

CHAPTER- 6

CONCLUSION

While critically examining the three notable subjects of my thesis, I observed that there are many contemporary writers who must not be missed. These women writers do not need any introduction. Their name itself epitomises their presence on the literary stage. These writers have been taken up at last in my work to compare and contrast the theme and narrative technique to delimit my thesis beyond Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande. Literary journey has no end; one may go deeper and deeper to acquire the gem from writers. Arundhati Roy is a political activist and she is always involved with human rights and environmental issues. Her highly acclaimed novel *God of Small Things* is an example of how small things in life can affect it. Communism, Caste system and Keralite Syrian Christian way of life is well described. *The Cost of Living* is one of the essays which speak against the hydroelectric dam project in Maharashtra, M.P., and Gujarat, the way Kamla Markandya has depicted the effect of industries in *Nectar-in-a-sieve* through Rukmini.

Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* expressed herself by the fictional character Laila. The entire story revolves around Laila, how she achieves her freedom by going against all the circumstances. Laila was free to think but she was not free to act. The mortal standard and the conservative traditions to her are nothing but the hypocrisies. But, she did not rebel against them until she falls in love with Ameer, a poor relative of their family friend. Ameer would never be approved by Laila's family

but she goes against the wish of the family and wins her freedom. Laila is similar to many characters of Shashi Deshpande's novels.

Most of Bharati Mukherjee's writings reflect Indian culture and the immigrant experiences in her novel. There is always a sense of cultural clash in her writings. This is because once she claimed that she considers herself as an American writer and not an Indian expatriate writer. In her novel *The Tiger's Daughter* the protagonist struggles in American culture. She explores the cultural shock of the common expatriate by the character of Tara. Even when Tara came back to India, she faced harassment and is intertwined with the politics in India. *Wife* is the story of a housewife whose dreams get shattered when she is married to an engineer instead of a doctor. The protagonist Dimple is very much similar to the characters of Anita Desai. Dimple experiences a cultural shock and alienation and this leads her into madness resulting in a tragic end at the end. Her novel *Jasmine* portrays the journey of Jasmine from east to west. *The Holder of the World* tells the story of a contemporary American woman who is a puritan and she elopes with a Hindu Raja.

Jhumpa Lahiri's initial literary career faced problems when publishers declined to accept her collections. It was in 1999 when publishers accepted her collections of short story *Interpreter of Maladies*. This masterpiece won her the Pulitzer Prize in 2000. The theme of her writings is basically the problems of immigrants who are puzzled between the two cultures. Her stories also focus the struggle of the parents who want to keep their children in touch with the Indian culture and tradition. *The Namesake* has the

theme of clash and conflicting ideologies between the two cultures similar to the dilemma and problem of immigration faced by Anita Desai's characters like Dev, Adit and Sarah.

Kamala Das is said to be a bi-lingual poet of India. She challenged the traditional approach of dealing with the theme of poverty and short stories. *My Story* remains her best selling book since its publication as she has beautifully described her life from the age of four, she explores her desires and concepts of sex, she writes the reality of discrimination in her life, she describes her literary career and extramarital affair. These can be easily visible in Shashi Deshpande's novel. *Alphabet of Lust* is a story of Mansi, the protagonist of the novel. It is evident in the novel that how the sex can secure the pride of place. It is a kind of sexual surrender for the greed of power and ambition. Not very similar but to some extent her character is similar to character of *Two Virgins* by Kamala Markandya. *Padmavati the Harlot and Other Stories* deals with the freedom and self-identity of the women. Here the women are given voice to speak and a mind to think and a heart to judge their life, very much similar to Markandya's theme and plot.

Most of Kiran Desai's writings are characterized by the clash of the cultures, nations and religion. She is the daughter of famous writer Anita Desai who is one of my subjects. *The Inheritance of Loss* is the story of migrations and its consequences very much close to the theme depicted by her mother in her writings. It depicts the conflict between the two different worlds. The plot revolves around the two main characters Biju and Sai. The primary theme is the loss of the identity. Desai has taken the Gorkhaland

movement as the historical background of the novel. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is the story of a young boy, Sampath Chawala living in an Indian village, who always try to avoid the mature responsibility of life and settles himself under a guava tree claiming to be a 'holymen'. Theme of cultural clash, loss of identity and problems of immigrants are felt by both Anita Desai as well as Kiran Desai.

In Mahasweta Devi's writings we get picture of the tribal communities, women, and the dalits of West Bengal. *Mother* was written on the background of the Naxalite Movement. The novel portrays the complexity between the personal and the political relationship. It shows that writers are always affected by the contemporary issues and they want the issues to be read by people as writing is the only way through which writers can make the contemporary issues time immemorable. *Imagery Map* explores the troubling and the pathetic situation of Indian tribal. *Breast Stories* reveals the sufferings of a woman.

Nayantara Sahgal is the cousin of our first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru. She has received world wide acclaim and her writings are marked by the political turmoil of India. Her *Rich Like Us* deals the life of two women, Rose and Sonali. Rose is a foreign woman, married to an Indian established businessman, but she finds life very miserable as she is not able to adopt the Indian culture. On the otherhand Sonali is an aristocratic woman of India, who struggles for a progressive India. Though a civil servant, she faces humiliation. *The Day in Shadow* is the life of Simrit, a divorcee, who is horribly surrounded by the memories of of the past. She tries to find her happiness in Raj, a

Member of Parliament. Post Independence theme has been identified in Kamala Markandaya also.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala was a great novelist as well as screen writer. She was honoured with the Booker Prize for *Heat and Dust*. This novel tells the story in first person narration. Story is about Olivia whose grand daughter comes to visit India. The story is told by Olivia through the letters which she has written. Olivia falls in love with a Nawab and gets pregnant. She decides to abort the baby and out of fear of scandals she escapes and starts living in an unknown village. The novel ends with the description of the present-day narrator who also gets pregnant and decides to stay in the unknown village. The character resembles the character of *Where shall we Go this Summer?* The novel won the Booker Prize in 1975. *The House Holder* explores the development of mind and the character and the writer focuses on the spiritual crisis of the protagonist. In *Nature of Passion*, Jhabvala uses wit to present the story and discusses how the lives are running with compromise.

Shobha De, is a famous novelist, columnist, and an editor of various magazine. *Speedpost* is a series of letters to author's six children. The book deals with the concept of love, sex, and religion and also the pain, pleasure, responsibility of the parents, anxiety towards life etc. *Second Thoughts* deals with the plight of Maya who wants to move away from Calcutta to Mumbai, a life full of light. She marries a conservative boy, remains unsatisfied as he does not bother about her desires. She spends her life in

loneliness. She falls in love with a neighbour but gets betrayed. *Starry Nights* depicts the struggling life of an actress.

Coming back to my three subjects, Shashi Deshpande has a distinctive position as a writer of women-centric novels as she ventures to explore the life of Indian women with socio-cultural and psycho-ethical paradigms of human existence. The reflection of resentment against the social conventions that ignore the emancipated identity of woman forms the basis of her artistic vision. She struggles to establish that to ensure balance in society, it is essential to acknowledge the central identity of woman. The fictional world of Shashi Deshpande can safely be defined as the voyage through the female consciousness that strives to construct its identity beyond oppressive social mechanism. Jaya in *That long Silence* realizes that her unconditional surrender to the choices of Mohan, her husband is not a desirable option for her. In *Moving On*, Manjari selects her own code of life and makes confession of her choices but finds it difficult to compromise with the resultant agony. In *Roots and Shadows*, Indu leaves her parental home and arranges a marriage on her own choice but finally returns to the house of her grandparents. Urmi in *The Binding Vine* discovers the silence of her mother-in-law Mira through her lost poems. Sarita in *The Dark Hold No Terror* is an unfortunate victim of the sexual sadism of her husband Manohar.

Ms. Deshpande portrays highly dynamic and creative women who try to establish themselves in professional career but couldn't get rid of their kinship with society and family. The characters also have innate urge for motherhood and craving for male

companionship. It forms an integral part of female identity. Shashi Deshpande in her novels follows a circular track in which there are infinite diversions without any definite conclusion. She never presents situations in a linear order where isolation begins on a definite point and culminates on another point. Some of her protagonists adopt the desire of temporary withdrawal, as a method of preserving their self-dignity. Return to the past becomes a mechanism to decide future course of action. In *Small Remedies*, Madhu's efforts to revive her career as a writer to discover the life of Savitribai becomes a remedy to her own anguish as a wife and as a mother. Jaya in *That long Silence* concentrates her future as a journalist during the period of withdrawal. The idea of withdrawal in *Roots and Shadows* is significant because it signifies Indu's affinity with her past.

In the narrative structure, the language used by Shashi Deshpande is like a poetic creation that comes out of the inner consciousness of the characters and affects directly the consciousness of the readers. She tries to remain close to Indian ethos and Indian tradition while choosing words and images. She has given English language a force of the language of native expression. She makes an extensive use of self-reflective mode of expression. She introduces the situations directly and allows her protagonists to retrospect on their own sympathy without the involvement of author's own personality. From *Roots and Shadows* to *Moving On*, there is a process of growth from simple narrative structures to more complex and more mature narrative patterns. She does not adopt the ideology of 'Organic Unity' of plots in which the writer becomes super observer. Her novels cannot be appreciated with the canons of stream of consciousness.

She takes a middle ground between forward action and regressive action to seek the harmony of past and present. It has the advantage to establish an ideology that individual never survives in isolation and innumerable counter-acting events decide the directions of the actions.

Shashi Deshpande, as a novelist, plays the role of an articulator instead of the role of a narrator. The socio-psychological and psycho-philosophical dimensions of feminine consciousness give 'Universality' to the narrative vision of Shashi Deshpande. She has presented a balanced, mature, sublime vision of man- woman relationship that includes social commitments and personal desires. Like Kamala Das, Shashi Deshpande shares the pain of all those female protagonists who express their craving for self realization beyond the horrors of marital rape. She accepts that sanctity of family is undoubtedly a part of male existence but for a woman it is the essence of her survival and existence. It is with the motherhood that a woman comes into her own as a woman and she can make a place for herself in the family. Madhu in *Small Remedies* and Urmi in *The Binding Vines* suffer after the loss of Adit and Anu respectively. Madhu's condition is no better than that of Childless Maya in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*. Shashi Deshpande is not a conventionalist but she exhibits her originality in her innovative vision to modify and to create unusual narrative patterns to realize her mission as an artist.

The unique feature of Anita Desai is that she uses characters, situations, dialogues, atmosphere and images to explore and express the inner self. The usage of feminine

sensibility in Anita Desai's novels is inter-related at several levels of textures and structures. The character Maya in *Cry, The Peacock* goes deep into the feminine psyche from childhood to youth and ultimately death. She seeks solace in her childhood memories. Ultimately her psyche problems, aggravated by her childhood, drive her to a kind of schizophrenia as she presents herself as a 'body without a heart, a heart without a body.' Monisha in *Voices in the City*, like other heroines of Mrs. Desai, is sensitive and hence a prey of marital discord and disharmony. Anita Desai chooses the method of using Monisha's diary as a medium to portray her suppressed feelings. Indian immigrants settled in England gets focus in her novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* – the title of the novel refers to Adit's final farewell to Asian immigrants in England when he leaves England for India for good. Sarah hopes to start a new phase of life in the country of her husband. Anita Desai depicts the condition of Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* through the symbol of a wounded eagle. The structural partition is concerned with three stages in the development of Sita's character during the course of her novel. The final section portrays her retreat to Bombay, which is suggestive of her retreat to world of reality. *Fire on the Mountain* is about the psychological seclusion of a lady echoed by the landscape of the mountains- rocky and barren. Her life was a terrible betrayal by her husband which prompted her to a life of silence.

Marital discord recurs as the theme of Anita Desai's novels. Her novels, with a touch of feminist concern, portray the failed marriages, strained man-woman relationships which often lead to alienation and loneliness of the characters. Her novels like, *Cry, The Peacock, Where Shall We Go This Summer?, Voices in The City and Bye-Bye-*

Blackbird also deal with the theme of marital disharmony. Srinivas Iyengar has observed that Anita Desai has added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction. Anita Desai uses various images and symbols particularly those of birds and animals for characterization besides making use of the landscape and myths for characterisation. Sounds have been symbolically used in *Clear Light of the day* eg. the Koel calling out on tall trees, a child crying in the servants' quarters, a bicycle clashing past, its bell jangling etc.

In Anita Desai's fictional world it is always through the inanimate or non-human representatives that inner acts of the characters are made clear and never by direct statements. In *Fasting Feasting*, Anita Desai preens (arranges) through the cultural boundaries and portrays the universality of the human aspirations and dilemma. The world is like a large institution: there are prescribed roles and expectations for all, and most especially for women. She is expected to fulfill all the roles and in living up to these expectations but she loses her own identity. The title is very much a part of life. The Indian life-style believes in restraint signifying fasting, whenever required, and the life in United States is rule-less; mostly feasting. Neither in excess nor in deprivation lays happiness. One should be moderate—the essence which the modern man has to realize. The narrative base in Anita Desai's novels is the family. City life in India, in all its variety and detail, constitutes a large chunk of her writing. Calcutta, New Delhi, Old Delhi and Bombay are recreated in images of the Indian social scene in some of her novels. One reads her novels like long poems drawn mostly from those corners of life where no poetry seems to exist. This also accounts for the absence of humour in her

writings though she can occasionally create a humorous character like Miss Moffit. Her forte in characterization is the delineation of female protagonists mostly obsessional and psychopathic. In both plot and characterization and also in themes, some patterns repeat themselves. Her characters lack variety and vividness. Country folk appear only in *The Village By the Sea* wherein she delineates lower people for the first time; other works have lower people conspicuous by their absence. Images and symbols in her novels contribute to the structural pattern of the novels. These image-patterns in turn record the different stages in the novelist's development as an artist. The metaphysical world also attracts her attention and so do the mental apprehensions of her protagonists who are undergoing traumatic psychic experience due to the collapse of a value-system and lack of satisfactory alternations. The novelist creates mirror images of respective societies developing typical novelistic techniques.

Kamala Markandaya does not use any innovative narrative technique but her novels which are mainly sociological in function have well developed plots which are unfolded step by step. She is a good story teller who resorts to plain narration, rather than experimenting with innovative and complicated techniques. In most of her novels, we see women narrators and the story unfolds from the feminine consciousness. She conveys the difference in the customs between India and that of the West in *Some Inner Fury*. Markandaya is traditional in her narrative outlook. Being an excellent story teller, she resorts to the traditional method rather than being modern. She makes use of the developing trend of the novel where the story is given prominence. Naturalism is a feature of the novels of Kamala Markandaya. A naturalist novelist is furious at the ills of

the society which she poignantly pictures. So she creates angry young men and women. But she has no solution to these problems. Kamala Markandaya, a true social-critic stops with being a naturalist. She occasionally uses symbols and irony.

A study of the methods and narrative technique adopted by Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande reveals that they are well versed in the craft of fiction and that each one of them has chosen a particular mode suitable for their theme and vision. These women writers are aware of the condition of women in the society, so with their insight and understanding, they have successfully presented the emotional needs; strive for self-fulfillment and the dilemma which modern women are facing. Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande form a small group –the members of mini tradition-whose concerns can be called ‘existential.’ Anita Desai of course, is well established and has been esteemed highly for her positive contributions to Indian fiction in English. Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have written short stories while Kamala markandaya has not written short stories.

Whatever be the techniques used by the women writers, the central theme is the description of the inner feeling of substance called woman. These writers wanted to create a place where woman could express themselves, be in the world which belongs to them. Writers do advocate change for a just social order but they have a restricted domain. In today’s world there are women like Rukmini - though uneducated but who would never surrender. These writers do not want any character going through psychological disorders rather they want to encourage women narrating stories of

courageous women, showing them examples to fight against the direst situations of their life. All the narratives need not have strategy but most narratives do have one. Innovative strategies are not required but narration must reach to the soul of the readers.