



SATHYABAMA

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT - I

Indian Literature In English – SHS1204

INTRODUCTION

Indian writing in English began with the contribution of Indian writers writing in English having Indianness in regard to words and style of writing. British rule in India encouraged the growth of the English language to stabilize their power in India. With the spread of English education, Indians began to write in English and giving form to Indian literature. Thus Indian writing in English created a space for themselves dealing with their own themes. Indian writing in English that became a discipline of study in the twentieth century focused more on social issues connected to the freedom movement and other malignant social issues like casteism and communal rivalry. Men dominated the Indian literature. They created women characters as stereotypes and fixed them into restrained gender roles attributing servile status and docile qualities as feminine much different to that of masculine, powerful and domineering.

Literature is the expression of sublime thoughts, impressing the reader's mind with a sense of grandeur and elevates human life to a higher level. The Oral narrative tradition of transmitting literature to the posterity, gave way to written formal literature. With the advent of education and sophistication, literature acquired a colossal growth in diverse literary forms about human life and its experiences and it was used as a medium to communicate the message to massive audience to construct a better society.

Indian writing in English has a vibrant history with gigantic expansion globally. In the beginning the Indian writers were inspired by western models towards prose, translation, biographies and political essays. The first book in English by an

Indian was written in 1793 by Sake Dean Mahomed titled *The Travels of Dean Mahomed*. The emergence of the Indian English novel underwent assorted phases from imitation, assimilation and finally to genuine self expression.

Indian fiction has become a cogent tool for generating thought and bringing about a much-desired reformation and transformation. The first Indian English novel, titled *Rajmohan's Wife* was published in the year 1864 by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and it marked a significant epoch in the history of Indian Writing in English. He is considered to be the father of the novel in Indian literature. *The Poison Tree* (1873) and *Krishnakanta's Will* (1878) were other two popular novels of Chatterjee that prompted Krishna Kripalani to compare him with international novelists:

It was Bankim Chandra who established the novel as a major literary form in India. He had his limitations, he too was romantic, effusive and indulged a little too freely in literary flashes and bombast and was no peer of his great contemporaries, Zola and Dickens, much less of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. There have been better novelists in India since then, but they all stand on Bankim's shoulders (Kripalani 45).

Other contributions in this period were Rajalakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), H. Dutt's *Bijoychand* (1888), Kali Krishna Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881) and Kshetrapal Chakravarti's *Sarata and Hingana* (1895). Rabindranath Tagore entered the realm of literature with the release of his first substantial poems by 1877 and was acclaimed for his best-known works novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas and essays. Initially, he imitated the style of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee until he attained his own

voice in the novels *Binodini* (1902), *Choker Bali* (1903), *Gora* (1910), *The Home and the World* (1916), *Farewell My Friend* (1929) and *Four Chapters* (1934). He exerted prodigious influence on people and created a new awareness to rediscover themselves in relation to time and space.

It was Tagore who laid the foundation for the emergence of English novel translated from Bengali novels thus extending his literary capabilities as an English Translator of his Bengali works in English language. His successors, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan took forward the fiction further in its growth. R.K. Narayan displayed compassionate humanism in his writing and focused on the private lives of the characters, and Mulk Raj Anand dealt with realistic themes and made bold depiction of the misery of the downtrodden and the lower class people. With the arrival of Gandhi, the scenario changed and the writers focused on the theme of freedom in their writing of novels.

Indian independence movement under Gandhi's inspiring leadership in the 1920s changed the panorama into vibrant ambiance and activated everyone into participation. Gandhi's persona not only lighted the political arena but also enlightened the literary field to erupt into vociferous activity. Gandhi invigorated the common men with an ardent enthusiasm to write on social themes and they found a place in par with elite class writer's dominion of literature. Indian fiction in the 1930s attained a blooming colour under the shade of Gandhi and ordinary folk suddenly realized their lives can become the theme of the stories. Gandhi inspired everyone to develop a freedom consciousness and to struggle for India's independence.

A revitalized energy entered into the veins of Indian writers offering an interconnection between India's freedom and Indian English fiction. In the words of M.K. Naik novels became an instrument in the hands of writers focusing on the society with its values thus "Indian society, galvanized into a new social and political awareness, was bound to seek creative expression for its new consciousness" (Naik 57) and to generate expected transformation through fiction writing. The writers fashioned their work exuding nationalism and handled the themes with their own cognizance and sensibilities and responded to Gandhi's clarion call for the independence of the country. There were numerous novels with freedom movement as focal point at this time.

Kandan the Patriot (1932) and *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) of K.S. Venkataramani created ripples among the people provoking them to commit themselves for freedom struggle. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says, "Kandan gained an importance because it was the very image of the excruciating times we were then passing through; ...that his portrait acquired a connotative richness..." (Iyengar 281). *Murugan the Tiller* depicted the message of economic independence of the poor and an evolution of a better society. Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura's* (1938) delineation garners momentum on the political horizon amalgamating the threads of Gandhian revolution of obliterating the social evils. C.D. Narasimhaiah rightly expresses on *Kanthapura*: "The entire action in the novel comes out as an artist's enactment of Nehru's image of the impact of Gandhi on the Indian scene together with a hundred particulars that illuminated many hidden spots in the life of the country during that period" (Narasimhaiah 48).

Gandhi's inspiration on Mulk Raj Anand, impacted him to write the novel *Untouchable* (1935) accentuating the social evil of segregation of the entire society based on the division of labour. His next novel, *Coolie* (1936) emphasized on the desolation of the downtrodden class and the third novel *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) projected a peasant boy from the village experiencing the fierceness of war and the perspicacious understanding guiding to a political awakening.

After independence the novel witnessed the moment of detachment from national history, though it dealt with the theme of independence and those novels were R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), Nayanatara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* (1952), Khwaja Ahmed Abbas *Inquilab* (1955), Nagarajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961) and Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966). In all the novels Gandhi was portrayed as an ideal character and a driving force and the political events from Jallianwala Bagh to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact were given scope of national importance. Meenakshi Mukherjee notices a vast change in the attitude of writers of pre and post independence:

In these novels written in Nineteen Fifties which deal with the same theme, a noticeable distance between the author and the events has crept in, although this does not necessarily result in a better artistic realization of the theme. In *Waiting for Mahatma* and *Chronicles of Kedaram*, the novelists are detached enough from the course of history to treat Gandhi casually as a human being or an idea rather than as an overwhelming symbol, and concentrate on weaving stories of human relationships which only marginally touch upon the struggle (Mukherjee 34).

The country attained freedom and overjoyed with celebration, but the sorrow enveloped with partition, drenched the nation in seething pain. Writers caught the occasion and gave vent to their emotions on partition carnage. The novels of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Raj Gill's *The Rape* (1974), Bonophul's *Betwixt Dream and Reality* (1961), Chaman Lal Nahal's *Azadi* (1977) and Padmini Sengupta's *Red Hibiscus* (1962) narrated the fright and despair of people unexpectedly found in two countries later. When the independent India was in a position of modelling its own structure and mapping its course to national and international matters, literature found its stupendous growth in the search for newer themes.

The themes that reflected the quest for identity in the novels of the time were R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), Raja Rao's *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), M. Anandanarayanan's *The Silver Pilgrimage* (1961), Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* (1991) and *Voices in the City* (1965), Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* (1968), Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffin Dams* (1969), Balachandra Rajan's *Too Long in the West* (1962) and *The Dark Dancer* (1958) and Nayantara Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969).

The history of Indian writing in English was ushering a new era with the novels written during the Eighties and Nineties taking a new trend in its narration. The portrayal of the characters changed in its magnitude. They were demanding for self assertion and individuality. They belonged to any part of the world and were open minded encompassing different cultures, finding new vistas and avenues and expanding to new horizons. Viney Kirpal aptly comments, "The sudden realization of

the reality of history in which the individual has an important role to play is reflected in the novel of the 1980s” (Kirpal xxi).

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) set an innovative tone for the novel of the Eighties. It created a storm in having the vast panorama of the world as its setting; varied culture and religion were fused together; characters moved nationally and internationally. The daring theme and controversial aspects of the novel drew the attention of Makarand Paranjape: “This momentous book really jolted the very foundation of the Indian English novel. Its energy, self-indulgence, irresponsibility, disorder and cockiness really shocked the daylight out of the staid form of the Indian English novel” (Paranjape 220).

Similarly Nayantara Sahgal’s *Plans for Departure* (1985) and *Rich Like Us* (1983) Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay* (1988), Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988), Chaman Lal Nahal’s *Sunrise in Fiji* (1978) and Upamanyu Chatterjee’s *English, August: An Indian Story* (1988) brought forth new energy and freshness to English literature in their themes and techniques. Other renowned contemporary novelists of Indian English literature include Shashi Tharoor, V.S. Naipaul, G.V. Desani, Vikram Seth, O.V. Vijayan, Chitra Banerjee, Arun Joshi, Shobha De, M. Ananthanarayanan, Bhadani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Allan Sealy and others. Arundhati Roy sensitized the world with her book *The God of Small Things* (1997). She received the Booker Prize of 1997 for her work. Her book was an international best-seller overnight. Firdaus Kanga, Sudhir Kakar, Ardeshir Vakil, Chetan Bhagat, Kiran Desai, Hari Kunzuru, Jhumpa Lahiri and Rohinton Mistry are some other prominent writers of Indian origin.

The history of the Indian writing in English has embarked on a journey, encountering radical overhaul at certain junctures generating panoply of fine Indian writers, male and female. The Indian writers of diverse literary forms – poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists have rendered phenomenal contribution to world literature. The arrival of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanyu Chatterjee with their overwhelming originality set a revolutionary trend in the sphere of post- colonial literatures. Pico Iyer has rightly commented on these writers:

They are something different. For one thing they are the products not so much as of a colonial division as of the international culture that has grown up, and they are addressing an audience as mixed up and eclectic and uprooted as themselves. They are the creators and creations of a new post-imperial order (Iyer 49).

A new kaleidoscope is provided by them to glance at the history, politics and individuals with a new sensibility and a new ethos challenging the world towards transformation.

Women writers too established their identity in literature, specifically by their immense contribution in the realm of fiction. They emerged with flamboyant originality and outstanding transparency on women's experiences in the patriarchal society outrageously exposed in their novels. Indian women writers excelled in the exploration of the inner mind of women through their feminine sensibility and sketched women characters with utmost authenticity offering profound psychological significance. The novelists exploited their skill and uncovered audaciously, the physical and psychological torture of women in the male dominated society awakening

the conscience into metamorphosis. Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shobha De, Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapoor and many more carved a permanent feminine space in the history of literature.

Feminism, as a philosophy and movement over the centuries and feminist stalwarts at the helm has created a feminist history. Feminism envelops varied aspects of women's life and experiences, in terms of their social, political and economic situation. The stable male dominated society offered no space for women to involve actively in political, economic, or social affairs. According to Lerner patriarchy is domination, "Patriarchy means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general" (Lerner 505). She says patriarchy accumulates power, "It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power" (Lerner 505).

A movement with its ideas gathered momentum under the term feminism in the beginning of the twentieth century. Feminism has passed through various stages growing in its stature demanding total equality in every sphere. Susan Faludi argued for the treatment of women as equal, "just as deserving of rights and opportunities, just as capable of participating in the world's events" (Faludi 18). The movement's history was divided into three waves by feminists and scholars. The early feminist movement was the first wave feminism, referring to suffrage movement that claimed right for women to vote. Women were considered passive by nature and traditional in their activities. To change the patriarchal mindset and prove women's assertiveness, "The suffragettes smashed the image of women as a passive, dependent creature as effectively as they smashed the plate-glass windows of Regent Street" (Rover 20).

The beginning of 1960s was the commencement of the second wave feminism with women's liberation movement on social and legal rights. The third wave feminism started from 1990 onwards to the present in response to what young women perceived as failures of the second wave. Charlotte Bunch holds the view that feminism as a force must bring transformation to everyone. She is an American activist and Founding Director of the CWGL (Centre for Women's Global Leadership) in Rutgers University. She posted a blog on feminism and posits its meaning for today's society: "Feminism is a transformational force, an individual and social force. It is a way of looking at the world - a questioning of power/domination issues, an affirmation of women's energy" (Bunch).

Mary Wollstonecraft, the eighteenth century thinker, is a prophetic visionary of the past and present times and she is called the first feminist or mother of feminism. Her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) is considered a classic of feminist history and a touchstone for generations of women committed to equality and rights, based on social, political and economic issues. She insisted that women should not be measured by men's standards. Virginia Woolf much influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft says, "she is alive and active, she argues and experiments, we hear her voice and trace her influence even now among the living" (Shukla 53). Wollstonecraft has laid a tradition of feminism through her writing, thus bringing the agendas of women to the centre stage to discuss and debate for a change in the society and for the benefit of one half of the human species.

Virginia Woolf is considered to be one of the greatest writers and a feminist of the twentieth century. She vehemently revolts against the patriarchy that deprives them of education, economic independence, and a domestic space. In *A Room of*

One's Own (1929) she rightly claimed that: “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction” (Shukla 79). Being a rebel, Woolf carves a space for women in English literature and urges them to create their own history and literature.

The foundation of modern feminist movement is laid by the French writer, Simone De Beauvoir. Her best known book *The Second Sex* (1949) is considered as a feminist text. According to Beauvoir, a woman continue to view herself as being inferior and dependent on man as she is given to believe that “the world is masculine on the whole, those who fashioned it, ruled it and still dominate it today are men.” (Beauvoir) Biological difference between man and woman is a fact that has to complement each other. Women’s role as inferior beings is no longer acceptable as they have proved by occupying every professional positions of the society. Simone de Beauvoir asserts that “one is not born but becomes a woman” (Beauvoir 14) because the environment in which women are born teach them to behave and live to fulfil the expected norms of patriarchy. Toril Moi claims that Beauvoir was “the greatest feminist theorist of the twentieth century” (Moi 3).

Betty Friedan, the American feminist crusader is deemed as one of the major architects of 1960s movement for women’s liberation. She is the author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) which is considered as one among the influential books of the twentieth century. She contends women need political and legal equality to remove the inferior status in the society. The National Organization for Women (NOW) which had been established in 1966 and Friedan was appointed its president to transform the social fabric of women’s life with economic equality. She called for a new social policy as, “new thinking about competitiveness ... new thinking about

work in terms of time and family, and new definitions of success” (Friedan 46). This period as a time of incredible energy that created optimistic belief towards radical social change with the emergence of innumerable feminist writers.

Feminists demand for inclusion of women in the man-made political and economic structures and for recognition of her values, qualities and roles. In today’s scenario the term ‘postmodern’ is used to illustrate the rapidly changing societies where everything seems transitory. Judith Squires explores postmodern strategy of ‘inclusion’ of women without gender discrimination in the society. According to Judith, “The strategy of inclusion seeks gender-neutrality; the strategy of reversal seeks recognition for a specifically female gendered identity” (Squires 3). Thus female gendered identity is treated with equality and respect in the society.

Feminist writers contributed a substantial body of literature; they are Betty and Theodore Roszak’s *Masculine/Feminine* (1969), Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* (1970), Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* (1970), Robin Morgan’s *Sisterhood is powerful* (1970), Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Eva Figes’ *Patriarchal Attitudes* (1970), Michelle Wandor’s *The Body Politic* (1972) and Leslie Tanner’s *Voices from Women Liberation* (1970). These writers focused on a social system in need of transformation as it is based on female subordination and male domination.

The emergence of women novelists in the period of the nineteenth century was a landmark in the history of literature and they propounded a new direction in the writing of English fiction. During a conversation between K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar and an English Professor of a Scottish University in 1951, the English professor exclaimed

at the steady growth of women writers in each year with their significant contributions to the English novel.

It was almost a case of more women than men, qualitatively as well as numerically! Jane Austen and George Eliot, the Brontes and Mrs. Gaskell, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf had established their own 'great tradition', and today a woman novelist in England, lacking neither a room of her own nor financial independence, can ordinarily hold her own with the male of the species (Iyengar 435).

Women writers deliberately climbed the ladder of success contributing towards collective literary history, and feminism have played a significant role in shaping the growth in women's writing.

There are different types of feminism such as Liberal feminism, Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Ecofeminism, Black Feminism and many more with overlapping beliefs. Liberal feminism argues that women must have political and legal equality encouraging individual freedom. Women who achieve self-liberation will be able to attain employment opportunities thus to transcend oneself in economic sphere. Liberal feminist observes lack of transcendence of the social system as the impediment towards human dignity.

Socialist Feminism focuses on the power structures of society, law, politics and economics which are the chief cause of women's subjugation. Based on the Marxist theory, feminists argue, that women must attack patriarchy and capitalism to attain liberation. In the German socialist women's movement, women were more concerned about family instead of working for transformation of the society thus "The

transformation of Social Democracy into a state-supportive reform party had its parallel in the metamorphosis of the proletarian women's movement into a training ground for social angels" (Thonnessen 9).

Radical feminism analyzes how the meaning of gender is constructed and perpetuated emphasising on the cultural aspect which causes subordination of women. Black Feminism seeks emancipation from racism and class oppression. Ecofeminism asserts the connection between women and the environment, and seeks liberation from the exploitation and domination of the patriarchal society.

Feminist theory emerged focusing on women's struggles with the three waves of feminism. The first wave theorists are Mary Wollstonecraft and Susan B. Anthony who voiced for political rights. Betty Friedan and Andrea Dworkin are the second wave theorists who drew the attention to social and economic changes in women's lives in patriarchal culture. The third wave theorists are Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak focused on the universal experience of womanhood. All feminisms and all theories are concerned about improving the women's condition in the society as it analyses the inequalities in political, economic and social spheres.

Feminist theory and criticism encompass various disciplines – anthropology, sociology, economics, literature, education, philosophy, politics and the themes explored are gender inequality, women's rights, domestic violence, equal pay, sexual harassment, patriarchy, stereotyping, objectification, oppression, to mention a few. Elaine Showalter divided the development of feminist theory and literary criticism into three phases. "Feminist critique", is the first phase and the reader studies the ideologies of the literary history. In the feminist critique women are the consumers of

the literature created by men and the depiction of women in the limited roles, their feelings and experiences in literary history are the perception through the eyes of men. It is also called the feminine phase (1840-1880) as women's attempt to equal the achievement of male culture using male pseudonyms. The literature produced by men is what they thought about women and the feminist reader attempts to examine the ideologies of the patriarchy.

She calls the second phase as Gynocritics where the producer of textual meaning is woman or the writer and creates female collective history of literature. Today, Women's Studies as a discipline in the academy have established a voice and a space specifically for women creating an intellectual forum that challenges the patriarchal society. In other words, it is called the feminist phase (1880-1920) where women writers begin to reject the accommodating positions of women depicted in writings and using literature to sensitize the ordeals of wronged womanhood.

Gynocritics give preference to the analysis of women's literature, study based on female experience to formulate their critical principles taking into account the feminist research done in various field of anthropology, history, psychology and sociology. Working as 'gynocritics', women have categorized male-created texts as 'the women-centred criticism' in order to offer a different interpretation of the images of women projected in male-created texts and rewriting it from the feministic perspective. Feminist literary criticism has created a platform for women to look at women in literature from the women's point of view.

The last phase called as gender theory explores the ideology and the literary effects of the gender system. Gender is a cultural and social construction upon

biological differences of the patriarchal society and writing must be seen as one's personal experience in the social context. Women's writing is perceived as the authentic experience of the writer and offers us an opportunity to know the varied shades of human nature through the eyes of woman. This phase is also called the female phase (1920 -) where women rejected the first two phases imitation as well as disapproval and looked into the female experience as the origin of independent art.

Women's position in the society all over the world gives an understanding about the system of patriarchy. Literature controlled by the male writers, reveals the male point of view about women and teaches them to look at themselves from a male perspective. Feminism is an awakening against the system of patriarchy which stipulates women with gender roles entangled with division of labour. The feminists challenge the division of public and private domain for male and female respectively that denigrates women's position as inferior. Shirin Kudchedkar elucidates the disparity of patriarchy in its outlook towards women:

Personality traits are distinguished in terms of polar opposites of masculine and feminine. Men are considered to be bold, strong, assertive, independent, aspiring, rational, logical, women on the contrary are considered to be timid, yielding, gentle, dependent, self-sacrificing, emotional and intuitive. Though all cultures claim to praise and value the 'womanly' quality, one can cite an equal number of passages denigrating women while the verbal praise masks the actual relegation to a secondary position. Literature of course amply reflects these stereotypes (Kudchedkar 33).

Feminism in India did not have its distinct origin like west but it started closely inter-linked with nationalism. Women along with men participated in the struggles with a common goal to attain India's freedom. But once India was independent, the women's empowerment vanished from the public sphere and the question asked by the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI, 1974) was that "What were the historical and ideological dimensions of women's role and status in India and why had the debates on the women's question, initiated during the freedom struggle faded out of the public arena?" (Mazumdar 13). Women worked in the public sphere to attain freedom for the country and after men forced her to the domestic sphere. The Committee's question was to bring into focus the status of women which had been deteriorated and Indian government's failure in empowering them.

The concept of woman in Hindu society derives from the Aryan and pre- Aryan culture of Indian society. The Puranas projected the image of woman as Shakti, symbol of power and energy. The Sankhyan concept of Prakriti considers nature symbolized a woman as nature. Thus the Hindu image of woman emerges from dual concept of femaleness, woman as Shakti and Prakriti versus power and nature. The *Ramayana* depicts Sita, who goes with her husband Rama for fourteen years in exile, as an ideal Indian woman to be imitated by other women. Savitri and Gandhari stand as role models for Indian women's devotion to their husbands. Through oral and written tradition the patriarchal laws were institutionalized. But the fact is pre-Aryan Indian culture was matriarchal and the patriarchy was established by Brahmanic tradition. According to Ashis Nandy, "Though the Brahmanic tradition attempted to limit the dominance of woman in society, the pre-Aryan dominance of the woman

was retained in many areas of life...This undeniably is a matrifocal culture” (Nandy 72).

The laws that are prescribed in the ancient text are formulated to safeguard and protect them and also their interests. The ancient texts have played a vital role in moulding the Indian women as victims and men as victors. The two important lawgivers of the tradition were Manu and Yajnavalkya. The ancient legal text is named *Manu Smṛti*. Smṛti means remembrance and was meant for the welfare of the society. It has three parts: the first part Acora, teaches code of conduct and sets of rules, the second part Vyavahara is about laws and punishments and the third part Prayascitta deals with atonements. Vyavahara deals with laws concerning women, marriage, remarriage, divorce, inheritance and punishments. The period of Smṛtis is between 2 B.C. to 4 A. D. and so the oppression of women is an age old history. *Gautama Dharmasutra* (GDS) speaks about remarried women and the custom of Niyoga (Kane XV.18.). Niyoga means to beget a son to the dead husband who died without a son. Manu speaks in defence of Niyoga but silent about women’s remarriage.

Manusmṛti says “In the childhood the father looks after the girl, in youth her husband, in old age her sons: a woman is never free” (Shastri 5/151). Thus a woman’s life is entangled in the vicious circle of patriarchy from her birth to death and it places woman as “inferior” and “subsidiary” to man. Folklore is the oral literature which is used to carry on the Manusmṛti tradition and culture in various societies.

The Gujarathi folklore describes the daughter as “Parkithapan”, the wife as “Akhand Saubhagyavati” and the widow as “Gangaswaroop” which means a daughter

is someone else's property, the woman as a wife must be safe from the curse of widowhood and as a widow she is as holy as Ganga river. The daughter has no voice or choice in the selection of the partner and she has to obey her father. It is said, "The daughter and cow go wherever they are asked to go, the daughter is called Parkithapan" (Trivedi 251). The birth of a male child is a celebration in the Indian society. Lord Ganesha is invoked during the wedding to beget sons, "We invite Lord Ganesha on this auspicious occasion, Blessed are those who have four sons" (Trivedi 251). The woman is expected to contain in these titles and roles so that patriarchy has absolute control over women.

Every fibre of the laws, focused all significance on men and their existence while women are considered as a property. To quote Trivedi, "since the days of *Mahabharatha*, Draupathi, Damayanti and Taramati have been treated as the possession of their husbands in Indian history. The woman is equal to gold, silver and cow in Hindu marriage ceremony" (Trivedi 252). After marriage she does not have her own identity and thus she changes her surname into her husband's name. Woman is burdened with the practice of spiritual exercise of fasting and praying for her husband. She performs "many *vratas* like Vata Savitri vrata, Karuva Chauth vrata and Jaya Parvati vrata for the long and healthy life of her husband" (Trivedi 253).

She wears ornaments to make herself beautiful thus to make her husband happy. After his death the woman does not wear bindi on the forehead or any other ornaments on her body. The women break the bangles as a sign of their sorrow and detachment from the world. But man as a widower in the patriarchal society remarries immediately without having any norms to be followed. As a daughter-in-law she suffers violence from her in-law's family. The mother-in-law also treats the daughter-

in-law badly because the whole system has taught women to treat oneself and other women without any respect and self worth. Patriarchy does not encourage women coming together for fear of them becoming powerful. So there is a hidden agenda of setting them against each other like mother-in-law versus daughter-in-law. Thus mother-in-law behaves as a task master towards the daughter-in-law and deprives her of the fundamental joy she shall get as an individual.

In Indian mythology, women are portrayed in three images such as creator, protector and destroyer. Shivani as creator, Bhavani or Amba as protector and Durga or Kali as destroyer are worshipped. The Indian tradition portrays the woman either as “Devi” or “Dasi” and as a human being she is no one. Indian society places women above as devi or below as dasi as long as it does not affect one’s life but to place them equal with men is difficult for the male superiority as well as for the patriarchal power.

Naradasmrti of 4 A.D. has stipulated rules for women’s remarriage and according to the caste system the conditions are different. If the husband is gone abroad and not known for a long time, a Brahmin woman must wait for eight years and other castes like Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra women need to wait for six years before remarrying. But no laws speak about what would be her livelihood during the waiting period or how she will support herself.

Naradasmrti has a unique aspect that the woman must make the choice of the man for the marriage and this is first of its kind in Smrti literature. The woman’s acceptance and consent for marriage is considered as betrothal (Smrutitirth XII. 2). The man has to undergo a fitness and virility test prior to

the marriage. It says, “when fact of his virility is placed beyond doubt, he shall obtain the maiden” (Smrutitirth XII. 2). Smrti encouraged monogamy and man’s responsibility towards his wife but King Dasaratha in the epic *Ramayana* has three wives. Today bigamy is not accepted in the society as it is under Indian Penal code, section 494, causing seven years of imprisonment and fine (Shastri 242).

Manusmrti has benevolent rules towards men as it was created by patriarchy. In matter of adultery, a woman would be pushed out of the house (*Naradasmrti* XII. 90). Further, a man can get rid of his wife on account of innumerable reasons: for squandering husband’s wealth, procuring abortion, attempt on husband’s life, being barren, giving birth to female progeny only, addict to liquor and have got incurable disease (*Naradasmrti* XII 93). In today’s society these aspects are considered as cruelty to women and treated under IPC section 498-A calling for three years of imprisonment and fine. But a woman is never at liberty to leave a man with the above reasons of the ancient texts.

Indian tradition makes women as the guards of culture and identity through their lifestyle and submission to patriarchy. Indian feminism faced conflicts between religion and women related to the concept of freedom. Feminism was not an accepted concept in Indian scenario. Because of the conflicts in the understanding of feminism as a concept among men and women, it had a very slow growth. According to Maitrayee Chaudhuri, “until the 1990s, we did not really have a body of feminist scholars engaged in academic conversation within the corpus of what is a western- dominated international academic feminism” (Chaudhuri xiii). Though feminism was not in an established form there were women personalities such as Rokeya Sakhawat

Hossain, Cornelia Sorabji and Tarabai Shinde who expressed their views on feminism in the colonized India.

Feminism in India has changed both at the local as well as at global level, leaving tremendous impact on ever-changing gender relations, growth in education, and development in technology. The galaxy of Indian women novelists are contributing in undoing the psyche of women's past through their writing representing women's thoughts and perspectives. They are carving an identity of one's own in radical expressions, soaring beyond the boundaries set by the patriarchy in every aspect touching a woman's life. Feminism on a global level has its difference with regard to political and economic aspects from the First World countries to the Third World countries.

India as a hierarchical society had multiple patriarchies connected with oppressions of caste, class, community and tribe. According to Vasanthi Raman, the analysis of "multiple patriarchies" created difficulties in perceiving the concepts of feminism. Each caste, class and community had its own way of oppressing women with its own norms. When one patriarchy was dealt, it affected the other in another way; "the fact that the one most often determines and structures gender relations in the other" (Raman 63). Women had their own struggles to get under one umbrella of feminism due to debates such as whether it is feminism or nationalism, secularism or socialism, state and culture, communalism and casteism; these divisions scattered the energies of women into different directions. Religion also played a crucial role creating difference in women's opinion. Sucheta Mazumdar observes that, "Women have to realize for their survival that they have to go beyond religion, indeed beyond

nationalism. These are, after all, the pillars of the dominant political order” (Mazumdar 269).

Indian women did not raise their voice against patriarchal oppression like their western counterparts because it caused uneasiness in the patriarchal system. Neera Desai, a feminist sociologist finds out that not only ordinary women, even academicians and researchers on Women Studies (WS) dared not to address themselves as feminists: “The term ‘feminist’ was not only not popular, but there was a distinct ‘allergy’ to it and many women, particularly academics, described themselves as WS researchers rather than feminist scholars” (Desai 250). Due to our colonial past, modernity had a late arrival in India but in West, feminism had a steady growth and Indian feminism too has taken time to develop as a movement.

Vina Mazumdar, the Indian feminist had her own share of struggle when she entered the public space. She faced double burden of responsibilities of being a university teacher and a young mother. Her decision of giving up the profession in a difficult moment is reciprocated by an authoritarian answer from her father that to be free and equal in a poor nation demands equal responsibility. In the patriarchal society man has only one responsibility working in the public space while woman has to take care of profession as well as home because she is asking for equality. In the words of Vina Mazumdar, “Much of my adult life represented elements of struggle. But, what had been mainly an individual women’s effort at ‘managing’ the demand of professional and familial responsibilities, changed into a collective and ideological struggle for rediscovery of the nation, the world, the past, the present and the future...” (Mazumdar 135).

Indian women began to emerge with the question of leaving the victimhood of the past which taught denial of self for the sake of patriarchy forgetting selfhood. The significance of selfhood gained recognition asserting the need for space for women as human rights. Forming feminist groups and fighting for a just and equitable society not only for women but for all oppressed people became the agenda of feminism. Madhu Kishwar expresses similar concerns, “not just with women’s equality, as the term ‘feminist’ would imply but with the protection of the human rights of all the disadvantaged and discriminated groups in our society, while having special emphasis on women’s rights” (Kishwar 2).

The consequences of reforms resulted in changes in the sphere of middle class homes and family ideals got re-fashioned. In the twentieth century women participated in the political activities and the patriarchy was threatened as the images of Sita and Savitri were getting lost. Radha Kumar describes that, “V. Ramakrishna Rao displayed an unequivocal distaste for the “sheer grasping suffragette” bemoaning the loss of Sita and Savitri; and Cornelia Sorabjee linked the newfound assertiveness of many Indian women with the “Western influence” (Kumar 88).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is a contemporary critical theorist. She is known as Marxist, Feminist and Deconstructionist. As a Third World feminist, she challenges the patriarchal system. According to the feminist theory, men writing about women from their point of view are phallogocentrism and women writing about women are gynocentrism. In phallogocentrism woman is a reader and in gynocentrism woman is a writer. Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” has become a classic in post-colonial theory. The term ‘subaltern’ represents the oppressed and marginalised of the society.

According to Spivak, subaltern identity is silence. The woman is caught up between imperialism and patriarchy and the 'woman' disappears since she has no voice. She observes, "for the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference. . . with what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?" (Spivak 80). Amitav Ghosh's novels give an affirmative answer to Spivak's question. John Thieme commends that Ghosh, "endeavours to recuperate the silenced voices of those occluded from the historical record" (Thieme 251).

Amitav Ghosh's novels prove that subalterns can speak provided they are given ample possibilities and opportunities. Women play a very significant role in Ghosh's novels and he brings the marginalised into the history. He creates a subaltern voice powerful and audible. The women who experiences oppression commands change and make the change possible. Thus the women characters of Ghosh's novels appear as a new breed to the present society enabling us to perceive life from their point of view.

Over the decades, Indian feminism has grown in creating a voice of its own in the international arena. In an occasion of discussion on Indian feminism, Irene Gedalof begins the preface quoting Mary John, an Indian feminist, "Western feminists need to reconsider what they are out to learn from the distant places they visit. Instead of developing ever more theoretically sophisticated twists on the cross-cultural construction of gender, why not attend also to feminist voices from elsewhere" (John 144). Indian feminism has become an audible voice calling forth attention from the world at large.

Indian feminism witnessed three stages of development; colonial period of feminism identified as western concept, post-independence period with the birth of

new women's movement and post national frame work of the present focusing on globalization with new challenges. Mary John, the director of The Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) in New Delhi from 2006 to 2012, voiced against the sexual violence in the contemporary India with regard to 16 December, 2012 gang rape of a girl in Delhi. Mary John involved herself in the society as a professor in women's studies and feminist politics.

The Indian women novelists of early century contributed through their works to the collective literary history of feminism. They are Krupabai Sathianathan's *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1894), Cornelia Sorabji's *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901), *Between the Twilights* (1908) Swarna Kumari Ghoshal's *The Fatal Garland* (1915), *An Unfinished Song* (1913) and Iqbalunnisa Hussain's *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household* (1944). These novels created commendable presentation of the abuses of customs and traditions which enslaved women and treated them inhuman.

It must be noted that there have been many leaders in feminism as women but not all feminists are women. There are many male supporters for feminism who believe that manhood is oppressive to women and their rights. John Stuart Mill's book *The Subjection of Women* (1869) argued that discrimination against women was wrong in principle and they must be free to educate themselves, must have access to employment and political office. It created uproar in Britain and at the same time a worldwide impact. Mill has been considered as "the only major liberal political philosopher to have set out explicitly to apply the principles of liberalism to women" (Okin 197). Elizabeth Cady Stanton esteemed Mill's work and his forthright thoughts promoting women's cause. She expressed, "I lay down the book with a peace and a

joy I never felt before, for it is the first response from any man to show he is capable of seeing and feeling all the nice shades and degrees of woman's wrongs and the central point of her weakness and degradation" (Rossi 62).

The western educated Indian writers were affected by the European liberalism and it stimulated them towards introspection of their own value system pertaining to women's freedom in India. They decided to break the norms set by the patriarchal society and this daring act was initiated and championed by men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshav Chandra Sen etc. They brought remarkable reforms in the lives of women by abolishing the practice of sati and child marriage and advanced the status of women by promoting their education and procuring right to property.

Amitav Ghosh, though a contemporary writer, falls in line with them for his profeministic ideas. Ghosh nowhere asserts directly that he is for women and their welfare. But his intense care and concern for them are reflected in his novels. The study on Amitav Ghosh and his novels perceives his women characters from feministic point of view, applying relevant feministic theories. The theories emphasize on men and women's equality politically, economically and socially. The study also analyses the conditions which shape and transform women's lives. The quality of Ghosh's novels is remarkable and it sets them apart from other novels for the message it carries to the readers. G. J. V. Prasad comments that "To my mind every book that Ghosh has written (and hopefully will write) is of importance because of what he is trying to say and how he says it" (Prasad 19).

Amitav Ghosh is born on 11 July, 1956 in Calcutta, India. His father, Shailendra Chandra was a diplomat, and his mother Ansali Ghosh was a house wife.

Ghosh travelled frequently in his youth to different parts of the world. He lived in Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and India. He attended Delhi University and received his M.A in Sociology in 1978. He attended the University of Oxford, and received a PhD in Social Anthropology in 1982. Ghosh went on to teach at the University of Delhi, the American University in Cairo, Columbia University in New York City, and Queens College of the City University of New York, among other institutions. Ghosh is married to Deborah Baker hailing from U.K, who is a biographer and an essayist. Now he is living in New York. They have one daughter and one son, Lila and Nayan. Ghosh as a writer possess the advantages of mastery over different languages and knowledge of different cultures. R. K. Dhawan commends on his novels saying, “It bears testimony to Ghosh’s interaction with at least four languages and cultures spread over three continents and across several countries” (Dhawan 123).

There are fictions as well as non-fictions to his credit. The novels are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015). His non-fictions are *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and At Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002) and *Incendiary Circumstances* (2006).

Ghosh has received numerous awards for his works in the realm of fiction. *The Circle of Reason* was awarded France’s Prix Medicis in 1990, and *The Shadow Lines* won two prestigious Indian prizes the same year, the *Sahitya Akademi Award* and the *Ananda Puraskar*. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the *Arthur C. Clarke award* for 1997 and *The Glass Palace* won the *international e- Book Award* at the Frankfurt book fair in 2001. In January 2005 *The Hungry Tide* was awarded *The Crossword*

Book Prize, a major Indian award. His novel, *Sea of Poppies* (2008) was named for *the Man Booker Prize and the IndiaPlaza Golden Quill Award*. Amitav Ghosh's work has been translated into more than twenty languages. His essays have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic* and *The New York Times*. In January 2007 he was awarded the *Padma Shri*, one of India's highest honours, by the President of India. In 2010 he was *awarded honorary doctorates* by Queens College in New York and the Sorbonne in Paris.

Amitav Ghosh defends the cause of feminists indirectly by creating women characters different from the traditional women characters. Amitav Ghosh novels deal with religious rites and customs. It fuses history, geography, voyages, trade, adventure, magic, memory, and multiple viewpoints. His novels depict that the dichotomies and boundaries that are created geographically, politically, socially, and culturally are under constant change. G. J. V. Prasad comments on Ghosh's writing as he has the eye of an anthropologist who can see every detail minutely and "a historian's grasp of facts and chronology and with a creative writer's curiosity" to predict the reasons and its effects. With tremendous imagination and skill, "Ghosh weaves together a pluralistic and self reflective view of the world - one that challenges" (Prasad 56) the accepted norms and traditions of the society.

Amitav Ghosh does immense research before venturing into each of his novel. In a journey for research on *The Hungry Tide* he spends time with a scientist Isabel Beasley who has inspired him for the portrayal of the character Piyali Roy. In an interview by Simon Sandall, Ghosh reveals that he is interested in characters rather than issues when it comes to writing novels. He expresses that his major interest is

“The characters absolutely . . . That’s why I write novels, because novels are about people” (Ghosh).

The Circle of Reason is the first novel of Amitav Ghosh which brought flexibility in the movement of characters nationally as well as internationally. After the death of his parents Alu is sent to his uncle Balaram Bose and like all children he is quick to adapt to the new surroundings. Being displaced, he begins to learn Bengali and Hindi for his survival. In an accident everyone in his house gets killed except Alu and he is wrongly labelled as a terrorist and he is pursued relentlessly by a policeman Jyoti Das. Events and fate beyond control makes Alu travel across the borders from a small village in Bengal to the Sahara desert.

Jyoti Das makes his way across the continents in pursuit of Alu and realizes his mistake when he meets Alu causing transformation in him. Darshna Trivedi expresses that *The Circle of Reason* is a noteworthy novel about “the modern man’s problem of alienation, migration and the existential crisis in life” (Trivedi 34). Today many countries are facing the major problem of migration due to war. The countries are closing their borders on the face of refugees because they are not in the position of accommodating huge number of people. On the other hand the migrants are in a pathetic situation who has no place to say their own. Amitav Ghosh delineates the struggles of people who are the victims of various circumstances.

In *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh explores the quest for freedom in the women characters and the geographical borders created after the partition brings rift in the minds of the people. The stories of three generations are spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and London. The narration begins at colonial India and concludes after the creation of

East Pakistan. The narrator's grandmother Tha'mma grows up in Dhaka during the Indian freedom struggle. She is strong in her nationalist sentiments and migrates to Calcutta after her husband's death. Her nephew, Tridib gets killed by a passionate mob in the 1964 riots in East Pakistan during her visit to Dhaka.

The three major women characters Tha'mma, May and Ila have their own opinion about freedom and live their lives independently according to their understanding. Ghosh emerges in this novel as a champion for women's freedom. This novel's events are Ghosh's childhood experience and its impact on his life. R.K. Dhawan commends that, "*The Shadow Lines*, a book that led him backward in time to earlier memories of riots, once witnessed in childhood. It became, says Ghosh, a book not about any one event, but about the meaning of such events and their effects on the individuals who live through them" (Dhawan 20).

The Calcutta Chromosome is a mixture of a science fiction and a detective novel. Ronald Ross, a scientist in the Colonial Medical Service discovers the cause of malaria in Calcutta in 1898 and wins the Nobel Prize. The novel proceeds to unravel the very concept of discovery with a secretive cult of women's knowledge of malaria. Women in the novel are a new breed of powerful, confident and autonomous female characters who occupy the centre stage of the novel. The women characters in the novel are Mangala, the sweeper with supreme power, Mrs. Aratounian a retired principal, Sonali, a successful actress and Urmila, a famous news reporter and they have occupied the centre stage of action and men as the followers. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* the writer stretches the story from one end to the other and "this is a neatly sculpted work of a master craftsman. It marks a break from the traditional theme of Indian English novel" (Dhawan 19) giving shape for new form and style.

In *The Glass Palace* Amitav Ghosh emerges with humanistic concerns and stands for equality of all, irrespective of their nationality, religion, caste, culture, gender, social or political status and upholds human dignity. British ventures attack on Burma and exploit the nation of its resources. Burma's lack of modern military power helps the imperial power to take advantage of the situation. The story brings people of different nationalities together to build their lives according to their abilities. Rajkumar, an Indian boy of eleven reaches Burma as his parents are no more. He climbs the ladder of success by his hard work. Saya John is from Malaya who makes his fortune through timber trade. Saya becomes the mentor of Rajkumar and teaches him the way to achieve stability economically. Rajkumar meets Dolly just once and her image and beauty remains with him. Dolly, a maid in the royal family moves to India with the exiled royal family. She begins to accept India as her home and plays a vital role in the management of royal family matters of everyday.

Dolly establishes a bond between Uma and they begin to spend time together talking for hours. They become close friends and share all the matters happening in their life. Their inseparable friendship gets affected with the surprise visit of Rajkumar. He is being a rich business magnate his visit to India is arranged through the benevolence of the Collector. He reveals his reason for India's visit is Dolly and he remembers her as nine year old girl during the exile. Dolly refuses to accept that she has met him.

Rajkumar succeeds in marrying her with the help of Uma, the collector's wife. Dolly is from Burma and has deep spirituality of Buddhism. He takes her back to Burma, Dolly's native land and begets two children Neel and Dinu. Though Dolly is married and occupied with the bringing up of the children that does not make her feel

a sense of achievement. Her heart longs to spend time in prayer and meditation. Though she is married and a mother of two children, she gets gradually drifted into silence without her knowing of it. At times Rajkumar reminds her that she has left them far behind because of her silence and aloofness from the world. Neel marries Manju, the niece of Uma and they have a daughter Jaya. One day in a war bombing Neel dies and that affects Manju adversely deteriorating her mental health.

Once the riot begins in Burma, the Indians begin to move out to India fearing threat to their lives. The long journey from Burma to India kills Manju on the way as she has no desire to live any more. They come to Calcutta to Uma's house and Uma is happy to have them with the grand niece. Dolly begins to think about her second son Dinu who is left behind in Burma. Dolly informs her desire to join the Buddhist nuns in Burma once she finds Dinu. She goes in search of Dinu and finds him living a peaceful life. Later she joins the Buddhist nunnery as she had decided earlier.

In *The Glass Palace* Ghosh portrays women characters Queen Supayalat, Uma Dey, Aung San Suu Kyi and Daw Thin Thin Aye who transform themselves and venture into politics thus causing societal change. The story lengthens to three generations between three countries under British rule exposing the obliteration of human rights and the subjugation of human values. The novel begins in Burma with British usurping power and dethroning the royal family by sending them on exile to India. Ghosh attacks the inhuman aspects of imperialism and highlights the life of ordinary people with their joys, sorrows, tragedies, displacement in the history in the process of colonization but have no place in the pages of history. Pico Iyer observes that Ghosh deals about two themes in his novels: "his interest in the lives of middle class Indian families and his concern for the world's afflicted." These people in

Burma “suddenly turn into dispossessed. Refugees themselves, struggling across rivers and mountains” (Iyer 29) and finding their way to build up their lives once again.

The Hungry Tide of Amitav Ghosh deals about environmental and ecological concerns. The government’s handling of refugees in Morichjhapi, an island in Sundarbans is followed by violence and bloodshed. The displaced people come back to the tide country with the desire to settle and work on a piece of land. But the government deals with the refugees mercilessly to evacuate them from the island to preserve that place for animals.

The people’s life does not have priority over the life of animals. Kanai, a translator from Delhi visits the tide country to meet his aunt, Nilima. Kanai comes to the realisation that all his learning does not come to aid when it comes to dealing with the life of tide and tigers. Fokir stands in contrast to Kanai in value system as well as in life style. He strikes a chord of understanding with Piya though the language was absent between them. Kanai equipped with language fails to understand Fokir. Piya admires his incredible ability to read the river and understand the nature.

Nirmal, a revolutionary and ideal in thoughts finds it difficult when it comes to practical action. Nirmal questions Nilima regarding the ownership of Lusibari which also belongs to government and Hamilton who has the islands taken over for his experiment. The attitude of Hamilton is much appreciated by Nilima. Nirmal accuses her for the lack of understanding and her insensitiveness to the welfare of the refugees: “Were the dreams of these settlers less valuable than those of a man like Sir Daniel just because he was a rich shaheb and they impoverished refugees? (HT 213)

Nilima is not in a position to create hostility with government and the politicians by supporting the settlers, so she defends her cause and her inability to help them, “. . . over the years I’ve built something – something real, something useful, something that has helped many people in small ways” (HT 214). Kusum feels proud of her son Fokir, as a child he was so much at home with the river and helps Horen to push the boat ashore. She exclaims to Nirmal choking with pride, “See Saar: the river is in his veins” (HT 245). She sees within her son an industrious nature for economic independence even at a tender age.

In *The Hungry Tide* the women characters Nilima, Piya, Kusum and Moyna are entrepreneurs in their own standard and have brought economic change for themselves and for others. The protagonist of the novel Piyali Roy from U.S., a scientist and cetologist undertakes research of marine mammals. She goes through harassment from the men in the beginning of her research work. The guard who is appointed by the forest department and the guide becomes threat for her life. With much difficulty she gets rid of them. She decides to come back to settle in Sundarbans, the tide country to work for the financial autonomy of the people. Nilima through her social service brings economic independence to the lives of many people. The novel focuses on relationship between nature and the ordinary people. During their routine, they experience unpredictable tides, and dangerous animals from mangrove forest. The women characters in the novel emerge with a genuine desire to make others’ life better by committing for a cause and thus changing the face of Lusibari by offering various amenities and facilities to the local people.

Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*, a story of voyage stands for his scholarship
35
and minutely researched narration. The novel entertains and invites the society to a

remarkable social transformation. The British uses India to produce opium and exploits the resources to make fortune for their country. The Raja of Rakshali loses his property and freedom thus sends as a convict to Mauritius. Kalua is a giant like figure who comes forward to save Deeti from fire as she is prepared to commit sati. Though belonging to a low caste man, Kalua is not afraid of the impact of his action. Amitav Ghosh dares to depict such actions through a low caste man challenging the caste ridden society. Ghosh depicts the scene of sati very vividly in this novel.

As Kalua approaches the cremation ground, he listens to the conversations of the people and understands that 'sati' was to take place with the cremation. He makes an immediate arrangement with his cart by letting free the oxen. He takes the bamboo platform from the axle from his cart and ties it around its middle. By that time he sees the procession coming out from the house with Hukam Singh's body, following close behind by a second procession, "Kalua saw that it was headed by Deeti, in a resplendent white sari- except that she was slumped over, barely upright: she would not have been able to stand on her feet, much less walk, had she not been supported by her brother-in-law, Chandan Singh, and several others. Half dragged and half carried, she was brought to the pyre and made to sit cross-legged on it, beside her husband's corpse.' (SOP 177)

Kalua waits for his time, as everyone becomes busy towards performing sati until the pyre is lit. Kalua is decided to save Deeti from the flames, "Now, still keeping to the shadows, he crept down to the edge of the crowd and rose to his feet. Unloosing a roar, he began to whirl the bamboo platform above his head, holding it by the end of its rope. The heavy, sharp-edged object became a blur, cracking heads

and breaking bones, clearing a path through the crowd- people fled from the hurtling projectile, like cattle scattering before some whirling demon”(SOP 177).

Kalua acts very prompt leaving no time for others to realise about the happenings. He speeds up to the fire and saves her, “Racing to the mount, Kalua placed the platform against the fire, scrambled to the top, and snatched Deeti from the flames. With her inert body slung over his shoulder, he jumped back to the ground and ran towards the river, dragging the now-smouldering bamboo rectangle behind him, on its rope. On reaching the water, he thrust the platform in to the river and placed Deeti upon it.” (SOP 177) And from there he moves towards the midstream freeing himself and Deeti from the hands of Chandan Singh and the team who were already chasing after them, since all these were work of one or two minutes totally unexpected. Deeti and Kalua decide to escape in a ship called Ibis.

Ibis, the ship carries people from all walks of life forming an international community, setting its voyage to Mauritius with each one dreaming a life of freedom and happiness. The major women characters Deeti and Paulette in this novel stand against the social taboos of patriarchy thus become the beacons of hope for others to change their lives. Deeti, the protagonist of the novel succumbs to miseries and sufferings but rises above and stand tall in spite of the difficult circumstances and leading others to follow the suit thus becoming a voice for others.

Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*, the second volume of Ibis trilogy, is a narration of historical events starting from the first Anglo-Chinese opium war in 1838 and its tragic consequences on millions of individual human lives. The ship embarks its journey as a self-contained floating world with opium trade in the nineteenth

century, a journey from Baltimore to Bihar and Canton to Calcutta. The Canton's governor, Lin Zexu decides to free his country from opium plague and destroys the opium; the British merchants had brought to Canton for sale. The decision of Lin Zexu brings the opium trade reached a standstill. Few Indians who transported opium to Canton grew fabulously rich by the opium trade. The East India Company and British firms amassed overwhelming profits from the opium trade. The Indians were treated with second-class status and contempt in Canton in comparison to Europeans and Americans.

Amitav Ghosh's third volume of Ibis trilogy is *Flood of Fire* and the story begins with the tension between British and China regarding the opium trade and British declares the Opium War (1839-42). Amitav Ghosh brings the social and military situation in India in 1830s into the visibility of the reader with his profound research and meticulous narration of the details. Hind, the civilian transport ship carries the British Indian army, sailing from Bengal to China. The voyage has a diverse group of travellers with their own issues: Havildar Kesri Singh, the sepoy, Zachary Reid the sailor, Paulette, the botanist, Deeti and Kalua major characters of the first book and a varied cast of characters are travelling to China. The defeat of China in the war leads to British's seizure of Hong Kong. Amitav Ghosh delineates in his novels the thirst of the unfettered avarice of the fettered mind in the human being leading to miseries in the life of many people through the demonstration of British war upon China.

Amitav Ghosh with his pro-feministic attitude stands tall in his portrayal of women characters such as Queen Supayalat, Uma Dey, Aung San Suu Kyi, Nilima, Piyali Roy, Kusum, Moyna, Deeti and Paulette. His characterisation depicts as though

patriarchy or gender disparity never existed in the society thus provoking an attitudinal change in both men to change their outlook and women to begin to believe in themselves. The three novels selected for study are *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* has ordinary women characters asserting their decisions to live an independent life in the social, economic and political arena of the society.

The study analyses the select three novels from the feministic perspective. The research enfolds the feminist theory in general as it relates to various feminisms at different level. Ghosh promotes an integrated approach to life in his portrayal of women characters as empowered human beings who envisages an independent life on political, economic and social spheres which correlates to social, liberal and radical feminism propagating equality in each area.

The objectives of the research are:

- To explore feministic perspectives of Amitav Ghosh as reflected in the select novels
- To investigate the hierarchical and conventional images of women characters and redefine them as progressive and empowered in the context of social, economical and political structures.
- To explore the power of women characters to transform the system of patriarchy for societal, political and economical transformation

To support the argument of thesis, some books and a few scholarly articles on Amitav Ghosh novels are consulted.

Nagini Ram (2007) in the journal article titled “Displacement in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” explores the modern phenomenon of displacement. In this novel the refugees are forced to leave their homeland with “borders dissolved under the weight of millions of people in panic-stricken flight from an army of animals” (60). The desire to belong to a country and to have a home of one’s own is a basic longing of every human being. A person who is displaced experiences lack a sense of belonging to the mainstream of the society. The struggle of Kusum who shifts from Dhanabad to Morichjhapi becomes the subject for this author’s analysis. Except for Piya no other character would like to associate with the problems of the other as they identify exclusively different issues to tackle with. Neelima though portrayed as a social worker does not take initiative to help Kusum. Kusum undergoes all the trials and tribulations all by herself along with the refugees of her sort.

Anurag Bihari (2013) in his journal article ‘Diasporic strain in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*’ analyzes the Diasporic aspects of the novel. Kanai is a Delhi businessman, who had migrated from Kolkata to the capital, while Piyali Roy is the daughter of Bengali parents who had immigrated to Seattle at United States. Hunger is the significant cause behind Diaspora, such as - hunger for food, hunger for success; hunger for self realization and many more. This hunger pushes the person ahead to face life and the world. There is another element of Diaspora related to those who are displaced from their own homeland wishing to come back to their native land. Kusum, with many other refugees comes back to settle down in Morichjhapi for her survival. The human instinct for survival in other words, is the human quest for meaning in life. Diaspora as subject matter of Amitav Ghosh’s fiction has led many critics and the researcher to see him as a blossoming ⁴⁰postcolonial writer.

Swarnabharati (2012) in the journal article titled “Morichjhapi: A Historiographic Metafiction in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*” attempts to show the merging of history with fictitious elements. In this novel, Morichjhapi has been a conserved area for wildlife protection and the refugees have forced themselves into this area. They have cleared up the forest cover on the island and built their huts, but the government authorities use force and violence to depopulate the conserved area. The massacre in Morichjhapi is the reconceptualization of the real historical ‘events’, is presented to the readers through the character Nirmal. His documentation of events are not just stories but they are the major events that happened in real history of Sundarban islands. Amitav Ghosh’s ‘The Hungry Tide’ is a gripping story with a number of narratives: past and present, fantasy and myths interwoven into the text. Piya’s adventures in trying to trace the Irrawady and the Gangetic dolphins take the centre stage of the story.

Partha Sarathi Mandal (2012) in the journal article titled “Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines: A Study in Displacement*” explores the reality of what displacement could mean in many lives through this study. Displacement is very intimately associated with Diasporic literature which dwells upon the identity, haunting the victims of displacement. To Tha’mma India is an ‘invented country’. Though she physically belongs to the land she mentally looks for the ‘house in which she has grown up in Dhaka’. The victims of displacement Tha’mma and Ila remember their past through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Their search for cultural identity makes them as individuals who have no root to anchor upon.

Displacement of people is a significant theme in almost every novel of Amitav Ghosh and it is a major problem of the modern world. People are displaced because of

war and conflicts in very many countries today. It is a forced displacement of people in one way. There are people who dislocate themselves in search of wealth and livelihood. In desire to acquire achievements some migrate themselves into better environment. Every displacement creates pain and insecurity in the regions where they inhabit in the early stages.

Nilofer Shakir (2012) in her journal article “Collage of Histories: A Study of *The Glass Palace*” shows that, this novel is a fusion of histories of three countries Burma, India and Malaya passing through turmoil. The novel highlights the impact of colonialism in South East Asia. The rise of Uma as an activist in the novel is highly significant. The tour of Europe that she undertakes after the death of her husband marks the beginning of her headlong entry into the ongoing freedom struggle in India. Hence she represents the growing consciousness of the nation towards the attainment of freedom. In this novel Amitav Ghosh has worked upon creating a collage of histories. He connects different nations such as Burma, Malaya and India together and binds them through human relationship. Every individual though belonging to different nations, basically desire for freedom and enhancement of life. Ghosh delineates the commonness of human being in the histories of various nations. The common people undergo inevitable miseries in process of nation building.

M. Saji (2012) in the journal article entitled “Historiographic Metafiction as a Pattern: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*” examines the socio-political consciousness of Ghosh in tracking back the history and enters in to the ordinary lives of common people in the alienated land. Ghosh thus brings out the necessity of multiculturalism and universal humanism that were once a part of the trade link

between India and Egypt through a Historiographic metafictional narrative and also gives importance to the centuries-old culture of accommodation and acceptance.

Swati Kumari (2012) in the journal article “Historiographic Metafiction in Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*” explores the term ‘Historiographic Metafiction’, since they thematise the theory of contemporary historiography. The innovative use of history and fiction is Historiographic Metafiction. That exploits the grounding of historical knowledge in the past real. Bahram entered the business in his early twenties, becoming one of the most successful Indian opium traders. He’d originally hoped simply to prove himself to his in-laws and perhaps gain some distance from them but the opium trade has offered him far more than that, providing glimpses of the life he has always wanted.

P. Shailaja & G. Manoja (2007) in the journal article entitled “Equality and Difference: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s Women in *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide*” focus on women who are finding their ways and means towards liberation. Living in their own circumstances and meeting their own problems, the women take the situations in their control. Dolly in *The Glass Palace* is a woman with unconquerable strength of character and conviction. She is able to handle every situation in the royal family most efficiently. Uma Dey, the Madame collector meets all expectations as a wife of the collector and as a widow stands up asserting herself into a new life. *The Hungry Tide* is a novel with energetic women who are able to give direction to their own life and decide what must be their achievement in life. Nilima, Piya, Kusum and Moyna are masters of their own life.

M. Adhikari (1997) in the essay titled “Female Empowerment in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*” brings out the tradition of subjugation and limitation with regard to women. His progressive ideas empower the female characters of this novel and a new breed of powerful, self aware, confident and autonomous female characters emerge to occupy the leaders’ roles. They do not battle against feminine issues like subjugation, alienation, isolation, emptiness or lack of empowerment. Their femaleness is not a disadvantage. Interestingly, despite being autonomous, they do not have an eccentric relationship to patriarchy. In this novel being born as woman does not create an outlook of inferiority. On the other hand Ghosh has made them as human beings who stand on their feet and live a life according to their own decision.

Mangala’s status as a supreme being permeates the novel. Her devotees address her as Mangala bibi and yet she is neither a wife nor a woman in a conventional sense; her marital status cannot reduce her power. Thus, the ideology of motherhood and wifehood is made important by patriarchy for their convenience is diluted by the writer. By liberating women from the false grandeur of these roles, Ghosh is allowing her to establish self-identity and self-ownership. In other words, he is underlining her potentiality for freedom of thought and action.

Ghosh depicts women free from emotional bondage of a family as well as from economic scarcity in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Ghosh has dealt with empowerment of women in every aspect in this novel. They are not worried about getting married and to settle in life. There is no question of depending on men for their survival in relation to safety or economic stability. Ghosh has created an

environment in this novel that makes women to feel secure and confident in their life situations.

N. Jaishree (2010) in the essay “A Dissect on the Imagery of Women in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* and *The Hungry Tide*” portrays about women who gives life and women who nurture it. The modern society has seen women who are able to think and act differently from the traditional ways that have been stipulated for centuries. Piyali Roy, a scientist is capable of spending days together on sea for her research on dolphins. Ghosh develops women who are strong, independent and courageous to travel and accomplish things making their own decisions. The images of Dolly and Nilima delineate a life of independence and they decide the course of their action. They behave like integrated human beings who can cause positive impacts on the lives of everyone around them.

Shobha Ramaswamy (2007) in her journal article “Woman as Initiator: Women in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” analyses the women characters who act as independent persons and decide to live life in one’s own space and pace. Women have the strength to face their struggles and they are prepared to taste victory as well as defeat. They are given freedom of choice and they take the initiative in making decisions. Uma Dey, a young Hindu widow decides to travel abroad and then becomes an active member of the Indian Independence party. She begins her career as a docile wife to a Collector who wishes to exercise his desire of compelling his wife to follow western culture. He is more of occidental in his attitude pertaining to women’s outward appearance. But he fails to realise the inner cravings of a women. His reaction towards the queen of Burma and her daughter reveals his patriarchal culture in which he was born and brought up. It was after the death of the collector,

Uma Dey, finds ample opportunities to strut around the world and participate in political activities.

E. Kanaka Bhagya Veni (1994) in the essay titled “The Image of Woman in Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land*” brings out the word “antique” which means “ancient”. This word is deliberately used to portray woman as disconnected to modern times. Here the author finds out that woman stands metaphorically for a “land”- woman as always passive and submissive like land. In this traveller’s tale, most of the women character’s names are not mentioned. Kanaka explores the reasons for the anonymity of women characters. Indians pay less importance to women and her identity. Whether she bears names or not she is insignificant in the men’s world. This book helps us to trace how Amitav Ghosh is provocative and that he is drawing attention to this antiquated attitude of the patriarchal society towards women.

P. Indu and G. Bhaskaran (2011) in the essay titled “Suffering an Abstraction in Women: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies*” explores the importance given to women and the sufferings undergone by them in his novels. Ghosh depicts women as champions of empowerment. The women characters liberate themselves first in order to become instruments of change in the society. He brings the issue and ethos undergone by three women namely Dolly, Uma Dey and Deeti in his two novels *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies*. These women characters strive for their independence as well as for others. Dolly is a personification of inner strength and spiritual aspirations. Uma is different from Dolly. As a widow, Uma doesn’t remain inside the four walls. She goes abroad and becomes a globetrotter, a freedom fighter and a sort of celebrity. An outstanding

character in *Sea of Poppies* is Deeti, who emerges above all difficulties and shines as symbol of empowerment.

Anu Chopra (2000) in the essay titled “May and Ila- The Two Faces of Women” analyzes the characterization of two women in *The Shadow Lines*. May is a very ambitious woman and wants to do some service to make others’ life better. May is projected as a strong character while Ila is shown as a woman with no ambition. Both of them prefer their life abroad for the reason of freedom they experience in their life. Ghosh believes that a sense of demarcation of land is created artificially in people’s mind as the human beings are possessive and are more conscious about divisions and boundaries.

N. K. Neb (2007) in the essay titled “Humanistic Concerns in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” exhibits the obliteration of human rights under the ruthless rulers both the British and the native. In the process, the inhuman treatment meted to the subjects of the British Empire and the subjugation of human values in the name of order and national self assertion by the native rulers brings out the novelist’s view of humanism. British Empire gives high pressures not only to the royal family but also to the native of Burma. They exploit man power and also the wealth of nature. Simultaneously we find that the Royal family to save its regal power from the British resort to various tactics that trouble the common man. In Ghosh’s understanding, the major element threatening humanistic values is power politics. In the words of Neb, Human values can be protected only if politics is made to serve people.

Susmita Roye (2009) in her article “Reconsidering Gender-power Hierarchy in a Post / Colonial Society: Masculinities in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*”

examines the gender power through the four leading male figures in the novel- Nirmal, Kanai, Horen and Fokir in an independent India where conquest, control and rule are masculine. There is another kind of masculinity that he projects - the masculinity of the female characters. Kusum, Nilima, Moyna and Piya are the major female characters of the novel who carry their life with assertiveness and commitment.

All these women rise above the narrow minded constrictions of their times and society present, and violate the prescribed code of femininity to a great extent to be able to take control of their lives. The experience of Kanai in the forest shatters the inflated false masculine pride and brings him to be a down-to-earth person. In permitting the tides of masculinity and femininity to freely intermingle in both a male and a female, the author forces us to perceive what otherwise our chauvinism refuses to admit: that every man has a bit of the woman in him just as every woman has a bit of the man in her.

Nilima runs an NGO, fights against the odds a woman would face while extending her philanthropic attitude to do service to the society that she belongs to. She has to equip herself with masculinity to confront the challenges. Leadership and rebellious intention to fight are branded as manliness. These qualities are to be found in Piya, Moyna and Kusum. Piya engrosses in research work connected to marine – an arena where men tussle to prove their courage and adventurous spirit. Moyna balances her role as a mother and a nurse to provide material comfort to her son. Fokir is the head of the family but his sudden death in a tragic accident compels her to take his role and do better for her son's education and his future. Kusum walks throughout

with her male and female counterparts, the refugees struggling to get a piece of land to establish her life.

Dr. Anju Bala Agrawal (2010) in her journal article “A Study of Globalisation, Nationalism and Subalterns (women) in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” analyses on the need to critique the myths of both nationalism and globalization. His women characters are central to his narrative. They are given prominence throughout the novel as women bestowed with capabilities of articulating their positions and roles amidst militant nationalism, cosmopolitanism etc. The novels show the failures of nationalism and globalization in the lives of those who are minor in their gender, class and ethnicity.

Sukanta Das (2007) in the journal article ‘Towards an Alternative Identity: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*’ analyzes and shows how knowledge about oneself is always temporary and is in the process of making and breaking man made borders. It explores the issues of identities exemplified in the story of the realization of characters. Piya, though belonging to America never fails to strike affinity with Indians through emotion and feeling while she differs from them based on a number of identity-forming components like nationality, culture, language, class, etc. Ghosh destabilizes the essentialist notion of identity as the social determinants like gender and nationality are not taken as essentially self-evident or valid. In other words the identity of a person, though dependent upon various sociological factors, cannot be fixed, absolute or stable. The ever-eroding border of land and water in the geographical setting of the book only supports the shifting nature of identity.

Banibrata Mahanta (2006) in the journal article “Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*” shows the division between civilization and culture that creates the dialogue. Piya stands as a scientist of the educated world. She is able to rise above the cultural barriers. She comes to do her research in India and meets problems on her way to accomplishment. The human made problems restricts the freedom of other persons. The man who is standing as guard from the forest department and the guide as the launch owner makes attempt to exploit her but Piya’s intuition and courage saves her from their vicious plans.

She takes the decision at the right moment to desert these men and not to become a victim of their mercy. Piya’s upbringing in United States plays a great role in moulding her personality. She does not want to entertain anyone who blocks her freedom on the way of her accomplishment. She is an adventurous person ready to take any risk for her research and survey of the dolphins.

Sanjay Kumar Misra (2009) in the journal article “Environmental and Ecological Concerns in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*” covers a period of about three decades and is set in the Sunderbans, literally meaning, and beautiful forests. This novel brings the environmental activism of Amitav Ghosh to the fore. The forest department takes care of the tigers by giving a lot of importance to it while human interests are ignored. In an emphatic way ‘The Hungry Tide’ is Ghosh’s plea that in Sunderbans, human beings are of less value than the tigers.

Nyla Ali Khan (2005) in the journal article “Citizenship in a Transnational Age: Culture and Politics in Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*” examines the political vision that questions the ethno linguistic and cultural divides created by the fiery

resurgence of nationalist ideologies, but interweaves the vision with the human story he delineates in the novel. This novel is an exploration of the historical transformations of community life which goes beyond the borders of fixed identities. This novel attempts to confront the contemporary issues of politics and economic occurrences by engaging a dialogical relationship with society and to overcome the restraints. Ghosh's novel is an endeavour to promote the idea of universalism in the face of nationalism to providing a solution to the real problems.

Ashalata Kulkarni (2012) in the journal article "Subversive Metanarratives of Postmodern Historiography in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*" locates his narrative in post-colonial India and juxtaposes the major events of history with the minor events of riots. The major events include the Second World War and India's wars with Pakistan and China in the post-independent period. These are juxtaposed against the 1964 communal riots which broke in the parts of West Bengal and Bangladesh after the partition of Pakistan into East Bengal. Ghosh shows a repercussion of this with the help of events taking place in the family of the narrator. The premise of this is that the family is a microcosm of the community, nation and the world at large. Thus Ghosh deconstructs dominant discourses of historical narratives of war and nationhood in *The Shadow Lines* by re-writing history through the celebration of the trivial incidents like riots and communal violence.

Shalini Saxena (2012) in the journal article "Deconstructing Magical Realism: An Appreciation of Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*" studies the magical realism is used in the modern fiction. *The Circle of Reason* is noticeable for a fine blend of fantasy and realism. This novel depicts Ghosh's strong fascination with the diasporic consciousness and is obsessed with feelings of rootlessness and

migration. Almost all the major characters are travellers in diasporic exiles. There is no place in this novel that can be called home.

Sanjay Solanki (2012) in the journal article “The Politics of Difference: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*” explores that memory is both the theme and the structural principal of the novel. With the passage of time, memory deals with traumas in an altogether different mode. The memory is that of an unspeakable pain in the heart which overwhelming the mind and displacing relations – but in stark contrast, foregrounding the places and by way of events and personal histories attached to them. The aspect of displacement causes untold miseries and pain to those who are subjected to it. The characters in this novel experience the partition of a country that results in division of people and families.

The politics and partition has a sudden violent twist in this novel. Tha’mma goes to Bangladesh where she lives many years and faces mob violence. She is taken aback with the sudden change of attitude of the people who have lived as neighbours and friends for years. The politics of hostility causes blindness and kills the human values that allow human beings to have existed so long. Tridib gets killed in the mob violence and Tha’mma experiences excruciating pain in her heart. She is pained for the loss of Tridib and also for the death of human values which sustains human life on this earth.

Amitav Ghosh focuses on gender issues in his portrayal of women characters. Ghosh relies on women characters to manifest various themes related to patriarchy, trade and commerce, Ecology and migration. Ghosh’s wide experience as a traveller, a professor and a writer provide him opportunities to explore the society from a humanitarian perspective.

He has published eight novels manifesting his academic knowledge as well letting him to establish his identity in the literary field. His works prove his versatile knowledge in various disciplines that informs his work with intellectual rigor and substance.

Ghosh uses his inventive and creative skill, wild imagination with absolute freedom in writing the novels. Ghosh's observation of human circumstances in its vivid perspective permits him to capture the life nuances. Each novel of Amitav Ghosh comes into the hands of a reader with its own newness and variety in its themes enveloping the global society as a whole, calling forth to awaken our consciousness towards a universal transformation of various aspects of our planet.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters

Chapter 1 expounds the overview of Indian Writing in English with a focus on fiction; traces the history of feminism and feministic theories from Western and Indian Perspective; includes Literature Review; explores the literary contributions of Amitav Ghosh; summarizes the select novels of Ghosh; elaborates on the profeministic attitude of Amitav Ghosh's with reference to his women characters.

Chapter II examines the women characters in *The Glass Palace* to explore the situations that prompt them to involve in politics shedding their inhibitions and exercise their power to protect their country from the confronting forces existing in the name of colonization. The study attempts to perceive Ghosh's ability to intersect his novel with political ideology and women's survival skills in a political arena. The real and fictitious women characters of the novel metamorphose their selves to actively participate in politics.

Chapter III analyses the novel *The Hungry Tide* from a feministic perspective to trace the efforts put forth by Nilima, Piyali Roy, Kusum and Moyna towards economic independence and to prove that the women of today undergo self transformation breaking barriers to attain their goal bringing forth economic transformation. The real life situations prompt the women characters to find solutions for their own problems and that helps to create impact on others to change their lives. The practices and traditions play an important role in shaping women's lives and women challenges these patriarchal norms to bring a new perspective to their lives.

Chapter IV makes a study of the domestic and social life of the women characters of Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies* in order to explore Ghosh' attitude towards women and patriarchy. The novel *Sea of poppies* reveals the scholarship of the author in his meticulous narration of adventure and action of men and women brought together on a voyage in a large ship, Ibis. The ship begins its adventurous journey with women filled with expectation of a life full of hope and promises. Ghosh skilfully weaves the voyage with sheer creative energy and treats the women characters with profound kindness to be victorious in the face of human adversities. The women characters begin to assert themselves in the life situations desiring for independence and autonomy which they attain through their efforts. Ghosh depicts the difficulties in a sea journey in its magnitude and also the ability of human being to survive in such situation.

Chapter V summates all four chapters of the research. The novels of Amitav Ghosh carry multidimensional aspects of women's empowerment connected to their socio, political and economic transformation. The first chapter traces the history of the Indian writing in English, covers the review of literature undertaken and summarizes

Ghosh' three select novels. It also studies feminist theory from Indian and western perspectives in order to prove that Ghosh attaches importance to feministic ideologies and in creating women as strong and powerful.

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UNIT - II

Indian Literature In English – SHS1204

Endless Time

Time is endless in thy hands, my lord.
There is none to count thy minutes.
Days and nights pass and ages bloom and fade like flowers.
Thou knowest how to wait.
Thy centuries follow each other perfecting a small wild flower.

We have no time to lose,
and having no time we must scramble for a chance.
We are too poor to be late.
And thus it is that time goes by
while I give it to every querulous man who claims it,
and thine altar is empty of all offerings to the last.
At the end of the day I hasten in fear lest thy gate be shut;
but I find that yet there is time.

– **Rabindranath Tagore**

Background:

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the greatest poets and writers in modern Indian literature. In this poem he speaks about the nature of time. We mortal beings believe that time has certain limitations and we usually feel the need to accomplish a lot before our life comes to an end as we believe that there is time only till we meet our death. The poet presents the idea that time is endless and is in the hands of the almighty, who is the creator. He further adds that for God there is no limit to time as he has seen centuries pass by and will continue to do so for centuries to come. Time is infinite for the almighty. We mortals seem to be in a hurry to do as much as possible, fearing that we might be late to do certain things and may lose out on certain opportunities. In doing so, we tend to get impatient when we feel like time is running out of our hands and yet there is a lot to achieve. The poet wants to convey that time is divine, yet one must not cling to it. We must value time as it is a precious thing but must also learn to live for the moment.

Structure:

The poem has been written in Early Modern English as we can see the use of words like 'thy', 'thou' and 'thine'. It has no rhymes or a regular rhythm.

Metaphor has been used in the poem. The comparison of passing of ages to the 'blooming and fading of flowers' and centuries passing by like a 'small wild flower', are two such examples.

The poet uses a sarcastic tone in the stanza where he says 'we have no time to lose' as he is indicating the impatience of men and is actually speaking about the infinite nature of time.

The last line of the poem leaves the reader with a sense of uncertainty as the poet might hint at the metaphysical aspects of reincarnation or afterlife. He may also simply mean to say that the doors of God are always open for everyone.

Analysis:

"Time is endless in thy hands, my lord.
There is none to count thy minutes."

The poem begins with the poet addressing the almighty and saying that time is endless in his hands as he is the creator of time. There is no one who can count his minutes as the life of mortals comes to an end, but time doesn't. The poet says that for God, time is infinite. It has no beginning and no end.

*"Days and nights pass and ages bloom and fade like flowers.
Thou knowest how to wait.
Thy centuries follow each other perfecting a small wild flower."*

Days and nights pass and time goes on for ages. The poet says that the almighty patiently watches as ages pass by and for him they're like watching the blooming and withering of flowers. Centuries after centuries follow each other. The metaphor 'wild flower' is used for someone who travels constantly and does not settle at one place. The passage of time is being compared to the same as time does not stop at any point and it keeps going on for centuries.

*"We have no time to
lose, and having no time we must scramble for
a chance. We are too poor to be
late."*

The poet uses a sarcastic tone in this stanza as he says that men act like there is no time. They feel that it is very limited and they must act quickly in order to not miss out on opportunities. Men do not want to risk being late in accomplishing things and usually want to rush through everything as they feel they have time only till their life comes to an end.

*"And thus it is that time goes
by while I give it to every querulous man who claims
it, and thine altar is empty of all offerings to the last."*

Men keep complaining about the pace at which time keeps passing as they feel it keeps racing ahead. The poet talks about the impatient nature of men. They usually rush through things and forget to value each moment. Time is divine and for God it is infinite.

*"At the end of the day I hasten in fear lest thy gate be shut; but
I find that yet there is
time."*

In the last stanza of the poem, the poet talks about the end of one's life when they feel that their time has come to an end. It is only at the time of death does one realize that even though they may cease to exist, time goes on for ages and it cannot be stopped or held onto.

'but I find that yet there is time', in this line the poet leaves a kind of uncertainty as he might mean that life goes on even after death or he might be hinting at the process of reincarnation. He might also mean that at the end of our lives we find the gates of heaven open for us and we realize that time is divine in nature and will continue to go on.

Summary:

The poet says that time is in the hands of the almighty and is infinite in nature. One cannot count his minutes as time has no beginning and no end. Days and night pass by and so do ages, just like flowers keep blooming and withering. God has watched all this patiently over centuries and centuries which seem to follow one after the other. Time does not stop at any point. We mortal beings feel the need to rush through things as we feel we have no time to waste and have to accomplish a lot in this one lifetime. We do not want to miss out on opportunities and in our rush we often forget to value each moment. Men tend to get impatient with time as they feel it keeps passing by and there is a lot one has to do before their life comes to an end. It is only at the time of death that one realises that time is divine in nature and his existence may come to end but time will continue to go on for ages.

Theme:

The basic idea being conveyed through this poem is that of the infinite nature of time. The poet says time is endless and is in the hands of the creator God. Time has no beginning and no end and hence cannot be stopped. It goes on for ages and ages even after one perishes. One's life comes to an end and it is then that one realises that time will continue to exist and he may not know what happens after his death but one door always opens after another closes.

‘THE UNREST OF DESIRE’ Keki N Daruwala

Explanation:

‘The unrest of desire’ (the title) - the restlessness caused by an fulfilled desire; the uneasiness caused by a desire for something.

‘Is lit up with eyes’ - is expressed through the expression in the eyes. The idea is that any desire, which one feels strongly, finds an expression through the eyes. A man's eyes show that he is experiencing some strong desire.

‘Mask’ - disguise; veil covering the face.

‘You slap upon your face’ - you emphatically bring to your face. Whatever the method which one may adopt in order to conceal a certain desire, the desire would find its expression through a man's eyes. A man may try to hide a desire by putting on a false expression on his face, but it would become perceptible in his eyes.

‘Under slabs of concrete’ - under a thick cover. **“Slabs of concrete”** is a metaphorical expression to convey the idea of something weighty and heavy to press down a feeling.

‘A coil of bone’ - another metaphorical phrase to mean the same thing, namely a heavy pressure to suppress a desire. **‘Wall’** -This word is here used as a verb meaning "to build a wall" (around a desire and thus to keep it hidden).

‘The cave-impulse at the mouth’ - the outlet through the mouth. A man may keep his mouth shut but the desire in his heart would yet find an expression through his eyes.

‘Etch’ - inscribe; dig lines on a wall in order to sketch the outlines of a picture or to draw the picture in full.

‘Your drives’ —your compelling desires; your forceful desires.

‘Aborigine’ - primitive.

‘Bison’ -wild ox ikad.

‘Stag’—a kind of deer with several horns growing on its head

‘Charcoal lines’ - lines drawn with a piece of charcoal.

‘Loping’ - running at a fast pace.

‘Bison and stag loping in charcoal lines’ - fast-running animals depicted on the wall of a cave with charcoal.

‘Erase’ - efface; remove.

‘The burn’ - the mark left on the flesh by a fire

‘It will char your dreams’ - The mark of the fire will even scorch your dreams. The idea is that the intensity of a desire would even haunt a man's dreams.

Summary:

A strong desire makes a man somewhat uneasy. He may try to keep desire hidden in his heart but it would manifest itself in some way through the expression in his eyes. The nature of his desire would not, of course, become known to anybody, but the fact that there is a desire in a man's heart would definitely become known to others who happen to see him and the expression in his eyes. A man may wear a mask or may throw some sort of disguise over the expression of his face, but he would not be able to mask the expression in his eyes.

A man may put his heart's desire under some heavy weight like that of a slab of cement or a large heap of bones, but his eyes would betray the fact that there is a desire in his heart. A man may keep his mouth shut, but the desire in his heart would somehow escape his heart and enter his eyes and thus become visible. A man may adopt any other methods which may occur to him to disguise the state of his heart, but it would still show itself in his eyes. A man may draw all sorts of pictures with a piece of charcoal on the walls of a cave in order to give a false representation of his desire; but it would never quit his heart and would even haunt him in his dreams.

Analysis:

This is a poem with a strong psychological interest. It describes a man's incapacity to suppress a desire or to keep it hidden under some assumed expression on his face. A desire would never fail to manifest itself through the expression in a man's eyes. Of course anybody looking at such a man may not be able to understand or guess the nature of his desire, but he would definitely come to know that there is a desire in his heart. This fact would become known to him by his merely looking into the eyes of the man concerned. The eyes would provide some sort of evidence of the existence on a desire in the man's heart.

The idea expressed in this poem is an abstract one; but much concrete imagery has been used in the poem. Eyes manifesting the unrest of desire mask being thrust upon a face; the salt-blood being probed with an insist tongue; a desire being pressed down with the weight of cement slabs or of bones: bison and stag being traced on a wall with charcoal all these concrete pictures to build up which the poet has used metaphorical language.

The Old Playhouse by Kamala Das

Introduction

The poem The Old Playhouse by Kamala Das reflects the central idea of her poetry i.e. the dominance of patriarchy and her struggle against it.

Like many of her other poems including [An Introduction](#) or [The Looking Glass](#), The Old Playhouse is also a [Confessional Poem](#). The poem is not divided into stanzas. The Old Playhouse is also without any rhyme scheme.

Poem

The Old Playhouse and Other Poems by Kamala Das Published by English Summary

Attack on Patriarchy

The poem begins with the word **You** that is a direct attack on man and patriarchy. According to the poet, her husband has planned to domesticate a bird (the poet) by holding it in the fake love so that she may forget the seasons (spring, summer, autumn or in other words the joys of her life) and her home which she left behind her for him.

Not only this, but he has also made her forget her nature, her desire to fly or freedom, and to explore the opportunities were also crushed.

Her Hopes & Aspirations Affected

The poet says that *it was not to gather knowledge of yet another man that I came to you but to learn*. The lines mean that she did not marry him or gave him her body and soul to learn about him or in other words to serve him, but to know about herself.

However, what his husband taught her was about himself. He i.e. the male- dominance was the centre of all the education. In the next line, the poet says that *you were pleased with my body's response* i.e. her husband wanted to quench her lust by exploiting her body.

He never tried to explore her soul and never loved her. Though he succeeds in penetrating every part of her body. He kisses her lips so hard that his saliva would fill her mouth. But he fails to satisfy her soul.

Her Job as a Wife

According to the poet, he called her wife or *the better half*. However, she was not more than a slave to him. She was forced to serve him tea, take care of his medicine.

In the next line, the poet says *cowering beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and became a dwarf* meaning that after getting married to him, she was reduced to a slave to his male ego. And thus she lost her desires and thinking that made her act like a fool whenever he would ask her something.

Decaying of Her Desires

The poet says that *the summer begins to pall* i.e. the joy of her life is going to end because her husband has killed her desires. She can hear *the rudder breezes of the fall and the smoke from the burning leaves* i.e. she sees her dreams, desires, quest and her zeal dying like smoke coming from burning leaves.

In the next line, she says *your room is always lit by artificial lights, your windows always shut* i.e. the world which her husband has provided to her is full of fake love and there is no freedom for her. Even in the AC, she can smell *the male scent of your breath* i.e. the dominant patriarchy.

Thus *the cut flowers in the vases have begun to smell of human sweat* meaning that her desires which have been killed by her husband

have rotten. *There is no more singing, no more dance* or in other words, there is no joy in her life.

Legal Love of Her Husband

Her *mind is an old playhouse with all its lights put out. The strong man's technique is always the same* i.e. the dominance of patriarchy is always there which never goes away. Her husband *serves his love in lethal doses*. Here she perhaps refers to the lustful love of her husband which is without real love and rather than giving her life gives a death-like experience. The poet compares the love between her and her husband to *the Narcissus at the water's edge*.

Narcissus was a young boy who fell in love with his own reflection and suffered a fall. Like it, his love will also suffer destruction as it is self-obsessed. For that, it will have to break the mirrors and bring the night. In other words, it will also kill the poet before dying.

The Old Playhouse by Kamala Das

The title of the poem, *The Old Playhouse*, constitutes its central image, and the [speaker](#) finally discovers that love-making has made her mind an Old Playhouse with all its lights put out'. It is like a deserted old playhouse having no life of its own. It has almost become non-functional and inert due to the disastrous physical-cum-mental strains. She has lost all her value as a woman in this life of confinement and suffocation.

ADVERTISING

Imagery used in *The Old Playhouse*

Kamala Das has used very suggestive [imagery](#) to show the disastrous effects of the mismatched marital relationships in *The Old Playhouse*. The word 'sparrow' stands for the poetess who is captured by her cruel and heartless captor (husband) who denies her any identity or freedom. The images of 'summer' and 'autumn' show the bright and dark phases of her life. The [comparison](#) between the poet's mind and the 'old playhouse with lights put off' is equally very appropriate and suggestive.

Both are in a state of neglect and have lost their functional value. The poet's mind is in a state of inertial and filled with impenetrable darkness like the darkness prevailing in the deserted old playhouse. The image of Narcissus shows that Kamala Das's love for her husband is all shattered by her egotistical husband and she is haunted by her own face which is reflective of her loneliness and desolation.

The image of mirror is very relevant because it faithfully mirrors the loneliness and anxieties of her face. The images of the 'kind night' and 'to erase the water' suggest that only death can help her in overpowering her [mood](#) of depression and loneliness.

The Old Playhouse Analysis

You planned to tame a swallow, to hold her (...)
Pathways of the sky.

In the poem, *The Old Playhouse*, which can be read in full [here](#), [Kamala Das](#) shows her total

disenchantment with her married her married life and its disastrous consequences on her life. It is an open protest against her egotistical husband who does not think beyond the gratification of his sensual desires. The female [persona](#) accuses her husband for domesticating her like a swallow after marriage in a well-planned manner.

She also blames him for depriving her of the thrills of romantic love and the desired woman's freedom. He has intentionally done it so that she cannot only forget the fury of the winter and autumn seasons but also snap all her ties with the life before marriage. He has spared no efforts to make her forget her colourful past in which she enjoyed perfect freedom and

distinct identity. He wants to make her forget her true nature as well as the very desire to move about freely in the infinite spaces of the sky.

This first section of the poem points to the disastrous fate of the mismatched marriage. Marriage is not an institution limited to the gratification of the sensual desires only. It is not a unilateral but a bilateral relationship based on mutual-trust and mutual understanding. There is no place for the exploitation and dehumanization of any partner in love.

It was not to gather knowledge (...)

To offer at the right moment the vitamins.

In this second section, the woman is critical of her feeling less husband for shattering her romantic dreams of the married life. She has realized that she is merely an object of physical entertainment meant for satisfying the lustful desires of her husband only. She has lost all her identity as a woman and is systematically alienated from her happy and contented past life.

The woman, in the poem, then explains the reason of marrying the man and the intention behind forming this relationship. She had come to him not to be enlightened about him but to learn about her true self. She thought that the marriage would give her an opportunity for self-growth and self-discovery. But all her hopes were belied because of the egotistical nature of her husband. She found highly selfish and self-centred who could not think beyond himself.

Cowering (...)

In the vases have begun to smell of human sweat.

In this third section of the poem, the woman had a very horrifying experience of the marital life. It marked the sudden end of the life of romantic aspirations and dreams. She was almost overpowered by the monstrous ego of her husband. She lost the very will to live in this hostile environment. She had also lost the [chance](#) of self-growth and self-discovery. She was treated like an object of sexual-gratification only.

Kamala Das always felt terrified by the dreadful ego of her husband. She was meant to please her self-conceited husband against her wishes to preserve this relationship. It is in this process of unnatural appeasement she had lost her individuality and self-respect. She was almost reduced to a dwarf and lost all her will to think and act in an independent manner.

Being mentally disturbed, her responses and reactions were always illogical and inconsistent. She had lost all her identity as a dignified woman and felt totally dehumanized in this caged existence.

Kamala Das's marital life is all disturbed due to the overpowering and egotistical nature of her husband. She is all alienated and frustrated in life because of the indifferent [attitude](#) of her husband. She is denied all the needs of a woman for self-growth and self-discovery. She is neglected by her husband who treats her as an object for the satisfaction of his lust only.

There is

(...)

To shatter and the kind night to erase the water.

In this fourth section, the female persona has suffered both physically and mentally at the hands of her self-centred and selfish husband. She has lost all her freedom, self-respect and identity as a woman and is reduced to the level of a dwarf. She has to work like a caretaker to satisfy his daily needs. She is almost crushed under his unchallenged monstrous ego.

It was a period of winter in her life. For Kamala Das, life has come to a stand-still. All her romantic dreams of the marital life are shattered and she faces a complete vacuum in her life. There is no space for singing or dancing in her colourless and meaningless life. Her life is like an old playhouse filled with impenetrable darkness. She is all fed up with the stereotyped and mechanical technique of love-making of her husband. He offers love in fatal doses which will ultimately kill his wife.

Poetry Analysis: Sarojini Naidu's "Bird Sanctuary"

Named as the nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu is essentially a poetess of Indian flora and fauna. Nature was a spring of perpetual bliss to her. The 'Bird Sanctuary' depicts the ideal refuge of God that offers ideal fostering space and nurturing place for every bird regardless of its identity. The poem is addressed to the Master of the Birds. There is festive joy as the birds sing tumultuously. The enchanting aura they craft herald the Festival of Dawn. Birds of multitudinous colors produce music entrancing and melodious.

The birds strive to sing carols from their throats of amber, ebony and fawn and passionately evocate the pastoral arena of India. The bulbul, the oriole, the honey bird and the shama are perceived fluttering from the high boughs sodden with nectar and dew. As the atmosphere is animated with colour and movement, the gull exhibits its silver sea-washed coat, and the hoopoe and the kingfisher their sapphire-blue. The wild gay pigeons envisage a home, amid the tree tops and endeavour to achieve the same, filling their beaks with silken down and banyan twigs. The pervading greenery is reflective of fertility and prosperity in the lives of the birds. Their ascent phrased as "sunward flight" signifies their aspiration to accomplish new heights. The green parrots pose themselves as marauders who loot the ripe-red figs.

With personal and autobiographical ramifications, the poetess asserts that God grants sanctuary and shelter even to a bird with a broken wing. The poet indubitably refers to herself as a bird with a broken wing. The poet persistently

battled against ill-health that plagued her throughout her life. Nevertheless, she seeks solace in the fact that THE Almighty will never desert her.

The poem is allegorical and has nationalistic significance. The poem was penned in 1971 when India lay in the vortex of freedom struggle. The multitude of birds that commemorate the generic festival of dawn may allude to the unambiguous Dawn of Independence. It at once emblemizes Gandhi's Tolstoy Farm, Tagore's vision and Nehru's New India.

The bird is the most apt emblem to depict the concept of liberty from caged existence. In the poem, she combines the sensibilities of Keats and Shelley in her outlook. That is, the lyricism of Keats and the revolutionary zeal of Shelley. As Dr. Rajalakshmy claims:” She unfolds the beauties, transformations and the significances of our natural world. It reveals a world of colour, perfume and melody.”

The Bird Sanctuary – Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu is a well-known freedom fighter. She advocated women's liberation. She is called as 'the Nightingale of India' for her poetry's musical quality and rhythm.

In her poem, the Bird Sanctuary, she describes a garden full of several kinds of birds. The birds welcome dawn making different types of sounds. Birds having various colors such as amber and ebony, birds like bulbul, oriel, honey bird and shama are moving on the trees. The trees are full of nectar and dew.

Silver colored gulls are flying in the sky. Kingfisher and hoopoe birds are in sapphire blue and bronze colors. Grey pigeons are building homes on tree tops with banyan twigs. The jade green gypsy parrots are enjoying red ripe fig fruits.

The poet says that God's wonderful garden has space for every bird. She prays God to provide safe resting place for distressed or wounded homing birds. She symbolizes birds to all living creatures and bird sanctuary to earth wonderfully.

In the poem "*The Bird Sanctuary*", the poet Sarojini Naidu evokes the delightful imagery of different kinds of birds living happily in a sanctuary. There are birds of varying colours

– from amber and ebony to jade green and sapphire blue. Small birds like the bulbul and the oriole fly around happily. There are colourful birds like the kingfisher and wandering birds like the gull. The pigeons are trying to build a home while the parrots are out to eat ripe figs.

The poet portrays the bird sanctuary as a gracious and generous place where all kinds of birds live freely and joyfully. She ends the poem with a prayer to God asking him to grant shelter to a homing bird with a broken wing.

This beautiful poem is an allegory to a safe place in Nature where all kinds of people can live freely and happily. The poet's prayer to God asking for shelter for a "homing bird with broken wings" is in fact a prayer for herself. She longs for a resting place and solace from her pain, and prays to God to provide her shelter in his sanctuary.

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UNIT - III

Indian Literature In English – SHS1204

THEMES OF THE PLAY Ghashiram Kotwal by Vijay Tendulkar

A theme is the subject of the play - the view and message that the playwright communicates.

A play may have more than one theme and it is quite possible to have a main theme and several sub-themes that originate from it.

What then is the main theme in Ghashiram Kotwal?

The personality clash between the Nana and Ghashiram may appear to be the theme at the surface level but we know that Tendulkar has examined the relationship between religion, caste, sexuality and violence to expose the structures of power that maintain the status quo.

As we have noticed, Tendulkar is concerned about the politics of power and its various implications. According to Saimik Bandhopadliya, 'In Ghashiram, power is defined 'horizontally' in terms of individuals against individuals from humiliation, to revenge in assertion, to eventual victimization. ' (Ghashiram Kotwal, Seagull, Calcutta, 1984, p.v.)

Do we agree with this?

It might seem on one level that an individual is pitted against another. However, at another level it is clear that the forces of state and society remain supreme even after individuals have perished. For example, Ghashiram, an innocent newcomer to Poona is unjustly accused of stealing and is beaten up by the Poona Brahmans.

This incident makes Ghashiram vow to revenge himself on them.

It is interesting that Ghashiram, himself is a Brahmin, has turned against his other brethren.

The opportunity for getting even with the Brahmans presents itself when the lecherous Chief Minister of the Peshwa. The ageing Nana Phadnavis desires his beautiful daughter Lalita Gauri.

Then begins the game of power in which Gauri is made a pawn and sacrificed to Nana's lust.

In return, Ghashiram is made the Kotwal of Poona.

This serves two purposes:

one, it gives Ghashiram the opportunity to take his revenge and unleash terror on the people of Poona and two, it allows Nana to have his cake and eat it too.

He has Gauri on the one hand and on the other his own tyranny is obscured by Ghashiram's cruelty.

It is clear even at this stage that the deal is an unfair one as the benefit lies mainly on the side of Nana.

And finally, Nana sacrifices Ghashiram to the bloodthirsty crowds without the slightest compunction or regret and at the end of the play we find that he himself continues to thrive.

Who is really powerful; Nana or Ghashiram?

We notice that the power is only deputed in Ghashiram who does not realize this and begins to mistake it for real power.

When he loses Lalita Gauri and his game is up, he realizes his error and the reality of his position.

It is Nana's misdeeds that have been "credited to his account".

It seems then that power conceals itself behind its agents and continues to thrive unchallenged.

Does the power rest with Nana?

It would seem so but even Nana can be summoned at any moment by the Peshwa.

The Peshwa himself is a symbol of power within the context of feudal society.

Thus the power vested in him is underpinned by the social set-up which functions on the basis of maintaining the status quo. The king or the Peshwa in this case has the power by virtue of the Divine Right. His position is maintained by various state apparatuses like the army, the police, religious and social institutions, etc. Here the power is delegated to the Nana who further deposes it to Ghashiram by making him the Kotwal who then operates through a police force.

Thus, there is a whole hierarchy of power positions.

It seems then that it is an individual against an individual. For example, if a person is beaten up by the police, he can see the evil face of that particular policeman alone.

He does not realize that the policeman is backed by the police force which again is maintained by a particular state.

The state itself functions according to a certain ideology. A society structured in such a way ensures that power is maintained and supported by such hierarchies.

The attention is focused on individuals who are passed off as culprits.

But the real culprit, the social set-up continues unchallenged as individual is pitted against individual. And even if Ghashirams are created and destroyed, society remains unchanged. The attention is diverted from the real problem which still remains untouched.

And Tendulkar's play very subtly makes us think about and analyse this phenomenon.

We have seen how power operates more overtly through violence and oppression.

At a subtle level, it functions through such social attitudes that help in maintaining hierarchies and hiding the real source of power which is delegated to agents such as Ghashiram who are also victims of that same power.

Religion and sexuality are also used as the strategies of power.

Religion

While the army and police are used by the state to maintain control within societies, there are other subtler strategies that are also used.

For instance, religion.

Most religions tell us to turn the other cheek if we are hit. This prevents us from reacting against tyranny and injustice.

When we imbibe these values during childhood, first in the family, then in the school and finally in society at large, they become so deeply ingrained in us that they do not allow us to challenge or change our social situation.

Such values are imparted to us so subtly that we do not question if they are right or wrong.

Take the case of Ghashiram Kotwal.

The play begins with a religious hymn and the popular gods dancing on stage.

This sets the context against which the drama unfolds itself

. The Brahmans go to Bavannakhani to see the dancing girls and say they are going 'to the temple' to give a sermon on 'Vishwamitra and Menaka'. They justify their decadence by comparing Bavannakhani to holy Mathura.

The 'abhanga' or devotional song is often sung with the 'lavani' or love song in his play. Scenes of violence and cruelty are alternated with devotional songs. When Nana tries to seduce Gauri in front of the statue of the holy Ganapati, he simply dismisses her fears saying: 'That all holy Ganapati? The maker of Good? Look, he has two wives. One on this side, one on that side'.

Further on in the play, when Gauri is dead and the distraught Ghashiram confronts Nana and accuses him of his daughter's death, the latter reassures him: 'He - the Omnipresent - He makes everything happen We are merely instruments ' He then urges him to 'forget what has happened. All merges into the Ganga. 'Thou shalt not grieve over what is gone. The Vedas have said that' (P 44). "

Don't you think here is a case of the devil citing scriptures to suit his purpose?

Religion then becomes a useful alibi in covering people's misdeeds.

By invoking religion, all kinds of evils are glossed and even sanctified. Rituals are encouraged to fill the pockets of the greedy Brahmans. Moreover their position as the 'twice born' is reinforced by the prevalence of the caste system.

Caste

Along with religion, caste is also a major factor in the play.

Is it a comment on the decadence of the Brahmins?

When the play was first performed it was banned for being anti-Brahmin and for fear of there being a revolt in the audience.

Is it really meant to expose Brahmins, their corruption and moral degradation?

According to the playwright he was more interested in 'the emergence, the growth and the inevitable end of the Ghoshirams

The decadence of the class in power (the Brahmins, incidentally, during the period which I had to depict) also was incidental though not accidental.

Caste is used as an instrument of power.

The Sutradhar reports that according to Ghoshiram 'to eat with a lower caste person is a crime' (p. 26). To sleep with a 'Maliar woman' (a lower caste among the untouchables) is also considered a crime. On the other hand, the Brahmins, have no hesitation in chasing and pestering a white Sahib for money. This shows that race and colour constitute a higher position in the social hierarchy. And the white Sahib ranks higher than the privileged Brahmin who is feasted and showered with gifts in the Peshwa's Poona.

Tendulkar has depicted the hypocrisy of the Brahmins, their arrogance, authoritarianism and their, debauched and adulterous behaviour. Rather than being identifiable by their good deeds and noble behaviour, the Brahmins are known by their 'shaven head', 'holy thread' and 'pious look'. It is this pious look that conceals their petty deeds. Nana himself a Brahmin is marrying for the seventh time not to mention his lusting after numerous young girls, Lalita Gauri among them.

Though full of revenge and hatred for the Brahmins, Ghoshiram is himself a Brahmin.

And his conduct in bartering his daughter's virtue for the dubious distinction of becoming the Kotwal of Poona, can hardly be justified and speaks of his inhuman opportunism as well as total lack of paternal sentiment and sensitivity. The total picture of the Brahmins that emerges from this play is one of hypocrisy, double standards, self-indulgence and moral degradation. It exposes the rottenness of the caste-system that privileges a person on the basis of birth rather than merit and maintains the rigid hierarchy to control and suppress persons.

Sexuality

Women too, as we have seen, have become a pawn in the power game. In fact there is a close nexus between sexuality and power.

Consider, for example, Nana's statement with reference to Lalita Gauri: 'Our grandeur's gone if she's not had' (p.20). A man's self-image, identity and machismo is definable only, it seems, in relation to the conquest and oppression of women. There is a close connection between sexuality and religion as *lavanis* (love song) and *abhangas* (devotional song) are sung at the revelries in *Bavannakhani* which is likened to Mathura and the erotic dances to *Krishan Lila*.

The garb of religion helps to justify and whitewash the debaucheries of the Brahman men. Gulabi's tantalizing dances, the Nana's lustful pursuit of Lalita Gauri, the clandestine meeting of the Brahman wife with a Maratha lover, all serve to create an underlying strain of eroticism throughout the play.

Violence

Tendulkar did research on violence in India because of which he has explored its many dimensions. He is not only concerned about the violence of the State against the people but against the violence of people against other people.

This is clear in Ghashiram's torture of innocent Brahmans and the belligerence of Gulabi's men against Ghashiram when he is forcibly divested of the necklace that Nana had given him. A stark example of this violence is the ordeal-by-fire episode. An innocent Brahman, accused of theft, unsuccessfully tries to convince Ghashiram of his innocence. Even though the evidence indicates that the Brahman has been unjustly implicated, Ghashiram has an ordeal set up to test his innocence. The nails of the Brahman's right hand are pulled out and his fingers are washed with lemon juice and soap and then hands are sealed in a bag. Seven Rangolis are drawn on the floor and an iron ball is heated red hot. The ball is then placed forcibly on the hands of the protesting Brahman. Naturally, his hands burn and the cruel Ghashiram triumphantly proclaims that this would not have happened had he told the truth for only liars get burnt. He then urges the agonized man to 'confess' or else the ordeal would be repeated. Left with no choice, he falls into the trap - 'I confess that I stole'. (p.36). Instead of letting him off Ghashiram orders the soldiers to 'cut off his hands and drive him out of Poona'. (p.36). Here is an example of the extreme physical and mental violence that can be perpetrated by one human beings on another. How does this square with the so-called religious commitment of the Brahmans? In addition to this is also the more subtle violence that human beings are capable of. This is the violence of mental cruelty-the kinds we witness when Nana subdues Ghashiram's agony and anger at the death of his daughter by invoking protocol.

But what is Tendulkar's aim in portraying this violence? According to Sudhir Sonal kar 'It [violence], has to somewhere grasp the tragic human condition, it has to have a poetic dimension to it The violence of greek tragedy, moves and enriches. Tendulkar's violence shocks and even when it disturbs, the ethical question remains both untouched and unanswered'. ('Vijay Tendulkar and the Metaphor of

violence' The Illustrated Weekly of India. Nov. 20, 1983, p.2 1). By leaving the ethical question open, Tendulkar is perhaps inviting his audience to think about the solutions for themselves.

Is Tendulkar trying to convey a 'message'?

As we know the function of art is not to provide answers or solution but to raise questions. If indeed it begins to have 'palpable designs on us' as Keats would say, it becomes mere propaganda. In this play, as we can see, Tendulkar provides us with a blueprint for an unforgettable theatrical experience by satirizing the utter decadence of feudal society . By exposing the foibles and hypocrisies of Brahmans, he forces us to think about the situation of our own society. There are no easy answers. Underlying the .entertainment is a thread of seriousness and you may have felt slightly confused after completing the play. The 'end' in fact makes you think - How has Nana got I away scot free?

How can the celebrating crowd be so oblivious to the fact that the real evil remains? And the fact that such questions come to mind proves the success of Tendulkar's enterprise

Girish Karnad Naga Mandala

Naga Mandala by Girish Karnad is a play where myth takes over reality. Girish Raghunath Karnad is a contemporary Indian playwright, actor and movie director in Kannada language. He is among the seven recipients of Jnanpith Award for Kannada, the highest literary honor conferred in India. Girish Karnad wrote the play Naga Mandala in 1987-88. The play is based on two oral Kannada tales he had heard from his mentor-friend and well-known poet, translator and philologist A.K. Rumanian, to whom Karnad also dedicated the play. Through the interesting blend of history and myth, he talks about socio-cultural issues of the India.

Plot Summary

Rani is a young bride who is neglected by her indifferent and unfaithful husband, Appanna. Appanna spends most of his time with his concubine and comes home only for lunch. Rani is one of those typical wives who want to win her husband's affection at any cost. In an attempt to do so, she decides to drug her husband with a love root, which she mixes in the curry. That curry is spilled on the nearby anthill and Naga, the King Cobra drinks it.

Naga, who can take the form of a human being, is enchanted with her and begins to visit her every night in the form of her husband. This changes Rani's life completely as she starts to experience the good things in life though she never knows that the person with her is not her husband but the Naga.

One of these days, she gets pregnant and breaks the news to Appanna. He immediately accuses her for adultery and says that he has not fathered the child. The issue is referred to the village Panchayat. She is then asked to prove her fidelity by putting her hand in the snake burrow and taking a vow that she has not committed adultery. It is a popular belief that if any person lies holding the snake in their hand, they will be instantly killed by the snake God.

She does place her hand in the snake burrow and vows that she has never touched any male other than her husband and the Naga in the burrow. She is declared chaste by the village Panchayat. However, her husband is not ready to accept that she is pregnant with his child and decides to find out the truth by spying on the house at night. Appanna is shocked to see the Naga visiting Rani in his form, spending time with her and then leaving the house.

Appanna gets furious with the Naga and indulges in a fight with him. Both of them fight vigorously and at one point of time, the Naga takes the form of the snake and escapes into the burrow. The villagers see the snake escaping into the burrow and kill it. Before dying the snake comes to Rani and reveals the truth to her.

However, after this incident Appanna realizes his mistake and he accepts Rani along with the child she is carrying.

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UNIT - IV

Indian Literature In English – SHS1204

Swami and Friends Summary

The novel *Swami and Friends* is an episodic narrative that follows the daily life of Swaminatharian, a charismatic and lazy schoolboy, in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi with his father, mother, and granny. He attends the Albert Mission School and has an established cadre of friends, including Samuel "the Pea," Sankar, Somu, and Mani, but the arrival of a new boy in school, Rajam, son of the police superintendent who speaks English like a European, threatens Swami's popular status. They become rivals, enemies even, but swiftly reconcile and become fast friends. Swami invites Rajam over to his house and gives orders for his family to change their behavior and clean up to put a good face for Rajam, whose family comes from more money. Swami's old friends—the Pea, Sankar, and Somu—feel abandoned by his budding friendship with Rajam and begin calling Swami "Rajam's tail" to humiliate him. Rajam eventually brings everyone together to his house and urges them to reconcile and get along, bribing them with prizes, which ends up working.

Swami and Rajam, along with Mani, a tall strong boy who can beat up almost anyone, become a loyal trio. Swami gets into some trouble with another boy, the coachman's son, after trying to get enough money to buy a wheel. Interrupting their provincial play is a nationalist strike as part of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. Swami is swept up in the frenzy of the crowd and throws stones at the window of the headmaster's room, breaking it. The crowd of protestors is broken up by the policemen who violently beat the protestors, led by Rajam's father, the superintendent.

The next day, the headmaster questions and punishes him and all the students who were missing from school. Swami, acutely distressed, runs away from the school, muttering, "I don't care for your dirty school." He is kicked out of the missionary school and enrolls in the Board High School, deemed a more inferior institution. Rajam forgives Swami for his "political sins" and posits that they start a cricket club, which he crowns the Malgudi Cricket Club or M.C.C. for short. They gather their friends together and practice, but Swami arrives late to every practice because he is kept at school until late in the afternoon. Rajam grows exasperated by Swami's tardiness and, with a friendly match coming up, coerces Swami to plead with the headmaster to let Swami leave class early for his cricket practice. The headmaster declines. Swami becomes desperate and asks a doctor to give him a certificate allowing him to leave early. The doctor refuses, but says that he will speak to the headmaster. Swami begins leaving class early for cricket class, until the headmaster comes in and calls his truancy out in front of the

classroom. The headmaster begins beating Swami, who is overcome with a mix of rage and humiliation. He takes the cane out of the headmaster's hands, throws it out the window, and runs away.

After the incident, Swami believes that he is doomed, kicked out of the two high schools, unable to face his father's wrath at home. He sees his only option is to escape the town entirely, only coming back anonymously to play the cricket game. He wanders off but gets lost and very hungry and begins to miss his home. He regrets his decision to escape. He begins having wild, scary dreams and falls asleep on the road, where he is picked up by a man carrying a cart. Meanwhile, his father has been roaming the town looking for him and his mother and granny are very anxious. When the man identifies Swami, he calls his parents and they pick him up. Swami is relieved to be found but upset when Mani tells him that he missed the cricket match and that M.C.C. lost. Rajam declares that he no longer cares for Swami and they stop being friends. One night, Mani divulges to Swami that Rajam and his family are leaving Malgudi permanently because his father got transferred to another city. Swami wakes up early the next day to say goodbye to Rajam at the train station and give him a gift, a volume of Hans Christen Anderson's *Fairy Tales*. They manage to wriggle their way through the crowd of police officers who are sending Rajam's family off, and Swami and Rajam face each other. Swami cries out that Rajam is going away and when will he ever come back? Rajam opens his mouth to respond, but his response is lost in the locomotion of the trains as it chugs away. Mani runs alongside the train and gives Rajam the gift of books. The train leaves, and Swami cries, wondering if Rajam will ever think about him again, and Mani tries to console him by saying that Rajam will write letters to Swami, but his answer seems flimsy and his face inscrutable.

Swami and Friends Summary

A young boy named **Swami** wakes up on Monday morning in the town of Malgudi in South India. He rushes through his homework at his desk in his **father's** room and then goes to the Mission School, where he is bored throughout most of his classes. Swami gets a bad grade on his mathematics homework and then, in his scripture class, gets into an argument with his teacher Mr. **Ebenezar**, a Christian fanatic. Swami is offended at his teacher's dismissal of the value of Hinduism and arrives at school the next day carrying a letter from his father to the **Mission School Headmaster**, in which his father complains to the headmaster that the school does not welcome non-Christian boys.

Swami tells his four closest friends about the letter. These boys are **Somu**, the friendly class monitor; **Mani**, a powerful but lazy bully; **Sankar**, "the most brilliant boy of the class"; and a small boy named Samuel, nicknamed "**The Pea**," who is not remarkable in any way except that he makes Swami laugh more than anyone else. Later in the day, the headmaster scolds Ebenezar but also tells Swami not to report incidents to his father in the future, saying that the boys should instead turn to the headmaster with any problems.

On the subsequent evening, Swami and Mani sit on the banks of the Sarayu river, discussing a classmate named Rajam who Mani wishes to throw into the river. It becomes clear that Rajam is known in school as a kind of rival to Mani, due to his fearlessness, intelligence, and wealth. **Rajam's father** is also the Police Superintendent. Swami insists that he supports Mani more than anyone else, and when they return to school Swami begins acting as a go-between for the two rivals. Eventually, they decide to meet for a fight on the banks of the river to see who is more powerful. But when the time for the fight comes, Rajam suggests that they put aside their differences and become friends, to which Mani happily agrees. Having always admired Rajam, Swami is also delighted at this turn of events and glad to be the friend of both powerful boys.

The reader is introduced to Swami's **grandmother**, whom he calls Granny. She lives with Swami's family in a small passageway, and Swami feels safe and secure in her company.

Swami excitedly describes Rajam to Granny and, although she tries to tell him stories of his own grandfather's similarly impressive accomplishments, Swami refuses to listen. On a Saturday shortly thereafter, Swami ignores his grandmother's requests to spend time with him and instead goes with Mani to Rajam's house, where they are impressed by his luxurious home, numerous toys, and the delicious food his cook serves.

Back at school, Swami runs into his three friends Somu, Sankar, and The Pea. However, they are unfriendly to him and make a joke about a "tail." After school, Swami makes Somu tell him about their joke, which it turns out refers to their calling him "Rajam's tail" because they believe Swami now thinks himself too good for his old friends. The rejection by his friends is the "first shock" of Swami's life, and he reflects miserably on how quickly people can change. At home, he makes a paper boat and puts an ant on it, then watches as the boat is consumed in a flood of water. As the days continue, Swami's friends continue to ignore him, and school becomes an increasingly painful experience.

On another Saturday, Swami excitedly prepares for Rajam to visit his house. He anxiously orders his father, **mother**, grandmother, and cook through various preparations. The visit goes well, and Rajam even charms Granny with his stories. The next time Swami attends school, he is again faced by his old friends mocking him, and he slaps both the Pea and Sankar. Joined by Somu and Mani, the group goes outside, and Swami explains to Mani that the other three call him Rajam's tail. Mani defends Rajam and fights with Somu until the other boys get the headmaster to break up the fight.

Three weeks later, Swami and Mani go to Rajam's house again, this time because Swami told them he had a surprise for them. When they arrive, they jokingly pretend to be a blind puppy and a blind kitten to get Rajam to let them in, only to discover when they open their eyes that Somu, Sankar, and the Pea are also present. Rajam serves the group food and then lectures them all on the value of friendship, offering them each a gift if they promise not to be enemies any more. One by one, each boy accepts his gift.

At Swami's home, his mother has been in bed for two days and seems confusingly changed to him. Granny tells him that he is going to have a baby **brother**, but he is indifferent even when

the baby is born, telling the Pea that the baby is “hardly anything.” The Pea assures him that the baby will grow up quickly.

In April, Swami and his classmates have only two weeks before their school exams. Swami’s father forces him to study constantly, and all of his friends are also unhappy under the stress of studying. Swami only feels that his efforts are worthwhile when his father compliments his work. Shortly before the exam, Swami makes a list of supplies that he needs and, disappointed that “his wants were so few,” he makes a more complicated list and brings it to his father. His father scolds him and refuses to give him money to buy supplies, instead telling him to take supplies from their desk at home.

At last, Swami’s final exam is over. He worries that he finished faster than his friends and did not write enough for one question, but his worry quickly turns to excitement as the other students finish and form a joyful crowd to celebrate the end of school. The group of boys destroys paper and ink bottles, creating happy chaos until a school administrator breaks up their celebration.

Without school in session, Swami realizes that he is closer friends with Mani and Rajam than with Somu, Sankar, and the Pea. He also wishes to get a hoop to play with, and gives some money to a **coachman** who promises to get him one, only to realize that the coachman tricked him. Rajam forms a plan in which Mani will kidnap the **coachman’s son** as revenge, but the plan goes awry when the boy gets away and his neighbors attack Mani and Swami to chase them away. Sitting on a road outside town and feeling frustrated, the three friends accost a young cart boy named **Karuppan**, frightening him with claims that they are the Government Police before eventually letting him go.

Soon thereafter, Swami’s father begins making him study again even though school is out. Feeling sorry for Swami after a long day of work, however, his father also brings him along to visit his club in the evening. Swami enjoys the visit until he realizes that the coachman’s son works at the club. He becomes increasingly fearful that the boy will attack him, not even trusting his father to protect him, and cannot relax until they leave.

In August, Swami and Mani find themselves in the midst of a protest for Indian independence. Moved by the speakers, Swami and Mani swear to support India against England and boycott

English goods, with Swami even burning his **cap** when someone suggests that it's foreign-made. The next day, Swami is nervous about not wearing a cap to school, but finds a crowd of protesters blocking entrance to his school. The group says that school is canceled due to the imprisonment of an Indian political worker, and Swami gets caught up in breaking windows and destroying property at both the Mission School and the nearby Board School. Eventually, the protest moves to a square in town, where Swami sees Rajam's father order his policemen to violently disperse the crowd, a sight that shocks and frightens Swami. Later, his father expresses sympathy for the protesters but scolds Swami for losing his cap, saying it was made in India all along. The next day in school, the headmaster punishes all of the students who participated in the protest and Swami angrily runs away in the middle of class.

Six weeks later, Rajam finds Swami to tell him that he forgives his political activity and to invite him to form a **cricket** team. Swami has transferred to the Board School, while his group of friends back at the Mission School has broken up: Somu was held back, Sankar moved away, and the Pea started school late. Swami agrees to join the cricket team, and he and Rajam call themselves the M.C.C. With Mani, they write a letter to a sporting goods company ordering supplies. Although the company writes back asking for a deposit, the boys continue believing that their supplies will arrive and begin practicing with improvised equipment in the meantime. Swami quickly reveals himself to be a good bowler and earns the nickname Tate, after a famous bowler.

Swami discovers that the workload at the Board School is heavier than he is used to and also that it requires him to participate in daily afterschool drill practices. Consequently, Swami leaves school too late to attend cricket practice on time, which makes Rajam angry. One evening, Swami is concerned about his grandmother, whom he ignored earlier in the day when she said she didn't feel well. He is relieved to find that she is well, but she disappoints him when she does not know what cricket is. However, Swami decides to educate her rather than scolding her. When Swami continues to be late to practice, Rajam decides to confront the **Board School Headmaster** and convince him to let Swami leave school early. Although Swami protests, he insists, and leads Swami to the headmaster's office. The headmaster ignores their request and Rajam eventually gives up his effort.

The M.C.C. schedules a cricket match against another local team, but Swami is still not able to get enough practice time. With only a week left before the match, he decides to try and get a pass from a physician named **Dr. Kesavan**. Dr. Kesavan proclaims Swami healthy but agrees to tell his headmaster that Swami should get to miss drill practice. Delighted, Swami skips drill practice every day to attend cricket, only to find at the end of the week that the doctor never spoke to the headmaster. The headmaster threatens to cane Swami, but Swami throws the cane out the window and runs away. Swami fears that his father will be too angry to let him live at home without attending school, so he decides to run away. He goes to the Mission School and, after reminiscing about how much he loved being a student there, he finds Rajam to say goodbye. However, Rajam convinces Swami to run away only briefly before participating in the match and then leaving for good.

The narration's perspective switches to Swami's father, who wanders the town alone late at night, looking for Swami. Swami has not been seen for hours and his mother and grandmother are sick with worry, with his father growing anxious as well. After looking everywhere else he can think of, Swami's father fearfully peers into the Sarayu to see if Swami has drowned. Not finding him, he continues to walk along the rail lines.

The narration returns to Swami, who is wandering on a quiet road far from home. He reflects that he was foolish to leave over such a trivial problem and wishes to be back home with his family. He decides to return home but unwittingly goes the wrong way, becoming more and more lost until he at last begins to hallucinate in despair, thinking that he is being attacked by animals. He falls unconscious after a fantasy of winning the cricket match. The next morning, a cart man named **Ranga** finds Swami in the road and takes him to the District Forest Office, where an officer named **Mr. Nair** helps Swami figure out who he is and where he is from. Soon, Swami's father takes him home with the assistance of Rajam's father, where he is content to celebrate among his family until Mani arrives and informs him that he has missed the cricket match. Having thought that the match was the next day, Swami is devastated. Mani also says that Rajam is furious, so Swami resolves to speak with Rajam the next day and repair their friendship.

Ten days later, Swami still has not spoken with Rajam due to fear of his reaction. However, he has learned that Rajam's father has been transferred and the family is about to move away. Swami searches his possessions for a going-away present for Rajam, settling on a **book of fairy tales**, and resolves to go to the train station in the morning to give it to Rajam. Swami goes to the station but is again too intimidated to talk to Rajam, who gets on the train without saying goodbye. Panicking, Swami asks Mani for help and the two boys run alongside the train, finally giving Rajam the book. Rajam seems to say something to Swami, but his words are lost under the noise of the train. Mani tells Swami that Rajam has his address and will write, but Swami

Swami and Friends Character List

Swami (or Swaminathan)

Swami is the central character of the plot. He is also the protagonist of the play. As a child, he goes to school where he does not like studies and gets bored easily. He is an honest boy of seven but, on the other hand, he also does not hesitate telling lies to his father. He loves his granny's stories. He is good at cricket and is nicknamed "Tate." He saw the revolution phase of Indian independence. Later in the course of the novel, he became bolder and socially prominent.

Swami's Father

Swaminathan's father is a lawyer by profession. He is stern and authoritarian, but caring. He worries about his son's studies and encourages him to study hard. Sometimes he is overly strict, but later in the novel he also shows his concern for the well-being of his son.

Swami's Mother

Swaminathan's mother is in charge of the house and cares for Swami both materially and emotionally. She defends Swami in his arguments with his father. However, her appearances are occasional. She is the character that Swami misses the most when he runs away from the house.

Swami's Grandmother

Granny is described as a sweet and sleepy lady whom Swami will often go to and tell stories about his day. She is a religious woman. She tells Swami the stories of her past. Her relationship with Swami changes throughout the novel.

Swami's Younger Brother

He is the only sibling to Swami. He is born midway through the novel. He captures the prime attention of his family. Swami too cares for his little brother. However, this character has no major role as he remains a child throughout the novel.

Mr. Ebenezar

He is Swami's scripture teacher at the Albert Mission School. He is a Christian fanatic and degrades Swami's religion, Hinduism, and considers Christianity superior to other religions. Later, he is scolded by the headmaster of the school.

Rajam

Rajam is the new kid at the Albert Mission School and is Swami's rival turned best friend. Rajam is good at studies, speaks English "like a European," and is the son of the police

superintendent, which gives him more attention and status at school. He is witty and fearless in nature and naturally assumes authority in social settings. It is his idea to start a cricket team.

Mani

Another close friend of Swami, Mani is described as the "Mighty Good-For-Nothing." He is a bold and strong figure in his class. He is not good at studies and purposefully slacks off, but he likes fighting and no one dares to challenge him, even the teachers. Mani likes to dominate the whole class and also bully some of his classmates.

Somu

Somu is Swami's school friend from the Albert Mission School. He is the monitor of Swami's class and carries himself with an easy and confident air. Swami calls him the "uncle of the class."

Sankar

A classmate of Swami, Sankar is known as the "the most brilliant boy of the class." Swami admires Sankar's intellect and takes his guidance. Later, he leaves Malgudi as his father is transferred to another town.

Samuel (or The Pea)

Also nicknamed "The Pea," Samuel is Swami's classmate and friend. Both Swami and the Pea are close friends until the Pea changes his school. Both remain friends as they both play cricket together. He is the only Christian friend of Swami.

Swami and Friends Themes

Innocence and Irony

The narrative is told with the innocence of its seven-year-old boy protagonist, Swami. He does not understand maps, nor the politics of the anti-colonial nationalist movements, nor how money works. A lot of the tension driving the storytelling is based on the misunderstanding and tomfoolery that results when he and his pals try to engage with matters that they do not fully understand. Their innocence also creates a sense of irony that permeates throughout the novel wherein the narrator will sometimes tell us details that Swami himself does not know. For example, while Swami is wandering through the woods, he thinks that he is on the main road on his way back to his house. The narrator, however, informs us that he is actually quite lost on a branch road because he has been following a gentle, imperceptible curve that has led him astray.

Colonial Domination

The novel begins with Swami waking up and immediately dreading the prospect of going to school and listing the homework that he still has to do before class starts in two hours. At school, he encounters very domineering figures and hierarchical power structures. We are introduced to school first through Dr. Ebenezer, his scripture teacher, who demonizes and denigrates the native Hindu gods as "lifeless" and "dirty" objects and uplifts the Christian Jesus as a true god. This episode of British colonial domination through religious indoctrination is a more overt instantiation of a theme that runs throughout the novel. School structures his time to the extent that the central conflict by the end of the novel is that school ends too late for him to attend his cricket practice on time.

Mythological Construction of the Everyday

Malgudi is a made-up town, the setting for much of Narayan's fiction. It is both mythical and mundane, a place that is no place yet also could be every place in India. Narayan gives us very few identifying features of Malgudi and eschews a close realism in his depiction of the town. In this way, he gives the setting a sense of folksy unreality wherein each reader might transplant and project their own ideas of what Malgudi might be or look like.

Patriarchy and Authority

Swami is always navigating men who wield authority over his life, whether his school headmaster, the doctor, or his father. The men in the story are whom Swami both fears and resents, but also desires approval from, as evidenced by his elation when his father invites him to the club with him. In contrast, the women—primarily his mother and his granny—are the

people whom he relies upon to listen to and care for him. His mother always brings his coffee and sugar as his afternoon snack after school. His granny is always available to listen to his latest story or lecture. When Swami fakes sickness, he manipulates his mother and granny to convince his father to let him stay in bed. The women, while not associated with the formal institutions of power, still exert a powerful force upon Swami. For example, hours into getting lost in the woods after trying to escape, Swami recalls his mother and her cooking as one of the most powerful sensations of home.

Belonging, Community, and Competition

Belonging to a group is central to the story and Swami's life. The novel shows that belonging is not an easy, smooth affair, but often happens through exclusion, hierarchy, and competition. Swami feels confidently established as the charismatic head of his friend group, but Rajam's arrival threatens to displace him. Instead, Swami befriends Rajam, but then Swami's old friends feel abandoned by his new friendship and start mocking Swami as Rajam's "tail." This is eventually resolved when Rajam proposes that they all form a cricket team. Thus, they all belong together in one unified identity as a team, but their sense of camaraderie is sustained through the exclusivity and competition of sports.

Boyhood

Boyhood is the overall period of life through which Swami and his friends are living through, and its sense of adventure earns comparisons to famous American boys such as Huck Finn or to the English tradition of schoolboy fiction, such as Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* Boyhood is defined by its sense of escape and adventure through evading and resisting authorities, as well as by a strong sense of group identity and friendship.

Oppression and Escape

For Swami, Malgudi transforms from an idyllic town to a place of unbearable pressure and judgment in his school from the headmaster, in his family from his father, around town from the police officers, and even within his own friend group with Rajam, who smoothly assumes authority over Swami due to his fluent command of English and wealth. While their adventures are often fairly innocent and the stakes low, Swami's tensions are connected to larger systems of oppression that he continually bumps into and that land him into tight corners. He continually tries to escape as his method of achieving freedom—from the Albert Mission School and later the Board High School—but instead of giving him freedom, it often lands him in bad situations wherein he must rely on authority figures, such as his father, to bail him out.

Work

Swami is ultimately anti-work in his everyday life and tries to skate by school with doing as little work as possible. This often earns him harsh words from his father, who is invested in him being a good student. His anti-work ethos dovetails with the larger historical conditions of his time in which Indians striked in solidarity with freedom fighters against British colonial rule. In the "Broken Panes" chapter, Swami is overjoyed to hear that a strike is happening, at first because he is relieved to not have to go to school, but later because he imbibes the liberating mood and begins to act on it, throwing stones at the school.

In Custody Summary

In Custody is a novel written in the year 1984 by a renowned Indian-American author Anita Desai. The book is about searching for self-identity and meaning in life. In the first chapter, the audience is introduced to a young man named Deven Sharma, who feels dissatisfied with his life and wallows in his sense of failure. Setting aside his life ambitions of becoming an Urdu poet, Deven settled in a loveless marriage with his wife who also feels discontent but afraid to speak her mind. To add to his frustrations, Deven makes his living teaching Hindi literature despite his first language being Urdu.

Ever since he was a child, Deven dreamed of becoming a great Urdu poet, he listened to his father recite different poems by a famous poet, Nur Shahjehanabadi and had fallen in love with Urdu poetry. Now he feels trapped, with no purpose whatsoever, praying for someone to throw him an olive branch. While drifting in his failures, an opportunity to revive his life comes along, Deven is asked to interview the distinguished Urdu Poet Nur Shahjehanabadi. Deven was going to shake the hand of his idol and a master poet. He feels nervous and excited at the same time, this is a chance to revive the elements that gave meaning to his life. With the support of his friends and the university, Deven prepares to interview Nur. The school provides all the equipment and finances for the interview. With that, Deven sets off to interview Nur.

Nur lives in a rundown apartment building on the uppermost floor. As Deven steadily climbs the stairs, he feels his life is about to change for the better. However, as he makes his way up, his hopes start dwindling, the place is strewn with garbage, drunkenness, fighting, and grime. When Deven eventually gets to Nur he finds a frail, physically, and emotionally tortured man surrounded by sham followers who live off his prosperity without offering anything in return. The poet's wives are in constant quarreling with each other while the others drink away what's left of the poet's wealth. Deven attempts to connect with Nur to no avail, he even pays for a new location for the interview but the drama in Nur's life keeps coming up. The interview is a failure and as it becomes clear to Deven, he begins to question his self-worth and his love for Urdu poetry.

Eventually, Deven gives up on the project and prepares to face his colleagues and the college administration, but something in him has changed. After long and sleepless nights, Deven had something of a divine awakening, he realized that he and Nur were practically the same-nothing can change their love for poetry and who they are. Deven regained his sense of security and self-worth.

Characters

Deven

The protagonist of this novel is Deven, a disillusioned literature professor. He becomes very excited when he gets the chance to interview one of his former idols, the great Urdu poet Nur. However, upon meeting Nur, Deven is shocked to discover his idol isn't what he seems.

Nur

The great Urdu poet Nur is a key focus in this novel. He is saddened by the fact that the language Urdu is becoming scarce, and is reluctant to complete the interview. He is shown to live in terrible living conditions, which puts Deven off interviewing him.

Murad

Murad is Deven's friend, who convinces Deven to complete the interview with Nur. When Deven is doubtful and reluctant to carry on, Murad manipulates him into continuing.

In Custody Themes

The Decline of Urdu

Although the novel is essentially driven by its characters rather than its themes, each character represents a theme and the key one of these is the decline of Urdu and the loss of an old culture, symbolized by Siddiqui, Deven's fellow Urdu lecturer. Everything he stands for is encapsulated in the Urdu culture and consequently he feels as though he is losing his identity.

Nur is an Urdu poet, but he realizes that the language is slowly dying out. Eventually, it will be studied as something historical and ancient, rather than kept alive. He is aware that he is a representation of things that are dying and this seems to be making his life unravel as well.

Deven is similarly concerned about the dying of Urdu. He sees it as something more interesting and romantic than modern life can offer. With the slow death of Urdu comes an almost Westernization of India which not everyone is in favor of. Therefore, the death of a language, and the culture that is dying with it, is seen as a sort of cut-off point between the way things used to be and the way that they are becoming.

Bullying and Manipulation

Most of the characters in the book are highly manipulative and do not get along well with others. Murad is a bully; he is also very adept at playing Deven for a fool and knowing exactly what to say in order to get him to do what he wants. As a publisher, he wants Deven to interview Nur so that he can make money out of it, but he tells Deven that the interviews will be helpful

in assisting scholars of Urdu to learn, knowing that this more altruistic take on the interview will persuade Deven back to Nur's house.

The more peripheral characters in the book are also extremely manipulative. Neither of Nur's wives gets along with the other and their relationship is both acrimonious and also built on a foundation of competition. His second wife is particularly driven to steal his thunder and to make herself more important, using his fame as a poet to do so.

Negative View of Feminism

Nur's second wife, Imtiaz, is a determined woman who uses Nur's fame and hard work to gain accolades and fame for herself. Her character embodies the theme of feminism primarily because in the culture in which she lives, this is what feminism is taken to be. Her ambition and boldness are seen as negative qualities, and the novel shows that feminist women are manipulative and bully others. Feminism in the novel is not shown to be a positive force as there are no other characters who are strong women who are shown as anything but manipulators.

Deven's wife, Sharm, also highlights the need for feminism within the culture she lives in. Her dreams are far smaller than Imtiaz's; she wants a better refrigerator and does not want to spend her life doing household chores, but she is unable to provide this for her. She is consequently seen as a henpecking wife for wanting something better than the status quo.

In Custody Analysis

Chapter 1

In chapter one of the novel, the narrator Deven is surprised by an unexpected visit from his childhood friend Murad. Deven has been moping, and feeling dull and unmotivated in the beginning of the story, which sort of foreshadows that something unexpected or great may occur later in the story. Murad and Deven are childhood friends, and the writer displays their friendship by contradicting their backgrounds. Their friendship is oxymoronic and somewhat toxic as Deven is used to being a doormat, his kind soul allowing anyone to trample over him, while Murad is used to being the dominant person, because of how spoilt he was. Due to Murad's powerful character, Deven feels inferior and 'invisible'. Murad proposes an interview to Deven, where he claims it will be beneficial for scholars, and Deven agrees not only because he can meet his idol, but as an escape from Murad's suffocating demeanor.

Chapter 2

The view of the second chapter shifts as it shows Deven's trip from Mirpore to Delhi. Mirpore symbolizes a 'prison' and the window of opportunity allowed Deven an excuse to escape the enclosed town he grew up in. In this chapter, the readers can depict Deven's insecurities and self-consciousness as he ponders on whether his simple 'satin shirt' was good enough for the famous poet he admired, Nur. The story is showing an optimistic side as Deven is hopeful, and believes his life can change for the better. However, as he arrives to Delhi, he is disappointed by what he saw. He was shocked when he realized a 'respectable' poet like Nur inhabited in a 'low-life' neighborhood. This part of the chapter symbolizes that although somebody is 'famous' or seen as a wealthy and content person in the public eye, they may not be actually living their best life as everyone faces their own problems. The narrator mentioned "a cruel trap, or prison" to display his emotions and feelings towards Mirpore and how he feels imprisoned in the small town.

Chapter 3

Deven had arrived Chandni Chowk and is on his way to meet Nur. He is at first let down at the sight of Nur living in a trashed, run-down zone, with drunken neighbors. The writer described Deven climbing up the stairs to meet his 'idol' Nur, to symbolize now Deven views Nur not only as his 'idol' but he worships him as someone highly important. As described in Deven's backstory, Nur impacted his life heavily. He had built his dream and ambition based on listening to Urdu poetry that his father had read to him.

Chapter 4

Deven had returned to Mirpore feeling miserable as he had failed his mission to interview the 'superior Nur'. Sarla, Nur's wife is introduced in this chapter. The tone of the chapter displays that Sarla is dissatisfied with her life, the same as Deven and they had been forced into the relationship. Both Deven and Sarla had their own dreams and ambitions, but were crushed due to their restrictive lifestyle and having to stay in Mirpore, also known as the 'prison'. This chapter displays a sense of melancholy, showing the reader that not all dreams can come true, and some are less fortunate than others.

Chapter 5

Deven is manipulated by Murad to once again attempt to interview Nur, as Murad wanted the money and was counting on Deven to do the interview for him. One of Nur's wives, Imtiaz Begum is introduced as "the so called poetress" and is shown to have a powerful character.

Deven had failed to convince Nur to do the interview, and Murad uses his manipulative nature to tell Deven to get a tape recorder.

A Review of The Sunset Club

Khushwant Singh.

'Boorha Binch' is the term used by walkers and wanderers in the historical urban jewel that are the Lodhi Gardens in central New Delhi. Who are the three wizened old men who regularly seat themselves on a particular bench (Old Men's Bench) facing the Bara Gumbad (Big Dome) monument built during the fifteenth century by the ruling Lodhi dynasty? The get-together occurs during the sunset hour throughout the year, for years on end. "English-speaking Indians call them the 'Sunset Club.'" And so we have the setting of Khushwant Singh's novel. The narrative starts on 26th January 2009 and ends a year later. The changing seasons reflected in the flora and fauna of the Lodhi Gardens is the natural canvas on which we turn chapters. In "'May of the Laburnums', "a mass of canary gold dripping down like bunches of Kandahar grapes. You gape open-mouthed at this miracle of beauty. No fragrance, only gaudy showers of gold..."

In "Apologia," he remarks: "I had no intention of writing this novel. I had turned ninety-five and was not sure I would be able to finish it. Having nothing to do I became restless. Then Sheela Reddy of Outlook magazine suggested I record memories of my dead friends about whom I talked so much. The idea germinated and I got down to doing so. I mixed facts with fantasy."

The product is pure Khushwant Singh; containing all the classic ingredients of his large literary sphere: the master story-teller, the quoting scholar, the signature humour, the wicked wit, the insightful commentator and the racy and ribald narrator. One may be forgiven if one interprets the principal protagonist Sardar Boota Singh (also known as 'Rangeela Sardar' according to Begum Baig) as Khushwant Singh himself. In a thinly-disguised self-portrayal, in a fictional place; Boota has a real-life counterpart. Having met him a number of times at his Sujjan Singh Park flat, New Delhi as well as at his Himalayan home in the hills in Kasauli; 'Sunset Club' may be read as real and fictional literature.

The other two characters include the eldest Pandit Preetam Sharma, a Punjabi Brahmin and a retired educationist chairing a number of cultural and social organisations. "He is in good health but needs glasses to read, hearing aids to hear and dentures to eat." He is single and lives with his single sister. Sharma is "Sabjantha" (Mr. Know-it-All). Nawab Barkatullah Baig Dehlavi is a "Sunni Mussalman whose Pathan ancestors settled in Delhi before the British took over the country." His father set up a chain of Yunani dawakhanas (pharmacies) in Old Delhi.

Residence is at Baig Manzil mansion in Nizamuddin in New Delhi. The Aligarh University graduate is in his eighties. "Baig is in good shape: no glasses, no hearing aids, no false teeth, though he is occasionally short of breath." As for Sardar Boota Singh, "He suffers from many ailments: chronic constipation, incipient diabetes, fluctuating blood pressure, enlarged prostate and periodic bouts of gout. He has been wearing glasses since his schooldays, half a denture as all this lower teeth are gone, and for some years, hearing aids as well." A brief on his health.

Although a wily provocateur, Boota Singh, remains challenged by his two friendly debaters. Each one needles the others while contesting one-upmanship; turning all three into argumentative Indians. Provoked to retaliate, the fierce debates often end in 'Chalo ji, let bygones be bygones.' "Boota, what are those lines about truth that you often quote? Quoting other people's words of wisdom is Boota's favourite pastime. He clears his throat and recites":

Truth is good

If someone else dies for the

truth It is better

You are no martyr who should

On the gallows be hung

Hold your tongue.

'Sunset Club' explores the inevitable process of aging; the twilight years of three firm friends whose friendship has spanned more than four decades. Their past recollections, their current opinions and their future thoughts all come into play in this touching and tongue-in-cheek narrative. 'Boorha Binch' has been privy to discussions on health and wealth; the sacred and profane, politics and politicians, love and lust, corruption and cronyism, life and death - the essence of what brought and what brings meaning and pleasure to lives that now see the final curtain descending. Much of what is happening in India in 2009, gets a mention by the three musketeers as they seat themselves on the 'Boorha Binch' during the dipping westerning sun. Manmohan Singh and M.F. Husain, Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, Maneka and Varun Gandhi, mangoes and monsoons, the new Nano car produced by Tata, hilarious episodes on Valentine's Day and April Fool's Day, 'Baara baj gaye' (the Sardarji joking line) and Death. (Mirza Ghalib's couplets).

Life goes at a galloping pace

Where it will stop, no one

knows; Our hands are not on

the reins Our feet not in the

stirrups.

There is a day fixed for death

Why then spend sleepless nights thinking about it?

Thus Boota Singh leaves clear instructions to his 'bearer' staff member that upon his demise; there is to be equal distribution of his stock of scotch whiskey to his two bosom buddies.

Morning papers rarely bring cause to cheer. Pandit Sharma does not subscribe to papers. After all, they are freely available at the Library of the India International Centre. Baig Sahib "turns over the pages of the Hindustan Times. He spends a few minutes looking at pictures on the obit page to see if he knows anyone who has departed and puts the paper aside before asking his Begum to tell him what is happening in the world." The Voice of Begum' is up-to-date on all news. Sardar Boota subscribes to six newspapers that are home-delivered early in the morning. The punch-lines keep coming. Effortlessly, without rancour or malice. And I find myself chuckling through the reading. A word on obituaries. I suggested to my husband why not replace subscription for Newspaper A to Newspaper B - for a change. He is on the phone with Friend A about Friend B. Only to hear that Friend B had passed away. Invariably, I am told that he would have known about his friend's death, if it had not been for my intervention. He did have the last word. Papers serve many purposes.

Should any one cringe at the hilarious and detailed descriptions of certain body functions; eg. bowel movement or sexual anecdotes; Boota Singh has cautioned the reader early on in his 'Apologia.' "My readers may find what I've written to be in bad taste - unacceptable in polite society. So be it. I have never been known for politeness or propriety. If you are offended by some things in the book, cast it aside." Well, reader you have been warned!

Profound and poignant, hilarious and full of homilies; in parts gentle and affectionate and elsewhere bold and raucous, Khushwant Singh continues his legendary wit, insight and commentary in *Sunset Club*. Believing it to be his last book, I was gratified to discover *Khushwantnama: The lessons of my life* (2013). In full form, a brilliant title. The word-master completed his magnum opus at the productive age of ninety-eight. The man must have prayed

hard to reach a century. However, he died a year short. Khushwant Singh passed away in 2014.

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UNIT - V

Indian Literature In English – SHS1204

TWO LADY RAMS BY MULK RAJ ANAND

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF TWO LADY RAMS:

Mulk Ray Anand was an Indian English writer. He was born on 12 December, 1905 in Peshawar, British India. Now Peshawar is part of Pakistan. After completing his graduation in 1924 he moved to England for PhD degree where he came into contact with English writers, Philosophers and Intellectuals. The violent exploitation and personal consequence of India's uncompromising caste system led Anand to write his first prose easy. His first novel was 'untouchable', it was based on the daily life of the lower caste section. Mulk Raj Anand got the title of '**Charles Dickens**' because of this novel. He died on 28 September, 2004.

SUMMARY OF TWO LADY RAMS:

The story, **Two Lady Ram** is about Lalla Jhinda Ram and his two wives. Lalla Jhinda Ram, an ordinary shopkeeper. He married two women, Sukhi and Shakuntala. He was forced to call both of them "**Lady Rams**" to calm the furious bitterness and high-blow war between his two wives. And the question was of naming his one of the as "**Lady Rams**". If he chose one the other one will be creating disaster.

The elder wife of Jhinda Ram, Sukhi cannot give comfort to him and she was unable to perpetuate the race of giving him child. Due to this reason he married Shakuntala. The first wife gave Jhinda Ram a financial puss to his life as she brought a big dowry along with her while the second wife introduced romance in his life.

The colonial regime had conferred the knighthood to Jhinda Ram, elevating his social rank thereby to that of the elites, "in recognition of his sundry services to the British Empire." There was problem arising as both the wives wanted to the title of **Lady Ram**. The trouble worsened with the news that for conferring Jhinda Ram with the title of Knighthood, there was invitation to attend the Garden party which was to be held the next day at the residence of his Excellency

he Governor, specially for the ceremony of investiture of all those dignitaries who had been titles, medals and scrolls of honour.

The invite was for Sri Jhinda Ram and Lady Ram that was very big problem for him that whom to take with him. He asked his second wife get dressed in a new sari for the party. This information reached the ear of his first wife and she got so furious and a war started between them. After receiving Skuhi's abuse and curse, Jhinda decided to put it to an end by dragging the first wife by her hair, to her part of the house.

After ending of the drama Jhinda Ram's chauffeur witness all the event. Both of the wives appeared in the flashing saris and after all the dressing-up ritual none of them considered having her "prolonged toilet" ruined for the day. Thus Jindal aft into his car with both of his wives for party at the Government House.

The arrival of **Two Lady Rams** instead of one became a matter of discussing during their reception at government House by "His Excellency and Her Excellency". The governor's wife and His Excellency conferred Jhinda Ram with the title of "the Star of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire". The story concluded happily on the note from that day onwards Sir Jhinda and the **two Lady Rams**.

In India—A Fable by Raja Rao

In *In India—A Fable* by Raja Rao we have the theme of colonialism, potential, control, change and independence. Taken from his *Collected Stories* collection the story is narrated in the first person by a man called Raja (assumed to be the author) and after reading the story the reader realises that Rao may be exploring the theme of colonization. Throughout the story the narrator gives life to India. He talks of the forests, the rivers, the goddesses and the elephants. All symbols of India that may have been forgotten when India was under British rule. It is as though Rao is suggesting that India is a living and breathing country and can be once it no longer is under British rule. It is also interesting that the narrator is able to control Pierrot or at least amaze him or occupy his mind. The fact that Pierrot is French might also be important as Rao could be highlighting the differences between India and Western society. Pierrot though only a child knows very little if anything about India. Who as mentioned is amazed by the country and recognises it as being better than Arabia. At least in his imagination.

This could be important as Rao could be highlighting the potential that India has after British rule. Also the fact that Pierrot moves on from Arabia to India could mirror Britain's leaving of India. No longer is Britain the country that it was or would ever be again after WWII and the decolonization of India and the decline in the geopolitical role of Britain would only be a matter of time. The narrator also seems to be in touch with the spiritual side of life. If anything he is connected to not only India but to nature itself. This could be significant as Rao could be suggesting that the body of India has not changed. However it is the mind set of those who live there that needs to change. The fact that the story is not set in India could also be significant as Rao may be attempting to highlight that the narrator is not under the rule of the British yet longs for a post-colonial India. An India that in Pierrot's eyes and possibly the narrator's eyes is the best of places to be.

Women also play an important role in the story. A role that may or may not be befitting to them. The narrator considers the Sorbonard girls to be narrow in their vision while Queen Anne of Austria is portrayed as being an unhappy wife. If anything Rao may be symbolically suggesting that Western women are not the equal of Indian women. Who are happy and have the ability to look forward. They will not be defeated (nor will the Indian men) and as such the

narrator is comfortable to praise, without saying it, Indian women. The buttons on the narrator's coat may also have some symbolic importance. Though they may not be gold. They are more real than Rudolfe's horse of gold. Rao managing to slight Western society by a very effective means. The horse is of course that of the colonizer. The fact that Pierrot's father is away in Morocco might suggest that he too is a colonizer working for the military in Morocco. It is also noticeable that throughout the story there is a clear attempt by Raja to surround the narrator with those who are from Western society. In many ways mirroring how life may be for those who live in India. Surrounded and controlled by Western influences. However it is noticeable that the narrator never forgets India or the positives that India has to offer. It might be lost on Pierrot but it is not lost on the reader.

The end of the story is also interesting as Pierrot returns and remembers the narrator. He also remembers the narrator's story and has promoted himself to the role of a maharaja. He has forgotten about Arabia as the narrator might hope that others may forget about India or at least allow India to be in control of their own destiny. It is also interesting that at no point in the story does the narrator, apart from language, allow for Western society to influence him. He is independent of the influences that might have come from India being controlled by British rule. This in itself is important as it suggests that the narrator is proud to be Indian and does not necessarily appreciate the fact that India has been colonized by Britain. Not only is the narrator a supporter of an independent India but he also has changed Pierrot's opinion on India. Something that is clear to the reader by way of the fact that Pierrot is now playing the role of a maharaja.

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