The Fictional Narratives of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri: A Psychoanalytic Study

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO NAGALAND UNIVERSITY
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

By

Avinuo Kire

Ph.D. Regd No: 502/2012

Under the supervision of

Prof. A. J. Sebastian sdb
Department of English

Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus
2013

DECLARATION

I, Avinuo Kire, do hereby declare that the Thesis entitled **"The Fictional Narratives of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri: A Psychoanalytic Study"** submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree on the same title

Kohima
30 November 2013

Avinuo Kire
Research Scholar

COUNTERSIGNED

Dr. Nigamananda Das
Associate Professor & Head
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima 797001

Dr. AJ Sebastian sdb
Professor & Supervisor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima 797001

Nagaland University
(A Central University Established by the Act of Parliament No.35 of 1989)
Headquarters: Lumami, Kohima Campus, Meriema- 797001

Department of English

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Ms. Avinuo Kire,** bearing Regd. No. 502/2012 dated 29-11-2011, has worked under my supervision as a research scholar on the topic ***The Fictional Narratives of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri: A Psychoanalytic Study***, in the Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus.

She has successfully completed her research work within the stipulated time and the thesis is the fruit of her original investigation conducted during the period of her research.

Dr. AJ Sebastian sdb
Professor
Department of English
Nagaland University

Kohima
30th November 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the very outset, I must acknowledge the Almighty, who has been a source of strength and comfort to me all thoughout my research study. That being said, this journey would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor, Prof. AJ Sebastian. I am deeply grateful for his constant supervision, encouragement and support. I am also indebted to Dr Nigamananda Das, Head of the Department of English, for all his valuable inputs. I remain grateful to all the Faculty members of the Department of English, the Dean, School of Humanities and Education, the Evaluation team of the Pre Submission Seminar and other officers as well as staff of Nagaland University for their ready help and timely assistance. I place on record, my gratitude to Miss. R. Themmungla, Clinical Psychologist, who graciously shared her vast knowledge with me.

I would also like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Libraries and staff of both Nagaland University and Delhi University, for enabling me to access the books and materials necessary to conduct my research.

Last but not least, I thank my family for their unflagging support and encouragement at all times.

Kohima — Avinuo Kire

30 November 2013 — Research Scholar

REFERENCE ABBREVIATIONS

1. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard: HGO*
2. *The Inheritance of Loss: IL*
3. *"Night Claims the Godavari": NCG*
4. *Interpreter of Maladies : IM*
5. *Unaccustomed Earth : UE*
6. *The Namesake: TN*

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction: Background to Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai (1971-) and Jhumpa Lahiri (1967-) are both contemporary Indian Diaspora women writers. Although the two women each employ distinct and unique narrative techniques, nevertheless, they share familiar threads of concern in their writings. This mutual interest appears to be quite inevitable, given that both writers share a common background, thereby inculcating an Asian American and post colonial interest. While Lahiri's prose is simple and elegant, Desai's narrative is lush and imaginative, with a touch of comedy. Despite their distinctive style, there is a pervasive sense of melancholy and nostalgia which emanates throughout the overall narrative of Lahiri and Desai, no matter what the subject matter. It is interesting therefore, to delve into the background of this remarkable pair. By doing so, we learn to appreciate the common threads and concerns which harmoniously works alongside their individual vision.

Kiran Desai is the daughter of eminent Indian novelist Anita Desai and was born on 3rd September 1971 in Chandigarh, India. Young Kiran spent the early years of her life in Pune and Mumbai and studied at the Cathedral and John Connon School. At the age of nine, Kiran and her family shifted to Delhi. At fourteen, Kiran and her mother relocated to England and after a year, shifted to the United States where she finished her schooling in Massachusetts. She went on to study Creative Writing at Bennington College, Hollins University

and Columbia University. Thereafter, the promising writer took a break of two years to write her first book *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.*

Kiran Desai's maiden novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* was published in the year 1998 and received various accolades from notable figures including literary giant, Salman Rushdie. This fictional marvel won the Betty Trask Award, a prize given by the Society of Authors to the best new author under the age of thirty five, by citizens of the Commonwealth of Nations. It was consensually agreed by the literary world that Kiran was a writer to watch out for. Thereafter, her second book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, published in 2006, became well acclaimed and went on to receive among others, the 2006 Man Booker Prize as well as the 2006 National Book Critics Fiction Award. This much celebrated book was also shortlisted for three prestigious literary prizes in the year 2007; the Orange Prize for Fiction, the Kiryiama Pacific Rim Book Prize and British Book Awards Decibel Writer of the Year. It may be said that Kiran Desai has inherited the passion for writing as her own mother Anita Desai is a gifted writer herself and has previously been shortlisted for the Booker award on three occasions. Kiran is a citizen of India and permanent resident of the United States. She is partner to acclaimed writer Orhan Pamuk, recipient of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. It is also significant to mention that Desai is the youngest woman to have won the prestigious Booker Prize in 2006.

Desai first came into literary attention in 1997 when "Strange Happenings in the Guava Orchard" was published as the closing piece in *Mirror work*, an anthology of fifty years of Indian writing edited by Salman Rushdie. Besides the genre of the novel, Desai has also displayed her proficiency in the short story with "Night claims the Godavari", which appeared in the 2008 anthology titled *Aids Sutra: Untold Stories from India.* This book has been edited by

Negar Akhavi and contains a foreword by renowned Microsoft owner and philanthropist Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda Gates. The fine sensitivity with which Desai portrays the sex workers in Andra Pradesh reveals her innate compassion and empathy as a writer. The fictionist in her also lends the story a sense of mystical pathos and romanticism.

Desai reveals that hermit Sampath, the central character in her debut book, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard,* was inspired by a story she had heard and read, about a man who climbed up a tree and lived there for many years until his death. Desai states, "So, I began to wonder what it was about someone like this who would do something as extreme as to spend his life on a tree" (Desai. www.randomhouse.com). This admission proves that she is an adventurous and bold writer who is not content with writing about what she knows but instead, desires to explore new and uncharted territories. Through her protagonist Sampath, Desai explores the reasons as to why a person could choose the life of a hermit. In the extract below, Desai talks about her courageous philosophy as a writer and about how attending a writing workshop failed to help her.

> I think one of the great joys in writing is to try and explore what you don't know, that's exciting to me. There are all kinds of little things- show, don't tell- I just wouldn't pay attention to any of that really. I don't think you can write according to a set of rules and laws; every writer is so different (Desai. www.randomhouse.com).

This fictionista also possesses a finely tuned compassion which effortlessly spills into her complex characters. Her trademark touch of humour, coupled with the delicately nuanced sensitivity and emotional depth of her

characterization is proof of this statement. Desai is a child of many countries, having shuttled between continents repeatedly since a young age. This experience of being an immigrant pervades her writing.

> It is this feeling of being caught between two continents that infuses *The Inheritance of Loss.* At times, it appears to rejoice in the intermingling of cultures; at others it seems to inspire a wistful melancholy (Barton. guardian.co.uk/book.in).

The above lines also reveal how Desai's past experiences have strongly influenced her writings. Although not as conspicuous as Lahiri, Desai's literary offerings definitely possess autobiographical strains. There is an unmistakable intimacy between herself and her characters. Desai states in an interview, "They're made up of bits and pieces of people I know- the main characters are- and other characters are totally imagined. But of course I'm sure they all do have bits of me in them as well, different parts of my personality" (Desai. www.randomhouse.com). Sampath's mother Kulfi, in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* constantly experiences intense food cravings and is obsessively adventurous in her culinary pursuits. This characteristic trait is also reminiscent of Desai's own love for food which the writer herself gaily admits. "It's (cooking) a great interest of mine; it's so much a part of my life. I'm always in the kitchen, cooking and experimenting- I love it" (Desai. www.randomhouse.com). Desai has also revealed that she prefers writing in her kitchen. This jubilant passion for food has obviously been infused into her fictional creation.

The soft spoken Desai is a simple and grounded woman with strong family values. She is close to her father Ashvin Desai, who resides in Delhi and who had predicted his daughter's Booker win long before it was even

nominated. Desai says of her father, “He is my closest link to India and what it means to me” (Lahiri http://indiatoday.html). Although she has lived the majority of her life outside of India, Desai still holds on to her Indian passport and is reluctant to surrender her Indian citizenship. This reveals a sense of attachment to her ancestral home as well as reiterates the diaspora predicament of never quite fitting in the adopted country. This dilemma is typically reminiscent of the immigrant experience where rootlessness, alienation and loyalty towards one’s adopted country and to one’s roots is always a constant tussle.

> I feel less like doing it (surrender her Indian citizenship) every year because I realise that i see everything through the lens of being Indian. It’s not something that has gone away, it’s something that has become stronger. As I’ve got older, I have realised that I can’t really write without that perspective
> (Desai. www.guardian.co.uk.in).

It is revealing as well as significant that Kiran’s debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, happens to be based in India. “I think my first book was filled with all that I loved most about India and knew I was in the inevitable process of losing” (Desai. www.bookbrowse.com). This statement also carries a sense of memory in her acceptance that the India she writes about, which she remembered as a child, may not exist anymore. Desai has credited her writer mother, Anita Desai, to have made a huge impact in her writings. She confesses that senior Desai played a motherly role as she gave more emotional support as opposed to critical support when it came to her writings.

> I’m sure she (Anita Desai) did have a big influence, because all my life I‘ve grown up hearing her talk about literature and books. It

was wonderful to have her around when I was writing this book, to talk to her through this whole process"
(Desai.http://www.randomhouse.com).

Desai admits to reading a lot of poetry and states that her favourite writers, among others, are Ichiguru, Kenzaburo Oe, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and R K Narayan. She also reveals that one of her favourite books, which she rereads over and over, is *Pedro Paramo* by Juan Rulfo. Kiran's admirable capacity to accept and find joy in any given situation which life brings transcends into her art. Her writings have won accolades because of the way she finds humour and beauty in very ordinary characters living ordinary lives. Kiran is presently believed to be working on her third book.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a second generation diasporic Indian American writer, born to Bengali parents. She was born in London on 11th July, 1967 and was later brought up in South Kingston, Rhode Island in the USA. She received her B.A. in English Literature from Barnard College in 1989, and then moved on to complete multiple M.A. degrees in English Literature, Creative Writing and Comparative Literature from Boston University. Lahiri also did her Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies from the same university. Later on, she took up fellowship at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Centre from 1997-98. In 2001, Lahiri married American journalist, Alberto Vourvoulias Bush and they have at present, two children. Lahiri currently resides in Brooklyn with her family and has been a Vice President of the PEN American Centre since 2005.

Lahiri came into acclaim with her debut collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, which won the Pulitzer Prize 2000 for fiction. This book was then translated into twenty nine languages and became a bestseller in

the United States and other countries as well. She then went on to write a novel, *The Namesake* in 2003 which is now a major motion picture. She wrote another collection of short stories titled *Unaccustomed Earth* which came out in 2008. For her brilliance, Jhumpa Lahiri has been conferred many literary awards besides the Pulitzer Prize, such as the Trans - Atlantic Award from the Henfield Foundation in 1993, O Henry as well as PEN/Hemingway award for *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999, Addison Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2000, M.F.K. Fisher Distinguished Writing Award from the James Beard Foundation in 2000 and Guggenheim Fellowship in 2002. The Commonwealth Award of 2009 was conferred to Lahiri for her contribution to the literary world. This prolific fictionista's most recent work is a novel, *The Lowland*, which released on September 2013.

This remarkable author has been appreciated for her superb prose writing, be it short stories or the novel. Her literary contributions such as *Interpreter of Maladies*, *The Namesake* and *Unaccustomed Earth* have each dealt with the subject of Diaspora. Lahiri, being a Diaspora herself understands only too well the immigrant experience. However, she claims this was not intentional and in one of her interviews, she states:

> When I first started writing, I was not conscious that my subject was the Indian-American experience. What drew me to my craft was the desire to force the two worlds I occupied to mingle on the page as I was not brave enough or mature enough to allow in life (www.chipublib.org).

Lahiri is a child of three countries – having Indian roots but born in London and later, raised in Rhode Island in the USA. Shuttling periodically between Boston and Calcutta, Lahiri has admitted to not ever feeling like she belonged to any particular place. She seems to express her feelings as a diaspora through her characters. In a particular interview, Lahiri says, "I wasn't a part of things. We visited (India) often but we didn't have a home. We were clutching at a world that was never fully ours with encouragement" (Lahiri. www. bookbrowse.com). She has experienced firsthand the diasporic trauma of never being able to fully connect to any particular place. "Growing up with ties to all the three countries, Lahiri has lived with a sense of homelessness and an inability to belong to any of these countries" (Sah 152). However, her search for identity is not weighed down by insecurities but is rather, a quiet, mature and reflexive one. Her stories are the product of an observant, reflexive mind.

As a young girl, Lahiri was shy and reserved and had few friends with whom she could share a common and healthy interest such as the love for books. It is interesting to note that Lahiri's real name was actually Nilanjana Sudeshna. After she enrolled in her school in America, her teachers found her original name too difficult to pronounce. Therefore, the nickname 'Jhumpa' was adopted instead (www.bookbrowse.com). Now that she has gained recognition as a writer, many readers are often astounded to learn that Lahiri's graduate school application was rejected by several schools which she had applied to. This compelled her to join a non profit organisation in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She worked there as a research assistant and this turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Being a research assistant, Lahiri was given a computer of her own and this led to the creation of many ideas for her stories. She admits to

having drawn inspiration and being influenced by various writers, some of which are James Joyce, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Virginia Woolf and Antov Chekov. Says Lahiri: “I am eternally indebted to two living writers, William Trevor and Marvis Gallant. Recently I’ve been reading a lot of Thomas Hardy and am Completely under his spell” (www.chipublib.org).

Lahiri’s works are mostly based on first and second generation Indian Diasporic writers. A commendable aspect of her writings is the sincere honesty in her narrative style. Being a Diaspora all her life, Lahiri obviously has no real experience about life in India, her ancestral homeland. No doubt, she has gathered some knowledge about India from her frequent visits to India when she was younger but other than that, she has no real experience of daily life in India. Therefore, she does not write about resident Indians but rather, about a subject she knows intimately and that is the life and predicament of Indians living abroad.

> Lahiri projects the Indian immigrants of Bengali origins as economic refugees, self chosen exiles and transnational hybrids who form a new generation of Indian Americans in a codified Homogeneous American national culture (Nayak 134).

Another admirable aspect of Lahiri’s writings is the fact that she does not resort to clichés or eccentricities which immigrant stories are prone to. Her stories are humane in the sense that they deal mostly with human relationships and the struggles and joys of life felt by the en masse people everywhere. Her stories are genuine, sincere, thought

provoking and always seem to carry a deep moral message. With regard to this matter, Lahiri says in an interview:

> Relationships do not preclude issues of morality…When I sit down to write, I don't think about writing about an idea or a given message. I just try to write a story (which is hard enough) and there's obviously a message, or a moral, or something. I think that's good – but it's not something I actively think about, to be honest with you (www.pifmagazine.com).

This expatriate writer is interested in human issues such as relationships, loneliness, fidelity, love, marriage etc. A lot of her stories are about marriages that are under great strain. This appears to be relevant to the Indo-American exchange. "Lahiri remains a detached observer of the daily events in the lives of her fictional characters" (Kadam 122). In India, the institution of marriage is given a lot of importance but in America, divorce rates are very high and the sanctity of marriage and family is fast deteriorating. Lahiri brings out this influence in her stories.

An impressive aspect of Lahiri's writing is her ability to write in the voices of both the genders. She professes the ability to write in a male perspective as "an exhilarating and liberating thing to do" (www.bookbrowse.com). Having experimented with both forms of prose i.e., short stories and novel, she states that writing a novel is both liberating and overwhelming whereas a short story has more intensity and purity. In discussing Gogol, the main protagonist in *The Namesake* , Lahiri confesses that she and Gogol have a lot in common. This

confession pertains to how names played a significant role in both Lahiri and her protagonist, Gogol's lives. Like Gogol in the novel, this writer's petname 'Jhumpa' inadvertently became her official name. The significance of a name is dissected in her novel as this was something that obviously affected her own life as well. "Emotion involved in finding a child his name is examined at length, as also the real life inconveniences, embarrassments and psychological pain issuing from it in practical encounters" (Mishra 166).

In this way the stories, although purely fictional in nature, contains autobiographical strains as Lahiri draws richly and honestly from her own experiences about life. When *Interpreter of Maladies* made its debut, it received rave reviews from various literary critics. Pulitzer prize winner and book critic, Michiko Kakutani hailed Lahiri's entry into the genre of diasporic writing as a 'precocious debut' (www.powells.com). This new age diasporic writer's skill as a writer has been compared to literary giants like Hemingway and Carver. Her trademark narrative technique is her sparing words which is economical yet deeply eloquent. This is typical of a writer of short stories. At the same time, she has also proved to be as skilful in the genre of the novel with *The Namesake.* Lahiri's writing has a charming lyrical quality to it.

As Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri are both Diaspora writers, it is natural that common themes run throughout their narratives. They are also female writers writing under the literary genre of contemporary Indian Fiction in English and both have each achieved success before the age of thirty five. Sharing such a common background, it is inevitable that Desai and Lahiri develop similar issues and concerns. Topics such as the problem of immigration faced by the diaspora community, marginalisation, identity crisis,

internal and external conflict, ambiguity of 'home' and other such similar predicaments are common refrains in the literary output of these two expatriates. It is significant that the above stated concerns are largely psychological in nature. Desai and Lahiri have become a kind of representative figures for young, aspiring Indian women writers. They hold an important position in the modern world as the voices which speaks for the multi cultural communities, the post colonial, the marginal, the immigrant, the subaltern and the feminist. For this reason, their writings are rich in diversity. Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri are a pair of dynamic writers whose prolific careers have only just begun.

WORKS CITED

Desai, Kiran. "Kiran Desai Interview with Bold Type". 26 Nov 2012 <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0599/desai/interview.html>.

---. "An Interview with Kiran Desai by Laura Barton". 16 Jan 2013 <http://.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/oct/12/bookerprize2006>.

---. "Interview with India Today Group". 23 Jan 2013 <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/kiran-desai/1/180336.html>.

---. "Kiran Desai Biography by Book Browse". 26 Sept 2012 <http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm/author_number/229/kiran-desai>.

---. "Kiran Desai Biography". 25 Aug 2012 <www.paperbackswap.com/kirandesai/author>.

---. "Interview with Kiran Desai by Blogspot". 19 Feb 2013 <jaiarjun.blogspot.com/2006/01/kirandesai/interview_20html>.

Kadam, Mansing G. "*The Namesake:* A Mosaic of Marginality, Alienation, Nostalgia and Beyond". *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Kakutani, Michiko. "The New York Times". 29 Sept 2009 <http://www.powells.com/biblio 17-9780395927205-0>.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. "Jhumpa Lahiri in Conversation with Mary.A.Dempsey". 15 Feb 2009 <http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/oboc/maladies/authorquestion.html>.

---. "An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri by Book Browse". 24 April 2009 <http://bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm?author_number= 929>.

---. "An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri by Arun Aguiar". 20 Nov 2008 <http://www.pifmagazine.com/SID/598>.

Mishra, Krushna Chandra. “Identity and Naming Culture in *The Namesake”*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Percraft International, 2008. Print.

Nayak, Bhagabat. “Contra-acculturation in Immigrant Sensibility: A study of *The Namesake”*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Sah, Binda. “Trauma of Diasporic Existence in *The Namesake”*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Chapter II

Defining Psychoanalysis and its Criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism is the interpretative perspective of literature by applying some techniques of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a form of therapy propounded by the Austrian Psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in order to treat patients of hysteria and neurosis during the late nineteenth century. “Psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorder by ‘investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind’” (Barry 96). This treatment was based on the observation that the root of neurosis and other mental symptoms could be effectively determined by encouraging the patients to talk and recall memories and ideas, however seemingly unimportant. An emphasis is particularly given to infantile sexuality. During the verbal interchange between the patient and therapist, the latter encourages the former to freely express forgotten, suppressed or repressed memories which ultimately presents an insight into the patient’s neurosis or mental conflict. This cure has aptly been described as the “talking cure” by one of Freud’s patients (Surprenant 199). It may be noted that the patient’s willingness and trust to reveal all to the therapist is detrimental towards this cure.

Psychoanalysis and its criticism is a widely debated and controversial topic for a variety of reasons. “Of all the critical approaches to literature, this has been one of the most controversial, the most abused and least appreciated”

(Guerin 125). The root cause of the reason for its disrepute is because the very science of psychoanalysis developed by Freud is considered to be flawed and narrow. “There is a growing consensus today that the therapeutic value of the method is limited, and that Freud’s life work is seriously flawed by methodological irregularities” (Barry 96). Granted, many of Freud’s theories, particularly the ones relating to aspects of sexual behaviour may seem limited in its approach. However, to debunk an entire science because of a few flaws is highly imprudent. Accordingly, with regard to the psychoanalysis theory, it is axiomatic to recognize that no single critical approach to literature, be it traditional, formalistic or psychological, is complete in its interpretative powers. When applied correctly to the relevant literary work, each approach can prove its worth and capacity. Freud’s idea of the “unconscious”, on which all his theories are based upon is a major breakthrough towards understanding the complex human psyche which was previously ignored by other theorists. “The Foundation of Freud’s contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche” (Guerin 127).

It is pertinent to keep note that the notion of the “unconscious” is not a new concept introduced by Freud. “Freud was not the discoverer of the unconscious” (Barry 96). Early philosophers such as Aristotle during the fourth century B.C., referred to the unconscious in his classic definition of tragedy plays and the effect of catharsis by combining the emotions of pity and terror in such plays. Similarly, Plato’s barring of poets from his republic as an act of revolt against the arousal of misleading passions is also a psychological theory.

> Long before Freud could discover the unknown forces and drives in the mental structure of man and name them as the unconscious, literature had bourne out of the testimony of their existence. To take an example that has now become cliché: the enigma of what

> deflected Hamlet from carrying out his intention of avenging himself on his stepfather and threw him instead in a slough of despond? (Palkar 166).

The history of literature has presented to us the idea of the superiority of the human facility of imagination by eminent romantic poets such as S. T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. These early ideas are reminiscent of psychoanalytic theories. This also includes the Renaissance man, Sir Phillip Sydney's beliefs on the moral effects of poetry (Guerin 126). As seen above, the importance of the unconscious, the unseen human psyche was always emphasised upon in order to understand human actions and thereby, understand and produce worthy literature. "In this sense, then, virtually every literary critic has been concerned at some time with the psychology of writing or responding to literature" (Guerin 126). It only chanced to happen that it was Sigmund Freud who labelled the unconscious and brought it under the purview of the science of psychoanalysis.

It is interesting to observe that the essence of psychoanalysis has always existed in the field of literature. Greek mythology is rife with descriptions of mentally disturbed characters which reveal an extraordinary and early insight into the concept of psychoanalysis. Literary greats such as Proust and Thomas Sterns Eliot explored the realm of the psychic by applying tools of symbolism, metaphors, allusions and many other seemingly psychoanalytic influences. The imminent literary critic Lionel Trilling states;

> Yet I believe its is true that Proust did not read Freud. Or again, exegesis of *The Waste Land* often reads remarkably like the psychoanalytical interpretation of a dream, yet we know that

> Eliot's methods were prepared for him not by Freud but by other poets (Trilling 42).

It is therefore important to grasp that psychoanalysis and particularly, psychoanalytic criticism is not at all a revolutionary twentieth century discourse as widely believed. William Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* is testament to mankind's understanding of the complex human psyche long before Freud. Freud is often credited for comprehensively explaining the indecisiveness, mental torment and lack of will in Hamlet in avenging his murdered father, through the psychoanalysis theory, "Oedipus Complex". This idea denotes the emotions that are retained by the unconscious mind of a boy who views his father as an enemy and wishes to sexually possess his mother. Following the same idea, Carl Gustav Jung, another leading psychoanalyst introduced the "Electra Complex" for girls. Jung's label is deprecated however, by Freud who insists that his Oedipal complex applies to both sexes; Freud believed girls experienced homosexual desires. Understandably, such theories have sometimes drawn flak and scathing comments from certain critics. Whether considered plausible or otherwise, it is certainly worth noting that all these ideas which are considered revolutionary or new age is actually not so. "But the term that Freud used to explain Hamlet's psychic problem was again borrowed from a well known Greek myth and its renowned literary version, *Oedipal Rex"*, which provided him with the notion of Oedipus Complex" (Palkar 167). It is therefore important to note that literature has always contained the essence of psychoanalysis.

Throughout the ages, writers have strived to explore the complexities of the human mind through literature. Many dramas and plays have traced the development of psychological behaviour with clinical accuracy. Shakespeare's *Othello* provides an insight into the subjective qualities of obsessive, violent

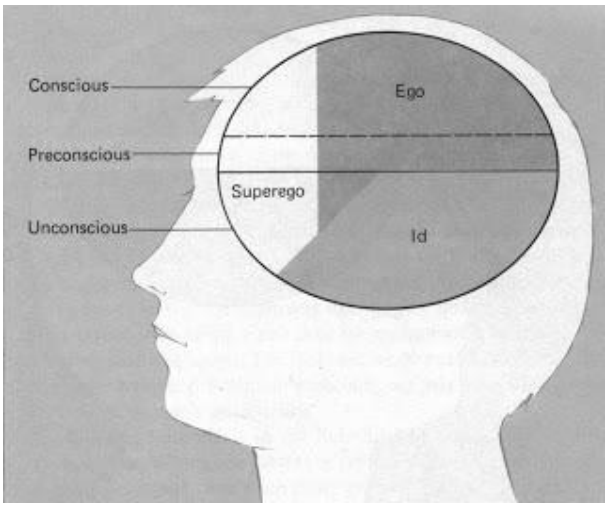
jealousy. A psychoanalytical Interpretation of Lady Macbeth's symbolic hand washing and sleepwalking in *Macbeth* reveals her guilt reaction over the murder of King Duncan. Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is another extraordinary example of a work of literature which explores the mind's vast capacities. The hero Don Quixote's imagination turns windmills into castles, gallery slaves into gentlemen and believes himself to be a real knight. Don Quixote is a remarkable character whose endearing follies and delusion can only be comprehensively understood through a psychoanalytic reading. The eminent writer Franz Kafka's protagonist Joseph K in his novel *The Trial* explores the bizarre world of schizophrenia. Literature and psychology evidently therefore, appears to go hand in hand. This does not imply that literature can aid to the science of psychoanalysis but it can indeed assist psychologists in understanding human experiences throughout history.

> Of course, literature cannot provide either the theoretical or practical basis for understanding and treating specific cases of abnormal behaviour, but it does complement psychology in giving a different kind of understanding of such behaviour. Literature yields valuable information, for example, about personality dynamics, about mental disorders prevalent during a particular historical period, and about the inner experiences of those who have undergone such disorders (Coleman 8).

Freud may be credited with the understanding that our actions are largely influenced by the mental processes of the mind. This remarkable psychologist brought forward a multitude of groundbreaking ideas, each relating to the unconscious. The following are all under the aegis of Freud's concept of the realm of the "Unconscious". Before going further into the literary aspect of psychoanalysis, it is important that an understanding of the

major ideas of psychoanalysis is grasped. This is due to the reason being that, "Psychological criticism in the present context will, by and large, mean psychoanalysis" (Singh 164).

The Id, Ego and Superego: This theory is perhaps Freud's most popular psychoanalytic idea. According to this concept of personality structure, a human being has three psychical apparatus which may be categorised as "Id" "Ego" and "Super ego". The illustration below is a diagrammatic representation of the Freudian theory of human personality.



Source: www.e-james1114-dc.blogspot.com

The id is considered to be the primary source of all psychic energy. The Id freely and randomly follows instinctive urges without any consciousness of rational, moral or censorious awareness.

> Id, Freud says, 'contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution- above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organisation and which find a first physical expression here (in the id) in forms unknown to us' " (169 Singh)

Because of this free compulsion and association of thought processes, the Id is also known as the "pleasure principle" (Guerin 129). There is no unified will in the realm of the Id.

The second apparatus, i.e., the "Ego" serves as a medium between the Id and Superego. It is the voice of reason and rationality. The Ego ensures that not all the psychic activity in the Id is expressed or followed through, as some impulses within the Id may prove to be harmful to the individual. "Whereas the Id is governed solely by the pleasure principle, the ego is governed by the reality principle" (130). The Ego therefore, goes through a process of selection and chooses which part of the Id to express and what to discard or retain within. The Ego thus, acts as a regulating agent which protects a person from becoming too self indulgent. The Ego acts as the voice of reason and controls the Id's unbridled instinct for self gratification.

The Superego is an extreme version of the Ego. Whereas the Ego serves as the rationale agent, the Superego is driven by a strong moral conscience and is therefore known as the "morality principle" (131). Largely unconscious, the Superego strives towards an unattainable human perfection. "Freud attributes the development of the Superego to the parental influence that manifests itself in terms of punishment for what society considers to be bad behaviour and reward for what society considers good behaviour" (131). The Id and Superego are extremes of each other and the Ego serves as the regulating agent between the two. Just as it is dangerous to give free rein to the Id factor, too strong a Superego is just as harmful.

> The Id is the influence of heredity, the superego the influence, essentially of what is taken from other people- whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience, that is

> by accidental and contemporary events. To this three tiered division of the psyche Freud associates three psychical qualities- the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious (Singh 170).

By popular or layman understanding, we can refer to Id as untamed passions. This is best explained by the example of a young child who has yet to develop an Ego i.e., the rationale conscience and therefore acts on all whims and impulses without a thought for consequences.

Penis Envy & Castration anxiety: The former is applied to women and the latter to men. As can be expected by the suggestive terminology alone, both these theories are highly controversial. According to Freud, boys resolved their issues through "castration anxiety" and girls through "Penis envy". He further proposed that unsuccessful resolutions might lead to neurosis, paedophilia and homosexuality. Understandably, these ideas were debunked in later stages. Penis envy is much derided by feminists who often accuse Freud of being a misogynist due to his somewhat derogatory views of the female sex, the concept of penis envy, not being the least. During the later stages of his life, Freud admitted that his understanding of women was inadequate.

Hysteria : The seed of this theory largely evolved from Freud's work with patient Bertha Pappenheim, commonly known as Anna O, who suffered from various mental symptoms including hallucination, amnesia and partial paralysis. At that time Freud worked alongside a colleague, Dr. Joseph Breuer. During the patient's sessions with Dr. Breuer, the former would describe her experiences and expressing her feelings seemed to alleviate her symptoms, much like a catharsis. This led the patient to dub the method as the "talking cure". Both Freud and Breuer believed that hysteria in a woman had meaning and that this meaning could be uncovered by encouraging the patient to express

her feelings and experiences, repressed or otherwise. The concept of hidden meanings and symbols in dreams called “Dreamwork” is also applied here.

> Freud made abundant use of “free association” which led the patient from symptom to the thought to the memories- beyond the conscious to the preconscious and the unconscious. This obviously paved the way for the patient’s release (166).

Freud soon separated from Breuer due to difference in ideas and methods. He later branched out separately and referred to his ideas and methods as Psychoanalysis.

Dreamworks: This Freudian terminology refers to a therapy in which an individual’s hidden desires can be revealed through his or her dreams. Freud believed that analyzing a person’s dreams will result in understanding aspects of the personality as dreams are realted to pathology. Symbolic representations are important in deciphering the meaning of dreams. Such symbolic representations can be in the form of “displacement”, where one the actual object is represented by another. “Condensation”, is the event where a number of meanings are represented by a single image in the dream. Freud revolutionized the study of dreams through his literary work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899).

Eros (sexual drive/ creative life force) & Thanatos (death force/destructiveness): Freud postulated that human beings are controlled by these two basic drives. Eros is the human instinct to live and is thus concerned with the preservation of life and of the species. Although similar, Eros is not to be confused with libido as it refers strictly to the sexual component of our life. Both Eros and Thanatos are empowered by Libido energy, which is the life

force. Eros seeks to create as well as safeguard life and is associated with positive emotions of love through sexual drives. In his celebrated essay, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920),* Freud states that Eros strives to lengthen life and promotes pro social behaviour.

Thanatos is the death drive which continually yearns for a tension free and almost lifeless state of life. It opposes Eros and pushes a person towards self destructive behaviour. In the later part of his work, Freud emphasised on the opposition between Thanatos and Eros which are constantly in tussle in the human psyche. "Eros and Thanatos shows how continually relevant the struggle between external storm and inner drive has remained for humanity over the centuries" (Kraftner. www.freud –museum.at/cms/tl_files). While Eros is associated with positive emotions like love, caring, nurturing, cooperation etc., Thanatos is assciated with negative emotions like hatred, fear, anger and other anti social activities. Freud saw psychic life as an interplay of these two ever-interpenetrating forces, Life and Death.

Oedipus/ Electra & Jocasta Complex: These three psychoanalytic theories revolve around the same principle, although it appears that the Oedipus Complex is by far the most popular or at least, the best known of the three. Oedipus Complex was propounded by Freud himself. This controversial idea is derived from Greek Philosopher Sophocles' tragedy of the youth Oedipus who kills his father in order to wed his mother and in self punishment, blinded himself. Freud believes that all children fall in love with one parent and feel hatred for the other. He described these stages as the "phallic stages" of a child's development. "Freud holds that the first choice of mankind for any object is an incestuous one directed at mothers and sisters, and the most harsh, stringent measures are required to prohibit it" (172). Freud believed that this tendency exists within all children but was more marked in neurotics. As the

child knows the danger of acting out these impulses, he/she represses this feeling which in turn leads to anxiety. “Freud only says that both boy and the girl can shift their objects of libidinal desires; they cannot get rid of it” (172). This means that the child can shift or transfer the object of desire but not get rid of it.

This idea took form with the study of a young boy known as little Hans. In 1909, Freud’s paper, “Analysis of a Phobia in a Five year old boy”, shared the idea that little Hans’ fear of horses is actually due to the boy’s internalised anger towards his parents. Following the same idea, Carl Gustav Jung, another leading psychoanalyst introduced the “Electra Complex” for girls. Jung’s label is deprecated however, by Freud who insists that his Oedipal complex applied to both sexes; Freud believed girls experienced homosexual desires. In the event where the mother is apathetic towards her need, the girl child may shift her desire to the father figure. However all in all, where girls were concerned, Freud appeared more concerned with “penis envy”. In 1920, eminent Swiss Psychoanalyst Raymond de Saussure proposed the term “Jocasta Complex” which defines the incestuous sexual desire of a mother towards her son. As evident, this term is derived from Jocasta, the Greek mythological queen who has a sexual relationship with her son, Oedipus. This term is often used to cover varying degrees of mother son attachment including domineering but asexual mother love, which is often prevalent with an intelligent son and absent/weak father.

It may be noted that besides other post Freudian psychoanalytic theories, an exhaustive number of psychoanalytic complexes has evolved over the years such as Adonis Complex, Lolita Complex, Don Juan Complex, God Complex, Matryr Complex, Cleopatra Complex, Hero Complex and many others. However, as this study does not specifically require the application of all these

theories and also due to obvious constraints, the scholar has chosen to describe only the pioneering and most groundbreaking theories.

Defence Mechanisms: Amidst much debate and controversies, there are certain psychological processes which are generally agreed upon by all psychologists alike. This is the understanding that people use defence mechanisms to reduce their feelings of anxiety and guilt. “Freud used the term defence mechanisms to refer to unconscious processes that defend a person against anxiety; they protect against external threats or against internal anxiety arousing impulses by distorting reality in some way” (Hilgard 442). These mechanisms come into play during conflicts of the Id, Ego and Superego and other psychological processes as described above. The mental processes termed as defence mechanisms are as listed below:

- ✓ Repression: According to Freud, “Repression is the fundamental technique people use to allay anxiety caused by conflicts” (Morgan 588). Repression is the process in which a person may “forget” or repress into the unconscious, any thoughts or memory which arouses anxiety. In this operation, the subject repels and denies conscious representations of thoughts, images and memories that are disagreeable because they are incompatible with the Ego.

- ✓ Sublimation**:** Freud introduced the possibility that initially conscious awareness such as unresolved conflicts, un admitted desires or traumatic past, if suppressed or left unaddressed by an individual, will ultimately shift into the individual’s unconscious. An individual may also shift such suppressed desires into something grander i.e., more sublime than it actually is in reality.

"For Freud, sublimation was the highest level of ego defense. It consists of a redirection of sexual impulses to socially valued activities and goals" (590). For example, a writer may divert some of his or her libido into the creation of a literary work.

- ✓ Reaction Formation: This is the situation where a person undergoes a transference of motives or reaction. A person who is too modest, too affectionate or too solicitous may actually harbour the opposite emotion. "The implicit principle is that the best defence is a good offense" (589). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has captured the essence of reaction formation with the quote, "The lady doth protest too much methinks" (Shakespeare Act 111 Scene 11). For example, a mother who lacks maternal instincts and resents her child may anxiously deny her actual impulses by behaving in a very concerned or overprotective manner towards the youngster.

- ✓ Projection: It is natural for human beings to have certain undesirable traits or qualities which we may not wish to acknowledge, even to our own selves. The unconscious mechanism that protects us from acknowledging these unwanted traits is referred to as Projection. "In projection, we protect ourselves from recognizing our own undesirable qualities by assigning them in exaggerated amount to other people" (Hilgard 444). People who obsessively projects may develop a disorder and experience a whole new system of thinking. They project their own hostile feelings to others and become paranoid that other people are out to get at them.

- ✓ Rationalization: There is a popular Aesop fable where the fox could not jump high enough to reach the grapes and finally comforts himself by thinking that the grapes must be sour anyway. This is a fine illustration of rationalization by the fox. This defence mechanism substitutes an acceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one. “Rationalization serves two purposes: (1) It eases our disappointment when we fail to reach a goal- ‘I didn’t want it anyway’- and (2) it provides us with acceptable motives for our behaviour” (443). Rationalization does not necessarily mean that we are lying as a person may actually believe his explanation.

- ✓ Intellectualizing: This defence mechanism involves reasoning and is related to Rationalization. “In intellectualization, however, the intensity of the anxiety is reduced by a retreat into detached, unemotional, abstract language” (Morgan 590). This is a process whereby a person involved in an emotionally threatening situation attempts to deal with it in abstract intellectual terms by becoming emotionally detached. This kind of defence is a necessity for people who deal with life and death situation on a daily basis such as people in the medical profession. Although an amount of intellectualization is necessary for people in certain professions, the same may prove to be damaging for a person who is not required to do so.

- ✓ Emotional Insulation: This is related to intellectualization. “Here the individual reduces his emotional involvement in situations that are viewed as disappointing and hurtful” (Coleman 126). Since disappointments in life are inevitable, people learn to

contain their expectations and hopes, thereby forming a protective emotional shield. This is natural. However, in extreme cases, a person may become resigned, isolated, uninvolved and become scared to live. Chronic schizophrenics and people suffering from other mental disorders practice an extreme and unhealthy amount of emotional insulation.

- ✓ Regression: "In the face of a threat, one may retreat to an earlier pattern of adaptation, possibly a childish or primitive one. This is called regression" (Morgan 590). This is a way of coping with anxiety and stress. For example, a child who is upset about the arrival of a new baby may go back to earlier behaviour such as thumb sucking, baby talk, refusal to walk etc. Adults too, may sometimes revert to childish dependency when faced with a stressful situation and is unable to cope.

- ✓ Displacement: This defence mechanism is the process in which a person reduces his or her anxiety by venting out his or her anger and frustration towards an object, other than the original target. "In displacement a motive whose gratification is blocked in one form is directed into a new channel...Freud felt that displacement was the most satisfactory way of handling aggressive and sexual impulses. The basic drives could not be changed, but the object toward which the drive is directed could" (Hilgard 447). For example, a person who is angry with his boss but cannot vent out his frustration for fear of being fired, may go home and vent his anger by shouting at his unsuspecting wife or children.

The human mind is fragile and highly complex. Defence mechanisms therefore acts as protective armours which shields our psyche and help us to cope with reality. Every person resorts to the above listed mechanisms from time to time. When used sparingly without causing harm to others, defence mechanisms are healthy and even beneficial. However, psychological problems arise when a person exaggerates these mechanisms or comes to depend on them too frequently. Such a person may develop a phobia and become delusional, neurotic, obsessive or paranoid.

It is not a matter of surprise that Freud's theories are a subject of much heated debates. Many of his ideas seem far fetched and bizarre to say the least. Freud's insistence of the unconscious as the centre of most human actions and basing a select study and its discovery as a representative of the en masse human race seems to have compromised his psychoanalytic discourse.

> For instance, the fiction of 'penis envy' which is hard to take if you are a woman. Feminists are often outraged by this kind of 'phallic discourse, but even if a woman does not subscribe to the feminist ideology, she is likely to be amused or bemused by these male fantasies that psychoanalysts doles out to us with the serious air of scientific truth (Palkar 166)

It must however be acknowledged that Freud was the genius behind the establishing the genre of psychoanalysis. Although the concept of the unconscious always existed, it is Freud who established this idea as a distinct school of thought and thereby, laid the foundation for various new branches of study based on existing psychoanalytic theories. Gradually, Freud's psychoanalytic theories were further developed by other leading psychoanalysts through the ages. In Freud's own lifetime, there were many

who disagreed with his theories, as popular as they were. “Prominent among them were Adler and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Adler broke away from Freud in 1911 and Jung three years later” (Singh 176). Jung had a more mystical and religious approach to psychoanalysis which Freud differed with. Consequently, later psychologists such as Jung, Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and others proposed their own modifications to Freud’s theory. In this way, the psychoanalysis epistemology grew and evolved.

An eminent theorist of psychoanalysis is Jean Jacques Lacan and his popular theory of the “Mirror Stage” where he proposed that the human child, between six to eighteen months, first acquires the concept of the self upon his image in the mirror. Also, “For Lacan- unlike Freud- the unconscious partakes of both and the super ego, and therefore contradiction is inscribed in the human psyche, which Lacan conceives as a text” (Palkar 172). Likewise, various psychoanalysts had different interpretations of Freud’s theories as well as developing new ideas pertaining to the complexities of the realm of the unconscious.

There are various stages to the vast and ever expanding genre of the psychoanalysis discourse. The first stage is dominated by the pioneers namely Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Northrop Frye, Kenneth Burke among others. Then came the second phase which was more theoretical in nature, contained in the works of Richards, Empson, Ransom Brooks, Tate and Winters. The third phase came with revolutionary discourse in the works of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Harold Bloom and Jacques Lacan whereby structuralism, post structuralism and deconstruction evolved. The fourth stage is the discourse of the feminist take on psychoanalysis. The fifth stage is the present ongoing debate on psychoanalysis and the focus on merits and demerits of the same

(Singh 165). The very fact that hat the psychoanalytic discourse is still in process to this day is a testament to the vitality and ever exhaustive nature of this field of philosophy.

As understood, Psychoanalysis initially started as a therapeutic technique but later expanded into the literary realm. “The conceptual edifice of psychoanalysis could not have developed without philosophy, the arts and most recently, linguistics and poetics” (Huguet 280). Looking back, this eventuality is quite inevitable as this branch of science involves the human psyche and culture where everything becomes meaningful and calls for interpretation. And where better to apply psychoanalysis than in the field of literature which is constantly on a quest for new and alternative interpretations. In due course of time therefore, psychoanalysis has led to the evolution of psychoanalytic criticism specifically referring to literary criticism which in method, concept or theory, is influenced by the tradition of psychoanalysis begun by Sigmund Freud. It may seem that the science of psychoanalysis is as much indebted to literature as literature is to psychoanalysis.

> Freud was an avid student of literature and his love of literature is mirrored in the modern discourse of psychoanalysis, very many concepts of which sound more fictional and bizarre than the fictions that literary discourse spin out for us (Palkar 167).

Similarly, the works of Lacan reflects his interest in surrealist literature The object of psychoanalytic literary criticism can be defined in the simplest manner, as the psychoanalysis of the author or his/her literary character. This approach believes that the true meaning of a book may be understood from the point of view of the unconscious and early childhood experience. Freud’s psychodynamic structure of the personality suggests that our behaviour is

influenced by ‘id’, ‘ego’ and ‘super ego’, representing the ‘unconscious’ ‘conscious’ and ‘reality principle’. Basing then, on Freudain theory, psychoanalysis basically involves three techniques:

1. A method of mind investigation, especially of the unconscious mind;
2. A therapy of neurosis inspired from the above method
3. Formulation of a new discipline based on the knowledge acquired from applying the investigation method and clinical experiences.

Psychoanalytic criticism often aids in providing clues to baffling characters, situations, symbols and actions. There are numerous literary marvels which have been ingeniously interpreted with the tools of psychoanalytic ideas. To date, the most popular psychoanalytic criticism of a literary work is Shakespeare’s *Hamlet.* No other theory of literary criticism seems to define Hamlet’s much debated delay in avenging his murdered father. “Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis, claimed the credit for solving the mystery of Hamlet’s inaction and paralysis of will” (Palkar 166). Psychoanalytic critics also depicts Hamlet’s almost misogynistic behaviour towards Ophelia as a classic case of a neurotic and repressed figure. Another popular example of psychoanalytic interpretation is Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn,* where extreme rebellion against parental figure is depicted. This literary novel is not by any means, a psychological novel but rather, a social one. “However, Mark Twain showed a remarkable pre Freudian insight when he dramatized this theme of rebellion in the portrayal of Huck’s detestable father as the lowest common denominator of social authority” (Guerin 138).

Lacan’s concept of the “Mirror stage” has been a defining factor in twentieth century literature, especially in the stream of consciousness novels.

The projecting space of mirrors is, of course, literally and metaphorically, of great importance for novelists and poets.

> It is no accident that the first chapter of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse (1927)*, a novel structured according to the transformations of the specular image into the social 'I', is entitled 'The Window'. Its idyllic figure of 'mother and child' works as a centre of attraction and identification for everybody in the house, guests included (Huguet 281).

Where psychoanalytic criticism of literature is concerned, Freud was of the view that the work of literature can be understood by analysing the psyche or biography of the creator. Whereas, Jung argued that a work of literature is not necessarily an extension of the soul of its creator; that in essence, art had a separate life of its own. "The artwork is neither biologically psychological nor does it yield to causalistic psychology. The poet is at best a verbal medium, the instrument of certain archetypal and universal forces (Singh 179). Freud had often accused Jung of bringing mysticism into psychoanalysis which for the former was a purely scientific and clinical field. However, to Jung's credit, he has predicted literary theorists like Roland Barthes and his acclaimed Deconstruction essay "Death of the Author", which is uncannily similar to Jung's idea. Jung helped greatly in developing gaps in psychoanalysis. In time, psychoanalysis has been increasingly refined by other leading psychologists that the Fruedian system has become better understood and valued. In essence therefore, the present enduring science of psycholoanalytic criticism is the fruit of not just one but many psychologists. "Psychological criticism is meant the criticism (practised in relation to human personality or literary text) as developed by Sigmund Frued, C.J. Jung, Northrop Frye, Kenneth Burke, among many others" (Singh 165).

Psychoanalysis theories may seem highly farfetched to many and for good reason too. However, it cannot be denied that this genre of interpretation has had a tremendous impact on world literature. Many major literary works have also been effectively deciphered through psychoanalysis. The crucial point is to apply the relevant psychoanalytic idea or concept to the appropriate literary work. If this is done, then new meaning such as never been understood from other tools of criticism may be unveiled. After all, psychoanalysis stems from complexities of the human life which affects the psyche and what is literature but a reflection of life. Psychoanalytic reading has been practiced since the early development of Psychoanalysis itself and has now developed into a rich and heterogeneous interpretive tradition

WORKS CITED

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literal and Cultural Theory.* Chennai: Manchester Press, 1995. Print.

Coleman, James C. *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life.* Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1976. Print.

Crews, Frederick. ed. *Psychoanalysis & Literary Process.* Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, 1970. Print.

Guerin, Wilfred L, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C Reesman & John R. Willingham. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Hilgard, Ernest R, Richard C Atkinson & Rita L Atkinson. Introduction to Psychology. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1975. Print.

Huguet, Josiane Paccaud. "Psychoanalysis after Freud". *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Kraftner, Johann. "Eros & Thanatos- Drives, Images, Interpretations". Accessed on 23rd October 2013. <www.freud.museum.at/cms/tl_files/eros_thanatos_en.pdf>.

Lapsley, Rob. "Psychoanalytic Criticism". *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. Ed. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Mangal, S K. *Advanced Educational Psychology.* New Delhi: Prentice Hall, 2007. Print.

Markovic, Zorica. "Psychoanalytic Conceptions of Marriage and Marital Relationships". 29 November 2012 <www.facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/pas/pas2000/pas2000-08>.

Morgan, Clifford T, Richard A King, John R Weisz & John Schopler. *Introduction to Psychology*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw- Hill Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Singh, Charu Sheel. *Theory of Literature*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. Print.

Surprenant, Celine. "Freud and Psychoanalysis". *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Palkar, Sarla. "Psychological Fictions, Literary Truths". *Critical Theory: Western and Indian*. Ed. Prafulla C. Kar. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print.

Trilling, Lionel. "Freud and Literature". *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*. Ed. Dennis Walder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

Waugh, Patricia. *Literary Theory and Criticism*. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Chapter III

A Psychoanalytical interpretation of Jhumpa Lahiri's Narratives

Jhumpa Lahiri has made a tradition of creating exceptionally humane characters in her acclaimed fictional works. Lahiri is a true psychological writer because of the emotional depth and complexities of her characters. This writer credits her life experiences, particularly childhood, for the skill which enables her to capture the humanity in her fictional characters. Lahiri states;

> I spent much time in Calcutta as a child- idle but rich time- often at home with my grandmother. I read books, I began to write and to record things. It enabled me to experience solitude ironically, because there were so many people, I could seal myself off psychologically. It was a place where I began to think imaginatively (Lahiri. www.sawnet.org).

Her debut book *Interpreter of Maladies*, is a collection of nine short independent stories and is aptly subtitled *Stories from Bengal, Boston and Beyond.* It is interesting to note that most of the characters are diaspora like their creator. Even more intriguing is the observation that all the characters deal with some kind of inner alienation and conflict. Seven stories out of nine deal with the Indian American interaction and the remaining two treats the Indian characters in the backdrop of cultural beliefs and superstition.

The title of the book itself is taken from one of the short stories and her choice of title book is very revealing. As such, the suggestion that maladies may be interpreted conveys an intensely psychological meaning. Lahiri has always been a very personal writer and her writing seems almost a catalyst. She states in an interview, “What drew me to my craft was the desire to force the two worlds I occupied to mingle on the page as I was not brave enough or mature enough to allow in life” (Lahiri. www.chipublib.org). Being a child of three countries- having Indian roots but born in London and later, raised in Rhode Island in the USA, Lahiri has admitted to not ever feeling like she belonged to any place. Whether consciously or otherwise, she expresses these very same emotions through her characters. The issue of Diaspora and the immigrant experience constantly run throughout her stories and these themes are intimately psychological in nature.

This stunning collection begins with “A Temporary Matter”, a story about an emotionally estranged young Indian couple in Boston. The rift in Shoba and Shukumar’s marriage had been building up ever since Shoba delivered a stillborn, who would have otherwise been their first born. Shukumar is a research scholar and he had been away in Baltimore for an academic conference when the miscarriage happened. He had gone at Shoba’s insistence. Although she does not blame him for his absence, nevertheless, there is an underlying resentment. Their deteriorating marriage is not helped by their determined refusal to address the cause of their sorrow. Instead, the young couple find reasons to avoid each other by throwing themselves into their respective work, Shoba in her job and Shukumar in his research study. “He had Shoba had become experts at avoiding each other in their three bedroom house, spending as much time on separate floors as possible” (*IM 4).* In due time, their relationship crumbles as they have blocked their feelings leading to mental anxiety and internal distress which causes them to behave like strangers.

> They weren't like this before. Now he had to struggle to say something that interested her, something that made her look up from her plate, or from her proofreading files. Eventually, he gave up trying to amuse her. He learned not to mind the silences (12).

The couple opens up to each other when their colony experiences an hour of power failure every evening for a few days. Each evening during these hours, they would have dinner by candlelight and under Shoba's initiative they exchange confessions. "Something happened when the house was dark. They were able to talk to each other again" (19). Their predicament of two people in an intimate relationship being capable of opening up to each other only in the darkness has largely to do with extreme mental anxiety. Psychoanalysis has often stated that a denial to address painful experiences and a blocking of intense emotions leads to anxiety. Repression is believed to give rise to anxiety and to neurotic symptoms. "In Freud's theory, repression is the fundamental technique people use to allay anxiety caused by conflicts" (Morgan 588).

On the last night of power failure, Shoba announces her decision to move out of their house and adds that she has already found alternative living arrangements. "He was relieved and yet he was sickened. This was what she'd been trying to tell him for the past four evenings. This was the point of her game" (*IM* 21). Instead of expressing his anger and hurt, Shukumar attempts to hurt her in return by calmly telling her that their stillborn baby had been a boy, something he had never revealed before. He knew that she found solace in the mystery of not knowing the sex of their deceased baby. Shoba and Shukumar may be viewed as tragic victims of anxiety and neurosis which is caused by the

repression of a painful and very personal memory which they could face in reality.

Another interesting as well as acutely psychological nature in this story is the precise characterisation of Shoba and Shukumar. Shoba is the more self-assured and confident one of the pair. It is revealing that she is a financially independent career woman while her husband is still pursuing his studies. This is something Shukumar himself is intensely self conscious about. “Once these images of parenthood had troubled Shukumar, adding to his anxiety that he was still a student at thirty five” (3). Shoba’s fierce, very un Indian independence is reflected in how she had taken the bold decision to move out of their marriage and also arranged her own alternative living arrangement without consulting her husband. Shoba’s self sufficiency is reflected in how “She keeps the bonuses from her job in a separate bank account in her name” (6). On the other hand, Shukumar is something of a man child. He is endearingly helpless and also seems to be in awe of his wife’s confidence. “It astonished him, her capacity to think ahead” (6). His timidity in his own house around his own wife is achingly revealed in how “he feared that putting on a record in his own house might be rude” (5).

Psychoanalysis places importance on an individual’s biography in order to ascertain behavioural traits. This may be applied to Shukumar’s feelings of insecurity. It is relevant that Shukumar’s father had died early and since the story does not mention any other sibling, presumably, Shukumar is an only child. Growing up without a father figure may explain his feelings of insecurity. His closeness to his mother is revealed in how Shoba, during their nightly confessional exchanges, revealed to him how she took the opportunity to check his address book when his mother had called him on the phone. They had only known each other for two weeks then but she already knew that a call

from his mother would be a long one (13). Another confession of Shoba is about how she had lied about working late and gone out for a drink with a male colleague named Gillian instead, during one of his mother's visits. "He (Shukumar) imagined her complaining and Gillian sympathising about visits from in laws" (17). It seems significant that two out of three confessions from Shoba involves another woman; Shukumar's mother.

> According to Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, marital partner choice, as well as marital relationships, are defined much before marriage was concluded. Relationship with marital partner is determined by relationships with parents and important persons in one's childhood (Markovic. www.facta.junis.ni.ac).

The possibility of a parental fixation, in this case, a mother fixation in Shukumar makes sense. It need not be sexual in nature as according to classic psychoanalysis idea but it is possible that Shukumar's intense mothering by his mother affected his confidence and consequently, his marriage.

"Sexy", is the only story where the protagonist is not an Indian character but Miranda, a twenty two year old American. At a first reading, "Sexy" comes across as a story from the "other" woman's point of view in an extramarital relationship. Miranda is engaged in an affair with the much married, smooth talking Indian man named Dev. A further critical reading reveals that this story has dominant psychoanalytic themes. Miranda has a rather indiscreet Indian colleague who continually regales her with the devastation of her cousin whose husband has fallen in love with another woman. This other woman is a young English girl. This interracial, extramarital affair between two people who are strangers to Miranda bears a strong resemblance to her own affair with Dev. At

first, Miranda listens only out of polite interest and does not confess her own affair to Laxmi. However, she feels guilty about her own affair whenever Laxmi updates her about about the agony of her cousin, the betrayed wife. Her husband wanted a divorce and she was to leave with her son to her parents' house in California to recuperate. Laxmi then convinces her devastated cousin to stop over at Boston where they were. At a last notice, Miranda is requested to babysit young Rohin so that his heartbroken mother and Laxmi could spend time together.

Rohin is seven years old and quite precocious. He calmly tells Miranda that his father is having an affair with another woman and also about his mother's devastation. The account of their time together is extremely curious. Miranda does not treat Rohin like the little boy that he is, nor does Rohin behave like one. The young boy asks her to draw things in her apartment so that he can memorize their day together. He tells her, "Because we're never going to see each other ever again" (104). Miranda obliges when Rohin asks her to draw him. The tale takes an interestingly peculiar turn when Rohin discovers a slinky lingerie hanging in Miranda's closet which she had purchased with her lover, Dev in mind. Rohin then asks Miranda to wear the lingerie. What is even more curious than Rohin asking Miranda to put it on for him is the fact that Miranda actually obliges. She tells him to stay outside while she changes into the lingerie but seven year old Rohin refuses and states, "But my mother always takes off her clothes in front of me" (106). Miranda replies, "I'm not your mother" (106). The description of Miranda carrying him out the room is very intimate. "When he refused to stand, she picked him up. He was heavier than she expected, and he clung to her, his legs wrapped firmly around her hips, his head resting against her chest" (106). After Miranda changes into the lingerie, she asks Rohin to zip her up and he innocently declares, "You're sexy" (107). This declaration evokes in Miranda, a memory of Dev calling her

sexy. She wonders whether this young boy even knew the meaning of the word and asks him what he thought it meant. Rohin replies, “It means loving someone you don’t know” (107). It is obvious that the boy must have picked up on bits of adult conversation regarding the recent unfortunate happenings in his parents’ marriage.

The concept of a young boy subconsciously identifying with his father is very psychological in nature. Rohin is aware of his father’s affair with an unknown English woman and he regards Miranda as an equivalent to the mysterious “sexy” woman and himself as his father. Miranda, on the other hand is a confused and lonely young woman. She is feeling neglected by her lover Dev who rarely has time to spend with her because of his wife’s presence. She crosses the line in indulging a child’s sexual curiosity. In the end however, Rohin’s declaration of her being sexy seems to shock her out of her reverie and she cries after putting him to bed. “But Rohin still slept. She guessed that he was used to it now, to the sound of a woman crying” (109). Her affair with Dev ends shortly after.

“This Blessed House” is another story which explores the curious dynamics of male female relationships. This is a tale about a newlywed Indo American couple named Twinkle and Sanjeev who are in the process of settling into a new house in Connecticut. To her immense delight, Twinkle continuously discovers Christian paraphernalia in their new house. She is enamoured with the Christian icons and proudly displays them with a childlike enthusiasm which exasperates and irritates Sanjeev. This leads to friction between the couple.

Twinkle and Sanjeev are two extremely different personalities, a fact which Sanjeev realises only after marriage. Theirs was a whirlwind romance

and the two had gotten married within four months of getting acquainted. Lahiri possesses finesse for details and beautifully describes how Twinkle and Sanjeev are polar opposites. Sanjeev is a thirty three year old successful Engineer with brilliant career prospects ahead of him. He is ambitious and has a relatively serious demeanour which makes him take life very seriously. He is also very conscious about social appearances. “Though he was of average build, his cheeks had a plumpness to them; this, along with the eyelashes, detracted, he feared, from what he hoped was a distinguished profile” (140). Being of average height, he also gets irritated when his wife insists on wearing high heels as she would tower over him. His main reason for disliking the Christian paraphernalia is not due to any aesthetic nor religious reasons but because of concern as to what people may think since they were Hindus. He organises his engineering texts from MIT in alphabetical order and listens to classical music. One wonders whether Sanjeev loves this genre of music partly because it is “respectable”. As successful as he is, Sanjeev is insecure and self conscious.

His wife Twinkle, on the other hand does not take herself seriously, nor does she bother with other people’s opinions like her husband. She does as she pleases, when she pleases. Twinkle is twenty seven years of age and had been abandoned by a struggling American actor just before she met Sanjeev. She is often frivolous and instead of arguing sensibly, throws tantrums like a child when Sanjeev voices his displeasure over her actions. The fact that she was in a relationship with an American actor before she met Sanjeev seems significant. It shows that she is more laidback and at ease around different kinds of people. Sanjeev, on the other hand, does not feel comfortable around people in general whether people of other nationalities or other Indian Americans in Connecticut. “He often wondered why they included him in their circle. He had little in

common with any of them" *(*144*).* Sanjeev is overly bothered with the opinions of people whom he doesn't necessarily care about.

The psyche of this couple presents a strong dichotomy to each other. It is a mystery as to why a good looking and successful man with an attractive wife would have reasons for insecurity. Although Sanjeev's family background is not mentioned in the story, it is evident that he is a self made man with no connections, who has worked hard to get to where he is now.

> Still, the presence of his college books in the room reminded him of a time in his life he recalled with fondness, when he would walk each evening across the Mass. Avenue bridge to order Mughlai chicken with spinach from his favourite Indian restaurant on the other side of the Charles, and return to his dorm to write out clean copies of his problem sets (138).

Sanjeev is understandably very careful not to lose what he has achieved. Perhaps this is the reason why he constantly requires assurance from others. Sanjeev's dislike at having his wife tower over him appears vain and superfluous but he actually suffers from an inferiority complex. He is bewildered when guests arrive for their housewarming party. "It bewildered Sanjeev that it was for him, and his house, and his wife, that they had all gone to so much care" (152). Sanjeev is a poignant character who can be better understood from a psychological perspective.

Twinkle, true to her name, is like a little girl. She is a child woman who does as she pleases and throws tantrums in the face of obstruction. She sleeps in the middle of the day claiming that she is bored even though there is a lot of cleaning up and unpacking to do. "They didn't bother her, these scattered,

unsettled matters" (141). She is easily excited with little things and now, the centre of her curiosity and delight revolved around the Christians paraphernalia. She exclaims to her friend over the telephone, "Everyday is like a treasure hunt!" (141). In fact, most times, Twinkle appears to be more childish than childlike and is often very immature. Life is a game to her.

Psychoanalysis often accords the significance of names and this idea is apt when describing Twinkle. "Nicknamed after a nursery rhyme, she has yet to shed a childhood endearment" (142). The significance of Twinkle's name gains significance when Sanjeev introduces her to his friends at their housewarming party. He introduces her as Tanima, which is odd as no one including himself, uses that name. Sanjeev's act in introducing his wife by the name "Tanima" reveals his deep concern with respectability and perhaps on a psychological level, a desire for his wife to be more mature and sophisticated. Twinkle then easily interrupts and says, "Call me Twinkle" (151). She is artless and her refusal to be introduced by another name suggests an attachment to her name. Names are an integral part of one's identity and to change one's name is a subconscious desire to change one's identity.

> The names of individuals play an important role in the organization of their ego defense patterns and are cathetic and utilized from the point of view of ego defenses in a manner similar to an organ or body part. Freud was well aware of the importance of names and discussed mechanisms and causes of forgetting names, which consciously or unconsciously have unpleasant, or other associations, and the distortion or falsification of names
> (Murphy. http://www.pep-web.org).

Sanjeev's embarrassment about his wife's name and Twinkle's attachment to her childish pet name which she refuses to shed in adult life is a curious psychoanalytic play.

"When Mr. Pirzada came to dine" is an aching tale narrated through the eyes of ten year old diaspora Lilia. The young girl's fascination with her parents' visitor Mr. Pirzada is not only poignant and innocent but also intriguing from a psychological level. The story unfolds in the autumn of 1981 when Pakistan was then engaged in a Civil War. Mr. Pirzada, a family friend and regular visitor of young Lilia's parents was a professor in Botany at a local University in the United Stated while his family, consisting of a wife and seven daughters were in Dacca. Every evening, Mr.Pirzada and Lilia's parents would listen to the radio for news of the on going turmoil in the former's homeland. Mr. Pirzada's homeland Dacca is now the capital of Bangladesh but was then a part of East Pakistan.

The intrusion of politics in the story does not make the dynamics of human relationship take a secondary place to political ideology. "Instead, we see politics as a slice of life, as an alienable part of the reality in which we live in. In this story, Lahiri is able to combine micro experience with macro events" (Nityanandam 32). Nor is this story a platform for political ideology. Rather, there is no boundary between the political and the social. They are merged together and dissolves into the lives of the characters in the story. Even though politics dominate the story, Lahiri, in her usual distinct style gives priority to the feelings, emotions and turmoil experienced by her characters. The stress is on how politics and its ideology affects the characters and not vice versa.

Mr Pirzada's predicament is immensely psychological in nature. There is undoubtedly a sense of guilt he feels for living a safe and comfortable life in America while his family struggles in war torn Dacca. The fact that he is in America to earn a living and provide for his family is irrelevant and the sense of guilt persists. This is symbolised in how Mr. Pirzada's pocket watch is always set to the time zone in Dacca. There seems to be a psychological comfort gained in constant remembrance.

> Before eating Mr. Pirzada always did a curious thing. He took out a plain silver watch without a band, which he kept in his breast pocket, held it briefly to one of his tufted ears, and wound it with three swift flicks of his thumb and forefinger. Unlike the watch on his wrist, the pocket watch, he had explained to me, was set to the local time in Dacca, eleven hours ahead. For the duration of the meal the watch rested on his folded napkin on the coffee table. He never seemed to consult it (*IM 30).*

Young Lilia's fascination with her parent's visitor borders on an innocent but a tad obsessive crush. She meticulously observes every little detail about him from his mannerisms to his sartorial sense in clothing. Lilia sweetly admits to being enamoured by Mr. Pirzada's attention whenever he presented her with sweets.

> I was charmed by the presence of Mr. Pirzada's rotund elegance, and flattered by the faint theatricality of his attentions, yet unsettled by the superb ease of his gestures, which made me feel, for an instant, like a stranger in my own home (29).

Unlike most children, instead of consuming the sweet treats immediately Lilia reveals, “I coveted each evening’s treasure as I would a jewel, or a coin from a buried kingdom, and I would place it in a small keepsake box made of carved sandalwood beside my bed…” (29). Although she may not realize it herself, Lilia is slightly jealous of Mr. Pirzada’s family back in Dacca whenever she observed him winding his watch to a different time zone. “When I saw it that night, as he wound it and arranged it on the coffee table, an uneasiness possessed me; life, I realised, was being lived in Dacca first” (30). Though at a tender age, Lilia displays a touching sensitivity towards other people and she even prays for the safety of Mr. Pirzada’s family (32). Her fascination for Mr. Pirzada is to such an extent that she sneaked a book on Pakistan to read during library hour at school even though she had been assigned specific books to look up by her teacher. “There was a chapter about Dacca, and I began to read about its rainfall, and its jute population” (33). She would have continued reading if not for her teacher who found out what she was reading and replaced the book as it was not part of Lilia’s book report.

In the end, after Pakistan’s surrender, Mr. Pirzada leaves for Dacca to find out about the fate of his family. Lilia’s family receives a card from him after several months saying that he was reunited with his family and thanked them for their love and hospitality. That night, Lilia’s parents celebrated the good news with a special dinner. “…We toasted our water glasses, but I did not feel like celebrating. Though I had not seen him for months, it was only then that I felt Mr. Pirzada’s absence” (42). The knowledge of Mr. Pirzada’s reunion with his family drove home the reality that Mr. Pirzada would no longer be part of her life. Little Lilia’s innocent outpourings of varied emotions is achingly poignant and the beauty of this tale lies in the narrative purity of a sensitive young girl’s tumultuous psyche. Lilia had religiously been eating a piece of Halloween candy each night in remembrance of Mr. Pirzada and his family.

After knowing that he would not return, Lilia ends her narration with the lines, “That night there was no need to. Eventually I threw them away” (42). Lahiri’s ends the story on a deeply symbolic and therefore, psychological note

The title story “Interpreter of Maladies”, takes place within the span of a single day. Mr. Kapasi, a tour guide drives the Indian American Das family to the Sun Temple at Konarak in Orissa. Initially, Mrs. Das is quite indifferent towards their guide Mr.Kapasi but when she learns about his alternative profession as an interpreter of maladies, her indifference quickly transforms to interest. Mr.Kapasi, who speaks Gujurati, takes care of the Gujurati patients by translating their ailments to his employer, a doctor who does not understand the language. In this way, he acts as an “interpreter” of ailments and maladies. For some reason, Mrs. Das found his job as an interpreter quite “romantic” and her newfound intrigue turns the simple Mr. Kapasi’s head.

The story ends with Mrs. Das overestimating the nature of Mr.Kapasi’s job as an interpreter of maladies and she divulges an intimate secret to him; a secret she has revealed to no one. Mr. Kapasi is shocked and disillusioned by the casual nature in which Mrs. Das reveals that her eight year old son Bobby is not the biological son of her husband but is actually the outcome of a clandestine moment of pure physical gratification. Mr. Kapasi’s ardour evaporates and he finally sees the real Mrs.Das. “He looked at her, in her red plaid skirt and strawberry T-shirt, a woman not yet thirty, who loved neither her husband nor her children, who had already fallen out of love with life” (66). Mrs.Das, at first glance is not a particularly likeable character. She is aloof, vain and her disinterest in her own family makes her come across as cold and frigid. However, once the reader understands her troubled psyche, Mrs. Das becomes a tragic figure. She is simply then, a young girl married too young at twenty one and overwhelmed by motherhood.

> Always tired, she declined invitations from one or two college girlfriends, to have lunch or shop in Manhattan. Eventually the friends stopped calling her, so that she was left at home all day with the baby, surrounded by toys that made her trip when she walked or wince when she sat, always cross and tired (64).

Mrs. Das' act in choosing to divulge her secret to a stranger, much less, a tour guide, reveals what a lonely figure she is. She implores Mr. Kapasi to suggest a remedy for her pain and tells him, "Eight years, Mr.Kapasi, I've been in pain eight years, I was hoping you could help me feel better, say the right thing" (65). Mr.Kapasi's suggestion that what Mrs.Das mistook for pain may actually be a guilt complex deeply offends Mrs.Das and their brief camaraderie ends abruptly. Whether Mrs.Das' ailment is pain or guilt, as suggested by Mr.Kapasi, it is evident that her ailment is deeply rooted in suppressed emotions and unexpressed desires. The burden of carrying a terrible secret seems to have disturbed her psyche and she experiences physical pain. Her intense frustration and paranoia is evident in the following lines, "I have terrible urges, Mr.Kapasi, to throw things away. One day I had the urge to throw everything I own out the window, the television, the children, everything. Don't you think it's unhealthy? (65). This reaction is deeply rooted in psychological imbalances.

> The desires of the Id are powerful forces that must be expressed in some way: prohibiting their expression does not abolish them. A person with an urge to do something for which he will be punished becomes anxious. Anxiety is a state of uncomfortable tension that the person is motivated to reduce. One way of reducing anxiety is to express the impulse in disguised form,

> thereby avoiding punishment by society and condemnation by the superego (Hilgard 376).

Freud's concept of the Id, Ego and Superego is immensely relevant in Mrs.Das' predicament. She is burdened by the suppression of her innermost desires i.e., her Id by the Ego, i.e., the reality principle and over time, this repression has affected her physical state. Mrs.Das is a classic literary epitome of a deeply repressed woman and this repression has ultimately manifested into neurosis.

"A Real Durwan" is based in India, with the partition as a backdrop for the story. The main protagonist is Boori Ma, the old sweeper of the stairwell who is a Bangladeshi immigrant deported to Calcutta after Partition. Boori Ma constantly laments about the "glory days" of her past and reminisces over the luxurious and comfortable life she once led in her hometown. The tenants of the building where Boori Ma sweeps are often sceptical about her stories as they keep changing with every narration. "So she garbled facts. She contradicted herself. She embellished almost everything. But her rants were so persuasive, her fretting so vivid, that it was not easy to dismiss her" (*IM* 72). She would mournfully compare her glorious past to the poverty and many hardships that she faces at present. Old Mr.Chatterjee's constant refrain is, "Boori Ma's mouth is full of ashes, but she is the victim of changing times" (72). Boori Ma is an enigma; no one knows for certain whether her stories are real or just a figment of her imagination. "Whether there was any truth to Boori Ma's litanies no one could be sure" (71). The tenants would continuously debate the accuracy of her tales but in the end, they all agreed that she was harmless and a superb entertainer, if nothing else.

Boori Ma is an intensely intriguing figure, particularly from a psychological perspective. As previously stated, it is not certain whether her litanies are true or concocted by an imaginative mind. What seems even more intriguing is that the old woman tells her stories with the conviction of truth. Unless proven otherwise through facts, it is rather probable than not, that Boori Ma is suffering from delusion. This is very psychological in nature. It is also suspicious that her grandiose stories are never quite consistent. This often provokes the children to mock her. " 'Which was it, by truck or by cart?' the children sometimes asked her on their way to play cops and robbers in the alley" (72). To this Boori Ma would reply in a nonchalant manner that it does not matter to her whether they believe her or otherwise. "Believe me, don't believe me. My life is composed of such griefs you cannot even dream them" (72). This nonchalant remark is very revealing. Perhaps Boori Ma does not care whether her listeners believe her; perhaps the purpose of her stories is to gain attention or to distract herself from her present miserable existence. A classic symptom of delusional people is to make up stories of grandeur that presents them in an enviable position. Victims of delusion also delude themselves into believing their own concocted and fantastical stories. "When problems become too much for us, we sometimes seek the "solution" of escape into a dream world, a solution based in fantasy rather than reality" (Hilgard 438).

There is an interesting, seemingly minor exchange in this story which gives weight that old Boori Ma may indeed suffer from delusion. Boori Ma had been having sleepless nights and she was convinced that something was in her sleeping quilt. She asked a kindly neighbour, Mrs. Dalal to inspect her quilt. " 'Whatever is inside this quilt is keeping me awake at night, Tell me, where do you see them" (*IM* 74). When Mrs. Dalal replied that she couldn't see anything, Boori Ma insisted that the creatures must have wings which made Mrs. Dalal chastise her gently by saying, " 'Boori Ma, you are imagining things' " (74).

The old woman staunchly protested when Mrs. Dalal suggested that she might be suffering from prickly heat. “But Boori Ma preferred to think that what irritated her bed, what stole her sleep, what burned like peppers across her thinning scalp and skin, was of a less mundane origin” (75). There is a robbery in the building towards the end of the story and the tenants threw the old woman out, believing that she must have had something to do with the robbery. Her protest of innocence falls on deaf ears. “‘For years we have put up with your lies,’ they retorted. ‘You expect us, now, to believe you’ ” (82). The old woman walks away muttering, “Believe me, believe me” (82). We are not certain whether this plea to be believed is directed at the tenants or herself. Lahiri has cleverly ended this story without disclosing the veracity of her protagonist’s claims. We can therefore, only debate as to the mental balance of the woman. Nevertheless, Boori Ma remains an enigmatic psychoanalytical figure.

“Mrs. Sen’s” is a story which stands out particularly due to its bittersweet poignancy. Lahiri’s breathtaking sensitivity as a diaspora writer is beautifully showcased in this fine piece of writing. She has managed to convey so much emotion and feeling through a few simple words and sentences. In this story, Mrs. Sen, an immigrant in America, is a babysitter for eleven year old American Eliot. At first reading, this story appears to be about the immigrant experience and diaspora, which it certainly is. However, a closer scrutiny from a purely humane point of view without the burden of labels present a simpler and increasingly poignant picture. This then, becomes a tale about human loneliness; an emotional loneliness which is therefore, deeply psychological in nature. Mrs. Sen is a thirty year old Bengali woman, struggling to adjust to an alien world. Her only identity is through her husband, Mr. Sen who is a mathematics professor in a local university. As far as Mrs. Sen is concerned,

"home" would always mean India and through her childlike conversation with little Elliot, we understand how intensely she misses her homeland.

Through the finely detailed description of Mrs.Sen's daily habits, we gather that she has not adjusted to the American way of life at all. She prepares only Indian food using a traditional curved blade, shuns western wear and dons the sari regularly while also applying vermillion in the parting of her hair. Mrs. Sen's repeated attempts to learn driving is symbolic of her desire to gain control in her life. During one such futile attempt, she gives in to frustration and says " 'No more…I hate it. I hate driving. I won't go on' " (131). The emotional manner in which she says the words, with her forehead resting against the top of the steering wheel suggests that she is referring to something other than mere driving.

It is ironic that amongst all the so called "grown ups", surrounding Mrs.Sen, it is the child Eliot who seems to comprehend her loneliness. "Two things, Eliot learned, made Mrs.Sen happy. One was the arrival of a letter from her family" (121). "The other thing that made Mrs.Sen happy was fish from the seaside" (123). Mrs.Sen's attempt to surround herself with all things familiar does not ease her loneliness. This is proof that loneliness is a predicament of the psyche. The concept of home is therefore arbitrary, in accordance with a person's emotional upbringing. For example, that a sound sleep requires peace and quiet is the general consensus for most people. However, this is not so for Mrs. Sen. " 'Here, in this place where Mr.Sen has brought me, I cannot sometimes sleep in so much silence' " (115). The tale ends with Mrs. Sen's final effort at driving ending in a minor accident with Elliot inside the car as well. As a result, Elliot's mother withdraws him from the care of Mrs. Sen even though neither was injured. Outwardly, Mrs. Sen is a woman who appears to have it all but inside, she is tortured soul gripped by desperate loneliness.

"The Treatment of Bibi Halder" is a tale reminiscent of Freud's revolutionary and much controversial "Hysteria". This story is deeply psychological in nature and can also be aptly interpreted through the psychoanalytic concept of "Eros" i.e., the sexual drive and "Thanatos", the death or destructive drive. The protagonist is a twenty nine year old woman named Bibi Halder who suffers from a mysterious ailment which regularly results in fits and bouts of delirium. Bibi Halder had undergone a series of antidotes and treatments including allopathic, homeopaths, ayurvedics; all in vain. "Over time, all branches of the medical arts had been consulted" (158). Religious and superstitious antidotes had also been experimented with but nothing could cure her ailment. Bibi Halder lived with her cousin Halder and his wife where she was put up in a storage room on the roof of a building where a number of families resided as tenants. Bibi Halder would often bemoan her miserable fate loudly to the married women. "Each day she unloaded her countless privations upon us, until it became apparent that Bibi wanted a man" (160). Bibi Halder regularly expressed her envy of brides and mothers until finally, the womenfolk decided to find her a man. "Anticipation began to plague her with such ferocity that the thought of a husband, on which all her hopes were pinned threatened to send her into another attack" (160). When a man failed to materialise, she became maudlin and eventually collapsed in paroxysms. Bibi Halder's malaise statement, "I will never be cured, never married" (161), is intensely revealing.

> In psychology, the term hysteria was once used to describe a medical condition thought to affect only women. Symptoms of the illness included partial paralysis, hallucinations and nervousness. The term is thought to originate from ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, who associated these symptoms with the

> movement of a woman's uterus throughout different locations in the body. The term hysteria is from the Greek *hysteria*, which means uterus (Cherry. http://psychology.about.com).

Eventually, much to Bibi Halder's delight, an outrageous new treatment was prescribed by a doctor. "It was there, after performing a series of blood tests, that the doctor in charge of Bibi's case, exasperated, concluded that a marriage would cure her" (161). News spread far once this pronouncement was made. "Apparently some activity was what the poor girl needed all along" (162). The men folk would murmur indelicacies and the women blushed and agreed that, " 'Relations will calm her blood' " (162). According to Freud's hysteria, repression of sexual desire in a woman could make her hysterical, resulting in fits. As outrageous as this idea may seem, especially to feminists, it cannot be denied that mysterious nature of Bibi Hlder's ailment, coupled with her acknowledged desires propels her as an ideal candidate for Freudian hysteria.

> Both Breuer and Frued came to think that hysterical symptoms substitude normal behaviour and have sense and meaning. Both also agreed that if the unknown meaning is uncovered, the hysteric symptoms will disappear (Singh 166).

Consequently after the doctor's pronouncement, Bibi Halder enjoyed a brief time of anticipation by beautifying herself and preparing for a conjugal life. Bibi and the other women forced Halder and his wife, who barely tolerated Bibi, to put an advertisement in the local newspaper in order to solicit a groom. Towards the end however, due to the widespread knowledge of Bibi's condition, no man came forward, not even the old lonely four tooth widower could be persuaded to propose. Bibi Halder's dejection seemed to trigger her

baffling ailment and she began to suffer attacks more frequently than before. “Another seizure, and another, went unchecked” (*IM* 169). At the same time, dissent in the Halder household grew and reached a heated climax when the Halder couple lost their infant baby girl. Due to superstitious beliefs, they blamed Bibi for their loss, claiming that she had infected their baby. Finally, the Halders decide to move away to start a new life, leaving Bibi Halder behind. They left an envelope containing three hundred rupees under Bibi’s door the day they left and was not heard of again. No other relatives would take her and Bibi started to live the life of a recluse by making her home in a little storage room on the roof of the building. The neighbours would try to look after her by donating what they could spare. All is quiet for a few months and one fateful morning, some neighbours noticed vomit by the cistern tap. After this was observed a second time, the tenants went up to check on Bibi only to discover that the girl was four months pregnant. Bibi would not reveal any details of what happened of who the father was. “In vain we searched for traces of the assault, some sign of the intrusion, but the room was swept and in order” (172). With the help of the kind neighbours, Bibi manages to start a modest business and carried her baby to full term, finally delivering a son. Bibi became calm and sober towards the end, never suffering an attack, never revealing what happened to her.

> For years afterward, we wondered who in our town had disgraced her. A few of our servants were questioned, and in tea stalls and bus stands, possible suspects were debated and dismissed. But there was no point carrying out an investigation. She was, to the best of our knowledge, cured (172).

That fact that Bibi Halder’s symptoms disappeared as mysteriously as they appeared gives sufficient proof that her condition was not physical ailment

in the usual sense of the word. It is more psychological in nature owing to repression of desires which in turn gave birth to hysteria. It is then, only fitting that she became 'cured' after experiencing 'relations' and becoming a mother. The fact that Bibi became increasingly melancholic and longed for marriage, an euphemism for sexual relations, underlines the necessity of the psychoanalytic sexual life drive known as Eros. As previously explained, Eros is the intrinsic sexual drive which gives the desire to create life and reproduce. Eros is necessary for an individual's health and wellbeing. As the fulfilment of this primal instinct was denied to Bibi, she unconsciously expressed her frustrations by self destructive behavior through Thanatos i.e., the destructive or death drive. "Freud believed that people are driven, fundamentally, by unconscious, animalistic, instinctual urges, particularly lust (eros) and aggression (thanatos)" (Wilderdom. www.wilderdom.com).

"The Third and Final Continent" is the final story in this stunning collection and it is fitting that it remains so. While the ending of the previous stories are somewhat vague in nature and open to various interpretation, this particular story has a concrete and conclusive ending. This tale ends on an optimistic note which gives hope to the readers about the predicament of diasporas. This tale is greatly reminiscent of Anurag Mathur's *The Inscrutable Americans.* In Mathur's book, the main protagonist Gopal is something of a village bumpkin who migrates from his village to the United States where he finds everything alien and strange. Lahiri's story is also an account of a simple Indian man struggling to adapt to a strange new world in the overseas. The plot of the two aforementioned stories are therefore, greatly similar. However, the tone is entirely unique to each. While Mathur's tale is told with comical, tongue in cheek humour, Lahiri's story is sombre and poignant.

Lahiri's story is about a Bengali gentleman who first started life in exile as a student in England. The manner which this tale unfolds is a reflection of the psyche and condition of a typical immigrant, who leaves his small hometown with dreams of making a better life in foreign shores. The protagonist says, "I left India in 1964 with a certificate in commerce and the equivalent, in those days of ten dollars to my name" (173). He lives a frugal lifestyle, while struggling with feelings of loneliness and alienation. Just when he was getting used to English ways, his job requires him to move to America. He realises that American ways are very different from the English and he goes through an unavoidable cycle of alienation and adjustment. His initial feelings of unsettlement in the United States is vividly detailed in the following lines;

> Car horns, shrill and prolonged, blared one after another…The noise was constantly distracting, at times suffocating. I felt it deep in my ribs, just as I had felt the furious drone of the engine on the *SS Roma.* But there was no ship's deck to escape to, no glittering ocean to thrill my soul, no breeze to cool my face, no one to talk to (175).

The above lines beautifully conveys how entering America makes him feel like he had just entered foreign shores from India all over again. It did not matter that he had already been an immigrant in England for many years. In America, he soon becomes the tenant of an old eccentric lady named Mrs. Croft who is a hundred and three years old. Mrs. Croft is a woman stuck in the past and has a peculiar nature. Gradually, he learns to adjust to her somewhat baffling and eccentric manners and they forge a relationship of mutual respect. At the same time, our protagonist has gotten married to a woman named Mala, courtesy the Indian system of arranged marriages. When Mala arrives to join him in America, they are practically strangers and therefore, behave very

awkward towards each other. It is ironic that he had become used to everything in his adopted country except his wife who is from his very own ancestral land. “The only thing I was not used to was Mala” (190). He had to learn to share his life intimately with someone after being alone for so long.

The life and experiences of the nameless protagonist shows us how feelings of loneliness and homesickness has largely to do with the psyche rather than any geographical or physical barriers. Isolation is most intensely felt emotionally. The protagonist’s first bout of rootlessness after arriving in England may be termed as a result of homesickness and alienation. However, it is interesting that he feels the same after shifting to America. This was after he had already being a diaspora in England for a considerable amount of time as a student. Therefore, the feelings of unsettlement is not due to nostalgia in missing his homeland. Moreover, he initially feels completely detached from his own wife while waiting for her to join him in America. “In those six weeks, I regarded her arrival as I would the arrival of a coming month, or season-something inevitable, but meaningless at the time” (189). Emotional detachment, loneliness, alienation, nostalgia are all psychological predicaments. It is not the physical but what is intangible which creates these disruptments in the human psyche. In the end however, the story ends on a hopeful note. Our protagonist and his wife learn to love, create a family and carve a comfortable life in America. The former is saddened when he discovers the demise of his old landlady, Mrs. Croft in the obituary section of the local newspaper. He reflects and draws strength through the life of Mrs.Croft and states, “If she could lead a life spanning a little more than a century witnessing the various upheavals in the world, he could also live a life spanning the three continents” (Narzary 71). Only we know through a psychological reading, that the three continents are spanned within the psyche.

Lahiri's second collection, *Unaccustomed Earth* made its appearance in 2008. Like its predecessor, this book is also a collection of short stories and contains dominant autobiographical strains of its creator. Although the subject matter and narrative technique remains the same, this literary laurel showcases the growth in Lahiri's maturity as a writer. This stunning compilation consists of eight short powerful stories and is divided into two parts. The first part of the book contains five short independent stories and the remaining three stories in the second part of the book are interrelated but nevertheless, complete stories on their own. The stories are more intense and full of underlying angst. *Unaccustomed Earth* is poignantly introduced with a quotation from Nathanial Hawthorne's *The Custom House:*

> Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall sterile their roots into unaccustomed *(quot. In UE ix)*

As echoed in the above extract, there is a strong garden metaphor in the book. Psychoanalysis has always held the method of symbolisation as crucial in understanding hidden meanings and intent. It is therefore only apt that this collection begins with the title story, "Unaccustomed Earth". The main protagonist Ruma, a second generation diaspora is married to Adam, an American. The couple have a three year old son named Akash. This tale revolves around the visit of Ruma's widowed father, a retired 70 year old Indian American. There is a strong sense of psychological anxiety within Ruma and her father which stems from identity crisis. The two are both subconsciously in a quest towards self affirmation and acceptance. Ruma is filled with anxiety at the thought her father's impending visit. She is caught

between two cultures; that of India, her ancestral home and America, her adopted country. The Indian part of her feels guilty over her widowed father living alone and she feels obligated to ask him to move in with her family as is the norm in traditional Indian families. At the same time, she dreads that he may actually accept her offer as she is not sure whether she wants him in her life or not. Ruma's Hamlet like indecisiveness and tormented psyche is better understood from a psychoanalytical perspective. She is a second generation diaspora and is familiar with the Western culture where people are more independent. "Ruma feared that her father would become a responsibility, an added demand, continuously present in a way she was no longer used to" *(UE* 7). Ruma and her father share a very formal relationship unlike the bond she had with her late mother. Her father had previously rang Ruma, asking whether he could spend a week at her home.

> "You're always welcome here, Baba," she'd told her father on the phone. "You know you don't have to ask". Her mother would not have asked. "We're coming to see you in July", she would have informed Ruma, the plane tickets already in hand (5).

Her widowed father was now retired and spent his time travelling around Europe. The postcards that he occasionally send Ruma reveals the distant relationship between father and daughter. "Her father wrote succinct impersonal accounts of the things he had seen and done...occasionally, there was a sentence about the weather. But there was never a sense of her father's presence in those places" (4). Adam was away the week that Ruma's father visited. He was an understanding husband and had advised Ruma to do what would make her happy, even if that meant having his father in law live with them. Despite her apprehensions, Ruma gradually discovers how easy and calming it was to have her father around. He was not fussy about his food and

helped around the house by washing the dishes even though she protested that he need not bother. An avid gardener, Ruma's father also made a small garden outside her backyard during his brief stay. This unconscious act endears him to Ruma. "She felt flattered by his interest in the place in which she lived, by his desire to make it more beautiful" (42). Ruma's father also established a bond with little Akash and read bedtime stories to his grandson. By the end of his stay, "She (Ruma) didn't feel tortured any longer" (47). She not only wanted but needed her father to stay with her by moving in. Ruma's father declines however, gently telling her that his home was elsewhere. Ruma cries when her father refused the offer.

> He knew that it was not for his sake that his daughter was asking him to live here. It was for hers. She needed him, as he'd never felt she'd needed him before, apart from the obvious things he provided her in the course of his life. And because of this the offer upset him more (53).

Ruma's prolonged Hamlet like indecisiveness and tormented psyche may be better understood from a psychological perspective. Although a grown woman with a life that seems enviable outwardly, she remains very insecure inside. She feels estranged from the people closest to her, including her husband and child. She feels alienated from her own loving husband as she believes that he cannot understand her fears and dilemmas with regard to her initial indecision over whether to ask her father to move in or not. Their marriage is not as smooth as one might believe.

> He reminded her that her father was in good health for his age, content where he was. But he didn't object to the idea of her father living with them...She knew he (Adam) was trying to help.

> But nothing was making her happy; recently, in the course of conversation, he's pointed that out, too (7).

Ruma is unable to forge close friendships with anyone. She is polite to everyone but "It felt unnatural to have to reach out to strangers at this point in her life" (23). Ruma shared a close but often antagonistic relationship with her mother due to the generation as well as culture gap. "There were times Ruma felt closer to her mother in death than she had in life, an intimacy born simply of thinking of her so often, of missing her" (27). Ruma feels increasingly estranged from her own three year old son Akash as he gradually grows. "In spite of her efforts he was turning into the sort of American child that she was always careful not to be, the sort that horrified and intimidated her mother; imperious, afraid of eating things" (23).

The protagonist's tortured psyche alienates her from everyone. This may stem from a kind of repression during early childhood. Although unconscious, Ruma longs for her father's attention and approval. Her father is no doubt, a dutiful parent who provides for his family but is otherwise aloof and not given to outward displays of affection. Ruma recalls how as a little girl in school, her teacher had once spoken on the dangers of smoking cigarettes. Knowing that her father smoked, she had cried all night, convinced that her father would die soon. "He (her father) had done nothing, back then, to comfort her; he's maintained his addiction in spite of his daughter's fear" (21). Ruma had often quarrelled with her mother which is normal in close familial relationships. There is a bravery in being able to express disagreements with a loved one. This was not the case with her father.

> She (Ruma) had never been able to confront her father freely the way she used to fight with her mother. Somehow, she feared that

> any difference of opinion would chip away at the already frail bond that existed between them (37).

Father and daughter connected for the first time during the former's visit. This seemed to have rekindled the long repressed desires in Ruma and she feels herself softening towards her father again. She feels protective of her father when Adam casually questions over the phone, her father's act of making a garden in their backyard as it required constant attention which neither himself nor Ruma could give. "His flippancy irritated her, and she felt defensive on her father's behalf" (47). Ruma's father had bonded with his grandson during his stay and the two became inseparable. This surprised and touched Ruma. "She realized that for the first time in his life, her father had fallen in love" (48). At one point, while eavesdropping on her father reading bedtime stories to little Akash, Ruma consciously restrains herself from interrupting the poignant scene. "But she stopped herself, returning upstairs, briefly envious of her own son" (48).

In the end, Ruma's father leaves after his weeklong stay as planned. Ruma is forced to accept his refusal not to move in with them. Ruma is an intensely psychological character. She comes across as neurotic and is filled with insecurity and feelings of inadequacy. However, her last act redeems and transforms her from a lost child woman to a matured woman, ready to move on with life. Ruma discovers a postcard unwittingly left behind by her father, addressed to an unknown Indian woman, whom her father had met during one of his many travels. She realises that her father had other reasons for wanting to live his own life. At first, she is jealous and feels that her father had betrayed her late mother's memory. She then notices the hydrangea that her father had planted in her garden which was her late mother's favourite flower. "It did not prove that her father loved her mother, or even that he missed her. And yet he

had put it there, honoured her before turning to another woman" (59). Ruma then does a poignant thing by putting a stamp on the postcard for the mailman to take it away later in this day. The depth of Ruma's character may best be appreciated from the psychological perspective which stems from a childhood repression.

"A Choice of Accommodation" is a dramatically psychological tale wherein the trauma of the protagonist physically manifests itself outside the realm of the unseen. This is the story of an interracial couple, Amit and Meghan, who travels from New York to attend the wedding of Amit's college crush Pam Borden at his old prep school, Langford Academy. The simmering tensions in their marriage is revealed as Amit, in an intoxicated state blurts out to a stranger at the wedding party that his marriage had fallen apart after the birth of his two daughters. Amit is the son of wealthy Bengali parents and had a privileged education in the elite boarding school, Langford Academy, in America. In spite of his privileged background however, Amit possesses a debilitating lack of confidence and has a nervous personality. He feels a strong sense of abandonment as his parents had put him in a boarding school when he was a young boy. It had not been his choice. Even though he is a grown man now, Amit carries the scars of this childhood trauma with him. "He couldn't imagine sending his daughters to Langford- couldn't imagine letting go of them as his parents had let go of him" (86). Amit feels detached from everyone and feels no nostalgia towards his alma mater and does not keep in touch with any of his old classmates. Although he has a loving wife in Meghan, as well as two healthy twin girls, Amit carries a sense of abandonment and loneliness with him. "And yet there were times Amit felt as alone as he had first been at Langford" (114).

Amit had been separated from all that was familiar to him when his parents decided to move back to India and plucked him out of the Public school in Winchester, Massachusetts where he had been raised. The schools in India had been deemed not good enough and so he was packed off to Langford Academy, a boarding school without having any say in the matter. Ever since then, he has harboured an underlying resentment towards his parents. Although he is a grown man now, he is unable to get over his feeling of betrayal. “Still, he refused to forgive them” (97). It is significant to note that Amit represses his feelings and has never expressed his torment to his parents. Perhaps the following lines explain the reason why young Amit was unable to emotionally reach out to his own father and mother. “His parents, unlike most Bengalis in Massachusetts, has always been dismissive, even critical, of India, never homesick or sentimental” (95). Amit obviously did not share a close emotional bond, rather, his successful and busy parents had not given him the love that he had craved. As miserable as he had been in boarding school, Amit had not told his parents about his trauma.

> There was no escape at the end of the day, and though he admitted it to no one, especially not his parents when they called from Delhi every weekend, he was crippled with homesickness, missing his parents to the point where tears often filled his eyes, in those first months, without warning. He sought traces of his parents’ faces and voices among the people who surrounded and cared for him, but there was absolutely nothing, no one at Langford to remind him of them (97).

Amit’s traumatic experience and sense of abandonment affected him in adult life as he suffers from a paralysing lack of confidence and has a morbid outlook in life. Morever, there is also a sense of failure in defeat in him.

> The idea that early childhood experiences influence later personality, the notion that the true motives for our behaviour may be unconscious- these are direct outgrowths of dynamic theorizing, particularly Frued's (Morgan 591).

Amit's father, a renowed ophthalmologist had wanted Amit to follow in his footsteps and become a doctor as well. Amit lacked the aptitude and therefore, had quit medical school halfway and became an editor for medical journals instead. He had met his wife Meghan in medical school. His parents had disapproved of his marriage to Meghan because of her so called "common" background. Amit is haunted by the memory of a particular incident when his little daughter Monica had nearly choked on a piece of dried apricot while in a restaurant. A woman nearby who luckily happened to be a nurse had leaped up to the sound of Monika's coughing and had effectively put her finger inside the girl's mouth and scooped the culprit out. Despite two years in medical school, "Amit lacked the simple instinct, the confidence to do such a thing" (*UE* 90). He would often run imagined scenarios in his mind where he saw himself taking his girls out to different places. In all these imagined scenarios, he would inevitably do something stupid and careless or negligent which would result in him being the lone survivor. These wildly imagined scenarios always ended in Meghan divorcing him as she would blame him for what happened to their girls. In the end, he would lose it all, his wife and family. This is a very disturbing activity which the paranoid Amit indulges in. He has no confidence, does not realise or value his worth and therefore feels that he is unworthy of being loved. He has a loving family but he seems to be always on edge, almost as if he is preparing himself for them to abandon him one day. He lives his life on the edge, always waiting for the sky to fall down on him.

“A brief glance in the wrong direction, he knew , could toss him over the edge” (91). Amit is alienated from everyone around him. He has no friends, is estranged from his parents and does not appreciate his family. Amit wondered to himself, “Wasn’t it terrible that after all the work one put into finding a person ... that solitude was what one relished most, the only thing that, even in fleeting, diminished doses, kept one sane?” (115).

Amit drinks too much at the wedding and blurts out terrible thoughts with regard to his own marriage to a complete stranger. He tells the woman that his marriage had disappeared and also added that this is inevitable for every married couple in due time. The woman becomes offended by his drunken statement and ignores him after telling him off. However, Amit is beyond caring and justifies himself. He goes off to find a payphone to call his daughters and in his inebriated state, ends up abandoning Meghan at the party and reaches their hotel room alone. Meghan is hurt but does not make a big issue out of it the next morning and Amit is grateful. She had every reason to hurt him back because his callous behaviour but she is too level headed to do so. A young couple at the party had dropped Meghan off at the hotel after Amit had abandoned her. Meghan is good enough to go back to Langford for a brunch the next day as he wanted to say goodbye to the newly weds. However, they arrive too late and discovers that everybody had left already. They end up making love in one of the empty rooms in Langford. The physical intimacy seems to make up for the lack of emotional intimacy. When they were finished, Amit laid on top of her, and he “hoped that he was forgiven, and for a few moments they remained together on the narrow bed in the little room, his heart beating rapidly, vigorously, plainly striking the skin of her palm” (127) .

It is evident that Amit's neurosis stems from his early traumatic experience as a boy, his feeling of abandonment by his own parents and most importantly, his refusal to address or acknowledge his emotions. "Freud believed that neurotic, disturbed behaviour involves conflict between id demands and ego/superego restraints" (Morgan 593). The most disturbing outlet of his trauma is the account of his hair turning prematurely gray while in boarding school. This is a dramatic case of psychological trauma taking on a physical manifestation. This happened in the sixth form at Langford Academy when he was barely a teenager.

> He'd read it was possible, after a traumatic experience, for a person's hair to turn gray in youth. But there had been no sudden death he could point to, no accident. No profound life change, apart from his parents sending him to Langford (*UE* 93).

His early ageing had continued later onwards, so much so that "by the age of twenty one his hair had turned completely gray. It was here, at Langford, that it had begun, when he was in the sixth form" (93). The tile story, "A Choice of Accommodation" may be symbolic of the instability and rootlessness within Amit. He has no loyalties towards any particular place, person or even himself. He unconsciously views his parents' act of placing him in a boarding school as a rejection of himself as their son. This feeling of abandonment and rejection has led to a paralysing sense of inferiority complex. Amit's paranoia and neurosis stems from his early traumatic experience at Langford Academy. In a devastatingly sensitive manner, Lahiri has managed to capture the psyche of a tormented soul, trapped within his own inferior sense of self.

"Hell Heaven" is related in a first person narrative by a Diaspora child named Usha. She recounts the memory of a man named Pranab Chakraborty

whom she had called “Pranab Kaku”, a Bengali term meant for addressing a father’s younger brother. This man was in fact, not a real uncle but someone who had befriended her parents in the early seventies. He had been a lonely and struggling student, trying to adjust to life as an immigrant and would regularly eat at their home as one of the family. Pranab calls Usha’s father Shyamal, ‘Da’ which means elder brother and Usha’s mother, ‘Boudi’, meaning sister in law in Bengali. This reflects the strong bond which immigrants abroad often form simply by reasons of sharing the same nationality. Usha narrates with a childlike and unconscious innocence, her mother’s infatuation towards this man who had touched their lives briefly but so intensely. Pranab Kaku ends up marrying an American woman called Deborah, much to the dismay of his parents in India as well as the entire Bengali community, including Usha’s mother, though she never reveals her devastation. Although Usha’s mother realises that Pranab could never be hers, nevertheless, she had hoped that he would marry an Indian girl and continue to be close to them. “It was universally agreed that she (Deborah) had stripped Pranab Kaku not only of his origins but of his independence” (75). Regardless of how nice Deborah was, Usha’s mother viewed her as the immoral American girl who had stolen Pranab away from his people. Usha’s mother often liked to comment that Deborah had changed Pranab for the worse and that his personality had undergone a complete change. Usha’s mother remarked, “ ‘He used to be so different. I don’t understand how a person can change so suddenly. It’s just hell-heaven, the difference,’ she would say, always using the English words for her self concocted, backward metaphor” (68). The marriage ended in a divorce. The irony is that it was not the American Deborah who had left Pranab, as Usha’s mother predicted. Instead, Pranab had fallen in love with a married Bengali woman and in the process, destroyed two families. Even more ironical is when a devastated Deborah tries to find solace by confiding in Usha’s mother. Unknown to Deborah, Usha’s mother had secretly hoped that the American girl

would leave Pranab. She carries a dark secret within her and the story ends with her finally confiding her secret to her daughter Usha. An adult Usha ultimately comes to know that her mother had been devastated by Pranab's marriage; so much so that she had attempted to end her life a few weeks after the marriage when she had been alone at home. Usha's mother had doused her sari in lighter fluid and had stepped outside the house with the intention to light herself on fire. As she tried to muster the courage to strike a match, a neighbour mistook her trance like state for peaceful reverie and interrupts her.

The story revolves around Usha's mother and there is a strong sense of pathos which runs throughout the entire story. An outward account of the life and actions of Usha's mother depicts her as a lonely and bitter woman who seems to grudge others a chance of happiness. She also shared a hostile relationship with her only child, Usha. Usha's mother turned into a rage when Usha wanted to wear a bra as she entered her early teenage years. She would also warn Usha against marrying an American, sternly warning that her daughter would never get away with it as Pranab Kaku had. Usha recalls, "I was thirteen, the thought of marriage irrelevant to my life. Still, her words upset me me and I felt her grip on me tighten" (75). Usha's mother was paranoid about Usha turning into an "American" girl. She does not seem to evoke much sympathy at first. As previously stated, she appears to be a neurotic woman; bitter, self centred and alienating everyone around her. However, a psychoanalytic reading reveals that Usha's mother is a woman who is to be sympathised. One needs to delve into the psyche of Usha's mother to truly understand what a sensitive and desperately lonely woman she really was.

> Usually the neurotic vaguely senses that something is missing, that she is not fulfilling herself or leading a truly meaningful life.

> And this, in turn, leads to feelings of futility and unhappiness, to a "loss of joy" (Coleman 218)

Usha's parents had a traditional Indian marriage when Usha's mother was very young and there is an age gap of nine years between them. Young Usha explains;

> My father was a lover of silence and solitude. He had married my mother to placate his parents; they were willing to accept his desertion as long as he had a wife. He was wedded to his work, his research, he existed in a shell that neither my mother nor I could penetrate" (*UE* 65).

Usha's mother had been a young bride full of idealistic dreams about her husband only to discover that he had married her only out of compulsion. Besides having to accept that romance was not to be a part of her marriage, she was also compelled to adjust to a new world with a culture which felt utterly alien to her. Pranab Chakraborty had therefore been an unanticipated pleasure in her life. He was the same age as her and they could talk about many things which they had in common. "He (Pranab) did not turn a deaf ear to her nostalgia, like my father, or listen uncomprehending, like me" (66), says Usha. "She and Pranab Kaku would argue passionately about these matters, raising their voices in playful combat, confronting each other in a way she and my father never did"(65). The following lines emphasises the reason why it would be inevitable and quite natural for Usha's mother, though a married woman, to fall in love with another man. "But, most important, in the beginning he was totally dependent on her, needing her for those months in a way my father never did in the whole history of their marriage" (67). Whenever Usha's mother expressed her crippling loneliness and complained of missing her life in

India, her husband would make no attempt to placate her. Instead, he would tell her to return to Calcutta if she so desires, thus making it clear that their separation would not affect him one way or the other.

It is quite evident that Usha's mother suffered a keen disappointment in her marriage because of her aloof and uninterested husband. She did not feel cherished or loved. This led to her infatuation over Pranab Chakraborty, the man who called her "Boudi" meaning "sister", although to her credit, she did not act on her feelings, nor did she intend to at any point of time. This restraint further added to her depression. "Freud believed that neurotic, disturbed behaviour involves conflict between id demands and ego/superego restraints" (Morgan 593). Her unreasonable and often neurotic behaviour towards Usha can thus, be better understood by delving into her psyche. Usha's mother never felt needed by her own husband and she ended up losing Pranab Chakraborty as well. As little Usha gradually grew up, she became more independent and this made her mother fear that she was losing her own daughter to America. The hostility began on the eve of Pranab's wedding. Usha wanted to stay back for the after party but her mother had forced her to come home. Usha recalls, "As we drove home from the wedding, I told my mother, for the first but not the last time in my life, that I hated her" (*UE* 74). Usha admits she became a rebellious child, defying her mother many a times.

> When she screamed at me for talking too long on the telephone, or for staying too long in my room, I learned to scream back, telling her she was pathetic, that she knew nothing about me, and it was clear to us both that I had stopped needing her, definitively and abruptly, just as Pranab Kaku had (77).

Lahiri beautifully ends this tale on a wise and poignant note. Usha goes through her rebellious years and as she finally becomes a young woman, she gradually learns to understand and emphatize with her mother. She also notices that with time, her parents had grown fond of each other, out of habit if nothing else (81). Usha was not the only one who "grew up", so to speak. "My mother and I had also made peace; she had accepted the fact that I was not only her daughter but a child of America as well" (82). Though it had taken a while, Usha's mother finally learns to make peace with her life.

This story explores the necessity in every human to have a purpose in life; the desire to be needed is intrinsic to a person's self worth. Usha's mother is a housewife who had no career and watches soap operas to pass the time. "Her only job, everyday, was to clean and cook for my father and me" (76). Her husband had never made her feel needed as a wife from the very beginning of their marriage. When Pranab Chakraborty and then her own daughter Usha ceased to need her as well, she became increasingly neurotic and depressed. Lahiri has kindly ensured that Usha's mother attain peace during her old age. Nevertheless, it is important to note that a psychological study is pertinent to understand the behaviour of Usha's mother.

"Only Goodness' is an evocative tale which explores the complex and often unreasonable emotions that drives a person to behave in a certain manner. The issue of repression; the internalising of one's emotions and feelings comes into focus yet again, in this powerful story. Sudha and Rahul are a pair of second generation disapora siblings, born to immigrant Bengali parents. Sudha, the elder one, grows up to become a successful career woman and marries a respectable English gentleman. In spite her many notable achievements, Sudha remain self depreciating and overly critical of herself. Her life is ruled by a sense of irrational guilt which ultimately damages her marriage. Her younger

brother Rahul develops a drinking problem from an early age and becomes a social pariah. He ends up alienating himself from everyone including his lifelong supporter, his elder sister Sudha.

Sudha and Rahul are raised in a manner typical of immigrant parents. Their frugal parents possess a survivor's mentality and take nothing for granted. An admirable trait in them is the fierce determination to succeed. They put education and academics above all else because after all, America was the place where dreams could come true. Sudha and Rahul have been brought up under the pressure to succeed in life. Their efforts would be constantly compared to the academic performances of other Bengali children. Since childhood, their parents would clip newspaper stories about especially gifted children such as the boy who completed his Ph.D. at the age of twenty or the girl who went to Stanford at the age of twelve. These stories were to serve as inspiration for Sudha and Rahul. Sudha has always been a protective elder sister to her younger brother, pampering and indulging him like a little mother. She tries to make sure that her brother grew up reading all the popular American children's books like Peter Rabbit and others; books which her parents had not had the imagination to buy or read to her when she had been Rahul's age. She also attempts to ensure that Rahul played with the 'appropriate' toys. In ensuring that he had a 'proper' American childhood, Sudha hoped that Rahul would fit better in America, unlike her. "At times she engaged with Rahul's upbringing more than her did-..." (136). She had always envied her brother as he was considered the better looking and also the more intelligent one of the pair. While she slogged to maintain her good grades, Rahul seemed to breeze through his studies effortlessly. Rahul had been precocious enough to have skipped third grade in school.

It had been Sudha who had introduced Rahul to alcohol when he first came to visit her in college. This was done so in a harmless manner, the way siblings conspire mischievous deeds together, without the knowledge of strict parents. Rahul was still in school then and had pronounced the drink as revolting. When she came home from college during holidays, Sudha and Rahul would often drink and smoke clandestinely in her room after their parents went to bed. “She (Sudha) felt a new bond with her brother, a sense, after years of regarding him as just a kid, that they were finally friends” (129). Although she is the elder sibling, it is apparent that Sudha who suffers from an inferiority complex, looks up to her younger brother, striving to please him and craved his approval. This complex is common in being a second generation diaspora, striving to fit in and also magnified by parents who set such high standards for their children that no amount of effort seems to be enough.

> Her father had no patience for failure, for indulgences. He never let his children forget that there had been no one to help him as he helped them, so that no matter how well Sudha did, she felt that her good fortune had been handed to her, not earned (140).

As Rahul grew up, Sudha nervously noticed a dependency towards alcohol in him. Whenever she came home for holidays, Rahul would expect her to buy alcoholic drinks by the case as he was not yet old enough to purchase the same. Although Sudha did not feel any desire to drink, she submitted to his demands as she did not want to disappoint him and because she did not like to see any disapproval in his eyes. Initially, she failed to regard his addiction seriously and assumed that he was simply going through a rebellious phase as she too had. Later, when Rahul became an alcoholic, Sudha is filled with guilt as she recalls how she was the one who had first introduced him to alcohol and had provided it whenever either of them came home from holidays during the

early years. The magnitude of Sudha's guilt is revealed by the fact that she hides her misapprehensions from her parents and husband. Sudha seems to blame herself unreasonably and excessively, for all her brother's problems. It does not matter that Rahul, who knew that Sudha doted on him and would do anything for him, had taken advantage of her devotion. It is irrelevant to her that considering Rahul's nature, he would have procured alcohol one way or the other if not from her, then from someone else. This guilt is an inner demon which Sudha struggles with throughout the entire story and it became intensified because she represses her fears and did not confide in anyone. Her secrecy ends up damaging her marriage with her husband Roger as he understandably feels betrayed that she could not confide in him about the severity of her brother's problems.

Rahul had been born at a time when his parents were financially better off and were well settled by the time he arrived. He also had the good fortune of having a devoted elder sister who looked after the social needs his parents overlooked. Sudha had not had the same privilege. Being an intelligent as well as good looking boy, Rahul had grown up pampered and indulged by everyone around him, especially by his family. Unfortunately, instead of appreciating his advantages, Rahul became spoilt and rebellious. He dropped out of college and began living in his parents' home. At a young age, Rahul was once caught for reckless driving in an inebriated state. He also ruins Sudha's wedding reception by engaging in a public scuffle with his father while raising a toast in a drunken stupor. He is rude and sullen towards Sudha and his parents and has no regard for the feelings of other people. Towards the end, at the age of twenty two, Rahul elopes with Elena, a thirty year old single mother, but not before stealing his mother's gold jewellery and other treasured items.

Though often frustrated, Sudha is always forgiving of Rahul's irresponsible and thoughtless actions. Her patience can only be understood in view of the guilt she harbours in her psyche. Even though she is an educated and intelligent woman, Sudha lets herself be played the fool when it concerns Rahul. He is always on her mind even after he disappears with Elena.

> Sudha thought of Rahul often during her pregnancy, invaded by memories and dreams of their childhood, recalling the existence that had produced them both, an experience that was both within her and behind her and that Roger would never understand (159).

Sudha receives a letter from Rahul after a year passed by without any word from him. She and Roger were now proud parents to baby Neel. Without rereading the letter or bothering to consult with Roger, she impulsively invites him to visit her. Rahul arrives and appears to be the perfect houseguest for a couple of days. He tells Sudha that he is in rehab and also apologises for his behaviour at her wedding. When everything seemed to be going perfect, he ends up ruining it by getting drunk while babysitting Neel on the last night of his visit. Rahul had offered to babysit and had insisted that Sudha and Roger have a night out by themselves. The couple returns to find the house in disarray and baby Neel in the bathtub by himself, in danger of tipping over and drowning himself without adult supervision. Rahul was ultimately discovered in Roger's study, passed out and drunk. He had found the liquor that Sudha had hidden away, stashed inside a chest meant for sweaters. Sudha is hysterical and Roger is understandably furious. It is only at this point, that Sudha confesses the severity and history with regard to her brother's alcoholic problem. Roger had always been under the impression that Rahul had simply gotten a little carried away on a few occasions. Sudha had never corrected his

misassumption. Roger feels betrayed and tells Sudha he would have never lied to her the way she had.

Sudha's tormented thoughts keeps her awake that night. She ponders over the irreparable estrangement with her brother and the husband who no longer trusts her. She thinks of her parents who continues to love Rahul although he had not bothered to get in touch with them ever since he ran away from home. "They were incapable of shutting him out. But Roger was capable, and Sudha realized, as the wakeful night passed, that she was capable too" (171). The next morning, before Roger woke up, Sudha forces Rahul to leave. He apologises for the previous night and tells her that his flight isn't until evening. For the first time, Sudha is firm and refuses to be moved. She calls a taxi while Rahul packs. After his departure, though emotionally drained, Sudha attends to the cries of her baby, Neel.

It is important to note that Sudha had been repressing her feelings of guilt her entire life. She tormented herself with self blame and refuses to confide to anyone about her fears. In all this time, she tolerated and longed to be reunited with Rahul, despite his behaviour; protecting him even from her own husband by not tarnishing his image. It was only after she finally confessed to Roger that she could resolve to remove him from her life. This overnight change of attitude appears to be cathartic in nature; a moving forward which came about only after articulating her repressed emotions.

"Nobody's business" explores the idiosyncrasies and eccentricities of people. There are basically two main characters; Sang and Paul, in this story. Sang is a Bengali Diaspora and her roommate Paul is an American student. In this story, Paul is secretly obsessed with Sang, who is a pretty girl, in love with a man called Farouk from Cairo, Egypt. Sang ultimately discovers that Faurok

is cheating on her and she escapes to London with a shattered heart. Sang also constantly receives phone calls from unknown Indian suitors, interested in marrying her. Sang's explanation for this is that her traditional Bengali parents desperately wants her to be married as she is already thirty, smart, and single.

Paul is an American living in his own country and is also pursuing a Ph.D. in English Literature at Harvard University. He is attracted to Sang from the first day he met her when she had responded in reference to a housemate advertisement which himself and another roommate, Heather, had placed in the local paper. Paul observes Sang's habits and attempts to be physically near her, so much so, that he actually moves to the kitchen area as he noticed that Sang was most inclined to head there whenever she came out of her room. "He liked studying in her fleeting company" (181). When Sang's boyfriend Farouk visits, Paul is acutely aware of the couple's weekly routine. Throughout the story however, Paul nurses his obsession secretly and does not verbally express his feelings to his pretty roommate or anyone else.

At first, Paul simply appears to be a timid and socially inept fellow, but harmless enough otherwise. As the story progresses however, his behaviour becomes increasingly bizarre and reveals that he suffers from a serious personality disorder. The first sign was when one day, Sang asked his opinion about a colour while she was painting her new room. Paul could not think of anything to say then. Several hours later, during the evening of that same day, as Sang stepped inside the house, Paul immediately uttered "Black Raspberry", without any preliminary conversation. He had picked up the conversation from where they had left it several hours earlier, expecting Sang to know what he was referring to. Sang merely found him amusing then. Paul does not have much of a life outside of his studies. He had previously appeared his Ph.D. oral exams and failed. "He had failed not because he wasn't prepared but because

his mind had betrayed him that bright May morning... He felt himself go crimson. It was the nightmare he had been having for months before the exam" (182). He explains to Sang in detail about the usual standard pattern of the oral exams, neglecting to mention that he had already appeared and failed. Paul seems to have become increasingly neurotic as he is left alone in the apartment most of the time. Being home always, Paul usually answers the telephone which is often for Sang. One day, a hopeful suitor called for Sang and on being informed that she was unavailable, dejectedly inquired whether Paul was her boyfriend. "The mere possibility, articulated by a stranger, jolted him" (183). Though Paul replied in the negative, the call troubled him the entire day. "Nevertheless, for the rest of the day he felt burdened by the question, worried that he's transgressed somehow simply by answering the phone" (183).

It becomes obvious that Paul suffers from a personality disorder as he unwittingly started living Sang's life by deliberately getting himself involved in her affairs. One day, an unknown woman named Deidre calls for Sang while the latter was out. As usual, Paul answers the telephone and ends up having a strange conversation with her. The woman claimed to be Farouk's lover and enquires whether Farouk and Sang were cousins as this was apparently what she had been informed. Paul makes it his business to find out the truth and in a series of events, makes Sang listen to his pre planned telephone conversation with Deidre as Sang had not believed him. Paul's curiosity about Deidre is normal. What is strange is that he initially tells nothing to Sang except that a woman named Deidre had called for her. He did not mention that this woman had called not once but four times, asking Paul the strangest of questions about Sang and Farouk. Despite all the troubling information, Paul gives Sang no inkling about his long conservations with Deidre over the telephone while Sang was away. He seems to have deluded himself into imagining that Deidre, a stranger whom he had never met, had become a friend. Paul behaves protective

towards Deidre by withholding information to Sang, as if he had to bear Deidre's confidences. Paul remains silent when Sang concludes that Deidre may simply have been a telemarketer. It was only after she confronts him after speaking to Farouk that he admits Deidre had called more than once and that she had been crying. When an exasperated Sang marched up to him, demanding why he had not told her any of this information before, Paul flinches, expecting her to hit him. His guilty behaviour causes Sang to shout at him.

After receiving the new information from Paul, Farouk confronts Deidre who denies everything. Sang accuses Paul of concocting the entire story to get her attention and calls him a liar. It was at this point that Paul actually goes to the trouble of purchasing an extra phone, an adapter, an extra jack and locates Deidre's number. He repeatedly calls Deidre until she has no choice but to agree to speak to him. Determined on vindicating himself, Paul makes Sang listen on the other telephone line while he speaks to Deidre who apologises to Paul and confirms everything he had previously said. A devastated Sang confronts Farouk at his apartment along with Paul who accompanies her. The confrontation becomes out of hand with Sang being hysterical and the two men engage in a scuffle in the public hallway. A policeman finally arrives to intervene. Sang leaves the apartment she shares with Paul and Heather soon after and goes to live with her sister in London.

All the characters in this story have certain quirks and peculiarities. However, Paul, the Ph.D. student from Harvard stands out from all the rest. The fact that he is pursuing a Ph.D. from one of the most prestigious universities proves that Paul is an intelligent person, at least academically. When it comes to social matters however, he undergoes a personality change and behaves irrational, immature and inept. Paul does not realise or think about

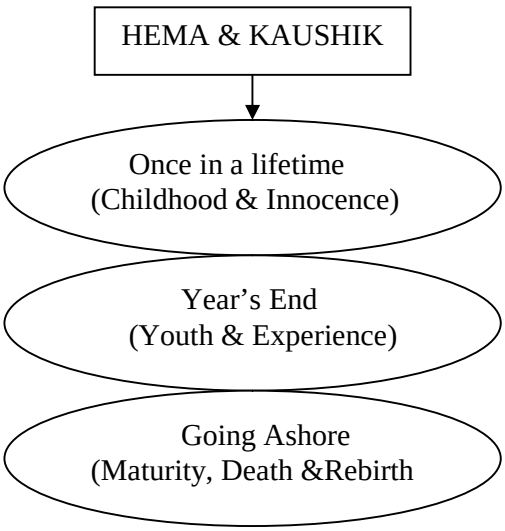
the consequences of his actions. He seems to want to project another image of himself which is completely different from reality. He pretends that he has never taken the Ph.D. exams before and feels comfortable building a friendship with Deidre, someone who does not know him and has never met him. He takes a lot of trouble to vindicate himself when Sang calls him a liar, neglecting the fact that he had actually deceived her so many times before. Paul does not see himself as the insecure and neurotic person he really is. Psychology has a theory for such people. Carl Roger's self theory states that the concept of a person's self image are sometimes based more on personal needs rather than reality. An insecure person may often create a false image of himself; an ideal self i.e., the kind of person he or she would like to be.

> The most unfortunate results in the development of personality occur in cases where an individual develops some false image. This false image is sometimes so strong that even indisputable reality is vehemently denied. Inconsistency between one's actual image and a false self image, may then lead to abnormality in one's behaviour (Mangal 411).

Paul is one of the few non diaspora figures in Lahiri's writings who seem to struggle with all the self image issues that are usually inherent in diasporic figures. This has to do with Paul's feeling of self doubt which has led to an unconscious personality disorder.

The second part of *Unaccustomed Earth* serves as a trilogy, containing three short stories; "Once in a Lifetime", "Year's End" and "Going Ashore". Unlike the first half of the book, these three stories are all interrelated, tracing the lives of it protagonists, Hema and Kaushik. Part two of this collection is thus, aptly titled, "Hema and Kaushik". The opening story, "Once in a

Lifetime" is touchingly narrated by an adolescent Hema. The second story, "Year's End" is narrated by Kaushik. Finally, the third and final ending to this remarkable trilogy is narrated by an omniscient narrator, who may be the writer herself. The diagram below indicates how this trilogy of stories is interrelated and specifies the themes that each tale revolves around.



"Once in a Lifetime", is narrated in a letter like confessionional manner by thirteen year old Hema who is writing to sixteen year old Kaushik. The story reads like a glimpse of someone's intimate memory. The tale opens with Hema saying, "I had seen you before, too many times to count, but a farewell that my family threw for yours, at our house in Inman Square, is when I begin to recall your presence in my life" (*UE* 233). She goes on to recall how Kaushik's family decided to re immigrate back to the United States after returning to India in 1974. Hema's family had thrown a farewell party for them then; this is the last memory Hema has of Kashik. At that time, Hema had been six and Kaushik, nine years old. This candid story explores the powerful influence that the psyche, specifically memory, has over a person's behaviour. This may either be conscious or unconscious.

Hema's parents agree to host Kaushik's family until they find a place of their own, when the latter re immigrates back to the United States. She is now thirteen years old. At first, Hema is resentful for being made to give up her room to Kaushik. Her feelings changes when she meets Kaushik as she develops a secret schoolgirl crush on him. When Kaushik's family left for India years ago, a number of their household items including Kaushik's clothes had been handed over to Hema. She had disliked the unattractive boyish clothes which her mother forced her to wear and had developed an unconscious aversion to Kaushik, as if his hand me downs personified him. "One winter I had to wear your coat, which I hated so much that it caused me to hate you as a result" (226). Hema's parents had fond memories of Kaushik's parents, Dr. Chaudary and Parul and often reminisced about the past before they had left for India.

Time has a way of changing people and the reunion with the Choudarys turn out to be very different from what Hema's family had imagined. Hema's resentment disappeared and she instantly developed a crush on him. Hema had held the image of Kaushik's memory so strongly that reality surprises her. "Until your return I'd thought of you as a boy of eight or nine, frozen in time, the size of the clothes I'd inherited" (228). Her surprise is evidently felt in the lines, "I had not expected you to be handsome" (232). Likewise, Hema's parents find that their long lost friends have not stayed frozen in time as in memory. Ironically, Dr. Choudary and Parul from India have become more modern and westernized while living in India. "Bombay had made them (Kaushik's parents) more American than Cambridge had" (235). There were comments regarding Parul's stylish haircut, their drinking alcohol and other extravagant lifestyle habits. "My parents felt slighted by your parents' extravagant visions, ashamed of the modest home we owned" (245). Hema's

parents realised that they no longer had anything in common with the Choudarys, other than sharing a past.

It was not long before Hema's parents began to long for their houseguests to leave although they continued to play the part of gracious hosts. Hema, who was sleeping in her parents' room listened to her mother complain to her father every night. Hema was the only one who did not mind their guests. Soon, her parents no longer went the extra mile to entertain their guests and went on with their normal weekly routine while Kaushik's family also went on with theirs. "Somewhere, in that cramped house, a line was drawn between our two families" (245). One day, snow began to fall heavily, forcing everyone to stay indoors. This brought the two families together, at least for a day. In a cheerful mood, Hema's mother cooked a big pot of khichuri and Parul, who rarely cooked, prepared her long promised English trifle. That night, Hema's father, who was a teetotaller, joined the Choudarys for a bit of their customary Johnnie Walker and the two pair of couples reminisced about the past. "They spoke of how young you and I had been, how much younger they had all been" (248). Once again, memories of the past brought them together, if only for a short while.

Kaushik and his parents ultimately purchases a house in a posh locality and moves out after a month's stay with Hema's family. Before leaving, Kaushik confessed to Hema that his mother was dying of cancer and that was the reason why his family had relocated back to the United States. Their return was to get away from everyone and give his mother the privacy she desired. When Hema's parents finally learned the news, they went to visit Parul at the hospital. Hema remained loyal to Kaushik by not revealing what Kaushik had previously told her about his mother. Kaushik's family gradually disappears from Hema's life soon after they moved out. "Our parents were only

acquaintances by then. Having gone separate ways after the weeks of forced intimacy" (95).

This tale explores the control that memory has over a person's psyche. Hema has been living with the memory of nine year old Kaushik. Her remembrance is further strengthened by the clothes which he had once worn when at that tender age. Though she is an intelligent thirteen year old girl, it does not occur to her that Kaushik would be growing up, maturing as she has been over the years. She might be aware of it in theory but the image of nine year old Kaushik in her psyche is so strong that it overshadows reality. She is therefore, startled to see a grown up Kaushik. Similarly, Hema's parents cherish the past with such fondness that they are disappointed with reality. Dr. Choudary and Parul appear to be decent people and are good houseguests. Hema's mother, who is a conservative woman in comparism, complains about her friend Parul's "stylish" haircut, clothes and supposedly frivolous habits. It is possible that she may actually be upset not so much because of Parul's new sartorial sense but because her friend had evolved from the memory of her which she cherished. "Once in a Lifetime" explores the powerful influence which the psyche, specifically memory, wields over a person's behaviour. This may either be conscious or unconscious.

"Year's End" is also related in the same narrative style as "Once in a Lifetime". This time, the narrative is by twenty one year old Kaushik, who is now in college. Unlike the first story, this tale is not entirely for the benefit of Hema, although Kaushik does address Hema directly in parts. Kaushik's mother has passed away and he recounts the painful and emotional journey which himself and his father had undergone after his mother's demise. His father was now in Calcutta, visiting Kaushik's grandparents.

Kaushik begins the tale by talking about his father's remarriage to a young Indian woman named Chritra. This woman was a widow and has two small daughters. She was also twenty years younger than Kaushik's father, Dr Choudary. Kaushik is disturbingly calm when his father rings to tell some some news at his college dormitory at Swarthmore, America. When his father tentatively warns him that he might find the news upsetting, Kaushik's immediate thought was whether one of his grandparents had passed away. Dr. Choudary instantly clarifies that they are fine and tells Kaushik about Chitra. They were already married in a small ceremony and this new family was coming to live with him in Massachusetts. His father's speech is cautious and sounds rehearsed. Although Kaushik does not ask or say anything, Dr. Choudary implores him to understand his decision to remarry.

> It was clear to me that he had prepared himself for my outrage-harsh words, accusations, the slamming down of the phone. But no turbulent emotion passed through me as he spoke, only a diluted version of the nauseating sensation that had taken hold the day in Bombay that I learned my mother was dying, a sensation that had dropped anchor in me and never fully left (254).

Although three years has already passed since his mother's demise, it is evident that Kaushik who is an only son, is still silently grieving. As distressed as he is by his father's news, Kaushik bottles his emotions and does not say anything. Kaushik is angry when his father defensively mentions, without his asking, that the marriage had been arranged by relatives. Kaushik says, "This remark upset me more than anything my father had said so far. My father was not a malleable man, and I knew that no one would have dared to find him a new wife unless he had requested it" (255). As Dr. Choudary tries to explain his many reasons to his son, who is silent on the other end, Kaushik recalls his

parents' loving marriage. When his father asks whether Chitra's little daughters could stay in his old room in Massachusetts, Kaushik nonchalantly replies that it is fine with him. The two men end the conversation politely. Kaushik returns to his room where his girlfriend Jessica is waiting for him. As intimate as their relationship is, Kaushik had never told her of his family, his mother's death and other important information which one would normally tell a person with whom one is in a relationship with. However, that morning, the phone call affected him so much that Kaushik recounts, "That morning, after crying briefly over her body, I did" (256). Kaushik seems to suffer from a sense of emotional detachment as well as repression. He shuts Jessica from his life soon after and the relationship ends abruptly.

Kaushik meets Chitra and her daughters, Rupa and Piu who are seven and ten years old respectively, when he goes home during the Christmas holidays. He cannot help mentally making unfair comparisms between his late mother and his new stepmother. While his mother had been sophisticated and cultured, Chitra could barely speak English and was a simple and conservative, small town village woman. Being thirty five, Chitra was closer to his age than his father's and wore vermillion in her hair, something his mother had never done. Kaushik feels increasingly bitter as Chitra solicitously served him and his father lunch, in the old fashioned ceremonious manner. Still, he does not say or do anything to betray his rioting emotions.

> I was suddenly sickened by her, by the sight of her standing in the kitchen. I had no memories of my mother cooking there, but the space still retained her presence more than any other part of the house. The jade and spider plants she had watered were still thriving on the windowsill, the orange and white sunburst clock she'd so loved the design of, with its quivering second hand, still

> marking the time on the wall. Though she had rarely done the dishes, though it was in fact I who had mostly done the dishes in those days, I imagined her hands on the taps of the sink, her slim form pressed against the counter (263).

Kaushik's late mother Parul is still gloriously alive in his world and he has mental images of her around the house. In spite of his mounting distress, Kaushik goes about behaving nonchalant and makes casual conversation with his father. After dinner, he is irritated when he learns that his father had hidden the bottle of Johnnie Walker because he did not want to alarm his new bride who was "old fashioned". The two of them and his late mother had always enjoyed a glass of Johnnie Walker after their meals. "I wanted to ask my father what on earth had possessed him to marry an old fashioned girl half his age. Instead I said, taking the bottle from his hand, "I hope it's all right if I alarm her' " (264). Everything about Chitra seemed to irk him, even the sight of Chitra brushing her long cascading hair one afternoon.

> The sight of it repulsed me; I could not help thinking of the hair that had fallen out in clumps from my mother's head, the awful wig she'd worn even in the hospital, until the day she died, that artificial part of her more healthy looking than anything else (276).

Aside from Dr. Choudary and Chitra, Kaushik feels no resentment against Rupa and Piu, his new step sisters. He is taken aback when his father asks him to pick up a Christams tree the next day for the girls' benefit. They had not celebrated the holidays after his mothers' demise. Clearly, Kaushik is still not yet ready to move on. In Bombay, his mother used to throw lavish Christmas parties and bring everything alive. She would often

speak fondly about Christmas in Cambridge, and reminisce about Hema's family and other friends left behind in America. The Choudarys had put up at Hema's place during the initial stages of Parul's illness when the disease had not yet progressed so far. Kaushik therefore associated Hema with his last happy memories of his late mother, before cancer had ravaged her body completely. Because of this, a strong connection is forged between them even though they are physically apart.

The only time that Kaushik's resentment is revealed is when his father suggests that he might take his step sisters along while buying the tree. Kaushik sarcastically replied whether he was expected to play with the little girls who were barely half his age. It is important to note that this caustic remark is not meant towards the girls but is a displacement of his bitterness against his father who has moved on while he is still struggling.

> In displacement there is a shift of emotion or symbolic meaning from a person or object towards which it was originally directed to another person or object. Often displacement involveds difficult emotions, such as hostility and anxiety (Coleman 126).

Another significant moment, though unconscious, is when Dr. Choudary, in noticing that Kaushik was drinking too much, tells him, "Easy" *(UE* 266). Kaushik replies, "Not easy...it's not easy for me" (266). Kaushik looks at his reflection as he says this and seems to be referring to something other than his drinking. The following day, Kaushik offers to take along the girls on his trip to Dunkin' Doughnuts to get coffee as there was none in the house. He is kind to them, helping them to choose amongst the variety of doughnuts and like a big brother, lifts little Piu up so that she could get a better view. He also teaches them on how to talk to people and advises them not to be

so shy. Kaushik compassionately reassures their fears about settling in a new school and gives them a dollar each to buy a doughnut to takeaway. His sense of empathy with his stepsisters is justified in the following lines.

> Like them I had lost a parent and was now being asked to accept a replacement. I wondered how well they remembered their father; Piu would only have been five at that time...I was lucky, compared to Rupa and Piu, having had my mother for as long as I did. The knowledge of death seemed present in both sisters- it was something about the way they carried themselves, something that had broken too soon and had not mended, marking them in spite of their light heartedness (272).

Kaushik had also woken up one night to the sound of Piu screaming from a nightmare and asking for her "Baba" again and again. Dr. Choudary arranges a trip to Disney World after Christmas and invites Kaushik to join but the latter refuses, making up an excuse about there being no winter holidays in his college. Rupa and Piu were devastated when they learned that Kaushik would not be joining them in Disney World.

> I sensed that they (Rupa and Piu) needed me to guard them, as I needed them, from the growing, incontrovertible fact that Chitra and my father now formed a couple. My presence was proof that my mother had once existed, just as they represented the physical legacy of their dead father (282).

Kaushik's sense of solidarity with his stepsisters is understandable. It is therefore unfortunate that the story ends on an ironic note. A few days before New Years' Eve, Dr. Choudary and Chitra goes out, leaving the girls under

Kaushik's care. It is the first time that the new couple are going out alone. Kaushik and the girls watch television in perfect camaraderie and he takes them out for pizza too. Everything was going smoothly until they returned home and Kaushik leaves them alone for a while to speak on the phone. He returns to find them in his old room, innocently playing with photographs of his late mother. Kaushik's repressed emotions and tension gives way and all his pent up bitterness were unleashed on his oblivious stepsisters. In a fit of emotion, he shook Rupa forcefully, demanding to know where they had found the pictures. The little girls begin to cry and tremble while an uncontrollable Kaushik rants about how his late mother was so much more beautiful and sophisticated than theirs; how their pitiable mother was just a servant, brought to look after the needs of his father and that this was the only reason they were in America. After he finished saying such harsh and unforgivable words, the girls remained quiet, staring down at the carpet, motionless and not saying a word.

Kaushik then packs his clothes and hastily leaves the house. His actions seem spontaneous but he realized that his subconscious had been thinking of running away for days. He keeps driving aimlessly, stopping now and then at motels, and finally reaches the Canadian border. He felt a sense of freedom in travelling alone for the first time. "It was like being dead, my escape allowing me to taste that tremendous power my mother possessed forever" (290). A telephonic conversation with his weary father made him realise that the girls had not revealed his unforgiveable behaviour. Dr. Choudary and Chitra had returned home to find the girls asleep and Kaushik missing and had assumed that he had run away in the middle of the night.

Life went on and shortly after, Kaushik graduated from college. His father, Chitra and the girls came to attend his Commencement ceremony. Rupa and Piu were polite to him but behaved like strangers. The fateful night was

never mentioned, nor acknowledged. Kaushik knew that they had not revealed anything and "that it would remain between the three of us, that in their silence they continued both to protect and to punish me" (293). Kaushik's repression of his emotions moulds the course of his life which unfolds in the final story. His explosion towards his stepsisters is an example of psychological projection, whereby his anger is actually directed towards his father and Chitra. In his inability to express his anger, Kaushik ends up projecting his inner rage towards Rupa and Piu.

"Going Ashore" is the final story in this magnificent trilogy which explores the psychological dimension of relationship that exists between Hema and Kaushik. The two are not involved in any physical or emotional relationship in any manner, be it as friends, mere acquaintance or lovers. However, there is a psychological relationship which moves across the boundaries of time and space. Though perhaps subconscious, their lives are irrevocably interlinked. Kaushik thinks of Hema during his bittersweet moments of nostalgia about his beloved late mother. He recalled how Hema had then been not much older than Rupa and how he had caused her to cry when he told her about his mother's illness. It is significant that memories of Hema have softened him towards her. In "Year's End", Kaushik addresses Hema as he reminisces, "I had hated every day I spent under your parents' roof, but now I thought back to that time with nostalgia. Though we didn't belong there, it was the last place that had felt like a home" (291).

"Going Ashore" introduces us to thirty seven year old Hema who is now a professor at Wellesly college. She is bitter over her failed relationship with a married man named Julian and on the rebound, is engaged to Navin, a man whom she does not love but who her parents approve of. Being a professor, Hema makes an excuse about needing to be in Rome for work related reasons

and escapes to Italy for a holiday by herself, just before getting married. This is unusual behaviour for an engaged woman and her action reveals her troubled state of mind. Kaushik, on the other hand, is forty years old and has had a string of failed relationships. He is now an established and wandering photo journalist who has worked on the war zones of Israel, Guatemala, Mexico, Africa and various other conflict areas. He has never been able to settle in a particular place for long as he "never fully trusted the places he'd lived, never turned to them for refuge" (309). Kaushik's choice of profession also reflects his longing for his late mother, though he may not realise it. In the previous story "Year's End", which twenty one year old Kaushik narrates, his younger self states with regard to his photography when his mother was alive;

> There were times my mother came down and kept me company, sitting quietly in the blackness as I struggled to load film onto the developing reel. Together we would breathe in the chemical smells, their corrosiveness, from which my hands were protected by rubber gloves, nothing compared to what was taking place inside her body. She would keep time for me with her watch, familiarizing herself with the process enough to be able to tell me when to pour the series of fluids in and out of the processing tank, both of us knowing that I'd have to buy a timer, eventually (278).

The above lines justify the likely possibility that Parul is still alive in her son's world; persistently alive by mode of memory. Kaushik has distant ties with his father and adopted family. He had last been in a relationship with a woman named Franca in Milan and the two had lived together. However, the relationship came to a bitter end as Kaushik was unable to commit to her. "She had not taken hold of him; he could see now that that was the problem" (306).

He had then left Milan for Rome, a city which reminded him of his late mother as they had come here for a holiday shortly after her illness was diagnosed. His father and Chitra had visited him in Rome as well but they had left no dent on the place as his mother had. “He never thought of their presence on the streets of Rome as he continued to think, now and again, of his mother’s” (307). The memory of his late mother seems to be stronger for Kaushik than any memory of a living, breathing, human being.

Fate brings Kaushik and Hema together as both of them shows up at a mutual friend, Edo’s place. The two had last met and spoken as children when Kaushik’s family were houseguests of Hema’s parents many years ago in America. But the time apart did not matter and the two became intimate immediately. On recognizing the Indian woman as Hema, Kaushik states, “That her face was the one he’d known” (310). Hema also feels that “He looks the same to her...it was as if no time had passed” (311). This shows the splendid strength of the human psyche. Hema follows Kaushik to his apartment in Rome and the two becomes lovers, simply continuing the relationship from where they left off decades ago.

> It was unquestioned that they would not part yet, unquestioned that though they had not seen or thought of each other in decades, not sought each other out, something precious had been stumbled upon, a new born connection that could not be left unattended, that demanded every particle of their care (311).

Hema tells Kaushik about her life and her impending marriage to Navin. When Kaushik questions her decision to marry a man she does not love, she replies that she had though it might fix things. Hema feels that Kaushik understands her as no one else had ever done. She is also gloriously aware that

“she was the first person he’d ever slept with who’d known his mother, who was able to remember her as he did” (311). This shared knowledge brought them closer together. As much as Hema loved Kaushik, she understood his nature even better. She braced herself not to expect anything permanent from their relationship. On the last day of her stay in Italy, Kaushik asks Hema not to marry Navin and follow him to Hong Kong instead. Hema is overjoyed but feels torn at the same time. “A piece of her was elated. But she was also struck by his selfishness, by the fact that he was telling her what to do. Unlike Navin, he was not offering to come to her” (321). Hema realises that Kaushik may never want to marry and she tells him that she didn’t want to change him or one day, be accused of trying to pin him down. Kaushik accuses her of being a coward and bitter words are exchanged. Hema suggests that they could still continue seeing each other but Kaushik was not interested in any other arrangement. She begins to cry as she knew that he would never forgive her for refusing his offer. She knew from experience how cold and aloof Kaushik could become. Even if she were to change her mind and accept his proposal, it was too late as he had already retracted it. She did not expect to see him again but he surprises her by showing up at her hotel the next morning and driving her to the airport. In the end, they both go back to their separate lives in spite of loving each other desperately. Hema leaves for India to get married and Kaushik sets off for Hong Kong, to take up a new job as a photo editor for an international newsmagazine. On his route to Hong Kong, Kaushik stops at Thailand.

On boarding the plane, Hema realises that her bangle, which he never took off, is missing. It was a gift from her grandmother and something she’d worn since she was ten. Kaushik had also commented on remembering her bangle from the past during their first night in Italy after meeting at Edo’s place. Hema is distressed over her missing bangle. Though she realises that

other jewellery would make up for the missing bangle during the course of her wedding, “And yet she felt that she had left a piece of her body behind” (324). There is a deep psychological significance in Hema’s distress over her missing bangle. No doubt, the bangle has sentimental value but Hema is also projecting her devastation over losing Kaushik on the missing bangle. The bangle is symbolic of Hema leaving a vital piece of herself in Rome. She had left her heart with Kaushik.

Kaushik stops at a small resort, a little north of Khao Lak before going to Hong Kong. His anger dissolved by then, Kaushik regrets his harshness towards Hema and wonders whether he might have sounded half hearted in his offer. He realises that he does not want to lose her. “She was the only person he’d met in his adult life who had any understanding of his past, the only woman he wanted to remain connected to” (326). The next day, Kaushik goes out to a cove on a rented boat with his friendly neighbour, Henrik. His neighbour speaks about the tremors the night before, which Kaushik is oblivious about. For a moment, as Kaushik watches Henrik swim in the water, he imagines his mother swimming alongside his neighbour. “He wanted to swim to the cove as Henrik had, to show his mother he was not afraid” (331). In a trance like state, Kaushik plunges into the warm and welcoming sea.

Until this point, this story is presented by an omniscient narrator, as opposed to the previous two stories, “Once in a Lifetime” and “Going Ashore”. Lahiri, skilfully introduces a break in narration with Hema taking over as narrator in the last portion of the story, like a coda. After parting, Hema is unable to forget Kaushik and searches for information about him on his website. Then on television, she sees images of the Tsunami and how Thailand had been badly hit. In February, she learns of Kaushik’s death through an obituary in the newspaper and mourns for him privately. “By then I needed no

proof of your absence from the world; I felt it as plainly and implacably as the cells that were gathering and shaping themselves in my body" (333). She is now married and pregnant with Navin's child and at the same time, also mourning Kaushik's death. This is symbolic of the cycle of life; creation, life and death. Hema almost wishes that her unborn baby belonged to Kaushik but says, "We had been careful, and you had left nothing behind" (333). Unknown to Hema, she will forever carry Kaushik's memory in her psyche, just as Kaushik had carried his mother's remembrance until his death. The story ends here and we are left to wonder about Hema's life.

This trilogy of stories is extremely psychological in nature. The lives of Hema and Kaushik have physically coincided only twice; once as little children for a month and decades later, as middle aged adults in Italy for a brief period. Kaushik passes away shortly after their second meeting. It is remarkable that a brief childhood encounter could last for a lifetime, up till middle age and in Hema's case, perhaps for a lifetime. This is an intense tale about two lost souls whose lives are interlinked through a psychological bond. This dazzling trilogy is not just about Hema and Kaushik but also explores the psychological relationship that Kaushik continues to share with his late mother, who remains alive in his psyche, till the final moment of his tragic life. Lahiri is a master of psychological accuracy and this story showcases her emotional wisdom.

Jhumpa Lahiri's remarkable novel, *The Namesake*, made its debut in 2003 and instantly became an international bestseller. This is a poignant cross cultural story of a Hindu Bengali family in America and their quest towards self realisation and inner acceptance. In this literary marvel, Lahiri takes us on the Ganguli family's emotional journey from conservative and tradition bound Calcutta to a suburban Boston. Lahiri is herself a second generation Diasporic Indian American writer and with this background, the author skilfully depicts

with honesty and painful accuracy, the trauma faced by immigrant Diasporas. A particular feature which is distinct in this novel is the refusal to resort to clichés and comic representations that diasporic characters are often subjected to. Instead, the protagonist and other characters are treated with fine sensitivity, irony and dignity. Lahiri does not generalise or indulge in stereotypes and therefore, her characters although fictional, become real and humane.

Two important figures in this novel are the son Gogol, who is the main protagonist and his father, Ashoke Ganguli, who may be considered the hero of the novel. Although Ashoke is an immigrant himself, he is the only diasporic character who has achieved a sense of self acceptance and is not an agonised or lost soul, as opposed to the rest of his family. This self assurance is intricately linked with the title of the book. Ashoke is an engineering student from MIIT and after an arranged marriage in Calcutta, embarks on a brave new life in America, together with his young bride Ashima Ganguli. It is during the end of the nineteen sixties when the young couple arrives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The beginning chapter of this delightful novel begins with Ashima Ganguli in an advanced stage of pregnancy and soon thereafter, gives birth to their first born son Gogol, who as previously stated, is the main protagonist. The fine and simplistic narration employed by Lahiri underlies the complex and problematic issues that constantly battles in the psyche of the protagonist and other diasporic characters. The fact that the story begins with Ashima's pregnancy may be symbolic and has a psychoanalytic interpretation. "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy- a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts" (*TN* 49). Except for Ashoke, all the characters are 'pregnant', metaphorical for their

eternal quest towards a realisation for the discovery of the 'self', which forever eludes them.

The naming of Gogol is the result of a series of unforeseen incidents. According to their custom, Ashima's octogenarian grandmother in India was to name the first born. Without disclosing the name to anyone, the old woman had mailed a letter containing one name for a girl and one for a boy. Expecting to receive the letter any day, Ashoke and Ashima had ignored the hospital forms which required detailed particulars for their child's birth certificate. "In India, parents take their time. It wasn't unusual for years to pass before the right name, the best possible name, was determined" (25). As fate would have designed it, the letter never arrives and Ashima's grandmother does not remember the name in her old age. The new parents are pressed to name their infant as they belatedly learn that in America, hospitals cannot release babies without a birth certificate. And so, it came to be that Gogol was named after the celebrated Russian literary figure Nikolai Gogol, whom his father has met only in books.

Ashoke's maturity and understanding of life is the result of a train accident which nearly took his life when he was a young man at the age of twenty two. Ever since the incident, he gratefully views his existence as a second chance at life. This poignant incident beautifully links the overall plot of the novel. Ashoke had always been a great lover of books and he especially enjoyed the genre of Russian literature. On that fateful journey many years ago, Ashoke was travelling to his grandparents' house in Jamshedpur. His grandfather was the person who had ignited Ashoke's special affinity towards Russian writers. Ashoke had been reading the story, "The Overcoat", by Nikolai Gogol, his favourite Russian writer during the early hours of 20 October, 1961, when the accident occurred. He had been awake reading instead

of retiring to his berth like the rest of the passengers in his compartment. Many people in the train perished but Ashoke miraculously survived. He was rescued from the wreckage when the crumpled wad of a single page from his book fell from his clutched fingers and caught the attention of a rescue worker.

> He cannot thank the book; the book has perished, as he nearly did, in scattered pieces, in the early hours of an October day, in a field 209 kilometres from Calcutta. Instead of thanking God he thanks Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life (21).

Ashoke feels a sense of gratitude to Nikolai Gogol, a man whom he has never met or spoken to in real life. His only link to this writer is by knowing a name and writings to testify to the name. But this seems to be enough for Ashoke. “Instead of thanking God, he thanks Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life” (21). Thus, when the hospital authorities insist that a name be inserted on their baby’s certificate, Ashoke and Ashima decides to enter the pet name “Gogol”, as a temporary means in order to get their baby released from the hospital. “Besides, it’s only a pet name, not to be taken seriously, simply something to put on the certificate for now to release them from the hospital” (29). Against all odds, fate had designed for Gogol to be named as such and the protagonist’s story is inexplicably connected with his name. This is a story about love, family, relationships, solitude and the discovery of oneself.

Admittedly, *The Namesake* carries significant autobiographical traces of its creator. This is particularly so, in reference to the relevancy of the book title and the use of a pet name for the main protagonist, Gogol. Similarly, Lahiri’s real name was Nilanjana Sudeshna but after she enrolled in her school in America, her teachers found her original name too difficult to pronounce and

therefore, the nickname, “Jhumpa” inadvertently became her official name (Lahiri. www.bookbrowse.com). Lahiri admits, “I’m like Gogol in that my pet name inadvertently became my good name” (Lahiri. www.bookbrowse.com).

As seen in the novel, Gogol is always torn between two worlds i.e., India, his ancestral home which he feels no real connection towards and America, his birth place which he identifies with in terms of culture but experiences a sense of estrangement from. This feeling is especially typical of second generation Diasporas. They constantly experience a feeling of alienation and rootless ness as they are aware that their adoptive country is not where their roots lay. At the same time, their adoptive country is all that is familiar to them and they know nothing about their ancestral land except what is told to them by their parents and through other second hand sources. This leads to confusion and frustration and they experience a sense of identity crisis from the simple and obvious knowledge that they look different from the en masse in the adoptive country, which is America in this case. In later years, Gogol and his sister Sonia dread their trips to India as they have become completely westernized and cannot assimilate with the Indian culture and traditions. At the same time, in spite of identifying with western customs, they feel alienated as they realise, as young as they are, that they can never completely belong.

Lahiri has confessed to have inherited a sense of exile from her parents and feeling like she never belonged to any place. “But it bothered me growing up, the feeling that there was no single place I truly belonged” (Lahiri. www.bookbrowse.com). The author’s history of being a second generation diaspora is similar to her protagonist Gogol. It is therefore natural that the brand of identity crisis and emotional upheavals depicted in Gogol’s character is reminiscent of Lahiri’s own experiences while growing up. These concerns

are all related with the immigrant experience and it is imperative to note that the psychoanalytic experiences of first and second generation diasporas are distinct and differ greatly from one another.

> While Jhumpa Lahiri's first generation Americans cherish their past and its memories as an indispensable, integral part of their roots and their being, her second generation Indian Americans reflect both proximity and distancing from it; they seem to perceive and adopt new angles at which to enter (this) reality (Das 16)

A reason to appreciate this transnational writer is the honest sincerity in her writings. Lahiri only writes about issues which she has experienced herself and her writing focuses especially on the human psyche. For this reason, the essence of autobiographical echoes are consistently present in her literary productions, particularly in *The Namesake.*

What is a name? The Oxford Dictionary has clinically defined this word as, "A word or words by which someone or something is known, addressed or referred to". William Shakespeare has famously quoted, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet 2.2). The second description suggests that names and meanings may be arbitrary. Lahiri's novel recounts the inevitable curiosity of human nature which always wants to discover the unknown. With regard to babies, Lahiri narrates the manner in which after giving birth, Ashima would repeatedly be stopped by strangers, all Americans, who would look into her pram and congratulate her. These strangers would always ask for the name of her baby, as if knowing the name would give them a better insight about the nature of the infant. Therefore, is the meaning of a name simply to do with the practical

labelling of a person or object akin to the practical process of labelling jars in the kitchen as “salt”, “sugar” and so on and forth?. Accordingly, let us then evaluate the significance and relevancy of the issue of the name in *The Namesake.*

Jhumpa Lahiri’s act in naming her protagonist Gogol after a pet name and also referring to this action in the title book cannot be overlooked as a mere coincidence. Lahiri’s own reminiscence of a similar predicament during her early years in America when she was compelled to adopt the pet name, “Jhumpa Lahiri”, instead of her real name “Nilanjana Sudeshna” (www.bookbrowse.com) assigns significant relevancy to the name issue. Names contain identity and to have to discard one’s name for another would undoubtedly intensify the feeling of alienation for a diaspora. This is especially so if the change in name is not due to personal choice but because of compulsion, in order to be accepted and fit into a strange and alien environment. As practical though the reason may be, a feeling of rejection is unavoidable as the rejection of one’s original name would be seen as a denial of the real self. Names are an integral part of one’s identity. By adopting a new name, more palatable to the new environment, a diaspora would also consciously or otherwise, adopt a new identity. The name of a person usually consist of a single word and due to this nature, the signifier is often the same as the signified i.e., the name and meaning is the same. We often conjure a mental image of a stranger by simply knowing his or her name. For example, a beautiful or exotic sounding name conjures an image of a desirable looking person. Intangible qualities are also often attributed likewise. Of course, such tangible or intangible qualities assigned to the bearer of the name are subjective and depends upon the imagination, culture, tradition or personal experience of the hearer. That being said, it is still true that names often conjure pre conceived notions of the same. It is a fact that when a human being enters the

world, amongst the first things asked about the new born is his or her name. A human child is sent to school once he or she is old enough to begin the application of the mind and learn things. It is therefore, terribly poignant that one of the first things a child learns in school is how to spell his or her name. This implies that the idea of the self and awareness of one's identity gradually is intrinsic to the process of discovery and learning.

> And so, Gogol's formal education begins. At the top of sheets of scratchy yellow paper he writes out his pet name again and again, and the alphabet in capitals and lowercase...In the front covers of the textbooks from which he is taught to read he leaves his legacy, writing his name in number two pencil below a series of others..."Gogol G," he signs his work in the lower right hand corner, as if there were a need to distinguish him from any other Gogol in the school (*TN* 60).

In *The Namesake*, as the protagonist Gogol grows up, he experiences a sense of burden through his name. This feeling sets in as he enters his adolescence and steadily increases in time. Being an adolescent disapora, emotional stress and adjustment is inevitable for young Gogol. Somehow, Gogol channels all this negative energy into his odd name. Initially, as an adolescent, Gogol is simply told that his father is a fan of his name sake and he unreasonably blames his name for his feelings of alienation, identity crisis and rootless ness.

> He (Gogol) hates that his name is both obscure and absurd, that it has nothing to do with who he is, that it is neither Indian nor American but of all things Russian. He hates having to live with it, with a pet name turned good name, day after day, second after

> second…At times his name, an entity shapeless and weightless, manages to distress him physically, like the scratchy tag of a shirt he has been forced permanently to wear (76).

Gogol regrets that he had rejected a different name offered by his parents when they had first admitted him into Pre School. As Gogol was a pet name, Ashoke and Ashima had tried to admit their son under the name, "Nikhil", but little Gogol, then oblivious to the trauma that would assault him in future, rejects the name and refuses to respond. "He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know" (57). Names carry one's identity and at a tender and innocent age, little Gogol was simply content to be just himself. However, as time passes, Gogol begins to experience an unnaturally magnified dread towards his own name which is intensely psychological in nature. "He even hates signing his name at the bottom of his drawings in art class" (76). He bitterly regrets his refusal in latter years and eventually, as a young man, legally changes his name to Nikhil, much to the disappointment of his parents. In the courtroom, when asked by the judge to elaborate the reason for his change in name, Gogol voices aloud the words he has never admitted to his own family, "I hate the name Gogol, I've always hated it" (102). Gogol experiences a sense of freedom after officially changing his name. "He wonders if this is how it feels for an obese person to become thin, for a prisoner to walk free" (102). After exiting the court room, Gogol walks around in a happy daze, suppressing the urge to introduce himself to strangers on the street as Nikhil. He takes as application for a student admit card and feels grateful tha his first credit card will read as "Nikhil" instead of "Gogol". He thinks of the women he can now approach freely and confidently, without feeling self conscious about his name. Gogol imagines that all his problems were tied with his name and has disappeared, not that his name has been legally changed.

> But now that he's Nikhil it's easier to ignore his parents, to tune out their concerns and pleas. With relief, he types his name at the tops of his freshman papers. He read the telephone messages his suitemates leave for Nikhil on assorted scraps in their rooms. He opens a checking account, writes his new name into course books. "Me llamo Nikhil," he says in his Spanish class (105).

Names are cause for affinity and fellowship as portrayed in a poignant incident which occurred when Gogol was eleven years of age. His class had gone on a field trip to a graveyard where a famous writer is buried. Gogol's teacher hands them several sheets of newsprint and crayons and the children are asked to rub the surfaces of gravestones to search for their own names. The other children excitedly holler common American surnames similar to their own, etched on the gravestones. Naturally Gogol, as young as he is, realises that unlike his American classmates, he will not find a Ganguli buried in the graveyard. "He is old enough to know that he himself will be burned, not buried, that his body will occupy no plot of earth, that no stone in this country will bear his name beyond life" (69). To his pleasant surprise however, Gogol discovers unique names like Abijah Craven, Anguish Mather, Peregrine Wotton and a few other names which he had never heard before. "Gogol has never met a person named Abijah, just as, he now realizes, he has never met another Gogol" (70). Someone remarks as to how his rubbings had produced unusual names like his own. At home, his mother is understandably horrified at the nature of their fieldtrip and refuses to
display her son's gravestone rubbings along with his other creations.

> But Gogol is attached to them. For reasons he cannot explain or necessarily understand, these ancient Puritan spirits, these very immigrants to America, these bearers of unthinkable, obsolete

> names, have spoken to him, so much so that in spite of his mother's disgust he refuses to throw the rubbings away (71).

When Gogol began his junior year in school, he meets Mr. Lawson who is the first of Gogol's teachers to know about his celebrated namesake, the Russian writer, Nikolai Gogol. Mr. Lawson's easy acceptance of Gogol's name is reason enough for the young protagonist to like him. During one fateful class however, Mr. Lawson took a lesson on the life and works of Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol. Gogol is mortified by Mr. Lawson's morbid account of the short and melancholic life of eccentric genius that his namesake was. The Russian writer's steady decline into madness shamed Gogol as if he shared a common identity with the writer. "Warmth spread from the back of Gogol's neck to his cheek and his ears. Each time the name is uttered, he quietly winces" (91). Later, Gogol unreasonably angry and feels betrayed by Mr. Lawson.

> With some, the name may become a part of the core of a severe neurosis. The degree of pathological disturbance varies from exaggerated pride or exaggerated shame over one's name, commonly encountered amongst adolescents, to extremes of psychotic proportions (Murphy http://www.pep-web.org).

As an adult, Gogol legally changes his name to Nikhil. The choice of the new name is not random and is linked to his original name as justified in the given lines. It is noteworthy that of all the Bengali names at disposal, Gogol chose one that is connected to his old one. This signifies that on a subconscious level, though perhaps unaware, Gogol is aware of his real identity and knows that he cannot escape his true self by a mere change in name.

> The name, Nikhil, is artfully connected to the old. Not only is it a perfectly respectable Bengali good name, meaning, "he who is entire, encompassing all", but it also bears a satisfying resemblance to Nikolai, the first name of the Russian Gogol (*TN* 56).

After the initial exhilaration, he is further immersed in the turmoil of identity crisis and alienation within himself as he is now torn between two identities. Having been known as Gogol for the most part of his life, his parents and most people he knew from childhood still persists in calling him so. His identity is split between being Gogol and Nikhil. "There is only one complication: he doesn't feel like Nikhil. Not yet. Part of the problem is that the people who now know him as Nikhil have no idea that he used to be Gogol" (105). His family makes a conscious effort to address him as Nikhil in front of his new friends in college but continues calling him Gogol at home. Gogol is painfully aware when his parents slip and calls him Gogol in public. Pet names are common in Bengali culture and are known as "daknam", which literally means the name which one is called by friends, family and other close condidantes. "Pet names are a persisitent remnant of childhood, a reminder that life is not so serious, so formal, so complicated. They are a reminder, too, that one is not all things to all people" (26). Ashima finds herself unable to write "Nikhil" on letters and cards as it feels very formal and aloof. "No parent ever called a child by his good name. Good names had no place within a family" (165). Gogol's family wants him to be happy and therefore, accepts his new name. However, having known him by his pet name Gogol all their lives, they are unable to call him anything else. On his part, Gogol feels awkward himself to be called Nikhil by his parents and other people who had known him before he had changed his name as he feels like a fraud.

> At times he feels as if he's cast himself in a play, acting the part of twins, indistinguishable to the naked eye yet fundamentally different. At times he still feels like his old name, painfully and without warning…He fears being discovered, having the whole charade somehow unravel, and in nightmares his files are exposed, his original name printed on the front page of the *Yale Daily News* (106-107).

Gogol subconsciously adopts two identities and mentally categorises people as those who knew him under his old name and the ones who having met him in later years, knew him as Nikhil. His new friends in college are separated from his past and as Nikhil, Gogol's personality undergoes a significant change. Nikhil is confident, at ease with himself, socially adept and has girlfriends, although he avoids letting his parents know about them. Shortly after changing his name, Gogol goes to a party and meets an American girl named Kim. He introduces himself as Nikhil for the first time and kisses her. Afterwards, as his friends express their awe over his new found boldness with the opposite sex, he almost tells them that it wasn't him. "But he doesn't tell them that it hadn't been Gogol who'd kissed Kim. That Gogol had had nothing to do with it" (96). Soon, Gogol makes an American girlfriend called Ruth at college. The pair share an intimate relationship and Gogol becomes very friendly with Ruth's parents, even spending nights at their house. Gogol however, does not tell his parents about Ruth, let alone introduce her to his family. "He cannot imagine being with her in the house where he is stll Gogol" (115). As is the case with second generation diasporas, Gogol has become completely westernized and the way his parents cling on to their Indian customs by way of attire, food habits and also their frugal way of living irritates him. He is always known as Gogol at home and therefore remains aloof, emotionally detached and especially alienated towards his parents.

> The names of individuals play an important role in the organization of their ego defense patterns and are cathetic and utilized from the point of view of ego defenses in a manner similar to an organ or body part. Freud was well aware of the importance of names and discussed mechanisms and causes of forgetting names, which consciously or unconsciously have unpleasant, or other associations, and the distortion or falsification of names
> (Murphy http://www.pep-web.org).

Gogol's journey towards self acceptance began with his father, Ashoke's untimely death. Gogol had always felt slightly guilty that his father had disclosed the significance of his name only after he had legally changed it to Nikhil. For most of his young life, Gogol had not known about the life altering accident which had almost taken his father's life and was responsible for his father's limp. Gogol had always assumed that he had been named so, simply because his namesake was his father's favourite author. When the truth is finally revealed, Gogol feels bitter and asks Ashoke whether he reminded his father of the catastrophic accident. Ashoke replies that to the contrary, his son reminded him of everything, the second chance at life that has been gifted to him. After Ashoke passes away, Gogol recalls past memories of his father with a sense of nostalgia and regret. He numbly goes through the traditional religious rites and customs observed during the mourning period. He has an American girlfriend Maxine and for the first time, he is not conscious of exposing her to his home and family. "This time, he doesn't care about the house, how the pile of guests' shoes heaped by the door, might appear to her" (*TN* 182). They eventually separate. Gogol marries Moushumi Mazoomdar,

also a diaspora and the daughter of an old family friend of his parents. The marriage end in a divorce after the discovery of Moushumi's infidelity.

After Ashoke's demise, Gogol's mother Ashima is now ready to move back to India and holds a last Christmas Eve dinner by way of a farewell dinner. When Gogol goes upstairs to look for a camera as requested by Ashima, he takes the camera inside his old room to load a fresh battery. There, an old forgotten book, never read, catches his eye. A copy of *The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol,* gifted to Gogol on his fourteenth birthday by his late father many years ago. Gogol finally begins to read.

Names hold great meanings in various cultures. Amongst the Angami Naga tribe, a new born infant is bestowed a name with qualities and virtues that the elders might hope for the child to possess. The child is thus expected to live up to his or her name in later life. In the beginning chapters of the book, Ashoke and Ashima hesitate when Mr. Wilcox, the hospital administrator suggests that they name their new born after one of them or perhaps an ancestor. "Within Bengali families, individual names are sacred, inviolable. They are not meant to be inherited or shared" (28). Names are thus, not seen as arbitrary in Bengali and various other cultures. During the course of a dinner conversation in the latter part of the novel, a group of people discusses possible names for a baby. A random character named Colin suggests a name which signifies a specific virtue such as Faith, Chastity, and Patience etc., and also mentions that he had a great grandmother who was named Silence. This conveys the personal value of a person's name even in certain western cultures. The intimacy of a person's name is especially revealed in Ashima's refusal to call her husband by his name especially during the beginning of their marriage.

> When she calls out to Ashoke, she doesn't say his name...She has adopted his surname but refuses, for propriety's sake, to utter his first. It's not the tupe of thing Bengali wives do. Like a kiss or caress in a Hindi movie, a husband's name is something intimate and therefore unspoken, cleverly patched over (2).

Names are considered so intimate in the conservative Indian culture which Ashima and Ashoke hailed from, so much so that Ashima learned Ashoke's name only after the betrothal. This conveys the belief that names are sacred and coveys the very nature of its bearer. Similarly, in *The Namsesake*, the given meaning of the names of the characters seemingly exemplifies their respective nature and personality. "Ashima means 'she who is limitless, without borders'. Ashoke, the name of an emperor mean 'he who transcends grief" (26). It is also poignant, the manner how Ashoke's mother embroiders his cotton handkerchiefs, "A for Ashoke" (11), in light blue thread. It appears as if the letter A stands for no name or word other than Ashoke. Gogol's younger sister, Sonali's name means "she who is golden" (62). Gogol especially envies his sister's name.

> Though Sonali is the name on her birth certificate, the name she will carry officially through her life, at home they begin to call her Sonu, then Sona, and finally Sonia, Sonia makes her a citizen of the world. It's a Russian link to her brother, it's European, South American (62).

It is significant that Gogol, who suffers from a terrible sense of rootlessness particularly envies his sister's name, more than any other name. The link to various nationalities her name offers gives her a sense of belonging which Gogol feels he can never claim with his name. On the other hand, Gogol

feels a terrible isolation because his name has no such lineage and believes that no one in the world shares his name.

> This writer he is names after- Gogol isn't his first name. His first name is Nikolai. Not only does Gogol Ganguli have a pet name turned good name, but a last name turned first name. And so it occurs to him that no one he knows in the world, in Russia or India or America or anywhere, shares his name. Not even the source of his namesake (78).

There is an incident during Halloween when some hooligans shortens the surname "Ganguli" written in individual golden letters on the side of the mailbox. It had been changed to "Gang", with the word, "Green" srawled in pencil following it. Gogol feels sickened with the insult while his father calmly dismisses it as boys having harmless fun. Gogol feels the desecration of his surname intensely and regards it as a direct insult to his person. According to psychoanalysis, names are significant towards the moulding of one's personality and may sometimes constrict identity, as in the case of Gogol in *The Namesake*. Often, names or rather, the lack of a proper name, gives rise of alienation in a person.

> Prior to its birth, the human infant is spoken of with hopes, desires and fears in the light of which it is assigned an identity: it is given a name. Such naming is no mere labelling. Rather it is an interpellation, a summons to the child to assume an identity not of its choosing, an identity which necessarily incarnates an ideal…Such naming gives rise to a sense of alienation
> (Lapsley 75).

Names are often seen as a projection of the self and this is portrayed by Gogol's reaction when he meets Moushumi after a long time. The pair had last seen each other as children and only had vague recollections of each other. "It had annoyed him, when he'd called her, that she hadn't recognized him as Nikhil. This is the first time he's been out with a woman who'd known him by that other name" (*TN* 193). Gogol had wanted Moushumi to regard him in the light of the image he had painstakingly created over the years and that image required him to be Nikhil and not Gogol. The fact that Moushumi had declined to change her last name to Ganguli after marrying Gogol is also hugely symbolic. Moushumi's name means "A damp south westerly breeze" (240), and this slightly obscure meaning presents an insight into her restless nature and eventual act of infidelity.

During their brief marriage, Gogol and Moushumi once attended a dinner party hosted by Astrid and Donald, a couple close to Moushumi, whom Gogol regards as frivolous. At one point during the course of the evening, the dinner conversation became centred around the topic of suitable baby names for the pregnant Astrid. Gogol understandably feels betrayed when in a casual dinner conversation, his wife carelessly discloses to her friends whom he barely knew, that he had legally changed his name from Gogol to Nikhil. Besides his family, Moushumi was the only person who knew about his past identity. This careless revelation by her therefore, felt like a betrayal of his trust in her and an intrusion into the sacredness of their marriage. Upon being barraged by questions as to why he had changed his name, Gogol simply explains that his father had been a fan of the writer. In a moment of exasperation, Gogol flippantly declares that human beings should not be allowed to name themselves until they turn eighteen. Until that age, humans should simply address each other with the use of pronouns, says the protagonist. This declaration emphasises the influence that names hold over the personality of its

bearer. Gogol recalls an English translation of a French novel he had once read, "In which the main characters were simply referred to, for hundreds of pages, as He and She. He had read it in a matter of hours, oddly relieved that the names of the characters were never revealed" (245).

Moushumi's affair which resulted in the destruction of her marriage to Gogol had started with a seductive sounding name. "The name alone, when she'd first learned it, had been enough to seduce her. Dimitri Desjardins" (256). He was an older man. Moushumi had first met Dimitri on a chartered overnight bus many years ago when she was only seventeen. They struck up a conversation. He had been intrigued by her exotic sounding name and had asked her to spell it for him. On finding her name difficult to pronounce, Dimitri had impulsively stated that he would simply call her "Mouse" instead. "The nickname had irritated and pleased her at the same time. It made her feel foolish, but she was aware that in renaming her he had claimed her somehow, already made her his own" (258). Moushumi who teaches French literature at a university, goes through the faculty mailbox and comes across an envelope with Dimitri's name and address on the cover. He had applied for a teaching position at the same University. She remembers how attracted she had been to him years ago and takes the initiative to call him herself. Their affair revolves around the intimacy of names. Names are seen as a sign of boldness and intimacy. Similarly, Ashima, a conservative Bengali woman, never utters her husband's name in all her years of marriage. "She has adopted his surname but refuses, for propriety's sake, to utter his first. It's not the type of things Bengali wives do" (2). Lahiri also tells us that there are different usages for pet names and good names. The former is used affectionately and only by loved ones and the latter, "for identification in the outside world" (26). It is also significant that Moushumi never mentions Gogol's name to her lover Dimitri, simply referring to him as a nameless, faceless husband. Dimitri does not express

curiosity either. This refusal to acknowledge a name seems to make them fee less guilty about the betrayal.

As meaningful as names are, it is interesting to note that that Gogol's paranioa about his name is entirely psychological in nature. This is because more than the actual name itself, it is the person's concept of his or her name which gives a name its influence over the bearer. At some level, although he is unwilling to admit it, Gogol appears to realise that his feelings of alienation are psychological and has nothing to do with his name. Before legally changing his name, Gogol vents out his frustrations to his father and claims that no one takes him seriously because they had named him after such a peculiar person as Nikolai Gogol. When Ashoke take this to heart and asks his son to name the person who had made him suffer because of his name, Gogol realises that he could not think of a single person.

> "People", he (Gogol) said, lying to his parents. For his father had a point; the only person who didn't take Gogol seriously, the only person who tormented him, the only person chronically aware of and afflicted by the embarrassment of his name, the only person who constantly questioned it and wished it were otherwise, was Gogol (100).

It is ironically sad that the various characters begin to realise the meaning of acceptance only after Ashoke suffers a massive heart attack and unexpectedly passes away while at his work place. He was the only person who is at ease with his identity. After her husband's demise, Ashima returns to India to live with her brother. To her surprise, she discovers a sense of sadness at the thought of leaving the adopted country which her late husband had come to love. Ashima realises that America had given her so much. Gogol who had

always taken his father for granted experiences profound sadness and a lingering regret over his father's death. He finally learns to appreciate his parents' bravery in leaving a world behind and creating a new one. Gogol finds himself increasingly drawn to his heritage, his name and his destiny as the embodiment of his parents' aspirations.

Through this psychoanalytic study of the name issue in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake,* one can confidently state that names are not merely random labelling of human beings. It is not just a practical process of identifying or addressing one person from the other. The human psyche is complex and therefore, the name of a person essentially becomes an integral part of identity. This identity is especially crucial in the case of Diasporas who inevitably faces the trauma of identity crisis.

Lahiri has proven her proficiency in both the novel and short story. The trademark elegant and concise prose is consistent in both genres. It is clear that the stories of this expatriate write are predominantly about the complexities of human psyche and how the state of mind affects relationships. Although Lahiri may not intend on a moral while writing her stories, her sensitivity for her protagonists ultimately result in drawing out the best essence of the human spirit; the God given compassion which resides in each of us.

WORKS CITED

Cherry, Kendra. "Hysteria" 21 November 2012
< http://psychology.about.com/od/hindex/f/hysteria.htm>.

Mangal, S.K. *Advanced Educational Psychology.* New Delhi: Prentice Hall India, 2007. Print.

Narzary, Reetamoni. "Where's Home? Patterns of Loss and Longing in *Interpreter of Maladies. Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.*Ed. Nigamananda Das, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Baral, K. C. ed. *Interpretation of Texts-Text, Meaning and Interpretation.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2002. Print.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* New York: Manchester University Press, 1995. Print.

Crews, Frederick. ed. *Psychoanalysis & Literary Process.* Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, 1970. Print.

Das, Nigamananda. ed. Introduction. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Dixit, Sudhir. "Names as Symbols of Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's Stories". *Jhumpa Lahiri – The Master Story Teller.* ed. Suman Bala. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 2002. Print.

Hilgard, Ernest R, Richard C Atkinson & Rita L Atkinson. Introduction to Psychology. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1975. Print.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies.* New Delhi: Random House, 1999. Print.

---. *The Namesake.* New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2007. Print.

---. *Unaccustomed Earth.* New Delhi: Random House, 2008. Print.

---. “An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri” by Book Browse. 24 April 2009 <http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/infex.cfm?author_interviews/full/index?author_number=929>.

---. “An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri by Vibhuti Patel” 15 December 2010 <http://www.sawnet.org/books/writing/patel_lahiri.html>.

Lapsley, Rob. “Psychoanalytic Criticism”. *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. Ed. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Markovic, Zorica. “Psychoanalytic conceptions of Marriage and Marital Relationships”. 29 November 2012 <www.facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/pas/pas2000/pas2000-08>.

Morgan, Clifford T, Richard A King, John R Weisz & John Schopler. *Introduction to Psychology.* New Delhi: Tata McGraw- Hill Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Murphy, William F. “A Note on the Significance of Names” by The Psychoanalytic Quarterly. 2nd March 2012. <http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=paq.026.0091a>.

“Name”. Def. 1. The Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus & Word power Guide. 16th ed. 2005.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet.* New Delhi: Mahaveer Publishers, 2009. Print.

Singh, Charu Sheel. *Theory of Literature.* New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1996. Print.

Raina, M.L. “Home, Homelessness and the Artifice of Memory”. *Contemporary Diasporic Literature: Writing History, Culture, Self.* ed. Manjit Inder Singh. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. Print.

Wilderdom. “Major Themes and Assumptions of Psychoanalytic Theory”. Accessed on 15th October 2013. < www.wilderdom.com/personality/L8-1MajorThemes.Psychoanalysis>.

Chapter IV

A Psychoanalytic Study of Kiran Desai's characterisation

Kiran Desai is undoubtedly one of the most original and remarkable writers of her generation. Her much heralded first book, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) made its debut with a lot of accolades and praise from literary greats such as Salman Rushdie and others. Despite the lush humour and comic story telling technique applied in this book, Desai's touching sensitivity towards her characters dominates above all, as she talks about her experience after finishing *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* "You live with these characters for years and you live in the settings...I lived in the little village that I created for so long that at first I was bereft when the book was finished" (Desai. www.randomhouse.com). As well received as Desai's debut book was, it is her second book, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), which enabled her to set a firm foot on the literary world. This marvellously imaginative novel went on to win the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2006 as well as the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, amongst others.

The Inheritance of Loss is a stunning literary marvel, set during the mid 1980s and traces the lives of the downtrodden and the upper middle class. It is an ambitious novel with parallel stories stretching from illegal Indian immigrant Biju in New York and the rest of the characters in the more remote north east corner of India. A young independent India is still reeling from the after effects of colonialism and this creates an intense psychological trauma in

Anglophiles. The novel is written with an original humour; full of stylistic playfulness and comic relief. Desai deftly shifts from New York and India; past and present, and the grim and comic. The inner mindset of her characters is magnificently depicted. The author also employs a stream of consciousness technique which aids in depicting the multifaceted psyche of her characters.

The book begins with sixteen year old Sai, a young orphan girl who resides with her Anglicised grandfather, Jemubhai Patel, who is a retired judge. The novel is set against the backdrop of the historic Nepalese insurgency movement for an independent state. Sai lives with her grandfather Jemubhai Patel at Kalimpong, located at the foothills of the Himalayas where the borders of several Himalayan states including Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet, meet. There is also a cook who resides with them. After his retirement, Jemubhai Patel had lived alone with only the company of a cook and Mutt, his beloved pet dog Mutt in "Cho Oyu", the isolated and crumbling house in Kalimpong. He is estranged from his family and has never met his granddaughter Sai as he had disowned her mother a long time ago. When Sai's parents passes away in a tragic vehicle accident in Russia, the nuns in the convent where she is raised decides to send her to her grandfather. Sai's arrival upsets her grandfather but he grudgingly tolerates the situation. The beginning of the story also introduces Sai's budding romance with Gyan, her young Nepalese maths tutor. In this same hill station, we are also presented with a coterie of Anglophiles in the form of the Bengali sisters Noni and Lola who live in a cottage called, "Mon Ami". There is also Mrs Sen, Uncle Potty, Uncle Potty and various other colourful characters.

In a parallel narrative, Desai also presents the life of Biju who is the son of the nameless cook who works for Jemubhai Patel. Biju is an illegal immigrant in New York and is struggling to make a new life. Through Biju, we

are also introduced to similar immigrant characters such as Saaed Saaed from Zanzibar and various others. Biju's father as well as everyone in India speaks highly of him as he is in the United States and they imagine him to be living the "American dream". However, reality is a stark contrast and the truth is that Biju is hopping from one place to the other, struggling to make a living and surviving by washing dishes in shady restaurants that are not too particular about verifying the profile of their employees. Biju and his friends constantly talks and dreams about ways to avail the coveted green card.

The Inheritance of Loss subtly but effectively presents the internal conflicts in India between different groups of people hailing from different social strata. This conflict is intrinsically linked to the past colonialism and present independence. With both sets of characters in Kalimpong and New York, we see that there is the rejection and yet awe of the English way of life. This creates an internal conflict within the character with his or her own self as well as with the social environment. The fragility of the lives of the characters is powerfully depicted by how the Nepalese Gorkha Revolution upturns their lives. This revolution also stymies the fledging romance between Sai and Gyan as unknown to Sai, Gyan becomes embroiled by the rising insurgency movement, if only temporarily.

Jemubhai Patel is arguably the most enigmatic character in this book. He is an embittered old man who is alienated from everything and everyone around him, except his beloved pet dog, Mutt. The singular, most definitive characteristic that stands out in Jemubhai Patel is that he is a blatant Anglophile. This has shaped the course of his life completely. The judge is a man who is so anglicised that Indian customs and way of living disgusts him and he even eats his chapattis with a fork and knife on the rare occasions that he eats Indian cuisine. He hates all Indians, which makes up everyone around him and has broken off ties with his own family.

The judge had left for Cambridge, England, from his ancestral home of Piphit, India, in the year 1939, when he was twenty years of age. His departure was serenaded by two retired members of a military band, hired by his father in law. He had just gotten married through an arranged marriage to Nimi, his fourteen year old child bride. Up till then, Jemubhai had been a simple village boy. However, his departure to Cambridge seemed to mark the beginning of a drastic personality transformation. Perhaps unconsciously, his psyche had already begun to warn him. An awareness came over Jemubhai as he sat in the train with his father.

> The very fact that they were sitting in the train, the speed of it, rendered his world trivial, indicated through each window evidence of emptiness that stood eager to claim an unguarded heart. He felt a piercing fear, not for the future, but for the past, for the foolish faith with which he had lived in Piphit (*IL* 36).

As Jemubhai's ship set sail for the distant overseas, the traditional customs were observed and he was supposed to throw a coconut into the sea. When his father reminded him to throw the coconut into the ocean, Jemubhai hesitated. For the first time, he viewed his father as a half educated man from the village. "Jemubhai looked at his father, a barely educated man venturing where he should not be, and the love in Jemubhai's heart mingled with pity, the pity with shame" (37). Unknown to his father, the son that he had lovingly sent overseas to avail the opportunity for a better life would never return as remembered. "Jemubhai watched his father disappear. He didn't throw the coconut and he didn't cry. Never again would he know love for a human being that wasn't adulterated by other contradictory emotion" (37).

A young Jemubhai seemed to have been an intensely sensitive and neurotic personality. He also has an inferiority complex which makes him

behave unreasonable and illogical. Jemubhai becomes increasingly incensed as he unpacks the food so lovingly packed by his mother for the journey. Besides the bundle of puris and pickle, there was also a banana which had become overripe in the course of the ship's voyage. He is convinced that his mother had done so because she knew that, "he lacked the courage to go to the dining salon on the ship, given that he couldn't eat with knife and fork" (38). His mother's thoughtfulness evokes a negative reaction. Instead of being touched, Jemubhai becomes incensed. "He was furious that his mother had considered the possibility of his humiliation and thereby he though, precipitated it. In her attempt to cancel out one humiliation she had only succeded in adding another" (38). Jemubhai's private fears take over his psyche and although unreasonable, he imagines that every kind gesture of a loved one has a diabolique intention. This kind of suspicious behaviour is typical of psychological neurosis in a person.

> The neurotic feels basically inadequate and insecure in a world which he perceives as dangerous and hostile. Consequently, he sees many everyday situations as threatening- situations which would not be so evaluated by most people (Coleman 218).

Jemubhai's neurosis is not something that evolved out of his experience with western culture. The fact that Jemubhai's paranoid behaviour occurred even before he reached English shores and consequently became an anglophile, reveals that the neurotic tendency in Jemubhai was always present. A colonial education in India had made a deep and lasting impression on Jemubhai since he was a child. As India was under British regime during that time, the school building in India where Jemubhai studied had a portrait of Queen Victoria on the entrance. Everyday little Jemubhai would study the portrait and feel deeply influenced by the picture. The strange looking woman which the fringed cape and peculiar hat impressed his young mind. "The more he pondered this oddity,

the more his respect for her and the English grew" (*IL* 58). Although the author does not delve too much into Jemubhai's childhood, there is a sense that he is a peculiar child who suffers from emotional detachment. This tendency became gargantuan after being exposed to western culture which leads him to detest everything Indian in nature. Jemubhai's thoughts are vicious as he threw the food so tenderly packed by his mother into the sea.

> Jemu picked up the package, fled to the deck, and threw it overboard. Didn't his mother think of the inappropriateness of her gestures? Undignified love, Indian love, stinking, unaesthetic love- the monsters of the ocean could have what she had so bravely packed getting up in that predawn mush (38).

The fact that the retired old Jemubhai retreats into an isolated and crumbling house in Kalimpong after severing all ties with family and friends, and also, the fact that he hates all humans and feels affection only for his dog gives reason to suspect a psychological imbalance in Jemubhai. His cruelty towards his estranged wife Nimi and the resulting course of events is immeasurably tragic. Before his imminent departure to England, a young Jemubhai was married to Nimi, the beautiful fourteen year old daughter of a rich man named Bomanbhai in their village. The newly married couple were practically strangers and Jemubhai had left for Cambridge shortly after the wedding. In England, Jemubhai Patel experiences racial discrimination and experiences a culture shock. Without ever experiencing the loveliness of the English countryside or the beauty of a different culture, Jemubhai worked twelve hours at a stretch and late into the night continuously. He studied tirelessly. "He retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow" (39). It is here in Cambridge that Jemubhai's delicate psyche

undergoes a grim and massive transformation. As his inferiority complex increased, Jemubhai became obsessively paranoid and neurotic in nature. His behaviour is directly connected to psychological reasons.

> Thus, Jemubhai's mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-coloured, his own accent peculiar. He forgot how to laugh, could barely manage to life his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth, because he couldn't bear anyone to see his gums, his teeth...He began to wash obsessively, concerned he would be accused of smelling, and each morning he scrubbed off the thick milky scent of sleep, the barnyard smell that wreathed him when he woke and impregnated the fabric of his pyjamas (40).

The above extract which describes Jemubhai's obsessive washing is indicative of a mental ailment obsessive known as obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) which makes the sufferers obsessively repeat an action. His increasingly obsessive cleaning continues after returning to India after clearing his ICS exams. "He followed his ablutions with a clinical measure of whisky, as if consuming a disinfectant" (170). More than the physical signs of psychological anxiety, Jemubhai's emotional health becomes alarmingly fragile. "Eventually he felt barely human at all, leaped when touched on the arm as if from an unbearable intimacy, dreaded and agonized over even a 'How-do-you-do-lovely-day' from the fat woman dressed in friendly pinks who ran the corner store" (40). Jemubhai would also burst into tears of self pity at the minutest acts of casual courtesy or affection and therefore, began to isolate himself from anybody familiar. While in England, he would search out for anonymous shops as he could not bear the familiarity of the corner store.

Jemubhai is overcome with emotion when the shop girl comments that her husband uses the same shaving cream which he had just purchased. “The acknowledgement of their identical human needs, the intimacy of their connection, shaving, husband, he was overcome at the boldness of the suggestion” (40). It would be justified to state that Jemubhai is a victim of neurosis and schizophrenia. “To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly” (40). Soon, the hard work pays off the Jemubhai clears the ICS exams. Jemubhai’s extreme reaction upon discovering the good news is evident that he suffers from a severe psychological disorder and is unable to control his emotions.

> Looking neither right nor left, the newest member, practically unwelcome, of the heaven born, ran home with his arms folded and got immediatedly into bed, all his clothes on, even his shoes, and soaked his pillow with his weeping. Tears sheeted his cheeks, eddied about his nose, cascaded into his neck, and he found he was quite unable to control his tormented ragged nerves. He lay there crying for three days and three nights (116).

The neurotic judge eventually becomes emotionally detached over everything. He refers to himself in the third person and isolates himself from everything familiar. “He had learned to take refuge in the third person and to keep everyone at bay, to keep even himself away from himself like the Queen” (111). The judge’s complete and utter alienation began in England and this remains throughout the rest of his life.

Jemubhai Patel clears the Indian Civil Service and returns to India after five years. He is greeted with brass bands, garlands and flower petals upon arrival. He also meets his forgotten wife Nimi Patel who shyly comes to receive him. He is now twenty five and she, nineteen. Before marriage, Nimi had lived a strict purdah existence in her father's home. Nimi's father, Bomanbhai Patel is a self made man who had acquired his wealth by doing business with the British regiment. He is a notorious character who indulges in immoral and questionable activities, including flesh trade. However, he keeps his wife and daughters under strict purdah behind the high walls of his haveli.

> Here they lived an idle existence inside the women's quarters, the strictness of this purdah enforcement increased Bomanbhai's honor in the community, and he began to acquire little fancies and foibles, to cultivate certain eccentricities that, just as he plotted, reiterated the security of his wealth and reinforced his honor all over again (90).

The above extract reveals that Bomanbhai had acquired his little idosyncracies and eccentricities only after acquiring wealth. This lends an interesting insight into a person's personal philosophy which influences him or her to develop a certain personality. Bomanbhai was an ambitious man and ensured that Jemubhai was made a son in law when he first heard of the latter's imminent departure for England. Jemubhai would become one of the most powerful man in India if he succeeded and Bomanbhai attempted to preserve his legacy by marrying his daughter to such a man.

Psychological ailments are invisible and thus, Jemubhai's family is unaware of the change in him. They smother him with their familial love and while lauding him, treat him as they had done before he had left. But Jemubhai

is no longer the person they had known. “He sat up, fidgeted, looked at the winged dinosaur, purple beaked banana tree with the eye of one seeing it for the first time. He was a foreigner- a foreigner- every bit of him screamed” (166). The judge also discovers an unreasonable hatred towards his innocent wife who had long cherished their reunion.

> He did not like his wife’s face, searched for his hatred, found beauty, and dismissed it. Once it had been a terrifying beckoning thing that had made his heart turn to water, but now it seemed beside the point. An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one (168).

Nimi’s once romantic dreams are crushed and she gradually becomes used to her husband’s cruel and aloof manners. “She grew accustomed to his detached expression” (170). Jemubhai is shocked and disgusted by the act of sex. “Yet he repeated the gutter act again and again...this distaste and his persistence made him angrier than ever and any cruelty to her became irresistible” (170). Jemubhai’s loathing of sex and viewing it as a grotesque act reveals his increasingly unhealthy psyche. This thought process is also reminiscent of a reaction formation. According to psychoanalytic explanation, reaction formation is a defence mechanism whereby a person represses his real desires and develops opposite behavioural patterns.

> Thus he may conceal hate with a facade of love, cruelty with kindness, or desires for sexual promiscuity with moralistic sexual attitudes and behaviour. In this way the individual erects obstacles or barriers that reinforce his repression and keep his real desires and feelings from conscious awareness (Coleman 126).

Jemubhai, who is now a judge received his place of posting in Bonda and himself and Nimi travels two days by train and car to reach their destination. There, the judge rents a bungalow and also hires an English companion named Miss Enid Pott in order to teach the English language to Nimi Patel. His wife's failure to learn the language incensed him and his unreasonable hatred for his innocent wife grows. He would take away food from Nimi's mouth if she could not describe it in English. Jemubhai never took his wife along with him on tours like the other officers. "She was uncared for, her freedom useless, her husband disregarded his duty" (*IL* 171). She was left alone most of the time and the only time he paid her any attention was to abuse her, both verbally and physically. From being a vivacious young girl, Nimi gradually became withdrawn and detached.

> She had fallen out of life altogether. Weeks went by and she spoke to nobody, the servants thumped their own leftovers on the table for her to eat, stole supplies without fear, allowed the house to grow filthy without guilt until the day before Jemubhai's arrival when suddenly it was brought to lustre again, the clock set to a timetable, water to a twenty minute boil, fruit soaked for the prescribed number of minutes in solutions of pottasuim permanganate (172).

Everything about Nimi triggered the judge's revulsion. "Even her expressions annoyed him, but they were –gradually replaced by a blankness, he became upset by their absence" (172). Her physical appearance, the tinkle of her bangles, the colours of her sari, the smell of her hair oil; such attire which were typical of Indian women angered him. In time, Nimi stopped looking into the mirror and let herself go completely. "She couldn't bear to spend a moment in dressing and combing, activities that were only for the happy and the loved"

(173). The extract below reveals her husband's neurosis as well as his mentally compulsive disorder.

> When Jemubhai saw her (Nimi) cheeks erupting in pustules, he took her fallen beauty as a further affront and felt concerned the skin disease would infect him as well. He instructed the servants to wipe everything with Dettol to kill germs" (173).

A particular incident which depicts Jemubhai's Anglophilism as well as his destructive hatred is when he discovered Nimi's footprints on the toilet seat and realised that she had been squatting. In his monstrous rage, he pushes Nimi's head against the toilet bowl (173). Miss Enid Pott finally gave up on attempting to teach Nimi and tells the judge that Nimi had deliberately made up her mind not to learn the language. "She (Nimi) will not argue- that way one might respond or have a dialogue- she just goes limp" (172). It is important to note that Nimi's refusal to learn is not due of stubbornness or dullness, as claimed by Miss Pott. The judge's abuse and neglect has affected her and she seems to have withdrawn into a dark place, a deep confinement within her own psyche.

> After a point, Nimi, made invalid by her misery, grew very dull, began to fall asleep in heliographic sunshine and wake in the middle of the night. She peered out at the world but could not focus on it, never went to the mirror, because she couldn't see herself in it..." (173)

The above description of Nimi's behaviour is hauntingly evocative of schizophrenia. Nimi appears to have retreated into a private world where no one could hurt her. This defence reaction is referred to in psychoanalytic terms,

as emotional insulation. At the same time however, she has lost the courage to face life and feels no emotion herself. “Psychotic rupture is perhaps the worst and the most regressive aspect of female subjectivity” (Tandon 24). From being a vivacious and spritely young girl with a zest for life, Nimi had now become a passive recipient of whatever life brings her. This transformation is due to her bitterness and frustration with her doomed marriage.

> In certain mental disorders, too, such as schizophrenia, there is often an extreme use of insulation that apparently protects the individual from emotional involvement in a life situation and world that have proved unbearably hurtful...Emotional insulation provides a protective shell that prevents a repetition of previous pain, but it reduces the individual’s healthy, vigorous participation in life (Coleman 127).

Although hard to comprehend, a psychoanalytic understanding leads us sufficient reason to believe that the judge is also as much a victim as his wife, at least psychologically. Within a year, the judge and Nimi are a pair of psychologically damaged couple whose dread and bitterness over each other seems limitless. “They belonged to this emotion more than to themselves, experienced rage with enough muscle in it for entire nations coupled in hate” (*IL* 173). Ultimately, the judge sends a pregnant Nimi home in disgrace to her home in Piphit. This final act had been triggered by a particular incident. While Jemubhai was out, Nimi had involuntarily been part of the Nehru welcoming committee. Nimi never stepped out of the house but had been compelled by Mrs Mohan, a neighbour and passionate congresswoman. Jemubhai, who was a member of the British Raj was enraged when informed of his wife’s involvement as it compromised his career. His rage was not minimised by the knowledge that Nimi was innocent and had been duped by a politically astute

Mrs Mohan. At home, he poured himself a glass of scotch and taunted Nimi with cruel questions while she remained mute as usual. Finally, Nimi replied when he asked whether she was plain stupid. “To his amazed ears and her own shocked ears, as if waking up to a moment of clarity before death, she said, ‘you are the one who is stupid’ “ (304). Jemubhai responded by hitting her and emptying his glass on her head.

> Then, when this wasn’t enough to assuage his rage, he hammered down with his fists, raising his arms to bring them down on her again and again, rhythmically, until his own hands were exhausted and his shoulders next day were strained sore as if from chopping wood. He even limped a bit, his leg hurting from kicking her (304).

Jemubhai Patel is a person who is mentally sick and he vents out his anger on Nimi in devastating violence. His violence against Nimi has nothing to do with her. “She soon realised that whatever she did, or didn’t do, the outcome was much the same” (305). Soon after the incident, he resolves to send Nimi to her family and informs her of his decision. As wretched as she is, Nimi refuses to leave as this would disgrace her family. “She could take it for herself- in fact it would be like a blame, a dark place to hide herself- but for her family- well, the thought of their shame on her behalf was too much to bear” (305). For the first time, Jemubhai talks to her in a kind tone and tells her that sending her back was a kindness as he might kill her if she remained. The terrible irony in this statement is not lost on the reader. Study into the psyche of hardened criminals often reveals mental illnesses of various natures. This statement seems to explain the horrifying intensity of Jemubhai’s hatred which could lead to cold blooded murder.

> The anger, once released, like a genei from a bottle, could never again be curtailed...His hatred was its own creature; it rose and burned out, reappeared of its own accord, and in her he sought only its justification, its perfection. In its purest moments he could imagine himself killing her (305).

Nimi gave birth to a daughter six months after being sent to Piphit. When Jemubhai received a telegraph about the news, he got drunk but not out of joy. “Without seeing his child, he was sure what it would look like: red as a blister, going off like a kettle, spilling liquids, waves of heat and anger emanating from it” (305). His dreadful imaginings of his own flesh and blood reveals a psychotic nature. Jemubhai refuses to take back or even see his wife and child despite appeals from his father in law and father, who even arrive in Bonda to talk to him. Jemubhai is defensive when his father tells him that sending him to England was a mistake and that he has become a stranger.

> He had been recruited to bring his countrymen into the modern age, but he could only make it himself by cutting them off entirely, or they would show up reproachful, pointing out to him the lie he had become (306).

The two men barely talk and Jemubhai does not ask after anyone in Piphit. His father barely stayed for two nights and that was the last that Jemubhai had any contact with his family. Somewhere during the years, a telegraph arrived to inform about Nimi’s death. She had caught fire over the stove. “The judge chose to believe it was an accident” (308). Nimi Patel is not one of the major characters in this book and details about her life are brief. With a few lines and excerpts, Desai deft fully manages to make Nimi Patel

one of the most heartbreaking figures in the book. Her tragic life is all the more compelling for this act.

Nimi's tragic life and the sense of pathos surrounding the loss of beauty and joy in her life is poignantly portrayed through a historical account. During her brief life with the judge, a despairing Nimi would often climb up the roof and watch the the ruins across the Jamuna river. It was a hunting lodge dated to the Mughal Emperor, Jehangir, which now consisted of a few arches with carvings of irises.

> The Mughals had descended from the mountains to invade India but, despite their talent in waging war, were softhearted enough to weep for the loss of this flower in the heat; the persistent dream of the iris was carved everywhere, by craftsmen who felt the nostalgia, saw the beauty of what they had made and never known (172).

The contrasting description of the bloodthirst of the Mughals intermingled with their compassion for a flower is evocative of the judge's brutality towards Nimi's soft fragility. Psychoanalysis gives importance to the use of symbols and metaphors to decipher hidden meanings. "Psychoanalysis finds in art a system of symbols, representing a hidden reality, and by analysis it can testify to the purposive genuineness of the symbols..." (Singh 174). Describing Jemubhai Patel as simply an Anglophile is too mild a description. His fixed paranoia over English culture and how this obsession rules his personal life reveals a person who suffers from a serious psychological disorder. The judge is alienated from his own self all the more as he is aware that for all his cultivated colonial mannerisms, he still remains a native to the English. Jemubhai frequently goes hunting but is a terrible hunter. The cook

would salvage his reputation by cooking a chicken and presenting it as the shot of the day. The dish would be proclaimed a "Roast bustard", which was evocative of the Englishman's favourite joke book of incorrect English by natives. "But sometimes, eating that roast bustard, the judge felt that the joke might be on him, and he called for another rum, took a big gulp, and kept eating feeling as if he was eating himself..." (*IL* 63). After retirement, the judge who is now alienated from everyone, relocates to Kalimpong at the foot of the Himalayas to live a life of isolation. He buys a house named Cho Oyu, which had been built by a Scotsman. It is no coincidence that the judge purchases a colonial house. The Scottish builder apprises him about the house he was purchasing and tells him that the land has potential. "The judge was not interested in agricultural possibilities of the land but went to see it, trusting the man's word- the famous word of a gentleman- despite all that had passed" (28). The judge's blind faith in the word of an Englishman reveals his Anglicism. The judge surveys the house and views it as an escape. "The judge could live here, in this shell, this skull, with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country, for this time he would not learn the language" (29).

Used to a certain standard of lifestyle acquired during his years of service under colonial government, Jemubhai employs a cook and lives with Mutt, his beloved dog. His granddaughter Sai enters his life much later. The judge's lifestyle is typical of an Englishman. Jemubhai Patel dresses in western attire, relishes afternoon tea with biscuits, has hunting rifles, eats western cuisine most of the time and cannot do without dessert. "The judge ate even his chapattis, his puris and parathas, with knife and fork. Insisted that Sai, in his presence, do the same" (176). The judge would also meticulously observe a typically western mode of formal dining with different courses. When the cook serves only plain biscuits during tea time, the judge becomes upsets. "Never ever was the tea served the way it should be, but he demanded at least a cake or

scones, macaroons or cheese straws. Something sweet and something salty. This was a travesty and it undid the very concept of tea time" (3). When Sai first arrived, the cook, in his excitement had forgotten to serve the soup. "The judge brought down his fist. The soup after the main course? The routine had been upset" (33). This reveals the severely obsessive tendency of the judge. With an eye for detail, the narrator meticulously describes the judge's very English way of dining. "The judge speared a bit of meat with his fork, dunked it in the gravy, piled on a bit of potato and mashed on a few peas, put the whole thing into his mouth with the fork held in his left hand" (109).

Jemubhai sleeps with his dog Mutt and his extreme affection towards the animal presents a stark dichotomy to his revulsion for humans. He uses baby talk while conversing with Mutt and feeds her the choicest food. The judge becomes mad with grief when Mutt is stolen during the height of the bloody uprising of the Gorkha insurgency. He actually steps out of the house to search for her and asks neighbours to search for his missing dog. The situation is revealed in the lines below. "He received blank faces, some angry laughter. 'Saala Machoot... what does he think? We're going to look for his dog?' People were insulted. 'At a time like this. We can't even eat!' " (289). The judge does not realise the inappropriateness of his request. It was a time when Kalimpong was in complete chaos; shops were closed, there was starvation, people were being killed and the gutters in the street were a bloody mess. "On the road to the market, the trees were hung with the limbs of enemies- which side and whose enemy?" (295). He even visits the SDO who becomes angry and replies, "A dog! Justice, just listen to yourself. People are being killed. What can I do?" (291). The judge finally returns homeward in a daze. He behaves in a delirious manner and calls out to Mutt tenderly and also begs whoever had stolen Mutt to return her.

> He shouted all the language that was between Mutt and himself, sending nursery words of love flying over the Himalayas, rattled her leash so it clinked the way that made her jump-whoop!-up on all four legs together, as if on a pogo stick. “Walkie, baba, muffin...Mutt, mutton, little chop... he cried, then, “forgive me, my little dog...please let her go whoever you are...” (292).

As a curfew was strictly imposed, a soldier follows the judge and urges him to return home. The judge angrily tells the man to leave him alone in a British accent, imagining that his accent would make a difference and continues his display of mad grief. The soldier continues to follow the judge and notes his strange behaviour. “Something indecent was happening” (293). Later at home, the soldier tells his wife about the bizarre behaviour of the judge. “ ‘God knows what happens, these senile men and their animals... you know’, he said, ‘all kind sof strange things...’” (293). The manner which the soldier describes the judge suggests that perhaps he is viewed as peculiar and maybe even a tad round the bend by the locals. Madness is after all, often subjective and based on socially accepted ideas or concepts. As for Mutt, she had been sold to a family who did not really care for her but just wanted to own a pedigree dog. “She was just a concept” (321).

Jemubhai Patel’s devastation over the disappearance of his pet dog Mutt is understandable. However, there is reason to believe that his grief is an underlying facade for something much more complicated which only a psychoanalytic study may grasp. The agnostic judge gets down on his knees to pray to God for the return of Mutt. His anguished mind then wanders to his past actions and decisions.

> For sins he had committed that no court in the world could take on... Yet he thought of his family that he had abandoned. He thought of his father, whose strength and hope and love he had fed on, only to turn around to spit in his face. Then he thought of how he had returned his wife, Nimi (302).

The judge thinks of Nimi and how he had left her. “Stolen her dignity, shamed his family, shamed hers, turned her into the embodiment of their humiliation” (302). His long buried conscience surfaces and he ponders distraughtly over her demise; whether he had caused her death by abandoning her. He thinks of Sai’s late mother, the daughter he never knew. The judge had condemned his daughter to a life in boarding school after Nimi had died tragically under mysterious circumstances. He had been relieved when, “she (Sai’s mother) reached a new height of uselessness and absurdity by eloping with a man who had grown up in an orphanage” (308). His daughter and son in law had tragically died in an accident and that is how an orphan Sai had come to live with him. The judge seems to have locked away his painful memories and these long suppressed recollections of pain and guilt were triggered by Mutt’s disappearance. There seems to be a displacement of grief.

> In displacement there is a shift of emotion or symbolic meaning from a person or object towards which it was originally directed to another person or object. Often displacement involves difficult emotions, such as hostility and anxiety. In some instances the individual whose hostility has been aroused by an outside person or event may turn the hostility inward, engaging in exaggerated self accusations and recriminations, and feel severe guilt and self devaluation (Coleman 126)

Jemubhai Patel is a man who is one of the elite Indians, having served in the Indian Civil Service and had a successful career. His psyche however, remains a chaotic mess and this affects his personal life. He has bottled all his painful memories for so long and refuses to address or come to terms with his past. However, in his old age, this long held repression appears to be forcing itself through little slips and incidents. “His memory seemed triggered by the tiniest thing” (*IL* 113). Despite his resolve, he recalls his psychologically tumultuous past.

> The judge picked up a book and tried to read, but he couldn’t. He realized, to his surprise, that he was thinking of his own journeys, of his own arrivals and departures, from places far in his past...Many years had passed, and yet the day returned to him vividly, cruelly (35).

According to psychoalanysis, “The unconscious memories of urges continue to seek expression and may emerge in the form of ‘accidents’, ‘slips’ or neurotic symptoms” (Morgan 589). Basing on outward behaviour, he appears to be an aloof and sadistic man who abuses his servants and is incapable of kindness or love towards his fellow human beings. However, a psychoanalytic analysis into his psyche helps us to understand him better. The judge is in fact, a victim of his own neurosis; a severely unhappy figure haunted by repressed and painful memories. “The judge felt old, very old, and as the house crumbled about him, his mind, too seemed to be giving way, doors he had kept firmly closed between one thought and the next, dissolving” (*IL* 110). These lines create a moving image of the crumbling old house which beautifully symbolises the disintegration of the judge’s psyche.

The judge appears to be fighting against his recollections of the past as his fragile psyche cannot handle it. Against his better judgement, he agrees to meet an old colleague called Bose who had also been in the ICS. Bose tries to reminisce about the past as old men do but the judge is unwilling. “Bose was drinking peg after peg, desperate to wrangle something- a common memory, an establishment of truth that had, at least, a commitment from two people” (205). Bose is struggling with his own frustrations and demons as well. It is interesting how Bose needed a confirmation of memory from another man to know that it was real; as if he did not trust his own psyche. Bose comes to the wrong man as the judge’s demons are of a different nature. He does not wish to open the floodgates of memory. “He wouldn’t tumble his pride to melodrama at the end of his life and he knew the danger of confession- it would cancel any hope of dignity forever” (208). Unlike Bose, Jemubhai does not wish to revisit the past. “It was possible to forget and sometimes essential to do so” (308). Jemubhai has consciously repressed his memories as he feels that it would destroy him to face them. “In this life, he remembered again, you must stop your thoughts if you wished to remain intact, or guilt and pity would take everything from you, even yourself form yourself” (264). Jemubhai is not a cruel man by choice. “Sai arrived, and he was worried that she would incite a dormant hatred in his nature, that he would wish to rid himself of her as he had her mother, her grandmother” (210). The judge is a slave to his own hatred and is incapable of controlling his emotions. However, he found that Sai was a westernized Indian like him and he saw something achingly familiar in her. “The grandaughter whom he didn’t hate was perhaps the only miracle fate had thrown his way” (210). A psychoanalytical analysis of the judge convinces the reader that he is a figure to be pitied. This is probably because the judge hates himself as much as he dislikes the entire human race. Through a psychological study into the delicate mental condition of Jemubhai Patel’s psyche, we realise that he is a man who is in pain, trapped within the confines of his own psyche

and is in the brink of a mental and emotional breakdown. Psychoanalysis tells us that the Id cannot stay repressed forever.

> The underlying assumption is that when some wish, fear, memory, or desire is difficult to face we may try to cope with it by repressing it, that it is, elimiminating it from the conscious mind. But this doesn't make it go away: it remains alive in the unconscious, like radioactive matter buried beneath the ocean, and constantly seeks a way back into the conscious mind, always succeeding eventually (Barry 100).

Seventeen year old Sai is an Anglophile like her grandfather, Jemubhai Patel. She remains one of the most endearing characters in the book. Unlike her grandfather, Sai is kind towards the cook and has a natural empathy for people in distress. She is also in the middle of a romantic relationship with Gyan, who is her Nepalese Math tutor. Unknown to Sai, Gyan is seduced by a group of Nepalese insurgents, some of whom, as the book opens, are marching to Sai's house to steal her grandfather's old rifles. Sai realises later onwards that Gyan must have informed his friends about the guns as Sai had shown him around the old house during the course of their romance. To Gyan's credit, he had unwittingly revealed the guns to the others and had not known about the planned robbery. Their brief romance is cut short by the Insurgency movement.

Sai is the only child of Jemubhai Patel's only daughter whom he had never seen. Sai's parents, Mr and Mrs Mistry had been scientists who worked in Moscow, Russia. This was during the close of the Indo-USSR romance and Sai's father had been picked from the Indian Air Force as a possible candidate for the Intercosmos program. Before the couple went off to Moscow, they hastily put their six year old Sai in the same convent which her mother, Mrs

Mistry had attended. Tragically, their lives were cut short when one day, a speeding local bus ran into them and the young couple died under the wheels of a foreign vehicle in a foreign land.

It is pertinent to delve into the psyche of little Sai in order to be able to understand the young woman she becomes. Seventeen year old Sai appears to be a very sensitive girl, mature beyond her years and has only adults for company. She is unable to forge friendships with her contemporaries and instead spends time with her elderly retired neighbours, the sisters Noni, Lola and Father Potty and Uncle Booty. Sai has experienced complex emotions such as death and loss since a tender age. While in the convent, Sai would communicate with her parents through letter writing. “But the letters seemed like book exercises. Sai had not seen her parents in two whole years and the emotional immediacy of their existence had long vanished” (*IL* 28). Sai’s grandmother, Nimi Patel, had gradually been ostracised by her own family after her marriage failed, although for no fault of hers. Her mysterious death is troubling and there are strong hints of foul play. It is probable therefore, that Sai’s mother did not have good relations with her mother’s family. Furthermore, her eloping with Mr Mistry had caused irrevocable damage to an already estranged relationship and she was ultimately disowned. Little Sai, hence, does not have any emotional support and has no blood ties with anyone besides her parents, who has left her in a convent. We are therefore given reason to believe that young Sai suffers from a feeling of abandonment and possibly, trauma.

Sai is informed of her parents’ tragic death by dour faced nuns who try their best to be sympathetic. Emotional detachment is often the sign of a traumatised psyche and this is reflected in the fact that Sai did not mourn her parents. “She tried to cry, but she couldn’t” (28). Her fragile psyche seems to

be numbed and the lines below are revealing. " 'I'm an orphan', Sai whispered to herself, resting in the infirmary. 'My parents are dead. I am an orphan' " (27). She seems to be willing herself to mourn and is making a conscious effort to remind herself of the tragedy that had befallen her. After Sai is orphaned, the nuns discuss the practical consequences. "This month there would be no Mistry bank draft in the convent coffers, no mandatory donations to the toilet renovation fund and bus fund, to fete days and feast days" (28). The women notice the single listing in the emergency contact for Sai and they decide to pack the girl off to the now retired Chief Justice, Judge Jemubhai Patel. He was her grandfather after all. It is heartbreaking to imagine the rioting emotions which Sai had to deal with at a very tender age. To lose her parents suddenly and then, to have to deal with a completely new environment and meeting a grandfather she had never known. The traumatic experience would have been compounded by the fact that her grandfather is a bitter man whose only act of kindness is that he does not turn her away from his house. Through Sai and her grandfather, Desai presents a tragic picture of two people, who are very different from each other but share a common link of suffering from severe emotional disability.

Another aspect that Sai and her grandfather had in common was their English education. Having been raised in a convent, the white culture was so ingrained in her that she is completely anglicised.

> The system might be obsessed with purity, but it excelled in defining the flavour of sin...This Sai had learned. This underneath, and on top a flat creed: cake was better than laddoos, forkspoon knife better than hands, sipping the blood of Christ and consuming a wafer of his body was more civilized than

> garlanding a phallic symbol with marigolds. English was better than Hindi (30).

Sai's Anglicism eventually alienates her from Gyan but it causes Jemubhai Patel to tolerate her better. When the robbery at Cho Oyu occurs and the GNLF boys demand that tea and snacks be arranged, Sai struggles to prepare tea in the kitchen. "Sai, her hands shaking, stewed tea in a pan and strained it, although she had no idea how to properly make tea this way, the Indian way. She only knew the English way" (6). Soon after Sai's arrival, the judge decides that sending Sai to the local government schools would be too risky as she might come up speaking the wrong accent (Indian) and therefore, decides to hire a private tutor instead. Not surprisingly, the judge is unable to provide his orphan granddaughter with the affection she desperately craved. Instead, it is the simple, nameless cook who pampers her and gives her affectionate pet names. The cook also entertained Sai by regaling to her, concocted stories of her grandfather in the old days.

Sai's attachment to the cook and her craving for affection is touchingly expressed over how she envies Biju, the cook's son, who is presently struggling to make a living in America. The cook and his son Biju shares a very close father son relationship and enjoys each others' company. "They hadn't noticed Sai, then aged thirteen, staring from her bedroom window, jealous of the cook's love for his son" (103). Sai had been overjoyed when Biju's visa had been approved by the American embassy. "If his son were around, he (cook) would pay only the most cursory attention to her. She was just the alternative, the one to whom he gave his attention if he could not have Biju, the real thing" (187). This is reminiscent of the psychoanalytical concept referred to as, "Displacement". "In displacement, the motive remains unaltered but the person substitutes a different goal object for the original one" (Morgan 590). To

appreciate the terrible poignancy of Sai's jealousy, we have to understand the stark social and economic divide between Sai and Biju. Sai belongs to the cream of Indian society and has had the best education that money can buy. Her grandfather is one of the first few Indians who have served under the elite Indian Civil Service. Her late parents were also a part of the intellectual set in post independence India. Despite such a privileged lineage, Sai envies Biju, the son of the cook. Biju's mother had died when he was small and the boy had experienced nothing but abject poverty his whole life. His father's devotion appears to be the only thing of worth in his life.

Although Sai herself does not realise it, she suffers from a sense of utter loneliness and has a crippling lack of self esteem. These are psychological issues which can only be understood from a psychoanalytical perspective. At age seventeen, she talks to herself and often views her own mirror image like that of a stranger. This echoes her feelings of alienation from her own self.

> Sai, walking to the kitchen, caught a glimpse of herself being smothered and reached forward to imprint her lips on the surface, a perfectly formed film star kiss. "Hello," she said, half to herself and half to someone else (*IL* 2).

While looking at her mirror image, Sai thinks about the fact that no human had ever seen an adult giant squid alive. "Theirs was a solitude so profound they may never encounter another of their own tribe. The melancholy of this situation washed over Sai" (2). These lines convey the terrible loneliness of young Sai which enables her to emphatize with an elusive sea creature. Whenever Sai spots children with doting parents, she wonders, "Had her mother been like this? And her father? Sai felt suddenly bereft and jealous of these children" (213). At one instant, she chance upon a happy Tibetan family

in a restaurant cooing over a baby and this happy scene depressed her. “Why couldn’t she be part of that family? Rent a room in someone else’s life?” (213). It is significant that Gyan had entered Sai’s life at a time when she is most vulnerable; the prime of her adolescence. It is not surprising that young Sai who is already a mini adult, suffers from a loss of self and has low self worth. She would often scrutinise herself in the mirror and struggle to find beauty.

> She sometimes thought herself pretty, but as she began to make a proper investigation, she found it was a changeable thing, beauty. No sooner did she locate it than it slipped from her grasp; instead of disciplining it, she was unable to refrain from exploiting its flexibility. She stuck her tongue out at herself and rolled her eyes, then smiled beguilingly (74).

Sai’s Anglicism also drives a wedge between herself and Gyan. She has inherited her grandfather’s revulsion for the Indian custom of eating with one’s hands. “Eating together they had always felt embarrassed- he, unsettled by her finickiness and her curbed enjoyment, and she, revolted by his energy and his fingers working the dal, his slurps and smacks” (176). This literary wonder traces the life of Sai from childhood to early womanhood and explores the most intimate moments of her life. Although Sai’s psyche is a riot of complex adolescent feelings and emotions, there is not a single incident where she betrays her feelings either through words or deeds. On the contrary, she is always well behaved and calm. Sai tells Gyan about her parents and the past but never confides her dark thoughts. It is evident that Sai represses her emotions well. This unhealthy repression of her feelings comes into play once again after her romance with Gyan comes to an end. Soon after the robbery, Sai had spotted Gyan in an insurgency procession and figured that he must have instigated the robbery. The two lovers quarrel bitterly and harsh words are

exchanged. She does not express his sorrow to anyone and conceals the symptoms of heartbreak under the common cold.

> Her rescuer was the common domestic cold. Heroically, it caught her common domestic grief in the nick of time, muddled the origin of her streaming eyes and sore throat, shuffled the symptoms of virus and disgraceful fall from the tightrope of splendrous love. Shielded thus from simple diagnosis, she enveloped her face in the copious folds of a man's handkerchief (251).

Sai mourns over the loss of Gyan's affections and begins to question her previous feelings. "Was her affection for Gyan just a habit? How on earth could she think of someone so much?" (252). Mutt goes missing not long after. Sai, who is always kind but not particularly over fond of Mutt goes berserk with grief over the missing dog. "When Mutt went missing, Sai, who had hidden her loss of Gyan first in a cold and then in the madness of the hillside, found a disguise so perfect, even she was confused as to the origin of her misery" (309). Instead of addressing the real cause of her grief, a broken Sai searches for Mutt in despair. Her confusion over the real cause of her misery suggests a psychological imbalance. This displacement of grief echoes psychoanalytical issues of repression, suppression and displacement. Sai is a young girl who is struggling with herself and has a lot of emotional baggage which she suppresses, however unintentionally. Her actions and behaviour can only be best understood through a psychoanalytical reading.

Gyan, the twenty year old Nepalese tutor is essentially a good but simple person with no particular political aspirations or beliefs. He is influenced by the fervour of the Gorkha liberation movement and in a singular

moment of passion, inadvertently betrays Sai by informing the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) members about the guns at the judge's residence. It is significant that Gyan hails from a poor family whose ancestors had served under the British army as soldiers. When Gyan was a small boy, the last family recruit had returned, a broken man.

> There was nobody who could remember him, but finally, their father's childhood memories were resurrected and the man was recognized as an uncle. He had lived with Gyan's family until he died, but they never discussed where he had travelled to, or which countries he had fought against. He came of a generation, all over the world, for whom it was easier to forget than to remember, and the more their children pressed, the more their memory dissipated" (142).

Gyan remembers his astonishment as a small boy when he learned that his grandfather had never been to England although he had committed his whole life to the cause of British Empire. During the height of their fleeting romance, Gyan and Sai exchange their past as confidantes. Gyan doesn't answer when Sai asks him about what his father had been like and she wisely didn't press him. "Sai asked, but she didn't press him. After all, she knew about stories having to stop" (143). Gyan tells Sai that Tenzing Norway was the real hero when the two make an excursion to see the socks of the man, displayed at a Darjeeling museum. "Tenzing was certainly first, or else he was made to wait with the bags so Hilary could take the first step on behalf of that colonial enterprise of sticking your flag on what was not yours" (155). There is a sense of loss, colonial exploitation and bitterness that pervades Gyan's ancestral history. Gyan's grandfather, the last family recruit in the British army had returned to Kalimpong with a missing toe when Gyan was quite small and it

took a while for the family to recognize him. Gyan's family never discovers what this relative had been through as a soldier. In the event of painful memories, the mind often blanks out or represses the past. This defence mechanism may either be conscious or subconscious.

In addition to the heritage of sadness and loss that Gyan bears, he also struggles to come to terms with the issue of social divides and the reason for his family's terrible poverty. Gyan is a young and ambitious man whose psyche is disturbed by such grave concerns. The fervour of the Gorkha movement triggers these feelings which have remained suppressed. It is interesting that Gyan becomes powerfully stirred by the protests considering the fact that he does not possess any political ideology for the Gorkhaland movement. Gyan seems to have transferred his anxiety for the future towards the liberation movement. This could also be true for many of the Nepali protestors. "Were they taking their cues from old protest stories or from the hope of telling a new story" (157). While in the market, Gyan chances to witness a procession of the Gorkha Liberation Army. A man stands up and expounds on the many injustices suffered by the Indian Nepalese who were treated like minority in a place where they were majority. He passionately urges the Nepalis to unite under the banner of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). Gyan is intensely swayed by the fervour of the speech. "It suddenly became clear why he had no money and no real job had come his way, why he couldn't fly to college in America, why he was ashamed to let anyone see his home" (160). Suddenly, Sai's Anglicised behaviour and privileged lifestyle sickens him and he views her as the enemy. "For a moment all the different pretences he had indulged in, the shames he had suffered, the future that wouldn't accept him- all these things joined together to form a single truth" (160). His frustration with life and underlying bitterness over colonial exploitation was redirected towards Sai and her grandfather who represented colonial dominance with their

English customs. At a subconscious level, both Gyan and Sai appear to be aware that his anger towards her was misplaced. Sai even tells him, " 'You hate me,' said Sai, as if she'd read his thought, 'for big reasons, that have nothing to do with me. You aren't being fair' " (260). However, being unable to understand his frustrations, Gyan chooses to ignore his instincts. He needed an object to direct his deep rooted anxiety.

> He realized Sai could not be the cause of what he felt, but as he left he slammed the gate shut...She was defining his hatred, he thought. Through her, he caught sight of it-oh-and then he couldn't resist sharpening it, if only for clarity's sake" (174).

And so Gyan voiced an adamant opinion that the Gorkha movement should take the harshest route possible. "So, in the excitement of the moment, he told. Of the guns and the well stocked kitchen, the liquor in the cabinet, the lack of a phone and there being nobody to call for help" (177). The following morning, Gyan's fervour quiets down and he feels terribly guilty and frightened. But it was already too late. Gyan's betrayal appears to be an unforgivable thing. A psychoanalytical study into his psyche helps up to better understand the reason behind what had led to his betrayal.

Desai has cleverly allowed the cook to remain nameless throughout the story. This symbolises his nonexistent social standing in the world. He resides in a little hut nearby Cho Oyu with only a few meagre belongings and has been with the judge since he was fourteen years of age. This poor man represents the en masse of the nameless downtrodden. The cook is not an Anglophile himself but he has the similar mentality which believes in white superiority. His father had served as a cook under the British Raj and had helped to get him his present job under the judge. He had not been impressed with his Indian

employer and considered it a step down from his father who had served white men only. “The ICS was becoming indianized and they didn’t like it, some of the old servants, but what could you do?” (63). The cook often regales Sai about the glory days of the past, most of which are concocted. He mentions a special hen which provided eggs for them. “They were a foreign breed and that hen laid more eggs than any other murgi I have known” (60). It makes little sense that a foreign hen would lay more eggs than a local one. However, this naive statement reveals that the Britishers may have left but the psychological impact in the minds of the natives have remained. The cook is a simple and kind man whose one true joy in life is his son Biju, who is in America. He doesn’t mind his own pitiable living condition as long as his son prospers. Contrary to what he imagines, Biju is struggling to survive in America and bouncing from one restaurant to another as a dishwasher and doing other odd jobs. The cook is affectionate towards Sai and regales her with elaborate fabricated tales of her grandfather’s supposedly grandiose past. He went so far as to claim that the judge had been born in a palace and that he had desperately loved his late wife, also that the judge had been a superb hunter whom everyone admired. The poor man seems to enjoy his fictitious tales as much as Sai enjoyed listening to them. “The cook couldn’t help but enjoy himself, and the more he repeated his stories, the more they became truer than the truth” (225). The cook would also spin similarly tall yarns about the glorious past to other people whenever he visits the market place. “He fanned a rumour of the judge’s lost glory, and therefore of his own, so it flamed and prospered up and down the market” (55). His present miserable condition is appeased by an enviable past, however illusionary.

The cook appears to be delusional and lives in an imaginary world. After a peaceful political procession for Gorkhaland turns violent, the cook walks about the market place in a daze. He had been a part of the procession as

it had been made compulsory to participate. The cook views the aftermath of the chaos; the pool of blood, odd slippers, broken spectables, even a tooth, scattered on the ground and the traumatic experience affects him powerfully. He brokenly reasseses the delusional life he had been living and suddenly a fear overtakes him. He wonders if his son is real after all. “The letter had had come to him all these years were only his hope writing to him. Biju was just a habit of thought. He didn’t exist. Could he?” (278). It is obvious that the cook is suffering from trauma after witnessing the terrible event.

The power of the psyche is demonstrated by the cook’s behaviour when Mutt is stolen. The judge behaves like one mentally deranged and ends up blaming the innocent cook for his beloved pet’s disappearance. He threatens to kill the cook unless Mutt is retrieved. The judge issues an ultimatum to the cook and says,

> Find her. It’s your fault. Mutt was in your care! I will kill you. Wait and see. You didn’t do your duty. You didn’t watch over her. It was your duty and you let her be stolen. How dare you? How dare you?? (313).

The judge’s conviction that the cook was to blame for Mutt’s disappearance affects the latter’s psyche and he begins to believe that he was actually responsible.

> The cook wondered if he had done something wrong and his guilt began to grow. Had he indeed been negligent? He had failed in his duty, hadn’t he?... He began to weep without looking at anyone or anything and disappeared into the forest (313).

The bereaved cook is unable to find Mutt. His fragile mind, already weakened by an imaginary guilt, wanders and the thin line between reality and imaginary blurs. He wonders whether the light of his life, his son Biju is real. “he had none...he’d never had one...it was just his hope writing to him...Biju was nonexistent” (321). The cook returns to Cho Oyu in a drunken haze and implores the judge to beat him. The judge is enraged, “How dare he lose Mutt how dare he not find her how dare he presume to come and disturb the judge” (318). The cook falls at his employer’s feet and confesses petty misdemeanours of the past which incites the judge’s rage and he rains blows upon the poor man. Alerted by the sound of ruckus, Sai runs inside and tries to stop the men in vain. The cook invites his ‘punishment’ and brokenly implores the judge to kill him. The disturbing ugliness of the scene is expressed below.

> The judge was beating down with all the force of his sagging puckering flesh, flecks of saliva of flying from his slack muscled mouth, and his chin wobbled uncontrollably. Yet that arm, from which the flesh hung already dead came down, bringing the slipper upon the cook’s head (321).

The above extract presents a vivid picture of a mentally deranged man whose rage is dangerously uncontainable. However unconscious, the dawning of something not quite right with them, the realisation of a flawed psychosis is suggested in Sai’s helpless remark. “ ‘There’s something filthy going on’, Sai wept and covered her ears, her eyes, “Don’t you know? Can’t you tell? Something filthy is going on’. But they didn’t stop” (321). Sai fled the terrible scene and wallows in her own cocoon of misery. She continues to hear the dull thuds from the two men and wonders, “Could it really be for Mutt’s sake...?” (321). This statement has the ring of a dawn of realisation. This breakthrough happens towards the end of the novel, an awakening of the realm of the

subconscious. The merging of bouts of sanity with insanity; the clarity of thought mingled with the mind's nefarious tricks is expressed in the nature of the rabies sickness. "In between the madness of rabies came moments of lucidity, so the victims knew exactly what was happening to them, exactly what lunacy looked like, felt like" (290).

The cook's son, Biju is frantic with worry as news of the Nepalese movement for an independent state reaches him in America. Daily life had descended into chaos with the insurgency uprising and phone lines in Kalimpong are cut. Unable to ring his father to check on him, Biju is determined to return to India to ensure that his father is safe and sound. Everybody warns him not to return and that he will regret his decision but Biju is adamant. While shopping for gifts to take home to India, nostalgia takes over Biju and he fondly reminisce his idyllic pastoral life in rural India. "He remembered bathing in the river, feeling his body against the cool firm river muscle, and sitting on a rock with his feet in the water, gnawing sugarcane..." (270). Biju's memory is very selective as he recalls life in India. "He didn't think of any of the things that had made him leave in the first place" (270). Memory is a seductive creature, often deceiving a person into thinking that the past is always glorious. Biju recalls how himself and his father would reminisce about their faraway village near the Jamuna. "How peaceful our village is. How good the roti tastes there! It is because the atta is ground by hand, not by machine...because it is made on a choolah, better than anything cooked on a gas or a kerosene stove...Fresh roti, fresh butter, fresh milk still warm from the buffalo..." (103).

Biju's concern for his father is genuine. Nevertheless, it is not the primary reason for his decision to return. Biju is miserable and lonely in America and he longs to return home. However, he is unable to do so as he will

be deemed a failure and as he does not want to disappoint his father. He is an illegal alien in New York, living in squalor along with other illegal immigrants like him. Biju has entered the United States by dishonestly applying for a tourist visa. Desai hilariously narrates the tactics that Biju and other hopeful applicants deploy while applying for visas at the United States embassy in India. Psychoanalysis has a way of detecting when a person is telling a lie and the applicants would try to master the art of body language.

> Look unafraid as if you have nothing to hide. Be clear and firm when answering questions and look straight into the eyes of the officer to show you are honest. But when you are on the verge of hysteria, so full of anxiety and pent up violence, you could only appear honest and calm by being dishonest (184).

Biju tries whatever he can to convince as well as impress the person behind the counter at the embassy. The desperate hopelessness, responsible for the exodus of natives to foreign shores for a better life is conveyed in the following lines. “Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners, looked back at his own countrymen and women, immediatedly glazed over, and went dead” (183). Biju struggles to make ends meet through a string of odd jobs. He remains as much in awe of the modern world is he is disillusioned by it and is desperately homesick. “Biju was so restless sometimes, he could barely stand to stay in his skin...A homeless chicken also lived in the park. Every now and then Biju saw it scratching in a homey manner in the dirt and felt a pang for village life” (81). Though desperate to return to India, Biju is aware of his difficult predicament. “Biju couldn’t help but feel a flash of anger at his father for sending him alone to this country, but he knew he wouldn’t have forgiven his father for not trying to send him, either” (82). Desai hilariously presents how Biju, representative of a typical struggling third world immigrant, resides

in a world filled with racial clichés and stereotypical prejudices. Biju is relieved as well as alarmed when he spots a Pakistani applying for the same job in America. “But oh, surely not Pakistanis! Surely they would not be hired. Surely Indians were better liked” (22). Both Biju and the Pakistani are hired and the two, strangers to each other, constantly bicker on behalf of their countries. This reveals how a person’s psyche and his mental make up influences the physical world he resides in. Biju’s simple mind is assaulted with so many racial stereotypes and traditional beliefs in the globalized world that he suffers from a loss of identity. “He tried to keep on the right side of power, tried to be loyal to so many things that he himself couldn’t tell which one of his selves was the authentic, if any” (148). The mental make up of a person is moulded by ideas and concepts which are not always logical or rational. These psychological impulses are ingrained and cannot be easily influeneced. This is expressed in the following lines.

> This habit of hate had accompanied Biju and he found that he possessed an awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generousity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harm to India (77).

Being a product of the colonial subjucation, Biju is convinced of the superiority of the Western influence. He appraises them in awe, as if they belonged to a higher, more evolved race of humans. “There was no way to fathom the minds and heart of these great Americans” (184). One night, Jeev, another illegal immigrant who worked with Biju caught a rat foraging inside their tiny cramped kitchen and cruelly doused the creature in lighter fluid before setting it aflame. Jeev had been complaining of sleepless anxiety and has projected the anger and frustrations he feels towards the animal. According to psychoanalysis, “Blaming others (in this case, the rat) or projection, is a way

of coping with one's unwanted motives by shifting them on to someone or something else" (Morgan 289). There is also the suggestion that hate is an emotion which humans sometimes employ in order to adapt to harsh realities. Biju witnesses a butcher swearing at a goat and calling it all kinds of derogatory names before killing the animal. "You have to swear at a creature to be able to destroy it" (*IL* 182). This is similar to the psychoanalytical defense mechanism known as "Rationalization", whereby a person makes an excuse to make himself feel better for an act. In this case, the butcher condemns the goat as an evil creature so as to make himself feel better for butchering it. "Rationalization is not lying; we believe our explanations" (Morgan 589). Biju and a bunch of other illegal immigrants work in the kitchen of a fine restaurant and Desai evokes a thought provoking pictorial image of the two social divides. "The sound of their fight had travelled up the flight of steps and struck a clunky note, and they might upset the balance, perfectly first world on top, perfectly third world twenty two steps below" (*IL* 23). Living as an immigrant takes a tool on the psyche of simple Biju. Becoming friends with other illegal immigrants was emotionally traumatic.

> The men left for other jobs, towns, got deported, returned home, changed names. Sometimes someone came popping around a corner again, or on the subway, then they vanished again. Addresses, phone numbers did not hold. The emptiness Biju felt returned to him over and over, until eventually he made sure not to let friendships sink deep any more (102).

The above not only reveals the loneliness of a simple village boy in a big city but more than that, it poignantly depicts how Biju becomes emotionally detached so as to protect himself. Psychoanalysis describes this act as "Intellectualization". "Intellectualization is an attempt to gain detachment

from an emotionally threatening situation by dealing with it in abstract, intellectual terms" (Hilagard 446). Biju is so homesick that he empathizes with a dead insect and mentally appears to see himself in the place of the insect. "Looking at a dead insect in the sack of basmati that had come all the way from Dehra Dun, he almost wept in sorror and marvel at its journey, which was tenderness for his own journey" (*IL* 191). It is evident that Biju is consumed by self pity and loneliness and is in the brink of a mental breadown.

Meanwhile, the cook, who has no inkling about Biju's increasing despair, brags to anyone who listens, about his son in America. Biju, with all kind intentions, encourages his father's pride. The cook naively believes that everyone in America prospers and hence, grows fat. "The cook knew about them all growing fat there. It was one of the things everyone knew" (233). Biju writes to his father and sweetly proclaims that, "when you see me next, I will be ten times myself" (233). Father and son laughs over these lines across continents. "He laughed as he wrote the lines and the cook laughed very hard when he read them; he lay on his back and kicked his legs in the air like a cockroach" (233). The reality is a stark contrast and a struggling Biju is,"shocked when he went to the ninety nine cent store and found he had to buy his shirts at the children's rack" (233).

Rationalization is a common psychological term, referring to when a person consciously justifies his actions in a manner that seems to him, socially acceptable. Similarly, Biju has rationalized to himself and others that his father is the sole reason for returning home to Kalimpong, India. As previously stated, Biju's concern for his father is indeed genuine. Nevertheless, a psychoanalytic study into Biju's emotional state reveals that this is simply a front for the increasingly powerful homesickness and urge to return home, which has always prevailed in his subconscious. "This (Rationalization) defence

mechanism substitute an acceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one" (Morgan 589). Biju ultimately returns to India. He feels overwhelmed as he steps out of the airport in Calcutta "He looked about and for the first time in God knows how long, his vision unblurred and he found that he could see clearly" (*IL* 300). This statement is obviously metaphorical and not to be taken literally. Biju had been so miserable and isolated in America that his psyche had retreated into a corner and he did not have the courage to face the world. However, he feels at home in his country and this has made all the differnce to him.

Inheritance of Loss presents a coterie of other Anglophile characters like the sisters Noni and Lola, as well as Father Booty and Uncle Potty. They are the fortunate few who are educated, well read and used to the finer things in life like tinned ham, cheese, ponds cold cream, Marks & Spenser's undergarments, English tea, and pastries etc. However, they are also lost in their privileged world and oblivious to the hopeless poverty and frustration of the en masse around them. Noni and Lola are two elderly sisters who live in a well managed rose covered cottage called "Mon Ami". Lola is the widow of an aristocratic Inidan gentleman and Noni is her spinster sister. The two comfortably live off Lola's late husband's sizeable persion. Noni had initially tutored Sai on Maths and Science when the later had first arrived in Kalimpong. Noni confessed her helplessness as the subjects grew more complicated in time and the judge was forced to hire Gyan to tutor Sai. During the height of the Nepalese Gorkha movement, the insurgents encroach the sizeable property of "Mon Ami" and set up camps outside their yard. When Lola goes to complain to the Pradhan, the head of the GNLF, she is cruelly mocked and humiliated. On learning the French name of her cottage, the Pradhan exclaims, "I didn't know we live in France. Do we? Tell me, why don't I speak in French then?" (243). The very fact that Lola goes to the head

of the GNLF to complain proves that she is completely unaware of the rising resentment of the underprivileged. When the sisters learned about the robbery at Cho Oyu, they become fearful for themselves as well. They have a watchman, sweeper, maid and gardener, who are all Nepalis and this makes them even more fearful because of their distrust of the lower class. When Sai absentmindedly reminded them that they have a watchman, Lola replies, “Budhoo? But he’s Nepali. Who can trust him now?” (43). Lola and Noni are both anglophiles. Lola has a daughter Pixie who is a reporter at the British Broadcasting Centre (BBC) and this makes her even more enamoured of the English. Every now and then, Lola goes to England to visit her daughter and comes back completely re commited to the superiority of England.

> Her suitcases were stuffed with Marmite, Oxo bouillon cubes, Knorr soup packets, After Eights, daffodil bulbs, and renewed supplies of Boots cucumber lotion and Marks and Spenser underwear- the essence, quintessence of Englishness as she understood it. Surely the Queen donned this superior hosiery (46)

Noni and Lola relish British shows such as *To the Manor Born*, *Yes, Minister* and devours Jane Austen books. There is an empty jam jar, saved for its prettiness. “ ‘By appointment to Her Majesty the queen jam and marmalade manufacturers,’ it read in gold under a coat of arms, supported by a crowned lion and a unicorn” (44). As Noni appreciates the writer of a book titled, *A Bend in the River*, Lola expresses her opinion of the writer.

> “Oh, I don’t know,” Lola said, “I think he’s strange. Stuck in the past...He has not progressed. Colonial neurosis, he’s never freed himself from it. Quite a different thing now. In fact,” she said, “chicken tikka masala has replaced fish and chips as number one

> take out dinner in Britain. It was just reported in the *Indian Express* (46).

Noni talks about colonial neurosis in another writer but is oblivious to the fact that her description perfectly defines the lifestyle and psyche of herself and Lola. They are the ones who have not progressed and are stuck in the past. It is apparent that the ghost of colonialism still hovers in the little cottage named Mon Ami in the remote North East region of India. By comparism, Noni is the more level headed of the two sisters and she even understands the plight of the insurgents, even symphatizing with them at times. She appears to be a thoughtful woman with repressed desires. Noni, who is a spinster, has never been in love in her entire life. Her widowed sister Lola who had been much indulged by her late husband often behaves childish and freely throws tantrums. On the other hand, Noni thinks about her own emotions which were always in check, not free and irrepressible like Lola. “What did she have? Not even terrible hatreds; not even bitterness, grief. Merely irritations over small things” (68). To her horror she had realized that she felt jealous of their maid, Kesang’s affair with a Sherpa. It speaks volumes that Noni is the only one who appears to sense Sai’s loneliness and emphatises with the young newcomer.

> When Sai had first arrived, Noni had seen herself in her, in Sai’s shyness. This was what came of commiting a sensitive creature to a mean spirited educational system, she thought. Noni, too, had been sent to such a school- you could only remain unsnared by going underground, remaining quiet when asked questions, expressing no opinion, hoping to be invisible- or they got you, ruined you (68).

The above lines reveal a colonial educational system which suppresses and represses the native students, breaking their spirits until they became isolated from their own people. This comes about with a re education, a brainwashing of young mouldable psyches. Noni had been broken like Sai and she had been very lonely. “Noni recovered her confidence when it was too late” (68). Noni is a sad figure with regrets and unfulfilled desires which she subconsciously suppresses. She has a deep rooted anger towards the colonial subjucation and discrimination which she carefully conceals. She reads a book titled, *The Indian Gentleman’s Guide to Etiquette* by H Hardless, which is full of racially patronizing advice for the Indian gentleman and it stirs her rage. “A rush of anger surprised her. It was unwise to read old books; the fury they ignited wasn’t old; it was new” (199). Noni sees her younger self in Sai and encourages the latter to meet people her age. Sai is extremely shy around her peers but she confesses to Noni of her desire to travel. “Books were making her restless. She was beginning to read, faster, more, until she was inside the narrative and the narrative inside her, the pages going by so fast, her heart in her chest- she couldn’t stop...the feeling they created was so exquisite, the desire so painful” (68-69). Along with the political uprising and unstability, there is a strange restlessness within Sai and Noni, a repressed Id which refuses to remain suppressed anymore. “ ‘Now and again, I wish to live by the sea,’ sighed Noni. ‘At least the waves are never still’ ” (69). Noni urges Sai to follow her dreams and take a chance in life. She tells Sai, “Look at me, I should have thought about the future when I was young...You must do it on your own, Sai” (69). There is a terrible and bitter sweet poignancy in this statement. Sai feels a deep loss of identity and tries to capture a truthful physical image in mirrors but even this seems to elude her.

> But how did she appear? She searched in the stainless steel pots, in the polished gompa butter lamps, in the merchants’ vessels in

> the bazaar, in the images proffered by the spoons and knives on the dining table, in the green surface of the pond. Round and fat she was in the spoons, long and thin in the knives, pocked by insects and tiddlers in the ponds; but the mirror, fickle as ever, showed one thing, then another and left her, as usual, without an answer (74).

This is evocative of the "Mirror Stage" article, propounded by the renowed French psychoanalyst and Psychiatrist Jacques Lacan, who famously stated that the mirror reflection is the first and earliest stage where the human child acquires the concept of self. "The child is captivated by its reflection in the mirror which gives it the illusion of wholeness and of control over its body and the environment" (Palkar 170). Although Sai is not a child but in fact, a young woman, she still struggles to find herself as a whole unit in mirror reflections. Desai has marvellously exploited this literary theory to reveal Sai's sense of alienation from her own self. "The projecting space of mirrors is, of course literally and metaphorically, of great importance for novelists and poets" (Huguet 281).

Psychological undercurrents run deep throughout the narrative and there is a physical description of the women in the marketplace in Kalimpong which comes across as deeply symbolic.

> You saw women everywhere in nighties, daughters, wives, grandmothers, nieces, walking to the shops, collecting water in broad daylight as if on their way to bed, long hair, ruffly garments, making a beautiful dream scene in daylight (*IL* 86).

According to Psychoanalysis, dreams contain significant symbols and metaphors. Although the above extract is an active description about the women in the market place, the mention of the dream scene with woman walking about in nighties and flowing hair in broad daylight evokes a deeply psycholoanalytical metaphor. It suggests fantasy; a play between reality and imaginary and the conflicted psyche of the people. There is an eccentric madness in the entire scene. Desai romantically depicts Kalimpong as a place lost in time. A despairing Sai resolves to escape from the place. “She’d have to propel herself into the future by whatever means possible or she’d be trapped forever in a place whose time had already passed” (74). This description is obviously not a physical or geographical perspective but evokes a plethora of emotions like memory and nostalgia which are psychological in nature.

Father Booty and Uncle Potty are two middle aged gay men who live together. Uncle Potty is a fun loving elite Indian who loves his alcohol and Father Booty is a foreigner who also owns a Swiss Dairy Farm. During a house visit, Father Booty is found to be residing illegally in India and is directed to leave Kalimpong within two weeks. The characters are all slightly delusional and lives in an unrealistic world of English comforts, unaware of their fragile social standing and ignorant of the unrest which would inevitably disturb their existence.

“Night Claims the Godavari” is an extract from *Aids Sutra: Untold Stories from India*, an anthology of short stories. This collection has been produced in collaboration with Avahan, the India Aids Initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The book which begins with an introduction by Bill and Melinda Gates, consists of sixteen short stories by leading Indian writers including “Night Claims the Godavari” by Kiran Desai.

This story is an account of Kiran Desai's brief experience with sex workers in coastal Andra Pradesh. Though not strictly a fictional tale, the story has traces of fictitious elements in terms of superstitious beliefs and folklore. Desai has also wrought her fine imaginary twist to the lives of the sex workers. Desai begins the story with her arrival in Delhi Airport to her childhood home. There is a pervading sense of nostalgia as she eloquently describes the home she has grown up in. The writer goes through her family library and reads a story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez that her mother, writer Anita Desai had admired. The story, "The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and her Heartless Grandmother", is a fictitious tale of a young girl who accidently sets fire to her grandmother's house. The furious grandmother thus pimps her granddaughter to a legion of men in order to repay the debt of the destroyed house. Granddaughter and Grandmother journey across deserts and the former is carried on a grand bed carried by porters, serving client after client, but never makes enough to repay her debt. This tragic tale moves the psyche of the writer and the mood is set for the rest of the writer's travel to the delta region of the Godavari river in coastal Andra Pradesh to meet the sex workers. The first thing the author notices on the streets of a village while driving through is the overabundance of beds. This odd observation is reminiscent of the story of Erindira, a romanticized fictional version of today's sex worker.

> Beds being delivered, new old beds, makeshift stage set beds, cheap beds being varnished in the sun, mattresses in the dust. Around this strangeness of beds proliferating, village life seemed as benign as Narayan's Malgudi stories that had created my idea of what it meant to be Indian in this world, in the sweetest incarnation possible (*NCG* 41).

The above extract emphasises the blurring lines of reality and fiction and emphasises how stories affect the psyche and influences perceptions and ideas. The author arrives to Peddapuram, the village of 'high class' sex workers who hails from the Kalavanthalu sub caste. The Kalavanthalu women were hereditary courtesans and temple dancers in the past, famous for their beauty and elegance. "They trace their lineage from the days when they were protected by royalty, priests and landowners, all the way downhill to a franker prostitution as patronage crumbled in a modernising India of another shade of morality" (41). The descendants of these legendary courtesans are now in the flesh trade and work as sex workers. Because of their lineage, they consider themselves superior to the rest of the sex workers, even though the work is the same. There exists a lot of mythical beliefs that seeks to provide a facade of romanticism to this appalling trade. The author is told that each year, the priests select a poor but beautiful Kalavanthalu girl and marries her to the Hindu god Shiva in a temple where the Godavari meets the sea. The girl's family is given 2-3 acres of land by the Village council. A wedding like lavish ceremony is held and the girl spends one night alone with the deity in the temple. Afterwards, the girl is auctioned to the highest bidder. This act of "marrying off" a girl who is fated to be a sex worker gives the girl a facade of respectability and this act is therefore, very psychological in nature. "Most Kalavanthalus are not married in temples any longer- the symbolic ceremony attempts to bring a whiff of distinguished past, of religious approval, to the present" (44). As marriages in temples are no longer done, the women are instead "married off" to banana trees and even their aunts present them the mangalsutra, a traditional necklace ornament worn by married Hindu women. These sex workers enjoy talking about their illustrious ancestors and a certain family of sex workers proudly tells the author that, "They trace their lineage all the way to the three celestial dancers who tried to distract the sage Vishwamitra from his meditation" (45). Another means of enhancing their image in an

illusionary manner is how these high end sex workers are fond of naming themselves after bollywood film stars. “They have glamour and ‘colour’ , name themselves Kareena Kapoor and Sonali Bendre after film stars, without it seeming absurd” (46). A peculiar and revealing observation of the writer is how the sex workers all wear the mangalsutra, a traditional necklace ornament worn by married Hindu women.

> A tremendous amount of discussion about mangalsutras. It seems so sad- all the sex workers have this necklace, this sign of a married woman, about their necks. Everywhere you sense a desire for structure and ritual, for normality in lives singularly without it (44).

Even though the sex workers are single women, struggling to earn a livelihood through the flesh trade, they insist on decking the traditional mangalsutra which obviously does not make much sense. Their action can only be understood from a psychoanalytical approach which reveals the longing for normalcy which is relieved, even if slightly, by this ornament. This can be seen as a kind of voluntary self delusion. This delusional tendency is also revealed in the manner of calling a regular client a “Temporary husband”. “ ‘Temporary husband’ is another English phrase, always uttered with pride at having attracted loyalty within a system conjured for betrayal” (44). Freud often spoke of the defence mechanisms applied by the human mind in the continual tussle amongst the id, ego and superego. “They all involve an element of self deception” (Hilgard 442). This voluntary conscious or unconscious self deception accords a degree of emotional comfort to the person.

Superstitious beliefs and archaic customs play a significant role in the exploitation of young girls in this trade. “On the highway, truckers go

barrelling through the void, their minds becoming convinced of rumours: if you sleep with a virgin and a donkey you won't get AIDS". (*NCG* 49). The author travels further to other villages and encounters similar superstitions. "If you have sex with a Dommarisani, a sex worker from the Dommari street acrobat community, your crops will be good and you will be healthy all year" (51). Like Erendira in "The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and her Heartless Grandmother", many girls are trapped into this trade due to circumstances beyond their control. The writer then meets the most pitiful of workers, the women by the sea who possess nothing of material value and lays down sacks on the ground as beds for customers. These women, in spite of their sordid tales of woe, informs the author that there are other women who are far more tragic than them. Women so unfortunate that they almost seem mythical. These are poor widows who are branded as witches and chased away from the village, their property stolen by greedy villagers. These women are seen as communal property, free for any men to enjoy. "There are mythic creatures of misfortune who actually exist" (53).

This story, with its mythic beliefs and superstitions presents a world where reality truly is stranger and certainly more sordid than fiction. A person, a community's beliefs and its psychological influences play a dominant role in the dark underworld of sex workers.

Kiran Desai's much heralded debut book *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* was published in 1998 and has garnered critical acclaim for its sparkling wit and rich humour. This book has been serialised in the New Yorker and also included in the *Vintage Book of Indian Writing.* Through her vivid imagination and fresh narrative style, Desai has managed to capture the vivid richness of the rural Indian culture in a fresh and comedic manner. Her

bold confidence has proved this much awaited literary debut into a wryly fantastical and thoroughly entertaining read.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is the story of Sampath Chawla who is born in Shakot, a sleepy little Indian town. The town had been subjected to severe drought and Sampath was born on the night the drought ends, when a monsoon sweeps across the little region of Shakot. Furthermore, the Swedish Red Cross also makes a food drop right in front of Sampath's house following his birth. Initially, the roar of the planes flying overhead made Sampath's father, Mr Chawla feel quite anxious. "Could it be that his son's birth had coincided with the end of the world? Leaving Kulfi and the new baby, he and Ammaji ran to the window to investigate, and discovered that far from being the end of things it was more like the beginning" (*HGO* 11). Thus, baby Sampath's birth appears to herald in a new era for the Shakotians and they accord their sudden change of tide to Sampath's birth. Aside from Kulfi, Sampath's eccentric mother, everyone else believes that Sampath is destined to become an important man.

> Soon the house of full of well wishers, chattering excitedly, not knowing whether to talk of the baby or the rain or the food. 'Wonderful', they kept exclaiming, water dripping from their clothes to form pools about their feet. 'What a beautiful baby...and can you believe the monsoon? Oh and the food!... What a baby!' ... Attempting to include Kulfi in their high spirits, the neighbours assured her that her son was destined for greatness, that the world, large and mysterious beyond Shahkot, had taken notice of him (12).

Sampath's name is apt as it means, "Good fortune". However, twenty years swiftly pass and Sampath has yet to fulfil the grand hopes predicted since his birth. He has led an extremely mediocre life, facing failure at school and now, working at the back desk at the Shahkot Post Office. All of Sampath's old classmates are ahead of him, career wise. Sampath cannot seem to find interest in anything in his life and it appears as if he is not going to amount to much. He idly spends his days, day dreaming in tea stalls and singing to himself in public gardens much to the discomfiture of his father who finally manages to find him a job at the post office. Sampath is a peculiar fellow and seems to have inherited his mother Kulfi's fantastic brand of eccentricity. Unlike Mr Chawla, his very conventional father, who thinks the world of a government job and worries a great deal about respectability, Sampath is unhappy with his increasingly conformist life. Mr Chawla's personality is completely diverse from that of his son. He commits a common parental mistake by assuming that his dream for his son is the best one. He fails to see that Sampath is a very different boy and tries to mould Sampath into a younger version of him. Once, the ever energetic Mr Chawla sees Sampath staring listlessly at a fly on top of a fruit and feels annoyed with his son's lack of initiative to do anything about the insect. With a rolled up newspaper, Mr Chawla swats the fly.

> His son was so very annoying. He remembered how, as a young man himself, he had been so full of promise and efficiency. He had been smart, nimble and quick, the opposite of his son, who, now that the fly was dead, sat contemplating the mushrooming of milky clouds in his tea with a blank and hopeless expression in his face (24).

Sampath is compelled to take the job his father finds for him but he is extremely unhappy with his life there. His oddball of a mother, Kulfi Chawla, from whom Sampath has inherited his peculiarities, seems to be the only one who can understand his frustrations. As Mr Chawla berates and lectures his son on being more pro active and responsible, Kulfi thinks strange thoughts and sympathises with her son. "'Pheasants, peacocks, pomegranates, potatoes...poor Sampath' murmurs Kulfi to herself" (26). Sampath talks to himself and his mind endlessly wanders from one subject to the other. He suppresses his instinctive whims and impulses. Ultimately, the repressed emotions are expressed in a shockingly hilarious manner. The inevitable outpouring of his suppressed emotions occurs during the wedding of the post office Head's daughter. Sampath, together with the rest of the staff were required to help out with the wedding preparations. At first, Sampath toes the line and his conventionally respectful behaviour surprises everyone, including himself. When the head of the post office gives him directives on how to conduct himself, Sampath answers in a very automatic manner, as had been drilled into his head by his father, Mr Chawla.

> But, suddenly remembering the advice he had received earlier in the day, mimicking his father's tone of voice, he chirped 'Yes, sir. I will see to it right now, Sir.' But once he began, the latter half of his sentence- the 'right now sir'- amazed and shocked by the preceding words, grew shaky and trailed up thinly into the high ceiling of the room, where the fan revolved with an uneven flutter like an irregular heartbeat, cobwebs having been caught in the blades. They all turned to stare at him in surprise. Never had they heard him attempt such a sentence. It was most uncharacteristic. Realizing himself how odd he had sounded, his

> face burning, Sampath turned and scuttled off to his desk in the dark depths at the back of the post office (32-33).

Sampath's subconscious appears to revolt against this new persona that he is morphing into. He makes a half hearted effort to carry out his assigned tasks for the wedding but his mind is largely distracted. By the end of the day, Sampath is sent home with dire warnings to come early the next day before anybody else as it is discovered that he has not completed any of his tasks. But Sampath is beyond caring. "How they tormented him! He had been having such a nice time, left to his own devices" (34). Soon after, on the day of the wedding, Sampath lets loose his long suppressed impulses and does everything that he shouldn't. He is assigned the job of filling the glasses with sherbet and Sampath helps himself to the drinks instead of serving them. He tosses choice bits of food to stray dogs and after being threatened by angry cooks, goes off snooping around the cupboards at the residence of his head, where the wedding is being held. He drapes himself with lengths of satin, puts on a nose ring and admires his reflection in the mirror. "Now he traced the outline of his face and drew in the fantastic costume. He smiled and bowed at his reflection as if he were his own honoured guest" (40). Finally, dressed in this ridiculous fashion, Sampath steps out to face the guests. He sings loudly, jumps and wades in the fountain and lastly, to the horror of the audience, begins to disrobe in front of everyone. "However, in this flushed moment, he mistook them for cries of admiration. With a style particular to himself, one by one he let the saris and dupattas draped about him fall" (41). Uncaring of the appalled shrieks and his office head, Mr D.P.S.'s stern commands for him to stop, Sampath finally pulls down both his trousers and underpants. It appears to be a moment where the id has taken complete control, uncaring of the ego's restraints. "Its (the Id) function is to gratify our instincts for pleasure without regard for social conventions, legal ethics or moral restraint. Unchecked, it would lead us to any

lengths- to destruction and even self destruction- to satisfy its impulses for pleasure" (Guerin 130). Needless to say, Sampath is immediately fired after the stunt he pulls.

Sampath's family is aghast at the mortifying turn of events and his father shouts that he would have to search for another job all by himself but Sampath does not care. It is also possible that he has behaved deliberately reckless for the purpose of getting fired as his father would not have allowed him to quit his job. "But he hated his job anyway. He didn't want his job. He didn't want it, he couldn't do it and he didn't want another job. He would not be able to do that either. He felt defiant." (42). His colleagues Mr Gupta and Miss Jyotsna comes to comfort and gently berate him. Sampath feels suffocated with all the attention and longs to be left alone in peace. He is seriously depressed and wants to escape his life.

> How he hated his life. It was a never ending flow of misery. It was a prison he had been born into. The one time he had a little bit of fun, he was curtailed and punished...All about him the neighbourhood houses seemed to rise like a trap, a maze of staircases and walls with windows that opened only to look into one another. He felt bitter at heart. Surely, he thought, his surroundings were detrimental to his mental health (43)

The above extract is peculiarly sane and is a sharp contrast to the rest of this fantastical book where the whole of Shakot appears to be slightly mad. Sampath wonders about his mental health and this hint at psychological imbalances suggests that his physical actions are linked with the state of his emotional psyche. Having a well meaning but domineering father had led Sampath to repress his largely eccentric behaviour and this is finally beginning

to get to him. When Mr Chawla discovers his son's shockingly appalling behaviour which has led to him losing his job at the post office, he does not try to figure out the reason why Sampath has done what he did. Instead, he orders his son to go to the Bureau of Statistics the very next day and ask if they have any openings. Sampath goes further into a downward spiral of misery. "He did not want another job. He wanted open spaces" (44). His mother Kulfi tries to comfort him by offering him a guava fruit. Sampath takes the proffered fruit in a sulking manner but something happens as he stares at the refreshing cool greenness of the guava. "He could have sworn a strange force had entered him, that something new was circulating within him. He shuddered in a peculiar manner and then he began to smile" (47). Kulfi notices the change in her son and wonders whether the fruit had gone bad. At this point, Sampath tells his mother that he wanted his freedom. It is as if a revelation had been opened before his eyes and Sampath articulately ponders upon everything which is distasteful to him. It is revealing that his father's lectures are amongst the things that he wants to run away from.

> A breeze lifted the hair off his forehead. Goose bumps covered his arms. He thought of Public Transport, of the Bureau of Statistics, of head massages, of socks and shoes, of interview strategies. Of never ever being left alone, of being unable to sleep and of his father talking and lecturing in the room below (47).

The next day, while the rest of the family are off to attend a wedding, Sampath catches the first bus he sees and leaves Shahkot. He has no plans and does not have any idea where the bus is heading but Sampath is deliriously happy. "He thought of how he was leaving the world, a world that made its endless revolutions towards nothing. Now it did not matter anymore. His heart was caught in a thrall of joy and fear" (48). To the great surprise of other passengers, Sampath jumps out of the bus window while the bus was stalling

and he races into the wilderness, towards an old orchard. Sampath climbs up a guava tree and there, he finally feels as if he is home and at peace. “Concealed in the branches of the tree he had climbed, Sampath felt his breathing slow and a wave of peace and contentment overtook him” (50). In the meantime, Sampath’s family, along with the rest of the neighbours are busy searching for him. They gather where Sampath had disappeared to, when the town watchman reports of a man who has climed up a guava tree outside of Shahkot and refuses to come down, or talk to anyone. Mr Chawla who is by now, well familiar with less than normal behaviour, finds no difficulty in believing the story. He states, “If someone in this country is crazy enough to climb up a tree, you can be sure it is Sampath” (53). Sampath is distressed when his family tracks him down and implores him to come home. While the rest of the family shouts and pleads with him, Sampath’s mother Kulfi empathise with her son and almost seems to envy him. She is also a victim of desperate loneliness like her son as she is made to repress her eccentric but true impulses by having married into a “respectable” family who frowns on unconventional behaviour.

> Looking at her son, Kulfi felt the past rushing back to her, engulfing her in the memory of a time when she was young, when her mind was full of dark corners...She looked at her son sitting up in the tree and felt her emotion shift, like a vast movement of the spheres, and then she said, “Let him be” (54-55).

Mr Chawla is furious with his wife and attempts to think of strategies and means to get his son down from the guava tree. He consults a holy man for advice and when asked about Sampath’s affliction, Mr Chawla replies, “He is suffering from madness” (57), in a matter of fact manner. Amongst the many tactics attempted, a bride was also brought to lure Sampath down from up the

tree. Marriage as a remedy is a common psychological euphemism for sexual activity to calm down a high strung person. The girl is encouraged by the gathering crowd to climb up the tree and touch his feet. As she does so, Sampath leaps in horror which makes the poor girl lose her balance and fall to the ground in a heap. Mr Chawla loudly laments the fate of his son while the onlookers look on in curiosity and sympathy. Sampath wants to shout that he be left alone and in peace but is unable to do so. Instead, he looks down below and spots Mr Singh, a familiar face amongst the crowd. Unknown to anyone, he had been opening and reading private letters while working at the post office before he got fired. On spotting Mr Singh, Sampath remembers a particular letter which contained personal information and loudly enquires Mr Singh regarding the same. Naturally, Mr Singh is amazed as to how Sampath could have known such private information and Sampath, encouraged by the astounded reaction, reveals information about other people present, without letting them know about their letters which he had read.

Soon after, Sampath is regarded as a spiritual man with unfathomable wisdom. “Clearly, there was more to this post office clerk than to ordinary mortals. In his eyes they had detected a rare spirit” (67).The next day, Mr Chawla reads about his son’s new found fame in the local newspaper and he is filled with fresh hope and a plan of action is set in motion. A shrewd Mr Chawla decides to earn money off Sampath’s fast gaining reputation as a holy man. He recruits his entire family and they relocate near the guava tree to be closer to Sampath to look after his needs. Sampath is no longer urged to come down. On the contrary, a cot is hoisted up the tree to make him more comfortable and also lend him an appearance of grandiose. “Thus Sampath was gradually provided with all sorts of comforts and, the more elaborate his living arrangements, the happier he was” (70). As more and more devotees gathered

to pay their respects, Sampath would astonish them by revealing bits of information and also spout nonsensical rhymes which leave them in wonder at his supposedly hard to grasp wisdom.

As Sampath's fame as a holy man grew, he is visited by devotees from all over and his family who had once berated him for his peculiar habits now claim that they had always known his streak of genius.

> 'Oh', said Ammaji, chiming in delightedly as she rolled a betel leaf, 'he was born with spiritual tendencies. Everybody was saying maybe he is a little mad, maybe he is a little simple minded, but it is just that he could never interest himself in the material world (96).

Just when Mr Chawla imagines that all is well, a troupe of monkeys invades the orchard and particularly, Sampath's tree. Oddly, the monkeys do not bother Sampath or behave remotely aggressive towards him, but they create chaos for the devotees, including Sampath's family. Mr Chawla who is having a gala time making money off generous devotees and visitors, attempts to talk Sampath into moving into a proper hermitage as the monkeys were creating a ruckus and driving away visitors. Sampath, who feels a kind of endearment towards the monkeys is distressed by this suggestion and declares that he would never move from his tree. Sampath feels angry with his father for even suggesting such a thing. He is ready to live the life of a hermit, removed from all human contact. This reveals the intense emotional detachment that Sampath suffers from. From this point onwards, the whole of Shahkot appears to have turn right around the bend. In order to take care of the monkey menace, a series of plans, each nuttier than the next is conjured. The town's big wigs including the Brigadier, the Superintendent of Police, the District Collector and Chief

Medical Officer, all contribute elaborate plans for this purpose. The devotees had also divided themselves into two groups; one against the removal of the monkeys and the others for it. On his part, Sampath has become attached to the monkeys and amidst the chaos, he longs for the peace that he had enjoyed briefly.

> Sampath remembered his early rapture in the orchard. It had been a love affair; how he had bloomed and blossomed, how his joy, his playfulness had shone upon his face. He remembered, regarding the remains of his collection, how he had spent hours stringing necklaces of seed pods about himself. How he had put flowers behind his ears, sipped their nectar. He had unzipped pods with his teeth and prised open buds to uncover parasols of pink (167).

It is apparent that Sampath's mind is becoming increasingly removed from the previous life that he had once lived. While the world below him is in a state of utter bedlam, Sampath's psyche seems to be drifting into a flight of fancy. "Sampath stared up into the fountains, tilting his head all the way back, to look upon where there was not a trace of civilization...There there were no villages, no houses, no people" (185). His devotees gathered below look at his trance like demeanour and admiringly imagine that he is immersed in deep meditative wisdom. Sampath looks at the creatures teeming around him and envies them.

> Jealously, he looked back at the birds that fluttered about him searching for crumbs: these small creatures with their delicate ribs, their beating wings that scooped hearts light as snow

> through the clarity of air. His face bore a desperate hunted look (186).

Ultimately, a daring plan to get rid of the monkeys was devised by the town brigadier. On that morning, the people come to the orchard with nets to trap the monkeys. That was when Mr Chawla, along with the rest, discover that Sampath is no longer sitting on his cot. Instead, they discover an unusually large guava fruit on the exact spot up the guava tree where Sampath reclines.

> Upon the cot lay a guava, a single guava that was much, much bigger than the others: rounder, star based, weathered. It was surrounded by the silver languars, who stared at it with their intent charcoal faces. On one side was a brown mark, rather like a birthmark (207).

Before anyone has the chance to reach the fruit, a large monkey grabs the fruit and escapes, along with the entire troupe of monkeys. The saga of Sampath ends at this point, along with the story. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is undoubtedly a highly hilarious and fantastical story and not to be taken seriously. However, as comical as the characters are, there are common and pertinent psychological issues which however fictitiously magnified, still rings true enough in everyday human experience.

Kulfi, Sampath's mother is another strong character whose psyche is almost as fascinating and as unfathomable as her son, the protagonist Sampath. Her own husband has given up on trying to understand her and the couple live separate lives though they reside under the same roof. Mr and Mrs Chawla are the epitome of a mismatched couples who are completely alienated from each other. Kulfi is the only person who does not raise her eyebrows towards

Sampath's peculiar and strange behaviour. This is because she shares her son's frustrations with life as she is stuck in a marriage where she cannot indulge her intrinsic nature. When Sampath is born, his bizarre appearance pleases Kulfi. Her loneliness is achingly revealed by the sense of peace she derived through baby Sampath's odd appearance. While other mothers might have reacted adversely, Kulfi experiences a sense of solidarity with her baby's strangeness and feels less isolated.

> She looked at the tiny creature in her hands, a creature that looked as if he had come from another planet altogether, or had been discovered in the woods, like something alien and strange. The baby's eyes were red and his skull pointed. She looked at his strangeness and felt a sense of peace and comfort descend upon her (12).

The above reveals Kulfi's sense of alienation from the people around her and the loneliness that she feels in being the only one who is regarded as "strange". Kulfi is not the typical traditional wife and her husband as well as everyone else knows it. "By this time, it had been generally acknowledged that she was a little eccentric to say the least" (21). The fact that she once drew pictures but has now abandoned this hobby reveals that she once had cherished dreams of her own. "On the walls behind her were traces of the drawings she had made so many years ago, still visible from behind a thin layer of whitewash" (21). Mr Chawla is not an unkind man but he is incapable of understanding or appreciating his wife. He clings on to the societal definition of "normalcy" and sees himself as the advocate for normal behaviour in his family. "Oddness, like aches and pains, fits of tears and lethargy, always made him uneasy and he had a fear of these uncontrollable, messy puddles of life..." (6). As time passes, Kulfi withdraws into her own private shell and is oblivious

to the hustle and bustle of life around her. It is her daughter and mother in law who looks after the needs of her husband.

> As the years progressed, she grew more peculiar. Ignoring completely the hullabaloo created by her husband, she continued to stare out of the window while her daughter complained about the choice of news item being read aloud (21).

Kulfi appears to be a rather tragic character, a woman who has never been understood by anyone, before or after marriage. Instead of trying to get help or attempting to understand her, Kulfi's family had washed her off their hands by hurriedly getting her married to a most unsuitable man.

> Kulfi had been even younger, so alarming her family with her weird ways, they were worried that if her marriage were delayed any longer, she would be left on their hands for ever, her sanity dissipating, the sense scattering from her like seeds from a poppy pod (62).

This blatant reference to mental insanity in both Kulfi and later, her son Sampath is terribly disturbing. Amidst the hilarity of this highly imaginative read, Desai has effortlessly managed to tackle common but no less grave human issues which affects the emotional psyche of a person. The subject of mental illness is touched upon again and again. In fact, Kulfi directly hails from a family with a history of mental illness and eccentricity.

> Clearly she was going mad. Yes, there it was- the eccentricity that had plagued her mother's side of the family for generations

> bubbling up yet again, just when they hoped the culprit genes had finally run into some dead end and been laid to rest (63).

Kulfi's family has actually tricked the Chawlas by getting Mr Chawla to marry her without revealing her mental illness. "When it became apparent that Kulfi too had inherited this familial strain of lunacy, her father knew he had not a moment to lose" (64). Kulfi hailed from a much higher social class than Mr Chawla but owing to her mental state which devalued her worth in the marriage market, she was married off to Mr Chawla, along with a huge dowry to ensure that she was not rejected. Kulfi's fate does not turn better after marriage. After her husband realises that his bride is not mentally sane, he tells her, "If it were not for the family name, straight away I would take you to the mental home" (103). Likewise in reality, the stigma of mental illness is so grave that victims are often made to suffer in silence rather than be openly treated as it would bring "shame" to the family. In time, Kulfi's new family learns to ignore her oddness, even when she makes outlandish and nonsensical statements. During the beginning of the novel, Kulfi's mother in law asks her son, Mr Chawla what he would like packed for his tiffin, to which Kulfi respinds by muttering about peacocks and pomegranates. Nobody pays attention to her. Again, Kulfi states, " 'Peasants, peacocks, pomegranates'...But again, nobody heard her and Mr Chawla addressed his mother" (25). It appears that Kulfi has been sidelined in the family as no one bothers to listen or react to what she says. Mr Chawla is not a bad husband and initially attempts to communicate with his wife but soon gives up in the face of her incapacity to interact or socialise like normal people.

> Mr Chawla had learned to shrug his shoulders at her. All his early attempts to teach her to interact normally with the world had made as much impression on her as rain on waterproofing and instead, as soon as Sampath was old enough, he had turned his

> attention to his son, for his greatest responsibility, he felt, was to pummel him into being at least minimally functional in the world (77)

Kulfi is always lost in her own private world and is consistently dreaming of the strangest food dishes which she attempts to recreate in real life. Her culinary efforts are often met with failure and this is a frustration that grates on her. “The frustration inside her would grow into an enormous cloud that blocked off everything else and her eyesight and hearing would go blurry” (77). This reveals the extent of her psychological damage and how it has finally begun to affect her physical form. It is often the case that when mental illnesses are not handled carefully, they tend to affect the victim’s physical health in due time. It is apparent that Kulfi’s delicate emotional state has begun to deteriorate with the passing of time. Mr Chawla has observed this about his wife.

> As the years passed, he found he understood her less and less instead of more and more. What went on inside her mind? He found himself wondering sometimes. Did she think like a human being? He saw expressions of anxiety, of happiness, of peacefulness upon her face, it was true, but was she considering how she felt, analysing and reasoning? (103).

It is apparent that Mr Chawla doubts his wife’s capacity to reason and think like a human being. Kulfi on her part is oblivious to her husband and others around her. Her life revolves around her strange dreams and visions which leaves her frustrated more often than not. Kulfi’s failure to recapture her dreams symbolises her frustration in not being able to express her true desires.

> But how could she possibly have reconciled her wild dreams with her tame life in Shakot, with their tiny kitchen, their meals on the old plastic covered table? Again and again, the dishes she produced could not match the visions inside her..." (76-77)

Besides Sampath, the rest of her family is always wary of her cooking. "Sampath would taste what she made, and smile and nod his admiration, but she would be inconsolable" (77). Kulfi becomes most prolific and successful in her gastronomic experiments after Sampath climed up the guava tree and became revered as a holy man. While Sampath relished his mother's complicated and weird dishes, Mr Chawla on the other hand, worried that his wife might accidently poison their son. Nevertheless, Sampath grew increasingly plump, happy and healthy with his mother's cooking; so much so that the devotees began to crave Kulfi's cooking as well. "Far from consigning her to a mental home, they hovered above her greedily, trying to peer into the bubbling pots, to draw their fingers through the piles of spices on the grinding stone" (103). Towards the end of the story, before Sampath mysteriously vanishes, Kulfi journeys into the nearby forest in search of the strangest of ingredients for her dishes. While exploring the forest, Kulfi day dreams and becomes even more delusional than she already is.

> No new scents enlivened the air and she wandered farther and farther away. As she wandered, she began to daydream. She was the royal cook of a great kingdom, she imagined. There, in some old port city, ruthless hunters, reckless adventurers, fleets of ships and whole armies lay at her beck and call, were alert to her every command, her every whim. (154).

Kulfi's daydream about an army which is alert to her every whim and fancy reveals her desire to be heard and understood. There is something intensely tragic about Kulfi and Sampath; this mother and son duo. Kulfi's loneliness is achingly revealed by the sense of peace she derived through baby Sampath's odd appearance. While other mothers might have reacted adversely, Kulfi experiences a sense of solidarity with her baby's strangeness and feels less isolated. They are the only two people who understand each other completely. Sampath, who by all standards, is considered mad actually mothers his mother during her moments of distress. "It took her weeks to calm down, sitting with Sampath on the rooftop in complete silence" (77). They share a poignant camaraderie. Even in a place where the entire population appears to be eccentric, Sampath and Kulfi are still not accepted as they possess a different brand of eccentricity which is deemed improper and objectionable by the Shahkotians. Through a psychoanalytical reading of the characterisation of Kulfi and Sampath, the reader discovers their repressed desires which are suppressed by societal norms of accepted behaviour which may be the super ego. Psychoanalysis seeks "An understanding of the human spirit by directly observing man's actions and words as manifestations of his inner most needs conditioned by the exigencies of his body and of the world he lives in (Fraiberg 1960). The true character i.e., the spirit of Sampath and Kulfi can only be grasped by not brushing aside seemingly insignificant actions or words but by paying attention, observing and according meaning to each word and deed. This ultimately reflects the person's inner most needs and desires, which in turn allows us a glimpse into the person's true character.

As absurd as the residents of Shakot appear to be, it has to be said that there is a semblance of purposive intent in their illogical behaviour. "Freud showed, too, how the mind, in one of its parts, could work without logic, yet not without that directing purpose, that control of intent from which, perhaps it

might be said, logic springs" (Trilling 47). This humorous tale is a fantastic play of Freud's Id, Ego and Superego. It illustrates, albeit in a hilarious manner, the consequences of a situation when the line between a person's Id (pleasure principle), Ego (reality principle) and Superego (morality principle) becomes blurred. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is unique for combining the diverse elements of comedy, fantasy and the issue of psychological imbalances.

WORKS CITED

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Chennai: Manchester University Press, 1995. Print.

Coleman, James C. *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life.* Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1976. Print.

Desai, Kiran. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* London: Faber and Faber, 1998. Print.

---. *The Inheritance of Loss.* New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.

---. "Night claims the Godavari". *Aids Sutra: Untold Stories from India.* Ed. Negar Akhavi. London: Vintage Original, 2008. Print.

---. Kiran. "Kiran Desai Interview with Bold Type". 26 Nov 2012 <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0599/desai/interview>.

Fraiberg, Louis. *Psychoanalysis and American Literary Criticism.* Detriot: Wayne State University Press, 1960. Print.

Guerin, Wilfred L, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C Reesman & John R. Willingham. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Hilgard, Ernest R, Richard C Atkinson & Rita L Atkinson. Introduction to Psychology. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1975. Print.

Huguet, Josiane Paccaud. "Psychoanalysis after Freud". *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Morgan, Clifford T, Richard A King, John R Weisz & John Schopler. *Introduction to Psychology.* New Delhi: Tata McGraw- Hill Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Palkar, Sarla. “Psychological Fictions, Literary Truths”. *Critical Theory: Western and Indian*. Ed. Prafulla C. Kar. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print.

Singh, Charu Sheel. *Theory of Literature*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. Print.

Tandon, Neeru. *Feminism: A Paradigm Shift.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2008. Print.

Trilling, Lionel. “Freud and Literature”. *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*. Ed. Dennis Walder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai are both master storytellers of their generation. Although unintentional, these two formidable writers share common concerns in their writings by virtue of them both being contemporary female Diaspora writers and sharing post colonial links through India, where their ancestry is traced. A consistent trademark in their literary offerings is the detailed attention and sensitivity with which they accord their fictional characters, treating them almost as if the characters are based on real people. Perhaps this is because their characters are influenced by real life experiences. This is something both the writers have themselves admitted, time and again. Desai and Lahiri delve into the deepest recesses of the mind of their protagonist/s with a psychological accuracy which brings the characters to life. This natural empathy for their fictional creations make the readers connect with the story better and also enables them to picture themselves in the shoes of the protagonist and other fictional characters.

It is worth noting that Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai are both Diasporas who have had to balance their identity between two countries. This experience is reflected in their writings and is thus, an inevitable by product of their common history. Although some neo Freudian psychologists including Carl Gustav Jung may disagree, Freud had believed that “meaning can be deciphered only in relation to the biography and associations of the author”

(Singh 179). This idea appears relevant in the case of Lahiri and Desai who have each highlighted the immigrant experience in their writings, in view of being diasporas themselves. It is pertinent to note that the immigrant experience is deeply psychological in nature and can only be adequately understood from a psychoanalytical perspective. Lahiri has admitted that her writings give her a sense of catharsis. In reference to the challenges she faced as a young Diaspora, Lahiri states, "I occupied to mingle on the page as I was not brave enough or mature enough to allow in life" (Lahiri. www.chipublib.org). In psychoanalysis, this act is evocative of the mechanism referred to as "sublimation", which Freud has propounded to be the healthiest form of defence mechanism as repressed impulses are channelled into healthy and productive activities.

> For example, a writer may divert some of his or her libido to the creation of a poem or novel, thus indirectly satisfying the same drives. Freud believed that much of our cultural heritage- literature, music, art- is the product of sublimation (Morgan 590).

Kiran has admitted that she fully realised the burden of immigration which she carried, only after writing about it in her book. This conveys a kind of catharsis where she has channelled negative and complex issues into her writings. When asked about the yoke of migration, she replies "It is something that has been going on forever. I did not realise it at first. There are so many interlinked patterns that it has become important to examine it" (Desai. http/indiatoday/kiran-desai/html). Consequently, both Desai and Lahiri concentrates on humanist themes and concerns such as dialogises of cultural encounters, diaspora, minority discourse, race and other issues. Because of this nature of narrative style, the characterization is often given more emphasis than the story line. It is therefore, only appropriate that a psychoanalytic study be

made into their works as it involves the study of the human psyche. Psychoanalytic criticism will thus, prove to be effective in interpreting the intention and relevancy in their literary outputs. Psychoanalysis states that there is often a basis for the birth of a story. The foundation for any literary creation lies in the psyche of its creator, whether consciously or subconsciously. It is therefore necessary for the reader to gain knowledge of the author's background and also delve into the psyche of the characters in order to understand the book intimately. As previously stated, this is especially true in the case of Desai and Lahiri who have both admitted on several occasions, that their real life experiences mirrors their fictional stories.

The entire body of work by Lahiri and Desai, as analysed in this research study has ultimately revealed that alienation has little to do with the physical environment but actually resides within the deepest recesses of the mind which is far greater than the physical world in which the protagonist and other characters reside. The practical inconveniences faced by an immigrant fade in comparism to the degree of mental anguish and trauma which are actually the essence of the immigrant experience. There always appears to be more happening within the psyche of the protagonist rather than the story line or his physical situation. Lahiri's debut short story collections entitled, *Interpreter of Maladies* contains a collection of nine short independent stories and is aptly sub titled *Stories from Bengal, Boston and Beyond.* Aside from the two stories, "A Real Durwan" and "The treatment of Bibi Halder", all the remaining seven stories deal with the Indian American Interaction i.e., Diaspora. Lahiri not only gives us Indian American characters but also presents the lonely American woman Miranda, the neurotic American Paul, hundred year old Mrs Croft and various other non diasporas. In the end however, whether the characters are diaspora or otherwise, we observe that they are all

struggling to fit in a world where they do not feel like they belong. These are all intensely psychological in nature.

Similarly, Lahiri's second collection, *Unaccustomed Earth,* which consists of eight short powerful stories, also deal with the immigrant experience, particularly with regard to diasporic humanist concerns. Suffice to say, such complex issues can only be properly addressed through a psychological reading. Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*, also addresses the immigrant predicament which is chiefly psychological in nature. Gogol, the protagonist in *The Namesake* is struggling to come to terms with the concerns of being an immigrant in America. He internalises his fears and this ultimately results in an illogical as well as incomprehensible revulsion of his name which he believes to be the root cause of his problems. Gogol's hatred of his name may appear to be irrational but a psychoanalytic reading reveals the inner mechanism of his tormented psyche which has led him to believe that his name is to blame for the challenges that he is up against. In the novel, Gogol meets an American girl called Maxine, who becomes his first serious girlfriend. Maxine and himself comes from two distinctly diverse cultures and have had very different upbringings as well. However, Gogol realises that the biggest difference between the two of them is psychological and not the obvious physical differences.

> She (Maxine) has the gift of accepting her life; as he comes to know her, he realises that she has never wished she were anyone other than herself, raised in any other place, in any other way. This, in his opinion, is the biggest difference between them (*TN* 138).

Kiran Desai's flair for story telling and her comic gift is wonderfully showcased in her debut book, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* The story of Sampath unfolds in a little rural Indian town known as Shahkot. Desai allows her rich imagination to run absolutely wild in the narration of this fantastical tale where fiction becomes indisputably wilder than reality. Desai's Shahkot is a unique town where the entire system is upside down and the whole Shahkotian population appears to be slightly mad. Nevertheless, the people never realise their own peculiarities but instead, persist in labelling the protagonist Sampath and his mother Kulfi as strange. Sampath and his mother Kulfi are set apart for their peculiar brand of eccentricity. Thus even in a place when madness seems to be the norm and everything goes, the issue of isolation still persists for some who do not fit in with the en masse. This story reminds us of the intrinsic tendency of human beings to judge others but to never think of applying the same yardstick to their own selves. Finally, when Sampath decides to make his home up a guava tree, the people suddenly consider him to be a holy hermit and start to revere him. Thus, due to societal beliefs, Sampath's most ludicrous decision turns to be a blessing in disguise for his family. This study also draws to attention, the question whether the issue of "normalcy" is possibly a man made concept. What is deemed normal and abnormal appears to be synonymous with socially acceptable or condemnable behaviour. The story conveys the idea that "madness" is often a state of mind which is intricately linked with societal norms.

An eccentric personality usually implies someone who is slightly peculiar with unconventional habits, set apart from the rest of humanity. One's eccentricities are commonly believed to be an ingrained part of a person's psychological make up. However, Nimi's father, Bomanbhai, in *Inheritance of Loss,* develop his foibles and eccentricities only after acquiring his wealth. This suggests that physical circumstances can sometimes influence the psyche.

Thus, the degree of the indulgence of the Id may depend upon a person's financial or social situation. This theory is substantiated by the fact that there are few poor eccentrics while rich eccentrics are quite commonly known. Human beings are curiously multi faceted creatures and a psychoanalytical criticism of the works unveils ambiguous meanings and complexities of the fictional characters.

"Night Claims the Godavari" from *Aids Sutra: Untold Stories from India* talks about the plight of sex workers in Andra Pradesh. These sex workers are ostracised from society and are not protected by the law. Thus their existence appears almost mythic in its misery. This short story reveals how the sex workers derive a modicum of comfort, however illusionary, from superstitious beliefs and religious folklore. Happiness and misery appears to be less to do with material comforts and much to do with societal acceptance. A conviction of the latter ultimately lies in the person's psyche.

Kiran Desai's Booker winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is widely acclaimed for its originality and insight into dominant contemporary issues such as globalization, economic inequality, terrorism, diaspora etc. There is also the all encompassing shadow of colonisation which lurks behind almost every conversation of her characters and also their physical environment. The Britishers are gone but they have left their stamp in India and even more so, in the psyche of the people. This immensely witty book presents a coterie of Anglophile characters such as the retired judge Jemubhai Patel, sixteen year old Sai, Uncle Potty, Father Booty, the sisters Nonnie and Lola and various others. The Anglophiles are the elite group and on the other divide is Sai's Nepalese tutor Gyan, the judge's cook and his beloved son Biju who is struggling to get by in America. All these characters share the common belief that anything English is indefinitely superior to its Indian counterpart. As in the case of Gyan

or Lola, there may be a sense of bitter resentment against the white supremacy but nevertheless, this is the acknowledged truth. The characters are all in the grip of terrible mental torment and a psychoanalytic reading enables the reader to understand the actions of the characters. Desai has admitted that her fictional characters are influenced by her own history. It is evident that Desai's personal experiences are responsible for the psychological depths of her literary creations. In a way therefore, it appears that the fictional characters contain a little bit of Desai in them.

> The characters of my story are entirely fictional but these journeys (of her grandparents) as well as my own provided insight into what it means to travel between East and West and it is this I wanted to capture. The fact that I live this particular life is no accident. It was my inheritance
> (Desai. www.bookbrowse.com).

Through a psychoanalytic reading of the literary output of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri, we realise that what links all the characters together is that they are all people struggling to fit in and carve a niche for themselves, whether diaspora or otherwise. Also, it is primarily observed that the predicament each character finds himself or herself in, predominantly lies in the realm of the psyche. This makes their fears complex since it is unseen to others and therefore, incomprehensible. An understanding of the character's psyche and emotional or mental state brings to attention the importance of the person's history which inevitably contributes to his or her present state of mind. A psychoanalytic understanding makes the reader more sympathetic to the character, even if his or her actions are not exactly right or appropriate. It is often stated that great literature reflects life and thus, through this reading, we

are reminded to be more tolerant of people and take greater pains to understand our fellow human beings, as we have done with our fictional characters.

Above all, the most significant finding revealed by this psychoanalytic study into the fictional narratives of Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri is that every human being suffers from insecurities and fears which lead to certain actions. Freud's Id, Ego and Superego helps in deciphering the personality structure and significantly contributes to the understanding that our inner world is much more complicated than the physical world. As Desai and Lahiri's writings are character centric, the Freudian psychology becomes most apt for interpreting the true nature and behaviour of the protagonist and other fictional characters.

> The Freudian psychology is the only systematic account of the human mind which, in point of subtlely and complexity and tragic power deserves to stand beside the chaotic mass of psychological insights which literature has accumulated through the centuries (Trilling 43).

This study proves that the psychological realm is not demarcated; one person's reality or morality may not be applicable to another. Therefore, we are made to understand that the actions of human beings cannot be generalised or judged so easily. Psychoanalysis reveals that two people may have very different motives for the same action and thus, in order to understand a person, it is necessary to treat each individual as unique. The writings of Lahiri and Desai also underline the message that it may be irrelevant, whether a person is clinically diagnosed to be suffering from mental disorders or otherwise. All human beings deal with the tussle between unconscious and conscious desires on a daily basis and this

influences our actions in life. Furthermore, one does not necessarily require to be a certified psychologist or be an expert in this branch of pedagogy in order to be able to gauge psychological problems. Lahiri and Desai, with their fine sensitivity and empathy, have shown that it is common human compassion and sincerity which has the greatest potential to unlock the vast complexities of the human mind.

WORKS CITED

Desai, Kiran. "Kiran Desai Biography by Book Browse". 26 Sept 2012 <http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm/author_number/229/kiran-desai>.

Desai, Kiran. "Interview with India Today" 10 November 2012 <India today http/indiatoday/kiran-desai/1/180336 html>.

Lahiri,Jhumpa."Jhumpa Lahiri in Conversations with Mary A Dempsy". 15 Feb 2009 <http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/oboc/maladies/authorquestions>.

Morgan, Clifford T, Richard A King, John R Weisz & John Schopler. *Introduction to Psychology*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Singh, Charu Sheel. *Theory of Literature*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. Print.

Trilling, Lionel. "Freud and Literature". *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*. Ed. Dennis Walder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A) Primary Sources

Desai, Kiran. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* London: Faber and Faber, 1998. Print.

---. *The Inheritance of Loss.* New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.

---. "Night claims the Godavari". *Aids Sutra: Untold Stories from India.* Ed. Negar Akhavi. London: Vintage Original, 2008. Print.

---. Kiran. "Kiran Desai Interview with Bold Type". 26 Nov 2012 <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0599/desai/interview>.

---. "An Interview with Kiran Desai by Laura Barton". 16 Jan 2013 <http://.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/oct/12/bookerprize2006>.

---. "Interview with India Today Group". 23 Jan 2013 <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/kiran-desai/1/180336.html>.

---. "Kiran Desai Biography by Book Browse". 26 Sept 2012 <http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm/author_number/229/kiran-desai>.

---. "Kiran Desai Biography". 25 Aug 2012 <www.paperbackswap.com/kirandesai/author>.

---. "Interview with Kiran Desai by Blogspot". 19 Feb 2013 <jaiarjun.blogspot.com/2006/01/kirandesai/interview_20html>.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies.* New Delhi: Random House, 1999. Print.

---. *The Namesake.* New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2007. Print.

---. *Unaccustomed Earth.* New Delhi: Random House, 2008. Print.

---. "An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri" by Book Browse. 24 April 2009 <http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/infex.cfm?author_interviews/full/index?author_number=929>.

---. "Jhumpa Lahiri in Conversations with Mary.A.Dempsey". 15 Feb 2009 <http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/oboc/maladies/authorquestions.html>.

---. "An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri by Arun Aguiar". 20 Nov 2008 <http://www.pifmagazine.com/SID/598>.

---. "An interview with Jhumpa Lahiri by Vibhuti Patel" Accessed on 15 December 2010 <http://www.sawnet.org/books/writing/patel_lahiri.html>.

B) Secondary Sources

Aston, N.M. ed. *Trends in the Twentieth Century Literary Criticism.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1998. Print.

Agrawal, K. A. *Spectrums of Indian Writings in English.* Jaipurt: Book Enclave, 2004. Print.

Bala, Suman. ed. *Jhumpa Lahiri: The Master Story Teller.* New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 2000. Print.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Chennai: Manchester University Press, 1995. Print.

Baral, K. C. ed. *Interpretation of Texts-Text, Meaning and Interpretation.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2002. Print.

Bai, K. Meera. *Women's Voices-The Novels of Indian Women Writers.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1996. Print.

Berman, Emmaneul. *Essential Papers on Literature and Psychosis.* New York: University Press, 1993. Print.

Begum, Shahnawaz. "Generations in Diaspora: Perspectives of Child Characters in Jhumpa Lahiri's Stories". *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Biswas, Brati. "Beyond Ethnicity: A Study of *Interpreter of Maladies"* . *Jhumpa ,Lahiri- The Master Story Teller.* ed. Suman Bala. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 2002. Print.

Bhatnagar, M.K., M. Rajeshwar. eds. *Post Modernism and English Literature.*New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001. Print.

---., M. Rajeshwar. eds. *Indian Writings in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2000. Print.

---. ed. *Feminist English Literature.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.

---. *Twentieth Century Literature in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2000. Print.

Bhattarcharjee, Sukalpa. *Post Colonial Literature: Essays on Gender, Theory and Genres.* New Delhi: Akansha Publishers, 2004. Print.

Chakrabarty, Jaydeep. "Diasporic Dynamism in Representing India: The Narrative World of Jhumpa Lahiri". *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Cherry, Kendra. "Hysteria" 21 November 2012 < http://psychology.about.com/od/hindex/f/hysteria.htm>.

Clifford, James. "Cultural Anthropology". 20 August 2009 <http://wayneandwax.com/pdfs/clifford_diasporas.pdf>.

Coleman, James C. *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life.* Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1976. Print.

Crews, Frederick. ed. *Psychoanalysis & Literary Process.* Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, 1970. Print.

Davis, Geoffrey V., Peter H. Marsden, Benedicte Ledent & Marc Delrez. eds. *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Society in a 'Post'-Colonial World.* New York: Rodopi, 2004. Print.

Das, Nigamananda. ed. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Das, Veena Noble. ed. *Fiction of the Nineties.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. Print.

Dixit, Sudhir. "Names as Symbols of Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's Stories". *Jhumpa Lahiri- The Master Story Teller.* ed. Suman Bala. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 2002. Print.

Dhawan, R.K. ed. *Writers of the Indian Diaspora.* New Delhi; Prestige Books, 1999. Print.

Dodiya, Jaydipsinh K. ed. *Perspectives on Indian English Fiction.* New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2006. Print.

Duffy, Karen Grover & Eastwood Atwater. *Psychology for Living: Adjustment, Growth & Behaviour Today.* New Delhi: Pearson Education inc, 2005. Print.

Dwivedi, A. N. *Papers on Indian Writing in English. Volume II: Fiction.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.

Flaherty, Kate. "Commentary on Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake"*. 1 June 2009 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jhumpa_Lahiri(1-3)>.

Fludernik, Monica. *Hybridity and Post Colonialism: Twentieth Century Indian Literature.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2008. Print.

Fraiberg, Louis. *Psychoanalysis and American Literary Criticism.* Detriot: Wayne State University Press, 1960. Print.

Freud, Sigmund. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis.* New York: Liveright Publishing Coorporation, 1989. Print.

Guerin, Wilfred L, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C Reesman & John R. Willingham. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Guild, Elspeth & Joanne Van Selm. eds. *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals.* New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Gupta, Santosh. ed. *Contemporary Indian Literature – Positions and Expositions.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2000. Print.

Ghosh, Lipi & Ramakrishna Chaterjee. *Indian Diaspora in Asian and Pacific Region.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2008. Print

Huguet, Josiane Paccaud. "Psychoanalysis after Freud". *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Hilgard, Ernest R, Richard C Atkinson & Rita L Atkinson. Introduction to Psychology. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1975. Print.

Horrwitz, Ernst. *A Short History of Indian Literature.* New Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1999. Print.

Iyengar, K. R. Srinavasa. *Indian Writing in English.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1963. Print.

Jain, Jasbir. *Writers of the Indian Diaspora.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2008. Print.

---. & Avadesh Kumar Singh. eds. *Indian Feminisms.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001. Print.

Judge, P.S, S.L.Sharma & Gurpreet Bal. Eds. *Development, Gender and Diaspora: Context of Globalisation.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications,2008. Print.

Kadam, Mansing G. "*The Namesake:* A Mosaic of Marginality, Alienation, Nostalgia and Beyond". *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Kakutani, Michiko. "The New York Times". 29 September 2009 <http://www.powells.com/biblio 17-9780395927205-0>.

Kershen, Anne. *Strangers, Aliens and Asians.* New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Klarer, Mario. *An Introduction to Literary Studies. London:* Routledge, 1999. Print.

Kumar, Gajendra & Uday Shankar Ojha. Eds. *Indian English Literature: A Post Colonial Response.* New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2005. Print.

Kushwaha, M.S. *Glimpses of Indian Research in English Literature.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1984. Print.

Kraftner, Johann. "Eros & Thanatos- Drives, Images, Interpretations". Accessed on 23rd October 2013. <www.freud.museum.at/cms/tl_files/erso_thanatos_en.pdf>.

Lahiri, Himadri. "Family as Space in Jhumpa Lahiri's Short Stories". *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Lapsley, Rob. "Psychoanalytic Criticism". *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory.* Ed. Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Maharaj, Brij & Ajaya Kumar Sahoo. *Sociology of Diaspora.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2008. Print.

Mangal, S.K. *Advanced Educational Psychology.* New Delhi: Prentice Hall India, 2007. Print.

Markovic, Zorica. "Psychoanalytic Conceptions of Marriage and Marital Relationships". 29 November 2012 <www.facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/pas/pas2000/pas2000-08>.

McClave, Heather. *Women Writers of The Short Story*. London: Prentice Hall, 1980. Print.

Mcleod, A. L. ed. *The Literature of Indian Diaspora: Essays in Criticism.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2000. Print.

Mishra, Krushna Chandra. "Identity and Naming Culture in *The Namesake"*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Percraft International, 2008. Print.

Mittapali, Rajeshwar & Pier Paolo Piciucco. eds. *Studies in Indian Writing in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001. Print.

---. ed. *Post Independence Indian English Fiction.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001. Print.

Mitra, Zinia. "An Interpretation of *Interpreter of Maladies"*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Morgan, Clifford T, Richard A King, John R Weisz & John Schopler. *Introduction to Psychology.* New Delhi: Tata McGraw- Hill Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Mukherjee, A.K. "Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies:* A Study". *Writers of the Indian Diaspora.* ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2001. Print.

Murphy, William F. "A Note on the Significance of Names" by The Psychoanalytic Quarterly. 2nd March 2012. <http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=paq.026.0091a>.

"Name". Def. 1. The Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus & Word power Guide. 16th ed. 2005. Print.

Naik, M. K. *A History of Indian English Literature.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982. Print.

---. *Dimensions of Indian English Literature.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers,1984. Print.

---. *Twentieth Century Indian English Fiction.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2004. Print.

Nanavati, U. M. & Prafulla. C. Kar. eds. *Rethinking Indian English Literature.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2000. Print.

Narzary, Reetamoni. "Where's Home? Patterns of Loss and Longing in *Interpreter of Maladies"*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International,2008. Print.

Nayak, Bhagabat. "Contra-acculturation in Immigrant Sensibility: A study of *The Namesake". Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Parameswaran, Uma. *Writing the Diaspora: Essays on Culture and Identity.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2007. Print.

Palkar, Sarla. "Psychological Fictions, Literary Truths". *Critical Theory: Western and Indian*. Ed. Prafulla C. Kar. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print.

Pandey, Mithilesh. K. ed. *Recent Indian Literature in English.* New Delhi:Atlantic Publishers, 1999. Print.

Parry, Benita. *Post Colonial Studies: A Materialist Critique.* London: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Pathak, R.S. ed. *Indian Fiction of the Nineties.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 1997. Print.

---. *Modern Indian Novel in English.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999. Print.

Pearce, Peter. "Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic developmental theories". Accessed on 20th October 2013. <www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/openup/chapters/0335206360.pdf>.

Prasad, B. *A Background to the Study of English Literature.* New Delhi: Macmillian, 1999. Print.

Prasad, Amar Nath. ed. *Indian Women Novelists in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001. Print.

Pathak, R. S. *Modern Indian Novel in English.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999. Print.

Patil, Z. N. *Style in Indian English Fiction.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. Prasad, Madhusudan. ed. *Indian English Novelists- An Anthology of Critical Essays.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1982. Print.

Ray, Mohit. K. Ed. *Studies in Literature in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.

Raina, M.L. “Home, Homelessness and the Artifice of Memory”. *Contemporary Diasporic Literature: Writing History, Culture, Self.* ed. Manjit Inder Singh. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. Print.

Rajeshwar, M. *Indian Women Novelists and Psychoanalysis.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1998. Print.

Roychoudhury, Buddhadeb. “The Metaphor of Pain: Reflections on *Interpreter of Maladies”*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Strachey, James.ed. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* England: Macmillan, 1964. Print.

Satchidanandan, K. *Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 1999. Print.

Sah, Binda. “Trauma of Diasporic Existence in *The Namesake”*. *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives.* ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet.* New Delhi: Mahaveer Publishers, 2009. Print.

Sharma, R. S., ed. *Studies in Contemporary Literature.* New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2000. Print.

Surprenant, Celine. “Freud and Psychoanalysis”. *Literary Theory and Criticism.* Ed. Patricia Waugh. New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.

Singh, Charu Sheel. *Theory of Literature*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. Print.

Singh, Veena. Ed. *Literature and Ideology. Essays in Interpretation.* Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1998. Print.

Singh, Manjit Inder. Ed. *Contemporary Diasporic Literature: Writing History, Culture, Self.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. Print.

Singh, Pramod Kumar. ed. *Indian Fiction in English.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2001. Print.

Srivastava, Sharad. *The New Woman in Indian English Fiction.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 1996. Print.

Talib, Ismail. S. *The Language of Post Colonial Literature : An Introduction.*London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Tandon, Neeru. *Feminism: A Paradigm Shift.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2008. Print.

Trilling, Lionel. "Freud and Literature". *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*. Ed. Dennis Walder. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

---. "Manners, Morals and the Novel". 24 April 2009 <http://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=0521559928>.

Vertovec, Steven. *Transnationalism.* New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Verma, M. R. & K. A. Agrawal. eds. *Reflections on Indian English Literature.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.

Wilderdom. "Major Themes and Assumptions of Psychoanalytic Theory".
Accessed on 15th October 2013.
< www.wilderdom.com/personality/L8-1MajorThemes.Psychoanalysis>.

Waugh, Patricia. *Literary Theory and Criticism.* New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006. Print.