid with pleasure and wine. She did not remember how her legs came to be caked with earth and crusted with blood and smiled in her sleep''(Diamant 29)

In present day, mothers often approach menarche as a reminder to warn their daughter of the perils of sex and teen pregnancy rather than as a signifier to rejoice at their transition into womanhood. In a modern society where women have adopted the misogynistic views of men about menses, girls are denied a celebratory initiation into womanhood. Literature that explores the coming of age narrative for young men

frequently uses the subject of initiation. The young female protagonist does not see the same subject explored. Before the 20th century, a girl transitioned from the innocence of infancy to the chastity of marriage, becoming a woman. The taboo and unhygienic practice of menstruation plays no part in the piety of the feminine character.

In *The Female Initiation Theme in American Fiction* Elaine Ginsberg discusses the crucial differences between stories of male and female initiation. She explains, that unlike male protagonists, young female characters are introduced to a heterosexual world, where the relationships between males and females are the most important, if not the only, relationships which need to be understood. She also recognizes that young males are often guided into manhood by an older male mentor while young female characters do not have an older female to provide guidance. Diamant counters that by having Dinah recount the stories told to her by her mothers as she seamlessly, yet quite intricately, weaves in her own story. The colour of the red tent has obvious associations with the colour of menstrual blood, without which there would be no new life, therefore red is associated with life-giving blood. Women's group are meeting once a month under the new moon to share food and stories, but most importantly they are seeking a sisterhood that gives them permission to speak openly about childbirth, motherhood, sex, love, and menstruation. This phenomenological response shows that readers of *The Red Tent* are not passively consuming its meaning, but actively applying that meaning to their personal lives.

Another stage in womanhood is childbirth. Childbirth is a traumatic experience with significant emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural implications. It also entails a great deal of bodily stress. Intense positive and negative feelings are typically present during labor and during the birth of the baby. There are many

cultural standards and perceived norms connected with birth and motherhood. The red tent can also be regarded as significant since it serves as a birthplace where the women bring new lives into a society where the male gender is dominant. Thus, the red tent acts as a support system that brings the women together for their own well being. Each women in the tent is supported by the rest in times of giving birth. In the red tent some women gain experience in helping others with childbirth. There are certain rituals taking place in the red tent, the most significant of them is childbirth. In the beginning of the novel, the writer has thrown light into the characters of the four sisters, Leah, Rachael, Bilhah and Zilpah. All of these sisters were born to separate mothers, proving categorically that there was no such thing as love and purity in a relationship. With four central characters acting as midwives who are Inna, Rachel, Dinah, and Meryt, childbearing is highlighted throughout the novel as a woman's unavoidable battle with life and death. *The Red Tent* vividly describes the frightening and painful conditions of childbirth in ancient times. As a midwife, Dinah felt for the still birth children of her mothers and she took over the journey of midwife herself.

By narrating graphic scenes of women in labor, being clutched at by their sisters as they tear and bleed in the process of giving birth, Diamant portrays a world where women must fear for their lives at every moment during delivery. Dinah might have lost her own life in childbirth had she not the experience and presence of mind to ask for a knife and mirror. During many of the births described, either the baby or the mother almost dies at least once. The assistance of a midwife was a luxury to women, and even this assistance offered no assurance that woman or child would live out the day. Dinah's narrative as a midwife offers a startling portrayal of the real and bloody experience of childbirth in ancient times. Laban was the father of all of these sisters. Just like a machine, a woman's body was used to bear children and then endure as a

result. Before Leah was born, her mother Adah had already given birth to seven sons and girls. “Adah named her beloved last-born Leah, which means “mistress,” and she wept a prayer that this child would live, for she had buried seven sons and daughters.”(Diamant 12)

The men always desired the birth of boys because they believed that only a son could take care of the flocks and other responsibilities. The females who had no involvement felt a lot of mental strain as a result. They used to make every effort to have a boy kid. The sole purpose of their marriage was to have children. Females were only regarded as reproductive tools that had to continue producing offspring until they reached adulthood or perished. Along with the midwife, other women in the red tent offered solace to women going through childbirth. Leah was only able to receive consolation from Inna, the midwife, during her contractions.

“She praised her, reassured her, told her, “Good, good, good, my girl.”

Soon, all of the women in the tent joined her in repeating ‘Good, good, good,’ clucking like a clutch of doves.” (Diamant 47, 48)

After the baby was born, the ladies used to pass him “around the tent, wiping him and kissing him, praising his limbs, his torso, his head, his little sex.”(Diamant 49) This shows the unity and strength of the women in the red tent who were always there for each other in all the difficult situations and supported mutually. Henceforth, Leah was named as a great mother because she was always bearing a child or giving to them.. Like a machine, she kept on bearing children in her womb and kept on delivering them, without a thought of refusing.

“Leah wore the mantle of the great mother, seemingly always pregnant or nursing. Two years after Reuben’s birth, she bore a second son, Simon. Levi was born only eighteen months later. Leah miscarried

after that, but within another year her sorrow was forgotten in the joy of her fourth son, Judah.” (Diamant 54)

Woman usually decided the name of their child beforehand and announced it in case she does not stay alive to see the child. Such was the irony. Either the women were dead or almost half-dead during the childbirth but they were supposed to bear as many children as they could. This was their only role. Leah gave birth to her last child which was a baby girl and named her Dinah. She was the only daughter born to Jacob as his wives always gave birth to sons. There was a difference in the resting time of women in the red tent after childbirth depending upon whether the child is a boy or a girl.

“After the birth of a boy, mothers rested from one moon to the next, but the birth of a birth-giver required a longer period of separation from the world of men.” (Diamant 38)

Another stage in womanhood is an old age. Old age is the spectrum of ages that are close to and beyond the human life expectancy. It is the conclusion of the human life cycle. Older adults are more prone to disease, syndromes, injuries, and other diseases than younger adults because they frequently have limited regenerative capacities. While both men and women experience aging as a complex and natural process, there are some variations in how they develop confidence with it. In reality, women's representations of emotional and cognitive feelings related to identity differ significantly from men's. It has been widely assumed that women of middle age usher in a long period of decline toward death and that therefore it will be associated with an increase in thoughts about death and mortality, as well as with declines in perceived physical, relational, and psychological capacities. The novel *The red tent* is

also portrayed the significance of the old age. When Dinah's family was ready to meet the grandmother Rebecca, Dinah had more expectations on her thus she says,

At night, I settled in beside zilpah, who fed my awe of the grandmother with tales about Rebecca's reputation as a diviner, healer and prophet, so that I could barely fall asleep. I could barely keep myself from running, for I was going to see Tabea again. Werenro would smile at me and tell more of her story. And I would meet the grandmother, who I imagined would understand me instantly and adore me above any of my brothers. (Diamant 176)

Rebecca was consider as a divine mother and the Oracle of Mamre. she can see the future and has healing powers. She is the matriarch of the family and schemes to give Isaac's blessing to Jacob, her favorite son. When Dinah saw her she says

I saw only her. The grandmother- my grandmother. She was the oldest person I had ever seen. Her years proclaimed themselves in the deep furrows on her brow and around her mouth, but the beauty of youth still clung to her. She stood as erect as Reuben and nearly as tall. Her black eyes were clear and sharp, painted in Egyptian style- a pattern of heavy black kohl that made her appear all-seeing. Her robes were purple- the color of royalty and holiness and wealth. Her head covering was long and black, shout through with gold threads, providing the illusion of luxurious hair, where in fact only a few grey strands were left to her.(Diamant 177)

The portrayal of the grandmother Rebecca shows that her age and her lifestyle was totally contradictory. Though she was an old woman, her enthusiasm and her beauty

place her as an important figure in the novel. Dinah's last days were considered as a remarkable one. When she is nearer to death, she saw all the woman who had passed the world before her.

In the darkness surrounding the shining lights of my life, I began to discern the faces of my mothers, each one burning with her own fire. Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah, Inna, Re-nefer, and Meryt. Even poor Ruti and arrogant Rebecca were arrayed to meet me. Although I had never seen them, I recognized Adah and Sarai as well. Strong, brave, wonderstruck, kind, gifted, broken, loyal, foolish, talented, weak: each one welcoming me in her way.(Diamant 382)

The ancestors and friends of Dinah who had died were never old and the description of them was spectacular. The death did not take their beauty, bravery and talent. After death also those women appear with great power and warmth. When Dinah dies she was not weak or sick

Egypt loved the lotus because it never dies. It is the same for people who are loved. Thus can something as significant as a name- two syllables, one sweet-summon up the innumerable smiles and tears, sighs and dreams of a human life.(Diamant 384)

Dinah was also considered as a lotus because Diamant gave new dimension into Dinah's life. Thus she was a significant and a remarkable person in the novel *The Red Tent*. Diamant portrays all the stages of women like menstruation, childbirth and old age in the novel in order to show that the womanhood is a powerful and divine life that every woman need to cherish.

Chapter Three

The Red Tent, Analysis of Deconstruction Through Jaques Derrida

Jacques Derrida is an Algerian-born French philosopher. Through close readings of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, Husserlian, and Heideggerian phenomenology, he developed the theory of Deconstruction, which he used in many of his texts. He is a notable representative of postmodern and poststructuralist thought. Derrida published more than 40 books throughout his tenure in addition to thousands of essays and speeches. Philosophy, literature, law, anthropology, historiography, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychoanalysis, music, architecture, and political theory are just a few of the humanities and social sciences on which he had a major impact. His work continued to have a significant academic impact well into the 2000s in South America, continental Europe, the United States, and all other nations where continental philosophy has been the dominant school of thought, particularly in discussions of ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of language. Because of his long-standing interest in language and his connections to notable literary critics from his time at Yale, Derrida is currently most influential in literary studies in the majority of the Anglosphere, where analytic philosophy is predominant. He also influenced architecture in the form of deconstructivism, music, art, and art criticism.

Deconstruction is a method of philosophical and literary analysis that was largely inspired by the work of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who started it in the 1960s. It closely examines the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts in order to challenge the fundamental conceptual oppositions in Western philosophy. The phrase used to describe the work of many academics in the 1970s, including Derrida, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Barbara Johnson. It is used more

loosely in the 1980s to describe a variety of radical theory endeavors in various humanities and social science fields. The oppositions that deconstruction challenges are typically binary and hierarchical, involving a pair of terms where one is assumed to be primary or fundamental, and the other secondary or derivative. These oppositions have been a part of Western philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks. Examples include, literal and metaphorical, comprehensible and sensible, form and meaning, speech and writing, mind and body, present and absence, inside and outside. Exploring the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering posited and occasionally asserted in the text and other meanings of the text, particularly those that are indirect, implicit, or that depend on figurative or performative uses of language, is what is meant by deconstructing an opposition. For Derrida, the most telling and pervasive opposition is the one that treats writing as secondary to or derivative of speech. Speech, in this opposing view, is a more genuine form of language because the speaker's thoughts and intentions are immediately present, whereas in writing, they are more distal or absent from the speaker or author and therefore more prone to misinterpretation. However, according to Derrida, spoken words only serve as linguistic signs to the degree that they can be repeated in different contexts without the speaker who first said them.

. In other words, speech only counts as language to the degree that it possesses the qualities typically associated with writing, such as absence, difference, and the potential for misunderstanding. Derrida claims that one sign of this is how frequently examples and metaphors from writing are used to describe speaking in Western philosophy. Even when writing is expressly stated to be secondary to speech, these texts effectively characterize speech as a form of writing.

Deconstruction denotes the pursuing of the meaning of a text to the point of exposing the supposed contradictions and internal oppositions upon which it is founded supposedly showing that those foundations are irreducibly complex, unstable, or impossible. It is a method that can be used in literary analysis, philosophy, and even the study of scientific writings. Deconstruction typically aims to show that a text is not a clear whole but rather consists of multiple, incompatible meanings; as a result, a text has more than one interpretation; the text itself intimately connects these interpretations; the incompatibility of these interpretations is irreducible; and as a result, an interpretative reading is limited to a certain extent. Initially, Derrida resisted giving his method the general name Deconstruction, arguing that it was a specific technical phrase that could not be used to describe his work in general. However, he ultimately conceded that the phrase had come to be used frequently to describe his textual methodology, and Derrida himself increasingly started to use the phrase in this more broad sense. Postmodernists, who believe that a text can have multiple meanings, also use Derrida's deconstruction strategy to find meaning in a text rather than to uncover meaning. There is an emphasis on deconstruction, which is the process of disassembling a text in order to uncover arbitrary presuppositions and hierarchies with the goal of identifying contradictions that cast doubt on a text's coherence. Because it depends on the interaction between the reader and the text, the meaning of a text in this case cannot be attributed to the author or his or her goals. Since the source is altered as well as the translating language, the translation process is also viewed as transformative.

Diamant in *The red tent* has given various instances which contradicts the real text. The chapter highlights the perspective of Deconstruction which is used by Anita diamant in this novel. Although Diamant creates an important character, Ruti, in

section one of the book, she stays fairly close to the storyline in the Genesis account. Laban's slave Ruti gave birth to his two sons Kemuel and Beor in Diamant's book. Laban treats Ruti with abhorrent cruelty. He beats her every day. Although Ruti is not mentioned in Genesis, Diamant describes Ruti's life in depth. There are also direct contradictions between the genealogy in *The Red Tent* and the family tree in Genesis. While the Bible attributes six boys to Leah and says that Bilhah was the mother of Naphtali, Diamant attributes seven sons to Leah, including Naphtali, who is depicted as a twin to Issachar. Another example of a contradiction with the biblical account involves the plot in which Rachel replaced Leah on her wedding with Jacob. In *The Red Tent*, Jacob loves Rachael at first sight and she loves him, but young Rachael is afraid of her wedding night. Rachael's sister, Zilpah, feeds the fear until Rachael begs Leah to take her place under the bridal veil. Leah does and becomes Jacob's first wife. As mentioned in Genesis 29:22-26, Laban switched the girls.

And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.

And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.(Genesis 29:22-26).

With a few notable exceptions, Diamant largely follows the biblical narrative of Jacob's tribe and the travels in chapter two, which is titled as "My Story." For example, Diamant describes Dinah and the prince in a loving relationship, which radically contradicts the rape of Dinah by Shechem in Genesis 34:2 "And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."(Genesis 32:2). Diamant's account is significantly different from the traditional rabbinic midrash concerning Dinah and Shechem. The rabbinic midrash repeatedly blames Dinah for the rape because she "went out to visit the daughters of the land" (Genesis 34:1). For example, Rabbi Judah b. Simon warned, "'Boast not thyself of tomorrow' (Proverbs 27:1), yet you [Jacob] have said, 'So shall my righteousness witness for me tomorrow' (Genesis 30:33) Tomorrow your daughter will go out and be violated. Thus it is written, 'And Dinah the daughter of Leah went out' (Genesis 34:1)".

Dinah is referred to as the daughter of Leah and not the daughter of Jacob in Genesis 34:1. Rashi, was a medieval French rabbi, the author of comprehensive commentaries on the Talmud and Hebrew Bible. Rashi's commentaries appeal to both learned scholars and beginning students, and his works remain a centerpiece of contemporary Torah study. Rashi explains the origin of the proverb like mother, like daughter in Ezekiel 16:44, he explains, because of her going out she is called the daughter of Leah, for [Leah], too, was one who would go out, as it says, Leah went out to meet him. Dinah was violated because she went out; she brought the rape on to her chastity on her own by going out and Leah is chastised for going out to meet her

husband. The traditional midrash seems to be an attempt to justify restrictions on women's freedom. A woman does not want to come back after she leaves and is drawn into corruption. A woman finds it difficult to separate herself from an uncircumcised individual once they become intimate.

All of the comments about the novel stress that women can better shut themselves at home to stay away from danger. As opposed to blaming Dinah for her own rape, Diamant reworks the story so that there was no rape; she replaces rape with romance. In *The Red Tent*, Shalem is a prince and Dinah is summoned to the palace because of her midwifery skills. When Dinah and Shalem first see each other, there is instant mutual attraction. Shalem's mother senses this and arrange a second encounter between the two of them. Diamant is clear about Dinah's consent before having an intercourse with Shalem. Dinah narrates, "He looked into my face to discover my meaning, and seeing only yes..."(Diamant 225). This is a radical departure from the traditional interpretation of the rape story. It could be argued, however, that Diamant's version is not such a radical departure from the biblical text. In Genesis 34:3 Shechem is clearly in love with Dinah and wants to marry her: "And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife'" (Genesis 34:3-4). The king, Hamor, also mentions his son's feelings for Dinah, "And Hamor spoke with them saying, 'My son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him in marriage. Intermarry with us: give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves'" (Genesis 34:8-9). Shechem tells Dinah's father and brothers that he will pay whatever they ask as a bride-price, "Then Shechem said to her father and brothers, "'Do me this favor, and I will pay whatever you tell me. Ask me for a bride-price ever so high, as well as gifts, and I will pay what

you tell me; only give me the maiden for a wife” (Genesis 34:11-12). They reply that Shechem and all the males in his kingdom must get circumcised and then Shechem will be allowed to marry Dinah. Shechem is not deterred by their request; he is willing to be circumcised as an adult for Dinah’s hand in marriage, “Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem. And the youth lost no time in doing the thing, for he wanted Jacob’s daughter” (Genesis 34:18-19). The biblical text alludes to more of a relationship between Dinah and Shechem, at the very least more to the story than a rape.

Another striking departure from the biblical narrative is Diamant’s account of the circumstances of Jacob’s name change to Israel. In *The Red Tent* Jacob is ashamed that his sons murdered the circumcised men and Jacob changed his name to distance himself from his tribe’s blemished reputation:

“Jacob cowered and took a new name, Isra’El, so that the people would not remember him as the butcher of Shechem. He fled from the name Jacob, which became another name for ‘liar,’ so that ‘You serve the God of Jacob’ was one of the worst insults one man could hurl at another in that land for many generations.” (Diamant 247)

In the biblical account, Jacob spent night alone across the river Jabbok. He fought with a man all night long. The man wrenched Jacob’s hip from its socket. The man claimed to be a divine being and he changed Jacob’s name to Israel after the physical struggle: “Said he, ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human and have prevailed’” (Genesis 32:29). In the Bible, the name Israel is a reward from a divine being, but in *The Red Tent* the name Israel was taken Jacob himself due to shame.

This change in the narrative weakens the superiority of the male character, Jacob. Another example from *The Red Tent* is Diamant's description of Laban as a lazy, abusive man and the women as hardworking contributors to the prosperity of the tribe. Alterations in the biblical plot such as these may be offensive to some people and are a source of controversy in the discussion of the limits of modern midrash. In part three, which is titled as 'Egypt,' Diamant continues the story of Dinah's life through old age, whereas Dinah's life story in the Genesis account ends with her rape and her brothers' violent revenge. Part three of the novel is Fabrication. There is evidence in Genesis 46:15 that Dinah may have traveled with her family to Egypt, but all else is Diamant's creation. There are many other conflicts between *The Red Tent* and the Hebrew Bible. These contradictions raise an important issue in the discussion of modern feminist midrash. However, the character of Dinah has a long history of various interpretations that precede Diamant's work. It is the missing voice of Dinah that enabled various interpreters throughout history to fill it with their own understanding of her story and its purpose. Dinah's role in the Scripture, which provoked Diamant to give her a voice of her own and subsequently examines the various understandings of Dinah's story by different interpreters. Hence Diamant elucidate the meaning of the text by contradicts the source text. She deconstructed the story of Dinah and gives a real meaning to her name.

Chapter Four

Style and Narrative Techniques

The word technique is derived from the Greek origin *techniko*, which denotes an artistic endeavour. The application of any literary fiction method encompasses the entire process of writing a novel. Technique, in general, includes everything a writer employs to vividly describe his story. The ability to relate a tale is a narrative that existed before it was given that name. The ability to creatively and realistically narrate a story helps the storyteller make it operative and stimulating for the viewer to understand.

A narrator can convey a narrative orally, in writing, or even internally. There are extra evaluation criteria for the observers. The tales are told by a narrator who the audience can hear or see. It is a strategy that incorporates characters, a timeline, a location, and a challenge. It makes an effort to reply or look for an explanation. Bedtime stories are the best instances of short stories, whereas novels are examples of long stories. Plays and movie scripts are two examples of narrative writing. Narrative writing is the most conventional method of communication, so it permeates every aspect of society. Everywhere in the world, narrative is a universal phenomenon. One could argue that the numerous narrative techniques form the basis of creative writing. Through writing, a writer attempts to communicate his or her feelings. Through writing, he more clearly and successfully communicates with his audience about his inner voice.

The Red Tent is about a minor character, Dinah mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible in the Genesis. Dinah is first mentioned in Genesis 30:21 as the daughter of Leah and Jacob, having six elder brothers. In Genesis 34, Dinah went out to visit the women of Shechem, where her tribe led by her father had purchased land and pitched tents. The son of Hamor and the prince of the land, Shechem was attracted to Dinah, they slept together and fell in love. When Hamor came to Jacob with a marriage proposal of

his son for Dinah and offered any bride-price and wide ranging matrimonial alliances to strengthen the ties between the two tribes, Jacob's sons agreed to accept the offer on the condition that Hamor's men would get circumcised. But they had deceit in their hearts and on the third day after circumcision, they attacked and killed Hamor, Shechem and other men folk of the tribe and took Dinah away.

The Bible portrays Dinah as the victim of her circumstances and is a marginalised figure in a very staunch patriarchal society. The killing of the Shechemites by the sons of Jacob is shown as seeking a revenge for defiling the honour of their sister. After the rape and the murder of Shechemites there is no mention of Dinah ever. In this narrative, Dinah is only a catalyst for all the actions that are decided upon and performed by males in the patriarchal society of the times. Dinah has neither a say nor any control over the actions or their repercussions. She is just the cite around which all incidents occur and her voice on these events is insignificant to be recorded.

However, the novel *The Red Tent*, by Anita Diamant not only revolves around Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and sister of Joseph but presents her take on the events. In the Genesis there is only a mention about her rape but the novel by Diamant gives it an altogether new perspective that the rape which was portrayed by the patriarchy as a bond of love and the sexual engagement is consensual. The plot of the novel too is not parallel to that of the Bible. Diamant, on the other hand, gives minute details about her protagonist Dinah and that too from her own perspective, written in the first person narrative.

In the Bible, Dinah gets marginalized because she is being mentioned little in the Genesis and being a woman in the male dominant patriarchal society, she is being an only daughter among twelve sons of Jacob. Maximum actions of the novel revolves around the women characters of the novel. The entire first part of the novel talks about the four

mothers of Dinah. The story of Dinah begins from the second part. One can also see that women in Dinah's family worship their female goddess unlike the male god of Jacob. The red tent is exclusively a tent made for woman to seek solace and comfort at the time of their menstruation and child birth. There is no mention of the red tent in the bible but the novel provides a place for women to not only rest during their child birth and menstruation but a place where they cherish each other's company, find mutual support and shared wisdom from the other women in the tribe. The red tent becomes symbolic of the red colour of the blood and the women remaining in the red tent during their menstrual cycle and childbirth further hints at the colour of the blood and that of the tent. Unlike in the Bible, the novel depicts that her sexual engagement with the Shechemite prince was consensual and not a rape. That is where Dinah gets her voice to express her side of the story. She was not disgraced by Shalem or taken in by force. Before her sexual encounter there is a scene when she sees Shalem for the first time and for the first time she feels her heart and body yearn for a man. She desired him to follow her and ask for her hand from her father. It can be seen here that the author rendered voice to the voiceless victim, Dinah in the novel and looking at history or narrative from her point of view is changing the course of the mainstream narrative.

Bible does not show Dinah as a person with her own strengths and weaknesses beyond the incident of her consensual sexual engagement or rape whereas the novel picturize Dinah as skillful midwife. In the prologue to *The Red Tent*, Dinah complains, "No one recalled my skill as a midwife, or the songs I sang, or the bread I baked for my insatiable brothers" (Diamant 2). Dinah further complaints of how she is marginalised in the Bible by saying,

I became a footnote, my father, Jacob, and the celebrated chronicle of Joseph, my brother. On those rare occasions when I was remembered ,

it was as a victim. Near the beginning of your holy book, there is passage that seems to say I was raped and continues with the bloody tale of how my honor was avenged (Diamant 1)

There is a mention of a son born to Dinah who aspires to serve the king of Egypt and further in the novel, the character, Dinah who then identified herself getting married with carpenter named Benia and both her weddings were consensual and nowhere she was victimised as depicted in the bible. Dinah is known for her skills as an experienced midwife, the knowledge she gained from one of her mothers, Rachel. In fact it was while assisting Rachel as midwife when she first went to Shechem and met Shalem there. It was the plan of both Shalem's mother Renefer and Rachel to acknowledge the feelings of Dinah and Shalem for each other and get them together. While their first week in the chamber as husband and wife, Dinah is very happy and contented with Shalem. It can be seen that Diamant attempts to give voice to one of the subaltern characters Dinah from Bible and narration revolves around her. Her work brings about an altogether new perspective of the mainstream narrative. It almost reverses the plot of the mainstream narrative and questions the truth of patriarchal narrative about the woman.

The term Midrash denotes the exegetical method by which the oral tradition interprets and elaborates scriptural text. Feminist midrash is an organic technique that works within the tradition to bring about lasting change. It is also regarded as a writing style. Anita Diamant used this narrative tool to bring out the untold story of the minor character Dinah by interpreting the first book in the Bible, Genesis.

The Red Tent's focus on Dinah's life and evolution of her behavior and the positioning of women centred relationships. Diamant's rewriting and retelling of an original Bible story, and voices of other women, in order to include Dinah's silenced story and the stories of her mothers, means the novel can be considered to be feminist

midrash. The fact that the novel details the struggles of women's everyday life within a patriarchal culture and also provides a space like the red tent, a space away from men, where women can bond over their shared experience and find joy in each other's presence makes the novel a feminist text. Diamant denies *The Red Tent* is midrash as she believes she strayed too far away from the original story for it to be considered genuine midrash. In Karen Flagg's essay *The Red Tent a Case Study of Feminist Midrash – The Red Tent as midrash*, Flagg uses Umansky's three criteria for a case for feminist midrash. Dr. Ellen M. Umansky is the Professor of Judaic Studies and Director of the Bennett Center for Judaic Studies at Fairfield University located in Fairfield, Connecticut, positions that she has held since 1994. These are, one, the fact that *The Red Tent* is a biblical story retold by a contemporary woman, two, Dinah is given a voice in the novel which is contrasted to her voicelessness in the Bible and three, ancient and modern voices are brought together laying a claim for a history of matrilineage through shared experience. Matrilineal society, also called matriline, group adhering to a kinship system in which ancestral descent is traced through maternal instead of paternal lines. In a matrilineage, people are connected as kin through the female line of descent since a lineage is a group of people who can trace their ancestry to a common ancestor. In the novel *The Red Tent* Diamant symbolizes the matrilineal relation throughout the novel. This claim for matrilineage is made in the beginning of the novel in Dinah's address to contemporary women:

We have been lost to each other for so long. My name means nothing to you. My memory is dust. This is not your fault, or mine. The chain connecting mother to daughter was broken and the word passed to the keeping of men, who had no way of knowing. That is why I became a footnote, my story a brief detour between the well-known history of my

father, Jacob, and the celebrated chronicle of Joseph, my brother. On those rare occasions when I was remembered, it was as a victim (Diamant 1).

The skill of the midwife taught to the next generation. This shows the matrilineage bond between the women in the red tent. In the beginning of the novel Inna was the midwife. When Inna became old she taught the skill to Rachel.

During her quest for a child of her own, Rachel assisted Inna and became her apprentice. She learned what to do when the baby presented itself feet first, and what to do when the baby came too fast and the mother's flesh tore and festered. She learned how to keep a stillborn's mother from giving up her spirit in despair. And how, when a mother died, to cut open the womb and save the child within.(Diamant 56).

After the death of Inna Rachel became a midwife at her place. When Dinah had grown up she also interested in midwifery skills. During her childhood itself she was interested in exploring everything and she love to mingle with nature. After she attain her puberty, her interest became shifted to the events in the red tent. On seeing one of her mothers, Rachel's experience in childbirth slowly she enhance it with by became an apprentice to Rachel. Rachel had a close connection with her aunt Rachel. Dinah says,

I kept close to my aunt Rachel. I found reasons to follow her from one task to the next, offering to carry for her, asking her for advice on my duties. I stayed by her side until nightfall, even falling asleep upon her blankets, and woke in the morning to find myself covered by her sweet-scented cloak (Diamant 120).

Inna and Rachel had been the teachers to Dinah. She says, "Though I was certain my teachers knew everything about delivering babies, Rachel and Inna tried to learn what

they might from women wherever they went”(Diamant 210). The first experience of Dinah as a midwife takes place when Rachel went to Shehem for the delivery of shalem’s sister.

Our beloved friend was aging, and the time came when Inna was too stiff to walk out in the night or to manage steep paths, so Rachel took me with her and I began to learn with my hands as well as with my eyes. Once when we were called to help a young mother deliver her second son- an easy birth from a sweet woman who smiled even as she labored-my aunt let me place the bricks and tie the cord. On the way home Rachel patted my shoulder and told me I would be a good midwife. When she added that my voice suited the song of the fearless mother, I was never so proud (Diamant 211).

The novel fits into the genre of bildungsroman, a “story of a single individual’s growth and development within the context of a defined social order” says Hader, as it follows Dinah’s evolution of character and her struggles in a patriarchal culture that attempts to silence her voice and thus erase her life from the history books. The defined social order into which Dinah is born and in which she reaches maturity is a pre-biblical patriarchal culture in which women are valued for their reproductive potential and are seen belonging to the men of their family. Dinah addressing the contemporary audience from beyond the grave after her death from old age is an attempt to use the form of bildungsroman to inspire; Diamant’s Dinah attempts to use her story to inspire a feminist future in contrast to the way Dinah’s story was weaponised in Genesis. Diamant writes Dinah offering her stories to the audience as a way of carrying on the matrilineal tradition of passing knowledge and stories from mother to daughter through the generations of

women in Dinah's tribe. As Dinah does not give birth to a daughter, the tradition stops with her and the stories are described as being lost.

Dinah's story in Genesis has painted her as a victim, however, in Diamant's retelling of Dinah's story, Dinah falls in love and consensually marries Shalem her supposed rapist. Written on the bottom of the front cover of Pan Macmillan's edition of *The Red Tent* it reads "the oldest love story never told". This line most obviously refers to Dinah's story in Genesis which is summarised to merely a footnote in history where she is a victim of rape, however, it is unclear whether the love story denotes the short-lived romance between Dinah and Shalem or alternatively the love story is Dinah's life story, her homosocial bonds with her mothers. Diamant takes Dinah's rape in Genesis and gives a different interpretation of the events in which Dinah and Shalem are deeply in love. Dinah is seen visiting the city of Shechem to attend to a concubine of the King on her request after helping Rachel to deliver her baby a few days prior. When Dinah arrives at the city of Shechem she is told by her brother Levi, who accompanied her there; "to behave as befits one of the daughters of Jacob"(Diamant 221). The meaning of this sentiment is seen to have terrible consequences when Dinah marries Shalem, the prince of Shechem. Dinah and Shalem's first sexual encounter is described as consensual by which is contradictory to the idea that Dinah was raped. Dinah describes the encounter:

He looked in my face to discover my meaning, and seeing only yes, he took my hand and led me down an unfamiliar corridor into a room with a polished floor and a bed that stood on legs carved like the claws of a hawk. We lay down upon the sweet-smelling black fleece and found one another (Diamant 225).

Shalem's mother, Re-nefer is clearly approving of Dinah as a suitable match for her son, "She approved of my height and the strength of my arms, my colouring and the

way I carried my head. The fact that one as young as I was already walking in a midwife's path told her I was no fool" (Diamant 224). After Dinah and Shalem have sexual intercourse, they are effectively married without a formal ceremony. Dinah notes that "I had no worries for the future. Shalem said our love-making sealed our marriage"(Diamant 227-228). In the Bible Dinah's life is seen resting in the hands of the men in her life, as they use her as a pawn in their territorial dispute with Hamor and the people of Shechem, and make decisions about her future without consulting or considering her. This is later seen to have tragic consequences when it comes to her brother's decision about her husband and his people. The actions of Dinah's brother, Levi, are important to note as they inform what happens later in the novel and affects the narrative:

While I lay in Shalem's first embrace, Levi was storming out of Hamor's palace, furious that he had not been given the audience with the king he considered his due. My brother had been dispatched to see when I would be sent home and had he been given a fine meal and a bed for the night my life might have had a different telling(Diamant 228)

The reason Hamor, the king, did not want to meet with Levi is because he viewed him as "the quarrelsome one who had accused him of swindling the family" (Diamant 228). Dinah caught up in a battle of egos and honour amongst the patriarchs and men of both families. It is ironic that after their love-making Shalem states that: "I will build you a tomb of surpassing beauty...The world will never forget the name Dinah" as the name Dinah has come to be associated with her rape when Shalem was speaking of building a structure to immortalise her memory (Diamant 228). Dinah's name has not been immortalised in the affirmative way Shalem wishes, celebrating her life, instead her name becomes synonymous with the story of her rape in Genesis due to the androcentric nature

of the religious text. Hamor used the opportunity of Dinah and Shalem's relationship presents to strengthen political relations between him and Jacob as he sees Jacob as a useful partner: "He had enriched the valley, and Hamor was eager for good relations with him" (Diamant 229). When Hamor presents his offer of Dinah's bride-price to Jacob, Jacob does not answer immediately and "searched his mind for a way to postpone a decision, a way to regain the upper hand" in the end he defers the decision by saying "I will discuss this with my sons" (Diamant 230). When Jacob learns of Dinah and Shalem's relationship, he struggles to imagine Dinah's face yet wishes to use her as a bargaining tool. He can, however, picture his son Joseph: "he could not quite conjure up the image of Dinah's face. All he could recall clearly was the sight of hair, unruly and wild, as she chased after Joseph. The memory came from long ago" (Diamant 231).

When Jacob speaks to Leah about the relationship he refers to Dinah as Leah's daughter and accuses her of being an accomplice: "Your daughter is no longer a girl... You have overreached before, but never to shame me. And now this" (Diamant 231). Jacob believes that Leah to be an accomplice, even though she had no knowledge of the relationship, and is angry because Dinah's relationship with Shalem has shamed him. Dinah is referred to as property passing from the hands of her father to Shalem's, her husband, in Jacob's conversation with Leah: "The prince of Shechem has claimed her. His father comes to pay the full bride-price of a virgin. And so I assume that she was until she went within the walls of that dung heap of a city... She is of Shechem now, I suppose, and of no use to me" (Diamant 231). In Jacob's mind, Dinah's usefulness is directly linked to her virginity which she no longer has so she is seen as no longer valuable or useful to him. Hamor is aware of this and soothes Shalem's worried mind about the possibility of losing Dinah, due to his love for her, by saying: "The girl is yours. No father would want her back as she is now. Go back to your wife, and let me worry

about the father” (Diamant 233). Dinah was criticized by the patriarchal society because she had a sexual relationship with a man and she was not considered by her father.

The reason Dinah’s sleeping with Shalem, an uncircumcised man, was so scandalous and the fact that it is violated Abraham’s covenant with God says sheres. This is an example of patrilineal or patriarchal monotheism which dictates the actions of women without them having any say in the making of these laws. Monotheism is a doctrine or belief that there is only one God. In the Bible the ancestors of Jacob believed in only god. It is Joseph who suggests the men of Shechem get circumcised as Dinah’s bride-price but he does so sarcastically: “let all men of Shechem become like us... so that their sons and ours will piss the same, and rut the same, and none will be able to tell us apart. And thus will the tribe of Jacob grow not merely in generations to come, but even tomorrow” (Diamant 236). Jacob takes what Joseph says seriously even though it is described as being spoken “only in mockery of the brothers who had tortured him since infancy” (Diamant 236). Jacob’s reasoning being “Abram took up the knife for those of his household who were not of his covenant. If the men of Shechem agree to this, none could say our daughter was injured...If the men of the city make such a sacrifice to the god of my fathers, we shall be remembered as makers of souls, as gatherers of men” (Diamant 236). Present in Jacob’s decision is evidence of the patriarchal nature of his monotheistic religion and the rhetoric of nation-building that uses women’s bodies as pawns. Jacob tells his sons that if the men of Shechem agree to be circumcised, then the tribe of Jacob will be known as gatherers of men which is pertinent as Jacob’s sons go on to form the twelve tribes of Israel and in doing so, form the nation of Israel (Diamant 236). During the discussion Levi is described as “ripped his clothing as though mourning my death” (Diamant 235). Simon’s reaction is also excessively emotional, referring to Shalem as: “The uncircumcised dog rapes my sister every day... Am I to permit this

desecration of our only sister, my own mother's daughter?" (Diamant 235). This is the first time Dinah is referred to as being raped even though Dinah does consent to the sex. The aggressive and opportunistic mentality of the men in Dinah's family provides Dinah as a catalyst that finally sees her cutting the relationship with her family. After the slaughter of the men of Shechem by her brothers, Dinah addresses Jacob whilst wearing the blood of the righteous men of Shechem and curses him to "never know peace again" as "their blood stains your hands and your head...you will never be clean again" (Diamant 245-246). Dinah curses her brothers and tells them that "the sons of Jacob are vipers" and "will each suffer in his turn, and turn the suffering upon their father" (Diamant 246). Dinah's act of renouncing her family is illustrative of her character development evolving as a revolutionary woman.

When Hamor hears that only the foreskins of the men of Shechem will suffice as Dinah's bride-price, he is angered and outraged and tells Jacob: "You must think very little of your daughter to make such a sport of her future" (Diamant 237). This is clearly illustrative of the nature of Dinah as a bargaining tool to further Jacob's religious agenda. Unlike his father's response, Shalem agrees to Jacob's demands despite his father's reaction:

"I agree to the demands... Here and now, if you like. I will honor the custom of my wife's family, and I will order my slaves and their sons to follow me. I know my father speaks out of fear for me and in loyalty to his men, who would suffer. But for me, there is no question. I hear and obey." (Diamant 237).

Shalem's response and his wish to build Dinah a tomb to memorize her beauty illustrates the idea of a man deeply in love with his wife which strengthens Diamant's

narrative of Dinah and Shalem being in love. The tale of Dinah's rape can be seen as propaganda which is rationale for her brothers slaughtering Shalem and his men when in fact it was motivated by territorial politics as suggested by Fuchs. Levi is not happy with Jacob's decision about Dinah's bride-price and it seems neither is Simon "pulled him away into the night, far from the light of lamps and the ears of their brothers" (Diamant 236). Dinah's brothers are seen avenging Dinah's honour, her honour as a woman belongs to the men of her family by killing her husband but this results in her life as she knows it ending as she is disgraced and ultimately left without a husband and family, which in a patriarchal culture, means she is ostracized. The novel details Dinah's development and growth as a character from girlhood to womanhood, however, after Shalem's death, her character's importance is derived from her status as qualified midwife and not from her relationship with the male characters in the novel, with the only exception being her son and heir to Shalem's kingdom. Dinah's place amongst Shalem's family is ensured due to the fact that Dinah is pregnant with Shalem's child, who turns out to be a boy and is named Re-mose. Through *The Red Tent*, Diamant allows Dinah to carry on the matrilineal tradition of the passing of knowledge, memories and stories with the readers of the novel acting as Dinah's surrogate daughters.

The Red Tent's narrative details the rich personal lives of women that are concealed from men in patriarchal culture. *The Red Tent* subverts the traditionally male-centred genres of midrash and bildungsroman, which are usually concerned with androcentric knowledge and the development of male characters, by concentrating on bringing the female experience to the religious text and detailing the development of the character Dinah. Anita Diamant's re-vision of Dinah's story, which is justified due to her silence in Genesis, is through descriptions of the homosocial bonds between women and their lives and experiences, and constructs the novel as feminist midrash. *The Red Tent* is

a feminist novel due to its detailing of the lives and community of women with a focus on Dinah's victimisation in a patriarchal culture that viewed her marriage to a foreigner to justify it being labelled as rape. Dinah's relationship with her mothers is central to an oral matrilineal tradition of knowledge production, however, Dinah's relationship with her mothers untimely ends with her renouncing her family after her brothers slaughter the men of Shechem and kill her husband. This is the illustration of the pressure, the mother-daughter relationship undergoes in a patriarchal society, yet it is Dinah's act of disowning her familial struggles that allows her a strong and profound character, that is indicative of feminist bildungsroman. Thus the chapter analyzes Diamant's narrative style of midrash, the matrilineal and patrilineal description and also the bildungsroman narration.

Chapter Five

Summation

All religious traditions encounter a changing world and each tradition must either adapt to new outside influences or its members must actively attempt to block changes from affecting them. Overriding a tradition's sense of permanence or changing its truths threatens the foundations of a tradition. Interesting situations arise when a religious tradition justifies change, resists change or undergoes change despite resistance. The phenomenon of *The Red Tent*, a journey from novel to modern midrash with a status akin to a sacred text for some people—represents one reaction to tension between Judaism and the change in the status of women in the modern world.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, to rewrite means to revise a text and from the point of view of linguistics, to rewrite is the act or process of writing an analysis of a phrase or sentence structure in a different form, usually by expansion. The intrinsic meaning of the verb is that of writing a new, supposedly but not necessarily in a better form. The original text is re-written through revision and expansion and thus becomes a rewrite of the initial text. The original text is inscribed a new and so the rewrite may be said to start afresh as another original text. The inscription of the original text implies modernization, since to rewrite also means to modernize, that is, to re-write an old text into modern spelling and language.

Women's rewriting emerged as a genre in the 1960s and since then attracted a lot of attention from both academics and publishers alike. As the research argues, retelling or rewriting stories is not a novel idea and has always been inherently linked to literature and storytelling, yet women's rewriting is specific as it works with a motivation to reconstruct

and rehabilitate the representation of women and their portrayal in the patriarchal society, being driven by both artistic and political ambitions. This research provides an examination of the beginnings of the genre and its further development as it has changed in the course of several decades.

Indeed, rewriting has been a part of the act of storytelling since its very beginning. Virgil's *Aeneid* as a Roman rewriting of Homer's Ancient Greek epic poems, Augustine's *Confession* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* as rewritings of Virgil is an example of rewriting. However, women's rewriting since the 1960s is specific as it benefits from a common purpose of reintroducing and re-evaluating women's voices, omitted or marginalized in the original stories, thus providing the genre with both artistic and political ambitions. Indeed, feminist and post-colonial writers employ re-writing as a tool to highlight the cases of previously marginalized female characters, object the authority of the canonical texts and provide different possibilities of understanding not only the certain stories in particular, but also the act of storytelling itself, as they open new narrative paths challenging the uniformity of the voice of the original.

During the twentieth century various authors, critics and academics highlight the lack of women's voices in literature or their obscured and marginalized presence. Already during 1928, Virginia Woolf delivered a series of lectures and later printed as *The Room of One's Own* in which she discusses the importance of women's writing. She highlights the inaccurate and insufficient representation of women in literature of the past, especially focusing on the many lives of women which are not recorded at all as "[no] biography or history has a word to say about [them]" (Woolf 97). However, women's rewriting since the 1960s is specific as it benefits from a common purpose of reintroducing and re-evaluating

women's voices, omitted or marginalized in the original stories, thus providing the genre with both artistic and political ambitions.

Elaine Showalter in her work *Literature of Their Own*, analyses, and examining in close detail literature created by women in the nineteenth century. Her work is an example of the tendency of women writers during the 1970s to return to the past in order to restore a sense of women's literary and cultural heritage and identity and to critically examine it. Indeed, in accordance with Woolf, Showalter shows "how much of female experience has gone unnoticed . . . how few women have been able to tell the truth about the body, or the mind" (Showalter 327). According to Showalter, the contemporary women writers of 1970 "reasserted their continuity with the women in the past, through essays and criticisms, as well as through fiction . . . [using] all the recourses, of the modern novel, including exploded chronology, dreams, myth, and stream-of-consciousness" (302).

One of the case studies presented in *Madwoman in the Attic* is the story of *Jane Eyre* by Brontë. Where Gilbert and Gubar are interested in the depiction of heroine struggles to find her place in the society which offers her limited possibilities of self-realisation. It is Jean Rhys's reading of the novel which provoked her to create in 1966 a response in form of her own novella *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Indeed, she chose to respond to the novel not from the point of view of literary criticism, but to react to it creatively. Thus, she employs fiction to present a rehabilitated portrayal of Rochester's mad Creole wife, who is in Rhys's novel endowed with a voice of her own. Rhys's novel had eventually become a central text of feminism, inscribing rewriting at the heart of the feminist project. Rhys's rewriting allows for the same story to be opened and investigated again with a new focus on the character of Bertha Mason, who is never presented with a chance to tell her story in the original. Furthermore, it gives

voice not just to Bertha “but also to other characters, [which] is an important site for the definition of what reading, writing and rewriting as technologies of memory can do” (Gilbert and Gubar 369). As a result, such rewritings affect the way of reading read and understanding the texts, and it transforms the way we remember them and thus Rhys’s novel is a cogent example of how women’s rewriting can be successful in opening up literary history to negotiation over which stories to be included, who is entitled to define it and which meaning it holds. Thus rewriting activates the past in order to democratise it and open it to new possibilities.

Chapter one deals with the origin of American literature which leads to the evolution of women’s writing. During the twentieth century the women’s writings were based on the central theme of women empowerment. They gave voice to the women who could not raise against the patriarchal society. The chapter also renders the significance of the novel *The red tent* and about the author Anita Diamant and her area of interest as a novelist, journalist and a freelance writer.

Chapter two illustrates the theme of womanhood in the novel *The red tent*. It exemplifies the stages of women from childhood to old age and explores how it is portrayed in the novel. Anita diamant rewrites the biblical event which is mentioned in Genesis. In the bible, the role of women was not much identical and their duties in their tribe was not explained clearly. But Anita Diamant rewrites the role of women by dividing the stages of women like menstruation, childbirth and the old age and also she emphasize the process in order to celebrate womanhood. In chapter three, rewriting relates to the theory of Deconstruction by Jaques derida. In Deconstruction, the writer gives contradictory meaning

or rewrite the original text. Thus chapter three deals with the contradictions in the novel *The red tent*. As mentioned earlier the novel *The red tent* contradicts the ideas in Genesis.

Chapter four renders the narrative style of *The red tent*. The narrative style of the author clearly sketches the concept of rewriting. While narrating the characters of the novel Diamant gives extra facts about them and make them as profound figures. The techniques like buildungsroman, midrash, matrilineage and patrilineage are analysed. In the Bible the life of Dinah started and ended in Genesis 34. But Diamant writes the life of Dinah from her birth to death in her own perspective and gives immortal life to her in *The Red Tent*. She gives immortal life to her. Rewriting makes it possible to explore the hidden character Dinah in the Bible and gave voice to her. By rewriting the story of Dinah, Diamant explores the hidden aspects of Dinah in the Bible and provides her own thoughts as a voice of Dinah. To create an impact of the silenced woman Dinah as a successful midwife, Diamant handled the technique of rewriting.

The research analyzed the novel *The Red Tent* in the perspective of womanhood in order to give a new life to the character, Dinah. Diamant's rewriting of the novel, the red tent is analyzed through Jaques Derrida's theory of Deconstruction. Thus the research proves that the womanhood as a powerful tool to voice out the position of oppressed in the patriarchal society. By incorporating the technique of rewriting, Diamant brings out the chaotic life of the woman character, Dinah and provides her an immortal life.

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Probing Beyond Borders: A Postcolonial 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 LITERATURE

by

MADHU MITHA S.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN12)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

April 2023



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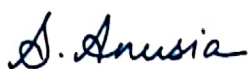
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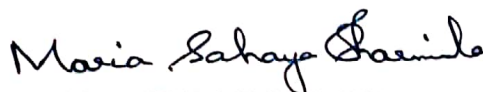
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project **Probing Beyond Borders: A Postcolonial Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** 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 and is a work done by Madhu Mitha S. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director

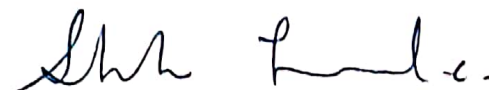
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SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Probing Beyond Borders: A Postcolonial Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

S. Madhumitha

MADHU MITHA S.



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PREFACE

The project entitled **Probing Beyond Borders: A Postcolonial Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*** analyses that how individuals' national and cultural identities are lost, found or muddled as viewed through the perspective of the postcolonialism.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with Indian Writing in English before and after colonialism. A short biography of Amitav Ghosh's and the general characteristics of his works are discussed.

The second chapter **Voicing Unspoken Histories** deals with the theory of Postcolonialism in the novel *The Glass Palace* analysis of the operations of colonial powers in Eastern nation like India, Burma, and Malaysia. Postcolonial theory looks at the broader interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized, emphasizing hybridity and the mingling of cultural signs and practices between colonizer and colonized.

The third chapter **Constructing Identity** portrays through both major and minor character of the novel *The Glass Palace* and the confusion of their own identity has revealed and how they find it.

The fourth chapter explores the **Narrative Techniques** of *The Glass Palace*. Ghosh used a multi-voiced or polyphonic narrative style.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters and justification of the title.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature, which derives from the Latin term *littera*, which means letters and refers to familiarity with the written word, is the study of such written works, may be prose or poetry, and which reflect a particular society, subculture, religion, or philosophy. A number of methods, including language, national origin, historical era, genre, and topic matter, can be used to categorise literature. For the historical analysis of different literary genres within geographic areas, such as African Literature, Oceanic Literature, Western Literature, South Asian Literature, Central Asian Literature, Southeast Asian Literature. Some literary genres, such as Arabic, Celtic, Latin, French, Japanese, and Biblical Literature are treated independently based on their languages, nations, or unique subjects.

Like any other art form in the country, the development of the Indian novel has been significantly influenced by the problems and surroundings of an independence India. In actuality, Indian English Novel has developed together with the country's independence and symbolises the burgeoning nationalism. The first generation writers' works reflect concern for societal and national issues. The novels from the 1960s are contemplative and have a private tone that focuses on a person's existence. Novels published from 1980 onward marked a turning point in the development of Indian English Literature by bringing about a profound shift in perspective style and form.

The nationalism, social issues, and Gandhian and Nehruvian socialism are all reflected in Mulk Raj Anand's books. The novels of Anand are respected as a tool for understanding the development of Indian Literature in English. His exploration of social realism and the vivacity of North Indian dialects provide the groundwork for

future novels linguistic and culture depictions. It has been acknowledged that the renowned foreword to *Kanthapura* serves as a manifesto for the direction Raja Rao chose and advocated for Indian Writing in English. Through a methodical indigenisation of English and a spirit and pace of Indian life, he overcame the dichotomy between a foreign language and methods of Indian story telling tradition. He departed from the revered framework of the European novel and fashioned it along the lines of India's epic past. He added a unique fusion of south India and French culture perspective and realities to Anand's endeavour to introduce Indian English novels to North India.

R. K. Narayan is a realistic fiction writer. He centred his attention on the concerns, setbacks, and problems of a generation that was on the verge of independence at a time when the institutions built during the British Raj were still in control and attempting to force their way into an independent India. Aubrey Menon is an important figure who has been marginalized in the discussion of the novels during and after independence. He presented an unbiased vision of the East and the West thanks in part to his diverse culture upbringing. Through his fictional and non-fiction writings, he holds up a mirror to the world and shares his insights on the system of injustice and hypocrisy that permeates it, racism, the conflict between so called civilised and primitive people, as well as many facets of colonialism. *All About H. Hatter* is a landmark in the development of Indian English literature, although being frequently overlooked. In this book, G. V. Desani deviated from Standard English grammar and diction rules and adopted a Joycean linguistic style. Structure around seven episodes which are subdivided further into Digest, Instruction, Presumption, and Life Encounter. *Hatter*, a novel, provided the unpunctuated phrases and haphazard capitalization that Rushdie would use in *Midnight's Children*.

Before and after independence, the great writing trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan produced English language fiction. Larger groups of authors in India did not explore writing fiction in English during that time. In fact, for almost two decades following independence writing a novel in English was regarded as going against the nation's standards of patriotism. It took more than ten years for a novel in English to receive Sahitya Akademi award. R. K. Narayan's *Guide* heralded the era of acceptance of English novels by Indian authors as an indigenous genre by winning the Sahitya Akademi award in 1960. Indian English novel also marched ahead with the general economic growth and prosperity sustaining the temporary setbacks of war and loss of great leaders.

Looking back at the history of English-language novel writing in India after the 1930s, one can say that the great trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan based their works on a variety of subjects, including the freedom struggle, Gandhian ideology and its effects on society, the need for social reforms, the eradication of social ills, India's modern destiny, the Partition, the emergence of the new urban India, the issues of rural India, etc. The second generation of authors, including Nayantara Sahgal, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, and Bhabani Bhattacharya, began to appear in the 1960s. Despite a lack of profusion at the time, their writing gave fiction fresh direction and new topics. While Manohar Malgonkar investigated historical perspective by illustrating the upheavals of his period, Nayantara Sahgal focused on the political issue. Anita Desai and Arun Joshi helped to establish psychological fiction. Khushwant Singh painted a picture of the human tragedy caused by the Indian Partition.

Although the definitions of alienation and modernity were different for India and the west, character development, psychological depth, and attempts to navigate

the feeling of alienation in the modern world were all important concerns for Indian writers writing in English in the 1950s and 1960s. One important change during this time period was the rise of female authors. Authors like Kamala Markendaya, Ruth Prawar Jabhwala, Nayantara Sahgal, and Anita Desai entered the stage and shared the platform with the most well known English-language authors. The concerns of women in traditional marital systems, interpersonal connections, modern social and political developments from a woman's perspective, as well as the psychological effects of the modern world, were addressed by these women authors of the first generation. The novels of these years demonstrated mastery of the genre but lacked originality.

Nevertheless, a number of significant Indian English books were released in the 1960s. *The Serpent and the Rope*, *The Cat and Shakespeare*, *The Guide*, *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *Storm in Chandigarh*, *A Handful of Rice*, *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Bye Bye Black Bird*, *Cry*, and *The Peacock* are just a few of the titles created over this twenty year period. The 1970s did not see a significant uptick in either productivity or inventiveness. The country was troubled at this time by the economy's collapse, the war, and the emergency. A very tiny trickle of originality indicated the impact of the same. The authors of the following generation would travel back to and revisit this time period since it serves as a memory lane.

The 1981 release of *Midnight's Children* is regarded as a sign of the revival of Indian writing in English. With Rushdie's very important book, postmodernism, language and grammar play, historical focus, language life, innovations through magic realism and allegory, and connections to contemporary Hindi cinema all made a seamless transition into the realm of Indian English novels. After 1980, authors demonstrated a mastery of the genre and advances. They shaped the theme of the

clash between tradition and modernity and found an artistic solution to end it. The commercial expansion of Indian language publishing within India also significantly increased the enthusiasm for English-language fiction authorship.

Novels created after 1980 have a distinct postmodern worldview mixed with the retention of Indian epic tradition's narrative skills. The burden of having to identify with the west as the home of the English language and the novel was lifted off the shoulders of this generation of writers. The English language is skillfully used by these authors to address a wider range of emotional, political, cultural, geographical, and historical themes. Themes centred on the dislocated, disenfranchised contemporary man and unrestrained alterations in the genre show knowledge of regional and global events. Their work is filled with a fervour of creativity, vitality, optimism, and confidence that comes via rich, cunning vocabulary and a light, occasionally hilarious, comical, and amusing style. A few instances of the same include *Midnight's Children*, *The Golden Gate*, *The Circle of Reason*, *Plan for Departure*, and *The Great Indian Novel*.

The book blossomed and developed in subjects, language usage, style, and technique by the 1980s. Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy, and Vikram Seth, among others, have based their writings on a variety of socio political and cultural issues that have emerged in post-independence India and are rapidly altering Indian life; these issues pertain to a young, multicultural democracy and have an effect on both communities and the lives of individuals. Salman Rushdie introduced a fresh and improvisational period of Indian Writing in English that struck a delicate balance between skill, inventiveness, and ideological concerns. As India's banks underwent transition and were nationalised, Shashi Tharoor focused on the political context, and Rohinton Mistry

examined bank scandals and their effects on the Parsi community. These investigations were furthered by Vikram Chandra, who provided a history of India from about 1750 to 1900. Following the end of colonialism and division, these postcolonial and post-partition Indian authors learnt this history, and they today compose tales about India and her past with amazing talent and stunning craftsmanship.

Indian Writing in English echoes a deep core of neo-colonialism based on power politics and illustrates the dialectics of imperialism in its passage from the periphery to the centre. Salman Rushdie, Khuswant Singh, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, and others who are considered literary giants write in the postcolonial context using novels as a vehicle for cultural representation. In order to allow for the assertion of the Indian self, these writers of the 1980s sought to strengthen Indian culture identity while also projecting India culture and historical legacy. They identify three common areas of all post-colonial writers as, “The silencing and marginalizing of the post-colonial voice by the imperial centre; the abrogation of this imperial centre within the text: and the active appropriation of the language and culture of that centre” (Kadam 17).

One of the best-known authors from India, Amitav Ghosh, is a serious novelist and anthropologist who writes with a postcolonial mindset. He is a citizen of the country that imperial Britain previously conquered and controlled. Amitav Ghosh’s writing has been greatly impacted by the political and social climate of the nation. Additionally, the tales and experiences he heard from his parents as a child had lasting imprint on his memory. His mother spends her formative years in Calcutta, where she recalls Mahatma Gandhi, civil disobedience and nonviolence, as well as the horrors of the 1947 Partition. His father served in the British colonial army in India, and he

would tell tales of the conflict and his fellow Indians' steadfast support of the British. Images of a politically and socially evolving India cast a heavy shadow on Ghost's thoughts.

Amitav Ghosh has put in a lot of effort to highlight issues with marginalisation, social discrimination, and prejudice towards people because of their caste, race, colour, religion, gender, or culture. India is a well-known nation. People of many caste, ethnicities, and religions coexist peacefully. However, issues like female foeticide, demonic traditions, gender discrimination, and untouchability remain unresolved. The most realistic occurrence was the liberation movement in India, a fabled nation. India became independent in 1947. However, even when the British conquerors withdrew, their impact on India historian and academics was irreversible. The literary artists, social reformers and the historiographer have played significant roles in all the national revolutions of the world. With his vision and philosophy, Amitav Ghosh has combined history with fiction. He writes about pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial India in his novels. In order to generate interest in his novels, he frequently incorporates the legends of his readers by fusing literature, tradition, colonialism, migration, dislocation, and culture.

Amitav Ghosh is raised in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and India. He was born in Calcutta. He completed his studies in Delhi, Oxford, and Alexandria. He is the author of several books, including *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines*, *In Antique Land*, *Dancing in Cambodia*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *The Ibis Trilogy*, consisting of *Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, and *Flood of Fire*. His most recent non-fiction book, *The Great Derangement; Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, was published in 2016.

In 1990, *The Circle of Reason* received France's Prix Medicis, while *The Shadow Lines* was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Ananda Puraskar in India. *The Glass Palace* won the International e-book fair in 2001, and *The Calcutta Chromosome* earned the Arthur C. Clarke award in 1997. A significant Indian Prize, the Crossword Book Prize, was given to *The Hungry Tide* in January 2005. His book *Sea of Poppies* (2008) made the Man Booker Prize shortlist and won the India Plaza Golden Quill Award and the Crossword Book Prize.

The works of Amitav Ghosh have been translated into more than thirty different tongues, and he has served on the Venice and Locarno film festivals' juries. He has had writings published in *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, and *The New Yorker*. *The Imam and the Indian* is the anthology's work. The non-fiction book *The Great Derangement; Climate Change and the Unthinkable* was released by University of Chicago Press in 2016 and won the first Utah Award for the Environmental Humanities in 2018.

Ghosh also had a brief career as a journalist, working as an editor and correspondent for the Indian Express, a publication that was seen as the main emblem of past resistance to the British Raj. Ghosh's early political involvement demonstrates that he was capable of critical thought about the many parts of his own context and environment at a young age. He has contributed to several journals, such as *The Hindu*, *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, and *The New Republic* and *The New York Times*, where he writes often. Ghosh taught in colleges in both India and the USA, including Delhi University, Queens College, and the Sorbonne, all of which bestowed honorary doctorates upon him. Harvard University, Queens College, and Columbia University are all in New York. At many universities, including the University of Virginia, Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the American University in

Cairo, Ghosh served as a visiting professor. Additionally, he received recognition as a Distinguished Professor at Queens College's Comparative Literature Department of City University of New York.

Themes of migration and travel, memory and history, political conflict and intergroup violence, and love and grief appear in Ghosh's books. He mixes myth and science, the past and the present, with a focus on history, memory, and the past. Ghosh is renowned for his fictional works that include cross-regional and historical linkages. His distinct insights on local and cultural politics, which are represented via the lives and experiences of the enormous cast of individuals in many of his works, frequently have an impact on his novels.

The majority of critical examinations of Ghosh's books focus on postcolonial and postmodern themes. The intersection of history and fiction, subaltern studies, and transcultural and translingual issues reoccur in assessments of Ghosh's themes. According to Anshuman A. Mondal,

In all his novels, for example, Ghosh exhibits an interest in the nature of language, textuality, and discourse, and the ways in which human perception, comprehension, and experience is invariably shaped and, to varying degrees, determined by them. For him, the question of 'identity' is always implicated in representations of the 'self' and of the world around it.... (20)

The protagonists in Amitav Ghosh's novels express their nostalgia for their current residence while embracing their roots and their country's past. One of the main concerns of the characters is the journey from the source culture to the target culture, between homelands and Diaspora, until the two overlap and blend. His protagonists set out on an everlasting search for selfhood as they move from almost

all familiar Indian environments to a completely different from of location where they must lead a compulsive life. The characters defended the idea of a distinct nation grew restless, descending to an unsettling state of uneasiness. The refugees were forced to choose between two extremes: either they could speed up or they were trapped in an unfriendly environment.

The Circle of Reason (1990), a tale set portion of the Bharat of British dominion and part of the Middle East and North Africa, is a pair of young child dubbed Alu or Potato because his head resembles a large, irregularly shaped tuber. Alu, who was abandoned at a young age, is reared in the hamlet of Lalpukur near Calcutta by his unsuccessful uncle Balaram and a relative named Toru-debi. He goes on to become a master weaver. A rationalist named Balaram founds the School of Reason to spread his beliefs.

Ghosh's travel to Egypt in relation to his Ph.D doctoral research work created the novel *In an Antique Land* (1992). The characters he meets and the locations he travels are turned into stories in the book. It chronicles the commerce that existed between India and Egypt as well as the tale of the slave Bomma. The book combines anthropology, history, autobiography, travels, and fiction. In quest of work, the characters move. The book's narration is divided into two parts: the first portion is on the life of Bomma, an Indian slave who was employed by the Arab-Jewish trader Abraham Ben Yiju in the twelfth century, and the second section explores Ghosh's experiences in an Egyptian Fellaheen community. Ghosh re-examines trading networks between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean before the colonial period.

In *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), Ghosh revisits the subject of how the malaria vector was discovered in order to highlight the contributions of Indians to science and erase the Europeans' scientific exploration of Indian researchers who are

ignored. On the basis of a scientific investigation, an attempt is being made to reconstruct the discovery of the malaria parasite's life cycle in the female Anopheles mosquito. The transcendence of nature is the goal of the subaltern's counter-science theory. The past and the present are intertwined by Ghosh. He looks into the prospect of discovering immortality in the future. A female priestess named Mangala who is uneducated and performs a praiseworthy role in guiding Ronald Ross's study brings the Subaltern to light. It combines science fiction and fantasy.

The Shadow Lines (1988) depicts the painful recollections of relocation and dislocation in relation to historical events that affected common people and were witnessed by the public. Memories serve as the setting for the narrative. The way the characters describe their memories gives the audience a feeling of the importance and relevance of the past in their lives. The young uncle of the narrator, Tridib, and his impact on him are the subject of Ghosh's narrative. Tridib's terrible death later in the book illustrates how little attention is paid to the suffering and loss given to people by public history.

The Hungry Tide (2004) is set in the southern Sunderbans, often known as tide country, which is comprised of the Ganges and Brahmaputra River deltas. In the Bay of Islands, an area exposed to violent storms and inhabited by tigers, crocodiles, and snakes, the tale depicts the desperate fight of settlers to live. It's the first novel in which Ghosh depicts an identity similar to himself, one that has both Indian and American associations.

The plot of *Sea of Poppies* (2008) takes place during an agricultural scandal when western demand for lucrative but deadly crops was on the rise and poverty in the developing world. The action takes place in colonial India's Ghazipur. The narrative starts in 1838, a significant year in the history of the trade in banned

substances. The cultivation of flowers is seen to be a very legitimate agricultural profession, especially by businesses recognise it's enormous financial potential. Additionally, the wading bird, the intimidating vessel, carries both drugs and outcasts to remote regions of the world. The work revisits several of the themes from Ghosh's earlier novels in brand-new, astonishingly meticulous, and fascinating ways. The constant migrations of people, trade, and empires that have travelled across the Indian Ocean since antiquity are among them, as are the lives of men and women with little influence, whose tales, set against the grand narratives of history, invite alternative ways to mull over past culture and identity.

The storm-tossed protagonists in *Sea of Poppies* are followed to the congested Chinese harbours in *River of Smoke* (2011), the second book in the Ibis Trilogy. The opium trade has brought economic and societal harm to the Manchu Empire, which is where the tale is situated. When it tried to ban the import of opium that owed so much wealth to the western powers, it was resisted in the name of free trade. The book rails against capitalism and free commerce.

The travelogue *Dancing in Cambodia and At Large in Burma* (1998) has relocation as it's primary theme. A social-historical chronicle, the book is organized into three sections: At Large in Burma, Stories in Stone, and Dancing in Cambodia. The first chapter opens with a chronological account of King Sisobath's naval voyage. The second chapter is devoted to describe numerous facets of the Angkor Wat temple, which was built in Cambodia in the eleventh century. While Angkor Wat is viewed by people all around the world as a singularly potent emblem of the romance and splendour of a vanished civilization, for Cambodian it is a sign of modernity. The book's last section is a chronological narrative that discusses the fight for democracy in Burma. He also looks into his ancestry. It offers insights into an Asian nation that

has recently experienced isolation from the outside world. Burma came under the rule of military rulers in 1962. Aung San Suu Kyi, the recipient of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, is portrayed by Ghosh as the democratic opposition in Burma. He makes an effort to highlight the battle for independence of the Kanenni, a member of Burma's minority, and comes to conclusion that the two nations would not be better off apart.

The Imam and the Indian (2002) is a collection of 18 pieces that were written between the years of 1986 and 2002. The 11th May 1998 nuclear explosive test by India, followed by the subsequent test by Pakistan, led to the creation of one of the widely read writings like "countdown." Ghosh examines the mentalities that fuel animosity and mistrust between two close neighbors. He remembers the anti-Sikh riots that took place in Delhi in the wake of Indira Gandhi's death in *The Ghost of Mrs. Gandhi*. The book is a single volume due to the variety of topics it covers.

A sincere effort to examine and recast the colonial history can be seen in all of Amitav Ghosh's works. All of Ghosh's books express concern about colonialism and its effects. Readers recognize his recurrent themes, which include: the significance of the individual in the overall scheme of political events; the ambiguous nature of borders, whether they exist between nations and people or between literary genres; the function of memory in one's recovery of identifying themes of time; the place of the artist in society; and the significance of narrative in shaping history.

The Glass Palace, a historical fiction book first released in 2000, depicts the lives of families in Burma in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, giving us an intimate look at the atrocities of colonial history. The cultural recoding of Indian society and eventually, Indian identity is revealed in the novel. The book tells the epic tale of Rajkumar Raha, Uma Dey, and Saya John through three generations. He blurs the lines between anthropology and art in his writing as he examines grand subjects

like migration and diaspora, history and memory, political conflict and communal violence, love and loss. The reader is taken on a historical journey that starts with the British invasion of Burma in 1885 and lasts until the Second World War, when democracy, peace, and order were restored. The colonial upheaval that occurred in Burma, India, and Malaysia in eighteenth and twentieth century is remembered and examined by Ghosh.

The historical events covered in novel include World War II, The Royal family of Burma's exile and subsequent settlement in Ratnagiri, India, as well as Mathew's amazing Morningstar programme. Finally, there is the plantation in distant Malaysia, and the narrative is peppered with numerous crisscrossing coincidences to balance off the tension between the present and the past. Immigrants experience loneliness and alienation because their native culture is absent, which leads to a disturbed mental condition. The main causes of alienation include a lack of flexibility, socialisation, and an inability to connect with the strange surrounding. Some of the key components associated with one's native country are language, culture, food, religion, clothes, and rituals. People's life connected to these components. The origin of a person's identity is their place of residence, which is imagined as an ancestor tree planted in local soil. Mobilization and relocation to a foreign country cannot sever a person's attachment to their native country. Salman Rushdie and Bharati Mukherjee, among other great authors, have written on the value of a person's home in their work.

In the majority of his novels, Ghosh's characters literally range from commoners like Dolly, Raj Kumar, Saya John, and Uma to members of the Royal family like Thabaw, Queen Supalayay, and Burmese princesses. However, what unites them all is the crucial tale of colonial displacement. These heroes are propelled from

Burma to India, Malaysia, Singapore, and back again, each time repeating an action pattern that Ghosh depicts in the earlier pages, accompanied by historical incidents, the entire Royal Family was being exiled. They were scheduled to go to an undisclosed location in India. The British government wanted to send them off with an entourage of helpers and counsellors. Asking for volunteers was to be the method of resolving the issue.

Rajkumar, the protagonist, is first seen in the opening pages of the book rushing around Mandalay in 1885 in quest of Ma Cho. Being young and orphaned, he must deal with poverty. He was a stranger in an unfamiliar nation, an Indian kalaa from across the sea. Rajkumar landed in Burma as a result of a shipwreck. He arrives to Burma from India as the last member of his family still alive, with a shining entrepreneurial soul and a hunger for success. He was one among many who had been uprooted from the ground. His father, originally from Chittagong, relocated his family to Akyab, an important port in Burma.

Rajkumar is a self-made individual who has total control over his life. He soon obtained employment there and transformed this exiled nation into a prosperous country of delight. Through the gains from the teak, rubber, and slave trades, he goes from being a lowly crew member on a boat to being a wealthy and influential part of the Indian community in Burma. But he continues to pursue romance despite his constant focus on work. This prompts him to seek out Dolly and wed her with Uma's help. There are so undoubtedly two elements to Rajkumar's success story. Dolly, who was also an orphan, has no other relatives outside the royal family; Outram House is her lone residence. She has a strong opinion on the banished place.

Dolly initially rejects RajKumar's proposal because she fears experiencing yet another shift in her life. She is unwilling to return to Rangoon. Even though Dolly

was hesitant to return to Rangoon following her marriage to Raj Kumar, she soon felt comfortable in Kemedine House, her new home. All of Raj Kumar's delight comes from his adoptive or moved nation. On the other side, Thebaw and Supalayath continue to be remembered by their nation. An immigrant never loses sight of his own country.

As Britain declares war on Germany, the speed of events in the book picks up. Before circumstances in Burma get nasty, Raj Kumar seizes the chance to reevaluate his company and sell his possessions. As a successful businessman, he liquidates all of his possessions to pay for a significant amount of timber. Meanwhile, Alison learns that Mathew and Elsa, her parents, have passed away in a vehicle accident in the Cameron Highlands. Arriving at Morningside House, Dinu, a beginner photographer, befriends Alison. Neel has succeeded in continuing his father's thriving business. He sold the company and purchased lumber. When the Japanese bomb approaches the plantation, where all of Rajkumar's money has been invested, the elephants panic, crushing Neel to death and fighting the trees in hand-to-hand warfare. Neel and the money were lost, and Rajkumar lost everything. Manju, Dolly, Rajkumar, and the infant are now attempting to flee after waiting for too long. They join the approximately 30,000 migrants who are attempting to cross the river. Manju softly submerges herself into the water and commits herself out of her own despair at Neel's death. Her kid would benefit much from Dolly and Rajkumar's aged hands since she had understood that they were a different sort of life-hungry individuals.

King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat, Saya John, Rajkumar, Dolly, Uma, Alison, Dinu, Neal, Arjun, Hardayal Krishan Singh, Jaya, and Ilango are just a few of the personalities Ghosh names to convey the hopes, setbacks, and disappointments of the displaced people in India, Burma, China, Malaysia, and America. This book depicts human powerlessness while describing many locations, conflict and displacement,

exile and rootlessness. Humans are only capable of trying to adapt, negotiate, live, and do everything else that goes into relationships. These new relationships emerging, the mingling of races and classes is something that never ends.

Ghosh use a rich, layered epic that probes the meaning of identity and homeland. Probing Beyond Borders: A Postcolonial Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* deals with a supplant of last King and Queen to India and their struggle to adapt to new culture and locality. This research describes how individuals' national and cultural identities are, lost, found or muddled as viewed through the perspective of the postcolonialism. In sortie, men and women lose or at last start to question their sense of identity and they set out on a journey to find their identity. Chapter two, Voicing Unspoken histories deals with the theory of Postcolonialism in the novel. The third chapter, Constructing Identity were portrayed through both major and minor character of the novel *The Glass Palace* and the confusion of their own identity has revealed and how they find it. The fourth chapter explores the Narrative Techniques of *The Glass Palace*. Ghosh used a multi-voiced or polyphonic narrative style.

Chapter Two

Voicing Unspoken Histories

Postcolonial theory looks at the broader interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized by dealing with issues such as identity including gender, race, class, language, representation, and history. Because native languages and culture were replaced or superseded by European traditions in colonial societies, part of the post colonialist project is reclamation. Acknowledging the effect of colonialism's aftermath, its language, discourse, and cultural institutions, has led to an emphasis on hybridity, or the mingling of cultural signs and practices between colonizer and colonized. The Palestinian American cultural critic Edward Said was a major figure of postcolonial thought, and his book *Orientalism* is often credited as its founding text. Other important postcolonial critics include Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Frantz Fanon.

What each of these (postcolonial) literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasising their difference from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this that makes them distinctively post-colonial. (Ashcroft et al. 2)

In Indian-English fiction Amitav Ghosh is one of the most significant novelists who have studied and analysed the experience of the colonized. The presentation of a dialogic understanding of the postcolonial perspective makes Amitav Ghosh a different kind of postcolonial writer. The fiction of Amitav Ghosh depicts not just the colonisation of India but also many kinds of imperial authority and their

effects on numerous facets of life in the former British colonies. He seemed to be especially interested in contrasting the various cultures, notably the eastern cultures that stood for accommodations and modifications and the western civilizations that were always attempting to undermine, usurp, and dominate the other cultures in order to govern over them. The multivalent and democratic nature of Ghosh's perspective is revealed in his concentration on the colonial designs in post-British colonial rule also. His postcolonial concerns are expressed in his earlier book, *In An Antique Land*, in which he exposes imperial forces' plan to oppress Egyptian and Indian culture. Similar to this, *The Glass Palace*, reveals his research into, comprehension of, and analysis of the operations of colonial powers in Eastern nations like India, Burma, and Malaysia in such a manner that the book evolves into a counter narrative to colonialism. The most crucial aspect of Ghosh's fictional language is that its meaning is determined through dialogical exchanges between words rather than individual statements. The knowledge of the majority of the main characters reveals how they change via dialogic interaction during the course of the book.

The central thrust of the novel is the presentation of a particular socio-historical reality and the development of a specific world-view. A particular perspective develops in the form of a counter narrative to colonialism expressing the interaction between power and the writing of history. In this process it shows how, "Colonialism created non-mutual and hierarchical relations in which the colonizer was always inescapably the Self to the marginalized Other of the colonized" (Griffiths 165). Strong storytelling in *The Glass Palace* emphasises the imperial forces' attempt to exert control over their citizens. It demonstrates how these forces develop a corpus of thought and practise to accomplish their objective. *The Glass Palace's* fictional discourse may best be understood by considering Edward Said's remarks on the

operation of imperial powers. He has vehemently argued that the core ideologies of imperialists are made up, fictions, and only fabricated. There is nothing transcendental or essential about them as,

Men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities-to say nothing of historical entities-such locals regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man made.
(*Orientalism* 5)

These made-up stories aid the dominant civilizations in defending their presumption of superiority. In *The Glass Palace*, Queen Supayalat's outburst provides a clear indication of how British imperialists attribute specific beliefs to the constructed orient in order to maintain their domination and supremacy. Her statements highlight the hollowness of their arguments and the sophisticated means by which these viewpoints are spread. As a representative of the British Government, the Collector, she explains to him as, "We have heard so many lectures from you and your colleagues on the subject of the barbarity of the kings of Burma and the humanity of the Angrez; we were tyrants you said, enemies of freedom, murderers" (Ghosh 150).

The Glass Palace revisits the idea of transcendental, united identity as a potent postcolonial voice. One can observe that several characters in this book frequently reject their national identities. They are remembered as Dolly, Uma, Raj Kumar, Saya John, Alison, Dinu, Neel, and Daw Thin Thin Aye rather than as Indians, Burmans, or Malays. Similar to this, the two separate names given to Raj Kumar's sons one Burman and the other Indian destabilize identities depending on nationality. The life depicted in this book transcends national borders and challenges the fixed, monolithic

notion of identity that imperialists created in order to demonstrate their supposed superiority via the use of binary oppositions between disparate geographic and cultural characteristics. According to the changed perspective,

Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notions of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism. (Said, *Culture* xxiv-xxv)

The idea of identity is now thought of as temporary and contextual. The various types of identity that are discussed in *The Glass Palace* are in line with this concept. The identity given to various geographic areas and the individuals in the book is linked to shifting power dynamics and various cultural settings. Studying Saya John's persona can reveal how various social interactions, political ideologies, and cultural situations influence how people see their own identities. He was raised by individuals from everywhere Portugal, Macao, and Goa. He received the name John Martins from them, which he eventually altered to John. But, the Indian troops at the military hospital in Singapore, who connected identity to the essence of place, are unable to grasp this and express their shock at his dual identity.

Their colonised mentality views identity as something permanent, pre-given, and immutable based on the purity of civilizations rather than considering the variety and multifaceted character of culture. Yet, the postcolonial viewpoint opposes this centralised viewpoint. Instead of the purity of cultures it understands that, "all cultures

are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic” (Said, *Culture* xxv). It is impossible to divorce the emergence of identity and the interplay of many cultures from the exercise of power.

The way in which Queen Supayalat’s identity changed as a result of the altering nature of power is a powerful illustration of how power interacts with human identity. With the establishment of British control in Burma, she experiences a rapid transformation in her identity as a sovereign monarch. Several aspects of the Queen’s identity that had previously gone unspoken are revealed by the shift in the public’s perception of their deposed rulers. The queen, who is oblivious of the temporary nature of identity, insists on adhering to customs that were once used to show respect for the ruling class. While in exile, the queen still demands that her English servant Mrs. Wright kneel at the queen’s feet to serve her. Paradoxically, she is unaware of how imperialist her actions are. This attitude of the queen undermines the notion that colonial identity belongs exclusively to British imperialists. *The Glass Palace’s* fictional discourse helps readers comprehend how identity is built on the basis of diversity rather than a transcendental essence:

Through all the years of the Queen’s reign the townsfolk had hated her for her cruelty, feared her for her ruthlessness and courage. Now through the alchemy of defeat she was transformed in their eyes. It was as though a bond had been conjured into existence that had never existed before. For the first time she had become what a sovereign should be, the proxy of her people. (Ghosh 34)

The foundation of imperialism’s cultural philosophy is the fixed idea of identity. The novelistic discourse in *The Glass Palace* rejects this idea as a

counternarrative to colonialism. As mentioned earlier, the different characters in this novel do not carry essential national identities. Most of these characters, though expatriated and exiled, hardly show any signs of nostalgic return to their native countries or to their cherished past histories. Dolly, for instance, travels to Ratnagiri to serve the exiled royal family of Burma. Dolly is questioned by Uma, the Collector's wife, about her interest in Burma. Dolly says, showing her lack of interest, "'No. Not at all'.... 'There's no point in being sorry for me. I'm used to living in places with high walls. Mandalay wasn't much different. I don't really expect much else.' 'Do you ever think of going back?'" (Ghosh 112)

The distinction between a native and an alien is no longer based on some fundamental geographical classification based on absolute and final concepts. According to the unique sociohistorical, political, and cultural setting. Another instance of this viewpoint is the case of Dolly. Instead of Mandalay, her earlier Burmese national home, it is Ratnagiri that gives her a feeling of home, "'And where would I go?' Dolly smiled at her. 'This is the only place I know. This is home'" (Ghosh 119).

The Glass Palace reveals the plans of the colonialists to justify their involvement in addition to challenging imperialistic notions of fixed and monolithic identity. They portray their hegemonic position as an act of charitable compassion intended to rescue the locals from the shadows. The subject races are regularly subjected to their ideologically saturating viewpoints in an effort to get them to start embracing them as transcendental and natural. The way this technique operates is so subtle and fascinating that the colonised people lose sight of their true significance and turn into instruments in the hands of the imperial powers. The Indian troops who

have been indoctrinated with these notions serve to strengthen and prolong British rule,

We never thought that we were being used to conquer people. Not at all: we thought the opposite. We were told that we were freeing these people. That is what they said - that we were going to set these people free from their bad kings or their evil customs or some such thing. We believed it because they believed it too. It took us a long time to understand that in their eyes freedom exists wherever they rule. (Ghosh 224)

The feminist viewpoint that reveals the hegemonic plans of patriarchy operating through subtle but potent ideological instruments is consistent with the growing postcolonial perspective in this instance. The typical nature of the dominating ideology in both these perspectives, post colonialism and feminism, shows that it's working, "impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination" (Said, *Culture* 9). The work serves as a counternarrative to colonialism and includes several cautions against colonial behaviours that are stated by various characters. Uma expresses particular anti-colonialist opinions when she claims: "We must not be deceived by the idea that imperialism is an enterprise of reform. Colonialists would like us to believe this" (Ghosh 294).

The Glass Palace makes the case against imperial countries' right to establish standards for others as another postcolonial point. By posing as the representatives of modernisation, the imperialists force their culture and way of thinking on their subordinates. In the customary colonialist manner, the continuation of the grip over

the subordinate races is portrayed in such a way that modernisation is presented as being identical with the advancement of the colonists' cultural values. Mrs. Dutta, like many other individuals, thinks the following under the influence of colonialist thinking, "this was one of the great benefits of British rule in India; that it had given women rights and protections that they had never had before" (Ghosh 188).

People take these things at face value since they don't comprehend the true intentions of the British imperialists. They do not realize that, "The issue of modernisation and education for women... is a clear example of the kind of hybridization of the indigenous culture which follows from the historical impact of Europe" (Griffiths 171). People like Uma fight and expose the colonial authorities' attempt to abolish and usurp Indian culture. She brings out the ironical nature of imperialist thinking regarding women's education when she tells Mrs. Dutta, "How was it possible to imagine that one could grant freedom by imposing subjugation? that one could open a cage by pushing it inside a bigger cage? How could any section of a people hope to achieve freedom where the entirety of a populace was held in subjection?" (Ghosh 189).

Dolly's counter questions, however, reveal the falsity of these accusations. These inquiries reveal how the colonial rulers create certain prejudices against the colonised population to mask their own harshness. Dolly's statements directly criticise essentialist thought and the built-in hierarchy. She reveals the humanism and benevolence of the British Empire's facade when discussing the image of Queen Victoria, the emblem of British power, "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" (Ghosh 114). This has highlighted and questioned the privilege bestowed on the dominant culture

via the use of fallacious justifications and fictions that give colonialists a higher status.

The Glass Palace's fictional discourse revolves around this rejection of colonial tactics. To reveal how imperial powers function, the author uses a variety of voices represented by various individuals, their experiences, and their points of view. The author discusses the effects of colonial policies on the general populace in order to support his claim. one comes to know how the acceptance of the colonial culture resulted in, "A mimicry of the centre proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed. It caused those from the periphery to immerse the selves in the imported culture, denying their origins" (Ashcroft et al. 4). Arjun's description of the way of life adopted by Indian soldiers to get recognition from their rulers illustrates the imitation of the dominant culture. He tells how these soldiers ate even that food which, "None of them had touched at home: bacon, ham and sausages at breakfast; roast beef and pork chops for dinner. They drank whisky, beer and wine, smoked cigars, cigarettes and cigarillos" (Ghosh 278).

And this food was not just a matter of satisfying appetites rather, "every mouthful had a meaning - each represented an advance towards the evolution of a new, more complete kind of an Indian" (Ghosh 278-79). Ironically, this being 'more complete kind of an Indian' is according to the standards ascribed by the British rulers. Otherwise, "All of them had stories to tell about how their stomachs had turned the first time they had chewed upon a piece of beef or pork" (Ghosh 279). These Indian soldiers, in spite of their revulsion to these practices, indulged in them because, "They had to prove to themselves as well as their superiors that they were eligible to be rulers, to qualify as members of elite: that they had vision enough to rise above the

ties of their soil, to overcome the responses instilled in them by their upbringing” (Ghosh 279).

The dominant ideology of the imperialist forces has conditioned the mind of the native soldiers to the extent that they accept it’s hierarchical nature as something natural and pre-fixed. Due to their acceptance of these ideas the Indian soldiers take pride in serving under the British officers. Therefore, “Many of them were uneasy about this: their relationship with their British officers was the source of their pride and prestige. To serve under Indians was a dilution of this privilege” (Ghosh 281). Here again the postcolonial perspective is voiced by Dinu. He tries to explain that the views about the superiority of certain races are fictional and constructed, “It’s not what you eat and drink that make you modern: it is a way of looking at things...” (Ghosh 279).

A specific fictional discourse’s growth is significantly influenced by language. With the new perspective, language is no longer seen as an impartial and objective medium, but rather as being ideologically saturated. The postcolonial viewpoint looks at how language was used to achieve colonial power. *The Glass Palace* shows how the top of Indian culture and the country’s educated population take pleasure in using English. Queen Supayalat’s insight is crucial in this situation: “She had found that her use of Hindustani usually put the Government representatives at a disadvantage - especially the Indians... they were hesitant about switching languages; it seemed to embarrass them that the Queen of Burma could speak Hindustani better than they” (Ghosh 109).

The Indian troops and commanders’ use of English is a result of their efforts to assimilate the foreign culture of the invaders. Yet, *The Glass Palace*’s postcolonial worldview does not convey the idea that decolonization implies a fundamental

difference between the languages of the people and their masters. It distinguishes between the characteristics of language and how it distinguishes between similar civilizations. The author of the book has not tried to link certain cultures and languages. In this context, his objective appears to be to incorporate cultural references into the fictional discourse by using local terminology and providing English translations for them. It suggests that language comprehension shouldn't be linked to a hierarchical way of life or society. Rather, language contributes to the creation of a certain cultural milieu. And certain cultural circumstances have a role in meaning formation. Words like pa-Kyekis, who specialises in tying chains, and tai, a long wooden home on stilts, are useful in understanding the novel's fictitious setting. The hierarchy of the men who labour in the jungle camps to manage the elephants has also been established; the elephant handlers are known as oo-sis and pe-sis, and the commander of the camp's oo-sis is known as hsin-ouq. These illustrations clarify the idea that there are no better or inferior languages. Only the cultural setting necessitates using particular terms to convey meaning.

The rejection of the reconstruction of pre-colonial reality as a type of decolonization is the most significant feature of the postcolonial discourse presented in *The Glass Palace*. The main theme of the book is to oppose not just the British colonialists but also to advance the idea that all kinds of colonialism should be resisted and eliminated. The novel's three generations of families provide a tale that challenges and criticises colonial establishment in all of its manifestations. The phrase postcolonialism in this sense refers to the circumstances that existed before imperialism and true colonialism, as well as those that persisted for a very long time after colonialism's historical conclusion. In *The Glass Palace* what finds more

relevance and acceptance in the postcolonial perspective is the realization that “To overemphasize indigeneity is to lapse into a febrile essentialism” (Quayson 49).

To speak of post-colonial discourse in Foucault or Said’s sense, then, is to invoke certain ways of thinking about language, about truth, about power, and about the interrelationship between all three. Truth is what counts as true within the system of rules for a particular discourse, power is that which annexes, determines, and verifies truth. (Ashcroft et al. 167)

The novelistic discourse that develops in the presentation of different shades of imperialism, irrespective of its cultural or historical specifications, can be related to the view expressed in these words. This system of power dynamics is not unique to British empire. Occasionally, a segment of the oppressed or colonised society engages in colonial behaviours as well. The forces of the dominant powers never stop working to marginalise, enslave, dominate, and subjugate the other using a variety of means. In many cultures, the exercise of various types of power takes diverse forms. By highlighting and denouncing these behaviours, Ghosh is able to make the dialogic and decentralised nature of novelistic discourse. There are other Western troops than the British that engage in colonial activity. Among the relevant races, there are groups of people who continue to support their imperial ambitions by exploiting the helpless and defenceless. Uma’s reaction at Raj Kumar makes clear that, “Raj Kumar, you’re in no position to offer opinions. It’s people like you who’re responsible for this tragedy. Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your kind have done is far worse than the Europeans” (Ghosh 247).

The Glass Palace, the last portion of the book, reveals important undercurrents of the many manifestations of colonialism and imperialism. They come to a new understanding of colonialism as a result of their struggles and experiences over the course of around three generations and in three different nations. This place their existence in a specific setting within a glass palace. In the end, the soldiers engaged in combat with imperialist forces believe, “The forces they were fighting against were often mirror-images of what they themselves had been at the start of the war: most were Indians, often from the same regiments, often recruited from the same villages and districts” (Ghosh 480).

This highlights the sinister plans of the colonial powers, which have an impact on how their people think so that they fail to find a single goal and stay divided. Nonetheless, the author of the work does not consolidate the fictional discourse into any one overarching viewpoint that fundamentally views particular national groupings as colonialists. The despotic and imperialist actions that were carried out in Burma highlight the diversity of viewpoints and the multitude of voices that exist within a culture. In this context, one sees Burma got freedom in 1948 but, “in 1962; General Ne Win seized power in a coup and the country became subject to the bizarre, maniacal whims of its dictator” (Ghosh 486). The movement for democracy emerged but again in 1988 military Junta imprisoned its leader Aung San Suu Kyi. It is not only the British imperialists who exploit their subjects but the native administrators also unleash hell. The case presented in this context is that of Myanmar, “the military was like an incubus, sucking the life from its host... A new censorship regime developed growing out of the foundations of the system that had been left behind by the old imperial Government” (Ghosh 535).

What makes the postcolonial discourse in *The Glass Palace* an open-ended and decentralized enterprise is the criticism of the view that associates colonial thinking to the western powers only. How the oppressive forces in Myanmar exercise their control and use brutal force to justify their practices has been emphatically exposed by Dinu and his young wife, Daw Thin Thin Aye, “The newspapers”, controlled by the administrative machinery, “were full of strident denunciations of imperialism. It was because of the imperialists that Burma had to be shut off from the world; the country had to be defended against neo-colonialism and foreign aggression” (Ghosh 537). Dinu explains the true nature of these views when he says: “These thugs use the past to justify the present. And they themselves are much worse than the colonialists; at least in the old days, you could read and write” (Ghosh 537).

But his wife rejects this centralizing perspective, “To use the past to justify the present is bad enough - but it’s just as bad to use the present to justify the past” (Ghosh 537). Therefore, what acquires greater significance in the process of ‘decolonization’ is the view expressed in the following words regarding Indian reaction to colonialism, “The movement against colonialism was an uprising of unarmed Indians against those who bore arms - both Indians and British” (Ghosh 254). So, the decolonization requires freedom from the native colonialists as well.

The postcolonial perspective that emerges in this novel does not challenge imperial powers through nationalist assertion, making native the central and self-determining, rather it challenges the worldview based on the polarity of ‘governor’ and the ‘governed’, ‘ruler and ruled’ as essentialist. This kind of a view envisions a world free from the politics of power. According to this perception, “While misrule and tyranny must be resisted, so too must politics itself... that it cannot be allowed to cannibalize all of life, all of existence” (Ghosh 542).

Chapter Three

Constructing Identity

Ghosh examines the sensation of displacement and alienation that comes with being a migrant as well as the identity issue that results from it. One of the most important and difficult issues in today's movements is still identity. The books of Amitav Ghosh imply the necessity of intercultural harmony and strong humanitarian relationships while ignoring societal, regional, and political factors. His books demonstrate his dedication to a widely conceived, secular humanist set of principles.

The novels describe how individuals' national and cultural identities are lost, found, or muddled as viewed through the perspective of a historian, traveller, or writer. In his stories, men and women lose or at least start to question their sense of who they are in the context of the events that surround them, and they set out on a journey to find who they are.

According to Sushila Singh, "the inner and outer realities contribute to the making of an identity" (138). No person or group can avoid the issue of identity in relation to a variety of categories, including gender, class, country, and race. Nonetheless, it can be difficult to grasp one's self in connection to these fairly strict categories. As a result, images of uniqueness are frequently supplanted by an unabating sensation of disquiet and dread.

The main character in the book *The Glass Palace* is Rajkumar, whose personal past is intertwined with colonial history in order to both construct and destroy histories. He is projected as a prosperous teak and rubber merchant for he "has the capacity to understand the relationships between sartorial and other semiotic codes and power and appropriates them for his own ends" (Sengupta 29). Because of his

broken or fragmented mind, he was no longer able to identify as an Indian or a Burmese.

Even before British colonialism screwed with people's ancestries and roots by ruthlessly transporting men and women from their native soils of Burma and India to other colonial regions, Rajkumar was a vagabond. After a dispute with his relatives, his father moved away from his family connections and settled in Akyale, the principal port of Arakan. Rajkumar grew up on a boat while serving as a translator for traders along the Bay of Bengal's coast.

His family was killed by a deadly fever in Akyale, but the eleven-year-old street kid was left alone to make his own way in the world. Throughout the course of the colonial upheaval, his experience in the book is one of struggle, survival, and triumph. The reader sees the British caused ruin of Burma through this boy's eyes, and we understand the author's topic via his understanding. The subject of human choice and the impossibility of the situation are both raised in the novel. It exhibits "the obliteration of human rights under the ruthless rulers both the British and the native" (Neb 24). The three families' members frequently relocate from Burma to India to Malaysia either voluntarily or as a result of external circumstances. Rajkumar and Saya John, two Malaysians, as well as Indians, profit from the growing teak and rubber industries.

The catastrophe that occurred when Japanese bombing destroyed the nation and the frontiers of India is imitated in the Second World War. After losing his daughter-in-law, his older son Neel, and all of his material assets, Rajkumar travels back to Calcutta in search of refuge. Rajkumar, who was born a poor orphan, attained great fame and power before losing it all once more. But the Burma link is what he earned. His ethnicity as an Indian or a Burmese is no longer known.

The character's split consciousness prevents them from being motivated to adhere to a certain national identity. The alternate names for Neel and Dinu draw attention to their dual identities. Moving as a migrant: "from Chittagong to Burma, finds no difficulty in moving to Malaya. He makes business contacts and forms friendships. He was willing to follow fortune wherever it leads him" (Kaul13).

The Madame Collector, Uma Dey, is gorgeous, endearing, vivacious, and self-possessed. She develops into a chic hostess and is only added to the Collection. She starts to consider the significance of everything that has happened in her life thus far. She does not want to be reduced to a role and consistently devoid of any characteristics that distinguish a sentient person from other beings. She yearns for independence from others as well as a friendship built on mutual understanding and affection. Yet she is not given the necessary room. She has a hard time adjusting to the environment of restrained dramatization. She renounces the family tradition of dependency and develops into a self-assured person who fights for peace and non-violence.

Uma recognizes as,

The conditions being created in their homeland were such as to ensure that their descendants would enter the new epoch as cripples, ... that they would truly become in the future what they had never been in the past, a burden upon the World.... change the angle of their country's entry into the future. (Ghosh 222)

Uma, a Dolly friend and the shy widow of an Indian civil servant, escapes the death-in-life of Hindu widowhood and unleashes her untapped potential by travelling to Europe. She accepts her position as a pivotal character in the fight for independence. Like her contemporaneous Lala Hardayal, Uma recognizes her new

position in life after some time has passed since the death of her husband. Uma, the wife of an Indian officer, becomes aware of genuine humanistic issues and realizes that not only is British imperialism not the only force fighting against the spirit of mankind, but that indigenous are not in any way different when they engage in repressive practices. Uma had learned from those troops, who had developed a stronger sense of their own Indian identity, that the British had claimed to be releasing Indians from their oppressive monarch and terrible practices. In other words, wherever they are in power, there is freedom.

Such a realization has a long history in both British and Indian history. As Indians and Burmese struggle over separating Burma from British authority, Uma's eyes blaze. Rajkumar, a neo-colonist, is criticized by Uma and called out for, "It's people like you who're responsible for this tragedy. Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your kind have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the European?" (Ghosh 247).

Uma sets herself against the colonizing mission. A recurring issue in the book is the morality of fighting for someone else. In London, Uma has freedom and wealth. She takes charge of the effort to liberate India. She travels around the country, gathers money for the cause, and settles in New York, where Saya John's son Mathew was residing. Later, Uma urges him to go back and see his somewhat estranged father, who is in increasing need of his son's assistance. Her aggressive political views quickly significantly alter in the new environment, and she begins to think more about Gandhi's peaceful ways and offers her skills to his cause.

Arjun most definitely has not chosen the path of passive resistance; Uma has.

He enrolls in the Dehra Dun Military School, where he joyfully discovers his identity. Manju, his sister, aspires to be an actress, while Neel, Rajkumar's son, is the film's producer. The two develop a romance, and they get engaged before getting married.

The psychologically nuanced and compelling character study in the book involves Arjun, a Bengali officer in the British Army. This representation is based on the events of Ghosh's father, who found himself engaged in combat with the Indian National Army, a splinter group that was the British soldiers' exact opposite. It's interesting to note his thoughts before enlisting, "Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, I still find it hard to believe that I really belong with these men. It makes one so proud, but also humble ... country!" (Ghosh 262). As said by Vinoda, "His enthusiasm deludes him into thinking that 'true freedom' consists in breaking the taboos of earlier life, eating what they like, drinking what they like" (16).

At the first sign of an engagement to confuse the geometric labyrinth of the Malay rubber plantation where they are dispersed, Arjun's regiment is routed. He engages in a series of self-examinations that lead him to see the fallacy of the principles he has spent his life by. Without self-awareness and self-questioning, he believed that he had been a weapon in the British hands. He recounts the thinking processes that led him to rebel against the authorities. He also learns about his loss of identity, but thanks to Alison, who cared about him, he gets psychological awareness and strength.

Arjun, whose hierarchical conceptions of native and *angrez* are so firmly ingrained that all his effort is to be like an Englishman, is a clear example of the influence of western academic disciplines. His recognition of the colonial rulers' supremacy and reverence for them orient him to embrace European culture by

imitating them. After reading some Mahatma Gandhi quotes, he becomes very agitated and yells,

Arjun was extremely irritated by this time and he made an angry, spitting noise. ‘Idiots,’ he said. ‘I wish I could stuff this down their throats. You’d think they’d have better things to do than march about in the hot sun...’ ‘Watch what you say, Arjun,’ Uma said sharply, from the back seat. ‘I hope you know that I was meant to be in that march too (Ghosh 292)

At the start of the Second World War, many hundred Indian soldiers in the British army began to switch sides and enlist as warriors for the INA, signaling the decolonization of Arjun’s mentality. Arjun, who was referred to by his coworkers as *angrez*, experienced a psychological crisis and underwent a mental transformation, as persuasively explained by Ghosh. He also observes the rubber plantation workers in Malaya, who are largely Indian and live in abject poverty. He also thinks that the local Indians in Malaya refer to Indian soldiers as mercenaries since they aren’t really soldiering, just brutal killers. Arjun becomes unstruck, unmoved and his struggle within himself is movingly portrayed as, “He was a military man and he knew that nothing - nothing important - was possible without loyalty, without faith. But who would claim his loyalty now? The old loyalties of India, ... impossible to rebuild” (Ghosh 440-41).

His approach is characterized by a peculiar mix of British allegiance and understanding of the negative effects of submission. He muses about the issue of India’s enslavement. His sense of patriotism and his devotion to the Empire grew to be diametrically opposed. After having his expectations in the British for a long dashed, Arjun ultimately protests against the Empire in order to protect the interests of

the locals. He dies and seeks his own identity in the historical signification process as the allegiance battle in him comes to an end. The basic moral quandary of the Indian army's troops' dual loyalties is plainly explored by Ghosh.

Dinu, who also received her education in the West, joins Arjun in labelling the Indian nationalists as naive fools. His main point centers on Hitler and Mussolini's support for fascism. He labels them as the worst kinds of racists and imperialists. He thinks that civilizing the globe is the responsibility of the white race. The British colonialists seemingly came to India to purge Indian society of all its ills. Instead of bringing up a litany of societal vices like the caste system and untouchability that existed long before the colonialists arrived, he criticizes Uma for always discussing the sins of the Empire.

Beni Prasad Dey acknowledges the discriminatory framework that underpins their policies and programs in the colonies. His wife Uma remembers him as a mimic guy and a servant of colonizers. The princess's pregnancy and the possibility of her marriage to the Indian Sawant had put him in a very hard position. He gives off the impression of being a weak and maybe even funny British man.

His sudden transformation into a tragic hero comes at a difficult moment because his wife Uma had just made the decision to leave him and go back to her parents' house. In the wake of this terrible turn of events, Beni Prasad commits himself by drowning in the sea. It is clear that Ghosh is challenging the modern Indian who has a special bond with Britain by utilizing this figure. Arjun is honored to hold a leadership position and is one of the few Indians at the Academy. He learns to follow in the footsteps of another Indian, Hardayal, whose family has combat experience with the British. Despite his family's long history of service in the British military,

Hardayal is getting dissatisfied in that capacity and is beginning to wonder what use the British are making of Indians like himself.

When Arjun's regiment travels from Singapore to Malaya, rumors of a Japanese air invasion start to spread. As a result, certain battalions start to desert, and Arjun hides from the Japanese invaders with his batman, Kishan Singh. They are pleased to see Hardayal, who has linked himself with the Indian national cause, when they emerge from the storm drain the following morning. Arjun chooses to adhere to him. Saya John, Dinu, Ilango, and Alison intend to go with the Japanese out of Singapore. Dinu battles with the Indian authorities for upholding the British laws by preventing non-Europeans from boarding the train. Dinu makes a vow to accompany Alison and Saya John when they go to Singapore via automobile. As Alison wakes up in the morning, she discovers Saya John being questioned by Japanese troops and her actions entice them to shoot him. They move as far as they can. Alison kills herself as the troops close in on her; she has followed Beni Prasad Dey's tragic path.

A spokesman of the Indian community in Rangoon, meantime, issues a general call to leave Burma that evening. Neel, who has assumed his father's obligations, is crushed to death. Together with almost 30,000 other refugees, Rajkumar, Dolly, and Manju attempt to flee. However, Manju drowns while crossing a river because she was unable to control herself after losing Neel. She believed her kid would do better in Dolly and Rajkumar's seasoned hands since she had realized they were a distinct breed of people who were fighting for their lives. After spending the next six years with Uma, Rajkumar and Dolly proceed to Rangoon in search of Dinu. Dolly is never seen by Rajkumar again. She meets Dinu in 1948, spends some time with him, and then passes away in a nunnery.

As Jaya attends an art history symposium at the University of Goa, she encounters an early 20th-century pioneer photographer and learns that he is actually her uncle Dinu. Since he is now eighty-two years old, she resolves to meet him and spots him at his works in a studio, he calls “The Glass Palace”. The reader gets the impression that everything have finally gone full circle. Dinu had spent three years in a military jail in Burma, much like Aung San Suu Kyi had. Like Aung San Suu Kyi, he teaches classes that emphasize aesthetics but also suggest a political ideology.

Jaya finds out that Dinu left Malay when Alison passed away and travelled to Rangoon in 1942. As he went in search of Arjun, he discovered him injured and close to death. The young woman who assisted in providing for him while he was passing through Rangoon, Ma Thin Thin Aye, is the next person he marries. Dinu and Ma both listened to Aung San Suu Kye’s talks. This increases political consciousness greatly. Dinu is informed by Jaya that Rajkumar and Dolly passed away just a few days apart, although living far apart from one another.

Saya John raises objections to the Indian sepoy, a component of the British force that drove out king Thebaw. Hardayal later shared his opinion, concluding that any purported loyalty to the British officers is phoney. Alongside the emotionally charged event that has historical effect for India, the book’s characters are confronted with issues of devotion to their own identities. For instance, Ilongo, Dinu’s half-brother, explores concerns about hybridity, border-crossing, and investigating borders both within and between peoples throughout the novel. More so at the point in the book where Ilongo’s identity is revealed that is, the point at which Arjun and Hardayal as questioning their loyalties.

Hardayal and other Indian soldiers in the British army challenge previously uncontested frontiers that now appear more arbitrary in the face of impending

carnage. Arjun asks, “Well, didn’t you ever think, this country whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time - what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country.” (Ghosh 330)

When Arjun’s battalion arrives in Singapore on its way to the Malaya, he has the sort of experience that another Indian officer had uttered. Arjun is much impressed by the illiterate man, Kishan Singh’s clear understanding of their suppression in the face of larger historical forces, and he becomes unhinged saying: “And was it possible that he had never known this even of himself? When Arjun decides to join Hardayal’s: mutiny wonders: “Was this how a mutiny was sparked? In a moment of heedlessness?” (Ghosh 440)

The reader wonders how closely Ghosh would align himself with Arjun’s response if he had made the decision to ask this question. When we consider the latter’s fate from this perspective in the book, it becomes even more complicated. Hardayal at first is trembled when he goes in search of Arjun in 1942 by Arjun’s disaffection from the British and his commitment to his new cause: “this is the greatest danger ... but compassion” (Ghosh 447). But he had finally concluded that for him to offer such a pat summation of Arjun’s life was far too facile and self-satisfied. Many have followed the same route.

Under the influence of Western education, the colonialists use the characters Beni Prasad Dey, Arjun, and Dinu as simple puppets to carry out their expansionist objectives under the guise of reforms. Over 50,000 Indian soldiers were stationed on the island at the time of Singapore’s fall; half of the group enlisted in the Indian National Army. The author takes us back to the moment when Arjun made his choice and considered how awful their lives was. Ghosh’s sense of humanism is demonstrated by his focus on the portrayal of human survival and existence under the

influence of various types of politics and power. Ghosh has fictionalized the activities that stifle human freedom and tend to enslave man or woman in order to communicate his worry.

Power politics, in his opinion, pose the biggest danger to humanistic principles. Politics' encroachment into various spheres of life tends to push human concerns to the side. The way politics operate prevents social and cultural intuitions from advancing human dignity. Man is not the centre of the universe; rather, he is a means to the objectives of those in charge of various organizations. To quote Meenakshi Mukherjee "Human lives spill over national boundaries, refusing to stay containing in neat apartments" (152).

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, the work will be remembered for its caustic condemnation of British colonialism, since the structure known as *The Glass Palace* is deeply laden with symbols of hope and loss. The book appears to be a sort of elegy for the state of the diaspora. The Indian immigrants and the diasporic workforce encounter and strive for global identities despite different cultures. Every character must deal with the paradox of human life. Being the characters,

Struggle to gain a sense of subjectivity, to come to terms with the complex interconnections between economic, political and cultural developments in the colonial world, there are significant transformations within them leading toward changes in the national identities. (Bhargava 246)

King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat, Saya John, Rajkumar, Dolly, Uma, Alison, Dinu, Neel, Arjun, Hardayal, Kishan Singh, Jaya, and Ilongo are just a few of the dislocated people Ghosh discusses in his book. Other characters include King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat, Dolly, Uma, Alison, Dinu, Neel, Arjun, and Jaya.

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, the narrative spans more than a century in the history of the subcontinent; throughout this time, wars are fought, uprisings are put down, political and ethical concerns are discussed, and riches are built and lost. Everything is deliberately and accurately reported by the author, whose accuracy is supported by careful study. In order to build new civilizations, cultural hierarchies combine the upper and low classes despite differences in race, religion, and class.

The rejection of a rigid idea of human identity is another part of *The Glass Palace* humanistic impulses. It highlights the tension between the democratic viewpoint Ghosh adopts in this story and the imperialism's basic cultural idea, which is the rigid sense of identity. He offers characters that lack fundamental identities in order to refute the idea of identity as something solid and fixed. These characters are remembered as Dolly, Uma, Raj Kumar, Saya John, Alison, Dinu, Neel, and Daw Than Thin Aye rather than as Indians, Burmans, or Malays.

Similar to this, Rajkumar's boys' two separate names one Burman and the other Indian destabilize identities depending on nationality. The writer's use of a fictitious technique frees the idea of humanism from predetermined ideals described in transcendental terms. Here, Ghosh's viewpoint is more in line with the variety of human existence's potentials, which tends to give rise to his humanistic concerns becoming more multifaceted and influencing a range of opinions defining human values.

The presenting of a dialogical viewpoint on humanism is the most important component of Ghosh's fictional discourse. In this discourse, dialogical discussions between words rather than individual statements determine meaning. Notwithstanding the battle between the British Empire and its colonies, which presents a contextual

and provisional view of humanism, Ghosh's concern for a person's total freedom, sovereignty, and dignity may be seen as a shared theme.

It opposes the essentialist worldview based on the opposition between the governor and the governed, the ruler and the people, rather than rejecting the imperialists via nationalist self-assertion. It imagines a future devoid of any sort of oppression against others. Each and every person has the right to live a free life.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

The term technique is extracted from the Greek root word *techniko*, which means an art. The use of any technique in literary fiction comprises all that goes into the creation of a novel. In general, technique embraces all that the novelist uses for narrating his tale in a vivid manner. The skill of telling a tale is a narrative which came into presence long before it got its appellation. It comes to us so obviously that we flinch expressing our approaches through language. As we begin expressing our feelings and thoughts, a narrative takes form. It is a talent that benefits the story teller to narrate a tale realistically in a creative manner, to make a tale operative and stimulating for a reader to comprehend properly.

The use of the device of the narrator and the narrating stance is termed by Genette as narrative voice. A narrative cannot influence the reader consciously or unconsciously if there is not the fascination of story and story-telling. According to Kenon there are three basic aspects of narrative fiction: story, text and narration. Todorov holds that each different way the fabula is told presents a different *sjuzet*. Thus, it becomes clear that the act of narrating is important rather than the story. There has been extensive experimentation done in this aspect of narrative voice and the novel has witnessed a lot of significant structural changes. Narrative, the element of the story was intact in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It was the narrator or author who played upon the reader, manipulated, and directed the reader's responses. These types of novels were not concerned with what really happened but with the meaning of what the narrator of the work believes to have happened. It is through narrator's eyes that the entire action of the novel was presented. All this lead to limit the reader's freedom to interpret.

At the beginning of twentieth century one of the major currents that developed the form of the novel was that summary was replaced by scene. This was emphasized by the dictum the novel should not tell but show. Many technical devices were used by the author to extend freedom to the reader. The two major trends that emerged were the multiplications of the narrator and marginalization or effacement of the author/narrator. The extreme case of the effacement of the narrator as a telling voice is the stream of consciousness novel. In these novels the scene is in part interior monologue. Roland Barthes makes an important point in his writing,

There are countless forms of narrative in the world. First of all, there is a prodigious variety of genres, each of which branches out into a variety of media, as if all substances could be relied upon to accommodate man's stories. Among the vehicles of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, pictures, still or moving, gestures, and an ordered mixture of all those substance. (237)

A narrative can be expressed verbally, in writing, or even in the mind. There are additional assessment points to describe the observers. The 'narrator,' who is audible or visible to the audience, tells the stories. It is a type of approach that includes characters, a time frame, a setting, and a difficulty. It tries to respond or seek explanation for it. The finest examples of short stories are bedtime stories, whereas novels are examples of large stories. Examples of narrative inscription include play and movie screenplays. As it is the most traditional form of communication, it's presence is felt everywhere. Narrative is present everywhere in the universe and is a global phenomenon.

It is possible to say that the many narrative devices serve as the foundation for creative writing. A writer tries to express his thoughts and emotions through his writing.

He expresses his inner voice more effectively and plainly to his audience through writing. Paul Ricoeur writes, “The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character” (Simms 72).

Paul Ricoeur’s statements demonstrate that a storyteller’s temperament is considered to be at its finest while recounting a narrative. By telling a story in the postcolonial environment, anyone may reveal their personality as a storyteller. Analysis of various writings produced in nations that at one time or another were subject to European Colonial Rule is known as postcolonial approach. Those who had been cast aside by the conquering west and labelled as uncivilised and barbarian began returning to the centre once the country gained its independence. The postcolonial writers employed a wide range of methods. The writers’ methods for creating national distinctiveness included restoring local wisdom, unravelling various narrative via polyphony, and rejuvenating the rich past legacy.

Just like literature, the concept of history can also be re-assembled. Re-interpreting mythologies and folklores is predominant among authors in order to make the readers trust that they belong to some local place. The traditional style of monologist description followed by the European writers is substituted by polyphonic narration having manifold speeches of narrators. The postmodern propensity of leaving the all-knowing author has become noticeable in the novels of this old-fashioned. Giving power upon the disagreement that no one knows the inner voice or the minds of the others, the ever-present narrator who imagines to know everything gives way to polyphonic or multi-voiced stories.

The novelist Ghosh began to take an established view of Indian reality and handled themes with clarity and sureness. He has experimented with new methods to

express exceptional ideas. Narrative techniques of different type are complexly merged into the feel of his novels. He discovers the concepts articulated by the Russian philosopher and criticizer Mikhail Bakhtin in his novels. A polyphonic manuscript is a collection of multiple voices and it's perception is permitted off an authorial regulator and heteroglossia is assumed as the social assortment of speech. This technique is used to analyse the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh from the postcolonial approach.

Directly or indirectly, every narrator has got his or her own form of the story. Hereafter, there is no demand of an actual story. The exploration for truth is an incessant development involving re-building and re-narration of stories. The novelist deploys manifold voices of multiple narrators, which is a feature of polyphonic novels. Story narrating is an attached portion of human life. It is occupied with the ideals of the story teller and the linguistic means in which the tale is told. These ideals vary from person to person making the story heteroglossia. This kind of narration cheers the novel as it is an assembly of narrated stories. In India, the spoken custom of narrating a story inspire Ghosh to approve the polyphonic method in his novels, and he effectively did that.

The notion of Bakhtin recognizes polyphony as a substantial feature of the novel and he disallows the monologist procedure of the traditional novel in which the characters' voice, lookout, philosophy and the diversity of social worlds are all objects of the author's information. So, they are subordinated to the creative project where the voice of the author is confirmed to be the last word. For 'Bakhtin movement,' the first criteria for a novel to be polyphonic are the self-determination and individuality of characters freed from the firm mechanism of the writer.

The novels of Amitav Ghosh are polyphonic in nature because he makes his characters a sovereign and stops himself from imposing philosophical control over

them. Diverse characters who act as narrators achieve their roles in the novel in their exclusive linguistic registers ensuing in the arrival of heteroglossia in the novel. The reader can notice changes in their vernacular according to the social, cultural and economic position. Thus, change and variety exist when each and every character institute his or her uniqueness by their exceptional method of narration in the novels.

The influence of colonialism on the social, cultural, and political lives of the people of the colonized country is observed by Ghosh from the perspective of a marginalized Indian through the novel *The Glass Palace*. The novelist Ghosh has tried to analyse the history when Burma was seized and annexed as a part of British India. The pessimism that he embraced within him towards the British colonizers is articulated throughout the novel.

In Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, Jaya's son Rajkumar is the speaker of the story. He has associated many sub-narratives with different characters to make it a complete one. The childhood recollection of the charming and the most affectionate prospect that he has ever witnessed- the interconnected dentures of his great aunt Uma and his great grandfather, endured in his memory for a long time. While he mellowed, his longing to find out more about the relationship between Uma and Rajkumar, amplified. He agrees to know the history of the family and write down their record in the technique of a novel.

The Glass Palace deals with the ancient events and opens with the British capture of Burma to the British India in November 1885. Till the Burmese fought for democracy under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi, the image of democracy and the endeavours of the Military Junta surface the fight by keeping her under house arrest in 1996. The family history of the Rahas with Rajkumar as the head and the history of the three generations of the family are found in *The Glass Palace*. The speaker throws light

on Rajkumar's fight with life when he was an orphan. When he was only eleven years old, he was emanated from Chittagong with his mother to discharge themselves from the controls of a killer excitement. But he lost his mother who was the only ray of hope and basis of his life.

Her final words, "Stay alive, Beche Thako. Rajkumar, live my Prince hold on to your life," (Ghosh 14) enthused him to change on in life with sureness. The rise and fall of Rajkumar forms the basis of the novel. Many other stories have been finally interlaced into the surface of the novel making practice of polyphony and heteroglossia. The much-wanted independence given to the characters brands it as a polyphonic novel. The diversity of languages that the characters in the novel employ, permit heteroglossia to occupy an important role. The language that the orphan Rajkumar practices is totally altered from the adult Rajkumar. As a child of eleven, he revealed great development, when he advanced a half-Indian and half-Burmese food-stall proprietor for a job. Though she was irritated, being good at heart, she enquired him about his parents and he simply answered that they were no more.

Rajkumar's short and traditional answer was powerful enough to inspire sympathy in Ma Cho and he decided to work in her food-stall for nourishment and accommodation. Their relations reinforced and he got many elements about *the Glass Palace* of Burma from her. Frequently, she reproached Rajkumar in the following manner, "Now you get back to work or I'll your black face in hot oil..." (Ghosh 10).

Actually, it is Ma Cho who exerts control and her words replicate the behaviour of the influential against their assistants. Her language is characteristic of the working-class ethos. Unaffected by deficiency and orphan-hood, he familiarizes himself to the altering situation and becomes an effectual teak trader. In his trade, he appeals himself in conveying indentured laborers to work in the plantations. Being a subcontractor in

the teak trade, he copied the colonizer in desolating teak forest and utilized elephants for pulling logs. Ecological humiliation due to the extreme mis-treatment of nature is pointed out by Ghosh when he mentions about the dishonest ways in which Rajkumar made money through deforestation. Ashcroft and his colleagues perceive, “Ecological imperialism radically altered the entire ecology of the invaded lands in ways that necessarily disadvantaged indigenous people and annihilated or endangered the native fauna and flora on which their cultures and their very life depended” (69).

In analysing the splendour of Dolly, Ghosh makes use of polyphony. Her loveliness, when imitated through ‘multiple voices’ becomes all the more stimulating. In Rajkumar’s variety, she seemed to be beautiful beyond acceptance. He says, “She was like the palace itself, a thing of glass, inside which you could see everything your imagination was capable.” (Ghosh 144)

In Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*, the inconsistent philosophies are accessible through the collector and his wife. They characterize the educated Indian choice during the days of the colonial rule. While she fights against the suppression of India by the British, her partner takes their side. When the expatriated majestic family is brought under his observation, he takes to be a realistic servant of the Empire. He is caned for a slight laxity of his responsibility to the Empire and as a consequence he ends his life.

In Ghosh’s novel *The Glass Palace* the dimensions of narratology and concept of narrator and narrative voice are not very much different from that of the Western story tellers. But at the same time Ghosh is influenced by great Indian narrative tradition of story-telling which has always been much stronger and older in India. In the present novel at the very beginning of the novel the reader comes to know about the legendary Glass Palace in Burma. Here the character focalizer is an eleven-year-old urchin Rajkumar 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 years old boy, but it is evident that here the omnipresent 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 manoeuvres, models of automobiles and air craft drilling of oil, timber trade, food, clothing, language etc. All these details are historically specified and presented by omnipresent narrator through the eyes of different character focalizers.

The omnipresent narrator narrates how the proud Queen Supayalat was feared and admired blindly by the Burmese, and how unceremoniously the conquering British removed the king and the pregnant queen from Mandalay to distant Rattana-giri in the West of India. It was a sharp move by the Britishers, who were successful in humiliating the royal couple completely. The king and the queen led a life of utter shabbiness and obscurity in unfamiliar region while their country got plundered and depleted of its precious natural resource such as, precious gems, petroleum and ivory.

The most important aspect of the novel is, however, that not even a single episode in the whole text represents the British directly. They are always at the background and brought into the story not as characters. They have been treated in the same way as 18th or 19th century British writers used the colonized countries as background or as references that may affect the narrative style or the story line, but do

not have direct association with the characters. It is in fact the history of nation seen and presented through the eyes of subaltern. It is a notable example of giving the voice to the colonized people or the colonizers both, but more remarkable is that the voice is given by colonized not by colonizers. In the early parts of the book the authorial presence is evident and quite visible when the omnipresent narrator throws light on the life of local people and the time when Britishers were just establishing themselves as colonizers. The historian narrator author has an eye for each small detail for which he gives detailed description.

The historian narrator author has a keen eye for minor details, which he describes in great detail. Queen Supayalat and her mother flanked the king as he walked out of the pavilion. The procession moved slowly through the palace's lengthy halls and over the Hall of Audience's mirrored walls. Past the guard honor's shouldered rifles and the English officers snapped-off salutes. By the east gate, two carriages were waiting. Just as he was about to enter, "Just as he was about to step in, the king noticed that his canopy had seven tiers, the number allotted to a nobleman, not the nine due to a king" (Ghosh 43).

Free direct communication between characters is used by the narrator:

'You know, Uma,' she said in her softest voice. 'Every time I come to your house, I notice that picture you have hanging by your front door...'

'Of Queen Victoria, you mean?' ... 'Don't you sometimes wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria's name? It must be millions wouldn't you say?' (Ghosh 114)

Dolly and her friend Uma had an amazing conversation in which they questioned historical truths and conventional wisdom. Dolly forces Uma, the wife of the Indian Collector, to think about the situation from her point of view in response to

Uma's question regarding Queen Supalayat's violence. This conversation depicts clearly the author's view about the representational dice in pictures or literature. Later Uma accepts her friend's perspective and removes the picture from her house.

The authorial presence is evident when Ghosh strongly voices the irony of situation. He shows subjugated Burma and the attitude towards India and the Indians is starkly different from the treatment of the Burmese people. Though Raj Kumar, an Indian born, is there at the centre of the novel, but far from being a flawless character. He is the representative of those Indians who amassed wealth and attained power as they benefited through the British colonization. It is a fact that British colonized both India and Burma, but in Burma it was the Burmese who are the oppressed and exploited while the Indians as well as people from other countries were given much chances to flourish. One of such stories is that of Raj Kumar's story of success. Through memories and stream of consciousness of Raj Kumar and other such characters Ghosh depicts how colonialism is a process where people and values are always compromised.

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, Indian 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 a many way in *The Glass Palace*. Ghosh creates a number of strong equally important and distinctive voices in the text that also contribute to the novel's dynamic heteroglossia. The reader finds the fundamental open-endedness of the polyphonic novel in *The Glass Palace*. There are many memorable characters in

the novel. They are driven by different beliefs and become representatives of important historical tendencies. Every character, each image stands as a full and unmerged voice in their own right. The glasses of the Glass Palace as they mirror a pregnant Supayalat ironically present the mute and invincible power of the other and her pregnancy is a sort of hope that challenges and reflects the power of an unseen future in the form of the unborn child.

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." (297). The reader notices the influence that some of characters have on the other. For example, Raj Kumar's adherence to his business is the outcome of his uncle Saya John's influence upon him in his adolescent years when he comes to Mandalay.

The different voices along with authorial voice demonstrate the "multimodality" of the novel. The natives of Mandalay, the migrants, the servants in palace, the people of slums near Queen's place, the people of different countries India, Burma, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Singapore, are the people who speak different languages and evidently belong to different social classes and cultural backgrounds. Their different professions, languages, beliefs, cultures, nationalities and worldviews enrich the heteroglossia of novel.

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 can. (Ghosh 74)

Another voice that emerges to be very strong in the novel is depicted through real life persona Aung San Suu Kyi's presence, she is a leader, a symbol and voice of struggle to uphold democratize values against the tyrannical rule of the military. Her very presence is the embodiment of a live character focalizer in the given circumstances. Ghosh has used her as a symbol of the voice rising for the cause of the dignity and sovereignty of man as man.

Ghosh is deeply rooted in his indigenous traditions of story-telling as he is greatly influenced by native writers, Tagore and Satyajit Ray, and the Indian tradition of story-telling like that of Panchtantra, Jatak Kathas etc. At the same time, we find on him the influence of foreign writers like Proust, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Ford Madox Ford. On one hand his narrative techniques are in consonance with Indian oral story telling tradition on the other hand he is influenced by sophisticated Western techniques like that of multiple narrators' reflections, stream of consciousness interior monologues, memoirs to name a few. There are different modes of narrative such as

realism, fantasy, metaphors, symbols, irony, and magic realism, incorporated in the novel. The novel includes different genres and extra literary material such as history, myth, allegory, and picaresque. Here Ghosh tries to focus on the formidable complexity of the real world instead of presenting a simplistic, unified and monologic version of reality.

Polyphony and heteroglossia are a powerful argument against homogenization and monologism. In fact, 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 open-endedness 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.

The novelist, Ghosh through his literary works experiments with the structure and the steady conclusion and selects the open-endings and incompleteness which are the key structures of polyphonic novels. By allowing the readers to understand the ending in their own way, Ghosh plants his philosophical tensions unsettled. Thus, in this technique a significant universe is given to the readers to question and understand the text.

Chapter Five

Summation

A powerful, postcolonial writer Amitav Ghosh is probably the most scholarly practitioner of the by-now-distinct genre of Indian writing in English. Ghosh has produced some of the most lyrical and insightful works on the effect of colonialism on the native people. He occupies a rather curious place in the landscape of contemporary English-language authors from the Indian subcontinent. Ghosh's fiction has, over the years, pushed at the boundaries of the genre, probed its unlit corners, and brought it into powerful dialogue with other places, peoples and times.

With his *The Glass Palace*, a 500-page magnum opus Ghosh returned to a more traditional, though hardly less challenging, form, the historical novel. Almost unique in its attention to proximate regions beyond the immediate subcontinent, Ghosh's fictional work is enriched by its roots in his own travels, encounters and research. The novel visits the regions where the displacements of colonialism and war became the mass experience of millions, generating enormous suffering but also the making of new communities. *Palace* moves with an epic sweep across the late 19th century to the present-day, knitting together the stories of the doomed last King of Burma and his family, their servant, Dolly, an Indian-Burmese orphan named Rajkumar, and Uma, a widow who becomes a famous participant in the Indian freedom struggle. As it illuminates the links between the histories of India, Burma and Malaysia, the novel reminds us that the texture of history is always to be felt in the complex predicaments of individuals and families. In her review of the novel critic Ira Pande stated that: "Ghosh, a historian by training, an adventurous traveller and a sensitive writer of fiction, it becomes a confluence of all three" (70).

The first chapter, Introduction deals with Indian Writing in English before and after colonial rule. Literature is the study of written works that reflect a particular society, subculture, religion, or philosophy. Mulk Raj Anand's novels are respected as a tool for understanding the development of Indian English Literature. R. K. Narayan is a realistic fiction writer. Aubrey Menon, G. V. Desani, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan, and the great writing trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan all contributed to the development of Indian English literature. Narayan, Nayantara Sahgal, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, and Bhabani Bhattacharya wrote in English in the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the freedom struggle, Gandhian ideology, social reforms, and the Partition.

The 1981 release of *Midnight's Children* marked the revival of Indian writing in English, with postmodernism, language and grammar play, historical focus, language life, innovations through magic realism and allegory, and connections to contemporary Hindi cinema. Postcolonial and post-partition Indian authors use novels as a vehicle for cultural representation, emphasizing the silencing and marginalizing of the post-colonial voice by the imperial centre. Amitav Ghosh's writing has been impacted by the political and social climate of India and the liberation movement. Amitav Ghosh combines history and fiction to explore pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial India in his novels.

The Glass Palace is a historical fiction book that examines the cultural recoding of Indian society and identity in Burma in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Immigrants experience loneliness and alienation due to lack of flexibility, socialisation, and an inability to connect with their surroundings. Rajkumar is a self-made individual who transforms an exiled nation into a prosperous one through the teak, rubber, and slave trades. He seeks out Dolly and weds her with Uma's help. Raj Kumar's delight

comes from his adopted nation, while Thebaw and Supalayay continue to be remembered by their nation. This book depicts human powerlessness, conflict and displacement, exile and rootlessness, and the mingling of races and classes. It conveys the hopes, setbacks, and disappointments of displaced people.

The second Chapter Voicing Unspoken Histories deals with the theory of Postcolonialism in *The Glass Palace*. Postcolonial theory looks at the broader interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized, emphasizing hybridity and the mingling of cultural signs and practices between colonizer and colonized. Amitav Ghosh is a postcolonial writer who examines colonialism through dialogical exchanges between words. *The Glass Palace* presents a counter narrative to colonialism, emphasizing how imperial forces develop a corpus of thought and practise to achieve their objective. Identity is now seen as temporary and contextual, linked to shifting power dynamics and cultural settings. Saya John's dual identity destabilizes imperialist notions of identity. The postcolonial viewpoint understands that all cultures are hybrid, heterogeneous, and unmonolithic, and how power interacts with identity.

The novel rejects the idea of identity as a counternarrative to colonialism, instead focusing on the unique sociohistorical, political, and cultural setting. *The Glass Palace* reveals the plans of colonialists to justify their involvement and challenge imperialistic notions of fixed and monolithic identity. It also makes the case against imperial countries' right to establish standards for others. Uma and Dolly expose the colonial authorities' attempt to usurp Indian culture, but Dolly's counter questions reveal the falsity of these accusations. The acceptance of colonial culture resulted in a mimicry of the centre, leading Indian soldiers to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins.

The postcolonial viewpoint looks at how language was used to achieve colonial power, with the top of Indian culture and educated population taking pleasure in using English. *The Glass Palace* rejects the reconstruction of pre-colonial reality as a form of decolonization and promotes the idea that all forms of colonialism should be resisted and eliminated. Novelistic discourse reveals the many manifestations of colonialism and imperialism through the experiences of three generations. The despotic and imperialist actions in Burma highlight the diversity of viewpoints and voices within a culture, which are exploited by both British and native administrators.

The postcolonial discourse in *The Glass Palace* is an open-ended and decentralized enterprise that criticizes the view that associates colonial thinking to the western powers only. Dinu and his young wife, Daw Thin Thin Aye, expose how the oppressive forces in Myanmar exercise their control and use brutal force to justify their practices. The postcolonial perspective does not challenge imperial powers through nationalist assertion, but rather challenges the worldview based on the polarity of governor and the governed, ruler and ruled as essentialist. This view envisions a world free from the politics of power.

The theme of Constructing Identity has portrayed in the third chapter. There was a crisis in the major and minor character of the novel and the confusion of their own identity has revealed and how they find it. Rajkumar is a vagabond whose personal past is intertwined with colonial history to construct and destroy histories. Rajkumar and Saya John, two Malaysians and Indians, relocate from Burma to India and Malaysia in search of refuge, but their dual identities prevent them from adhering to a certain national identity. Uma Dey is a self-assured person who fights for peace and non-violence, escaping Hindu widowhood and becoming a pivotal character in the fight for independence. Uma, the wife of an Indian officer, realizes that British imperialism is

not the only force fighting against the spirit of mankind, and sets herself against the colonizing mission to liberate India.

Arjun is a Bengali officer in the British Army who rebels against the authorities and learns about his loss of identity. He is an example of the influence of western academic disciplines and his recognition of colonial rulers' supremacy. Arjun's struggle to reconcile his patriotism and devotion to the British leads him to protest against the Empire to protect the interests of the locals. Ghosh's story rejects a rigid idea of human identity and presents a dialogical viewpoint on humanism, advocating for total freedom, sovereignty, and dignity.

The fourth chapter of this thesis explores the narrative techniques and the unique method of narration. Ghosh used a multi-voiced or polyphonic narrative style. Amitav Ghosh has experimented with new methods to express exceptional ideas, including polyphonic manuscripts, which are collections of multiple voices and heteroglossia is assumed as the social assortment of speech. Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* is a polyphonic novel that explores the influence of colonialism on the social, cultural, and political lives of the people of the colonized country. It follows Jaya's son Rajkumar, who is the speaker of the story and reflects on his childhood memories of his great aunt Uma and his great grandfather. The novel also features other stories interlaced into the surface, making it a polyphonic novel.

Ghosh's novel *The Glass Palace* uses polyphony to explore the splendour of Dolly, and the narrator is an eleven-year-old urchin Rajkumar who is awestruck by the palace. The omnipresent narrator of the novel, Ghosh, presents the history of India and Burma through the eyes of the colonized people. The narrator has a keen eye for minor details, such as Raj Kumar's story of success, which illustrates how colonialism is a process where people and values are always compromised. The narrator also reveals

the irony of the situation, showing how the Burmese were oppressed and exploited while the Indians were given much chances to flourish.

The novel has polyphonic voices, independent individuals whose truth emerges in contact with another's. Character focalizers expose the reality of British Empire, exploiting young English men to extend it's hold and strengthen it's power. Ghosh uses Aung San Suu Kyi as a symbol of the voice rising for the dignity and sovereignty of man. Ghosh uses polyphony and heteroglossia to explore different possibilities through dialogism, exposing the role of socio-political institutions in stifling human voice.

The complexity of *The Glass Palace* is astounding. Amitav Ghosh poignantly depicts the struggles of Rajkumar and his family; their struggle for survival through the political and social turmoil. The historical descriptions are so dynamic and montage of image of the myriad sounds, smells, sights and feelings of that period. The key theme of *The Glass Palace* is colonialism. The characters are oppressed by colonialism because of this colonialism they lost their identity and they are striving to get back the recognition. *The Glass palace* is about human relationships, love, and loss; a slow unravelling of memory in the passage of time.

Thus, the research analysed that the characters gets back their identity. The operations of colonial powers in Eastern nation like India, Burma, and Malaysia. Postcolonial theory looks at the broader interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized, emphasized hybridity and the mingling of cultural signs and practices between colonizer and colonized.

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Deciphering the Mute Struggles: A Feminist Study of Chimamanda Ngozi

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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 LITERATURE

by

NARMADHA A.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN13)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

April 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Deciphering the Mute Struggles: A Feminist Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*** 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 and is a work done by Narmadha A. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

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Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



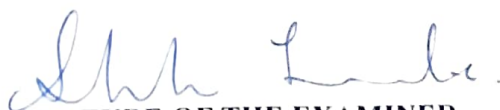
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Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Deciphering the Mute Struggles: A Feminist Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI


NARMADHA A.

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Deciphering the Mute Struggles: A Feminist Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*** analyses the struggles undergone by the protagonist of the novel, Kambili in Enugu, Nigeria.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the Nigerian writings and a short biography of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, her contemporary women writers, a short summary of the novel and also about the title explanation of the project.

The second chapter **Recounting the Gendered Violence** deals with the theory of Feminism, Feministic aspects and how the mother and children frees themselves from their father and hopes for a better future with her children in the new city in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

The third chapter **Quest for Identity** is portrayed through both major and minor characters of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* and exploring their own selves in different cities, Enugu and Nsukka. The struggled life in Enugu and independent life in Nsukka are dealt in the chapter.

The fourth chapter explores the **Narrative Techniques** of *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie uses the narration shifts from indirect speech to direct speech and Autodiegetic narration and how the Autodiegetic narrator plays an important role in the novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters and the justification of the title of the project.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is of the utmost importance and contributes significantly to the world's continued intellectual advancement. Literature is regarded to advance humanity, moral and intellectual growth in addition to serving as a tool for language development. Intellectually upright ravine, making people more enlightened and better global citizens. Literature is defined as any written work, including poems, novels, short tales, essays, etc., that demonstrates excellence in style and expression as well as general or enduring appeal. Literature is viewed as a tool for manipulating language to explore the human condition in a variety of contexts.

In Africa, literature has emerged as a fundamental component of cultural globalisation. African literature does not aim to meet this desire. They argue that works from other races should not be considered examples of ideological universalism because it is a particular reserve of Western works. African literature typically refers to a vast, intricate, and innovative body of writing about and from Africa.

African literature is primarily divided into three separate and well-recognized categories: literature produced in European languages, literature written in indigenous African languages, and traditional oral literature of Africa. African traditional oral literature might take the shape of prose, poetry, or proverbs. It's typically referred to as orature. Orature was passed down through the generations by memory and recitation and thrived in Africa partly due to the lack of widespread literacy. The content's length might range from short passages like proverbs to lengthy epics. It requires a series of steps to be taken over time. This verbal skill served the dual function of entertaining audiences and imparting knowledge. They served as a vehicle for elucidating the origins of the universe, the core of God's and the creature's activities, and their interactions

with one another. Folklore told orally was used to promote societal ideals and combat antisocial behaviour.

African written literature has been around for around 5,000 years. The hieroglyphic script of ancient Egypt serves as the ancestor of African literature. There are African literary works in their original language as well. Yoruba and Hausa were the languages spoken by West Africa, Swahili is spoken by East Africa and Zulu is spoken by Southern Africa. With a few notable exceptions, the majority of written literature from Africa is composed in European languages, particularly English, French, and Portuguese.

African works of literature written in both French and Portuguese are however, not as comprehensive as Anglophone African literature. This can be attributed to the fact that several European imperial powers colonised Africa, the British annexed various regions along the continent's length and breadth, starting with Egypt, Sudan, and Kenya in North Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria in West Africa, and Zambia, Botswana, in the continent's southern region. The term "modern African literature," is frequently used in referring dominating African literature. In *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o refers to modern African literature as "Afro European literature."

The relationship between the West and Africa, which has both historical and experimental components, give rise to modern African writing. One of the most notable characteristics of African novels are that they are a genre that was created as a specific body of creative discourse concerned with ways to challenge the influence of western cultural hegemony on African states of consciousness. Almost all African writers, particularly those who write during the post-colonial era, exhibit this type of resistance in their works.

Post colonial literature refers to the writing produced between 1960 and 1970 during the post-colonial era. A significant amount of African written literature in English is produced during these post-colonial centuries as many African nations attained political independence from their colonial overlords. Post colonial African literature provides the means of understanding physical, psychological, and other aspects of African existence. It stands for the intellectual reaction of Africa to colonialism and neocolonialism. African literary texts are heavily influenced by the continent's rich traditions, the struggles of modern day African existence brought on by colonialism's economic experience and its terrible neo colonial legacy.

African literary titans like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, and Esia Mapahele all made enormous contributions to the continent's literature. These authors' work aid in familiarising Europeans with the "African Consciousness". During this time, writers are both artists and political activists. These pieces capture the joyous atmosphere surrounding the emergence of sovereign states. These authors with African heritage are dedicated to decolonizing the psyche, or restoring people's faith in society and themselves. When Wole Soyinka is awarded the Nobel Prize in literature from Africa, it becomes a significant turning point in post-colonial African literature.

It symbolises the West's appreciation of Nigerian literature's literary prowess. African writing also gains momentum once Heinemann Publishers released a series on African writers. African masterpieces like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a classic that is accepted in the curricula of the Universities in the West, are examples of African English literature that is now widely recognised. Nigeria produces the most literature of any African nation, particularly Afrocentric English literature. Many of Nigeria's literary works are available in Nigerian languages, but up until now, it hasn't been able to the interest of Western literary communities. English language literature from

Nigeria has a bigger national and global impact. Anglo-phone English language writings from Nigeria now more firmly associate with stronger aesthetic submission to western readers. Nigeria's development is admirably portrayed and valued abroad.

More than 250 different ethnic groups and 50 different languages found in Nigeria. Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba are the three tribes that make up the majority of the population. The Hausa is the majority in northern Nigeria. Igbo rules the South Eastern region, whereas Yoruba rules the South Western region. The stark division between the various regions of Nigeria is further supported by religious differences. The majority of Hausa people are Muslims. The majority of Igbo are Catholic Christians, while Muslims and other Christian denominations make up the majority of Yoruba. Before Nigeria was united and colonised by Great Britain in 1914, the many tribes lived in independent states with minimal interaction with one another. Local tribes were utilised to administer their respective territories while the British government served as the central authority during the colonisation of Nigeria by Great Britain.

The majority of the colony's military forces are composed of, who excelled in the military sector. The Yoruba and Igbo naturally excel in education and trade because to the location of Nigeria's oil deposits and commerce centres. There are few racial clashes because the British did a good job of controlling the balance of power.

Elections are used to keep the balance of power after Nigeria attained independence in 1960, and all national concerns are treated democratically. Military uprisings that were primarily led by dishonest Hausa military officials. The coups led to high levels of tension and ethnic violence among the various communities. The Igbo declared themselves independent from Nigeria and gave the country's south-eastern territory the name Biafra in an effort to rule their own area. However, because the majority of the new significant natural resources are in Nigeria, Nigeria refused to

recognise it, which sparked a war between Nigeria and Biafra. Between 1967 and 1970, three million civilians and soldiers died in the conflict. The Biafra state was ultimately eliminated and abandoned. This is why “Biafra” has a bad reputation.

Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri, and Wole Soyinka frequently express dismay and grief over the situation of their country during the colonial and post-colonial periods in their writings. The writings provide an insight into Nigerian culture and daily life. Nigerian literature serves as a vehicle for the country’s ideas and has a tendency to revive the country’s long-submissive and much denigrated culture and society.

Prominent authors of Nigerian literature passionately reject the idea that western colonial forces are “hijacking” Africa. Leading figures in African literature work to promote the evolution of nationalism and reawake the spirit of identifying as black. They encourage self-rediscovery and the belief in long-forgotten native customs and beliefs. As a result, these authors have served as the communities’ spiritual and cultural leaders. In the years following Nigeria’s independence, writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo, and John Pepper Clark are referred to as the quartet of Nigerian literature scene. They were talented writers who wrote with confidence and are well-known for their reformist perspectives on Nigeria and Africa.

Second generation poets like Odia Ofeimuna and Nigi Osundare, as well as authors with the highest calibre of talent like Biyi-Bandele Thomas and Ben Okri, have taken up the torch of Nigerian writings. For his book, *The Famished Road*, Ben Okri was awarded the Bookers Prize in 1991. His novels frequently touch on issues like nationalism, militarism, and corruption. The texts of Achebe and Soyinka make this expliciter. However, he makes an attempt at Nigerian politics in his article “The Catastrophe Now Facing Nigeria.”

People in this slowly modernising Nigeria face several difficulties in daily life. All people around the world confront hardships in life, and Nigerian women must deal with a wide range of issues like poverty, racism, sexism, gender inequality, polygamy, restrictions on reproductive freedom, domestic abuse, and patriarchal practises that intimidate. Since the beginning of time, women have had to face obstacles and submit to demand placed on them by society, tradition, and man. Women have been groomed to accept this devalued status since they have historically been allocated lower and subjugated positions in comparison to men in every social setting throughout the world.

A Nigerian woman's deteriorated state is so ingrained in her mind that she carries out her responsibilities and obligations without seeking any praise and almost ever demonstrates a rebellious mentality. She decides to embody compassion, submission, endurance, and selflessness. Nigerian society has always been characterised by female subordination.

However, there has been a significant development in the status of women in African nations recently access to and exposure to western education, western culture, and knowledge of the advantages of education, urbanisation, and active involvement in several occupations led to financial independence and promoted emotional and mental well-being. She has also realised she is a person being capable of studying and earning, and it helps her to develop her own identity. This female empowerment improved the status of Nigerian women, to some extent reduce their servitude, and inspire them to participate in a variety of male-dominated projects. Numerous human endeavours, including creative writing, have historically been dominated by men because: the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power...Moreover, his pen's power is not just the ability to generate life but the power to create posterity, to which he lays claim. (6)

This has been a common theme in both African and Nigerian literature as well as Western literature. The main literary legacy in African literature can be accurately identified by taking a quick look at the evolution of Nigerian writing from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period. Typically, male authors like Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutola, and Wole Soyinka write about issues that are specific to men concern and interests. Typically, they show women in oppressive roles who are bound to patriarchal power. Because the majority of African and Nigerian literature was written with male readers in mind, women characters are frequently neglected, portrayed as helpless, and shown acting within male-defined boundaries.

Due to widespread female illiteracy brought on by cultural barriers and early schooling for Nigerian men, men in that country have an advantage over women. The colonial era encouraged this masculine bias in education, which is in part to blame for excluding women from the written word. In addition, the patriarchal idea prevalent in Nigerian culture, the constrictive gender roles of daughters, wives, and mothers, and the traditional reticence of women naturally push them to the sidelines.

African women also lack the favourable setting required for creative writing. Nigerian women are limited by both time and space; they do not have the luxury of a private area where they can write in peace and quiet, nor do they have the leisure time necessary to engage in deep and introspective thought. The government does not support or encourage home produced works, particularly those written by black female authors. However, female writers began to appear in Nigeria in the 1960s and 1970s. In the annals of African writing, 1966 is still remembered as a watershed year. Grace Ogot's *The Promised Land* was the first female author to have a book published by East African Publishing House. The acclaimed Heinemann African Writers Series published *Efuru*, the first book authored by Flora Nwapa. Thus, the first contemporary female

writers of African fiction appeared in 1966. The first generation of black female writers includes those like Flora Nwapa, Mariamma Ba, Ama Ata Aidoo, Grace Ogot, Efua Sutherland, and Buchi Emecheta. Gloria eloquently describes this development for female writers in Nigerian literature.

Numerous critics have investigated and examined a few “coming-of-age” novels. Some Western and some African critics refer to some of the chosen novels as children’s literature. For instance, Vivian Yenika Agbaw investigates how gender issues and the representation of Africa are portrayed in West African children’s literature in her 2008 book *Representing Africa in Children’s Literature*.

However, the fundamental theme shared by all female writers is expressing unity in the face of gender inequality and highlighting women’s strength. They express vehement opposition to the alienation, dislocation, and displacement of women in their works. Female writers of literature aim to eliminate the absence of Nigerian/African women from the literary landscape and expose the most sexual bias in male literary tradition.

Most people credit Flora Nwapa as the originator of African female tradition in literature. One of the first female writers to question the conventions of masculine literary depiction was her groundbreaking books, including *Efuru* (1966), *Idu* (1970), *One Is Enough* (1982), and *Women Are Different* (1986), reflect issues that are important to women, including marriage, the value of children in marriage, women’s roles in the home and family, and the need for economic independence among women. *Never Again* (1975) captures the horrors and sadness of the Nigerian Civil War. In her works, the Igbo society and its practices are also depicted. In *Efuru* (1966), she also pioneered the “New African Women,” the first and most audacious departure from the

traditional portrayal of women in African literature. She highlights the need for women to have economic, emotional, and mental liberation via her works.

Another writer from Senegal who fights for the recognition of women's power is Mariamma Ba. Her books *Scarlet Song* and *So Long a Letter* portray the aspirations of African women. Mariamma is sympathetic to women who suffers societal injustice and indignities. Ama Ata Aidoo, a female writer from Ghana, is a further advocate for the advancement of black people. The deep animosity Aidoo feels for the ways that western civilization has shaped African awareness is evident in her works. Her books are a criticism of the many problems with race, colour, and gender that exist in an unbalanced society. As a result, the novels of Flora Nwapa and Ama Ata Aidoo discussed the position of women in African nations.

One among the African women writers is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In 1977, Adichie was born in the Nigerian city of Enugu. Her mother was the first female Registrar and her father was a professor when she was growing up on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka campus. She spent a year in Nsukka studying medicine before moving to the US at the age of 19 to pursue a different course of study. She earned a Political Science and Communication degree summa cum laude from Eastern Connecticut State University.

She holds a Master of Fine Arts in African History from Yale University and a Master of Arts in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University. She received two fellowships: one from the Hodder Foundation at Princeton University for the academic year 2005–2006 and another from the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University for the academic year 2011–2012. She was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2008.

Adichie has been awarded honorary doctorates by Johns Hopkins University and many other Universities and over thirty languages have versions of Ms. Adichie's

writing. The play *For Love of Biafra* by Adichie is released in Nigeria in 1998. It is among her earlier works that examines the conflict between Nigeria and its breakaway Biafra nation in the late 1960s; she later describes it as “an incredibly melodramatic play.” Ultimately, she created a number of short stories about that battle, which would later serve as the basis for her hugely popular book *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). She starts working on her debut book, *Purple Hibiscus*, while still a student at Eastern Connecticut State University (2003).

It is a coming-of-age tale of Kambili, a 15-year-old from a wealthy and well-respected family in Nigeria who is terrified by her fervently religious father. In 2005, *Purple Hibiscus* won the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book (Africa) and the Best First Book Commonwealth Writers’ Prize.

Adichie’s second book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), took four years. It is based on her parents’ experiences during the Nigeria-Biafra war. The outcome is an epic novel that, while concentrating on a small cast of individuals, primarily middle-class Africans, eloquently captures the brutality of the conflict. In 2007, *Half of a Yellow Sun* won the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction and went on to become a best seller on a global scale. A unique prize for the “best” prizewinner from the prior decade, the “Best of the Best” Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction was given to it eight years later.

Adichie published *The Thing Around Your Neck*, a collection of short stories, the following year to rave reviews. A young Nigerian lady studying and writing about race in the United States is the subject of the 2013 film *Americanah*, which centres on her romantic and existential challenges. *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014), a piece of nonfiction written by Adichie, is modified from a TEDx presentation she has given in 2012. Elements of the speech are also used in the song “Flawless” by Beyoncé in 2013. 2017 saw the release of *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*.

Adichie penned *Notes on Grief* (2021) when her father passed away, in which she both lamented his loss and honoured his life.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, is a coming-of-age story. Kambili and Jaja, her older brother, deals with political instability, callous classmates, and a rigid family environment. They also contend with a father whose extreme abuse will leave both physical and emotional scars that will never heal. *Purple Hibiscus* hides more deeper levels of significance when read critically. However, there were many issues in colonial Nigeria, and the primary cause had been the ethnic animosity inherent in this vast and artificial nation. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene Achike is a colonial figure who serves as the patriarch and father of Kambili and Jaja. Nigeria is granted full independence by England in 1960, following a century filled with administrative challenges. In effect, England withdraw its colonial forces without actually leaving behind any infrastructure, leaving it to the various ethnic groups to handle the administrative concerns.

The Igbo people are connected to the rest of Nigeria artificially through location and resources, not by ties to one another's cultures or ethnicities or through strong nationalist sentiments. Native Americans and non-Native Americans, however, have a history, if not a shared view about the normative repercussions of that past. Despite their differences, the Igbo and the other cultural groups in Nigeria all contribute to the identity of the young country. Together, they must unite their diverse personal histories to create a new, postcolonial nation. The parent figures in *Purple Hibiscus* represent the strongest or most likely of the many possible futures created by the necessarily diverse hopes of each of these groups. The future of Kambili and Jaja ultimately reflects the future of Nigeria.

The children of *Purple Hibiscus* are vying for independence, whereas the Nigeria-Biafra War was about self-determination. After a disastrous conflict, Nigeria's youth are entrusted with reconstructing the country. Similar to how Kambili and Jaja's family is falling apart, they need to find themselves. According to Madelaine Hron, the child's quest for a sociocultural identity is intricately tied to challenges originating from postcolonialism and globalisation, this is metaphorically equivalent to Nigeria's effort to forge its own identity in its post-colonial culture. The numerous father figures who serve as role models for the kids reflect the various aspects of Nigeria's identities, both past and future.

In the same way that Nigeria's past both in reality and in dashed hopes has an impact on the present, so do the father figures in the novel have an impact on Kambili. As evidenced in the novel, Kambili's journey to adulthood also reflects the struggles of young Nigeria, as it negotiates Western and traditional norms while also being overwhelmed by economic disparity, poor governance, pervasive corruption, or human rights violations.

The two literal dads of the story, Eugene Achike and Father Amadi, are the most blatant examples of this metaphorical conceit. A man of contrasts, Eugene Achike represents all of the varied interests of post-Biafra Nigeria. There are currently only about 10% of Nigerians who practise indigenous religions, while Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and Fulani are among the various languages spoken there. Despite this, English is the country's official language. Although Eugene adopts some native customs, he is a force for colonialism in terms of both culture and religion. Father Amadi is a person who brings people together; he has combined their many interests into one harmonious totality.

With the exception of Aunty Ifeoma, Eugene Achike's sister, the moms in the book are essentially non-existent, being acted upon rather than acting themselves. This might be the case since motherhood is often associated with concepts of nurturing and domestic stability, neither of which apply to post-Biafra Nigeria's political landscape. She is a single parent and the household's only wage earner, Ifeoma also fills the function of father in addition to that of mother. The decisions made by the parent figures now determine their lives and their prospective roles in history. The children's grandfather, Papa Nnukwu, stands in for the actual history of indigenous culture. Eugene, his son, stands in for the genuine present-day colony and conflict.

Father Amadi and Ifeoma, who stand for democracy and togetherness, respectively, are excellent choices for the future. The offsprings, who stands in opposition to the parent figures, are dynamic beings whose final personalities and course of action must be established. They have to decide how Nigeria will develop. Adolescents' developing identities are closely related to this future. The father figures in *Purple Hibiscus* and their biological father, Eugene Achike, Ifeoma, Eugene's sister; Father Amadi, a Catholic priest, and Papa Nnukwu, the children's grandfather serve as models for Kambili and Jaja as they struggle to navigate their adolescent transitions into adulthood.

The emerging post colonial Nigeria is represented by Kambili and Jaja, which deals with an adolescent blossoming into an identity distinct from its colonial antecedents. The fact that both of the children are Igbo, a group whose culture and ethnicity have been torn apart by conflict, suggests that Nigeria's identity depends on how effectively it's citizens are able to get past their past suffering.

Kambili and Jaja are at odds with one another portions of themselves in each of their parent figures and in each of the possible future of Nigeria. They will need to

navigate through all of the components of their identities, including influences from their families, cultures, and political systems, in order to find their true selves. Emerging Nigeria must complete the same challenging challenge. The children's and Nigeria's development of a cohesive sense of self is by no means guaranteed. *Purple hibiscus* denotes the impossibility of totality. Even if the kids do grow up and become somewhat independent, it is an independence that comes with lasting emotional and physical scars.

Native and colonial, Pagan and Christian, Nigerian and English, familial loyalty and personal identity are only a few of the competing forces that are hurled at Kambili and Jaja. They efficiently navigate between indigenous and dominant Western systems, much like many cultures inhabit two worlds concurrently. Their ability to successfully navigate their father figures, who serve as their role models for adulthood, will determine how well the children are able to develop into the future and, by extension, how Nigeria will do the same. They are also trapped in that liminal space between childhood and adulthood.

By the end of *Purple Hibiscus*, Jaja and Kambili become adults. Their interactions with the parent figures in their life influenced how they saw themselves. The kids represent Nigeria at a turning point. Nigeria has a number of options, and each of these options has both national and personal repercussions. In *Purple Hibiscus*, these questions of selfhood and identity are explored utilizing the bildungsroman literary style as an allegory for the creation of Nigeria's post-colonial national identity.

Nigeria uses its diverse pasts, from its native tribes to its British colonial past, to navigate its diverse potential futures, much like children who use good parental models as guides to become adults. *Deciphering the Mute Struggles: A Feminist Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus* deals mainly about the struggles of the protagonist Kambili. How Kambili remains silent and though her father, Eugene,

beats her wildly, she loves him till the end of the novel. Eugene punishes Kambili even for small things and Kambili is not a rebellious child, she accepts her father as he is. She stays mute for the entire novel and doesn't ask her father any questions. Kambili also wants to be like their cousins, free, independent and to do whatever she desires, but Eugene is very strict and he wants his children to obey him and follow God and doesn't want them to do things which are not liked by God.

The children in Achike's household doesn't speak back to their father and though they doesn't like the rules made by him, they follow it without any questions. Kambili finds herself to be a free spirit in Ifeoma's household and she finds about her own identity and desires in Nsukka. The difference between Enugu and Nsukka is well portrayed in the novel. For Kambili, Enugu is a good place to live until she visited her aunty in Nsukka. Ifeoma lets them do whatever she wants and never made rules. In the novel the only mute person is Kambili and not her mother and brother.

Due to being a silent child for fifteen years, Kambili doesn't speaks about her desires to her father and keeps it to herself because she knows her father won't allow her to do anything, he simply wants them to be spiritual and shouldn't disobey God's words.

The chapter two deals with recounting the gendered violence, how Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice experiencing violence from the head of the family, Eugene. Eugene beats them for petty things and gives severe punishments in the name of spirituality in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Chapter three deals about the characters' exploration of identity. Kambili and Jaja experiences two different atmospheres. In Enugu the children are very silent but in Nsukka they are very independent and aunty Ifeoma lets free and chapter four deals with the narrative techniques and how he narration changes from indirect to direct in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

Chapter Two

Recounting the Gendered Violence

Adichie examines how women deal with trauma in her works. Depending on the novel or short story, this topic appears in various traumatic situations, historical periods, and age groups. In order to make the case that Adichie believes in the adoption of cultural hybridity within Nigeria, The chapter examines the effects of domestic abuse on Kambili Achike in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and reveals the connection between the domestic setting of the Achike household and the national setting of Nigerian politics.

In order to better comprehend the effects of abuse on female gender performance and the larger metaphor that Adichie builds through the causal chain, this chapter draw on feminist theory. Susan Andrade's *The Nation Writ Small: African Fictions and Feminisms, 1958-1988* focuses on this interaction between the private and the public, but the parallels she draws for numerous fictions from that era are still relevant to Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Andrade argues that women's writing in African fiction often depicts domestic scenes but illustrates the causal relationship between the private domestic sphere and the public realm:

By illustrating the overlapping public and private realms and narrating them simultaneously, it comments on domination within the family and within the colony and points to how colonial and patriarchal relations structure not only the public realm of politics, war, and employment, but also the private one of food procurement and children's education. (Andrade 35)

The chapter discusses how Adichie finally contends that cultural hybridity in Nigeria must be recognised in order for progress to occur through the examination of the shifts in Kambili's gender performance and the dynamics of the public and private

spheres. What Homi Bhaba calls this hybridity as a reality that exists in between. The discursive picture that is created at the nexus of history and literature, connecting the domestic and the external, inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of frame. The notion that Adichie advocates for a “inbetween reality” of the lingering effects of Western colonial practises and traditional Igbo customs will therefore be the conclusion of this chapter.

In Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili Achike, a developing Nigerian kid imprisoned in a home with an abusive father, a quiet mother, and an older brother who is likewise powerless, is examined for the effects of domestic abuse. Kambili’s gender performance is influenced by her relationship with trauma, in her instance, her father’s violent and frequent psychological abuse. Kambili is only able to control her gender performance on her own terms rather than comply with her father’s patriarchal expectations of womanhood if the psychological and physical pain is momentarily soothed by a trip to her Aunt Ifeoma’s home. In the formative years of psychological development, *Purple Hibiscus* is a bildungsroman, a narrative that chronicles the journey from self-ignorance to self-discovery and self-awareness. The story traces Kambili’s transformation from a voiceless follower of her father’s radical Catholic theology to a master of her own feelings, thoughts, and well-being.

The time that Kambili spends in Nsukka under the influence of her aunt Ifeoma, a widowed lecturer raising three children through surrogate parenting, and Father Amadi, a local Nsukka Catholic serves as a catalyst for her self-discovery. The novel is told by Kambili, an eighteen-year-old lady who is reflecting on the past three years of her quest for self-hood. The book is structured into four parts, each of which focuses on a distinct stage of Kambili’s quest to redefine her gender performance. In the most of the chapter, Kambili is portrayed as a teenage girl who loves her father despite his

maltreatment. In regard to instances where Eugene's conditioning has rendered Kambili too fearful and unable to produce language among her peers and inside the household setting, Kambili repeatedly says, "My words would not come" during the first half of the novel (Adichie 48).

Due to her father's indoctrination, Kambili is mute when performing routine activities like saying the pledge at school. This is because he has taught Kambili that speaking aloud is a violation of his authority, and ultimately God's authority. Kambili lacks friends as a result of her inability to express her views and feelings, which leads her peers to label her as a "backyard snob" (Adichie 51). The female students in Kambili's class think that her quiet stems from her family's aristocratic status rather than from the continual fear of physical abuse, which leaves "parallel marks on her face and ringing in her ears for days" (51).

Kambili is effectively mute as a result of Eugene's patriarchal domination and the looming danger of violence; it is only until Kambili separates herself from her father's authority that she starts to rediscover her capacity for speaking. Kambili learns about her subjectivity as a result of her liberation from Eugene's patriarchal rule and entry into democracy. Kambili's sexuality, which she should have started exploring at the age of fifteen, is paralysed by Eugene's reign of fear in addition to suppressing her voice. Eugene uses corporal punishment to make sure that Beatrice, Kambili's mother, and their female reproductive systems are always viewed as inferior to religion. Eugene defends his repeated verbal and physical abuse by enveloping it in the language of love and religion.

In other words, Eugene mistreats his family members while defending his actions with claims of love and his desire for his family to uphold God's standards of purity. He illustrates this by beating his entire family after they permitted Kambili to

break the Communion fast so she could get some relief from her menstruation cramps. Similar to Beatrice, who requests to stay in the car when visiting a British priest after mass due to morning sickness from being pregnant, Eugene responds to her request by giving her a horrific beating that kills an unborn child.

Eugene believes that Beatrice deserved the beating and that by making the family pray for Beatrice's crimes, he is simply helping God to keep Beatrice morally upright after this terrible incident. So, as a result of Eugene's abuses that combine Christian fundamentalism with a dread of the body and sexuality, feminine sexuality is suppressed in the Achike household. As Eugene associates sexuality with sin, any sexuality in Beatrice and the growing Kambili is invalidated by Eugene's strict religious beliefs. Both women derive their power from their bodies, and Eugene must suppress this power in order to preserve the patriarchal system.

Without access to their own sexuality, Kambili and Beatrice are unable to completely represent womanhood, and Eugene's attempt to peel away their sexuality renders a substantial portion of their gender performance mute. As a result of her father's rigid upbringing, Eugene also has influence over Kambili's gender expression through her outward looks. Because of his adherence to his religious principles, Eugene hides Kambili's physical appearance by dressing modestly and forbidding the use of any cosmetics. Because any form of vanity constituted a sin, Kambili is always forced to cover her legs with skirts and gowns.

Kambili also never uses cosmetics and has never even tried to do so while being in Eugene's house. By his fervour for religion, Eugene manipulates Kambili's gender expression in the psychological, sexual, and physical realms in order to hold onto his patriarchal control. The brief time that Kambili and Jaja spend with their aunt Ifeoma and cousins Obiera, Amaka, and Chima is enough to spark Kambili's rebellion against

total submission to Eugene's rule and to help her define her own identity as a woman, Nigerian, and Christian on her own terms. Kambili is introduced to the possibilities of femininity by her experiences of movement and contact with other worlds because she starts to observe how other women, women who are not constantly mistreated by males, might live.

However, Kambili's struggle for independence develops gradually, and her early days in Nsukka are marked by anxiety: anxiety that her father will find out about the sins taking place in Ifeoma's home; anxiety that she will miss Eugene because of her love for him despite his mistreatment; and anxiety that she will feel lonely. Kambili is affected by Eugene's patriarchal influence until she encounters the democratic principles upheld in Ifeoma's household. Due to her exposure to role models like Ifeoma and the freedom to be, to do that permeates Ifeoma's home environment, Kambili's gender performance is altered. It becomes vital to compare and contrast the private domestic environment in Enugu, where Kambili has lived her entire life under her father's control, with the private domestic environment that Ifeoma builds in Nsukka in order to better understand the catalyst of Kambili's self-discovery.

Aunt Ifeoma, a woman, is purposefully chosen by Adichie to be the incendiary agent that triggers Kambili's identity awakening because Ifeoma is a self-sufficient single mother who raises her children without resorting to violence like Eugene does in his home, instead choosing to negotiate and explain things to them. This act of independence and upholding democratic principles exposes Kambili to a new expression of womanhood. Ifeoma develops into a feminist character in the book and fights for women's autonomy by adhering to the ideology that says women must retain some degree of independence. This is demonstrated when she considers how young her female pupils are getting married, "What is the use of a degree, they ask me, when we

cannot find a job after graduation...Six girls in my first-year similar class are married, their husbands visit in Mercedes and Lexus cars every weekend” (Adichie 75).

Ifeoma promotes her viewpoint that women need to be somewhat independent in order to be in charge of their own lives. Until she moved into Ifeoma’s house, Kambili lacked any independence because Eugene denies women any autonomy in his house. Ifeoma’s cackling, hearty laugh is described in the reader’s first encounters with her, as is a moment in which she tugs at Kambili’s breast and remarks, “See how fast these are developing!” (Adichie 71). Ifeoma rejects Eugene’s unfettered religious hegemony and confronts his expectations of women’s gender performance in Eugene’s own home by laughing and recognising Kambili as a developing young woman. As a result, Ifeoma stands out as an illustration of a different gender performance model for women in Nigeria, and Kambili’s exposure to this new performance style will ultimately have a big impact on how she sees herself as a person.

The two household settings in Enugu and Nsukka are very dissimilar. By describing the barbed wire-topped compound walls that encircle her home and capture it’s residents, Kambili exposes the suffocation within the limits of her Enugu home, which is marked by strict routines, violence, and the Catholic religion. Between Eugene’s close family and the rest of the world, these walls, as described by Kambili, perform a symbolic purpose, designating the disciplinary borders that separate, repress, and police, keeping order and marking divisions. Eugene’s patriarchal rule is manifested in the household where the physical and mental abuse takes place.

When Eugene uses the justification of protecting children from everlasting damnation to justify his beatings, his love comes to be equated with suffering. He gives the kids love sips of his steaming Sunday tea. As Kambili states, The tea was always too hot and always scorched her mouth, she is equating the sensation with Eugene’s

affection. “Yet, I knew that while the tea burned my tongue, it also burned Papa’s love into me, so it didn’t matter” (Adichie 8). The private atmosphere of Kambili’s home in Enugu controls how she behaves both inside and outside the house because Eugene’s lifetime of control and manipulation makes it impossible for Kambili to escape the domestic reality of her home in Enugu. As a result, the visit to Ifeoma’s house in Nsukka illustrates the potential for Kambili to live a different life independent of Eugene’s rule and exemplifies the freedom to love without suffering.

As Kambili and Jaja get at Ifeoma’s “tall, plain building with peeling blue paint,” (Adichie 112) it is surrounded by her garden, which has “roses and hibiscuses and lilies and ixora and croton growing side by side like a handpainted wreath” (112). Ifeoma’s home, which has an open floor plan, is the polar opposite of the Achike residence in Enugu. The open spaces enable freedom and openness rather than enclosing and casting a shadow over the residents. Ifeoma’s home is buzzing with conversation and laughter, and the family prepares Catholic prayers with Igbo praising songs. Ifeoma encourages her kids to laugh and express themselves, in contrast to Eugene who muzzles his kids’ opinions.

The greatest moment to observe this is during meal times, a daily ritual that is performed very differently in Eugene’s and Ifeoma’s families. Kambili observes the freedom and happiness that occur during mealtimes in Ifeoma’s home:

“I did not say anything else until lunch was over, but I listened to every word spoken, followed every cackle of laughter and line of banter. Mostly, my cousins did the talking and Auntie Ifeoma sat back and watched them, eating slowly. She looked like a football coach who had done a good job with her team”. (Adichie 120)

Kambili is able to contrast the routine household activities in Nsukka with those in Enugu, and her experiences in Ifeoma's home make her aware of the repressive features of Eugene's patriarchal authority. The polarity between the frolicking temperament that permeates the cramped apartment in Nsukka and their forlorn existence even in the middle of everything that should make life relishing in Enugu are revealed to Kambili by seemingly insignificant freedoms like conversation and banter at the dinner table, donning lipstick, and expressing personal opinions. As a result, Kambili is exposed to fresh options at Ifeoma's home, allowing her to develop her own personality free from her father's ideologies' continual barrage.

Kambili spends her brief stay in Nsukka observing her aunt Ifeoma, her cousins particularly Amaka, Ifeoma's child who is about Kambili's age and learning about Catholicism and religion from Father Amadi, the local priest in Nsukka, and Papa Nwuku, Kambili's paternal grandfather. Often commenting on Aunt Ifeoma and Amaka's performances, Kambili reflects on her ambition to imitate them. "I pondered what it felt like to that when Amaka barter with a fruit merchant, buying food for her family just by using her voice" (Adichie 133). Due to the lack of a voice, Kambili is reduced to a passive bystander who lets others make decisions for her instead of taking charge of her own well-being.

The ambition of Kambili to imitate her aunt and cousin also shows in the kitchen. Kambili states, "I watched the measured movement of her hand and the increasing length of the peel, wanting I could apologise, wishing I knew how to do it right" (Adichie 134), after being requested to peel yams and failing to do it correctly. When Kambili fights herself against Amaka's criticism with Ifeoma's encouragement to defend herself, the kitchen becomes the scene of her language discovery. As Madeline Hron points it, Kambili only breaks free from the manufactured sweetness of

her upbringing and finds agency as a woman when she herself learns to cook and make traditional Igbo meals.

As a result, Kambili's stay in Nsukka starts at the point when she first notices the differences between Ifeoma and Amaka's public displays of femininity and her own, and it is also at Nsukka that she first expresses herself. After studying her cousin and aunt for a few days, Kambili starts to make an effort to mimic their behaviours. Kambili wears Amaka's lipstick and curiously peers into the mirror as she attempts to physically imitate. Furthermore, Kambili is wearing shorts for the first time when Father Amadi says, "You have good legs for running," causing Kambili to look away because she "had never heard anything like that before" (Adichie 176). In response to remarks like these, Kambili begins to feel attracted to Father Amadi sexually, a feeling she was unable to feel under Eugene's rule. During this time, Kambili starts to develop as a sexual entity. Furthermore, Kambili is well on her road to freedom thanks to the sexual and physical representations of femininity she attempts in Nsukka because identity reformation can only take place if she feels at ease with her own body and mindful of that of others.

A psychological metamorphosis goes hand in hand with these bodily and sexual transformations. Kambili's mouth performs practically all the functions linked with it" for the first time in her life. She laughs, speaks, talks, sings, and she cries. She starts to develop her own identity. Moreover, Kambili breaks free from the mental cage Eugene had placed her in and starts to form her own views and sentiments about things that Eugene had previously prescribed. When Kambili recognises the beauty in Papa Nnukwu's morning prayer rituals that Eugene condemned as acts of immorality by heathens and Pagans she starts to defy Eugene's stringent Catholic views.

Kambili respects Papa Nnukwu's spirituality while not sharing his traditionalist ideas because it represents "a curiously healthy union between traditional culture as represented by Papa Nnukwu, and modern society as represented by Ifeoma" (Kearney 140). Once Papa Nnukwu has passed away and Kambili has returned to Enugu, Amaka gives Kambili a painting of her grandfather as a gift. This acceptance of her grandfather and the ability to choose this acceptance is depicted in the artwork. Because Kambili has "recovered her voice, and she is unwilling to watch her father truncate the stable transition of her development, which the painting will help her realise even within the circumscribed radius of her father's walls" (Stobie 161), Eugene's discovery of the painting results in the horrifying beating of Kambili.

Kambili won't stand by and let her father dominate her. So, after spending time in Ifeoma's democratic home, she assumes the role of a bolder gendered body that uses that body to protect her newly discovered identity and voice despite her father's violence. Along with depicting ties between private household areas, *Purple Hibiscus* also shows a connection between the domestic and national spheres that represents Nigeria's politics at the time.

It is possible to read intimate domestic life as not just micro-political or insignificant but as interlocked with the macro-political, as that which it depends, thanks to Susan Andrade's *The Nation Writ Small*, which places African feminist writers' depictions of domestic life within a larger political context. To put it another way, it becomes important to examine how both household and political life affect one another. The family dynamics in Eugene and Ifeoma's houses "depict the consolidation and diffusion of social power" (Andrade 34) in ways that reflect more generalised national power dynamics since *Purple Hibiscus* is situated in the domestic sphere.

Eugene's patriarchal dictatorship and Ifeoma's democratic republic are the two sorts of power relations that are the main subject of *Purple Hibiscus*. Consequently, it is reasonable to question the wider political message that Adichie presents by scrutinising the private domestic domains in the book. Although Eugene rules the household with a patriarchal dictatorship, he rises to prominence during this period as a voice against the military dictatorships that ruled Nigerian politics. Adichie illustrates the political unrest in Nigeria in the 1990s while also portraying scenes of domestic misery. Nigeria's 1990s were marked by unreliable political systems, military takeovers, and the delusion that new leaders would usher in a new era of democracy. Eugene takes great risks to speak against the current government, yet he does not practice democracy within his own home. Kambili reveals the resistant voice of Eugene when she discusses the content of the newspaper that he runs:

The Standard had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money in foreign bank accounts, money meant for paying teachers' salaries and building roads. But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy. Renewed Democracy. (Adichie 25)

This summary of the Standard's articles shows Eugene's aim to call attention to the Nigerian government's flaws and failures in an effort to give voice to the country's oppressed citizens. Eugene shares this belief in using one's voice to oppose the government, as evidenced by his revelation of the horrible government murder of Nwankiti Ogechi. In contrast to his outside struggle for democracy on behalf of the Nigerian people, Eugene denies his family any autonomy and silences them within the home. Adichie contrasts Eugene's seeming benevolence in public with the horrible violence that occurs inside the Achike's home.

As a result, the domestic sphere mirrors the contemporary political environment. Adichie draws comparisons between the political unrest in Nigeria at this period and Eugene's use of physical and psychological torture to maintain patriarchal power in his household. For the nation, the home becomes a microcosm. Domestically, Kambili takes a stand against her father's patriarchal rule, a male authority figure who deprives her of her voice, autonomy, and sense of self. Nationally, Eugene transforms into a Nigerian person who, through his voice in the *Standard*, offers resistance to repressive military regimes that thwart the emergence of democracy. Adichie weaves together domestic abuse, voicelessness, and gender issues in order to further emphasise a wider point about politics and the state of affairs in Nigeria. The oppression of Eugene and the apathy of Beatrice depict the plight of the majority of Nigerians. While depicting horrific acts of domestic violence, Adichie also subtly makes references to violence that takes place in Nigeria, such as bloody coups, public executions, and market women being whipped by soldiers.

"I had not seen her face, but I felt that I knew her, that I had always known her" (Adichie 44). Kambili says after witnessing a market lady being whipped. "I hoped I could have assisted her by removing the red mud from her wrapper and going over to aid" (44). Kambili is just a bystander at this stage in the story and has no voice. She sees the woman being whipped and can identify with the violence, but she is unable to speak up against the abuse of power by the authorities due to her own lack of speech. Due to the succession of dictatorships and the accompanying violence that followed national independence and the Biafran War, the Nigerian population currently does not express its voice, similar to Kambili.

She experiences a dictatorship, similar to that of the people of Nigeria, as a result of her father's patriarchal role in the family. She realises that the only way she

can develop an independent identity is by escaping her father's oppressions. Adichie demonstrates how political freedom can only be attained by resistance to patriarchal repression while gaining a deeper understanding of traditional culture and its connection to colonial after effects through the comparison of Eugene's home and Ifeoma's home, where Kambili realises her potential and finds her identity. In Kambili's emancipation journey, Adichie highlights the urgent necessity for patriarchal resistance in Nigeria. In addition, she presents Amaka as the ideal of femininity that Nigerian women should aspire to.

Amaka is a unique breed of today's teenagers. She is imaginative, accommodating, truthful, loud, and a fierce advocate. Amaka embraces and believes in her Nigerian background, but she also accepts aspects of Nigerian culture that date back to colonial and patriarchal authority. Amaka's refusal to select an English name for confirmation, despite her wish to be confirmed in the Catholic Church, is the best example of this. Kambili, in contrast to Amaka, does not start out as a symbol of Nigerians' ability to resist oppression. However, despite being oppressed from the beginning of her life, Kambili comes to represent the possibilities of escaping patriarchal rule.

Despite being voiceless at first, she manages to escape Eugene's abuse and reinvent herself with the aid of Ifeoma and Amaka. "How many of us have defended the truth, wonders Kambili on the third page of the book?" (Adichie 5). By using her body to defend the Papa Nnukwu's artwork, Kambili opposes her father at the book's conclusion. In other words, Kambili's response is an admission of the reality that her grandfather is not a heathen, but rather a conservative deserving of respect. Adichie's usage of Kambili and Amaka demonstrates her belief that despite the repressive nature

of patriarchal control, women must support other women and the voiceless in order to overcome it.

Adichie thinks that the Nigerian people must embrace cultural hybridity, which is represented by the *Purple Hibiscus* in Ifeoma's garden, in order to combat this patriarchy. *Purple Hibiscus* depicts the conflict between traditional Igbo practises, like the traditional religious beliefs of Papa Nnukwu, and the remnants of practises established by the English when they colonised Nigeria, like Catholicism and a reverence for all things Western, in order to highlight the crossroads that the Nigerian people are faced with.

The third chapter deals with the identity crisis of the characters and how they explore their identity in different cities.

Chapter Three

Quest for Identity

Identity exploration is the heart of identity transition, in which individuals consider different identity related options, such as family roles or dating relationships. That is, identity exploration is the degree to which individuals engage in searching for personal values, beliefs, and goals. There are many stages of identity exploration. They are identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement. Each identity status represents a particular configuration of youth's progress with regard to identity exploration and commitment to the values, beliefs, and goals that contribute to identity. Identity can be explored by travelling to different places and meeting new people.

In the novel *Purple Hibiscus* written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, each character's identity is well portrayed. The main character is the father figure of the novel, Eugene Achike. His identity exploration is the biggest part in the novel. Eugene is the husband of Beatrice and father of Kambili and Jaja. Eugene, is a rich and affluent business head and newspaperman fixated and concentrated on uncovering the reality of the imbalances and change in Nigeria, however significantly more centered and one-sided around his obsessive form of Catholicism. Jaja, his sister Kambili and their mom all together live anxiously, never knowing when he may snap and detonate. Nonetheless, interestingly, Kambili's close relative Ifeoma Eugene's sister is a college educator and a dowager, brightly raising and mentoring her posterity to be autonomous. One winter excursion close relative Ifeoma induces and persuades Eugene to enable Kambili and Jaja to visit her youngsters at Nsukka.

Toward the starting, Eugene, the dad of the house is an over the top Catholic Christian who leads his home with a firm hand. He could not accept any demonstration

of laxity or lack of respect of the Catholic teachings from any individuals from his family, including his wife, Beatrice. Achike has everything sorted out and convenient in the novel. For instance, there is the ideal opportunity for each feast set aside in the home time for the congregation programs; time to go to friendly lodging from overnight boardinghouse is even a timetable for the posterity to do everything. The story at that point wavers between Enugu and Nsukka in the eastern piece of Nigeria; as Kambili and Jaja leave their people in Enugu, they spend their occasions and opportunity with close relative Ifeoma, a rebellious and free Woman against Achike, in Nsukka. He rebuffs his son and daughter by pouring boiling water on their feet for offering consideration regarding papa Nnukwu. Once more, Eugene Achike is the proprietor of The Standard an enemy of the government, this is on the grounds that as indicated by Father Benedict. Sibling Eugene stood up for opportunity he is a chieftaincy title holder and he is particularly notable and much regarded by his town people for open-handedness, kind and extensive heartedness.

Eugene's unequalled generosity in helping his locale and the general population wins him the title Omelora. Kambili and Jaja's adventure to Nsukka to meet their close relative and cousins in the college quarters has a great deal of effect from their unshaken home in Enugu. Close relative Ifeoma, Eugene's more youthful sister, influences them to appreciate a ton of opportunity. Kambili, for example, can open up and laugh with her cousins uninhibitedly, an opportunity which she could not appreciate at home. Ifeoma is the leading woman who could ideologically challenge Eugene's dictatorship. She is the person who stops the majority of Eugene's hard handedness. The expert of the school for her activism ends close relative Ifeoma's arrangement to the college as she chooses to look for shelter in the Assembled Conditions of America with her kids.

Beatrice additionally decides to leave the nation with her two posterity in the wake of murdering Eugene. Sisi, the young woman is utilized to give the toxic substance that utilized to execute Eugene as she is delightfully paid and compensated by Beatrice her fancy woman, with many cash and material things amid the arrangements of her wedding. Savagery saturates the novel as we see Eugene Achike wreaks untold and careless destruction on his family; Kambili, for eating ten minutes previously mass. Demolishing of Jaja's finger when he was scarcely ten years of age for missing two inquiries on his drill test; beating his wife Beatrice, to the point of losing her pregnancy; pouring bubbling water on his children's feet for remaining under a similar rooftop at Nsukka with their grandfather, Papa Nnukwu, for the old man is a worshiper of another god; throwing the missal at Jaja for not going to the fellowship.

The violent reaction by Eugene began to hurt his wife's body to the extent of murdering a baby which is against humankind, furthermore, God whom he requires to love and extol. This sort of exchange repudiates the destiny, which his Catholic tenet affirms. As a decent spouse who needs to guard the picture of his wife, she returned from the Centre as though nothing happened and expressed to her children that:

There was an accident, and the baby is gone, she said. I moved back a little, stared at her belly. It still looked big, still pushed at her wrapper in a gentle arc. Was Mama sure, the baby was gone? I was still staring at her belly when Sisi came in. As always, she cannot blame her husband for all the harm he has caused and as such, dare not tell her kids about it, though they know the truth. (Adichie 42)

Ifeoma was so enraged when she heard the outcome for her to the level of losing a pregnancy, and she could not acknowledge sides with her sibling. She is entirely against her sibling's state of mind of beating his significant other and considers it an

indication of mortification. She was so enraged when Mama began giving her cases of what Eugene improved the situation the general population in his town yet she gruffly revealed to her that it is a long way from what they are stating. She was so irritated while she gave purposes behind Eugene's conduct. She states:

Eugene has not been well. He has been having migraine and fever, she said. "He is carrying more than any man should carry. Do you know what Ade's death did to him? It is too much for one person." "what are you saying?" Auntie Ifeoma swiped impatiently at an insect that flew close to her ears. "When Ifediora was alive, there were times, Nwunye m, when the university did not pay salaries for months. (Adichie 250)

Eugene subjects his family to a wide range of mental injury, and it influenced their mind definitely. Kambili could not talk intensely with Amaka, she discovered that their family is completely not quite the same as theirs because of her dad's definitive method for deciding the family. Eugene's maltreatment on his family runs from mental to physical, which influenced every one of the individuals from his family. Eugene wound up losing regard from his family, they are just scared of him and does whatever they like when he is not anywhere near. Ibeku Ijeoma Ann, a professor in Federal University, says, "They have prohibited from staring at the TV, partner with their cousins and grandfather, and playing and notwithstanding talking in the house. Their life was so taught by their dad's essence" (Ann 433).

Beatrice probably revealed to herself that in the event that she proceeds with like this, Eugene might kill her one day and would wed another spouse. She decided to overlook what the congregation and her public will say on the off chance that she passes on the hindrance that remains on her approach to opportunity. It has probably been a major fight before she decided to do it. When observing Sisi through the eyes of

Kambili, she takes into consideration the house more likely than not been furious with her lord for always beating his wife and kids. She cannot successfully rescue the circumstance or help them since she regularly views, as a negligible cook who ought to pursue the request in the house and in that capacity, cannot contribute anything important to the improvement of the family. Therefore, she resembles a guard dog that is dependable at home and realizes everything that occurs. The open door came when her madam trusted in her, as well as she wanted to assist. Jaja who resists his dad did not flicker an eye but rather to remain in as the symbol of atonement notwithstanding when he is not the guilty party. He guaranteed to spare their unborn infant from the impulses of his dad notwithstanding when the child is yet unborn.

He is more likely than not been crushed constantly by his dad's conduct and guaranteed to do everything he can to ensure the women throughout his life. He generally looks at himself to Obiora who is more youthful yet deals with his mom; he stated, "I ought to have dealt with Mother. Look how Obiora balances close relative Ifeoma's family on his head, and I am more established than he is. I ought to have dealt with Mom" (Adichie 289). Beatrice persevered through a ton from Eugene yet while it is conspicuous, she could not continue remaining stuck to him since she notices that he helped her out by not wedding another spouse who could offer him more kids.

She declined to mull over what the congregation and the public would state since she trusts that they could not humiliate Eugene and, in that capacity, cursed their results. Her kids did not reprimand her for executing their dad with the exception of Kambili who protested her strategy for slaughtering in light of the fact. Their mom was sufficiently astute to realize when to employ the toxic substance. Jaja who notifies he has to secure his mom and regularly contrasts himself and Obiora who is more youthful yet takes legitimate consideration of his mom without his dad did not waver to assume

the liability of “murdering his dad and was taken away by the policemen” (Ann 435).

Kambili states:

The police officers came a few hours later. They said they wanted to ask some questions. Somebody at St Agnes Hospital had contacted them, and they had a copy of the autopsy report with them. Jaja did not wait for their subjects; he told them he had used rat poison, that he put it in Papa’s tea. They allowed him to change his shirt before they took him away. (Adichie 295)

When Jaja arrested by the police officers, Beatrice’s was in mental and physical discouraging condition, she was so upset. Occasionally, she is talking and staring blankly in the air. Kambili uncovers that she has been diverse as far back as Jaja has bolted up since she approached telling individuals she murdered Father; however, no one tuned in to her, despite everything, they do not. They thought sorrow and dissent that her significant other is dead and that her child is in jail have transformed her into this vision of an agonizingly hard body. Most occasions, “her answers are gestures and shakes of the head, and frequently she sat and gazed” (Ann 436). The privileging of boys over little girls as a principle of patriarchy society became apparent in the novel in the manner in which women have given less an incentive in the family based on their original introduction. When the Achike’s family went to Abba, the town where Eugene brought up, they spent Christmas with their more distant family. At the point when the female relatives assemble to cook at the Achike, house in Abba, one of the women states, “One woman said, hooting even more loudly, her mouth shaped like a narrow tunnel. If we did not have the same blood in our veins, I would sell you, my daughter, another said to Jaja. The girl is ripe!” (Adichie 91).

The village women obsess about Jaja because as a male he will acquire his father’s riches. His being male guarantees that the cash is kept in the family, not at all

like Kambili who will get hitched somewhere else. Jaja will likewise proceed with the family name and henceforth the genealogy while Kambili will leave the Achike name and receive that of her husband. Woman in the section above says she would pitch her little girl to Jaja. In this public, Women are commodified and consequently can be subjected to any real trade by wedding them off without requesting their authorization. The general population who are in charge of the trading of the woman of the hour are the male individuals from that society. Adichie appears to recommend in the novel that it is through the establishment of marriage that women, who move toward becoming properties in their husband's ancestries, lose every close to home right and self-character. Jaja's sexual orientation alone uses him more influence than Kambili because even though they have conceived in a similar family, the prevailing idea is that Jaja is the legitimate inheritor of his father's riches since he is male.

The ethos of man-centric society's inclination of the male kid is likewise resounded by Papa Nnukwu, Kambili's grandfather, amid a similar Christmas period that Eugene and his family visit his hometown. Kambili's widowed close relative, Ifeoma and her kids likewise visit Abba in the meantime keeping in mind the end goal to invest energy with Papa Nnukwu. Nevertheless, because Papa Nnukwu is a conventionalist, Eugene disallows his family to have any nearby cooperation with his particular dad. Eugene, an individual from the informed world class made through evangelist instruction, is a strict Catholic whose twisted impression of the confidence has made Catholicism prejudiced and Manichean. He lives by the managers of the white Catholic cleric, Father Benedict, whom he does not question and makes a decent attempt to please. Through his particular combative understandings of Catholicism, Father Benedict urges Eugene to utilize his congregation-endorsed control as the leader

of the family to control his family. Eugene is a fanatic in the entirety of his undertakings, and he dreaded like a divine being by his family.

Adichie stands up to male-centric society and different types of underestimation of women in her works. African women work inside the worldview of commanded fringe characterized gatherings thus they are effectively occupied with the generation of oppositional philosophies to counter the superseding male-centric standards. Adichie's writing to be a type of challenge writing destroy the male request, and to investigate how she accomplishes a sound for her female figures. Man-centric society constrains women to trust that their common position is regular and irredeemable. Adichie's composing is a push to voice inward information and necessities of women in a way that difficulties business as usual. She improves prior pictures of African Women anticipated by male-centric request and figures female characters as talking subjects in *Purple Hibiscus*.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene fits the depictions of a Gothic patriarch and Kambili, Jaja, and Beatrice the desolation subjects of his position. These losses of paternal man-driven master make everything possible to ensure their free space in the harsh conditions occasioned by Eugene. Females misused in their distinctive characters in the universe of the two books. Adichie additionally depicts Beatrice as complying with the patriarchy directs of their public that place an incentive on male youngsters. Portraying him as a decent man to Kambili when she starts to investigate the real picture that she had of him as an equitable man, Beatrice discloses to Kambili that, such huge numbers of individuals had willing girls, and huge numbers of them were college graduates, as well.

Beatrice sees that other women, who were college graduates, might have played out the job of bearing children for Eugene far superior to her since she just delivered

one child, she, accordingly, feels the second rate compared to these women. That negative societal esteem unknowingly gives on Kambili. Adichie additionally depicts Beatrice as adjusting to the direction of a patriarchy culture that manages woman regard just when she hitched. Beatrice disguises the patriarchy directs of her public, which sees women without spouses as lacking or deficient. Befuddled and neglecting to comprehend the possibility of a woman accomplishing personhood without a man, Beatrice is dismayed by the possibility that a woman can even consider existing without a spouse because socially that is inadmissible and inconceivable.

At the end of the day, what Beatrice implies is that it does not make a difference regardless of whether a woman mishandled in her marriage. For whatever length of time that she has a spouse to crown her life, she needs to bear every one of the torments and limits of that marriage. It is from this commence Beatrice declines to leave Eugene after he breaks a stool on her gut making her prematurely deliver again Beatrice, whose social and fiscal nearness is settling to her harming mate.

Silence and speech are essential subjects everywhere in the story, to the point that the difference between the two shifts a common subject on both the individual and diplomatic dimension. The two themes are talking with our spirits and an alternate quiet. Quiet is related with the worry of dad that mom, Kambili, and Jaja involvement with all occasions.

The patriarchal role of hushing is seen affecting everything in Beatrice who needs confidence and in low monosyllabic tones due to extensive stretches of abuse and persecution. So additionally, her daughter Kambili talks when she tended to and stammers, their physical and energetic scars continue a family riddle.

Regardless, her inability to leave also jeopardizes the lives of her youths. Jaja and Kambili's visits to the liberal Ifeoma's house show them with possible results of

seeing the world including begin to address religious doctrine that their father had imparted in them. As opposed to survey their granddad as an untouchable, the time they proceed with him before his going at Ifeoma's put pulls in them closer to him. His downfall affects them to recognize the sum they had been missing from a comfortable relationship with their grandfather. Right, when Eugene finds out Kambili's painting of Papa Nnukwu that her cousin Amaka had offered her to review their grandfather by, he about pounds the life out of Kambili when she defiantly adheres to the fine art instead of surrendering it. Kambili is left absent in mending place for a significantly long time, leaving the all-inclusive community around her in expectation, not knowing whether she will live or not. Again, when Ifeoma uncovers to her sister-in-law to go, Beatrice, in a zombie-like state, keeps rambling. It has never happened this way. He has never rebuked her like this. Normal of somebody who has masked abuse, Beatrice sees the whipping of her daughter as an order for her wrongdoing. She excuses Eugene from any wrongdoing, rather relexicalizes and sanitizes his barbarities as order; something any parent can do, out of fondness, to keep the child in the straight and confined. For example, when Kambili gets mindfulness, Beatrice again decays to perceive that her significant other is an abuser.

Despite the torment he has administered on their daughter, Beatrice portrays Eugene as a valuing and disapproving of dad in this way exonerating him from expecting obligation for the abuse, and educating Kambili that it is common and legitimized for a father and companion to beat his loved one and children as a technique for preparing them on suitable characteristics. In any case, now, Kambili has ended up being baffled with her father, and with the fantastic effort, she rejects her horrifying head from her mother and disregards her comment. Conflicted in her emotions, she severely dislikes her mother to fail to shield her from the abuse and for legitimizing

him: unalterable quality and her refusal to legitimize her dad's abuse reflected in Kambili's action of expelling her head from her mother. That demonstrates her office in testing the abuse that obliges her from understanding her potential as a fledged self-ruling person. It is starting at now that Kambili appears to truly separate ties with her mom's physical and mental weight and her cooperation with male-controlled society, to move toward her reinforcing.

The way that Kambili, at last, gets an essential voice by virtue of the effect of her close relatives and her cousins. In the midst of her stay at Nsukka, which moves her dad's opinion frameworks, one notes over the range of the novel how Kambili gets shortcoming from her mother whom she has seen defenseless continuous events because of her father. Like her mother, she is as if manner covers the abuse to the point that she views it as usual:

Every time Aunty Ifeoma spoke to Dad, my heart ceased, at that point began again in a rush. It was the saucy tone; she did not appear to perceive that it was Father, that he was extraordinary, remarkable. I needed to connect and squeeze her lips shut and get a portion of that glossy bronze lipstick on my fingers. (Adichie 77)

Regardless of the torment, he perpetrates on her and other relatives, Kambili still observes her dad as supernatural, as uncommon and someone who is unequipped for catching up. Indoctrinated into trusting the prevalence of her dad, Kambili rejects it when anyone addresses him in a way that expels him from the principles that she and the whole society has put him. She strives to satisfy him in whatever she says and does, and always looks for his endorsement, maybe trying to get away from the savage beatings that she, for the most part, endured because of her dad. For example, when Jaja says something satisfying to her dad, she wishes she had said it first. Kambili

comprehends the significance of the dolls to her mom. Notwithstanding, her dad is excessively incredible a man, making it impossible to be prosecuted for breaking the puppets. By declining to involve him in the breaking of the dolls, she pardons him for the torment that he has incurred on the family. She does not consider him in charge of harming them but instead considers it his God endorsed and social obligation to lead them towards the correct way.

The maltreatment anyway ends up deplorable. Unfit to adapt to Eugene's proceeded with brutality any more, Beatrice, similar to her girl Kambili, goes to a point where she provokes Eugene's power over the whole family by declining to be the subject of maltreatment any longer. Her measures are intense. In an offer to shield herself and her kids from Eugene's oppression, she harms him to death towards the finish of the novel subsequently liberating herself and the youngsters and the male-centric social structure, which endorses the subordination of women. Through this, last demonstration, Adichie shows the office practiced by women even with male-centric power thus delineating that "obstruction isn't an outer battle against power, however, an inner and dyadic exercise of intensity relations, over others as much as over ourselves. In power as in war, activity and response are constantly social" (Martin 13).

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Christianity deals with its certainty holders the sort of social capital that is not taken pleasure in by the people who seek after Igbo traditions. Papa Nnukwu speaks to this specific point. Eugene's father, Papa Nnukwu, keeps up Igbo traditions and obtains his kid's disappointment in doing overall. Despite the fact that Papa Nnukwu has every one of the reserves of being a persistent certain individual, the substances in the story shows the devastating conditions of his life. He cannot shoulder the expense of the medication, and he gets by on the bare necessities.

Kambili depicts Papa Nnukwu's home by communicating that "The house that stayed in the midst of the compound was pretty much nothing, decreased like bones, and it was hard to imagine Father and Close relative Ifeoma growing up there" (Adichie 63). Before this delineation of Papa Nnukwu's forlorn withstanding is Kambili pondering about the wealth of her own home "Our home still knocked my socks off, the four-story white radiance of it, with the spurting wellspring in front and the coconut trees flanking it on the opposite sides and the orange trees spotting the front yard" (Adichie 55). Eugene speaks to the social capital that remained to the moderate Christian followers to this story. Eugene is wealthy where Papa Nnukwu gets by on least necessities. Papa Nnukwu addresses the Igbo and even more basically, the colonized Igbo. As the substance deconstructs itself, regardless, we see that Eugene could not acknowledge an occupation of set predominance without being Igbo.

Eugene lives extremely and effectively while apparently, Papa Nnukwu encounters physically ailment for which has no medication. Adichie has quite fabricated a predictable weight between the advantaged positionality remained to direct Christian supporters and the fair positionality of traditionalists. So also, as "Eugene is the representation of the colonizer's Christianity. Eugene's self-loathing fills his silly responsibility to Christianity" (Martin 21).

Expelling Igbo from Eugene's personality is an incomprehensibility in light of the fact that doing, overall, would exchange off his ability, losing it. Adichie constructs Eugene's character with the goal that his duty to Christianity deciphered as his isolating to Igbo. Accordingly, for Eugene totally to be free of Igbo conventionalism could infer that his ludicrous dedication to Christianity would dismantle. As communicated previously, an adjacent examining of these lines exhibits Father's quality included in the colonizer's Christianity, thusly privileging Christianity and the colonizer.

What is not in this scene is the peculiarity that subsists between Eugene and his family. Eugene's ability fill by calm, subservience, and abhor. By the day's end, despite the fact that his ability and abuse exist, that control cannot be portrayed without those he oppressed. Kambili depicts events of the family residual calm until the moment that Daddy completed with his break and the quietness of repercussion time when Father gave us sacrosanct composition. This calm draws in Eugene and advances the improvement of his prevalence. Kambili parcels her soul and body to comprehend her reality. While she visits close relative Ifeoma, she teaches herself and controls her body with the goal that she stays consistent with her dad's desires. She does not participate in the singing and keeps on quieting her voice. Her pith, her shadow, stays open and allowed to subverting the excellent story that has imparted in her all through her entire life. Kambili's soul from her dad's spoil eats up the idea of the office. Adichie's account keeps on disentangling itself now. Despite the fact that Kambili segments her soul and body, both possess a space of uncertainty and vacillation that benefits neither custom over the other. Everybody at Eugene's family indicates extraordinary apprehension occasioned by Father's ritualized living and religiosity. Any picture of a male expert transforms into weight, and Kambili happens to see this in all of those things that Father stays for like his religion.

In all of the master figures, in the majority of the potential predeterminations for Nigeria, Jaja and Kambili are looked with parts of themselves that are fragmentary and in a fight with each other. Finding their selfhoods will require course through the greater part of the bits of their characters, including familial, social, and governmental impacts. Disavowing powers heled Jaja and Kambili: indigenous and normal, Pragmatist and Christian, Nigerian and English, familial devotion and individual character. They, as various social occasions reasonably involve two universes in the

meantime, investigating among indigenous and overpowering Western structures. While in Nsukka, Jaja feels all of a sudden, the relish of individual independence. In what nearly transforms into a spirit evolving knowledge, Jaja can express his contemplations and settle alone choices. To be sure, even Kambili sees this; she “checked out him and pondered about the contemplate in his voice, at how much lighter the dim hues of his understudies was” (Adichie 126).

The next chapter deals with the Narrative events and speech, in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Kambili is the narrator of the whole novel and she narrates the events happening in her home Enugu and her aunty Ifeoma’s home in Nsukka.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

Narrative technique is the way in which a writer conveys what they want to say to their reader and the methods that they use to develop a story. The individual elements of different narrative techniques can be broken down into different categories. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the first of Adichie's novels under study, the narrative is told by the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, who also functions as the focaliser of the narrative information. Autodiegetic narrator means the one who is a narrator and also the protagonist. Following Genette, there can be an instance where the focaliser and narrator are one and the same, especially in a retrospective homodiegetic narration like *Purple Hibiscus*, even though they are usually different in the case of a heterodiegetic narration. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the novel begins in medias res and the autodiegetic narrator-focaliser, through analepsis, brings the reader up to date on narrative information.

The beginning of the narrative sets the pace for the illustration of events, as the reader meets Kambili for the first time and is presented with the situational state in the Achike household. Kambili is 15 years old, with the enormous responsibility of presenting the narrative of her family. Her position as an autodiegetic narrator, inadvertently, places some limitation on her depth of narrative information and therefore, immediately creating some anticipated distance between herself and the narrative. Consequently, what she does is to present whatever information accessible, within her purview, to the reader. In the novel, therefore, the dominant style of narration adopted by Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* is a maximum of narrator presence and a minimum of narrative information "Things started to fall apart at home when my

brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the *étagère*” (Adichie 11).

The above quotation is a presentation of the situation in the Achike family, things started to fall apart at home when the brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the *étagère*. In the presentation of characters in the novel, the description is similarly done in detail. For example, Papa is presented in this light:

Papa always sat in the front pew for Mass, at the end beside the middle aisle, with Mama, Jaja, and me sitting next to him. He was first to receive communion. Most people did not kneel to receive communion at the marble altar, with the blond life-size Virgin Mary mounted nearby, but Papa did. (Adichie 12)

There is vivid description of Papa here, in his initial presentation and this sets the tone for an impression of him as a perfectionist. It is also clear from the presentation how Papa is revealed with every detail of his demeanour whenever he receives the communion. The narrative also includes details of what Papa does while he is sitting and watching the rest of the congregation troop to the altar. The revelation of Papa Eugene by the autodiegetic narrator is heightened in the narrative as he is presented as one who hardly speaks Igbo, and that anytime he speaks it, it is a bad sign. According to the narrator, he hardly spoke Igbo, and although Jaja and “I spoke it with Mama at home, he did not like us to speak it in public. We had to sound civilised in public...we had to speak English” (Adichie 21).

Papa is also revealed by the autodiegetic narrator as being a man who likes order. She makes this known in the following quote when she wonders what Papa would do for the new baby Mama Beatrice is expecting to have. Papa Eugene is a perfectionist

and also likes order. Consequently, he does not take it lightly with the academic performance of his children, as demonstrated in his reaction to Kambili coming second in her class' exams "Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges. Because God has given you much, he expects much from you" (Adichie 55).

From the foregoing, it is evident that the information being made available to the reader is all revealed through the perspective of Papa Eugene who is given the opportunity to do self-revelation. As a result of the fact that the narrator, Kambili, has a restricted vision of and distant from the narrative information and therefore, can only know and reveal information that is made available to her. In this extract, there is virtually no narrator presence. It is pure scene, pure mimesis in direct quoted speech, as the narrator has handed over the narration to the character, Papa Eugene; hence, a maximum of information and an obliteration of the narrator.

Distance, as presented in the novel can be examined in a number of ways, which includes spatial, temporal, emotional and conceptual or ideological. Regarding spatial distance in the novel, Adichie employs three different settings: Enugu, Nsukka and Abba to set the scene for the analysis of character and theme. Enugu is where Kambili and her family stay and it is presented as a place of oppression because of Papa Eugene's abusive nature, as opposed to Nsukka, which is portrayed as an uncluttered and affectionate atmosphere. Kambili and Jaja's first meal at their Aunt's house in Nsukka provides an unambiguous dissimilarity to the oppressive atmosphere in Enugu because of her father's abusive nature.

The freedom and enthusiasm of Auntie Ifeoma's household, notwithstanding their financial restrictions, impresses Kambili, while lifting the restrictions on her life and revealing her to fundamentally diverse values and beliefs. Adichie foreshadows the

development of Kambili's character through the colossal distinction between her own home and the Nsukka household's open and loving environment, as symbolised in the University's motto: To restore the dignity of man. However, all of this is not made possible until Kambili goes to Nsukka, as her restrictions to narrative information also imply that she needs to be at Nsukka to enable the reader perceive how personal development is affected. Abba, on the other hand, serves as the traditional hub of the novel, where issues relating to tradition are explored further. The employment of these places creates an initial spatial distance between Kambili and the narrative, as she is placed in a restrictive position regarding narrative information since it is virtually impossible for her to have complete knowledge of happenings in all three settings.

Consequently, there is distance between the autodiegetic narrator and the narrative that is presented to the reader. She is only able to bridge this gap when she moves from one setting to the other. For example, it is when she moves from Enugu to Nsukka that she realises that there is a different kind of life other than what she has been exposed to at Enugu, by her father, Papa Eugene. The description of Abba and Papa Nnukwu's home is also done with precision, to the extent that the reader is able to visualise it "Jaja swung open Papa Nnukwu's creaking wooden gate, which was so narrow that Papa might have to enter sideways if he ever were to visit" (Adichie 71).

The above quotation is a presentation of setting and the narrator consciously throws light on several features of Papa Nnukwu's compound. This vivid description is done in such detail that it affords a panoramic assessment of Papa Nnukwu's home. Here too, the focus of the focalisation begins on the creaking wooden gate and then moves to the compound, which was barely a quarter of the size of the backyard in Enugu. The focalisation then shifts again to Papa Nnukwu's house, which stood in the middle, small and compact like dice. This movement of shifts in focalisation enables

the reader to have a visual representation of Papa Nnukwu's compound. Again, the details portrayed in the extract also depict the deprivation in Papa Nnukwu's living condition to the extent that it has a rippling effect on the domestic animals found in the compound, as two goats and a few chickens sauntered around, nibbling and pecking at drying stems of grass.

In effect, Papa Nnukwu's destitute life, in the abundance of the plenty his son has, also has domino effects on the livestock in his compound. The narration of events and the presentation of scenery are heightened in the narrative in the episodes where Papa Eugene assaults Kambili. Prior to this incident, there had been a number of assaults on the Achike family by Papa Eugene, both psychologically and emotionally. However, the assault turns more physical when he beats his wife and children because he feels they are desecrating the Eucharist by allowing Kambili to eat ten minutes earlier in order to take Panadol for her menstrual cramps.

The vivid description of one of Papa's brutalities on his own family, as presented by the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili. The information above in this narration of events is not limited to Papa's callousness but also includes details of the belt he uses to beat them, as well as details of the manner how Papa applies the belt on them. The focalisation begins from the belt, with Kambili providing the reader with details of the belt. The focalisation then shifts from the belt to how Papa uses it on his family, as it landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. Kambili puts the bowl down just as the belt landed on her back. In effect, the extract assumes a mimetic tone, including the comparison of Papa to a Fulani nomad – because of his use of the belt, which is akin to the Fulani's use of the switch, that it produces a synaesthesia of the senses and accordingly, the reader is able to perceive with the

senses, the scene depicted in this narration of events and also appreciate the extent of how the author explores the subject of domestic violence in the novel.

Another instance of the narration of events that presents a scenic view to the reader is the episode of Papa's pouring of hot water on Kambili's feet for staying in the same room with Papa Nnukwu, Kambili's Grandfather who is considered a heathen by Papa Eugene. The incident is presented by the autodiegetic narrator in the following extract, as Papa Eugene orders her to step into the tub:

I stepped into the tub and stood looking at him. It didn't seem that he was going to get a stick, and I felt fear, stinging and raw, fill my bladder and my ears. I did not know what he was going to do to me. It was easier when I saw a stick, because I could rub my palms together and tighten the muscles of my calves in preparation. He had never asked me to stand inside a tub. (Adichie 200)

The careful effort of the autodiegetic narrator in detailing the scene of the event enables the narrative to assume a mimetic tone; hence presenting a maximum of information to the reader, information that is additionally, visually sensible. As the evidence saturates the narration, the reader is taken closer to the narrative to perceive every element from his or her individual perception. Here too, the narrator presence permeates the entire extract to the point of narrator saturation and for good reason, the autodiegesis is fully explored for narrative effect. The narrator, thus, provides the reader with adequate information that is also veritable to saturate the narrative to produce the quality of verisimilitude, as a constituent of realism.

This incident also reveals more about the character of Papa Eugene as well as the theme of domestic violence, as has already been stated in the study. The narration of events in *Purple Hibiscus* is presented with such detail that the narrative assumes a

mimetic tone, with the autodiegetic narrator enabling the reader to perceive the particulars of the narrative to which the reader is predisposed in the delivery of events. Consequently, in the narrative, there is a maximum of information and a minimum of the informer in the narration. That is, there is more detailed narrative, with minimal presence of the informer in other words, of the narrator.

Narration of speech affords the narrator the opportunity of showing more information in the narrative. As a model of the modernist novel, which is geared towards discourse, the speeches of the characters are appreciated through both their uttered and unuttered thoughts. This technique is also the medium by which the autodiegetic narrator enables the reader to have maximum of information through the type of narrative style adopted by the author in presenting issues in the narrative. The bulk of the information revealed to the reader concerning the characters, themes and setting, in this novel, is all presented from the focalisation of Kambili, the autodiegetic narrator.

The reader perceives Papa, from Kambili's perspective, to be a religious person, who cherishes perfection, as it has already been mentioned in the discussion, from the very first report from her. This opening quote, therefore, prepares the minds of the reader to anticipate that the narrator, through her reports, will reveal the bulk of narrative information, with some opportunity for the characters to also reveal themselves. The narrator also provides the reader an opportunity of first-hand information regarding the status of Papa Eugene in his church, especially from how Father Benedict presents him before the congregation. In the narrator's words "During his sermons, Father Benedict usually referred to the pope, Papa, and Jesus—in that order. He used Papa to illustrate the gospels" (Adichie 12).

The extract above begins with the narrator revealing to the reader how high Papa is held in his church, to the extent that he is placed second to the Pope, before Jesus, in that order. The narrative, here, begins in Indirect Speech and it immediately switches to Direct Speech when the direct words of Father Benedict are quoted. This seeming disappearance of the narrator, briefly, affords Father Benedict the opportunity to present Papa to the congregation himself. Hence, the character here reveals another character instead of the narrator. In this way, there is a mimesis of what is told because it becomes the voice of the character himself and the narrator's distance from the narration is thus guaranteed. The same can be said for the responses of the congregation, which are reported verbatim, to produce the effect of verisimilitude in the narration.

The novel, as has already been stated, is presented from the perspective of Kambili, a 15-year old girl at the beginning of the novel. It is a reflection of her intelligence and sensitivity and as such, the language at the start is crammed with detailed observations. However, her presentation of the narrative information lacks some level of maturity and adequacy, as she is restricted from an omniscience knowledge of narrative information, which is characteristic of first person or "I" narrations. The frequent use of pronouns such as "I", "me", "mine" and "ours" unequivocally reinforce the influence that proceedings in the narrative have on the narrator, especially because of her limited access to anyone else's interiority, thereby ensuring greater distance created between the narrator and the narrative.

In addition, after Kevin has handed Papa Nnukwu a slim wad of cash Papa has requested to be sent him, Kambili wonders how Papa Nnukwu will be feeling about the small amount of money given him, considering the fact that he is aware that his son, Papa Eugene, has been and is always generous with other people. However, Kambili does not and cannot know Papa Nnukwu's reaction because she has a restricted view

of the narrative information available to her. She, therefore, tells the reader “If Papa Nnukwu minded that his son sent him impersonal, paltry amounts of money through a driver, he didn’t show it. He hadn’t shown it last Christmas, or the Christmas before. He had never shown” (Adichie 75).

Here, Kambili’s presentation is in Indirect Speech and she acknowledges the fact that she does not know about Papa Nnukwu’s reactions about this because he had not shown it. Thus, according to Genette, this type of internal focalisation has a restricted view of narrative information because the narrator can only know as much as can be made known or available to her. Kambili, therefore, does not know because Papa Nnukwu does not reveal that information to her, hence, creating some narratological distance between her and the narrative. This lapse in her knowledge of narrative information is manifest in the highlighted part of the extract. The extract is also a reflection of the mental state of the narrator, as she is in retrospection of Papa Nnukwu’s reaction to his being given an impersonal paltry amounts of money. The reader is, therefore, taken into the consciousness of the narrator, who also doubles as a character in the novel, to also wonder the effect this is having on her.

The narratological distance created between Kambili and the narrative is also apparent in the absence of direct insight into the mental processes of other characters. This includes assertions about the unspoken thoughts, feelings or intentions of the characters other than Kambili herself, which are rendered only in her subjective interpretations of them, a situation which also indicates the limitations of Genette’s theory, for which Cohn’s *Transparent Minds* (1978), provides adequate alternative for the thought processes of the characters. For illustration, when Kambili comes second in her class and Papa takes her to school instead of Kevin, as Kevin always does, she wonders why papa has gone to her school. In her words, she states that “Papa came out

of the car with me and I wondered what he was doing, why he was here, why he had driven me to school and asked Kevin to take Jaja... I looked around, feeling a weight around my temples. What would Papa do?" (Adichie 53).

The extract above is an example of Free Indirect Speech through the series of rhetorical questions asked, as they reflect the stream of consciousness of the focaliser-narrator, Kambili, as she wonders why Papa has gone to her school. The distance created in the narrative between the narrator and the information available to her, by this technique, enables the reader to get into the thought processes of the narrator to experience what she is going through, as her father goes to her school. The use of the cognitive verb, *wondered*, which introduces the highlighted part of the sentence immediately creates some distance between the narrator and the narrative and subsequently the reader too, as the reader becomes conscious of the ignorance of the narrator and therefore, his or her own ignorance as well.

The narrator's fears, which are presented in Free Indirect Discourse, in the series of questions, enable the reader to get into her thoughts to experience her anxiety regarding what Papa Eugene can do. Her lack of knowledge regarding Papa's possible actions places some distance in the narrative and this technique creates suspense as the reader also wonders and anticipates what can happen. The reader is able to form some impressions about the narrator's limited access to narrative information regarding what Papa is going to do at her school. In the first extract, the use of the word *wondered*, places a restriction on what Kambili knows. Here, she does not have full control of the narrative information and so can only speculate as to what Papa will do. The narrator, Kambili, only gets a full grasp of what Papa does when his actions are revealed in the narrative. Thus, she only gets to know as and when the characters reveal narrative information to her.

In addition, owing to the perceived restrictions in the narrator's distance to narrative information, there is the predominant employment of dialogue, which allows the characters to do self-presentation and also reveal a lot of the narrative information themselves to the reader. For example, the presence of Aunty Ifeoma in her brother, Papa Eugene's home enables the reader to comprehend the character traits of both Mama Beatrice and Aunty Ifeoma herself, as they both act as foils to each other. In one of the ensuing interactions between these two characters in the novel, the reader is given first-hand information regarding how this is played out, when Aunty Ifeoma explains to Mama the need to be an independent woman:

“Umunna will always say hurtful things,” Mama said. “Did our own umunna not tell Eugene to take another wife because a man of his stature cannot have just two children? If people like you had not been on my side then...” “Stop it, stop being grateful. If Eugene had done that, he would have been the loser, not you.” “So you say. A woman with children and no husband, what is that?” “Me.” Mama shook her head. “You have come again, Ifeoma. You know what I mean. (Adichie 83)

The extract above is presented in such a manner that the characters involved in the interaction are given the floor to present how significant the issue of marriage is to their community, especially the fact that the woman is made to believe that a husband crowns a woman's life. The bulk of the extract is presented in Direct Speech, with the words of the characters themselves narrated, making the whole narrative mimetic in nature. Hence, in this quotation, the narrator is virtually relegated to the background and distanced from the narrative, with her minimal interference when she provides some interlocutory comments on their speeches.

Furthermore, Kambili's distance from the narrative information, even though she functions as the focaliser narrator, is so significant that her ignorance is in consonance with the reader's. From the narrative, when Auntie Ifeoma commends Papa Nnukwu for being able to sit for so long to enable Amaka to paint a portrait of him, she attributes it to the faithfulness of Our Lady. This attribution gets Kambili confused and she wonders and asks her Auntie, How can Our Lady intercede on behalf of a heathen. In response to this, Auntie Ifeoma takes time to educate both Kambili and the reader:

Auntie Ifeoma was silent as she ladled the thick cocoyam paste into the soup pot; then she looked up and said Papa Nnukwu was not a heathen but a traditionalist, that sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar, that when Papa Nnukwu did his *itu-nzu*, his declaration of innocence, in the morning, it was the same as our saying the rosary. (Adichie 173)

The extract above is also reported in Indirect speech and then shifts into Free Indirect Discourse: it begins in IS, with the narrator presenting Auntie Ifeoma's explanation, then it switches to Free Indirect Discourse, where the narrator presents her own consciousness of the situation. Here, too, the use of Free Indirect Discourse enables the reader to get into the mind of Kambili to understand the impact that the narrative information has on her, as she is distanced from it. Consequently, the reader can also only wonder what they were laughing about, and whether they would stop laughing if she went in there. In effect, even though there is narrator presence in the extract above, she is still distanced from the narrative information, as illustrated in the use of Free Indirect Discourse, which enables the reader to have access to the cognitive processes of the narrator and her deficiencies at presenting the narrative information.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, therefore, there is more narrator presence and as a result, the autodiegetic narrator, Kambili, reveals virtually all the information in the narrative, with the characters having little opportunity for self-revelation. The narrative is predominantly presented by the employment of the first person narrative perspective, with some instances of dialogues when the characters reveal themselves and other issues in the narrative. There are also some instances of the use of Free Indirect Discourse in the narration of the thought processes or cognitive processes of the autodiegetic narrator, especially in exhibiting her level of ignorance of or restriction to narrative information, thereby exposing the narratological distance created between herself and the narrative and by extension, the reader, as well.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is titled so because of the purple hibiscus flowers in Auntie Ifeoma's garden. Unlike Kambili and Jaja's father, Eugene, their Auntie Ifeoma is kind and progressive minded and understands the children. Kambili and Jaja are so free in Nsukka and not in Enugu, They can do whatever they want in Nsukka, So to the siblings, the purple hibiscus comes to symbolize a mental awakening, freedom and a new hope for change in future.

Chapter Five

Summation

Purple Hibiscus is a Nigerian novel deals with how a spiritual family suffers in the name of spirituality by the Father figure. Eugene Achike uses violence as a weapon to control his family. He beats his wife and children without mercy and he says that it is for their own good. How the mother and children end his dominance and how they hope for a better future is the main part of this novel. Feminism is the major theory of this novel. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie beautifully portrays how Nigerian women survives in the society in her book *Purple Hibiscus*. Chapter one deals with the author, her books and, her contemporary writers and a short analysis of the novel.

Literature is an important tool for advancing humanity, moral and intellectual growth, as well as language development, making people more enlightened and better global citizens. African literature is a vast, intricate, and innovative body of writing about and from Africa, divided into three categories: European, indigenous African, and traditional oral literature. Many African women wrote novels about Feminism and about African culture and traditions. The novels of Flora Nwapa and Ama Ata Aidoo discussed the position of women in African nations.

One among the woman writers is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, an African woman writer born in Enugu in 1977. She earned a Political Science and Communication degree from Eastern Connecticut State University. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book and Best First Book Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* captures the brutality of the Nigeria-Biafra war, winning the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction and the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. Adichie published *The Thing Around Your*

Neck, Americanah, We Should All Be Feminists, Dear Ijeawele, and Notes on Grief, all of which are praised by critics.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a coming-of-age story about political instability, callous classmates, and a father who abuses them. It also highlights the ethnic animosity in colonial Nigeria, where Eugene Achike is the patriarch and father of Kambili and Jaja. The children of *Purple Hibiscus* are vying for independence, and their quest for a sociocultural identity is linked to challenges from globalisation. The father figures in the novel reflect the struggles of young Nigeria, such as economic disparity, poor governance, corruption, and human rights violations. The two father figures in *Purple Hibiscus* are Eugene Achike and Father Amadi, who represent the varied interests of post-Biafra Nigeria. Eugene is a force for colonialism and Father Amadi is a person who brings people together.

Auntie Ifeoma, Eugene's sister, is a single parent and the household's only wage earner. The decisions made by the parent figures now determine their lives and their prospective roles in history. The offsprings, Kambili and Jaja, are dynamic beings whose final personalities and course of action must be established. The emerging post-colonial Nigeria is represented by Kambili and Jaja, two Igbo children whose culture and ethnicity have been torn apart by conflict. They must navigate through all of their identities, including influences from their families, cultures, and political systems, in order to find their true selves. *Purple Hibiscus* denotes the impossibility of totality, and the children's and Nigeria's development of a cohesive sense of self is by no means guaranteed. They are trapped in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood, and their interactions with the parent figures in their life influenced how they saw themselves. *Purple Hibiscus* explores the questions of selfhood and identity in Nigeria,

using bildungsroman literary style to explore its diverse pasts and potential futures. The second chapter focuses on feminism, identity, and narrative techniques.

Feminism is an important aspect in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. The mother murders her dominative husband by slowly adding poison to his tea. Eugene without knowing it, drinks the tea every day and falls sick eventually and dies. Ifeoma, Kambili and Jaja's aunt is very supportive to the children. Though she doesn't like how her brother treats his own wife and children, Ifeoma stills gets worry after Eugene dies. Because he helped her in many situations. Ifeoma is a widow and has three children. Survival has become tough for her but Eugene was always there for her.

Eugene is called as an Omelora by the people, because he does so many things for the people. Eugene supports people and stands against government for them but he doesn't know how to treat his own family. Eugene is a father of the catholic church, he teaches about God's love and says people to follow God's path but in the name of spirituality he beats his wife and children. This is not accepted by the mother and she killed him. Eugene beats wildly even one person does a mistake. He breaks a table on his wife's belly when she is pregnant and she loses her baby due to that, it doesn't happen once but twice. By hearing this Ifeoma becomes more angry with Eugene, so Ifeoma calls the children to her house to stay with her.

Eugene makes rules and he wants his wife and children to follow it, and if they doesn't follow then he gives punishments to them. Another incident is when Kambili breaks her fasting due to her periods, Eugene sees that and takes her to the bathroom and pours hot water on her feet. Eugene says that it's for their own good and they should obey him. Later that incident he hugs Kambili and tells her how much he loves her. Beatrice is his own wife but he doesn't treat her like that, he beats her very hardly and doesn't even feels sorry for it. Beatrice experiencing all these beatings and violence of

Eugene couldn't bear it after a limit. She decides to kill him and here the Feminism arises. Beatrice couldn't tolerate Eugene anymore and she plans to come out from his torture. Feminism is an important theme of the novel and the novel revolves around male dominance and feminism.

Chapter three is about identity exploration, the difference between Kambili and Jaja's behaviour when they are Enugu and Nsukka. When Kambili and Jaja is in Enugu they will be always quiet and listens to whatever their father, Eugene, says to them but in Nsukka, in their aunty Ifeoma's home they can be on their own. Ifeoma understands the children and leaves them free to be however they want. In Enugu Kambili and Jaja have a schedule for everything like studying, praying, eating, folding their clothes, only in those times they were allowed to do all those things by Eugene.

But in Nsukka, in their aunty's house, Kambili and Jaja be in their own selves. They watch TV, eat whatever they want and play whenever they want. When in Nsukka they doesn't care about how they should be and what their father says. Though Eugene made a separate schedule for how they should be in Nsukka, Kambili and Jaja doesn't follow that. They liked to be in their aunty's home. Because there they explored their own identity, they realized who they are and how they want to be. Ifeoma supports them a lot. Even Kambili falls in love with Father Amadi and she likes him a lot.

They are a whole different people in Nsukka and they liked their self in Nsukka, because it feels real to them. In Enugu, they doesn't even have a TV because Eugene considers that they won't study if there is TV. But in Nsukka, aunty Ifeoma allows them to watch TV and takes them out to show them the world. Kambili and Jaja liked to be Ifeoma's home more than their own. Kambili is not allowed to wear lipsticks in Enugu but she has a desire to wear it, Eugene strictly says no to makeup things. When in

Nsukka, Kambili wears Amaka's lipstick and likes it and sees herself in the mirror for a long time.

Jaja doesn't know how to cut a chicken in Enugu and he was not allowed to do that. But in Nsukka, he was fully into cutting a chicken and Kambili sees him in a shock. Kambili doesn't know that her brother could cut a chicken even he is not have done it before. Jaja was a whole different in Nsukka. Kambili thinks about Eugene sometimes but Jaja is always happy and doesn't care about his father.

The fourth chapter deals with the narrative events of the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, about one narrator narrating the whole story. This novel has autodiegetic narrator, the only one who narrates the whole novel. Kambili narrates the illustration of events in Achike household and in Nsukka. This novel is a novel of maximum narrative presence. Narration of Eugene's behaviour is the opening of the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, When Jaja doesn't took his communion Eugene gets angry and throws the missal across the hall, this shows how Eugene is at the starting itself. Kambili narrates this event that Eugene breaks all the small figures kept in the shelf.

Kambili gives vivid description of Eugene that though he gets angry on them, he does all those for their good and he just wants them to obey him and God. Kambili also narrates how Eugene reacts when he heard that they were more than fifteen minutes in Papa Nnukwu's home. Papa Nnukwu is Eugene's father and Eugene doesn't like him because he is a traditionalist and believes in other God. So Eugene doesn't allow his children to be with Papa Nnukwu for a long time. After the death of Papa Nnukwu, Kambili kept a painting of him that Amaka, her cousin, drew, but Eugene doesn't know about this. When he came to know that he beats Kambili and Jaja very much and tears the painting of Papa Nnukwu.

Also Kambili narrates how they spent their days happily in Nsukka and not in Enugu. They were very free and happy in Nsukka but in Enugu they are always afraid that Eugene will scold them and they cannot play or watch TV. Kambili also wants a life of her own and she really hopes for a better future but Eugene doesn't allow them to think because he takes all the decision in their home and the children doesn't have their own rights to even think about their own self. But when in Nsukka, they are on their own and they like their own personality. Kambili narrates the whole events happening in both places, in her home, Enugu and in her Aunt's home, Nsukka, so this novel is an autodiegetic narrative novel.

At the end of the novel, the mother understands her children's struggle because of their father, Eugene and she takes revenge on him by adding poison to his tea. At the novel's beginning Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice are all mute and accept their father's punishments but at the end, the mother couldn't tolerate his actions and becomes a rebellious one. Though Kambili struggles, she is also not happy with her father's death.

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, analyzed from a female bildungsroman perspective with a view to encourage men with negative attitudes towards women to change. Feminists in Africa are sometimes mistakenly regarded as radical and adopting western lifestyle which is alien to African culture. Here, in this novel *Purple Hibiscus*, the protagonist Kambili Achike suffers a lot in her father's hand. After visiting her aunt Ifeoma's house, she realizes that she too has some likes and dislikes and she also wants to lead life of her own. The novel begins with silence and also ends in silence. But the silence from the beginning is different from the silence at the end of the novel. The ending silence is a transformation of Kambili with new hope. On the whole the last shade of silence that confuses their sense of imagination could be said to be shady, because it is a silence characterized by hope and dreams.

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**'Pederasty Eromenos': A Study of Narrative, Memory and Gender
in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*.**

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

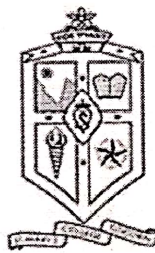
For the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

NAZHATH RIZWANA R.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN14)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

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April 2023

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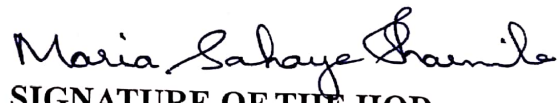
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled 'Pederasty Eromenos': A Study Of Narrative, Memory and Gender in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* 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 and is a work done by Nazhath Rizwana.R during the year 2022-2023, and that is has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director

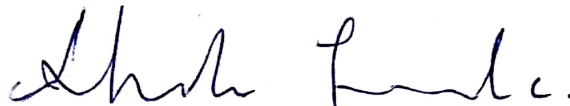
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SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled '**Pederasty Eromenos**': A Study Of Narrative, Memory and Gender in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* 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 and is a work done by Nazhath Rizwana .R during the year 2022-2023, and that is has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023



Nazhath Rizwana. R

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

The project entitled '**Pederasty Eromenos**': A Study of Narrative, Memory and Gender in Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* analyses the narrative, memory and gender through the Pederasty between the characters in the novel.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with American literature and its relationship with Greek mythology. A short biography on Madeline Miller and the general characteristics of her works are discussed.

The second chapter **Unveiling the Narrative** deals with the narratology and narrative techniques in the novel *The Song of Achilles*.

The third chapter **Memory and Trauma** portrays the importance of memory in various characters of the novel and the role of memory in constructing traumatic experiences in the very same characters.

The fourth chapter explores the **Gender Conflict** in *The Song of Achilles* analysing the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

English literature is a broad term for all English-language literature that has been produced throughout history. English literature dates back centuries and is very important for several reasons. Many of the most famous works in the history of English literature deal with universal themes and can be helpful for those wishing to understand historical time periods and the development of literature and poetry over time. Literature in English definition includes writers from Britain, Ireland, America, Canada, and many other regions where English is spoken. Because English literature dates back so many centuries, it can be helpful to look at different eras to get a sense of how literature has evolved over time and what the most important works of each era were.

The majority of the initial colonial writing was political and religious tracts. The first well-known poets were Massachusetts natives Edward Taylor (1642–1729) and Anne Bradstreet (1612–72). Theologian and metaphysician John Edwards maintained New England's intellectual hegemony throughout the early 18th century (1703-58).

American literature reached its pinnacle in the works of New England authors Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Herman Melville, poets Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, and Mark Twain.

American literature is difficult to categorise into different time periods. There are frequently numerous literary movements occurring concurrently due to the vastness and diversity of the United States and its

population. It hasn't prevented literary experts, though, from trying. Below are some of the time periods in American literature from the colonial era to the present that are most frequently cited.

From 1607 to the late 1700s, the first American colonies produced a body of literature that was heavily influenced by British authors. The poems, diaries, letters, chronicles, histories, and educational materials written by colonists and notable religious and historical personalities of the time share many of the literary works of the period.

The narrative, which was frequently utilised in colonial American literature, is distinctive to this time period. The majority of the literature in this genre is made up of letters, diaries, biographies, and memoirs. The Puritan writers dominate the colonial American literary canon when it comes to religion. The Puritans frequently used the motif that God should be adored in their writings about the religious roots of many of their settlements, particularly the migration from Britain. Texts that helped students get ready for worship were also used. By implying that life was a test and that failure would result in damnation for the soul, this literature aided in the propagation of the Christian message. Ambition and diligence were continually emphasised. Many Puritan writings take the style of poetry. Non-Puritan authors often drew on religious conflict between colonial settlers and Native People to depict religious tension.

The Age of Revolution, is a time span that encompasses the writings of Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, and began about ten years before the Revolutionary War and

ended about twenty-five years later. Since ancient antiquity, this is undoubtedly the most prolific time for political writing. The first American novel, *The Force of Sympathy*, by William Hill, was written in 1789, while the first American comedy, *The Contrast*, by Royall Tyler, was written for the stage in 1787. These important early works are all products of the Early National Era, a period in American literature. While William Cullen Bryant and Edgar Allan Poe started writing poetry that was distinctly different from that of the English tradition, Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper are credited with developing uniquely American fiction.

The Era of Transcendentalism and the American Renaissance are other names for the American Renaissance, which is often regarded as the best period for American literature. Walt Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Poe, and Herman Melville are a few notable authors. Moreover, Poe, James Russell Lowell, and William Gilmore Simms served as the forerunners of American literary criticism during this time period. The first books by African-American authors, both male and female, appeared in the years 1853 and 1859 with *Clotel* by William Wells Brown and "Our Nig" by Harriet E. Wilson.

American ideals and self-awareness underwent significant transformation as a result of the American Civil War, Reconstruction, and the industrial period. Realistic depictions of American life, such those seen in the writings of William Dean Howells, Henry James, and Mark Twain, took the place of some of the romantic conceptions of the American Renaissance. Regional writing also flourished during this time, as evidenced by the

writings of Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, Bret Harte, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and George W. Cable, among others.

The relatively brief naturalist era was characterised by its insistence on accurately portraying life as it actually is, even more so than the realists had been doing for decades prior. Some of the most intensely unadulterated novels in American literary history were written by American Naturalist authors like Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London. During this time, Edith Wharton produced some of her most well-known works, including *The Custom of the Country* (1913), *Ethan Frome* (1911), and *The House of Mirth* (1905) also emerged in addition to Walt Whitman.

The Modern Era is the second most influential and artistically rich period in American writing, behind the American Renaissance. E.E. Cummings, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, and Edna St. Vincent Millay are just a few of the notable authors. The Jazz Era, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Lost Generation are just a few of the significant movements that made up the Modern Period. The disillusionment that followed World War I and the emigration of the Lost Generation in particular had an impact on several of these writers. Moreover, the Great Depression and the New Deal produced some of America's best social issue literature, including Faulkner and Steinbeck's books and Eugene O'Neill's plays.

The Beat Generation was characterised by writers who were committed to anti-traditional literature in both poetry and prose as well as

anti-establishment politics, including Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. Confessional poetry and sexuality in literature both increased during this time period, sparking legal disputes and discussions over censorship in America. Henry Miller and William S. Burroughs are two authors whose works encountered censorship issues. The counter culture movements of the following two decades were also influenced by these two great writers and other writers of the day.

In terms of theme, mode, and purpose, American literature has expanded and become more diverse since World War II. A number of significant authors have emerged after 1939 whose works may already be regarded as classics and who are likely to be canonised.

In American literary history, myth has always had two sides: on the one hand, there is the emigrants' attachment to the traditions of Christian humanism, and on the other, there are the mythical realities and potentialities of a New World. Myth is, after all, the basis of literary creation. Consequently, it could be feasible to claim that the presence of mythology in American literature serves as a kind of paradigm for how tradition and innovation interact to shape the development of the country's unique cultural identity.

The word mythology which comes from Greek ordinarily refers to stories of gods or other supernatural beings handed down from ancient times. It frequently contains a collection of myths, tales, and folklore that a specific culture holds to be true. Because to the lack of knowledge and technology in

the past, humans frequently used superstitious explanations to explain nature, the world, and social life.

The mythology of the country is based on those notions and justifications. There are many different sorts of myths and stories in the lengthy history of humanity, with Greek mythology having the most influence. A collection of myths from the ancient Greeks make up Greek mythology. Through the help of numerous gods, heroes, and enigmatic creatures, these tales explain the beginning and nature of the universe . Also, they discuss how certain mysteries and religious practises that the Greeks themselves practised came to be.

Greek mythology thus plays a significant role in the history, culture, and religion of ancient Greece. Greek mythology is more frequently studied today since it accurately captures the religion, politics, and culture of ancient Greece as well as the entire ancient Greek civilization. Also, it is crucial to comprehend the meaning of these stories in order to comprehend the essence of both Greek culture and the entirety of western society. Greek mythology is praised for its greatness and significance, in part because of the profound and enduring impact it has had on the entire western world, particularly the English culture. It affects practically all facets of western society, including language, literature, music, art, technology, and even how people think. In general, culture refers to a people's entire way of life. It typically encompasses the beliefs, practises, artefacts, institutions, techniques, and languages that define the way a human community lives.

It practically permeates every part of daily life and mostly affects how individuals behave, including how they speak.

As a result, it is closely related to language. On the one hand, language penetrates human thought and the way that people see the world since it is an integral element of who we are as people. It articulates and represents cultural reality. Nonetheless, since language is a by-product of culture, it contributes to the maintenance of culture. The English language has been greatly influenced by Greek mythology. It significantly boosts English language growth. Since language is an essential component of culture, the impact of Greek mythology on English culture is obvious. Greek mythology is the source of many terms and allusive phrases.

These are a few illustrations of those oblique expressions that can be used to demonstrate the strong impact of Greek mythology on the English language; The first woman in Greek mythology was named Pandora. As part of the punishment meted out to humanity for Prometheus' theft of the fire-secret, Zeus commanded Hephaestus to fashion her from Earth. She was therefore given appropriately harmful traits when she was formed by numerous gods and goddesses. All of human evils were kept in a magic box that belonged to Pandora. He unlocked Pandora's enchanted box after she wed Epimetheus out of curiosity. All the sufferings and evils that were inside the box such as sickness, hopelessness, malice, greed, jealousy, old age, death, anger, violence, and cruelty flew out after it was opened. As a result, the phrase 'Pandora's box' can apply to any source of significant and unanticipated problems or a gift that appears desirable but is actually a curse.

Another such illustration is Achilles heel. In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles was a legendary hero. He is the child of Thetis and Peleus. His mother Thetis immersed him in the Styx River when he was a little child in an effort to render him invulnerable. Achilles' entire body, save for his heel, became invulnerable as a result of his mother holding onto him by that area. He was later wounded in the heel during the siege of Troy and eventually passed away as a result. The phrase 'Achilles' heel' is frequently used in English speech and is still widely used in everyday conversation. In contemporary English, the phrase 'Achilles' heel' usually refers to a flaw or weakness that, though it may not be immediately obvious, might ultimately bring about a person's demise.

Greek mythology features Hercules, also referred to as Heracles, as a celestial hero. He possesses enormous power and is powerful, fearless, and inventive. He is claimed to have rendered the world safe for mankind and to be its benefactor by defeating evil archaic forces. The phrase 'a Herculean task' is frequently used to describe a task that requires enormous strength because Hercules is a very strong hero. This idiom, whose meaning derives from Greek mythology, is still widely used in everyday speech. There are several idioms in the English language that come from Greek mythology. It can be seen from the aforementioned instances how heavily Greek mythology has influenced the English language.

Literature and culture are closely related to one another. One way to think about literature is as a kind of cultural mirror. It plays a significant role in culture as well. While discussing the impact of Greek mythology on English culture, the impact on English literature cannot be disregarded. Also,

a brief analysis of its influence on ancient literature is important because those excellent literary works afterwards had a significant influence on English authors and poets.

Mythology was one of the most significant sources of literature and culture for the ancient people. The actual reflection of ancient people can be observed in many of the literary works of that era. There are some notable poets and playwrights from ancient Greece whose works have had a lasting impact on English literature today.

Greek mythology has had a huge influence on culture for centuries. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes the four most renowned dramatists in ancient Greece had already drawn inspiration from Greek mythology for their works. Moreover, *The Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, two of the greatest works of literature ever written, are also based on Greek mythology. Hence, English literature has been greatly influenced by such works.

Renaissance literature, a well-known literary movement, reached England in the 16th century. The rediscovery and study of books from classical antiquity inspired the revival of letters and the arts, and new aesthetic standards based on classical models were developed. From that point forward, English authors, poets, and playwrights started incorporating allusions to mythology into their writings and drawing inspiration from Greek mythology while creating new works. Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Keats, Shelley, and Byron are among the most well-known authors and poets.

Themes and resources from Greek mythology are still used by American and British authors today. The structure and the character of Ulysses are taken from Homer's epic *Odysseus* in James Joyce's masterwork *Ulysses*. Greek mythology is also referenced in the play *Mourning Becomes Electra* by American playwright Eugene O'Neill, which is based on Aeschylus' tragedy *Oresteia*. Additional examples are T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and John Updike's *The Centaur*. Greek mythology continues to be a source of inspiration for playwrights and authors in England today. Every era of English literature has been greatly influenced by Greek mythology.

Starting with the literary terminology that have Greek roots, one may classify the enormous range of classical influence. Latin should not be overlooked either. The classical background many American writers got in school helped them become familiar with those terms. Plato and Aristotle were taught in different classes when Greek and Latin were no longer taught, while influential works like Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Bulfinch and Hamilton's book on mythology, and Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* provided the mythology knowledge. Before Jung and the New Critics brought archetypes to the forefront of our collective consciousness, they were widely used in American literature.

No writer who is truly knowledgeable can avoid using examples from the vast Greek gallery of personae, both in myth and history, to illustrate the governing passion or dominant quality of his character. As powerful as Zeus, as wily and resourceful as Odysseus, as virtuous as Penelope, as strong as Hercules, as tragic as Hecuba, as vengeful as Medea, as all-seeing as

Tiresias, as beautiful as Helen, as sexually confused as Oedipus, as honest as Diogenes, as intelligent as Socrates - and, the anger of Poseidon, the wrath of Achilles, the wizardry of Daedalus, the wisdom of Solon, the ambition of Alexander.

The creation of literary genres and their definition, which the Greeks left for us, are very well known. Not just the previously stated comedy, tragedy, ode, and lyric, but also the Homeric epic and its classification as a protracted tale in poetry. In our criticism, Aristotle's division between the dramatic and the narrative still holds true. Subsequent critics added their formal specifications, known as The Three unities to the Poetics. The fable, which Aesop created or at least made well-known, is another genre.

The kind of adaptation found in Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* and the English translation of Greek classics like Robinson Jeffers' depiction of Medea are two examples of additional classical influences in American literature. The words in a work may essentially stay the same from translation to translation, but how we read a play and the different perspectives we bring to it cause the text to alter from one age to another. Hence, classical influence is dynamic, ever-changing, and not fixed in marble and static.

American literature also benefited from fresh perspectives learned abroad. Ralph Waldo Emerson is one person who used his travels to England and Germany to extend his outlook. It wasn't until Freud and others like Ernest Jones gave us a deeper grasp of the Oedipus complex in *Hamlet* that

its full impact could be realised. It goes without saying that any deviation from the original in a translation ought to be moderate.

The widespread and extensive usage of allusions to various parts of classical Hellenism in all genres is one example of these sorts' classical influence. The symbolic and literal meanings desired in context can be achieved by using these references in either a positive or negative way. Another sort is the recounting, particularly in novels, of what actually transpired to a famous character like Helen, Electra, Ariadne, or Alexander in myth, legend, or history. The classical effect on contemporary literary theory, literary movements, schools of thought, and criticism is also crucial to our goal. Most college lectures on the history of literary criticism start with pertinent passages from Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus, and in my opinion they should.

Philadelphia and New York City were the places Madeline Miller was raised. She attended Brown University, where she majored in classics and received her BA and MA. For more than fifteen years, she has instructed high school pupils in Latin, Greek, and Shakespeare.

Additionally, she completed coursework at Yale School of Drama's dramaturgy programme and the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought, where she concentrated on the transformation of classical texts into contemporary forms. Her debut book, *The Song Of Achilles*, was a New York Times bestseller and won the 2012 Orange Award for Fiction. Her second book, *Circe*, debuted at the top of the New York Times bestseller list right away. It was also shortlisted for the 2019 Women's Prize for Fiction

and received the Indies Choice Best Adult Fiction of the Year Award and the Indies Choice Best Audiobook of the Year Awards.

Circe also won the 2018 Elle Big Book Award, The Red Tentacle Award, and an American Library Association Alex Award for adult novels of particular interest to teen readers. Dutch, Mandarin, Japanese, Turkish, Arabic, and Greek are just a few of the more than 25 languages that Miller's novels have been translated into. Many magazines, including the Guardian, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Telegraph, and Lapham's Quarterly, have published her pieces. She most recently released *Galatea*, a stand-alone short fiction. She currently resides outside of Pennsylvania's Philadelphia.

The Song Of Achilles is narrated from the viewpoint of Patroclus, Achilles' lover. Young Greek royal Patroclus' father is dissatisfied with his son's mediocrity as he raises him. At the age of nine, Patroclus is taken to Sparta by his father, where he presents himself as a potential suitor for Helen. Menelaus is the man Helen chooses as her husband after she rejects the other suitors, and the other men swear to support her decision.

After Patroclus accidentally kills a young man of noble family, his father banishes him to Phthia, where he makes friends with Achilles, the son of King Peleus. Patroclus initially rejects Achilles' companionship, but the two soon become close. Patroclus is made into Achilles' comrade-in-arms and swears a blood oath and a love oath to him. At Mount Pelion, where they are schooled by the centaur Chiron, Patroclus accompanies Achilles.

Thetis, a sea nymph, is Achilles' mother. She shows her displeasure with their connection and with Patroclus for having followed Achilles to

Mount Pelion. Patroclus and Achilles have a kiss one evening while they are by themselves.

At some point, Patroclus and Achilles are summoned back to Phthia, where they discover that Helen of Sparta has been abducted by Paris of Troy. Patroclus worries that he may become involved in the conflict because he is reminded of the oath, he made to protect Menelaus and Helen when he was a young boy. According to a prophecy, Achilles will become famous and resemble a god during the war with Troy, but he will also perish in battle after the death of the Trojan Hector. Achilles initially refuses to take part in the battle, and Thetis even hides him on the island of Scyros alongside King Lycomedes. Achilles poses as a girl in Scyros to hide from the battle. Deidameia, the daughter of Lycomedes, learns about Achilles' ruse and secretly marries him, giving birth to Pyrrhus.

Achilles is persuaded to travel to Troy when Odysseus and Diomedes arrive at Scyros and disclose his actual identity. Knowing that Achilles is his genuine love and that he would sooner die than be apart from him, Patroclus continues. Agamemnon's Greek army, which includes Achilles and Patroclus, engages in battle with the Trojans at Troy. Achilles easily prevails in numerous battles, displaying his unmatched warrior strength. Achilles takes a young girl named Briseis from the plunder when the Greeks raid the Trojans in an effort to protect her from Agamemnon's violent passion. Briseis and Patroclus immediately become good friends. When Agamemnon disobeys the gods by keeping the priest's daughter instead of returning her, the gods punish the Greeks by sending a plague. When Achilles tries to explain to the Greeks that Agamemnon's refusal to return the girl is to blame for the

epidemic, Agamemnon responds by stealing Briseis from him and dishonouring him in front of the other men. Achilles decides that he is better than Agamemnon and will not fight in his army. Patroclus wears Achilles' armour and joins the fight as the Greeks go on to lose battles and lose a large number of troops. One of the most powerful Trojan warriors is killed by Patroclus, who is then quickly killed by Hector. After Patroclus' passing, a grieving Achilles returns to the battlefield and eventually kills Hector while carrying the dead warrior around. One evening, King Priam of Troy asks Achilles to free Hector's body so that he can receive a dignified funeral. Achilles concurs. Achilles kills an increasing number of important Trojans as the battle goes on. Paris, the son of King Priam who had abducted Helen, finally kills Achilles by shooting him with an arrow. Pyrrhus, Achilles' son, then joins the conflict. Pyrrhus objects to the idea of burying Patroclus' and Achilles' ashes together, but Thetis makes arrangements for their interment together. In the novel's epilogue, Patroclus talks about visiting his and Achilles' grave and rejoining with him in the afterlife.

The word Pederasty in Greek means a sexual relationship between a man and boy. The novel explains Pederasty through the relationship of Achilles the Erastes, a adult one in the relationship and Patroclus the Eromenos, a passive and young in the relationship. Through their Pederasty, chapter two deals with narratology and narrative techniques, chapter three deals with Achilles and Patroclus' memory and the following trauma, chapter four deals with their gender conflicts and the last chapter gives a elaborate summation about all the four chapters.

Chapter Two

Unveiling The Narrative

Narratology refers to both the theory and the study of narrative and narrative structure and the ways that these affect our perception. While in principle the word may refer to any systematic study of narrative, in practice its usage is rather more restricted. It is an anglicisation of French coined by Tzvetan Todorov. Narratology is applied retrospectively as well to work predating its coinage. Its theoretical lineage is traceable to Aristotle but modern narratology is agreed to have begun with the Russian Formalists, particularly Vladimir Propp. The significance of narrative in human culture can be seen from the fact that written cultures seek their origins in myths which they then record for posterity. Narrative provides us with a fundamental epistemological structure that helps us to make sense of the confusing diversity and multiplicity of events and to produce explanatory patterns for them. Narratives are based on cause-and-effect relationships that are applied to sequences of events.

Patroclus is a central character in *The Song Of Achilles* by Madeline Miller. He is the closest friend and lover of the story's protagonist, Achilles, and serves as the narrator of the novel. Patroclus is portrayed as a kind, empathetic, and compassionate person who is often at odds with the brutal and warlike culture of ancient Greece. He is not a warrior by nature and does not relish the violence that is so common among the heroes of the story. Instead, Patroclus is a healer and a caretaker who values life and human connections above all else. Despite his lack of combat skills, Patroclus is fiercely loyal to Achilles and is willing to do anything to protect him. He accompanies Achilles to Troy, knowing full well the dangers that await them, and he does his best to support and encourage Achilles, even when the war takes a heavy toll on their relationship.

Patroclus is also a tragic character, as his love for Achilles ultimately leads to his own demise. He is killed in battle wearing Achilles' armour, and his death spurs Achilles to seek revenge on the Trojans, leading to the climax of the story. Overall, Patroclus is a complex and nuanced character who represents the power of love and loyalty in the face of violence and tragedy.

Patroclus being the narrator of Miller's novel, through his perspective, the reader gains an insight into his own character as well as the character of Achilles and the events that take place throughout the story. He also provides a unique viewpoint that is often at odds with the traditional narrative of ancient Greek heroism. He sees the horror and tragedy of war very closely and personally, but he is not immune to its effects. His compassion and empathy towards others set him apart from the typical warrior heroes of the story, and his role as Achilles' lover adds emotional depth and complexity to the narrative. Patroclus' narration also allows the reader to experience the growth and evolution of his relationship with Achilles. He begins his life as a shy and hesitant boy, unsure of his place in the world, but over time, he becomes a confident and capable companion to Achilles. Through his narration, we see the love and devotion between the two men deepen and evolve as they face increasingly difficult challenges together.

The narrator, who serves as the conduit between Madeline Miller's message and the reader's understanding of it, plays an important role in each of her stories. Miller is attempting to convey a different version of a well-known story, and she also hopes the reader will take away some moral lessons. She has acknowledged in numerous interviews how challenging it is for her to create the appropriate tone when sharing her tales since she feels obligated to make amends for individuals who were mistreated by the ideals encountered in the

original text. The narrator serves as her guide, so she does not care how many years she must spend searching for it. For instance, Miller spent 10 years crafting *The Song Of Achilles*, and this lengthy writing period was partly caused by her tireless search for Patroclus' voice. As she explains in The Saturday interview that, she 'erased five years' worth of writing in favour of a new version of the novel, in which the voice of the character she loved about so passionately sounded more honest.

She says she has discovered Patroclus as her narrator but is still forming his speech patterns and relies excessively on epic literature's diction. Also, his character and goal in the book were more in line with the message she transmits. In her opinion, Patroclus is a person who is drawn into the epic genre because he is in love with Achilles and they both share strong feelings towards each other. She preferred that he be formed by the realm of classical lyric poetry, which is the poetry of friendship, love, and inward emotion. As a result, she chose to make Patroclus the narrator of *The Song Of Achilles*.

She encapsulated the central theme of each of her works by allowing the voices of those who had been silenced to be heard and conveying their tales, particularly those of women, slaves, and queer characters who were, seemingly, historically marginalised. Miller has shown individual responsibility and paid a lot of attention while writing this book. Achilles is an epic man, and Patroclus is not one. He is just a regular man. But he is stronger than he realises, and when he goes out to others and provides what he believes to be helpful, that very tiny assistance has had a really positive impact.

Also, from Patroclus' point of view as the story's spectator, the problematic elements of ancient Greek culture and traditions are brought to light. The most alarming aspects of their viewpoints are those related to slavery and gender norms. Slavery was condoned and continued by the Greeks, as can be seen in Homer's works, mostly because they used common men and women from the lands they conquered as slave labourers for domestic and agricultural work. Aristotle was the most notable of the famous writers and philosophers who recognised and saw the necessity of this practise.

According to the gender norms that the ancient Greek culture believed in, the majority of female slaves and a few male slaves end up sharing their owners' beds. Contrary to how we define gender and sex, the Greeks used both categories interchangeably. Furthermore, the ancient culture did not regard masculinity and femininity in the same way that we do today, which has resulted in a wide range of behaviours and social standards. Their conceptions of masculinity, in particular, were limited to the physical attributes of a stereotypical Homeric hero as well as the mental qualities of strength, physical power, and courage, which presented difficulties for those men who did not meet those criteria.

One such man, whose feelings and characteristics were more in line with those of women, is Patroclus. Greek philosophers presented a realistic perspective of the antiquated biological conventions that governed Greek society. As De Beauvoir noted and covered in her writing *The Second Sex*, whether a woman was a free person or a slave, her rights were severely limited and seldom respected because the male sex was seen as superior and the female sex as an inferior being that had to be subjugated. The ideals of biological

conventions in society can be recognised in the Iliad by the way males treat all female characters and the criticism Patroclus receives from people who think he is not manly enough.

Miller is able to critique the antiquated Greek ideas that would be considered unacceptable by modern standards by using Patroclus' point of view to present a realistic, fresh interpretation of the already existing events and characters in Homer's poem. Miller also uses Homer's descriptions to create a 'neutral' and 'keen' narrator in her novel who is able to see through the intentions and true nature of most characters, giving the classic poem a whole new meaning. Patroclus is portrayed as a cunning and morally driven man in the Iliad, which works in Miller's favour.

Nevertheless, Patroclus continues to be the story's narrator even after his death. Until they both depart from this world, he keeps watch over his loved ones, Achilles and Briseis in the form of a ghost. The concluding events of Homer's epic and what follows in Miller's interpretation is the deaths of Achilles and Briseis and the collapse of Troy which are realistically interpreted. Even yet, Patroclus makes one of his first contributions to the original work while he is still alive by offering his viewpoint on Achilles' father, King Peleus.

Even if it was ordered by the gods, the old man's choice to rape the Goddess Thetis makes him unhappy, and it sows a doubt about the King of Phthia's seeming, well-known compassion. Although Patroclus respects Peleus goodwill for giving him and other youths sanctuary, he recognises the advantages behind this 'selfless' deed. "here is where I

tasted the full truth of Peleus' kindness: well-trained and indebted, we would one day make him a fine army. (Miller 23)

In the new interpretation of the classical text, Patroclus' appraisal of other significant characters is also crucial. He is aware of Odysseus's strategic and occasionally cunning thinking, for instance there is, "I should have known that Odysseus would not come with tawdry blackmail as his only coin. The stories named him Polutrops, the man of many turnings" (Miller 155). Despite not being the cruellest or most morally reprehensible character in the Iliad, Odysseus is still incredibly cunning and cool-headed when it comes to his own benefit.

Odysseus' comments about Patroclus and Achilles' relationship, his acceptance of the treatment of the female slaves, and the bloodbaths during the raids are the most obvious examples of the king of Ithaca's behaviour that Patroclus highlights in his narration because he is able to see these traits early in the story. Patroclus and Odysseus have a link based on their mutual respect and adoration for one another. This bond is reinforced during their final encounter, when Patroclus, who is now a ghost, asks for his assistance out of respect. Miller rewrites this passage as follows; "Our peace is in your head" (Miller 345) highlighting the character development of Odysseus over the course of the narrative. Despite his attempts and failures to keep his word, Odysseus' words demonstrate how his understanding of the Greek traditions and ideologies he had always upheld has changed.

His last words about Patroclus are full of respect and admiration for the boy, and he compares the strength and love of their relationship with the one he shares with his wife. In his earlier apparitions, he had disapproved of Patroclus for his "weak" demeanour and the "shameful" relationship with Achilles. The narration of Patroclus

supports Odysseus' honesty and reassures the reader of the veracity of his character's progress.

Moreover, the story is fundamentally shaped by Patroclus' understanding of issues like female slavery, domestic and sexual violence, and the effects of war. It is crucial to highlight certain fundamental distinctions between Patroclus' perspective on them, which can be seen as the author's modern ideology in the novel and Homer's perspective on them in the poem *Iliad*. When Patroclus' youth is first described in the book, it is clear that he is already aware of the widespread maltreatment of women in his culture. Due to a mental disease that is not specifically mentioned in the narrative, her mother is subjected to physical violence by his father and is ridiculed and ignored by everyone else. As a result, Patroclus is usually quick to notice when other characters, especially women are subjected to the same abuse, for instance the way he tries to save Brieses from the men of Trojan war who were trying to assault her and objectify her.

His explanation of Achilles' parents' union show how against he is of the vision his society has of women. He defines the encounter between his parents as the story of Thetis' ravishment,

Everyone, even I, had heard the story of Thetis' ravishment. The gods had led Peleus to the secret place where she liked to sit upon the beach. They had warned him not to waste time with overtures- she would never consent to marriage with a mortal(Miller18).

No other male character in both Miller's book and Homer's poem is able to perform what Patroclus does in any circumstance. Achilles due to his sexuality and his bond with Patroclus, has no interest in having female partners, but he does not complain

when other people exploit female slaves or war trophies. In contrast, Patroclus is visibly uncomfortable and opposed to the sexual violence against women that is so pervasive in his culture, even though he does experience attraction to a variety of women throughout the novel. He even makes an effort to aid them on a number of occasions, something that other male characters view as a weakness, by begging Achilles to take them as his battle spoils so that the other troops won't treat them badly.

His perception of the conflict is a significant additional theme in Patroclus' narration. All men are portrayed in Homer's *Iliad* as brutal warriors for whom victory is defined by honour and glory at all costs. In Miller's interpretation, the war and particularly its aftermath are viewed from the viewpoint of a person who neither is nor wants to be a soldier. He is repeatedly criticised for his lack of combat prowess, but when Chiron offers him the chance to learn them, he rejects the offer, choosing to become a doctor, a profession that seems appropriate for someone who wants to serve everyone.

But, near the conclusion of the book, when he enters the arena to fight in Achilles' stead, he is overcome by the adrenaline of the battle and demonstrates that he was truly a competent fighter, which emphasises the significance of his decision to hold off on fighting until then. Patroclus' opposition to military service is motivated by his dislike of it rather than his lack of fighting prowess. He is a man who has been banished, lacks a title, and has no need to protect his honour or his land. To him war means only death and nothing else. He lamented his fellow soldiers in the same way that he regretted the dead Trojans and the innocent lives lost in battle since he is aware of the devastation caused by the conflict. When Achilles declines to fight, it is his sorrow for his dying friends that drives Patroclus to try anything to persuade Achilles to rejoin the battle. However, it is the same emotion that drives him into combat as "Achilles" and

ultimately which takes his life. The following remarks “Some men gain glory after they die, while others fade. What is admired in one generation is abhorred in another” (Miller 147) is spoken by Odysseus in relation to Patroclus as he is attempting to persuade Pyrrhus, Achilles’ son, to engrave Patroclus’ name in their joint grave. The message that these words convey wonderfully captures the significance of having Patroclus as the narrator of this story. Because most of us are not Achilles, but we can still be Patroclus, an ethical person.

Yet, history is constantly evolving, and although in Homer’s day the god-like heroes and the most skilled warriors were recognised and adored, today it is the victorious and honourable men with their moral sense who are admired. Because of this, the reader is able to examine the gendered roles assigned to the various individuals in Patroclus’ story as to the sensitivity he conveys through his narrative. Yet, Patroclus dared to disobey the rules that a man had to uphold, in order to receive respect in return, defying the ideas that had been upheld by his community for millennia. The way he viewed Homer’s poetry was altered by his sensitivity to other characters, to gender norms that he believed were unfair, and to the unfair treatment that women endured at the hands of males.

The narration of Patroclus becomes a ray of hope for all readers. Patroclus’ by daring to fall in love with another man and not feeling ashamed of it in a society where such relationships were mocked and threatened; by wanting and trying to fight for what de Beauvoir in her work *The Second sex* would define as equality among all beings; by having a more humanistic view of his own society and believing that all ideologies could be changed for the better. All those characters who have always been the victims but who now have a voice in contemporary storylines to reclaim their rights.

Until now, the paper focused on narratology; now, when it comes to narrative techniques, Miller uses several narrative techniques in *The Song Of Achilles* to create a powerful and immersive story.

A first-person narrative is a mode of storytelling in which a storyteller recounts events from their own point of view, using the first person such as I, we, our, and ourselves. It may be narrated by a first-person protagonist or other focal character, a first-person re-teller, a first-person witness, or a first-person peripheral. This device allows the audience to see the narrator's mind's eye view of the fictional universe, but it is limited to the narrator's experiences and awareness of the true state of affairs. In some stories, first-person narrators may relay dialogue with other characters or refer to information they heard from the other characters in order to try to deliver a larger point of view. Other stories may switch the narrator between different characters in order to introduce a broader perspective. An unreliable narrator is one who has completely lost credibility due to ignorance, poor insight, personal biases, mistakes, and dishonesty, which challenges the reader's initial assumptions. Here in *The Song Of Achilles*, the story is told from Patroclus' point of view, which creates a personal and intimate connection between the reader and the narrator. This allows the reader to experience Patroclus' emotions and thoughts in a way that would not be possible with a third-person narration.

A flashback, sometimes called an analepsis, is an interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point in the story. Flashbacks are often used to recount events that happened before the story's primary sequence of events to fill in crucial backstory. In the opposite direction, or prolepsis, events are revealed that will occur in the future. Both flashbacks and flash forwards are used to cohere a story, develop a character, or add structure to the narrative. In literature, internal analepsis is

a flashback to an earlier point in the narrative; external analepsis is a flashback to a time before the narrative started. The novel frequently employs flashbacks to Patroclus' childhood and earlier experiences, giving the reader insight into his character and motivations. These flashbacks also provide context and depth to the story as we learn about the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles.

Foreshadowing is a narrative device in which a storyteller gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. Foreshadowing often appears at the beginning of a story, and it helps develop or subvert the audience's expectations about upcoming events. The writer may implement foreshadowing in many different ways, such as through character dialogues, plot events, and changes in setting. Even the title of a work or a chapter can act as a clue that suggests what is going to happen. Foreshadowing in fiction creates an atmosphere of suspense in a story so that the readers are interested and want to know more. The literary device is generally used to build anticipation in the minds of readers about what might happen next and add dramatic tension to a story. Moreover, foreshadowing can make extraordinary and bizarre events appear credible, and some events are predicted so that the audience feels that it anticipated them. The novel uses foreshadowing to create a sense of tension and anticipation in the reader. We know from the beginning that the story will end tragically, and this knowledge hangs over the narrative, heightening the emotional impact of the events that unfold. Symbolism is a literary device that uses symbols, be they words, people, marks, locations, or abstract ideas, to represent something beyond the literal meaning.

It can elevate writing to a sensory experience. Symbols can give words double meanings, both literal and figurative, and writers can say more with less. Symbolism can also be a sort of secret language between the writer and the reader. The novel uses several symbols to convey meaning and add depth to the story. For example, the horses

that are given to Patroclus by Achilles' mother Thetis represent the bond between the two men and the inevitability of their fate.

A mythological allusion is when a piece of art, literature, or music hints at a piece of mythology. This mythological allusion could be with regard to the country's indigenous culture or a reference to another culture's mythology. The novel draws heavily on Greek mythology, incorporating figures such as the gods and goddesses as well as the Trojan War. These references add a sense of epic grandeur to the story while also providing a framework for the narrative.

The narrative techniques used in *The Song Of Achilles* are essential in conveying the emotional depth and complexity of the story. They enable the reader to become fully immersed in the world of the characters and experience their joys, sorrows, and tragedies. They help to create a story that is rich in emotion, depth, and complexity. They enable the reader to fully engage with the characters and the world they inhabit and to explore complex themes such as love, sacrifice, and destiny.

Chapter Three

Memory and Trauma.

Memories play a central role in the novel, shaping the characters and the events that unfold. First, memories drive the plot of the novel. Patroclus' memories of his childhood, his exile, and his time with Achilles drive the narrative forward as he recounts the events that led to their eventual confrontation with the Trojans, "I am made of memories." (Miller 350) Patroclus' memories are a vehicle for the reader to learn about the characters and their motivations. Secondly, memories shape the characters. Patroclus' memories of his mother's abuse and neglect shape his personality, making him withdrawn and fearful.

It is the only memory I have of my mother and so golden that I am almost sure I have made it up. After all, it was unlikely for my father to have allowed us to be alone together, his simple son and simpler wife. And where are we? I do not recognize the beach, the view of coastline. So much has passed since then (Miller 03).

Achilles' memories of his mother's prophetic warning and his father's neglect shape his own personality, making him driven and proud. Memories also shape the characters' relationships with each other. Patroclus' memories of his love for Achilles and Achilles' memories of their time together create a bond that shapes their actions and decisions throughout the novel.

Finally, memories provide a sense of continuity and connection in the novel. The characters' memories of their shared experiences, such as their training together as boys or their time in the Trojan War, create a sense of shared history and connection.

Memories also connect the characters to their past and their cultural traditions, such as Achilles' memories of his divine mother and his belief in the honour and glory of heroic deeds. Through memories, the novel explores the lives of every character in the novel.

The Theory of Explicit Memory was first introduced by an Estonian scientist named Endel Tulving in his 1972 book entitled *Organisation of Memory*. Explicit memory is a type of long-term memory that involves the conscious and intentional recollection of past experiences and information. It is also known as declarative memory because it involves the ability to declare or explicitly state the information that is being recalled. Explicit memory is contrasted with implicit memory, which involves the unconscious and automatic retrieval of past experiences and information without conscious awareness. Explicit memory can be further divided into two subtypes: episodic memory and semantic memory. Episodic memory refers to the memory of specific events and experiences that occur at a particular time and place. Semantic memory, on the other hand, refers to the memory of general knowledge and facts that are not tied to a specific event or experience.

The process of forming and retrieving explicit memories involves several stages, including encoding, consolidation, and retrieval. Encoding refers to the initial acquisition and processing of information, while consolidation involves the strengthening and stabilization of the memory over time. Retrieval refers to the process of accessing and recalling the stored memory when needed.

The Song Of Achilles by Madeline Miller is a novel that explores the role of explicit memory in shaping the characters and events of the story. The main character, Patroclus, relies heavily on explicit memory to recount his experiences and relationships with the other characters, particularly Achilles.

This, I say. This and this. The way his hair looked in summer sun. His face when he ran. His eyes, solemn as an owl at lessons. This and this and this. So many moments of happiness, crowding forward (Miller 350).

Throughout the novel, Patroclus engages in explicit memory recall, to describe his childhood experiences, his relationship with his father and his exile from his homeland.

My father had spent his life scrabbling to keep his kingdom, and would not risk losing it over such a son as me, when heirs and the wombs that bore them were so easy to come by. So he agreed: I would be exiled, and fostered in another man's kingdom (Miller 17)

Memories of Patroclus are mostly of his time with Achilles right from meeting him in the beginning when they were present as suitors for marriage to King Tyndareus' daughter Helen. He was nine years old when he saw Achilles for the first time. Patroclus was very much attracted towards the valour, charisma and also with the physical appearance of Achilles. Their bond grew closer when Patroclus was exiled from his own kingdom and went to King Peleus court, where he met Achilles as the prince, Thus, from the beginning to even after death Patroclus' mind overflows with memories of Achilles.

He relies on explicit memory to recount his time spent with Achilles, including their shared experiences in training, battles, and their romantic relationship. Patroclus' explicit memories of Achilles shape his understanding of their relationship, and he often

uses these memories to justify his loyalty to Achilles, even in the face of danger and opposition. Patroclus's memories of Achilles are depicted as a source of comfort, joy, and pain. They highlight the depth of their bond and the impact that Achilles had on Patroclus's life.

Achilles, on the other hand, also relies on explicit memory to guide his actions and decisions. His memories of his mother's prophetic warning and his father's neglect shape his motivation to become a heroic warrior, while his explicit memories of his victories and defeats on the battlefield influence his sense of pride and honour. Additionally, Achilles' explicit memory of his relationship with Patroclus shapes his emotional responses throughout the novel, as he struggles with his love for Patroclus in the face of societal expectations and obligations. Achilles' childhood memories are, where he is shown to be a gifted athlete and warrior even at a young age. The moment when he first meets Patroclus at his father King Peleus' court gets the knowledge about Patroclus exile is what draws him to Patroclus despite their differences in social status. His training with Chiron, where he learns to become a skilled fighter and develops a reputation as one of the best warriors of his time.

His relationship with his mother, the sea goddess Thetis, who is overprotective and manipulative, and The Trojan War, where he fights heroically and leads the Greek army to victory, Throughout the novel, Thetis is depicted as a complex and often difficult character who has a profound impact on Achilles. The memories of Thetis in the novel involve her emotional abuse of Achilles. For instance, she manipulates Achilles and forcefully makes him marry Deidemia, with whom he has no affection or care. Thetis also makes Achilles do this marriage even after knowing that he loves Patroclus. She is deeply concerned with Achilles' destiny and his role in the Trojan War, and she frequently expresses her fears and frustrations through harsh criticism and

verbal attacks. This emotional abuse contributes to Achilles' trauma and emotional struggles, and it creates a sense of distance and mistrust between mother and son.

Another significant memory of Thetis is her role in Achilles' training and preparation for the war. Thetis is depicted as a skilled warrior herself, and she passes on her knowledge and skills to her son. However, this training also comes at a cost, as Achilles is forced to suppress his emotions and his sense of self in order to become the warrior his mother wants him to be.

Despite her flaws and difficult behaviour, Thetis is also depicted as a complex and loving mother towards the end of the novel after the death of her son, which shows how deeply she cares for him. "She remembers feeling the child within her, luminous in the dark of her womb." (Miller 350) She is fiercely protective of Achilles, and she is devastated by his prophesied death. This love and protectiveness add depth and complexity to Thetis' character, and it highlights the complexities of familial relationships in the context of the mythological world of the novel.

The role of explicit memory is also evident in the novel's exploration of cultural traditions and mythology. Memories provide the reader with a deeper understanding of Patroclus and Achilles characters, their motivations, and their actions, and those memories not only inform the reader of the depth of their relationship but also drive the plot and the characters' actions. The explicit memories in the novel also serve to emphasize the importance of storytelling and the power of memory. Throughout the novel, characters share stories and memories as a means of connecting with each other and preserving their experiences. It also gives an insight into the characters. These memories also serve as a way for the characters to immortalise themselves, as they will be remembered long after they are gone.

In general, the theory of explicit memory is a central theme in *The Song Of Achilles*, as it shapes the characters, events, and cultural context of the novel. Through the use of explicit memory recall, the novel explores the complexity of human experience and the power of memory to shape our identities, relationships, and understanding of the world around us. Overall, the importance of explicit memories in *The Song Of Achilles* lies in their ability to provide insight into the characters' experiences and motivations, drive the plot, and emphasize the power of storytelling and memory. However, memories can also be a source of pain and trauma, "But the memories, faster than I can hold them back. They do not come as words, but like dreams, rising as scent from the rain wet earth. This, I well up like spring water say. This and this." (Miller350)

Trauma refers to a distressing or disturbing experience or event that overwhelms a person's ability to cope. Trauma can be caused by a single event, such as a natural disaster or physical assault, or it can be the result of ongoing, repeated experiences, such as emotional or physical abuse, neglect, or living in a war zone. Trauma can have a profound impact on a person's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It can cause a range of symptoms, including anxiety, depression, hypervigilance, dissociation, and flashbacks. Trauma can also affect a person's relationships, work, and daily functioning. In the novel memories lead the characters into traumatic lives. While the novel primarily focuses on love and mythology, it also touches on traumatic aspects and their impact on the characters of Patroclus, Achilles, and Brieses.

Patroclus experiences the profound trauma of exile when he is forced to flee from his home after accidentally killing a boy. This trauma shapes his character and influences many of the decisions he makes throughout the story. Patroclus is the son of a king, but he is not a warrior like his father and is often seen as weak and unmanly.

When he accidentally kills a boy during a game, his father exiles him from his home and sends him to live with King Peleus, the father of Achilles. At first, Patroclus is grateful for the refuge and protection that Achilles and King Peleus provide, but he also feels a deep sense of shame and loss. He misses his family and his home, and he is tormented by the memory of the boy he killed.

That night I dreamed of the dead boy, his skull cracked like an egg against the ground. He has followed me. The blood spreads, dark as spilled wine. His eyes open, and his mouth begins to move. I clap my hands over my ears. The voices of the dead were said to have the power to make the living mad. I must not hear him speak (Miller 22).

Patroclus also struggles to find a place in the new world he has been thrust into, where he is an outsider and a non-warrior. This trauma of exile causes Patroclus to become introspective and reflective, and he develops a deep empathy for others who are also marginalised or excluded. He forms a close bond with Achilles, who also feels like an outsider in his own way, and he becomes his most trusted companion and confidante. As the story progresses and the Trojan War begins, Patroclus faces new challenges and traumas, but his experience of exile remains a central part of his character. He never forgets where he comes from, and he is always driven by a desire to belong and to find a place in the world.

Patroclus' trauma of exile in *The Song Of Achilles* is a powerful and moving portrayal of the impact that displacement and exclusion can have on a person's identity and sense of self-worth. It also highlights the importance of empathy

and connection in helping people heal from trauma and find a sense of belonging.

When it comes to the traumatic life of Achilles, the trauma that he experiences is his separation from his mother. Thetis knows that Achilles is destined to be a great warrior, but she also knows that he will die young if he fights in the Trojan War. To protect him, she sends him away to live with King Peleus, his father, who is a mortal. Achilles grows up feeling a deep sense of longing and abandonment because of his separation from his mother. He also struggles with his identity as a demigod, feeling torn between his human and divine heritage.

The trauma that Achilles experiences in the latter part of the novel is the loss of his beloved companion and lover, Patroclus. When Patroclus is killed in battle, Achilles is devastated and struggles to overcome his grief. His rage and thirst for revenge led him to commit a series of violent acts, culminating in his killing of Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior. Through his experiences, Achilles learns the cost of his great power and the pain of his destiny as a hero. He also learns the value of love and loyalty, as his bond with Patroclus is the one thing that gives him solace and purpose.

Achilles' traumas are a powerful exploration of the complexities of heroism, identity, and the human experience. They show how even the most powerful and invincible heroes can be vulnerable to emotional pain and how love and connection can be both a source of strength and a source of sorrow.

Briseis experiences a profound trauma when she is taken as a prize of war by Achilles and forced to live with him as his captive. Briseis is a Trojan princess who is captured by the Greeks when they sack her city. As a beautiful and valuable prize of war, she is given to Achilles as a spoil of victory. However, Briseis still suffers from the

trauma of being taken from her home and family and forced to live with her captors. She feels angry and resentful towards Achilles and the Greeks for their invasion and destruction of her city and people. She also feels powerless and vulnerable as a woman living in a world dominated by men.

As the story progresses, Briseis becomes increasingly aware of the larger political and social forces in the war and begins to question her own loyalties and identity. She is torn between her love for and loyalty to her own people and her growing feelings for Achilles and the Greeks.

Achilles, Patroclus, and Briseis each experience trauma in different ways, which influences their personalities and motivations. For Achilles, the trauma of his separation from his mother and the loss of Patroclus drive his actions and decisions throughout the novel. His grief and rage after Patroclus' death push him to seek revenge against the Trojans, leading to his ultimate downfall. Patroclus' trauma of exile and his struggle to find a place in the world inform his compassionate and empathetic nature. He is driven by a desire to connect with others and to help those who are marginalized or excluded. Briseis' trauma of captivity and displacement highlights the impact of war on civilians and the ways in which gender and power intersect in conflict.

In addition to influencing the characters, trauma also drives the plot of the story. The Trojan War is itself a traumatic event that shapes the lives of all those involved, and the actions of the characters are driven by their attempts to deal with the trauma they have experienced. The characters in the story, both soldiers and civilians, experience various forms of trauma as a result of the war. Achilles, Patroclus, and Briseis all suffer from the psychological effects of combat and displacement, which shape their personalities and influence their actions.

Achilles, as a warrior and hero, experiences the trauma of battle first hand. He is driven by a desire for glory and honour, but he also struggles with the knowledge that his actions have dire consequences for himself and others. His rage and grief after Patroclus' death led him to commit acts of extreme violence, but they also reveal the depth of his pain and vulnerability.

Patroclus, as a non-combatant and outsider, experiences the trauma of exile and displacement. He feels alienated from the world around him and struggles to find a sense of purpose and belonging. His compassion and empathy for others are born out of his own experiences of marginalisation and exclusion.

Briseis, as a captive and victim of war, experiences the trauma of violence and powerlessness. She is forced to live with her captors and witnesses the destruction of her city and people. Her experiences highlight the impact of war on civilians and the ways in which women are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence in conflict. The portrayal of war trauma in *The Song Of Achilles* is a powerful reminder of the human cost of war and the enduring psychological effects of violence and displacement.

It also highlights the importance of empathy and understanding in helping individuals and communities heal from the trauma of conflict. The role of trauma in *The Song Of Achilles* highlights the ways in which our experiences can shape our identities, motivations, and relationships. The trauma of war and the memories of the characters are marked by the violence, loss, and displacement they have experienced. Achilles, Patroclus, and Briseis all carry the memories of the war with them, influencing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

The portrayal of memory and trauma in *The Song Of Achilles* highlights the ways in which our past experiences continue to shape our present lives, even as we

strive to move forward and find meaning in our lives. It also emphasizes the importance of empathy and understanding in helping individuals and communities heal from the trauma of the past.

Chapter Four.

Gender role conflict.

The socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and persons of all genders are referred to as gender. It affects how individuals behave and interact, how they see themselves and other people, and how power and resources are distributed in society. Gender identity exists on a continuum and can evolve over time; it is not limited to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man). The roles that people and groups take on, the expectations that are placed on them, how they interact with others, and the nuanced ways that gender is institutionalised in society all contribute to the wide range of how people and groups interpret, experience, and express gender. Also, gender is constructed in various ways among countries. They primarily concentrate on the roles that men and women are supposed to play. The socialisation process is important in imposing these roles on male and female children. Roles in production and reproduction, paid and unpaid employment, power dynamics, and politics are among the contrasts.

Existing roles and relationships between men and women are questioned, and gender norms are also questioned and altered. Both men and women must conform to specific social roles. Women were socially conditioned to only act in specific ways and fulfil certain responsibilities, such as those that involved being productive and having children. For instance, women are expected to perform caring and nurturing reproductive tasks by society. Women's social position to see that reproductive tasks are more suited to them than productive or community roles. Nonetheless, there are differences in how men and women view their own traits, duties, and tasks that are not based on sexual orientation. It is given to them in accordance with the perceived disparities, which are therefore social constructs. These responsibilities vary amongst

different societies according to the dominant cultural system, such as patriarchy. Activities that are given to men and women must be based on these varied perceptions in accordance with gender norms. In the majority of developing nations, women have a triple burden. They play three different kinds of roles: political, community managing, and reproductive. Childbearing, childrearing, caring for elderly family members, and home labour are all reproductive roles. Women perform productive tasks in addition to their reproductive responsibilities as secondary wage earners. The economic activities carried out by women are not taken into account.

The productive jobs include part-time employment, wage work in agriculture, caring for dairy animals, and involvement in urban informal sectors. In addition to the aforementioned two, women are active in politics and community administration. It is regarded as a continuation of fruitful labour. Provision and maintenance of community resources for shared use are among the actions and roles. Also, they are involved in the community's overall health care and education. Women who work in politics and community roles are not paid. Unlike women, men do participate in community politics and activities, but they get paid either in cash or kind. In many societies, women also carry out productive activities such as maintaining small pieces of land, agricultural plots for farming systems and animal husbandry. These tasks are often not considered as work and are often unpaid. Women may also perform. Many roles attract wages in both the formal and informal economic sectors. But women's economically productive roles, in contrast to men's, are often undervalued or given relatively little recognition.

Gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and the roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can be positive or

negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others. Gender has appeared in religious, philosophical, and literary works for centuries. Aristotle in the work *Miles* states that, “Woman is more compassionate than man and has a greater propensity to tears... But the male... is more disposed to give assistance in danger, and is more courageous than the female” (10).

Here Aristotle tries to portray an image of an ideal guy and an ideal wife. And the list of these qualities is limitless. Everyone is expected to behave that way by our society. The shattered standing of women in our society is mostly due to these gender norms. a culture where women are viewed as subhuman, crazy, and ardent. the person who prioritises their house and seeks permission before undertaking any work. Men also thought about doing the exact opposite. aggressive, rivalrous, superior, and domineering. These qualities are ingrained in a child’s heart from the moment of her birth, if not earlier. Thus, they merge completely with their personalities. These preconceptions eventually caused females to view themselves as inferior. And soon they stopped experimenting with new things.

Gender roles were well established in ancient Greece, where men were supposed to be warriors and keep a specific code of honour. Contrarily, women were supposed to submit and perform household tasks. Nonetheless, the novel *The Song Of Achilles* depicts women as being less influential and less powerful than men. Women are expected to be subservient, obedient, and to help men in their endeavours.

Gandhi fought tirelessly for the rights of women. He had a strong sense of women’s potential. He freed the women from their houses and established their parity with males in all spheres of endeavour. He consistently encouraged the populace to view women as equal partners. Woman is not a plaything for man. A woman wants to

exercise her birthright to freedom and equality. She, therefore, has the greatest need for knowledge. Mahatma Gandhi in his book *Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi* describes;

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be. If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?(12)

According to Gandhi, women have the right to be born free and equal. She is qualified for any role in life. Gandhi forced women to leave their homes and participate in all facets of society. Under his leadership, thousands of women played key roles in independence campaigns. If men and women are essentially the same, their issues must also be the same. Both of them share the same emotions and way of life. The two are essential to one another. Gandhi associates women with ahimsa and satyagraha. Ahimsa is the Sanskrit word for endless love and suffering. A woman displays affection in the greatest degree. She demonstrates it when she carries and feeds the baby. She endures daily suffering for the sake of her child. Gandhi considers women to be the embodiment of ahimsa. They are able to spread such love to all others.

In *The Song Of Achilles*, female characters Deidameia and Brieses frequently have a weak voice and are dictated to by male characters. Achilles' wife Deidameia is

described as being subservient and obedient to him despite his lack of interest in her and his decision to leave her alone despite the fact that she was pregnant, due to Achilles' love for Patroclus. Furthermore, she never makes decisions on her own; instead, Achilles and her mother control every aspect of her life. Deidameia is portrayed as possessing domestic, conventionally feminine traits like passivity. She is also portrayed as being young, which is typically connected with innocence and lack of experience. Briseis is similarly depicted as being helpless and vulnerable to the desires of masculine characters. She is initially portrayed as a prize of war, a treasure that Achilles and Agamemnon will battle for. The men around Briseis are also determining her fate. In spite of being imprisoned, Briseis demonstrates fortitude and strength, refusing to let her situation break her. She also proves that she is capable of offering emotional support to others by becoming a source of help and consolation for Patroclus. She is presented as emotional and vulnerable, which are characteristics that are generally associated with women.

The mother of Achilles, Thetis, who is portrayed as being overbearing and cunning, is opposite to gender stereotype. Though being a woman, she does not attribute to feminine characteristics more often. Thetis is not well-liked by the other characters in the book, and her actions are frequently interpreted as being against her son's best interests. In the novel Thetis also possesses a great deal of power and agency. The capacity for goal-setting and decision-making is known as agency. Women can exercise agency in a variety of contexts, including as individuals and as a group inside the family, in markets, politics, and other formal and informal networks. Our empowerment strategy is based on agency. It speaks to women's and girls' ability to act with intention and pursue goals without fear of retaliation or violence. The three primary manifestations of agency are collaborative action, leadership, and decision-

making. They aren't merely elements for agency, but rather means by which women and girls can take control of their own lives. During the skills and practises of becoming a woman, the body is acted upon by both others and a conscious self. Saba Mahmood an anthropology professor in her article '*Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent*' (2005) states ;

Habitus in this older Aristotelian tradition is understood to be an acquired excellence at either a moral or a practical craft, learned through repeated practice until that practice leaves a permanent mark on the character of the person. Thus, moral virtues (such as modesty, honesty, and fortitude) are acquired through a coordination of outward behaviours (e.g., bodily acts, social demeanour) with inward dispositions (e.g., emotional states, thoughts, intentions) through the repeated performance of acts that entail those particular virtues (136).

Mahmood discusses how women schooled themselves purposefully in feminine virtues to resemble their goals. Women who were not shy by nature, for instance, would attempt to become shy. After some practise, they developed an ingrained sense of modesty and shyness. Mahmood's ideas about agency serve as a useful starting point for an investigation into the ways in which women actively shape their personas as proper and respectable women, including coping mechanisms for both actual and symbolic violence, such as how women react to offensive comments and gestures in public places. Moreover, agency is practice-focused, and by incorporating embodiment into the analysis, her embodied approach expands the poststructuralist and feminist liberal conceptions of subjectivity construction.

In *The Song Of Achilles*, the character-building process for Achilles involves Thetis. She is a perfect example of agency since she always aspires to exercise her will and power over everyone around her, particularly her son Achilles. She is revealed to be a complicated individual who possesses both caring and cunning traits. She overprotects her son and worries about his future because she is aware that he will perish in the Trojan War. They argue as a result of Thetis' attempts to stop Achilles from participating in the battle. But, this disagreement also demonstrates Thetis's unwavering love for her son and her willingness to do whatever it takes to keep him safe. The relationship between Achilles and Patroclus also involves Thetis. She initially has a negative opinion of their relationship but later changes her mind. She is aware of Achilles' real affection for Patroclus and his value to him. Initially, she urges Achilles to stay away from Patroclus because she is confident that their love would make him more indefinite. Thetis' status as a deity serves as another example of her agency. She is strong and skilled at influencing the course of events. Achilles' future is secured by her, who makes sure he succeeds as history's greatest warrior. She makes arrangements for him to train with the centaur Chiron and acquire the unbreakable armour from Hephaestus. The character of Thetis, who represents the idea of agency in the novel is complicated and fascinating. She significantly influences both the fate of her son and the outcome of the Trojan War by her choices and deeds.

The idea of masculinity is one of the most fundamental gender stereotypes in *The Song Of Achilles*. Men were highly prized in ancient Greece, and warriors were supposed to be powerful, brave, and adept in combat. The characters of Achilles and Patroclus in the book represent the gender gap, where Patroclus is seen as weak and inferior since he lacks the traits of a warrior, whereas Achilles, as the son of a

goddess, is destined to become a great warrior and leader. Achilles, who is portrayed as the greatest warrior of all time, embodies the ideal of masculinity and is lauded for his physical prowess and valour, and he is frequently compared to a deity. If a soldier has all this power and prowess, then he would gain the title of *Aristos Achaion*, the best of the Greek. Achilles has this title because it is his destiny, as the prophecy had foretold: “I will be the best warrior in our generation.” (Miller 36) He does not, however, physically meet this criteria, as already been mentioned. Achilles embodies the beauty and grace that women look for in a guy. He is the son of the goddess, thus if it were not for his divine ancestry, his cousin Ajax would have received the title. “I pitied Ajax, a little. He would be *Aristos Achaion*, if Achilles were not.” (Miller 205)

Ajax has overgrown biceps and calluses on his hands as evidence of his thorough preparation for the war and realisation of demanding assignments. He is mentioned in a similar way later on by Patroclus in Troy, thus this is not the only time he is described in this way. He also brings up the rumours that were circulated among the soldiers, which highlight his heroic actions. His description contrasts sharply with that of Achilles, who is not only attractive but also shows no signs of training. His hands are exquisite from playing the lyre, not calloused at all.

Along the way we passed the camp of Achilles’ famous cousin, towering Ajax, King of the Isle of Salamis. We had seen him from afar at Aulis, and heard the rumours: he cracked the deck of the ship when he walked, he had borne a bull a mile on his back. We found him lifting huge bags out of his ship’s hold. His muscles looked large as boulders (Miller 205).

Gradually, Patroclus senses a change in Achilles' demeanour when they enter the battlefield. He initially justifies killing defenceless victims in order to live up to the heroic expectations that have been placed on him. He not only alters his earlier belief that he should not kill innocent guys to not kill unarmed men, but he also feels proud of his combat skills. This is an illustration of how Achilles compromises his own moral principles and alters his worldview to conform to social norms. The expectations society have on him result in his personal corruption.

Achilles gradually begins to exhibit unusually angry behaviour and an overly developed sense of honour, which would ultimately result in the slaughter and destruction of the Greek warriors: is a hybrid He succumbs to the toxic male heroic expectation due to the strain that society, the war, and his fate place on him. Achilles, however, is compelled to conform to Ancient Greek ideals since he is unable to escape this pressure, either due to his fate or as the prince of Phthia believes. "Our world was one of blood, and the honour it won; only cowards did not fight. For a prince there was no choice. You warred and won, or warred and died." (Miller 209)

This extreme sense of honour is what confronts him against Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, a very powerful and arrogant individual. Achilles first confronts Agamemnon at the start of the battle for refusing to kneel before him. They clash so frequently because Agamemnon, the Greek army's commander, and Achilles, the *aristos achaion*, both hope to be remembered as the war's greatest heroes. They have every right to be proud because they are Troy's most well-known warriors.

Agamemnon stepped forward. He opened his hands in a gesture of welcome and stood regally expectant, waiting for the bows, obeisance, and oaths of loyalty he was owed. It was Achilles' place to kneel and offer them. He did not kneel. He did not call

out a greeting to the great king, or incline his head or offer a gift (Miller 183).

In addition, his hybris alters his connection with Briseis in addition to condemning the Greek warriors to death because the Trojans were more powerful without him on the field of battle. At first, Achilles offers to keep Briseis as a thank-you for helping in the fight because he wants to spare her, the abuse that any other person would have meted out to her, she would have been treated like an object and no one would have felt bad about it. Patroclus persuades Achilles to accept her, knowing that she would be secure with them. Patroclus senses Agamemnon's intentions, and insists on Achilles to save her.

Agamemnon mounted the dais, and I saw his eyes slide over the girl, a slight smile on his lips. He was known, all the house of Atreus was, for his appetites. I do not know what came over me then. But I seized Achilles' arm, and spoke into his ear. Take her (Miller 214)

Another indication that Achilles is respected among soldiers and Patroclus is not evident. He needs to rely on Achilles' authority. But as the battle for Troy progresses, Achilles gradually begins to view Briseis as an object rather than a partner like Patroclus. This demonstrates the change in Achilles' deference towards Briseis to the objectifying nature of him due to poisonous masculine expectations imposed on him.

You know what he will do to her. 'It is his choice,' he repeated. He would deprive me of my honour? He would punish me? I will let him.' His eyes were lit with an inner fire. 'You will not help her?' 'There is nothing I can do,' he said with finality (Miller 270).

The Song Of Achilles also examines the idea of masculinity and its connection to homosexuality through the homosexual relationship of Achilles and Patroclus. Same-sex partnership were widespread in ancient Greece, but peoples' attitude towards them varied according to the couple ages and social standing. On the basis of how their connection defies conventional ideas of masculinity and sexuality, others around them see their love for one another as a sign of weakness. Almost every angle of human perception has been used to address the issue of homosexuality over the years. Presently, civilizations around the globe are more or less willing to have this conversation. The beginnings, though, were substantially more challenging. When we go back in history, we will notice that homosexuality was extremely high on the list of the taboo things, despite the fact that understanding of the modern notion of sexualities is growing around the world and is beginning to be considered as a relatively uncontroversial. There were a vast number of negative stereotypes. Darrell Steffensmeier and Renee Steffensmeier in the article *Sex Differences in Reactions to Homosexuals: Research Continuities and Further Developments* state that,

This stereotypes-perceived danger and psychological disturbance-both suggest that a sense of threat is associated with a rejection of the homosexual. A particularly interesting finding was that male subjects are especially rejecting of male homosexuals. Presumably male subjects tend to view the male homosexuals as a sexual failure and to perceive him as personally threatening or dangerous (9).

The existence of these stereotype places a greater emphasis on gay rights, homosexual persecutors, and views about homosexuality in various civilizations. The presence of these stereotypes goes hand in hand with another study, more focused on

gay rights and persecution of homosexuals as well as attitudes of different societies toward homosexuality. Susan Dicklich, Berwood Yost, and Bryan M in their study *Building a Barometer of Gay Rights (BGR): A Case Study of Uganda and the Persecution of Homosexuals* talk about a barometer of gay rights which "measures the degree to which a regime is rights protective, and society rights protective toward gays"(14) However, Dicklich, Yost, and Dougan also note that few nations in the world actually embrace homosexuals as valuable members of their society, and even fewer bestow full human rights on their homosexual citizens. They draw a connection between the efforts to advance human rights for people of different sexual orientations. In fact, gays have been compared to dogs and pigs and labelled as deviants, persons without rights, and Invisible. They have been denounced as paedophiles, destructive housewives, and outcasts.

Yet, homosexuals have existed since ancient times. Many nations and communities have approached homosexuality in different ways, with some allowing full marriage rights and others declaring it a capital offence. Accepting homosexuality is currently less challenging than it was in previous years, yet a significant amount of hostility is still prevalent and urgently has to be overcome.

The history of homosexuality, their rights, and their battles for acceptance and understanding are complicated issues that have a negative impact on various spheres of daily life and academic pursuits. The fight for fundamental human rights is where the majority of the problem rests. This campaign to uphold human rights. One of the hardest sections seems to be the homosexual communities, who struggle to be at least somewhat legal and socially equal to the heterosexual ones. Homosexuals must navigate a multilevel system and advance through each level in order to obtain their rights. One of the clearest instances of the acceptance of homosexuality without harsh

judgement or persecution is ancient Greece. Ancient speeches and writings about homosexuality can be found in sources, including how it received a more favourable perception.

The Pausanias' speech given in Plato's *Symposium*, refers to the so-called 'Common Love' which is tied not only to homosexuality but also to bisexuality. It says that people who live according to a practice of this Common Love feel affection toward both, male as well as female. Furthermore, Pausanias' speech talks about lovers in ancient Athens who were encouraged to pursue the object of their affections, and the object to resist or flee, in order to test the lover's perseverance and seriousness of purpose. This is not the only case when homosexuality was implemented. Homosexuality in some particular form was present even among the figures from higher social classes. Male homosexuality in the ancient Greeks is frequently thought to have developed as a result of a comradeship of arms between noble soldiers during the Heroic Period or as a result of an early ritual of religious initiation for men.

Literature has long been a source of knowledge about homosexuality and has been more accepting of the idea of powerful major homosexual characters, as well as optionally smaller characters. In *The Song Of Achilles*, Miller portrays the homosexual relationship between Achilles and Patroclus in an explicit way. When Patroclus and Achilles first meet as kids, they become fast friends before maturing into a romantic relationship. Throughout the Trojan War, they remain faithful to one another, with Patroclus acting as Achilles' closest friend and confidant. A deep heartfelt affection and love is shown to exist between Achilles and Patroclus. Right from the beginning to end, the love between two characters is very well interpreted from the original Homer's *Iliad* which shows Patroclus as merely a companion of Achilles and also shows him as a minor character. Whereas Miller writes her novel by having

the whole story narrated in Patroclus point of view. There are various scenes depicted in the novel where Patroclus and Achilles are together which shows their deep love and affection abruptly. During their childhood Patroclus and Achilles race with each other and Patroclus inspite of losing with Achilles, feels happy by seeing him win.

I did not mind anymore that I lost when we raced and I lost when we swam out to the rocks and I lost when we tossed spears or skipped stones. For who can be ashamed to lose to such beauty? (Miller 47).

Throughout the novel, they are together. Even when Thetis sends Achilles to the Island of Sycros without informing Patroclus about it ,the love between Patroclus and Achilles drives them together and however Patroclus finds Achilles. Achilles and Patroclus are presented as being inseparable throughout the book, with Patroclus acting as Achilles' closest friend, lover, and confidant. With depictions of the two characters sharing, cuddling, and other displays of affection, their relationship is characterised by strong physical and emotional intimacy. Their relationship is portrayed by Miller in a way that is consistent with ancient Greek views on same-sex relationships, which were frequently seen as normal and acceptable, especially between older males and younger boys. The ancient Greeks had a completely different perspective of sexuality than contemporary Western nations, and they had more complex and varied views on same-sex partnerships than contemporary western people have.

Homosexuality refers to a sexual orientation in which a person is attracted to people of the same gender. On the other hand, bisexuality refers to a sexual orientation in which a person is attracted to people of both the same and other

genders. There is no inherent relationship between gender identity and sexual orientation. A person's gender identity may or may not influence their sexual orientation, and vice versa. For example, a transgender woman may be attracted to other women and identify as a lesbian, or she may be attracted to both men and women and identify as bisexual. Similarly, a cisgender man may be attracted to other men and identify as gay, or he may be attracted to both men and women and identify as bisexual. It is important to recognise and respect the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations and to understand that they are complex and multifaceted aspects of human identity. Miller in the beginning of the novel embraced to write a new version of Homer's *Iliad* by interpreting it with Achilles and Patroclus relationship, gradually through her characters she brings out many societal issues and challenges which prevails even in contemporary period.

Chapter Five

Summation

The First chapter shows the relationship between American literature and Mythology. Given that mythology has been a crucial component of human narrative for thousands of years and that American literature draws on a wide variety of mythical traditions, American literature and mythology have a complicated relationship. The use of conventional myths and tales as source material is one way mythology shows up in American literature. For instance, numerous American authors have transformed Norse tales like the tale of Ragnarok or Greek myths like the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice into new works of fiction.

The creation of American writers' own myths, which draw on the country's rich cultural and historical traditions to produce works that captivate readers, is another example of the influence of mythology. This is evident in works by William Faulkner, who invented a fictional county in Mississippi that served as the location for several of his books, as well as in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, which utilises the whale as a metaphor of America's place in the world. In addition to these specific instances, mythology also plays a larger role in American literature by offering a collection of archetypes and symbols that authors can use to infuse their works with meaning. For instance, the hero's journey, a form of narrative that may be found in many mythical traditions, is a recurring subject in American literature, from Huckleberry Finn's experiences to *The Great Gatsby's* pursuit of the American Dream. the relationship between American literature and mythology is complex and multifaceted, with mythology serving as a rich source of inspiration and meaning for writers across many genres and traditions.

Just like the other works of American literature, Madeline Miller in her novel *The Song Of Achilles* takes mythology as a source material and frames her story plot. Miller's novel is based on Homer's *Iliad* which explicitly discusses about the Greek mythological hero Achilles. When Homer in his poem brings his main concepts as the end weeks of Trojan war and life of great hero Achilles, Miller in her novel interprets this concept of Homer by retelling the life of Achilles in through the narrative of Patroclus who is the major character in Miller's novel but a very minor character in Homer's poem. Patroclus is shown just as a mere friend of Achilles in Homer's poem, whereas Miller in her novel shows him as lover and a high-born companion.

The Second chapter title explains how Miller has made Homer's minor character Patroclus as her narrator. It also explains the narrative techniques of Miller such as foreshadowing, imagery, flashbacks, symbolism and allusions through which she has made Patroclus as the voice of her novel. A first-person point of view is one of the main narrative devices in the book. The reader may comprehend Patroclus's thoughts, feelings, and motivations because the story is recounted from his point of view. The story is more captivating and emotionally resonant as a result of this personal perspective, which forges a deep emotional bond between the reader and Patroclus.

The work also uses a non-linear style for its storyline. The narrative is told through a sequence of flashbacks and memories, allowing for the investigation of memory and how it affects the sense of self in the characters. When the reader pieces together the sequence of events that lead to the story's conclusion, this literary method builds tension and suspense. Miller enhances the story of the book with symbolism and imagery. For instance, the sea is a reoccurring theme in the narrative and stands for both risk and opportunity. The use of imagery and symbolism deepens the meaning of the story and makes reading more engaging.

Finally, Miller gives each character a unique narrative voice by using language and dialogue. Patroclus has a more reflective and expressive voice than Achilles, who speaks in a more formal and heroic manner. The characters' personalities and goals are more subtly portrayed through language and discourse used to separate them from one another. The narrative strategies used in *The Song Of Achilles* contribute to the creation of a rich and compelling novel that covers difficult concepts like love, gender, and bravery. The novel's strength and emotional resonance are a result of the first-person point of view, non-linear narrative structure, symbolism and imagery, and distinctive narrative voices. The Trojan War's events and their relationship with Achilles are seen through Patroclus' perspective. Throughout the course of the book, Patroclus is a complicated character, experiences substantial growth and development. He is a shy, insecure little child at the beginning of the novel, and his father views him as a disappointment. But when he is transferred to live with Achilles and his father, Peleus, his life takes a drastic change. He discovers love and acceptance there, and his friendship with Achilles becomes the plot's main focus.

Patroclus, the narrator, offers a distinctive viewpoint on the Trojan War's events. He is not a hero or a fighter; rather, he is a spectator who views and participates in the conflict from a distance. In contrast to the heroic and romanticised picture of the war that is frequently portrayed in literature, this enables the reader to perceive the human aspect of the conflict. Furthermore, the story is given further emotional depth by Patroclus's love for Achilles. The ultimate expression of their love, his sacrifices for Achilles are the result of his unshakable commitment to Achilles, which is both beautiful and devastating. The voice Patroclus provides for *The Song Of Achilles* is outstanding. One can see the human aspect of the Trojan War through his eyes, and his love for Achilles lends an emotional depth to the narrative that is both potent and

moving. Among the narrative techniques which are used by Miller in her novel flashbacks also remain as a major narrative technique. The Third chapter title focuses on the flashbacks, more precisely about the memories of the characters which further prolongs and acts as source of trauma. The connection between memory and trauma is one of the book's major themes. Both Achilles and Patroclus are plagued by their memories and prior events throughout the entire book. Achilles is driven to pursue glory and immortal fame on the battlefield by the agony of having his mother forsake him as well as his awareness of his own mortality. On the other side, Patroclus seeks comfort in Achilles' arms as a result of his childhood memories of cruelty and neglect.

It becomes evident later in the book how both individuals' suffering has affected both their personalities and their behaviour. Patroclus battles emotions of inadequacy and a sense of being unworthy of Achilles' love while Achilles contends with his need for glory and fear of dying. Through the course of the book, Miller examines the nuanced connection between memory and trauma, emphasising how trauma can affect how we perceive the outside world and how we view ourselves. The novel ultimately contends that facing trauma head-on, acknowledging and processing the grief, and seeking out love and connection as a form of healing are the only ways to release oneself from the grip of trauma.

Another major theme of the novel is Gender. The Fourth Chapter title discusses about the role of gender. The novel heavily emphasises how gender shapes the identities and lives of the characters. The idealisation of masculinity and the expectations that go along with it are one of the book's major themes. Achilles is the epitome of the ideal warrior strong, courageous, and adept in battle. On the other side, Patroclus is a gentler and more sensitive figure who tries to conform to the manly ideal but is not able to. He is shunned and mocked throughout the book for not being like other soldiers, and his

friendship with Achilles is frequently perceived as shaming men. Yet, the book also questions conventional gender roles by highlighting the strength of Achilles and Patroclus's love as something that defies expectations of gender. The two men fall in love and find solace in one another, and their relationship ends up being the most important thing in their lives despite the pressure from society to conform to a heteronormative ideal.

In the book, Miller primarily employs the characters of Achilles and Patroclus to illustrate the range of masculinity and femininity. In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles, the most renowned of the Greeks, is characterised by his beauty and might is provided in a gentler way. As in Homer's original story, Miller presents the reader with an Achilles who is motivated by pride, but also by his sense of duty and his undying love for Patroclus. He opposes both the mistreatment of slaves and the standards set by his society for what constitutes appropriate male behaviour and romantic relationships.

Also, as evidenced by the episodes of Briseis' kidnapping and his chat with Peleus, he is regretful when he behaves wrong. Yet, Miller does not absolve him of responsibility when he feels at fault, forcing him to face the consequences. Even though the moral standards upheld by his civilization are different from those upheld by other societies, he must face the reader and show how his actions are contrary to those that should always be respected. Patroclus serving as the story's narrator was a brilliant choice made by Miller. Without a question, his persona deviates the most from the stereotypes of traditional masculinity. He was previously seen as kind in Homer's poem, being the moral compass for other characters, which was a trait uncommon for men in the ancient society and was developed through his narrative of every occurrence in Miller's work. The reader sees how gender discrimination and injustice have persisted throughout history thanks to Patroclus. Not being afraid to describe the

horrific brutality that women had to experience at the hands of males neither ignoring the specifics nor defending the abusers. For everyone who reads the account, he is making it apparent that these moral standards weren't upheld back then, and they still aren't today.

Since *The Song Of Achilles*' release ten years ago, society's understanding of societal standards like gender equality and women's rights has undoubtedly changed. The story of Miller deviates from the prevailing social ideals. Some people disagree with her humanized readings of Homer's characters, arguing that new storylines should highlight their questionable behaviour rather than redeem them. Some do not think she gave her female characters enough credit to be deemed a feminist book. With amazing deftness, Miller introduces these classic masterpieces to a new audience. She addresses the majority of the more pressing historical social issues via her unique lens, highlighting the human qualities of the epic characters who inspired Homer's most well-known works.

Pederasty or paederasty is a sexual relationship between an adult man and a boy. The term pederasty is primarily used to refer to historical practices of certain cultures, particularly ancient Greece and ancient Rome. In the novel through Achilles and Patroclus's relationship one can understand that though initially Achilles is not a man by age, he is a man in terms of his prowess and valour, then gradually when he becomes an adult, he happens to be stronger and his physical features become more manly. On the other hand, Patroclus is considered to be a boy, even in his adulthood as he is not physically strong. Through their relationship and characteristics Patroclus can be considered as 'Eromenos' a younger and passive homosexual companion of Achilles who is the 'Erastes' an adult man and active partner. Hence both Eromenos Patroclus and Erastes Achilles form Pederasty through their purest love. By their pure love and

Pederasty, Miller brings out the study of narrative, memory and gender in her novel *The Song Of Achilles*. The novel's narrative structure significantly influences the characters' memories and experiences, which in turn affects how they see and embody gender roles. The majority of the book is told through Patroclus' perspective as he narrates his memories of his time spent with Achilles. The plot is told in a sequence of flashbacks and memories, and the narrative has a non-linear structure. The examination of memory and its effects on the characters' perceptions of their gender identity and sense of self is made possible by this format. Patroclus frequently muses on his background and how his experiences have impacted him as he tells the story. His feelings of alienation and disconnection from conventional gender norms are influenced by his memories of being bullied as a child for not being manly enough and his subsequent expulsion from his home. Similar to this, Achilles' childhood recollection of becoming a male hero and his desire to uphold that standard influence how he views manhood.

The characters' memories and interpretations of events are also impacted by the gender norms placed on them. For instance, Patroclus struggles with the idea of femininity and the guilt he feels for not being manly enough when he is forced to disguise as a woman in order to hide from his foes. Similar to how his memories of his act and how he perceives them are influenced by his ambition to be a great warrior and keep his macho ideal. The intricate ways in which cultural expectations impact our memories and our sense of self are highlighted by the interaction between narratology, memory, and gender in *The Song Of Achilles*. The book questions gender roles and investigates how memory and storytelling might influence how we perceive the world.

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Immigrant Conflict: Class, Language, and Identity in Michael

Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirement

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

PAULINE K. A

(REG. NO. 21SPEN15)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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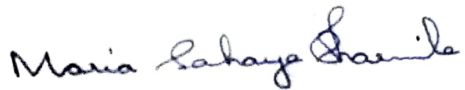
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled is submitted **Immigrant Conflict: Class, Language, and Identity in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*** 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 and is a work done by Pauline. K.A. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



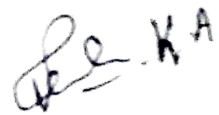
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Immigrant Conflict: Class, Language, and Identity in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI



PAULINE K. A

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Immigrant Conflict: Language, Identity and Class in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a lion*** shed the light on identity crisis and how the writer wishes to expose the immigrant worker who were faded from the history.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the Canadian literature, immigration and sufferings, biographical details of Michael Ondaatje

The second chapter **Class Conflict** summarises the working class who were oppressed by the wealthy people and their struggle to get rights in the society. The impact of upper class and sufferings of the lower class is vividly depicted based on the novel.

The third chapter **Issues of Language and Identity** discusses about the immigrant community who were strained to live in the society because of language barrier and identity crisis. The life of immigrant in Canada, their struggles on identity, health and linguistic barriers.

The fourth chapter **Narrative technique** dealt with the writing style of author who used numerous methods in his work to cherish the readers.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceeding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Canada, the second largest country in the world by land, takes up nearly the northern half of the North American continent. The capital of Canada is Ottawa. Despite its size, it is one of the least populous nations in the world. It became a country on July 1, 1867. The Huron-Iroquois term Kanata, which denotes a community or town, is where the word “Canada” originates. After Britain split up old Quebec onto the provinces of upper and lower Canada in 1791, the name Canada was entirely reinstated. The Dominion of Canada was a Confederation formed in 1867 by the British North America Act out of the three colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada. The act also created the distinct provinces of Ontario and Quebec out of the former British colony of Canada. The Dominion status gave Canada a great deal of autonomy, the British crown retained jurisdiction over international relations and military alliances. Within the British Empire, Canada attained complete self-government in 1931, but it did not acquire full legislative independence until 1982, when it was granted the ability to change its own constitution.

Canada has become even more culturally diverse as a result of the increasing number of immigrants from other European nations, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. It is one among the member of Commonwealth and is federally recognized as bilingual (in English and French). In comparison to other countries, it rates highly in terms of economic freedom, education, gender equality, civil freedom, quality of life and environmental sustainability. It is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse country in the world as the result of extensive immigration. Canada’s economy and culture have been significantly impacted by the long-standing and intricate relationship it shares with the United States. For thousands of years, numerous

different Indigenous people made a substantial contribution to the economics and culture of the early European colonies.

The national, social, economic and political settings of Canada have an impact on Canadian literature as well. The primary cultural influences on Canadian literature were British, French, and Aboriginal. The English and French literature were divided into two main categories in Canada. On 8 October 1971, After Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau declared in the House of Commons of Canada that, after much deliberation, the policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism would be implemented in Canada. So, it became a welcoming country for authors and readers. Most of the critics have brought the issues of nationalism and area in Canadian literature. At the initial stage, they were inspired to write about many societies, but as time goes on, they eschewed writing about the romantic adventures of the icy North and instead focused on improving Canadian culture and society by writing specifically for it.

The perspective of the Canadian authors on geography, social experience, first nation's culture, immigration pattern and proximity to Europe, Asia and the USA varied, but they also had many similar perspectives on how they represented nature, civility, and human interaction both at home and abroad. Not only that, but they have also identified formal and linguistic strategies, theories of knowledge and meaning, ethical and political issues and the psychology of racial, gendered, sexual and ethnic identity. Canadian literature is no longer limited to a few specific literary topics; instead, its perspective has incorporated a lot of fresh issues. The history of Canadian literature frequently discusses Colonial, Early National, Interwar, Post-war and Contemporary Canadian Literature, highlighting the many customs. As time went on,

the indigenous' opinions regarding the importance and usefulness of this literature evolved.

Early in the 17th century, epistolary fiction from the English Garrison colony in Quebec and Jacobean poetry in Newfoundland both contributed to the development of Canadian literature in the form of exploratory literature. Newspapers and literary magazines became a good source of publication for political commentary of conservative and reform-minded people, as well as for literary expression, which was used to be followed in 19th century generally in Romantic Sentimental and Orientalist fashions in Britain. This was the case after the end of 1776, with the loyalist settlements of Upper Canada and the Maritimes. Many Canadian writers then started to produce political humorous writing in English. At the time, Nova Scotia began to take the shape of satire.

All literary genres like novels, plays and poetry were suffered from historical romance and Gothic paradigms. One of the earliest autobiographies was Susanna Moodie's settlement narrative. The basis for many travel writings as well as the short fiction that evolves as a new genre throughout the 19th century was found in the travel writings, which often featured several brief personal sketches of people and locations. Folklore and folksongs persisted, but until the latter 19th century, little literary attention was paid to Native oral literature. After the 1960s, Canadian society had significant growth in the literary world. Because the concept of ethnic purity and stable identity have been entirely altered in many nations as a result of immigration policy and cultural hybridity.

Famous authors of this era include Richler, Mavis Gallant, Alice Munro, Alister Macleod, Clark Blaise and several others. Many Canadian Universities, Small

Presses, Academic journals and literary magazines like Canadian Literature and Creative Writing Schools were established on the Massey Commission's advice. But regrettably, a rapid change in government policies had a significant impact in the publishing sector, libraries, the public media, and scholarship. With their experiment in writing styles and methods, new technologies expanded the possibilities in literature and gave rise to syllabic and concrete poetry, mixed-media presentations, and performance poetry. After thirty years, Margaret Atwood put her views into dystopias, forming a new nationality.

The Writers Union of Canada was established in 1973, to address the difficulties faced by writers. After that, poets with unconventional styles like Guy Vanderhaeghe, Al Purdy and Brighurst produced poetry, by bringing back literature and highlighting the quiriness pervasive in Canada. Jack Hodgins, George Eliot Clarke and Wayne Compton each made a unique contribution. Asian background was used by writers like Michael Ondaatje, Wayson Choy and Rohinton Mistry to share their past. Successful writers have recently arisen in the later decades of the 20th century and the ongoing vitality of Canada's literary community.

One of his contemporary writer Margaret Atwood whose full name is Margaret Eleanor Atwood. She was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada on November 18, 1939. She is a Canadian author best recognised for her prose fiction and feminist viewpoint. *Double Persephone* in 1961, *The Circle Game* in 1964 and *The Animals in That Country* in 1968 are some of Atwood's early poetry works in which she explores human behaviour, appreciates the natural environment and criticises materialism. She frequently explores the themes of role reversal and fresh starts in her works, which are all centred on women who are looking for their place in the world and the people they interact with. A TV series based on the novel debuted in 2017 and was co-written

by Atwood. It is based on the written account of a woman who lives in sexual slavery in a repressive Christian theocracy that has taken power in the wake of an ecological upheaval. *The Blind Assassin*, which won the Booker prize in 2000, is a deftly written story that centres on the memoir of an elderly Canadian woman who is purportedly writing it to clear up any misunderstandings regarding both her sister's suicide and her own role in the posthumous publication of a book that was purportedly written by her sister.

Susan Swan was a Canadian author, writer and educator. The classic Canadian novel written by Susan Swan are *The Western Light*, *The Last of the Golden Girls*, *The Wives of Bath*, *What Casanova Told Me*, and *The Largest Modern Woman in the World*. *The Dead Celebrities Club* is Swan's most recent book (2019). It was described as a “timely tale of greed and corruption, worthy of the age” by The Globe and Mail. Swan is a writer and journalist who, from 1975 to 1979, also performed odes named *Queen of the Silver Blades* on topics like self-pity and figure skater Barbara Ann Scott. Yet, she is best recognised for her widely acclaimed fiction, which has been released in twenty different nations. Her previous writings frequently addressed the issue of gender and the difficulty of inhabiting a female body in a male-dominated Western civilization. A critic referred to her as “a contemporary Charles Dickens,” and James Wood, a critic for The New Yorker, claimed that her novels drop under the broader category of “the avant-garde of content.” Wood uses the term to express his opinion that the subject matter, a writer chooses to explore has become increasingly important in the development of fiction writing. Swan's most recent books have explored a young woman's desire for a caring father.

Clark Blaise a Canadian-American author. He was both a short-story writer and a professor of creative writing at York University. He received the title of Officer of

the Order of Canada in 2010. Blaise relocated to Montreal and acquired Canadian citizenship in 1966. He published his first two collections of short stories while residing in Canada, *A North American Education* (1973) and *Tribal Justice* (1974). The International Writing Program was run by Blaise. He founded the Montreal Story Tellers Fiction Performance Group with writers Raymond Fraser, Hugh Hood, John Metcalf, and Ray Smith in the early 1970s while residing in Montreal. He also taught creative writing at Concordia University during that time. A memoir of adventures in India written in collaboration by Blaise and Mukherjee was released in 1978.

George Harry Bowering is a well-known Canadian novelist, poet, historian, and biographer. He was the first Canadian to hold the title of Parliamentary Poet Laureate. The article by Robin Blaser in *Particular Accidents*, a book that casts a wide net across George Bowering's earlier work and offers readers a privileged view of his growth, is the greatest introduction to his work. *A record of writing: an annotated and illustrated bibliography* of George Bowering by Roy Miki, published in 1990, provides a thorough foundation for Bowering's early work despite being out of date. His best book, *Burning Water*, is still the best because it relies on the emotional honesty of its characters while still insisting that readers interpret them as fictitious constructs.

Michael Ondaatje, whose full name is Phillip Michael Ondaatje, is a Canadian novelist and poet who was born in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), on September 12, 1943. His musical prose and poetry are a synthesis of myth, history, jazz, memoirs and other genres. When he was 19 years old, Ondaatje moved to Montreal. He earned a B.A in English from the University of Toronto in 1965 and an M.A. from Queen's University in 1967. *The Dainty Monsters*, his debut collection of poetry is a sequence of verses that contrast real life with legend. It received attention for its distinctive blending of homely and prehistoric themes. In contrast to his poetry, His prose works

are better known. These include *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), a novel about the New Orleans jazz musician Buddy Bolden's descent onto madness, *Running in the Family* (1982), a memoir about life in Ceylon, and *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), a book about the conflict between the wealthy and the poor in the early 20th century Toronto. Hana and Caravaggio, two characters from this book, also showed up in the 1992 *The English Patient*, which is set in a World War II hospital in an Italian villa. He won Booker prize for the novel *The English Patient*. Ondaatje was a supporter of Thomas Wyatt and Robert Browning who draws deep inspiration from Eastern aesthetic practises.

Ondaatje is perhaps best understood as an artist who has challenged the very boundaries of such genres, rather than as a poet or novelist. The readers are treated to some of the formal excitement and experimentation for which Ondaatje is respected by critics in his humorously titled *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (1981). *The collection works*, also referred to as a collage, combines music, images, poetry, prose, interviews, a play, and white space on blank pages into a single, episodic story.

He continued to highlight folk heroes in his debut book, *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), which included a fictionalised biography of jazz musician Charles "Buddy" Bolden (1876–1931). In order to create a prose poem that is also “a fable of the twentieth-century artist,” Ondaatje expands on the stylistic experiments of *The Collected Works* in this passage. Like Billy, Buddy exists outside of “official” history, and the novel implies that we only have access to this “life” through music, stories, and rumours. He appears as a character in the poem, maybe to emphasise the hazy distinction between real and imagined life. In this essay, life and art, biography and fiction are not diametrically opposed concepts but rather mutually constitutive ones.

In his highly anticipated follow to *The English Patient*, *Anil's Ghost* (2000), Ondaatje takes us back to his native Sri Lanka. In this instance, the Second World War in Europe is replaced by the South Asian Civil War and the atrocities and traumas of post-colonial violence. Anil Tissera, a forensic anthropologist with training in both England and the United States, is the protagonist of the book. Anil travels to Sri Lanka to investigate a string of homicides on the country that appear to be driven by politics. Along with anthropologist Sarath Diasena, they are driven in their search for the truth by the discovery of human remains in the Bandarawela caves, which looms over both the story and the book's war-torn setting. The book reaffirms his reputation as one of the best storytellers in the world.

In his semi-autobiographical works, his postmodern obsession with the permeability of boundaries and genres is particularly striking. *Running in the Family* (1982) depicts the luxurious and eccentric lives of Ondaatje's parents and grandparents in colonial Ceylon using memoir, fiction, and photographs (Sri Lanka). In the 2011 novel *The Cat's Table*, the protagonist Michael, who is 11 years old, travels from Ceylon to England. The novel explores the transitions between childhood and adulthood, memory and imagination, truth, and storytelling, and portrays a rich array of personalities, tableaux, and seafaring adventures while taking place during the three-week ship ride.

Ondaatje has a distinguished background as a critic and editor in addition to his creative work. In addition to editing *Mongrel Broadides*, where he published poetry by James Reaney, Margaret Atwood, and others, he published his critique of *Leonard Cohen* in 1970. *The Broken Ark: A Book of Beasts* (1971), *Personal Fictions: Tales by Munro, Wiebe, Thomas, and Blaise* (1977), and *From Ink Lake: An Anthology of Canadian Short Stories* were all edited by him (1990). *The Long Poem Anthology* from

1979 and the bpNichol collection *An H in the Heart* are two of his edited collections of poetry (1994). Ondaatje was a long-time editor for Coach House Publications and currently serves as editor of the literary journal *Brick*.

For him, writing a novel is a lot like painting. He works in little fragments that finally comes together over the course of several years using only a few light strokes at a time. Most of his novels begin with just one image and the rest develops naturally from there. He explores the creative mystery and its unforeseen delights as a poet and author of prose. He enjoys the thought of mistakes in his writing and the joyous irruption accounts of his innocent self. According to him, the two most crucial aspects of creating a novel are relying on guesswork and having faith in the characters that he created. The writer is opposed to linear thinking. He refers to his books as cubist, and it is practically told not to try to fix any mistakes.

His writings are difficult to piece together into a coherent story because the events jump around in time, the styles and point of view change, there are gaps in the story and loose strands. He also has a strong enthusiasm for language and a remarkable talent for sensually tease out sentences. The main element of his memorable passages is suggestion, which is supported by a variety of deep pictures. His story is constructed slowly like coral into towers, branches, secret rooms, creating a beautiful grisaille of memory and love. He typically closes a chapter with a recollection, an aroma or a visual rather than an actual event. In an interview with JP O'Malley, under the title "I came from a tussle with the sea" Michael Ondaatje shared his view on his own writing. He told that whenever he starts a new book, he usually has very little to work with, maybe only one image-perhaps of a patient in bed conversing with a nurse. He does not know the identity of the patient, the nurse, or a young boy munching on a stalk of celery while

crossing a field. This statement proves that his writing style and the way he carries out his writing differs from others.

People who displaced from their native country and settled down permanently in another country is said to be immigration. States have historically benefited greatly socially, economically, and culturally from the immigration process. Many modern states are characterised by a vast diversity of cultures and ethnicities that have emerged through earlier periods of immigration; the immigration experience is long and varied, and it has frequently led to the creation of multicultural societies. Over 8,00,000 immigrants are mostly from the British Isles, came to Canada during the Great Migration of Canada which occurred between 1815 and 1850. This phase of immigration was demand driven because to the need for infrastructure labour in the expanding colonies, populating new rural communities and terrible conditions, unlike the 19th and the early 20th centuries when organised immigration schemes brought in majority of the new immigrants to Canada.

The Anglo European (British, Scottish, Irish) and French immigrants who arrived in Canada as early as the middle of the 1600s were among them. They were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and were drawn to Canada by the fur trade. The early social and economic institutions of the newly established colonial Canadian society were shaped in part by this group. Between the middle of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, labourers were sought after to work in industries and on the construction of railways and immigrants with agricultural experience settled on the western and central Prairies to create farmland. For these goals, immigrants from Europe were attracted. Toronto is a metropolis and the provincial capital of Ontario in Southeast Canada. It is Canada's most populous cosmopolitan city. It is the financial and commercial hub of the nation.

Toronto has developed into a significant international trading hub on the Northwest shore of Lake Ontario which makes up part of the border between Canada and the United States. It also benefits from access to major American industrial centres. In Europe, Factors like the social system collapsing, agriculture and industry changing, and rapid rise in population all play a role in emigration. There was a new breakthrough in dry land farming; the first focused immigration promotion strategy of the Canadian government. The Agriculturalists from the UK, Belgium, America, Poland, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, and Scandinavian were among the most sought after ethnic and cultural immigrants to Canada between 1867 and 1914. Despite the fact that some of these desirable immigrants did succeed as rural farmers, others had difficulties.

With an expanding railway network connecting it to the rest of Ontario and a port that provided access to American and British markets, Toronto developed into a significant regional hub in the second half of the 19th century. The city's financial industry was competing nationally with Montreal by 1914, benefiting from a mining boom in Northern Ontario and American businesses were increasingly choosing Toronto for their branch offices. Canada is sometimes referred to as a land of immigrants because, beginning with French and English pioneers, millions of newcomers have moved here and contributed to the development and defence of our way of life. Immigrant groups should maintain their uniqueness and contribute to the national character, each in its own way, according to John Buchan, the 1st Baron Tweedsmuir and Governor General of Canada, in 1937. This idea is still present in Canada's multiculturalism policy.

Following a constant influx of British immigrants during the 19th century, a second wave of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, most of the people from Italy or Portugal, arrived in Canada in the early 1900s. Many Canadians were

unemployed and homeless during the Great Depression, a global economic downturn that occurred in the 1930s. During this time, immigrants from other countries frequently lived in unhygienic circumstances and were denied fundamental workplace rights. The red squad started pursuing members of labour organisations, particularly foreign immigrants who sought to fight for their rights, out of fear of anarchist or communist revolutionary violence.

In the Skin of a Lion by Michael Ondaatje, the experiences of immigrants in Toronto are described. He focuses on how Toronto came to be and tells the unofficial tale of the immigrants whose built Toronto. He also applies immigrant viewpoint to the city. In the story, Ondaatje deals directly with the home of his inheritance and that of his adoption. He negotiates the extremely dissimilar environments of Sri Lanka and Canada that overlap and depart in subtle and violent ways in his mind, sensibility, and existence. He considers history, memory, myth, culture, and their claims on personal identity as he investigates these two sites of his birth and adoption.

In the Skin of a Lion Michael Ondaatje's novel which deals with immigrants whose contribution toward building the city of Toronto has been conceal by the wealthy people. It was first published in 1987. It is a fictional reimagining of Toronto's construction in the early 1900's, focusing particularly on the significant role that immigrants played in the construction of the Prince Edward Viaduct and the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant. The process of learning English as an immigrant is the topic that the book pays particular attention to. Specifically, it examines how the workers simultaneously build new infrastructure for the city and themselves while learning a new language. Although they created buildings that have since earned cultural value in Toronto, the labourers have been mostly forgotten in the city's history due to their lack of an English voice, among other social issues under the skin.

In this novel, which is set in early 20th-century Canada, the writer describes the radicalization of young working-class man Patrick Lewis and how this drives him to become a bomber and engage in domestic terrorism. The author follows Patrick from his childhood in rural Canada to his adult life in Toronto, where he joins a demolition crew on a public works improvement project. After his own experiences and those of other labourers connect him with radical labour activism, he embarks on a bombing campaign. Despite the chaos his actions cause and the time Patrick spends in jail, he lives to tell the tale. The novel's framework is provided by his relationship with his stepdaughter Hana, to whom he tells the story while they are riding in a car together.

The novel begins with Patrick who is adamant about raising Hana, who is sixteen, like a real father. Patrick tells Hana about his connection with Alice, her mother, the circumstances leading up to the bombings, and his friendship with Caravaggio, a thief he made friends with in prison, as they travel north from Toronto to meet Clara, the old love of his life. Patrick learned about explosives while growing up in a logging camp where his father created explosives to cut down stumps. The teenager was drawn to the city by the lack of opportunities in the countryside. He finds work initially looking for missing people, is thrust into the dramatically class-separated urban environment, falls in love with Clara, who later dumps him in favour of an extremely rich boyfriend. Patrick comes to despise the wealthy, viewing them as parasites on the working class. He came into contact with additional organisers who held even more extreme views while working on a tunnel construction crew doing destruction.

Patrick's story is intermixed with those of other working people, particularly those who constructed the infrastructure of contemporary Toronto. Particularly, the

construction of a huge bridge is greatly aided by a Macedonian immigrant named Nicholas Temelcoff. Hana's mother, Alice, a former nun, is the lady Nicholas discovers in the water one night. Ondaatje ties the various threads together by demonstrating how Alice got involved in radical politics and later met Alice. When Nicholas starts a bakery, it quickly becomes the gathering place for the other characters who also live in the neighbourhood of immigrants. Patrick blows up a bridge because of his radicalization following Alice's death and his hate of the wealthy. Being imprisoned after being captured and found guilty, he befriends Caravaggio, who manages to break out of jail. Though his plans remain unchanged, after being freed he plans another bombing with Caravaggio. Finally, he is unable to complete it and shifts his attention to his duty as Hana's carer, which is where the narrative started.

In the Skin of a Lion sheds light on Toronto's social landscape, where immigrants are only accepted in roles that are advantageous to the large objectives of the city. Otherwise, they are stifled by both their own constraints and those that society places on them, and their voice is silenced from both sides. The book defies a dominant history of Toronto by vividly envisioning the voices of individuals who lacked the verbal capacity to express themselves. The next chapter analyses the class conflict faced by the immigrants, especially in Canada, who were oppressed by the upper class. The third chapter highlights the major aspect of the novel. It focuses on struggles faced by the immigrant in Toronto, Canada. The direction of crisis take various turns in the all character's lives. The most common problem is the loss of self, "identity crisis", Linguistic barrier and even biological conflict.

Chapter Two

Class Conflict

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels created Marxism as a body of thought in the middle of the 19th century. A philosophical anthropology, a theory of history, and a programme for economic and political change were the initial three concepts that made up the movement. The term “Marxism” was initially adopted by Marx’s opponents, not by Marx or Engels to define their ideologies. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels established Marxism, an ideology and socioeconomic theory. The core principle of communism is that everyone has a right to participate in the benefits of their labour, but that this ability is denied by the capitalist economic system, which creates two classes in society: non-working owners and non-owning workers.

Marx referred to the resulting circumstance as “alienation,” and he believed that alienation would be abolished and class differences would end once the workers took possession of the rewards of their effort. According to the Marxist view of history, class conflict is what drives history, and capitalism is the most recent and important historical moment because during this period that the proletariat will finally come together. According to Marx’s concept of classes, capitalism is just one among a variety of economic systems that have developed historically and logically after one another. He claimed that they are inspired by huge, impersonal historical factors that manifest themselves in social class struggle and behaviour. Every society, according to Marx, is split into social classes whose members are more similar to one another than they are to those of other social classes.

Only in the 19th century, with the growth of the modern social sciences, particularly sociology, were theories of social class completely developed. Political

theorists including Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau examined the problems of societal stratification and inequality. Vladimir Lenin has defined classes as,

large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. (Lenin 421)

Marxism focuses on the struggle between the powerful and the weak, the have and the have-nots, the powerful and the downtrodden. A Marxist interpretation considers the conflicts between the middle-class capitalists, known as the bourgeoisie, and the lower, working class known as the Proletariat.

Regular workers have minimal power in the capitalist economic system since they do not own the factories, structures, or materials that are used in production. In times of high unemployment, employees are also easily replaceable, thus diminishing their financial quality. Business owners must get the most work out of their employees while paying them the lowest salary possible in order to increase profit. As a result, there is an imbalance between owners and workers, with owners taking advantage of the workers for their personal gain. Marx felt that because workers have no personal investment in the manufacturing process, they would grow frustrated with their jobs and even with humanity, and develop hatred for company owners.

In order to retain its positions of privilege and authority, the bourgeoisie is able to use social institutions, such as the government, media, education, religion, and the

financial and banking systems, as weapons and instruments against the proletariat. In the end, the economic relations of exploitation and inherent inequality between these two classes will spark a revolution in which the working class overthrows the bourgeoisie, seizes the means of production, and ends capitalism. The rise of industry and the need for workers among the Bourgeoisie class led to the creation of the Proletariat class. According to Marxism, there will be only one class as the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat will battle, the Proletariat will rise up, and it will overthrow the Bourgeoisie.

Power can originate from a variety of places, including physical strength, financial resources, the grip of a gun or the institutions themselves but in terms of politics, language is the most potent weapon at the disposal of members of a society. Those with good communication skills are more influential than those without it. Naz Rasool stated about democratic society in his book,

A democratic society needs people who have the linguistic abilities which enable them to discuss, evaluate, and make sense of what they are told, as well as to take effective action on the basis of understanding...Otherwise there can be no genuine participation, - only the imposition of the ideas of those who are linguistically capable. (Rasool 9)

Marxian class theory has been open to a variety of alternative viewpoints, especially those put forth by academics like E. P. Thompson and Mario Tronti. Class consciousness in the manufacturing process, according to Thompson and Tronti, predates the development of fruitful connections. Marxian class theory frequently relates to discussions about earlier class conflicts in this way. Marxian class theory asserts that an individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by

their role in the production process, and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. In his work, *Communist Manifesto*, Marx says that

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles... Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (Marx)

In early 20th century Canada is depicted in the book *In the Skin of a Lion*, a time when European immigrants were significant to the country's economy. Patrick Lewis, the main character, and his fellow co-workers, such as Macedonian immigrant Nicholas Temelcoff put their lives and health in peril every day by undertaking hard manual labour on risky bridges, subterranean tunnels and tanneries. On the other hand, the wealthy lead a life that appears carefree and is centred on consumerism and luxury. Examples of these people include Commissioner Harris, a man indifferently in charge of large construction projects and Ambrose Small, a millionaire who only cares about accumulating wealth. The novel emphasises the brutality of class-based injustice by

demonstrating how the wealthy keep employee ineligible and impoverished in order to take advantage of them for their own gain. Patrick is first driven to using violence as a kind of protest against these circumstances but he eventually realises that no philosophy can justifiably call for the taking of human lives.

Michael Ondaatje novel *In the Skin of a Lion* is a convincing exploration of the complex nature of power and the impact of ethnocentric domination on different cultural groups. Though lending itself to a wide variety of readings, the obvious Marxist consistently portrayed throughout the novel signify a strong relationship between those concepts and Ondaatje's personal beliefs and values. Thus, these particular interpretations can be perceived as a mechanism by which Ondaatje's intentions are revealed: capitalist exploitation of the working class, class struggle and the plight of the marginalised groups, and the resulting effect on the composer is effectively captured within three key scenes which both express and highlight the significance of the issues being explored. The power differential between Patrick and the other migrants, like Commissioner Harris, and those in positions of authority also involves a yearning for inclusion in society. The working conditions of the workers and the fact that "there was no record kept of the workers who died" (Ondaatje 248) are examples of how these class battles are emphasised throughout the book in many ways.

The first of these scenes, deals with the official opening of the Bloor Street, Viaduct, illustrates the dismissive attitude of the capitalist rich toward the contribution of the working class in building Toronto. "Christened 'Prince Edward,'" (Ondaatje 29) the bridge was to be opened by a "show car containing officials," supposedly representing those responsible for its construction. However, the procession is interrupted by someone "anonymous and cycling like hell to the east end of the city. In the photographs he is a blur of intent" (Ondaatje 29) crossing the bridge, a faction

technique that Ondaatje has included to symbolise acts of resistance by ‘common people’ against those in power. The depiction of “the string of onions that he carries on his shoulder splaying out” (Ondaatje 29) strongly suggests that the individual is a migrant, possible one who had worked on the bridge, strengthening the significance of his subverting the ceremonial role of the officials. The Marxist overtones of this event is supported by the reference of “thunderous applause (that) greeted him at the far end,” (Ondaatje 29) a celebratory gesture for undermining the capitalist class, exemplifying Ondaatje’s view on the class struggle and the value he places on the perceived powerless over the powerful.

This passage also discusses the impact of ethnocentric domination on the migrant working class, specifically the effect this has on the telling of history. Announcing (in an epigraph) that a single narrative will never again be conveyed as if it were the only one. The writer foregrounds within this scene those historically considered anonymous, despite their integral contribution to the physical and social infrastructure of Toronto. He conveys his intentions through a flashback to the eve of the official ceremony, in which “workers had arrived and brushed away officials... moved with their own flickering lights-their candles for the bridge dead” (Ondaatje 29). There is no official ceremony to mourn, or even acknowledge the dead, and so the workers must conduct their own private at least some recognition. The evocative imagery of “their candles...like a wave of civilisation, a net of summer insects over the valley” (29) communicates the emotional aspect of cultural disempowerment and dissatisfaction with historical anonymity. The event challenges the ethnocentric assumption of official accounts by addressing the role of the marginalised groups who were historically silenced. In this way Ondaatje embraces disregarding the dominant version of history

as though it were the only one instead providing a counter history that gives power to the unacknowledged masses.

The writer explores elements of the complexity of power in relation to storytelling and history through the characterisation of Alice and the influence of metaphor. This extract follows Alice's puppet show, a theatrical interpretation of the migrant and working-class experience demonstrating the frustration of those who are limited by their cultural dimension to give them a voice in society. During the scene she instructs Patrick, a member of the working class, that "you reach people through metaphor. It's what I reached you with earlier tonight in the performance" (Ondaatje 128).

The metaphor in question, in this novel, is the means by which Alice encourages the minorities to use their voice by dramatically communicating the issues of the lower class herself. The importance is then placed on the power of story-telling, which connects to ethnocentricity; by having the marginalised given the opportunity to tell their own histories. They are empowered to subvert their traditional position of historical anonymity. Ondaatje is reinforcing that there is no such thing as "a single story" since 'definitive' history is constructed by, and only includes, those in power. As such, Alice's characterisation as an initiator of storytelling and activist for the migrant workers reflects Ondaatje's purpose in acknowledging the significance of unfold stories over dominant records.

Further on in this scene, power is discussed within the context of wealth and the ideals of capitalism. Patrick laments having only, he only had ten dollars until Alice points out the negative consequences of capitalist ambition. The writer claims that people only succeed when they mimic the individuals they wish to surpass. Ambrose

Small has been utilised as a symbol for “bare-knuckled capitalism” (Ondaatje 60) and its adverse effects on society, a typical Marxist perception of wealth and financial power. Alice, as the counterpoint to the world of the rich, describes him as “predatory,” and isolated individual who “let nothing cling to him, not even Clara” (Ondaatje 129). She says she liked Patrick “because you knew that. Because you hated that in him,” (Ondaatje 129) emphasising her belief in the corruption of those that represent power and its damaging ability to divide society into the powerful and the powerless. This scene thus encapsulates Ondaatje’s intension in relating differing forms of power, be it communicative or financial, and the significant effect it can have on the lives of individuals and groups.

The final scene, a confrontation between Commissioner Harris, yet another symbol of authority, and Patrick, exhibits the response to the capitalist exploitation of the working class and the plight of the marginalised groups. Patrick, while holding a blasting box under his arm, demands that Harris understand the true nature of the class structure, verbally attacking him for the “goddamn herringbone tiles in the toilets (that) cost more than half our salaries put together” (Ondaatje 248). Patrick, on behalf of the historically silenced minorities, forces Harris to “think about those who built the intake tunnels. Do you know how many of us died in there?” (Ondaatje 248) As well as connecting to the anonymity of the “bridge dead,” (Ondaatje 29) Harris curt reply, “there were no records kept” (Ondaatje 248). This substantiates the workers’ lack of recognition and absence of value in the eyes of the ethnocentric class system. However, Harris is already aware of this to an extent: he quickly realises that “what you (Patrick) are looking for is a villain,” (Ondaatje 249) a face for the oppressive dominant culture. This incident encapsulates the degree to which cultural groups have been affected by

the forces of power and explains the writer's belief in the need to re-evaluate history with a focus on the extensive contribution of the migrant workers.

In addition, Patrick's view of Harris as a "villain" demonstrates his need for something tangible to hold responsible for the disempowerment and frustration of the workers. However, Patrick fails to realise that acts of aggression, in this case threatening to blow up the waterworks, will not eliminate the systems of exploitation because power is a metaphysical entity, underlining the nature of its complexity. Harris, perhaps because of his deep involvement with it, is conscious of this, pointing out to Patrick that he does not want it to exist but he moves around it all the time.

Terrorism is ineffective because power cannot be located in a single individual or building, but emanates from the dominant culture in a way that is constantly shifting and changing. Ultimately Patrick's, and by extension the workers', contribution to the development of Toronto and society as a whole. He also encourages Patrick to accept Alice's death, to abandon her metaphorical idea that "you name the enemy and destroy the power" (Ondaatje 130) so as to be able to move beyond the concept that one is the enemy and the other is the victim. In this way Ondaatje provides the notion of the resolution of class differences and his belief in the future of the working class.

Throughout the novel the writer's exploration of the nature of power and ethnocentric domination evolves as the complexity of these subjects is revealed. The importance placed on the ability to tell stories, the portrayal of capitalist corruption and exploitation, and the assertion that authoritarian power is not a physical manifestation that can be destroyed by acts of terrorism demonstrates the multifaceted way in which power can be perceived and the impact it can have on individuals. Furthermore, the portrayal of class struggles and the historical silence of marginalised groups displays

his view on the plight of ‘anonymous’ migrant workers. In essence, Ondaatje’s purpose in writing this novel was to communicate the value he holds for the non-dominant cultural groups and his personal beliefs in regards to the effects of power, in all its forms, on society, as captured in the Marxist reading. The working class in Canada toils in harsh conditions for low wages while the wealthy live protected lives. For example, the construction of bridges and water systems depends on the exploitation of weaker members of society.

The Waterworks and the Bloor Street Viaduct, also known as the Bridge, are two locations where the Proletariat was abused with subpar working conditions and pay while the Bourgeoisie claimed credit and profited. They received a daily wage of one dollar. This quotation alludes to the dyers who used animal skins to create various colours. In the end of the novel, when Patrick confronts Harris about the workers and he responds that the tiles “cost more than half our wages put together” (Ondaatje 248). This statement is in contrast to what Harris says when Patrick goes to the waterworks. As a result, the disparity and congruity of the wealth distribution are used to illustrate the gap between the lowest ranking members of society and those in higher social classes.

Another way that the wealthy and the weak are divided is through positions of power and control. Ambrose Small is powerful because he is wealthy. By granting middlemen like Harris the authority to govern the workers, he may thereby exert control over them. As Ambrose manipulates other people, Patrick never suspects that Harris is not the one with real power. Patrick then attempts to attack the upper class through Harris, as Harris tells Patrick, “You don’t understand power” (Ondaatje 248). Caravaggio is a robber who only targets the wealthy, and he breaks onto the wealthy world’s ball to steal a yacht in order to aid Patrick in breaking into the waterworks.

Throughout her talks, Alice criticises the wealthy, claiming that “three-quarters of the population of America...can’t afford your choices” (Ondaatje 128). According to her, the only place to spit in a rich man’s home is in his face.

The encounter between Carvaggio and Anne offers one of several examples of the relationship between the wealthy and the working classes with which the novel is mainly concerned. He is most surprised by Anne's distinction from Caravaggio in this regard while observing her:

He put his hands up to his face and smelled them. Oil and rust. They smelled of the chain [in the boathouse, upon which he hoisted himself to the roof]. That was always true of thieves, they smelled of what they brushed against. Paint, mushrooms, printing machines, yet they never smelled of the rich.... And what did this woman smell of? In this yellow pine room past midnight she was staring into a bowl of kerosene as if seeing right through the skull of a lover. (Ondaatje 207)

Anne lives in a world that Caravaggio can enter, unlike Rowland Harris or Ambrose Small, whose wealth matches their ambition and power, or the wealthy guests at the Yacht Club ball, whose ignorance and decadence set them apart from Caravaggio and Patrick.

Worker responsibilities in the waterworks tunnels are similar to those of mules. Workers on the Prince Edward Bridge are so numerous, impersonal, readily breakable and replaceable that they are compared to tools: “A man is an extension of hammer, drill, and flame” (28). These manual jobs expose employees to significant risks and many of them passed away either as a result of their labour for example, contracting pneumonia in the harsh winter, falling off a bridge, etc. or as a result of hardships and

hazardous conditions they are subjected to sulphur in factories, salts and acids in the tannery.

Although Commissioner Harris defends his construction endeavours by saying that he creates jobs for people, he actually gives little thought to the health or welfare of his employees. This demonstrates how rich and poor people view and feel about these tragedies from completely different perspectives. Harris views the deceased men as expendable labourers. They served as Patrick's pals and neighbourhood. Ironically, the workmen who built the waterworks, known as the "Palace of Purity," perished from "tuberculosis, arthritis, and rheumatism" (Ondaatje 138). Workers are shown as nameless groups engaging in hazardous physical labour throughout the entire book. Throughout Patrick's childhood unidentified loggers would come and go from Eastern Ontario as the winter approached cutting and transporting wood in dangerous conditions.

Rich and poor are a major issue that the novel touches on right away. We find out that a landowner owns the cows and that Patrick's father works for the landowner in the very first scene, which shows Patrick as a young boy watching the loggers cross the road in the early morning. Patrick's father eventually starts working in the Feldspar mines, which is hazardous job that is not done by individuals with other resources. In contrast to the wealthy persons who manage the projects, it is demonstrated that the bridge and tunnel builders work extremely hard for low wages. While working on the bridge, Nicholas Temelcoff observes that Commissioner Harris' that tweed coat was more expensive than the total weekly wages of five bridge workers. While Commissioner Harris is always referred to as a man by name, the workers who constructed the bridge and tunnel are compared to tools and animals.

The result of a misunderstanding of power, leads to many people trying to mislead their attacks. Patrick plans to blow up Harris' Waterworks because he thinks it represents the epicentre of power and wants to feel powerful, get attention, and exact revenge. He is unaware that Harris is only the outward manifestation of power; the actual, invisible, untouchable authority lies upper regions. As a result, the labor of the immigrant working class should be honored as an essential component in the growth of Canada and of contemporary. The next chapter deals with the issues of language and identity which suppressed the immigrant life. And it also focuses on how these barriers constantly make them alienated.

Chapter Three

Issues of Language and Identity

Immigration is the process by which people move to another country to live permanently. Immigration has historically provided states with significant social, economic, and cultural benefits. The history of immigration is lengthy and diverse, and it has frequently led to the emergence of multicultural communities. Many modern states are distinguished by a wide range of cultures and ethnicities that have come about as a result of earlier waves of immigration.

The novel *In the Skin of a Lion* is praised by critics including Katherine Acheson, Gordon Gamlin, Michael Greenstein, Fotios Sarris, and Susan Spearey for its dazzling virtuoso treatment involving concerns of socioeconomic class, ethnicity and the immigrant experience that never rigidifies into a political discourse. Although Ondaatje investigates textual, ideological, geopolitical, and physical limits in his novels, Susan Spearey notes in her review of *In the Skin of a Lion* that the tropes of migration and metamorphosis frequently appear in his works.

Ondaatje opposes conventional ways of thinking in Canada by choosing to write about communities that are “hopelessly predestined to insignificance.” Hutcheon observes:

Ondaatje is one of the few North American writers who address the issue of our immigrant, working-class history, a history silenced by official versions of public events.... We know today the names of the rich (Ambrose Small) and the politically powerful (R.C. Harris, city commissioner), but we do not know the names of the peripheral, of the women of the rich (Small's mistress), or of the anonymous workers (who built the structures ordered by Harris). These are

among the outsiders, the "ex-centrics," that are made the paradoxical (and very postmodern) centre of the novel. The protagonist, Patrick Lewis, may belong to the centre in terms of race and language, but he is working class and from the country. (Hutcheon 133)

In the Skin of a Lion explores the experience of migration and includes migrant minorities who are typically overlooked by history and society. It tells the narrative of immigrants to Canada and is set in the pre second world war and a reflection of multicultural metropolitan environment of Toronto. The plot is made up of the snippets of the stories of Patrick Lewis, his two mistresses Clara and Alice, Ambrose Small, a millionaire who disappears without a trace, Harris, the commissioner of public works, Carvaggio, a thief and Nicholas Temelcoff, a man who completes a variety of challenging tasks. They are all populated by immigrants from Finland, Greece and Macedonia.

The way story develops in pieces is comparable to the idea that immigrants from other countries are not seen as full people with unique intricacies; rather, they are broken down into discrete bodily parts and assessed according to the numerous tasks that they are capable of carrying out. Ondaatje revisits the pivotal period in Canadian history when the immigrant laborers from Europe laid the groundwork for the present industrialized nation. In this environment, immigrants of many countries are constantly arriving in search of work and a better life. As a result, one of the novel's most important, persistent and thematically evocative element is how immigrants are portrayed. They were portrayed as the epitome of "outsiders," cut off from their former lives and barred from their new ones. They are transplanted into Canada's foreign environment, leaving behind familiar locations and cultures. The immigrant characters continue to have a tremendous sense of otherness and a sense of not belonging as a

result of terrible, bewildering experience. The Canadian society's rejection of them exacerbates the difficult situation.

The narrator wants to give voice and beauty to the labor of the oppressed, specifically the immigrant workers who have their life and performed backbreaking to develop Toronto. Ondaatje claims that while researching Toronto's past, he was astounded by learning the history. Turner, in his work, told that many sand buckets were used to construct the Bloor Street Viaduct, but the builders of the damned bridge went unmentioned. Especially with relation to the Bloor Street Viaduct and the Harris Water Treatment Plant, Ondaatje's description of Toronto presents a city that is undergoing construction. Ondaatje, however structures his attempt at senate representation of labor and his writing goes beyond a literal understanding of labor.

The voices of immigrants where silenced throughout Toronto's history in addition to the inherent limits of learning a second language. The people of 1930s saw the implementation of a policy that forbade speaking any language other than English in public meetings in Toronto under threat of imprisonment due to fears of foreigners. This causes the immigrants' interactions to be compelled to take place in underground meetings and behind close door in the novel, thus preventing outsiders from participating in public culture.

Currently, a large number of people emigrate to other nations for a variety of reasons, most notably war and poverty. People make the decision to relocate in the hopes of leading a better life, such as working in locations requiring less physical exertion. Nonetheless, because most immigrants are unskilled and under privileged, issues continue to arise. They are unable to communicate in the language and are unaccustomed to their new environment. This is particularly true in the city of Toronto,

which is home to numerous immigrants who moved there in search of employment opportunities and a higher standard of living. The immigrant's life is emphasized in Michael Ondaatje's novel *In the Skin of a Lion*. They are shown as difficult and their presence in Toronto transformed it for the better. One day, Toronto was the destination of a car tour that Michael Ondaatje and his friend Robert Fones were taking. Then, his companion understood how the historically and architecturally interesting the Viaduct.

This novel is a fictional reimagining of Toronto's construction in the early 1900s. Particularly, the significant role that immigrants played in the construction of the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant and the Prince Edward Viaduct. The process of learning English as an immigrant, specifically how the workers simultaneously build new infrastructure for the city and a new language for themselves, is a topic of particular interest in this book. The fact that these workers lack an English voice, among other social factors, prevents them from receiving credit for the structures they built, which have since acquired cultural significance in Toronto. As a result, the workers have been largely forgotten in the history of the city.

In addition, Ondaatje invites the reader to analyze the marginalized in the creation of the history as well as to re-evaluate the significance of Canada as a multicultural nation. The varied ways that Ondaatje handles the identities of some important characters, particularly Nicholas Temelcoff and Patrick Lewis, in milieu of diaspora also gives light on the lives of early twentieth century migrants. One such employee on the Prince Edward Viaduct is Nicholas Temelcoff. He is the bridge's daredevil; a Macedonian immigrant. He swings, free falls and performs stunts that no other bridge worker would have the nerve to attempt. Despite how risky this activity is, Temelcoff complete it without issue. Yet, he struggles to improve his English, he is described as "breaking down syllables and wandering about them as if putting the

phrases out like tackle on pavement to be checked for worthiness, picking up one he fancies for a minute then replace it with another” (Ondaatje 45) as he moves through the site. In this situation, his manual labor serves as his main point of reference.

Despite the challenging hurdles of trying to acquire English and adapt into Canadian society, European immigrants succeed in preserving cultural coherence through their numerous ethnic businesses, restaurants, and gathering places. Since it is illegal for immigrants to organise public gatherings or simply speak a foreign language in public, many immigrants are forced to lead marginalised lives as a result of their poor command of English. They can still rely on their cultural community for camaraderie and support, though. They are able to take solace from the hardships of urban working-class life because to their strong sense of community.

Construction sites have horrifying and upsetting working conditions. The largest lake in North America’s largest lake was forty feet below the construction site. It is humid and hazy outside. Every time they hammered the walls, the stone walls, they jerked the wrist and palm to the shoulder. They had to stand and work on muddy, slippery ground for long periods of time: “All morning they slip in the wet clay, unable to stand properly, faeces where they work, eating where someone else left shit” (Ondaatje 110). The tunnel was like a pit of hell because there was no fresh air or light. This appalling description of the working environment is a disgrace to human civilization.

The language and cultural traits necessary to give migrants a voice in society were absent. The whole novel is to give a voice to the disenfranchised, the ones who did the work but missed out on getting the credit in nation building; the vast number of inarticulate migrants who form the basis of all developing countries. They are frustrated

by their lack of power and influence in mainstream society and their only outlet is to “bang on” the walls.

The difficult part is language, which is typically taken for granted as fundamental and elementary. Ondaatje writes about Temelcoff, “Language was far more difficult than what he did in space” (Ondaatje 45). Although Nicholas’ work on the bridge makes him the most important employee on the job site, his English language barrier makes him appear isolated and raises the pitch of his voice; his manual labor talks for him more than he can for himself.

Language barriers cause Nicholas to act antisocially, which shows that he is having a difficult time assimilating in to the society to which he is contributing. Others does not seem to care much about this, least of all Commissioner Harris. The Commissioner takes a personal but distant interest in Nicholas, since he has a vision for his project and his city. Harris sees Nicholas as a great tool for realizing his goals and Nicholas’ linguistic limitations will serve Harris’ legacy. He is dependent on those who cannot work elsewhere because of their differences. Immigrants like Nicholas where only encouraged in the latter when Ondaatje made the comparison between building a city and building one’s language.

Patrick Lewis, the main character in Michael Ondaatje’s novel *In the Skin of a lion*, looks for himself and for the light. He and his family resemble a local off-farming migration. He lacks love and cannot survive the world without these components. He is described as a lonely man who is cut off from the outside world in a passage in chapter three. Without him, the quarter of Clara, Ambrose, Alice, Temelcoff and Cato created a drama. And he was nothing more than a prism through which their lives were reflected. He looked for things and gathered stuff. He had inherited his father’s shame

as a man. From the beginning of his boyhood, when he observed the immigrant loggers who spoke a different language, this inclination to stay on the outside while yearning to be inside recurs in the book: “He longed to hold their hands and skate the length of the creek” (Ondaatje 23). Another instance of being on the outside and then being allowed inside is when tears start to pour from his eyes as the Macedonian shopkeepers comprehend him.

Ondaatje gives his readers a glimpse into immigrant life through this particular person. Even though he is a native Canadian, he lives in a neighborhood with many immigrants. In his book, *In the Skin of a Lion*, he constrained and simplistic the immigrants experience in Toronto in the years between the two World Wars. Both the economic undercurrents and the political tensions that characterized the era are absent from his portrayal of the labor disputes. The novel illustrates the value of language to immigrants’ ability to communicate.

As a transcultural immigrant, Patrick tries to assimilate into his new social milieu but battles with loneliness because he cannot speak the language. In order to “relocate and sound the spaces in-between,” post-colonial collage is “interested in mapping the gaps, the interzones where discontinuities are suppressed” (Carter 187). This strategy is used by Michael Ondaatje who create complex stories about immigrants and outsiders in this novel, by drawing on historical document, notable works of twentieth century literature and rumors.

The reader’s first experience with an immigrant community is depicted in *In the Skin of a Lion*. When a nun, later known as Alice, falls of the incomplete Bloor Street Viaduct and is saved by Nicholas Temelcoff. The nun views the crowded, foreign interior of the nearby Ohrida restaurant were Temelcoff, who was hurt and the nun

resided for short while in that restaurant. Ondaatje deftly exposes the inequalities and exploitation that still exist, but he also highlights the virtue of labor in the capitalist system by pointing out that Temelcoff spends his nights in a factory. In an effort to dispel the generally held perception of the labors' exploitation and oppression, Ondaatje uses examples of the craftsmanship involved in their work to highlight the skill of the immigrants. The humanist rhetoric included in Patrick Lewis' story can occasionally be overshadowed by the recurring topic of racial degradation.

The novel does not mention specifically Patrick's birth place but it is evident that he was born in Canada and that he arrived to Toronto in 1923 as a part of the native off-farm displacement. Patrick is a quite person. His lover, Alice, on the other hand, works as a performer at an unofficial gathering of immigrants. She accuses Patrick of valuing "solitude" and "retreat," highlighting his position as a member of a dominant group in contrast to the other "three quarters of the population of Upper America," (Ondaatje 128) who cannot afford to live life with his level of detachedness. Patrick claims that he only has "ten bucks" (Ondaatje 132). In addition, Patrick's character who is said to be of British descent is heavily utilized by Ondaatje as a meeting place for the two opposing sides of affluent and poor. Since Canada is seen as a battlefield of class interest in the novel, where the wealthy and powerful are portrayed as the oppressors, Alice's point of view not only implies that the money of the rich is acquired at the expense of the misery and privation of the improvised laborers.

Ondaatje most effectively illustrates the relationship between race, nationality, language and color in the scene where the tannery employees emerge from the vats of green, red and ochre dye; "They have leapt into different colours as if into different countries" (Ondaatje 136). The text clarifies that the majority of the dyers were Macedonians, with a small number of Poles and Lithuanians, who "on average had

three or four sentences of English” and to whom “the labor agent” gave “English names,” (Ondaatje 138) but it is still clear that this metaphor accurately depicts the various backgrounds of the laborers. “If he were an artist he would have painted them but that was a false celebration,” (Ondaatje 136) Patrick observes after seeing this sight. The readers were given the opportunity to consider the purposes of aesthetics and the politics of representation through this artwork.

Patrick and all immigrants from various nations have been uprooted and relocated. The Representation of "Race" in Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* is a topic Glen Lowry explores in his article as

The trauma and alienation experienced by the immigrants while working for the building of Toronto city in Canada as: Overlapping the trauma of immigration with the alienation of urbanization, it refigures the expansion of Toronto, the modern industrial core of an emergent nation state, within an international flow of bodies and cultures. (Lowry 64)

The immigrants are portrayed as the epitome of outsiders since they have been cut off from their former society and are not welcome in their adopted one. They are moved into the foreign environment of Canada, Leaving behind familiar locations and cultures. The immigrants continue to have a strong feeling of otherness and belonging despite the distressing and unsettling experience. Canada's society, which rejects them, serves for exacerbate their problem. As Patrick develops friendship with his neighbors, he come to the conclusion that immigration can result in mutual exchange rather than one-sided assimilation and that everyone can learn from one another's culture traditions. He also understands that his Macedonian friends' labor on building projects has made a favorable impact on society. The story comes to the conclusion that

working-class immigrants should be commended for their contributions to the growth of the metropolis and, more broadly of contemporary civilization.

The majority of Patrick's co-workers are immigrants from Europe, and they all struggle to make it in a city they do not fully belong in. Their lives are characterized by a sense of rootlessness. In these circumstances, the daily grind of life and work can turn into a solitary, impersonal activity that keeps people apart rather than knits them together. Patrick initially has the impression that he does not exactly belong in his own environment because he feels distant from his own family. While teaching him vital dynamiting skills, his father remains an enigmatic figure who is quiet and detached and enjoys working alone more than spending time with his son. His mother is never mentioned in this novel.

A similar sense of alienation greets Patrick when he goes to the city at the age of 21, "He was an immigrant to the city" (Ondaatje 55). His connection to his previous life is severed by the new surroundings, which forces him to start again from scratch. Patrick, meanwhile, prefers to live a repetitive, frugal life and does not look for companionship. Patrick spends a long time on the periphery of this community despite living in a varied area that is home to many of his fellow workers. He feels "ashamed they could uncover so little about him. He had reduced himself almost to nothing" (Ondaatje 117) when he speaks with local Macedonian shop owners who only know that he is single and that he always orders peaches on Friday.

Since immigrants are not permitted to organise or participate in public meetings and are only permitted to speak English, immigrants have a lot of difficulties. Meanwhile, local Police Chief Draper has passed rules that discriminate against immigrants from other nations. Only a small number of immigrants have been detained

and imprisoned for taking part in demonstrations at the Shapiro Drug Store conflict or in High Park. The immigrants' position is described as follows: "He in fact pleasures in his descant interpretations of what is being said. He catches only the names of streets, the name of Police Chief Draper, who has imposed laws against the public meeting by foreigners. So if they speak this way in public, in any language other than English, they will be jailed. A rule of the city" (Ondaatje 139).

Language is one of the most important barriers for the immigrants. Though Patrick is a natural Canadian. Patrick initially establishes relationship with members of the Macedonian community by explaining to the shopkeeper and his family why he keeps wanting to buy vetch every week through a sketch of his pet Iguana. Patrick develops feelings for Clara Dickens, the rich Ambrose Small's mistress. Patrick listens as Clara tells him about her past. He gains knowledge about the value and significance of preserving personal history as he listens to her. He starts to realise the importance of his own past. In order to highlight Patrick's emotional and psychological limitations, Ondaatje illustrates his isolation and insularity. When Patrick narrates his own life, he is still incapable of speech:

There was a wall in him that no one reached. Not even Clara, though she assumed it had deformed him. A tiny stone swallowed years back that had grown with him and which he carried around because he could not shed it. His motive for hiding it had probably extinguished itself years earlier. . . Patrick and his small unimportant stone. It had entered him at the wrong time in his life. Then it had been a flint of terror. He could have easily turned aside at the age of seventy or twenty, and just spat it out and kept on walking, and forgotten it by the next street corner. (Ondaatje 74)

Patrick gradually understands that he will have to adapt to his Macedonian neighbors in this immigrant community. This challenges conventional wisdom regarding the requirement for immigrants to adapt into local culture. Instead, it proposed that individuals of a diverse, multicultural community may mutually benefit from each other's presence, so enhancing everyone's quality of life. Patrick soon learns that, although being Canadian, he is a cultural outsider in his own neighborhood of the city. Patrick, who spends a lot of time alone is astonished by the activity around him when the Macedonian store owners ask about his life one day:

He had reduced himself almost to nothing. He would walk home at dusk after working in the lake tunnel. His radio was on past midnight. He did nothing else that he could think of. They approved of his Finnish suit. *Po modatadeganten!* Which meant stylish! stylish! He was handed a Macedonian cake.... Elena, the great Elena who had sold him vetch for over a year, unpinned the white scarf around her neck and passed it to him. He looked up and saw the men and women who could not know why he wept now among these strangers who in the past had seemed to him like dark blinds on his street, their street, for he was their alien. (Ondaatje 118)

The warmth of the Macedonians fills a social void that Patrick may not have known he needed to fill. He now understands that not just the Macedonians will need to make an effort to fit into Canadian society. Instead, Patrick himself must learn to interact with their culture because among the Macedonian community he is the one who was alienated. Patrick thus argues that inclusion can take place in both of these ways: through societal integration and through Canadians' acceptance of the cultural traditions of recent immigrants. Patrick also emphasizes the value of appreciating each individual life, outside the confines of the community's safety net, provided the

Macedonian community helps him feel assimilated into a friendly, welcoming group. Patrick is crucial in helping marginalized sections of society feel proud of their contributions to the Canadian people by caring about their specific history.

Nicholas Temelcoff learns that the work he did was actually extraordinary when Patrick shows him an old photograph of Nicholas working on a significant bridge in Toronto: "Patrick's gift, that arrow into the past, shows him the wealth in himself, how he has been sewn into history. He will now start telling stories" (Ondaatje 155). Patrick therefore sees beyond the community and into the life of individuals, even though communal structure saves the Macedonians from feeling isolated or alienated in Canada. The entire book suggests that these people's deeds have been crucial to the creation of contemporary society rather than relegating lower class immigrants to the background of history.

Temelcoff felt the need to study English because he didn't know it well, as the narrator observes:

He still could hardly speak English and decided to go to school working nights in another Macedonian bakery. If he did not learn the language he would be lost. The school was free. The children in the class were ten years old and he was twenty-six... When he returned to Toronto all he needed was a voice for all this language. Most immigrants learned their English from recorded songs or, until the talkies came, through mimicking actors on stage, it was common habit to select one actor and follow him throughout his career. (Ondaatje 49-50)

Temelcoff becomes aware of his lack of self-confidence as a result of the language barrier. He therefore attended school with young children because, in his opinion, he would be lost if he didn't speak English. Some migrants experience

loneliness and helplessness as a result of being excluded from the society they are trying to integrate into. This is effectively illustrated through the puppet show.

Yet the situation with immigrant labor is unique. They have to pick up English. English names are provided to the foreign-born employees: “Charles Johnson, Nick Parker...The name strange in their foreign language were remembered like number, much like the numbering in prison” (Ondaatje 138). When an actor dressed as a human sized puppet plays the part of an immigrant in Toronto in the puppet show at the Waterworks, which portrays the frustration of the immigrants. The puppet, who is unable to talk, is hurled around in the mob, then blamed by the police, before finally collapsing in exasperation and repeatedly pounding a fist on the ground.

Linguistic barriers prevent him from socializing in his own nation, so he moves to a Macedonian immigrant neighborhood in Toronto. However, he develops relationship with those around him, and one day while laughing aloud at a silent movie in the Teck Cinema he observes that the majority of theatre patrons do not understand English, but they are all gathered to watch the same silent film. “[W]atching a Chaplin film he found himself laughing out loud, joining the others in their laughter. And he caught someone’s eye...who had the same realization that this mutual laughter was conversation” (Ondaatje 144). Patrick grasps the idea that the spoken word is not necessarily the only means to interact with people. It is possible to communicate by laughing together while watching a silent movie with persons from various backgrounds. Despite the fact that Patrick is not an immigrant, he chose to live among them, with people who cannot understand him and vice versa in both language and custom.

Ondaatje illustrates the capacity for human adaptability and integration into many settings and civilizations. He demonstrates how those who have been uprooted can construct a new cultural setting that combines their previous experiences with new elements. His characters appear to go through a process of change in their unique consciousnesses that allows them to redefine themselves by realising that the past cannot be recovered, only recalled, and finding difficulty in the relocation to a different cultural space. Without the publication of *In the Skin of a Lion*, it is doubtful that many people would have considered or acknowledged the contributions that immigrant labourers made to Canada, and they would have been condemned to history.

Moreover, Ondaatje draws a comparison between moths and immigrants in the book to highlight the significance of focusing on the voices of the marginalised: While the workers and their loved ones were travelling to the waterworks, he writes that they were "[e]merging from darkness, mothlike" (Ondaatje 115). Moths are a recurring and powerful symbol throughout the book, and Patrick speculates at the outset of the story that "[p]erhaps they are not mute at all, it is just a lack of range in his hearing" (Ondaatje 10). When Ondaatje compares the immigrants, who stand in for the ex-centrics, to the moths, he says that they are looking for the lights and that they have always had a voice, but no one was willing to hear it. He is prepared to give them a voice because, as Patrick realises, all they need is someone who can hear them. As a result, *In the Skin of a Lion* sheds light on the ways that linguistic differences and identity crisis have limited the accounts of immigrant workers who contributed to the development of modern-day Toronto. The next chapter shed the light on Ondaatje's way of writing, narrative techniques and his linguistic expressions.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

Michael Ondaatje claims that “reclaiming untold stories is an essential role for the writer” (Bush 245) in an interview with Catherine Bush. *In the Skin of a Lion* by Ondaatje is a masterfully inventive combination of wisdom, poetry, history, and love. Ondaatje uses a creative collage style in his work to mix fact and fantasy. His larger narrative works, which frequently draw inspiration from the unconventional lives of real individuals, combine fact and fantasy. Adele Wiseman claims that Ondaatje has accurately portrayed the lives of immigrants in fiction as a component of the history of the construction of Toronto because neither official history would have imagined it nor is currently able to do it. He casts in the dark as his method. He starts with surreal pictures, gradually constructing his complex narrative, yet he spends years vigorously and laboriously refining his work. Ondaatje’s utilisation of actual historical occasions, locations, and individuals lends credibility to these voices and their narratives, fostering empathy and comprehension.

Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a lion*, took a different turn in the stylistic narrative and reflect traditional ideas more in the novel. Earlier books, like *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, *Coming Through Slaughter*, and *Running in the Family*, provide the reader a variety of fragmentary, unconnected, but nevertheless clearly interconnected stories, linguistic snapshots, recollections, personal testimony, and historical reconstructions. The newspaper clippings, images, maps, and poetry are irregularly inserted between these text fragments, which are delivered by numerous voices using a range of tones, registers, and generic styles. By contrast, this novel adopts a more

conventional structure of a collection of interconnected storylines and subplots, articulated by an omnipresent narrator who is, notably, not omniscient.

He has continued to base his fiction on figures and documents found in the archives as well as on tales that these discoveries have made public. He uses a variety of media in his writing just as consistently and thoughtfully, never favouring any one over another and always pointing out both its advantages and disadvantages, as well as its potential and its limitations. A list of such materials for this novel might include historical documents, individual photos and antiques, dramatic radio and theatre plays, hit song lyrics, movies, maps, newspaper clippings, letters, long stories, blueprints, and even dreams. the majority of the primary sources he uses are not readily available to the reader. Instead, one of the characters or the narrator will either refer to or describe these same elements within the text which are no less numerous. Because of this narrative intermediary between the reader and the original texts, Ondaatje's sources aren't just presented as independent pieces of documented evidence for the reader to either interpret "straight" or, alternatively, against the grain.

The novel represents an intentional effort to change history and betray, in the sense of exposing hidden realities. The writer takes readers on a voyage through the twisted roads of Patrick's memories and, in the role of a future avenger, offers a different account of what happened as well as compensation for the historical debt owed to immigrant labour by Canadian society. The novel emphasizes the historiographic metafictional elements, which allow for the problematization of history, and intertextuality, which appears frequently throughout the novel. The author opposes and deconstructs the idea of absolute truth in official history, which has an exclusionary tendency, and presents the reader with a different account of the event.

By examining the novel's narrative technique, the work concentrates on revisionist interpretation of history. Ondaatje challenges historical accounts while also highlighting the contributions of immigrant labour to Toronto by using intertextuality as a postmodern storytelling method inside a historiographic metafictional framework. The book could also be seen as a contribution to the discussion of immigration as a historical, contemporary, and future issue on a local and global scale. The “delicious” prose and poetic descriptions of working-class Torontonians left out of history in *In the Skin of a Lion* won recognition. “Episodic, fragmented, structurally loose and shifty” (Kizer) was how the novel was described in the review title “Mr. Small Isn’t Here. Have an Iguana!”. In his own words, Ondaatje stated that he “wanted to talk about the people who were unhistorical - all those invisible professions that lie underneath history” (Kizer). It was therefore regarded as a book that successfully “decentres history” through “poetic imagination and... tale-telling” (Kizer).

In this novel, Ondaatje’s writing style is linked to Hutcheon’s own idea of historiographic metafiction, according to her argument that “in this bio- or historiographic metafiction we experience... [a] postmodern performance in our act of reading the fragmented text” (Hutcheon 84). She then cites *In the Skin of a Lion* to support her argument regarding Ondaatje’s writing. In addition to briefly addressing the novel's emphasis on Toronto’s marginalised populations, an American writer Hans Bak offers support for Hutcheon’s argument. Bak adds:

[N]ovel had best been seen as a piece of ‘historiographic metafiction’, a self-referential act of literary and historiographical revisionism, in which Ondaatje seeks to do poetic justice to the anonymous masses of laborers who actually built the city, but whose historical contributions have mostly gone unrecorded;

their lives have remained unwritten, they have remained silent in the public record of the city, without a voice in official urban historiography. (Bak 291)

This work addresses the rhetorical function of the narrative structure in the novel *In the Skin of a Lion*. It framed as historiographic metafiction. The phrase “historiographic metafiction” was first used in the late 1980s by Canadian literary scholar Linda Hutcheon. The term “those well-known and popular novels” that are “both deeply self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (Hutcheon 5) is used to describe historiographic metafiction. In order to reconsider and remodel the forms and contents of the past, historiographic metafiction often appropriates historical figures or events. It is implemented to fictional works that combine historical fiction and the literary device of metafiction. In Ondaatje’s novel, historians, like storytellers, “decide which events will become facts” (Hutcheon 122), showing that “[m]emoirs are true and useful stars, whilst studied histories are those stars joined in constellations, according to the fancy of the poet” (Pepys 69). It was Ondaatje’s lack of knowledge about the individuals responsible for building the bridge that inspired him to take up his pen and question the official sources’ account of events.

Historiographic metafiction, in this view, represents a particular textual creation that is self-aware and purposefully calls attention to its status as a construct. Hutcheon claims that the text itself raises concerns about the boundaries between fiction and reality, which accounts for its contradictory nature. Because it depends on what it is challenging that is the fact, the text can be read as either recovering or rejecting historical presumptions. Importantly, its goal is to show alternative lines of reasoning rather than to explain the truth.

Intertextuality is the intricate connections between texts that are seen as essential to the formation or understanding of a narrative. The idea, rhetoric, or ideology from other works is drawn upon through intertextuality in order to be included into the main message rather than using referential terms from various literary works. It is possible to identify the author's intentions and the purpose of his narrative in many passages throughout the book Ondaatje's use of intertextuality as a narrative technique to interact with the reader and provide hints and information about how the narrative will be conducted as well as about themes and the text's framework. This can help to demonstrate the writer's deliberate intentions in confronting history through fiction. The writer attempts to present a different interpretation of the events in his book *In the Skin of a Lion*.

One excellent definition of narrative strategy is provided by O. A. Kovaliov, who states that similar to the word 'textual strategy,' the concept of 'narrative strategy' denotes an author's perspective on his audience. The author attempts to accomplish particular objectives through a literary text and employs a variety of persuasive techniques in order to achieve goal. Consequently, it is possible to understand how intertextuality allows the author to engage in a kind of intertextual game with the reader, in which the reader is required to actively identify the meanings concealed in the intertext. Hutcheon offers another insightful description for understanding intertextuality's function as a postmodern narrative technique in the novel. According to her:

Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context [...] It is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead it

directly confronts the past of literature - and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts. (Hutcheon 118)

To build a connection with the reader and make clear his objectives of bringing the past into the present to allow for fresh interpretations, the author makes use of intertexts throughout the narrative.

The writer employs a variety of postmodern literary devices, including parody, pastiche, irony, imagery, temporal distortion, and others. The studies by Robert David Stacey and Ridvan Askin about the novel are also fascinating. The pastoral style, according to Stacey, is used to write the book and “continues to offer the contemporary novelist a set of structures from within which to explore the dynamics of difference and the meaning of history, whether for those with power or those without” (Stacey 467). The author could spot the story in the historical context while simultaneously questioning the historical accuracy by using a historiographic metafictional frame, where fact and fiction are blended: “When [the self-reflexivity of historiographic metafiction is] conjoined with historical references to actual events and personages, this demystifying auto-representation engages a problematizing of historical knowledge and of the borders between fact and fiction, conducted within the power and limits of narrativization” (Hutcheon 227). *In the Skin of a Lion* has such a mixture of historical fact and fiction, misrepresenting the distinction between the two.

By bringing up historical figures (Small, Harris, Temelcoff, Caravaggio, and so on) and transposing them into a fictional milieu with entirely imaginary characters (Hana, Patrick, Clara, and Alice), Ondaatje begins the fragmentation and deconstruction of history. For instance, Cato, a communist in the book, is a combination of actual communists Viljo Rosvall and Janne Voutilainen. He is neither entirely

historical nor entirely fictitious. Due to the fact that the historiographic metafiction heavily relies on prior knowledge and, as a result, the reader's capacity for interpretation, it is only possible to conclude that Cato is a representation of these two historical unionists if one is aware of or looks up the details surrounding their demise and funeral. It is reported that "[s]oon after the funeral began there was an 85% eclipse of the sun, casting a brooding shadow of divine judgement on the whole affair" (Raffo 14) in reference to the funeral procession for Viljo Rosvall.

To illustrate the relationship between Cato and Rosvall Voutilainen in the book, Ondaatje alludes to it as follows: "During Cato's funeral, while Alice held the infant Hana, there was an eclipse" (Ondaatje 159). In accordance with history, those Finnish-Canadian unionists vanished before being discovered dead at Onion Lake, and their deaths were classified as accidental drowning; "[t]he 'Truth' about the fate of these two men is now probably lost in the past" (Raffo 3). By associating Cato to these communists in the book and demonstrating that he was actually murdered and "found under the ice of a shallow creek near Onion Lake," (Ondaatje 157) which is more in line with the general public's ideas, Ondaatje casts doubt on the historical records. Further, the other historical figures are exposed to the same procedure for calling the historical facts into question. According to history, the actual Ambrose Small vanished and his body was never found.

In the novel, the author disputes this statement by demonstrating that his protagonist Ambrose had fled of his own will and was residing with his girlfriend Clara Dickens. The nun experiences the same thing; in the narrative, Temelcoff saves her from falling off the bridge, and she later changes her name to Alice Gull. The line between fact and fiction is now blurred, making it difficult for the reader to distinguish between the two. Now that the story has been placed in context, historical assertions

are being questioned. This blur caused by the blending of reality and fiction might be regarded as being symbolised by the biker who “escaped by bicycle through the police barriers” during the political rituals of the bridge’s opening and raced across it. As a result, “[n]ot the expected show car containing officials, but this one anonymous” (Ondaatje 29) was the first person to cross the bridge. “[I]n the photographs he is a blur of intent,” the author said. “On his flight he claimed the bridge in that blurred movement” (Ondaatje 29). The distinction between fact and fiction is becoming increasingly hazy, giving the powerless and anonymous a chance to reclaim their place in history.

Also, in order to reclaim the historical discourse, it is necessary to fill in the gaps with a different perspective, and this alternative is a discourse built on the viewpoints of those who have been left out of the official records. Yet, because history did not give the excluded discourse a place, as opposed to the official discourse, it has not been preserved. And because of this, memory plays a crucial role in the historiographic metafiction's textual production.

Remembering does not involve going back in time, rather, it means adjusting a former event to the circumstances of the present. It is rearranging and providing lost meaning. Patrick’s memory, which serves as the book’s starting point, serves as a metaphor for that. Patrick has a unique recollection, yet this distinct memory is linked to the memories of the other characters and creates a community that opposes to one voice. When Ondaatje compares Patrick’s discovery regarding the interactions of those memories and histories with a street band, whose music is composed of various melodies that come together to form the chorus: “The cornet and saxophone and drum chased each other across solos and then suddenly, as Patrick drew alongside them, fell

together and rose within a chorus,” (Ondaatje 150) he is evoking the idea of individual memories being combined to form a larger meaning.

As a result, Patrick comes to the realisation that “[h]is own life was no longer a single story but part of a mural, which was a falling together of accomplices” (Ondaatje 151), specifically Patrick’s relationships with the other six main characters in the novel, who are referred to as “six stars and a moon” in the prologue, where Patrick represents the moon by acting as a “prism that refracted their lives” (Ondaatje 163). The “scene” in the novel where Patrick challenges Commissioner Harris in the final section is the best representation of the conflict between history and fiction. Patrick, a fictional character, could be seen to portray a fictional perspective, and Harris, a historical character, could be seen to depict the historical events. In the book, Alice tells Patrick that “[y]ou reach people through metaphor” (Ondaatje 128). Hence, let’s apply a metaphor to describe this conflict. Patrick stands in the corner, sporting his fictional cape, and challenges Harris, asking him if he is aware of the number of casualties that occurred during the construction of the intake tunnels. Harris, who is standing in the opposite corner and is wearing his history cape, responds, “There was no record kept” (Ondaatje 248).

Patrick recalls Nicholas Temelcoff of the nun, Patrick gives him the ability of going back in time: “Patrick’s gift, that arrow into the past, shows him the wealth in himself, how he has been sewn into history” (Ondaatje 155). In order to demonstrate this, Ondaatje uses the only narrative of Nicholas Temelcoff, a daredevil who, in spite of his prior struggles to fit into his new life as an immigrant, “[h]e is a citizen here, in the present, successful with his own bakery” (Ondaatje 155). Reminded by Patrick, Temelcoff thinks back to the time he saved the nun. He experiences “the pleasure of recall. It is something new to him. That is what history means” (Ondaatje

155). Temelcoff learns that by being “sewn into history,” he now has a voice and “[n]ow he will begin to tell stories” (Ondaatje 155). Then, as individual stories are reviewed and given new significance, they are absorbed into history.

Self-reflexivity is an important characteristic of historiographic metafiction because it helps readers to see the text as a product of human thought. Metafiction is a literary device that allows a story to demonstrate awareness of itself, which is indicated by the discourse’s turning within. For instance, the author points out in this passage that Patrick is a fictional character: “All his life Patrick Lewis has lived beside novels and their clear stories” (Ondaatje 85).

Another excellent instance of metafiction in the book is when the author describes the romance between Patrick and Clara as existing beyond the text: “He has come across a love story. This is only a love story. He does not wish for plot and all its consequences” (Ondaatje 159). The metafictional device thus adds to its own understanding of itself as an artefact and makes use of this understanding of its own nature to raise issues regarding the relationships between the real and the fictional. It also has a stronger impact on how we perceive the world that is typically accepted as real:

Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside. (Waugh 2)

According to the above mentioned, the reader's active participation in the metafiction's definition is obvious.

Between the true event and the fictional story, there is room for the reader to experiment with how well he can modify the previously developed frameworks. If the reader is not aware of the historical context, this effect cannot happen. In this view, it is clear that the historical discourse either favours or discredits alternatives; "[h]istoriography and fiction, as we saw earlier, constitute their objects of attention; in other words, they decide which events will become facts" (Hutcheon 122). The alternate narratives that historiographic metafiction suggests offer possibilities to recapture the options that official discourse has abandoned.

The significance of the novel as a whole is shown by Ondaatje's choice of italics and the fact that it is accompanied by a blank space above and below. Historiographic metafiction is evidently being used in this novel because of the various unreliable points of view, the disjointed plot, and the uncertainty. With a strategic use of narrative form and imagery, this fictions by Michael Ondaatje investigate fragmentation, alienation, uncertainty, self-destruction, or to be more precise, the problematic nature of human identity. The final chapter highlights all the aspects dealt in previous chapters and offers the final finding of the study.

Chapter Five

Summation

Michael Ondaatje is best understood as an artist who has challenged the boundaries of genres, rather than as a poet or novelist. His poems and novels explore the ambiguity between real and imagined life. Ondaatje uses language in a manner that should be virtually prohibited. He creates scenes that can be both luxuriant and heartbreakingly harsh, moving between them with the flexibility and free association of memory. His portrayals of the hard work that these folks perform in early 20th-century Canada (bridge construction, forestry, tunnel drilling beneath Lake Ontario to construct a water purification facility) are unmatched in scale, bravery, and a sense of the hard and muscular.

As a migrant himself, Ondaatje's writing reveals a desire to rewrite history from the viewpoint of the marginalised people. His stories make an effort to enlighten the experiences of individuals who were marginalised in Canada's history, such as women, immigrants, and the working class. Ondaatje has undoubtedly been significantly impacted by the discussion around Canadian history.

The hazy, surreal world of Toronto in the early 20th century is brought to life in the novel *In the Skin of a Lion*. Many immigrants arrived in the city during this time, fleeing the suffering, violence, and poverty that characterised their daily lives in their native land. They travelled for weeks across the ocean, drawn by the allure of the new land's glistening lights and their promises of a better life. These large numbers of immigrants, who were frequently uneducated and in poverty, created and transformed the city into the vibrant, multicultural metropolis. They just had their desires and hopes, but they had the strength and determination to make them come true. These men and

women's continuous effort directly contributed to the development of nations that have since evolved and succeeded, but history largely ignores and forgets the very people who formed those nations.

The novel *In the Skin of a Lion* is praised by critics for its sharp treatment of socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and the immigrant experience. One need to take a more analytical view to the story, focusing on the elements of authority and its distribution through the characters while trying to remain detached from the characters themselves. The novel indicates that empathy, solidarity, and respect for other people's dignity are the most significant means of individual growth. Thus, the private should not be kept apart from the public and of social advancement, even though it makes no direct reference to political progress. Marxist readings of the book are relevant because complex societies are typically created through the exploitation of cheap labour, sometimes in the form of slaves and other times as factory fodder from helpless migrants. However, any one reading is constrained because one need to approach the book with greater objectivity, concentrating on the elements of power and how it is distributed among the characters while keeping a distance from the individuals. As a result, Ondaatje successfully exposes the poor structure of the capitalist system, which is founded on exploitation and agony.

Ondaatje hopes to expose European power and draw attention to those who are marginalised, such as immigrants and outsiders who feel lost and without identities in their surroundings. He wrote *In the Skin of a Lion*, in order to tell and illuminate the story of the disadvantaged Toronto characters who were used and controlled by the colonisers to develop Toronto but who continued to be outsiders. The author seeks to centre the plot on characters like Caravaggio the thief, Nicholas Temelcoff, Patrick, a

tunnel worker, and Alice, a nun, in order to demonstrate how the colonies oppressed, marginalised, and isolated them in the city where they took shelter.

The story primarily centres on Patrick Lewis, a son of an explosive specialist. Sometimes it jumps to a few other individuals, such as Nicolas Temelcoff, all of whom are somehow connected to Patrick's story. The lower class workers who toiled to build some of Toronto's greatest early twentieth-century achievements in city infrastructure are shown by Ondaatje as having poor to horrific quality of life. The immigrants who contributed to construct one of the centres of modern country are depicted in this novel with their sweat, blood, and tears. Patrick is driven to use violence as a protest, but eventually realises that no philosophy can justifiably call for the taking of human lives. Ondaatje's novel explores the nature of power and ethnocentric domination, emphasizing the lack of recognition and value for migrant workers.

In his writing, Ondaatje empowers the migrants and champions the individual throughout his work, giving them a sense of identity and the ability to adopt lion skin. He emphasises the migration histories of the individuals who founded the city, portraying them as genuine people rather than merely an "extension of ... drill" (Ondaatje 28) who give Patrick an identity and inspire him to fight for their cause. By blowing up the Muskoka hotel and attempting to blow up the Waterworks, he fulfils Alice's desire of political activism and gaining a voice among the powerful. He has the opportunity to talk with Commissioner Harris during his final election campaign and share the stories of the workers and Alice; he does so while wearing the skin of a lion.

And in the midst of it all, he tells us a sweet and depressing tale of immigrants who are caught between poverty and the hope of the New World, between past and current loves, and between the rich and the poor. This story is passionate, realistic, and

survived. A Molotov cocktail is used to end a confrontation between a wealthy man who wants to go missing and the searcher who is trying to find him in order to find the woman he loves. The climax is also sad, exciting, and a reminder of the fundamental decency of a human being. For immigrants, language is crucial. It enables them to interact with a hostile world and form new relationships. Also, it makes them more accessible in such a world and helps them to carry on their stories to future generations. This is quite evident in the character Patrick, who uses language to attempt to share with the daughter of his late beloved Alice the history of the immigrants. Despite the challenges of trying to acquire English and adapt into Canadian society, European immigrants succeed in preserving cultural coherence through their numerous ethnic businesses, restaurants, and gathering places.

By reflecting and celebrating the diversity of personal and local histories that give voice to the historical figures who have been forgotten, Ondaatje aims to balance the omissions and partiality of the historical master narrative. This novel is a historical fiction, which serves to highlight the importance of immigrant worker in the Americas, a population whose contributions deserve to be acknowledged. Without them, modern countries would not be what they are today. History frequently struggles to offer immigrants the recognition they deserve. The Prince Edward Viaduct and the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant were constructed in Toronto around the turn of the 20th century by immigrant workers under terrible pay and working conditions. Their living conditions are given little or no thought. The Prince Edward Viaduct is also referred to as the Bloor Viaduct.

The fictitious story is perfectly intertwined with actual events. None of them stand out. They don't go overboard. They do not obscure the narrative. The viaduct was intended to be a double-decked truss-arched bridge carrying traffic, water, and power

between Eastern Toronto and the city's interior. The remarkable incidents that occurred while the bridge was being constructed may be found, including the nun who fell from the still-unfinished bridge, Ambrose Small going missing, labour union meetings, and the murder of labour union leaders. Ondaatje devoted months to researching the City of Toronto's newspapers and archives. He combined the known with the unknown to create a story.

His writings are difficult to piece together into a coherent story due to the events jumping around in time, styles and point of view changing, and gaps in the story and loose strands. He has a strong enthusiasm for language and a remarkable talent for sensually tease out sentences. His stories are constructed slowly like coral into towers, branches, secret rooms, creating a beautiful grisaille of memory and love.

The immigrants are important to reconstructing the country, and they deserve the chance for a fresh start as well as the struggle to find an attention for their stories and become a significant part of history for what they have performed. In other words, people have the right to be honoured. With his writing, Ondaatje celebrates the uniqueness of each person and provides migrants a sense of identity and the chance to adopt lion skin, as shown throughout his work. *In the Skin of a Lion* by Ondaatje challenges the idea of a single, objective reality, emphasizing the significance of marginalised people using collective voice and action to overcome their historical marginalization. The text illustrates how unexpected, brief interpersonal connections can support in a person's development and discovery of themselves through the irregular, yet interconnected stories.

The author gives the immigrants the chance to assume the role of protagonists and construct their own histories through the use of a historiographic metafictional

frame narrative method. By combining these historical figures with fictitious characters, Ondaatje addresses history by splitting it into pieces and fusing them with the narratives of the immigrants in order to give them a voice and include them into history. Through the use of poetry, Michael Ondaatje creates a beautiful and metaphorical patchwork out of scraps in various forms, developing narratives, and various colour. It is clear that fiction has a powerful influence on how history is seen, and a wonderful storyteller like Ondaatje provides strong evidence of this influence in his book. This conflict study of class, language and identity thus validates the title Immigrant Conflict: Class, Language and Identity in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*.

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Subconscious Dispute of Racial Inequality in Nelle Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

ROKANCY.R

(REG.NO. 21SPEN16)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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DECLARATION

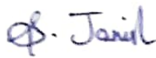
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Subconscious Dispute of Racial Inequality in Nelle Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** 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 and is a work done by Rokancy, R during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

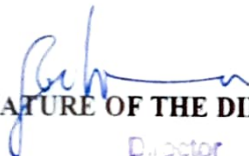


SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE



SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Subconscious Dispute of Racial Inequality in Nelle Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI


ROKANCY. R

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Subconscious Dispute of Racial Inequality in Nelle Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** explicates the psychological sufferings faced by the marginalised people regarding their race, color and the community to which they belong.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the origin of American Literature and the state of America during the time of Great Depression. It also brings out the biographical details of Nelle Harper Lee and the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter entitled **Racial Prejudice** deals with the racial conflict in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*

The third chapter entitled **Conflict of the Psyche** explores how the characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are struggling and dealing with the psychological conflict which arises in them by the influence of the society to which they belong.

The fourth chapter **Gothic Traits** portrays the Gothic elements and the characters exist in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and half, America was merely a group of colonies scattered along the seaboard of the North American continent colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion the motherland, America became the United States, a nation extended southward to the pacific. World Wars I and II, which occurred in the 19th century, severely disrupted people's life on earth. Human existence was impacted by the aftermath of two world wars. All over the globe, it was shocking to experience. People were searching for their closest loved ones as everything fell into disarray. Particularly, there was much turmoil in the lives of the troops. America experienced significant suffering.

The Wall Street Collapse, also known as the Great Crash or the 1929 Stock Market Crash, happened on October 24, 1929. It was the worst stock market crash in American history. Their lives were impacted by the global financial crisis and the Wall Street meltdown. The nation's GDP fell precipitously. Workers who were unemployed stole items to support themselves. The nation had a high suicide rate. Families in America were disintegrating. At a certain point, the divorce rate ceased increasing. The nation even maintained authority over its birthrate. Crime rates across the nation abruptly increased. A household had a drinking and smoking problem among all of the members. Due to women's inability to pay their expenses, prostitution was on the rise. World Wars and the Great Depression had societal and cultural outcome in America. Mass migration as a consequence occurred, changing the face of America. People's mindsets were changed by it. Hope and a new existence were what they were looking for. Due to their prior experiences, farmers, Native

Americans, African Americans, and immigrants wished for a modern existence. New forms of expression were adhered to the American Culture. The works published were mainly based on these themes.

The Americans attempted to become prosperous in 1920. During this time, industries, and production efficiency developed. Modernism began to appear in America and Europe during this time. Through art, modernism brilliantly captured the essence of contemporary living. Sinclair Lewis was the first American to win the Nobel Prize for writing in 1926. William Faulkner published his novel *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929. In 1930, he published another work *As I Lay Dying*. All the writers wrote which all dreamt of the country and they were searching for the real America.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird* is written in the context of *Scottsboro Boys*. It is a novel in which nine Black men were convicted of raping two white women without valid evidence. The condemning of Tom Robinson was based on this true incident. Another incident took place where a black teenager Emmett Till, who was murdered for flirting with a white woman in Mississippi in 1955, and whose death led for the cause of the Civil Rights Movement in America. This incident was also considered by Lee to show certain tribulations faced by Tom Robinson in the novel. Lee was very much influenced by the incident. Different things that happened as a consequence of the Great Depression during that time had an impact on Lee. It has been suggested that Lee was influenced by the Emmett Till murder case when she wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A fourteen-year-old Afro American kid from Chicago travelled to Mississippi to see his aunt and uncle. After some days the dead body of the boy was found. The white jury acquitted two men for the murder. Harper Lee wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* during the world wars and Economic Depression. The history of slavery in the American South, which came to an end with the American

Civil War, had a significant impact on Harper Lee's childhood. Through the personalities, moral dilemmas, and social difficulties the story presents, it aids readers in understanding human thought processes.

America was characterised by a cultural division between the North and the South. Black slaves laboured on the farms in the agricultural southern states. Since there were more industries in the northern states, everyone had superior economic backgrounds. Southerners defended the black race by asserting that they were blessed to have come into touch with Christianity. The black slaves were also in need of guidance from their white superiors. Moreover, the African American was denied to have equal access to voting, education and employment opportunities. White farmers became bankrupt and found difficult for living. In her book, Harper Lee talked about the detestation and cruel treatment of African Americans. The American Dream can be used as the foundation for a study of all these events and cultural differences that served as the context for the book.

When individuals were greatly impacted by social and economic decline, Harper Lee penned *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The Great Depression was a global economic catastrophe that affected North America, Europe, and other regions. It began in 1929 and ran until 1939. It has more severe consequences on people's lives all across the world. The devastating effects disseminated in America and affected their life. This period in America is a great source for the writers to produce prolific literary works. The economic crisis was an inspiration for the American writers like Harper Lee, Ernest Hemingway F. Scott Fitzgerald and others to do literary experiments in modern American literature.

Novels by Lee's contemporaries featured topics from the two World Wars and the Great Depression. A great American author F.S. Fitzgerald was not universally

regarded as a superb literary craftsman by the critics. Fitzgerald had a direct, poetic, vibrant, and funny style that stirred feelings at at the right moments. Fitzgerald believed it to be the essence of what made Americans unique. Loss was another important motif in his works, along with mutability or destruction. Fitzgerald and the Jazz Age were linked. He published *The Great Gatsby*, a well-known book, in 1924. The Great Depression's influence on America can be seen throughout the book.

Ernest Hemingway is considered as the master of concise and straightforward expression. Hemingway wrote in an economical and demeaning manner. It had an impact on American fiction of the 20th century. Other writers including James Jones, Nelson Algren, and Norman Mailer were greatly influenced by him. Only a few books, including *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Death in the Afternoon*, and *The Green Hills of Africa*, have been written by him. He was a mature male author. Hemingway made an effort to portray the individuals engaged in dangerous exterior battles and adventures. The portrayals of the characters shown bravery.

William Faulkner was raised in Mississippi, where he created an imaginative landscape Yoknapatawpha for his novels. The landscape was mentioned with several families with interconnections back to the generations. Faulkner recreated the landscapes and races like Indian, African-American, Euro-American and other groups. He was famous with his narrative chronology, different points of views and voices and baroque style. The famous novels of Faulkner are *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. Most of his novels show how meaning resides in the manner of telling. The viewpoints used by Faulkner makes the novel more self – referential. The themes like southern tradition, family, community, the land, history and race are incorporated in his novels.

Sinclair Lewis was born in Minnesota and graduated from Yale University. Lewis satirised the repetitive, hypocritical small-town life in Minnesota in his book *Main Street*. Through his works, he exposed the globe to the way of life, materialism, narrowness, and hypocrisy of Americans. He gained fame both nationally and internationally as a result. For his book *Arrowsmith*, he was given the chance to win the Pulitzer Prize. It was a novel that followed a doctor's struggle to uphold his morals in the face of corruption and greed. In 1930, Sinclair Lewis became the first American to receive the Nobel Prize in literature.

John Steinbeck in his well known book *The Grapes of Wrath* portrayed The Great Depression through the perspective of a farmer. It is thought to be his finest achievement. Steinbeck's debut book, *Cup of Gold* was published in 1929. Henry Morgan's life and death served as the inspiration for the book's plot. The attack and taking over of Panama, also known as the 'Cup of Gold,' by Morgan, and the alleged discovery of ladies who were believed to be fairer than the sun are at the centre of the story. John Steinbeck's 1939 novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, glorifies a simple, rural way of life. Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited*, a 1933 chronicle of an average industrial worker's life in the Depression Era, conveyed disillusionment and cynicism. *The Moon Is Down* is another novel about the Socrates – inspired spirit of resistance, was later adapted into a film. In 1952 Steinbeck's longest novel, *East of Eden*, was published. According to his third wife, Elaine, he considered it his *Magnum opus*, his greatest novel.

Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926 at Monroeville, Alabama, America. She was the youngest among the five kids born to Amasa Coleman Lee and Francis Lee. Lee was given the name Nelle, her grandmother's name, Ellen, was spelled backwards. Amasa Coleman worked at home while Francis was a newspaper editor

and a lawyer. Francis Lee justified himself for putting the blame for the murder of a white business owner on two black males who had received a sentence. Harper Lee finished her education at Monroe County High School. She participated in literary honour society and developed interest in English Literature. Later, Lee graduated from Huntingdon College, Montgomery in 1944, then to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. She realised her potential for writing by contributing to the schoolshumour magazine *Rammer Jammer*. Lee was also the editor for this magazine. Lee got the chance into Law school and did an exchange program at Oxford University. Lee wrote the manuscript of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and shown to Tay Hohoff editor at J. B. Lippincott & Co. The novel was published in 1961. *To Kill a Mockingbird* deals with issues of racism this was observed by Lee in her childhood.

In 1936, when Lee was ten years old, she wrote a semi-autobiographical novel based on her observations of her family, neighbors, and local happenings. Regarding racist issues, people's attitudes were sensitive. *Go Set a Watchman* was written in mid 1950s and published as a sequel of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 2015. Nelle Harper Lee became a famous American novelist. She became popular and successful, winning the Pulitzer Prize for her novel. Harper Lee was her pen name. The novel's script was written by Horton Foote, and it was turned into a film in 1962. Gregory Peck, who played Atticus Finch in the cinematic version of the book, was recognised with three trophies. Lee's father was actually claimed to be Atticus Finch. Philip Alford played Jem in the movie adaption, which starred Mary Badham as Scout.

Truman Capote was her intimate friend who influenced her in writing this novel. Capote wrote the impact of the murder of four members of the Clutter family on their small Kansas farming community. The two traveled to Kansas to interview

townspeople, friends and family of the deceased and the investigators working to solve the crime. Lee served as his assistant and helped with the interviews. They eventually won over some of the locals with her easygoing, unpretentious manner. Truman was flamboyant in personality and style found hard to get him into his subjects' appreciation.

To Kill a Mockingbird is also a bildungsroman novel by Harper Lee, who wrote her two books with semi-autobiographical elements. If the first novel is based on her childhood experience, the second novel was based on her experience as an adult. Lee was successful in portraying the real life of people during the Great Depression. She presented real elements like race, justice, and economy. The characters of the novel include her family and neighbours as the character and an event that occurred near her home. This indicates that Lee understands her family, neighbours, town and country. As a writer, she presents the tribulations of her 'self' and 'others' in her novel. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is novel which shows the maturation of the author. The novel starts by showing the author as child and conclude in matured state. The novel is narrated by Harper Lee from first person point of view.

In order to eliminate any linguistic difficulties, Lee tells the story in an uncomplicated and plain manner. The dialogue between the characters is portrayed in a conversational style. The language's dialects and slang reflect the time period's spoken communication patterns. Themes like racism, justice, prejudice, and civil rights are included in the novel to demonstrate social realism. The novel caught the audience's attraction in the form of book and film. This indicates that Lee's novel is real choice for the audience to know about America in 1920's. These factors make Lee a distinctive writer among her contemporaries. The study on the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper lee is based on the realistic topics. The themes like race,

justice, poverty and segregation is elucidated based on the real life experience of the author and the incidents that took place in the novel. The key events depicted in the novel include the Scottsboro Trial cases, poverty in Alabama, and segregation of Blacks. Despite the fact that these problems first appeared in America at the beginning of the 20th century, they are still present today in various forms around the globe. According to wealth, civil rights, freedom, and liberty, it divides people into different groups. In an increasingly globalised world, this results in hegemony.

While reading the novel the readers get a sense of how people really live in the country through reading about Maycomb residents' daily life. Everything was in a state of anarchy during the Great Depression. Particularly in a damaged state were families, parenting, and basic needs. Using the idea of the American Dream as a framework, the study analyses racial concerns. Social realism covers topics such as the family structure, marriage as an institution, and other events. People in America were facing a tough time. Lee was deeply influenced by the American dream to show the real situation of people to make readers understand through her own life experiences. She speaks to the readers directly through her characters. As an author, she inspires the mind of readers to achieve American dream. Based on his neighbours and the events that occurred when she was a child, Lee has woven a lovely tale. In the book, Lee is referred to as Scout. Her dad is depicted as Atticus Finch. To support Tom Robinson, Atticus Finch stands up for him. He stands for the equal-opportunity society of America.

The fragile nature of the court system is discussed by Harper Lee in the novel. Afro American was denied justice and a peaceful co-existence. The African American community served as a global symbol of people's conditions. Due to discrimination against the African American community, the law's execution and

implementation did not go according to plan. An innocent individual was found guilty as a result of it. An innocent person cannot be judged based only on preconceived notions. People in modern culture judge others based on their prejudices. Human values are given less prominence. It is clearly seen in public places like court. Everyone criticises based on his assumptions and prejudices. In the case of a magistrate he cannot judge a person based on his personal interest or some discriminations. It is the time when the law and order are unstable. Only a specific group of people are granted justice and equality. The formalist community idealises social injustice and inequality in various ways for their own selfish ends. In terms of social realism, these effects of social injustice and inequality are examined and understood. Only social issues are brought up in court. The American Dream is used to study several issues, including those related to education, finance, culture, and other events.

Lee narrates the novel based on the reminiscences of her childhood. It interrupts Scout's timely narrative which enhances the plot with prior events by making it reaching on the right time. The novel opens with an adult Scout Finch reminiscing about her childhood. Scout develops the values and ideas learnt by encountering the characters in Maycomb's society. She learns about justice and injustice by watching the trial of an African American man. Tom Robinson is a portrayal of the African American community during the Great Depression. Lee views the American society without any partiality to an extent. She witnesses the divisions of class and race in her small town in the novel. Lee is groomed in way to consider everyone in an egalitarian manner. She has the courage to know herself and those around her. Lee is able to respect the diversity of the people in her community, people such as Tom Robinson and Boo Radley. There is rarely a situation in which Scout

does not learn something new about education, superstition, bravery, or cowardice. The story evolves in a world where the children lose their innocence as they grow up and questions the harsh realities of adult life. Lee's story accepts the Afro American Community through her characters like Tom Robinson and an eccentric Boo Radley.

Lee employs images like Mockingbird as symbols in the book. The author uses symbols, one of which is "Mockingbird." A mockingbird is a bird known for imitating other birds' songs. In the book, much like the bird, the kids imitate their parents by growing up. Themes and concepts like justice, equality, and kindness that are associated with this symbol are evident in the novel. These ideas are manipulated by certain characters for the survival. The survival of people is also questioned by the author. Mockingbird also represents Atticus Finch in the novel. His endeavor is to establish an egalitarian society. It is the vision of Lee seen in the novel. Atticus tries to save Tom Robinson from Mayella Ewell's rape case. His children follow the good qualities like their father.

To Kill a Mockingbird is set in the fictional town of Maycomb, during the Great Depression. The protagonist is Jean Louise (Scout) Finch, an intelligent and unconventional girl who ages from six to nine years old during the course of the novel. She and her brother, Jem, are raised by their widowed father, Atticus Finch, a prominent lawyer who encourages his children to be empathetic and just. When Tom Robinson, a Black man, is falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell, a white woman, Atticus agrees to defend him despite threats from the community. Although Atticus' defense is strong, Tom is convicted, and he is later killed while trying to escape custody. The next chapter deals with the racial conflict. It discusses how racism defines the life of white people as good and bad.

Chapter Two

Racial Prejudice

Prejudice derives from the word prejudgement, which implies that a person makes up his or her mind about something without any real knowledge about it. It can also be meant as negative belief towards certain people because of their membership in a particular group in society. Prejudice is an unjustified attitude or opinion, usually negative, directed towards an individual for something over which the individual has no control. Prejudice is when someone thinks negatively of another person because of his race or religious beliefs. Prejudice is as rigid and unfair generalization about an entire category of people.

Prejudice can cause many serious problems in society, because it can lead to discrimination, segregation, hostility, and oppression. So, we can also define prejudice in the other words as a set of attitudes which causes, supports, or justifies them against the other people in the society. Therefore, prejudice is a rigid and unfair generalization that creates negative prejudgement towards particular member of group without any real knowledge. Prejudice is an emotional component of people's reaction to other groups, also a deeply felt set of feelings about what is good and bad, right and wrong.

Racial prejudice is frequently used to justify keeping a group in a subordinate position such as a lower social class. Conflict theorists, in particular, stress the role of racial and ethnic hostility as a way for the dominant group to keep intact its position of status and power. Indeed, this approach maintains that even the less-affluent White working class uses prejudice to minimize competition from upwardly mobile minorities. Racial prejudice is often experienced by the people in minority in society, and of course the doer is people in majority. Some people called themselves and the

others who have similarities as in-group. Then another people who are different from them are called out-groups. When racial prejudice is done by somebody or group in society, they will not be able to give an objective assessment towards others. Therefore, they will look everything in negative way before understanding them closer. Racial prejudice is attitude, belief, and thought which often causes some negative actions in society.

Racial prejudice often takes the form of a stereotype. Stereotype can be positive or negative, but it is often negative. Stereotype is not just regular perception or assessment toward somebody else or the other groups. Yet, it can cause serious problem in social life. It can lead racial prejudice which bothers harmonic life in society. Consequently, racial prejudice gives some troubles in society, because it has serious effects in social life that can bother road of life in society. Scapegoating is another mechanism that fuels prejudice, scapegoat is a person or category of people, typically with little power and are blamed for a wide variety of things that they could not possibly have caused. The subordinate people will be the victims of racial prejudice in society, because they do not have enough power to give reaction.

Racial prejudice and discrimination can be observed in diverse fields of activities such as in their professions, sports, institutions and teaching learning activities. It is also seen in their daily interactions even the colleagues. It does not affect only the present aspects, but also the future points of view. The blacks in America have been victimized due to cultural racism. It is very tough for the whites to avoid the existence of culture, because it is deep-rooted in the society. Bonilla-Silva outlines “cultural racism as one of the mechanisms through which colorblind racism is perpetuated in the United States” (3). Most of the whites consider racial prejudice as their cultural heritage. Coakley states that a cultural heritage is parameter that people

use to “identify a particular population” (226). The blacks retain bitter experience in such a social structure where people are evaluated on the basis of color rather than on moral virtues and deeds. Coakley defines the social structure as “the established patterns of relationships and social arrangements that take shape as people live, work, and play with each other” (5).

This novel presents the painful situation of Tom who is accused of raping a white girl. He is kept in jail although there is no evidence against him. Phelps asserts “at the heart of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a tragedy that was re enacted time and again in the South of the first half of the twentieth century. An innocent black man is adjudged guilty and ends up dead” (929). Rezazade and Zohdi admire his novel for portraying the life of selfish society full of racial prejudice and injustice. They state “Lee beautifully portrays the life of a fanatic, racist, and selfish society and depicts the racial prejudice and injustice done by these racist poor Whites toward Negroes” (48). The novel deals with racism and shows that it is evil. It creates a great distance between two races resulting in domination, violence and death. Tyson views racism as “the unequal power relations that grow from the sociopolitical domination of one race by another and that result in systematic discriminatory practices: segregation, domination, and persecution (360). This novel is a mirror of society. It sees characters, their situations, their problems and deeds clearly, and presents these aspects in the written words clearly. The blacks realize that they are living in a poor and helpless society isolated from the society of the whites although they live in the same society. This novel presents the very picture of the society.

Rezazade and Zohdi view Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* which pictures a poor, outwardly fanatic, and surely racist society in which people are not equal. “Discrimination, prejudice, and injustice are ingrained in them and the isolation

of townspeople has made the town in stasis, which has estranged them from each other” (50). This novel exposes the fact that segregation creates bitter feelings in the blacks and they have a sort of pressure torturing them in their life. It has affected them in every step of life. Similar opinion is expressed by Du Bois: “Segregation has affected all aspects of Black’s life. They go to separate churches, they live in separate sections, they are strictly separated in all public gatherings, they travel separately, and they are beginning to read different papers and books” (124).

Harper Lee is a humanist and black writer. She uses a contemporary character and social issues to portray or to convey the message of her novel. So it is not surprising that she addresses the issue of racial prejudice in this novel. She uses interesting mix of characters to make the point that race has little or nothing to do with the way a person chooses to act toward others, and racism is practiced by many kinds of people. Most of the Whites accept the legalization of racial prejudice in Maycomb, but the others refused it. For example, when they are in the court all the white people get sit downstairs (where it is cooler) while all the black people have to sit upstairs. People like judges or juries support this injustice among the two races.

There are many evidence that can describe racial prejudice happened in Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As a form of racial prejudice, rumors can cause a great deal of harm to the individual that is being targeted. Rumors can easily obscure the truth about a person because they are basically lies, opinions, and incorrect observations about the individual in question.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Boo Radley is one of the example of an individual who suffered from this form of racial prejudice. The prejudice of Radley family and Boo Radley makes somebody else afraid of closing Radley’s house, because opinions have been formed if people walk. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is one of the best and most

popular American novels ever written on racism that is a burning problem in America. Bradley asserts “international human rights institutions and nations alike must acknowledge the deeper problems embedded in racism, including the use of race as a means for categorizing humans, racial ideology that promotes racial supremacy, and racial bias” (58). It is an irrational and inhuman treatment to categorize humans as superior and inferior on the basis of race. There are international human rights institutions and laws, but they are not fair and neutral. The blacks have experienced emotional and psychological strain in different field of activities. Sian points out:

A consequence of embedded practices of institutional racism , female and male academics of color/difference, at all career levels, experience emotional and psychological strain across every aspect of their profession, including in their daily interactions with colleagues, in their teaching practice, and in their future prospects. (22)

There are some victims who get racial prejudice from the other people in society; it is experienced not only by black people, but also the whites. There are several incidents and situations that are reflected as evidence of racial prejudice in Lee’s novel. Atticus Finch is a sensible person. He does not like injustice; therefore he advocates in favour of a black person named Tom Robinson who is accused of raping a white girl Mayella. Francis does not like Atticus Finch for supporting Tom. Francis calls him a ‘nigger-lover’. People’s use of the term ‘nigger’ hints at the bitter reality of racial prejudice and discrimination.

“Nigger-lover!” he yelled. When stalking one’s prey, it is best to take one’s time. Say nothing, and as sure as eggs he will become curious and emerge. Francis appeared at the kitchen door. “You still mad, Jean

Louise?” he asked tentatively. “Nothing to speak of,” I said. Francis came out on the catwalk. “You gonna take it back, Francis?” (Lee 110)

Scout is angry with Francis because Francis mocks her father as a nigger lover, even Scout does not know what the meaning of nigger lover is, but the way she says it sounds rude and she can’t accept her father’s step for taking the case of a black man. That’s why Scout forces him to take his words back.

The novel reveals that anything that has any relation with crime or something suspicious is supposed to have done or happened by a nigger even though they never meet him so in a real life situation. The white people have reared such an irrational concept in their mind without any reason except the case of race or color. Even in the court of judgement, judgement is not done by considering any proof or evidence or facts. We can see how the sheriff had no heart to put a white man in jail along with Negroes. The white man crushes or breaks the law, but he is not supposed to be as bad as a black one. The punishment between the black and the white is different because of racial discrimination. If Boo is black, he may already be kept in jail. He is white so the punishment is changed, and he is locked in the courthouse. The same crime committed by a white man and a black man is treated differently. The following extract shows how people set up the place for the black and the white in the court:

The courthouse square was covered with picnic parties sitting on newspapers, washing down biscuit and syrup with warm milk from fruit jars. Some people were gnawing on cold chicken and cold fried pork chops. The more affluent chased their food with drugstore coca-cola in bulb-shaped soda glasses. In a far corner of the square, the Negroes sat quietly in the sun, dining on sardines, crackers, and the

more vivid flavors of Nehi Cola. Mr. Dolphus Raymond sat with them.
(Lee 214)

In the court there were two sides of the place where the two sit. The one was for the white and the other for the black. It is unfair because white get the strategic one and the black got the other side. The surrounding where the white one is placed was comfortable and entertaining, where the black one is kept is poor. It is an unfair deed of the court. Bob Ewell does not like Atticus to be appointed to advocate in favour of a black boy Tom. They think that it is not good for the white man to support the blacks. The whites believe that they should not help the blacks, shouldn't defend the blacks. It shows how law is handled and who handle it. The Negroes, having waited for the white people to go upstairs, began to come in. "Whoa now, just a minute," said a club member, holding up his walking stick. "Just don't startup them there stairs yet awhile" (Lee 218).

The Negroes have to give priority to the white people. The blacks get a chance to move ahead just after the whites have moved ahead. The blacks have to wait for a while to let the white ones go up the stairs. The way is the same for everybody, but the whites consider that they should be given a chance to walk first. "The colored balcony ran along three walls of the courtroom like a second-story veranda, and from it we could see everything" (Lee 219). The black people always remain in the second list after the white people in some activities in the court. The Negroes have to wait for the white people before they enter. And the other proof is how the sitting place is arranged. The white people get in the down stair and the black get in the upstairs. It means they are separated and cannot mix in one condition or place even in a law court. When there is a case between the white one and the black one, the judge declares his decision in favour the white one, and the black one is punished in spite of

his innocence. The black one is always considered wrong: Tom Robinson's a colored man, Jem. No jury in this part of the world's going to say, "We think you're guilty, but not very," on a charge like that. It was either a straight acquittal or nothing" (Lee 294).

Jem is told by her friend that Tom is a black person. Because of being black, the jury will not take decision in his favour. The same type of injustice is mentioned in the following extract: "In our courts, when it's a white man's word against a black man's, the white man always wins. They're ugly, but those are the facts of life" (Lee 295). It is not surprising and secret that the black man always loses the case with the white man. It is a bitter fact or reality of life. People know that the white are ugly or guilty, but they are not punished, therefore defending the black is in vain. It is impossible to fight with the white one. It clearly shows that even the judges are in the hands of the white ones. They are unfair. We can also see an improper behaviour of the white towards the church of the black. The whites have no respect for the church where the blacks worship. "Negroes worship in it on Sunday and white gambled in it on weekdays" (Lee 157). There is kind an improper act that whites do to the blacks. The church where the blacks go for prayer, the whites use it as a gambling place. The whites do not consider that the church is a holy place for both the whites and the blacks. They treat such a holy place negatively because of their negative attitudes towards the blacks.

The socialization of racism formed by some people is unfair. The white people thought that the black people were the black sheep for the society; therefore they did not want to keep any relation with the black people believing that the relation could be dangerous:

“Why, I run for Tate quick as I could. I knew who it was, all right, lived down yonder in that nigger-nest passed the house everyday. Jedge, I’ve asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that nest down yonder, they’re dangerous to live around ‘sides devaluin’ my property”. (Lee 234)

In that statement the person uses the term “nigger-nest” and the nest is used for the place of animals or birds, not for human beings. So it is a very rude remark to talk about the black people that they are dangerous. The white believe that it is dangerous to allow the black people to live near their property and surrounding. They think that the blacks are like dangerous animals. It is their inhuman considerations about the whites. In the novel, people who get bad treatment are not only the nigger but people who defend the nigger. They always get almost the same treatment from other people. “You gotta make me first!” he yelled. “My folks said your daddy was a disgrace an’ that nigger ought a hang from the water-tank!” (Lee 102). The prejudice spreads like a poison. The prejudice is not only influencing the adults, but also influencing the children. It creates hatred in their hearts towards the black without any reasons. It is shown by Cecil who treats Scout so badly because her father defends a nigger. Atticus’s cousin tries to convince Scout that it is not her fault. From the conversation, it is clear that the mind set of children is influenced a lot by adults. The adults except Atticus desire that the children must have the same negative perception about nigger.

Most of the white persons thought that if a person has any sort of relation with a nigger, he or she should be treated like a Negro too. In this case, Atticus defended Tom Robinson who was a Negro. “With these attributes, however, he would not remain as inconspicuous as we wished him to: that year, the school buzzed with talk

about him defending Tom Robinson, none of which was complimentary” (Lee 119). It is a painful experience of the family members of Atticus Finch that even the school teachers do not like Atticus for helping Tom. The teachers should admire him, but they do not use the words of complimentary for his supportive work. The teachers know that racial prejudice and discrimination is a sort of crime in the eye of the court and a sin in the eyes of religion and inhuman deed in the eyes of humanity, but in reality they can’t admire and support the blacks:

We would squirm our way through sweating side walks crowds and sometimes hear, “There’s his chillum.” Or, “Yonder’s some Finches.”

Turning to face our accusers, we would see only a couple of fanners studying the enema bags in the Mayco Drugstore window. Or two dumpy countrywomen in straw hats sitting in a Hoover cart. (Lee 180)

We can notice the effects of defending the negro get a lot of hatred which is expressed by improper words from the society. Complaint about the disagreement of Atticus’ decision of defending the negro at first comes from his own family and when the main family member of Atticus go out they experience same bad treatment from the people. Besides from the cynical reaction from the people who do not like Atticus defending the negro, he also get a directly bad treatment.

There is a sort of enmity between Bob Ewell and Atticus, because Atticus takes a case of Tom. Tom is accused of raping Bob’s daughter. Bob is angry with Atticus; therefore he spat in his face, threatened him to take his life. It shows that the whites are cruel not to only the blacks, but also the white who supports the black. It is the white persons’ prejudice that is shaped by the society. “What has happened?” “Nothing’s happened. We’re scared for you, and we think you oughta do something about him.” Atticus smiled wryly. Do what? Put him under a peace bond?” “When a

man says he's gonna get you, looks like means it" (Lee 292). The Finch family is terrified by the white people. The family members are worried about Atticus who is threatened by a white man Bob. Terror that comes from people makes the children of Atticus become afraid and worried about his father.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Boo Radley is another one of the example of an individual who suffered from this form of racial prejudice. The prejudice of Radley family and Boo Radley makes somebody else afraid of closing Radley's house, because opinions have been formed if people walk near Radley place or take and eat everything from it, they will get dangerous thing that threat their life. Therefore, they will believe that Radley's are very dangerous people. Negative assumptions have installed in their mind for long time and those cannot be changed easily. They will always suppose to Boo Radley and his families are dangerous and wicked people in society. "The Radley Place was inhabited by an unknown entity the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days on end; Mrs. Dubose was plain hell" (Lee 7).

All of the statements about Boo Radley are not real they never happen in society. He just does one mistake that make the people punish him with immortal title in the society. Actually, there are kindnesses which have been done by Boo Radley, and they prove to Scout and Jem that people's words are just prejudices without basis against somebody. They get information about him from Miss Maudie and they experience some things with their unexpected company, Boo Radley that can change their mind about him. Boo Radley and Tom Robinson share many similarities inspite of fact that one man is white and the other is black. As a black, Tom Robinson faced the racial prejudice that many blacks endured during the 1930s in the Deep South. Tom Robinson is prejudiced because of his color. He is prejudiced by many people.

Tom Robinson's trial become the greatest example of injustice of racial prejudice is seen.

Many people in society whether they are old or young will always feel different from the others, if they keep in mind that they are different from others gradually. Even the children who are innocence toward this life can feel if certain people are different from them. In the journey of time, Maycomb people adapt Radley's customs. But, then prejudgements are become viable among people in society. Without knowing where the information about Radley, especially Boo Radley comes from, most of people prejudices them in negative labels. Hence, no one wants to get along with them. Those prejudices succeed to frighten major people in Maycomb County. Therefore, the differences can emerge prejudice in society because it is kept in mind strongly installed by hyperbole stories. Prejudice emerged from differences among people in the society that cause feeling of superior in certain people also argued that prejudice exists in society because people have feelings or prejudice about various of different traits, cultural background and practice, and the other differences, in this case, the difference is supposed as strangeness, because it is a new thing and never done before in the society.

A large majority of White people believed that African- Americans were second-class citizens and treated them that second class citizens. The racial tensions leading to those events are reflected in the plot and themes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Nelle Harper Lee's popular novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* can be considered as a classic of modern American literature dealing with serious issues of rape, race and inequality in America. This novel reveals the context of racial prejudice, causes of racial prejudice and impacts of racial prejudice. The racial prejudice can be seen in the behaviors and treatments of the whites towards the blacks in Maycomb County.

Boo Radley and the blacks are like the mocking birds with the virtues of innocence and goodness. Therefore, it is a sin or crime to kill a mocking bird. Having a racial prejudice towards the black people is like the act of killing an innocent singing bird. The third chapter explores how the characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are struggling and dealing with the psychological conflict which arises in their mind by the influence of the society to which they belong.

Chapter Three

Conflict of the Psyche

The Psychoanalytic Theory is the personality theory, which is based on the notion that an individual gets motivated more by unseen forces that are controlled by the conscious and the rational thought. Sigmund Freud is closely related to the psychoanalytic theory. According to him, the human behaviour is formed through an interaction between three components of the mind, i.e. Id, Ego and Super Ego. Id is the primitive part of the mind that seeks immediate gratification of biological or instinctual needs. The biological needs are the basic physical needs while the instinctual needs are the natural or unlearned needs, such as hunger, thirst, sex, etc. The id is the original system of personality, everything that is inherited and present during the time of birth. "id represent the biological substratum of humans, the source of all drive energy" (Pervin 76). Id is the unconscious part of the mind; that act instantaneously without giving much thought to what is right and what is wrong. The Super-Ego is related to the social or the moral values that an individual inculcates as he matures. It acts as an ethical constraint on behaviour and helps an individual to develop his conscience. "The superego is the internal representative of the traditional values and ideals of society as interpreted to the child by its parents, and enforced by means of a system of rewards and punishments imposed upon the child.

The superego is the moral arm of personality; it represents the ideal rather than the real and it strives for perfection rather than pleasure" (Hall and Lindzey 38). As the individual grows in the society, he learns the cultural values and the norms of the society which help him to differentiate between right and wrong. Ego is the logical and the conscious part of the mind which is associated with the reality principle. This means it balances the demands of Id and super-ego in the context of real lifesituations.

Ego is conscious and hence keep a check on Id through a proper reasoning of an external environment. Hence, these are the fundamental structures of the mind, and there is always a conflict between these three. The efforts to attain the balance between these defines the way we behave in the external environment.

Psychoanalysis is the method of treating mental disorders, shaped by psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes unconscious mental processes and is sometimes described as depth psychology. The psychoanalytic movement originated in the clinical observations and formulations of Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud who coined the term psychoanalysis. During the 1890s, Freud worked with Austrian physician and physiologist Josef Breuer in studies of neurotic patients under hypnosis. Freud and Breuer observed that, when the sources of patients' ideas and impulses were brought into unconsciousness during the hypnotic state, the patients showed improvement.

Psychoanalytic theory is highly based on a person's childhood experiences, therefore we must take a close look at Harper Lee's childhood. Her mother's name was Frances Cunningham Finch, all three of these names are used in the story; Scout Finch, the Cunninghams, and Scout's cousin, Francis. She had a childhood friend, Truman Capote now another famous author, who was the basis for the character of Dill. Her father was a newspaper editor who worked in law for a while. Her father once defended two African Americans who had been accused of murdering a white man. This heavily correlates with the story in *To Kill a Mockingbird* as Atticus defends Tom Robinson. Her father's clients however were sentenced to death. The character and life of Scout is much like Harper Lee's; both were tomboys and both grew up in southern America. Harper Lee's experience with her father being a lawyer enabled her to write the courtroom scenes. Harper Lee wanted *To Kill a*

Mockingbird to be a love story but it turned out to be a novel full of inequality and poverty. The book itself is the story of Harper Lee's childhood, but with different names.

The following are three examples of plot events in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* that represent how the book is written through a Psychoanalytic lens. The first example will be of Mayella at her testimony. The second will include Scout and Cecil Jacobs in a short confrontation, and the third will discuss the event where Jem destroys Mrs. Dubose's yard. When Mayella Ewell is called forward during Tom Robinson's trial, she begins to contradict herself. She says one thing, then another. According to Bob Ewell and Heck Tate's testimonies, they made it very clear that Mayella had been beaten. Yet when Atticus asks her this question, she says "I don't recollect if he hit me. I mean yes I do, he hit me." (Lee 185). This shows that Mayella is not telling the whole truth. In her head, her id is telling her to tell the court that Bob Ewell was the one who beat and possibly raped her, but her superego is telling her to blame it on Tom because if she doesn't, her father might beat her again. Between the two, her ego agrees with her superego because it is more likely to be believed due to the fact that Tom is black.

During the book, a boy named Cecil Jacobs calls Atticus a nigger lover. This enrages Scout and she decides that she wants to punch him for it. In the end though, she decides not to because Atticus told her not to fight anyone for him. Scout narrates this confrontation: "I drew a bead on him, remembered what Atticus had said, then dropped my fists and walked away" (Lee 76). During this time, whilst Scout is trying to decide what to do, her id is telling her to do punch him because he is insulting her father. Meanwhile her superego is telling her not to both because it is violent and that her father has told her not to fight. Overall, Scout's ego agrees with the

superego interpretation of the situation and she decides that she won't punch Cecil because she respects her father and his decisions.

In the novel Mrs. Dubose is an old woman who spends her days sitting on her porch knitting. Every time Jem and Scout walk past her house she yells and insults them. This constantly infuriates Jem and makes him very angry. One day, Jem takes Scout to town so that Jem can buy himself a present with his birthday money. Jem goes to buy a mini engine and he promises to buy Scout an electric twirling baton. On their way home from the store, they pass Miss Dubose's house and Jem loses it. He takes Scout's baton and runs "flailing wildly up the steps into Mrs. Dubose's front yard" He proceeds to wreck the garden and didn't "calm down until he had cut the tops off every camelia bush Mrs. Dubose owned, until the ground was littered with green buds and leaves" (Lee 102-103). In this specific happening, Jem's id won over his superego. His superego was telling him to calm down and keep walking, telling him that such a violent action could only lead to bad things. But as described in the book, he "went mad" (Lee 102) and his id won over. As the id is the part of our conscience that tells us to do and follow our desires, it told him to go and wreck this woman's yard as revenge. His ego then agreed with the id and let him destroy the yard. This could be connected to the section of Oedipus Complex that concerns power. Jem sees this opportunity and he wants to show this weak woman that she is the powerless one and that he can protect himself, be it physically or mentally.

Freud's psychoanalysis highlights the different phases of the characters using the id, ego and superego. The relationship between Atticus and Scout is very important, the id, ego and superego of Scout changes from the beginning of the novel till the end because of the influence of Atticus. He teaches her social values and how to handle the situation. Scout's brother Jem takes her to school the first day and show

her the class. Her teacher Miss Caroline encounters that Scout can read, “she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste” (Lee 19) and asked her to tell her father not to teach her any more because it will interfere with her reading. Scout disagrees and replied “He hasn’t taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus ain’t got time to teach me anything” (Lee 19). She said “‘If he didn’t teach you, who did?’ Miss Caroline asked good – naturedly. ‘Somebody did. You weren’t born reading *The Mobile Register*.’ you weren’t born reading.”(Lee 19). Scout argues “Jem says I was... I got swapped when I was born” (Lee 19). The teacher got irritated and punished her and to avoid any more trouble she apologised, “patted the palm of my hand with the ruler, then made me stand in the corner until noon... I mumbled that I was sorry” (Lee 19).

Scout explains Atticus what happens at school and said “I didn’t think I’d go to school any more...she said you taught me all wrong, so we can’t ever read any more, ever” (Lee 33). Atticus explains that they can keep reading at home but she needs to keep quiet at school. He tells her a simple trick to get along with people. “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee 33). Scout being a young girl, unable to balance her desire and reality, her id is very stronger than her superego. Scout should understand that sometimes desires cannot be fulfilled due to social principles. Her id insists that she wants to read from home, by telling her teacher that she is born literate, she lied to her. Though lying is unacceptable to superego, in order to fulfil the wish of her id, she made a story. Atticus helps her to develop her superego by teaching her valuable lessons.

Francis calls Atticus a nigger lover so Scout got irritated and fights with him. “I split my knuckle to the bone on his front teeth” (Lee 93). This time her superego

cannot compromise with her id and she beats him. Her id cannot tolerate the uncomfortable state of tension. When her tension level got raised, her id functions in such a manner as to discharge the tension immediately. The relationship between Scout and Boo Radley shows the development of her mind and also reflects the influence Atticus has within this development. Boo is a mentally unstable person so he was kept inside the house by his family. He was considered as a mysterious being by the children and so they created new versions of stories about him. Scout develops a negative to positive feeling towards Boo Radley because of her development within her id, ego and superego.

Boo was about six – and- a- half feet tall, judging from his track; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were bloodstained – if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time. (Lee 14)

The children have never seen Boo Radley in their life, but they have given the meticulous description of him. Scout couldn't acknowledge how a person can stay inside his life throughout his entire life. Her desire is to know who Boo Radley is and why he never leaves the house. In reality he is a mentally disabled person. Her superego was not fully developed to distinguish the reality. Her ego is unable to relate reality; here the ego fails to satisfy the instincts so the id reasserts its power. Scout's superego knows that she should respect every one and it is wrong to create stories about people. Her ego is unable to comprehend the situation and incapable of finding the balance between her superego and id.

Scout finally realised that Boo Radley is above suspicion and he is by no means going to hurt her. Scout's trials and tribulations occurs due the conflict amid id, ego and superego, she strives to find solution for her conflicts finally her ego starts to connect reality and stabilise with her superego and id. Her superego and id are able to find balance because her ego is able to communicate with reality and figures out how to deal with the situation herself.

The novel tackles the ideologies and characteristics associated with the deep South of the late 1930s. What gives this novel such a pertinent place in American literature is the honest way the story unravels along with the innocent point of view in which it is told. While the book explores systemic racism in American culture, the fact that the story is told from the perspective of a young Jean-Louise "Scout" Finch presents the view that fear, just like racism, is a learned attitude. While the main plot involving the trial of a "negro" accused of raping a white woman unfolds, it is the children in the novel from which the reader learns about the psychology surrounding both racism and fear.

Fear is instilled directly from the gossip of neighbours and exacerbated with the imagination of the children; all of which makes Arthur Boo Radley into the monster he is believed to be throughout the novel. From the beginning, Boo's house is described as "the Radley Place", which connotes anything other than a house, much less a home. As Boo's interaction with the neighbourhood children continues, Scout manages to dispel the stereotypes against him and change her view of him from suspect to hero.

The gum is just one of several items the children find in the knot of a large oak tree on the Radley lot which the kids, until then, had passed every day without incident. Treasures continue to appear mysteriously in the tree, the next of which are

two shiny coins. As the plot to discover Boo Radley in person continues, Scout finds herself connected to a scheme, concocted by Jem and Dill, to place a note for Boo through the Radley window. The adventure takes a scary turn when Boo's brother hears noises outside and shoots his rifle towards the sounds in the bushes, forcing their immediate escape only to later discover that during the escape, Jem has lost his trousers. Scouring through the fence the pants were caught and had to be left behind. Months later, Jem admits to Scout that in returning for the pants, he found them folded neatly as if someone had expected Jem to retrieve them.

While walking home one evening, Jem and Scout are surprised by someone lurking in the darkness, at which point Boo finally emerges from his home, saving the children and killing Bob Ewell. With this act, Boo is elevated to the status of hero. Later, Atticus and the sheriff agree to tell the town that Bob Ewell fell on his own knife, thus sparing Boo from being dragged through public scrutiny of any kind. In the denouement of the novel, Scout comes to a full realization on the very steps of Boo's home where he likely had been watching them their entire life. In choosing Scout to narrate the story in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee uses psychological theories to parallel this important subplot, alongside the Tom Robinson trial, to reveal that, despite the fears of the children, Arthur Boo Radley is not only the family friend and the children's guardian, but also the neighborhood watch.

As the town recluse, Arthur "Boo" Radley is a mysterious entity with only one incident of disorderly conduct on record. Beyond this, rumors paint a false picture of the man, and the children follow suit creating tales of a "boogeyman" when specific signs actually prove later that his actions are that of a family friend. The first important turning point in the humanistic evolution of Boo occurs the summer after Scout's first year at school. Dill returns to Maycomb and the children roll one another

around in an old tire for sport. When Scout takes her turn, she loses control and rolls in front of the steps of the Radley place. Jem and Dill are mortified; they try to encourage Scout to return quickly. Scout then hears something the boys do not hear. In her words: “Through all the head-shaking, quelling of nausea and Jem-yelling, I had heard another sound, so low I could not have heard it from the sidewalk. Someone inside the house was laughing” (Lee 55). She keeps this to herself to save face with the boys but clearly, she realizes she has heard Boo’s voice. Peter Stearns and Timothy Haggerty, in their paper, “The Role of Fear: Transitions in American Emotional Standards for Children” state, “Injunctions of courage, appropriately and dramatically illustrated, formed one of the standard themes of mid-century children’s stories...for the failure to conquer fear could lose battles and undermine both a just cause and a boy’s standing” (Lee 64). Scout is desperate to fit in with the boys, and she decides to keep what she hears to herself. This is an important moment in Scout’s changing perceptions of Boo; it is the first time she feels that perhaps Boo is not a monster.

In this context, it is easy to see now how the gifts left in the knot of the Radley tree were clearly gifts from a friend. However, a far greater alliance is on display when Jem returns to the “scene of the crime” to retrieve the pants he foolishly left behind during their scheme to leave a note for Boo. In Jem’s words, “When I went back, they were folded across the fence... like they were expectin’ me... And something else—They’d been sewn up. Not like a lady sewed ‘em, like somethin’ I’d try to do... it’s almost like—like somebody was reading my mind” (Lee 79). The text goes further to describe the reaction—Jem shuddered. “Men and boys readily conclude that the control of fear is an act of manhood” (Stearns and Haggerty 72). After all the tormenting Scout endures from her brother for being a girl, the fear Jem

shows single-handedly brings him back to the reality that they are all just children. That being said, given the severity of the situation and the curtailed consequences thanks to the evidence left behind, what Boo tried to show is an expression of friendship.

As a father, Atticus has created a loving and healthy home for his two children, Scout and Jem. With Calpurnia as a female figure in the household, a nice balance is achieved. According to Paul R. Rasmussen, in “The Task, Challenges, and Obstacles of Parenting” this “importance is for the welfare of the individual child as well as the welfare of the community, which extends from the immediate family to the broadest sense of the living community”(Lee 90). Under normal circumstances, one could say everything is under control. However, as an attorney and state legislator, Atticus sometimes is called away to work long hours, and the children are only between the ages of six and. A guardian watching from the distance makes perfect sense.

Two key moments can be used as evidence to the guardianship Boo seems to have over the children. The first is during the pandemonium in the neighborhood as all watch the burning of Miss Maudie’s home one bitter, cold night. Suddenly Scout realizes a blanket has been placed over her, but she cannot figure out how it happened. When Jem mimics how Boo might have slowly maneuvered in and out of the chaos to place it on her unnoticed, Scout is horrified, explaining, “My stomach turned to water and I nearly threw up when Jem held out the blanket and crept toward me” (Lee 98). “Fear and anxiety emerge when children perceive a threat to their state of welfare or comfort. A child may not recognize the threat fully in a cognitive or intellectual way, but feels it as a state of emotional discomfort unique to the perception of threat” (Rasmussen 99). While there was never really any threat per se,

to the children, Boo is still an anomaly and thus scary to them. Fears reach a peak when everyone realizes that their “boogeyman” has not only left his domicile, but actually placed something on Scout; even something good is clouded by fear.

By the climax of the novel, Bob Ewell has threatened Atticus for the clear “defamation” towards his family during the trial. Seeking revenge, Bob attacks the children at night, but they are saved when Boo arrives to the rescue. Seen from the point of view of a Scout, who happens to be trapped inside the ham costume she had been stumbling in all the way home, this moment is fascinating and very effective. Scout describes when the stranger attacking the two grabs on to her, yet suddenly releases her with a sudden jerk backwards. “One’s mind works very slowly at times,” Scout explains. “Stunned, I stood there dumbly. The scuffling noises were dying; someone wheezed and the night was still again” (Lee 356). This is the moment Boo saved the lives of Scout and Jem; the irony is that once again neither child sees his face.

The idea that Boo has only been seen out of his house at night quickly turns negative in the children’s eyes at the start of the novel; by the end, Scout finally sees the world from Boo’s point of view while standing on his porch. Boo Radley is simply acting as a neighborhood watch. In chapter one, When Scout wonders whether or not Boo ever leaves his “place”, Jem passes on one of Miss Stephanie’s tales:

He goes out all right, when it’s pitch dark. Miss Stephanie Crawford said she woke up in the middle of the night one time and saw him looking straight through the window at her... said his head was like a skull lookin’at her... I’ve seen tracks in our backyard yard many a mornin’ (Lee 17).

The children are innocent, so any information they receive is expounded to create a more complete version of the mystery solely based on what they conjure up. In an article published in the *Journal of Folklore Research*, “Unraveling Stories: Exploring the Juncture of Ghost Story and Local Tragedy”, Ilana Harlow writes, “In order for discrete events or discrete narratives to be conjoined in a teller’s mind, they must be conceived of as bearing relevantly on each other” (177). After re-telling Miss Stephanie’s tale of Boo in her window, Jem confirms he saw long, dragged tracks in the backyard. Boo, thus, is rumored to be a six-and-a-half-foot monster, whose hands are blood-stained from eating cats and squirrels. It is also said that he has a long-jagged scar and rotten teeth. To this, Scout effectively proclaims, “Jem gave a reasonable description of Boo” (Lee 17).

For Scout, the final clarity regarding Boo Radley literally shows his role as the neighborhood watch. From the striking, opposite side of the spectrum, on the Radley porch, after saying goodbye to Boo, Scout looks out in the direction of the street to consider all the times throughout all the seasons that Boo has sat at that vantage point and watched children run, play, fall in love and out again, when “Boo’s children needed him.... Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough” (Lee 379). With this denouement, Scout’s clarity is complete. The monster has finally, rightfully becomes the good man.

Fears that bring about prejudice are explored is the subplot surrounding the mysterious Boo Radley, as the children slowly learn to put aside their pre-conceived stereotypes. It is fear of the unknown that relegates Boo to a monster, despite so many clues throughout the novel that he is in fact a good man. In revealing this at the end,

Harper Lee shows how far attitudes can blind people from simple truths, and create attitudes which cause severe and sometimes deadly consequences.

Boo's story parallels the trial of Tom Robinson in subtext. Both Boo and Tom are innocent, persecuted for being misunderstood. Scout and Jem's misunderstanding of Boo leads them to fear and torment him, and a similar prejudice, although definitely a more full-blown version, is what leads many of the citizens of Maycomb to unjustly condemn Tom. Instead, Boo represents innate goodness. In future research, a closer look at what makes Tom Robinson a good man could be tackled. Every perception of Boo is misguided by gossip and fear of the unknown. Boo has always only been a family friend, a guardian to the children, and the neighborhood watch. After all, Boo communicated. The following chapter portrays the Gothic elements and the characters exists in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Chapter Four

Gothic Traits

Gothicism, also known as horror romanticism, creates an air of suspense and terror. This atmosphere is a pronounced feeling of dread, which can be physical fear of the body or a spiritual fear of the mind and soul. Gothic Literature is defined as Germanic and medieval. It is Popular during the early 19th century. The common characteristics present in gothic literature are like brooding atmosphere, haunted castles/ mansions, isolated settings, ghosts, spirits, vampires, mysterious disappearances/ reappearances, supernatural occurrences, sensational plot lines. The central aim of gothic literature is to evoke terror in its reader.

American gothic contents are meant for showing how these contradictions contest and constitute national identity even as they are denied, the gothic tells of the historical horrors that make national identity possible yet must be repressed in order to sustain it. Examples of American gothic include the horror fiction of Stephen King and vampire fiction of Anne Rice. Southern gothic are often seen as the primary site of American gothic because the South is the repository of values and attributes not necessarily welcome in the rest of the country. Edgar Allan Poe cited as the first writer of gothic and his status as a Southerner makes him the first southern gothic writer. Issues of race, alienation, and otherness are central to southern gothic.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* belongs to the literary tradition of the Southern Gothic, a genre that became prominent in the twentieth century and furthers the Gothic tradition of exploring the macabre violence lurking beneath the apparently tranquil surface of reality. As in Gothic novels, the Southern Gothic genre derives tension from the suppression of dark urges, secrets, and past violence, which threaten to erupt over the course of the novel. including Dorothy Allison, Barry Hannah, and

Cormac McCarthy all have attributes of Southern Gothic novels. Positioning *To Kill a Mockingbird* within the Southern Gothic context helps us understand the novel.

Southern Gothic novels are also often dark and violent, also have the reference of supernatural, and also can be characterized by unresolved conflict between the hidden and the revealed. In the Southern Gothic, the action is transported from castles or windswept moors to the rural South, and the conflict is between the racism and violence of the region's past and present day. All of these characteristics are on display in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel is set in rural Alabama, and is populated with monstrous characters such as Mrs. Dubose and the ghost-like Boo Radley. The trial of Tom Robinson and Bob Ewell's climatic attack on Scout and Jem represent the struggle between the region's suppressed racist, violent history and a more genteel, "surface" image of the South.

To Kill a Mockingbird is more optimistic than many works that characterize the Southern Gothic. *To Kill a Mockingbird* ends with the triumph of good (Boo Radley and the Finches) over evil (Bob Ewell). The violence of the past, so crucial to the Southern Gothic genre in general, is tempered by the possibility of characters reconciling with history and learning from past sins. Lee's characters are driven not only by repressed drives and secret torments, but also a genuine desire to do good and enact societal change. Secrets, long-suppressed, lose their power to haunt when revealed in the light of day, as when Boo finally emerges from his house and lets his neighbors look at him. The final words of the book, "most people are nice when you finally see them," evokes hope of a more enlightened, less prejudiced future.

Gothic traits are meant to provide the non unpleasurable thrills of mystery and dread. Harper Lee uses Gothicism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* effectively. She uses seven gothic traits: a castle, crime, religion, a ghostly or demonic figure, magic, the

phenomena of nature, and a gothic villain. These traits work together to create the gothic element in the novel. The setting is the key to gothicism, which provides the proper air of mystery and it is the backdrop for other scenes of innumerable horrors. The main setting is the haunted castle. The haunted castle does not need to be a castle. An old run-down or ruined house can serve equally well. The actual building is unimportant as long as it provides the proper gothic atmosphere. Such an old house is the setting of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables*. Similarly in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the ancestral Usher home takes the place of the medieval castle.

The Radley house is the haunted castle of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Located three lots down from the Finch home, the Radley house stirs the darker emotions in Scout and Jem Finch. Scout describes the Radley Place as it looks from the street.

The house was low, once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had a long ago darkened to the color of the slate grey around it. Rain rotten shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard – a 'swept' yard that was never swept – where Johnson grass and rabbit – tobacco grew in abundance. (Lee 9)

The house is always tightly locked. The windows remain shuttered constantly, and the blinds drawn. The screen less doors are closed throughout the week as well as on Sundays. The rear of the Radley house enhances its haunted quality. One night, Scout, Jem, and their new friend Dill Harris creep through the backyard, hoping they can peek inside the house. Scout becomes timorous as they approach the house and she gets her first good look. The back of the Radley house was less inviting than the front: a ramshackle porch ran the width of the house; there were two doors and the

two dark windows between the doors an old Franklin stove sat in a corner of the porch above it a hat-rack mirror caught the moon and shone eerily. Scout and Jem never see the house interior. Anything connected to Radley place is considered evil and malignant. The backyard fence separates the Radley's property from the school's playground. Pecan trees in the Radley yard drop nuts on the other side of fence. Few people knowingly eat the pecans because they fear the nuts are deadly poison. One child claims he nearly died from eating the pizened nuts.

Living inside the Radley house is someone who frightens Jem and Scout more than the house. According to Scout, the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days. The person is Arthur Radley. Boo is the ghostly or demonic figure prevalent in gothicism. An aura of mystery and fear surrounds his very name, no one ever sees him. Many people of Maycomb, adults as well as children, think of him as the town's madman, ghost, or ghoul. Scout describes the local attitudes about Boo:

Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom... People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people's azaleas froze... it was because he breathed on them. Any stealthy crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. Once... people's chickens and household pets were found mutilated; although the culprit was Crazie Addie ... [people were] unwillingly to discard their suspicions. (Lee 9)

Few people have seen Boo for over fifteen years, but a popular ghoulish conception of him is passed by word of mouth. Jem relates this to Dill that Boo was six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth

he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time. Boo mysteriously comes and goes in the night and Jem and Scout never see him. But he knows them. He leaves them small gifts in a hole of an oak tree that sits in the Radley front yard. The items leaves are such things as a spelling medal, a broken watch, two soap dolls made to resemble Scout and Jem, and a case knife. One cold winter's night he gives Scout a blanket. Maudie Atkinson's house burns down, and they are forced from their house in case the fire spreads. As the night wears on Scout dozes and Boo covers her sleepy and cold body with a blanket.

The Finch children have a strong desire to see Boo. They concoct the schemes to make him come out, but they fail. Scout finally gets her wish at the end of the novel. His true looks, while not like the gruesome image the town en-visions, does enhance his ghostly visage. Scout describes him as he stands in Jem's room. He pressed the palms of his hands against the wall. They were white hands, sickly white hands that had never seen the sun, so white they stood out. His face was as white as his hands, but for a shadow on his jutting chin. His cheeks were thin to hollowness; his mouth was wide, there were shallow, almost delicate indentations at his temples and his grey eyes were so colorless, that made Scout to think Boo was blind. His hair was dead and thin, almost feathery on top of his head.

Dill and I followed on his heels. Safely on our porch, panting and out of breath, we looked back. The old house was the same, droopy and stick but as we saw stared down the street we thought we saw an inside shutter move. Flick. A tiny, almost invisible movement and the house was still. (Lee 16)

Like a ghost, Boo cannot stand exposure to bright lights. He gets Scout to lead him to the dimly lit porch rather than the living room with its bright lights. He needs

the darkness. Boo is the ghostly figure in the gothic tradition. A mysterious crime or a guilty sense of wrong doing is another trait for gothicism. Boo is a tormented creature who is anguished by an indefinable guilt for some crime it cannot remember having committed. The crime may be spiritual, like the sin of adultery committed by Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. It may be criminal like the murder of old Pyncheon in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

The only crime Boo commits is a one-night drinking spree during which he and a few teenage friends harass Maycomb's old town marshal. For punishment, Boo's father locks the boy inside the Radley house. A year or two later his mother accuses him of stabbing his father with scissors. Nobody but Mr. Radley knows what has actually happened, but the sheriff incarcerates Boo in the courthouse basement, which serves as the Gothic device of a dungeon. He nearly dies from the damp. Boo is soon entrusted to his father's custody and returned to the house. No one ever sees him again in the day time. The townspeople do wonder what has become of him. At one point Jem speculates that he has died and his body stuffed up the chimney. Scout disbelieves Jem and wonders how he is forced to remain inside the house.

The unknown nature of Boo's crime, the severe and bizarre punishment, and the pervading silence that overhangs the entire situation heightens the novel's air of mystery and feelings of dread. Abbeys, cloistered monks, and strange religious practices are standard gothic fare. Two characters, who prominently typify the gothic traits are Ann Radcliff's Schedoni of *The Italian* and Matthew Lewis' Ambrosia of *The Monk*. In this tradition of Schedoni and Ambrosia are Mr. Radley and his oldest son, Nathan. Father and son resemble each other physically and temperamentally. They share physical characteristics with Radcliff's Schedoni. Schedoni is extremely thin in figure. His countenance is serious; his skin is pale and bleached. Mr. Radley's

eyes are so colorless they did not reflect light. His demeanor is grave and unsmiling, and his posture is ramrod straight.

Lewis's monk, Amrosio, is an amorous, licentious man whose lustful dealings with women are cruel and merciless. Unlike Ambrosio the Radley's passion is religion, not sexual lust but they are as ruthless as Ambrosia in satisfying their desires. The use of gothic trait of religion thickens the aura of mystery and horror surrounding the Radleys and increases the suspense and feelings of dread by adding a satanic feeling to the gothic atmosphere.

The Radleys belong to a Protestant sect that is fundamentalist to an extreme degree. They cloister themselves away from all who are not of their faith. They have a little contact with the rest of Maycomb's community. Maudie Atkinson, a friendly neighbor of the Finches, explains to Scout that the Radleys are foot-washing Baptists who are more hard-shell than she herself is. The foot-washers believe anything pleasurable is a deadly sin. For example, they loudly condemn Maudie because she spends more time growing pretty flowers than reading her Bible. The Bible is taken so literally that, according to Maudie, foot-washers think women are sin by definition. Their devotion is as hypocritical as the piety of the young Ambrosia whose religious zeal is, in reality, spiritual conceit and pride. Schedoni and Ambrosio commit murders. The Radleys do not actually kill anyone, but they nearly destroy Boo's soul. For his crime Boo must be punished, and Mr. Radley followed by Nathan after the old man's death strives to insure that Boo's punishment is eternal. They go about the task with the religious fervor of fanatics. When Nathan discovers that Boo has been leaving gifts for Scout and Jem in the oak tree, he seals up the tree hole, depriving Boo of even the simple human pleasure of sharing. Spells, supernatural events, enchanted objects, magic amulets and potions are fairly common in gothicism.

Many adults and children in *To Kill a Mockingbird* believe in supernatural phenomena. Spells and incantations provide protection from the evil spirits, or haints, which stalk Maycomb. To protect themselves as they walk past the Radley Place, the Negroes whistle to frighten away the malignant evil of the house. The blacks also believe in the phenomena known as hot steams. Jem gives instructions on the nature of the hot steam:

‘Haven’t you ever walked along a lonesome road at night and passed by a hot place?’ Jem asked Dill. ‘A hot steam’s somebody who can’t get to heaven, just wallows around on lonesome roads an’ if you walk through him, you’ll be one too, an’ you’ll go around at night suckin’ people’s breath’. ‘How can you keep from passing through one’ ‘You can’t,’ said Jem. ‘Sometimes they stretch all the way across the road, but if you hafta go through one say, “Angel-bright, life-in-death; get off the road, don’t suck my breath.” That keeps ‘em from wrapping around you’. (Lee 41)

Scout and Jem laugh at their idea that hot steams might be real, but they accept as reality other forms of magic. When Jem returns to fetch his trousers which he lost the nights they sneaked into the Radley’s backyard, he finds the pants neatly folded over the fence and repaired. He tells Scout that he feels the pants were left there, as if someone knew he would return for them. Jem said that he felt like somebody was reading his mind. For a long time afterwards, Jem fears his every thought is known. They eventually discover that Boo has been watching them from his window for years, and he simply knows them very well.

One element of magic foreshadows Boo's rescue of Scout and Jem. One of Boo's gifts is a pair of Indian-head pennies. Jem gravely considers the pennies as magic amulets. He tells Scout and Indian-heads are powerful magic:

'Well, India-heads-well, they come from the Indians. They're real strong magic; they make you have good luck. Not like fried chicken you're looking for it, but things like long life 'n' good health, 'n' passin' six-weeks tests... these are real valuable to somebody. I'm gonna put 'em in my trunk'. (Lee 39)

The pennies are indeed good fortune for Scout and Jem. Boo saves them for death, allowing them to escape from early deaths. Moonlight, blowing wind, lightning, and other such natural phenomena effectively lend themselves to the development of the gothic atmosphere, particularly deep darkness which often attends the crucial events. In two of the novel's crucial scenes, Lee envelopes the settings in darkness. The first critical event marks Jem's first step into manhood. The second incident is the climax when Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout. The first happens on a moon-drenched night. Scout, Jem, and Dill creep under the Radley's back fence in an attempt to peek through the shutters at Boo. The moon disappears, and the dark swallows the world. Barely able to see, they bump into objects and each other.

A shotgun blast cuts through the silence and darkness. As they flee, Jem entangles his trousers in the fence, abandons them, and runs off in his undershorts. Later, he decides he must retrieve them, even though he believes he risks his life. Scout and Jem approach the climactic scene: the huge oak tree near the corner of the schoolyard and the Radley Place. Jem thinks he hears a strange sound. Scout hears nothing but becomes uneasy. The night was still. Occasionally there was a sudden breeze that hit my bare legs, but it was all that remains of a promised windy night.

This was the stillness before the storm. They move on in the night. As they approach the oak tree, she hears the noise.

Bob Ewell charges out of the darkness to kill them. He breaks Jem's arm, making the boy unconscious. Attacking Scout, he tries to knife her, but he is thwarted by her costume. He is attempting to crush her when he suddenly releases her. He gothic villain is never a sympathetic character, for he and his crimes are made to appear even more monstrous by the addition of gratuitous acts of cruelty of sadism. Another reason he is despicable is that he acknowledges the moral codes of society and his own wickedness by violating these codes.

The gothic villain pursues his evil to his certain death. Bob Ewell fits the description of the gothic villain. Ewell, a minor character, he is typical gothic villain. He takes sinister pride in his cruelty and never feels remorse or pity. The one trait that seems to intensify Ewell's repugnance is his cowardice. Ewell savagely beats his oldest daughter because, isolated from human contact and affection by her father, she tries to seduce a Negro man. Ewell brings a false charge of rape against the man, Tom Robinson, to cover his brutal attack upon his own daughter, and he lies on the witness stand to secure a conviction. He hypocritically proclaims he seeks justice and the protection of Southern womanhood. After Robinson's death, he torments Robinson's widow with implied threats of either assault or rape. He stops only when her employer confronts him man-to-man with a promise of legal action. Ewell is too cowardly to perform his cruel deeds openly. He harasses Helen Robinson only when she is alone, just as he beats his children when no one is near. When Atticus, who is Robinson's lawyer, and Judge Taylor reveal him to be a liar and hypocrite he is, he seeks revenge.

Afraid to deal with them personally, he employs underhanded methods: he tries to burgle Judge Taylor's house and he tries to kill Scout and Jem. Ewell flouts

many codes and customs of his society. He gets drunk in public rather than in private which is tolerated. His drinking causes hardships for his children. He is violent when drunk and he spends his welfare money on green bootleg whiskey. Refusing Work progress administration job, he is the first in line to get his relief check, and he lets everyone know he buys liquor with the money. He enjoys outraging the townspeople. He goes to great lengths to violate even small customs and codes. He curses violently in front of women and children, conduct not condoned in Maycomb, and laughs at the discomfort he causes. Ignoring the Wesleyan principle of personal cleanliness and hygiene, he houses his family next to the town dump and keeps his body filthy. Scout notices at Tom Robinson's trial that for the very first time she is seeing Ewell clean. Ewell takes pride in his cruelty and violations of social mores. In the manner of the gothic villain, he pursues without remorse his evil course of action until he dies a deserved and violent death. The use of gothic villain and traits of gothicism do not make *To Kill a Mockingbird* a simple roman noir, a novel of terror and wonder. The novel contains other elements of Romanticism. But the gothic traits play a significant role in the overall Romanticism of the novel. The following chapter sums up all the important aspects of which are given in the preceding chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

After reading Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* one can identify the conflicts which happen in the society regarding race, color and the community to which a particular person belong. It also portrays how the righteous one was prejudiced by the reason of misconception about his past. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel which focuses on the sentiments of the author and the Americans. American dream becomes the platform for all writers to create their works in American Literature. It explains the idea of freedom, individualism, mobility, flexibility, optimism, hard work, progress and patriotism. It is essential for all the writers to speak about any particular issue or subject to motivate the readers and their life. Harper Lee writes the novel to create an anti-racist, classless society. In reality, Lee influences the minds of many readers. Practically, it is a difficult task to make an ideal society. She plays a greater role in forming a society based on American dream. The contemporaries of Lee crafted the novels based on themes like destruction, loss, external conflicts and adventures.

The Introductory chapter provides the background to the study and gives an introduction to American literature. It also gives a brief introduction to Nelle Harper Lee and his works. It states the research problem, an overview of the dissertation and justification of the study. It aims to highlight the importance of the novel as well as about American writings.

The southern tradition, family, community, the land and history were the themes inculcated in the American novels produced during the nineteenth century. These themes show that it was an auspicious time for the American writers, because many incidents took place during this time. In the world history, nineteenth

century was eventful. There were both negative and positive events that took place during this period. The catastrophes had an adverse impact on the life of human beings around the world. In America, the lives of people are disturbed. They could not do many things because they are baffled.

The first chapter discusses about the things like Great depression, Wall Street collapse, World war, as the backdrop of the novel. The novel has become a great discourse in the study of human life during nineteenth century. The Finch family, their father, and their neighbourhood also convey a powerful moral lesson. Lee instructs her reader on the moral duty of how to treat others by illustrating fatherly guidance and neighbourly counsel. As the kids look for signs of their strange neighbor's existence and deal with racism's effects in their little Southern town, they learn lessons about how to treat others with respect and kindness no matter who they are or where they come from. Lastly, Lee's characters show how frequently prejudice and fear lead to abuse and misjudgment; Lee asserts that it is possible to coexist peacefully with people of different races and cultures.

The chapter entitled **Racial Prejudice** deals with the racial conflict in the novel *To Kill A Mocking Bird*. Racial prejudice is attitude, belief, and thought which often causes some negative actions in society. In *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, Tom, who is accused of raping a white girl, is put in a horrible scenario. While there being no proof against him, he is held in jail. Racism is discussed in the book, and it is demonstrated to be harmful. As a result, there is dominance, violence, and death between the two races. It thoroughly understands the characters' circumstances, issues, conflicts, and actions and conveys these elements in the written word. Black people are aware that, despite living in the same society as white people, they are poor and powerless. This book depicts society as it is. There are numerous examples of racial prejudice in

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and rumours can do a lot of harm to the person who is the target. Because they are essentially lies, views, and inaccurate observations about the subject of the rumour, rumours can readily hide the truth about a person.

In her novel, Harper Lee explicitly describes racial prejudice. There are certain victims who encounter racial prejudice from other members of society; not just black people but also white people are affected. Atticus Finch is an intelligent individual. As a result of his dislike of injustice, he supports Tom Robinson, a black man who is accused of raping Mayella, a white girl. Francis disapproves of Atticus Finch for backing Tom. Francis refers to him as a nigger-lover. The name "nigger" and the terrible reality of racial prejudice and discrimination are both used by people. Despite the fact that they have never encountered a nigger in real life, the book makes clear that anything that has to do with crime or something strange is assumed to have been done or happened by him. Without any justification other than the instance of race or colour, white people have developed such an unreasonable concept in their minds. Even in a court of law, a decision is never made based on facts, evidence, or any kind of proof.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Boo Radley is another one of the example of an individual who suffered from this form of racial prejudice. The prejudice of Radley family and Boo Radley makes somebody else afraid of closing Radley's house, because opinions have been formed if people walk near Radley place or take and eat everything from it, they will get dangerous thing that threat their life. Therefore, they will believe that Radley's are very dangerous people. Negative assumptions have installed in their mind for long time and those cannot be changed easily. They will always suppose to Boo Radley and his families are dangerous and wicked

people in society. The racial prejudice can be seen in the behaviors and treatments of the whites towards the blacks in Maycomb County. Boo Radley and the blacks are like the mocking birds with the virtues of innocence and goodness. Therefore, it is a sin or crime to kill a mocking bird. Having a racial prejudice towards the black people is like the act of killing an innocent singing bird. This is the main message of this novel.

The chapter entitled **Conflict of the Psyche** gives details about psychoanalytic theory and how the characters in *To Kill A Mockingbird* are struggling and dealing with the psychological conflict which arises in them by the influence of the society to which they belong. The personality theory known as the psychoanalytic hypothesis is founded on the idea that an individual is motivated primarily by forces that are invisible but are under the control of conscious and logical thought. The psychoanalytic hypothesis has a close relationship to Sigmund Freud. He contends that the interaction of the Id, Ego, and Super Ego, three mental faculties, shapes human behaviour. As a result, these are the core mental structures, and there is perpetual competition between them. The attempts we make to strike a balance between these determine how we act in the outside world.

Harper Lee's youth has to be looked at closely because psychoanalytic theory heavily relies on an individual's formative experiences. All three of these names Scout Finch, the Cunninghams, and Scout's cousin, Francis are mentioned in the narrative. Her mother's name was Frances Cunningham Finch. Truman Capote, a known-famous author who was a childhood friend of hers, served as the inspiration for the character of Dill. Her father was a newspaper editor who briefly practised law. One time, her father defended two African Americans who were charged with the murder of a white man. Atticus's defence of Tom Robinson

strongly parallels the narrative of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The defendants for her father, however, received death sentences. Both Harper Lee and Scout were tom boys who grew up in the South, and their characters and lives are very similar. Harper Lee was able to write the courtroom scenes because of her father's experience as a lawyer. Harper Lee wanted *To Kill a Mockingbird* to be a love story but it turned out to be a novel full of inequality and poverty. The book itself is the story of Harper Lee's childhood, but with different names.

In a subtle way, Boo's tale is similar to the Tom Robinson trial. Innocent people Boo and Tom were victimised for being misunderstood. Scout and Jem's misperception of Boo causes them to terrorise and torment him, and a similar bias, though undoubtedly a more extreme one, is what causes many Maycomb residents to unfairly accuse Tom. Instead, Boo stands for inborn goodness. Boo is misrepresented in every way by rumours and apprehension about the future. Boo has only ever been a family friend, a child's guardian, and the neighbourhood watchman.

The fourth chapter **Gothic Traits** examines the Gothic themes and characteristics that are prevalent in the book. The Gothic style, usually referred to as horror romanticism, evokes a sense of suspense and terror. This atmosphere is marked by a strong sense of dread, which can be a fear of one's body or a fear of one's intellect and soul. Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* belongs to the literary tradition of the Southern Gothic, a genre that became prominent in the twentieth century and furthers the Gothic tradition of exploring the macabre violence lurking beneath the apparently tranquil surface of reality.

Understanding *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a member of the Southern Gothic literary tradition aids in our comprehension of the book's place in a vibrant literary

tradition and gives the representation of racism and small-town life in the book more depth. The conflict between the South's repressed racist and violent past and a more genteel, "surface" image may be seen in the trial of Tom Robinson and Bob Ewell's climax attack on Scout and Jem. The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* is more up to date than many other Southern Gothic masterpieces.

Harper Lee makes use of seven Gothic elements: a castle, criminal activity, religion, a ghostly or demonic figure, magic, natural phenomena, and a gothic antagonist. Together, these characteristics contribute to the novel's gothic flavour. The setting is the key to gothicism, which provides the proper air of mystery and it is the back drop for other scenes of innumerable horrors.

To Kill a Mockingbird depicts life through the honest, easy and remarkable eyes of the child. Throughout the novel empathy is invited through the narrator's experience through the narrative technique. This novel is a perfect example for adult fiction where the reader can learn from the children's reflection. Through the eyes of children the adults learn to empathize with the unknown and other. One of the important aspects in the novel is how Scout acts immorally and is cruel to others. However, this behaviour and these actions are legitimized because they are excused by the fact that Scout and Amir are children, and the reader might empathize with their childishness through understanding their developmental level and how childishness is a natural part of their behaviour. A child is known for its innocence. In this novel the children reflect the innocence to the adults. The character Boo Radley is mentally challenged and seemed childlike and arrogant at the beginning of the novel. By the end of the novel he saves the children from Bob Ewell. Boo Radley's innocence reflected at the course of final scene.

In conclusion, *To Kill a Mockingbird* features a diverse cast of characters

who play an important role in exploring themes such as racism, justice, moral and courage. Through its complex and memorable characters, the novel offers a nuanced and insightful view of American society and the challenges that continue to face it. By scrutinizing the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* regarding the title **Subconscious Dispute of Racial Inequality**, one can determine how the society with its norms and misconception affects the psychological state of the common working class people.

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Repercussion of colonization in Ngugi waThiongo's

A Grain of wheat

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

SUDHA .S

21SPEN17



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Repercussion of Colonization: A Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*** 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 and is a work done by Sudha S. during the year 2022-2023, and that has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

M. Rufina Mary

SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE

Maria Sabaya Samil

SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

John

SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR

Director

Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

Lucia Rose

SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Principal

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

Shilpa

SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Repercussion of Colonization: A Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of requirements 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.

APRIL 2023

G. Sudha
SUDHA S.

THOOTHUKUDI

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Preface

Ngugi wa Thiong'o was an Kenyan novelist, playwright, and critic of literature. His books include, *Devil on the Cross* (1977), *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965). His works explore the tensions between the present and the past as well as the colonial and postcolonial inconsistencies of Kenyan and Gikuyu society.

Ngugi waThiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* about the Mau Mau rebellions in Kenya, kenya just before night of independence. It also depicts the struggle of Mau Mau rebellions in Kenya.

The project entitled **Repercussion of colonisation**Ngugi waThiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* shows European colonisation and the people sufferings in the society.

Chapter one focuses on the African Literature, African History, biography details of Ngugiwa Thiong'o and abstract of novel *A Grain of Wheat*.

Chapter two Betrayal and Redemption, the people in Kenya betrayal neighbourhood and their colloquies at last they redeem themselves by revealing the truth.

Chapter three colonisation, European colonisation in Kenya, people affected by colonisation explore the emotion because of colonisation.

Chapter four stylistic analysis ,Ngugi wa Thiong'o use the narrative methods in *A Grain of Wheat* such us flashback, anonymous narrator, omniscient narrator and use of language.

Chapter five sums up all the important aspects of the preceeding chapters.

I am indebted to our parents and I thank them for their moral guidance and benevolence.

Chapter one

Introduction

The word literature comes from the Latin word *littera*, which means a letter of the alphabet, or *litterae*, which means letters. It means that although there was a lot of oral literature in every community, the term “literature originally” meant anything written down, written, or sort of written. Consequently, writing is a way for people to express themselves. However, even when it is properly ordered, not all verbal or written expression qualifies as literature. Some writings only qualify as literature as an art form if they are adjudged to have “artistic value,” which refers to innate creative talent and human ingenuity in literary writings. Literature also comes in a variety of forms, depending on the languages used. Other kinds of literature include Tanzanian literature as well as French literature, English literature, Chinese literature, and African literature.

A phenomenon surrounds the continent of Africa. With 1.216 billion inhabitants, it is the second-most populous country in the world and the second-largest continent after Asia. Africa is a well-known moniker that has spread across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans from the Nile River's borders. The name has come to be associated with historical revolutions and heritages. There is one significance to Africa's name, though, that has been up for discussion for a long time. Regarding the original name of what is now known as Africa, several schools of thought have developed. African literature is literature created in or about Africa. While the European conception of literature often relates to written letters, the African definition also encompasses oral literature. The term "literature" can also refer to the creative use of language solely for artistic purposes.

Historically, Africans have not dramatically separated art and education. African authors, following their lead from oral literature, employ beauty to help spread crucial facts and information to society rather than writing or singing for beauty's sake. Some of the greatest civilizations in history had their origins in Africa, such as Ancient Egypt, which ruled for more than three millennia and constructed the Great Pyramids. The Mali Empire, the Songhai Empire, and the Kingdom of Ghana are a few other civilizations. The people of southern Africa are arguably the oldest people group in the world, and some of the oldest human tool discoveries have been made in Africa.

The Indian Ocean is to the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean lies to the west. Africa is the second-largest Continent on the globe after Asia, and it extends well south of the equator, covering more than 12 million square miles. Africa is the second-most populous continent in the world. With a wide range of geography, species, and weather, Africa is one of the planet's most diversified regions. The African continent has a variety of tribes, including the Yoruba, Apache, Sioux, Cherokee, Cheyenne, and Gikuyu. The Bantu-speaking Kikuyu, also known as Gikuyu or Agikuyu, are a tribe that inhabits the highlands of south-central Kenya, close to Mount Kenya. The Kikuyu historically resided in separate domestic family homesteads, each of which had a hut for each wife and was enclosed by a stockade or hedge.

Many Kikuyu decided to keep this structure when the emergency was over due to the economic benefits of village settlement and land consolidation. A 'Mbari' is a patrilineal group of males and their wives and children that can number anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred people. The population is split up into nine clans plus several subclans outside of the Mbari.

The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his subjectivity,

and whose only wealth is individual thought. Now the native who has the opportunity to return to the people during the struggle for freedom will discover the falseness of this theory.(Fanon 47)

On January 5, 1938, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was born in Kamarithu, Limura, close to Nairobi. Ngugi and his family were members of the Gikuyu, the largest ethnic group in Kenya. Even from his early childhood, Ngugi's life was framed by the Kenyan struggle against the British. His family was heavily involved in the Mau Mau freedom fighting movement—one of his brothers was a freedom fighter, the home guard tortured his mother, and Ngugi's deaf brother was shot in the back by a British soldier. He was one of 27 siblings in a big farming family and the fifth child of the third of his father's four wives. Twelve miles northeast of Nairobi, Kenya, in the settlement of Kamirithu, the family resided. His father, Thiong Dowa Nducu, was a peasant farmer who had been dispossessed by the British Imperial Land Act of 1915.

Ngugi's family became entangled in the British Empire's process of the annexation of land in Kenya. The resulting dissolution of rural communities and the pressure it puts on the traditional family structure The direct European occupation of indigenous peoples' lands was always a potential, even likely, step in the colonisation process. However, in Kenya, the British went to considerable lengths, even breaking laws and agreements they had established, to obtain for themselves the greatest land in what was to them very much a white man's nation, that is, one where there was a good chance that white people could prosper. "We must strive for a form of social organisation that will free the menaced spirit and energy of our people so we can build a new country and sing a new song" (*Home* 50). They were particularly drawn to the region that came to be known as the White Highlands, where land theft was most widespread and persistent, and it was there, in the village of Kamirithu.

Kenyan novelist, playwright, and critic of literature, Ngugi wa Thiong'o. His books include, *Devil on the Cross* (1977), *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967). The colonial legacy, traditionalism, cultural nationalism, and the role of the intellectual in the postcolony are his key subjects. His works explore the tensions between the present and the past as well as the colonial and postcolonial inconsistencies of Kenyan and Gikuyu society. He is renowned for having the best characterization skills in all of Africa. His use of impressionism and the poetic collective consciousness is an internal representation of his character's emotional responses to the outside environment. But when didacticism compels him to create stereotypical mouthpieces for philosophical viewpoints, he gets attacked. *House of the Interpreter* (2012) is the second volume of his memoirs and his most recent work. In *The House of the Interpreter*, he recalls his time at Alliance High School from 1955 to 1959.

The memoirs provide crucial insight into his evolution of thinking and his developing cynicism. His writings on language function and the connections between literature, culture, and politics are equally vast. As Adrian Roscoe observes that, the "three colonial products Ngugi frequently identifies are loneliness, class divisions, and guilt" (312). *Homecoming* (1972) and *Writers in Politics* (1986) are only a few of the publications that have collected these writings. He contends that language serves as a tool for maintaining the enslavement of people. The fact that Ngugi wa Thiong'o chose to write in Gikuyu shows how important language is to him. A Kenyan language, an African language, is integral to the anti-imperialist efforts of Kenyan and African peoples, the author claimed in a Gikuyu essay. Additionally, he intended to write for the people he was trying to give agency to through his novels, peasants and the working class. The Great Nairobi Literature Debate, which was centred on the teaching of literature and how it should be organised, generated significant issues regarding the framework utilised to organise education.

Ngugi was first exposed to modern African writing in English through Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The Caribbean and the wider black diaspora were introduced to it through George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*. Later, Ngugi's M.A. dissertation at Leeds was focused on Lamming's work, and a portion of it was later included in his debut collection of essays, *Homecoming*. The Caribbean-born C.L.R. James, whom Ngugi met at Makerere University in 1969 while James was in Uganda, is another significant black radical for Ngugi. The book by James is exemplary as an early work of radical revisionist historiography because it situates its point of view close to the insurgent masses in Santo Domingo and vice versa, and both of them had an impact on what the European ruling classes did. It was written from a Marxist perspective, contesting their conclusions.

Ngugi has become more and more committed to James' approach to history, but it has drawn harsh criticism, particularly from professional historians, particularly, but not exclusively, Kenyan, who object to a novelist not only trespassing on their territory but also presuming to challenge their findings. James stands out as a person who, despite all the political whims and historical vicissitudes of the twentieth century, maintained a clear-eyed belief in left-wing politics and the possibility that regular people could create a fundamentally better world for themselves. He also offers a model of intellectual practice in his radical oppositional approach to history. To the despair or amazement of some critics, Ngugi has followed a similar path and not only maintained his radical ideas but may perhaps have reinforced his alliance. When Amos Tutuola submitted his manuscript for *The Palm—Wine Drinkard* to the British publishing business Taber and Taber in 1951, it became the first novel from tropical Africa to catch the attention of Western literary audiences.

There were other writers as well who received some sort of honour for their work. *The Wanderer of the East*, a 1934 London publication by Thomas Mofolo, favoured

Christianity. *Pitseng* (1910) and *Chaka* (1925) were published after that. The first novel set in West Africa was *Ethiopia Unbound*, published in 1911 by Casely Hayford. R.E. These books stood apart from Tutuola because they revered Christianity. Tutuola used folklore from Yoruba culture in his works. The non-African readers were taken aback by Tutuola's language, which bore all the hallmarks of an early work of African literature. With his debut book, *Song of the City* (1945), Peter Abrahams became the first non-white African to receive widespread readership. Consequently, African literature didn't begin to take on its own identity until after the 1950s. Several regions of the continent saw the development of distinctive characterizations in African literature.

In South Africa, assimilation, identity crises, and racism were the prominent topics of discussion. Notable films include *Mine Boy* by Peter Abrahams in 1946, *Cry the Beloved Land* by Alan Paton in 1948, *Burger's Daughter* by Nadine Gordimer in 1979, and *A Walk in the Night* by Alex La Guma from 1962. Except for South Africa, novel writing was only a post-independence phenomenon in English-speaking Africa. Chinua Achebe is one of Africa's best-known authors. He is renowned for highlighting the dominance of African cultures in his paintings, particularly the Ibo culture. His work, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), has established itself as a model for other novelists. Another well-known author, Wole Soyinka, is both African and European. Soyinka, who was raised in a Yoruba-dominated home, sought to create a new set of ideals that would unite the past and the present. *An African Speaks for his Nation* by Parmenas Mockerie and *Facing Mount Kenya* by Kenyatta were both published during the 1930s. The 1958 publication of Muga Gicaru's autobiographical narrative of history and politics in colonial Kenya, *Land of Sunshine*, was another significant work that made a significant impact on literary history. Early in the 1960s, authors started to use literary styles to reflect the experiences of their people under colonisers. These encounters gave people hope for future freedom. In D.S. Izevbaes's view,

The earliest critical attitude towards contemporary African literature seems to have been strongly influenced by non-literary interests, the most important of which was nationalism or the desire to create an indigenous tradition that would be more or less independent of foreign models. (27)

The novel *Petals of Blood* was first released in 1977. The novel, which is set in Kenya just after independence, centres on four people named Munira, Abdulla, Wanjia, and Karega, whose lives become entwined as a result of the Mau Mau uprising. Each retreat to the quiet, rural village of Ilmorog to get away from city life. The characters in the book contend with both the effects of the Mau Mau insurrection and a brand-new, fast-westernizing Kenya as the plot develops. *Petals of Blood*, was first published in 1977. The Mau Mau insurrection causes the lives of four people named Munira, Abdulla, Wanjia, and Karega to become intertwined, and the story is set in Kenya just after independence. To escape city life, each retires to the serene, rural village of Ilmorog. As the tale progresses, the characters in the novel struggle with the effects of the Mau Mau uprising as well as a brand-new, rapidly westernising Kenya.

African nations were subjugated and ruled by European nations throughout the imperialistic era. African countries formed their administrations and sought to take control of their economies as they began to renounce colonial domination and gain independence in the middle of the 20th century. However, the majority of them almost immediately learned about neo-colonialism, which is when international capitalists and local ruling elites collaborate to invest in a country but restore that country to a relationship that is very similar to colonialism. They are now vulnerable to local corruption, market factors, loans, and changes in transportation. The experience of neo-colonialism in Ilmorog is chronicled by Ngugi, who

demonstrates that despite all the new contemporary advancements, the people were losing all of their power.

The River Between, while a student of English at Makerere University, a branch of the University of London in Kampala, Uganda, he authored the book in 1965. Its initial name was “*The Black Messiah*”. While Ngugi initially admired the English literary canon and became deeply devoted to Christianity, some events rocked his worldview and motivated him to investigate the complex relationship between colonisers and colonised. First, the British, who educated him and helped him become a Christian, tortured his mother and imprisoned his brother during the Mau Mau Uprising from 1952 to 1960. Second, he discovered that East African literature was lacking in comparison to the abundance of western and southern African literature at the African Writers Conference in 1962. Three weeks later, Ngugi delivered his draught of *The River Between* to the professor by knocking on his door late at night. When *The River Between* was released, the British were attempting to end female circumcision. Ngugi examines the consequences of colonialism on African society in a series of novels, the first of which is written in English. The outcomes are nuanced, and the novel isn’t thought of as painting the scenario in black and white.

The colonisation of Kenya by the British, in which they spread Christianity and abused the nation, is metaphorically depicted in *The River Between*. Livingston, who plays the role of Joshua, is the converted African who does everything in his power to serve the colonisers. The British establish government facilities and levied taxes, which at first do not worry the populace because they are unfamiliar with taxes. They don’t know they’ve been taken advantage of until much later. Waiyaki’s attempt to bring his people to independence through education follows his father’s advice. But in the end, he understands that raising people’s standards of living through education alone is insufficient. The community must

instead win respect for itself through political action that unites the various tribes. Ngugi is renowned for his work with youngsters. His trilogy, which depicts the exploits of a young hero named Njamba Nene, is renowned for the sociocultural values it promotes. His children's books include *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus* (1986), *Njamba Nene and the Cruel Chief* (1988), and Njambe Nene's *Pistol* (1990). Peter T. Simate says that "Ngugi's children's fiction can be read as a watered-down version of work conceived for mature readers" (152).

Matigiri (1986) is the novel Ngugi wrote after he was forced into exile, and once again the language is Gikuyu. It tells of the return in the 1980s of a freedom fighter, who had been a former chauffeur and plantation worker for a white man and had been living in the forest since the Emergency. He has buried his weapons, put on a belt of peace, and set out to find and reunite his scattered family. But as he moves through contemporary society, he grows progressively saddened, shocked, and angry, because he sees that the conditions are in some ways worse than those that existed in colonial times. Finally, he decides to give up the way of peace and take up once more the way of the gun.

Matigari is fundamentally a person looking for his family. On another level, his return represents the freedom fighters' return to their mission of purging society of its flaws and reconstructing it in a more egalitarian manner. The route is one of the armed oppositions. On a deeper level, he represents the typical hero of myth and folklore who is on a quest. This feature is emphasised by the epic and oral narrative forms because, in the heroic figure tradition of these traditions, he is both a trickster and a warrior, a young combatant and an experienced veteran. His arrival in society, which will reshape it, is ultimately connected to Christ's second coming.

In *Wizard of the Crow* (2004), Ngugi's follow-up book, he expresses the desire, to sum up, Africa of the twentieth century from the perspective of two thousand years of world history. Ngugi's work, which is set in the free republic of Aburiria and begins in our times, dramatizes a struggle for the people of Aburiria's souls with biting humour and acute observation. His High and Mighty Excellency is one of the candidates, along with the villainous Global Bank, the corrupt Christian Ministry, and the titular Wizard, an incarnation of folklore and wisdom. *Wizard of the Crow* exposes humanity in all its never-ending-surprising complexity by weaving together the stories of the wealthy and the common people to create a stunning mosaic. *Wizard of the Crow*, the pinnacle of Ngugi waThiong'o's career to date, is a masterpiece that draws inspiration from deeply enigmatic traditional African storytelling.

Weep Not, Child, in 1962, while he was a student at Leeds University in England.. The terrible tale of Njoroge, a young kid trying to get an education in Kenya during the 1952–1960 Emergency, is followed. The development of Kenyan revolutionary parties fighting the British colonists occurred during this turbulent time. The goal of the book is to examine an entire civilization that is in transition and on the verge of violence from various angles rather than to relate a few stories. There are various subplots in it, such as that of Ngotho, Njoroge's father, who fights to keep his family's land, and Mwihaki, an affluent village girl who considers dating Njoroge. Perhaps most intriguingly, it also makes an effort to comprehend Mr. Howlands' perspective as one of the white colonists.

Weep Not, Child was one of the few East African novels to be published in English when it was released in 1964. Although it didn't at the time succeed in selling as many copies or attracting as much attention as books by white authors who have written about Africa,

including Alan Paton and Bryce Courtenay, the book, as well as those that came after it, were well-received by literary reviewers.

Devil on the Cross, was first written in the Gikuyu language and published in 1980 under the pen name Caitani Mutharabaini. The author himself translated it into English the next year, and Heinemann Educational Books released it in 1982 as a part of its well-known African Writers Series. The story follows a Kenyan woman named Warnga, a former sugar girl who previously had dreams of becoming an engineer, as she travels on two different voyages. After being dismissed from her job and dumped by her lover, Warnga sets out on her first journey from Nairobi to Ilmorog, where she will meet up with her parents. She accepts a stranger's invitation to a Devil's Feast, however, and decides to attend with several others she meets on a private minibus. The feast turns out to be a businessmen's competition to determine who can come up with the most lucrative and exploitative ideas for both exploiting peasants and increasing Kenya's dependence on foreign aid.

Warnga is motivated to make changes in her life through the events of the feast and a visit from the devil himself. As a result, she is eventually able to transform into a Marxist engineer and get engaged to a wealthy guy she met earlier on the 'Matatu'. Then she embarks on her second voyage with this man, Gaturia, to visit his folks in Nakuru. But while there, Warnga discovers that Gaturia's father is the same man she had an unsavoury encounter with when she was a young girl. By killing him at the novel's conclusion, Warnga transforms herself from a helpless victim of neo-colonialism into a martyr for her cause and completely commits herself to the Marxist battle. As one might probably infer from the book's content, it is a fiercely funny satire that also has a lot to say about Kenya's unsuccessful attempt to achieve true independence. All of its characters act in ways that reflect and frame the conversation surrounding these social challenges, even their names and language do so.

While concentrating on the language, proverbs, and fables of the Gikuyu people and using a series of dialectic dualities to advance his plot, Ngugi also chooses to incorporate these themes in his narratology and language.

Devil on the Cross is maybe more than anything else a cutting satire targeted at the forces of neo-colonialism and the corruption that is fostered by a flawed decolonization process. Even after Kenyans fought for their freedoms during the Mau Mau and expelled the white man after winning their independence, many black people are content to work as their proxies, giving off the appearance of self-rule while exploiting local people in service of foreign lords, as Ngugi shows us through characters like Boss Khara, the Rich Old man from Ngorika, and the local tycoons present at the Devil's Feast. Ngugi ties tales of neo-colonial exploitation to tales in the book about man-eating ogres, monsters, and witches because such corruption of the people against their countrymen is not only immoral but also cannibalistic.

The connection made in the book between neo-colonial cannibalism and the holy sacrament of the eucharist supports Ngugi's assertion that Western religion played a significant role in solidifying neo-colonialist rule over Kenya's people. Indeed, Ngugi makes it clear that religion is not just incidentally involved in Kenyan neo-colonialism but rather plays a crucial role in upholding and maintaining it through such details as the Parable of the Talents, tycoon involvement in churches, and the Devil's claim to Warnga that religion fosters complacency among the peasants.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o of "*Decolonising the Mind*" is about how the Europeans once colonised a great number of nations. As a part of their development, they introduced their language and culture to the colonies. The British forced English as an official language into the colonial nations, colonising the locals' minds in the process. Even after the British decolonized these nations, the people there remain mentally colonised. They attempt to

imitate the British and celebrate the British language. This essay explores the British decision to make English the official language in former colonies, the effects it had on local languages, and the current state of those languages. Additionally, this essay makes suggestions for decolonizing the intellect. Thiong'o makes recommendations to help decolonize the mind, therefore making use of a fitting title.

Although the events of *A Grain of Wheat* take place in the four days before Kenyan independence in December 1963, the author recalls events that occurred as early as the British colonisation of Kenya in the first two decades of the 20th century, when the British occupiers drove tribal groups off their land, turned them into squatters, and frequently used them as forced labour to advance their expansion across Kenya. The Mau Mau Uprising, also known as the Emergency, in which Ngugi's own family participated, is nonetheless the event that has the greatest impact on the narrative. A coalition of Kenyan ethnic groups, including the Gikuyu, Meru, and Embu, as well as British Army soldiers and Gikuyu who sided with the British occupiers, launched the Mau Mau Uprising in 1952.

Within the first year of the Mau Mau uprising, British authorities declared a state of emergency, which resulted in numerous arrests and detentions of suspected Mau Mau leaders and supporters, including Jomo Kenyatta. The remaining Mau Mau freedom fighters were forced into the jungle by this pressure, where they used guerrilla tactics to harass and intimidate the British forces, who were far better equipped and armed. Although the main leader of the Mau Mau, Dedan Kimathi, was captured in 1956, indicating a formal defeat, different factions of Mau Mau fighters continued to fight local wars against the British up until Independence, significantly aiding in the British decision to hand back control of Kenya to the Kenyan people.

There is a moral conflict over Kenya's future, as the British colonialists and the Kenyan liberation fighters have fundamentally different visions for the country. As their empire grew, the British worked to administratively and technologically modernise Kenya. But in doing so, they impose themselves on long-extinct ethnic groups like the Gikuyu and appropriate their land for their use. With the backing of the majority of their village, Thabai, the Mau Mau fighters aim to drive the white man out of Kenya totally to protect their way of life. The Gikuyu prefer to preserve their independence, right to self-govern, and ancient customs over the "modern" future that the colonists had in mind. The moral conflict surrounding Kenya's future is demonstrated by the fact that some Kenyans—and even some Gikuyus—decide to support the British and adopt their view of the future as Kenya's best course of action. As a result, the battle over colonisation became one between moral principles rather than just between nations: Western imperialism and Kenyan tradition.

Both the colonisers and the colonised regard themselves as the good and heroic people serving humanity, while their adversaries are seen as the bad. The mirrored characters John Thompson and Kihika in the story serve as an illustration of this. The English regional governor, John Thompson, is an ardent supporter of British colonialism and sees it as a moralising and purifying force for the advancement of humanity. Years before the events of the narrative, John encounters two African students who are enrolled in a British university and who are well-versed in Western literature and history as well as convinced of the positive effects of British imperialism on the world. This unequal portrayal makes the case that in the war between colonisers and colonised, the Kenyans' moral struggle for freedom exceeds the British government's effort to moralise what they perceive to be a weaker nation. In *A Grain of Wheat*, the Gikuyu can only confront British oppression through bloodshed. The battle between the coloniser and the colonised is resolved when Kenya declares its independence

from Britain at the end of the novel. The moral case against such colonisation by any country remains strong, however, as the author notes that Britain still practises imperialism.

Chapter Two

Betrayal and Redemption

Kenyan people are completely helpless in the face of the economic, psychological, and cultural changes brought about by the colonial system of dominance and expropriation. Social interactions were hampered, and society as a whole disintegrated. Throughout the early colonial assault, the Emergency, and the Mau Mau insurrection, people fall to irrepressible passions against the backdrop of great personal suffering, which leads to a deceitful betrayal of their ethnic ideals as well as of themselves.

James Decker in his article “Mugo and the Silence of Oppression” notes that society’s fragmentation causes a great deal of perplexity, self-doubt, and lack of confidence in people. “Neighbour betrays neighbour, wife betrays husband, friend betrays friend, all in an effort to maintain personal welfare” (James 55). Some people have completely embraced foreign values. They abandon their ethnic beliefs with more fervour than the colonialists themselves

in their ferocious desire to fit into the colonial and post-colonial reality. When people's expectations of others and themselves aren't met, betrayal denotes the breakdown of trust that results.

Betrayal compromises a person's integrity and goes against his most cherished convictions. He becomes more prone to emotional distress, fear, and a lack of hope. Fanon apprehends that Kenyan Uhuru "instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people" turns out to be "only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been" (Fanon 121). When social failure is realised as a result of cracks in the social fabric, shame often follows. Most betrayers probably don't experience guilt feelings. But the entire African culture experienced strong remorse over its betrayal.

Man's conscience is his biggest source of misery. Some of the traitors feel a strong urge to atone for their sins. Their guilt sometimes drives them to violent behaviour, and other times it leads them to serious introspection. Lewis Nkosi in *Tasks and Masks* describes *A Grain of Wheat* as a novel which is "built around a series of ever-widening concentric circles of guilt and betrayal" (Nkosi 40). Nearly every character has made a mistake or betrayed someone. *A Grain of Wheat*, a betrayal novel, is a comprehensive examination of the moral dilemmas that the residents of Thabai hamlet faced during the Emergency and its ensuing psychological effects. It is the night before Uhuru, but liberation is not followed by feelings of joy or calm, but rather by a disconcerting sense of impending doom. The people's disenfranchisement and sense of betrayal are exacerbated by the land theft demonstrated by their double-crossing MP., who is a perfect example of the arrogance and corruption of the new black leaders.

Fanon alleges, "nationalism quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are the legacy of the colonial period" (Fanon 124). The men at the top of society are a bunch of manipulators who seek to replace colonialism with neo-colonialism

out of a combination of power-lust and petty self-interest. *A Grain of Wheat* is a harsh criticism of the new elites' avarice in appropriating privileges for themselves while continuing to deny those who carried the weight of the liberation war. In the novel, small-scale betrayals serve as metaphors for the new leader's massive betrayal of an entire nation. They must accept the curse of treachery and self-betrayal that circumstances have forced upon them.

The four protagonists, who had participated in the events leading up to Uhuru, are now held captive by their recollections of their shortcomings. Arthur Ravenscroft sees the novel as an "orchestration of four different but interrelated betrayals and their consequent corrosion of selfhood" (Ravenscroft 204). All of the protagonists are overcome with guilt, humiliation, and jealousy on the eve of Uhuru as a result of the oppressive circumstances they had to endure. They feel so uneasy because they can't even trust themselves. Similar to how betrayal symbolises individual guilt, individual guilt also represents the collective guilt of a whole civilization. Everyone who chose not to take part in the struggle for freedom is guilty. Each one of them tries to create a purpose for his life, much as the villager Githua relates his amputated leg to a wound sustained during the battle. Mugo is a strong-willed individualist who finds himself in a dangerous colonial setting at a time when society is rapidly shifting from a lifestyle centred on the community to one centred on the individual.

Mugo has long harboured grandiose fantasies, believing himself to be Moses, chosen to guide the populace into the Promised Land of Peace and Uhuru. But when Kihika shows up in his hut one night, it exposes his self-deception since he prefers to be a Judas to a Moses. Mugo prioritises his survival above all else and prefers to live in exile. Kihika dispels Mugo's delusions that he can achieve social standing via perseverance since he believes Kihika has everything while he, Mugo, has nothing. While Mugo can only dream of power and success, he can never bring himself to take part in the independence struggle. Kihika enjoys the respect of his family and the people look to him as their leader. Seeing that

Kihika's presence in his life will undermine all of his ambitions and efforts to succeed, Mugo eventually betrays Kihika.

Man's inner anxieties and goals are frequently rationalised through public activities. In *Guilt: Theory and Treatment*, Edward Stein discusses people with sociopathic personalities. Stein quotes The American Psychiatric Association which refers to such a personality as "a person whose behaviour is predominantly amoral or anti-social and characterized by impulsive, irresponsible actions satisfying only immediate and narcissistic interests without concern for obvious and implicit social consequences" (Stein 85). The inevitable result of Mugo's efforts to protect his well-being and an act of retaliation against Kihika for crushing his dreams is his betrayal of Kihika. He toiled in a never-ending nightmare with demons for a week after that. Mugo eventually decides to turn against Kihika and the cause rather than stand at the centre of the action because he is unwilling to do so. Mugo's confession to the D.O. Robinson is his first contact with another man and in this betrayal, he discovers the power and authority of his own knowledge and delicious joy at his own daring.

Mugo's noble act of protecting the pregnant Wambuku from the guard's savage beating is an indication of his desire to make amends for his wrongdoing. He felt that he deserved the punishment, which is why he was numb and silent during the ensuing torture sessions in the detention camps. Mugo is trying to appease his guilty conscience by remaining silent in response to the frequent torture and interrogations that require the attention of the camp authorities. As Frantz Alexander states, "self-punishment itself is a primitive defense measure to relieve the ego of guilt" (Alexander 121). Mugo is always being pursued by shame and terror in the form of embarrassing memories, images, nightmares, and voices, yet nothing can stop them. His shame turns into an obsession that plagues him with a string of terrifying visions.

In his dreams, Mugo sees water icicles getting closer to him until they seem like they will puncture his eyes as he lies frozen with terror. With guilt haunting him, he imagines eyes watching him and accusing him constantly. He feels threatened and suspicious by other people's looks and gestures. When Mugo betrayed Kihika, his heart served as the area for an uncomfortable clash between repressed remorse and terrified inner strife. When the populace persuades him to take charge of the Uhuru celebrations, this guilt is heightened. His sense of guilt is increased by Mumbi's account of the pain imposed on Thabai and its residents when Kihika was put to death. But because he now perceives heavy blood trickling from the mud walls of his hut, the tormented Mugo is unable to escape the grip of his tremendous remorse.

Mugo's life is wrecked by private emotions of remorse since, despite being originally viewed as a hero by others, he is a traitor in his own eyes. The British were the victims of Mugo's criminal treachery when he handed over the revolutionary militant Kihika to them. The acts of the lone individual Mugo are the voice and need of the community since he prioritised his survival over his allegiance to the group..

Actions of betrayal towards a group done by Gikonyo and Karanja in *A Grain of Wheat* illustrate the tendency of Ngugi's other characters to put their needs ahead of the benefit of the group. Gikonyo had taken a quick stride towards detention when he was taken into custody for his involvement in the revolutionary movement because he thought the day of deliverance would come quickly. But, six years in prison kill his hope, and the physical suffering and waiting pangs break down his emotions. He clings to the idea of his wife and mother as the one constant reality, stripped of all hope for early independence. To gain the necessary strength, Gikonyo concentrates on Mumbi as he makes his way to the screening office to confess. The sound of his feet on the sidewalk sounds excessively loud to him as he advances, oblivious to the other prisoners' quiet accusing glances. The steps seem to follow

him throughout the incarceration camps after he has made his confession, even though his mind is clear as he moves towards his act of betrayal.

Gikonyo believes that seeing Mumbi again will help him deal with the pain of his guilty conscience. Yet, he is repulsed to discover deception all around him when he gets home. He discovers that Mumbi has deceived him by carrying Karanja's child, hence the feeling of betrayal has also permeated his home. Gikonyo's anger at Mumbi's treachery is fuelled by his sense of guilt and the knowledge that his renunciation has failed and he must now live with the treachery it involves. Even though Karanja is now a chief, he still views Gikonyo as an outsider. Gikonyo's tormented and agitated state of mind is plagued by vile visions of Mumbi reacting to Karanja's advances. His beautiful idea of a home with his wife crumbles, visions of her deceit corrode his psyche, and he rejects Mumbi. Gikonyo's sense of dignity and self-worth have been severely damaged, and he now despises himself for his dishonourable submission to the jail authorities.

According to Edward Stein, when a person experiences anti-love, they begin to feel guilty and begin to think of life as hell. Such a life results in,

Hatred and the worst of all hatred, hatred of self. Guilt is the special form of anxiety experienced by human-in-society, the warning tension of life principles violated, of conditions of human existence transgressed, of socio-spiritual reality ignored or affronted, of God alienated, of self-being destroyed.
(Stein 14-15)

Gikonyo's hopes for a life full of love with Mumbi are dashed, and it seems as though life is hell. He assigns Mumbi his guilt to mend his bruised pride. He is unwilling to comprehend the circumstances that caused her to turn on him.

Gikonyo does not want to forgive Mumbi because he has not yet been able to forgive himself. To know everything would be to forgive everything. The haunting echo of the steps

on the pavement resurfaces in Mumbi's consciousness as a result of his betrayal, Mumbi's betrayal, and the remorse that follows. Carl Jung acknowledged in *Man and His Symbols*: "Symbols,... do not occur solely in dreams. They appear in all kinds of psychic manifestations. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations" (Jung 41). In a desperate attempt to find someone to talk to, he spills his heart to Mugo. The burden in his heart is partially lifted by this, but remorse of a different kind creeps in since he feels as though he has exposed himself completely to Mugo.

The steps are now keeping him up at night and working to undermine his manhood, his self-confidence, and his embarrassment about being the first to admit the pledge. Gikonyo is no longer able to live in peace and contentment since he has to deal with betrayals in both the public and private spheres as well as his act of betrayal and the remorse that follows it. The demands of the Emergency have turned Mumbi, who was once lively and attractive, into a worn-out and hardened woman. Mumbi's weary expression represents the lassitude brought on by colonial exposure that has permeated the entire nation of Kenya. Mumbi's guilt-ridden secret, which breaks her heart, has its roots in Freedom Movement's mitigating circumstances. Mumbi's resistance gradually breaks down in the face of Karanja's continuous pursuit as a result of the Emergency's stresses.

Mumbi's act of betrayal and her subsequent misery serves as an example of how colonialism frequently forced native Africans to act in ways that ultimately caused them great stress and suffering. Karanja only calls Mumbi to his office after she had given up all chance of ever seeing Gikonyo again. She submits to Karanja in obedient thanks when he tells her that Gikonyo would soon be able to join her. She pays a price for this immoral act of betrayal by losing Gikonyo's love.

Colonialism has not simply depersonalised the individual, it has colonized; this depersonalisation is equally felt in the collective sphere, on the level of

social structures. The colonised people find that they are reduced to a body of individuals who only find cohesion when in the presence of the colonizing nation. (Fanon 238).

The character of Karanja eloquently illustrates this claim made by Fanon. Demonstrates the normal mindset of a conquered African who thinks the white guys are invincible. The power of the white man is immovable to Karanja, like a rock. Ngugi has frequently stated his disgust for Kenyans who adhere to the sell-out tradition and who view cooperation with the British as the quickest path to post-colonial wealth and power. Karanja is fearful of the day when the British authority in Kenya will expire and utilises his connections with the white bosses to boost his status among his countrymen. The belief that the Europeans hold the ultimate power drives Karanja's actions continuously. His obsession with Mumbi and the resulting sense of self-preservation prevents him from joining the freedom movement. Given that his worldview is one of universal selfishness and callousness, he is forced to act selfishly.

According to Karanja doesn't want any part of independence if it means becoming a hanging corpse like Kihika and being cut off from Mumbi. After confessing the oath, Karanja takes a job in a hood. Karanja takes pleasure in the power of betrayal that comes from spying on his followers. But compared to his actions in the hood, he is more vicious as a home guard and chief. In the persona of Karanja, Ngugi illustrates the complete dehumanisation of native peoples by the colonial apparatus. Karanja has killed a lot of freedom fighters while serving as a home guard. Karanja is denied the peace and hopes that others have attained through their acts of sacrifice because he has abandoned all community principles and has only been motivated by his own selfish goals.

Karanja is terrified by his recollections of his treacherous deeds and imagines them when Uhuru dawns. He first struggles with accepting his feelings of remorse. Jung suggests

that a sense of shame results from a failure to accept oneself completely and to bring the unpleasant aspect of oneself what Jung refers to as the shadow into consciousness. Karanja eventually comes to their realisation that a traitor like him will have no place after the arrival of Black rule. Karanja is now plagued by the image of the hooded self hovering vividly in front of him. Magda B. Arnold states in *Feelings and Emotions*: “Guilt presupposes a capacity to feel either fear of another or sympathy for another” (Arnold 196).

Due to his anxiety about black power and worry about the disappearance of the white man, Karanja exiles himself from his tribe and feels guilty about it. For Karanja, who is now a broken and dejected man, the night seems to get progressively darker. He has a profound sense of racial inferiority implanted in him by white values, which prevents him from feeling a connection to his people. He continues to be a black man who longs to be a white man. The novel examines themes of religion and revolt. It focuses on the oppressive feeling brought upon by colonisers. In this story, the invaders’ flimsy attempts to civilise the unfriendly continent contrast with the inhabitants’ quest for self-realisation. They have the vigour and strength to speak out against the colonisers because of their devotion to their community and sense of national pride. It portrays the people’s lofty hopes and sentiments in the wake of the creation of the new nation. The plot paints a dark picture of colonization’s toll on life while also showing a glimmer of hope in the resistance to white control.

Both Mugo and Gikonyo, another villager, suffer from mental anguish as a result of carrying around remorse for long-hidden atrocities. Despite their attempts to escape their guilt, both men come to the realisation that they can only find forgiveness and solace by voluntarily accepting responsibility for their actions and accepting the consequences. *A Grain of Wheat* makes the case that forgiveness and freedom from guilt can only be attained via frank confession and a readiness to accept the consequences of one’s acts through the parallel travels of Mugo and Gikonyo. Gikonyo and Mugo both conceal shameful

secrets from everyone. Even though there is little risk of either of them being discovered, the shame they both carry torments them emotionally, showing what a terrible burden concealed guilt can become.

Although Mugo is falsely viewed by the Thabai people as a courageous, noble hero who provided sanctuary to Kihika, it is revealed in the novel that Mugo was the one who killed Kihika by betraying him to John Thompson to escape the control of the whites. Mugo is tormented by guilt, showing how the internal burden of guilt can haunt and overshadow one's worldly triumphs, depriving them any rest, even though it is impossible for this to be discovered and his fellow villagers want to make Mugo a chief and a leader. According to Robin Cook, Mugo's guilt comes across as "a gnawing awareness of self-blame" and "creeps into our consciousness on waves of his perpetual terror" (Cook 101).

Gikonyo shares Mugo's shame in having been betrayed. Gikonyo confesses to being a member of the resistance while being held in a detention facility, breaking his promise to the Mau Mau in the hope of being released. Similar to Mugo, Gikonyo is troubled by his betrayal and believes that his guilt is constantly following him. When Gikonyo returns home and learns that his wife Mumbi has given birth to another man's child, he brutally rejects Mumbi out of pent-up humiliation. Gikonyo's anger, albeit focused towards Mumbi, is intended at himself for his cowardice, showing how harbouring guilt affects not only the person carrying it but also those around them. Both men come to realise that an honest acknowledgement of guilt is the only way to be free of their oppressive guilt. After Mumbi tells Mugo about her adultery, Mugo is moved and gets his first taste of guilt alleviation when he admits to Mumbi, Kihika's sister, that he helped commit her murder. Although he expects Mumbi to despise him for it, she feels sorry for him instead because of the weight it places on him, especially because the village has embraced him as their new freedom fighter hero.

Mugo feels relieved after confessing, and even though Mumbi decides not to expose Mugo as a traitor, this realisation prompts Mugo to realise that he must tell the truth in front of the entire village. Mugo does this a few days later, demonstrating the only way to be free of such oppressive guilt and shame. When Gikonyo admits his betrayal to Mugo, he experiences a tiny bit of comfort from his remorse. Gikonyo is not freed from his burden, either, as he has not yet mustered the same fortitude to tell his countrymen about his treason. Gikonyo's enduring guilt implies that to be released from it, one must own their fault to everyone who was hurt by it. Mugo is facing the death penalty for a serious crime. But, his readiness to accept this repercussion restores his standing in society and motivates others, especially Gikonyo, to act honourably and bravely. Taking responsibility for one's actions and accepting the appropriate punishments may lead to redemption, if not physical liberation, according to Mugo's journey. In front of the entire community, Mugo admits his wrongdoing, expecting to be torn to pieces. Instead, he is simply permitted to depart because the people are so shocked that their new hero has just committed treason.

Even though Mugo gladly gave up his position as the village head, along with the associated money and power, to speak the truth, the people don't hate Mugo for betraying their hero, instead, they see Mugo as the bravest and most honourable of all of them. The village's reaction to Mugo's admission is a beautiful example of how owning one's sin may lead to redemption. Two of Kihika's allies take Mugo discreetly so, they might execute him with the greatest amount of dignity rather than subject him to a humiliating and public death. This further exemplifies Mugo's atonement in the eyes of his community. Several villagers in the village are motivated by Mugo's courage. Although Gikonyo does not publicly repent before the novel ends, Mugo's example inspires him to do so and to make amends with Mumbi, putting a hopeful climax to the tale. Mugo's sacrifice shows how one redemption

may have a good effect on a whole community by not only bringing about his atonement but also sowing the seeds of redemption for Gikonyo.

Chapter Three

Colonialism and Culture

Colonialism is the practice or policy of people or powers having authority over another people or region. Through the establishment of colonies and generally to gain

economic dominance. Colonisers may impose their economic system, language, religion, and other cultural practices during the colonial process. The territory is ruled by foreign administrators who want to take advantage of the people and resources in the colonised area to further their interests. It is related to imperialism but different from it. Although colonialism has existed since antiquity, the term is most closely linked with the European colonial era, which began in the 15th century with the establishment of some European powers colonial empires.

Initially, European colonising nations adopted mercantilist policies intended to boost the domestic economy; as a result, agreements typically forbade the colony from engaging in trade with any other country save the metropole. By the middle of the 19th century, the British Empire had abandoned mercantilism and trade barriers and embraced the idea of free trade with few barriers and tariffs. Since the metropolises were Christian, Christian missionaries were active in nearly every colony under European rule. The dual economic system that colonialism created for the African economy, education, trade, market, transportation, and monetary institutions—was also disarticulated as a result. Colonialism imposed a monocultural economy on the lands, which made colonies in Africa dependent. Additionally, it dehumanised African traders and labourers. Africans have been driven off their lands and forced to labour on colonial plantations for pitiful salaries. Similarly, the colonialists seized control of the trading and middleman activities of Africans. Africa was not able to industrialise because of colonialism.

Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, to fight against the colonisers for the liberation of Africans, comes up from time to time. Ngugi focuses attention on the importance of humanism in the novel, which is underscored by the colonisers' dehumanisation of Africans during pre- and post-colonial times. *A Grain of Wheat*, which is set in Kenya on the eve of

independence, focuses on the events leading up to independence, particularly the gradual awakening of African consciousness against the backdrop of historical events that results in the formation of a party under the leadership of Jom Kenyatta and Harry Thuku in the fight for freedom. The novel of the white men who attempt to put an end to the independence struggle is paralleled by that of the Mau Mau, whose members were captured, imprisoned, and tortured horribly in detention facilities for daring to oppose the colonial administration. The colonisers regard a genuine movement for independence on the part of the exploited and dispossessed Africans as subversive and in need of repression, even though they wilfully ignore the chaos and damage they have wrought.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the African culture, experience, and situation are portrayed. Ngugi was fascinated by the social context in which his characters lived. In this novel, the Mau-Mau struggle serves as the backdrop. He explains the reasons why people resist, and he goes to great lengths to convince his readers of the sincerity of the struggle through the words and deeds of Kihika, a figure who represents the freedom warrior. The great warrior Waiyaki, buried by the white masters, protested against British rule, which saw colonisers take over the land of indigenous people and make them work on their land as labourers. The colonial empowerment and enforcement manifest the power of the colonisers.

Meanwhile, Harry Thuku fought against the heavy taxation that made the white settlers rich, so he formed a movement and asked others to be the voice of the movement. Each word from Harry Thuku became news and spread over the ridges in the Thabai village. As a result, the rebellions were hanged and buried by the colonisers, and they are also called colonial encounters. Those who opposed the British rulers were severely punished by the British during the colonial era. They attempt bomb blasts and gunfire among the people, and many warriors are killed.

Through the mental states of the individuals, Thiongo primarily seeks to investigate the frailty of human life. Gikonyo, Mumbi, Karanja, and Mugo are the four main characters. Their memories of Kihika, who was betrayed by one of the villagers and hanged, rule their lives. His fellow soldiers had survived the battle and had travelled to Thabai to find the traitor and expose him during the Uhuru celebrations. These individuals have dreamed of Uhuru since they were young students. Nonetheless, they are constantly reminded of the hardships that come with war and the four days they spent experiencing them. By removing these layers from their lives, each character is fully revealed at the end of the novel. The memories of these individuals help us get to know Kihika and comprehend the reasons behind his decision to become a forest fighter.

The plot updates us on Kihika's activities, particularly the murder of D.O. Robson. Kihika reports this to Mugo. Since they never go into the woods to get that experience, the way they experience the forest fighters is always recorded. The pain of those who were left behind allows us to gauge the level of their success, and it was their experiences during the protracted crises that created the pattern of betrayals. Due to his role as the starting point for all of the other characters' problems to be solved, Mugo is the most complicated of these characters. During the rule of the Europeans, they considered Africans as slaves, and African women willingly shared the bed with white men since they were restricted from giving food to women until they shared the bed with them. The novel illustrates the pathetic condition of women. Women are ready to perform the roles of men and their work; all over the village, men are imprisoned, and they take over the detention camp. The detention camp for the detainees was discovered by Europeans as a way to torture Africans into confessing to the oath. Until they confess the oath, they should be in a detention camp. **Huge numbers of detainees were killed in detention camps, and their release dates were unknown.** The

black people were working for ten shillings per month. The white masters demanded massive amounts of work but paid a minimal amount.

The desperation Mugo feels at the beginning of the novel, which borders on schizophrenia, has its roots in his early years. Being an orphan raised by a drunken aunt in a world of destitution, dirt, and constant vomit smell, Mugo develops a love for solitude early in life. Despite everything, he decides to leave the misery of his life in the past and push people to acknowledge his accomplishment. Ngugi's portrayal of Mugo elicits nuanced reactions in the psyche. His betrayal of Kihika is motivated in part by the threat that the upheaval in the land poses to his resolve to never again go through the poverty of his youth. The plot opens with a tormented dream in which a drop of water that was about to drown him transforms into a purifying rain, signifying his rebirth and baptism. Kihika makes a self-sacrificing act to bring about a new heaven and a new earth. Mugo makes a sacrifice that is on a lower level to atone for the misdeeds of others.

Only after death will Mugo's presence become significant. Unaware of it, Mumbi has unintentionally played a role in Mugo's rebirth, just as he does for her and her spouse, Gikonyo. In their teenage years, Mumbi and Gikonyo started falling in love. He was hesitant to express his affection for her. He feared she would turn him down. Yet Mumbi demonstrates to Gikonyo that she prefers him to other suitors, and Ngugi depicts the pleasure of their realising their love in one of the novel's few sequences of lyrical happiness.

Gikonyo enters prison with the conviction that the emergency will have a positive outcome. The information that Jomo lost his case, was tried, and was found guilty, however, has severely wounded him. Gatu, the sole pillar of goodness among the inmates of Yala Camp, hangs himself out of despair, further weakening it. The psychological anguish of living in the camps causes him to go through a phase of craziness. He renounces the oath and

goes back to Mumbi after his health has been restored. He has made up his mind to accept the deceit that his renunciation implies. Mumbi is currently caring for Karanja's child out of love. This explains why he turned down Mumbi. The communication between Gikonyo and Mugo is extensive. Each of them is in a sense an orphan because Gikonyo's parents have expelled him from their home, and Mugo's parents have passed away. Everyone wants to be independent and secure. The sole distinction is that Gikonyo is a carpenter and Mugo is a farmer. Their lives are, strictly speaking, their work. Gikonyo's love for the wood he works with is similar to Mugo's love for the land he tends. The way Mugo and Gikonyo react to these sources of their livelihood determines both of their psychological health. The soil represents Mugo's soul, especially after the emergency when he is carrying his guilty secret. Ngugi's portrayal of Mugo elicits nuanced reactions in the reader's psyche. His betrayal of Kihika is motivated in part by the threat that the upheaval in the land poses to his resolve to never again go through the poverty of his youth. He makes his confession in a work of fiction.

I wanted to live my life. I never wanted to be
involved in anything. Then he came into me
life, here, a night like this, and pulled me into
I killed him. (Thiongo 180)

This confession is not complete or even truthful, as his jealousy-driven motivations for approaching Thompson have demonstrated. One thing is certain, though: He is correct in asserting that he is drawn into the stream for reasons unrelated to the conflict and not because of his touch with Kihika. The pain Mugo endures while being held in the various prison facilities due to his support of Wambuku helps to lessen the severity of his betrayal of Kihika.

Our ability to feel sympathy for him stems from the novel's artistic ability to transport us to a mind that is crumbling under the weight of guilt.

Gikonyo, who can no longer take the abuse of the prison, breaks his pledge, returns to find that his wife has deceived him, leaves up his life as a carpenter, and becomes a prosperous small business owner. Yet he does not get as much solace from his current occupation as he did from working with wood in the past. In the novel, once his spirit has been freed from the dark jealousy that had long consumed him, he revives the notion of carving a stool for Mumbi as a wedding present. After he had previously heard her express her love for the conventional wooden stool, he had been inspired to carve the stool. But he gives up the plan after spending a considerable amount of time in Thabai because of a deterioration in his relationship with Mumbi. Gikonyo is an honest individual who enjoys humble discussions but is unable to see both sides of the story. He imagines Mumbi's treachery when he learns that she had a kid with Karanja and punishes himself. The culmination of Mugo's four-day re-enactment of his life leading up to Uhuru is a fleeting flash of great understanding. In both his thoughts and actions, Gikonyo exhibits the same mindset.

He participates in a footrace at the celebration, and his major competition is Karanja, the father of Mumbi's bastard kid and Gikonyo's long-time rival for her affection. Years ago, Gikonyo lost to Karanja in the sprint to the railroad station, but oddly, he ended up winning Mumbi. The same thing occurs once more, and the race is now between them for Mumbi rather than between him and Karanja. Gikonyo trips and falls, injuring himself and needing medical attention. He hears Mugo's confession there, and as a result, he develops psychotherapeutic skills and plays a crucial role in Gikonyo's catharsis. Mumbi is the least complicated of the novel's four main characters. Gikonyo's sense of betrayal stems

from a personal ethic so pure it can only accept absolute fidelity; therefore, reading Gikonyo is excessively harsh on her. She makes it clear in her account to Mugo that her goal in life is straightforward. She surrenders to Karanja at the moment he informs her of Gikonyo's prisoner release. She used the sexual encounter as the ultimate expression of her utmost excitement at learning of her husband's release, with Karanja playing simply a supporting role. "What else is there to tell you? that I remember being full of submissive gratitude? That I laughed—even welcoming Karanja's cold lips on my face? I was in a strange world, and it was as if I were mad. And need I tell you more? I let Karanja make love to me". (Thiongo 146)

Gikonyo's colonialism is the practice or policy of one people or power having authority over another people or region, frequently through the establishment of colonies, and generally to gain economic dominance. Colonisers may impose their economic system, language, religion, and other cultural practises during the colonial process. The territory is ruled by foreign administrators who want to take advantage of the people and resources in the colonised area to further their interests. It is related to imperialism but different from it. Although colonialism has existed since antiquity, the term is most closely linked with the European colonial era, which began in the 15th century with the establishment of some European powers' colonial empires. Session fantasies of Mumbi and Karanja having an illicit relationship are what led to his disdain for her and made him yearn for her. He never inquires, so he is unable to understand Mumbi's emotions after the peak of the emotion has passed. Gikonyo makes her endure too much suffering before realising almost too late the cost of her obstinate attitude towards him. He wants to see her again, but he finds out that it will only happen under her terms.

Gikonyo's choice to carve the stool for Mumbi shows both his affection for Mumbi and his ability to forgive and forget the past. Now that she knows, he will accept the child. This suggests that she will accept the wedding stool, which represents a fresh start and a new birth. Karanja, one of the four main characters in the book, is the most pitiful and comes closest to being used solely as a symbol by Ngugi. The other characters stand in for the numerous ways that regular people are oppressed by outside powers. This also holds for Karanja in a significant way. He is not completely innocent, though, like the others. He portrays the mindset of the colonised African in the same way as Kihika does the polar opposite. He becomes their puppet, first as a home guard and then as chief during the emergency, as he is persuaded of the superiority of the white man. The author believes that Karanja's behaviour towards Mumbi after he has seduced her is a prime example of this kind of treachery. By showing us Karanja's conviction to prove to the world that the world is callous and insensitive, Ngugi humanises Karanja and explains his actions.

The gathering that takes place every Sunday at the railroad station serves as the scene that makes this clear. Together with other villagers, Karanja is anticipating the train's arrival, and the scene makes this clear. Together with other villagers, Karanja is anticipating the train's arrival. He defeated Gikonyo in their duel and won the game. When the train arrives, Karanja experiences an instant of complete perception clarity.

In line with this belief, the author of the story aligns himself with what he sees as the greatest power, namely, the Europeans. Like Gikonyo, Karanja is aware that he lacks heroic qualities. He is not willing to advance the cause nearly as far as Gikonyo is. Whatever thoughts he may have had of joining the cause are predicted by his adolescent disdain for Kihika, which is similar to Mugo's, as well as his sense of self-preservation and his cherishing of affection for Mumbi. As Karanja departs Thabai after the conclusion of the

Uhuru Day festivities, the silhouette of the hood looms over him. The accuser becomes the accused symbolically. Uhuru Day has brought about freedom for Mugo, Mumbi, and Gikonyo—liberation from shame, doubt, and fear. For Karanja, this freedom is ambiguous. The Uhuru celebrations were dominated by a disquieting sense of imminent doom, which is why he escapes the punishment that General R. has planned for him.

They fell short of the villager's anticipation of what Mugo would say about the actions he took to make Uhuru possible. Strangely, he ends up serving as Gikonyo's and Mumbi's agents to clear their names of wrongdoing. For the residents of Thabai, Uhuru Day turns into a solemn occasion. A hero's professional life is examined and found wanting. The revolution was betrayed through him. General R. examines the motivations behind and successes of the independence struggle as well. He discovers that the revolt was duped. The myriad problems that flesh and spirit are inheritors of are thoroughly explored by Ngugi. The main protagonist's difficulties are resolved at the novel's conclusion, releasing the stress, conflicts, doubts, and guilt they had been harbouring. When Ngugi analyses the white colonisers' motivations as represented by Thompson's various presumptions about the superiority of British civilization, he looks back to colonial periods, which in turn caused the battle for independence. He asks what Uhuru means as he casts a dejected and, like General R., perplexed gaze forward.

In addition to providing a sombre outlook for the future, General R.'s address acknowledges another way in which Kenyans have betrayed their country. It is a speech that foreshadows the topic of *Flowers of Blood*. Wambui continues the train of thought as she, Mumbi, and Warui reflect on the significance of Mugo's final act and how it relates to their own experience, which they recollect on Uhuru day. Ngugi's creative homage to the independence movement's liberation fighters is titled *A Grain of Wheat*. They are

demonstrated to us via the work of Kihika and in the different speeches that demonstrate the sincerity of the campaign for the return of the land to the Kenyan people. The book itself serves as a cautionary tale about the betrayal of the revolution by the M.P., who robs Gikonyo of Mr. Burton's land so that he can use it for cooperative farming.

Gikonyo's actions should be taken into consideration since he is well on his way to becoming an entrepreneur-capitalist who makes a living by taking advantage of the necessities of others. Even when the MP is abhorrent, that is, when he is treated with contempt, it only takes one thief beating another while the vast majority of people do nothing. To some extent, delegates Gikonyo, Mugo, Karanja, and Mumbi are criticised for their shortcomings. They are more concerned with staying alive and resolving personal conflicts than they are with politics. One of the four people with positive ideas, Mugo, is excluded from participating due to his defect. He discovers the value of participation much later.

The story, which emphasises the necessity of achieving independence, makes a few assumptions about how that independence should be used. *A Grain of Wheat* isn't strictly speaking a political novel in the truest sense because the political topic is balanced against the story's investigation of the human equation. The plot is dominated by Ngugi's humanism, which is demonstrated by his concern for his people and his comprehension of what motivates them to take action. The novel delves deeply into the minds of his characters to capture both their strengths and weaknesses, their virtues and follies, and their flaws and perfections. The complex and contradictory themes of religion and rebellion, human frailty and fallibility, the burden of alienation and a sense of community, colonial attempts to civilise a dark continent and the native's search for identity through nationalist struggles, the hopes and aspirations of the people at the birth of a new nation, white violence and

counterviolence, irony and mimicry, and a sarcastic tone all play a part in the novel's overall structure.

According to GovindNarain Sharma, "Kihika is a true Christ who, through sacrifice, not only justifies himself but also brings about a revolution in the lives of his friends and followers by showing them the way to spiritual regeneration."(Sharma 5), which emphasises the necessity of achieving independence, makes a few assumptions about how that independence should be used. A Grain of Wheat isn't strictly speaking a political novel in the truest sense because the political topic is balanced against the story's investigation of the human equation. The plot is dominated by Ngugi's humanism, which is demonstrated by his concern for his people and his comprehension of what motivates them to take action. The novel delves deeply into the minds of his characters to capture both their strengths and weaknesses, their virtues and follies, and their flaws and perfections.

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A secular quest, a social ethic, a national aspiration, and a sense of devotion are all covered and embraced by this attitude in Kihika, which aims to go beyond the restrictions of a religious concept. For the indigenous people who wage a bloody war against colonial forces, Kihika's understanding of religion is not just limited to its

meaning as an abstract concept. When his friend Karanja says something that makes him think of his assertion that Jesus had failed, he feels humiliated. Karanja even questions Kihika's attempts at religious revivalism. Kihika is momentarily confused. He persistently makes this argument rather than conceding to Karanja's arguments.

I die for you, you die for me, and we both become sacrifices.

For one another. So I can say that you, Karanja,

are Christ. I am Christ. Everybody who takes

The Oath of Unity to change things in Kenya is

Christ (110).

That demonstrates unequivocally that Christ failed in the Kenyan setting. This is a typical occurrence in all colonial situations, when the dominant religion of the colonised country is always inclined to assist the oppressor and inflict misery on the colonised people. The coloniser was given the benefit of the doubt by the Christian religion, which unreservedly helped him to strengthen his position in the colonies. The Africans were removed from their homes and sent all over the earth as slaves. In order to take the fire directly into the heart of the enemy's camp using the tools of religion and the sword or gun that had been used to carry the cross, the novelist appeals to the suffering people throughout the world. In order to take the fire directly into the heart of the enemy's camp using the tools of religion and the sword or gun, which had been utilised thus far by the colonial master, the novelist pleads with the suffering masses throughout the world to carry the cross and bear the burden.

Social ramifications result from Ngugi's appropriation of the Christian epigraph. The novel also rests on a crucial irony that runs throughout as an undercurrent. The novelist can use irony as a tool to highlight the crucial subject of betrayal. It is a lesson to be learned from previous experiences. Mugo's name alone has an ironic quality to it. The Gikuyu prophet Mugo made a prophecy concerning the arrival of the white man, but his people disregarded it.

Mugo avoided disagreements and involvements throughout his life. Yet after meeting Kihika, he finds himself being lured into the things he had been trying to avoid. He finds himself in a predicament where he must make a moral choice between siding with Kihika and everything she stands for or the coloniser. Mugo declines to take centre stage at the Uhuru celebrations. Wambui is extremely upset and claims that Mugo's absence will make the Independence Day celebrations boring because he is Kihika born once more. Even though the phrase born again appears frequently in the book, it is used here humorously. On another occasion, Gikonyo complimented Mugo, saying that he has a generous outlook and that people like him ought to enjoy the benefits of freedom. Ngugi keeps the reader guessing about Mugo's identity as a reticent hermit almost until the end of the novel when he finally confesses.

The Mau Mau Oath confession made by Gikonyo is a betrayal. **He had been discouraged by the brutal killing of Gatu, just like the other prisoners.** Gikonyo's desire to follow his Mumbi, who looked so pure, an incorruptible reality amid a world of changing shadows, is a factor in his treachery. **Gikonyo was overcome by her purity, and when he went back home, he was disappointed.** During his absence, Karanja and Mumbi have a kid. In addition, Karanja breaks his pledge and betrays the wife of a buddy. Gikonyo feels tremendous discomfort as a result. Gikonyo seeks to find his identity and fulfilment through his involvement in love with Mumbi. Nonetheless, given the novel's depiction of the world of

contaminated relationships, it is true that none are pure. Another key topic in the book is the feminine principle. According to the author, Mumbi is pictured as a kind mother who can sincerely return Gikonyo's affections and as having a charming demeanour. She serves as a source of motivation and support for Gikonyo and others. According to G.N. Sharma, she is "an angelic being... generous, forgiving, and compassionate, an embodiment of Ngugi's humane vision (Sharma 8). Gikonyo starts to taste and recognise achievement in life as a result of his strong relationship with Mumbi. His contact with her paves the path to a sense of clarity regarding his prosaic existence and lends a purpose to his life. Gikonyo recalls how her magic trick transformed him from a commonplace, everyday position to one of merit and grandeur.

Inadvertently revealing Mugo's betrayal of Kihika through her open disclosure of their tense marital connection, Mumbi exposes Mugo's deceit. G.N. Sharma says, "The open honesty with which she told her own story to Mugo made him ashamed of his morbid secretiveness" (Sharma 9). Wambui, Warui, and Gikonyo fail to persuade Mugo to lead the procession and give the main address at the Uhuru celebrations. Ultimately, Mumbi is given charge of this mission. She enjoys entrapping Mugo in her spell. Although she fails to persuade Mugo of the importance of her mission, she more than makes up for it by discovering the truth about Mugo's treason and taking the lead in putting Mugo in a position to make the shocking revelation in front of the Uhuru celebration attendees. Mumbi, with her capacity to overcome any challenge, belongs to the powerful race of Ngugi women. When Gikonyo pulls her toddler around rough-handed, she almost challenges him. She is not the type to put up with any humiliation or tolerate it.

When she becomes aware of Gikonyo's unfair treatment of her, she goes to Mugo to discuss the issue of her extramarital connection. She does not reveal the details of her

marriage to others, especially hypocritical men, as many other women do. As Gikonyo insults her beyond his comfort zone, she leaves the tomb, or the location of her spouse, with pride and dignity. She is determined to prevent Gikonyo from labelling her as an orphan in any way. Ngugi was thinking at this time about themes like poverty, widening disparities around the globe, and the escalating conflict between capitalism and communism. Wrestling with God was the initial working title of the book. The fundamental themes of the book—the will of God, destiny, and fate—are in direct opposition to socialist doctrine. The egalitarian principles of a people who are prepared to learn and practise the habit of living in peace with one another in a spirit of reciprocal trust, respect, and tolerance are the subject of the book.

Ngugi charts the evolution of society against the backdrop of colonialism's distinct historical background as well as an evolving social environment. **As a result, his characters experience a process of growth as they interact with their social context and learn about life and the wider world.** In-depth depictions of the relationships between characters and the social context of their activities in African writers' novels demonstrate the interplay between man and his environment. Ngugi's characters are typical in that they develop into mature individuals via their battle with the reality of colonial legislation. The full truth of the colonial encounter, which by influencing the entire social and cultural framework upended the conventional economic basis of African civilization, is exposed in the interaction between man and his dilemma in Ngugi's works.

Ngugi, examine the present's disappointment while also looking ahead to the future. People respond in diverse ways to the accomplishments of freedom, for instance, after *A Grain of Wheat*, for instance. And this new position, a scenario of independence, is almost imperceptibly a renewal, a new beginning, since it provides the Africans with an opportunity to assert their humanity, strengthen their sense of self, and rebuild their lost confidence. *A*

grain of wheat must lose its identity and destroy itself to sprout into a sapling. *A grain of wheat* emphasises the value of effort and sacrifice for the sake of freedom. The phrase sprouts like a sapling and represents how freedom will resurrect the country through the sacrifice and martyrdom of patriots. Mugo also had a fear of home guards; due to Kihika's disappearance, he now has the same dilemma. Fear, sacrifice, guilt, and anxiety are human emotions formed by the colonisers among the African people. If Africans were not colonised by the coloniser, Mugo was not betraying Kihika, and Mumbi was not betraying Gikonyo.

Chapter Four

Stylistic analysis

The strategies and tools used by authors to tell stories, whether in written works of literature, films, plays, or oral stories, are known as narrative techniques. Although many tactics focus on certain word choices, punctuation, or exaggerations of description, almost every storyteller, regardless of genre or style, adopts a few basic techniques. First-person, second-person, third-person limited, which coincides with the point of view of a specific character, and third-person omniscient, which can reveal the thoughts of any character, are the four forms of narration that authors can use in their books or stories. Some stories employ various storytelling styles. In a story, the omniscient narrator can play a variety of roles, including conveying objectivity and dependability.

The use of style as an aesthetic expression aids in placing the literary works' contents in the correct context. As a means of making meaning and effectively communicating their subject matter to their audience, perspective takes hold of the many ways people tell their plot. In Ngugi WaThiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*, the significance of the narrative point of view in comprehending post-colonial themes is explored. In addition, the novel studies compile some of the most significant arguments made in the study of narrative perspective and

demonstrate how the narrative approach or point of view primarily aids in the development and comprehension of post-colonial issues in the plot under consideration.

The omniscient narrator's main purpose is to shed light on everyone's innermost thoughts and sentiments. This is particularly helpful in a lengthy or intricate story with numerous characters. The narrator offers a more complex view of events by displaying the thoughts and emotions of several people. This comprehensive viewpoint is provided throughout the novel via the omniscient narrative so that the reader can comprehend the motivations behind each character. Any style of narration can convey the thoughts and emotions of every character, but some plot call for particular devices, such as flashbacks, stories within stories, letters, or dialogue, to accomplish this.

It may be possible to have a better comprehension of the themes or the intricate web of forces that shape the course of events by putting the reader at some distance from the events through the use of an omniscient narrator. The plot is not influenced by experiences or emotions because the narrative is not focused on the viewpoint of a single character. The narrative is instead conveyed in an impersonal, objective voice. Stories set during a conflict or in a highly charged religious atmosphere are particularly well suited for this style of narrative. The writings of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o capture both the literary history of Africa and the history of Kenya. *A Grain of Wheat*, for instance, serves as a symbolic representation of the growth and revolutionization of African literature. Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* defines decolonization as the "replacement of certain species of men by another species of men without any period of transition; there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution"(Fanon 27).

It was written during a time when many nations, especially those in Africa and Asia, were calling for independence. The force that forced the self-determinism battle ultimately gave birth to a new Kenya. National liberation, decolonization, national revival, and the

restoration of nationhood were all themes in Ngugi's novel *A Grain of Wheat*. The argument that the Mau Mau fight and bloodshed were motivated by a desire to right wrongs is the foundation for this defence. The battle of the Kenyan people to overthrow the current British order through the Mau Mau apparatus and bring about the birth of a new Kenya in the shape of reconstruction is the subject of the novel's action. *A Grain of Wheat* has a colonial undertone because, in Kenya, the most important posts were held by European settlers.

Probably the most prevalent and well-liked type of writing is prose. The prose language is also the language of commerce, administration, and education. Thus, prose can be thought of as a spoken language that has been represented or changed into written form. The author uses a variety of techniques when composing prose to narrate his story. He has a greater chance of selecting the appropriate storytelling strategies that will effectively convey his message to the readers because he is aware of the nature of his narration. Ngugi uses a technique known as several narratives in his novel *A Grain of Wheat*.

The omniscient or anonymous narrative style is one of the narrative viewpoints used by Ngugi in *A Grain of Wheat*. He isn't one of the novel's characters. The characters and their actions are described in the third person in the omniscient point of view story, except for times when they are speaking. Oral literature often uses the omniscient narrative style. A few connecting paragraphs that are narrated by an unnamed narrator, whose voice Ngugi has trusted to tell the story, tie all the events together.

The iron snake spoken of by Mugo was quickly wriggling towards Nairobi for a thorough exploitation of this hinterland. Could they move? The snake held on to the ground, laughing at their efforts with scorn. The white man with bamboo poles that vomited fire and smoke hit back; his menacing laughter remained to echo in the hearts of the people, long after Waiyaki had been arrested and taken to the coast bound with hands and feet. (Thiongo 12)

The omniscient narrator in this instance is the unnamed speaker. This method of exposition substantially attests to Ngugi's literary brilliance and dedication to the process of social reconstruction, as well as the interdependence between his ideology and his aesthetic style. The novel's socio-economic conditions are made clear via the narrator's multiple points of view. This aids in the comprehension and realisation of the novel's overall meaning.

The author, Ngugi, uses several connecting passages that are recounted by an unnamed narrator whose voice is trusted by Ngugi to relate the collective vicissitudes of the nation, creating a national epic that affirms the values of community out of all these disparate pieces. It would be misleading to portray these passages as the writer's direct interventions, however, because the narrator is here portrayed, he is not an objective but an objectified word. The anonymous narrator of these passages uses language and speaks in a manner akin to a traditional storyteller, and his account of the Gikuyu warriors' fight against the British-installed railway is illustrative in this regard.

It would have been possible to speak of identification between author and narrator if Ngugi had placed all the vicissitudes of his characters within an external narrative frame, endowed with a narrator whose voice was above all the others, but this is not the case. Instead, the narrator storyteller is far from being omniscient because his voice is embedded among the voices of the heroes. Despite taking on a significant role due to its connecting role, the narrator's voice is just one of several. In this approach, Ngugi can both separate himself from and relate to the traditional storyteller, illustrating how he is no longer able to play that role because the society to which storytellers belonged has vanished. However, the narratives told by the storyteller are the foundation upon which the nation is built, on the story structure level, they are the pivot that gives importance and holds together every one of the account pieces. On the other hand, the personal plural consistently refers to a community that is centred on the Thabai village and is sometimes referred to as the village

but seems to extend well beyond the Gikuyu people. This narrator could be considered a Gikuyu who represents Kenya as a whole. In addition, the anonymous narrator puts himself in the position of someone speaking.

This mode of narration divides to construct a Kenyan community, imagining it as a nation, a community linked to a geographical space and endowed with temporal depth. This is not just a stylistic question. Ngugi's concept of Kenya as a melting pot of its various peoples is perfectly reflected in this viewpoint, which is focused on the Gikuyu but applies to the entire nation. Kenya is referred to in the novel as the country of black people, and one of its main characters, Kihika, states that Kenya belongs to black people to demonstrate this point of view's emphasis on the African community. More specifically, a rural community is situated at the centre of this imagined community, and it is the Gikuyu workers whom Ngugi picks as legends of his novel and of his portrayal of the country.

The city is depicted as a place of dishonesty and corruption, ruled by the same elite that avoids its national responsibilities and keeps the masses in the countryside at a distance. This romantic view of the relationship between people and the land is a representation of nationalism. However, it also has its roots in the Gikuyu culture of pre-colonial times, when the land was regarded as the mother. Indeed, Ngugi was able to reimagine and redefine a lot of European and African cultural elements thanks to the adaptability of the novel genre. He combines biblical and Gikuyu mythologies, employs detective story techniques, and seeks inspiration for the plot, characters, and time structure in African literature.

In this sense, the choice of genre is important because, in many countries in Europe and Latin America, the novel, particularly the historical novel, has been a prominent cultural focus for building a national conscience. A community in which the existence of each individual is articulated within the same geographical and temporal frame was constructed by the realistic novel, with its numerous characters acting simultaneously in a shared time and

space. The historical adds temporal depth to these localized simultaneity-sharing communities and makes them historical by creating a link of direct succession between readers and the generation before them.

The novel delves into the concept of unity and expands it to include the community in both political and personal life. Unity is needed to achieve independence and freedom. Independence from slavery Freedom is the capacity to act freely and the right to free will. The characters have demonstrated the power to unite and liberate the nation. Confession and communication are two other aspects that lead to universal experience. Admission is the key for people to assuage their personalities and hearts, and likewise, it is the key for people to make a day-to-day existence accumulate and open up a correspondence, which is the foundation of solidarity. Culture is what Thompson frantically needs to force upon Africa, and he considers English culture to be the level of a person.

A flashback is a scene from the past that brings information into the present that is needed for the reader to understand the character and scene better. This writing technique is often used to convey information that can't be relayed through other means due to constraints imposed by the story itself. Most of the time, those constraints have to do with the length of the story, but other times telling the whole backstory is just not a good option. The purpose of using flashbacks is to convey to the reader information regarding the background of the characters and give them an idea of their motives for doing certain things later in the story. Another function of flashbacks in a narrative is to increase tension. Flashbacks are interruptions that writers make to insert past events to provide background or context to the current events of a narrative.

When flashback applies as a literary device, the author breaks with the traditional, chronological storytelling narrative. Therefore, when a flashback is included, it will likely bring information that has not been previously presented. There will be new details and facts

that may help with the events taking place as part of the plot. The novel is divided into fourteen numbered chapters plus four short named chapters at the end. The novel begins shortly before the Kenyan Uhuru celebrations, and it climaxes at the celebration itself. In between, it travels back in time and then returns to Uhuru, filling in all the events that led up to the day of independence. Each character's story is revealed in bits and pieces throughout the novel. The novel is not told chronologically. It begins shortly before the Kenyan Uhuru celebration, and it climaxes at the celebration itself. In between, it travels back in time and then returns to Uhuru, filling in all the events that led up to the day of independence. Each character's story is revealed in bits and pieces, throughout the novel.

The stories are intertwined, making a complex story with many threads. The two main storylines are there in the novel. There are some other stories: the story of the Thompsons; the story of Kihika; the story of Wambuku; and the story of Njeri. Throughout the novel, the flashback stories run parallel with the present story of the celebration of Uhuru. Dr. Lynd, Mumbi, and Gikonyo all felt the need to share their experience and connect themselves to the present. Mumbi had a flashback of his own life after Gikonyo went to the detention camp, Mumbi waited for Gikonyo's arrival for six years. Mumbi suffers a lot without Gikonyo because of Karanja, and Karanja spontaneously forces Mumbi to marry him. But Mumbi rejected Karanja several times, and then one day Karanja returned to Mumbi's hut, saying Gikonyo was coming back, so she allowed Karanja to share a bed with her. At present, Mumbi confesses to Mugo, and Mugo also has a flashback of Kihika's death; they both confess to each other.

After Mumbi confesses to Mugo, Gikonyo expresses the sufferings in the detention camp and how much he loves Mumbi, Gikonyo starts his experience at the first sight of Mumbi. Mugo also plays the role of the platform for flashbacks. Most of the characters in the novel confess to Mugo; they have decided that Mugo is the best person with whom to share

their past life experiences. He had no peace of mind. The guilt of Kihika's death made him restless. This way, many characters in the story are related to the past through flashbacks. Ngugi has used the flashback technique. The anxiety is aroused, and the past cannot be ignored, with the characters revealing the responsible past that led to their present sufferings. This device hits the mark. It works for the author.

The language they used to express their hopes and anxieties was frequently general and even ambiguous. **Ngugi has created a complicated narrative structure that allows him to quickly and effortlessly switch between different eras of time.** The novel character's inner lives and mental states are what he is most interested in. The plot goal is to explain the current mental states of his characters and demonstrate how these are the result of events that have been building up from the past over time. As a result, he uses a variety of techniques to construct a chronology that lacks a linear form. Many narrative sections, internal monologues, dialogue, recollections, and anecdotes are included throughout the novel. *A Grain of Wheat* is written in English, a language that has a long history of being associated with colonialism and oppression in Africa. Although the novel is written in English, Ngugi still incorporates his native Gikuyu into proverbs and folk songs to convey the novel's revolutionary theme. Moreover, the novel compares these Gikuyu maxims with refrains and illustrations from the Christian Book of Scriptures, a medium through which preachers spread English right off the bat in its set of experiences in Kenya.

Ngugi manipulates and uses language to promote Gikuyu and Kenyan culture and to discredit English as a Kenyan language, even though he wrote *A Grain of Wheat* in English. Ngugi demonstrates his opposition to English as an African literature language and his larger national concerns for Kenya following its colonisation and its new status as an independent nation by presenting English in a negative light in his novel. Ngugi illustrates the plight of the populace. It is speaking from the perspective of the emergency's victims. Africans who write

in English succumb to a form of Europeanized writing, but he admits to being complicit in this scheme. Through his descriptions of Karanja's interactions with the European official for whom he works, Ngugi also discusses anti-colonialist betrayals.

Karanja had repeatedly made her way towards Thompson to directly ask him a question. When he got close to the Whiteman, he would violently thunder as cold water lumped in his stomach. The Karanja's inability to communicate with white people is described in this passage. Kihika's cult of personality and presence in opposition to colonial oppression are starkly contrasted by Karanja's reverence and submission. Ngugi, as observed, intends to portray the Mau Mau as a united force with a consistent nationalist standing and a firm class-rooted view by discarding all aspects of the movement that conflict with this narrative.

The majority of these historical movements were too diverse to be reduced to unity. In *A Grain of Wheat*, the construction of the nation is explicitly depicted as a narration, a linguistic act. For sure, the vast majority of the occasions of the revolt are not related straightforwardly; they are, however, refracted through the inner voice of its legends and courage women. Following a narrative strategy typical of literature, their narration is what is represented, and it is through their narration that those historical events are relived. Every significant development either consists of or turns on acts of speech in their absence throughout the novel. Through the dialogue, confessions, and free-form indirect monologues of the heroes, the events are evoked and arranged as mosaic tesserae. Because its focus shifts towards militant nationalism, Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* could be considered a traditional novel.

Kenyans and Europeans alike have debated for a long time about whether or not Mau Mau was a primitive and irrational movement led by religious Gikuyu and how it ought to be remembered in national history. *A Grain of Wheat* can be interpreted as Ngugi's effort to represent the Mau Mau movement and challenge the British-written history of the Mau Mau,

according to a nationalist interpretation. The contestation is significant because it aims to reaffirm Kenyans' collective identity in the years following independence.

Most Kenyans, step by step, figured out how to make facilities with the new system, however, the seeds of upheaval spread underground in the development, referred to by the English as Mau. This movement is important to the main plot of this novel. The Mau Uprising, otherwise called the Mau Revolt, Mau Defiance, or Kenya Crisis, was a tactical clash that occurred in Kenya somewhere in the range of 1952 and 1960. It involved anti-Mau Mau Kikuyu groups dominated by Kikuyu, collectively referred to as Mau Mau, elements of the British Army, the local Kenya Regiment, primarily British, auxiliaries, and anti-Mau Mau Kikuyu.

The narrator's reflection on or recollection of past events serves as the basis for a retrospective narrative. The storyteller recalls significant events that do not occur in the narrative in this section. Ngugi fills in the story's gaps using the retrospective narrative technique. "Then nobody noticed, but looking back we can see that Waiyaki's blood contained within it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a political party whose main strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil" (Thiongo 3).

The narrator now tells the audience about Waiyaki's past exploits in this excerpt, which refers to Waiyaki. Retrospection is also evident in this mention of Jomo Kenyatta. The narrator encourages his fellow Kenyattas to emulate Jomo Kenyatta's resilience and accomplishments during the struggle for freedom at this point in the novel. It not only tells us about these heroes' heroic deeds, but it also establishes a connection between the past and the present, giving the story historical significance.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Literature is a way for people to express themselves, but not all verbal or written expression qualifies as literature. **Artistic value is determined by innate creative talent and human ingenuity.** African literature is literature created in or about Africa, and the term “literature” can refer to the creative use of language solely for artistic purposes. Some of the greatest civilizations in history had their origins in Africa, such as Ancient Egypt, the Mali Empire, the Songhai Empire, and the Kingdom of Ghana. Ngugi waThiong’o was exposed to modern African writing through Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*. Ngugi has become more committed to C.L.R. James’ approach to history and his works as it has drawn criticism from professional historians.

Ngugi is one of the most significant and subversive writers in Africa. He is critical of Africa’s retention of neo-colonial political, economic and social structures. He is critical of Africa’s retention of neo-colonial political, economic and social structures. He is equally critical of Africa’s self-betrayal, characterising it as a strong contributing factor in Africa’s

demise. His writing powerfully reflects the disaffection of Africans disillusioned by independence's failed promises. Ngugi's novels offer particularly incisive fictional representations of Kenya's postcolonial history. More than mere chronicles of historical events, his novels are compelling narratives of foreign intrusion countered by indigenous resistance to brutal exploitation.

Ngugi initially admired the English literary canon and became deeply devoted to Christianity, but several events rocked his worldview and motivated him to investigate the complex relationship between colonisers and colonised. His novels chronologically portray the postcolonial history of Kenya. By the time he wrote *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, he was convinced of the necessity for some kind of revolutionary action. Familiar with the myths, legends and history of his people, all his fiction has the essence of the cultural heritage and history of Gikuyu. He discovered that East African literature was lacking in comparison to western and southern African literature at the African Writers Conference in 1962.

A Grain of Wheat recalls events that occurred during the British colonisation of Kenya in the first two decades of the 20th century. The Mau Mau Uprising, also known as the Emergency, was a coalition of Kenyan ethnic groups, including the Gikuyu, Meru, and Embu, who launched the uprising in 1952. British authorities declared a state of emergency, leading to the arrests and detentions of suspected Mau Mau leaders and supporters. **The remaining Mau Mau freedom fighters were forced into the jungle, where they used guerilla tactics to harass and intimidate British forces. The main leader of the Mau Mau, Dedan Kimathi, was captured in 1956, indicating a formal defeat, but different factions of Mau Mau fighters continued to fight local wars against the British up until Independence. The moral conflict over Kenya's future is demonstrated by the fact that some Kenyans decide to support the British and adopt their view of the future as**

Kenya's best. The preceding chapters deal with the morality and understanding of people facing colonial implementation and their struggle for freedom.

The battle over colonisation became one between moral principles rather than just between nations, as both the colonisers and the colonised viewed themselves as good, heroic people serving humanity. This unequal portrayal makes the case that the Kenyans' moral struggle for freedom exceeds the British government's effort to moralise what they perceive to be a weaker nation. **The colonial system of dominance and expropriation in Kenya caused social interactions to be hampered, leading to a breakdown of trust and betrayal.** This led to emotional distress, fear, and a lack of hope. The protagonists are overcome with guilt, humiliation, and jealousy on the eve of Uhuru due to the oppressive circumstances they had to endure. Mugo is a strong-willed individualist who believes he can achieve social standing through perseverance, but when Kihika shows up in his hut one night, it exposes his self-deception. Mugo eventually betrays Kihika, symbolising the collective guilt of a whole civilization. His sense of guilt is heightened by Mumbi's account of the pain imposed on Thabai and its residents when Kihika was put to death. Mugo is unable to escape the grip of his tremendous remorse.

Mugo's life is wrecked by his private emotions of remorse since he is a traitor in his own eyes. Gikonyo believes that seeing Mumbi again will help him deal with the pain of his guilty conscience, but he is repulsed to discover deception all around him when he gets home. He discovers that Mumbi has deceived him by carrying Karanja's child, and his anger at Mumbi's treachery is fuelled by his sense of guilt and the knowledge that his renunciation has failed and he must now live with the treachery it involves. Karanja is a conquered African who believes the white man is invincible. He is fearful of the day when the British authority in Kenya will expire and uses his connections with the white bosses to boost his status among his countrymen. He takes a job in a hood to spy on his followers and is more vicious as a

home guard and chief. He is denied the peace and hopes that others have attained through their acts of sacrifice because he has abandoned all community principles and has only been motivated by his own selfish goals.

Colonialism is the practice of people or powers having authority over another people or region through the establishment of colonies and imposing their economic system, language, religion, and other cultural practices. Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* focuses on the importance of humanism in the novel, highlighting the colonisers' dehumanisation of Africans during pre and post-colonial times. The novel is set in Kenya on the eve of independence and follows the formation of a party under the leadership of Jom Kenyatta and Harry Thuku. The colonisers view a genuine movement for independence as subversive and in need of repression, ignoring the chaos and damage they have caused.

Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* explores African culture, experience, and situation. The Mau-Mau struggle serves as the backdrop, and Ngugi explains the reasons why people resist. Waiyaki, Harry Thuku, Gikonyo, Mumbi, Karanja, and Mugo are the four main characters. Their memories of Kihika, who was betrayed by one of the villagers and hanged, rule their lives. Through the mental states of the individuals, Thiongo explores the frailty of human life and reveals the reasons behind Kihika's decision to become a forest fighter. It portrays African culture, experience, and situation through the Mau-Mau struggle. The great warrior Waiyaki protested against British rule, which saw colonisers take over the land of indigenous people and make them work on their land as labourers. Harry Thuku formed a movement and asked others to be the voice of the movement, but the rebellions were hanged and buried by the colonisers.

Those who opposed the British rulers were severely punished by the British, with bomb blasts and gunfire killing many warriors. Thiongo explores the frailty of human life through the mental states of the four main characters, Gikonyo, Mumbi, Karanja, and Mugo.

People respond in diverse ways to the accomplishments of freedom, which provides an opportunity to assert their humanity, strengthen their sense of self, and rebuild their lost confidence. Fear, sacrifice, guilt, and anxiety are human emotions formed by the colonisers among the African people.

In Ngugi waThiongo's *A Grain of Wheat*, the significance of the narrative point of view in comprehending postcolonial themes is explored. The omniscient narrator's main purpose is to shed light on everyone's innermost thoughts and sentiments, providing a more complex view of events by displaying the thoughts and emotions of several people. The omniscient or anonymous narrative style is one of the narrative viewpoints used by Ngugi in *A Grain of Wheat*. Ngugi uses several connecting passages that are recounted by an unnamed narrator to relate the collective vicissitudes of the nation. The anonymous narrator uses oral tradition and speaks in a manner akin to a traditional storyteller, and his account of the Gikuyu warriors' fight against the British-installed railway is illustrative in this regard.

The novel is a complex story with many threads, including two main storylines, the Thompsons and Kihika, Wambuku, and Njeri. Dr Lynd, Mumbi, and Gikonyo all feel the need to share their past experiences and connect themselves to the present, with Mumbi having a flashback of his own life after Gikonyo went to the detention camp. Mugo's guilt over Kihika's death leads to flashbacks, allowing the characters to reveal the responsible past that led to their present sufferings. Ngugi uses a complicated narrative structure to explain the characters' inner lives and mental states and includes narrative sections, internal monologues, dialogue, recollections, and anecdotes.

Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* is a traditional novel that portrays the construction of the nation as a narration, a linguistic act. Through dialogue, confessions, and free-form indirect monologues, the events are evoked and arranged as mosaic tesserae. It is seen as Ngugi's effort to represent the Mau Mau movement and challenge the British-written history

of the Mau Mau, which aims to reaffirm Kenyans' collective identity in the years following independence. The Mau Uprising, otherwise known as the Mau Revolt, Mau Defiance, or Kenya Crisis, was a tactical clash that occurred in Kenya between 1952 and 1960 between anti-Mau Mau Kikuyu groups dominated by Kikuyu and elements of the British Army, the local Kenya Regiment, and auxiliaries. **The narrator's reflection on or recollection of past events serves as the basis for a retrospective narrative, which fills in the plot gaps and establishes a connection between the past and the present, giving the story historical significance. Retrospection is also evident in the mention of Jomo Kenyatta, who encourages his fellow Kenyattas to emulate his resilience and accomplishments during the struggle for freedom.**

Ngugi wa Thiongo is a powerful spokesperson for the re-assertion of African cultural identity. His views centre on the changing alliances between individuals and communities. He has given a powerful and compassionate expression to precolonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. At the level of relationships between individuals, between individuals and their communities and between individuals and their emergent nations.

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Cultural Mysticism: A Study of Suppression and Self–Realization in Chitra

Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

SUREKHA S.

(REG.NO. 21SPEN18)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Cultural Mysticism: A Study of Suppression and Self-Realization in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*** 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 and is a work done by Surekha S. during the year 2022-2023, and that has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

M. Rufina Mary


SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE

Maria Sahaya Sharmila

SIGNATURE OF THE HOD

Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR
Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Cultural Mysticism: A Study of Suppression and Self-Realization in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of requirements 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.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI



SUREKHA S.

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PREFACE

The project entitled **Cultural Mysticism: A Study of Suppression and Self-Realization in Chitra Banerjee's *The Mistress of Spices*** analyses the struggles of Tilo in discovering her identity with the aid of her magical spices. Spices act as a catalyst in enhancing the fractured identities of the immigrants. It shows Tilo's moral struggle in overcoming her desires over her duty as the mistress of spice.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with a brief idea of Indian Literature, and Indian writers' famous works. It also gives a short biography of Chitra Banerjee and her works.

The second chapter **Magic and Healing** focuses on the aspects of the magical power of spices. It portrays how the protagonist, Tilo led her life with the spices and how she breaks her rules for her loved one.

The third chapter **Cultural Identity** shows the dilemma faced by Tilo in identifying herself. It reflects the cultural conflict of Tilo in adapting to American culture without forgetting her native roots.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Techniques** deals with the narrative style of Chitra Banerjee. It also analysis the six phases of the protagonist Tilo and the narrative devices employed in her work.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt with in the preceding chapters by finding Chitra Banerjee as the author and novelist who glorifies the culture of India.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the Project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian literature refers to the body of works by writers in India who write in the English language, whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora. Indian English literature has a relatively recent history. The first book written by Mohamad, titled *The Travels of Dean Mohamad*, A Travel Narrative was published in 1793 in England. Indian literature describes their surroundings and social life in a strange language that belongs to a faraway land. As part of the Indians' interaction with the Europeans and the British, individuals from different classes went abroad for their mother tongue and lived on the continent several times. Their progeny enjoyed tremendous advantages both in terms of exposure and language skills. Indian writers' writing bristles at the charge that they are not authentic enough, but the range of Indian subjects they can portray realistically is limited. Some Indian writers who write in English, like Rushdie, dismiss the vernacular as having little moral value.

The word 'Indian literature' refers to works written both inside and outside India, before and after 1947, on the entire Indian subcontinent. Indian literature, which is among the oldest forms of literature, has served as a model for other cultures. The phrase alludes to ancient literary works written in several Indian languages. Literary work used to be transmitted orally in earlier times of Indian English literature. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Indian English literature expanded under British imperialism in India. It got its beginnings because of the British government's educational reforms in India, missionary activities, and upper-class Indians' reaction to English literature and language.

The anti-colonial fight against the British empire in India gave rise to contemporary Indian literature.

Indian authors have portrayed the Indian experience through western literary genres like essay, theatre, and fiction. Urbanisation and industrialization also increased Indian writers' awareness of their surroundings. As Indian writers started to challenge certain institutions and customs, science and reason played a significant role in modern Indian literature. They produced new gods in their existing culture, the gods being man and nature, rather than criticising themes of pre-modern Indian literature, which were focused on themes of otherworldliness. Indian literature made the future of India's independence a major issue during the Indian Renaissance, which started in the middle of the nineteenth century. The establishment of a new system in India is another crucial issue. One of the best-known authors in contemporary India, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote about these subjects, Tagore was the first Indian to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913.

Indian literature first appeared between 1500 and 1200 BCE. The Rig Veda, a body of literature, is another piece of Sanskrit literature. Moreover, there are three other Vedas, the Epic, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana, that are also included in the canon of Indian literature. These are some of the holy scriptures in Hinduism. Hindu literature is endlessly cited. Yet, as time went on, literature in numerous languages also emerged. The non-fictional body of prose works in Indian English literature from the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century is extensive and diverse, and it includes letters, diaries, political manifestos, articles, speeches, and philosophical works. In addition to shaping the future of contemporary India, the speeches of Swami Vivekananda,

Rabindranath Tagore, Chittaranjan Das, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak are the writers who had an impact on the future of the English language in India before R.K. Narayan, M.R. Anand, and Raja Rao. Gandhi successfully changed his hegemony of standard English.

Indian home rule, or Hindu swaraj, was written in an indigenous version of the English language. The famous male writer in Indian literature is R.K. Narayana; his novels and short stories are the best and foremost Indian writers in English and are the causes of the interest in English literature among common, middle-class Indians. Narayan is best known for creating the fictional town of Malgudi, but he also wrote numerous other fictions works, such as *Swami and Friends*, *The Guide*, and *A Tiger for Malgudi*. The short story collection *Malgudi Days* are both his best-known and most popular book. On any list of the "Best Indian Writers," his name would be present. Next, Mulk Raj Anand was a pioneer of Anglo-Indian literature, and his writing is notable for the representation of lower castes in traditional Indian society. With the publication of his debut book, *Untouchable*, in 1935,

He became the first Indian author of Indian descent to find *the village*, *Coolie*, and *the Private Life of an Indian Prince*. These are notable works by Mulk Raj Anand. Next, Khushwant Singh is one of the famous writers in Indian literature; he has been a journalist in his lifetime and has been a lawyer, information officer, journalist, editor, and MP. He received the Padma Bhushan award in 1974, and in 1984, he returned it in opposition to Operation Bluester. *The train to Pakistan*, *karma*, and *the company of women* These are notable works by Khushwant Singh. Next, Aravind Adiga's novel, *The White Tiger*, won the Booker Prize in 2008, when he was just 33 years old. He was born in Madras and grew

up in Mangalore. He is a financial journalist during financial times; his notable works are *The White Tiger*, *Last Men in the Tower*, and *Selection Day*. Currently, he lives in Mumbai.

Vikram Seth wrote *A Suitable Boy*, which was published in 1993. He received awards like the Padma Shri, the Sahitya Academy Award, and the WH Smith Literary Award. His notable works are *A Suitable Boy*, *The Golden Gate*, *An Equal Music*, and *Two Lives*. Next, Amitav Gosh was born in Calcutta. His notable works are *The Sea of Poppies*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, and *The River of Smoke*. Next Chetan Bhagat is an author, screenwriter, columnist, and television personality who was named by The New York Times in 2008 as the author of English-language novels that sold the most copies in Indian history. His comedy-drama books feature Indian young adults from the middle class, which is well known. His best-known works are *Five Point Someone*, *Two States*, and *Half Girlfriend*. Ruskin Bond, a British writer born in Punjab, began his writing career as a freelancer and later found employment as an editor in several journals.

His book wasn't released until 1980, but once it was, readers praised it highly. His most notable works include *The Blue Umbrella*, a sentimental book that has been widely read. And then Rabindranath Tagore, Despite having a law degree, Tagore was a huge fan of Shakespeare and his works. After the publication of his debut poem, *Mansia*, in 1890, he rapidly rose to fame among Bengali readers. His most important works are *Gitanjali*, a collection of poems, and *Galpaguchcha*, a collection of 80 short stories. The most famous female writers in English literature are Arundhati Roy, whose book *The God of Small Things* won the Man Booker Prize for fiction in 1998 and helped her gain international notoriety. One of the best-known personalities in Indian English-language writing, Roy

began her career with screenplays for television and motion pictures. Her notable works are *Shattered Republic*, *Listening to Grasshopper*, and *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*.

Jhumpa Lahiri is well-known for her books, articles, and short stories. She was born in London but moved to the US to attend Barnard College. She continued to earn a master's degree from Boston University. Before her major triumph as *the interpreter of maladies*, she was a struggling author whose work was initially rejected by the publisher. In this collection of her short stories on immigrants' lives in post-popularity, she wrote several other works that are well-known both in India and outside the name-sake country; *Unaccustomed Earth* and *The Lowland* are a few of the most well-known. Kamala Das, one of India's finest confessional poets, produces exquisite English and Malayalam writing. Her writing reflected her feminist beliefs; it showed a rare honesty and sensibility. Her poems continue to be relevant to women today because they have long acted as an inspiration to those seeking to free themselves from domestic and sexual oppression.

Anita Nair has authored a wide range of works, including mystery fiction, short stories, poems, and even children's books. *The Ladies Companion* and *The Better Man* are her best-known works. Nair also brought to life in fiction the experiences of the typical Indian lady through works like *Mistress, A Novel*, which highlighted the evolving connection between a woman and her husband. And then, Ilavenil Meena Kandaswamy is one of India's most fearless young voices, as well as a poet, fiction writer, and activist. Her writing often focuses on feminism and the caste-elimination movement of modern-day India. She has a degree in sociolinguistics and the novels *The Gipsy of Goddess*, *Touch*, and *Ms. Militancy*, as well as two poetry anthologies, *When I Hit You* and *A Portrait of the*

Writer. As a Young Wife, her most recent book, is a brilliant and thought-provoking story about an abusive marriage.

Anita Desai is a member of the National Book Critics Circle and the Man Booker Prize winner. She skillfully fuses socio-political realism with magical realism in her writing. Her use of themes like alienation, cultural disputes, displacement, and exile to depict the enormous canvas of contemporary society in the context of globalisation makes her work so fascinating. This nature of her work is demonstrated by her critically acclaimed book, *The Inheritance of Loss*. Githa Hariharan's works belong to the era of the rebirth of Indo-English writing that started with the emergence of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight Children* in the early 1980s, while on maternity leave, Hariharan wrote *The Thousands of Faces at Night*, her debut novel, which went on to win the Commonwealth Writers Award in 1993. The book, which follows the lives of three generations of women in Chennai, focuses on how they struggle to find a balance between tradition and modernity.

Mahaswetha Devi has a distinctive writing style that is personal and emphasises concerns affecting women. After being long chosen as the 1996 recipient of the *Raj Kamal Puroskar*, an honour granted for the finest book written by a woman, she gained notoriety. She was born into a lower-caste Hindu household, and she works as a marathonist. She has authored several novels about topics including sexuality, women's difficulties, and other topics. She is one of the top Indian women writers. Sunetra Gupta is a well-known novelist. She is a professor of science at the University of Oxford and teaches theoretical epidemiology. Her fifty books, *so good in black*, were named for the DSC award for south

Asian literature. *The Glassblower's Breath*, in this book, talks about the reader's journey and emotional, intellectual, and sexual experiences.

The above-mentioned list of authors is a list of writers with enough people to claim the title of "the best Indian female author." Many of the best Indian female writers have a large number of best-selling books in each of their respective fields. Chitra Banerjee was born in Kolkata, India. She moved to the United States to pursue doctoral studies. She obtained an MA at Wright State University and a PhD at the University of California—Berkeley. *Arranged Marriage*, which received the American Book Award, the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award, and the PEN Josephine Miles Award for fiction in 1994, is one of her story collections. Another is *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001). Divakaruni's many novels include the best-selling *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999) and its sequel, *The Vine of Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2003), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2009), and *Oleander Girl* (2013).

Chitra Banerjee's novel, *Arranged Marriage*, describes the cultural shifts that both free and entrap the characters as they work to forge their own identities. *Arranged Marriage* explores the topic of a conventionally arranged wedding in the East. The eleven stories are each given by a different narrator, who is typically a husband, wife, or close family member, and who describes various elements of marriage that are loving and destructive. The stories serve as a mosaic of viewpoints that authenticate the lived experience of the centuries-old tradition in the current world rather than attempting to make a moral claim about it. The book is well-known for subtly criticising stereotypes of arranged marriages. The short stories she wrote were all full of misery and suffering.

The major theme of *Arranged Marriage* is female itinerancy, which foregrounds related issues of racism and assimilation into two societies. In an *Arranged Marriage*, Divakaruni immigrant heroines are fully conscious of being victims of gender discrimination prevalent in the conservative male-dominant society. Divakaruni gives her pragmatic resolutions related to the modern Indian immigrant woman's beleaguered existence. Another novel is *Sister of My Heart*, in which Divakaruni portrays the moving story of two cousins, Sudha and Anju Chatterjee, born twelve hours apart in the same house. The women considered themselves twins, and from a very early age, they got everything they needed from life—love, respect, guidance, and friendship—from each other. The major themes of the story are love, respect, council, and friendship. It is a dramatic tale of a girl who gets a stepmother after her mother's death. However, she refuses to accept her despite the latter doing everything to win.

The queen of dreams says that Rakhi, a young artist and divorced mother living in Berkeley, California, is struggling to keep her footing with her family and with a world in alarming transition. Her mother is a dream teller, born with the ability to share and interpret the dreams of others to foresee and guide them through their fate. The major themes included in the Indian experience are contemporary America, women, immigration, history, myth, and the joy and challenge of living in a multicultural world. Identifying the theme of identity is a very important theme in the novel. Many of the issues faced in novels deal with one's search for, or discovery of, their identity. For instance, Sudha, one of the main characters of the novel, does not discover her identity until the end of the novel.

In *The Palace of Illusions*, the novel traces Panchali's life, beginning with her magical birth in the fire as the daughter of a king before following her spirited balancing act as a woman with five husbands who have been cheated of their father's kingdom. Draupadi is left pining for her secret love for Karna, the half-brother of the Pandavas. It's interesting to note that there is no real romance between Draupadi and Karna in the actual Mahabharata. Karuna's identity as the sixty-first Pandava is revealed very late in the story. The novel's major themes depict the situation of women in the ancient period. It reveals the courageous nature of women and their determination to live happy life while enjoying their fundamental lives. The novel is a feminist work in which myths are revised and retold from the female point of view. This novel focused on the inner parts of women's lives.

One Amazing Thing centres on a group of characters from varied backgrounds who are stuck inside a visa office following a significant earthquake. It portrays their stories of survival and epiphanies in an impossible circumstance with no obvious way out. She determines various themes like women's issues, immigration and the journeys of people, history, myth, magic, and the celebration of diversity. *One Amazing Thing* gives a gamut of emotions and reactions to her characters. All of them carry at least one thing of poignancy. It includes a great emptiness; she is feeling a deep love for her husband. She attempted suicide to escape her life, but now wishes to lose herself in India and start again alone. The point of highest emotion, the turning point, is the point at which the outcome of the conflict can be predicted. External conflict refers to the obstacles a character faces in the external world.

Oleander Girl is a novel about a girl who was orphaned at birth and has enjoyed a sheltered childhood with her adoring grandparents. But she is troubled by the silence that surrounds her parents' deaths and clings fiercely to her only inheritance from them: the love notes she found in her mother's book of poetry. The major themes of the novel are women, immigration, the south Asian experience, history, myth, magical realism, and diversity. She writes for adults and children. The Indian experience; contemporary America; women; and the joys and challenges of living in a multi-cultural world. The major aspect of the novel is that an engaged woman in a traditional Indian family discovers harrowing secrets about her birth parents. As her mother died in childbirth, Roy was raised by her grandparents, who led her to believe her father died in an accident.

The Vine of Desire begins with Sudha and her newborn daughter, and she and newborn daughter are on their way to San Francisco, where they will live with Sunil and Anju. Anju hopes to help Sudha start a new life in America, away from the stigma of divorce, and Sudha hopes to help her dear friend overcome the pain of losing her baby. The major theme of the vine desire he writes about best explores the themes of love, friendship, assimilations, self-analysis, and discovery. Then in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's famous novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, the novel revolves around the exploits of Tilo, an adventurous character who manages a grocery store in inner-city Oakland and uses her expertise in spices to assist her patrons in overcoming challenges. Tilo offers miraculous spices for cooking as well as for the difficulties that Indian immigrants face in a strange environment.

The major themes incorporated in her novel are a myth, magical realism, magic, reality, cultural identity crisis, and the predicament of Indian migrants. The novel's main theme is that black pepper is the king of spices. Its produce comes from the still-green, unripe drupes of the pepper plant. The novel describes Indo-American women writer Divakaruni, who has given me a metaphorical representation of the Indian spices to touch upon knowledge beyond science. It also depicts the representation of different myths, magic, and histories related to spices. Tilo decides to spend the night, knowing that the species will be resentful and havoc will be caused in the lives of the people she cares about because of the punishment. This novel was shortlisted for the Orange Prize and made into a film by Gurinder Chadha and Paul Berges of *Bend It Like Beckham* fame.

In the novel, the major character Tilo ends up in Oakland, in a store called "Spice Bazaar". Her life changed one day when a handsome man on a motorcycle crashed outside her store. Her store. Tilo tried to heal his injuries while trying to ignore their strong mutual romantic attraction. Her life changed when he touched her, and they began to fall truly in love. She called him a lonely American. But the spices became suddenly angry and jealous, and things soon started to get worse and worse with other customers. The spices started to have negative effects on her customers, and Tilo then attributed the source of these misfortunes to her breaking his rules. The first mother came to her vision angry with Tilo for choosing Doug over the spices. Sad to say, Tilo promised to return to India and close the store. After a romantic and passionate night, she left him a note saying that she must leave and could not return, but that she would love him forever.

After that, she returns to the store and sets all the spices on fire, with her in the flames, as a sign of eternal servitude and slavery to the mystical spices. In the end, Doug came searching for her and found the store devastated. But Tilo had not been burned after all; she was still there, alive. There was no sign of a fire, but there had been an earthquake. A vision of the first mother sitting at the beach was shown, telling Tilo that because she demonstrated her loyalty to the species, now she could have everything. Her desires and spices would never desert her again. Doug agrees to help her rebuild the store, and she joined him happily as they walked along holding hands; their romantic relationship was strong and pure as ever. The novel has talked about the cultural, migrant, and realist aspects.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning author, poet, activist, and teacher. Her themes include the Indian experience, contemporary American women, myth, and the joy and challenge of living in a multicultural world. The style of Chitra Banerjee has juggled several genres of poetry, short stories, essays, and fiction. In fiction, her narratives have taken multiple forms: realistic, historical, magical realism, and myth. The writing style is an author's unique way of communicating with words. An author creates a style with their voice, personality, and overall tone that they apply to their text. A writer's style can change depending on the type of writing they're doing, whom they're writing for, and their target audience. Chitra Banerjee's work has been included in the Best American Short Stories, the O' Henry Prize Stories, and two Pushcart Prize anthologies. Her book of short stories, *Arranged Marriage*, won an American book award.

The Bay Area Book Reviewers Award and the PEN Josephine Miles Award for fiction Divakaruni's ideas are based on aspects of young women's transition, from being obliged to follow these cultural norms to the shift in her mentality throughout this process. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, by one of the most exceptional writers of the Indian diaspora, Chitra Banerjee, has developed immigrant sensibility as one of the major aspects of her fiction. She portrays women as the most powerful force in the world. Chitra seems to employ the form of a short story to dramatize the ordeals of wronged womanhood. Chitra Banerjee's most famous novel, *The Palace of Illusions*, was a national best-seller for over a year in India and a retelling of the Indian epic. The Mahabharata from Draupadi's perspective Divakaruni's most of her novels are related to the challenge of women's liberation in these narrative aspects and to self-revelation in Chitra Banerjee's *The Mistress of Spices*. Tilo's inner conflict over established self-identity. The next chapter deals with the magical elements and realism employed in the novel *The Mistress of Spices*.

Chapter Two

Magic and Healing

Magical realism is a form of storytelling mostly associated with Latin America that is distinguished by the causal incorporation of magical or mythical elements into otherwise realistic fiction. Magical realism is an aesthetic style or genre of fiction in which magical element blends with the real world, myth and magic. As stated in Zamora's *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, "Magical Realism is an important presence in contemporary world literature. Because they treat text texts from many countries, avoiding separatism while at the same time respecting cultural diversity." (4)

Franz Roh, a German art critic, coined the term magical realism in 1925. When Roh intended to create an art category that deviated from the stringent constrained of realism, it did not identify an artistic trend in South America and the Caribbean until the 1940s. The elements of magical realism are fantastical realism elements, real-world setting, authorial reticence, plenitude, hybridity, metafiction, a heightened awareness of mystery, and political critique. Magical realism is a genre of fiction which depicts a setting rooted in realism, but which has elements of fantasy.

Magical realism refers to the type of fiction in which fantasy infiltrates regular life. But the story's fantastical features are secondary to what those elements signify to the protagonist. The standard framework of reality is called into question, just as extraordinary and magical realism allows authors to present an alternative in accepting reality, which may be an extremely effective tactic against political regimes. The existence and the use of magical realism were found mostly in the works of Indian authors, namely Salman Rushdie, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Githa Hariharan, and Kiran Desai. Probably the best-

known writers of magical realism in the English language. Noble Prize winners Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the German Novelists and Playwrights Gunter Grass, the British Indian writer Salman Rushdie, African American novelist Tony Morrison the first Latin American woman writer Isabel Allende.

Magical realism comes to encompass a few different functions of fantastic elements. In stories that are unwilling to confirm or deny for the reader that these elements exist in its world. It can sometimes feel unsettling or give the story a like quality. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez will be on every list of magical realism that is ever written. Not only is it a beautiful piece of literature but it has influenced many authors, particularly in the realm of magical realism. It's a multigenerational epic that tells the story of the rise and falls of life and death, riches, poverty, triumph and tragedy of the town of Macon through the history of the Benda family. Magical realism is known for changing how one thinks. Instead of seeing the ordinary and mundane, magical realism brings a spark of life to the imagination, which excites the mind of the readers. Magical realism is an amalgamation of realism and fantasy. Patricia Merivale in her *Saleem Fathered by Oskar: Midnight's Children, Magic Realism*. "Realism, some reader-responsiveness from within the text, to keep the narrator's tale on track and his quixotic feel on the give permission to become the sort of writers they have it them-selves to be"(180).

It is also known for showing a different viewpoint on life and how people think or act. It does not use dream motifs, nor does it create false words. Magical realism is unlike other writing styles that try to change or dominate the existing seemed to be forced on people and in turn demand attention and gratification. The extraordinary in magical realism

is rarely presented in the form of a dream or a psychological experience because doing so takes the magic out of recognizable material reality and placed it into the little-understood world of the imagination. Magical realism manages to present a view of life that excludes a sense of energy and vitality transformation of the object of representation rather than the means of representation. In magical realism, the writers confront reality and try to untangle it, to discover what are the mysterious things in human life.

Magical realism first appeared in the early 1970s in Canada, West Africa and the United States and now spans many locations across the globe. The novel *The Mistress of Spices* is the narrative of an immigrant, Tilo living in the US, she is the mistress of spices and owns a spice shop, 'Spices Bazar' in Oakland, California. Tilo's past and her capabilities as a mistress of spices create a narrative fantasy, while her experiences as an immigrant and that of her customers, mostly Indians, make for a realistic narrative. She uses the postmodern technique of magical realism in her novel.

The Mistress of Spices is a story of a girl who is born to poor parents and regarded as one, who will again put her parents in misery as they will have to pay a dowry. Little did they know at the time of her birth that she is born with the supernatural power of foreseeing the future. As her fame spread, pirates hear about this and kidnapped her one day. However, she was powerful enough to overthrow the chief and become the queen of pirates. She was not satisfied and when in search of peace, she comes to an island where she is to become the mistress of spices under the rigorous training of the First mother.

'I Should have made u go', the Old one would tell me later, shaking her head ruefully. 'They were volcano hands, simmering with risk, waiting to

explode. But I Couldn't. 'Why not, First Mother?' 'You were the only one in Whose hands the spices sang back'. (Divakaruni 34)

The First mother teaches her along with other girls all about the spices. These spices are later to be used to cure other people's misery when given to them with magical chants. Once she manages to learn all those spices powders, she is to run a store in Oakland. She is given the name 'Tilo', with a warning that she should never leave the store. She should never use the power for her benefit but for others and to help them in their life. Chitra Banerjee introduces her protagonist,

I am a Mistress of Spices. I can work the other too. Minerals, metals, earth, sand
And stone. The gems with their cold clear light. The liquid that burns their hues
into your eyes till you see nothing else. I learned in the island. But the spices my
love. I Know their origins, and what their colours signify. (Divakaruni 3)

One can understand that spices in the novel play a very important role. However, they are not only significant characters but relate to important myths and fables, and magically speak to her also. Hence the role of spices develops our personality inner and outwardly and quotes

I am looking for a spice for him. 'Different spices may help us with different troubles' the Old one told us after she had taught us the common cures. 'But for each person there is one special spice. 'No, not for you- the Mistresses must never use the spices for their own end. (Divakaruni 71-72)

She should not make any physical contact with any human being. Like all other magical realism elements, her powers come with many restrictions and conditions. As the

story progresses, readers find smaller stories intertwined where Tilo uses her powers to help others. While helping others, she is so taken into it that one after another she starts breaking the forbidden rules without realizing it, which was laid for mistresses. Not only she breaks rules, but she also allows herself to fall in love with a lonely American man. But Tilo abandons this exalted position when mystical sea serpents warn her, that she can develop her supernatural talents to help people for the greater good. This isolated island is a haven for these women, who call themselves the 'Mistresses of Spices' and are under the care of the first mother, the eldest and wisest teacher of all the women. The women are trained in the art of listening and controlling the spices and are then forth into the greater world to aid humanity. After Tilo learns all that she must begin her duties of healing the masses.

Tilo is thrust into the chaos of American life and the newness of a culture to which she must adapt. Although Tilo has already begun her diasporic journey, she does not feel the loss of a home, but rather the finding of many. A spice is a seed, fruit, root, bark, or other plant substance primarily used for flavouring colouring or preserving food. Spices are distinguished from herbs, which are leaves, flowers, or stems of plants used for flavouring or as a garnish. Spices are sometimes used in medicine, religious rituals, cosmetics or perfume production, or as a vegetable. Chitra uses her character Tilo to improvise ordinary kitchen spices to cure people's lives, not only in a medical way. But spices heal people's hearts. This portrayal of spices as a magical element is somewhat unique and she gives a unique description of spices in the novel. The interesting part of the novel is the magical quality of Tilo and the spices. Here the older one is the first mother who taught Tilo about the power of spices and the consequences.

In case Tilo violates the rules, she may lose her magical quality permanently. There are three rules for Mistress they are You are here to see to the other desires, never to use spices for your own leave the store so there is no danger of string away from the spices You may never touch another's skin. Tilo agrees with the conditions of the First Mother,

O spices I am still yours, Tilottama essence of tilo, giver of life and love and hope. Help me not to fall from myself. Lonely American, though my body is a sudden soaring whenever I think of you, if you are come to you are to come to me, it will have to be by your own desire. (Divakaruni 84)

This clearly states the magic powers of Tilo which others could not have, and she could envision the person's future happening with the power of spices something different powers. Chandan the powder of sandalwood tree has the power that relieves the pain of remembering. Saffron is for lonely nights to glow and attract love into your life coriander leaves are to feed your passion through rights Cinnamon is for making friends and it is the destroyer of enemies. Kala jeera Black Cummins seeds will protect from the evil eye. Cardamom binds true love and Lotus root for making couples lifelong happy.

India is a land of different spices, such as turmeric, chillies, cinnamon, sesame, sandal, fenugreek, Asafoetida, Brahmi, basil etc. They are characters like other human beings and speak to Tilo having magical properties for solving problems. Her use of mythical stories Juxtaposing with spices relates to different cultural stories such as the story of Tilottama who symbolizes the restorer of health, and the myth of the beautiful apsara the god of rain. A very important spice, turmeric is auspicious and used on various occasions,

These are the magical powers which spices possess in them. The mistress uses the spices according to the customer's desires, but the day came where mistress breaks the law of spices and regrets her mistake and she wants the spices' power back to her. Similar to the Biblical allusion, where Eve commits sin and regrets it and yearns to go back to the Eden Garden. Here in the novel, Tilo suffers like Eve but at least she got spices' power back and the loved ones too. Spice is like a king, it will take revenge immediately when Tilo breaks the rules by giving the other spices to Dough to keep with her. When asks for his spices, the mistress can't find the spices for him she is in chaos, the spices refused to speak to her because she left her desires in vision, the true seeing is taken from her and the spices won't obey the mistress.

But after some time, the spice showed Asafoetida as the spice of Dough. But knowing the fact Tilo knows that Asafoetida is an Antidote for love. Instead, she gives the spice, Tulasi to him which makes Dough always remember Tilo. She had forgotten to think that requires another customer who needs Kala Jeera to protect him, and she was distracted from her duties. Accidentally Tilo is hurt with a knife while preparing Kaala jeera for Haroun and Dough touches her hand with love, but she felt like breaking the rules. Due to this thought, she tries to come out of this trance and turns back. But unfortunately, the fire caught in the Red Chilies, and they try to put off the fire in the Spices Bazaar.

The burning of Red Chilies acts as the first warning of the spices against Tilo, the Mistress of Spices. In the following, she prays to God that spices should not leave her and wants them to speak to her again. The spice Coriander leaves, which helped Kwesi, had their revenge by parting him from his loved one. Tilo feels sorry for Kwesi and asks for spices, the reason for punishing Kwesi for her sin. The relationship between Tilo and the

spices is interconnected. This incident also acts as a symbolization, like how the magic which helped the people, can also change their fate for the worse. It also foreshadows the danger which will prevail on the people, who used her spices.

Next is Jagjit, who got benefited from the spice Cinnamon, as it helped him in gaining new friends and it also helped him to come out of his introverted side. But he dramatically changes from innocent to worse by making bad friends, it's because of the counter effect of cinnamon on Jagjit. The spice which changed his life turned back on him. As Tilo enquires about these spices,

Jagjit with his thin, frightened wrists who has trouble in School because he knows only Punjab still. Jagjit whom the teacher has put in the last row next to the drooling boy with milk-blue eyes. Jagjit who has learned his first English word. Idiot. Idiot. Idiot. I Walk to hear back where he stares in confusion at the packets stamped with hieroglyphs of Hindu and English.
(Divakaruni 38)

After this she does not want to see him again, she wants to continue his duty as Mistress of Spices but in the night, Dough knocks on the spice Bazaar shop to share his feelings. He talks to Tilo that her mother is passed away and she cries in feeling and getups and walks out, suddenly she stops and Black gold with lime soda to tell the deepest secret about him and by the magic of black gold she heard all the secrets about him, and He proposes his love to her leaves the Bazaar. The next day Tilo prepares Kala jeera for Haroun, suddenly Jagjit's mother comes there and returns the pickle and scolds her for adding more spices to the pickle and she gets back the money she spends on doctor's fees. Tilo realizes that it's all because of red chillies. Next Gita's grandfather comes to say about

how Gita refused to say no to Sathish. The almond, which was used for Githa, helps people to sweeten their thoughts and words. But the almond turned bad, and it got reflected in Gita's life.

She wants to prepare another almond with kesar powder for Githa's grandfather. When she drops the soiled Almond powder into the trash box. She notices her plants are dry, she catches the spices' revenge on her. She asks the spices not to punish her customers. She wants to go out of Spices Bazaar to give Kala Jeera to Haroun and she says to spices that she is not going on his own sake and she is not leaving the spices alone. Tilo even promises the spices that she will come back soon after finishing the work. Before giving Kala Jeera to Haroun, he was attacked black and blue by the thief. Here Black Cumin catalyses the thief who attacked Haroun. She feels that she is distracted by her desires, and she fails the duty assigned by spices. When she returns home, her spice Bazaar was stolen by the thief and all the spices were damaged, Tilo realizes her mistake and learns that all the problems were created because she breaks the rule of first mother. Suddenly the First mother appears and speaks to Tilo and advice that she broke many rules, and she wants her to back where she belongs, which means the fire is the only end of Tilo. "Ah if only I knew. There is a feeling inside me like someone walking on thinnest ice, knowing at any moment it will crack, but unable to stop. Here is a question I never thought to ask on the island. First Mother, why is it is not allowed, what can be wrong with seeing yourself?" (Divakaruni 147).

Tilo decides that she is going to commit suicide in the spice Bazaar and make notice of 'Final Day sales' in her shop. The decision of Tilo to end her life acts as a turning point, like a magical realism her problems have a solution. The solution found by Tilo is to end

her life, thereby she tries to save the people whom he helped. She meets Gita's grandfather who happily says that she is returning with his lover, she thanks the spices for joining their hands. Also, she notices Mahesa and Kwesi found love between them. Jagjit had found a new friend with Kwesi for guide high and loses life in America. She feels happy and ready to date her lover, Raven. She commits adultery with Raven and returns to her home. Tilo returns to the store and collects all the leftovers in the store and made a pyre in the centre of the room and sprinkles sesame all over to protect her through the journey and invokes words, but nothing happens. She fears that she has been doomed to live as an old woman without power and live hood and plans.

To end herself from climbing the red gold edge of the bridge, but finally decides to accept the decree of spices. She willingly accepts it and firmly believes that she had not sinned but acted out of love. She recollects the story of shiva-halaal. For one to be happy another must take upon the suffering. She is ready to take whatever burden they lay down but needs one hour of sleep saying so she lies down. After a while, when she heard Raven, she was in confusion whether she was dead or alive, but spices spoke to her saying that as she accepted the punishment in mind without battling then was enough for her and no need to undergo any physical punishment. Now she was neither like the old mistress nor like the young lady of the last day.

She notices one red chilli in her hand. She happily lived with Doug and enjoyed being a Mistress of Spices.

My hands guide me where I need to go. The jar of red chillies is surprisingly- light. I hold it in my hands and for a moment I hesitate. Tilo you know from this point there will be no turning back. Doubts and more

doubts crowd the cage of my chest, clawing and crying for release.

(Divakaruni 234)

As a Mistress, one should not touch others, but Tilo has crossed this rule many times, she touched Lalitha to console and comfort her, and later she was touched by the American when her finger was cut while she was cutting black cumin for Haroun. She tries many times to offer Black cumin to protect Haroun from the evil eyes but every time she fails. One night when Haroun found the American in the shop, he asked Tilo to send him away, Tilo rebuffs him by saying she can take care of herself. As a Mistress of Spices, she must feel others' pain and leave her passions behind, but from the time she was attracted by the Americans, spices start working against her as well as the persons to whom they were used because of which Gita was separated from her family. Feeling responsible for these actions, Tilo tries to meet Gita and tries to unite her with the family members.

In this process, she stepped out of the store breaking another rule of the mistress to meet Geeta she tries to prepare clothes of American style out of Khus seeds but fails as a spice does not cooperate with her. Then she went to sears and takes all the worldly items with want but puts away everything again and takes a pair of American clothes to wear to Geetha and a mirror the most forbidden thing for mistress. Tilo has magical power and she becomes the master of all spices and owner of a spice shop. She speaks to them as characters to solve the problem of people in the real world with the help of spices. She artistically applies magic to Indian immigrants, especially to overcome their suffering and to impact their heart desires spices, myth and legends and beautifully just posed her life for the relaxation of people and mental, physical and psychological problems.

To depict the magical realism character Tilo, who is born in India and shipwrecked on a remote island inhabited woman. There is a grown-up lady's first mother, who imparts to her the power of spices and sends her to California, Urban America, and warns her to violate rules while applying magic on people. The first rule is to live the spinster and never succumb to carnal desires. Secondly, not to leave her place. Thirdly, if she doesn't follow these rules, there will be no effect of spices on people. That is why she is warned by her First mother to be a chaste, pure and sincere woman while applying magic spices on people. Tilo did follow these rules at the beginning, but later in the novel, she succumbs to earthly pleasures and commits sin. As in *The Mistress of Spices* novel, Tilo was given a chance and Tilo chose her path,

Look well, Mistress. Once in a great while a Mistress, grown rebellious and self-indulgent, fails her duty and must be recalled. Warning is sent to her, and she has three days only to settle her affairs. Then Shampati's fire blazes for her once more. (Divakaruni 56)

Chitra Banerjee highlights magical realism, brings together the folklore of India and takes the reader to a fantastic world and again brings into the twentieth-century postmodern realistic world. Chitra Banerjee highlights magical realism bringing together folk-tales of India and recollects supernatural magic realism administered in the present mundane world for the welfare of humanity. The following chapter deals with cultural identity and the identity crisis Tilo faces in America.

Chapter Three

Cultural Identity

Culture finds its expression in the literature, language, music, rituals and additionally food habits of a region and ethnicity. In India, rice-based South Indian cuisine significantly differs from flour-based North Indian type. Food, for Indians, carries strong nostalgic connections with one's roots. By forging a bond with the homeland food, *The Mistress of Spices* examines several topics together with cultural identity and food culture in women and across cultures. Tilo has taken the spices route to self-discovery throughout the novel. The spices had spoken throughout the narrative. As Mannur in her *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* claims, “Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Mistress of Spices*” through the evocation of spices and sugared treats, mobilizes a culinary idiom sweetened or spiced with the taste of otherness. By engaging the text’ use of Orientalism to render race palatable.” (21) Tilo’s discourse with exotic Indian spices imbued with magic in a dusty old shop in Oakland California provides Divakaruni with a platform to speak with her heart of the American language throughout the food. The identity of Tilo, from the mistress of spices to Maya.

The term ‘Food way’ was first used by folklorists, and it deals with the connection between food-related behaviour and patterns of membership in culture community, group and society ‘Food in Folklore’ is the food tradition of any one community includes not just the recipe involved. ‘Food ways’ also examine the rules that define these cultures' choices of foods, such as ‘ideas of health and cleanliness’ and foods that are especially esteemed or shunned, and specific rules governing the contexts in which foods may or may not be eaten. Folklorists study these food habits or traditions and eating behaviours within a

community or culture. As Pollan claims, *In Defence of Food: The Myth of Nutrition and the Pleasure of Eating*, “Food is also about pleasure, about community, about family and spirituality, about our relationship to the natural world, and about expressing our identity” (6). These references to food may be found in folktales and folksongs, but they may also be seen in other expressive genres, such as folk dance, festivals, costume, and even architecture ‘Food ways’ also denotes how people of a particular region produce or obtain, prepare, and consume food.

Divakaruni's narrative in *The Mistress of Spices* is built upon the fault line in American identity that lies between self and community. It also cuts through the essence of Indian thought, for the self to exist and co-habit several realities and identities simultaneously. All the characters were somewhat trying to associate themselves with the Americans and their culture. As Mannur says in his *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* claims, “Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Mistress of Spices*”, “My reading of *Mistress of Spices* suggests that belying the spicy-sugary exterior of these popular novels are surprisingly trenchant critiques of racial politics and capitalism in the United States” (21). Nayan Tara seeks her identity through multiple selves through Shampati's fire till she is Tilottama or for short Tilo. But not until she starts living in the dusty old shop in Oakland, she questions her identity between herself and the largely Indian immigrant community that passes through her shop. Her sense of community and self are strongest.

As Tilo was inherently tested throughout the novel. She must choose between maintaining her identity as Tilo, the mistress of spices and the young woman deep within who cries out to be seen, acknowledged and more importantly loved and cared for. The spices are a defining force throughout the novel. Tilo chafes under the spice's strictures and

tries not to be overtly involved in her customers' lives. She is virtually discarded by her family for the sin of being a girl. Resentful at being treated so shabbily at a young age.

She realises her identity and embraces it, she gets benefited from this new claim and sets out to advance her identity to the world Nayan Tara throws herself on the mercy of the mythical serpents of the oceans, who deliver her to the mystical island of spices. An enchanted island, where she is tutored by a mystical figure, she calls the First Mother. There, she is initiated into a priestly sisterhood of Spice Mistresses sent out into the world to help others, offering magic potions of fennel, peppercorn, and lotus root, The place Nayan Tara, now renamed Tilottama or Tilo, chooses to be the mistress dispensing remedies is a 'Spice Bazaar' in a rough section of Oakland, California, a tiny, rundown shop from which the now- aged Tilo as a mistress is forbidden to venture.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* represents both willing and unwilling cultural experiences and cultural conflicts in America. This cross-culture creates a disturbance for Tilo and for the native inhabitants. Multicultural, always shocks them. Immigrants' pain and anguish get aggravated due to the hostile nature of the foreign society. Due to the crises of the unwilling new culture and the immigrant culture, Tilo suffers from 'double trauma' first one of being away from the native land and the second is coping with the foreign culture. Cultural swapping becomes difficult to adjust for immigrants. They continuously remain nostalgic. Their past never leaves them. For, as said by Avtar Brah in her *Cartographies of Diaspora*, the old world, "cannot be expunged so easily, for we carry traces in our psyche." (5) The tools of memories and nostalgia help these immigrants to create 'imaginary homeland' and survive invisibly in the foreign land. As a result of the continuous presence of the past, the present gets disturbed. Their nostalgia

for their 'lost world' annihilates the possibilities of assimilation for immigrants. Almost all the immigrants in the text undergo cross-cultural trauma in America.

On the other hand, some willing people wish to leave behind their native cultural baggage and its responsibilities when they travel to a new land, but they find themselves in the same situation, they wish to be free from. This difference between the situation of their dream and reality creates a dilemma for them. The main protagonist, Tilo is a willing person as she chooses to be in America to heal the immigrants with her magic herbs and spices. She tries to cure the wounds immigrants caused in American society and its culture. She prescribes the use of special spices to the people who come to her. "Looped letters that say Spice Bazar faded into a dried-mud brown Inside, walls veined cobwebs where hang a discoloured picture of the gods, their sad shadow eyes" (Divakaruni 4). Though Tilo lives in a free land, she is imprisoned by the laws of the 'old world' left behind. As she is not supposed to fall in love with anyone. "Mistress must leave her own passion behind in the centre of the good hand is imprinted an invisible lily, the flower of cool virtue, glowing pearl at midnight" (Divakaruni 31). All these are customary chains of the Indian patriarchal culture. Tilo falls in love with an American, Raven and finds herself in the tangling ties of two opposite cultures.

Tilo as a woman changed her cultural identity through the mixing of two cultures. Indian and American culture. Because she immigrates from India to America, she follows two cultures and the psychological aspects of Tilo get confused with the newfound identity and culture. Nostalgia for the 'native world' is another significant psychological determinant in immigrants' lives to assimilate into the American culture. Nostalgia for the left behind world cripples and aggravates their trauma. The immigrant wives in the novel

are dependent on their husbands and there is nothing much to do at home situation increases their yearning for the 'old world they left unwillingly. To bear the pain of being in a foreign land, they seek relief in nostalgia in the left behind the world and its memories become real for them. They always carry a home in their mind. Mark Stein says that, *Eating Culture. The Politics of Food*. "Food does more than satisfy. One's biological need for calories, nutrients, and water. Food choice divides communities and has the power to the boundaries between them. Food taboos can serve to mark outsiders as unclean, unhealthy, unholy" (134).

This never left home's confrontation with a new and opposite foreign culture, putting them into cultural conflict. To survive this problem, they create 'Indian ghettos' and take the recluse in their cocoon. Daksha's mother-in-law wishes Daksha to behave like a typical Indian daughter-in-law. She doesn't wish to eat morning food and yells at Daksha for fresh food The mother-in-law says, old food from the fridge is good only for servants or dogs

'Good', saying, 'Yes, more,' even her husband, because after all isn't the kitchen to women's place. In answer to my asking, she say's 'Yes Auntie it's hard but what to do? After all, must take care of our old. It makes too much trouble in the house if I say I can't do all this work. But sometimes I wish. (Divakaruni 80)

The cultural clash brings with it the painful awareness of their failure of going back to their longed world increases the trauma. For instance, one such dependent wife - Mrs Ahuja - is a regular visitor to Tilo's Store. The Writer, Ahuja's wife has of course a name.

Lalita. That she would like to call hereby it, but how it can be while she thinks of herself only as a wife.

Lalita is a "double marginalized". Her husband, Mr. Ahuja works as a watchman in America. He cheats on her by showing his young age photo and gets married to her in India and brings her to America. He exploits her physically, sexually and psychologically. When Tilo comes to know Lalita's pain of being with such a cruel husband. Lalita relives her pain by telling it to Tilo and informs her that she likes stitching clothes. Tilo asks her, "Why don't you work in this country?" (Divakaruni 15). Lalita, being alone at home experiences loneliness.

The writer expresses her pain as, "the silence like quicksand sucking at her wrists and ankles. Tears she cannot stop" (Divakaruni 15). The pain forces her to tell the reason to Tilo, Lalita says, "He refuses that his woman should work...Aren't I man enough, man enough, man enough" (Divakaruni 15). He beats her regularly. He suffers humiliation and the hostile nature of America. His low job profile weakens him. The job frustration he exerts on his wife. Lalita is confined in the patriarchal glass world, willing to be in the outside free and liberal world. That it's a hard process for immigrants to 'unconditioned' from the former 'old world and its culture' and again 'condition' themselves to assimilate into the 'new culture'. Their willing and unwilling nature determines their success and failure in the adoption of the new land and its culture.

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni gives the food a different perspective. Food in the novel represents the authenticity of India. Divakaruni spiced up the novel by adding magical elements to the food. Indians have used these spices even before 3000 years, which has been recorded in the Sanskrit texts. Indians incorporate foods

into so many things in their daily life. People use turmeric in a very auspicious way, every good festival would have turmeric in some way or other. All these spices construct an indigenous pattern of their own. *The Mistress of Spices* is a story of a young lady named Tilo, who runs a spice store in America. She has been trained as a mistress of spices who has magical command over spices. Each chapter in the novel has a reference to spices. The spices are blended with the emotions and personalities of the characters in the novel. Tilo uses the spice to heal and comfort the people, but she is also able to see the consequence of the spice when it is used in the wrong way. Being a Bengali, Divakaruni uses all the spices used in Bengali cuisine. Bitter, sour, sweet, salty and pungent are the five main tastes that are taken care of in a traditional Bengali lunch.

I am a Mistress of Spices. The work the others too. Mineral, metal, earth and sand and stone. The gems with their cold clear light. The liquids burn their hues into your eyes till you see nothing else. I learned them all on the island. But spices are my love. I know their origins, what their colours signify, and their smells. I can call each by the true name it was given at the first, when the earth split like skin and offered it up to the sky from amchur to zafran, they bow to my command. In a whisper, they yield up to me their hidden properties, their magic powers. They all hold magic, even the everyday American spices you toss unthinking into your cooking pot.

(Divakaruni 3)

Through these lines, one can see that she identifies herself with the spices. strongly believes that every spice has unique properties, and it is designed for an individual. Indian household can't stand a day without these spices. Through these lines one can see that she

identifies herself with the spices. Tilo strongly believes that every spice has unique properties, and it is designed for an individual. Food can also be associated with memory. Food is seen as an effective trigger of memories. When one eats a particular food, the taste and the smell bring back some memories. Some happy and some sad. Even the place or the setting can also be associated with some memories and emotions. Food is also considered a part of religion. Food adopted a very important role in the literature denoting the culture of the place. Culture plays a very important role in the life of a person. Culture defines the person. The way Tilo was brought up is also decided by the culture. India is a country which is rich in culture. Indians have their traditions and customs. Despite being well-educated and modernized. As Terry Eagleton remarks, in his *Food in the Age of Anxiety* “If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just food-it endlessly interpretable-materialise emotion”. (4)

There are still so many traditions which have been passed to them from generation to generation. As a human being matures from childhood to adulthood, the preference for food changes as one grows. Like baby foods that are made easy for digestion are fables and folktales that have lighter subjects that have a greater impact in exhibiting the culture of a particular place. People moving to other parts of the world generally carry a lot of spices and masalas to stock them up for months. Despite moving to a foreign Land, people find it hard to survive without the spices which are unique to our place. These spices carry the richness of India. Divakaruni brings out her native Bengali culture, and its rich traditions, customs, and practices in this novel.

Most of the South Asian diasporic writers include references to the native food and consider it as an intrinsic part of their ethnic culture and one piece of their culture that they

can easily carry with them to the new country. Hence, food is used to convey the culture that slides smoothly into the system. As one grows, food changes from liquids to solid food as the grown-up adult would chew and digest solid food without any need of breaking it down. Food and by extension recipes passed down through generations, contain complex cultural influences. These nuances are unique to geographical locations. For example, essentially becomes one of the aspects of identity.

Food and culture go hand in hand in the novel *The Mistress of Spices*. The author explicitly introduces identity to play a major role to bring out the connections the immigrants had with their roots. Tilo made the immigrants realise their identity, traditionally by using spices. No matter where the immigrant migrates, the food of their native place is always special for them, and one can't deny it. Divakaruni aims to expose the challenges faced by Indian Immigrant women and how they make the world a better place through their existence. Without a doubt, Divakaruni brings out a solace concerning food and culture and wraps up the connections to define identity. *The Mistress of Spices* depicts the desires and dreams of Indian migrants in the United States. The novel records the novelist's personal experiences as an immigrant. So, Chaturvedi quotes that "a central motif in the mosaic of American society. Her objective is to deconstruct myths and stereotypes. She hopes to dissolve through her writing boundaries between people of different backgrounds, communities, ages, and worlds" (Divakaruni 56).

Tilo, the mistress of spices beholds the magical powers of Indian spices. She often speaks to them and listens to them. Her shop 'Spice Bazaar', acts as a central place in the novel as it remains a meeting point for all the characters. Tilo is bound within the walls of her shop. where she meets her customers who happened to be Indians. As Tilo has magical

power, she can find the perfect spice to heal the customer's angst and agony. She knows everyone's internal and external sufferings through magical power. In the novel, she helps those characters with spices who come to her shop. The readers find out the conflicts through Tilo's point of view. Different characters in the novel come across different types of conflicts as immigrants. Haroun a young Indian in California who desired the American dream frequently visits Tilo's shop to know fortune-telling. He struggles to root a life with native people and confronts physical assault for being an Indian. He ends up driving a taxi while he wants to work for a company. He is mentally stagnated with his past and pushing himself to overcome internal conflict. Divakaruni says that in the conflict of fate and destiny, Haroun longs for "Riches and happiness and maybe even love, a beautiful woman with dark lotus-flower eyes" (Divakaruni 27-28). She portrays him as a victim of inner conflict.

Lalita is often identified as "Ahuja's wife" not as "Lalita". She leads an unhappy married life as an immigrant. She wanted an identity, a secure life and a baby to define her life. The state of Lalita is trapped with Ahuja as a being 'double exiled.' Lalita characterizes the numerous Indian wives who are marginalized in their own families and the alien land of America. Furthermore, Ahuja's attempt to rape his wife seizes any opportunity for Lalita to accept him as her husband. Lalita resists in vain. Wifhood denied her, and Lalita craves to realize her womanhood as a mother. Her dream of becoming a mother is shattered due to her husband's impotence, this shatters Lalita's ultimate dream of becoming a mother. After all these obstacles, she gains self-respect and dignity.

Another character Jagjit a Punjabi teenager who is shy and feels inferior among Americans. Walking down Chicago Street with some relatives she was appalled when a

few white teenagers yelled “nigger” and hurled slush at her. The incident, deeply shaming, was never discussed, but it stayed and played in her mind and acted as the spur to kick start her writing.” Like the above incident, Jagjit faces racial conflict through the behaviour of his fellow mates. They address him with awful words and treat him in a disgraceful way. To overcome these challenges, he changes his name to “Jag” and adopts a new culture to mingle with mainstream citizens. As a small boy, he undergoes racial conflict in this novel, and he stands out to show that the new generation is ready to adopt a new culture and reject its own culture and traditions.

This one,’ says the American. ‘I want this one’. ‘Are you sure,’ I ask, dubious ‘Absolutely.’ I simile with the irony of it. Tilo is a certain as you were on the island, and as little- knowing. So now you, like the Old one, must take on the cautioning role. We are standing in the aisle of snacks. (Divakaruni 148)

In the novel *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni brings out many subaltern themes like conflicts, identity crises, marginalization, cultural clashes, race, community and hybridity. In addition, Tilo confronts cultural conflict but settles down by accepting it. Through Tilo, the novelist reflects on the condition of Indian immigrants in western land. Tilo is the priestess of spices who possesses magical power over spices and is an expert in telling fortunes. Initially, Tilo was named Nayan Tara by her parents. When she was born, she was gifted with the enchanting power of finding lost objects and predicting forthcoming risks. This magical power leads to lots of loss for her so out of hope and rage, she falls into the ocean. Later she was found on the shore of Spices Island, where the First Mother names her Tilo after Sesame seeds. She turns spices powerful to assist her clients to overcome troubles and challenges. She also treats their homesickness, alienation, and ill-treatment in

a new place through her spices. She lives to abide by the rules given by the First Mother of spices.

Whenever Tilo thinks of Raven, a native American, and her craving desire for love, the spices would warn her and suggests an antidote for love. Though Tilo was faithful towards her duty, the spices sometimes act like the master of the mistress. She remained a slave for half of her life. She wanders between the responsibility towards spices and her desire towards Raven. Tilo has been trapped between spiritual and emotional worlds which is evident in a twisted and toxic state of mind in an alien country. She was seeking the choice of becoming a common lady to live with Raven. Meanwhile, she couldn't choose the magical spice. Tilo stagnated with the warning of First Mother, as she says "Don't let America seduce you into calamities you cannot imagine. Dreaming of love, don't rouse the spices' hate" (Divakaruni140). She is torn between internal and external conflict.

Being an expert with enchanting power, she served her village and laboured for pirates. Later, then ended up as a mistress of spices and much later when the story sets in she wants to become a native person. To explain the conflict of Identity through the different journeys of Tilo, Tomlinson's article says that

Identity is also closely related to the term self. Tilo has been addressed by nearly four different names representing four conflicting and confusing identities in a single lifetime. She remains an enigma both for the readers and herself. Her truth and identity are multi-layered just like the species whose potential unfolds and posits several possibilities. Similarly, Divakaruni suggests the idea of being reborn every time after the symbolic

death of her protagonist's previous identity just like the mythical bird phoenix which is reborn out of its ashes. (Divakaruni 140)

She encounters a marginalized identity when a mainstream customer comes in and treats her unpleasantly. Tilo never gives up her culture, meanwhile, she wants to embrace a new culture. She commits self-sacrifice in the Sampati fire as punishment for breaking her mistress rules. But the spices forgive Tilo and say, "Mistress who was, when you accepted our punishment in your heart without battling it, that was enough. Having readied your mind to suffer, you did not need to undergo that suffering in the body also" (Divakaruni 305). In the novel, Tilo confronts cultural hybridity against cultural conflict when asks, "What kind of name do you want" (Divakaruni 337) Tilo replies, "One that spans my land and yours, India and America for I belong to both" (Divakaruni 337). They both share the same kind of conflicts as they belong to a different marginalized community, the reality of immigrants' life in western countries.

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni inscribes the conflict of cultural clash in an alien land. The novel explains the trauma faced by the immigrants of the East. It indirectly says that Indians are inside their homeland of four walls Tradition. Culture, Community, and Identity. Like a square peg in a round hole, few eastern immigrants are living in western land with emotional and physical conflicts. Despite the conflicts, the characters end up embracing a transformed identity in a new land with hope and love. *The Mistress of Spices* has revealed the traumatic change through the cultural Identity of the Tilo. The next chapter deals with the narrative techniques employed by Divakaruni in her work *The Mistress of Spices*.

Chapter Four

Narrative Techniques

The novel *The Mistress of Spices* was written with a masterful mix of flight and fancy combined with everyday grit. The novel starts with a girl called Nayantara. Her parents don't want her because she is a girl. She wanders around her village, and she somehow starts making predictions. One day, the pirates come and carry her away. For a few years, she lived with them as a pirate queen, and they named her Bhagyawati, the bringer of luck. She is dissatisfied with her life and wishes for it to end. A storm brews, and just before she lands in the salty sea, life's sweetness comes back. Managing to survive, she meets the speaking water snakes, the Nagas. Snakes always arrive to save her life. They tell her about the island of the spices, where the Old One lives. She reaches the island of spices. She is the strongest student on the island, full of arrogance and life.

Life on the island is full of magic and fantasy and on the final day on the island, it is time to choose a name and a place. Though the Old One, who trained all the mistresses how to use the spices and named all the mistresses. Nayantara chooses her name, as Tilottama. Tilo chose her name after the spice Tilo means 'sesame'. In the novel, Tilottama is the first-person narrator, an auto-diegetic narrator telling her own experiences. In the diegesis, she refers explicitly to her feelings as well as to her relationship with the characters of the narrative, which is part of their spoken exchanges.

The narrational choice predicates her involvement in the story in that she tells the story as an element of her own experiences. The narrative mechanism of *The Mistress of Spices* involves many narrative levels embedded within each other. To illustrate, the

narrative of immigrants contributes to the multi-layered structure of the novel. A story within a story becomes a narrative strategy. The first-person pronoun 'I' operates as the thread around which a variety of episodes and referential elaboration, including intrusive opinions about the mental and emotional states of the characters within the matrix of narration, are threaded. The whole narrative revolves around the main character, or protagonist, of the novel, Tilottama.

The narrative unfolds the various facts and phases of the protagonist's life and her development as she travels from one location to another. The novel can be divided into six phases. The first phase involves her childhood experiences in her native village. The second phase relates to her experiences with the pirates. The third phase narrates her meeting with snakes. The fourth phase narrates her life on the magical island, where she meets the Old One and gets training as the mistress of spices. The fifth phase narrates her experiences as a mistress of spices in Oakland, helping the immigrants with the spices. The sixth phase presents how she was caught between her love for Raven and her responsibility as mistress of spices.

All the phases are not presented in chronological order. The chronological order in *The Mistress of Spices* is interrupted by the stories of different periods. The purpose of the fractured narrative order is to introduce the various life periods of the protagonist, Tilottama. Divakaruni makes use of anachronisms to keep different narratives together and provide the reader with the past and present of the protagonist. The anachronisms in the novel add to the complexity of the protagonist's identity. The novel begins with the passage, "I am a Mistress of Spices. I can work the others too. Mineral, metal, earth and

sand and stone... I learned them all on the Island. But the spices are my love. They are the ones I work with" (Divakaruni 3). The reader is introduced to the heroine at the very beginning. The novel starts in media-res. the first sentence discloses the narrator's profession and hints at the magical powers of the heroine.

Writers make strategic use of both analepsis and prolepsis in telling a story, for the beginning is seldom the best place to begin stories tend to begin in the middle with the analeptic method. Sketching out what went before and using proselytising devices to hint at what the outcome will be, and thereby engaging the reader and future generations, gives the basic narrative momentum. In the novel, there is a use of both analepsis and prolepsis. The movements of analepsis and prolepsis signal the significant changes in the life of the heroine, Tilottama. The first movement appears in the form of analepsis. Past-oriented temporality, achieved through the narration of the heroine's tale within analepsis, emphasises the importance of establishing a connection with the past of the heroine, whose previous experiences are fundamentally significant.

The very first analepsis appears in the very first chapter, which provides information about Tilo's place of birth. So, it is through external analepsis that the childhood period Tilo is presented. She was named Nayantara. The basic thought of the Indians' desire for a male child is illustrated, "Wrap her in an old cloth, lay her face down on the floor. What does she bring to the family except for a dowry debt?" (Divakaruni 8). She wanders alone in the village, with no one caring about her. She somehow starts making predictions. She predicts where there will be droughts and where there will be floods. Everyone in the village bows down to her, "When I looked at them, grown men trembled

and threw themselves at my feet, and that too seemed easy and right, and so it was that I grew proud and willful” (Divakaruni 12).

In the second phase of the narrative, Tilo recounts the arrival of pirates in her village, and this analepsis brings an unexpected twist to the novel. The pirates come, burning the village, raping the schoolgirls, stealing whatever they can find, and destroying everything else. They see her and carry her away, “They carried me through the burning village; I was dazed by shock and shame at this new helplessness... The pirate chief’s voice lifted above dying moans, giving me, in awful irony, my new name. Bhagyavati, Bringer of Luck, for so I was to be for them.” (Divakaruni 19)

The above external analepsis illustrates the changing identity of the heroine by showing how her name changes. Her parents named her Nayantara, and now the pirates have named her Bhagyavati, bringer of luck. The search for identity is the main thematic concern for the diasporic writer’s narrative. As the narrative progresses, the theme becomes more prominent. The analepsis creates interest in the heroine for the reader. After reading the first remarks about the childhood experiences of the heroine, the readers cannot help but feel sympathy for her because of the cruel treatment she had to endure. Her past is part of her current sphere, making it impossible for her to live simply in the present because the present does not exist by itself. The new sense of time is also expressed in the very structure of the text itself, for Divakaruni jumps from one temporal location to another with almost every chapter.

The third phase of the narrative begins with the heroine’s meeting with the snakes. Snakes are symbolically used by Divakaruni and are picked up from Bengali folk tales.

Bengali folktales form an integral part of the narrative. These tales create magical effects in the novel. This narrative technique of using folktales is one of the key and most unique elements in the novel. Here, it is important to refer to magical realism. Magical realism is a literary technique that explores how different cultures perceive reality. Divakaruni takes us on a journey to that magical world of fantasy. In this novel, Divakaruni makes use of magical realism. She mixes her images with the same skill as an Indian housewife making her special masala curry mix—unique, complex, and delicious. The novel is a combination of fantasy and realism.

Snakes appear everywhere in the narrative, not only in the past-time narration but also in the present-time narration's repetitive narration. The fourth phase in the life of the heroine begins when she reaches the island. This analepsis illustrates that she, through the island of spices, thinks that she will be able to reach her destination. "The island of spice," I said, and it seemed that I had finally found a name for my wanting" (Divakaruni 24). The protagonist narrates her life on the island through singulative narrative, repetitive narrative, and iterative narrative. The use of iterative narrative and repetitive narrative is illustrated, "Each year a thousand a thousand girls are back from the island. Each year a thousand girls whose hands have failed them throw themselves into the sea as they sail home" (Divakaruni 35).

The analepsis involves her new journey to the island of spices. It reveals the crucial reasons behind Bhagyavati's metamorphosis into a mistress of spices. The first thing The Old One does, when Bhagyavati reaches the island, analyses the hands. "It is the hands that call power out of the spices" (Divakaruni 31). The Old One, after having a look at the hand

of Bhagyavati, says, "You were the only one in whose hands the spices sang back" (Divakaruni 34). The analepsis informs us that the heroine is the strongest student on the island, full of arrogance and life. Life on the island is full of magic and fantasy. It is the old one who trained all the mistresses how to use spices and gave names to all the other mistresses, but the protagonist has chosen her new name and place. As she says to the old one, "But I had chosen already. First Mother, my name will be Tilo, short for Tilottama. I will be Tilottama, the essence of Til, life-giver, restorer of health, and bringer of hope" (Divakaruni 44).

The analepsis also illustrates the myth behind the name Tilottama. So, Tilottama, the mistress of spices, has many disguises and names that reveal her multiple identities. Chameleon-like, she keeps changing throughout the novel, making clear how complex the problem of identity crisis is that Indians try to cope with in a foreign land. Accordingly, her name has changed many times, from Nayantara to Bhagyavati, and now to Tilottama. "My mistress name, finally and forever, after so many changes in who I am" (Divakaruni 45). The Old One shows them places around the world filled with people in need of spice. Out of them, Tilo is adamant about choosing Oakland. After choosing the place of their work, they have to pass through the Shampati Fire. Shampati is a mythical bird who rose from ash.

We danced around it, singing of Shampati, a bird of myth and memory, who dived into the conflagration and rose new from ash... I watched my sister's show, Mistresses. One by one, they walked into the fire, and when they reached its centre, they disappeared. (Divakaruni 58-59)

Divakaruni, again, through the Island of Spices, and Shampati Fire create a world of magic and fantasy. Each chapter in the book is the story of the spice turmeric, cinnamon, fenugreek, asafoetida, fennel, ginger, peppercorns, kalonji, neem, red chilli, makaradwaj, lotus root, and sesame.

The spices are an integral part of the narrative. The spices rule not only adds spice to dishes but also has magical powers and is connected to the people who consume them. The narrative blends the spices with the characters and their emotions. Turmeric, the hope of rebirth Chilli, the cleanser of evil Fennel, to cool tempers Fenugreek, to render the body sweet and Kalojire, to reduce pain and suffering. The spices play an important role in the novel. They sing and speak about themselves, and they even warn Tilo, like other characters in the novel. So, the species are personified in the novel, and at that level, the species act as narrators, intradiegetic and homoeotic narrators. When Tilo hold it in her hands, the spices speak to her. Its voice is like evening, like the beginning of the world. Spices are personified, “I am turmeric, who rose out of the ocean of milk when the devas and asuras churned for the treasures of the universe, I am turmeric, who came after the nectar and before the poison and thus lie in between” (Divakaruni 13).

Divakaruni invokes features of Hindu mysticism throughout the narrative, metonymically linking the spices to Hindu beliefs in cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction. In effect, the spices take on destructive and constructive qualities depending on how they are wielded. The spices are used to unite lovers, mend a family rift that occurs when a young woman wants to marry outside of the South Asian community, aid a young

Indian boy who is the subject of racist attacks at school, and encourage another young woman to leave her abusive husband.

Tilottama, the rebellious immortal, reaches Oakland in the guise of an old woman to operate the spice shop. The spice speaks to her and helps her help the troubled mortals she encounters. In Western culture, spices seem to have no power. But in the Indian context, spices have the power they are real and can create magic. So, Divakaruni makes use of magical realism. She employs the magical realist technique to comment on racism in multi-ethnic America. She endows magical properties to spices, an everyday, mundane commodity largely imported from India. The protagonist, Tilo, is the owner of a spice store in San Francisco who, over the course of the novel, reveals herself to be a healer performing magic through spices.

In the hands of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, spices and magic become forms of alternate realities. One of the important features of magical realist texts is that a familiar incident or object is endowed with magic. Thus, associating a mundane commodity with magic makes it all the more fascinating. As one knows, there is no distinction between the magical and medicinal values of spices in the novel both the 'real' and 'magical' attributes of the spices are familiarly depicted, with minute details. In the novel, Tilo deploys clove and cardamom to help Jagjit in his friendless state, "Crush cloves and cardamom, Jagjit, to make your breath fragrant. Cardamom, which I will scatter on the wind for you tonight. North wind carrying them to open your teacher's eyes unseeing. And also, sweet pungent clove, laving, the spice of compassion" (Divakaruni 39).

Thus, Divakaruni conflates the medicinal and everyday uses of clove and cardamom with their magical capacity to evoke compassion. She almost seamlessly merges a familiar truth with an unfamiliar one. Divakaruni argues that the technique she uses in the novel is her version of realism, as opposed to the established one.

She has endowed the species with the power to heal and harm, to please and to punish, to create and destroy, and even to reorganise the world order. The novel is replete with fantasy and magic, but there is a strong undercurrent of realism. Tilottama's and the immigrant's narrative related to their experience in America is full of realistic elements. As the narrative progresses, the fantasy element diminishes and the realistic element becomes more prominent. The fifth phase of narration presents the narrative that narrates Tilottama's experience as the Mistress of Spices. In analepsis, it is pointed out that as Mistress of Spices, they have to follow rules and never leave the spice store to touch another human being to love only the spices never to see their reflection. As long as they follow the rules, the spices work. In Indian folk belief, spices are used for more than flavourings. They have magical powers all their own, and they provide remedies for physical maladies as well as cures for spiritual ills.

Though the story focuses on the life and experiences of the protagonist, Tilottama, who introduces the lives of immigrants. The primary narrative journey of the protagonist as mistress of spices, her desires, and her thoughts are well presented through descriptive pauses and scenes. The text presents the period from the protagonist's birth to childhood in a few paragraphs. Similarly, her years with pirates are also summed up in a few

paragraphs. The protagonist's life on the magical island of spices is presented through summaries and ellipses.

There is no description of how much time they spent on the island. So, the text presents the protagonist's entire life from her childhood to becoming the mistress of spices, with other details, in not more than thirty pages. The narrative makes use of diegetic narration. The descriptive pause shapes the reader's perception of the immigrants, and the distant setting contributes to the portrayal of Tilo and other immigrants as isolated from society. Through descriptive pauses and scenes, the narrative presents the difficulties and dilemmas faced by Tilo and the immigrants. The most vivid among them are the faces of four whose fates are inextricably linked with that of Tilo, Geeta, Lalita, Haroun, and Raven. The descriptive scene and iterative narrative illustrate the man-woman relationship through the story of Lalita.

This is presented through Tilo's focalization and narrative speech. There are several instances of racist attacks enumerated through Tilo's focalization when she reads the forbidden newspaper. Tilo helps all the immigrants with spices. As long as Tilo follows the canons of her mentors on the island and uses the spices only to help her customers and never for her enrichment, her powers work their magic. However, she begins to rebel and becomes involved in the lives of her clients. Whenever Tilo is overpowered by worldly desire, The Old One and the spices intervene to remind and warn her mistress of the rules. This type of narration is repetitive. Tilo is unable to resist the temptations of the lonely American. She falls in love with this lonely American young man, Raven, which constitutes the sixth phase in the narrative.

Now Tilo has to choose between a supernatural, immortal life and the vicissitudes of existence in modern times. Through prolepsis, she wants to tell Raven, who wants to escape from the problems of urban America.

Raven forgives me, the note will say. I do not expect you to understand. Only to believe that I had no choice. I thank you for all you have given me. I hope I have given you a little too. Our love would never have lasted, for it was based on fantasy, yours and mine, of what it is to be Indian. To be American... there is no earthly paradise. (Divakaruni 311)

Tilo perfectly illustrates the dichotomy faced by many immigrants. Tilo is a metaphor for the young Asian woman caught between family and religion and living an independent life. Tilo makes her decision, and she again changes her name to Maya, the Hindu term for the everyday world of desire, pain, and joy as the world of illusion, a place of inevitable sorrow from which the Hindu is trying to escape. As Tilo says to Raven,

Now you must help me find a new name. My Tilo's life is over, and with it that way of calling myself. One that spans my land and yours, India and America, for I belong to both now. Is there such a name?" Then she says, "How about Maya?" She has finally broken free of all ties and asserts, "I who now have only myself to hold me up. (Divakaruni 338)

In the end, she has crossed the threshold that opens up a whole new world, and she is now entirely responsible for herself. Thus, in the novel, there is a complex woman confused over her position in the world and always seeking several ways to alter her existence

because she is dissatisfied with what life has to offer. She consistently examines herself, and in confronting her helplessness, isolation, and desires, she undergoes a process of self-development. In maintaining her Indian entity as Maya and stepping out into America with Raven at the same time, she dissolves boundaries between the two worlds.

The narrative ends on a positive note, and Tilo, along with a majority of the characters depicted within the novel, achieves happiness in their painful search for greater individual freedom by moving beyond the limits of their enclosures. The characters of the novel are facing a tug of war because of the differences between Indian tradition and Western tradition. There is a clash between the old values and the new values, which is well presented in a scene where Geeta's grandfather, another immigrant, tells Tilo,

Maybe obey all these firing women in this country, but you tell me yourself, didi, if a young girl should work late in the office with other men and come home only after dark and sometimes in their car too? Chee Chee, back in Jamshedpur, they would have smeared dung on our faces for that. "But dada, this is America after all..." "Arre baap, so what if this is America, we are still Bengalis, no? (Divakaruni 88)

It is not only pauses and scenes that the novelist is using for narrative movement. There is also the use of ellipses and summaries to increase the narrative speed of the novel.

As far as frequency is concerned, singulative narrative, repetitive narrative, and iterative narrative are present, thus contributing to the understanding of characters and their

situations. Repetitive narration is used to express Tilo's feelings during her childhood when her fame spread,

And so it was that I grew proud and willful. I wore muslins so fine...I combed my hair with combs carved from the shells of great tortoises... And when I read in their eyes, I felt disdain, and a bile black triumph that churned in my belly because I who Had been last was now first. (Divakaruni 9)

Repetitive narration combined with singulative narration is used when spices speak of their powers and magic. The same style of narration is used in each chapter. *The Mistress of Spices* provides the reader with internal focalization from a first-person point of view. But the point of view goes beyond the limitations of first-person narration, as Tilo, the first-person narrator, can read the thoughts of the characters. The novel starts with an internal focalization, through Tilo, who uses narrative speech. She is the most important focal character in the novel. Due to narrative strategies, she can peep into the psyche of the character. Internal focalization and narrative speech are used in the novel. It is through her focalization that all the other characters are presented. Tilo's narrative speech is interrupted with transposed, imitated, and immediate speech.

Tilo is the primary agent of external and internal focalization. It is through Tilo's focalization that the desires and woes of the immigrants are presented, e.g., Lalita's suffering is presented through the focalization of the narrator. There is an amalgamation of direct-tagged speech, direct untagged speech, indirect speech, and immediate speech to present characters fully both physically and psychologically. They contain the strengths, weaknesses, and quirks all humans do. Besides, the main narrative, there are embedded

stories where the main narrator, Tilo, functions as the narratee and the character of the novel functions as the narrator, as in the novel *Raven* is telling his own story. Here he acts as an intradiegetic homodiegetic narrator.

The novel spells out a message of hope and the ability to transcend the limitations and hurdles that occur when two cultures confront each other. She also stresses the significance of finding one's self. They can also be involved in American culture while continuing to retain their ethnic identities. They can place a high value on family ties while observing Indian tradition and also keeping in touch with their other Indian peers. At the same time, they can also be successful in carrying out their roles as Americans, thus, adopting the good values of both cultures.

Divakaruni has put into words what millions of immigrants would find hard to articulate, especially within the confines of the dilemmas that have been faced by women who move from the locales and traditions of home and into the brave new universe outside. She proves that a novel can be a window to a culture and that it offers an insightful passage into another world and another life. So, the narrative is a tale of Tilo, an immortal, in an old woman's body. She is a Mistress of Spices, and through the narrative, the reader can see the woman she was and how she becomes a Mistress of Spices. This story is interwoven with the "current" stories of Tilo's customers and Tilo herself.

The power of the novel's narrative lies in its use of myths, satire, and irony to reveal the attitudes of society towards women and immigrants. Divakaruni's writings are a scathing critique of the attitudes of people towards immigrants and also of our Indian society and values that have always accorded only a secondary status to its women. In

Divakaruni, we get women in a state of flux, undergoing mental conflicts and, in the process, trying to establish a new identity as strong individuals. In her work probing into women's minds, we see her use of dream psychology. Fantasy is used to represent the writer's wish to cross the boundaries of time and place. The next chapter sums up the idea dealt with in the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Indian writing in English refers to the body of works by writers in India who write in the English language, whose native and co-native language could be one of the human languages of Indian English literature has a relatively recent history. The postcolonial period in Indian literature was a period that paved way for many women writers. Sufferings of women in the male dominant society, suppression of women, man–woman relationships and emancipation of women were some of the common themes on which the women writers in India wrote. Although the immigrant writers or the diasporic writers lived in a foreign country they too wrote on women-centric themes with the same kind of Indianness as that of the Indian women writers writing in India.

Chitra Banerjee has insisted on being read not as an Indian or expatriate writer but as an immigrant writer, whose literary agenda is to claim that America is being improvised by newcomers from the Third World. She is accepted in her adopted country as an Asian American or a woman of colour, but not as part of the mainstream of American writing. To her credit, she won many prestigious awards instituted by Americans. As an award-winning author and poet, she writes for both adults and children. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is concerned with crossing over from one culture to another without compromising either, negotiating new boundaries and remaking themselves. She has attempted to create a comprehensive picture of South Asian family life. She writes about what she knows and feels.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is at her best exploring the themes of love, friendship, assimilation, self-analysis and discovery. Indian women immigrants naturally can build a

bridge of understanding between two cultures as they are trained to be adaptable, to accommodate themselves in the husband's families, and the husband's lifestyles. Chitra Banerjee also shows that most second-generation people adjust well and make a space for themselves in the new country. The voiceless, invisible woman learns the art of adopting an American way of talking, walking and dressing.

Indian Americans are conscious of their Indianism, whereas, Americanized Indians care for their oneness with the alien culture. The protagonists struggle to cling to mainstream American society through the melting pot paradigm, accepting the new in the interest of maintaining the old order of ethnicity and cultural values in the new world. Divakaruni's female protagonists survive in social situations, and the conditions make them realise their status in society. In the Indian setting of this novel, issues of arranged marriages and dowry problems are prominently addressed in the novel *The Mistress of Spices*. The open-minded American society permits certain liberties to women, but their traditional mindset doesn't allow them to enjoy themselves.

Chitra Banerjee's novel, *The Mistress of Spices* is distinct in that it blends prose and poetry, successfully employing magic realist techniques. Tilo, short for Tilottama, is the mistress of spices. Born in India, she is shipwrecked on a remote island inhabited by women. Here she encounters an ancient woman who imparts instructions about the power of spices. She has taken the body in Shampati's fire and has vowed to become a Mistress. She is named after the sub-burnished Sesame seed, a spice of nourishment. Her past life is dominated by fantasy and magic. The present life of Tilo is related to her service as a mistress in a spice store in the crooked corner of Esperanza where Oakland buses stop.

The store has an inner room with its sacred and secret selves. When she happens to see the customers, she used to raise questions related to their problems. While she supplies the ingredients for curries and kormas, she also helps her customers gain a more precious commodity, whatever they most desire. She gives free advice to the local Indian expatriate community. Each individual who comes to the shop is given different spices. There are women, children and men characters like Haroun, Mohan and Raven who seek help from Tilo. She catches glimpses of an abused wife, a naive cabbie, and a sullen – clinging to dignity, all of whom lack balance. To each, Tilo dispenses wisdom and the appropriate spice, for the restoration of sight, the cleansing of evil, and the pain of rejection. Tilo seeks personal fulfilment by reaching the earthly paradise as desired by her American lover, Raven. She also gets an identity as Indian-American. At the same time, she wants to continue rendering service to people with her magical, mystical and visionary powers.

Chitra Banerjee has grappled with women's experiences through female language and the intuitive aspects of female intelligence. Tilo, forges to be an idealist by exacting the Indian women's traditions, by looking at Indian subcultures and also unacknowledged realms of experimental realities. The question of women's freedom is the most crucial issue that she takes up for discussion. The fact is that her women are seen not as victims of oppression, as passive spectators of the drama of history, but as having an influence and a history of their own and providing a platform to study the progression from the feminine to the female.

Magical realism refers to a type of fiction in which fantasy infiltrates regular life. But the story's fantastical features are secondary to what those elements signify to the protagonist. Magical realism comes to encompass a few different functions of fantastic elements. Chitra Banerjee in her *The Mistress of Spices* uses the postmodern technique of magical realism. To depict the magical realism character Tilo, who is born in India and shipwrecked on a remote island inhabited woman. There is a grown-up lady's First mother, who imparts to her the power of spices and sends her to California, Urban America, and warns her to violate rules while applying magic on people.

The first rule is to live the spinster and never succumb to carnal desires. Secondly, not to leave her place. Thirdly, if she doesn't follow these rules, there will be no effect of spices on people. That is why she is warned by her First mother to be a chaste, pure and sincere woman while applying magic spices on people. Tilo did follow these rules at the beginning, but later in the novel, she succumbs to earthly pleasures and commits sin. As in *The Mistress of Spices* novel, Tilo was given a chance and Tilo chose her path, Chitra Banerjee highlights magical realism, brings together the folklore of India and takes the reader to a fantastic world and again brings into the twentieth-century postmodern realistic world. Chitra Banerjee highlights magical realism bringing together folk-tales of India and recollects supernatural magic realism administered in the present mundane world for the welfare of humanity.

The Mistress of Spices also highlights the culture of India by explaining the various spices in India. Culture finds its expression in the literature, language, music, rituals and additionally food habits of a region and ethnicity. *The Mistress of Spices* examines several topics together with cultural identity and food culture in women and across cultures. Tilo

has taken the spices route to self-discovery throughout the novel. The spices had spoken throughout the narrative. Tilo's discourse with exotic Indian spices imbued with magic in a dusty old shop in Oakland California provides Divakaruni with a platform to speak with her heart of the American language through the food. The identity of Tilo shifts from the mistress of spices to Maya.

Food and culture go hand in hand in the novel *Mistress of Spices*. The author explicitly introduces identity to play a major role to bring out the connections to who we are through her traditional means of using spices. Food and Culture wrap up the connections to define Identity. *The Mistress of Spices* depicts the desires and dreams of Indian migrants in the United States. The novel records the novelist's personal experiences as an immigrant. In the novel *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni brings out many subaltern themes like conflicts, identity crises, marginalization, cultural clashes, race, community and hybridity. In addition, Tilo confronts cultural conflict but settles down by accepting it. Through Tilo, the novelist reflects on the condition of Indian immigrants in western land.

Tilo is the priestess of spices who possesses magical power over spices and is an expert in telling fortunes. Initially, Tilo was named Nayan Tara by her parents. When she was born, she was gifted with the enchanting power of finding lost objects and predicting forthcoming risks. This magical power leads to lots of loss for her so out of hope and rage, she falls into the ocean. Later she was found on the shore of Spices Island, where the First Mother names her Tilo after Sesame seeds. She turns spices powerful to assist her clients to overcome troubles and challenges.

She encounters a marginalized identity when a mainstream customer comes in and treats her unpleasantly. Tilo never gives up her culture, meanwhile, she wants to embrace

a new culture. She commits self-sacrifice in the Samapti fire as punishment for breaking her mistress rules. But the spices forgive Tilo and say, “Mistress who was, when you accepted our punishment in your heart without battling it, that was enough. Having readied your mind to suffer, you did not need to undergo that suffering in the body also” (305). In the novel, Tilo confronts cultural hybridity against cultural conflict when asks, “What kind of name do you want” (337) Tilo replies, “One that spans my land and yours, India and America for I belong to both” (337). They both share the same kind of conflicts as they belong to a different marginalized community, the reality of immigrants’ life in western countries.

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni inscribes the conflict of cultural clash in an alien land. The novel explains the trauma faced by the immigrants of the East. The novel indirectly says that Indians are inside their homeland of four walls Tradition. Culture, Community, and Identity. Like a square peg in a round hole, few eastern immigrants are living in western land with emotional and physical conflict. Despite the conflicts, the characters end up embracing a transformed identity in a new land with hope and love. *The Mistress of spices* has revealed the traumatic change through the cultural Identity of the Tilo.

The novel *The Mistress of Spices* is written with a masterful mix of flight of fancy combined with everyday grit. The story of the novel starts with a girl called Nayanara. Her parents don’t want her because she is a girl. She wanders around her village, and she somehow starts making predictions. One day, the pirates come and carry her away. For a few years, she lived with them as a pirate queen, and they named her Bhagyavati, the bringer of luck. Again, she is dissatisfied with her life and wishes for its end. A storm

brews, and just before she lands in the salty sea, life's sweetness comes back. Managing to survive, she meets the speaking water snakes, the Nagas. Snakes always arrive to save her life. They tell her of the island of the spices, where the Old One lives. She reaches the island of spices. She is the strongest student on the island, full of arrogance and life.

Life on the island is full of magic and fantasy and on the final day on the island, it is time to choose a name and a place. The analepsis involves her new journey to the island of spices. It reveals the crucial reasons behind Bhagyavati's metamorphosis into a mistress of spices. The first thing The Old One does, when Bhagyavati reaches the island, is to analyse the hands. The analepsis informs us that the heroine is the strongest student on the island, full of arrogance and life. Tilottama, the rebellious immortal, reaches Oakland in the guise of an old woman to operate the spice shop. The spice speaks to her and helps her help the troubled mortals she encounters. In Western culture, spices seem to have no power. But in the Indian context, spices have power; they are real and can create magic. So, Divakaruni makes use of magical realism. She employs the magical realist technique to comment on racism in multi-ethnic America.

Tilo endows magical properties to spices, an everyday, mundane commodity largely imported from India. In the hands of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, spices and magic become forms of alternate realities. In the novel, Tilo deploys clove and cardamom to help Jagjit in his friendless state. In the second phase of the narrative, Tilo recounts the arrival of pirates in her village, and this analepsis brings an unexpected twist to the novel. The pirates come, burning the village, stealing whatever they can find, and destroying everything else. They see her and carry her away.

Chitra Banerjee has forced the world to recognize her, not as a marginalized Indian woman writer but as an important voice in the mainstream of world literature. Her novels are a celebration of the strength of a woman, not her weakness. In a language of emotion and meticulous metaphor using images provided by the woman protagonists, the novelist has articulated the many-sided pathos and rebellion of contemporary Indian women, not only in India but also in the new world.

Divakaruni, humanism is placed at the centre of all situations and believes in the ethical equality of men and women. Her novel projects that all men and women are equal and there is no division of caste, creed or race, which are obstacles to human development to the full height and dignity. According to the novelist, the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. She strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon women by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind.

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Custody

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by

UMA MAHESWARI J.

(REG. NO. 21SPEN19)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **An Exploration of Psychological Trauma in Manju Kapur's *Custody*** 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 and is a work done by Uma Maheswari, J. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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SIGNATURE OF THE HOD
Head,
Department of English (SSC),
St. Mary's College (Autonomous),
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR
Director
Self Supporting Courses
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.



SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, *An Exploration of Psychological Trauma in Manju Kapur's Custody* 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 my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2023

THOOTHUKUDI

J. Uma Maheswari.

UMA MAHESWARI J.

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PREFACE

The project entitled **An Exploration of Psychological Trauma in Manju Kapur's *Custody*** shed the light on broken marriage and in the modern era which made the children to experience traumatised life.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the Indian literature, writers who wrote about feminism, and biographical details of Manju Kapur.

The second chapter **Marital Discord and Motherhood: A Thematic Analysis** which deals with the status of marriage and domestic life is interwoven with the life of a woman.

The third chapter ***Custody*: A Psychoanalysis through Sigmund Freud** discusses about the instinct of the two women continuously becomes victim of the society.

The fourth chapter **Style and Narrative techniques** dealt with the writing style of author who used numerous methods in his work to cherish the readers.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceeding chapters.

The research has followed the guideline prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Post colonialism in literature includes the study of theory and literature as it relates to the colonizer colonized experience. In many works of literature, specifically those coming out of Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent, the characters struggle with their identities in the wake of colonization, or the establishment of colonies in another nation. In addition, readings of postcolonial literatures sometimes are resourced by concepts taken from many other critical practices, such as post structuralism, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and linguistics. Such variety creates both discord and conflict within the field, to the extent that there seems no one critical procedure that we might identify as typically postcolonial. The term post colonialism does not have a history. It has entered as a common parlance and is frequently used by critics, teachers, and writers.

Women writers in post colonial India have created a literature of their own, so to say, placing women in the context of the changing social scenario, specially concentrating upon the psyche of such women. True that the Indian women have consciously accepted the supremacy of the patriarchal value system by surrendering meekly to their traditionally assigned roles and allowing themselves to be dominated. But increasing education, better job opportunities and awareness of rights and privileges of women have forced her to contemplate.

Indian women today are exposed to a new set of values with education and economic independence putting them in a rather conflicting state where

they desire independence while they dread their traditional role but are still not courageous enough to walk out of the situation. At this juncture the woman has to redefine her status, certainly not an easy venture. Women writers have caught the Indian women in this flux and have portrayed them realistically both psychologically as well as physically in their novels. Such literature has certainly contributed to a fresh exploration of the role and status of women.

Women as a subject matter in Indian fiction in English is not something recent but the approach of the novelists is certainly different. In the novel of the 1960s women in Indian fiction were depicted as ideal creatures having various virtues, with no concept of revolt while the later novels portray. Women as educated and conscious of their right and privileges demanding their proper place in society. Undeniably, recent years have witnessed the impact of western feminist theories put forward by writers like Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* (1952), Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Kate Millet *Sexual Politics* (1970).

Under these influences the Indian women writers have successfully attempted to break the literary and social norm of the past. They delve deep into the psyche of their characters and also herald a new concept of morality. At the outset writers like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Bharati Mukherjee and some others have denied any sort of feminist bias in their writings but an in depth analysis proves a strong feminist intent, for women's issue pertains to be the chief concern of their plot.

The new generation of Indian women novelist namely, Gita Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair and Manju kapur have invited much critical

attention. Each one of the four has composed at least one novel focusing attention on the plight of contemporary women especially in their endeavor for emancipation and liberation from the matrilineal social system. However, it is difficult to assess their position as feminist writing either Western or Indian. Nevertheless, scrutinizing their novelists' adventure provides an interesting study.

The many ways that Indian women novelists have been depicting women have recently grown in popularity throughout the Postcolonial era, which has resulted in a spectacular and enormous change by the great Indian women authors, especially Nayantara Sehgal, Kamala Markandya, Anita Desai, Bharathi Mukherjee, Manju Kapur, Githa Hariharan, and others are examples. They have portrayed the female characters as people who struggle against patriarchal society's suppression and oppression of women. They present women as defying gender norms, shattering the chains of exploitation and oppression, rising with a search for identity, and claiming their uniqueness. One of the prominent new voices making her presence known is Manju Kapur. One of the notable new voices making her presence known is Manju Kapur. Her books explore the anger, resistance, retribution, and defiance of social norms experienced by women. She speaks out against masculine chauvinism to assert the rights to economic independence of women. The current research examines the intense excitement and agony of some of the protagonists, like Virmati of *Difficult Daughters*, as they struggle for self identity and emancipation and protest against the mindless dogmas of socio cultural and patriarchal grips masquerading as ancient norms.

Kamala Markandaya is a contemporary writer of Manju Kapur her famous works are she was well-known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies, Markandaya's first published novel, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), was

a bestseller and cited as an American Library Association Notable Book in 1955. Her other novels include *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *Possession* (1963), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffey Dams* (1969), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973), *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977), and *Pleasure City* (1982). Her last novel, *Bombay Tiger*, was published posthumously (2008) by her daughter Kim Oliver.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the famous contemporary Indian novelists in English. She writes about the conflict between tradition and modernity in relation to women in middle class society. Shashi Deshpande's novel deals with the theme of the quest for a female identity. The complexities of man woman relationship especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of a disturbed adolescence. The Indian woman has for years been a silent sufferer. While she has played different roles as a wife, mother, sister and daughter, she has never been able to claim her own individuality. Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Focusing on the marital relation she seeks to expose the tradition. Shashi Deshpande, daughter of the renowned Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar Shriranga, was born in Dharwad. At the age of fifteen she went to Mumbai, graduated in economics, then moved to Bangalore, where she gained a degree in law. Her writing career began in earnest only in 1970, initially with short stories, of which several volumes have been published. She is the author of four children's books and seven previous novels, the best known of which are *The Dark Holds No Terror*, *That Long Silence*, which won the Sahitya Academy award, and *Small Remedies*. Shashi started writing children's stories for her two young sons. She recreated her own happy childhood in a small town in her first book, *A Summer Adventure*, and subsequently wrote two more adventure books. *The Naraynpur Incident*, her fourth book for children was based on

the 1942 Quit India Movement. Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian novelist.

Anita Desai was born in 1937. Her published works include adult novels, children's books and short stories. She is a member of the Advisory Board for English of the National Academy of Letters in Delhi and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in London. Novels by Desai include *In Custody* (1984; film 1994) and *Journey to Ithaca* (1995). *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) takes as its subject the connections and gaps between Indian and American culture, while *The Zigzag Way* (2004) tells the story of an American academic who travels to Mexico to trace his Cornish ancestry. Desai also wrote short fiction collections include *Games at Twilight*, and *Other Stories* (1978) and *Diamond Dust*, and *Other Stories* (2000)—and several children's books, including *The Village by the Sea* (1982). *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011) collected three novellas that examined the collateral abandonment and dislocation wrought by India's furious rush toward modernity. Her daughter Kiran Desai won the Booker Prize for the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006).

Manju Kapur is an Indian novelist, born and brought up in Amritsar, Punjab. She studied and received an M.A. degree in 1972, from Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Canada, and an M.Phil from Delhi University. She teaches English at Delhi University under the name Manju Kapur Dalia. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia; they have three children, and live in New Delhi. Kapur is the one of the prominent new voices making its presence felt. She won the Commonwealth Award for her first novel *Difficult Daughters* in 1999 and it was a runner up for the Crosswords Award.

Women writers form a major chunk of Indo English writing. Gender discrimination and male chauvinism can no longer push them to the background. Whatever the drawbacks of British rule in India, they definitely created an atmosphere of awareness by enlightening people about their rights. Exposure to English Literature written not only by the English speaking countries made people realize the need to assert themselves.

Kapur is an efficient writer who has penned down a variety of characters especially woman characters. They are bold, daring and in search of their identity and recognition and this process, sometimes become self centered also. Her perceptions of women's liberation and autonomy are deeply established in the Indian women's conditions within the socio-cultural and economic spaces within the country. The protagonists in Manju Kapur's novels are caught in the continuous dichotomy between the personal needs and the institutional and social obligations and responsibilities. They challenge the male domination and patriarchal mechanisms of surveillance and control over women's body. The female characters created by Kapur are characterized by the adoption of a critical and reflexive attitude that question their position and as a controversy and confrontation to the social context and a prevalent and powerful patriarchal ideology.

Kapur highlights the factors which curbs the freedom of the female to live, grow and actualize herself the way men do. The manner in which religion, tradition and myth are misused to women into an acceptance of their secondary status causing them to lead claustrophobic and circumscribed lives. The female protagonist resist and overcome the ideological suppression and reshape ideals and existing value systems to re-invent herself in a meaningful

way. In a sense, her novels are a significant contribution towards the realm of Indian English fiction and feminist psycho analysis in India.

Manju Kapur hates to be called as a feminist writer, though all her fictional works she projects the feminist concerns. The entire scenario in her novels is feminine. Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*; Astha in *A Married Woman*; Nisha in *Home*; Nina in *The Immigrant*; and Shagun and Ishita in *Custody* are all middle class educated urban Indian women struggling to establish themselves with their own independent identities in the patriarchal setup of which they are part and parcel.

Marriage is one of the tools for a creative writer to depict the cultural ethos representing Indian tradition. In India one of the major problems for educated women is marriage. Manju Kapur has opted both for it and also cashed it. Marriage is a central theme in all her works. Kapur's every novel opens with a live discussion on marriage the topmost significant issue in the life of the female protagonist.

Her novels are *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011), and *Shaping the World Women Writers on Themselves* (2014). Kapur without any linguistic jugglery and gimmickry presents, the post modern novel in a traditional knit narrative design. The depiction of sex, rather illicit relationship, in the present day world attracted ample attention in Indian novels, too. Kapur also allows her characters to covet for such association.

The first novel *Difficult Daughters* starts with a quote a fore mentioned statement made by Ida, the narrator and the daughter of Virmati, the protagonist

of the novel, who is torn between the desire for education and the lure of illicit love, “The one thing I had wanted was not to be like mother” (Kapur 1). While staring at the fire rising from her mother’s pyre, Ida thinks about her. The story goes in flashback when narrator recalls the life of Virmati, her mother. Being the eldest daughter in her seven siblings, she has to take care of her sick mother, and household which was informed to Ida, by her relatives.

Virmati who was very particular about her studies falls in love with a professor who is married and father of two. Manju Kapur has very impressively depicted the Indian’s fight for getting freedom and Virmati’s fight for freedom for identity and recognition. She breaks her engagement with the boy the family has chosen, feels that the physical relationship as a crime, and wants the professor to marry her and no matter if she becomes his second wife. Later, her secret affair reveals to their family members, she was treated harshly, kept hostage at home.

According to her, marriage is a means of freeing from social harsh treatment, in which she can refrain herself from insecurity and uncertainty. She is dejected and helpless when she comes to know that professor’s wife is pregnant and goes back to continue her studies, but she can’t divert her feelings for him. In spite of knowing everything she marries him. But after feels isolated and hollow inside and the identity she was searching for has no existence. As the narrator says, “She is married with a husband, a co-wife and two step children” (Kapur 151).

Kapur's next novel, *A Married Woman* is completely a book of fiction which moves around Astha, the female protagonist of the novel. Astha an educated middle-class Delhi woman who had almost everything which a woman aspires for: children, a dutiful loving husband and comfortable society but still she feels a vacuum in her life. She is not satisfied with what she has as she quests for her own recognition. Almost everything is taken care of, "her education, her character, her health, her marriage . . ." (Kapur 147). They brought her up properly "as befits to a woman" (Kapur 147).

Being a romantic girl she falls in love twice before getting married to Hemant. She is glad to find a husband like him as he is ambitious and sexually adventurous. But she starts to feel lonely after Hemant involved in business. She doesn't want to perform role of traditional female so she finds a job for her which leads her to Aijiaz, a young charismatic Muslim. She gets attracted towards him but before she could reveal this to him, she learnt of his death in a sectarian attack. Astha in *A Married Woman* starts to work for the political group established in the memory of Aijaz. For raising funds she does painting. Later she finds herself attached with the widow of Aijaz which results in a lesbian relationship. This seems to break her belief in the institution of marriage. At the end her friend goes to foreign country for her higher studies and Astha comes back home.

Kapur's third novel *The Immigrant* is described on "Lucid, perceptive and sympathetic" by India Today. The novel centres around the protagonist Nina, a thirty year old unmarried girl. She is beautiful and lives with her widowed mother in a single room house. She is broken heart and in a sexual relationship with her philandering professor who was ten year elder to her. She

is dejected as she wishes to get married and to have children. She wants her to be surrounded with by her own family which includes her husband and children but, for her marriage was not on card.

Unexpectedly a marriage proposal for Nina arrives and everything changes. The two get married and she leaves her home to make a new life with him. Ananda is a successful dentist there in Canada and quite busy always. He tries and fails to have sexual relationship with several western women due to his premature ejaculation. He thinks that this problem will be solved after he is getting married. Nina wants to become a mother but Ananda is not interested in it. She receives a news about the sudden death of her mother in Delhi; that her mother's sudden demise back in Delhi; she cries for her mother's loss. She finds that her husband is consulting a sex therapist to fulfill his longevity to have sexual relationship with the western women. On hearing this she moves away from her husband. The novel ends with the line "Pull your shallow roots and move. Find a new place, new friends, and a new family. It has been possible once, it would be possible again" (Kapur 300).

Manju Kapur's novel *Home* is addressed with a lot of issues which are experienced in a joint family. Its story starts with the lives of two sisters Sona and Rupa, the former is married with Yashpal who is the eldest in the Banwari Lal clan and Rupa to a Lawyer. Sona is childless even after 10 years of her marriage. For this reason she is felt pity on by the other woman members of the family as if woman's most important work is to deliver a baby. After the death of Sona's only sister-in-law, her son Vicky a teen age boy comes to live with them and till that time she becomes the mother of a girl.

Vicky sexually abuses her cousin sister, Nisha. This incident traumatizes the little girl and she is sent to live with her maternal aunt. When Nisha grows old she has an affair with a boy of her college which doesn't last for long. Nisha has some skin problem due to this her marriage lingers on and on. She visits a number of doctors for all kinds of treatment but it is of no use. Finally she starts her business which gradually brings her success and she marries a divorcee.

Custody is the fifth novel of Manju Kapur which explores the relationship in an upper class family. Shagun is the leading character in the novel who has beautiful eyes. Raman a product of a prominent IIT and IIM chooses her as his wife. Everything goes well for twelve years, but problem arises after when she falls in love with Raman's handsome and charismatic boss, Ashok Khanna. The boss had never been in love but when just after meeting Shagun, he at once decides to be with her. She has an extra marital affair for which she does not hesitate to lie to her mother and husband. She even insists on her young daughter to be admitted in a play school so that she can get time to spend with her lover.

She leaves her children at her mother's place to visit her lover yet she keeps cajoling herself that she is a good and devoted mother. On the other hand, Raman who is a devoted, hard working husband does not comprehend why his wife is going away from him. Finally he divorces her and fights a legal battle with Shagun over their children. Their daughter remains with him and son with Shagun who now lives with her lover. The story of Ishita, the other character parallels with this. Ishita is blown off by her husband and in-laws just because she is unable to conceive. She is divorced and given five lakhs

for her survival. She starts working with a Non Governmental Organization and later she marries Rama and loves his daughter as her own.

Manju Kapur has received several awards and honours. She won Commonwealth Writers Prize for her first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998), best first book, Europe and South Asia. In 2011, she got DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, short-list for *The Immigrant*. Her novel *Custody* is telecasted as a serial named *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* produced by Balaji Telefilms Producer Ekta Kapoor. .

Manju Kapur's novel *Custody* presents the marital relation in an entirely new perspective. The novel *Custody* narrates the story of Raman and Shagun, a married couple with two children, eight year old Arjun and three year old Roohi, who enjoy a sophisticated life. Shagun often thinks badly of her spouse, Raman. She compares Raman with Ashok Khanna and this leads her to discontent in her present life. She thinks about her husband as:

Every day she practiced thinking badly of her spouse. Her lover encouraged this by providing a basis for comparison. The dissatisfaction that accrues in most marriages was not allowed dissipation; instead, she clung to reasons to justify her faithfulness.
(Kapur 2)

Shagun had graduated from Jesus and Mary College. She doesn't like to study rather had interest in modeling. "She hadn't really liked studying though she done reasonably well. She was looking forward to the freedom marriage would provide" (Kapur 26). Raman is a hardworking businessman very busy with his work. Shagun, a beautiful green-eyed woman wife of Raman, had fallen in

love with her husband's boss, Ashok Khanna. Whenever she worries about her kids, Ashok consoles her as follows. "Whenever she worried about her children he assured her of his constancy. Once she was truly his, he vowed, no further sorrow would ever distress her" (Kapur 2). Ashok Khanna is a corporate man with a firm belief in hard work. As days go by and his love also grows, the effort he invests into it becomes more vigorous.

Ashok was proud of his brand, 'the Mang-oh!' His focus was how to increase the sale of his product as follows. Targets three states in North India sponsor local events in schools and colleges, build up loyalty, extend awareness of The Brand Mang-oh!. Raman Kaushik, the Mang-oh! Sales manager, is very perfect in his work and even forgets his family for the sake of his job. "He thought of the hours on the road, the miserable B and C towns where he had passed many lonely nights, sacrificing family life for the sake of his job" (Kapur 5).

Shagun and Raman plan a trip to go to Europe for their summer holidays. Raman had to create brand awareness in every corner of the country, so his time was more outside rather than his home. This made him to be away from his home. Shagun protests and did not like this. Raman replied "But what to do, darling?" (Kapur 16). Raman is not willing to find the solution for this separation but rather made it to grow. But when he told her about his salary, she was surprised to hear his salary.

"While her poor hard-working husband had to be content with ten lakhs a year. Since Raman had moved to The Brand, Shagun had heard of salaries

that at one time seemed unimaginable 40-50-60 lakhs a year plus bonuses”.
(Kapur 17)

They spend weekends with family, friends, clubs and parties. At one time Shagun discovered that she was pregnant, Arjun was almost eight at that time. She doesn't like the second baby. “It is not that I'll be thirty, Arjun is just becoming independent, I don't want to start all over again. Always tied to a child, is that what you want?” (Kapur 18).

To Raman, another child was only a blessing. So he informs his mother-in-law, Mrs.Sabharwal, about Shagun's pregnancy and informed her delicate condition. Finally, Shagun gives birth to a girl child, Roohi, in June 1996. Arjun who looks just like Shagun and Roohi who looks just like Raman. They both were adorable kids for them. Mrs.Sabharwal, Shagun's mother, is very happy about her son-in law “For twelve years he had been more son than son-in law” (Kapur 25). Her daughter's marriage had now completed eleven years, before her marriage many men had looked at Shagun but none had ventured across the boundary line of matrimony. Shagun's mother was happy to see her daughter living a happy life. But for Shagun, there was an emptiness in her married life.

Later she decided she must have been unhappier than she realized. She had been brought up to marry, to be wife, mother and daughter-in-law. She had never questioned this destiny, it was the one pursued by everyone she knew. (Kapur 27)

Soon after she meets Ashok Khanna, everything changes. Ashok tries to seduce her. A curtain is drawn between her normal life and secret life. Her secret life

with Ashok made her feel happy. “In the beginning it was wonderful, her sense of power experienced differently now that she was thirty two” (Kapur 27). Shagun doesn’t like to mention her husband’s name when she was with him “She had stopped using her husband name. It seemed too intrusive” (Kapur 28). Raman notices her beauty as well as her restlessness. Raman feels things are not right between Shagun and himself. Again he realizes as if the centre of the world is hollow. He is very sincere in his work but fails to know the reason why she behaves in an indifferent way. “Yet the demands of his work forced him to be away long hours, thinning the connection between them” (Kapur 31).

Shagun’s mother notices the minute change in her daughter’s behavior. So Shagun discloses her affair with Ashok to her mother. Shagun’s mother advises her that what the society talks and how she will face Raman. “The house rests upon a woman. In your children’s happiness, lies your own. Anything else is just temporary” (Kapur 30). She again begs her not to bring shame to the family and be an object to ridicule, “You think all wives love their husbands? But they stay married. You are so idealistic. You don’t think about the society? What about your children” (Kapur 79).

Shagun’s mother scolds her: “Are you mad? You want to destroy your home” (Kapur 94). Shagun replies “My whole life, from this stupid early marriage, to having Roohi so late -Arjun is old enough” (Kapur 94). Meanwhile, after knowing the affair of his wife with his boss, Raman felt sick and was admitted in the hospital, his leaden heart had attacked him. Raman’s parents look after him day and night. Raman’s mother, Mrs.Kaushik blames her as “What kind of wife are you” (Kapur 97). Because Shagun did not even come to meet him.

Another story of this novel was, Ishita, an well educated girl had an arranged marriage with Suryakanta.

But as soon as her husband, Suryakanta and in-laws discover she cannot conceive, they want to separate her from their family. She was always a loving wife, daughter-in law to the family but they did not care for her. After that she underwent a lot of innumerable painful and tedious medical treatments, she was filled with a sense of shame and insignificance. She was ashamed and cursed herself for her infertility. Then the family abandons her. Manju Kapur describes the pathetic condition of Ishita as “She could not conceive, whereupon SK had decided he could not love her. She was divorced he didn’t want her, he had made that so clear” (Kapur 121).

Ishita hates her body. After that she was separated from Suryakanta and his family. When she reached her mother’s, everybody in the apartment wants to know why she had come back. After some sort of confidence in her, she wants to move on from her past life. Then she works in an Non Government Organization for slum children. Later, she marries Raman and became his wife for the sake of Raman’s daughter Roohi to whom she shares a bond of kindness. Raman’s mother says that Raman is “Handsome, intelligent, an achiever in school, he spent all his time sulking” (Kapur 102). In her frustration she tells the grandchildren to look after their father. Raman knows that,

There must have been a fault in him as well, that had driven her to do what she did. She was basically a good woman, he knew that, and now he tried to think of a way to draw he

closer. We have to talk, he said, and commenced on his prepared speech, starting with love, moving on to the children and ending with forgiveness. (Kapur 103)

Again he stress “Should she stay in this house, he told Shagun, it would have to be as his wife” (Kapur 108). Then Shagun leaves the house with a note “I have gone, don’t bother looking for me, good bye . . . Marriage over, finished, done with” (Kapur 105).

One month later she speaks to Raman and asks for a divorce by mutual consent. She wants some arrangements by which she could visit Arjun and Roohi. Arjun likes her mother’s presence and says “I don’t want to leave Mama” (Kapur 144). She one day comes to his house and takes the two children with her. She says that if he doesn’t give divorce she would not allow him to see the children. He dials his mother-in-law’s number, Shagun picks up and tells that “She also doesn’t want to talk to you” (Kapur 145). After this, Arjun fails to concentrate on his studies. He says “I don’t want to go to school” (Kapur 160). Then he joins Dehradun Public Academy. Ashok shares his school experiences with Arjun. Even his father never shared his school stories with him. Arjun stays in the hostel. The novel *custody* shows the conflicts in modern society and psychological view of modern society.

Chapter one in the research deals with the introduction to the Indian literature and the evolution of women's writing the chapter give a short biography of the author and the novel. Chapter two attempts to convey the themes of Marital discord and Motherhood in the novel *Custody*. Chapter three explores the theory of

psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud in the novel. In chapter four style and techniques depicting common techniques like theme, plot, characters and Parallel story lines.

The research focuses on the major themes, Marital Discord and Motherhood by comparing the female characters Shagun and Ishita. On employing Sigmund Freud's psycho analytical theory, the psychological trauma and the psychological imbalances of the characters are analysed. To analyse the writing style of Manju Kapur, the research attempts to bring the most famous narrative technique of Kapur's parallel line narrative.

Chapter Two

Marital Discord and Motherhood: A Thematic Analysis

This chapter deals with the thematic analysis of Manju Kapur's *custody*. The themes of the novel are marital discord and motherhood. Marital discord includes conflict, disharmony, and lack of agreement between currently married parents. Child behavior problems were defined as conduct problems, excluding internalized difficulties, such as anxiety. Some of the common causes of marital discord are financial issues, lack of intimacy, uneven familial responsibility distribution, poor communication between the partners, infidelity, inconsistent religious beliefs, trauma, and so on.

Manju Kapur's novel *Custody* unfolds unbelievable uncertainties of matrimony in today's modern society. Marriage in Brahmin culture is considered as a pious ritual which not only incorporates its two-fold families but also closely binds two souls diversified in views and tastes into death. *Custody* highlights clearly the wife's sense of suffocation, the husband's fear of abandonment and the pendulum shifting of children from one home to the other, with painstaking sincerity.

Manju Kapur's novel *custody* beautifully portrayed the marital discord and motherhood. Shangu and Ishita are the two female protagonists of the novel. Kapur showed their emotion and attitude in different perspectives. Marriage is the foundation of the family, a social group consisting of parents and children. It is the oldest and most powerful social institution that has the test of time in binding people in various relationships such as husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law and so on. In the past, marriages also did the task of uniting

two kingdoms. In our country, woman is considered the centre of family which shows how domestic life is interwoven with the life of a woman. The theme of marriage and the consequences of marital discord find exquisite manifestation in the texts under study. Marriage is one of the most prominent themes in the fictional world of Manju Kapur in which various shades of relationship get projected, evaluated, and experienced.

In the novel Kapur deals with marital discord and its consequences. The collapse of marriage is explored in *custody* from multiple angles making situation. The present study under this title also questions the status of married women in a traditional bound social order that sees women exclusively in the role of an obedient and docile wife and a breeder of children.

The novel *Custody* ends with the sentence: "In the meantime victory lay with the possessor" (Kapur 396). It seems to emphasis on the concept of possessing a symbolic metaphor on which Indian family has subtly laid its foundations. To possess simply means to own; but it also refers to gain dominance, influence and control over people's bodies and minds. The possessor has, to vigilantly guard that which is confined in custody. It deals with the divorced couples, social hypocrisy and battle for children that transform into a politics of possessiveness and unequal power relations in male dominant families. Since the emergence of the patriarchal family the role of humans has been to manipulate, exploit, abuse, and submit through a complex network of norms, conventions and institutions. Round the world women's studies and feminist theory agree that the hegemonic patriarchal family is the centre of gender based discrimination.

Some of these family models are more democratic and respectful. The roots of all the tensions, problems, abuses and conflicts that take place in Kapur's novels are typical of this model of family which is unfortunately widespread. Its structure is similar to a building in which the load of its foundations unequally distributed to the pillars. And this collapse or breakup of the family, is followed by the ugly process of formal divorce and the custody of the children.

The novel is mainly set in the throbbing upper middle class society of Delhi in the mid 90s. The subject of *Custody*, is against the back drop of uprising foreign enchantments, is a marriage fractured and mutilated by socially unacceptable norms. It captures matrimony at its extremely intolerable form followed by the emotional fall out of a break up on one Delhi family.

The central couple of the novel *Custody* is introduced as their problems gear up. Raman and Shagun, a seemingly happy couple with two children, eight year old Arjun and three year old Roohi, enjoy a privileged life. Soon Shagun meets Ashok Khanna, Raman's charismatic boss at the Brand Mang-ho, and they immediately fall in love bringing their not so convincing married life to a shattering and shuddering end. A spate of events occur after this infatuation which converts Raman into a vengeful person. This affair sparks a furious and insane momentum dragging them through the tough ordeal of separation, divorce, remarriage and a crescendo of custody battle in all its legal deception and psychological ugliness.

Badly trapped in the web, Shagun the beautiful wife of Raman, finds herself struggling to define her role as wife, mother and lover. In another part

of Delhi, just in contrast, is a colony governed by conventional bonds, where Ishita, whose marriage collapses because she cannot have children of her own, strives to find satisfaction in independence and social work.

In search of contentment and familial fulfillment, Shagun is drawn to Raman. Their union aggravates the bitter battle for the custody of children amid the demands and uncontrolled anger of the four grown ups. In the tale of dilapidated marriages, the children remain in the backdrop quietly nursing the injuries. It is then that the readers begin to comprehend and visualize the disastrous and deadly side effects of the legal fight for custody, the cruelty of relations and their trauma, spilt amidst two homes.

Kapur places her polygamists in the context of the 1990s. Raman, spends long hours working for the reputed and successful company that manufactures soft drinks. It is the beginning of the globalization; and rising Indian companies are competing to project their business on the International platform. Raman is a hardworking man, who won a stunningly beautiful bride for his perseverance and skillfulness.

In the initial stage of their life one can see him in his traditional role of father and husband, who goes out to the world to gain money, and to be looked after when he returns home, but also, typically who does not care for his own wife and children. He seems to be married to his profession reflecting certain liabilities that fall under his domain, utterly blinded to his wife's demand and children's progress.

Some women like Ishita, brought up and domesticated traditionally may be fully satisfied being guardians of their family but Shagun's spirit is

different. She has never been able to guide her own life as the reins were in the hands of her parents and cultural customs:

She had wanted to be a model, but her mother was strongly opposed to a career that would allow all kinds of lechery near her lovely daughter. 'Do what you like after you marry,' she had said, but after marriage there had been a child, then the claims of husband, family and friends made a career hard to justify especially since money was not an issue. (Kapur 11)

From the beginning one can smell that a marriage like this is bound to fall. Shagun's flirtatious nature are not tolerated by the sophisticated Indian society. Had it been Raman, the Brahmin Puritan norms would have consented and justified his conduct. But as it is the female who walks out of an oppressive marriage and lives in a relationship that is more equal and democratic, her honest deed and implicit interrogation of principles seem to require a violent reaction by the dishonoured man who, consequently, causes more unnecessary pain to the lives of the members involved Shagun and children.

Thus, deeply humiliated and insulted, Raman's male chauvinist instincts cannot allow this public affront. He instantaneously rejects Shagun's request for divorce or any amiable negotiation to solve matters. Owing to his childish attitude and his wounded male ego, he lacks the goodwill to solve disputes rationally and avoid the suffering of the children, proving his tall oath of love and concern for family. Ishita has an arranged marriage but as soon as her husband and in-laws discover that she cannot conceive, despite the

innumerable painful and tedious medical treatments, she is filled with a sense of shame and insignificance. The readers can find Ishita psychologically stunted and distorted, in the novel, “Smaller than the ants on the ground, smaller than the motes of the dust in the sunlight air, smaller than the drops of the dew caught between blades of grass in the morning was Ishita as she sat in the gynecologist’s office.” (Kapur 63)

The negotiations and terms of marriage are so asymmetrical in these families that even Ishita’s mother says, “For us money is not as important as family. But beta, it is essential that Suryakanta have a child. As the only son, he has to make sure that the bloodline of his forefather’s continues” (Kapur 66).

Kapur reflects these gender discriminating norms quite vividly. There is another example that confirms oppression over possession with Ishita’s in-laws: “For us the girl’s qualities were everything. You know we asked no dowry?” (Kapur 66). The resultant reaction is that the woman does not have the right qualities to produce descendants, the proceedings for mutual-consent split must begin and a cash arrangement has to be agreed. But Ishita, symbolically a lame parasite, does not seem to learn much from her traumatic and humiliating experience: “The mother began to call her shameless, the sisters refused to talk to her, the father and Suryakanta avoided her” (Kapur 69). She stays frigid and unreactionary to all the taunts and abuses, refusing to take lessons of advancement from her past experiences.

Ishita a weak victim who is scared of facing turmoil. She proves to be an epitome of weak and feeble woman when she misses the golden

opportunity of survival through adoption. She unnecessarily hates herself and her sexuality “If only she could tear out her whole reproductive system and throw it on the road. She hated her body, hated it. Everybody in the building must know why she had come back. Return to sender.” (Kapur 121-122) This violent servile discourse that accuses her of being a failure of the feminine capabilities reaches its climax when she turns into a revolutionary like Shagun who dares to transgress the unjust codes, to honestly follow her own spirit. Ishita’s marriage to Raman retrieves her lost status “so rudely snatched from her” (Kapur 303).

The story takes a tumultuous sweep here. The children become the family’s material stakes. Ishita manipulates events and invents lies. She exercises power over the small child to eventually win the custody of the little girl. Raman and their lawyer prove mere puppets to her wishes. This unscrupulous behaviour undoubtedly manifests that more the members of a family confine themselves to its social and internal structures to maintain and contract power the more they transgress ethics and democratic laws.

But the burning fact that underlies the whole situation is that despite Ishita using corrupt modes and methods, to a certain extent the readers feel compassion for the barren who, with no fault of hers, is badly wounded and abandoned by all and sundry. Still she suffers from the reminiscences of which have been constantly hovering over her entire being, as she is under society’s constant suppression, she needs to demonstrate that she is a loving mother for the girl child. Put under vigilant watchful scanner, entrapped in suffocation and choking family web, her egoistic love compels her to break the set democratically ethical agreement of the society.

Consequently Ishita turns into the worst oppressor. In the deepest of her soul she envies Shagun's strong will and individual success; "How could New York tolerate the presence of such a woman?" (Kapur 379). It is at this juncture that the readers understand the significance of Roohi's custody to Ishita, a last chance to cure her past frustrations and be acceptable to those who dictate or abide by stringent socio cultural norms.

Kapur points out the flexibility of gender roles and Mrs. Hinogorani, is a suitable example. Ashok and Shagun responsible, supportive and democratic in approach, where every individual has right to equality, where responsibilities are shared and where laws are equally enacted. Kapur's style of tackling adverse situations articulately is her forte. The battle which seemed so aggravated and aggressive could have made for an exhausting, car crash drama had it not been for Kapur's gentle satire.

Kapur is adept at dealing with the complicated family reconfiguration, and the insecurity it harbings. The concept of family shame and social propriety is firmly rooted. Perhaps this lack of social judgment stems from the 1990s when India was entering the world economy on a more ambitious footing and the idea of family was over ridden by individualism.

India has just joined the fast paced world and changes are rapidly happening. All sets of Indian society have responsibility to dismantle hegemonic model of the family and to reinforce democratic values that annihilate the culture of science when there is violence, that deconstructs democratic values that sensitize the legal machinery that promote educational programs to raise awareness. The changing social situation of India must create families that

recognize democratic values on which human dignity, justice and peace can find a comfortable abode.

Motherhood is another name of devotion. The selfless love and devotion towards the infant or child are grown from the seeds of innocence; no cunning, scheming, selfish motives here. The act of giving birth is the only moment when both pain and pleasure converge in a moment of time. It is in the manner of the sharp point of a needle, astride upon that point are both pain and pleasure, simultaneously assailing the female that is undergoing the miracle of childbirth. This is the only instance where both pain and pleasure work in unison, also a miracle. This is the second miracle. Before the childbirth, the lady was a woman. After the childbirth, the woman is transformed into a mother. This is a revolutionary act an revolutionary happening; in the manner of silkworm getting transformed into some winged angel a miracle. This is the third miracle. This experience of transformation into motherhood is a privilege reserved exclusively for women. Men do not undergo such miraculous transformation.

But the female protagonists in her latest novel *Custody* travel in two different directions, one is Shagun in modern and the other is Ishita in traditional. Therefore the study analyses how the modern motherhood of Shagun makes her manipulate her children for the sake of her self-actualization and infidelity and how Ishita's infertility with the sense of traditional notion of motherhood makes her accept the modern concept of remarriage.

Raman is a fast rising marketing executive at a global drinks company; Shagun is his extraordinarily beautiful wife. With his glittering future, her vivid beauty, and their two children are eight year old Arjun who looks just

like her and two year old Roohi who looks just like him and the pair appears to have everything. Then Shagun meets Raman's dynamic boss, Ashok and everything changes. In an official party, Shagun is introduced to Ashok Khanna, the foreign return boss of Raman.

One week later, Ashok seeks the interest of Shagun to act in their company's advertisement. Raman encourages Shagun to act as he has known that modeling was Shagun's dream before marriage but that career had been strongly objected by her mother as she felt that modeling would bring all kinds of lechery near her extremely beautiful daughter. The shooting days bring Ashok and Shagun closer and open before her a new vista in modeling field. But this exploration is objected by Raman, from then on, a curtain is drawn between her normal life with Raman and another secret one with Ashok.

The Mang-oh Advertisement has been dubbed in several Indian Languages and offers are coming for Shagun to act in other films too. So he wants to go to Bombay to generate a portfolio, but Raman objects it as he does not trust the world when it comes to his wife but Shagun feels it as his patriarchal oppression. As Raman has a hectic schedule of travelling for few months, he has requested his parents to take care of his family. When the elder Kaushiks have visited their son's family, they receive an unpleasant welcome from their daughter-in-law. They feel very strange. Mrs.Sabharwal, mother of Shagun, who senses first that something is wrong with her daughter. Therefore she invites Shagun to stay with her as Raman is out of station. Shagun has rejected her mother's offer. Instead she requests her mother to stay with her children for two days as she has to move out to visit a friend in Bareilly. Thus she lies to her mother to lie down with Ashok in Bombay. When Shagun has returned,

the radiance on her face sounds an alarm in her mother's mind. Hence, she recites the Gayathri Mantra, praying for the protection of her daughter's family life.

Shagun's infidelity leads her complete rejection of her children at daytime and husband at night. In course of time, Raman too starts to suspect Shagun due to her odd behaviour and constant lies. Shagun has decided to go once for all, but she hesitates a little only for her children, to proceed with her plan. She cannot leave them as well as cannot take them with her due to the transferable job of Ashok. Ashok continuously presses Shagun to take a decision and at the same time seduce her mind and body making her unable to act according to her consciousness. He speaks ill of the marrow social set up of India to make her to break out of her traditional and sentimental shell. But the motherhood of Shagun in the novel *Custody* speaks as: "Well, do it quickly, whatever you have to do. My life is a nightmare. It is hard to be a wife when your heart is somewhere else. If only I were not a mother, how easy it would be. To leave him, to live with you, just be happy." (Kapur 87)

Meanwhile Raman has smelt the adultery of his wife with his boss. He gets angry with her, at the same time compels her to go for a family counselling for the sale of children, but in vain. Shagun cannot stop her to visit to Ashok whom she believes as her future. When Ashok is transferred to New York on punishment, Shagun stops her staying with Raman especially during night. She does not have any sense of guilt over her activities.

Arjun starts to spend as much time as he can in his friend's houses. Roohi reflects it in constant loud wails which grate on all their nerves. So

Raman takes care of her needs and does not allow her to depend on servants. Shortly after this massacre of a family, Raman has heart attack due to his mental pressure. In the hospital, Raman's parents have to take care of their son as their daughter-in-law is not ready to stay with their son.

During the absence of Raman, Shagun tries to get the opinion of Arjun, how he will feel if his father is not with them. So Arjun has the feeling that his father is going to die. Thus, instead of preparing the boy, she has left him more anxious. After Raman's discharge also, Shagun has started living with her children and is adamant not to enter the bed room because she knows well that her husband is waiting for some gesture to forgive her completely.

On the day of Ashok's return from New York, Shagun visits him to say goodbye due to the children's behaviour, her mother's pressure and Raman's unspoken hopes. But Ashok does not let her leave. Mrs.Sabharwal is given the task of explaining to a bewildered son-in-law that Shagun does not intend to return. All of a sudden the cardiac patient is left with his hopelessness and two suddenly motherless children. While the children demand for their mother, he distracts them with lies. But as the days passed, he has informed the kids that their mother loves them but she has left of her own accord. They have to be brave and learn to get along without her.

Arjun's progress in studies goes down as his mother fails to take care of his tests. When the teacher demands to get the test papers signed, Arjun forges his mother's signature. Unlike at their own home, during bed times the kids cannot enjoy the comfort of their mother as she is always busy with their

uncle in the next room. That room is always filled with their smile and the smell of liquor and tobacco, consequently Arjun gets irritated and Roohi has nightmares. Shagun never allows the kids to watch television during evening times as Ashok gets mood out due to its noise. Thus the mother's world is more occupied by her lover than by her kids and they are often left under the care of the servants.

For Raman, getting divorced on mutual consent becomes tough. So Shagun does not allow the children to talk with their father. When Raman demands to talk with them, it is said that the children are not ready to talk with him as they are afraid of him. Due to this battle, Arjun feels ashamed to go to school as he feels that everyone in the school may know his story and laugh at him. Ashok easily understands what the exact problem is, so he convinces Shagun to send Arjun to a boarding school. However Arjun raises a lot of questions against this plan, gradually he accepts it since he feels that the people in the new environment will not question about his parent's separation. When Raman has taken a stay order against the plan of sending Arjun to boarding school, it is cunningly proved to the court that the child has personally rejected his father and personally chosen the boarding school.

Shagun bridges a wall between the son and the father. When Ashok has the posting at United state, for her own benefits, she manipulates the kids as the third man in the game and this time the game is different, "I want divorce . . . I will never free you. Never. So take the children and give the divorce" (Kapur 240). Raman's love of children initiates the divorce on mutual consent and gives the chance to Shagun to win the game. Shagun gives up all ownership of their joint assets including children and gets visitation rights in the holidays.

When Roohi refuses to leave her mother, she is threatened in the name of the police and she is informed that it is the mistake of her father.

In the same apartment of Kaushik, live Mr. and Mrs. Rojaro with their only and divorced daughter, Ishita. She is very ambitious to get a government job but she is forced to marry Suryakantha. The elders in the family always consider that producing grandchildren is the moral obligation of the daughter-in-law. Unfortunately, at the same time of medical examination it is proved that Ishita cannot conceive naturally, therefore it is decided to try with lab. Before and after lab, Ishita spends her whole time in prayer as she likes kids and her life also will be saved if she has a baby, “Prayers, prayers, more prayers. Please stay, please grow. You are my only chance of happiness. So many people to love you, just come into the world. I beg you. But it wouldn’t. Even with more hormones it wouldn’t”. (Kapur 64)

Ishita loses the baby due to her over stress, so within the night, the warm atmosphere in the house is changed and they demand for divorce. After the divorce, while Ishita joins in a non governmental organization to teach English to slum children, her parents are interested in arranging the second marriage for her. Instead of remarriage, Ishita wants to adopt a baby to make her life full and happy but her notion of remarriage gets a chance when she meets Roohi and Raman. In course of time, Ishita feels that Roohi and her father are becoming the light of her life, so she marries Raman. Ishita takes the sole responsibility of Roohi’s happiness, first of all she makes change in the routine and does not leave her with the servants.

Like a story, Ishita narrates Roohi about the reason behind her marriage with her father and gives the guarantee that the new mother will never leave her daughter and father. Ishita strongly opposes to send Roohi to visit her natural mother as she will get confused over hanging two mothers and get nightmares after her journey to united states. It makes Shagun rage double, so she asks Arjun to remind Roohi of her natural mother. To keep her daughter forever in her life, Ishita keeps fasting, turns religious and surreptitiously visits astrologers which she has refused to do to save her first marriage. After a long custody battle, Ishita wins Roohi and Shagun wins Arjun as per the wish of the children.

The novel has so many themes like family dynamics, impact of western influences on the Indian family system, human relationship and impact of divorce on children and family. The chapter deals with the two versions of motherhood in the modern and westernized world. One type of mother, a minority in number, like Shagun, gives birth for the satisfaction of their husband or family and is ready to reject them in search of their own identity or new life with someone else. The other type, a majority in number, like Ishita, gives birth to or adopts babies as a treasure considering them the best part of their life.

Though Shagun bore the kids for the sake of Raman and his family, she loves them wholeheartedly still she meets Ashok. Then her world is completely occupied by her enjoyments with him and concern for him. She moves out with Ashok as he has given the permission to keep her children with her but if Ashok does not give that promise, then also she will do the same. She misunderstands that the kids especially Arjun completely loves only

his mother, but that is a wrong assumption because he loves his father too, that is why he has phoned his father and has met him secretly.

As he loves his father, he does not like the presence of Ishita in his father's life but he accepts his mother's love for Ashok as he does not want to give stress to his mother. Shagun is ready to leave the children with Raman to get a divorce. After living together with Ashok, she never asks Ashok to compromise anything for the children instead she makes the children compromise on the love, care and affection of their mother for the sake of Ashok. After her marriage with Ashok also, the emails from Shagun to her mother speaks more about her happy life with Ashok and her career and less about the children.

Ishita is the epitome of Indian traditional women though she is educated and modernized like Shagun. She is very ambitious regarding her career before and after marriage but she is very flexible where it is really needed for the harmony of the family at the same time she shows her self pride wherever needed. She accepts her marriage with Suryakantha according to her parent's willingness to maintain the harmony in the house but does not want to obey her parents when they asked her to stay in her in-laws home even after they regard her as useless.

She is adamant that not to have remarried as every man will be the same like her husband but becomes supple when she observes the longing of a kid for motherly care and affection and she marries Raman not for him but for Roohi. Unlike Shagun, Ishita spends more time for Roohi's education,

boosting up her talents and teaching her moral values, at the same time she does not fail to give her love for Raman.

Thus, for Shagun, establishment of her own identity and her own interest in life are more important than the life of her children. She behaves as if the shifting from Raman to Ashok is as natural as changing of clothe for her personal enrichment. It could be right if she is only an individual but it is painful and questionable when the shifting is done by a mother because children won't sincerely accept the swerving parents.

Individual prosperity should be accepted but that prosperity is meaningless if achieved by crushing the minds of the next generation without even humanitarian attitude. Indian tradition might have undergone so many changes due to westernization but few things are unchangeable like motherhood. The tenderness and sacrificing nature of motherhood is the real beauty and pride of not only an Indian woman but also for any woman in this world. Over all, motherhood is not a tradition, it is divinity itself.

The chapter attempts to analyse the major themes of the novel and given the consequences of marital discord in the lives of both Shagun and Ishita. Also the contradictory portrayal of Shagun and Ishita by the author is analysed in the view of motherhood. The next chapter is going to analysis the characters psychological disorder of *custody*.

Chapter Three

Custody: A Psychoanalysis through Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is one of the most famous person in psychology. Even though most of his ideas have been abandoned by modern psychology, his psychoanalytic theory formed the basis for many current psychodynamic theories. Freud was the first to discuss the unconscious mind and its role in human behavior. Freud believed that there were three levels of consciousness. First is the unconscious mind, which exists outside of one's awareness at all times. Next is the preconscious mind, which includes all information that you are not currently aware of but that can be recalled. Finally, the conscious mind is your current state of awareness.

Sigmund Freud, often known as the father of psychoanalysis is one of the most important figures in the early development of the field of psychology. An Austrian neuroscientist, he was one of the most important thinkers of the early twentieth century and pioneered many psychological concepts, including the unconscious, repression, psychoanalysis, and therapy.

Freud was active during the early twentieth century and was a notable figure in both Europe and America. He resided in Vienna for most of his life, along with his wife and children, and he practiced psychoanalysis and wrote prolifically on a variety of topics, including psychology, literature, and religion. Freud gained a dedicated following, with many other scientists and intellectuals influenced by his work. Fleeing the rising power of the Nazis, Freud immigrated to London in 1938, where he continued to write and practice. After suffering cancer in his jaw, he passed away in 1939.

There are three parts of the personality according to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. They are the Id, Super-ego, and Ego. The id is the first to develop,

the ego is second, and the super-ego is the last to develop. The id is the biological component of the personality and includes one's instincts. The id operates the unconscious mind. It is like the little devil sitting on the cartoon character's shoulder which is always selfish and needy. It operates according to the pleasure principle. The pleasure principle is the idea that all of the needs should be met immediately. Then there is the super-ego. The super-ego exists in all three levels of consciousness. The super-ego is like the little angel. It is always concerned with what is socially acceptable. The super-ego pushes one to obtain the ego ideal, or one's view of what is right. It also represents conscience, or view of what is considered to be wrong.

In psychology, Alienation is a state of separation from one's environment, peer group, family or self or feeling estranged. It is an ambiguous idea in spite of its notoriety in examination of contemporary life. The sufferers are typically uncertain and unhappy, frequently turning to alternative ways of life in quest of meaning. It is a conceivable early symptom of identity crisis or schizophrenia; may contribute suicide and violence. Before 1950's and 1960's, psychoanalytic perspectives and theories that emphasize the role of unconscious processes in the assurance of both normal and abnormal were prominent. Sigmund Freud developed new system of comprehending the way that individual's minds work, and another method for treating mental behavior called psychoanalysis.

He trusted that the bad experience which individuals have as children can influence their emotional health as grown ups, and that by conversing with a mentally ill person about their past memories of life and feeling, the concealed reasons for their sickness can be found. He wrote *The Ego and the Id* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*. His thoughts, particularly about the significance of sex, influenced the way

that individuals thought in the twentieth century be found. Freud's theories are highly controversial today. For instance, he has been criticized for his lack of knowledge about women and for sexist notions in his theories about sexual development, hysteria, and penis envy. People are skeptical about the legitimacy of Freud's theories because they lack the scientific evidence that psychological theories have today. However, it remains true that Freud had a significant and lasting influence on the field of psychology. He provided a foundation for many concepts that psychologists used and continue to use to make new discoveries. Perhaps Freud's most important contribution to the field of psychology was the development of talk therapy as an approach to treating mental health problems.

In addition to serving as the basis for psychoanalysis, talk therapy is now part of many psychotherapeutic interventions designed to help people overcome psychological distress and behavioral problems. Prior to the works of Freud, many people believed that behavior was inexplicable. He developed the idea of the unconscious as being the hidden motivation behind what we do. For instance, his work on dream interpretation suggested that our real feelings and desires lie underneath the surface of conscious life. Freud believed that childhood experiences impact adulthood specifically, traumatic experiences that we have as children can manifest as mental health issues when we are adults. While childhood experiences are not the only contributing factors to mental health during adulthood, Freud laid the foundation for a person's childhood to be taken into consideration during therapy and when diagnosing.

Literary scholars and students alike often analyze texts through a Freudian lens. Freud's theories created an opportunity to understand fictional characters and even their authors based on what is written or what a reader can interpret from the text on topics such as dreams, sexuality, and personality.

Psychoanalysis is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as, A therapeutic method originated by Sigmund Freud for treating mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious element in the patient's mind and bringing the repressed fears and conflict into the conscious mind, using techniques such as dream interpretation and free association. Freud began his studies on psychoanalysis in collaboration with Dr. Josef Breuer in the study of Anna O case. Anna was subjected to both physical and psychological disturbances, such as not being able to drink water out of fear. Breuer and Freud both found that hypnosis was a great help in discovering more about Anna and her treatment.

The research and ideas behind the study of Anna was highly referenced in Freud's lectures on the origin and development of psychoanalysis. These observations led Freud to theorize that the problems faced by hysterical patients could be associated to painful childhood experiences that could not be recalled. The influence of these lost memories shaped the feelings, thoughts and behavior of patients. These studies contributed to the development of Psychoanalysis Theory for interpretation of literary texts. Freud's major ideas include Unconscious, Repression, Sublimation. The Tripartite Psyche Id, Super-Ego, Ego. Dream Work and Freudian Slips. By applying Psychoanalysis Theory and a few major concepts of Freud, the novel *Custody* is analyzed to draw insight and inference about the problems which are creeping slowly in the present society, which if not removed from its crux will spoil the heritage, culture and richness that is prevalent in the society and nation.

The ego operates in your preconscious and conscious mind. The ego is the part of the personality that makes your decisions, this is like the cartoon character in the example. The ego is in the middle, makes the decision, and faces the consequences. The ego operates

according to the reality principle. The reality principle is the idea that the desires of the id must be satisfied in a method that is both socially appropriate and realistic. The ego must mediate the demands of the id, the super-ego, and reality.

Sigmund Freud's theories and work helped shape current views of dreams, childhood, personality, memory, sexuality, and therapy. Freud's work also laid the foundation for many other theorists to formulate ideas, while others developed new theories in opposition to his ideas. Freud's theories were enormously influential but subject to considerable criticism both now and during his life. However, his ideas have become interwoven into the fabric of our culture, with terms such as Freudian slip, repression, and denial appearing regularly in everyday language.

Freud's theories include Unconscious mind, which is one of his most enduring ideas, that the mind is a reservoir of thoughts, memories, and emotions that lie outside the awareness of the conscious mind. Freud proposed that personality was made up of three key elements, the Id, the Ego, and the Super-ego. The ego is the conscious state, the id is the unconscious, and the super-ego is the moral or ethical framework that regulates how the ego operates. Freud claimed that two classes of instincts, life and death, dictated human behavior. Life instincts include sexual procreation, survival and pleasure death instincts include aggression, self harm, and destruction. Freud's theory of psychosexual development posits that there are five stages of growth in which people's personalities and sexual selves evolve. These phases are the oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latent stage, and genital stage. Freud suggested that people use defense mechanisms to avoid anxiety. These mechanisms include displacement, repression, sublimation, and regression.

Custody by Manju Kapur deals with the sufferings of broken marriage that affects the psyche of the children. Functioning of psyche is given more importance in

all characters, According to Sigmund Freud repressed wishes plays main role in unconscious mind. Freud in his work *The Unconscious* says "In psychoanalytic practice we are accustomed to speak of unconscious love, hate, anger etc." (Freud 126) A sense of love flourishes between Shagun and Ashok in the beginning of the novel. Shagun's guilt makes her to think that everyone is watching her immoral behavior what Freud calls in his *The Ego and the Id* "Unconscious consciousness of guilt" (Freud 10).

Custody can be interpreted in psychoanalytical perspective. There is a lot of psychological trauma and emotional imbalance experienced by all the characters in the novel. Shagun has inner conflict between her Unconscious and her Conscious mind. The story speaks about emerging group of successful, educated young Indians who can choose the direction of their destiny so easily no matter what the underlying moral implications are like. Kapur's portrays in *Custody* with the Indian marriages that collapse, social hypocrisies and fights for kids that intertwine with conflict and anguish in order to depict a worldwide reality politics of unequal power relations and possessiveness in normative patriarchal families which is a site for oppression, constraint, violence, disintegration and possessiveness.

Shagun and Ishita are two contradict women facing many psychological disorders. Shagun is an example of id, ego and super- ego. The id is the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy basic urges, needs, and desires. Shagun's unconscious psyche work to satisfy her desire. She is a married young beautiful woman with two children. To live a sophisticated life which Raman could not able to give Shagun moved with Ashok Khanna, who is the boss of Raman.

Through her twenties she had presumed herself content, knowing she had much to be thankful for, healthy children, comfort, and money. Now the destroyer was in her heart, threatening what she had once held dear. “All her energy was spent in keeping secrets. She had to be constantly vigilant, continuously invent excuse, convincingly justify absence from home, phone calls, even a preoccupied expression” (Kapur 33).

Ishita also had a instinct to continue her relationship with Suryakanta. Ishita knows that she wants to faced the broken marriage but she expect to live with her husband “The only way to be close to him was to shut her eyes and fantasize herself back to the love they had once shared” (Kapur 124). Even though, he avoids her she expected to be with him.

The ego is “that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world”(Freud 25). The ego is the only part of the conscious personality. It’s what the person is aware of when they think about themselves, and is what they usually try to project toward others.

The ego develops to mediate between the unrealistic id and the external real world. It is the decision making component of personality. Ideally, the ego works by reason, whereas the id is chaotic and unreasonable. The ego operates according to the reality principle, working out realistic ways of satisfying the id’s demands, often compromising or postponing satisfaction to avoid negative consequences of society.

In reality shagun start to showed her instinct through her behavior. She maintains distance from her husband and children. Shagun’s instinct starts to express

in real. when she met Ashok Khanna she is only having a desire but in reality she is ready to marry him. she also accuses Raman for her behavior.

When Raman returned he wondered how he had never seen the guilt that was so evident in every gesture, every word A lack of easiness, forced attention, periods of abstraction. Yes, that is how the faithless behaved (Kapur 86).

Ishita accept the reality but she cannot able to move on even though, she was heavily wounded by her husband's house she wants to be with him.

In the dark watches of the night Ishita thought they were right, she was shameless. Who stayed where they were not wanted? When she looked in the mirror she saw a plain unloved face, eyes without expression, dull skin, dry lips. She had lost all the weight she had put on since her marriage, her collar bones stuck out, her breasts had shrunk. Even the beggars at the street crossings looked mor lively than she (Kapur70).

The Super-ego can be thought of as a type of conscience that punishes misbehavior with feelings of guilt. For example, for having extra-marital affairs." Problems in super-ego. They may feel isolated, experience depression, self harm, or fantasize about hurting themselves or others. A harsh super-ego can lead people to push others away and can also cause a person to feel stagnant at work or in a relationship.

The super-ego is a cluster of internalized parental or societal moral values and censoring stances that are held within the person's psyche and impact his or her thoughts, feelings, and behavior. The super-ego is present in the conscious,

preconscious, and unconscious. The super-ego consists of two systems: The conscience and the ideal self. The conscience is our inner voice that tells us when we have done something wrong. The conscience can punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt. The Super-ego can be thought of as a type of conscience that punishes misbehavior with feelings of guilt.

Shagun feels superego through her guilty feeling she faced the guilty conscious for two times the first time is when Raman came to know about her ill relationship with Ashok Khanna.

It was hard for him to look at her, the fear in her face was as apparent as the guilt, but to come out with an accusation was to make the nightmare still more real. But he had to, and when dinner was cleared and the servants gone, he started, praying for inspiration, for something to say that would make her see sense (Kapur 87).

They spent the night in his house, and the next morning she cried as she described the horrible guilt, the children behavior, her mother's pressure, Raman's unspoken hopes. Everybody involved with her had suffered. She had come to say goodbye, she said, wrapping her long white arms around him, bringing his face close to hers, feeling the dampness of his breath upon her skin, breathing in his sophisticated scents (Kapur 106).

The kids find their own ways to handle the crisis because they are confused and feel isolated loyalties swarm around them, tossing them into tough and emotionally disturbing situations with their parents. And for any child, having to choose between the

parents is the hardest and most emotionally devastating thing to battle with. Their lives are shot and crushed by the ever slow, crushing wheels of the rigid legal system in India. Worst of all he begins to realize that marriage to Shagun to whom he loved blindly had become a big mistake, one for which his kids too would pay a very heavy price. That turns into the question for Raman and Shagun. *Custody* is the story of how family love can break down into an obsession to possess kids, soul and body, and a chilling critique of the Indian legal system.

Shagun went to the extent of thinking her children as a burden. This shows she fails her motherly love “*Custody* raises the issue of motherhood. The biological and stepmother Motherhood is seen as an institution that resists or limits the freedom of a woman” (Deepa 75). Ashok seems to be morale less because he always loves money and physical intimacy. He gains money from Raman and pleasure from Shagun. Shagan deceives herself by believing him “Freud and Lacan argued that people have an almost infinite capacity to deceive themselves. This is especially true when they are making judgment about themselves or when they are contemplating their own desire and their own image” (Hill 18).

Hopelessness filled Ishita and Raman because they undergo same suffering. He is deceived by Shagun and by Surya Kantha. They both underwent physical and psychological sufferings. Raman undertook physical suffering when he is admitted in hospital and suffers psychologically due to his separation from wife and children. Ishita feels physical sufferings when she undergoes painful medical treatment regarding insertion of eggs in uterus and suffers psychologically when she is separated from her husband. This suits what Freud says in his *The Ego and the Id*,

Psycho Physiology has fully discussed the manner in which a person's own body attains its special position among other objects in the world of perception. Pain seems to play a part in the process and the way which we gain new knowledge of our organs during painful illness is perhaps a model of the way by which in general we arrive at the idea of our body. (Kapur 11)

Children suffer a lot when they miss their father. Arjun did not speak to anyone. He considers Ashok as an alien who separates him from father. "The world is very chaotic place for infants, where meaning is not fixed. In the whole animal kingdom, human infants are the most, disorganized and most helpless, for the longest period" (Hill 71). Arjun feels helpless in studies after being separated from his father. He feels dejected in food and studies. Whenever he asks about father, Shagun consoles his son by portraying his father as a sadist man and murderer. He considers Ashok as a demon who separates him from the love of his mother. This best suits Lacan's concept "The symbolic father is not the same as the biological father whose sperm helped create the subject. The symbolic father is any agency that separated the young subject from its mother" (Homer 60). For Arjun, Ashok is a symbolic father because he separates him from his mother. He suffers a lot due to lack of mother and father's affection.

Raman is forced to lie to his children when they ask for their mother. He says Shagun has gone to take care of their grandmother. Arjun can see through his father's lies. Arjun and Roohi's education also gets affected because of these problems. Roohi's teacher complains to Shagun that Roohi has become quiet and absent minded in class. Arjun's Mathematics and English marks go down when he is in the custody of his new legal step father, Ashok Khanna who is not as caring as his biological father Raman, who can teach

him both the subjects. Arjun also forges his mother Shagun's signature in the test papers in which he has scored low marks and hands them over to the teacher.

The moral psyche and children's psychology is at stake because of the divorce issue between Raman and Shagun. In the divorce and custody paper, Raman accuses Shagun and Ashok of "exposure to him threatened the minors' psychological wellbeing she herself was an evil moral influence" (Kapur 137). The children, who are exposed to such emotional imbalance in their early childhood, are at the risk of being affected by Psychological disorder. Aptly Shagun poisons her children's mind constantly by stating that Raman is trying to kill her by taking them away from her, which Roohi takes literally and says to her brother Arjun, "Papa is trying to kill mama" (Kapur 138).

The method that Freud employed for interpreting the dream is,

The repressed material itself will never occur directly to the patient but will be expressed allusively, in the form a substitutive association. Hence the analyst must master the art of interpretation, since he must infer the unconscious or repressed material from the patient's allusion or recognize its character from the associations the patient makes (Habib 576).

This unconscious repressed emotion which comes as dream is called Dream Distortion which means. The visual images in dreams are allusive or symbolically represent the original context which is censored by Ego. The original content of the dream may have some socially and morally unaccepted content that will be stopped by Ego even during sleep. To escape the censorship of Ego the unconscious repressed desire disguise itself in visual images which are allusive or symbolically represent the original content. This

process is called by Freud as Dream Distortion. In case of Arjun his dreams clearly portray or signify the conflict, chaos, and mental torture that are undergone by the child who is in a boarding school because of his parent's divorce. Dreams are not only expression of repressed desire but also pressure releasing valve of the human body. Freud defines "a dream as the disguised fulfillment of repressed wish." (Habib 575) but it also expresses the repressed conflict in the mind.

Arjun also is continuously haunted by dreams in his sleep. These dreams are considered by Freud as the expression of a repressed desire, they represent the unconscious desires, "dreams are a language, the language of the unconscious and of repressed desire." (Nayar 67)

Arjun gets his first dream when he is informed by Shagun that he will be shifted to boarding school named Dehradun Public Academy, where Ashok was an alumnus. Arjun gets his first dream when he is returning from Dehradun Public Academy School after his first visit."In his dreams there was a large playing field covered with stubbled yellowing grass. A pavilion at one end was filled with boys, they were all looking at him running, but he was alone. He didn't know where he has to run to, just that his life depended on winning. Everybody clapped. He looked around for his father, but he was not visible." (Kapur 187-188)

Arjun again gets dreams the next night but this time in his dream he is running in the mist, the boy who had showed him around boarding School, he could see the boy in his dream and as the boy comes near him he is featureless. And the third time the dream occurs is when he visits Raman and Ishita for a few days, That night again he dreamt of a large playing field. This time he was running in circles, sweat dripping from his body. All around him were impenetrable hedges, and beyond those were boundary walls, high walls with

iron barred gates, guarded by men in sentry type kiosks. (Kapur 214) When these dreams of Arjun are interpreted using Freudian approach, it symbolizes that he has been missing Raman and he is not able to decide which father to choose Raman or Ashok biological or legal. The displacement of two father figures in dreams is represented symbolically as the guards, and the boy who had shown him around boarding school represents the new inhospitable place where he has to go for studying.

Arjun is smart enough to understand that he is haunted by dreams only when he is troubled by his parents. He is also sure that no one except him knows that he has been getting dreams as no one can understand what is going on in his new life with Ashok and Shagun. Dreams act as representing the desire of the mind. Arjun and Roohi, are portrayed as children who have to face the bitter side of divorce and custody case fought by Shagun and Raman. They are made to suffer from psychological trauma and parental alienation. Arjun's subjected to dreams that symbolize confusion in his unconscious mind. Parents must be aware of the after math of divorce upon children who are the future pillars of the nation.

Manju Kapur used Freud's psychoanalysis in different way. Every character in the novel *custody* undergone psychological disorder because of the family set up. The next chapter is going to deal with narrative style and techniques of Manju Kapur.

Chapter four

Style and Narrative Techniques

Narrative techniques in writing are the literary methods of using plot, setting, theme, style, and characters to create details that can be visualized by the reader. Narrative techniques provide deeper meaning for the reader and help the reader use imagination to visualize situations. Narrative literary techniques are also known as literary devices. Before we look too closely at narrative techniques, it is important to understand that literary elements in narratives include such things as the setting, plot, theme, style or structure, characters, and perspective, or voice of the story, since literary techniques are the best understood in the context of one of these elements. Narrative techniques provide deeper meaning for the reader and help the reader use imagination to visualize situations.

Common technique relevant to plot, which is the sequence of events that make up a narrative, include backstory, flashback, flash-forward, and foreshadowing. Common techniques relevant to narrative perspective, or who is telling the story, including first person, second person, third person, and third person omniscient. The plot of a story is the sequence of events that shape a broader narrative, with every event causing or affecting each other. In other words, plot is a series of causes and effects which shape the story as a whole.

Manju Kapur is famous for her writing style, which depicts pre independence to post independence. She has explored the theme of loneliness, mental struggle, suppression, sex abuse and gender space. She is a teacher of English Literature at Delhi University. Hence her protagonists are also well educated and their education leads them to be independent thinking. It helps them to take a bold stand against the

society which is ready to tie them down with patriarchal rules and regulations. They understand the value of education as it is the only way to self-reliance. All her novels speak volumes with their language, style and narrative techniques. Her canvas is always larger than life capturing the minute details of everything she sees in life through the prism of family.

Custody is set in the backdrop of urban upper middle-class family of Delhi who despite being affluent are impoverished in values and morals. Kapur explores the hollowness of modern life as the story revolves around Raman and Shagun who are couple along with charismatic Ashok Khanna, Raman's boss and Ishita, a childless divorcee. Kapur uses the institution of marriage in the novel to present the story of four adults and two children. A series of dispute follows along with arguments, heated discussions, exposing the evil side of divorce. The plot revolves around the legal tussle for custody once the marriage of Raman and Shagun falls apart following Shagun's affair with Raman's boss Ashok. The children Arjun and Roohi become mere pawns in their parent's divorce. The novel basically looks closely at the end of a marriage and the effects.

The story setting is the time and place where the story takes place. It can be real or imaginary, but it should be vividly described so that readers can picture it in their minds. The important thing is that the specific setting and the societal and cultural surroundings help to create a unique and believable world for the story. The setting can be used to establish mood and atmosphere or to reveal important plot details.

A theme is a central, unifying idea. It is the bigger issue that emerges as the characters pursue their goals. In *custody*, Manju Kapur deals with the themes of

infidelity, infertility, broken marriage, motherhood, parenthood, modern marriage, betrayal and so on.

Manju Kapur presents one of the aspects of female embodiment, infidelity in her latest novel *Custody*. Infidelity empowers a woman and it reflects and defends women's right to desire, and the pursuit of the fulfillment of female sexual desire. Autonomously decided, infidelity permits women to experience their own sexuality as a pleasurable one as they control their gender, their sexuality and their reproductive potential and it challenges the male domination and patriarchal mechanisms of scrutiny and control over women bodies. Shagun and Raman's marriage has been arranged along standard lines, she the beauty, he the one with brilliant prospects. She meets Ashok Khanna, a corporate man who is seduced by her beauty: "In her color, her greenish eyes and her demeanor, she was a perfect blend of east and west" (Kapur 4).

Manju Kapur has expertise in the art of story-telling. She creates and recreates the story lines of her characters in her popular novel *Custody*. She knows the art of creating a new and energized space for her woman characters using the canvas of socio psychological realism. She is unparalleled in her depiction of the struggling female characters of the middleclass, particularly after getting divorce, in the patriarchal society. She focuses on two significant things in her novel, *Custody* infidelity and infertility. Shagun's infidelity and Ishita's collapse of their marriages. They are destined to lead hopeless life. They get divorce to start a new beginning with their new life partners. They are infertility led to the married, divorced and re-married to reclaim their happy space; however, they could not get what they desired for themselves.

Manju Kapur writes about women's lives through the eyes of a woman. She has presented the problems of the Indian woman in a joint family in a male dominated society. Her novels highlight the issue of patriarchy, which denies woman's voice and freedom. Manju Kapur portrays a truthful picture of the unpleasant condition of the Indian women, their great suffering care and anxieties, their shy or modest character, violent or aggressive, humiliating and degrading treatment in a male dominating society. It also shows the women's marathon struggle for seeking the sense of 'identity' in a totally averse and ungrateful society. In her writings, Manju Kapur has emphasised on the issues in the context of patriarchy; inter-religious marriage; family bond, male-female bond, co-existence of past and present. She has narrated her women protagonists as a victim of biology, gender, domestic violence, and circumstances.

The novel begins with the sad notes buzzing in the lives of Raman and Shagun, who have dramatically lost happiness in their married life. They quarrel and blame for nothing. They are in a fix. They do not know how to settle their matters and continue their life as husband and wife. Their "marriage had been arranged along standard lines; she the beauty, he the one with the brilliant prospects" (Custody 14). But the beauty and the brain fail to harmonize and adjust in a time in spite of all material comforts in the capital of India. The problem is that Raman is stupid rather practical in dealing with his disgruntled wife. He does not have time for his wife, for his children and even for himself. He spends his whole time for the growth of a flourishing soft drinks company. His job addiction appears to have spoiled his family life making Shagun realize that there is nothing left joyful in her married life.

Shagun is also lured by his loving words and genuine style and leaves behind the essential restraints of marriage and breaks its holiness through sexual misbehavior.

But as a married woman she suffers from her love affair, she worries about being caught: “Guilt sees acquisition everywhere in the glance of a servant, the fretful cry of a child, the stranger staring on the street, a driver’s insolent tone ... it was her conscience that made her so uneasy” (Kapur 1). She faces conflict as she neither upholds the strong stoic and self-sacrificing image of her predecessors nor controls her dangerous feminine desires. Her mother who has internalized the subtleties of patriarchy views her as a sexually erring wife, who must be chastised and brought back into the orbit of conservative social morality. She advises her, “The house rests upon a woman. In your children happiness, your husband happiness, lies your own. Anything else is just temporary” (Kapur 80).

Shagun’s mother begs her not to bring shame to the family and be an object to laughter: “You think all wives love their husbands? But they stay married. You are so idealistic. You don’t think about the long term. What about the society? What about your children?” (Kapur 79). Her comments display social attitude and treatment towards a female in extramarital affairs. It also indicates that the support network for the female is inadequate in physical world as society casts an unforgiving darkness on the female who is unfaithful. The novel takes a different stand and it leads to understand the modern life style which the writer mainly focusses. Its protagonist Ishita seems to be a common woman suffering from the infertility problem.

In the case of the children, in another account of a marital conflict, Shagun herself made the decision to separate from her husband, but since she was a homemaker and involved with Raman's boss, she was unable to negotiate a financial settlement with Raman. This division between husband and wife is shown in both storylines as the structure of interpersonal relationships in Indian society and the distinction between divorce among couples with children and nulliparous couples. It

all starts with anomalies that occurred shortly after their marriage; Shagun married Raman, although she didn't like her union from the beginning. She wanted a self-sufficient life and admired the women who worked for modelling agencies. Her innermost desires are nurtured when Raman's boss, Ashok Khanna, gives her a chance to work in an advertisement for their business, fulfilling her childhood dream.

He thought of this opportunity as a gift, knowing the excitement it would provide. When he first knew Shagun, she had wanted to be a model, but her mother was strongly opposed to a career that would allow all kinds of lechery near her lovely daughter. Do what you like after you marry she had said, but after marriage there had been a child.
(Kapur 11)

Kapur also throws light on the other characters involved in this upheaval. A literary character is a person, animal, or object presented as a person in a narrative. There are two required elements of a story; the first being characters, the second is the plot or events of the story. A story must have at least one character, though most stories will have several characters interacting with one another. The role of the characters is for whom the story's events happen as they experience the story's conflict. Raman and Shagun, a couple with two children, reap the monetary benefits and accompanying lifestyle of his work at the Brand, a company that invests largely in the manufacture of soft drinks. As Shagun begins her passionate affair with Ashok, she finds herself struggling to define her roles as wife, mother and lover. When she asks Raman for a divorce, he descends into anger and self-pity as his perfect life unravels around him.

At the other end of the city, in a colony governed by far more traditional bonds, Ishita, a young divorcee, strives to find satisfaction in independence and social work. She is drawn to the divorced Raman and the temptation of familial fulfilment, which has so far evaded her. The novel depicts the world of four major characters Raman kaushik, Shagun, Ashok Khanna and Ishita. Raman, a marketing executive at a global drinks company and his wife Shagun, a beautiful lady with sparkling greenish eyes and their two children Arjun and Roohi. The other characters are Mr. and Mrs.Kaushik parents of Raman. They always support their son in his hard situation. Mrs.Sabharwal was a mother of Shagun. she is a one who always worried about her daughter's behavior and about her life. Mr. and Mrs.Rojora were father and mother of Ishita. Nandan was a lawyer of Raman. He helped in his divorce case. These characters play a vital role. Kapur showed the consequences of each character in both favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

Parallel storylines, which also called as parallel narratives or parallel plots. The story structures where the writer incorporates two or more separate stories. They are usually linked by a common character, event, or theme. The novel has tried to explore the finer nuances of a divorce both pre and post. Not only through the journey of what leads up to one, but also the repercussions of this as well. The story takes us through the life of Raman, who works for The Brand, a leading soft drink manufacturing company. He has this respectable job, gets paid handsomely, and leads a decently content life with his gorgeous wife Shagun, his smart teenager son Arjun and his adorable three-year-old daughter, Roohi.

Parallelly, Ishita, who although not strikingly beautiful, is wise, kind and generous. Ishita gets married and leads a happy life, adapting to her new family, being everybody's favourite. Raman, like a dedicated employee, gets completely absorbed

in his work and starts spending even less time with his family. Shagun, after leading a happily married life so far, decides that she is bored of being just a house-wife and now wants to start working. The twist begins with the entry of Raman's bold and dashing boss, Ashok. For Ashok, it is love-at-first-sight. He manages to somehow convince Shagun that an affair without the knowledge of her husband wouldn't harm anybody. But slowly the relationship begins to get serious and Shagun is forced to choose. Ishita on the other hand is diagnosed as infertile. The happiness in her married life slowly starts fading away. Her family's behaviour changes instantly and she ends up being a divorcee. She then begins to channel her energies into social work and leads a comfortable enough life until, she meets Raman.

Shagun moves abroad, Raman refuses to divorce her and the case is dragged to court, with each party trying to defame the other. As the title *Custody* suggests here begins a crude battle for the guardianship of their children; a lethal game where the innocent children get trapped and are torn between their two sets of parents who later re-marry. Each character has a mind set, unique in its own way, reflecting the modern virtues that we have been adapting. The author manages to create a sublime atmosphere that reveals the various tragedies that a family can go through. The future of the children is at stake. There is screaming, yelling, and all the possible melodrama.

Thus, the author incorporates the story line with parallel narration to emphasize the significance of the characters, Shagun and Ishita. The technique called, parallel line story employed by Kapur renders a clarity of the portrayal of characters and themes. Her writings reflect the experiences of the women in real world. ManjuKapur is highly skilled in dealing with the domestic issues. The female hero of her novels risks the safety of marriage, family and house hold in the quest of autonomy which is smothered by the burden of phallo centrism in society and

plethora of family duties. However, one characteristic that remain intact in every novel of kapur is her fore grounding of vivid shades of man-women relationship. The next chapter sums up all the concepts and the thought which are discussed in the preceeding chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Manju Kapur's fiction stresses on the needs of women for self fulfilment, self-realization, independence, individuality and self actualization. Manju Kapur says "I am interested in the lives of women, whether in the political arena or in the domestic space...what sacrifices do they have to make in order to keep the home fires burning and at what cost to their personal lives do they find some kind of fulfilment outside the home" (Sinha 160)

Custody presents the devastating effects of divorce on different stakeholders of a family the wife, husband, children and in-laws. It opens with the description of the arranged marriage between Shagun and Raman "Raman and Shagun's marriage had been arranged along standard lines, she the beauty, he the one with brilliant prospects!" (Kapur 14). Raman worked hard to give her a good life. She had two lovely children and everything she wanted. In spite of all this, Raman was denied the central position in his family. She was searching for something like passion. She falls in love with Ashok, Raman's boss in the beverage company. Only to marry with him she wants divorce from Raman, and when it is denied she kidnaps the children. The battle runs to the court justice where it is further delayed only to be settled by mutual understanding. Meanwhile, Arjun and Roohi children of Shagun and Raman suffer for no faults of theirs. "Roohi's crying fits, Arjun's traumas and sleepovers at friend's houses, Raman coming home late, late, late, this was the norm" (Kapur 101).

There is another marriage in *Custody* between Ishita and Suryakanta, which fails because of Ishita's infertility. However the most interesting thing is Kapur's idea of bringing together two divorcees, Ishita and Kaman as a successful couple. In this

novel we find Kapur's own definition of marriage .“Marriage is when two people decide to live together forever. Should they change their minds they go to court and get marriage cancelled. Finished. Divorced . They become strangers, sometimes they never see each other again” (Kapur 341).

The *Custody* novel is all about the sufferings, aspiration, childlessness, disloyalty, individuality, new woman. In laws India treat a woman who cannot conceive, redefines the changing parenting scenario in middle class Indian homes are main factor of the novel. So, the novel has been studied by applying a tool of social criticism. Her narratives reveals that women are being protagonist with their own plan and cognition , they would like to sustain individuality and freedom life system , making decision in their life to solve all their problems are being their major agenda and answers worrying to attain all their innate needs and necessities such as freedom of love, affection , caste identity , sterility as a annoyance, divorce problems ,extra and illegal couples marriage affair in search of love, affections and inexpensive freedom etc. The broadened vision of women's in their narratives is a most important of this social system.

Custody reveals the unimagined uncertainties of matrimony. The wife's sense of suffocation, the husband's fear of loneliness and the constant shifting of children, like commodities, from one home to the other are evoked with pain stacking sincerity. The women's question is no longer an issue confined to the possession of woman within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life Manju Kapur being a novelist primarily concerned with the problems of the nearly emerging urban middle class. The female protagonists of her novels protest against male domination and the marginalization of woman. Man has subjugated woman to

his will used to promote his sexual gratification but never has he desired to elevate her to her genuine rank. He has done all that he could to database and enslave her mind.

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent victim and upholder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. However, Manju Kapur seems aware of the fact that the women of India have indeed achieved their success in sixty years of independence, but if there is to be a true female independence, too remains to be done. Readers understand emergence of new women in Manju Kapur's heroines, who do not want to be rubber dolls for others to move as they will. Defying patriarchal notions that enforce women towards domesticity, they assert their individuality and aspire self-reliance through education. They nurture the desire of being independent and leading lives of their own. They want to shoulder responsibilities that go beyond a husband and children. They are not silent rebels but are bold, outspoken, determined and action oriented. All protagonists know they can depend on others to sort out the domestic situation and proceed to tackle it on their own. In spite of getting education and freedom the woman protagonists of Manju Kapur's novels does not blossom into new woman in the real sense. Though they dare to cross one patriarchal threshold, they are caught onto another, where their spirits are curbed and all they do is adjust compromise and adapt.

Chapter two focuses on the marital discord and motherhood. Through the novel she shows the different aspect of contradict women. Shagun and Ishita was portrayed in contradict manner. Shagun neglecting her motherhood. They spend weekends with family, friends, clubs and parties. At one time Shagun discovered that she was pregnant, Arjun was almost eight at that time. She does not like the second baby. "It is not that I'll be thirty. Arjun is just becoming independent, I don't want to

start all over again. Always tied to a child, is that what you want?" (Kapur 18). But Ishita was totally opposite to Shagun. Ishita suffers a lot because of her infertility because of this she faced the broken marriage. It all depended on the type of infertility, and the number of attempts that were made. There were many options even if the normal anatomy was lost, but she had to see the couple before she could give an opinion.

“ All she was looking for was hope, and words such as infertility and loss of normal anatomy did not do the job. With a heavy heart she thought of the pre-marriage emphasis on the girl's homeliness, on the little Suryakanta's she would bring into the world. Mrs Rajora decided her husband was right , she was getting tense for nothing. Ishita and Suryakanta were young, everything would be fine.” (Kapur 53).

Motherhood was totally contrast in the novel *custody*. The novel *Custody* revolves around the custody of children and the identity of woman as mother. Motherhood has been a burning issue for the feminists who want to change it from necessity to choice. In the early years of Women's movements, the feminists appeared to be unsympathetic and radical who felt child bearing and rearing were obstacles for women's progress and advocated the liberation of women from the practice of motherhood. In the research explored the identity of mother in the light of the novel *Custody*.

Chapter three deals with the sufferings of broken marriage that affects the psyche of the children. Freud's Unconscious suggests that repressed wishes play a major role in unconscious mind. Shagun has inner conflict between her Unconscious and her Conscious mind, Raman falls ill when he learns of Shagun's marital affair,

and Arjun and Roohi face difficulty coping with the new environment and parents. The story portrays the stress and anxiety caused in Indian traditional families due to conflicting policies and ideas.

Raman rejects Shagun's proposal of divorce due to his childish attitude and wounded male sense of self. He views his children as his instrumental weapons to fight with Shagun to restore his reputation and subtly let it be called love. Shagun does not want to give up her own life and bliss, and decides not to apologize and return to him. They are strong in their decision of separation. They turn into the most unfortunate ones in the legal battle, realizing that the law was a cut and dried business. Ashok and his children, Arjun and Roohi, are at the stake of a parent's battle of divorce. Ashok is incapable of thinking in non business terms, and his marketing job fills his head with cliché. Roohi is suffering from nerves disorder, and Arjun is being brainwashed by his mother. The court does not provide much support to Raman, and his obsession about his life with Shagun leads to his divorce. Kapur's novel shows how a perfect childhood can get messed up and how the care takers inner selves and their personal desires can take a device on the innocents.

Ishita and Raman both experience physical and psychological suffering due to their separation from their families. Freud's *The Ego and the Id* states that pain plays a part in the process of attaining a special position in the world of perception. Children suffer a lot when they miss their father, with Arjun feeling helpless in studies and dejected in food and studies. The moral psyche and children's psychology are at stake due to the divorce issue between Raman and Shagun, as Raman accuses Shagun and Ashok of exposure to him threatened the minors psychological wellbeing. Arjun's is in the custody of his new legal step father, Ashok Khanna, who is not as caring as his biological father Raman. Arjun also psychologically affect in the novel

through his parents attitude. He was only eight but he can able able to understand his family situation. Shagun and Raman used their children as his weapon to fight.

Through her novel *Custody*, Kapur provides an insight into the elements like unimagined uncertainties of matrimony; the crescendo of divorce and custody battle in all its legal and psychological ugliness. The conflicts that are found in this novel are that all the major characters Shagun, Raman, Ishita and Ashok Khanna become self centered where they forget about the children's future moral and psychological well-being; and the psychological turmoil of the children is revealed indirectly through the characters Arjun and Roohi who are the victims of their parents divorce and custody cases. The cost of adopting western principles is the production of young individuals like Arjun and Roohi who experience chaos and confusion in their childhood which makes their childhood awful and unpleasant to be remembered and cherished. The research has brought forth the psychological trauma and alienation experienced by the two children Arjun and Roohi as well as this trauma is communicated by the children through dreams and their false illness and behavior. The way Manju Kapur weaves narrative techniques to impress the readers in the work custody. Her unique portrayal of character who emphasis the nature of her writing deals with domestic life.

The research attempts to prove the themes, Marital discord and Motherhood through the characters Shagun and Ishita in the novel the contradictory story lines of the characters creates an impact on the mind of typical Indian family of the Post Modern age. The incorporation of Psychoanalysis explores the Psychological imbalance of the characters between conscious and unconscious state. The employment of parallel line narration brings out the significance of the female characters, Shagun and Ishita and also highlights the themes of the novel *Custody*.

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