

CHAPTER VI

SUMMATION

FRESH PILGRIMAGES

In the foregone chapters of this dissertation entitled “The Pilgrimage of Women in 20th Century Literature with reference to Margaret Laurence *The Diviners*, Toni Morrison’s *Sula* and Lakshmi Kannan’s *Going Home*” the protagonists’ pilgrimage has been followed to see how they march forward pushing aside all the hurdles and conduct their pilgrimage in sociological, psychological and archetypal level. In the pilgrimage the protagonists of the novel as well as the novelists empower themselves to achieve self identity. Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Lakshmi Kannan have been selected as representatives of their genres as they, more than any other writers of the period seem to creatively communicate the agonies suffered by the women, sharing the same experiences as women and as creative writers. Their experience as well as their impact on their community is not identical, and their genres and modes of writing are also different. However, their writings create an inspiring awareness among the feminist community. This convergence of ideological interest and identical cumulative impact has made this researcher see them as a single group of creative writers, who have chosen different routes to reach their destination.

The current dissertation has been segmented as five chapters: 1) Explication of terms 2) The Sociological Pilgrimage--Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* 3) The Psychological Pilgrimage--Toni Morrison's *Sula* 4) The Archetypal Pilgrimage--Lakshmi Kannan's *Aatthukkup pokanum* or *Going Home* 5) The Artists' Pilgrimage. Pilgrimage can be divided into two types physical and spiritual. The Physical journey denotes the journey to a holy place or sacred place. But the spiritual journey means the journey towards i) inner self or self realization or self-revelation or self-understanding ii) realization of God through suffering, and merging with Him. Spiritual journey as noted in the first category can be opted to follow three different ways, namely 'sociological' – to achieve individuality and an identity in the society, 'psychological' – to probe into the psyche and realize self-awareness, and 'archetypal' – to explore the self deeply and find out one's roots.

Chapter I- Explication of terms ventures to define several terms associated with 'Pilgrimage'. In the context of this study the terms become technical and so theoretical. Women in India, in spite of patriarchal objections have bravely confronted them and paved new paths leaving the beaten track. The Indian national movement had witnessed the dynamism of several heroic women, whose heroism tragically remains in oblivion. However, they remain role models to the future womankind as well as to the women creative writers. This present study is a contribution to the discipline

‘Women Studies’ that surveys the ‘Sociological Pilgrimage’ of Morag Gunn, the ‘Psychological Pilgrimage’ of Sula and the ‘Archetypal Pilgrimage’ of Gayatri/Rama, the protagonists of the respective works chosen for scrutiny. The term pilgrimage apart from its direct meaning, ‘a Sacred Journey’ also connotes the inward journey taken by the individuals to achieve his or her cherished goal, that is sacred to that individual. Pilgrimage is essentially enfolded in two inevitable elements ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’. To know about religion is to understand other cultures. The discussion of religion necessarily leads to secularization with the advent of new religious awareness brought in due to different spiritual thinking. The political movements were treated as religions by the adherents as they were committed to humanistic ideals. Secularism itself was considered spiritual, and so religious. Such a ‘secular humanistic thinking’ gave way to what is called ‘Free-thought’. Secular humanism and free thought naturally fascinated feminist ideas, which spread a wide spectrum to involve feminist theories, feminist language and feminist epistemology.

Feminist epistemologists attend to the interactions between gender and other social categories including religion to knowledge growth. Sandra Harding has offered a tripartite taxonomy of Feminist epistemology: Feminist empiricism, Feminist standpoint theory and Feminist postmodernism. Of these the standpoint theory or standpoint feminism emphasizes that the social

sciences must be practiced from the standpoint of women since the women hold a different type of knowledge. Women are ‘situated knowers’. This notion of knower leads to the ‘Feminist Perspectives on Self’, which orders itself in three distinct thoughts- classic psychoanalysis, object relations theory, and poststructuralism, all focusing on identity development. ‘Feminist Identity Development’ progresses through several stages. Several models have come out not only to identify the ‘self within’ but also establish that ‘identity’ to the external world. The well known psychologists for this project are N.E. Downing and K.L. Roush and Carol Gilligan, whose “Stage Theory” has been acknowledged in the feminist circles. The collaborative work of Belenky and others is also quite popular. Carol Gilligan is much concerned about the crucial role of women’s voices in transforming a patriarchal world. She strongly maintains that women must voice out openly to make the world understand their selves. Creative writers like Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Lakshmi Kannan take up this vital point in their writings, make the protagonists break their silence and initiate these female heroes to undertake sociological, psychological and archetypal pilgrimages towards self knowledge, self awareness and self actualization respectively.

Chapter II is ‘The Sociological Pilgrimage – Margaret Laurence’s *The Diviners*’. The sociological realization of Morag Gunn, the protagonist is depicted throughout the novel and Laurence tries to unravel the secret of her

identity, the self, through her social commitments. The character of Morag is undoubtedly Laurence herself. Morag's whole life is a pilgrimage to discover who she is and where she belongs. She subjects herself to interrogation and self-scrutiny, and constantly holds a mirror upto herself and to her life. This persistent quest for identity is a feature common among the female Canadian writers. Morag's progress is sociological as well as a psychological pilgrimage, by making a descent into the psyche and return successfully. Laurence remarks that this theme, human kind's quest for the archetypal parents, for our gods, for our own meanings in the face of our knowledge of the inevitability of death, is central to mythology, religion and history. *The Diviners* is primarily concerned with fictionalizing the processes of the protagonist Morag's search for an adequate sense of meaningful identity. The narrator-protagonist's pilgrimage towards self-discovery deliberately aims "at a specifically Canadian identity" by fusing together personal and national history, It is not only an individual's story but also a story of nation. The novel is divided into five parts.

In *The Diviners*, Morag's family romance takes place within larger historical and ideological contexts with multiple, often contradictory, privileged sites of presence around which desire is structured. Morag's tale slots lessons in courage, endurance, and confidence trained by diverse people. The first section of the novel comprises the snapshots of Morag's childhood,

the frozen images of past moments the now formalized presences of what is presently absent. The pictures are presented not for what they show but for what is hidden in them. Morag orphaned at the age of five, is reared by the town garbage collector Christie and his wife Princess. As such Morag's sociological pilgrimage commences at a tender age when it should have been filled with fun and laughter.

The second section talks about the death of Morag's parents, which means her physical departure from the farm that leads to the loss of the conscious world of the child and her imaginative companions. The recognition of an external social reality is the initial movement of conscious self understanding, the pilgrimage of the individual. Morag has to move from the country farm, a free location that constructs her world of imagination to Manawaka where she would be caught into a limiting, narrow sophisticated bourgeois society that could offer her only a pseudo-intimacy. Morag creates stories that provide spaces for her to get educated, commits herself into a kind of interior socialization and fantasisation to understand her self better. This is the beginning step in her 'Sociological Pilgrimage'.

Morag's behaviour in school is determined by her relation to two privileged sites of presence: intelligence and class. Morag is intelligent and loves words, and yet her clothing, idiom and friends indicate her lack of membership in the privileged social class to which Stacey Cameron

grudgingly belongs. Morag feels acutely her lack of social status but compensates it by valorizing; she sits at the back of the class and becomes the toughest girl in the school. Nonetheless, she sees the opportunities an education can provide. She loves Christie for the stories he tells and for his love of words but hates him for his lack of social manners and standing. Her consolations again are social constructs. As a child, she finds consolation in Jesus but when she is not chosen to sing a solo in the Christmas Eve service, she realizes that Jesus is mediated through an institution that discriminates along class, gender, and race lines. She then turns towards other narratives such as the tales of Piper Gunn. This is an example of ‘Secular Humanism’ which perhaps, initiates her to ‘free thinking’ that directs her to take up a ‘sociological pilgrimage’.

The same process is at work in Morag’s marriage to and divorce from Brooke. The third section of the novel covers Morag-Skelton relationship. In him she looks for the ultimate meaning of her life. To gain Brooke, Morag conforms to the subject-position of genuine innocence and in this process she loses temporarily her own history and identity. Once married to Brooke Skelton, the professor, Morag’s writing comes under his supervision. To write, she must reject his control and opinion. Jules’ visit restores to Morag a sense of a self beyond Brooke’s construction of her. At first, Morag’s understanding of the larger symbolic structures such as narrative and history is problematic.

What she hears from Christie and Jules, which they claim as truth seem to oppose the history she has learnt in school. Thus Morag is faced with the possibility of multiple truths. Consequently her first book is published in Morag's maiden name without Brooke's advice. She then incorporates a multiplicity of discourses and her beliefs into her work without organizing them around a unitary Truth. *The Diviners* is the result.

The fourth section of the novel 'Rites of Passage' can as well be called 'Writs of Passage' which was the original title given by Laurence. The section concentrates on Morag Gunn's writings compiled together by different memory banks. The first book and her daughter come almost simultaneously. Thus her intellectual and physical fulfillment virtually coincide. After the initial success, Morag Gunn produces a succession of best-sellers. She also realizes her long cherished dream – an identity to herself. Acknowledgement of her writing from an unexpected reader shows Morag Gunn as a successful writer after so many hurdles. Now creation is no longer merely the isolated woman writing on the apartment tower. On all levels she continues her pilgrimage. Novel writing becomes a necessary labor and the birth of her daughter confirms social status and identity to her. In this period of psychic stress, Morag completes her first part, 'Spear of innocence'. The process of creative writing enables her to stay alive, be independent of her false persona. She frees herself from Brooke to be reborn along with her child. The

blossoming of the writer in her and the physical journey from Manawaka to Winnipeg is another phase in her ‘Sociological pilgrimage’, as she begins pondering about the plight of the pioneering Canadian women. Morag’s pilgrimage into the past at the age of forty-seven is also a spiritual quest to understand the meaning of her heritage. Morag finally follows Jules’ example of accepting one’s ancestry on faith.

The fifth short section of the novel conveys the message that Morag Gunn seems to have divined her Self towards a kind of reconciliation, that is between her daughter Pique and herself and between herself and her dead parents. Like her creator, Morag Gunn uses her pen as a vehicle to take a pilgrimage into the past, to fathom divine truths that lie hidden from ordinary vision. In the novel’s time-present sequence, Morag is writing her fifth novel hoping to mitigate the gloom and confusion. Her ‘Sociological pilgrimage’ is a renovating kind of ‘secular humanistic’ step in her religion of heritage. Morag’s religion of heritage is, in a profound sense, a universal religion, as Laurence affirms, “tribalism is an inheritance of us all”. Laurence, most consciously and overtly weaves in this work, larger nationalist intent through Christie’s tales of Piper Gunn and Jules’ tales of Metis. Exploring history is also a sacred pilgrimage that is likely to reveal many unknown details. In making Morag inherit the entire Canadian Past --- the Scottish and Metis histories --- Laurence seems to compel Canada to do the same. Thus, the

'secular humanistic' mode has a larger social concern aimed at a new heritage. Morag's 'Sociological Pilgrimage' is not only an individual's self attainment but also the nation's recognition of its own culture.

Chapter III, 'The Psychological Pilgrimage – Toni Morrison's *Sula*' analyses the 'Psychological' pilgrimage undertaken by the protagonist Sula, who establishes her identity in spite of the several barriers that interfere during her journey. The novel focuses on two friends, Sula and Nel, both have been shaped and continue to be shaped, by their experiences with their families, particularly with their mothers. Toni Morrison's accent is on the diversity of Black sensibilities, horrors of slavery, modes of expression and independent thinking. Her works present the black woman as an individual, struggling towards freedom and selfhood. She comes out of the biological traps, breaks all the shackles of stereotypes and emerges as a New Woman to establish her female identity. *Sula*, the novel of and for women, deals with the relationship between Sula and Nel and represents the conflict between the desire to rebel and the need to conform. It is the story of the psychological pilgrimage of the black women, especially that of rebellious Sula. Sula casts off the conventions and traditions, challenges the limitations forced on her individuality, throws out the standards others use to measure her life and proves herself as a strong feminist. Sula, deemed as a pariah represents emancipation of suppressed women as she daringly surfaces her individual

self with her identity as a black woman. Sula lives her life while others lead their lives.

Nel Wright feels that she is unable to realize her Self because of her marriage. Her marriage with Jude confines her and restricts her long search for traditional value. Following her traditional mother can be viewed as a ‘Psychological Pilgrimage’. Nel Wright, the progeny of black women, strives hard to push away the native wildness inherent in Black Women. Her moral and identity development can be investigated in terms of the model suggested by Downing and Roush which commences with passive acceptance of society and moves forward to an active commitment to the ideas. To trace her moral development marks her ‘Psychological Pilgrimage’. *Sula* portrays the much-needed ‘female-bonding’, portrayed through Sula-Nel friendship. ‘Male bonding’ is between men through their shared activities that often exclude females. In contrast to it ‘Female bonding’ refers to the formation of close personal relationships between women, that enhances self scrutiny and better understanding. *Sula* demonstrates the relationship between Nel Wright and Sula Peace that also describes the pernicious effects of slavery, the restrictions of the society and the evil consequences of racism. The novel also indicates how the black women have to carry on themselves and install their identities, by sharing their personal and private experiences.

Eva Peace, mother of Sula, a positive portrayal of a woman is a very formidable character, physically, mentally, and emotionally. She clearly identifies her needs to survive. Eva contracts disabilities but becomes an assertive role model, fights throughout her life and remains an inspiration because of her moral strength. She sets laws of her home by deviating from the path of becoming a stereotype black matriarch and thus becomes a true archetypal mother. On the other hand Hannah, Mother of Nel conforms to the stereotype definition of a wife and happy mother. She carefully trains her daughter in the traditional manner. However this behaviour of Hannah ends when a chance flashes out the spark of individuality in her that begins to glow.

Toni Morrison traces the lives of two Black women, Sula and Nel, from their childhood days to their alienated maturity. Morrison herself talks about Nel-Sula, as the two sides of the same coin who come from different backgrounds, find on each other security, love and identity bluntly denied to them in their home. Together the two girls find courage to create themselves. Of the two Nel seems stronger and reliable and Sula's friendship with her makes the defiant Sula discover her female identity. The 'Psychological pilgrimage' of Sula and other women characters in the novel gets marked by several stages that conform to Carol Gilligan's triple stages of moral development; it also points to the progression from selfish living to social commitments and then to principled morality. Though Sula leads an

unprincipled existence throughout, she seems to get a realization at the end that specifies her self attainment. Her psychic journey directs her to an awareness, but unfortunately her capabilities could not be revealed in societal performances. Nel as her ‘Other’ counterbalances the truncated life of Sula. Sula-Nel bond makes Sula grow inwardly and learn to integrate responsibility and care into moral decision making. Gilligan’s observation, ‘goodness to truth’ can be noted in this novel when Sula sows the seed of self sacrifice in her death bed.

Chapter IV, ‘The Archetypal Pilgrimage – Lakshmi Kannan’s *Aatthukup Pokanum*’ involves two female protagonists’ journey in different psychical stages governed by various archetypes as noted by Carol Pearson in *Awakening the Heroes Within*. ‘Home’ is the *leit-motif* of the novel that blends with the life-stream of the protagonists. They try to reach their roots and accomplish their self identities. Rama in a laborious way and Gayatri in a simple manner conduct their journeys and establish themselves as Role-Models. Lakshmi Kannan observes that the home to any Indian woman is only a shelter and not a place of self fulfillment. ‘Home’ acquires different connotations to different sections of people. ‘Home’ means internal cohesiveness and unity, which moves a person progressively towards self-actualization. According to the Jungian concept it is an important contribution to a person’s Individuation process. ‘Home’ has spiritual meaning too, though

a structured house is needed to create a home. *Aatthukkup pokanum* explains how ‘home’ the realm of women provides spiritual wisdom to the female characters of the novel. Lakshmi Kannan reflects Virginia Woolf’s idea that the writer does not even have a room of her own to sit quietly to do her work. The novel clearly explains Rama, the creative writer’s pathetic situation of not having a separate place and how she longs to have a space to sit and write; on the contrary Gayatri a tradition bound woman likes to have a home of her choice where she can exercise her freedom. Both of them need an independent space to realize their free choices.

Lakshmi Kannan's *Aatthukkup pokanum* portrays the significance of the women within a family circle and identifies them as successful home makers to continue their individuality and achieve inner fulfillment. Gayatri's talented friend Rama is appreciated neither by her parents nor by her chauvinistic husband Durai. Though Rama leads a meaningless, lifeless existence with her husband, she is guided by several archetypes and proves herself to be a ‘Female Hero’ by attaining self actualization. In spite of all the physical and psychological obstacles she succeeds as a writer through her steadfast and strenuous archetypal pilgrimage. To her ‘home’ means her own writing in which she can display her moods, longings, desires, anxieties and so on. Her novel ‘Driftwood’ mirrors her own character - a woman who gets shaped and becomes matured as she is tossed like driftwood caught in the

stream of life. Thus Rama undertakes the archetypal pilgrimage by not only revolting against the society's hurdles for freedom but also silently accepting the circumstance and empower herself to flourish as a writer. As she cannot anchor herself in her own home, she becomes an alien there. That kind of alienation leads her to generate the friendship with Damodharan; she finds a home not built with brick but with love and care that can lead her to the spiritual heights. This bond brings in fulfillment in her.

In contrast to the radical Rama, Lakshmi Kannan portrays the silent Gayatri bounded to her maternal grandfather's home where she had grown up as a child. Her nostalgic longing for 'RETREAT', a grand, excellently structured house with the spacious garden makes her get alienated from her own self in spite of enjoying the love of husband and family. Though there were many restrictions to child Gayatri, home remains supreme in her mind making her reject even the childhood plays. To her, her grandpa is a Maharaja and RETREAT is his palace, the heaven to her. After marriage Gayatri takes up a job to lessen the burden of her husband Shankar. Both Rama and Gayatri are the representatives of educated middle class Indian women who have to carry the dual responsibility of being housewives and career women. 'Home' in real sense is a subtle dream for most of the Indian women. But Rama and Gayatri hold within them different yearnings for 'home' --- Rama's longing is related to her writing and her friendly

companion; Gayatri's longing is for the spiritual home, the final liberation though in Shankar she has a lovable friend. '*Aatthukkup Pokanum*' – this is child Gayatri's refrain that becomes repeated in the novel and keeps it moving back and forth, connecting the past and the present. The refrain thus becomes a structural device. The author exploits the term 'aham or Aam' used in the Brahmin dialect and weaves around it many shades of meaning including a spiritual one.

. In *Aatthukkup pokanum*, Lakshmi Kannan creates a few other women characters who are not stereotypes but possess positive ideologies such as Gayatri's mother Meenakshi, Usha and Kiran Agarwal. Each of these women exists as a separate space within a boundary of a home with a tale behind them that repeatedly narrates the history of women subjugation by patriarchal structure. Amidst this horrendous existence, women have to inch forward to maintain their individuality. Lakshmi Kannan limits herself in tracking the archetypal pilgrimages of Gayatri and Rama, indicating that such a unique kind of pilgrimage can be embarked on both in an empirical– sociological way and in a psychological- spiritual way. The course of archetypal pilgrimage of these two female heroes Rama and Gayatri is monitored and directed by the different archetypes that define their psychical states in the different phases of their arduous journey. They have to obey the directions of these archetypes step by step and move forward. In the process, they are

tossed between the positive as well as the negative features of the archetypes. But their archetypal pilgrimage does not reach the pinnacle as suggested by Carol Pearson. It can be said that Lakshmi Kannan successfully completes her ‘Archetypal pilgrimage’ through her characters.

Chapter V, ‘The Artists’ Pilgrimage’ refers to the different structural devices opted by Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Lakshmi Kannan to accomplish the thematic substance of their writings. They fuse their powers of imagination and modes of expression to create aesthetic works of art that yield to numerous interpretations especially in terms of Feminist ideas, Feminist criticism and Feminist epistemology. These three creative writers exhibit great verbal mastery, language, manipulation, linguistic experimentation, innovative forms and devices which make them surpass in contextual excellences and artistic finesse.

Laurence divides *The Diviners* into five parts, appending with *Album* and Afterword by Timothy Findley. The five parts are 1. River of Now and Then 2. The Nuisance Grounds 3. Halls of Sion 4. Rites of Passage 5. The Diviners. Margaret Laurence’s devices and techniques in composing and structuring *The Diviners* are portrayed through images, symbols, memory bank movies, snapshots, flash backs and cinematic techniques. They are visual, aura, dramatic, physical, sensuous and picturesque in content. The predominant symbol in the novel is ‘river’ which primarily connotes the

significance of time and provides the conceptual meaning of the novel. The innovative devices such as snapshots, memory-banks, movies and tales narrate Morag's stories of the events of her earlier life in the present tense. Laurence has used the technique 're-telling' rather than 'telling'. The narrative structure of *The Diviners* is an amazing phenomenon that has attracted several critical studies.

In *Sula*, Toni Morrison has achieved a mascon image because of the flair for experimentation in language and the choice of subject matter which embodies the black experience. Having her rootedness in Black life, Morrison chooses the relationship between young black girls as central to *Sula*, drawing her memories from hometown, her family and black friends. Morrison's art can be seen as visual as it deals more with sound and colours, and her verbal magic often results in lyrical descriptions. *Sula* employs third person narrative and the novel is segmented chronologically. In *Sula* Morrison equates fire with water; burning in fire is equivalent to baptism, a unique symbolic thinking in her. Morrison's work with the four elements fire, water, air and earth gathers around a narrative centre. 'Mud Imagery', the fusion of water and earth, the third universal symbol of creation suggests Nel and Sula's togetherness as a means of expression and imagination.

Unlike Margaret Laurence and Toni Morrison, Lakshmi Kannan does not load her work with literary techniques. She synoptically deals with the

main characters, not burdening them with unnecessary clichés but concentrates on two married women to convey the meaning of ‘Home making’. The novel can be classified as ‘Bildungsroman’ type as it illustrates the protagonist Gayatri’s growth from youth to maturity and her character development, encompassing a growing awareness of her individuality, identity and self-determination. The leitmotif of ‘home’ is the main metaphor underlying the entire novel its refrain *Aatthukkup pokanum* is repeated often, both at the literal and symbolic level. Memory plays an important role in this novel and it can also be noted that the author is quite comfortable with the stream of consciousness mode and its allied techniques like flashback, interior monologue, irony and satire. The subliminal structure of images, metaphors and symbols give unity, draw the different episodes together into an organic whole and add strength to the novel. As in *The Diviners* and *Sula* fire is used as a powerful image.

All the three novelists have perfectly portrayed their female heroes’ undertaking their heroic journey in three different directions. It can be seen that each of the protagonist’s pilgrimage can be analyzed in all the three modes distinguished in the dissertation, since each of them realizes her social commitment, the psychological burdens and the archetypal demanding. Their creators have attracted the reading public and hence have received criticisms and reviews, especially Margaret Laurence and Toni Morrison. Lakshmi

Kannan's critical oeuvre is minimal though her novel is quite demanding. A few of the critical materials will be appended here.

Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* being a novel of epic dimension naturally yields itself to plethora of interpretations and this kaleidoscopic presentation further leads to different colourful images that seem to be endless. To confine this magnificent novel and just look at a single aspect is a challenging, but an incomplete task. To scrutinize *The Diviners* is like divining one's Self. Such a divining has been done from different quarters of the globe, which continues to expand its critical horizon. By adding a few critical remarks as 'Review of Literature' of *The Diviners* will also point to the further scope of critical studies.

The *Encyclopaedia of Literature in Canada*, (2002) edited by W.H.New presents a brief, comprehensive survey of the novel showing that the different aspects mentioned can be critically appraised further:

Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* can be placed in the contexts of 20th-century Canadian fiction, Canadian Prairie writing, the REGIONAL novel, women's writing, Laurence's 'MANAWAKA' books, postwar fiction, or the KUNSTLEROMAN. If we choose, we may also set the novel in the context of what we know about Laurence, reading it almost as a piece of BIOGRAPHY. Historical, geographical, biographical,

or generic, the contexts we are most aware of will affect how we respond to the novel, which of its attributes we pay most attention to, which other texts offer useful comparisons. (249)

Notwithstanding this assessment, the novel obviously can lead to added scrutiny such as assessing it as a postmodern novel, postcolonial, as meta-fiction and so on.

Another interesting scrutiny is done by Ann Kristina in her *Portraits of the Artist as Mother: Margaret Laurence's The Diviners and Dance on the Earth.* (1997) The critic examines the role of the novelist as well as the protagonist as potential mother – writers, a further step in the area of women's writing. She views that her purpose is to examine the portrayal of the writer who is also a mother and wishes to emphasize the roles of mother and writer to both Laurence and her protagonist Morag Gunn, and asserts "the need to conceive of the mother-figure as a potential creator of art: the mother writing, rather than the mother written." The critic is concerned with the ways in which writing and motherhood conflict and whether a balance be achieved at all. However, in spite of the flaws in her portrayals of the mother-writer, Laurence has painted a portrait of the artist as a mother, that is a step forward in the area of women's writing. Kristina views that in the process of writing Laurence does not want to sacrifice her unique body-experience as a woman:

She clearly realizes that an intelligent and sensitive portrayal of the female artist should *take* her femaleness, both the restricting and the rewarding aspects of it-the things that make it different from the story of a male artist-into account Not only does she take Morag's sexuality and reproductive capacity into account, she also uses Morag's experiences as a mother both to enrich Morag's experiences as an *artist* and to suggest that a female artist's experience of her artistry may be as unique (in comparison with a male artist) as that of her sexuality. This is clearly a phenomenon that she has recognized in her own life. (12)

The critic asserts that to be a mother-writer is rewarding natural experience which is a step forward to the women writers. Patricia Morley forwards yet another view that "Morag's centre is her writing and her child" (162). Nora Foster Stovel in her scholarly critical work *Divining Margaret Laurence : A Study of her Complete Writings* (2008) seems to endorse Ann Kristina's view of 'mother-writer' in another way indicating that Laurence is creating a fictional family in her Manawaka novels, each one of them venturing to establish her 'Selfhood'.

Margaret Laurence creates a fictional Family of Woman in her Manawaka cycle, as she portrays her female protagonists in every possible familial and social role- as mother, daughter, sister and wife, and as lover, friend and more important writer. But within

those roles, each heroine must discover her individual identity beneath the role playing and gender construction-the selfhood that proceeds and informs all those roles. (22-23)

Nancy Bailey in her article “Margaret Laurence, Carl Jung and the Manawaka Women” published in *Studies in Canadian Literature* denotes Jungian influence in Laurence’s Manawaka novels and thus tries to look into the archetypal pattern in her novels.

Laurence, however, pursues the question of identity beyond the individual female consciousness to the consequence for creativity, which is the ultimate end of the Jungian conjunction - the emergence from opposites of a new identity. When that new identity is the living, rather than the inner, reality, of a child, the consequences may indeed be threatening, for the temporal future belongs to Piquette Tonnerre-Gunn. Will she be a diviner? Will the process of individuation be any easier for her, born as she is without the constrictions of society which are the sources of fear for most of the Laurence heroines?

(http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol2_2/&filename=bailey)

Bailey opines that Morag Gunn goes through the processes of personality development which correspond closely to Jung's full process of individuation.

She adds that “The parallels between the phases of Jung's theory and of Laurence's fiction reveal the novelist as spiritually akin to the psychologist; her work has the scope and articulation of a complete cultural myth which lends itself appropriately to Jungian analysis - while at the same time pointing beyond Jung's ideas on female-male relations, which were deeply conditioned by his own time.”

Allan Thomas in his review in the *Journal of Canadian Materials for young people* (1994, Vol. 22, Num.4) on Susan Warwick's *River of Now and Then: Margaret Laurence's The Diviners, (1993)* while discussing the river symbolism of the novel, provides another different perspective that the novel is not only for young Canadian females but also for all readers. He says:

Morag Gunn's search for her identity speaks particularly to the young, the female and the Canadian, but it has evidently been recognized as their own story by many other readers. Symbolically, the water for which the diviners search is the river of history, always dangerously in movement, yet once entered always there as an expression of identity through past and present, a river that flows both ways. The loose, wide quality of the novel has brought it some denigration but this is an effect of a method which exploits memory.

(<http://umanitoba.ca/cm/cmarchive/vol22no4/river.html>)

Pamela McCallum in her article “Communication and History : Themes in Innis and Laurence” published in *Studies in Canadian Literature* (Vol.3.1, 1978) based on Harold Innis’ Studies on the communicative aspect of the colonial expansion talks about Laurence’s communication methodology in *The Diviners*. Innis associates oral tradition of communication with fluid movement of ideas with temporal continuity that cannot be rigidly categorized. On the contrary written communication involves disciplined stability for the administration of large empires but because of its absolute fixity it is generally destructive to creative activity. *The Diviners* combines both the qualities fixity and fluidity in communication, fixity is by Morag’s writing and fluidity by her hearing different tales, stories and songs. Another interesting aspect is to recognize the non-verbal, unwritten expressions that render the novel a unique method far beyond the communication. McCallum states:

It is important to understand that *The Diviners* is not merely a testament of faith in the divining power of either written or oral communication. The radical innovation of the novel lies in its recognition that all forms of communication are limited and distorted by the pressuring social structures they necessarily inhabit .

[\(http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol3_1/&filename=McCallum.htm\)](http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/SCL/bin/get.cgi?directory=vol3_1/&filename=McCallum.htm)

These samples of critical renderings of Laurence's *The Diviners* obviously point to the variety of sites in which the novel could be built up on further. McCallum's observations indicate the need for looking into sharply the communicative methodology experimented by the novelist.

Though Toni Morrison's *Sula* does not have the epic dimension like Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*, the novel has been quite popular and has attracted critical attention from different quarters in terms of racism, black culture, feminism and so on. To Morrison the concern for black community especially the black women is predominant that she would present it through a symbolic space. Amy K. Snyder in her article "A Critical Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Sula*" commences her analysis by concentrating on Bottom, the place where the black people reside and the site in which the novel's actions are performed. The space in the novel gets associated with death and indirectly with Sula.

That an act of segregation founded the Bottom sentences the community to a perpetual existence of inferiority. The community can never escape its origin in which the founding father was tricked by a white man; it is perennially besieged by attacks of racism. These attacks take the form of prejudicial hiring and promotion. . . . From historical and economic perspectives, the Bottom symbolizes the unfulfilled dreams of economic relief. . . .

The opposition between top and bottom is constantly thrust through the surface of the text by imagery of falling and descent.

In the real world, falling is associated with getting hurt, but in the Bottom, from where a fall should be impossible, this association is magnified to disfiguring death.

(http://dspace.centre.edu:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/83/1/snyder_amy.pdf)

Adriana Jiménez Rodríguez in “Toni Morrison’s *Sula*: Formation of the Self in Terms of Love-Death Relationships with Others and with Oneself” discusses the undeniable presence of the forces of love and death throughout the narrative in the specific context of the protagonist’s relationship with others and with herself. The critic also talks about the multilevel comprehension of the text, with an all-encompassing feminism, important elements of psychoanalysis and deconstruction. All these seem to converge on the character of Sula, who faces a love-hate-love relationship with the community. Adriana acknowledges the opinions of Roberta Rubenstein and McDowell and States:

Even a casual reading of *Sula* will show that the community of the Bottom is more than just a setting for the novel: it is fairly apparent that the town is a character in its own right. One possible interpretation argues that “the community of the Bottom [...] is not

only a place but a presence—a kind of collective conscience that arbitrates the social and moral norms of its members” (Rubenstein 148). A slightly more sophisticated interpretation is McDowell’s argument in her article “‘The Self and the Other’: Reading Toni Morrison’s *Sula* and the Black Female Text,” where she claims that the novel “glories in paradox and ambiguity beginning with the prologue that describes the setting, the Bottom, situated spatially in the top. We enter a new world here, a world where we never get to the ‘bottom’ of things, a world that demands a shift from an either or orientation to one that is both/and, full of shifts and contradictions”(80)

Amy Snyder’s idea seems to be well supported by these critics. Rubenstein also believes that the character of the town serves the purpose of marking social and psychological boundaries, in this case, boundaries between Sula as a black female pariah in the process of identity construction, and the segregated black community: Rodriguez also makes a significant appraisal:

If we identify Sula as a kind of counter mythology, we are saying that she is no longer bound by a rigid pattern of predictions, predilections, and anticipations. Even though she is a character in a novel, her strategic place as a *potential being* might argue that *subversion* itself—law breaking—is an aspect of liberation that

women must confront from its various angles, in its different guises. Sula's outlawry may not be the best kind, but that she has the will towards rebellion itself is the stunning idea. This project in liberation, paradoxically, has no particular dimension in time, yet it is for all time.

This is a new angle in feminist thought-- to break law is an aspect of liberation.

Helen Hendaria Kamandhari in *A Study on the Conflicting Ideas of Black Women's Roles in Sula and Nel's Friendship as seen in Toni Morrison's Sula* offers yet another aspect of the novel focusing on 'Female Friendship':

Femininity makes women compete with each other to win men's attention and forget their sisterhood since women in a patriarchal society have been trained to accept the male-defined norms. Even though women themselves are involved in female friendships -- sharing their secrets and fears --, still the sense of competition between them cannot be abolished because they have been trained to be feminine (Tracy, 81). That is why Sula shows the possible of the impossible that women actually do not need to choose marriage. Women can live alone and women can take care of themselves without men. . . . Nel's sorrow upon the loss of Sula's

bond of sisterhood with her is employed by Toni Morrison to show that “women’s relationships with each other are more important and certainly more enduring than relationships with ‘men who restlessly drift in and out’” (Adams, p. 196, 1988). Strengthening women through sisterhood means a lot to black women as it is emphasized by Toni Morrison. This conforming to sisterhood for black women causes women to be free from the subordination which is found in male-female relationship. Sisterhood as comradeship should be regarded as more important than male-female relationship. To lose a ‘sister’ is much more miserable than to lose a man.

Kamandhari takes the support of the statements made by Anne Adams and Laura Tracy. All these critics unanimously lend their support to uphold feminist ideals and reject patriarchal codes.

As noted earlier, contrary to Margaret Laurence and Toni Morrison, Lakshmi Kannan’s *Aatthukkup Pokanum/ Going Home* has not contracted critical awareness, though the novel has high potentials to expand itself in critical as well as creative thinking. Pauline Das in “Homeless in One’s Own Home An Analysis of Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* and Lakshmi Kannan’s *Going Home*” studies the pathos of not having ‘home’ within one’s home concentrating on the novels of Arundhati Roy and Lakshmi Kannan.

The women have to be mute since the environment itself is voiceless. The critic makes a general remark:

Indian writers in English have contributed a lot in reflecting the thoughts and aspirations of the Indian mind. Women novelists especially have recorded their voices in a voiceless environment.

With the coming of Arundhati Roy in the Indian scene a great deal of attention has been paid to women's writing. Women writers' themes reflect the sad plight of their women protagonists, reflecting our society. (<http://www.languageinindia.com/dec2010/paulinehomelessness.html>)

She takes several instances from the novels to show how women break their silence to prove themselves. The critic echoes Carol Gilligan's observation.

Another significant review comes from the pen of Prema Nandakumar that has appeared in *World Today* September 22 ,1999 issue. In a scholarly language she argues for Indian women in general but condemns the attitude of one of the protagonists, Gayatri of *Going Home*. She says

While the Indian woman is an enigma wrapped in multiple folds of tradition, the contemporary Indian woman, sinned against most of the time, is one for whom the center has ceased to hold. Things fall apart all the time, whatever she may say or do. But the same

scenario also defies any attempt at generalization. Here is truth, but it is a partial one. Which is what Lakshmi Kannan insinuates in her novel, *Going Home*. By the time we close the book, we are quite tired of Gayatri's looking before and after and pining for what never will be.

It seems that this critic is not in support of the protagonist but strongly and inwardly supports Rubenstein's view that laws should be broken by women to enjoy freedom.

The above said brief review of literature especially to that of Laurence's *The Diviners* and Morrison's *Sula* definitely point to the fact that further critical scope of the novels/writers is quite enormous. Chapter I- "Introduction- Explication of Terms" encloses a brief discussion on feminist epistemology being an offshoot of free thinking and is a branch of social epistemology which investigates in terms of standpoint theory in knowledge production. One major contribution is to acknowledge women as "Situated Knowers" that ultimately leads to perspectives of self based on this proposition. This dissertation is constructed to present the sacred steps taken by the women protagonists in terms of sociological, psychological and archetypal pilgrimages. The three protagonists belong to three different nations and culture; but their purpose is one and the same—to achieve 'Personhood' and establish their identity. The study ventures to prove that

the secular humanistic vision has provided a large spectrum in feminist thinking that has opened up various lateral sites to accommodate Feminist Identity Development.

Incidentally, as discussed in Chapter I, the three vital traditions that have emerged in 'Feminist Perspectives of Self', namely, the psychoanalysis, object relations theory and poststructuralism can be profitably employed to study these three women novelists. The most noted exponents of the areas of study are Julia Kristeva, Nancy Chodorow and Judith Butler. Nancy Chodorow uses psychoanalytic theory to make sense of individualized, gendered identities. Every subject of enunciation -- every self -- amalgamates masculine and feminine discursive modalities. Whereas Kristeva understands the self as a dynamic interplay between the feminine semiotic and the masculine symbolic. Judith Butler maintains that personal identity is an illusion and the psychodynamic accounts of the self, camouflage the performative nature of the self and collaborate in the cultural conspiracy that maintains the illusion. These three categories obviously yield rich variations that lead to productive investigations.

Karen Horney's methodology has been discussed in detail in Chapter I to enunciate the 'Psychological Pilgrimage' that directs itself to the investigation of Toni Morrison's *Sula*. Karen Horney was the first woman to present a paper regarding feminine psychiatry. The discipline of Feminine

Psychiatry is indebted to this remarkable lady for her exclusive findings, collected in the volume *Feminine Psychology*. All her pronouncements contain thought-out ideas that can be worked out and applied to study literary works. In her essay entitled "The Problem of Feminine Masochism" Horney proves that cultures and societies worldwide encourage woman to be dependent on men for their love, prestige, wealth, care and protection. She points out that in the society, a will to please, satiate and overvalue men has emerged. Women are regarded as objects of charm and beauty — at variance with every human being's ultimate purpose of self-actualization. Women, according to Horney, traditionally gain value only through their children and the wider family. She touches further on this subject in her essay "The Distrust Between the Sexes" in which she compares the husband-wife relationship to a parent-child relationship — one of misunderstanding and one which breeds detrimental neuroses. Most notably her work "The Problem of the Monogamous Ideal" is fixed upon marriage, as are six other of Horney's papers. Her essay "Maternal Conflicts" attempts to shed new light on the problems women experience when raising adolescents. Horney believes that both men and women have a motive to be ingenious and productive. Women are able to satisfy this need normally and interiorly — to do this they become pregnant and give birth. Men please this need only through external ways; Horney proposes that the striking accomplishments of men in work or some other field can be viewed as compensation for their inability to give birth to

children. This accommodative thinking of Horney immediately takes the investigation to ‘Masculinity Studies’, another broad area of study, in which the men characters of the novels chosen can be subjected to thorough analysis. In fact, ‘Masculinity Studies’ must be made as an integral aspect in the Women Studies Programme.

The methodology for Feminist Identity Development is patterned by N.E. Downing and K.L. Roush with five stages, *Passive Acceptance, Revelation, Embeddedness, Emanation, Synthesis and Active commitment*. This is one significant area of investigation of the three novels chosen for study, though it has been discussed in a brief manner with *Sula*. Apart from the primary protagonist of the novels, even those who play minor roles such as Pique and Prin in *The Diviners*, Eva and Hannah in *Sula* and the subsidiary characters like Usha and Meenakshi – though the author does not provide them an adequate space in the novel—can be scrutinized well on their own merit. A similar elaborate study can be fruitfully conducted using Carol Gilligan’s methodology based on Laurence Kohlberg’s ‘Stage Theory’. Mention of Gilligan’s plan has of course been noted in the course of the dissertation. However, the possibility of a full fledged, thorough study cannot be negated. Gilligan’s major divisions ‘Pre conventional’, ‘Conventional’ and ‘Post conventional’ are veritable tools to conduct Personality Development courses. Gilligan’s triple stages of development point to the progression from

Selfish, to Social to Principled morality –a much needed programme for the confused youngsters of the present day. Again, a brief study has been made with *Sula*.

Another related study can be carried on the basis of Blenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Texule's suggestion given in the work *Women's Way of Knowing the Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (1986/1997). Their findings are based on conducting interviews with women to know how they developed their voices. They concur with what Karen. T. Zuga says as regards the different kinds of knowledge that women acquire, namely, Silence, Received Knowledge, Subjective Knowledge, Procedural Knowledge and Constructed Knowledge. Using these as parameters a very interesting scrutiny can be carried on not only with the women characters in the novels chosen for study but also with other different novels both by men and women. This feature can be further explored based on Carol Gilligan's views forwarded in her book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, in this book she emphasizes on the crucial role of women's voices that would certainly transform the patriarchal world. She views that voice is a new key for understanding the psychological, social and cultural order – Gilligan's belief can be well applied to all the women characters, apart from the major ones, to understand better their individuality. For example the songs of Prin in *The Diviners*, Hannah's strict traditional

directions , and Usha's vociferousness imply their psychic make up as well as of women of that sort.

Gilligan's statement that women's voice as a new key to 'litmus test for relationships' is a noteworthy point that immediately takes the reader to explore the mother-daughter relationship in the chosen novels. This relationship has been handled most elaborately by the sociologists, psychologists and philosophers, and their ideas have been disseminated in diffused ways that have unfortunately reached negative implications. Mother-Daughter-Mother relationship must be studied deeply through case studies, fictions, and mass media. In spite of the steady programmes forwarded by the Women Welfare Department, the messages do not seem to reach especially the rural womenfolk. The initial awareness for a mother as well as a daughter should be that they are women first. Adrienne Rich in her well argued book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as experience and institution* (1987) in the chapter entitled“ Motherhood and Daughterhood” writes sharply:

The culture makes it clear that neither the Black mother, nor the white mother, not any of the other mothers, are “worthy” of our profoundest love and loyalty. Women are made taboo to women—not just sexually, but as comrades, cocreators, coinspirators. In breaking this taboo, we are reuniting with our mothers; in reuniting with our mothers, we are breaking this taboo.(255)

She asserts that the gift of one woman to another can only be ‘blood stream of our inheritance’. She further says “until a strong line of love, confirmation, and example stretches from mother to daughter, from woman to woman across the generations, women will still be wandering in the wilderness.” (246). This statement can be verified and analyzed by examining the relationships between Morag Gunn and Prin, Morag Gunn and Pique in *The Diviners* , in *Sula* , between Sula and Eva Peace, and Hannah and Nel and in *Aatthukkup Pokanum/Going Home* between Rama and Madhuram, Gayatri and Meenakshi, though Lakshmi Kannan does not portray it in detail as done by Morrison and Laurence. This is a very rich area of investigation the result of which can be well-applied to make a study of Mother-Son relationship that many a time leads to Oedipus complex. In other words a strong, healthy relationship and understanding between mothers and daughters will certainly lead to a harmonious life. A study of this kind is mandatory in the Women Studies Programme. Literature promises fresh pilgrimages to the future women-kind to make their lives wholesome and effective.