DIALOGICS OF MARGINALITY IN THE WORKS OF ROHINTON MISTRY AND ARAVIND ADIGA

Thesis Submitted to Nagaland University in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

TALISANGLA
Ph.D. Regn. No. 507/2012

Under the Supervision of:

Dr. LEMTILA ALINGER
&
Prof. N.D.R. CHANDRA

Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus, Meriema

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NAGALAND UNIVERSITY
KOHIMA CAMPUS: MERIEMA-797001
NAGALAND

2015

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

Department of English

Date: ……...

SUPERVISORS' CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Dialogics of Marginality in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga" is a bona fide record of research work done by Ms. Talisangla, Regd. No. 507/2012 dated 21st August 2012. This thesis, submitted to Nagaland University in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other title and that the thesis as such is an independent and original work on the part of the candidate under our guidance. Ms. Talisangla has completed the research work for the full period as prescribed under clause 9 (5) of the Ph.D. Regulations and the thesis embodies the record of original investigation conducted during the period she worked as a Ph.D. research scholar.

(Prof. N.D.R. CHANDRA)
Co-Supervisor
Vice Chancellor
Bastar University, Jagdalpur
Chattisgarh 494001

(Dr. LEMTILA ALINGER)
Supervisor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima-797001

Dr. N. D. R. Chandra
M.A.; M. Phil.; P.G.D.T.E; Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Vice Chancellor
Bastar University, Jagdalpur
Chattisgarh 494001
Cell No. (0)9436604508
Office No. (0778) 2229239
Fax: (0778)229226
Email: chandra592001@yahoo.com

Date: ……...

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Dialogics of Marginality in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga" is a bona fide record of research work done by Ms. Talisangla Regd. No. 507/2012 dated 21st August 2012. This thesis, submitted to Nagaland University in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other title and that the thesis as such is an independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my co-guidance. Ms. Talisangla has completed the research work for the full period as prescribed under clause 9 (5) of the Ph.D. Regulations and the thesis embodies the record of original investigation conducted during the period she worked as a Ph.D. research scholar.

(Prof. N.D.R. CHANDRA)
Co-Supervisor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus: Meriema

Nagaland University

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

Department of English Date: ……...

SUPERVISORS' CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Dialogics of Marginality in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga" is a bonafide record of research work done by Ms. Talisangla, Regd. No. 507/2012 dated 21st August 2012. This thesis, submitted to Nagaland University in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other title and that the thesis as such is an independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my guidance. Ms. Talisangla has completed the research work for the full period as prescribed under clause 9 (5) of the Ph.D. Regulations and the thesis embodies the record of original investigation conducted during the period she worked as a Ph.D. research scholar.

(Dr. LEMTILA ALINGER)
Supervisor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima-797001

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I do hereby, declare that the thesis entitled *Dialogics of Marginality in the Works of Rohinton Mistry & Aravind Adiga* submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a meticulous record of a research investigation independently carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Lemtila Alinger and Prof. N.D.R. Chandra, Department of English, Nagaland University, during the period 2012-2015. This work has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other University/Institute for the award of any degree, diploma or title.

Place: Kohima

Date:

(**TALISANGLA**)
Research Scholar
Regn. No. – 507/2012
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus: Meriema
Nagaland

COUNTERSIGNED

Dr. N. DAS
Head
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus: Meriema
Nagaland

Dr. LEMTILA ALINGER
Supervisor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus: Meriema
Nagaland

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been fortunate to have been surrounded by a sturdy scaffold system – a number of people who have provided help and support throughout my research. I would like to begin first by thanking Prof. NDR Chandra, who graciously agreed to take on the supervision of this research and has provided immense encouragement, support and invaluable critical feedback from day one of this research undertaking and all along the way. I am thankful to Dr. Lemtila Alinger who joined the task of supervision halfway through my Ph.D., particularly for her meticulous and incisive reading of my work and feedback. I thank both my Supervisors for making constructive comments and suggestions for improving this thesis.

I would also like to thank Prof. Nigamananda Das, Head of Department and all Faculty of English Department, Nagaland University for their ready assistance in every way.

My sincere acknowledgements to the following esteemed Universities who made their vast depository of Library resources available to facilitate the research:

Central Library, University of Delhi
Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi
Nagaland University Central Library, Kohima
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi
Osmania University Library, Hyderabad
Ramesh Mohan Library, EFLU, Hyderabad

This work would not have been possible without the keen interest shown by friends and colleagues who constantly are a source of motivation: Bendang, Awa, Shashank, Grace, Avi, Senti and Miss Aka. I thank my Principal and colleagues of GHSS, Chumukedima for their generous support. Special thanks to Achi for helping me navigate Hyderabad Central University.

I acknowledge my parents for their constant support materially and spiritually, and all my siblings and their families for their unceasing love and encouragement. I would also like to especially thank my aunt Apok who extended hospitality on my several trips to Kohima. Above all, I thank the Almighty God for bestowing abundant blessings.

Talisangla

Unconditionally

For Mom and Dad

ABBREVIATIONS

Tales from Ferozsha Bagh	: TFB
Such a Long Journey	: SLJ
A Fine Balance	: FB
Family Matters	:FM
The Scream	: Scream
The White Tiger	: WT
Between the Assassinations	: BA
Last Man in Tower	: LMT
The Elephant	:Elephant
The Sultan’s Battery	:SB
Last Christmas in Bandra	:LCB
Subaltern Studies	SS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Narratives of marginality are polyphonic. The several voices coming from various locations, from the minorities or diasporic communities cry for attention in the mainstream society, endeavouring to carve out a niche in the elite discourse. These voices contest, contradict and complement each other. These marginalities include class/caste, race, gender and diaspora. Viewing the centre from these marginal positions in the creative texts of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga, a decentring is initiated. To keep alive any discourse, it is imperative to avoid totalizing discursive practice into rigid mode of being and meaning. Dialogism allows difference and multiple interpretations instead of subsuming distinct literary genres under one descriptive paradigm. The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of Aravind Adiga and Rohinton Mistry's writings in the light of the theoretical concepts applied to it. The meanings, contested meanings of the different terms and theories: marginality, subalternity, dalitism, diaspora, expatriate and so on, relating to the works of the writers will be analysed. Another task of this study is to find out where Mistry and Adiga's works can be situated among the realm of marginality and also to explore whether they truly represent the voice of the subaltern and to examine and explore how far the writings of the proposed authors reflect and represent the diasporic feelings and nuances.

1.1. Marginality

Marginality is to be on the margin, marginal. The *Encarta Reference Dictionary* explains ‘marginal’ as ‘very small in scale or importance’, ‘irrelevant- not of central importance’, ‘existing on the fringes of a group or movement’. The perception and description of experience as ‘marginal’ is a result of the binary structure of various kinds of dominant discourses such as imperialism, domination, colonialism. According to Ashcroft et al, Marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged centre, an othering directed by the imperial authority (103). Discourses of marginality thus include race, gender, psychological, geographical and social distance and segregation. In this sense, subalterns and diasporas are marginal. They are relegated to the periphery, their beings constantly negated. The research intends to study the experience of marginality in Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga’s works. A brief introduction of some of the theories and concepts of marginality are discussed below.

1.1.1. Subaltern

Subaltern, meaning ‘of inferior rank’, is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subjected to the domination of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers, and other groups denied access to ‘hegemonic’ power (Ashcroft et al. 215). First used from a historical perspective, Gramsci noted that since history being the history of dominant groups in the states, it was one-sided and therefore, half-true. The voices of the subalterns were muted. It does not mean that the subalterns never voiced out. Certainly, there were sporadic uprisings of discontent but most of them were unrecorded. Those histories which were written were never from the point of the subaltern but of the elite class,

their perception of the subaltern class. He asserted that the history of the subalterns, 'the others' were equally important. Perhaps history would have been different if it was written from the subaltern point of view. A systematic unravelling of the subaltern cause was therefore undertaken by the *Subaltern Studies* group led by Ranajit Guha which revolutionized the word subaltern and which was instrumental in lifting it into the prominence that it has achieved today globally. The term has been adapted to post-colonial studies that aim to focus on the subaltern culture and their plight. Subaltern studies or subaltern narratives usher in the voice of the oppressed, the downtrodden, the marginals to the mainstream historiographies and narratives.

1.1.2. Dalitism

Casteism is an age-old evil imposed by the powerful on society, to uphold discrimination as well as to gain unfair advantage over "the others" permanently. The grim realities of the social life in India can be understood properly by taking a penetrating psychological insight into human attitude. Dalit literature or Dalitism is a protest and a reaction against the caste system and the 'perceived' Brahmanical supremacy. The word 'dalit', etymologically means 'crushed', 'oppressed', 'tormented' and 'ignored'. According to Amod Kumar Rai, it is not necessary that these objectives should pertain only to the causes of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, or other Socially Backward Classes. He says, "people from all classes, communities, religions, sects, genders etc. are dalits if they are exploited, oppressed or deprived of general human needs and conditions" (43). Thus, the term "Dalitism" now is not confined to downtrodden and marginalised subject of the lower castes. But it has taken many issues and concerns in its wake. Although muted voice of untouchables is the centre of

attraction, yet it has now taken a new form containing all subaltern groups including women, tribals and other marginalised sections of the society.

1.1.3. Diaspora

The word ‘diaspora’, etymologically derived from the Greek word *diaspeiro*/*diasperien*, literally means ‘to sow or to scatter seeds’, or ‘to disperse’. It was first used by the Greeks for the movements of the Jews away from their homeland. Historically, then, it referred to displaced communities who have been dislocated from their homeland through migration, immigration or exile. Today, the term is applied to a number of ethnic and racial groups, living in an alien land; “diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries” (Braziel and Mannur 1). Diaspora has become an umbrella term that accommodates the wide scale dispersion and migration across the globe. Diasporic writers live on the margins of two or more countries. Migration takes place due to various reasons and in the Indian context the migratory movements were governed by historical, political, economic reasons including higher education, better prospects and marriage. These immigrant writers reflect, on the one hand, their attachment to the motherland and on the other hand, their feeling of alienation and rootlessness in their writings. Chief characteristics of the diasporic writings are the quest for identity, uprooting and re-rooting, insider and outsider syndrome, memory and nostalgia. Diasporic studies have emerged as an important field of study amid hotly contested contentions. Diaspora has been theorized in several diverse points and has attained new epistemological, political and cultural nuances. From the question of identity formulation to articulations of community’s

identity and to the question of nationhood can be explored under the diaspora ambit. It is therefore, essential to remember the fluid, exploratory and dynamic nature of diaspora.

1.1.4. Expatriate

Expatriate is somebody who has moved abroad, somebody who has left his or her homeland to live or work in another country, usually for a long period of time. Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* says, “It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt” (10). Expatriates experience a feeling of homelessness, neither belonging in the host nation fully nor able to fit in if do they return back to the nation of origin. As a result an ambivalent relationship thrives between these writers and the motherland, i.e. India alternating between the feelings of acceptance and rejection manifested towards each other.

1.2. Indian English Fiction

To say that Indian English Fiction has gone through a gamut of emotions is an understatement. It has been subjected to a series of dissections; prodded and probed, revelled and rivalled, exalted and denigrated, upheld and denounced simultaneously. But the fact that it garners such attention reveals the importance of it as an important literary genre. Indian English fiction is a living and evolving genre. They are rich in content and wide in range. At the outset, we have to understand that when we talk about

Indian English fiction, we mean fiction written in English language written by the Indians living in India or abroad. It is therefore, a wide terminology and is debatable even today. At the nascent stage, before and during the period of nationalism, the subject matter of fiction was inescapably political, social and religious. But after independence these themes were compounded with deeper psychological issues pertaining to human relationships, gender equations, alienation, search for identity and so on. Gradually, the Indian English novel developed as a subaltern consciousness; as a reaction to break away from the colonial literature. The Indian English writers started employing the techniques of mixed language, magic realism garnished with native themes. The saga and journey of the Indian novel, therefore, stands as the tale of changing tradition, the story of a changing and evolving nation.

Indian English Fiction reflects the spirit of difference. The characteristic feature of the Indian sub-continent is its variety – culture, language, topography and religion. As such, Indian English Fiction gets this immense possibility of a wide range of stories and themes markedly different from each other. Multiplicity of ethnicity, race, religion, caste, language, tribe, and class thus distinguishes India which becomes the site of creative difference and opulence. The understanding of Indian Writing in English as a contested discourse also enables us to study the multiple identities of the Indian people and the internal contradictions within Indian society and the clash of worldviews that it encounters as the canon stakes a claim in the world literary scene. The Master Narratives of the West have been challenged by postcolonial writers in several ways. In the case of Mistry and Adiga, owning English language as an Indian language paves the way to assert Indian English as one of the several Indian languages with its own distinctive sound and structure. They freely utilize native forms of narration, hybridizing, unapologetic with the incongruity of the ‘accepted’ English language.

However, as Nilufer E. Bharucha says, subversions operate not only at the level of hybridizing the 'Master Tongue' thus challenging the Master Narratives of the West but also in "repossessing appropriated histories" (*Repossessing the Master Tongue* 41). Colonial perspectives have been resisted by the decolonised that have provided their own versions of historical events. But the decolonised version also excluded and misrepresented the versions of the marginal. The dominant forces in postcolonial societies neglected the histories of the marginal. Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga thus challenge the metanarrative of history, make their bid to repossess history and showcase it as seen from the lower rung of the society in their writings.

The attitude towards English language by postcolonial writers as the medium of writing back to the colonisers have been fiercely debated and have vacillated from blind acceptance of the language as the medium to the end of the continuum of utter rejection of the language as the medium. Ngugi wa Thiong'o initially wrote in English language but later on summarily rejected the language and reverted back to writing in Gikuyu. But the fact remains that the works needed to be translated in English to get a larger audience. And isn't it the point of any writer to garner as much readership as possible? Appropriation is perhaps the better choice. The issue of language in postcolonial writings is vital as it redefines not only the English usages but also the writer's relationship with it. Some ostensible similarities emerge between the works of these two writers. To start with both Mistry and Adiga come from minority communities in the Indian subcontinent: Mistry is a member of the Parsi community and Adiga belongs to Syrian Christian minority. As members of marginal religious groups perhaps they might not have been subjected to the caste system which is primarily tied to Hinduism. However, minority religious groups are not necessarily immune to caste stratification. And often times, the smaller religious/ethnic minorities are often yo-yoed between the

majority Hindu and its nearest rival, in terms of population, the Muslims in India. The ambivalent spaces that they have created for themselves to exist diplomatically with both have given the writers immense scope of creative avenues to explore in their writings.

1.3. Rohinton Mistry and His Works

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now, Mumbai), India in 1952. He studied Mathematics at the University of Bombay, graduating in 1974. A year later he emigrated to Canada with his wife, where he worked as a bank clerk in Toronto while studying English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. After he won the Annual Contributors' Award from the Canadian *Fiction Magazine* and received a Canada Council Grant in 1985, he has been a full-time writer. As an Indian who now lives and writes in Canada, Rohinton Mistry belongs to the Indian Diaspora. Nevertheless, Mistry as a Parsi Zoroastrian, his ancestors were displaced by the Islamist conquest of Iran. As such, he belonged to a minority community and was a diaspora even in India. His writings therefore, often speak of the experience of multiple displacements. Mistry's first novel *Such a Long Journey* has three epigraphs as preface evocative of a mythical quest. The first epigraph is from Firdausi's *Shah Nama,* the second from T.S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" and the third from Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*. Mistry, therefore takes upon himself the task of shouldering the responsibility and weight of the immigrant's life in a new 'motherland' as a Parsi in India, and as an Indian in Canada. Mistry is seen to be the champion of the cause of the downtrodden and the hapless. Mistry in his fiction tries to uphold the values of non-violence, harmony in community and seek to build up social balance in the Indian society. His portraiture of the Parsi

community mirrors and parallels the tensions of a marginalized community in the throes of modernity. Mistry's fictional world is a microcosm of the ordinary lives led, their actions and inactions realistically depicted. His honesty seeps into his writings and there is no superfluity. The most remarkable feature of Mistry's fiction is that it brilliantly captures the crowded, throbbing life of India. He relies on memory and testimony thus locating his works within postcolonial traditions that values the confessional and testimony, these being characteristics forms of expression of the subaltern communities.

His first published work is a collection of short stories, *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987), also published as *Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firozsha Baag* (1989) which was followed by *Such a Long Journey* in 1991. He is also the author of *A Fine Balance* (1995), *Family Matters* (2002) and *The Scream* (2008). His fictions have won, among other awards, the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (twice), The Los Angeles Times Award, The Giller Prize, The Governor-General's Award, and the Royal Society of Literature's Winifred Holtby Award. *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* were also shortlisted for Booker Prize in 1991 and 1996 respectively. The first three texts focus on Bombay of the 1970s and *Family Matters* with the city in the 1990s. His works have been translated and published in over twenty-five languages.

Tales from Firozsha Baag (1987) is a collection of short stories set mostly in Bombay except for three stories – "Squatter", "Lend me Your Light" and "Swimming Lessons" which has Canada settings. The stories are linked together but the storytelling is different in each of the stories lending each an authentic narrative mode. Resistance to hegemony of dominant groups is also evident in these stories. These stories provide us an intimate view of the residents of the Firozsha Baag apartment complex who are

mostly middle class Parsis and like other middle class people in Bombay have to undergo daily battle with intermittent water supply, dilapidated homes with peeling paints, falling plaster and leaking WCs. It represents a minuscule Parsi community with all its idiosyncrasies, acutely aware of the threats that lie outside the six feet high, three hundred feet long black compound wall. What strikes the reader is the ease with which Mistry effortlessly hybridize and foreground the Parsi version of Indian English. The reader is able to gauge this from the beginning of the first story "Auspicious Occasion" when Rustomji, the main protagonist emerges from the W.C, his pyjama strings undone and shouts to his wife: " Mehroo! Arre Mehroo! Where are you? I am telling you, this is more than I can take!..." "that stinking lavatory upstairs is leaking again!... there I was squatting – barely started – when someone pulled the flush. Then on my head I felt – pchuk – all wet! On my head!" (TFB 3-4). This kind of linguistic licence that Mistry takes reverberates throughout his writings. Detailed analysis will be done in the following chapters.

Such a Long Journey (1991) is Mistry's first novel which immediately garnered attention. It was the first novel by an Indian immigrant to Canada to win the Governor General's Award for fiction in the year of its publication. Nilufer E. Bharucha in her encompassing work on Rohinton Mistry's works termed the novel as a "quintessential Bombay book" (*R. Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures* 119). Another significant aspect of this text is the recurring feature of 'journeying'. This is symbolic in many ways. It could signify the Parsis long journey from their ancestral land Iran to other parts of the world. And as said, as a Parsi Indian immigrant to Canada, Mistry is also doubly diasporic. The Parsi world in *Such a Long Journey*, also moves out of the self-imposed isolation, cutting down the high walls of their compound erected as in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and tentatively ventures out and interacts with the post colonial Indian world. In a

review of Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, Glenn Carey notes a "serious flaw", the lack of an appendix of Hindi expressions used in the story, with English translations (116). Only a polyglot reader will truly enjoy the nuances of the narratives. This comes to mind the debate "intelligibility" and "universality" in "emergent" literature (Wlad Godzich's term). Likewise, John Updike in his review of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* regretted the untranslated Swahili and Gikuyu words in the novel. It is understood that this is one way of resisting the hegemony of the West. But as a reader, whose mother tongue is not Hindi / Marathi/or any other regional language, it takes laborious time and effort to understand the texts interspersed with the mixture of Hindi and other local dialects. One can only begin to gauge at the meanings contextually.

A Fine Balance (1996) received rave reviews as soon as it hit the stands. *The Guardian* described it as "A masterpiece of illumination and grace. Like all great fiction, it transforms our understanding of life". Amanda Craig in the *Literary Review*, March 1996, said "This is a work of genius…It should be read by everyone who loves books, win every prize, make its author a millionaire" (34). The backdrop of *A Fine Balance (1995*) is the declaration of Internal Emergency in 1975 under Indira Gandhi. The central narrative of the novel is set over eleven years; the prologue is entitled 1975 and the epilogue, 1984, but the main focus is on that critical period of Indian history (State Emergency – 1975 to 1977). During the Emergency, the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution were suspended and the democratic government became a mockery at that time. Human lives, particularly those of the marginal were not valued. Law became an actual weapon in the hands of the enforcers of the Emergency which they wielded at their own whims. *Dictat* such as the birth control programme which was supposed to target married men who already had two or more children was misused to settle old scores and several unmarried youths were sterilised,

especially in the villages. The lower/lowest classes/castes were targeted and were herded in camps like sheep for sterilization. Many of the uninformed and uneducated villagers and those people living in the margins were forcibly sterilised and had no say in the matter whatsoever. The whole post colonial order/chaos in India after independence from imperial rule and the utter confusion of a newly formed conglomerate is presented in this novel. Set in Bombay during the upheavals of the Emergency, *A Fine Balance* addresses the issue of the self amidst caste/class and religious tensions. Four unlikely figures are drawn together by Mistry, their lives irrevocably juxtaposed side by side – Dina Dalal, the young widow; Maneck Kohlah, the student from North India and the low castes Ishvar and Omprakash Darji. Originally, Ishvar and Om belong to the *Chamaar* caste of tanners but they manage to break away from the rigid bonds of the caste shackles and are apprenticed as tailors by a Muslim friend. All the main characters in the novel undergo innumerable hardships but they are miniscule compared to the dispossessedness and disenfranchisement that the duo undergoes. Despite their best efforts to better their lot and prospects, it virtually seems impossible to shake off the tragedy and calamity that befalls upon them. Ishvar and Om who have fled the village and migrated to the city find themselves the outcaste equivalent in the city – the beggars. And so, "a triumphal return to the village remained a distant dream" (FB 4). Society seems to be doggedly persistent to make the pair struggle in their peripheral existence. But they never give up. The story is about the inextinguishable spark of the human will to survive despite massive odds.

With *Family Matters (2002*), Mistry returns to the Parsi world but this time with a difference. Inevitable old age and the several baggages that come with it are sensitively dealt with here. Nariman Vakeel, a 79 year old widower, incapacitated by old age and Parkinson's disease finds himself relegated to a position of an unwanted

guest in his own home- a once elegant apartment which he shares with his two middle-aged stepchildren. Coomy and Jal Contractor, unmarried brother sister duo also find themselves encumbered, in their middle age, with the enormous task of looking after their helpless stepfather. After unceremoniously dumping their benefactor on their younger sister's frugal home at Pleasant Villa, Coomy devices a plan to further stall Nariman from returning to Chateau Felicity. She cajoles Jal to go with her plan and the duo breaks the ceiling plaster, splashes water on it and reports back to Roxana and their father that a water tank burst and damaged the ceiling. It also turns out as the story progresses that Nariman had signed over the house to Jal and Coomy fifteen years back; the realization finally dawned on Nariman that his step-children have kicked him out of his own home. The addition of another person in the household of Yezad and Roxana also takes a toll on the expenses. They could hardly survive on the bare minimum leading to resentment on the part of Yezad. After the family moved back to Chateau Felicity following Coomy's tragic death, Nariman dies. Yezad's growing religiosity marked the deterioration of the once happy family. It is ironical how Yezad becomes extremely rigid in his beliefs and less tolerant of others, quite the opposite from when he was a sceptical man. This leaves his youngest son Jehangir confused and makes him feel like his "real father is gone, replaced by this non-stop-praying stranger" (FM 500). In *Family Matters*, Mistry affirms his belief that there is no pure good or pure evil, nor pure black or pure white. All the possible shades of grey are explored in the novel. Every character is at once a victim and a villain. The overarching shades and ambiguities of family life are candidly explored by the writer. Nariman Vakeel symbolizes not just the problems associated with old age but those problems of an ageing community whose values are neglected. Besieged by an array of ailments that accompany old age, the apathy with which Nariman's children ignore him is symbolic

of a younger generation losing traditional values and falling victim to the spiritual decay of the modern world. But Mistry still manages to humanize them, as agreed; it is a complicated world where we cannot divide everything into black and white. Certainly, the varying degree of shades of gray is realistic. Unloved step-children unwilling to take care of an unloving step-father and problems of middle class families unable to take care of ageing parents is a representative conundrum everywhere in the world. This is a universal problem afflicting all families living on the fringes.

The Scream (2008) is a short story first published by Mclelland & Stewart in 2008 which also featured exquisite original illustration by the celebrated Canadian artist, Tony Urquhart. Printed originally in a limited edition of 150 copies, it was exclusively sold by World Literacy of Canada as a fundraiser for their Organization. It was also chosen by Amnesty International as one of the stories celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights published in *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in its 60th year anniversary in 2009. Set in a Bombay apartment, *The Scream* is narrated by an old man, besieged by the predicament of old age. He is lonely, but the irony is that he is surrounded by noise everywhere – in the back room, outside the house in the streets. He hears screams each night but nobody is doing anything about it. The young people mock him and consider him senile and say that the scream is just his imagination working overdrive. He rues, "for them, whatever I say is a laughing matter, worthless rubbish. I am worthless, my thoughts are worthless, my words are worthless" (*Scream* 376-77). At night his stained and lumpy mattress is laid out in the front room, squeezed between the sofa and a baby grand piano. Squashed in his small space, the old man constantly has to endure these harsh screams every night. Perhaps the screams he hears are the screams of his heart, his neglected being that wants an outlet, crying out for attention from his children and grandchildren. The

apathy for the old is shown here. Once again, the focus of Mistry is on alienation of the aged.

1.4. Aravind Adiga and His Works

Aravind Adiga was born in Madras (now Chennai) on 23 October 1974. He grew up in Mangalore and studied at Canara High School, then at St. Aloysius High School, where he completed his SSLC. After emigrating to Sydney, Australia, with his family, he studied at James Ruse Agricultural High School. He studied English Literature at Columbia College, Columbia University, New York and also at Magdalene College, Oxford. As of now, he has three novels to his credit – *The White Tiger (2008)*, *Between the Assassinations (2008)* and *Last Man in Tower (2011)*, 4 short stories – *The Sultan's Battery* (2008), *Smack* (2008), *Last Christmas in Bandra* (2008) and *The Elephant* (2009). The short stories *The Sultan's Battery* and *Smack* were included in the collection of short stories *Between the Assassinations (2008).* Plus, several articles on politics, business and the arts have appeared in international newspapers and magazines including *Time*, *The Financial Times* and *The Sunday Times.*

The White Tiger (2008) is Aravind Adiga's debut novel that won the 2008 Man Booker Prize. It received rave reviews as soon as it hit the stands all over the world. It is the story of the modern protagonist/villain who takes destiny in his own hands, grabs at every opportunity with both hands to rise to the top. The White Tiger – the rarest of animal that is said to come along only once in a generation is the title bestowed on Balram Halwai by the school inspector by virtue of being the smartest boy in class. It is hilarious how Balram takes possession of the word 'entrepreneur' –"the Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at

the same time" (WT 9). Being an entrepreneur, he does not have time to be sentimental about the people that he hurts/kills to rise to the top. He is the symbol of the resisting subaltern who takes matters in his own hands to better himself. In an interview with Stuart Jeffries, Adiga gives his take on his protagonist:

> Balram Halwai is a composite of various men I've met when travelling through India. I spend a lot of time loitering about train stations, or bus stands, or servant's quarters and slums, and I listen and talk to the people around me. There's a kind of continuous murmur or growl beneath middle-class life in India, and this noise never gets recorded. Balram is what you'd hear if one day the drains and faucets in your house started talking. (*Guardian*)

The White Tiger, sheds light on the plight of the millions of India's poor in sharp contrast to the city skyscrapers and malls. The darkness is not just in the villages and remote areas but right behind the glittering buildings and shopping malls lies scattered the shanty huts along the pavements and street corners where the faceless, nameless subalterns live. The main theme of the novel is the contrast between India's rise as a global economy and its working class people who live in abject poverty. The greedy landlords in the village of Laxmangarh squeeze every drop of sweat of the villagers to fill their insatiable stomachs. They are given animal nicknames by the villagers depending upon their appearance and their peculiar appetites. The agricultural land, pastures, roads, even the river is taxed by the landlords. It is not an uncommon sight to see portraiture of people like Balram's father: "My father's spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in villages to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog's collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks" (WT 27). This is a common sight of all rickshaw-pullers, the human beast

of burden. All that Balram dream about is therefore, to get out of the clutches of the village and its soul sapping energy.

Between the Assassinations (2008) is Adiga's second published book though it was written before his first book, *The White Tiger*. The book is a collection of short stories which takes place in the fictitious town of Kittur in Southwest India. As the title suggests, the stories are mapped between the assassinations of two former Prime Ministers of India- Indira Gandhi in 1984 and her son, Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. The assassinations of the Gandhis were acts of vengeance by peripheral figures. In 1984, Indira Gandhi was shot by two of her Sikh bodyguards in response to the Indian army's desecration of Sikhism's holiest temple. In 1991, Rajiv Gandhi's flesh lay splattered on the streets when he became the target of meticulously planned suicide bombing by the Tamil Tigers, a political retaliation for India's role in the atrocities committed against Sri Lankan Tamils. Adiga is not interested in these assassinations per se. But he is definitely interested in the peripheral assassins, their psyche, what made them resort to such drastic, terrifying steps. Lakshmi Krishnan says, "While the Gandhi murders are large signposts in history, the desperation that led to the guards to open fire and the woman to detonate the bomb exists on a smaller scale in people's everyday lives. It is this 'infernal history' that occupies Adiga – the subterranean anger and frustration that, in his view, defines the Indian everyday's daily life". The themes touched upon are varied. We have an illiterate Muslim boy working at the train station being tempted by extremist element. A Dalit book vendor arrested for selling *The Satanic Verses.* Even after being beaten up badly and disfigured physically, his spirit is all the more resolved to sell the one and only book for which he was arrested. He doesn't know what the book is really about but he is fed up of being suppressed and oppressed. Then we have the story of a half-Brahmin, half-Hoyka Shakara P. Kinni always in the inbetween state,

nowhere and everywhere who explodes a bomb in college to vent out his anger and frustration at the society that refuses to accept his being. An account of a young boy and girl who goes on an errand from their addicted father in search of smack is realistically portrayed. They go begging from strangers all the way managing to hitch a bus ride without money, and also covering a large portion on foot all the while taking every opportunity to beg from people on the streets and knocking on the windows of cars at every traffic jam. Their demeanour changes as the situation demands to convince their audience to show pity. A fake sexologist's endeavour to support his family makes him the target of boy suffering from an incurable sexual disease to doggedly pursue him to help him find a cure for AIDS. Thus the whole moral compass is drawn in this town of Kittur. The short stories *The Sultan's Battery* that appeared in *The Guardian,* 18 October 2008 and *Smack* in *The Sunday Times*, 16 November 2008 are included in *Between the Assassinations.*

Last Christmas in Bandra was published in *The Times* December 19, 2008. This is a stirring story about a scavenger woman who is deprived of her biological son by the hands of the law. The judge – a law abiding citizen, uncorrupted still is the narrator in this short story. One of his unusual duties came every other Saturday when he was required to sign the documents presented by foreign couples adopting Indian children from the several orphanages. The judge chooses to sign off the scavenger woman's son in adoption to the German couple and forces the woman to do the same. One look at the scavenger woman and the judge is quick to dismiss her as irrelevant and accuses her of being selfish on learning from the social worker that she refuses to sign. The facts are incriminating against the scavenger woman for it is revealed that she never visited the orphanage where she left her son which in the eyes of the judge and the social worker tantamount to neglect and selfishness. They, therefore question her audacity to refuse

when she herself cannot take care of her son. But the point is the scavenger woman was never given a chance to speak, to defend her action/inaction. The story reveals the level of discrimination meted out to the subalterns who are rendered voiceless by the elites above them who are the dispenser of justice.

The Elephant, a short story that appeared in *The New Yorker* January 26, 2009 is a brilliantly crafted short story of Adiga's. In a crisp, economic, biting and precise manner, Adiga gives us a memorable character. The story is set in Kittur, a fictitious town between Goa and Calicut. This is the same setting that we find in *Between the Assassinations*. Adiga presents the stark contrast between the haves and have-nots in this story. On one side we have "the cycle-cart pullers in their usual position lying on their carts, staring into space, smoking beedis", on the other, we have the "fat kids in T-shirts" "licking vanilla cones" as the cart pullers looked on with "dull avarice" (*Elephant* 1) on their faces. Adiga gives us a yet another memorable character in Chennaya – one among the thousands of cycle-cart pullers waiting with their life hanging in the balance, for the call of their turn to tow furniture and other goods to the desired homes.

The latest book by Adiga is *Last Man in Tower* (2011). This book is set in Vakola, Mumbai and focuses on the residents of Vishram Society which brings to our mind similar housing society in Mistry's *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* The apartment complexes that make up Vishram Society are eyed by Shah, a real estate developer who plans to build his dream there. Shah is set on these complexes and is determined to acquire it at all costs. He therefore, sets about in earnest making deals with the residents of this society, some reluctant residents getting huge financial offers to vacate their flats. One man's particular resistance is the central focus in the novel that of Yogesh

Murthy's, a retired school teacher, affectionately called as Masterji. The catch in the terms of the buy-out is that the residents must unanimously accept the offer or none at all. So what do you do when your dreams are right in front of you – waiting for you to reach out and take it – after you make a moral compromise? Adiga sensitively portrays real characters faced with moral dilemmas. The prospect of certain wealth and richness in the immediate future for the other residents who are willing to vacate their premises is in danger of being denied and taken out of their grasp by the resistance of one man. In the face of such situation, the moral compass of the individuals of the society including close family and friends of Masterji are severely tested and compromised. Masterji's reluctance to vacate his home keeps the reader constantly in emotional turmoil, sometimes with love and pity, other times with irritation at his indecisiveness and obstinacy. When Dharmen Shah hears about the gruesome murder of Masterji, he comments: "I thought it would be a push down the stairs, or a beating at night… I forgot we were dealing with good people" (LMT 394). Driven by their desire for better lives, it is the friends and neighbours of Masterji who beats and batters him with a hammar and pushes him down from the terrace.

1.5. Chapter Schematization

The study contains the following six chapters – 'Introduction', 'Discourse on Subaltern', 'Subalternity in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga', 'Discourse on Diaspora', 'Diasporic Experience in the Works Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga', and 'Conclusion'. **Chapter 1** – 'Introduction', introduces the theories of marginality like subaltern, dalitism, dispora, applied to the study of the writers' works. The chapter then, gives a brief overview of Indian English Fiction as an evolving genre. It further delineates the biographical details and enumerates the body of

works of the two writers. It also lays down the objectives of the research. **Chapter 2** entitled 'Discourse on Subaltern' will analyse the subaltern theory and dalitism; its contested meanings and relevance in the literary discourse. Subaltern means 'of inferior rank.' The theory of Subalternity was first applied to the postcolonial theory by the *Subaltern Studies* group led by Ranajit Guha. They used the term to refer to those marginalised people that lives on the fringes of society; downtrodden people neglected, subordinated and alienated by the elite class. This chapter will also discuss its beginnings, the vast ambit within its theoretical reach and its relevance in understanding and uplifting the marginal. The subaltern studies thus, highlight the oppression and injustice suffered by the lower sections of society and try to give voice to the voiceless, the silenced.

The ancient Varna system of Indian society puts the Shudras (dalits) at the lowest level making it obligatory for them to serve Brahmins and other higher Varnas without complaining or ill feeling. The untold misery and sufferings that the lower caste –the Shudras, otherwise known as the untouchables underwent at the hands of the Brahmins or other upper castes, has led to the emergence of Dalit literature or Dalitism which reflect and portray the plight of dalits. Told with a rare sensitivity, these stories bring out the alienation and the silent rage of people on the margins. Dalitism, today is veering towards a more accommodative field by identifying themselves with the broader category of the subaltern. In the next chapter, the works of Mistry and Adiga will be analysed in the light of these theoretical concepts.

Chapter 3 is entitled 'Subalternity in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga'. This chapter will analyse the works of the writers in the light of the subaltern theory. Rohinton Mistry's *Tales from Firozha Baag* contains eleven short stories dealing with the haps and mishaps in the lives of the residents of Firozha Baag,

an apartment building of Parsis in postcolonial Bombay. The residents have so much in common – their rituals and customs, their special lingo, peculiar nicknames, and prejudices. Most of the residents are lower middle class Parsis, bereft of modern amenities. There is just one refrigerator in the whole complex. Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* set in post-independence India, for instance, demonstrates how the rise of Hindutva marginalized the Muslims and made it clear to the Parsis that they were an ethnic minority in Hindu India. Further caste discrimination and working class exploitation continues unabated. In *A Fine Balance*, the horrific fates of Ishvar and Om are symptomatic of a postcolonial subalternization – a process whereby certain categories are rendered destitute, disenfranchised, and economically powerless by the socio-political structures of the new nation-state. Om and Ishvar represent lower caste, rural subalterns, driven into the city by the upper caste initiated killings of their families. In the city they are exploited, and eventually reduced to beggary and sterility (literally, as a result of the Emergency's forced sterilization campaigns).

Adiga's *The White Tiger* also reveals the plight of the subalterns living in abject poverty and subjugation. The greedy landowners in the villages in *The White Tiger* just become another face of the colonial rule, squeezing the life out of the poor people. *The White Tiger* exposes the subjugation and subordination of the marginal, the lower sections of the society by the elites. In *Between the Assassinations*, Adiga delineates a group portrait of ordinary Indians in a time of extraordinary transformation (between the assassinations of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi). A series of short stories are narrated here. Kittur is a fictitious town on India's South-Western coast, in between Goa and Calicut – a small, undistinguished town. The ordinary lives and everyday struggle of the residents of the town's marginals are narrated. Across class, religion,

occupation and preoccupation, Kittur is drawn. The rest of the writers' novels will also be analysed by using this theory.

Chapter 4 is entitled 'Discourse on Diaspora'. This chapter will analyse the diaspora theory: its contested meanings and definitions. Diaspora can be the voluntary or forced movement of people from their homelands into new regions that becomes their adoptive homeland. Having arrived in a new geographical and cultural context, they try to negotiate between two cultures and the diasporas are often at a loss, neither really belonging in their adoptive nation, unable to forget their homeland and yet aware that they cannot fit in if they do return. Such diasporic movements develop their own distinctive cultures out of these cultural contestation and cultural negotiation. The diasporic writings are also sometimes known as 'expatriate writings' or 'immigrant writings' and they give voice to the discrimination and other traumatic experiences that they undergo as although "when one arrives in a new land, one has a sense of wonder and adventure at the sight and feel of a landscape so different from what one has been accustomed to; there is also a sense of isolation and fear; and intense nostalgia is a buffer to which many retreat" (Parameswaran 209). The feeling of nostalgia, a sense of loss and anxiety to reinvent home obsess them which find expression, consciously or unconsciously, in their writings.

Chapter 5 is entitled 'Diasporic Experience in the Works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga'. This chapter will dwell on the experiences of the Diaspora in the works of the proposed writers. This expatriate experience is present in both the works of Mistry and Adiga. Alok Sharma and Pinky Madam in *The White Tiger* have returned from the US to India, but they are unable to fit in. Pinky is constantly pestering Ashok to return to America, who on the other hand, is reluctant to leave their family and

relatives. After living in the US for a long time, Pinky finds it difficult to adjust and so this uncertainty of belongingness drives their marriage apart. Diasporic writings across the world are concerned with spaces, landscapes, and journeys. Since diaspora involves a change of place through a journey, this is also an evident theme in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. The spatial location is also implied in the title *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* Characters such as Kersi in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, which contains eleven tales, exemplify the immigrant's problem of alienation from both his adopted land and his 'original' one. The last story entitled 'Swimming Lessons' in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, is the only tale set entirely in Canada. However, even here the Canadian world is juxtaposed with Indian memories. As a Parsi, Mistry is on the periphery even in India, so his discourse also challenges and resists the domineering attitude of the dominant culture even within India. Mistry has also experimented with linguistic hibridity and celebrated the unique Parsi idiom in his writings especially in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and *Such a Long Journey.* Mistry's *Family Matters* is also a diasporic text. The novel is centred round the aged Parsi, Nariman Vakeel, retired Professor of English. In delineating his character, the novelist opens up the whole vistas of human emotions such as love, hate, and guilt. The interest of the book, to a great extent, lies in its warmth and compassion in dealing with human bonds and native customs and practices. Personal marginality as expressed by the characters in the novels is also an expression of a political and geographical condition and the alienation and rootlessness that arise as a result. The language of Misty and Adiga will be analysed dialogically. Dialogism ensures the primacy of context over text. Every meaning is understood as a part of a greater whole –there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which has the potential of influencing and conditioning others.

Chapter 6 is entitled ‘Conclusion’. This chapter sums up the aspects of the authors’ works that have been discussed in the previous chapters. Further, an attempt will be made to organise and synthesize all the disparate elements together and summarise the contentions of the researcher to justify the place of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga’s works as representative of the marginals’ predicament. A word, discourse, language or culture undergoes ‘dialogization’ when it becomes relativized, de-previleged, aware of competing definitions for the same things. Marginality thus, gets this possibility of having multiple meanings which are neither static nor fixed through dialogics. The meaning of marginality thus, is in constant flux with no authoritative or absolute meaning.

1.6. Objectives and Significance of the Study

The research intends to provide a better understanding of the creative works of Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga. By juxtaposing the two writers and linking their works to common themes and concerns, the work aims to generate further debates and questions. Post- colonialism /Post-coloniality have created its own subalterns. The colonial practices, attitudes have been imbibed by the post-colonials. They, therefore, become just another face for the colonial hegemony. The study will analyse how marginality keeps people on the periphery that becomes part of life. Is it a cycle? Can the subalterns ever shed their subalternity? Are they really voiceless? Who is then a subaltern? Is the diaspora homeless or transnational or both? These are some of the essential questions that the researcher wishes to address. While creating a beautiful piece of literature, the writers still succeed to communicate the cause of the marginals. Often humour becomes a tool in their hands to lessen the blow or the severity of their

indictment against the so called ‘mainstream’ culture, the government, the appointed leaders who think they are born to rule. Their humour is also often scathing. They mince no words to burst the bubble of ‘India Shining’ and unearth the harsh reality. Both Mistry and Adiga draw on their memory of India to revitalize and enrich their creativity which also serves as a balm for their tumultuous soul. The dynamics of marginality, the similarities and dissimilarities, the approaches to it, will be critically examined in the works of these two writers.

WORKS CITED

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India with India Today Group, 2008. Print.

---. "Roars of Anger." Interview by Stuart Jeffries. *The Guardian*. 16 Oct. 2008. Web. 6 Aug. 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/oct/16/booker-prize>.

---. "The Elephant." *The New Yorker*. 26 Jan. 2009. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/26/the-elephant>.

---. *Last Man in Tower*. Noida: Fourth-Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2011. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *Post-Colonial Studies: Key Concepts.* London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. *Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures and Transcultural Spaces*. Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003. Print.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. "Repossessing the Master Tongue, Subverting the Master Narrative and Challenging the Metanarrative of history: Rohinton Mistry's Fiction." *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Eds, Anjali Gera Roy, Meena T. Pillai. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 40-54. Print.

Braziel, Jana Evans, Anita Mannur, eds. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. Print.

Carey, Glenn. Rev. of *Such a Long Journey*, by Rohinton Mistry. *Library Journal* 15 April 1991. 116. Print.

Craig, Amanda. *Literary Review*, March 1996. Web. 30 Nov. 2013. <http://www.bookcrossing.com/journal/183986/>.

"Indian Novelist Aravind Adiga Wins Booker Prize." *Agencies*. 15 oct. 2008. Web. 25 Nov. 2011. <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/indian-novelist-aravind-adiga-wins-booker-prize/373637/>.

Krishnan, Lakshmi. "An Infernal History of India." *The Oxonian Review*. 9.8. 15 June 2009. Web. 11 June 2014. <http://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/an-infernal-history-of-india/>.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* 1987. India: Penguin-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *A Fine Balance.* 1996. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Family Matters.* 2002. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *The Scream.* 2008. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. 371-382. Print.

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

Rai, Amod Kumar. "Dalit literature: Origin, Nature, Definition and Scope." *Dalit Literature: Challenges & Potentialities*. Eds. Karan Singh, Amod Rai, Jyoti Yadav. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. 39-45. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSE ON SUBALTERN

2.1. Introduction

Oppression, subordination, subjugation, the Other, inferior, native; all these are key terms in colonial and postcolonial studies. After more than three centuries of living under colonial rule, at the stroke of midnight August 14, 1947 India became independent and became its own ruler. It was felt that all will be well, and all discrimination suffered under the colonial rule brought into equilibrium. The picture of the ideal nation-state: free, fair and equal dreamed of, during colonialism became a reality. But the newly independent nation absorbed and imbibed all the attitudes of the colonizer and mimicked the worst in him. Postcolonialism thus ushered in subalternization. According to Promod K. Nayar,

> if the native was the subaltern during colonial rule, postcolonialism created its own subalterns. Women, lower castes, and classes, ethnic minorities rapidly became the 'Others' within the postcolonial nation-state. The new elite was as oppressive and exclusive as the colonial master. Democratic approaches failed, and economic and social emancipation slipped across the horizons as millions of 'postcolonials' saw themselves colonized by the new powers. (100)

Colonial structures were then simply taken over by indigenous elites after independence. Subalterns thus became the oppressed after colonialism as the elites

emulated their predecessors. The appropriation of colonial practice of rule by the elites often led to resistance and revolt from the subalterns who were invariably quelled with harshness and coercion.

2.2. Meaning/Contested Meanings

The Oxford Concise Dictionary defines 'subaltern' as 'of inferior rank'. It is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers, and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power (Ashcroft et al, *Key Concepts* 215). Ranajit Guha referred to subaltern studies as listening to the small voice of history (*The Small Voice* 11-12). It was first used from a historical perspective. Gramsci noted that since history being the history of dominant groups in the states, it was one-sided and therefore, half-true. Perhaps history would have been different; if it was written from the subaltern point of view. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin support Gramsci's claim that, in spite of the fact that it is the elite narrative that becomes the 'official' version of history, the history of the subaltern classes is as complex and as significant as the history of the dominant classes (216). In this new context;

> the nation was being reconfigured, reimagined, re-theorised. Subaltern Studies became an original site for a new kind of history from below, a people's history free of national constraints, a post-nationalist reimagining of the Indian nation on the underside, at the margins, outside nationalism. (Ludden 12)

Aijaz Ahmad in *The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality* seems also to allude Colonialism as a "transhistorical thing" which is always present and always in process

of dissolution in one part of the world or another, so that everyone gets the privilege, sooner or later, at one time or another, of being coloniser, colonised and postcolonial (283). Again, K. Sivaramakrishnan astutely observes that Subalternity is "constructed in opposition to elite nationalism in a binarism that seeks to use culture to repudiate history" (226). Sumit Sarkar employs the term 'subaltern' as a convenient short-hand for three social groups: "tribal and low-caste agricultural labourers and share-croppers; landholding peasants, generally of intermediate caste status in Bengal (together with their Muslim counterparts); and labour in plantations, mines and industries (along with urban casual labour)…the subaltern groups so defined formed a relatively autonomous political domain with specific features and collective mentalities which need to be explored, and this was a world distinct from the domain of the elite…" (273). Subaltern Studies and Subalternity has various definitions and different groups that often overlap but the one constant feature is the notion of resistance to elite domination. Today, they no longer acquiesce to bear their lot. They no longer think of their plight as divinely ordained. They actively demand justice politically, economically and socially, in every way possible to assert their identity.

2.3. Genesis

From the beginning, Subaltern India rejected official nationalism and developed transnationally acquiring a global readership and critical appreciation. In 1983, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* sought to redress the failure of Communists and Marxists to understand nationalism. After this, political nationalism lost its grip on the historical imagination as nations were reinvented as "imagined communities". First used from a historical perspective, the term has been adapted to

Post-Colonial Studies from the work of the *Subaltern Studies* group of historians led by Ranajit Guha, who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. It is used in *Subaltern Studies* "as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (Guha, *SSI* vii). The purpose of the *Subaltern Studies* project was to redress the imbalance created in academic work by a tendency to focus on elites and elite culture in South Asia historiography. The group argued that the domain of politics and history was not homogeneous, as elite interpretation has made it out to be:

> What is clearly left out of this unhistorical (elitist) historiography is the politics of the people. For parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and intermediate strata in town and country – that is, the people. (*SSI* 4)

They felt that subordination cannot be understood except in a binary relationship with dominance. The group thus, aimed to examine the subaltern "as an objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role" (vii). Another contention of *Subaltern Studies* was that all preceding forms of historiography have excluded the marginal people as the conscious subject of his own history, relegating him as a mere contingent in the popular history. Regarding this, Gyanendra Pandey says, that the routine violence against "marginal groups – untouchables, immigrants, women, children, domestic servants and a myriad others" (191) have been ignored even in recent historiography. He further states, "violence, and the many small

acts of counter-violence it provokes is so ‘normal’; so ‘everyday’, so little threatening of security and trade, that it goes unrecorded by the state and the media – except occasionally in sensational accounts of ‘criminality’, ‘deviance’ or ‘madness’ – and rarely forms part of historians’ history” (191-92). Taking note of these serious implications to the identity of the marginals, the *Subaltern Studies* group sought to unfurl the history of the neglected, the underbelly of the nation. The group seeks to rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspectives of the peasants, the oppressed and silenced, whose role in history has not been affirmed. Ranajit Guha describes the *Subaltern Studies* group as originally being “an assortment of marginalised academics” (*Subaltern Studies Reader* xiv). Thus the project of the *Subaltern Studies* group was also from down below, not elite academicians. This also, perhaps made their point of view and voice stronger; the taking back of power by the subalterns themselves. Leela Gandhi sums up the *Subaltern Studies* as “an attempt to allow the ‘people’ finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and, in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed” (2). The aim of the subaltern project therefore was to give political voice to those subalterns - the oppressed, non-elite who cannot speak since elite intellectuals are unable to speak on their behalf.

Vinay Bahl critiques the term resistance – the one constant feature in subaltern consciousness – as a negative concept which may narrow down our understanding of history. He says, “Struggling people’s effort to survive in extremely difficult circumstances should be treated as heroic rather than as resistance” (390). Perhaps assertion rings better. Nevertheless, they own the term, be it heroic or resistance. And for that matter, the term subaltern often sounds derogatory. But for one, one doesn’t need to be a demigod to be a hero, one just need to believe that he/she is one. And

resistance is a core tool in the hands of the oppressed. Resistance, Bill Ashcroft also says, need not necessarily mean rejection of dominant culture, the utter refusal to engage with the dominant discourse because such kind of isolation is not only delimiting but impossible. He uses the term 'interpolate' to describe a wide range of resistant practices: "the capacity to interpose, to intervene, to interject a wide range of counter-discursive tactics into the dominant discourse without asserting a unified anti-imperial intention, or a separate oppositional purity" (*Postcolonial Transformation* 47). The process of insertion, interruption, interjection or interpolation, then is a tool in the hands of the subaltern to resist elite domination and bring about a transformation.

David Hardiman provides instances of how the adivasis or tribal peasants were easily susceptible to rumours and beliefs in miracles and the strange workings of the Divine. They were easily persuaded to listen to the teachings of a goddess (mata or devi) known as Salahbai, who had supposedly come out of the mountains to the east and who expressed her demands through spirit mediums/persons who would suddenly go in a trance and shake their heads violently and utter what were believed to be the Devi's command (*Adivasi Assertion* 196). This is one common feature that we find in all subaltern classes which reveals their ignorance and gullibility on one hand but also their collective sense of trust and belief in a greater power to lighten their pitiable lot on the other which also affords them a semblance of sanity and calmness in their everyday chaotic, miserable lives. The pattern of coercion/ hegemony also normally keeps the subalterns in their place despite misery and exploitation. This is what essentially keeps the majority of Indians in the Rooster coop according to Adiga's protagonist Balram Halwai. Just like the properly domesticated, brightly coloured roosters and hens in their tight metal cages, people from the darkness squeeze in together despite the smell of their own shit without a complain. They have been so conditioned to be obsequious, to

feel obligated so much so that even when the coop is left wide open nobody dares to escape. Oppression is legitimized in this case which makes rebellion seem not only too dangerous but also morally wrong. This perhaps led the theorist Spivak to question the validity of the subaltern's ability to speak.

Can the Subaltern Speak? is one of Spivak's most challenging and intellectually rich essays where Spivak questions the ability of the intellectuals to serve as a transparent medium through which the voices of the oppressed can be heard: "How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?" (*Can Subaltern* 32) Because since, the view of the oppressed is often written by the elite, then, doesn't that mean the voice of the oppressed becomes lost again? To guard against essentialist views of subalternity, Ranajit Guha suggests that there is a further distinction to be made between the subaltern and dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels. However, Guha's attempt to guard against essentialism, by specifying the range of subaltern groups, serves only, according to Spivak, to problematize the idea of the subaltern still further. And if "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (32). Spivak examines the position of the Indian women and concludes with the declaration that the subaltern cannot speak. This contention sometimes has been interpreted to mean that there is no way in which oppressed or politically marginalized groups can voice their resistance. But this has been explained by Ashcroft et al. that Spivak's target is the concept of an unproblematically constituted subaltern identity because the existence of post-colonial discourse itself is an example of such speaking. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* was delivered as a speech in 1983. The central concept Spivak says in an interview with Suzana Milevska was that "once a woman performs an

act of resistance without an infrastructure that would make us recognise resistance, her resistance is in vain" (Chakravorty, Milevska and Barlow 62). Spivak also brings in much larger confusion: "can men theorize feminism, can white theorize racism, can the bourgeois theorize revolution, and so on" (*Literary Representation of the Subaltern* 111). Essentially, what Spivak wants to highlight is the issue of representation, that the subaltern cannot be represented. In other words, Spivak is highlighting the problem and politics of representation. In claiming to represent the most marginal/oppressed group, the subject i.e., the subaltern is further rendered voiceless. Spivak's earlier contention is then questioned again by herself this time as she says that the position that only the subaltern can know the subaltern, only women can know women cannot be held as a 'theoretical presupposition'. In this light Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak depicts the subaltern Jashoda in the *Breast-Giver*, a translation of Mahasweta Devi's *Stanadayini.* And as Bill Ashcroft says, "the subaltern does need to speak *out of* otherness to speak *as* the other" and "the phrase 'the subaltern cannot speak' need not imply that the subaltern is silenced and has no voice whatsoever. Rather it suggests that the voice of the subaltern does not exist in some pure space outside the dominant discourse" (*Postcolonial Transformation* 46). Thus analysed, the *Subaltern Studies* project continues to be "creative, adaptive, and malleable. Dispersion and convergence, migration and assimilation, have made subalternity a movable feast with jumbled tracks leading in many directions" (Ludden 26). Arguments within subaltern studies in which various agendas jostle for space and talk to each other around a common theme only justifies that "the subaltern serves above all as the signifier for that concern" (Beverley 22).

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin also explain the common features of post-colonial literature:

> (Post-colonial literatures) emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasising their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. (*Empire Writes Back* 2)

Mistry and Adiga's texts emerged from the present circumstances of the dispossessed to share their 'difference', their experiences as marginals and emphasise their differences from the assumptions of the 'centre'. An attempt to discuss, analyse and interpret the dominant discourses of Subaltern issues and its representation in literature is therefore, undertaken in this chapter.

2.4. Affinities with Dalitism

The ancient Varna system of Indian society puts the *Shudras* (dalits) at the lowest level making it obligatory for them to serve Brahmins and other higher Varnas without complaining or ill feeling. Caste, according to Irfan Habib is "a fairly well-marked, separate community, whose individual members are bound to each other through endogamy (and hypergamy), and very often also a common hereditary profession or duty, actual or supposed" (Habib 161). He also adds to the definition, "a perception of the rank of one caste in relation to other castes, a ranking which finds expression in the degree of "purity" and 'impurity' of the other castes in relation to one's own". Clearly sanctioned by traditional Hindu beliefs, the Brahmins and other higher castes have always enjoyed the obsequious servitude of the dalits/the *shudras*

and regarded it as their birthright. And since caste distinctions were determined by birth, it was impossible for the lower caste to move up the ladder of caste – once a low caste, always a low caste.

The plight of India's untouchables that accounts for a formidable section of the Indian society is well-documented, especially their extreme poverty and material/social degradation is well known all over the world. But what the untouchables themselves think about their conditions, social standings or the lack of it, in their own eyes is less apparent. Caste differentiation and discrimination have thus bogged down Indian society through ages. The list of woes, discrimination that the untouchables were forced to bear by virtue of being born low caste starts from basic human rights denied like entry into temples, prohibition to draw water from public wells/tanks to prohibition to wear gold/silver ornaments and good clothes, to use flowers, to participate in festivals, wear shoes or even use umbrellas as noted by eminent historians. In 1920, Gandhi reiterated that removal of untouchability must be considered a major programme of the Congress, the same year B. R. Ambedkar who is considered a great leader of the Harijans (himself an untouchable Mahar) published the Marathi forthnightly *Mü Năyak* (Das 304). Ambedkar also wrote six autobiographical 'illustrations', as he referred to them titled *Waiting for Visa* which was published after his death. He discusses some of 'the events' in his life in order to bring the oppression of the lower caste into public forum and to garner international attention. Scholars have indicated that these six autobiographical extracts might have been written between 1946-7 (Rodrigues 45). Reading the history pages, it is revealed that Gandhi and Ambedkar had completely different understanding of the caste system and in the redressal of atrocities committed on the untouchables. Ambedkar was more revolutionary than Gandhi who was adamant on sticking to non-violence and a pacifist as some reactionaries would call him. But

both their roles are acknowledged in the upliftment of the conditions of the untouchables and in making their cause a national/international issue. And in 1947, when Ambedkar was appointed as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, abolishment of untouchability was legalised in Article 17. Nevertheless, untouchability still persists in one form or the other in India despite the legal prohibition sanctioned in the Constitution.

Inequality generated by the caste system is a recurring theme in Indian literature. Eminent scholars have written against the hierarchical structure that condemned the lower strata to the fixed life of indignity, subjugation, humiliation and poverty. History records that the criticism of the caste system by Dayananda, Vivekananda, Tagore and many others opened the eyes of the public for debate on this crucial issue. Sisir Kumar Das even traces the voice against social tyranny to the medieval period (303). But it was the movement started by Jotiba Phule, who came from a Mali caste (shudra) that caused major embarrassment to the Brahmins (Das 301). He argued that education of women and the lower castes was a vital priority in addressing social inequalities. The untold misery and sufferings that the lower caste – the *Shudras*, otherwise known as the untouchables underwent at the hands of the Brahmins or other upper castes, has led to the emergence of Dalit literature or Dalitism which reflect and portray the plight of Dalits. A host of Dalit autobiographies emerged both in English and other regional languages like Marathi in the last three decades of the 20th century. Jotiba Phule and Ambedkar have provided inspiration and direction to the Dalit writers, especially in Maharashtra. Some of the remarkable Dalit autobiographies include Daya Pawar's *Baluta*, Lakshman Mane's *Upara*, Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi*, to name a few. Arjun Dangle suggests that in Dalit autobiographies; "We see varying facets of the Dalit movement; the struggle for

survival; the emotional universe of a Dalit's life: the man-woman relationship; the experiencing of humiliation and atrocities; at times, abject submission, at other times, rebellion" (xiv).

Time and again, Dalit critics as well as writers have described Dalit autobiographies as narratives of pain and oppression. In this connection, Sarah Beth, a literary critic argues that Dalit autobiography uses the author's life experiences of pain as a means of political assertion. It contests the basis of caste discrimination, focuses on events that highlight the pain of experiencing the caste discrimination and explores its continued practice. The characterization of untouchables as mute, passive figures, recipients of insults and discrimination is common in literature. But the fact that untouchables have the ability to reflect and analyse critically their being and position affords them the opportunity to let the world hear firsthand the experience of oppression and struggle to create and nurture new identities for themselves in the modern world.

R.C.P. Sinha describes *An Indian Outcaste: The Autobiography of an Untouchable* (1951) as the first autobiography of an untouchable in English that delineates the story of the struggles of an untouchable named Hazari in the early decades of the 20th century. Told with a rare sensitivity, these stories bring out the alienation and the silent rage of people on the margins. Jumping forward, Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste: A Memoir* (2003) is a revolutionary text that constructs a modern Dalit identity in the context of globalisation and the internationalisation of the caste questions in the 1990s. The debates on caste and Dalit rights at the global level gave a new dimension to the struggle against caste discrimination. Narendra Jadhav, a well known economist and a Dalit explores the world he lived and struggled in, in *Outcaste: A Memoir*. It is narrated from the perspective of his father, mother, himself and his

teenage daughter. It traces the journey of Damu, the author's father, from a small village in Maharashtra to Mumbai overcoming all odds to educate all his children which becomes a testimony to the success of a Dalit family. Jason Overdorf offers an interesting comment on *Outcaste*:

> Indian family sagas are as commonplace as they are charming, but nearly all of them are tales of one kind of elite or another. *Outcaste* – a family memoir not of high caste, scholarly Brahmins, so well represented on the bookshelves, but of three generations of untouchables – is different.
>
> Twice as likely to live in poverty than other Indians and still bound to face powerful discrimination at every turn, India's untouchables – now known as Dalits – remain (except in politics) virtually silent and invisible. No major Indian newspaper or magazine employs a Dalit editor, and reporters are few and far between. Bollywood, where many Muslims have found fame, has no Dalit directors and no Dalit stars. And Dalit authors – already few in number – rarely find publishers eager to translate their books into English. (Overdorf)

Overdorf's view opens up issues for discussion in detail. But to summarize it, *Outcaste* is the story of a Dalit family, written by a Dalit. Secondly, he opines that this story is different from the stories of "other Indians" thus, making the Dalits central in the story and the global context. Narendra Jadhav says:

> There is widespread interest in Dalit writing now, all over the world. The upsurge is not because it is politically correct but because people want to know more about the underprivileged sections, about the lives of these whom they know so little (Anand 31).

Jadhav asserts his identity in the following words:

> Yes, I do come from the Mahar caste.
>
> Yes, my father was an illiterate lowly employee doing menial jobs to earn a square meal for the family.
>
> Yes, my forefather's were required to wear clay pots around their necks to keep their spit from polluting the ground, and the brooms were tied to their rumps to obliterate their footprints as they walked.
>
> Yes, as village servants, my forefathers were mercilessly forced to run … human pilots, foaming at the mouth under the scorching Sun, to herald the carriages of government officials.
>
> So what?
>
> Have I not reclaimed my dignity through my achievements?
>
> Why should the caste into which I was born count now?
>
> (*Outcaste* 207)

Outcaste is a powerful indictment of caste discrimination as well a confident assertion of Dalit identity. Though Narendra Jadhav is not ashamed of his caste, yet he asks for a space as a human being that makes caste divisions irrelevant. Dalitism, today is veering towards a more accommodative field by identifying themselves with the broader category of the subaltern. The idea of representation of postcolonial subaltern is based on the need to shift focus from the hegemonic to marginal. The main agenda of the Subaltern Studies project was to focus on the ignored issues including peasant and insurgencies in postcolonial India and bring back the issues to the so called 'mainstream' history. As Asok Sen says the binary elite/subaltern dichotomy has certain specific analytical uses in the study of historical processes and that it is not the

categorical rigidity of concepts that is important; rather the value of these concepts must be explored for all possible uses.

It is agreed that the issue of caste have been noted in Indian English Fiction but Tabish Khair contents that the overwhelming concentration of the Indian English gaze was on the middle and upper classes. It is only "by defining the universal and the pan-Indian in largely privileged Babu terms, the Indian English novelist often denies the existence of the Indian 'other' – which is neither middle class nor upper caste. The fact that this Coolie 'other' constitutes the actual majority in India makes the denial even more significant" (*Babu Fictions* 137). No doubt, some Indian English writers have dealt with lower-caste characters. However, the lower-caste character has been described from the point of view of the upper caste in the process compromising and subsuming the 'other's' personality. Khair says, "it is not that the 'caste other' is completely ignores in Indian English Fiction, but that his/her presence – in most cases – has been subsumed, rewritten and marginalized" (137). He also stresses that the structure of caste-based exploitation narrated in the Indian English novels do not address the "dynamics of oppression but highlight largely static images – brought home by repeated stories of contemporary lower-caste characters being punished for offenses in ways described in the ancient *Laws of Manu*."(*Babu Fictions* 155-6). There are still serious caste related problems and Khair feels that a continued "metaphorical and narrative repetition of the past still exists" which obscures the existing, more common and much-changed structures of caste-based oppression that ends up "streamlining and greatly reducing the lived variety of subaltern experiences and responses" (144). The class and caste divide still persists today, but its contours have changed and as such literature has a great role to play to take stock of the variety of political, cultural and socio-economic concerns that encircles caste divisions.

2.5. Summary

The subaltern being depicted cannot be taken for granted. In postcolonial India, there have been valid efforts to make the voice of the subaltern heard in literature – of giving voice to the silenced and displaced cultures and entities. There is also, as Malashri Lal documents, a different and just as valid element of subaltern resistance and speech in Indian English Fiction by women in the context of Indian and other predominantly patriarchal societies. Male domination and female subordination is so obvert in society which is reflected in literature. In Indian society, gender inequality takes so many forms from denying women the choice of a life partner, choice of education, physical movement without a chaperon, choice of dress/clothes to confining the role of women as 'home-maker'- housekeeping, looking after children, cooking, cleaning and serving the husband. Society's treatment of women as the 'inferior sex', the 'weaker sex' is so thoroughly engrained in the minds of individuals, which are then passed on from generation to generation that it is really difficult to get off the shackles of discrimination and the treatment of women as second class citizens. The threat to this discrimination is not from men but equally from women also. From a very young age, girls are taught differently from boys. In majority of the societies, the birth of a boy completes a family and makes it whole. Especially, when we talk of Indian society, the discrimination is easily visible. Women as subaltern are thus doubly discriminated. To confront male dominance, Spivak advocates women to assume the position of a "questioning subject". She says, "When I was talking about putting woman in the position of the questioning subject, I was really talking about the context of phallocentricism. It was a critique of the discourse of woman as produced, as defined by men" (*Strategy* 42). And by undertaking the role of a questioning subject, woman can hope to rise above their silenced subject. And just like how an understanding of elite

narratives is essential to juxtapose the contentions of the subaltern, it is also pertinent not to dismiss the issue of patriarchal views but write back to it.

"Does subaltern studies as it has evolved up till now help us in getting closer to the goal of social justice for all?... Do subaltern studies help in creating an emancipator politics for the subalterns? Does this historiography help in understanding people's lives, their actions and their histories more meaningfully in terms of developing strategies to make their lives better?" (Bahl 366) These are some of the questions that Vinay Bahl puts forward to ascertain the legitimacy and validity of subaltern studies. Mistry's and Adiga's fictions provide platform to the subaltern to speak up and convey their message loud and clear. Their subaltern protagonists are resilient characters who refuse to be bogged down by the several adversities that are thrown their way. The subaltern is presented as "the oppressed in the act of protest and with the consciousness of action" (Masselos 205). With considerable skill and sensitivity, the writers take upon themselves to actively take part in the politics of ethnicity, religion, gender, age and language that Rashmi Sadana feels are overshadowed by postcolonialism and transnationalism: "The politics of ethnicity, religion, gender, age and language in India – with their competing nationalisms and regionalisms – gets sidelined by the politics of postcolonialism as well as transnationalism, a concept that, in most respects, still makes peripheral the non-western world" (Sadana 157). Adiga is aware of the plight of the subalterns and he openly criticizes society's attitude and treatment of the subalterns. His zealousness to open public debate in reforming the society can be gleaned from many of his characters who rebel and bear the torch as resistant subalterns in his novels: "The old, bad India of caste and class privilege – the India of child marriage; of ill-treated widows; of exploited subalterns – it had to be overthrown" (BA 267)

The most contentious problems in subaltern theory hinges on the capacity of the subaltern subject to intervene in elite discourse, to contest it, change it and make the subaltern heard. Can subaltern voice be effective and meaningful only if they speak in the voice of their own experience in the language of their own culture? If they translate that experience into the discourse of the dominant power in order to be heard, are they somehow able to speak in the terms dictated by the dominant culture? Because it cannot be denied that although subaltern studies rejects metanarratives, its very own existence remain primarily within the metanarrative. So, just like how postcolonial literatures use the dominant literary forms to disseminate a non-Western worldview to a wide audience, Subaltern voice can do the same in the language of the elite. Subaltern studies today has acquired this huge impetus by accommodating several strands of dispossessedness and marginality, and addresses the concerns of the marginals, the dispossessed, and the downtrodden to give them a voice nationally and internationally.

WORKS CITED

Adiga, Aravind. *Between the Assassinations*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.

Ahmad, Aijaz. "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality." *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New Delhi: OUP, 1997. 276-293. Print.

Amin, Shahid, Dipesh Chakrabarty, ed. *Subaltern Studies IX: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1996. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Anand, S. *Touchable Tales: Publishing and Reading Dalit Literature*. Pondicherry: Navayana, 2003. Print.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 1991.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures.* 2n ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. *Post-Colonial Studies: Key Concepts.* London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bahl, Vinay. "Relevance (or Irrelevance) of Subaltern Studies." *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. Ed. David Ludden. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. 358-99. Print.

Beth, Sarah. “Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: The Transformation of Pain into Resistance.” *Sasnet*. n.d. Web. 10 June 2013. <http:// www.sasnet.lu.so/EASASpapers/4SarahBeth.pdf./>.

Beverly, John. *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Chakravorty, Swapan, Suzana Milevska and Tani E. Barlow. *Conversations with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. London: Seagull Books, 2006. Print.

Dangle, Arjun, ed. *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992. Print.

Das, Sisir Kumar. *A History of Indian Literature 1911-1956 Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy*. New Delhi: Sahitya Academi, 1995. Print.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. 4th imp. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

Guha, Ranajit, ed. *Subaltern Studies 1: Writing on South Asian History and Society*. 1982. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

---. “The Small Voice.” *Subaltern Studies IX: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1996. Ed. Shahid Amin, Dipesh Chakrabarty. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 1-12. Print.

---, *A Subaltern Studies Reader: 1986-1995*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.

Habib, Irfan. *Essays in Indian History*. Delhi: Tulika, 1997. Print.

Hardiman, David. “Adivasi Assertion in South Gujarat: the Devi Movement of 1922-3.” *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1984. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 196-230. Print.

Jadhav, Narendra. *Outcaste: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Viking, 2003. Print.

Lal, Malashri. *The Law of the Threshold: Women Writers in Indian English*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995. Print.

Ludden, David, ed. *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia.* 4th imp. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. Print.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fiction: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Masselos, Jim. “The Dis/appearance of Subalterns: A Reading of a Decade of *Subaltern Studies.*” *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. Ed. David Ludden. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. 187-211. Print.

McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., 2010. Print.

Nayar, Promod K. *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd., 2008. Print.

Overdorf, Jason. “An Oppressed Voice Heard.” Rev. of *Outcaste: A Memoir*, by Narendra Jadhav. *Asia Times* 20 Sept. 2003. Web. 20 June 2013. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/E120Df02.html.>.

Pandey, Gyanendra. “The Prose of Otherness.” *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha.* 1994. Ed. David Arnold and David Hardiman. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 188-221. Print.

Rodrigues, Valerian. *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*. New Delhi: OUP, 2002. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

Sadana, Rashmi. *English Heart, Hindi Heartland: The Political Life of Literature in India.* Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012. Print.

Sarkar, Sumit. “The Conditions and Nature of Subaltern Militancy: Bengal from Swadeshi to Non-Co-operation, c. 1905-22.” *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 271-320. Print.

Sen, Asok. “Subaltern Studies: Capital, Class and Community.” *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 203-235. Print.

Sinha, R.C.P. *The Indian Autobiography in English*. New Delhi: S.Chand & Company Ltd., 1978. Print.

Sivaramakrishnan, K. “Situating the Subaltern: History and Anthropology in the *Subaltern Studies* Project.” *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. Ed. David Ludden. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. 213-55. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Grifiths & Helen Tiffin. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. 28-37. Print.

---. “Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value.” *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New Delhi: OUP, 1997. 190-222. Print.

---. “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern.” *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics.* New York and London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

---. “Strategy, Identity, Writing.” *The Post-Colonial Critic*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. New York & London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

CHAPTER 3

SUBALTERNITY IN THE WORKS OF ROHINTON MISTRY AND ARAVIND ADIGA

3.1. Introduction

Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga are unquestionably aware of the plight of the subalterns. Their works are representative voices of the oppressed and downtrodden. Subaltern consciousness in these texts emerges as the consciousness of resistance and in resistance. Rohinton Mistry's *Tales from Firozha Baag* contains eleven short stories dealing with the haps and mishaps in the lives of the residents of Firozha Baag, a housing colony of Parsis in postcolonial Bombay. The residents have so much in common – their rituals and customs, their special lingo, peculiar nicknames, and prejudices. Most of the residents are lower middle class Parsis, bereft of modern amenities. There is just one refrigerator in the whole complex. Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* set in post-independence India, for instance, demonstrates how the rise of Hindutva marginalized the Muslims and made it clear to the Parsis that they were an ethnic minority in Hindu India. Further caste discrimination and working class exploitation continues unabated. In *A Fine Balance*, the horrific fates of Ishvar and Om are symptomatic of a postcolonial subalternization – a process whereby certain categories are rendered destitute, disenfranchised, and economically powerless by the socio-political structures of the new nation-state. Om and Ishvar represent lower caste, rural subalterns, driven into the city by the upper caste initiated killings of their

families. In the city they are exploited, and eventually reduced to beggary and sterility (literally, as a result of the Emergency's forced sterilization campaigns).

3.2. Subalternity in Rohinton Mistry's Works

In *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, the story 'Lend Me Your Light' raises certain subaltern issues. Belonging to the middle class section of the society, Kersi's family could afford the luxury of hiring a *ghaton/gungas* to do their menial works. The subalterns are mute here in this story but still, the writer highlights their plight through the eyes of the boys. When talking about *ghatis's* movements, they were said to be always 'flooding places', they never just went there. "Ghatis were flooding the banks, desecrating the sanctity of institutions, and taking up all the coveted jobs. Ghatis were even flooding the colleges and universities, a thing unheard of "(TFB 213). Kersi remembers the word *ghati* with mortification – "A suppurating sore of a word, oozing the stench of bigotry. It consigned a whole race to the mute roles of coolies and menials, forever unredeemable"(213). In one of Kersi's family vacations to Matheran, as a child, Kersi watched with interest a coolie loading the family's baggage on himself,

> the big metal trunk was placed flat on his head, with the leather suitcase over it. The enormous hold-all was slung on his left arm, which he raised to steady the load on his head, and the remaining suitcase went in the right hand. It was all accomplished with much the same approach and consideration used in loading a cart or barrow – the main thing was balance, to avoid tipping over. This skeletal man then tottered off towards the train that would transport us to the little hill station. (TFB 213)

Kersi's brother, Percy got involved in a venture to help the farmers financially in the village. Percy's commitment to do his bit in order to mitigate the plight of the villagers in the hands of the money-lenders invites the wrath of the money-lenders and their goons raze their temporary hut and burn it down. The idealist/socialist Percy is unafraid of putting his life in danger for the cause of the subalterns. Through the eyes of Kersi, Mistry also presents a panaroma of the poor in the city – naked children screaming for money from the travellers in the airport. When some tourists fling some coins from the van transporting passengers, one seasoned tourist comments: "if you try that when you're on the street, you'll create something like a bloody feeding frenzy of sharks" (TFB 226). We also see the motion of people clawing their way into a local train, the roadside stalls lined up along the edge of the pavement, hawkers shouting and singing their wares on display – people trying to earn a meagre living, amidst the paucity of options, people trying to survive. The apathy and corruption that forces the downtrodden people to stay as they are – poor, helpless, ostracized is evident when Navjeet, Percy's partner is beaten to death by the money- welding goons. Percy is dejected, tired and defeated – all life sapped away, all his efforts smashed to the ground literally.

Such a Long Journey, Mistry's first novel proper is set in India in 1971, the backdrop of the novel being the war with Pakistan which ended with the independence of East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Shortlisted for the Booker Prize, winning Canada's Governor General Award and the W.H. Smith Book, the story revolves around an ordinary lower middle class family caught in the vicious cycle of ordinary life in political intrigues that brings about a complete upheaval in their inconsequential lives. Gustad Noble's personal life gets unwittingly and irrevocably linked with the events of Indian history at that point of time. Gustad is acutely aware of the life of the minority in

India. Being in the periphery, minorities had had to struggle to survive; they had to be well- equipped and be always at the top of the game to be considered a candidate for better lives. When Sohrab, his eldest son refuses to study at IIT even after passing the tough entrance test, Gustad is flabbergasted, "What kind of life was Sohrab going to look forward to? No future for minorities, with all these fascist Shiv Sena politics and Marathi language nonsense. It was going to be like the black people in America – twice as good as the white man to get half as much" (SLJ 55). They had to struggle to procure basic necessities and any exigencies caused a great deal of shifting around in the family budget. "Most of his *sudras* had rents in them, and Dilnavaz kept fretting that a new patch was needed. Mending was useless – no sooner was one tear sewn up than another appeared because the mulmul itself was worn" (15). They had to sell off old newspapers to the *jaripuranawalla* so that they can afford to pay the paper bill every month.

Beneath the community's experience in the metropolitan, multi-ethnic Bombay, lies their caged and marginalized state in the post-independent India. We see glimpses of the subalterns, their pitiable living conditions and their state of poverty through the eyes of the lower middle class Gustad whose problems seem minuscule compared to the plight of the subalterns. In chapter fourteen, we see Gustad in one of his rare compassionate moods (to the poor). Outside the Aarey Colony milk booth, three boys in tattered vests and a little girl in scavenged ankle-length blouse are shooed away by the booth attendant who considers them "bad for business", "nuisances staring with big-big eyes as if they never saw milk in their lives" (199). The presence of the beggars incur losses even for the shops, "people don't like to shop where there are beggars" (200). The children waited until the attendant was absorbed in his work, they do have a trick or two up their sleeves, and sneaked in again. This time, the attendant was ready and he

managed to grab the little girl while the boys escaped his grasp. He began whacking her on the head. The girl squealed and struggled as the boys watched helplessly from a distance. Gustad witnessing this intervened and beckoning the children bought all four of them their choice drink, and waited all the while until they drained the last drops from their bottles.

The House of Cages, a name given by the residents to the area where prostitutes display their wares in their skimpy and colourful plumage, is another part of the marginal lives. It focuses on the pathetic plight of people living in the margins. It is located in a lower class colony with its corresponding filth –the musky smell of cheap perfume, smoke, liquor fill the air. Gustad goes into this place to meet Ghulam Mohammed, a consort of Jimmy Bilimoria – the friend who takes advantage of Gustad's trust and love and involves him slyly in a risky job of money laundering in the name of friendship. As he navigates his way up the stairs filled with prostitutes, he sees glimpses of the sordid tacky rooms. There was no sign of the covertly suggested scented silk sheets, the air-conditioned rooms, drinks and refreshments that people talked about in reference to such kind of places. Nothing is as it seems to be. Things "always look wonderful from afar. When the moment arrives, only disappointment" (201) greets him. The utterance is dialogical. We can gather that Gustad is no longer talking about just the House of Cages but the bitter disappointment with his son and the betrayal of his best friend. They are akin to mirages, all pretty and attractive from afar but no substance, just an illusion of hope that cannot be fulfilled. This is the grim truth that reflects Gustad Noble's life.

A member of the Parsi minority community, Gustad is also fearful of the busy, smelly and dirty Crawford Market, especially the vendors selling meat of different

animals – beef, pork, mutton, etc. The ominous hooks hanging from the roof, the sinister flash of a meat cleaver, sharp knives of different sizes and the sweaty, bloodshot eyes, crimson-stained vests and *loongis* of the butchers scares him to death and he fears that at any moment riots and bloodshed will erupt just like how it happened outside Parliament House when a peaceful protest against cow slaughter led by a vast congregation of *sadhus* wielding staffs, tridents and several other equally sanctified religious instruments clashed with police and turned violent. The police opened fire and it was all chaos. Gustad Noble and his wife are devout Parsi Zoroastrians. Gustad diligently recites his *kusti* prayer every morning. The zeal and dedication with which Gustad and his wife Dilnavaz practices customs and rituals is amply displayed in the following passage when Sohrab started schooling at St. Xavier's High School:

> Before leaving, he had been adorned with a vermilion dot on the forehead, and a garland of roses and lilies. Dilnavaz did the *overnaa* and sprinkled rice, presenting him with a coconut, betel leaves, a dry date, one areca nut, and seven rupees, all for good luck. She popped a lump of sugar in his mouth, then they hugged him and murmured blessings in his ear. (SLJ 57)

Gustad feels "if tradition was lost, then the loss of respect for those who respected and loved tradition always followed" (61). Yet, when their daughter Roshan gets constantly afflicted with diarrhoea and other maladies, they are willing to try anything that promises a cure. And so, Gustad is swayed to believe in the power of Mount Mary to heal sickness and goes there to pray for his daughter. Dilnavaz is equally susceptible to the advice of the mean and cranky spinster, Miss Kutpitia and her magic world of charms, potions, incense and remedies that include chillies, lemons, nail clippings and tails of lizards to restore peace and happiness in her family. This is one common gullible charm of lower class people, easily swayed and often times willing to do

anything in the moment of crisis despite feeling guilty deep down in their hearts. The pavement artist sums up the ordinary man's belief in miracles:

> Miracle, magic, mechanical trick, coincidence – does it matter what it is, as long as it helps? Why analyse the strength of the imagination, the power of suggestion, power of auto-suggestion, the potency of psychological pressures? looking too closely is destructive, makes everything disintegrate. As it is, life is difficult enough. Why to simply make it tougher? After all, who is to say what makes a miracle and what makes a coincidence? (SLJ 289)

The wall of the Khodadad Building, an imposing structure that shields the tenants from the outside world and affords the residents some sort of privacy gets a lot of space and attention in the novel. Over six feet high, the wall ran the length of the compound sheltering them, especially Jimmy and Gustad when they did their *kustis* at dawn. It is a symbol of the solidity of the past and the hope for future. The wall built as an enclave suffers from a double threat; one, of being demolished by the Municipal Council and, two, of being permanently converted into a urinal: "The stench was strong along the black wall as Gustad returned from work… He flung his hands about his head to ward off the flies and mosquitoes. And it wasn't even the mosquito season yet" (77). Dinner was always a challenge for the residents as they had to deal with mosquitoes 'dive-bombing' in their plates. The ingenious idea of Gustad Noble to commission a street artist to paint pictures of holy man, holy signifiers transform the wall. The wall of flies, urine and stink – the wall of suffering is transformed into a wall of devotion through the deft hands of the artist. It features figures of numerous religious faiths that exist in India: Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Judaic, Jainist and so on. The figures painted include, Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, a

representation of the Jumma Masjid, Moses descending with the Ten Commandments. Over the days, the wall filled up with gods, prophets and saints:

> The holy countenance on the wall – some grim and vengeful, some jovial, some compassionate, others frightful and awe-inspiring, yet others kind and avuncular – watched over the road, the traffic, the passer-by, day and night. Nataraja did his cosmic dance, Abraham lifted his axe high above Isaac, Mary cradled the Infant Jesus, Laxmi dispensed wealth, Saraswati spread wisdom and learning. (SLJ 184)

The presence of the gods and goddesses brings to mind the 36000004 gods that Adiga refers to in *The White Tiger*.

Set in the mid-1970s in India, *A Fine Balance* tells the story of four unlikely people – Dina Dalal, Maneck Kohlah, Ishvar and Omprakash Darji, who are thrown together by circumstances in a time of political turmoil and Internal Emergency. It is one of Mistry's finest novels that present a comprehensive tapestry of the tragedy of humanity. The anonymous, faceless working class is depicted and given a voice by the writer in this epic novel. Beyond caste/class, beyond religion, the main characters forge a sombre friendship that inspires the readers. In an interview with Shaikh, Mistry stated that this novel started with an image – a woman at a sewing machine – and was later expanded to include the tailors to bring in the horror of caste exploitation and discrimination of rural India, and the figure of Maneck Kohlah from Kashmir. The Quartet, Dina Dalal – an impoverished, fiercely independent, prematurely widowed Parsi woman; Maneck Kohlah – the student with his own problem of adjusting in a hostel from Kashmir; Ishvar and Omprakash/Om Darji – the uncle-nephew duo who belong to the exploited underclass in search of survival in the city is a quaint

combination. Yet, all four of them have experienced alienation and dealt a hard hand by society and fate which bonds them together.

The tailors used to be cobblers in the village. Their family belonged to the *Chamaar* caste of tanners and leather-workers. But when Ishvar and Om's father Narayan were young boys of 12 and 10 respectively they were sent by their father, Dukhi Mochi to be apprenticed as tailors to his friend Ashraf in the town. People talked about this bold move of Dukhi and commented that he had gone insane: "with wide-open eyes he is bringing destruction upon his household" (FB 95). Someone had dared to break the timeless chain of caste hierarchy, and there was general consternation everywhere in the village of his audacity. The story of Dukhi and his wife – the parents of Ishvar and Om's father Narayan reveal the severity of caste oppression:

> Besides tanning and leather working, Dukhi learnt what it was to be a Chamaar, an untouchable in village society. No special instruction was necessary for this part of his education. Like the filth of dead animals which covered him and his father as they worked, the ethos of the caste system was smeared everywhere. (FB 96)

As a child Dukhi listened every evening to his father when he related atrocities committed against the untouchables in a matter-of-fact tone, "he mastered a full catalogue of the real and imaginary crimes a low-caste person could commit, and the corresponding punishments were engraved upon his memory" (97). By the time he entered his teens, he was well versed in the art of perceiving that invisible line of caste he could never cross. All he could do was, "to survive in the village like his ancestors, with humiliation and forbearance as his constant companions" (97). Chopping off fingers for an unjust accusation or losing a hand or wrist for the same, being whipped

for getting too close to the well, women being shaved and walked naked through the square for refusing to go the field with the zamindar's son were daily occurrences of injustice and shame meted out to the untouchables. Dukhi Mochi is married off to Roopa when he is 18 and she, 14. After three successive daughters of theirs die during infancy, a son is born whom they named Ishvar. Being poor, it is inevitable that Roopa begins her nocturnal visits to the cows and orchards of various landowners to feed her beloved son, Ishvar. Shortly, another son, Narayan is born. News of the birth to the untouchables brought resentment from the upper caste in the village. People began to question Dukhi's fortune of bearing two sons and so he had to doubly take precautions not to cause even the slightest stir. It was hard for them not to be resentful, "the birth of daughters often brought them beatings from their husbands and their husband's families. Sometimes they were ordered to discreetly get rid of the newborn. Then they had no choice but to strangle the infant with her swaddling clothes, poison her, or let her starve to death" (100). The issue of women as the 'other' is also brought in here by Mistry. Discrimination of sex, preference of males over females is a social disgrace. In this case, women whether they belong to the upper, middle or lower caste do not really matter. They are discriminated and considered the inferior sex just because they are females.

Majority of the upper castes however, were philosophic about the draught of sons in upper castes households and attributed it to the problem of fallow wombs and Kaliyug – the world passing through the Age of Darkness. The remedy prescribed by the Pandits was to be more vigilant in the observation of the dharmic order; that "there was a proper place for everyone in the world, and as long as each one minded his place, they would endure and emerged unharmed through the Darkness of Kaliyug" (101).

Consequently, there was a sharp increase in the number of floggings/ corrections meted out to the untouchable castes:

> the crimes were varied and imaginative: a Bhunghi had dared to let his unclean eyes meet Brahmin eyes; a Chamaar had walked on the wrong side of the temple road and defiled it; another had strayed near a puja that was in progress and allowed his undeserving ears to overhear the sacred shlokas; a Bhunghi child had not erased her footprints cleanly from the dust in a Thakur's courtyard after finishing her duties there – her plea that her broom was worn thin was unacceptable. (FB 101)

> For walking on the upper-caste side of the street, Sita was stoned, though not to death – the stones has ceased at first blood. Gambhir was less fortunate; he had molten lead poured into his ears because he ventured within hearing range of the temple while prayers were in progress. Dayaram, reneging on an agreement to plough a landlord's field, had been forced to eat the landlord's excrement in the village square. Dhiraj tried to negotiate in advance with Pandit Ghanshyam the wages for chopping wood, instead of settling for the few sticks he could expect at the end of the day; the Pandit got upset, accused Dhiraj of poisoning his cows, and had him hanged. (108-09)

Dukhi, despite his obsequiousness, still gets beaten up twice, once for his negligence of falling asleep during on guard a grazing herd of goats. Instead of the promised glass of goat's milk, he gets a heavy thrashing. Then, another time, he broke the mortar of Thakur Premji's while he was pounding a sack of dry red chillies. The mortar split in half, one half landed on his feet injuring him and yet, this did not stop the owner from lashing out with his stick and cursing and chasing him out without payment for labour. The atrocities that Dukhi had to endure in the village as a Chamaar, somehow he is able to bear, but when his two sons are beaten up and whipped by the

school teacher for touching the slates, chalk and picture books used by the upper class children, Dukhi is determined to wrest for his sons a different destiny. He therefore, sends both his sons – Ishvar and Narayan, to be apprenticed as tailors with his close Muslim friend, Ashraf in town. After some years, Narayan returns home and starts his tailoring profession, gaining Chamaar customers and the family thrives for a while. But Narayan's sense of justice and a zeal for reformation in the system ends in his death. Elections were held in the village regularly but it was always a sham. The lower castes were made to make their thumb impressions on a register while the landlord's men filled in the ballot papers. They were not fooled in the least, but still were helpless to protest. And right before the elections, the speeches were filled with promises: promises of new school, clean water, and health care, land for landless, powerful laws to prevent discrimination of backward castes, etc. This was the same speech repeated year after year without fruition. The mockery of the rigged election system in *A Fine Balance* by Mistry resonates in Adiga's *The White Tiger*. Narayan was determined to assert his rights when elections were held again. He stood his ground and asked for ballot papers to fill his name and signature. His audacity shocked the upper class and they made sure that he died an agonizing death. The upper castes' punishment did not stop there. Apart from Ishvar and Om, who were in town, the whole family was burnt alive. Thakur Dharamsi also let loose his goondas upon the lower castes leaving a trail of deaths, rapes and atrocities in their uninhibited carnage.

Cruelty and tyranny abounds in the novel, and sometimes it is difficult to pick who is the oppressor and who is the oppressed. It is a vicious cycle, "each figure is located at the centre of a complex social network of power and oppression, so that all are simultaneously oppressors and victims" (Bhautoo-Dewnarain 35). Dina Dalal has been exploited by her brother before she got married and she in turn, exploits the

tailors, albeit, temporarily before she got to know them and their plight. The problematic Hindu Caste hierarchy is again shown when as an apprenticed tailor, Narayan Darji (earlier a Chamaar) returns home to the village and starts mending clothes for the Chamaar caste. One day, Roopa, Narayan's mother saw a Bhunghi (a caste lower than Chamaar) approaching their hut cautiously. She yelled and halted him before he could step into their home. When it became apparent that he wanted Narayan to mend his clothes, she was flabbergasted and insults him: "Don't give me your tailor-failor nonsense! I'll bathe your filthy skin with this boiling water! My son does not sew for your kind!" (FB 133). Narayan protests and calls him back but too frightened, the Bhunghi rushes off. Ibrahim, the rent collector is also just another chain in the rung of oppression. After the goondas sent along with him to Dina Dalal's place, primarily to intimidate her, turned into ransacking and mayhem. He breaks down,

> putting his hand over his face, he made a peculiar sound… It's no use, his voice broke. I cannot do this job, I hate it!...Everybody thinks I am an evil person, but I am not, I want to see justice done, for myself, for yourself, for everyone. But the world is controlled by wicked people, we have no chance, we have nothing but trouble and sorrow... (432).

The hopelessness, the inability to get out of the vicious cycle of oppression is expressedly stated here with no straight lines of beginning or end and with no formula for a solution. Om and Ishvar just cannot get rid of their peripheral life. Their family belonged to the lower class Chamaar caste of tanners and leather-workers but they dared to challenge the dictates of society by choosing a profession different from the one preordained for them, by virtue of being born in that caste and so are outcastes even in the eyes of their own caste in the village. They moved to the city to escape this ostracism but again, they are the 'others', the disenfranchised, voiceless entities in the

city. At least in the village they had the warmth of love of their family. But in the big city, they are gobbled up, chewed and spat out, completely annihilated and becomes demented and reduced to mere sceptre of human beings, a grotesque figure of dehumanization. The life of Ishvar and Om represents the larger tapestry of subalternity. Ishvar is mellower and somewhat accepting of their condition. He acknowledges "some people are in the middle, some are on the border" (FB 82). He accepts this as the fact of life. Om refuses to believe this. He is more rebellious and he hates the way his uncle Ishvar talks in that ingratiating, humble tone to their employer Dina Dalal. But to Ishvar, some things cannot be changed and they just have to accept them as they are.

The tragedy is that Om and Ishvar cannot seem to shake off poverty, degradation, humiliation and discrimination. From the village, to the town and then, the city, it seems hell-bent on destroying them, mocking their efforts for a better life. Their aim was to remain in the city for a while and earn money and return home but it is not to be as sometimes the city grabs you, sinks its claws into you, and refuses to let go. They are now introduced to the grim faces of poverty in the city; the subaltern existence in the city: "Splotches of pale moonlight revealed an endless stretch of patchwork shacks, the sordid quiltings of plastic and cardboard and paper and sackcloth, like scabs and blisters creeping in a dermatological nightmare across the rotting body of the metropolis. When the moon was blotted by clouds, the slum disappeared from sight. The stench continued to vouch for its presence" (FB 379). From the periphery in the village, to the margins in the city, they find lodgings in the crowded and dirty jhopadpattis on the fringes of the city where nothing is safe. From being at the mercy of the landlord, they are now at the hands of the slumlord that controls the slum areas. On account of being poor and low caste, Ishvar and Om experience specific discrimination

in the city. People in the jhopadpattis are often herded off like cattle in the several government initiated projects. Ishvar and Om first experience this specific discrimination when they try to apply for a ration card. They are told that they can have the ration card if only they agree to undergo the nusbandhi procedure (a vasectomy). Many of the low caste like them are so poor that they are easily lured by the promise of a transistor radio to undergo the procedure. Ishvar cries out in anguish tinged with anger: "All we wanted was a ration card… and the fellow wanted our manhood in exchange! What kind of choice is that, between food and manhood?" (FB 179) For the victims of the Emergency, the nation is made unhomely, they are the outsiders. It is acutely felt because the characters are marginal figures in the narrative. Residents of the jhopadpattis are one day herded off in big buses to attend the mass rally where the Prime Minister and several other politicians make grand promises:

> What we want to do is is provide houses for the people. Enough food, so no one goes hungry. Cloth at controlled prices. We want to build schools for our children and hospitals to look after the sick. Birth control will be available to everyone. And the government will no longer tolerate a situation where people increase the population recklessnessly, draining the resources that belong to all. We promise that we will eliminate poverty from our cities and towns and villages. (FB 265)

Mistry is aware of the contradictions that the forced gathering of people reveals about the kind of democracy that India professes. The actions directly contradict the democratic principles enshrined in the following excerpt:

> '…and take note, all you journalist who will write tomorrow's newspapers. Especially the foreign journalists. For grave mischief has been done by irresponsible scribbling. Lots of lies have been spread about this Emergency, which has been declared specially

> for the people's benefit. Observe: wherever the Prime Minister goes, thousands gather from miles around, to see her and hear her. Surely this is the mark of a truly great leader.'
>
> Rajaram took out a coin and began playing Heads or Tails with Om. Around them, people were making new friends, chatting, discussing the monsoon. Children invented games and drew pictures in the dust. Some slept. A mother stretched out her sari-draped lega, nestled her baby in the valley of her thighs, and began exercising it while singing softly, spreading the arms, crossing them over the chest, raising the tiny feet as far as they would go. (FB 263)

The seriousness of the speech is lost on the audience as well as the readers. Mistry's intention is quite revealing of the manufactured show of support that the large crowd seemingly signify when in reality, the people were herded and were put into the packed 'enclosures'. The quoted passage juxtaposes the supposedly serious meeting with the indifference of the crowd that immediately huddles in clusters to embark in playing games and do their own thing without listening; "The only prohibited activity was standing up or leaving the enclosures" (264). The regulars at such meetings know that whatever is being spoken by the public leaders are all hogwash. They are not fooled in anyway. So they simply follow the drill each time – get in the buses, sit in the enclosures, keep themselves occupied, cheer or clap at appropriate times, if lucky have tea and then return back.

The seed for what is to come in the later part of the novel, the nussbandhi project/forced sterilization is planted here. And soon after this rally, Om And Ishvar arrived home one evening to find their tin-and-plastic jhopadpattis being bulldozed. The dispossessed lingered outside, watching what their home was once:

> The hutment dwellers were massed on the road, fighting to return to their shacks, their cries mingling with the sirens of ambulances that couldn't get through. The police had lost control of the moment. The residents surged forward, gaining the advantage. Then the police rallied and beat them back. People fell, were trampled, and the ambulances supplemented their siren skirls with blaring horns while children screamed, terrified at being separated from their parents.
>
> The hutment dwellers straggled back from the pulse of the assault, spent, venting their anguish in helpless outrage. 'Heartless animals! For the poor there is no justice, ever! We had next to nothing, now it's less than nothing! What is our crime, where are we to go?' (FB 295)

The horror of the experience of the tailors is unparalleled. The tragedy of the poor, of losing their home is lost on the perpetrators. Om and Ishvar are caught in the middle of the city 'beautification' project. The make-shift tents that are let and sub-let by corrupt middle man on public land, jhopadpattis lend them shelter for a while but the beautification team with their bulldozers razes their pseudo homes to the ground rendering them homeless yet again, nowhere to go. Taking the remnants of their meagre belongings after the rampage, they take shelter in the railway platform that night. Later, they made a deal with the watchman of a twenty-four-hour chemist's store to sleep at the entrance until Sargeant Kesar with his troops arrived round the block and started once again herding the pavement dwellers into the trucks. This time they are rounded off along with the beggars and homeless people in the streets and taken on a truck to an irrigation project where they are made to work on a construction site for the price of a meal. The contention that everyone is oppressed and the oppressor is once again

brought to light as Sargeant Kesar's conscience is also tormented at what his superiors force him to do:

> Gathering crowds for political rallies wasn't bad. Rounding up MISA suspects was okay. But demolishing hutment colonies, vendor' stalls, jhopadpattis was playing havoc with his peace of mind…he had had to dump pavement-dwellers in waste land outside the city. He used to return home miserable from those assignments, get drunk, abuse his wife, beat his children. (FB 322)

Sergeant Kesar is therefore, in a way, a rung up the ladder of oppression. At the end of the day, he has to answer to his superiors for any dereliction of duties. He often had to force himself not to be sympathetic as he could end up jobless and on the street just like the beggars. Om, Ishvar and the ninety four odd street dwellers are rounded up like cattle and stacked up on a truck including the handless, limbless beggar with the *gaadi*, Shankar, also known as Worm. They are caught in the city Beautification drive and were taken to an irrigation project site where they were forced to work for food and shelter in tin huts. Over the next few days, several truckloads of pavement dwellers were brought in. The paid workers feeling threatened of their livelihood began to direct their resentment at the free labourers. Harassment of the newcomers was constant. Abuse, pushing, shoving became commonplace: "A spade handle would emerge out of a ditch to trip somebody. From scaffoldings and raised platforms, spit descended like bird droppings but with greater accuracy. At mealtimes a flurry of suddenly clumsy elbows overturned their plates …" (357). As long as the enmity was mild, the foreman was enjoying a free show of mirth but this was followed by some severe "accidents". Animosity towards the beggars and pavement dwellers reached dangerous proportions, "the day-labourers began pushing them off ledges and scaffoldings, swung carelessly with pickaxes, let boulders accidently roll down hillsides. The number of casualties

increased sharply" (360). There was complete degeneration of humanity. Dehumanization is complete when during entertainment in the camp at night, the Monkey Man whose two monkeys Laila and Majnoo were killed by his dog, returns now with his sister's two little children as props. He tied the children to the ends of a fifteen-foot pole; lifted them high and twirled them around, their faces becoming a blur in the process. He then, raised the pole higher, gave it a little toss and caught the end of the pole and balanced it on his thumb. A stream of protest and curses spilled from the spectators putting an end to the show. But the objective has been achieved, a complete breakdown of humanity is revealed here by the author among the smell of festering wounds and unwashed bodies.

Powerlessness and oppression accompanies them everywhere. In their trajectory, the readers are taken along the road of the dispossessed to both rural and urban areas. They are the 'other' to both the Government and the wealthy. The Government policy of "City Beautification" and "Garibi Hatao" are just disguises to get rid of the city's warts and overgrowths – the poor and the helpless people. Dina Dalal allows the tailors to sleep on the verandah of her tiny flat. This offers them a little respite. But, when they return to their town to get Om married, disaster strikes again to the unfortunate duo as they are again caught this time on the government's Family Planning Programme – the nussbandhi project/forced sterilization of the lower classes. The nussbandhi procedure is carried out on both Om and Ishvar and through the oppressive Thakur Dharamsi's influence, Om is castrated. Ishvar also loses his legs to gangrene as the sterilization was done in an unhygienic shanty make-shift tent with no proper sterilized instruments. This eventually, puts an end to their profession as tailors, finally putting them on the street –homeless, jobless and physically deformed. Fate is a cruel and capricious mistress for Om and Ishvar. And like the sea, it plays hide and

seek. They are shown the horizon but they are never allowed to reach their desired destination. A temporary respite, and then they are pushed headlong into untold adversities.

Shankar alias the Worm is one among the countless disfigured beggars that we find in any Indian street. With no fingers or limbs, the picture of Shankar is unforgettable. We first see Shankar through the eyes of Ishvar and Om, a picture of desolation in the prologue: "slumped upon a small wooden platform fixed with castors, which raised him four inches off the ground. His fingers and thumbs were missing, and his legs were amputated almost to the buttucks. 'O babu, ek paisa day-ray!' He sang, shaking a tin can between his bandaged palms. 'O babu! Hai babu! Aray babu, ek paisa day-ray!'" (FB 6-7). The legless beggar goes around begging office crowd, lunch crowd, shopping crowd propelling his gaadi/platform with his bandaged palms. It is surprising how this disfigured man is still able to laugh about his position in life. But it such that the kind of life that they have, if they don't learn to laugh at themselves, one would get sucked in by the utter misery. After he is caught by the police and huddled into the truck along with Ishvar and Om, he narrates how he started out his life as a beggar from the very beginning. He was born physically deformed, a cripple who had to be carried around by another. According to him, a crippled child earns a lot of money. Through his narration, a new character is introduced 'the Beggarmaster'. Almost reverently, Shankar describes the Beggarmaster like a saviour – a man who runs the beggars' begging routine and activities like a business venture. Every beggar under him is protected by him from the police for a cut in the earnings from begging. We find similar character in Vikas Swarup's *Q & A* and Danny Boyle's adaptation of the same, *Slumdog Millionaire*. But unlike Swarup's character, the Beggarmaster is a just and benevolent protector. We are here exposed to yet another side of the city's

dispossessed. It was indeed a complex network. Shankar describes how Beggarmaster has to be very imaginative in choosing beggars to be under his wings: “If all beggars have the same injury, public gets used to it and feels no pity. Public likes to see variety. Some wounds are so common, they don’t work anymore. For example, putting out a baby’s eyes will not automatically earn money. Blind beggars are everywhere. But blind, with eyeballs missing, face showing empty sockets, plus nose chopped off – now anyone will give money for that. Diseases are also useful. A big growth on the neck or face, oozing yellow pus, that works well” (329). The disfiguring of beggars to attract more sympathetic people or ‘professional modifications’ as it is also known, is undertaken to make themselves more unique.

Khair acknowledges Mistry’s effort of doing a rare job of using low-caste characters and occasional usage of the rural backdrop in *A Fine Balance*. Yet he agrees with Martin Leer who interviewed Mistry, that there seems to be an “anxiety leading to … a veritable encyclopedia of ‘othered’ coolie descriptions fitted into one text” (*Babu Fictions* 141). For instance, Dina’s past is realistic in every classic sense of the term, but the stories of (Coolies) Ishwar and Omprakash borrow heavily from different genres: the fantastic, the fairy tale, newspaper reportage, etc. And so Khair states, “while Mistry was in a way forced to concoct a common language of communication for his characters, any such attempt automatically reduces the autonomy of the ‘other’ experience depicted in an Indian English novel – as the language concocted belongs to the dominant section” (*Babu Fictions* 141). This is one trend of thought that simmered among some critics that Mistry’s low caste characters were too fantastical, the sufferings depicted too far-fetched, too unrealistic and over romanticised. Khair also questions the improbability of the extensive and complex discussions that (educated, westernized, upper-caste) Dina and Maneck carry out with the low-caste and “geo-

culturally" removed Ishwar and Omprakash. He asserts that the two classes lack a common language through which they can communicate to the extent as done by Mistry to further his narrative. It has also been said that "Mistry's picture of the excesses of the Emergency is graphic, but his understanding of the lives of untouchables is poor" (Narayan 45). To these charges, Mistry himself replies when he alludes to such kind of criticisms in his next book *Family Matters* in the words of one of his characters, Vilas*:*

> A while back, I read a novel about the Emergency. A big book, full of horrors, real as life. But also full of life, and the laughter and dignity of ordinary people. One hundred percent honest – made me laugh and cry as I read it. But some reviewers said no, no, things were not that bad. Especially foreign critics. You know how they came here for two weeks and become experts. One poor woman whose name I can't remember made such a hash of it, she had to be a bit pagal, defending Indira, defending the Sanjay sterilization scheme, defending the entire Emergency – you felt sorry for her even though she was a big professor at some big university in England. What to do? People are afraid to accept the truth. As T.S. Eliot wrote, 'Human kind cannot bear very much reality.' (210)

Mistry also takes a dig at the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats and other government machinery that is at the helm of governance. The abuses perpetrated by people in power towards the disempowered are extraordinary, especially during Emergency. Mistry depicts the apathy of the people in power in rendering the dispossessed homeless. This is suggested when Beggarmaster, the protector of the beggars helps out Dina with her landlord's high-handedness. To the question; if she should call the police, Beggarmaster responds, "if you want. But you might as well tell this crow on your window" (535).

Husain, the peon at Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium in *Family Matters* is a victim of communal violence in the wake of Babri Mosque riots. Husain and his friend watching as "their chawl went up in flames, wondering where his wife and three sons were …and then four figures tumbling down the step of the building, their smoking hands beating at the flames … while the goondas sprinkled more kerosene from their cans over Husain's family" (FM 144). His tale is a gruesome one. The trauma of seeing his wife and children being burned alive is relived time and again which puts him in the darkest recess of memory. Husain is a poor, dispossessed man who can only afford to rent a room for twelve hours every day. Husain often lapses into morbid silences and black depression as his battered emotions resurfaces periodically. Communal violence and persecution of minorities is also found in the other novels of Mistry. We find similar instances in *A Fine Balance* where Hindu fundamentalist picks out Muslim households, killing them and burning their houses. Ashraf and his family narrowly escape this horrendous fate through the help of Ishvar and Narayan Darji.

3.3. Subalternity in Aravind Adiga's Works

Adiga's *The White Tiger* reveals the plight of the subalterns living in abject poverty and subjugation. The greedy landowners in the villages in *The White Tiger* become just another face of the colonial rule, squeezing the life out of the poor people. *The White Tiger* exposes the subjugation and subordination of the marginal, the lower sections of the society by the elites. *The White Tiger* is Aravind Adiga's debut novel that won the 2008 Man Booker Prize. It received rave reviews as soon as it hit the stands all over the world. It is a compellingly angry and darkly humorous novel about a man's determination to rise from a remote Indian village to finding success in the city

through fair or foul means. It was described by one reviewer as an "unadorned portrait" of India seen "from the bottom of the heap". *Tehelka Magazine* described *The White Tiger* as truly "insightful but also a drolly funny worm's eye perspective of the vast class gap in contemporary India". Michael Portillo, Chairman of the Judges of the Booker Prize said "the novel undertakes the extraordinary difficult task of gaining and holding the reader's sympathy for a thoroughgoing villain. The book gains from dealing with pressing social issues and significant global developments with astonishing humour" (*Agencies*). Some of the critics weren't so accepting of his undue emphasis to this dismal portrayal of India. They termed it as just another India-bashing novel. At one level, it can be dismissed as that (just another India-bashing book). It takes a grim view of everything Indian and slams every Indian evil – caste system, poverty, poor-rich divide, dirt, squalor, and so on. But Adiga, in one of his interviews justifies his book:

> At a time when India is going through great changes and, with China, is likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society (Indian)… That's what I'm trying to do- it is not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self- examination. (*Rediff*.com)

Moreover, literature is not about copyrighting certain themes for certain groups. As Salman Rushdie says in his essay *Imaginary Homelands*;

> the real risk of any artist are taken in the work, in pushing the work to the limits of what is possible, in an attempt to increase the sum of what is possible to think. Books become good when they go to this edge and risk falling over it – when they endanger the artist by reason of what he has, or has not, artistically dared. (15)

The White Tiger, a tale of two Indias: "an India of Light, and an India of Darkness" (WT 14) tells the story of Balram Halwai, the son of a rickshaw puller, one of the faceless and nameless poor left behind by the country's recent economic boom. He doesn't even have a name when he was a kid and was called merely as "Munna" which literally means "boy". In fact, he was named Balram after Balram, the sidekick of the god Krishna by his teacher, Krishna, obviously, as he says his father has "got no time to name me" (13). The novel provides a darkly comical view of modern day life in India through the narration of its protagonist Balram Halwai. The main theme of the novel is the contrast between India's rise as a global economy and its working class people who live in abject poverty. On one side are the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore with all its fancy street names and colony names and on the other are the dirt, poverty, alienation, subjugation and subordination of a typical Indian village and its inhabitants:

> Electricity poles – defunct.
>
> Water tap – broken.
>
> Children – too lean and short for their age, and with oversized heads from which vivid eyes shine, like the guilty conscience of the government of India. (WT 20)

Laxmangarh is far from the ideal Indian village romanticized - the Indian village paradise, adequately supplied with electricity and all the modern amenities that a developing nation is supposed to be providing to its citizens. In reality, the stark poverty, the smell of dust, pig shit permeates in the air. The plight of the poor peasants who has to literally worship the ground that the landlords in the village walk in is pitiable condition. Moreover, after all the sweat, and hard labour, their meagre income is swallowed up by the greedy landlords. The corrupt landlords are all given appropriate

nicknames by the villagers such as The Stork, who took a cut of every catch of fish in the river and a toll from every boatman who crossed the river. Then we have the Wild Boar, who owned all the good agricultural lands around Laxmangarh. Next, is the Raven, who owned the dry rocky hillside and taxed the goatherds who went up there to graze their flock. Even the use of the roads was not spared from taxation. The Buffalo's appetite was worst, the rickshaw-pullers had to pay one third of what he earns for just plying on the roads. It is no wonder, therefore, that the poor peasants and landless labourers were constantly migrating to Delhi, Calcutta, Dhanbad and other metropolitan cities to find work. Search for greener pastures is the story of every human being but this is not applicable here. For the term 'searching for greener pastures' implies that one is already enjoying the green pastures. But here, the migration is undertaken out of necessity, in order to survive. The story of a poor man's life is indeed, written on his body, by a sharp pen. Rickshaw-puller is the equivalent of human beast of burden. It is therefore, Vikram Halwai's dream to get his son Munna alias Balram educated. He says: "My whole life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine – at least one – should live like a man" (WT 30). Balram, thus becomes this symbol of the aspirations of all the underclass people who wishes to actually live their life for once.

We too, therefore, understand Balram's desire to get out of the village, to be someone: to be called a 'driver' is such a big thing! He is so thrilled to wear a khaki uniform, given the situation. His transformation from Munna – Balram Halwai –White Tiger – Ashok Sharma is what dreams are made of for his kind of people. Balram makes it sure that his dreams are realized by taking destiny in his own hands – learning how to drive, doing every possible way to please his employers, stealing and killing his employer Ashok Sharma when the opportunity arose. Balram steadfastly clutches on

every opportunity to further his ambitions. Besides, he has a duty to be successful whatever the odds, by fair or foul means to his father, his brother and the rest of the lower section of the society. The villain that he is, yet the reader, can't help but admire his guts and determination to form his own identity. If the Indian village is a 'paradise', then the school is a paradise within the paradise:

> There was supposed to be free food at my school – a government programme gave every boy three rotis, yellow daal, and pickles at lunchtime. But we never ever saw rotis, or yellow daal, or pickles, and everyone knew why: the schoolteacher had stolen our lunch money. (WT 33)

The school teacher, though, had a legitimate excuse for stealing the money meant for the children; he had not been paid in months. So we see here, that the teacher himself is a victim for "no one blamed the schoolteacher for doing this. You can't expect a man in a dung heap to smell sweet. Everyone in the village knew that he would have done the same in his position. Some were even proud of him, for having got away with it so cleanly" (33). Ashok Sharma sums up the predicament of the Indian 'literates', "He can read and write, but he doesn't get what he's read. He's half-baked. The country is full of people like him" and, "we entrust our glorious parliamentary democracy… to characters like these" (10). Well, seeing that more than 70 percent consists of rural India, it is illogical that only a few percentages represent the "India shining". Balram grudgingly agrees with the view of his employer and that his life story ought to be called "The Autobiography of a Half-Baked Indian" (10).

The subordination and exploitation of the subaltern is complete when as Balram says: "in India – or, at least, in the Darkness – the rich don't have drivers, cooks, barbers, and tailors. They simply have servants" (68-69). So, even though Balram was

hired as a 'driver', he happily took on all the other menial tasks that he was assigned. When he was not driving the car, he had to sweep the floor, make tea, clean cobwebs, and massage their master, and so on. There is a particular incident when Balram wishes to comfort his master after Pinky abandons him. Ashok "lifted his hand – I prepared for his touch – but he wrapped it around the Mongoose's shoulder" (WT 188). This disappointment is further heightened when Ashok thanks his brother for being at his side: "I had nothing but this driver in front of me for five nights. Now at last I have someone real by my side: you" (189). This is a complete negation of Balram's selfhood, his identity. Constant negation of his selfhood results in his desire to shout "Balram is here too!" (136). Even while he is walking around the President's house listening to important men discussing important things. He envisions himself among them. Balram yearns to be visible. He wants the world to be aware of his presence, his self, his identity.

Adiga's hero Balram thus, becomes the medium through which the grim view of the downtrodden – the subaltern of the developing India is given a voice. Ignored, mistreated, rejected and left voiceless by the hegemonic elites, the subaltern lashes out and takes matters in his own hands. The ways and means that Balram resorts to is neither noble nor heroic. Definitely, Balram Halwai is not a hero *per se* but he is definitely the hero of Adiga's *The White Tiger* and a hero of the Darkness, a "working-class hero" (265). He is obviously the narrator and the readers are ushered inside the world of the less privileged strata of society and made to view the world as Balram sees it – a view from the bottom of the heaps.

Subaltern Studies and Subalternity has various definitions and different groups but the one constant feature is the notion of resistance to elite domination. *The White*

Tiger is therefore, a resistance to domination – the domination by the rich. Balram Halwai is voicing the concerns and plight of the subaltern in a subversive way. Left with no option, he takes matters in his own hands to become somebody at any cost. To him, committing murder just becomes another rung in the ladder to success. "The Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time" (WT 9). The postmodern hero/villain that Balram is, he firmly asserts that self help and one's own resources are to be trusted and not any external belief, perhaps, not even religion. He astutely and mockingly refers to the 36,000,004 gods that Indians believe in. The 'somehow win' attitude of the postmodern man also is the thriving force that goats Balram to do the unthinkable, i.e., murder his employer and benefactor Ashok Sharma. He unabashedly takes his name too. "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield "(84) the dictum of Tennyson's *Ulysses*, seems to be the motto of Balram. He is reminiscent of the proverbial hero who rises from the ashes. He is the postmodern hero – flawed, imperfect who does not wait for his destiny to unfold but takes destiny in his own hands aware of the consequences and ramifications.

The "India Shining" as portrayed in the global media also reaches the villages resulting in mass migration to these urban centres beaconed by all the glitter and glamour. But once they reach the cities, instead of the fame and fortune that they seek and aspire for they become the labourers in the industrial set-up, taxi and auto drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars, slum-dwellers always at the mercy of the corrupt police, legal and administrative structure – other names for the corrupt landlords dictating their lives in the villages. The paradise that they imagined the cities to be is only a mirage. Discrimination is also brought in with the onset of shopping malls in the beginning as highlighted by Adiga. The marginals – the low class people were not permitted to enter

the gigantic shopping malls at the beginning. Certain newspapers captions often carried the news of the discrimination: “Is There No Space for the Poor in the Malls of New India?” (148). Thus, the underclass people find it impossible to shake off the misery, poverty and squalor which follow them to the cities. As Balram shrewdly observes that a person can get out of the village, but one can never get the village out of the person. So then, cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore becomes a microcosm of India where we find “Darkness” as well as “Light”. Among the Malls and gigantic and towering buildings that houses major global companies like Microsoft and Dell, nestled on the backside are the slums where the construction workers reside. This is the paradox of India that Adiga succeeds in portraying with a breath-taking piece of story-telling using simple colloquial language, minimal plot detours and addictive humour.

The corruption endemics to Indian society and politics, familial loyalty versus independence, the experience of returning to India after living in America, globalization, and the rivalry between India and China as superpowers are some of the other themes that the reader gets to see from a subaltern perspective. “We may not have sewage, drinking water, and Olympic gold medals, but we do have democracy” (WT 96). This is an ironic statement, for the question is, is democracy in India democracy? The corruption, manipulation, and discrimination of endemic proportion: booth-capturing, proxy voting, counting even minors to caste vote whereas, the legal age to vote is 18, and ministers with criminal backgrounds ‘voted’ to power is essentially Indian democracy. And Balram rightly says, “… the three main diseases of this country, sir: typhoid, cholera, and election fever” and “I am India’s most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth” (102). The people living in the shadows of the sprawling malls in the city are also referred to as “human spiders” (265) by Adiga. We find stark but beautiful images such as the time when

> one of the human spiders dropped a wet rag on the floor and started to crawl with it, pushing a growing wavelet of stinking ink-black water ahead of him. Even the mice scampered out of the shop. The customers sitting at the tables were not spared – the black puddle splashed them as it passed. Bits of beetis, shiny plastic wrappers, punched bus tickets, snippets of onion, sprigs of fresh coriander floated on the black water; the reflection of the naked electric bulb shone out of the scum like a yellow gemstone. (WT 265)

The dirt, the squalor and the naked pain of the marginal is depicted here. The metaphor of the spider/web is used earlier in the novel also. At the beginning, it is used to describe the midget fan- "five cobwebby blades" (7). The chandelier also serves as a metaphor for luxury and even though Balram achieves "entrepreneurial success" the limitedness of his ill-gotten success is symbolised by the huge chandelier in his tiny office which is completely preposterous. Balram is also aware that what he is contemplating to do i.e., murdering his employee is horrendous for as he watches one of the "human spiders" moping and cleaning, crawling in the black dirt, a voice inside him said, " But your heart has become blacker than that, Munna" (265). This is how Adiga essentially succeeds in humanising Balram who easily could have turned into an out and out a villain. Balram keeps tossing about that night, unable to sleep.

It is indeed, ironic how Balram becomes "part of the family" (166) only after he was made a scapegoat for the death of one of his kind of people: a child of the Darkness in the street that got hit when the employer's wife was driving in a drunken frenzy. Similar incident resonates in *Between the Assassinations*. An Engineer in a drunken stupor is never implicated in a hit and run case where a man was killed. An employee of his is made to take the blame while the guilty goes scot free. Balram is caught in what he calls "the Great Indian Rooster coop" (175). Too frightened about the prospect of

going to jail yet still unable to run away and escape the coop. This is essentially perhaps the problem of the lower section of the society who does all the shitty work for their masters. The obsequiousness of the subaltern is so well-bred that it is difficult even for a revolutionary like Balram not to relapse back to the mode of perpetual servitude:

> The way I had rushed to press Mr Ashok's feet, the moment I saw them, even though he hadn't asked me to! Why did I feel that I had to go close to his feet, touch them and press them and make them feel good – why? Because the desire to be a servant had been bred into me: hammered into my skull, nail after nail, and poured into my blood, the way sewage and industrial poison are poured into Mother Ganga. (WT 193)

The reason, as Balram discerns, is because "a handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 percent – as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way – to exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse" (176). They themselves have been conditioned to feel, act and live their inferior life and devote themselves to their masters throughout their lives that even if the opportunity arose for them to escape this servitude, they still do not butch like the pale hens and brightly coloured roosters packed tightly inside their metal cages waiting for their turn to die. Thus, in order to escape, to fly out of the coop, Balram does the unthinkable: cutting off the hands that feed him, killing his employer Ashok Sharma. The scene is not pretty. It is a calculated, cold-blooded murder. And all his life in servitude Balram thinks; "I've made it! I've broken out of the coop!" (320). But again, every time someone in the streets calls out 'Balram', he thinks "I've given myself away" (320). In this way, the underdog, the subaltern is never really free.

The White Tiger as a Subaltern narrative therefore, try to give voice to the voiceless, the marginalised and victimized whose views are sidelined, silenced and unheard. Balram's extreme rebellion is representative of the lower class articulating their autonomy in relation to the elite class. Of course, this is by no means endorsing the appalling cold-blooded murder that the protagonist resorts to. It is important to note that it is not the desire of the subaltern to be a subaltern. But that the mainstream refuses to hear them at all. This is the irony of the post-colonial state – the post-colonial state then, more or less, becomes a continuation of the colonial state. The oppressor and the oppressed come full circle and thus, becomes a cycle.

In *Between the Assassinations,* Adiga delineates a group portrait of ordinary Indians in a time of extraordinary transformation (between the assassinations of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi). Lakshmi Krishnan calls *Between the Assassinations,* "a history of small people and small everyday brutalities, of grinding impotent rage and ultimate futility". Adiga's focus is again on the marginal talking back to the centre. But unlike *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations* has no grand consummation of rage and justified revenge. A series of short stories are narrated here. All the stories in *Between the Assassinations* centre on marginal characters – the anger that simmers right below the surface ready to explode any moment. Kittur is a fictitious town on India's south-western coast, in between Goa and Calicut – a small, undistinguished town. Here, an illiterate Muslim boy working at the train station finds himself tempted by an Islamic terrorist; a Dalit bookseller is arrested for selling a copy of *The Satanic Verses*; a rich, spoilt, half-caste student decides to explode a bomb in college; a sexologist has to find a cure for a young boy with a mysterious disease. Across class, religion, occupation and preoccupation, the small provincial town of Kittur is drawn.

Ziauddin, sixth of eleven children is put on a bus to Kittur without a penny by his father to fend for himself. Ramanna Shetty, the owner of a tea stall feels pity and takes him in despite misgivings about hiring a Muslim. A week before the rains were due, Ziauddin packed up his bundle and left for his village to help his family in plantation. When he returns this time, his whole demeanour had changed. He was gaunt-looking and started cheating and even when he was caught red-handed, he completely denied it and so Shetty kicks him out of his job. The unapologetic nature of Ziauddin is revealed as he constantly shows off his new employment to his previous employer. But he never lasted long in one job; he was quickly hired and fired until finally he becomes a porter in the railway station. This is when he is gets paid by a well-dressed stranger, a Pathan to take note of the arrivals and departures of trains at Kittur station, to note how many trains were there with Indian soldiers, how many had red cross marked on them and so forth. Ziauddin realising that something was not right refuses to do it anymore. This is when the Pathan in anger and irritation says, “There are fifty thousand Muslims in this town”, “everyone of them seethes. Everyone is ready for action. I was only offering this job to you out of pity. Because I see what the kaffirs have done to you” (BA 20). It is clear from the narrative that the boy was picked up, he was no random porter that the Pathan encountered. An example of how poor, disposed people are usually the target of unscrupulous people with ulterior motives to use them.

Corruption endemic to Indian society is presented yet again by Adiga in *Between the Assassinations*. Abbasi, an ordinary businessman is unable to keep his shirt factory running due to unending extortions. He has reopened his factory but the list of people he had to pay off to survive is staggering:

> the electricity man; the water board man; half the income tax department of Kittur; six different officials of the telephone board; a land tax official of the Kittur City Corporation; a sanitary inspector of the Karnataka State Health Board; a health inspector of the Karnataka State Sanitation Board; a delegation of the All India Small Factory Workers' Union; delegations of the Kittur Congress Party, the Kittur BJP, the Kittur Communist Party, the Kittur Muslim League. (BA 28-29)

The list goes on and every day, Abbasi had to deal with these crooks. Corruption, Abbasi said is "like a demon sitting on my brain and eating it with a fork and knife" (33). Once he unzips his cotton trousers and "bunching the first two fingers of his right hand together, he stuck them deep into his butt; he brought the two fingers out, dipped them into one of the glasses of whiskey, and stirred vigorously" (25). This special concoction is meant especially for the official from the State Electricity Board, sitting at Abbasi's table. The narrative leaves a sour taste in the mouth of a sensitive reader but this is one of Adiga's inimitable hard-hitting styles. Although gross, his action reveals his deep-seethed resentment at the system that Indian democracy entails. His sly method of lacing their drinks with spit and mucus affords him ironical smiles and some measure of satisfaction but it is just short-lived. Corruption has entrenched its tentacles so deep that it has even snared the free Press, the fourth estate, which is supposed to be the champion of truth and integrity. Gururaj Kamath, a journalist in the novel who wrote a column on the riots – "the destruction caused by the Hindu fanatics who hacked down shops off Muslim shopkeepers". In his writings, he had blasted bigotry and stood up for "the rights of religious minorities"(117). But he is in for a rude shock. His rose-tinted view of journalism is given a huge jolt after befriending a Night Watchman (a Gurkha) who seems to be the truthful eye of the impartial night. In a hit and run case, an innocent man is implicated while the actual culprit, a rich Engineer goes scot free since

he is “the richest man” in town, and “owns the tallest building” (BA 123) in town and therefore unwarrantable. He cannot be arrested. A journalist for the past 20 years, Gururaj is rudely awakened and as he digs deeper, he comes across several discrepancies in the past reportage and a nexus of crime-police-politician comes to the fore. Even his earlier reportage of the riots appears to be one-sided. Everyone thought it was communal fighting, “Hindus fighting Muslims” (126), but the grapevine tells another story of a planned violence of a real estate transaction masquerading as a religious riot between two communities. The newspapers are partly owned by these corrupt people and all the news is concocted to suit their whims. Gururaj’s disillusionment is so great that he begins to hallucinate and borders on insanity. His boss expresses his concern and desists him in his truth-seeking mission. And suddenly he realizes that he is alone, and that he has “become an outsider, a man who frightens others” (134).

There is then, the story of the man known as Xerox Ramakrishna. He has been arrested twenty one times for the sale of illegally photocopied books. Every day, he along with his eleven year old daughter, Ritu would spread his books on the pavements and sell the bestselling latest books at a discounted price. He belongs to the lower caste but he has an engaging personality. After being put in a cell, he would regale the policemen with ingratiating tales or the story of what his father did for a living – “taking the crap out of the houses of the rich landlords, the traditional occupation of people of his caste” (44). His embellished stories always worked and by midday, the police would let him out as they consider him ‘a decent fellow’ (45). But Xerox gets unlucky when he was caught selling copies of the banned *The Satanic Verses* of Salman Rushdie. He gets beaten up badly by Inspector Ramesh and the lawyer of the publishers. But like the underdog in *The White Tiger*, even after his bone has been

broken, Xerox is now determined to sell *The Satanic Verses:* "the book was banned throughout the Republic of India and it was the only thing that Xerox intended to sell that day: The Satanic Verses, by Salman Rushdie" (BA 51). This act of defiance is his way of resistance and replying back to the 'centre', the privileged, the people in power. He is the subaltern voicing out.

The bomb blast at St. Alfonso Bay's Highschool and Junior college, the handiwork of Shankara P. Kinni, a half-low caste, as his mother belonged to the Hoyka caste is also a symbol of resistance, of replying back to the centre. Half-low caste is worst than merely low caste. He is often the butt of jokes among his friends and relatives who just tolerate his presence. His father's family snubs him, looks down on him with condescension and sees him as a product of his father's "buccaneering adventure" (61) and his mother's family alternates between awe and distrust of him. He was aware that he was different from childhood. Once when a Brahmin friend invited him home, he was given tea and biscuits and made to feel perfectly at home but as soon as he stood up to leave, his friend's mother took a cleaning rag and began wiping clean the spot where he sat. Other times, strangers would simply stare at him, the ill-begotten son of a Brahmin-Hoyka union – a bastard - neither a Brahmin nor a Hoyka. So the decision to burst the crude bomb was not taken lightly. It was his way of replying back to the people who had insulted and humiliated him, treating him like an outcaste:

> Now he had spoken back to it. He kept his fist clenched.
>
> "Do you think it's the terrorists…" he heard some boy say. "The Kaskmiris, or the Punjabis…"
>
> No, you morons! – he wanted to shout out. It's me! Shankara! (BA 55)

He even wrote an advance police statement in case he was caught: “I have burst a bomb to end the 5,000-year-old caste system that still operates in our country. I have burst a bomb to show that a man should not be judged, as I have been, merely by the accident of his birth” (59). Shankara’s deep-rooted resentment at society’s mis-treatment of his self, his identity results in him taking the drastic step. The cyclic nature of oppression is again revealed when Shankara attends a political convention “The Hoyka Pride and Self-Expression Day Rally” considered the greatest political event in the history of Kittur. They demanded their rights as a full-fledged community and sought retribution for the five thousand years of oppression and injustice. Shankara comes to know through the professor, Daryl D’Souza that the Hoyka caste is again sub-divided into seven smaller caste and among them the Kollabas occupied the top position in the hierarchy and they in turn have been exploiting the other lower six caste and using the Hoyka card to get all the benefits.

Rose Lane, the hibiscus-lined street is a posh area of the Cool Water-Well Junction in *Between the Assassinations*. Soumya and her brother Raju are made to beg in the street to buy *smack* for their father. Like professionals they go about begging in the streets: “Her technique was solid. She had got it from her mother. It went like this: even as she begged, for three seconds she kept eye contact; her eyes would wander to the next autorickshaw. ‘Mother, I’m hungry’ (rubbing her tummy) ‘give me food’ (closing her fingers and bringing it to her mouth rapidly). ‘Big Brother, I’m hungry.’ ‘Grandpa, even a small coin would –’”(145). As she did this, her brother sat on the ground and was meant to whimper when well-dressed people passed by. A series of beggars are presented here – the man with no arms and legs sitting in front of a big hotel; one-armed, one-legged boy working at the Cool-water Well Junction, hopping about from car to car; mutilated men with bandages on their limbs. All of them scream

and hurl curses in defence of their territory when the children come near. The children are also not new to these insults and so they too reply in kind. When the beggars are together in their own circle, a whole different story is revealed. The children are representative of the thousands of children on the street begging for their family. Their innocence hijacked and their childhood ripped away. We see a lot of these children, often disfigured on purpose to attract 'sympathy' from onlookers. To be different is what they aspire to be so cutting off a hand or two, gorging out the eye are just considered embellishments which becomes a mockery of humanity.

Guru, a construction worker at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Valencia notes the biggest difference between the rich and the poor – "the rich can make mistakes again and again. We make only one mistake and that's it for us" (BA 186). This is how George D'Souza gets dismissed as a construction worker. George is open about his dissatisfaction and he constantly rants about the unfairness of it – the huge gap between the rich and the poor – "The rich abuse us, man. It's always, here, take twenty, kiss my feet. Get into the gutter. Clean my shit. It's always like that" (194). He soon finds another job, as a gardener with Mrs. Gomes, a high class woman whose husband is in the Gulf. George does not feel he owes anybody anything. He ingratiates himself to his employer and is instrumental in getting the driver dismissed and taking his place. George's ulterior motive does not stop with himself getting the driver's job. He plants the seeds to get rid of the cook: "She's not good, madam. And she's old. Why don't you get rid of her, and have my sister over from the village?" (203) To climb to the top by fair or foul means seems to govern many of Adiga's subalterns. Being extremely poor and downtrodden, clear conscience becomes too costly for them.

Last Christmas in Bandra, a short story that was published in *The Times* December 19, 2008 uses the personal tone of an unnamed Indian judge. Although a model, honest and law abiding judge highly regarded by everyone, he is instrumental in dispossessing the scavenger woman of her only son. Human rights have time and again been tested in the Indian democracy. The judicial system is also in the hands of a powerful few which is so frightening, especially for the poor and vulnerable subalterns. A quick sentence can put an individual in jeopardy and into the pit of darkness. The shabby, dirty, unkempt figure of the scavenger woman is enough for the judge to condemn her and subjugate her entirely. In the beginning, the judge gives a vivid description of the garbage heap outside his grand house:

> "Not far from the gate there was an open garbage heap, and the car's headlights would flash on it. Amidst the garbage lying in the heap, there was one item that always caught my eye – a pile of clipped chicken's feet, thrown there every evening by some butcher, which were always shaking to and fro, like something living, as the rats ripped and chewed them in a frenzy." (LCB)

The judge then, draws a parallel between the chopped chicken feet and the punishment meted out by the sultans in Indian history who without the slightest compunction chopped off hands and legs of "so-called criminals and pilling those limbs in a corner of their so-called courts of law" (LCB). The poverty and hunger and stark oppression of the have-nots in the modern times is akin to those barbaric past when the sultans took law into their own hands to condemn fellow humanity. There is hardly any truth to the so-called progress that modern man claims because surely we cannot call a nation as progressing when their actions are in fact regressing and imbibing the worst of history. The judge takes pride in his honesty; "When the police shoved a fellow in dirty clothes before me and said, this man has stolen money from a hotel or businessman on the

Linking Road, my first question was: 'Did you give this man a fair chance to tell his story?'" (LCB) But his approach and attitude markedly changes when situation presents itself. The upper class elite's condescension is overtly visible in the judge's dealings with the scavenger woman. The manner in which the judge recognises the mother of the orphan is demeaning: "I have not mentioned that there was also often a human being in that dump… the same wild scavenger woman whom I had seen there picking through the garbage for something to recycle" (LCB). The fact that he fails to mention her when describing the same garbage heap with the chopped chicken legs and the rats reveals his apathetic attitude towards the subaltern.

The miserable position of the subaltern is again seen in the character of the scavenger woman who is not given a fair chance. She is a scavenger who fights with rats and crows for rotten leftovers in the rubbish piles outside completely insignificant to the rest of the rich people. Her low status in society disables the judge from affording her the status of an equal human being with a voice. The judge tries to convince the scavenger woman to agree to her son's adoption by the German couple. He reasons, "You never visit him. You don't even recognise him. Why don't you let him get an education in life?" (LCB) But when the mother refuses, the judge accuses her of being selfish. He fails to see the mental trauma that the scavenger woman pushes herself to, to keep away from her son in order to shield the boy from her kind of livelihood. The judge is not walking the talk and fails to put the crucial question – did she get a fair chance?

> Then and there I thought, this person before me was not a mother, who is meant to show selfless love for her children, but the incarnation of selfishness, like the dog that sat on the manger. I was filled with hatred for all the poor of our country, who live like

> animals, vote for the most corrupt politicians, and insist staying poor and dragging the country down. (LCB)

It is indeed, a harsh indictment. Taking advantage of the scavenger woman's poverty and low status, the judge twists and hammers the woman's resistance into submission and gets her thumbprint in the adoption papers. The woman's feelings are marginalized and dismissed by the government agency and society.

The Elephant, another short story that appeared in *The New Yorker* January 26, 2009 is a brilliantly crafted short story of Adiga's. In a crisp, economic, biting and precise manner, Adiga gives us a memorable character. Usually, in a short story it is difficult to delineate a character and give it personality but Adiga in creating Chenayya's character achieves this feat and then some. The story is set in Kittur, a fictitious town between Goa and Calicut. This is the same setting that we find in *Between the Assassinations*. Adiga presents the stark contrast between the haves and have-nots in this story. On one side we have 'the cycle-cart pullers in their usual position lying on their carts, staring into space, smoking beedis', on the other, we have the "fat kids in T-shirts" "licking vanilla cones" as the cart pullers looked on with "dull avarice"(*Elephant* 1) on their faces.

Chenayya, the cycle-cart puller/coolie belongs to the lower caste, struggling to meet ends meet. Every day, he would sit outside Ganesh Pai's furniture shop waiting for his turn along with the rest of the cart-pullers. Like Balram in *The White Tiger*, he is not a silent recipient of insults heaped on by the upper class. He replies back in kind in his own way. After delivering a TV table to the house of Mrs. Engineer, he gets three rupees as tip from the madam for his effort. When he asks for three rupees more, he gets insulted, "Nothing doing. Get out or I'll call the police, you thug" (1). As he

walked out grumbling and sulking, Chenayya "picked up a rotting banana skin and hung it on the leaves of a neem tree that grew near the gate of the house, so that it would startle the owner when they came out" (*Elephant* 1). Out of the three rupees, Mr. Pai again demanded two rupees, the sum he was expected to give at the end of every trip: one rupee for the dinner he would be given at night, another rupee as Mr. Pai's cut for having been picked to deliver goods bought in the shop. When his number came up again during the day for a delivery to 54 Rose Lane, Chenayya started the routine again, cycling and pulling the cart intermittently and when the route took him over Lighthouse Hill, he had to alight and dray the cart as he often did when the load was heavy:

> the sinews bulged out of his neck like webbing …you can't go on, his tired limbs and burning chest told him. You can't go on. This was when the sense of resistance to his fate waxed greatest within him, and as he pushed, the restlessness and anger that had been inside all day became articulate at last: you will not break me, motherfuckers! You will never break me! (*Elephant* 2)

Chenayya is here, venting out his anger and frustration of a subaltern life, at his fate, at the society that makes him exist in this deplorable condition. He does not cower when he is in the right. When some rich but stingy people refuse to tip him, he will stand his ground and demand, "You motherfucker! Give me my money!" (2). It was always a triumph for him every time the men relented.

Chenayya is a rebel low caste, voicing the long delayed resistance. Despite the fact that the odours and the noise of the train did make him sick equally like it did the rich people. Still he does not hesitate to squat down, pull up his sarong and do the needful because he "wanted to shit into the faces of the people on the train" (2). He does this deliberately to make the 'proper' people feel uncomfortable. The grimaces on

the faces of the passengers offer him a thrill, a feeling of vindication for the poor and the dispossessed. A particular morning, as Chenayya was struggling with a heavy load up the hill, he sees an elephant coming down with a small bundle of leaves on its back. Suddenly he realises that the role has been reversed. He is the elephant now, the beast of burden. He couldn't believe his eyes, and so he shouts at the elephant "Hey, you, what are you doing with a bundle of twigs? Take this load from me!" (3). Ignoring the car honks all around him, he continues, "what is wrong with this world, when an elephant gets to lounge down the road, doing no work, and a human being has to pull a cart with so much weight on it?" (3) The cacophony of horns grew louder, but Chenayya is enjoying the fact that his ranting is delaying and blocking all the "rich and important people" (3). To quote Sisir Kumar Das said, "the hero-centric world finally vanished yielding place to the anti-hero" (322). Spewing forth a litany of tirades affords Chenayya a sense satisfaction however short-lived.

Chenayya also did not like the fact that his fellow cart pullers bent and grovel to Mr. Ganesh Pai. He was furious inside that nobody seemed capable of ever thinking badly of their employer who was milking them. Is he the bad egg then? For complaining about his beneficiary, for trying to bite the hand that feeds him. Many of them dreamed of buying autorickshaws or opening tea shops once they have saved enough money, a not so far cry of a dream for most people but for their kind of people, it was an impossible dream. It was unlikely that they would come out of their dispossessedness. The fellow cart pullers' spinelessness grated on him. But Chenayya had other plans. He had long planned on "stealing the money that a customer gave him. He would take the money and leave town. This much he was certain he would do someday very soon" (*Elephant* 4). The helplessness of their condition makes them

contemplate crime which in no way the author endorses but it succeeds in getting their voices heard. Chenayya's fury at the journalist trying to interview them is justified,

> those who are born poor in this country are fated to die poor. There is no hope for us, and no need of pity certainly not from you, who never lift a hand to help us. I spit on you. I spit on your newspaper. Nothing ever changes. Look at me… I am twenty-nine years old. I am already bent and black and twisted like this. If I live to forty, what is my fate? To be a twisted black rod of a man…You keep us like this, you people from the cities… it is in your interest to treat us like cattle! (*Elephant* 4)

He does try to better his circumstances. He knocked on factory gates, dabbled in electioneering but all he got was verbal and physical abuse and total rejection and negation of his presence and identity. Chenayya, beaten by life and yet somehow defiant is an extraordinary character. He basically sums up the reason why the subaltern remains a subaltern - "Because we acquiesce. Because we do not dare leave with the wad of fifty thousand rupees – because we know other poor people will catch us and drag us before the rich man. Because we dare not kill the rich, out of fear of their police. We poor have built the prison around ourselves" (7). Despite his many misgivings about life, fate, about rich people in particular, still the hope lingers that somewhere "a poor man will strike a blow against the world" (8). The statement that "his number would come up again soon" at the store echoes his inner most hope of improving his life and coming up in the world as a human being and not just a beast of burden.

3.4. Women as 'the other'/Marginal

The institution of marriage is of unrivalled significance in the life of people in India. Marriage has been redefined in recent times. With some amount of economic freedom, women have changed the basic rules somewhat. If a self-sufficient woman with a roof over her head chooses to marry, it is because she wants to share her life with someone, a companion to love and share not because she had to bow to society's pressure. A woman who is independent economically is also not compelled to continue a bad marriage because she can stand on her own feet. But till today society frowns on such kind of independent attitude. Especially in India, it is expected of the wife to cook, clean and be docile to her husband's wishes. This is entirely not the fault of men but the patriarchal set up of the Indian society which had entrenched these ancient so called 'values' of subjugation of women so thoroughly that even most women have been conditioned to think and feel inferior to men. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak opines in an interview; "the disease of gender blindness like many chronic diseases keeps the culture alive but unhealthy. It does not kill. The culture is alive and weak, culture with a huge split inside it, marked by class" (Chakravorty et al 62-63).

Patriarchy always provides an upper hand, a certain kind of access to men. Even before the eighteenth century, there have always been women fighting to assert their right in the male dominated world. The inequities against which the liberals protest- legal, economic, and social restrictions on the basic rights of women- have existed throughout history and in all civilizations. Throughout the history of civilizations, the stereotyping of what a female should be like, how she should behave or function was determined by the males. Femaleness and femininity seem to function only as an aside to suit the male's need. The family set up is also attuned in such a way it overlooks and

undermines the role of females. The father is considered naturally, as the head of the family and the breadwinner. Patriarchy thus aids in the subjection of women. Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over mothers, children, and property. It patronizes male rule and considers the male privileged above board the female. Patriarchy is dependent on female subordination. Patriarchy is thus an unjust social system that feeds off in the subjugation of women. The principles of feminism were articulated long ago just that the name 'Feminism' wasn't attached to the movements for women rights. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Western Europe was gripped by liberal movements. Liberalism involves the belief that government is formed by rational, autonomous individuals for the purpose of serving these individuals' interests. Liberals argued that all citizens, irrespective of sex, should participate equally in government and that all should be treated equally under the law. Pro women activists embraced these liberal theories. In 1798, the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, paved the way for women to argue that the movement toward a more egalitarian society should include an equal place for women. John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women (1869*) also supported this case. In this book, he argued and pleaded for women's right to enter any trade or profession, their right to vote. He firmly believed that the liberty of every individual is absolutely necessary for the development of the society. As he says, he wrote *The Subjection of Women* to show:

> That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle

> of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other. (3)

Mill held the view that women's position is not natural but the result of political oppression by men. He radically maintained that the masculine domination of the family was a corrupting influence, making boys selfish and girls abject.

Simone de Beauvoir writes in *The Second Sex (1988*), "the terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of the two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity… A man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong." Under the patriarchal set-up, a series of feminine characteristics such as sweetness, modesty, subservience, humility, obedience, obsequiousness have been developed. According to this system of society, women's actions are dictated by their emotions rather than their intellect. Consideration of women as the 'other', the marginal, the weaker sex therefore, has the tacit approval of the patriarchal society. The French-Bulgarian linguist and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva's consideration of femininity as marginality offers a *position* and not a *definition.* She refuses to define 'femininity'. In Kristevan terms, it is simply that which is marginalised by the patriarchal symbolic order.

"In these arranged marriages, astrologers and families decide everything. Then the woman becomes the property of the husband's family, to be abused and bullied. It's a terrible system, turns the nicest girls into witches" (FB 492). These are the exact words of Dina Dalal who is immensely aware of the double standard attitude of society

concerning the role of men and women. Dina Dalal was just twelve when her father died. She had to grow up fast as after her father's death, her brother with his misguided sense of guardianship felt it his duty to be a strict disciplinarian. She was overworked and denied education by her brother as according to Nusswan, there was no point in an education for women beyond matriculation as her role required only her knowledge of running the household kitchen. Her rebellions often ended with physical abuse at the hands of her brother. Her mother having descended into reclusion and quickly into total withdrawal, there was nobody to help Dina at that crucial period of growing up years. After the death of her parents, she somehow manages to get out of the patronizing and chauvinistic clutches of her brother Nusswan and is able to marry the man of her choice – Rustom Dalal. Despite odds, Dina Dalal chooses to live life on her own terms. And when fate deals a cruel hand and her husband dies in a gruesome accident, she still remains resilient to stand on her own feet and continues to live in the apartment that she shared with her deceased husband. Thus, in all appearance she epitomizes freedom, liberty and is a modern woman in all counts. But with no income she is forced to make concessions and takes on a paying guest – Maneck Kohlah in her tiny flat. She then starts her small business of sewing dresses for an export company Au Revoir Exports and hires two chamaar turned tailors – Ishvar and Om. In the novel, Mistry always puts the characters in a fine balance. The characters life always totters from one end of the spectrum – happiness to unhappiness or vice versa. Just when Dina starts to feel secure and think that her worries are finally over after hiring the two tailors, she is again threatened by Om's curiosity to learn about her employers, the Au Revoir Exports company, what she construes as Om's desire to eliminate the middleman – Dina and wrest her business. She painstakingly makes sure that all the labels of the company are ripped away before giving it to the tailors to stitch and goes to the extreme of locking

the pair in the house when she goes to deliver the stitched orders. Dina's independence and identity is constantly at threat but her determination despite massive set-backs is laudable. At first the tailors live separately in the slum colony but when their jhopadpattis are destroyed in the city 'beautification' drive, Dina again, is forced to share her tiny flat with the tailors because her survival depends upon the survival of the tailors. When Ishvar told her about Om's imminent marriage and subsequent relocation, an addition to the already packed flat she says: "But one thing she will have to understand it's my house, and follow my ways, like you and Ishvar and Om. Or it will be impossible to get along" (492). After uttering these words, Dina herself realizes that she sounded like a mother-in-law. She also finally succumbs to the landlord's goondas and got evicted thus ultimately she had to go and live with her brother Nusswan. Dina Dalal faces the kind of problem she does from her brother, her landlord, and the numerous obstacles on her path mostly because she is a woman. Nusswan considers his sister's refusal to live with his family as selfishness. His attitude mirrors society's prejudice against single woman living independently.

Society's treatment of women as the 'inferior sex', the 'weaker sex' is so thoroughly engrained in the minds of individuals, which are then passed on from generation to generation that it is really difficult to get off the shackles of discrimination and the treatment of women as second class citizens. The threat to this discrimination is not from men alone but equally from women also. From a very young age, girls are taught differently from boys. In majority of the societies, the birth of a boy completes a family and makes it whole. Especially, when we talk of Indian society, the discrimination is easily visible. Infanticides and destroying of foetuses if the baby is a girl are horrific stories and they are not merely tales but grim realities. We see this discrimination against females and preference for males in both the writer's works.

Like I have mentioned, the attitude that females are inferior to males is engrained even in the minds of women. The mother's role is immense here. From a very age, girls are made to feel inferior to boys. There is mention of the special room with a special bed for that special time of the month for women when they are considered unclean in 'Auspicious Occasion' of *Tales from Firozha Baag*. In *Family Matters*, Yezad Chenoy's growing religiosity also ensures that Roxana is also barred from entering his prayer area in the room at such times. So in the case of women, their "periodic lapses into temporary defilement, the sign of their fertilizable bodies, mark them also as sexual commodities" (D'Cruz 62). Dina Dalal and Roxana thus run the risk of being reduced to tradable bodies. They are also denied for that same reason of periodic uncleanness, the privilege of inheritance. The only item that Dina wanted – her father's huge wardrobe with the carved rosewood canopy of a sunburst and flowers was declined by Nusswan. The notion of uncleanness, defilement contrives to produce a substantial class of people (females) consigned to menial jobs for the benefit of those(males) privileged by their purity. Mistry exposes a traditional community that still regards women as unclean, equivalent to servants. Women are taught how they should behave in certain ways just for the mere reason that they belong to a different sex – girls cook, wash, clean; men inherit, women don't inherit ancestral lands and so many other things are certain stereotypical but nevertheless practised beliefs of Indian cultures. This discrimination is not concentrated in one particular caste/class but it has infiltrated all sections of society in India.

Even among the lower caste sections, preference for males over females is evident in several passages. Birth of a son causes envy among the villagers. Birth of two sons (Dukhi's sons Ishvar and Narayan) in *A Fine Balance* made the upper caste question the validity of it, implying that they might have stolen it from a Brahmin

household. Later on after Narayan married Radha, a son Omprakash and two daughters are born to them. Here, an open display of favouritism is evident. Omprakash is the centre of attention in the family. Omprakash left with his uncle Ishvar to be apprenticed as tailors with Ashraf Chacha in the town. A new road and bus service has shrunk the distance considerably between village and town making it possible for Om to often come home. His sisters resented his visits. Nobody paid attention to Leela and Rekha if their brother was in the house. It started as soon as he stepped inside the house:

> 'Look at my child! How thin he has become!' complained Radha….she used the excuse to lavish on him with special treats like cream, dry fruits, and sweetmeats, bursting with pleasure while he ate. Now and then her fingers swooped into his plate, scooped up a morsel and tenderly transported it to his mouth. No meal was complete unless she had fed him something with her own hands.
>
> Roopa (the grandmother) too, relished the sight of her lunching, munching, grandson. She sat like a referee, reaching to wipe away a crumb from the corner of his mouth, refilling his plate, pushing a glass of lussi within his reach. A smile appeared on her wrinkled face, and the sharp light of her memory flickered over those pitch-dark nights from many years ago when she would creep out into enemy territory to gather treats for Ishvar and Narayan.
>
> Omprakash's sisters were silent spectators at the mealtime ritual. Leela and Rekha watched enviously, knowing better than to protest or plead with the adults. (FB 141-42)

The extract clearly indicates the preferential treatment meted out to boys. It is a consensual act of the parents and grandparents to shower love and affection on the boy considered the 'man' of the house, bringer of dowry. All Leela and Rekha can do is watch enviously and weep in private. It is paradoxical then that most of the Indian gods

are female forms. They are worshipped and idolized and revered to by millions of men and women. Yet the female as a human is relegated to the position in the periphery. The women/female is then the marginalized 'other' in the narrative of daily life.

Mehroo, a hardworking young housewife married to a middle-aged man – Rustomji is an example of the domesticated wife that most men prefer. Mehroo came from an orthodox Parsi family who at the tender age of sixteen was married off to Rustomji, twenty years older to her. Her orthodox Parsi upbringing had conditioned her so finely in tune with all the Parsi beliefs and customs that Mehroo in fact, "welcomed her destiny and had carried to her new home all the orthodoxy of her parents" (TFB 3-4). The daily routine of the housewife is immense – she has to do the cooking, cleaning, washing, and manage the whole household with no credit at all for she is just a housewife. Most women do not consider housewife a job but in fact it is no easy job. In Indian context, it is considered the duty of the wife to cook, clean up after her husband and do his dirty laundry too. It is not a huge surprise for a culture that thinks of woman as a commodity and as a liability. She has to put up daily with her husband's belligerent attitude. Rustomji with his stubborn nature is an oppressor. He comes across as quarrelsome, irreverent and a hypocrite. He unabashedly leers and lusts after the maid, an insult and to his wife and denigration of womankind in general. At one time, he utters a string of insults at the bus passenger who dirties his white *dugli* with *paan* stains but when he insults and berates the onlookers, with the bus having already disappeared with the guilty passenger, he creates tension and the crowd threatens to beat him up. He quickly plays the victimized card – "a sudden inspiration which just might work. He reached his fingers into his mouth, dislodged the dentures, and spat them out onto his palm. Two filaments of saliva, sparkling in the midday sun, momentarily connected the dentures to his gums. They finally broke and dribbled down

his chin" (21). The collapsed mouth and flapping lips appeased the crowd and they dispersed snickering at the clown. His caricature by Mistry in one way is payback for his disrespect towards his wife. Rustomji sometimes borders on obnoxiousness. Staying in a fast dilapidating flat, he still refuses his wife's suggestion to redo the flat with his misplaced sense of righteousness. He maintains, it is the duty of the Baag trustees to renovate the building. He is willing to suffer indignities of dripping lavatory and falling plasters rather than make things easy for the trustees. Mehroo's suggestion is never taken into account. Many critics have criticized Mistry for his stock characters of women. In this regard, Bhautoo-Dewnarain has said that his women characters do not enjoy the same generosity of the imagination as the other subalterns in his fiction. They are often "invisible, silent or presented within the framework of stereotypes" (*Rohinton Mistry* 103). It is true in one sense as all the women characters except for Dina Dalal plays insignificant roles but on closer examination, we see that it is Mistry's expressed intention to delineate the characters as he finds them –othered and on the periphery.

This marginal position that women occupies in society is highlighted by the writers. The discrimination of women becomes worse when it is sanctioned by archaic traditional beliefs and practices. Some spirited characters come like a breath of fresh air but they are scarce and few in numbers. Daulat Mirza of 'Condolence Visit' in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* shows some spirit in opposing traditional sanctions against women. Ten days had passed since her husband and childhood sweetheart had passed away after a prolonged illness and she is apprehensively waiting for the tedious flow of visitors who would want the customary relay of her husband's illness leading to his demise that she has to oblige. This polite invasion of privacy and the recounting of the most private and painful details of her dead husband is the traditional practice by Parsis and Indians in general. They would come to offer their condolence, "share her grief, poke and pry

into her life and Minocher's with a thousand questions" (TFB 69). In order to gratify her unwelcomed visitors, she would have to relive the anguish of the most trying days of her life. She is totally unprepared for this and yet it starts with the first visitors – her nosy neighbour Najamai and her second cousin Moti with her two grandsons. The condolence visits are inevitable and unavoidable but in a rare show of strength Daulat gives away her late husband's pugree to a young man to the utter consternation and shock of her visitors. Despite their protestations that her husband was "barely digested by vultures at the Tower of Silence" (87), Daulat is adamant that the young man should take it if he wants it that day itself. She represents change and independence.

Roxana in *Family Matters* is the typical woman, daughter, wife and mother that patriarchy endorses. She puts everybody's needs above hers. Apart from cooking, cleaning and looking after her husband and children, she willingly takes on the massive task of looking after her bed-ridden father. On several occasions whenever there is not enough food during meals, her stomach is already full or she is not hungry. Without a word of complain, she takes on the added responsibility embracing it as her filial duty. She creates a kind of a system to manage the household expenditure. She keeps money meant for different expenses in different envelopes. The process of micro management sustains her amidst the pressures exerted by the family life. She is the silent invisible backbone of the family, never allowed the luxury of a breakdown. She loves her husband and family whole heartedly that she is willing to sacrifice anything for them. Despite everything, she is under-appreciated and silently bears the family's burden.

In *The Sultan's Battery*, Ratnakara Shetty, the fake sexologist/hawker/salesman's treatment of his wife reveals his condescending attitude towards women. He has three young daughters whom he considers liabilities. His wife

and daughters are sent into a flurry of activities whenever Ratna is around. His timid wife doesn't have a say in any matters and she always talks in whispers. She dare not raise her gaze upon her husband when entertaining guests. She "dropped something in the kitchen; then coughed; then dropped something else" (BA 219). The act of dropping something is her timid way of getting the attention of her husband. The sentence is telling as it reveals the insecurity of women even in her family. She doesn't have a voice. A woman is othered in a patriarchal society, a lower caste woman doubly so. Shankara's mother in *Between the Assassinations* belong to a low caste Hoyka married to a Brahmin Vasudev Kinni, a plastic surgeon based in the Gulf. She appears to have broken the age old tradition of caste endogamy but she in reality, has been dealt a raw deal. Her husband is based in the Gulf and is rumoured to be a philanderer. Although they have a grown up son, she is yet to be fully accepted with no indication for amalgamation in the future. She even felt beneath her own half-Brahmin son. She couldn't sit with any of her husband's relatives alone. Shankara's presence was required at such times – "her sole claim to acceptance, to respectability, was the production of a male child, an heir - and if he wasn't in the house, then she had nothing to show. She was just a Hoyka trespassing into a Brahmin's household" (BA 61). To her, Shankara was the ticket to acceptance.

The fate of Jayamma, an advocate's cook and the Hoyka girl servant – Shaila are juxtaposed together in *Between the Assassinations*. Jayamma belonged to a Brahmin family of eleven – nine girls and three boys. Her father could manage to save enough gold to marry off only six daughters and Jayamma was number eight, the last three girls had to stay barren virgins for life. For forty years Jayamma has been sent from one town to the next to cook and clean in people's homes, her hard-earned money always siphoned off by her sister-in-laws. Jayamma resented Sheila, the little low caste servant

in the advocate's house. She can't come to terms with the modern idea of keeping servants from the lower castes: "What kind of era is this when Brahmins bring lower caste girls into their household?" (BA 164) She ungrudgingly accepts her fate and position as a burden in her family and is willing to be kicked around countless towns and 'help' out cousins and distant relatives without a murmur of protest but the presence of the Hoyka girl irks her relentlessly. They constantly clash, calling each other names but towards the end, Jayamma realizes that both of them share more or less the same fate: to work in peoples' homes forever. She remembers all the houses she had been sent to by her sister-in-law, to serve other people's needs and she had taken nothing back. The agreed upon remuneration was never disclosed to her and it was always sent to her sister-in-law by her employers. And so, even though Jayamma belonged to the upper caste, her life is in the margins. As a woman, her life is no different from the life of the low caste girl. She has no control over her life. She has been responsible for other people's lives and had looked after other people's kids but she remained the same – unmarried, childless, and penniless, and like "a glass from which clean water had been drunk, her life showed no traces of the past that had passed – except that her body had grown ancient, her eyes were weak, and her knee joints ached" (179). The fact that girls are considered a liability in Indian households is once again reiterated by the writer. Jayamma feels threatened by Shaila's presence maybe because the young girl may replace her someday and not just because she belonged to a low caste.

The scavenger woman of *Last Christmas in Bandra* is again a subaltern, a nondescript person because she is a scavenger who rummages through garbage heaps outside posh residences to survive but she is also 'othered' because she is a woman. Her side of the story is never considered. The Judge did not mention her even in passing

when describing the garbage heap near Mrs. Rego's house. She comes into the picture only when she refuses to sign off her son for adoption. She is a nameless figure of ridicule that the Judge later on describes as a "humanoid hyena" with a look of "shining hatred in her hyena-like eyes" (LCB). It is no wonder that she doesn't trust anyone. But she is just a mirror reflecting back the judge's own prejudice against the downtrodden: "I was filled with hatred for all the poor of our country, who live like animals vote for the most corrupt of politicians, and insist on staying poor and dragging this country down."

3.5. Aged as 'the other'/marginal

Old age is characterized by a sense of hopelessness towards the world, a sense of loss and loneliness, of insecurity and social isolation, loss of freedom, loss of identity and independence leading to loss of self-respect. Conflict arises when old age is compounded by physical/psychological/emotional illness. Ageism affects not just poor elderly people but older people across all walks of life. But it is more acutely felt in the case of the poor. One reason why some people develop chronic illness before others is poverty. Poverty in old age is not just about income or the lack of it. It is just one element of a wider set of interlocking disadvantages that many old people have to deal with. The lack of social interactions also deeply affects the old people. Carol Walker refers to social exclusion as being "the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society" (8). Growing old is affected by increasing dependency on children and young adults on account of retirement which subsequently leads to restricted social roles. The othering is smothering. It is often

masked in care and well being of the aged that sometimes resistance is construed as ungratefulness of the care shown by the young. Mistry and Adiga sensitively tackles with this issue of the helpless aged. We find this concern in Mistry's 'Squatter', 'One Sunday', 'Lend me your Light', and 'Swimming Lessons'. It is dealt with extensively in *Family Matters* and *The Scream*. We also find incessant scrutiny of the aged in Adiga's *Between the Assassinations,* and *Last Man in Tower*.

The story of 'One Sunday' in *Tales from Ferozsha Baag* reveals the paranoia and insecurities of the old and the powerless. Francis, a poor handyman is mistaken for a thief by old spinster Tehmina and unfairly beaten up. The reluctant sharing of the grumpy old Najamai's fridge by Tehmina – who needs ice for her evening scotch and the Boyces family who stores meat affords the old Najamai security from burglary. Mistry's tragic vision is similar to Adiga's which suggests that anyone can don the role of oppressor, given the right circumstances. This philosophy is reiterated time and again by the writers. Mistry's 'The Paying Guests' is the story of a young couple, Boman and Kashmira in the throes of legal as well as personal battle with their elderly paying guests Khorshedbhai and Ardesar. Forced by their economic constraints, Boman and Kashmira decide to sub-let their apartment for two years despite knowing the loopholes of such arrangements. A year and a half passes off cordially in their divided spaces but when Kashmira become pregnant with their second child, they serve eviction notice to the aged couple. All hell breaks loose. The far reaching effects were:

> [endless] courts and courtrooms, sleepless nights filled with paeans to the rising sun, a sadistic nose-digging lawyer for Boman, veranda-sweeping for Kashmira, signs and portents in dreams for Khorshedbhai, pigeons (real and imagined) for Ardesar, thick and

> suffocating incense clouds for Boman and Kashmira, and finally, a taxi for Ardesar and an ambulance for Khorshedbhai. (TFB 155)

The immediate result was terrifying. Mistry's ability to instil an underlying compassion for all characters however bad is clearly displayed yet again. Everybody in the story is the oppressor and oppressed at one point of time. Right at the beginning of the story we see Khorshedbhai gleefully littering and defacing the veranda of the young couple's with bits and pieces of dirt and rotten vegetables. Her work was methodical and thorough:

> She commenced with the window and its parapet, tossing onion skin, coconut husk, eggshells trailing gluey white, potato peelings, one strip of a banana skin, cauliflower leaves, and orange rind, all along the inside ledge ….
>
> Pleased with her arrangement, Khorshedbhai stepped to the door leading to the other room….She draped the balance of the banana skin over the door handle, hung an elongated shred of fatty gristle from the knob, and scattered the remaining assorted peels and skins over the doorstep….
>
> Khorshedbhai reversed three paces and regarded her handiwork with satisfaction…. Only one thing remained now. Collected from the pavement as an afterthought while returning from the *agyaari*, she hurled it against the locked door.
>
> Dog faeces spattered the lower panel with a smack. Bits of it clung, the rest fell on the step. (TFB 149-50)

This was to be her eleven o'clock routine for the next few months. Ardesar helplessly watch his wife resort to such elaborate shameful antics and his persuasion falls on deaf ears. When we analyse from the perspective of the struggling middle class family of Boman and Kashmira, with one child, and another to be born shortly, we see their

dilemma and hardship. We also admire their courage in remaining docile towards the unbridled fury and vengeance of the old Khorshedbhai who unabashedly litters their verandah and makes herself a nuisance, her every move calculated to unnerve and make life difficult for the young couple. Their resources are also drained by an incompetent lawyer as the court case drags on. Kashmira soon gave birth but still Khorshedbhai's eleven o'clock routine at the verandah continued. Things become worse when Kashmira began strolling outside the verandah to stretch her legs, determined not to spend all her days locked inside with her kids. This action is considered defiance by Khorshedbhai and finally one day, when Kashmira was outside talking with Najamai, Khorshedbhai takes and locks the baby in the parrot cage and is witnessed dangling green chilli peppers over the baby's face. Outraged, a host of residents volunteer to testify against the harassment. It is easy to see Khorshedbhai as the oppressor through her actions but her extreme actions are a culmination of a series of injustice done against old people like themselves. There are several stories circulating in the Baag complex regarding the aged couple but the truth is they are representative of how old people are written off and bundled off from one place to another by kith and kin as well others as and when circumstances suit them. Nothing is certain in life but at their age, it is extremely difficult to relocate from one place to another. And to be unceremoniously served an eviction notice through a lawyer without so much as a by your leave from the next door, is considered disrespectful and the superior calm attitude of the young couple emboldens her to do unthinkable things in order to assert her right. Aged as the dispossessed is highlighted here, and in this instance, Khorshedbhai is replying in kind, resisting to the domination of the aged selves by society. She emphatically declares that no one would peck her to pieces. She would fight back.

In *Family Matters*, the old becomes the 'other' occupying the space of periphery. Nariman Vakeel, the seventy nine year old retired professor is relocated to the margins- voiceless by his step-children Jal and Coomy, later by Yezad, Roxana's husband. He is denied a voice in the family life and is left on the margins in the decision-making. Every activity, including bowel movement is regulated by Coomy, his step-daughter, disallowing him even the privacy of the bathroom. "In my youth, my parents controlled me and destroyed those years. Thanks to them, I married your mother and wrecked my middle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I won't allow it" (FM 7). Despite such spirited sporadic retorts, Nariman Vakeel ultimately succumbs to the chidings and pressures of Coomy and ends in submission. Afflicted with Parkinson's disease plus a minor accident leaves him bed-ridden and dependent on his children for his every needs. According to Sarah Lamb, "the expectation of an inheritance frequently serves and served as a major motivator of filial service" (34). Nariman Vakeel had already signed off his house, Chateau Felicity and his pension to his step children, Jal and Coomy. And so the impetus to look after the incapacitated Nariman is taken away. There is no more prospect of wealth or inheritance to induce the children to look after their father. The overt concern of Coomy's for her father's well-being masks her anger and frustration at having to look after an invalid old man. Unable to bear, Coomy and Jal dumps him on his real daughter Roxana's doorstep and comes up with one excuse after another to keep their father away from his own place, Chateau Felicity. Roxana is the epitome of the ideal wife, daughter and mother. Although thrust upon with an unexpected burden she shoulders the extra responsibility with dedication. Her devotion and love for her family and father is understated. She is uncomplaining and resourceful. But on the other hand, Yezad is chagrined at the audacity of Jal and Coomy to dump the responsibility of looking after their father without so much as by

your leave. As the manager of Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium, he doesn't earn much and the additional responsibility of another extra person leaves him resentful of the old man. Successful ageing depends on a number of parameters: enjoyment of food, a sense of purpose, physical fitness, a sense of humour, contribution to society, financial security which are all missing in the case of Nariman Vakeel after being bed-ridden. The several prejudices against the aged include scant contact by the younger people due to a fear of death and the constant and uncomfortable reminder of its inevitability. Yezad hardly talks to the old man and avoids him openly. He is also resentful that his wife spends so much time looking after her father in the meantime, neglecting husband and children.

In Pleasant Villa, we don't see much of the wit and charm that Nariman showed in Chateau Felicity. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Physical, mental and social well-being is closely related and can be mutually reinforcing. For instance if we have a positive outlook to life and feel confident about ourselves, we are more likely to develop positive relationships with other people. Conversely, being physically unwell can alienate us from others which have great potential to isolation, anxiety, illness and depression. Within a week of his accident, the deterioration of health is markedly visible. He is acutely aware that he is an unwanted burden which saps his vitality away leaving him in constant ruminations about his past life, especially about his one true love, Lucy – a Catholic girl that his parents disapproved of before he was cajoled into marriage to Jal and Coomy's mother, Yasmin Contractor. The stink that his bodily functions emanate in the room sent Yezad into fits of anger and resentment. The gradual unveiling of Nariman's past through his ramifications, deepen his tragic situation. Old age and its accompanying problem is sensitively dealt with in *Family*

Matters and after months of resistance, Yezad finally yields and helps Nariman to drink his tea, clips his nails and shaves his beard, finally putting an end to his feeling of animosity. After all, family does matter. Baroness Julia Neuberger has an interesting perspective on the perceptions towards the aged:

> Discrimination against older people is based on prejudice – a view of what older people will and should be like. It may be a caricature of granny sitting by the fire knitting or grandpa gardening and chatting to his grandchild. It may be the hobbling older person who finds it hard to get around, or the older person who is hard of hearing, leading to younger people shouting rather than speaking more clearly. It may be a picture of older people as hideous, or worthless, or useless (104)

It is this prejudice that Nariman often tolerates from Jal and Coomy with humour. His daily walk every evening despite misgivings from his step children is a tiny victory of his having his way with his life outside if he cannot do it inside the home. After unceremoniously dumping their benefactor on Roxana's tiny, cramped flat, Coomy returns to Chateau Felicity and embarks on the task of airing out the smell of disability and sickness. But even after an hour had elapsed she could still smell the odour. In fact, it had worsened and seemed to have permeated every room including the kitchen. Jal compare it to a scene from Shakespeare's Macbeth: "Like the damned spot on Lady Macbeth's hand, remember? All the perfumes of Arabia, all your swabbing and scrubbing and moping and scouring will not remove it" (FM 109). "What have we done?" Jal questions, but the deed is already done. It is too late.

The alienation of the old and aged people is again the focus in Mistry's short story *The Scream (2008)*. Originally published by McLelland and Steward (Canada), it was again chosen to be a part of the compilation of short stories, *Freedom: Stories*

Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights brought out by Amnesty International to mark its fiftieth birthday. The protagonist here is an old man –nameless and a figure of ridicule and jest. He is perpetually relegated at home, and the screams of help "Bachaaav, Bachaav!","Mut maaro, maaf karo!" (*Scream* 371) that he hears (nobody hears this even if they did, pretends not to hear) reverberates and fills his silenced life. Set in a Bombay apartment, *The Scream* is narrated by a man at the threshold of death, who is angry at the predicament of old age. The isolation from family life doesn't help either as he becomes alienated from the rest of the world that no longer need him. In his review of the short story, Steven W. Beattie questions, "Is the scream real, or is the man's entire narration the product of an addled mind riven by senescence?" (Review in Quill and Quire) The man's children tell him that it is only his imagination that is conjuring up these images and sound of screams: "Everyday they tell me I have lost my mind, my memory, my sense of reality" (*Scream* 381). Certainly, there are evidences to support this claim: the old man mistakes his grandchild for a servant; he harbours an irrational fear of losing "a few fingers or toes" (376) to the mice that roam round him at night. He constantly rails and raves in ways that are hilarious for the youngsters at home but which brings in a biting humour as old age is a universal truth. The story reveals the paranoia and insecurities of old age. Granted, the old are often relegated at home – an immovable entity, partly to protect them from the outside threat but also partly to make life easier for the younger generation looking after them. But being cosseted can also be suffocating. The drudgery of waking up each morning just to stare at the walls and view the world from the window, take food, medicine in time and go to sleep only to wake up the next morning to repeat the same routine can be quite frustrating. No wonder then that the old man borders on senility. The old, frail man's voice resonates throughout the narrative, and through him, Mistry speaks about

the apathy towards the helpless and the poor. “Apathy is a sin”, yet no one helps the old man. On the threshold of death, his loneliness is evident: “For them, whatever I say is a laughing matter, worthless rubbish. I am worthless, my thoughts are worthless, my words are worthless” (*Scream* 376-78). Everyone has to go through the indignities of old age. The old man rues his old age, “what destiny. Everything is my fault, according to the ones in the back room. They are so brave when it comes to subjugating an old man” (381).

Sharadha Bhatt, the old proprietor of the house that a couple Giridhar Rao and Kamini live in, in *Between the Assassinations* is regarded as ‘the ancient one’ by the weekly visitors of the couple. We once again see an old woman left alone by her sons and relatives bordering on insanity: “Sitting on a suitcase bursting with clothes, she was bellowing out to the coconut grove. ‘Yama Deva, come for me! Now that my son has forgotten his mother, what more is there for me to live for?’” (BA 248) The call out to the Lord of Death is punctuated with intermittent jingle of her bangles as she struck her forehead repeatedly.

Concerns regarding old age are also echoed in Adiga’s *Last Man in Tower*: “I wonder why God made old age at all”, Mrs. Pinto said, “your eyes are cloudy, your body is weak. The world becomes a ball of fear” (LMT 232). Dharmen Shah, a ruthless real estate developer who has set his sight on the Towers is hell-bent to acquire it at all cost. Aided by his muscle man- Shanmughan, they easily empty Tower B with exorbitant cash incentives. Tower A, however poses the biggest problem as its residents are mostly middle-aged and old-aged persons who consider the Tower their home. Initially, four people refuse his offer, claiming their right to live in their homes. One by one, they cave in to the pressure of the residents and allure of a staggering 1.5 crore

each. Finally, Masterji remains. Yogesh A. Murthy, a.k.a Masterji, is the last man in the Tower. A retired school teacher, an unassuming character inadvertently becomes the hero to thwart Dharmen Shah's overtures. The decision to accept Shah's offer must be unanimous: all in or all out. And so with the carrot thrust upon the residents tantalisingly, the takeover becomes a tale of intrigues, dramas and sinister negotiations with Masterji in the centre. He refuses to bow to the pressure of the real estate developer and the residents and maintains throughout the novel that he wants nothing. Gradually, his entire neighbour isolates him and begins intimidating him. Dispossessed of the support of family and friends, Masterji approaches the law in vain. The thin line between determination, honesty, resoluteness and stubbornness is easily breached in the case of the retired teacher. We don't know where one quality ends and where one begins. One sometimes question at the tenacity of Masterji to hold onto to the building considering the several flaws of the old building – it was structurally unsound, visibly crumbling down with an open sewer running through the neighbourhood thus unhygienic posing a threat to physical well-being. But for Masterji, the more he looked at his late daughter's sketches, the stairwell where she ran up, the garden that she walked upon, the gate that she liked to swing on at Vishram Society, the house became more beautiful and intimate. Masterji puts up a notice on the building addressed to "All Whom It May Concern Within my Society and outside it" and states lucidly,

> Vishram Society Tower A is my home, and it
> Will not be sold
> Will not be leased or rented
> Will not be redeveloped. (LMT 262)

Masterji wants 'nothing'. He reiterates this fact again and again to Mr. Shah and his lawyer Mr. Parekh. Mr. Shah is perplexed: "A man who does not want: who has no

secret spaces in his heart into which a little more cash can be stuffed, what kind of a man is that?" (LMT 287). He acknowledges that construction, especially redevelopment is a dirty business, "if you enjoy fish, you have to swallow a few bones" (288). He is unapologetic for his ruthless suppression of opposition. Masterji is alienated and towards the end, he is completely isolated. All his friends forsake him and the threat to his life becomes palpable. Masterji is a weak old man, all alone and alienated but a weak man who has found a place where he feels strong. Defending his home becomes a zealous focus of Masterji who finds a purpose in his old age. As the novel progresses, and as the boycott from the residents continues, Masterji develops passive-aggressive behaviour and sometimes is so paranoid that he sees everything conspiring against him. The call out to the hawk and other birds gliding over the building: "pigeon, crow, hummingbird; spider, scorpion, silverfish, termite and red ant; bats, bees, stinging wasps, clouds of anopheles mosquitoes. Come, all of you: and protect me from human beings" (346) reveals a gradual shut down of reason. One moment he is resolute, steadfast and recklessly headstrong; at other times afraid of his own shadow. But looking at how he ends up, his suspicions were not unfounded. Once a beloved Masterji – a man respected by everyone turns into a hated adversary, 'the other' person in the building which ultimately ends with him being attacked and pushed off their building by his own friends and neighbours. Despite Mr. Shah's many threats, it is the close friends and neighbours that plots and kills Masterji. The cold-blooded murder committed by ordinary 'good' people sends chills down the spine. Mr. Shah's objective has been achieved; all he had to do was tangle the carrot and plant the seed of money and fortune, suspicion, greed and the rest followed suit. The human tragedy is portrayed beautifully by Adiga in this novel.

The characters are multi-dimensional. They are everyday characters whom we interact with in any society. The reader finds something of himself/herself in the characters and so when we laugh at their follies and idiosyncrasies, we laugh at ourselves and when we see their suffering, we empathise and join in their sorrow. “What do you want? In the continuous market that runs right through southern Mumbai, under banyan trees, on pavements, beneath the arcades of the Gothic buildings, in which food, pirated books, perfumes, … are sold, one question is repeated, to tourists and locals, in Hindi and or in English: what do you want?” (LMT 230-31) Adiga forces us to confront our own wants, motives and attitudes and towards success and failure, towards old age and ageism. Is it wrong to want more? Is it wrong to say no to progress? Does saying ‘no’ merely reflect a stubborn fear of change? These are stark questions asked by Adiga through the novel.

3.6. Summary

Does the writers’ works substantiate Ranajit Guha’s initial objective of promoting a systematic discussion of subaltern themes? Definitely, the variety of subaltern characters that the writers sensitively portray puts the subaltern cause at centre stage. Balram Halwai, Chenayya, the unnamed Scavenger woman, Omprakash and Ishvar Darji, Dukhi Mochi and his family and the assortment of lower caste/class characters that peppers their works are not just imaginary characters but real characters that we find in every nook and corner of the cities and villages in India. They are representative of the millions of people fighting for basic human rights – food, shelter, right to life and dignity. Does the subaltern have autonomy and is the maker of his own destiny? Adiga’s Balram Halwai clearly fits the bill, albeit, subversively. He is the

maker of his own destiny, grapping opportunity with both hands. From the very beginning, Balram is called 'The White Tiger', a rare animal that appears once in a long while. As for the rest of the characters, they are caught in the "Rooster Coop", unable to shed their subalternity. Although subalternity is about resistance it seems that the subaltern cannot have autonomy since he is located in a universe which he does not control but merely able to resist. But the fact that he/she resists is step in the right direction to voice out against discrimination and denigration. As it is true that whatever happens to the least of us has the effect in all of us.

Home is inextricably linked to personal identity and social status. The majority of older people say that they want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. In fact, whether old or young, relocation is always difficult and painful. We see it in the characters of Nariman Vakeel who never feels at home in his daughter's tiny flat; we find it in Masterji who ends up being killed because he refuses to give up his home; we see it in the paying guests old couple – Ardesar and Khorshedbhai who vandalizes and litters their host's verandah in response to the eviction notice served to them by the owners of the flat. The mere thought of losing their home makes them retaliate in anger or plunges them into despair and depression from which is difficult to get out of. In the case of the old man in *The Scream,* the paranoia borders on insanity. Part of the negative attitude to older people lies in a particular fear; the fear of the inevitable mortality of all human beings. Jal, Coomy andYezad's attitude towards the old and frail Nariman is then like a defence mechanism against this knowledge of mortality. And so Nariman is pushed from view both physically and psychologically, so is Masterji literally. It is also true that modern societies see no value on those who are a liability economically. There is therefore, constant reference in the novels of Adiga and Mistry how the modern society is fast losing traditional core values and principles that Indians

hold so dear. “Can caring and concern be made compulsory? Either it resides in the heart, or nowhere” (FM 119). Mistry portrays the character of the young Jehangir to give a sense of hope, the possibility of change, of inculcating values to shape positive attitudes towards the aged. It is poignant to see the young Jehangir making soft murmurings and kissing sounds to comfort his grandfather in his troubled dreams and lull him like a baby. Unlike other ‘oppressed’ groups, older people have remained complacent and not asserted their rights demanding equal treatment despite differences. A massive sensitizing is required to alleviate the several grievances that the aged has to ensure a successful ageing which is possible only if we challenge the assumption that older people are not valuable to society.

Some critics may just dismiss the novels of the writers in question as banality of everyday life. The writers’ view of India is neither the India of great men and women nor grand narratives of prosperity. Their interest lies in the depiction of the millions of ordinary and unrepresented disenfranchised people living their inconsequential lives which nevertheless recovers the struggle of the marginalized as relevant and important. Narratives from the disadvantaged point, a revolutionary and reactionary concept contests history from the privileged vantage point is succinctly initiated by these two writers. They do succeed in recovering the history and voice of the silenced, intermittent voices that makes up the majority of the Indian state ruled by the elite few.

WORKS CITED

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2008. Print.

---. *Between the Assassinations*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.

---."Taking Heart From The Darkness." Interview. *Tehelka* 5.38. 27 Sept. 2008. Web. 11 Dec. 2011. <http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=hub270908Takingheart.asp>.

---. "I highlighted India's Brutal Injustices: Adiga." Interview. *Rediff.com*. 16 Oct. 2008. Web. 22 June 2012. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2008/oct/16adiga.htm>.

---. "Last Christmas in Bandra." *The Times*, 19 Dec. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2014. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/extracts/article2457455.ece>.

---. "The Elephant." *The New Yorker*. 26 Jan. 2009. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/26/the-elephant>.

---. *Last Man in Tower*. Noida: Fouth-Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2011. Print.

Beattie, Steven W. Rev. of *The Scream*, by Rohinton Mistry. *Quill and Quire*. Canada: St. Joseph's Media, n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2013. <http://www.quillandquire.com/review/the-scream/>.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H. M. Parshley. Penguin, 1972. Web. 05 April 2012. <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Reader.102/Beauvoir.I.pdf>.

Bhautoo-Dewnarain, Nandini. *Rohinton Mistry: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print. Contemporary Indian Writers in English.

Chakravorty, Swapan, Suzana Milevska and Tani E. Barlow. *Conversations with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. London: Seagull Books, 2006. Print.

Das, Sisir Kumar. *A History of Indian Literature 1911- 1956: Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy*. New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1995. Print.

D'Cruz, Doreen. "Configuring the Dynamics of Dispossession in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* & Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things." New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 5, 2 *(*December, 2003): 56-76. Web. 24 April 2012. <http://www.nzasia.org.nz/downloads/NZJAS-Dec03/5.2_6.pdf>.

Hill, Robert W, ed. *Tennyson's Poetry: A Norton Critical Edition*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.

"Indian Novelist Aravind Adiga Wins Booker Prize." *Agencies*. 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 09 Feb. 2012. <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/indian-novelist-aravind-adiga-wins-booker-prize/373637/>.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fiction: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Krishnan, Lakshmi. "An Infernal History of India." *The Oxonian Review*. 9.8. 15 June 2009. Web. 11 June 2014. <http://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/an-infernal-history-of-india/>.

Lamb, Sarah. *Aging and the Indian Diaspora: Cosmopolitan Families in India and Abroad*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009. Print.

Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women*. 12th Print. Cambridge: M.I.T Press, 1989. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1869.pdf>.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* 1987. India: Penguin-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Such a Long Journey*. 1991. UK: Faber-CPI Bookmarque, 2009. Print.

---. *A Fine Balance.* 1996. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Family Matters.* 2002. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *The Scream.* 2008. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. 371-382. Print.

---. Interview by Nermeen Shiekh. *AsiaSource*. Web. 30 Oct. 2012. <www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/mistry.cfm>.

Narayan, Shyamala A. "Changing Perceptions of the Nation in Indian English Literature." *Focus India: Postcolonial Narratives of the Nation*. Eds. T Vijay Kumar, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Harish Trrivedi, C Vijayasree. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 34-47. Print.

Neuberger, Julia. "What Does it Mean to be Old?" *Unequal Ageing: The Untold Story of Exclusion in Old Age*. Eds. Paul Cann and Malcolm Dean. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009. 101-122. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

"The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga." Review. *The Telegraph*. 9 Aug. 2008. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/fictionreviews/3558130/Review-The-White-Tiger-by-Aravind-Adiga.html>.

Walker, Alan and Carol Walker, eds. *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1997. Print.

CHAPTER 4

DISCOURSE ON DIASPORA

4.1. Introduction

Movement and migration is no new experience. Throughout the years and centuries people have been moving in groups large and small and resettling in the new territories. With the advent of modern means of transport and communication the phenomenon of migration has acquired a new dimension. It has interconnected the whole world into a global forum that channels the creativity of human beings to give new dimension to migration altogether. All these migrations have been propelled by a sense of adventure and desire for better lives, of hope and sometimes driven by fear and insecurity.

Diaspora can be the voluntary or forced movement of people from their homelands into new regions that becomes their adoptive homeland. Having arrived in a new geographical and cultural context, they try to negotiate between two cultures and the diasporas are often at a loss; neither really belonging in their adoptive nation, nor able to forget their homeland and yet aware that they cannot fit in if they do return. Such diasporic movements develop their own distinctive cultures out of these cultural contestation and cultural negotiation. The diasporic writings are also sometimes known as ‘expatriate writings’ or ‘immigrant writings’ and they give voice to the discrimination and other traumatic experiences that they undergo. Sudesh Mishra observes:

> As citizens of a nation-state, diasporas may enjoy the abstract rights and privileges of citizenship manifested in a juridical or constitutional sense. Since, however, they may not share a common cultural ground with the hegemonic community whose particular values and goals are mediated by the nation-state, and subtly or openly incorporated into its laws, the right to culture specific practices may be denied them. Even a pluralist nation-state will brook only those practices that do not directly collide with the universal rights abstracted from the particular belief systems, historical struggles, discursive practices and economic ambitions of the foundational community. (133)

Living in their chosen or sometimes, forced hostland, the immigrants are at once besieged by a plethora of core issues that directly relate to their bearings as human beings with subsequent free will. They are unable to breach that vast cultural gap that glares at them. The feeling of nostalgia, a sense of loss and anxiety to reinvent home obsesses them which finds expression, consciously or unconsciously, in their writings.

The discourse on diaspora has achieved worldwide attention and has become a more open-ended field of enquiry. Some of its prominent theorists as enumerated by Vijay Mishra would include, Stuart Hall (black hybridity and diasporic empowerment), Paul Gilroy (diasporic flows and spaces), Homi Bhabha (diasporas as sites of a postcolonial counter aesthetic), Gayatri Spivak (subalternity and transnationality), Edward Said (exile as the intentional condition of being "happy with the idea of unhappiness"), the Boyarins (diasporic deterritorialization as the exemplary state of late modernity), William Safran (diasporas as part of narratives of centre and periphery), James Clifford (diasporas as double spaces/sites), Appadurai (diasporic mobility and migration as the condition of the future nation-state) and Radhakrishnan (the presence of a double consciousness in an ethnic definition of diasporas) (*Diasporas and the Art*

25). To this list we can add, Robin Cohen, Amar Acheraïou, Vijay Mishra, Sudesh Mishra, Partha Chatterjee, Makarand Paranjabe and several others who have contributed to the burgeoning field of diaspora theory and criticism.

4.2. Meaning/Contested Meanings

The word 'diaspora', derived from the Greek word *diaspeiro*/*diasperien*, literally means 'to sow or to scatter seeds', or 'to disperse'. The etymology of the word thus suggests dispersal from an original centre to other peripheries. It was first used by the Greeks for the movements of the Jews away from their homeland. Robin Cohen traces the idea that diaspora implied forcible dispersion to Deuteronomy (28:58-68) in the Bible which transcends Jewish diaspora. We recall warnings to the biblical Jews that they would be "scattered to all lands" if they disobey the Mosaic Law. But Cohen still asserts that it is impossible to understand notions of diaspora without first understanding some central aspects of the Jewish experience. In the very first issue of the journal *Diaspora*, William Safran gives the following six defining paradigms for diaspora:

> The concept of diaspora[can] be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following charactersistics: (1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more 'peripheral' or foreign regions; (2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history and achievements; (3) they believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; (4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and the place to which they or their descendents would (or should) eventually return –

> when conditions are appropriate; (5) they believe they should collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and (6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (83)

His definitions come under attack from critics for neglecting the complex discursive and historical features of diaspora and his insistence on returning to the "homeland" (Clifford 306). Robin Cohen while appreciating this very useful list, detects some repetitions, tweaks some points and suggests additional features to produce a consolidated list of the common features of a diaspora:

Table 1.1 Common features of a diaspora.

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4. An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. The development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;

8. A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9. The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. (26)

Vijay Mishra also considers William Safran's model to be oversimplified. As a corrective he offers the following definitions:

1. Relatively homogeneous, displaced communities brought to serve the Empire (slave, contract, indentured, etc.) co-existing with indigeneous/other races with markedly ambivalent and contradictory relationship with the Motherland(s). Hence, the Indian diasporas of South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam, Malaysia; the Chinese diasporas of Malaysia, Indonesia. Linked to high (classical) Capitalism.
2. Emerging new diasporas based on free migration and linked to late capitalism: post-war South Asian, Chinese, Arab, Korean communities in Britain, Europe, America, Canada, Australia.
3. Any group of migrants that sees itself on the periphery of power, or excluded from sharing power. (*Diaspora SPAN* 1)

Makarand Paranjape finds Mishra's definitions apt in describing the Indian diaspora. But he differs with Mishra in his privileging the diasporic to the level of a special epistemology. According to him, the problem lies in "equating the diaspora with every form of migration or with every perception of powerlessness" (5). He feels that the diasporic experience must involve a significant crossing of borders. For Paranjape, the diaspora "must involve a cross-cultural or cross-civilizational passage. It is only in such a crossing that results in the unique consciousness of the diasporic" (6). Kapil Kapoor also echoes Paranjape's contention and goes a step further: "By using the word 'diaspora' for all kinds of exiles, migrants, immigrants, colonialists, missionaries, anthropologists, soldiers and castaways, I think, we negate the intensity of the original

diasporic experience and terribly devalue it" (34). Kapoor points out that one thing that makes the Jewish experience unique is the constant persecution and trauma that they were subjected to, and being chased from one country to another for more than two thousand years. He, therefore, calls for a separation of categories like diaspora, immigration, migration and so on. But the notion of Israel as their original homeland which these people carried with them for years filled them with hope of ultimate return to the motherland. It is also important to remember that the Indian sub-continent is called so for a reason. The diversity of culture, language, religion is so vast that India is like a unification of mini- nations. Mishra further divides Indian diaspora historically into "the old diapora of exclusivism (of plantation or classic capital or modernity) and the new diaspora of the border (of late modernity or postmodernity)" (*Diasporas and the Art* 26). Many of the diasporas refuses to be pinned down by such set definitions and diaspora today has become a fluid metaphor with innumerable connotations associated to it meaning. As the term 'diaspora' has proliferated, its meaning has been stretched to accommodate several agendas. This has resulted in what Rogers Brubaker calls a "'diaspora diaspora' – a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space" (1). Diaspora today has become this open, encompassing field of enquiry in the social sciences, literature, and the humanities with an impressive corpus of critical writings and theorizations.

Rhetoric of Exile: Exile in the case of the diaspora is obscured. It is a two way street. On one hand, a person who has immigrated to other countries, leaving his roots is an exile. On the other, when and if he/she returns, the person finds himself/herself at odds with his homeland. The reason, perhaps, is because the 'imagined' homeland is no longer what it used to be. This is the reason why many Indian English writers extend the term exile to both the experience of the West and of a return to their homeland.

Jasbir Jain notes a distinction between immigrant and exile, "While 'immigrant' defines a location, a physical movement and a forward looking attitude", the term 'exile' indicates "a compulsory isolation and a nostalgic anchoring in the past" (12). The word 'exile' evokes multiple meanings – alienation, exile – forced/self-imposed, and so on which is all true in the movement of people in different times for different reasons. In a study of exile in Indian English Literature, C.D. Verma charts the experience of alienation after a forced or voluntary exile from their homeland:

> By 'exile characters' is meant those characters who depart from their own culture and society and have to inhabit an alien culture. The alien experience proves disillusioning and the 'exiles' return home to their original milieu only to discover that they have become rootless anywhere and everywhere. (*The Exile-Hero* 1)

Further, he asserts;

> Departure or going away is not a sudden or abrupt, unconscious act on the part of the exile-hero. Before actual physical departure, the mind of the exile-hero is in a 'critical' state when he questions the authenticity of social environment. …The constricting social, moral, financial, political or even personal circumstances quicken in the exile-hero a desire to go away…. (*The Exile-Hero* 69)

Verma illustrates how a mental preparedness precedes the exile of the Indian English hero. His mind has already left his homeland before his actual physical self leaves. In tune with this thought, Tabish Khair in his encompassing and insightful analysis of Indian English novels asserts that alienation does not imply mere physical transference but discursive conflict (68). Alienation is thus total – physical, emotional and psychological.

4. 3. Home/ Imagined Homes

What is home? Where is home? What does it mean to be at home? Home does not merely denote a house in a geographical location. It is where our hearth and heart reside. It is the place where we feel belongingness, comfort and contentment, acceptance and a place to which we want to return willingly in the prospect of happiness. Cosy images are often associated with home. John Mcleod in *Beginning Postcolonialism* writes:

> the concept of "home" often performs an important function in our lives. It can act as a valuable means of orientation by giving us a sense of our place in the world. It tells us where we originated from and where we belong. As an idea it stands for shelter, stability, security and comfort. To be "at home" is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves" (210).

The word 'home' therefore has a double connotation – the place where we originated from and the place where we belong. So, home splits when the diaspora leaves his birth land and try to belong in the adoptive land. Home, then becomes problematic for the diaspora. The birthplace is the home where he was born, where his parents lived, where his childhood memories are in the case of the first generation diasporas, the adoptive or host land is where he maintains a hearth and so a home, presently for the diaspora. So, a back and forth shift of affiliation, of belonging often takes place and so a negotiation is necessitated. To be "unhomed", according to Bhabha, "is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private life and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow…"(*Location of Culture* 9). The traditional meaning/definition of 'home' ceases to exist for the diaspora as he/she redefines 'home' by his/her lived

experience. Home also may not be the clichéd home sweet home, so the feeling of homelessness is therefore, more psychological than physical. Again, the individual might inhibit semblance of multiple homes in his/her lifetime. It is possible in the modern world that one often is born at one place, pursues academics at another, and earns livelihood at yet a different location and so on. In such case, home becomes multiple: "home is England, where I was born and now live, home is Australia, where I grew up, and home is Pakistan, where the rest of my family lives" (Ahmed 87). Avtar Brah also makes similar points: "I have had 'homes' in four of the five continents – Asia, Africa, America, and now Europe. When does a place of residence become 'home'? This is something with which those for whom travel constitutes a form of migrancy are inevitably confronted at some stage in their lives. And, it is a question that is almost always enmeshed with politics, in the widest sense of the term" (1). Brah distinguishes between two qualitatively different 'homes'. One "invokes 'home' in the form of a simultaneously floating and rooted signifier. It is an invocation of the narratives of 'the nation'" (3). The other "is an image of 'home' as the site of everyday lived experience … It signifies the social and psychic geography of space that is experienced in terms of a neighbourhood or of a home town. That is, a community 'imagined' in most part through daily encounter. This 'home' is a place with which we remain intimate even in moments of intense alienation from it. It is a sense of 'feeling at home'" (4). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak although refuses to be pinned down as a diaspora considers that she has "roots in air", she is "at home everywhere and…not at home anywhere" (Chakravorty et al 19). As always, Spivak speaks in her metaphorical voice and she asserts, "…that's my way, to have found many homes, to have found roots in air rather than to have become a cosmopolitan" (54). Home then, attains this

site of different possibilities, the idea of home as infinitely expandable. Sara Ahmed has this interesting take on this narrative of migration and estrangement:

> The narrative of leaving home produces too many homes and hence no Home, too many places in which memories attach themselves through the carving out of inhabitable space, and hence no place that memory can allow the past to reach the present. The movement between homes allows Home to become a fetish, to be separated from the particular worldly space of living *here*, through the possibility of some memories and the impossibility of others. In such a narrative journey, then, the space that is most like home, which is most comfortable and familiar, is not the space of inhabitance – I am here – but the very space in which one is almost, but not quite, at home. (78)

Home, in this case is romanticized and it becomes the 'imagined home'. The 'real' home, where the individual originated from often becomes the most unfamiliar place where one do not have a physical home – a house and so, is relegated as guests in their place of origin. Home, according to Sara Ahmed, thus becomes the impossibility and necessity of the individual's future, who never quite gets there but is always getting there. The experience of estrangement necessitates a reconstruction of home. Such transnational journeys redirect our attention to the question of home and belonging.

Rushdie in his collected non-fiction, *Step Across This Line, 1992-2002* shows the life of the diaspora with great insight and sentimentality. Freedom of speech and expression is what he repeatedly defends and celebrates. Rushdie himself says life was no longer what it used to be after the *Satanic Verses* and the subsequent *fatwa*: "the world changed for me, and I was no longer able to set foot in the country which has been my primary source of artistic inspiration" (*Step Across* 196). Rushdie talks about the problems he and other similar diasporic writers have of trying to recreate home in

their writings. He says, “Our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind” (*Imaginary Homelands* 10). Rushdie evokes here a deep sense of nostalgia for home, how the separation from home creates feelings of loss which he tries to resolve through the creation of imaginary homes in his fiction. Being in exile, being shunned by the country he loves, by his own people deeply wounds Rushdie. His sadness is clearly evident in the fact that he constantly writes about his disillusionment in his non-fictions and alludes to it even in his novels. “Exile”, it says somewhere in *The Satanic Verses,* “is a dream of glorious return”. The condition of exile is also seized upon by Rushdie to turn it into a creatively rewarding journey because writing for Rushdie is, to a large extent, “linked up with imagining a nation and in his writing it means remembering India with fondness, exasperation and sadness” (Ramanan 41).

Rushdie refuses to have a narrow conception of the nation bounded by demarcations: “the intellectual uprooted against his will rejects the narrow enclosures that have rejected him. There is a great loss, and much yearning, in rootlessness. But there is also a gain. The frontierless nation is not a fantasy” (*Step Across* 67). In such a scenario “our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy” (*Imaginary Homelands* 15). Rushdie owns this space (diaspora space) and yet, the longing and nostalgia for India still persists and he acknowledges that the “imagination works best when it is most free” (*Imaginary Homelands* 20). “I have left India many times”, Rushdie writes, and “since then my characters have frequently flown west from

India, but in novel after novel their author's imagination has returned to it. This, perhaps, is what it means to love a country: that its shape is yours, the shape of the way you think and feel and dream. That you can never really leave" (*Step Across* 195). The love for India is engrained in Rushdie so much so that even on the brink of giving up, he still grabs on the invitation to return to India for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize which is only a pretext. To have made the trip back to India is the real victory, it is the real prize. No one's voice is considered legitimate to diasporic experience but understanding Rushdie is essential to understanding the diaspora consciousness, for indeed, it is a fact that his influence, his life, his writings have contributed immensely to the diaspora writings and its existential state. The urge of the modern exile to find a 'home' or 'homeland' is evident. As Robin Cohen suggests, for diasporic subjects, remembering the homeland nostalgically has opened up the avenue for multiple forms of identity within and beyond the nation-state (*Global Diasporas* 174-75). The ambivalent, complex relationship between diasporas and the homelands can be summed up in Victor Ramraj's words: "Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with the individual's or community' attachment to the centrifugal homeland. But this attachment is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode" (216). Diasporic narratives are therefore journeys between homelands and hostlands, a sort of a bridge between the two different cultures that often overlaps. The concept of diaspora also places "the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins" (Brah 193-209). In recent years the idea of 'home' has gained prominence and garnered interest, especially in a modern global world marked by travel and dislocation. The imagined home has come to play a significant role in the life of the diaspora. The relationship between the imagined home and the real home and the dynamics between these two

ideas of home is a subject of much lively academic debates whose distinctions often blur as the diaspora stakes a claim to their multiple homes.

4.4. Longing/Belonging – Hybridity

Majority of diaspora feel painfully split between two or more cultures. They have attachments towards both native and adoptive lands but it does not entail that they fit in both. They are unable to rest their moorings and drift afloat shuttling between identities. Many immigrants prefer to take on a hybrid identity. The term 'hybrid' in horticulture refers to a cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third. In the case of the diaspora, the cultural fusion creates hybridity. Robert Young points out that the term hybrid/ hybridity was first used in reference to humans in 1813, and was applied to "the crossing of people of different races" as early as 1861 (*Colonial Desire* 6). Amar Acheraïou traces hybridity/metissage in its various shades (biological, cultural, religious, political, and technological) diachronically – from the Sumerians and Egyptians through to the Greeks and Romans down to modern times. Acheraïou pays close attention to the ways in which hybridity was "experienced, construed, constructed, and manipulated across history to serve various, often contradictory, cultural, political, ideological, and economic ends" (2). He further states that for most scholars in postcolonial and cultural studies, hybridity "represents a crucial emancipator tool releasing the representations of identity as well as culture from the assumptions of purity and supremacy that fuel colonialist, nationalist, and essentialist discourses" (5-6). Homi Bhabha reiterated that 'hybridity' has been a fact of life in India because of the several waves of colonialism – the Aryans, the Moghuls, the British, and the several waves of migrants all bringing their various distinct cultures,

influencing and being influenced by the ethnic inhabitants' culture and thereby creating the Indian nation with the eclectic mix of cultures that resulted in India being acknowledged as a sub-continent by the rest of the world. Bhabha redefines culture, discourse, and identity as fluid and ambivalent and multi-dimensional and postulates the in-between or the third space in *The Location of Culture:*

> All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge (211)

The process of cultural hybridity then gives rise to new areas of negotiation of meaning and representation. Feroza Jussawalla says that the Parsis more than any other ethnic group have embodied hybridity the most (200). Parsis are Zoroastrians who came to India in the twelfth century A.D. to escape Muslim persecution. It is no wonder then that Homi Bhabha, Rohinton Mistry, Bapsi Sidhwa and several other Parsis writers and thinkers therefore embraces hybridity with open arms which is reflected in their works.

Hybridity has undergone extensive interpretations in its journey as a key concept in postcolonial studies. And as Monika Fludernik says, "the term hybridity, from its moorings in sexual cross-fertilization, racial intermixture has now drifted free to connote (rather than denote) a variety of interstitial and antagonistic set-ups which are clearly linked to a 'subaltern' (Gramsci, Spivak) perspective and a positive revaluation of hybridity" (21). Salman Rushdie's work is frequently mentioned as an example of hybridity- plenty of connotations with peppering of native Indian language idioms and inflexions. And long before that Raja Rao has pointed out in his 'foreword' to his novel *Kanthapura* that English is an 'Indian' language: "it is the language of our

intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before –"; "We have grown to look at the large world as part of us" (v).We can say the same of Mistry and Adiga as they do take generous creative license to infuse their work with linguistic and cultural diversity.

Literary thinkers and critics like Aijaz Ahmad, Arif Dirlik and many others have underlined the bourgeois and upper class face of many of the Third world postcolonial practitioners. Citing historical evidences, Amar Acheraïou asserts "the native elite groups to which most migrant postcolonial intellectuals belong were privileged conduits of colonial hybridity and beneficiaries of colonialism" (111). On this note, he further states, "hybridity discourse in its actual articulation is almost exclusively produced and championed by a Third world elite in a global academia" (113). He therefore, contents that the response of the non-elite colonized mass certainly deserves an in-depth study. Tabish Khair also opines that "hybridity as a theoretical position serves not just to obscure certain Indian and global realities but is, in itself, an attempt – determined or not – by highly westernized Indian English academics and intellectuals to escape the negative connotations of being described as alienated" (79). This may be so in one shade but on the other hand, 'hybrid' itself has both positive and negative connotations too. Not all cross-pollinated flowers are beautiful. There is therefore the risk factor in the hybrid whether it will be manifested positively or negatively. Nevertheless, hybridity does afford the immigrants the semblance of an identity – a globe-trotter, a go-getter and a world citizen. By incorporating two nations' cultures (at least), a delectable East meets West concept is created. This is happening not only abroad in diaspora community, but also right at home in India, within India which is a direct result of globalization. One eats Chinese food for lunch and Indian curry and rice/chappati for dinner; we like our traditional clothes but still manage to wear imported western clothes with élan; we intersperse our Hindi/mother tongue with

smatterings of English and vice versa. Identity than becomes an infinite site of possibilities. Lavie and Swedenberg, although ascribing to this incomprehensible infinity, they do sound a caution against any premature celebration of fragmentation:

> In this version, culture becomes a multicoloured, free-floating mosaic, its pieces constantly in flux, its boundaries infinitely porous. This postmodernist reading of new, emergent time-spaces and the dizzying array of fragments did deconstruct the spatially and temporally conceived hierarchical dualities of center/margin, but at the same time it ignored power relations, the continued hegemony of the center over the margins. Everyone became equally 'different', despite specific histories of oppressing or being oppressed. (3)

Diasporas are deeply attached to their homeland, yet yearn to belong to their adoptive country. They are caught between two worlds and yo-yoed back and forth trying to find and maintain the connection with both. The umbilical cord is cut when the diaspora moves away from the motherland to find its own footing and survive in a global world. Yet, the deep love and connection can never be severed. The diaspora's inability to take sides also results in being marginalized in both homeland and hostland.

4.5. Identity Crisis

In the milieu of all these, how does the diasporic subject under globalization negotiate his/her identity between homeland and host country? For those who have willingly crossed the border, homeland is a safe harbour to return to in their imagination or literally if things don't work out in the host country. A coerced migration however leaves the person disenchanted and distraught. For them, it is a lost motherland, a land

that is no longer theirs which make the longing all the more difficult to bear. On top of the problem of finding and defining 'home', psychological confrontations and negotiations with the 'new land' lead to crisis of identity. In the words of Jeffrey Weeks, "Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others" (88). He further states that "Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different, and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire. The problem is that these beliefs, needs and desires are often patently in conflict, not only between different communities but within individuals themselves" (89). Who we are and what want to be and become are deeply felt issues in identity politics. Such is the possibility of infinite construction of identity that it becomes difficult to strike a right balance and find the elusive footing. Identity then becomes doubly problematic for the immigrant in an alien culture. Linguistic and cultural barriers hamper everyday life and marginalize the immigrant. The immigrant is unable to dodge the postmodern palpable geography of identity: both here and there and neither here nor there at the same time. It is indeed difficult to find identity in the conundrum of this everywhereness and nowhereness. The experience of cultural displacement faced by the diaspora from the slight nuances often bordering to epic proportions leads to this loss of identity. Roger Bromley defines this hyphenated in-betweeness as: "the in-between zones are shifting grounds, threshold spaces, and displacement and migration have led to a struggle for space where identity is endlessly constructed, and deconstructed, across difference and against set inside/outside oppositions" (5). Adjustments, negotiations and establishment of trust and between the

immigrant and the hostland – lots of give and takes – is necessitated for the individual to find a footing and not get lost in the abyss of inbetweeness. Stuart Hall in his essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' (1990) suggests two ways of conceiving cultural identity: " The first position defines "cultural identity" in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (223). Such identity searches for images which impose "an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation" (224). Images of a shared 'Indianness', for instance, in Mistry's Toronto provide a sort of a coherence for the immigrants although that image of Indianness may belong way back in the past. The second way of viewing cultural identity explores "points of deep and significant difference" (225):

> Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (225)

The quoted views of Stuart Hall represent the struggle within the diaspora in perceiving his/her identity. Bill Ashcroft considers "the struggle between a view of identity which attempts to recover an immutable origin, a fixed and eternal representation of itself, and one which sees identity as inextricable from the transformative conditions of material life, is possibly the most deep-seated divide in

post-colonial thinking" (4). The struggle between the perceived/known cultural identity and the actual culture – the real transformative, evolving culture essentially becomes Sarosh's (a character in TFB) problem. After he returns back to Bombay, he realises that the Bombay he knew is no longer what it used to be. Landscape, people, and landmarks everything has changed with time so much so that he couldn't identify himself to the present Bombay. Hence, it becomes problematic to find his inner identity. The diasporic experience thus includes the quest for identity which is manifested in the will to exist despite all odds and to survive all odds.

4.6. Leaving / Returning

The role of diaspora in enriching the Indian Writing in English is immense. If we look at the history of Indian Writing in English, Diaspora writings have contributed a lot to the body of literature, especially, after Salman Rusdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), the flood of diasporic writings have intensified. Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Boman Desai, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Anita Desai, Aravind Adiga, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, A.K Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, to name only a few have all lived, are either living abroad or shuttling between home and abroad. This back and forth, shifting location is a recurrent theme in diasporic writings. In an interview with Talk Show host Karan Johar, Freida Pinto the famous international actor of Indian origin provides an interesting take on this sub-topic. Excerpts from the conversation:

> *Karan Johar*: Do you also get a sense sometimes, like you know, you feel a little lost? Because you know, your roots are of course, Indian and then you are there …Do you feel like you need to fit in there? And do things that are out of your comfort zone, to do that?

> *Freida Pinto*: Well, not really. I think what I really like about what I am able to do is to travel to all these places, fit in but not really fit in, and not get too comfortable and just when that place begins to, or I get too jaded or if I get to start picking faults… I can get out and come back home, come back to India. (*Koffee With Karan* Season 4)

The prospect of finding success abroad eggs on the individual to emigrate. The fact that he/she can always return anytime they like is like having the cake and eating it too. The world literally has become a global village, one can speak/ video-chat at the push of a button to loved ones back at home (in the motherland). It takes only a couple of flight changes to come back home any time they want.

In her book *The Tiger's Daughter,* Bharti Mukherjee shows how the immigrant had to don a double identity. Tara, in the story marries an American David Cartwright, thus setting the stage for major cultural collisions. Tara had to assume this hybrid identity as she has to negotiate between two diverse worlds. She is the insider as well as the outsider in the host country. Tara's predicament is essentially that of Mukherjee's and diasporas in general.

4.7. Displacement and Dislocation

Dislocation is a result of movement from a known to an unknown location. The term is used to describe the experience of displacement. It is not just uprooting oneself from one location to another physically but mentally also. Any dislocation precedes a mental preparedness required to keep at bay loneliness and the feeling of uprootedness. Changing a job or going to another locality in a promotion is met with trepidations. Could I possibly do the new job well? Will I be able to fit in the new place, new people,

new setting with different culture? So we can just imagine the feeling of emigrating to a totally new culture. Any amount of mental preparedness is never enough of the culture shock that the émigré faces in the host land. In the case of people who were not forcibly moved from their location, dislocation was a matter of choice. They chose willingly to move abroad and so for them, being an immigrant need not generate angst and longing. But we definitely find these in the works of some like Rushdie and Mistry, which is evoked by memory and nostalgia. Diasporic communities formed by forced or voluntary migration are equally affected by this process of dislocation.

Displacement is "the separation of people from their native culture through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture" (Bammer xi). Historical evidences account a number of displacements over the years and centuries for a whole lot of reasons, be it war, ethnic clashes, religious/racial discrimination and so on. Displacement and its addendum disillusionment/despair are equally felt by the displaced whether displacement happens outside or within the native culture. Journey is also used as a metaphor by Adiga and Mistry. Going away to a new place involves a journey for the diaspora both literally and figuratively. Diasporas have had to travel to make sense of their own lives and their journey is indeed a long one. When Maneck Kohlah in *A Fine Balance* first comes to the city and meets the allergic proof reader Vasantrao Valmik LLB on the train, he asks about his past. Mr. Valmik replies that it is a long story, whereupon Maneck replies that they have 'such long journey', echoing the title of Mistry's first novel. Mistry describes his emigration to Canada as 'quite jarring'. Belonging to a minority Parsi community tutored in the ways of the West in India, Mistry felt incomplete – "I felt that if I went there (West) there would be a wholeness to

my being… However, having arrived in the West, this sense of incompleteness turned around and I became aware of the loss of my home." (Nasta 199-200)

Critics have always differed in formulating the diaspora consciousness but their difference of opinion only aids in constructing lively debates which further generates interest in the diaspora. Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and many others have constructed seminal concepts that underpin these debates (on nationalism, multiculturalism, ethnicity, and cultural effects of globalism. Richard Terdiman's contention that "no discourse is ever a monologue; nor could it ever be analysed intrinsically … everything that constitutes it always presupposes a horizon of competing, contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies" (*Discourse/Counter-Discourse* 36) rightly justifies the presence of a variety of definitions and interpretations of diaspora. Diasporic writings provoke questions to the concept of 'home', 'roots' and 'belonging'. Their writings question the very concept of closed nationalities and identities. It questions the rigidity of its meanings and gives them fluidity and life through dialogism.

Beneath the seeming affinities that Indian diasporas share, there is a heterogeneous mix of eclectic experiences. Indian diaspora comes under the ambit of South Asian Diaspora encompassing the whole of Indian sub-continent before the radical change in the political map in the mid-twentieth century. The Imperial British rule left a partitioned sub-continent of two independent nation states – India and Pakistan which was subsequently followed swiftly by the bifurcation of two more nation states – Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. So, the composition of Indian diaspora before and after independence overlaps and diasporas before the partition often belong to two or more of the nation states simultaneously. Again, Indian diaspora involves great

diversity. Different groups of people moved in different times for different reasons. Landy *et al* have categorised the Indian emigration, from the historical to the contemporary period, into six broad phases: "a) merchants who went to East Africa or Southeast Asia before the 16th century; b) migration of various groups (traders, farmers) to neighbouring countries (Sri Lanka, Nepal); c) indentured labourers to colonial empires like the Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius or Natal; as well as migration through middlemen (*kangani*, *maistry*) to Southeast Asia; d) migration of skilled workers after the Second World War towards the developed countries (UK); e) migration of contract workers to the Gulf countries; and f) recent migration of knowledge workers to developed countries (USA)" (203-4). At the same time the multiplicity of religion, language and culture – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Bengalis, Christians, etc. entailed that they belonged to ethnic communities markedly different from each other. The diversity of origins, characteristics, period of movement and experiences is so vast that Judith Brown refers to South Asians abroad as "members of different diasporic strands, or even as different diaspora groups originating on the one subcontinent" (4) that is populating a sizable portion in the world map. Diasporic community is a varied and complex one and so it defies homogenization. It is a dynamic community, diasporas being often described by critics and diasporas themselves as world citizens. Despite the variations some certain common themes runs through the diasporic experiences: identity crisis, memory and nostalgia, consciousness of a common ethnicity, dislocation and displacement, the sense of occupying a middle space. Homi K. Bhabha develops a concept of creating a third space due to hybridity : "all forms of culture are continually in the process of hybridity" (*Third Space* 211). Bromley called the third space advocated by Stuart Hall and Bhabha as a "performative location, readily disarticulated and rearticulated, constitutive and positioning, not enclosing and excluding" (6) because

this third scenario is a non-binarist space of reflection in the politics of location. Drawing on Bhabha's concept of the third space, Lavie and Swedenburg also employ the border/hyphen metaphor in their endeavour to carve out a niche for the diaspora space:

> We wish to stake out a terrain that calls for, yet paradoxically refuses, boundaries, a borderzone between identity-as-essence and identity-as-conjuncture, whose practices challenge the lucid play with essence and conjuncture as yet another set of postmodernist binarisms. This terrain is old in experience and memory but new in theory: a third time-space… In this terrain opposition is not only reactive but also creative and affirmative. It involves a guerrilla warfare of the interstices, where minorities rupture categories of race, gender, sexuality, class, nation, and empire in the center as well as on the margins. The third time-space goes beyond the old model of culture without establishing another fixity. Yet while the third – space designates phenomena too heterogeneous, mobile, and discontinuous for fixity, it remains anchored in the politics of history/location. (13-14)

Sudesh Mishra observes a drawback in the dynamic split of the singular subject that vacillates back and forth: "No matter what the positional cut in identity, the subject always has an ethical upperhand vis-à-vis others. In the identity-as-conjuncture scenario the diasporic subject, in its multiple identifications, is assumed to promote a revolutionary alternative to the stabilities of ethnic and nationalist identity formations. In the reverse scenario of identity-as-essence, the same subject draws on strategic essentialisms to upset hegemonic discourses…" (86). Lavie and Swedenberg are also aware of this idealization of the third time- space as they concede "we are really speaking of some utopian space whose future outlines we can only vaguely begin to make out" (Lavie and Swedenberg 17). The notion of the third space is romanticized. It

is for this reason configuring "dispersed subjects as hybrid, luminal, border and hyphenated without recourse to the strategy of consigning non-diasporic groups to imaginary domains of non-luminality, non-hybridity, non-heterogeneity" (Mishra, Sudesh 86) has become one of the crucial dilemmas confronting diaspora criticism. The creation of any imagined community is a continuous work in progress, involving making and unmaking, learning and unlearning, aiming at not fixing boundaries but encouraging movements across them.

4.8. Summary

Indian Diasporas create a microcosm of India abroad. There are 'little Indias' spread across the world that serves as balms for the immigrant's aching soul and to an extent, envelopes them in the warm environment that they remember. They would get together to relive their memories of India, of times gone by; festivals and celebrations are collectively enjoyed. John McLeod writes: "Migrants tend to arrive in new places with baggage, both in the physical sense of possessions or belonging, but also the less tangible matter of beliefs, traditions, customs, behaviour and values" (211). The Indianness is celebrated; everything India – food, dress, values becomes the toast of the day in such gatherings. Sudesh Mishra observes, "Cut off from the dominant national forms of their host countries, transmigrants find solace in self-familiarising practices. They cling to mother tongues and exotic sartorial habits, they run 'ethnic' outlets and form suburban enclaves, and they built culture-specific meeting halls and places of worship" (133). Charu Sharma lists the fear of cultural dilution and the struggle to preserve identity and values, so that customs and traditions would not perish in the new world as some of the reasons of these microcosms (138). In his introduction to *In-*

Diaspora: Theories, Histories and Texts, Paranjape tries to theories the relationship between the diasporas and homelands. An important point made by him was that it is not just the homeland that creates diasporas but that diasporas also create the homeland. The tendency of Indians to retain a distinct identity through language and maintenance of such customs and traditional enclaves has often been criticized as separatist or exclusivist. But the endorsement of these little Indias reveal an attempt by the diaspora to maintain a tangible link with the homeland, however small and constructed the link is since Indians abroad in general have experienced various kinds of marginalization and rejections, distrust and inhospitality. This is one reason why they are unable to root themselves emotionally in the host country.

On the one side of the picture, the crisis of identity is obvious. The diasporic identity carries with it its own unique problem because of living on a dual plane, of straddling two worlds. Neera Singh refers to this identity that of a "hyphenated, decentred and fractured existence" (10). But on the other hand, the diaspora has the chance to relish the best of both worlds: "suspended between two such terrains (living without belonging in one, belonging without living in the other), diasporas are seen to represent a new species of social formation" (Mishra, Sudesh 16). The concept of diaspora ushers in the process of multi-locality across geographical and cultural boundaries. As Avtar Brah says, "Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing 'imagined' and 'encountered' communities"(193). And the "lack of rootedness, far from being a handicap, becomes for the diasporic writers an occasion for literary indulgence" (Ramanan, 40). Bharati Mukherjee's view is also in line with this thought. She redefines the concept of the diaspora. She believes in acculturation. And although the diaspora in the beginning encounter crisis, yet they have the opportunity to explore new

avenues and develop their own distinct footing in both the motherland and the hostland. Naturally, all diasporas do not share equal success stories. Economically successful diasporas are likely to possess a strong identity afforded by a thriving professional career and economic independence. This is the other side of the picture of the diaspora, the global figure enjoying the best of the East and the West, reaping the harvest of both worlds in the process resulting in overflowing creative juice.

The assertiveness, eloquence, is markedly evident in the second generation diaspora, especially. Rohinton Mistry resonates Rushdie's views in his writings and infuses life in his stories through the mirror of personal and collective memory and creates his version of reality. Chapter 5 will discuss how Mistry convincingly and also sensitively recalled his community's passage through time and history with a sense of loss and nostalgia in his writings. Vijay Mishra is against a celebratory rhetoric but suggests the necessity of understanding the diaspora's "agony, their trauma, their pain of adjustment with reference to other pasts, other narratives. And we need to accept that contrary to idealist formulations about diaspora as symbolizing the future nation-state, diasporas are also bastions of reactionary thinking and fascist rememorations" (*Diasporas and the Art* 29). And so for him, "an impossible mourning of the moments of trauma (including the prior trauma of being unceremoniously ripped apart from our mother's womb) remains … the decisive centre of the diasporic imaginary" (29). From the catastrophic origin, forcible dispersion to voluntary emigration, the concept of diaspora has come a long way and evolved into this malleable critical entity.

Diasporic communities have existed for centuries and they have always retained a sense of kinship with the homeland overtly and covertly, in tangible matters as well as in imagination. And regardless of the reason for leaving, they have survived and even

thrived outside the homeland. Modern advancement in technology have also aided a lot to make it easier for the diaspora to maintain close contact with their loved ones left behind. The government of India's twenty first century policy of massively wooing diaspora to attract investments in developing India have put diaspora on the front page. In his opening speech to the first Indian Diaspora Conference, held in New Delhi in January 2003, the then Prime Minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee lauded members of the Indian diaspora for their role as ambassadors of India abroad. Vajpayee's speech outlined the inclusive policy of the Indian Government: "I have always been conscious of the need for India to be sensitive to the hopes, aspirations and concerns of its vast diaspora. We invite you, not only to share our vision of India in the new millennium, but also to help us shape its contours. We do not want only your investment. We also want your ideas. We do not want your riches; we want the richness of your experience. We can gain from the breadth of vision that your global exposure has given you." This conference spearheaded a whole different interest in Indian diaspora and gave it new dimensions and spotlight.

When talking about Indian Writing in English, we can't afford not to talk about diaspora's contribution to the field. Dayashankar Mishra feels that Diasporic writers document the experiences of such people "to make the sensitive and insightful readers rethink the issues of race, nationalism and national culture in international perspective" (172). He further states that the "reminiscence of the native place does not show his/her love or reverence for the national place or culture, it provides him/her an opportunity to compare his/her life on two different places, native and the alien, to construct his/her present identity" (172). But the reminiscence of one's native place does show the diaspora's attachment to the memory of the native place. Diaspora's influence and practical significance in diplomacy and international relations on one hand and socio-

economic implications on the other is unquestionable. Certainly, there is no love lost between the diaspora and the homeland. And often times, the diaspora has to carve out his/ her identity, negotiate the different terrains as she/he no longer fit entirely neither in the native nor the host country. And even this constructed identity is "neither static nor fixed: its keeps on changing with time" (173). The migrant writes not only to achieve fame and wealth but also to address their people back home or the reconstructed home abroad in the form of diasporic communities.

Diasporic writing has an international platform and audience. It has the capacity, therefore, to expand the idea of the nation and narrations and bring in readers from the so called mainstream. Sudesh Mishra is of the view that root meanings do not give birth to a genre. A genre is much more complex, it is "made up of the dynamic procession of statements (some entering, some exiting) participating at the relational scene of the nomination" (*Diaspora Criticism* vi). The derivation of the word diaspora from the Greek word 'diaspeirein' which is understood to mean 'scattering' or 'sowing' does not account for the critical discourse that diaspora has attained over the years. It is no longer a mere scattering or dispersion that refers back to the biblical or botanical principles but as Avtar Brah has observed, the diasporic experience is also determined by who is it that travels, where and how and under what circumstances the travel is made (181-84). In the words of Khachig Tölölyan, "the term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (4). Diasporas do not conform to one clearly defined space and so diasporic experience and studies are multidimensional. As such, we find instances of diasporic predicament in people who have not moved at all but still feel alienated, alone, unable to assert their identity. The diasporic experience

is not just confined to people living abroad. It can be found even in people who moved from one part of the country to another. Diasporic writing is concerned with what Edward Said calls, "not only of a basic geographical distinction but also a whole sense of 'interests'" (*Orientalism* 12). In that case, diapora consciousness need not necessarily be found only in people living outside their motherland. It can be found in individuals staying in India but having moved from villages or towns or vice versa who are uprooted from their place of origin. BJP's vision document for the 2015 Delhi assembly polls on February 3, 2015 stirred up a hornet's nest by referring people from North Eastern States in the national capital as "Immigrants" (*Agencies*). The 24-page document that enumerates the party's target of making Delhi a world-class city includes a section called "North Eastern Immigrants to be Protected". Rival political leader Ajay Maken promptly questioned, "Is BJP trying to say the people from the North East are not Indian citizens?" The case scenario is highlighted as an example of the dialogism inherent in the word "immigrant". It may be that the BJP does not have any ulterior motive in calling the North Easterners "immigrants" which would otherwise indicate that North Eastern states belong to some other country. The term "immigrant" undergoes dialogism when it is used in this context to refer to a culturally different section of the Indian society whose physical appearance and languages are distinctly different from the accepted definition of an "Indian".

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who gave a resounding critique of the notion of 'subalternity' and gave it a new direction also believes that 'the Third World' is a creation of the West which distorts, even resorts to violence towards the non-Western cultures. The same thing can be said regarding the creation of 'the North-Eastern Region' or 'North-East' and the step-motherly treatment that it gets from the centre. Very frequently, there are reports of people belonging to North-East getting beaten up,

murdered, and raped. Every North-Eastern person has at least a testimony of racial harassment. We are here talking about the news coming from metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. What about all the unreported incidents of violence towards the physically distinctive North-East people in smaller towns and rural areas? On a consultation at Delhi University library for my thesis, I was approached by a conscientious student of the university who asked me politely which country I am from. Not new to such kind of questions when travelling in 'mainland' India, I politely replied that I am from Nagaland. The girl shook my hand and after a pause she again asked: "Nagaland is in India, no?" I confess I was a tiny bit ruffled that a University student is unsure of the names of the states in her country but again mildly amused as I could see that she was genuinely puzzled at that particular moment. The 'mainland' is here subalternizing the North-Easterners. India is a large multicultural country with several ethnic communities with different cultural identities jostling to retain and preserve their own identity and space. In this process, minority communities often find themselves painfully misunderstood and in the periphery even when they are at the centre. People from the North-East relocate to the metropolitan cities for better job prospects and life, but are jolted to the rude awakening that often the cities and its ways are not ready to absorb them. It also becomes difficult when the individual is unable to fit in seamlessly for a variety of reasons, their mongoloid features not helping at all. And the same applies for people who relocate to the North-East from the mainland, having to deal with its peculiarities. So it is certainly not just the migration to a different country but even the relocation within the country that ushers in the diasporic experiences and predicament. Beginning with the idea of forceful dispersion and scattering of people through colonization, the meaning of the word itself has evolved tremendously and has become this site of lively contestation.

WORKS CITED

Acheraïou, Amar. *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization.* Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Asnani, Shyam M. "Identity Crisis of Indian Immigrants: A Study of Three Novels." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 184-191. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Bammer, Angelika, ed. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

---. "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 207-221. Print.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Bromley, Roger. *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. Print.

Brown, Judith M. *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.

Brubaker, Rogers. "The 'Diaspora Diaspora.'" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005): 1-19. Web. 6 April 2012. <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/29_Diaspora_diaspora_ERS.pdf>.

Chakravorty, Swapan, Suzana Milevska and Tani E. Barlow. *Conversations with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. London: Seagull Books, 2006. Print.

Clifford, James. "Diasporas." *Cultural Anthropology*. 9.3 (Aug. 1994): 302-338. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656365>.

Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press, 1997. Print.

"Delhi Election: BJP's Vision Documents Northeast Indians Immigrants." *India Today.in*. New Delhi. 3 Feb. 2015. Web. 6 Feb. 2015. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/delhi-election-bjps-vision-documents-northeast-indians-immigrants/1/416727.html>.

Fakhri, Nargis & Freida Pinto. "Koffee With Karan: Season 4- Nargis Fakhri & Freida Pinto." *Koffee With Karan*. Startv, Mumbai. 19 Nov. 2014. Television. <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1f91fg_full-episode-koffee-with-karan-season-4-nargis-fakhri-freida-pinto_tv>.

Fludernik, Monika, ed. *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006. Print.

Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222-37. Print.

Jain, Jasbir, ed. *Writers of Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice*. Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1998. Print.

Jussawalla, Feroza. “’Hybridity’, Our Ancestral Heritage: Minority ‘Indian’ Writers Speak of their Diversity.” *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth Century Indian Literature.* Ed. Monika Fludernik. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006. 199-212. Print.

Kapoor, Kapil. “Keynote Address: Theorizing Diaspora and the Indian Experience.” *Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora*. Eds. Adesh Pal and Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 27-41. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 64.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi:Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Landy, Frederic, Brij Maharaj and Helene Mainet-Valleix. “Are People of Indian Origin (PIO) ‘Indian’?: A Case Study of South Africa.” *Geoforum* 35.2 (2004): 203-215. Print.

Lavie, Smadar and Ted Swedenburg, eds. *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.

McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Print.

Mishra, Dayashankar. “Shuttling Between Identities: Destiny of Diasporic Communities.” *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 171-183. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.

Mishra, Vijay. Introduction. *Diasporas*. Spec. Double Issue of *SPAN* 34-35 (Nov. 1992-May 1993): 1-2. Print.

---. “Diasporas and the Art of Impossible Mourning.” *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts.* Ed. Makarand Paranjape. New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2001. 24- 51. Print.

Mukherjee, Bharati. *The Tiger’s Daughter*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1971 rpt. 1990. Print.

Nasta, Susheila, ed. *Writing Across Worlds: Contemporary Writers Talk*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Pal, Adesh and Tapas Chakrabarti, eds. *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Paranjape, Makarand, ed. *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts.* New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2001. Print.

Patel, V.S. “Naipaul’s Half a Life: A Study in Diasporic Experience.” *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience.* Eds. Adesh Pal, Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 251-258. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Ramanan, Mohan. "Some Reflections on Indian Diasporic Literature." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 36-46. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Ramraj, Victor. "Diasporas and Multiculturalism." *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996. 214-29. Print.

Rao, C.R.Visweswara. "The Dialect of the Diaspora: Rohinton Mistry." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63

Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

--- *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002*. London: Vintage Books, 2003. Print.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge, 1978. Print.

Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (1991): 83-99. Print.

Sharma, Charu. "Home Isn't Home Anymore! Spaced Lives? The Hindi Bindi Club." *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/longing*. Ed. Neera Singh. New Delhi: Book Plus, 2008. 133-141. Print.

Singh, Neera, ed. *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/longing*. New Delhi: Book Plus, 2008. Print.

Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1985. Print.

Tölölyan, Khachig. "The Nation-State and its Others: In Lieu of a Preface." *Diaspora* 1.1 (1991): 3-36. Print.

Vajpayee, Atal Bihari. "Inaugural Address – First Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Conference." New Delhi: 9 Jan. 2003. <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/ch1.pdf>.

Verma, C.D. *The Exile-Hero and the Reintegrating Vision in Indian English Fiction*. Delhi: Sterling, 1991. Print.

Weeks, Jeffrey. "The Value of Difference." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 88-100. Print.

Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

CHAPTER 5

DIASPORIC EXPERIENCE IN THE WORKS OF ROHINTON MISTRY AND ARAVIND ADIGA

5.1. Introduction

The diaspora – the exiles, immigrants, emigrants or expatriates – experience is present in both the works of Mistry and Adiga. Although different narratives, the stories reveal how immigrants strive to adapt to the new cultural environment in which they find themselves unequipped while simultaneously struggling to maintain their sense of identity, traditions and cultural values. The writers, by virtue of their cross-cultural placement are in a position to comment on the dual plane that the immigrant occupies. The journey motif is used a plenty by the writers. Journeying is a common feature of diaporic writing. The journey can be spatial or emotional, or both. This is also a journey from the centre to the periphery and then back to centre. This back and forth is real and happening in the characters' lives. They get to experience this rollercoaster ride. And in this journey, hope for a change keeps the diaspora going. Diasporic writings across the world are concerned with spaces, landscapes, and journeys. Diaspora narratives involve a change of place through a journey which is an evident theme in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* and Adiga's *The White Tiger*. The spatial location is also implied in the title *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* Characters such as Kersi in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, which contains eleven tales, exemplify the immigrant's problem of alienation from both his adopted land and his 'original' one. The last story entitled 'Swimming Lessons' in *Tales from Firozsha Baag,* is the only tale set entirely in Canada. However, even here

the Canadian world is juxtaposed with Indian memories. As a Parsi, Mistry is on the periphery even in India, so his discourse also challenges and resists the domineering attitude of the dominant culture even within India. Mistry has also experimented with linguistic hybridity and celebrated the unique Parsi idiom in his writings especially in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and *Such a Long Journey.* Mistry's *Family Matters* is also a diasporic text. The novel is centred round the aged Parsi, Nariman Vakeel, retired Professor of English. In delineating his character, the novelist opens up the whole vistas of human emotions such as love, hate, and guilt. The interest of the book, to a great extent, lies in its warmth and compassion in dealing with human bonds and traditional customs and practices. The longing for America, for greener pastures in the case of Pinky Madam in *The White Tiger* also reveals the feeling of a loss of identity even after the diaspora has returned to the homeland. Personal marginality as expressed by the characters in the novels is also an expression of a political and geographical condition and the alienation and rootlessness that arise as a result.

5.2. Diasporic Experience in Rohinton Mistry's Works

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now, Mumbai), India in 1952. After a B.A. in Mathematics and Economics at the University of Bombay, Mistry emigrated to Canada fuelled by prospect of opportunity and better life in the year 1975 with his wife, where he worked as a bank clerk in Toronto while studying English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. Mistry started writing stories shortly, winning two Hart House Literary Prizes and the Canadian Fiction Magazine's annual Contributor's Prize for 1985. As an Indian who now lives and writes in Canada, Rohinton Mistry belongs to the Indian Diaspora. Moreover, Mistry, as a Parsi Zoroastrian, is doubly displaced from

homeland. Zoroastrian Parsis experienced mass migration and displacement thereafter, after the Islamist conquest of Iran. As such, he belongs to a minority community and as Nilufer Bharucha observes, Mistry was a diaspora even in India which "informs his writings with the experience of multiple displacement" (*Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures* 24). Mistry's life is similar to V. S. Naipaul's, a citizen of an exiled, displaced community without a natural original motherland except for India to which he is often found returning for creative garnish in his novels.

According to Nilufer E. Bharucha, Mistry's texts are "quintessential diasporic discourse asserting ethno-religious difference" (*Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures* 45). Mistry makes sure that the Parsiness is highlighted. Homi Bhabha has called such writing, "the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective" (*Location of Culture* 2). A member of a minority community in India and also in Canada, Mistry infuses his novels with the colourful traditions and customs of the Parsis. Not to be biased, he also highlights the incongruity of some of the Parsi customs and traditions in the modern world. Example, the separate room set aside for that special time of the month for Mehroo in 'Auspicious Occasion' – "a room with an iron frame bed and an iron stool for the women during their unclean time of the month" (TFB 3). We find similar provisions for Roxana to utilize during such days with the sudden onset of the once skeptic Yezad's growing religiosity in *Family Matters*. In reading his works we are therefore, offered a sizeable slice of the Parsi community and their assertion of identity and place in the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual canvas that is India.

In *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, 'Squatter' deals with the problems of the immigrant in Canada. Kersi and Viraf's dream of going abroad gains impetus by the stories of people like Vera and Dolly, daughters of Najamai from C Block from their

own apartment complex, who apparently, went for studies but they never came back. They were said to be happily settled there. Such kind of stories fuels their desire and determination to go abroad and achieve 'success and happiness'. Whereas in the other spectrum, the story of Sarosh's predicament brings home the stark reality which often accompanies emigration. Nariman Hansotia, a prolific story-teller is narrating to a group of boys the story of Sarosh/Sid and his peculiar problem. His views regarding immigrants' problems are often times embellished but despite the embellishments a discerning eye is visible in his keen observations. Ten years before, Sarosh's triumphant fulfilment of the Immigration requirements of the Canadian Commission in New Delhi was greeted with joy and celebration by all his friends and relatives. In the party thrown in his name in Firozsha Baag, an argument broke out which divided his well-wishers into two camps- one group happy for him in making the smart decision of moving in search for better life; and the other group saying he was making a mistake in leaving his homeland. In the middle of the heated discussion that ensued, Sarosh announced: "My dear family, dear friends, if I do not become completely Canadian in exactly ten years from the time I land there, then I will come back. I promise. So please, no more arguments. Enjoy the party" (TFB 187). His words were greeted with cheers and shouts of approval but little did Sarosh realize that these words would haunt him throughout his stay in Canada and in his endeavour to become Canadian completely. The list of problems that Sarosh imagined himself encountering in Canada were not unfounded. But he did not expect his problem to include his inability to relieve himself in the European style toilet! Mistry here is relentless in portraying the utter misery of Sarosh perched atop the toilet "crouching on his haunches, feet planted firmly for balance upon the white plastic oval of the toilet seat. Daily for a decade had Sarosh suffered this position. Morning after morning, he had no choice but to climb up and

simulate the squat of our Indian latrines. If he sat down, no amount of exertion could produce success" (185). His inability to adapt to what most people consider a simple thing is a constant reminder of his promise made ten years back .This unalterable fact ate him up and was a constant source of frustration and agony. This 'immigration-related problem' of his also hampered his career for he was late several times for work. But Sarosh could not do anything and he is only left to rue his unpreparedness for this type of problem. Sarosh is referred to the Indian Immigrant Aid Society.

When Sarosh approaches the Indian Immigrant Aid Society, a myriad of peculiar case histories that the immigrant faces comes to light; a man unable to eat Wonder Bread- a Canadian staple bread which makes him throw up, a woman who could not drink the water in Canada, a whole Pakistani family unable to swallow. After patiently listening to Sarosh, Dr. No-Ilaaz prescribes a remedy, a small device called Crappus Non Interruptus, or CNI which is implanted in the bowel. The device is controlled by an external handheld transmitter which the user can activate after sitting on the toilet seat and "just like a garage door, your bowel will open without pushing or grunting" (194). But the flipside explained by the doctor is that once CNI is implanted, the person can never pass a motion in the natural way and like all other electronic devices, the CNI can be activated by someone with similar apparatus. Sarosh was devastated. There had been a time when it was perfectly natural to squat but now it seemed a grotesquely insane thing to do. According to him if he could not be westernized in all ways, he was nothing but a failure. The refundable ticket he booked to return to India the exact day of completing ten immigrant years reveals his lingering hope of succeeding even once before that day arrived. And as the day crept in, Sarosh's attempt grows desperate but success eludes him. As he sits on the plane, the atmosphere described by the author also is in conjunction with what is happening in Sarosh's mind

– “the dark skies lowering, lightning on the horizon – irrevocably spelling out: defeat” (199). Then, suddenly, he felt the urge to go and he dashed for the washroom. Sarosh debated whether to squat or sit to finish the business, but the plane started to move which made him decide to sit. After much effort, impelled by the sense that he had been a failure for ten years, he pushed hard with renewed vigour. Finally, he succeeded. The excitement, relief, the joy was almost euphoric. The process of adaptation was complete” (201). But the predicament was that he was already on his way home. It is ironic then, that Sarosh-Sid could succeed only in the in between space of the plane in the air between the adoptive land and the native land. Sarosh’s inability to defecate in the European style commode is perhaps the outcome of Sarosh’s subconscious desire to stay connected to his motherland.

There was a welcome home party for Sarosh a few days after he arrived in Bombay. Just like his going away party, drinks flowed plenty but Sarosh noticed that all the brand names had changed and so has the faces. The place, people, had all changed. Nothing was as it was anymore. He desperately searched for the old pattern, something familiar and beckoning but all in vain. He has returned to his homeland but he was homeless, figuratively, as he no longer felt the connection with his motherland. So, Sarosh here, is filled with **loneliness**, a man of the world but unable to fit in any particular place. This is one predominant predicament of the Diaspora: “a valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration …” or as in the case of Jamshed in ‘Lend Me your Light’, “it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model” (Ashcroft *et al*, *Empire Writes Back* 9). The only advice Sarosh give for people planning to go abroad is “that the world can be a bewildering place, and dreams and ambitions are

often paths to the most pernicious of traps" (TFB 203). And in a parody of Shakespeare's *Othello* lines', he says to Nariman,

> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice: tell them that in Toronto once there lived a Parsi boy as best as he could. Set you down this; and say, besides, that for some it was good and for some it was bad, but for me life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior. (204)

The presence of societies like Multicultural Department, Indian Immigrant Aid Society- societies that are formed solely to look into the grievances of a particular ethnic population lends a helping hand on one hand, but differentiates and groups them on the other. Nariman Hansotia's opinion of the words 'multicultural', 'mosaic', 'melting pot', 'ethnic' are all double-edged. He considers them as nonsense and to him ethnic is only a polite way of saying "bloody foreigner."

The transformation of the immigrant's dream into a nightmare in 'Squatter' is continued in 'Lend Me Your Light'. The story's central focus is on "the dilemma of an immigrant who is caught between **belonging** and **alienation**" (Bhautoo-Dewnarain 15). Kersi and Jamshed emigrate to Toronto and New York respectively the same year for greener pastures. Kersi feels guilty of going abroad and feels like a deserter. Torn between elation and guilt and afflicted with conjunctivitis on the day of his departure, Kersi likens himself to a character in a Greek tragedy, guilty of the sin of 'hubris' for seeking emigration, in a way forsaking his birth land: "I, Tiresias, blind and throbbing between two lives, the one in Bombay and the one to come in Toronto…" (TFB 217). Sudesh Mishra opines that diaspora may enjoy all rights and privileges of citizenship of the adoptive land. However, they may not share a common cultural ground with the

host country. They find it difficult to imbibe its entire cultural ethos which is often in contradiction to his/her country of origin. And so "cut off from the dominant national forms of their host country, transmigrants find solace in self-familiarising practices. They cling to mother tongues and exotic sartorial habits, they run 'ethnic' outlets and form suburban enclaves, and they build culture-specific meeting halls and places of worship" (*Diaspora* 133). There is one such place in Toronto's Gerrard Street known as Little India. This is an example of small enclaves that immigrant communities put together where they can get everything India. Ranging from eatables like "*bhelpuri*, *panipuri*, *batata-wada*, *kulfi*, as authentic as any other in Bombay;…shops selling imported spices and Hindi records…" (TFB 220). They can even watch Hindi movies at the Naaz Cinema. These 'little Indias' are found in many diasporic texts which do provide them a taste of what they have left behind and sort of get a cathartic release from their pangs of reminiscence and nostalgia. But here too, Kersi finds himself trying to mingle with complete strangers unable to make a connection in this constructed scenario of home. To ward off loneliness, Kersi makes sure that his days are full; he attends evening classes at the University of Toronto and works during the day. He becomes a member of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Hoping to meet people from Bombay, he also goes to the Parsi New Year Celebrations:

> The event was held at a community centre rented for the occasion. As the evening progressed it took on, at an alarming rate, the semblance of a wedding party at Bombay's Cama Garden, with its attendant sights and sounds and smells, as we Parsis talked at the top of our voices, embraced heartily, drank heartily, and ate heartily (TFB 220-21).

Re-creation of a semblance of an Indian home and scenario in the hostland is carried out here. Makarand Paranjape has observed that the reproduction or replication of

Indianness through visual signs was far stronger in first generation and poorer immigrants whose ties with the homeland were virtually severed once they left India (9). This urge to collect replicas and memorabilia of India found new impetus by the availability of popular Bollywood cinema, music and Indian cuisine in the modern society. But in noting the sense of loss, suffering, alienation and displacement of the first generation immigrants, it is unfair to minimize the sense of loss faced by subsequent generations. Second and third generation diasporas may have been born in the hostland, yet, the constant everyday struggle faced by each diaspora is more or less the same.

Kersi is not happy with Jamshed's disdainful description of Bombay and his superior attitude, being a diaspora. Yet, he is also secretly embarrassed that he does not feel homesick or nostalgic. And on his visit back in Bombay, he realizes he is just a tourist in India. It has changed. As he buys authentic Indian merchandise from the Cottage Industries Store to take back to Canada, he comes to the rude awakening that he doesn't know it anymore. Nevertheless, he does not attain complete satisfaction while living abroad. He also feels alienated from the diasporic communities he meets in Toronto. Thus he is wedged between two worlds- neither in Bombay nor in Toronto. He occupies the **in-between space** that many immigrants inadvertently are forced to be wedged in.

Jamshed, who belongs to an affluent family is thoroughly westernized in his thoughts and behaviour and is often vocal and scathing in his attack of the way of life in Bombay, "nothing ever improves, just too much corruption. It is all part of the *ghati* mentality… Bombay is horrible. Seems dirtier than ever, and the whole trip just made me sick" (219). But perhaps, as Kersi observes was it because of the powerlessness that

everyone experience, mistake weakness for strength, and walk away from one thing or another? Thus, one should not read too much into Jamshed's tirade because it masks the inner turmoil. The love for his birth place is visible in the immigrant's every excuse to visit his homeland.

'Swimming Lessons' is set entirely in Canada. A young man who migrated to Ontario speaks of his life in an apartment complex, a non-existent life far removed from Bombay and its reality. The **outsider complex**, the inability to fit in is clearly evident in the absence of significant relationships in the immigrant's life. A cursory nod, glance, a brief handshake or greeting is the entire human bond that he experiences in his host land. The characters in the story are just ordinary people living in the margins – a sick old man living alone, Berthe, the building superintendent and her problems with her family, etc. All the characters are alienated from the mainstream to some extent. PW, short for Portuguese woman across the hall reminds the narrator of Najamai in Firozsha Baag. At the sound of the elevator, PW would open her door and pass on the latest, juiciest gossip of the people living in the apartment building: "Two ladies from the third floor were lying in the sun this morning. In bikinis" (TFB 283) or "Berthe was screaming loudly at her husband tonight" (288) – No formal greeting, straight up news is what PW delivers at no cost. She is the communicator of the whole building and she unabashedly takes liberty to dish out the latest news that transpires relating to the tenants. Again, this habit reveals the life of a foreigner trying to find meaning to her life. Although, the conversation may be just one way street, it still affords the woman company for her to share her person. 'Swimming Lessons' is very subdued and sombre in comparison with the other stories in the collection. The narrator, living in an alien country and culture, with no close friends often resorts to voyeurism that culminates in an overactive imagination with him as centre stage. The lack of a social life also leaves

him wallowing in **nostalgia** that takes him back to the memories of Bombay, his parents and the apartment block he lived in as a boy. The memory of his active childhood forms an interesting contrast to his present existence at the periphery; where for all the world is concerned he is just a fly on the wall, a non-existing entity, easily forgettable. The section about his parents is presented in italics which introduces a complex network of dialogic writing as it comments even on the writing of the whole collection itself. The presence of the omniscient third-person narrative adds to the complexity of an immigrant's life. The narration in italics reveals how immigration is like a two pronged knife that affects both the immigrant and the loved ones left behind. The arrival of a letter from the postman is an occasion of jubilation for the parents. The elation of receiving the letter is swiftly followed by sadness and disappointment at the brevity of the contents of the letter. The parents could gauge the distance in their son's letter which they feel lack substance and heart. They yearn to know about him, his life and friends but the response is tepid: "everything about his life is locked in silence and secrecy" (TFB 279). The insecurity of the old parents is also found here. As it is the case with most parents, they still want to feel that their children still misses them and needs them. Having nurtured their children from birth and having provided those wings, they still would like to believe that they will one day return to the nest and look after them. The need to preserve Parsi traditional beliefs and values is emphasized by the parents in their letter to "remind him he is a Zoroastrian: manashni, gavashni, kunashni…: good thoughts, good words, good deeds –" (284).

> *Mother and Father read the first five stories, and she was very sad after reading some of them, she said he must be so unhappy there, all his stories are about Bombay, he remembers every little thing about his childhood, he is thinking about it all the time even though he is ten thousand miles away, my poor son, I think he misses his*

> *home and us and everything he left behind, because if he likes it over there why would he not write stories about that, …*
>
> *But Father did not agree with this, he said it did not mean that he was unhappy, all writers worked in the same way, they used their memories and experiences and made stories out of them, changing some things, adding some, imagining some, all writers were very good at remembering details of their lives.* (TFB 293)

This passage, the parents' reaction on reading the collection of stories written by their son abroad sheds light on the unique position of the diaspora. The diverse opinions of the two readers of the stories – Mother and Father – reflect the differences of opinion that fictions of migrants generate in the audience. From the perspective of the mother, the tales can be read as narratives full of love, longing and nostalgia or according to the father it can be appreciated as a piece of literary work without confusing fiction with fact. This idea shares resonance with Rushdie's views that a diaspora identity is at once plural and partial, sometimes they feel that they straddle two cultures; at other times they fall short to belong in either. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy.

Life in Bombay and life in Canada are often juxtaposed together – starkly different from one another. Even after leaving Bombay, the narrator cannot help himself from reminiscing about the land he left behind. The present in Canada often takes him back to **nostalgic memories**. The sick old man in Canada brings to his mind the image of his grandfather suffering from Parkinsonism and osteoporosis. He juxtaposes the image of the old man in the wheelchair who mostly stayed in the lobby to talk to people on their way in and out of the apartment building to the image of his grandfather on the sofa, staring vacantly out at the world outside. The recreated pseudo family of immigrants in Canada reminds him of the real, loving family of his childhood; the

sanitized swimming pool takes him back to the insanely dirty Chaupatty beach in Bombay. The diasporic consciousness of harping back to **memory** lane is captured succinctly by the writer in this story. Every memory of Bombay is etched in sharp relief in the narrator's mind. The fact that he is lonely with plenty of time to immerse himself in memories of his motherland can be regarded as a coping mechanism of the diaspora to enable him to exist in an alien culture and environment. The stories of **dislocation** help to relocate: "they give a shape, a contour, a skin to the past itself. The past becomes presentable through a history of lost homes, as a history which hesitates between the particular and the general, and between the local and the transnational" (Ahmed 91). The past then becomes associated with a home that is impossible to inhabit in the present but nevertheless it presents an idealised image of what the immigrant consider 'home'.

Life abroad for the immigrant is often a far cry from the rosy picture imagined. Everything reminds the narrator of how things are back in Bombay. He is unable to make Canada a home away from home. When Berthe, the building superintendent is deserted by both husband and son, the narrator shrewdly remarks that "not son's van nor father's booze can take them far enough. And the further they go, the more they'll remember they can take it from me" (TFB 299). Migration thus, is not total; physical migration does not ensure emotional migration. There is thus, **ambivalence** – the simultaneous attraction and repulsion to one's native place as well as the host country of the immigrant. New spaces are created by immigration. The immigrant can no longer be who he was when he lived in his homeland. The silence is marked in 'Swimming Lessons'. Human interactions are random, scarce and distant. The only human bond that the narrator feels is towards the sick old man whose name he doesn't even know.

The swimming lessons in Brampton, Canada bring to the narrator's mind the failed attempts at swimming in Bombay attributed to the dirty Chaupatty beach. It also serves to reveal social complexities and shed light on aspects of the Parsi middle class- a minority community trying to fit in. The narrator's inability to learn swimming perhaps shows his inability to adapt to the ways of the adoptive country. A trace of racial slurs, representative of its occurrence to people belonging to ethnic minority happens when in the swimming class, three boys seeing his approach reacts: "one of them holds his nose. The second begins to hum, under his breath: Paki Paki, smell like curry. The third says to the first two: pretty soon all the water's going to taste of curry" (TFB 286). This is just one instance of the taunts and passive aggressiveness that native people usually show towards immigrants/foreigners, threatened by their presence, afraid of them 'flooding' their country also. Analysing the Indian immigrants' quest to find a 'home' in Canada, Vijay Agnew observes that the immigrants' "emotional and psychological struggle to feel 'at home' have much to do with the biased representations of India …" (207) acquired from negative portrayal by the media. Consequently, generalised stereotypical assumptions of "these imagined" India further alienate the immigrant and make them feel that they do not belong. Such feelings "heighten their nostalgia for their cultures and lost 'homes' in India" (208). The threat to the person is also imagined sometimes. When the narrator flounders in the pool after volunteering for a demonstration of jumping in the water and paddling, he immediately jumps to conclusion that he is being undervalued by the instructor on account of being an immigrant: "he does not value the lives of non-white immigrants" (TFB 288). The insecurity is palpable. Even in the innocent act of learning to swim, he senses these tensions which are sometimes imagined. It is easy to make the connection between the narrator in 'Swimming Lessons' and the author Rohinton Mistry. 'Swimming Lessons'

can be read as Mistry's attempt "to wend his way through the alienating experience of migration and the consequent onslaught of memories" (Bhautoo-Dewnarain 17). The tapestry of memories that the narrator describes is similar to Mistry reminiscing about life in Bombay as an immigrant in Canada. This story also gives a clue of how Mistry mixes fact and fiction in his writings as it is true if the nature of fiction that it often draws material from personal experiences.

'The Ghost of Firozsha Baag' in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* is the story of Jacqueline, otherwise known as Jaykalee, a sixty three year old Christian ayah from Goa who relocated to the city at the age of fourteen to escape unemployment in her hometown. The diasporic theme of search for better prospect is visible here. The **alienation** of the singular/odd Christian ayah from Goa in the midst of the Parsis in the Baag complex results in her being discriminated by the neighbours. She is away from home and finds it difficult to fit in. She still remembers how unprepared she was for the mad chaos of Bombay. She cried all the way from Panjim to Bombay on the bus. Leaving behind family and friends and everything familiar to her, she felt utterly alone and out of place with the alien environment so different from her serene Goa. Yet, she knew that "leaving was best thing" (TFB 52). In her narration, the reader could tell how she has been discriminated, especially as a minority Goan Catholic with very dark skin tone. The Parsi preference for light skin tone is revealed from the perspective of the outsider, the ayah – when a baby is born, "if it is fair they say, O how nice light skin just like parents. But if it is dark skin they say, *areé* what is this *ayah no chhokro*, ayah's child" (52-53). It was not just her Parsi employers but all Marathi people inn low class colony Tar Gully made fun of her and called her "Blackie, blackie" (53). After staying in Firozsha Baag's B Block for forty nine years, it irks her that the Baag community still mispronounces her name as 'Jaakylee' or worse, 'Jaakayl'. The fact

that she believed in the existence of ghosts also did not help matters. It made the teasing more intense, children referred to her as "ayah *bhoot*! Ayah *bhoot*!" (TFB 53). Reference to the indignities that she suffered as an outsider is softened by the first person narrative. She conceals her numerous trials beneath humour. 'Believe or don't believe' is the constant refrain that she uses in her narration to reiterate her case. After midnight mass, she always slept outside by the stairs because she must not disturb *bai* and *seth* after midnight. No ayahs get a key to a flat. Good humouredly she says, "… life as an ayah means living close to the floor. All work I do on floors, like grinding *masala*, cutting vegetables, cleaning rice. Food also is eaten sitting on floor, after serving them at dining-table. And my bedding is rolled out at night in kitchen passage, on floor. No cot for me" (51). Overworked and treated unfairly by her employers, she is hardly the enviable character but we do admire her uncomplaining, resilient nature. She has hardly any friends which give her plenty of time to think about her past nostalgically. She remembers how her mother would ceaselessly sew, mend and alter clothes for all the eleven children and made sure that no old/outgrown clothes went to waste. For Jaakaylee, sewing and remembering always brought more sadness. Especially thinking quietly in the dark, it is surprising how much she remembers about her childhood. To keep loneliness at bay, she constantly goes back into her romanticizing of the past, her parents, and her one un-confessed indiscretion with a boy named Cajetan, the beautiful beaches and boats but remembering her childhood is always accompanied by sadness. She is aware that living in the city's hinges she is slowly being subsumed by the city: "Forgetting my name, my language, my songs" (52). The longing of her lost identity, of her past self, and of her past town is apparent in her narration.

Kersi is the narrator of ‘Of White Hairs and Cricket’. He features prominently in many of the short stories and is a link between the stories. He appears early in the collection in ‘One Sunday’ as the bat-wielding rat nemesis and later in ‘Lend me Your Light’ and ‘Swimming Lessons’. It is an intensely personal narrative that shows different facets of the characters in the eye of the narrator. The uneasy truce within the family; the grandmother cooks separately for herself as she finds her daughter’s cooking insipid: “tasteless as spit, refuses to go down my throat” (TFB 134), his father’s constant **nostalgia** about his failed plans to go abroad, are all symptomatic of **dislocation**, of that search for that sense of satisfaction. Kersi’s dream of going abroad is stoked now and then by his father. Each Sunday, Kersi would pluck out the white hair laboriously from his father’s head one at a time, each session getting longer as the days past. During such times, his father would say, “… one day, you must go, too, to America. No future here” (136). The seemingly trivial act of plucking white hairs hides the effort to keep things status quo, to keep the dream alive of getting the perfect job, of bettering their family’s fortune. Sickness, death and the transience of relationships, of bonds are illustrated. Kersi’s innocent illusion of permanence is destroyed and he is disheartened:

> I wanted to cry for the way I had treated Viraf, and for his sick father with the long, cold needle in his arm and his rasping breath; for Mamaiji and her tired, darkened eyes spinning thread for our kustis, and for Mummy growing old in the dingy kitchen smelling of kerosene, where the Primus roared and her dreams were extinguished; I wanted to weep for myself, for not being able to hug Daddy when I wanted to, and for not ever saying thank you for cricket in the morning, and pigeons and bicycles and dreams; and for all the white hair that I was powerless to stop. (146)

Mistry is acutely aware of the contradictions within the Parsi experience of diaspora in the country (India), they are Indians but they are also Parsis. This is a common dilemma in a multi-ethnic country like India. People face identity crisis even within the country and since the Parsis are doubly displaced, the conflict is even more intense and intricate. So for Mistry, locating the Parsi identity is tantamount to locating the community's identity as a whole. Seneviratne notes that one mechanism by which an ethnic or national groups awakens to a consciousness of identity is "the perception of threat to the group by a force external to it" (5). During the colonial period in India, Parsis, although a minority community have always enjoyed the tutelage and favour of the British. But after the colonial rulers left India, they found themselves at the margin and as a result, many migrated to other developed countries. Add to this, the rigid Parsi tradition of endogamy and dwindling birth rates decreased any chance of the population increasing. A microcosm of Parsis is created in the Khodadad Building in *Such a Long Journey* as they try to carve out a niche of their identity. Mistry's works "incorporate the post-colonial desire of decolonized and suppressed communities for identity and authentic space for existence as a positive re-assertion within nationalist set-ups and their often disconcerting political practices" (Anand 239). The journey is the journey of an individual man, navigating the routes of an ethnic minority community trying to mark their space in a nation that is based on the twin pillars of secularism and democracy. It is also the journey of a community, of a city, and of a nation in the face of trials and tribulations. The community comes to life through the acts of remembering. As "the gap between memory and place in the very dislocation of migration allows communities to be formed: that gap becomes reworked as a site of bodily transformation, the potential to remake one's relation to that which appears as unfamiliar, to reinhabit spaces and places" (Ahmed 93). Gestures of friendship with

others who are recognised as equally strangers and 'others' turns into long-lasting friendships as the shared alienation cements their bond of kinship. The friendship that develops between Yezad and the Muslim peon at Bombay Sporting goods Emporium is not an unlikely friendship. In a country where approximately 80 percent of the population are Hindus, it is common to see minorities seeking one another. Immigrants partake of memories detached from present experience, in the process providing themselves the possibility of connection to a homeland far removed from their geographic reality. This notion of 'homeland', as a tangible reality is critical to an individual's sense of self-worth.

Gustad Noble often lapses into **memory** and **nostalgia** of past glories, the gone by paradise of the pre-Independence era for the Indian Parsis when everything was congenial under the British tutelage of the community. Gustad's present straitened circumstances are contrasted to their family's affluence as a child. He is nostalgic of their family's opulent past before they became bankrupt. This is in tune with Lisa Lowe's contention that culture is usually experienced in two incomparable ways. It is lived in the present as an imagined communion with the national collective and its values, an in the past, which haunts the embodied subject with its flashes and narratives of indissoluble difference (Lowe 2-3). As he sat on the chair that his grandfather had lovingly crafted, he is deported back in memories: "Gustad remembered the sign on the store. Clearly as though it is a photograph before my eyes: Noble & Sons, Makers of Fine Furniture" (SLJ 6). At every opportune time, Gustad clutches on to these fair reminiscences. The feeling of alienation is increased by the dislocation and disappearance of old values and symbols. The **longing** for the familiar- a marker of belonging is visible when Dinshawji laments the disappearance of old structures:

> Names are so important. I grew up on Lamington Road. But it has disappeared, in its place is Dadasaheb Bhadkhamkar Marg. My school was on Carnac Road. Now suddenly it's on Lokmanya Tilak Marg. I live at Sleater Road. Soon that will also disappear. My whole life I have come to work at Flora Fountain. And one fine day the name changes. So what happens to the life I have lived? Was I living the wrong life, with all the wrong names? Will I get a second chance to live it all again, with these new names? Tell me what happens to my life. Rubbed out, just like that? Tell me! (SLJ 74)

On the other paradigm, Gustad Noble is unable to accept his son, Sohrab's refusal to adhere to his father's dream for him to study at IIT, even after passing the tough entrance test. But in one way, Sohrab is here, asserting his identity: "why can't you accept it? IIT does not interest me. It was never my idea, you made all the plans" (48). Still, Gustad fails to see sense in his son's refusal and considers it an insult, insubordination and disrespect. He rues, "what kind of life of life was Sohrab going to look forward to? No future for minorities… like a crutch from a cripple" (55).

The protection of the Khodadad Wall is symbolic of the need to preserve their identity in the sea of changes that is happening at that moment in time. The impending loss of the wall wounds Gustad deeply because the wall was also a personal symbol of the past and the future. It was rather old but gave a benign stature of nostalgic remembrance of the past and it was also a future symbol of hope, unity, love, compassion and secularism and present security. The *morcha* with Dr. Paymaster and Peerbhoy Paanwalla as the uncanny leaders of the neighbourhood happened to pass that route on their way to the Municipal to "voice their protest against overflowing sewers, broken water-pipes, pot-holed pavements, rodent invasions, bribe-extracting public servants, uncollected hills of garbage, open manholes, shattered street lights – in short,

against the general decay and corruption of cogs that turned the wheels of city life" (SLJ 312). The defence of the wall becomes the concern of the *morcha* by default. They shout slogans: "Look at the pictures of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Look at Rama and Sita, Kali Mata, Laxmi, Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, Sai Baba. For every religion this place is sacred . . . See Nataraja and Saraswati, Guru Nanak and St. Francis of Assisi, Zarathustra and Godavari Mata, and all the paintings of mosques and churches" (327). The rhetoric of the *morcha* directors fails to convince Malcolm Saldanha, the face of the Municipal, who is also just a pawn in the hands of the government, just following the orders his bosses. An uproar starts with cries of of the morcha ringing out: "*Nahi chalaygi! Nahi chalaygi*! Municipality *ki dadagiri nahi chalaygi*!" (327). Enthralled by the pandemonium that ensued, Telmul Lungraa excitedly joins the milieu and gets hit on his head by a brick and instantly dies. The death of Tehmul Lungraa, a half-wit, just becomes collateral damage.

The yearning for roots is also apparent in the artist of the Khodadad wall. As the wall underwent its transformation from a mosquito infested urinal, to a place of reverence through his deft fingers, it made him restless. Over the years, a patterned cycle had entered the rhythm of his life, "the cycle of arrival, creation and obliteration. Like sleeping, waking and stretching, or eating, digesting and excreting, the cycle sang in harmony with the blood in his veins and the breath in his lungs. He learned to disdain the overlong sojourn and the procrastinated departure, for they were the progenitors of complacent routine, to be shunned at all cost. The journey – chanced, unplanned, solitary – was the thing to relish" (SLJ 184). But the "agreeable neighbourhood" had other things planned for him. He had been staying at the foot of the wall for quite some time, the longest stay at one place for him, and "the solidity of the long black wall were reawakening in him the usual sounds of human sorrow: a yearning for permanence, for

roots, for something he could call his own, something immutable" (184). This feeling of **rootlessness**, once enjoyed and welcomed is a source of irritation and restlessness. He has been shown the tip of what permanence entails – a solid wall for comfort, free food from the devotees thronging the wall to worship the several painted gods and a place to call his own home. This longing to belong is akin to the diasporic experience of rootlessness. The artist is torn between staying and leaving, the uncertainty of the future looms larger than life like the pictures of deities on the wall.

Critics like Makarand Paranjape prefer the term "elegiac" to nostalgic to refer to the tone of *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*. According to him, they do not celebrate the homeland but mourn its relentless and innumerable atrocities and tragedies. He thinks, "Despite what such texts appear to be, they in fact end up demonstrating a self-legitimating logic of leaving the homeland behind and, therefore, at least indirectly, of embracing the new diasporic home" (167). He states, "the new diaspora of international Indian English writers lives close to their market, in the comforts of the suburbia of advanced capital but draws their raw materials from the inexhaustible imaginative resources of that messy and disorderly subcontinent that is India" (167-68). Ultimately, however, the diasporic experience need not and cannot be reduced to either a simple-minded rejection of the homeland and acceptance of the host country, or vice versa.

Maneck Kohlah in *A Fine Balance* also faces **nowhereness**, the individual unable to find belongingness. He certainly has fond memories of his childhood spent in the mountains but as he grew up, the shared heritage of belongingness is shattered when his parents sent him away to boarding school and then college in the city. Being just a kid, his protestations are skirted off. Just like Sohrab, the parents' overzealous ambition

of their children to succeed in life succeeds only in driving them away. After college, Maneck looked forward to returning home to the mountains and help in the family General Store and business. But he can no longer see eye to eye, especially with his father, every conversation ending in arguments. Holidays at home become a drag. But at the same time, he cannot adjust with life in the city and college ragging also makes hostel life impossible and the only friend he had, Avinash disappears. He therefore takes up residence with his mother's school friend Dina Dalal in her tiny flat. Later, Maneck goes away to Dubai to work in refrigeration and air-conditioning company, the allure to earn good salary propelling him to move. His move is not a permanent emigration but it is only after eight years, after the news of his father's death that he returns to pay his last respects. After returning home, his mother could sense his aloofness and lonely broodings. And the only honest reply that he can give his mother for not keeping in touch is, "you sent me away, you and daddy. And then I couldn't come back. You lost me, and I lost everything" (FB 591). Not a single day had passed during his long exile that he did not think of his home and his parents. He expresses that he had felt trapped in Dubai and he constantly longed to return home. But when he did, he felt as helpless and alienated as before, he could not fit in. When his mother asked questions about Dubai, he searched for things to say and realised that he had nothing to say except, "lots of big hotels. And hundreds of shops selling gold jewellery and stereos and TVs" (585), all mundane things. He had nothing to say because he did not know anything about the language, customs, and people. "It was all as alien to him now as it had been when he had landed there eight years ago" (585). Maneck is a romantic at heart. He believes that everything will be okay once he returns home and reunited with his family and friends. But it is only after the news of his father's death that he returns home. Uprooted throughout his life, he returns with new expectations of a feeling of

security, but he realises sadly that is not possible. The discovery of the fate of Dina Dalal, Om and Ishvar quadrupled with the death of his father and friend Avinash saps the life out of him and propels Maneck to step onto the gleaming rail tracts. Utterly dejected by the peripheral life and alone and homeless, Maneck ultimately commits suicide. Maneck throws himself onto an incoming train and dies but his suicide does not solve the problem. We are reminded about similar incident that delayed the train taking Ishvar and Om, and Maneck himself to the city in the beginning of the novel. The mad rush therefore continues, and Maneck's death will hardly disturb the commuters for an hour or two, but it does make a statement about the capricious nature of human spirit in the face of obstacles that lead to such kind of tragic end.

Home is also what Black describes as a "double form of physical and social architecture. Houses, flats, roofs and domestic artefacts shape the inner world of the novel(s); while bonds of extended kinship provide metaphysical structures within which characters develop over time" (46). This explains how the unlikely foursome – Dina Dalal, the middle class Parsi widow; Maneck Kohlah, the student from the North unable to deal with college ragging; the untouchables Ishvar Darji and his nephew Omprakash Darji – forms a close kinship similar, if not more, to a family. It is by necessity that the four are forced to deal with each other. All of them need each other for one thing or the other. Dina Dalal needs a paying guest (Manech Kohlah, the son of her friend Aban seems an ideal choice). She also needs tailors to meet the demands of Au Revoir Exports and so she needs the cheap labour of the tailors – Ishvar and Omprakash Darji. Maneck Kohlah, after a harrowing incident of bullying and ragging at college finds the humble quarter a welcomed change. The uncle-nephew tailors get the chance to work with Dina Dalal at the crucial moment when they were desperately searching for work. We can see the class/caste divide in the way they interact with each other, especially,

the dynamics between the tailors and their employer Dina Dalal. On the first day of work, after offering a glass of water to the tailors Dina Dalal rinses the glass and puts it in a separate place, "from now on it would be the tailors' glass" (FB 76). This utterance establishes the kind of relationship as envisaged by Dina between her and the tailors. The fact that she keeps a separate glass and cups, later on in the novel, for the tailors reveals caste discrimination howsoever subtle. We find the same class differentiation echoed in *Family Matters* when Coomy uses different cups to pour tea according to the people being served – tin mugs for the ghatis/labourers and the regular china for Edul, the Parsi handyman. The apprehensions of the middle class regarding the lower class/caste hunger to attain success and perhaps overthrow their employer's hold is the reason why Dina Dalal meticulously tears off tags and labels from the packages from Au Revoir and make sure that no telltale signs are featured to trace their origin. But soon the threat of losing her business compels her to let the tailors stay on when their jhopadpattis are razed to the ground by the 'city beautification team', a calculated move from the government to clear slum areas- the eyesores of the city. As a character, Dina Dalal grows tentatively like the way her reservations against the tailors shed one at a time. Dina Dalal also finally succumbs to the landlord's goondas and gets evicted and had to go and live with her brother, Nusswan. Still she manages to hide and nurture her friendship with Om and Ishvar who are now beggars literally begging on the streets. Earlier forced into their company, Dina Dalal towards the end considers Om and Ishvar as extended family.

Importance of religion and ritual in the preservation of Parsi identity is vouched by Mistry. "Rituals and religious beliefs become the markers of ethnic, racial and communitarian identities; they highlight *difference"* (Bhautoo-Dewnarain 25). They are thus, a central theme in his novels. The constant struggle between the person and these

beliefs result in contradictions and dilemmas in the individual psyche. Mistry artistically foregrounds the Parsi traditional beliefs and rituals, "the diasporic writers in their space for a hybrid space keep their traditions, native customs and religions alive and also try to assimilate the culture of the alien land" (Agarwal 105). Jopi Nyman refers to this special feature of the diasporic fiction that, "fictions of diaspora are not necessarily nostalgic lamentations but texts actively redefining the migrant's sense of self and home, often showing their subjects re-entering spaces and sites once important to their families" (vi). Rohinton Mistry actively ascribes to this feature. Parsi traditional customs and religious beliefs are discussed at length time and again in his works. Birthdays, *navjotes*, weddings, arrivals and departures were always observed with certain rituals. Here are some excerpts from his texts to throw light on traditional beliefs and customs observed by the Parsis:

> The fragrance of frankincense delighted Roxana, for ritual and religion meant more to her than it ever had to Yezad. After her mother's sudden death, her training had been taken over by the Contractor side of the family, and Nariman's heavy conscience had refused them nothing. They had taught her the prayers, performed her navjote, taken her to the fire-temple for every holy day. (FM 24-25)

> The silver thurible in Coomy's hand, which had belonged to Mamma, filled Roxana's senses with reverence and childhood memories. She awaited her turn as Coomy offered it to each person for obeisance. (FM 25)

> (*Behram roje*) was particularly dear to her (Mehroo): on *Behram roje* her mother had given birth to her at the Awabai Petit Parsi Lying-In Hospital; it was also the day her *navjote* had been performed at the age of seven, when she was confirmed a Zoroastrian by the family priest, *Dustoor* Dhunjisha; and finally,

> Rustomji had married her on *Behram roje* fourteen years ago, with feasting and celebration continuing into the wee hours of the morning – it was said that not one beggar had gone hungry, such were the quantities of food dumped in the garbage cans of Cama Garden that day. (TFB 4)

Some charactersitic Parsi beliefs and aversions have also been mentioned by the writer which the older Nariman passes it on to young Jehangir. He says: "No. No cats. Parsi families never keep cats. They consider them bad luck, because cats hate water, they never take a bath" (FM 162). And that, "Parsis don't kill spiders, and they only eat the female chicken, never a cock" (FM 162). Mistry's texts are therefore; a record of the Parsis identity, their way of life, their religious beliefs and traditional customs:

> Now the dustoorji stepped into the sanctum to perform the ceremony for the changing geh. Sunset, thought Yezad, and the fourth geh of the Zoroastrian day had commensed. He watched the ritual clensing of the sanctum, the pedestal, the afargaan, the quiescent preparations before the offerings to the fire…Expertly he tended to the glowing embers, and flames began to lick at the tongs, growing to the soft murmur of prayers as he added the sandalwood collected from the tray. (FM 342-43)

The use of Parsi traditional names in the novels also highlights the community's effort of preserving their identity: Jehangir – Conqueror of the world; Murad – Boon, a blessing; Roxana – the dawn; and Yezad – Guardian angel. Their names taken together, thought Jehangir, made the perfect family: "they were blessed, they possessed the whole world, they had their own guardian angel, and Mummy's dawn light shone upon all of them" (289).

With the turn of the modern era, the threat to Parsi identity and community is not just from outside but also from within. In *Family Matters*, Dr. Fitter regrets the

deterioration of the race and its values. He comments, “When you think of our forefathers, the industrialists and shipbuilders who established the foundation of modern India, the philanthropists who gave us our hospitals and schools and libraries and bags, what lustre they brought to our community and the nation. And this incompetent fellow cannot look after his father” (FM 51). Dwindling birth rate, young men and women marrying non-Parsis, late marriage and heavy migration are some of the reasons cited by the writer in his novel through Inspector Masalavala. Jal’s optimism that the Parsis have “been a small community right from the beginning” but they have “survived, and prospered” (412) does little to assuage the apprehensions of the older generation regarding the future of the Parsis.

The diasporic consciousness is visible in Nariman Vakeel. He is old, frail and dependent on his children but treated as an undeserved burden by his step-children, Jal and Coomy. He is not made to feel ‘at home’ even in his house. He feels like a baggage to be lugged on, a burden on his children. And so, he often lapses into memory and happier times with his lost love Lucy whom he had to leave due to family opposition. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Confessions* says, “I see nothing in the future that tempts me; all that can charm me now is to recollect the past, and my recollections of the time of which I speak, as vivid as they are true, often let me live content in the midst of my misfortunes” (221). **Nostalgia** persistently tempts Nariman. For him, the indulgence in nostalgia is kind of an escape from his harsh reality. It is like a balm to soothe his aching body and soul. He thought about how he and Lucy, for eleven years had struggled to create a world for themselves, being shunned by their families: “A cocoon, she used to call it. A cocoon was what they needed, she said, into which they could retreat, and after the families had forgotten their existence, they would emerge like glistening butterflies and fly away together…”(FM 13). But that was just the dream as

Nariman, unable to endure family pressures leaves Lucy and marries Yasmin Contractor, a widow with two children. One of the most popular and frequent themes in Indian literature and cinema is frustrated love due to rigidities of endogamy. This rigidity to marry within the caste resulted in endless doomed love sagas. A common feature that characterizes all Indian communities everywhere is the importance placed on family rather than individual identity. In most cases the individual identity is subsumed under the greater community concerns. This is exactly the case with Nariman Vakeel who sacrifices the construct of his identity, his own wants to accommodate the wishes of his family. The choice, nonetheless, haunts him and affects his whole family for the rest of their lives. Harping back to memory lane, Nariman remembers how after he got married, Lucy still pursued him, beseeching him and declaring her undying love. He always managed to evade her but the evasion was invariably mingled with the heaviness of loss of their relationship. Throughout his life, he is the outsider who is blamed by his wife and step-children for encouraging Lucy's continued pursuit. He is not taken into consideration for any family decision as he has erred beyond redemption in the eyes of Coomy. Nariman's indulgence in these acts of remembering the past masks a discomfort, the failure to inhabit fully the present or present space of displacement. Sara Ahmed says that "migration can be understood as a process of estrangement, a process of becoming estranged from that which was inhabited as home" (92). To become estranged is to move away from the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar/strange. And the process of moving away or estrangement "involves a reliving of the home itself" (92). The migration of Nariman Vakeel is therefore, temporal as well as spatial and his reliving of his past, his 'home', when he was in love with Lucy are symptomatic of the experience of migration.

The theme of **migration** is also presented by Rangarajan, an assistant at Parsi General Hospital who asks Nariman Vakeel; if he had any friends or colleagues in foreign countries who might help him find a job as he was trying to emigrate. He had already applied to several countries including U.S.A, Canada, Australia, England, New Zealand, and Russia. His dream is not to go to a particular country but anywhere with better prospects as long as he can leave India. The desire to emigrate to these first world countries for better prospects and life is a common dream of people wanting to settle in rich countries. But the question is, what about their soul's prospects? Would they improve in a foreign land? Yezad Chenoy had also applied for Immigration to Canada at one time:

> He wanted clean cities, clean air, plenty of water, trains with seats for everyone, where people stood in line at bus stops and said please, after you, thank you. Not just the land of milk and honey, also the land of deodorant and toiletry. (FM 137)

It was his dream to migrate to Canada – the land of plenty and prosperity. He had composed a long paean to the Canadian High Commission extolling the virtues of Canada – its awe inspiring geography, its people, its munificent multicultural policy to expedite the process of emigration of his family to the desired hostland. He even wrote how the Canadian mosaic dream was far superior to American melting pot. Yezad's effort is replied by an application form and six months later, an interview date was set. It is fantastical how extraordinarily vast Yezad's repertoire is concerning Canada. He remembered however, being bombarded with questions of Canadian sports ice hockey and its various terms – power play, deke, icing penalty, of which he was stumped. Of all the information stored in his vast repertoire of knowledge concerning Canada, this particular sport was missing. The Immigration Officer swiftly dismisses him by saying,

"You Indians… you are so naïve. You want to go and freeze your butts in a country you understand nothing about, just to make a pile of money. Well, thanks for your interest in Canada, we'll let you know" (253). And so, his dream was to remain a fantasy. And he assuaged his disappointment by keeping track of problems in the "land of excess and superfluity", as he'd like to call Canada. The problems listed by Yezad are problems faced by immigrants in the new country:

> Umemployment, violent crimes, hopelessness, language laws of Quebec. Not much difference between there and here, he would think: we have beggars in Bombay, they have people freezing to death on Toronto streets; instead of high and low caste fighting, racism and police shootings; separatist in Kashmir, separatists in Quebec – why migrate from the frying pan into the fire? (FM 137).

These are tactics to console himself since his application was not successful. Disillusioned by the state of affairs; duty to take care of Nariman Vakeel, the illegitimate Matka being shut down by the police where Yezad invested even the money meant to run the kitchen expenses emboldened under a halo of dreams of winning it, the unfortunate incident of his son Jehangir's involvement in taking bribes in his capacity as homework monitor. All these happen in cataclysmic succession which results in constant bickering between Yezad and Roxana. It is at these times that Yezad wishes that he had persevered more to emigrate to Canada, the land of dreams. As he stood on the balcony, mulling about, he looked at the "chaos of television cables and radio antennae and electrical connections and telephone lines spread out against the sky. Fittingly, he thought for a city that was chaos personified. This mad confusion of wires, criss-crossing between buildings, haphazardly spanning the road, looping crazily around trees, climbing drunkenly to rooftops – this mad confusion seemed to have trapped the neighbourhood in its web" (FM 285). The inner turmoil that Yezad

undergoes is reflected by his surroundings. The city and its ways seem to be pulling the residents in its mad chaos. Yezad is filled with regret that he was not persistent enough to emigrate. He feels deep in his gut that things might have been not so bad if they have emigrated. But Mistry having lived in Canada since 1975, clearly knows how reality is. Mistry critiques the immigration policies of the host countries and makes a dig at the American dream and its 'melting pot' or Canadian multiculturalism and its 'mosaic' – terms used to describe their inclusive policies: "a crude image better suited to a sulphurous description of hellfire and brimstone than to a promised land" (FM 249). Mr. Mazobashi, the Canadian Immigration officer's rudeness elicits immediate litany of tirade from Yezad: "you, sir are a rude and ignorant man, a disgrace to your office and country. You have sat here abusing us, abusing the Indians and India, one of the many countries your government drains of its brainpower that is responsible for your growth and prosperity…if you are anything to go by, then Canada is a gigantic hoax" (253). Dreams of going abroad are often romanticized as a result, the problems of immigration jolt them when they realise that not everything is as rosy as it seems or promises to be. Nariman echoes the immigrant's feeling when he says that the biggest mistake anyone can make in their life is emigration as "the loss of home leaves a hole that never fills" (254). He is also here sharing his predicament, the tragedy of losing his 'home' having been deported to Yezad and Roxana's tiny flat by Jal and Coomy. The diasporic consciousness of dislocation is here presented in the case of Nariman Vakeel. This brings in the home truth that diasporic predicament is not the sole experience of people living abroad. It can equally be felt by people who undergo dislocation willingly or unwillingly. They do not feel 'at home' even at home.

Immigrants also evoke the past in highly selective ways and construct a present that is a **hybrid** of multiple cultures and experiences. Yezad and his employer Vikram

Kapur share their abhorrence for the Shiv Sena and its narrow parochial ways and a lament for the city they felt was slowly dying, being destroyed by goonda raj and mafia dons, “in an unholy nexus of politicians, criminals and police” (FM 151). Mr. Kapur was an infant of six months old when India was partitioned in 1947. His family was forced to abandon their home and flee Punjab and settle in Bombay and Yezad, a Parsi minority have another affinity of dislocation. So they had to keep telling the story to survive and keep their memory alive. Kapur has this passion of collecting old photographs of the city; old pictures of Hughes Road, now Sitaram Patkar Marg, picture of military bungalows roughly in 1930s now Marine Lines Station, Dhobi Talao Station before the Metro cinema was built. All these pictures make Yezad sentimental and nostaligic. The pictures remind him of his loss. Buildings, roads and spaces were as fragile as human beings, they were like “an extended family that he’d taken for granted and ignored, assuming it would always be there” (228) Mr. Kapur says to Yezad: “we’ll always have the photographs. Our city is preserved in them. And the record will remain for those who come after us. They will know that once there was a time, here in this shining city by the sea, when we had a tropical Camelot, a golden place where races and religions lived in peace and amity…”(303- 04). Yezad understands Kapur’s almost fanatical passion for Bombay that “he was pouring into it his yearning for his family’s past in Punjab, lost to him forever” (152). Unlike his parents, he doesn’t have any memory of their home in Punjab so it’s a lost past, a lost tradition that cannot be reclaimed. His extensive research and collection of old photographs of Bombay is fuelled by his desire to be amalgamated, to be absorbed as a Bombayvala, a son of the soil – his identity. He recalls an incident that he saw on the busy train platform:

> A train was leaving, completely packed, and the men running alongside gave up. All except one. I kept my eyes on him, because the platform was coming to an end.
>
> Suddenly, he raised his arms. And people on the train reached out and grabbed them. What were they doing, he would be dragged and killed, I thought! A moment later, they had lifted him off the platform. Now his feet were dangling outside the compartment, and I almost screamed to stop the train. His feet pedalled the air. They found a tiny spot on the edge, slipped off, found it again.
>
> There he was, hanging, his life literally in the hands of strangers. And he had put it there. He had trusted them. More arms reached out and held him tight in their embrace. It was a miracle – suddenly he was completely safe. (FM 159-60)

It was a miracle, he thought but as he continued watching, it happened over and over again – people stretching out their hands to pull a fellow passenger onto the train – no distinction of caste, religion visible in the outstretched hand. This incident has a lasting effect on Mr. Kapur and reaffirms his belief in Bombay, his Bombay. As observed by Vijay Agnew, "sharing stories and identifying with others who share common roots and similar dilemmas can help overcome feelings of victimization, eliminate personal blame, avoid sense of failure, generate critical consciousness, and encourage self-reflexion" (213-14). Such conversations and stories, writes Bhabha, can create what he calls a 'third space' which displaces history and sets up new structures of authority. Yezad and Vikram Kapur's sharing of selective memories is their way of reclaiming their past and identity. But later on Mr. Kapur's romantic notion of Bombay and his earlier account of the inclusive nature of Bombay and its residents is dashed to the ground when it actually happens to him. Wanting to feel accepted, Mr. Kapur runs after the train stretching out his hands, asking for assistance to help him inside but not a

single man volunteered to grasp his hand. The earlier story of a man being helped by fellow passengers onto the train is refuted when it is his turn. It was indeed a miracle, an epiphany. This incident completely deflates Kapur, the rejection breaks his spirit.

5.3. Diasporic Experience in Aravind Adiga's Works

Ashok Sharma and Pinky Madam in *The White Tiger* have returned from the US to India, but they are unable to fit in. They constantly talk about the contrast of life in India and America in a mixture of Hindi and English. Pinky belonged to a Christian family and so both families have disapproved of their union so they got secretly married in America. Pinky is constantly hankering after Ashok to set a date of return to New York as the dirt and squalor of India leaves her dejected. This irritable behaviour of Pinky also masks her inability to deal with the antagonism from Ashok's family. Belonging to a minority community, it is indeed difficult for Pinky to come up to the standard of the traditional Hindus. Ashok, on the other hand, is reluctant to leave their family and relatives. Ashok's original plan to stay in India for two months only is tested by the kind of attention and amenities at their disposal in India's emerging economy: "we've got people to take care of us here – our drivers, our watchmen, our masseurs. Where in New York will you find someone to bring you tea and sweet biscuits while you are still lying in bed..." (89).

Going abroad did change Ashok's outlook. His uncle feels that he has become too soft- he has become a vegetarian; he doesn't like to scold and shout at their servants. His father and uncle always ask them, "what crazy ideas do you boys pick up" (WT 83). They are shocked that they are sons of landlords but they do not want to hit the servants anymore. After living in the US for a long time, Pinky finds it difficult to

adjust. The expatriate after returning home finds it difficult to fit in. Pinky Madam's constant visit to the sprawling malls in Delhi and Gurgoan is a sign of a **search for belonging.** She loses it completely once when they were in the middle of traffic. She began screaming, "Why can't we go back, Askoky? Look at this fucking traffic jam. It's like this every other day now"(153). It is unavoidable that as a result of the romanticized notion of 'home', that dismay and disillusionment greets the immigrant when the real homeland fails to live up to their imagined, idealised version of homeland. This uncertainty of belongingness drives their marriage apart.

Shankara P. Kinni in *Between the Assassinations* is of mixed caste. He is half-Brahmin and half-Hoyka considered the worst kind of mixture of blood. It is worst than being a low caste pure Hoyka. His anguish is apparent in the outburst – "I have the worst of both the castes in my blood… I have the anxiety and fear of the Brahmin, and I have the propensity to act without thinking of the Hoyka. In ne the worst of the two has mixed and produced this monstrosity, which is my personality" (BA 76). Throughout his life, he is conscious of his difference, his otherness. He inhabits the diaspora consciousness of **in-betweeness** – neither here nor there. His hyphenated identity makes him stand out grotesquely in the sight of his Brahmin family. His person is tolerated, a constant reminder of his absent father's philandering result. Belonging becomes problematic – a never ending dialogue for Shankara. The social exclusion fills him with silent rage and self-hatred.

Mr Costello in *Last Man in Tower* put his fifth floor flat on sale after his son had jumped from the terrace. But no one bought it and the owner had moved to the Gulf after the tragedy in the family. Mr and Mrs Pinto's two children were settled in America –one in Michigan, the other in Buffalo. The children were far away but they had

Vishram Society as family; warm, human and familiar. Mrs Pinto being blind was familiar inside the Vishram Society building having traced her way about the building by memory; by counting the steps she told where there was a curve, a hole and so on. Thus they were the first to voice their apprehension to Masterji to leave their home, unwilling to give up the protective surrounding that they have created with friends in the building. Ashvin Kothari, Secretary of Tower A was born and brought up in Kenya, Africa. His father lured by better prospects moved from Jamnagar and set up a grocery store in Nairobi in the 1950s which prospered. But he "found out that Africans did not like Indian men who did well" (LMT 113). When Kothari was eight years old, there was a threat to their business and so his father sold off everything for a pittance and returned to Jamnagar. But Kothari always had fond memories of his home in Kenya as a boy. Kothari understands a builder as a man who builds houses but this opinion is refuted by Shah who says, "Architects build houses, Engineers build roads…" but "the builder is one man in Bombay who never loses a fight" (115). As he prepares to sleep that night, Kothari realizes that everything is about to change which reignites nostalgic memories of him and his father once again at the lake in Kenya with the beautiful pink Flamingoes. For Kothari India is like a second home and after selling out he plans to move to Sewri, a well known place visited by a flock of migratory flamingos. He has a wife and children yet; the crystal clear memory of the land of his birth still produces tears of nostalgia. Kothari had told his African story to every other member of the Vishram Society and perhaps "all these years his African-returned father's shame – the shame of the expatriate who had returned empty-handed – had crushed his natural gregariousness" (133) and made him the strange, often secretive, yet somehow sociable personality that he had cultivated. His deep-rooted **anguish** at being brutally removed from the country he loved is revealed in the following extract: "In the darkness, he saw

a flock of pink birds flying around him. He felt his father's fingers pressing on his – and then all the wasted decades in between fell away, and they were together once again at the lake in Kenya" (LMT 116). Mr. and Mrs. Pinto's children Tony and Deepa were in America. We do not directly meet them in the novel but we do learn about their hardship in the foreign land through the parents. They were said to have gotten the Green Card – the coveted golden ticket for all immigrants but their life is far from the imagined glitter. They do not have secure jobs and the parents still do not understand why they chose to leave Bombay and emigrate to that expensive place, so far removed from family. They are also indirectly responsible for the Pintos choosing finally to align with the rest of the residents against Masterji because they parents plan on sending part of the money after selling out to Mr. Shah to meet their children's needs abroad.

5.4. Home – A Contested Site

Home is a contentious concept. As discussed it has multiple meanings and interpretations. It may mean material matters such as the design of the house and function of spaces of the home in the simplest understanding or it may mean the place of belonging, the family and nation. In the modern/postmodern world like today where nothing is fixed but ever changing, in a constant flux, 'home' gets the possibility of being defined to suit an individual's needs and fancies. A whole panorama of diametrically diverse homes is created then as the writers negotiate between 'homes'. Within India itself, these writers'/individuals live in multiple geographical contexts which are ethnically, linguistically, religiously and regionally diverse. As such, all these concerns come into play in the novels reflecting the global as well as the local nature of Indian English Writings. Consequently, home is no longer in one place; it becomes

places of multiple locations rather than a dis-location from place (Hooks 1990). Home and cultural identity thus becomes sites of struggle.

The depiction of homelessness in *A Fine Balance* can be examined using the argument that homelessness is a symptom of the protagonists' real and perceived marginality through national and nationalist discourses that make the protagonists homeless literally and figuratively. As Marangoly George contends:

> If the home stands for not just one's representation of oneself but for what others see of one, then it is doubly important to pay attention to the status of those without homes either because of economic circumstance or political disenfranchisement. .. [and] those homes or selves that are not recognized as such because they are deemed inadequate or inappropriate. (24)

In *A Fine Balance*, the four protagonists – Dina Dalal, Manech Kohlah, Om and Ishvar Darji are persistently made homeless. It is impossible for them to partake the luxury of a home. The threat of outside forces, of being evicted from their temporary shelter denies them the security blanket of a home and domestic life. Manech Kohlah is unable to feel at home in his father’s house, he couldn’t fit in the university hostel and later on moves abroad but is rootless everywhere. Ishvar and Om escapes their village after their whole family is persecuted and murdered. They find refuge in their Muslim friend Ashraf’s home which is short-lived as religious intolerance escalades. They then, move to the city, rents a hut in the jhopadpatti which is shortly razed to the ground in the city beautification project. However, for a brief moment in the novel a semblance of home and domesticity is created when the four protagonists are living together in Dina's apartment. Earlier, her friend Zenobia tried to convince her not to let the tailors stay with her and that she can always find new tailors. But by this time, Dina’s perspective

has completely changed, we see the change of attitude when she replies, “But that’s not the point. I would let them stay even if they weren’t working for me” (FB 548). Later on Dina contemplates on telling Zenobia how successful the household was how for once she felt part of a 'family' that loved and respected her:

> Could she describe for Zenobia the extent to which Maneck and Om had become inseparable, and how Ishvar regarded both boys like his own sons? That the four of them cooked together and ate together, shared the cleaning and washing and shopping and laughing and worrying? That they cared about her, and gave her more respect than she had received from some of her own relatives? That she had, during these last two months, known what was a family? It was impossible to explain. Zenobia would say she was being silly and imagining fancy things, turning a financial necessity into something sentimental. Or she would accuse the tailors of manipulating her through fawning and flattery (FB 550-551).

This changed attitude of Dina is reinforced as the novel progresses and towards the end cemented when we see Dina secretly feeding Ishvar and Om at her brother’s home, who are now beggars. She considers them her family and her responsibility.

The make-shift family is forged out of necessity in the beginning. Circumstances force them to adjust in the tiny worn out flat. At first the tension is palpable, of having to adjust and live with three more people in such close, intimate enclosures, especially for Dina who had been living alone as a widow. The atmosphere is stifling but they have no other solution. At first the protagonists remain in two distinct groups, living and eating separately: Dina and her paying guest Maneck, the middle class Parsis, live and cook separately from Ishvar and Om, the low castes Chamar-turned-tailors. Gradually however, the differences are erased when Dina no

longer insists on the use of separate crockery for Ishvar and Om. The four settle into a happy comfortable routine. But it is not to last. Mistry doesn't allow happiness to go overboard. It is always in a fine balance. And so the readers are aware by now of the underlying imminent threat to their happiness in the layers of narrative.

One of the central images in the novel is the quilt that Dina makes from the remnants of the cloth left over from the tailors's work. The making of the quilt - a domestic item - is symbolic of the characters' attempts at home-making. It becomes a symbol of regeneration and recreation – of ties, love and family. The intricate way in which each pattern, made from left over pieces of the cloths from Au Revoir, are attached and stitched on to make the quilt symbolically show the characters' life journey. The neat stitches crisscrossed like symmetrical columns of ants .Each piece again corresponds to an event in their life and so the quilt represents their shared life with all the tears and laughter:

> 'Look,' Om pointed out, 'look at that - the poplin from our first job.'
> 'You remember,' said Dina pleased. 'And how fast you finished those first dresses. I thought I had found two geniuses.'
> 'Hungry stomachs were driving our fingers,' chuckled Ishvar.
> 'Then came that yellow calico with orange stripes. And what a hard time this young fellow gave me. Fighting and arguing about everything.'
> 'Me? Argue? Never.'
> 'I recognize these blue and white flowers,' said Manech. 'From the skirts you were making on the day I moved in.'
> 'Are you sure?'
> 'Yes, it was the day Ishvar and Om did not come to work – they had been kidnapped for the Prime Minister's compulsory meeting.'
> ----

> Ishvar leaned over to indicate a cambric square. ‘See this? Our house was destroyed by the government, the day we started on this cloth. Makes me feel sad whenever I look at it'. (FB 489-90)

The quilt is thus a tapestry of events. It is a story in itself within the story. Ishvar best sums up the significance of the quilt: “Calling one piece sad is meaningless. See, it is connected to a happy piece – sleeping on the verandah. And the next square – chapattis. Then that violet tusser, when we made masala wada and started cooking together. And don’t forget this georgette patch, where Beggarmaster saved us from the landlord’s goondas…the rule to remember, the whole quilt is much more important than any single square” (490).

In *Family Matters*, what Nariman Vakeel calls home is dubious. He is like an unwanted, unwelcomed guest in his own house. His home having been usurped by his step-children, he is unceremoniously shipped off to the home of Roxana, his biological daughter. Jal and Coomy Contractor, unwilling to take on the added responsibility of looking after a bed-ridden step-father dump him on Roxana, thus dislocating him from his own home. They do feel a sense of guilt and wretchedness afterwards but Coomy reasons, “it had to be done. We had no choice” (FM 110). But every person does have the free will to choose. It is just that one cannot force a person to care, “either it resides in the heart, or nowhere” (121). Old, frail and besieged with Parkinson’s disease and a broken leg, Nariman is utterly alienated. Roxana’s love and dedication is no substitution for home and what it entails. Nariman buries himself in an imaginary bauble and constructs his own ‘imaginary home’ in his mind with his lost love Lucy. To him, “the past is more present than the here and now” (128). Reminiscing about the past keeps his spirit alive, especially when the flesh is weak and old. These musings sometimes leaves him sad and sometimes happy but it definitely was worthwhile for Nariman says he

does not regret his past relationship with the Christian Lucy. The stringent Parsi rule of endogamy, to ensure purity of the ethnic community, disables Nariman in marrying Lucy. The fear of being excommunicated forces Nariman to sever ties with Lucy but they never could forget each other. These ruminations tells a parallel story within the narrative, of a star crossed couple unable to separate even after Nariman gets married to another woman. Lucy constantly pursues and haunts him and tugs on the heart strings of Nariman who is filled with guilt for leaving her and so constantly rushes to help her in her troubled life. His attitude is a source of bickering between husband and wife and the seeds of resentment of Jal and Coomy are sown in their mother's unhappiness. In a shocking turn of events, both Yasmin and Lucy dies after falling from the terrace when Yasmin was trying to get Lucy off the terrace parapet – the two women swaying dangerously on the ledge and falling headlong as Nariman watched in horror. Now, in his old age, Nariman finds himself constantly ruminating about their love affair. This perhaps is a deliberate attempt of Nariman's to keep at bay his current predicament of homelessness. The poignant love and bond that develops between the 79 year old Nariman and the 9 year old grandson, Jehangir is gut-wrenching. They understand each other perfectly and Nariman is his old affable, knowledgeable self in front of the kid. Nariman enjoys spending time with his grandson. Despite Yezad's forbiddance to help out their grandfather when his mother is not present, Jehangir couldn't bear to see how badly Vakeel needed the 'so so' bottle and so he helps despite admonitions. This friendship infuses vitality into the lonely life of the old and incapacitated Nariman. He does return home, to Chateau Felicity along with Roxana's family after Coomy dies in a tragic accident but it is not the same anymore. After being crammed at Pleasant Villa, Yezad and Roxana's family home, one would think it would be a comfort to get one's separate bed and room but no, Nariman feels more isolated and alone. Young Jehangir

seems to be the only person to understand the old man: “At first we made an effort to keep him company, sitting by his side, talking to him and to one another. Sometimes I took my homework to his room. But it was not the same. Especially with a hospital ayah who did everything for him. The day he overheard Jal Uncle and my parents having a discussion about hiring her full-time, he became very upset. He began to cry, No ayah! Please, no ayah! I don’t think they understood” (FM 468). Nariman is voiceless, his opinion is not counted. At least in Pleasant Villa, there was always someone near his settee. Loneliness pervades for Nariman now, all he can then is wait for sympathetic death to take him away. It is true that like the fine china, human beings if “locked away unused, eventually it will age and crack in the sideboard” (37) and so within a year of their move to Chateau Felicity, Nariman Vakeel dies uprooted and lonely.

5.5. Language of Marginality

‘Dialogic’ is a Bakhtinian term used to explain the concept of the novel in Mikhail Bakhtin’s work, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a word dominated by heteroglossia, or that which ensures the primacy of context over text. Every meaning is understood as a part of a greater whole –there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which has the potential of influencing and conditioning others. Bakhtin asserts that linguistics, stylistics and the philosophy of language have ignored this dialogized heteroglossia. He says that the real ideologically saturated “language consciousness” – one that participates in actual heteroglossia and multi-languagedness, has remained outside the purview of the three fields mentioned.

He further states that stylistics has been "completely deaf to dialogue" (Bakhtin 273): "Stylistics locks every stylistic phenomenon into the monologic context of a given self-sufficient and hermetic utterance, imprisoning it, as it were, in the dungeon of a single context; it is not able to exchange messages with other utterances; it is not able to realize its own stylistic implications in a relationship with them; it is obliged to exhaust itself in its own single hermetic context" (274). The inability of stylistics or for that matter, linguistics and the philosophy of language to accord proper theoretical recognition and illumination for the novel inevitably leads Bakhtin to address the necessity of engaging in a series of fundamental questions in a multi-languaged manner. Dialogism is his panacea to the simplistic authorial monologue which presumes only passive listeners. The specific phenomena that are present in discourse determined by a dialogic orientation are: "first, amid others' utterances inside a *single* language (the primordial dialogism of discourse), amid other 'social languages' within a single *national* language and finally amid different national languages within the same *culture*, that is, the same socio-ideological conceptual horizon" (275). For Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, the word is open to dispute which is charged with values and contradictions. Some excerpts of his thoughts which are crucial to understanding his gigantic concept i.e., dialogism are highlighted as follows:

> The dialogic orientation of a word among other words (of all kinds and degrees of otherness) creates new and significant artistic potential in discourse creates the potential for a distinctive art of prose, which has found its fullest and deepest expression in the novel. (275)
>
> No living word relates to its object in a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and its speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the

> same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that is often difficult to penetrate. (276)
>
> The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex relationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group. (276)
>
> The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way. (Bakhtin 279)

Basically, the term dialogism means "double-voicedness". It may mean interaction of "contexts" in an utterance. Sue Vice has discussed in detail how double-voicedness, and the sensitivity of one language to those surrounding it, results not in peaceful relativity or inert coexistence, but in a clash of discourses" (49). We can understand dialogism better with example of an excerpt: "Delhi…The capital of our glorious nation. The Seat of Parliament, of the president, of all ministers and prime ministers. The pride of our civic planning. The showcase of the republic. That's what *they* call it" (WT 118). The glorification of the capital city Delhi in the first few sentences of the excerpt is negated by the concluding statement "That's what *they* call it". The emphasis on '*they*' also insinuates that it is really not so in the speaker's opinion. We see it also in the utterance "I am India's most faithful voter, and I still have not seen the inside of a voting booth" (102). The implication here is suggestive of the prevalence of proxy voting and booth capturing, a coup which is done every election in India. Dialogism is also apparent in the statement: "We may not have sewage, drinking water, and Olympic gold medals, but we do have democracy" (96). And again, "Yes, that's right: We all live in the world's greatest democracy here. What a fucking joke"

(170). The double-voicedness is apparent here. There are two distinct voices in one utterance. The statement that India is the world's greatest democracy is immediately and irrevocably disputed and denied by the next line. Bakhtin calls this "authorial unmasking" (Bakhtin 304). The whole point is to expose the real basis for such glorification. Within the boundaries of a single simple utterance, authorial unmasking is openly accomplished. The emphasis on glorification is complicated by a second emphasis that is indignant, ironic which ultimately predominates in the final unmasking of the sentence.

At Vishram Society, the sign: "Work in Progress/ Inconvenience is Regretted/ BMC" is changed into "Inconvenience in Progress/ Work Regretted/ BMC" (LMT 33) by Ibrahim Kudwa. The clever interchange of words brings in the dialogic effect as it was common knowledge that BMC always did sub-standard work. Mr. Dharmen Shah who has no qualms in swallowing up poor people to further his own empire is said that A Confidence Group – his construction company project could only begin after two divine interventions: "A call from a Tamil astrologer in Matunga with a precise time to lay the foundation stone, and a visit here, to the shrine of Ganesha. Whose image was the official emblem of the Confidence Group" (LMT 100). Adiga brings in these contradictions to mock the real estate boom that was swallowing up the common man rendering people homeless by these unscrupulous sharks. Mr Shah says, "The builder is the one man in Bombay who *never* loses a fight" (115). Semantically, the sentence emphasis the grit and determination of the builder but beneath the utterance it suggests the builder's brute force in getting what he wants. The authorial intention is also visible as the word 'never' is in italics.

"What are these marks on your arms?" I asked. I had dealt with scavengers before, you see. Of course she said nothing" (LCB). This question of the Judge is just a rhetorical question asked merely to make a statement. The Judge here already knows what those marks are and has already made sweeping generalisations based on his world view. As soon as he sees the appearance of the woman, immediately he makes snap judgement leaving his fecund mind a waste. Beneath the judge's sweeping narration, we also read the author's story. He is the one who tells how the narrator narrates the story that reveals a lot about the narrator himself. As such, the concealed speech of the author is definitely important and necessary to be analysed. This interaction, this "dialogic tension between two belief systems" (Bakhtin 314), as Bakhtin says "permits authorial intentions" to be realized in such a way that we can "acutely sense their presence" (314) every step of the way in the work of the writer. Taking advantage of the scavenger woman's poverty and insignificant life, the judge twist and beat the woman's resistance into submission and gets her thumbprint onto the adoption papers. The judge does regret his decision in depriving the scavenger mother of her child and his actions are symbolically criticized by Nathan when at the church, he points a finger at the picture of David and say: "You king are the Guilty man" (LCB). Again the dialogic effect is signified.

In Adiga's works we sense acutely the various distances between the author and various aspects of his language, which is peppered with the different social and belief systems of others. This is succinctly illustrated in *Between the Assassinations*. In Kittur,

> … Kannada is the mother-tongue of only some of the Brahmins. Tulu, a regional language that has no written script – although it is believed to have possessed a script centuries ago – is the lingua franca. Two dialects of Tulu exist … Around Umbrella Street, the

> commercial centre of town, the language changes to Konkani: this is the language of the Gaud-Saraswat Brahmins, originally from Goa… A very different dialect of Konkani, corrupted with Portuguese, is spoken in the suburb of Valencia by the Catholics who live there. Most of the Muslims, especially those in the Bunder, the port area, speak a dialect of Malayalam as their mother-tongue; a few of the richer Muslims, being from the old Hyderabad Kingdom, speak Hyderabadi Urdu as their native language. Kittur's large migrant worker population, which floats around the town from construction site to construction site, is Tamil-speaking. English is understood by the middle class. (BA 139)

The exhaustive list is just an example in just one small town which is representative of the multiplicity of language and culture that lends a distinct identity, beauty and mad chaos that is India. And English when spoken by different community acquires a different rhythm and style. "Thanks you, Sir!" (BA 5, 8) is a constant refrain of Ziauddin, working in a tea stall. Whenever an English word was said Ziauddin would stop all work and repeat the words " Sunday-Monday,Goodbye, Sexy!" (4), to peals of laughter from the customers. The kind of English spoken by the lower class is distinctly different from that of the upper class. We also find the same thing in Mistry's works. The different registers used by different sections of the people are thoroughly researched by the writers. The speech of the lower caste/class in English is different from the English spoken by the middle class. And the English spoken by the educated is distinctly different from the average person's speech. From the tone and rhythm of the speech itself then, we get an inkling of which place/class that person occupies. For instance, the English of the ayah Jacqueline/Jaakylee is markedly different from those of the more educated ones. From her speech itself, her low class status is revealed. Jacqueline, the outsider to the predominant Parsi community in the Baag, also talks

about how old bai took English words and made them Parsi words: “Easy chair was *igeechur*, French beans was *ferach beech* and Jacqueline became Jaakaylee… all old Parsis did this, it was like they made their own private language” (TFB 50).

In Adiga, social heteroglossia enters the novel primarily as dialogues in the direct speeches of his characters. Regional inflexions are also used a plenty by Adiga: “A bomb in class, *Pather*. In the last bench. It went *opp* during the lecture. About one minute *apter* I began talking.”(BA 53); “You *puckers*! *Puckers*!” (53); “I have *scientipic* evidence…*Pinger*-prints survive on the black stub of the bomb… *Pinkerprints* have survived even on the loaves of bread *lept* behind in the *Paraoh’s* tomb” (81); “Are you *lapping* at me? Are you *lapping* because I cannot say the letter ‘*epp*?’” (82). The substitution of the /f/ sound by /p/ is presented here in the words of Lasrado, the chemistry professor at St. Alfonso Boys’ High School and Junior College. The language of Berthe, the Yugoslavian woman in Mistry’s ‘Swimming Lessons’ is a very rough-hewn English with native inflexions. Her words, the author describes, “falls like rocks and boulders” (TFB 285): “Radiators no work, you tell me. You feel cold, you come to me, I keep you warm”; “you no feel scared, I keep you safe and warm” (TFB 294). The rhythm of her speech is influenced heavily by her native tongue.

The names of people, of streets, places, sub-titles are shot through with intentions. Nicknames like the Stork, the Wild Boar, the Raven, the Buffalo, achieves the dialogic effect. These were nicknames of the landlords in the village who were named thus according to their peculiar appearance and appetites. The Stork was a fat man with a fat, curved and pointy moustache who owned the river that flowed outside the village of Laxmangarh in *The White Tiger* and took a cut from every fish caught in the river; the Wild Boar had two long, curved teeth that looked like tusks and owned all

the agricultural land; the Raven owned all the dry, rocky hillside and took a cut from the goatherds; the Buffalo owned all the roads and taxed whoever used the road. The White Tiger is a metaphor for Balram Halwai, a title bestowed on him by virtue of being the smartest boy in class – a very rare animal. In *Between the Assassinations*, the children are successful in getting the ten rupees from the foreigner to buy the *smack* for their father. They sweated all day begging to get the money, craving the attention from their father but instead Soumya gets smacked on the cheek when Raju mistakenly says she got a hundred rupees. "That's a shark, Sir. Freshwater. A small one. But authentic" (LMT 170) – Mrs. Rego's speech in reference to Dharmen Shah is telling. He is compared to a shark, the most dangerous predator underwater. In *Last Man in Tower*, Ajwani goes to Falkland Road whenever he feels the need. It is said that Falkland Road was always open for business throughout the day and night. The women waited in bright blue doors squatted on thresholds luring customers with coy smiles. The name of the street undergoes dialogization as it is a red-light area. For the residents of the Tower, the street Falkland road signifies not just a colony but the colony to which people with baser intentions turn to.

Nandini Bhautoo-Dewnarain rightly observes that most of the stories in *Tales From Ferozsha Baag* are marked by the use of dialogic narrative modes as they introduce the voices, tones and rhythms of the community's language and its social practices. Misty creates a vibrant image of a community in the restrictive throes of traditions, economic instability, racial and religious anxieties resulting in deep psychological and emotional conflicts. An array of narrators takes up the task of narrating one at a time, often simultaneously. The voices of narrators and characters often coexist within a single utterance. Through multiple perspectives, Mistry is here able to give voice to all. It also enables the reader to know the characters and their

actions impartially and analyse each of the character's point of view. This is possible through dialogism.

One story in *Tales from Firozha Baag* is entitled 'Squatter'. The title itself undergoes the process of dialogism. On the one hand it depicts the story of an immigrant named Sarosh/Sid and his peculiar problem. Among the multitude of problems faced by immigrants, Mistry presents a surreal problem – Sarosh's inability to defecate in the European style toilet. It becomes the uttermost desire of Sarosh's to push himself to succeed in this particular endeavour. Every day, he would sit on the toilet and will himself to do it but ultimately he had to perch atop the toilet and squat in the fashion of Indian latrines. His promise to return to India if he is not able to adapt to Canadian ways in ten years, in fact, in his words to "become completely Canadian" (187) harps on him and becomes a fixation. He equates his success, or the lack of it, in Canada to his adaptation of mastering the western way of defecating. He even begins to dread this basic bodily function which becomes more or less like a ritual for him. The issue of returning just for this reason sounds ludicrous and juvenile but underneath the basic problem, Sarosh's predicament as a marginal in the host country is embedded in the obvious. On the other hand, the ability to narrate stories of untold miseries, unbearable hardships comes naturally to the writer. Mistry is definitely aware of the problem of 'squatters', or in other words, persons occupying a building or land without permission illegally, in Indian cities and towns. If we look beyond the city walls into the fringes; the sidewalks, obscure outskirts and wastelands, we are made aware of the tumultuous lives of the 'others' – the squatters – in other words, the displaced, landless people. They live in squalor and abject poverty, earning meagre income and often left with no option but to beg from passer bys in the highways and every lane, nook and corner of the beautiful cities. At night, sometimes, they appear like beacons on the

streets, huddling in corners near fires lighted with scraps of paper and garbage. These squatters on several occasions are shepherded off from one wasteland to the other through multiple government policies of 'rehabilitation' and 'beautification'. Rustomji also explicitly states "this is not a Squatters' colony" (TFB 198) when he sees the group of boys boisterously listening and participating in the story-telling of Nariman Hansotia. So, the meaning of 'squatter' acquires different connotations and the tacit agreement of the actual meaning of the word depends on how the reader looks at it. Jehangir's description of art of Nariman Hansotia's storytelling technique may as well apply to Mistry's:

> Unpredictability was the brush he used to paint his tales with, and ambiguity the palette he mixed his colours in… Nariman sometimes told a funny story in a very serious way, or expressed a significant matter in a light and playful manner. And there were only two rough divisions, in between were lots of subtle gradations of tone and texture. Which, then, was the funny story and which the serious? Their opinions were divided, but ultimately… up to the listener to decide. (TFB 178)

Mistry seems to have in common with his character Nariman's ability to engage the reader in multiple dialogues and is able to not only sustain the listener's active involvement throughout his narration but also encourages diverse interpretations. When Nariman introduces the specialist who deals with immigrant problems, Mrs. Maha-Lepate, Kersi and Viraf exchange a secret smile in acknowledgement of the presence of several *lepate* in the prolific storyteller's stories. Maha and Lepate together roughly translate into Big Yarn Spinner or Big Story-teller. Again, the name of the doctor who looks into Sarosh's peculiar immigrant problem - Dr. No-Ilaaz is dialogical. He suggests to Sarosh to insert an apparatus – Crappus Non Interruptus, or CNI which

requires a minor operation. It is a small device which will be controlled externally by a handheld transmitter which he can activate whenever he wants to go. He just has to press a button. After extolling the virtues of the CNI (which is dialogic in itself), he then lists its cons: it is permanent, he can never defecate normally; it can be accidentally activated by someone with similar apparatus. The name Dr. No-Ilaaz is used dialogically by the writer because it is said that the doctor "took pride in being able to dissuade his patients from following the very remedies which he so painstakingly describe" (TFB 196). The identity crisis is inevitable in the case of the diaspora. Sarosh becomes Sid after emigrating to Toronto. Changing of name is common practice for a diaspora to avoid mispronunciation but also a tactic to fit in. After returning back to India, he can no longer bear to hear the name 'Sid' as it is just a reminder of his troubles. Again it can be read dialogically 'Sid' or 'sit' on the toilet seat. The name reminds him of his failure to sit on the European style commode.

In 'Swimming Lessons', the section about his parents is presented in italics which introduces a complex network of dialogic writing as it comments even on the writing of the whole collection itself. The dialogic parallel narration about his parents, their reaction to his absence heightens the feelings of nostalgia. The presence of the omniscient third-person narrative adds to the complexity of an immigrant's life. The narrative of 'Swimming Lessons' threads all the other stories together. Although all the stories in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* have different narrators yet a dialogic relation is maintained throughout. An awareness of the other is prevalent as the chain of events of the characters in the whole collection remains unbroken. Nariman Hansotia – the prolific story teller of 'Squatter', the fat ayah Jaakaylee with her shopping bag from 'The Ghost of Firozsha Baag', and the *kuchrawalli* from 'The Collectors' with her basket and long bamboo broom are fondly remembered in 'Swimming Lessons'. A

direct reference to Sarosh's predicament in 'Squatter' is also presented: "… the one with a little bit about Toronto, where a man perches on top of the toilet, is shameful and disgusting, although it is funny at times…"(TFB 296). Thus, 'Swimming Lessons' acts like a commentary on the rest of the earlier stories in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. This technique is continued by Mistry throughout his novels. The government's mandate: *garibi hatao* – eradicate poverty is misinterpreted by law enforcing agencies that conduct periodic roundups of pavement dwellers, beggars and street vendors, the homeless and hungry and dumping them outside the city limits in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and also in *A Fine Balance*.

The subalterns in Mistry's works are called by different names – *ghatis, ghatons, gungas*. The word *gungas* is dialogical as it was intended to placate by bestowing on them the collective conferment of the name of India's sacred river Ganga which balanced the several occasions of harshness and ill-treatment. The problem however is that in foreign countries *ghatis/gungas* is a common term for Indians. The sentence, "Who would want these bloody *ghatis* to come charging into their fine land?" (TFB 215) is referring to Indians in general. Then, Adiga's Balram refers to Ganga as the river of Death, "whose banks are full of rich, dark, sticky mud whose grip traps everything that is planted in it, suffocating and choking and stunting it" (WT 15). In the same utterance, he again refers to the river as "daughter of the Vedas, river of illumination, protector of us all, breaker of the chain of birth and rebirth" (15). Every description is true and dialogical in itself. It depends upon the perspective of the onlooker to determine and perceive it under different circumstances.

To take English and make it their own is Post-colonial's appropriation of the English language. Colonialism made India a subject of British imperialism for more

than two centuries and so the joke – they (colonial rulers) p(f)ucked India for two centuries but we get to p(f)uck their language forever. Taking back from the centre is one phrase that we find often in postcolonial narratives and parlance. Misty infuses in the English language tones and rhythms of Indian languages. What strikes the reader is the ease with which Mistry effortlessly hybridize and foreground the Parsi version of Indian English. The reader is able to gauge this from the beginning of the first story "Auspicious Occasion" in *Tales from Ferozsha Baag* when Rustomji, emerges from the W.C, his pyjama strings undone and shouts to his wife: " Mehroo! Arre Mehroo! Where are you? I am telling you, this is more than I can take!..." "that stinking lavatory upstairs is leaking again!... there I was squatting – barely started – when someone pulled the flush. Then on my head I felt – pchuk – all wet! On my head!" (3-4). This kind of linguistic licence that Mistry takes reverberates throughout his writings. Mistry's memory of Bombay is the source of his material and creativity. Its teeming life is captured beautifully. The nostalgia for his native land is displayed in the richness of photographic details. Mr. Kapur, the owner of the Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium in *Family Matters* takes upon his shoulder the task of collecting memorabilia to freeze frame Bombay as it was in the good old days. He cherishes the rare, old photographs of Hughes Road, Marine Line Station and others trying to recreate Bombay- the metropolitan, in every sense of the word, Bombay of the past.

Mistry and Adiga also incorporates Indian words and expressions into the English language making it richer and exuberant. Some certain catchwords are best left untranslated as often translation takes away the beauty of the word or phrase. This dialogized heteroglossia is one of the salient features of Mistry's and Adiga's texts. Mistry peppers Urdu/Marathi/Hindi in the English language, sometimes juxtaposed together in sharp contrast and other times in complete synthesis. Dialogized

heteroglossia are used a plenty in *Such a Long Journey*. Examples are: "*palungtode paan* or bed-breaker", "leather *sapaat*", "*fikko- fichuk*", "*sudra*", "*kusti*, Hindi-Chinee *bhai -bhai*", "Humko kuch nahin maaloom, we don't know anything", "*sojjo* soap", "*theek hai! theek hai*! Agreed the crowd", "ice-cold *paani*", sweet-sweet *paani*", "where is *maadar chod* America now?", "head *maalis*, foot *maalis*", "Inspector Bamji, speaking in Marathi, to Gustad's astonishment, told him to shut up: '*Umcha* section *nai'*" (132), "*Nahi chalaygi! Nahi chalaygi*! Will not do! Will not do! Municipality *ki dadagiri nahi chalaygi*! Municipality's bullying will not do!", "*gully gully may shor hai, Congress Party chor hai* – the cry goes up in every alley, Congress Party is a rogues' gallery-", "*havaa-paani laingay, ye toe yaheen maraingay*, an air-and-water variation on 'give me liberty or give me death'" .Dilnivaz also uses the Gujarati *asmai-kasmai* code to her husband in order to mask her speech and make it obscure for the Gurkha Night Watchman to understand: "M*asm*ayb*ism*e h*ism*e w*asm*as sle*asm*ep*ism*ing be*asm*eca*usma*use *esm*it w*asm*as ra*ism*ain*ism*ing" (135). In Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* –

Saarey jahan se accha
Yeh Hindustan Hamara
Hum bulbule hain iski
Yeh gulistan hamara
Better than all the world
Is this India of ours;
We are its nightingales,
It is our garden. (LMT 251)

Ishvar Allah Tero Naam
Sabko Sanmati de Bhagavan.
Ishwar and Allah are both your names
Give everyone this wisdom, Lord. (326)

Bakhtin's insights into the internal stratification of speech type as found in the novel are worth illustrating here:

> The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphasis) – this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [*raznorečie*] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia [*raznorečie*] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). (Bakhtin 262-3)

Such a combination of languages and styles brings forth the distinctive social dialogues among languages. For the writers in topic, the adoption of a critical voice that promotes intermingling of cultures and differing histories signify our present condition. Ken Hirschkop reminds the readers of the difference between a dialogue and dialogism. However, the confusion or overlapping between dialogue and dialogism is what makes Bakhtin's work interesting and provocative.

Angelika Bammer detects how language becomes the focal point around which debate, hopes and hostilities often crystallize: "for, at once carrier of national and

familial traditions and emblem of cultural and personal identity, language functions equally as an identity-grounding home under conditions of displacement and a means of intervention into identity-fixing cultural agendas" (xvi). Dialogic effects are more elaborate when two languages mix to extend the level of multicultural character. The novel's dialogism depends upon gender imbalance, as pointed out by Sue, but its self-consciousness makes it equally concerned with linguistic issues. Ashcroft *et al.* with regard to the metonymic function of language variance in post-colonial literatures puts it: "the untranslated words, the sounds and the textures of the language can be held to have the power and presence of the culture they signify – to be metaphoric in their 'inference of identity and totality" (*Empire Writes Back* 51). Just like that the words such as '*ghati'*, '*gunga'* etc. embedded in the text of the writers seem to carry and reflect the oppressed nature of the subalterns. Such use of untranslated words inscribes a difference – class difference in this case. An active engagement on the part the reader is thus demanded by the text where the reader is forced to read contextually as well as beyond the text.

Then, after *Such a Long Journey* there is an unabashed use of Hindi, Urdu and other languages. In *A Fine Balance* and *Family Matters,* Mistry no longer translates the other languages used apart from English. In *Family Matters* Edul Munshi, the handyman scolding in Marathi: "Tumee lok aykat nai! Bai tumhala kai saangte?" (389), "Asaala kasaala karte? Maine tumko explain kiya, na, eleven o'clock ao. Abhi jao, ration shop ko jao. Paisa banao, later vapis ao" (340) – Edul speaks in a medley of Hindi, Gujarati and English, with occasional Marathi thrown in for that extra special effect. Later again, "'Chaal, Ganpat,' he said, indicating one end of it, then turned to the other: 'And what are you watching, Ganpat, haath lagao, take that side'" (391). When we read the passage dialogically, we also find that the same generic name 'Ganpat' is

bestowed on both the labourers by Edul, thereby negating their identity. He is unapologetic in using dialogized words and phrases. There is no alternate explanation of regional words used. Their meanings can only be gleaned contextually. The untranslated words and phrases seek to reveal Mistry's owning of the English language and making it his. Besides, the untranslated words are not even italicized as in the earlier works but typed in the regular font as the English words. This novel marks a change in the way Mistry perceives Indian English Writing. No doubt, Mistry is a writer/novelist writing in English, and so, a global figure – a man of the world but he does keep his connection to his roots alive through his fiction. Mistry also stresses the intentional markers of stratification in language enabling us to locate a series of heterogeneous phenomena – professional and social dialects, world views and individual views with specific intentions and accents that Bakhtin talks about. As a result of these multiple layers in language, there are no neutral words and forms according to Bakhtin: "language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents" (293).

5.5. Summary

In this chapter, I have examined how the diaspora experience is expressed in the works of the writers in question. The diaspora predicament of **displacement**, **loss of identity**, of **rootlessless**, **longing to belong**, **nostalgia** of the lost 'home' but still unable to reclaim it, have been analysed in the writers' works. The diaspora is then, forced to occupy the **in-between** space, nowhere and everywhere at the same time, shuttling between nations and identities. Pinky in *The White Tiger* does not fit in even after returning to India so does Sarosh/Sid from *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. Sarosh feels

alienated and is unable to reach out to anyone. The swimming lessons in Brampton are just an attempt to blend in, to fit in with the customs of his hostland. But even here, he is unable to strike a real friendship and resorts to voyeurisms. It is not so much the knowledge and ability of swimming that he craves, but human contact; the need for company and friends that propels him to enrol for the swimming class. However, everybody he meets seems to have friends already and he is the outsider in that warm circle. The throbbing life of the diaspora as he/she tries to negotiate a space is captured beautifully by the writers. It has been argued that the diaspora's predicament is found even within the country – India. The diversity of culture is so massive that one is shell-shocked at the enormity of differences in attitudes and values that one comes across travelling throughout India.

Family is very important in India as they are everywhere. The whole extended family, especially the grandmother and grandfather as the source of stories and storytelling, gives the individual a sense of where they came from. In *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, the entire Baag or at least the individual blocks are families. Like real families, sometimes they find the proximity and intimacy too much and so at times yearn to be alone. Dina draws great comfort from the memory of her late husband Rustom and after his death constructs a kind of a makeshift family with Om, Ishvar and Maneck. There is a great sense of loss in the novel *A Fine Balance*. Each character has lost their home and family in some way. But they keep the memory of their home alive. When Maneck, Ishvar and Omprakash come to the city, they have not forgotten who they are. They remember how they used to live as a family and that is what makes them create a semblance of a family in Dina's apartment despite their mutual suspicions and doubts. The diaspora consciousness as found in the aged has also been discussed. Old, frail and incapacitated, the aged becomes entirely dependent on their kit and kin. Just

like how unmarried men and women stay with their parents until they get married (especially in India), it is taken for granted that children will look after their parents in their old age – no questions asked. This is a traditional practice. Modern lifestyle ushered in changes in the mindset of people that in today's world, the practice is diminishing. Filial devotion is considered very strong in India but independent people today don't want to take on that extra burden and when they do, they do it grudgingly. Society's attitude towards elderly people as a non entity with no respect for the unproductive individual also alienates the aged. The aged thus experience everyday marginality. Thus, the diaspora experience of loneliness, alienation and loss of identity as an individual is also presented in the aged by both the writers. The language of Mistry and Adiga has also been analysed. The several voices vying for attention in the narratives are dialogically deconstructed. An objective assessment of the writers' language reveals the multiple layers of meaning that changes with the context.

WORKS CITED

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2008. Print.

---. *Between the Assassinations*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.

---. "Last Christmas in Bandra." *The Times*. 19 Dec. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2014. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/extracts/article2457455.ece>.

---. "The Elephant." *The New Yorker*. 26 Jan. 2009. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/26/the-elephant>.

---. *Last Man in Tower*. Noida: Fourth-Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2011. Print.

Agarwal, Malti, ed. *English Literature: Voices of Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Dist., 2009. Print.

Agnew, Vijay. "Identity Construction in the Diaspora." *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses*. Ed. N.Jayaram. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. 207-224. Print.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Anand, T.S, ed. *Humanism in Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures.* 2nd ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.

Bammer, Angelika. ed. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

---, ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990. Web. <http:// homepage.usask.ca/~wjb289/bigfiles/POLST112/renan_what_is_a_nation.pdf>.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. *Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures and Transcultural Spaces*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003. Print.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. "Repossessing the Master Tongue, Subverting the Master Narrative and Challenging the Metanarrative of history: Rohinton Mistry's Fiction." *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Eds, Anjali Gera Roy, Meena T. Pillai. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 40-54. Print.

Bhautoo-Dewnarain, Nandini. *Rohinton Mistry: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print. Contemporary Indian Writers in English.

Black, S. "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 41.3 (2006): 45-65. Print.

George, R. Marangoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*. London: University of California Press, 1999. Print.

Hirschkop, Ken. "Is Dialogism for Real? *Social Text 30* (1992): 102-113. *JSTOR.* Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466470>.

Hooks, Bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990. Print.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics.* Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.

Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* 1987. India: Penguin-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Such a Long Journey*. 1991. UK: Faber-CPI Bookmarque, 2009. Print.

---. *A Fine Balance.* 1996. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Family Matters.* 2002. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *The Scream.* 2008. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. 371-382. Print.

Nyman, Jopi. Preface. *The Atlantic Literary Review. Spec. issue on Diasporic Indian Fiction*. 2. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2002): n.pag. Web. 5 June 2012.

Paranjape, Makarand, ed. *In-Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2001. Print.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Confessions, 1782-89*. Trans. Angela Scholar. Ed. Patrick Coleman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Book Six. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

Seneviratne, H.L.,ed. Identity, Consciousness and the Past. Colombo: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

Singh, Manjit Inder. "The Human Worlds of Naipaul and Mistry." *Humanism in Indian English Fiction.* Ed. T.S. Anand. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005. 235-240. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 78.

Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. Print.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Dialogue and its various processes are central to Bakhtin's theory of the novel, and it is as verbal process that their force is most accurately sensed. A word, discourse, language or culture undergoes 'dialogization' when it becomes relativized, de-privileged, and aware of competing definitions for the same things. Marginality thus, gets this possibility of having this array of meanings which are neither static nor fixed through dialogism. Bakhtin presents an illuminating illustration of the Tower of Babel (from the Bible) to signify the multiplicity of definitions and value judgements. The Tower of Babel is a story in the Book of Genesis (11:4-5 NIV) meant to explain the origin of different languages. According to the story, a united humanity of the generations following the Great Flood, speaking a single language and migrating from the east came to the land of Shinar. There, they agreed to build a city and tower that reaches to the heavens to earn fame; seeing this God confounded their speech into different tongues so that they could no longer understand each other and scattered them around the world. Bakhtin uses this analogy to illustrate the heteroglossia of language. Along with the internal contradictions, the prose writer has to navigate multitudes of social heteroglossia surrounding the object among which his voice must also sound. And thus, when we read a text dialogically, we see it in its entirety; the dialogism that penetrates the entire structure and all its semantic and expressive layers. David Lodge describes his interest in dialogism in terms of increased flexibility and a widening of options:

> Instead of trying desperately to defend the notion that individual utterances, or texts, have a fixed, original meaning which it is the business of criticism to recover, we can locate meaning in the dialogic process of interaction between speaking subjects, between texts and readers, between texts themselves. (86)

Ashcroft et al. in this regard also says "imperial expansion has had a radically destabilizing effect on its own preoccupations and power, in pushing the colonial world to the margins of experience, the 'centre' pushed consciousness beyond the point at which monocentrism in all spheres of thought could be accepted without question. In other words, the alienating process which initially served to relegate the post-colonial world to the 'margin' turned upon itself and acted to push that world through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentred, pluralistic, and multifarious. Marginality thus became an unprecedented source of creative energy." (*Empire Writes Back* 12). The meaning of marginality thus, is in constant flux with no authoritative or absolute meaning.

In the preceding chapters, the scholar has analysed the theoretical concepts of subaltern and diaspora and its implications with regard to the writers' works in question. **Chapter 1** gives an introduction to the theory of Marginality – Subaltern, Dalitism, Diaspora, and Expatriate. These marginal voices jostle with one another influencing and contradicting each other dialogically, allowing differences of meanings. A brief exploration of Indian English Fiction is undertaken under whose realm Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga's works are situated. The understanding of Indian English Fiction as a contested discourse allows the researcher to study the multiple inherent voices within the genre. A general overview of the writers' narratives, their common themes and concerns has been briefly discussed.

In **chapter 2**, the contestations in subaltern theory and study are analysed at length. Definition of subaltern is problematic – who is a subaltern? What parameters define a subaltern? Opinions differ among scholars yet majority agree that subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other lower sections of the society who are denied access to 'hegemonic' powers. This problematic nature however, garners lively debates on these theories and ensures its longevity and relevance. Critics like Spivak and others have questioned the ability of the subaltern to speak. The issue is of representation. Since the condition of the oppressed is mostly written by the elites, then the oppressed speech is not pure but becomes diluted within the elite's vehicle. The pattern of coercion, its grip on the subalterns is so strong that oppression is legitimized. Mistry and Adiga belong to minority communities in India but somehow as successful diasporic writers, they no longer seem fit the socio-economic minority in India. We have also discussed about Subaltern's affinities with Dalitism and how Dalits like Omprakash Valmiki, Narendra Jadhav and Ambedkar belong to the low caste but they are also national leaders and well-read educated writers. Consequently, they are models of progressive low castes. But no discourse can stand on its own 'pure' entity. And so, the stand that only the subaltern can know the subaltern cannot be held as a theoretical presupposition for subaltern, as subaltern studies cannot exist in a pure space outside the dominant elite discourse.

Next, in **Chapter 3**, Mistry and Adiga's works are analysed as representations of the subaltern. The writers probe deep into the psyche of the deprived, humiliated and denigrated subaltern and are therefore, vehicles of carrying across their message to the elites. Mistry and Adiga's texts emerge from the circumstances of the marginal to share their 'difference', their experiences on the periphery and emphasise their differences from the assumptions of the 'centre'. To the question, can the subaltern ever shed its

subalternity? We should remember that identities are never fixed. It keeps on changing. A person or a group can by sheer determination come out of the subalternity and legitimise their voice in the so called mainstream. Just like how Balram does so to shed his subalternity: chandeliers, champagne and possessing a fleet of Honda cars are outer reflections of his ascend in society. It is also pertinent to understand the differences between different groups and within groups. This differentiation can be gauged in *A Fine Balance* where one subaltern group is subordinated by another group. When we take gender into account, then again, men subordinate women and at several times suppress their voices. Within the same oppressed class/caste/group, we see multiple differences between men and women. They are subjected to varying levels of exploitation. A vicious cycle thus permeates.

Then, in **Chapter 4**, the several definitions of the diaspora have been scrutinized. Leaving the motherland and having migrated to an alien country with a totally different culture and environment, the diaspora finds himself/ herself in the margins. Migration could have been done willingly or unwillingly but the consciousness that he/she is different, or that he/she came from a different country is present in all diasporas. The awareness of this difference and the consequent problems related to it is the predicament of the diaspora. Identity crisis, dislocation, displacement, homelessness, alienation, nostalgia and uprootedness are some of the critical difficulties that the diaspora undergoes living in the margins. A sense of loss permeates and the anxiety to reinvent themselves – their identity and home becomes essential. Cultural contestations and negotiations, thereafter reconstruction happens, as a result diaspora attains this dynamic space of negotiation of diverse meanings. As discussed, diasporic consciousness can be found equally at home. The person need not emigrate abroad to experience this dislocation and displacement. India is a multicultural country with

diverse religio-cultural and linguistic differences. Indo- Aryan, Dravidian, Austroloid, Mongoloid, Negrito – all these racial groups are found in India. Different food/dress/looks/language makes up the beauty of India's unity in diversity and multiculturalism. This beauty, the pride of India as a nation though is often problematic. The sheer diversity means that one part of the country does not understand the other part and vice versa and as such parallel movements in search for greener pastures also results in relocation and displacement within such culture shocks. Diaspora thus, attains this dynamic state through dialogism and becomes a fluid entity with no rigid definitions.

In **Chapter 5**, the diasporic experiences as found in the works of the two writers have been examined. As the immigrant enters new territory, every terrain is marked by uncertainty. It may be that the diaspora has chosen his/her destination but nothing prepares him/her for the massive culture shock and displacement that comes part and parcel with relocation. Nostalgia becomes sort of like a balm to relieve their aching soul. The diasporic predicament of alienation, of loneliness, nowhereness/ the inbetween state – neither able to fully imbibe the cultural mores of the adopted land nor able to feel at home when and if they do return back to the motherland, relentlessly accompanies the diaspora. The characters fail to carve out a space, a home for themselves in their adoptive land neither does the present place of residence fully accept the diaspora and their eccentricities – Sarosh, Kersi of *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. There is thus ambivalence, the simultaneous jostling of attraction and repulsion directed towards the homeland and the hostland alternately. Perhaps, the angst that the diaspora experiences is welcomed by the diaspora as it affords a unique position to strive and fight for acceptance, for excellence and creativity. The diasporic state is then,

never a state of complacency but of energetic contestations that feeds off the unique position that the diaspora is in.

An in-depth dialogical analysis of the language of the writers has also been undertaken in this chapter. Dialogism emphasizes the relation between the author and his work, the work and its readers, and the relation of all three to the social and historical entities that surround them. Bakhtin stressed on the importance of social and historical context in relation to the text. A premeditated condition of successful dialogization is an active listener/reader because according to Bakhtin, the word is open to dispute as it is charged with values and contradictions. Using this theory, the language of the writers has been analysed. The narratives of both writers are dotted with social heteroglossia. The speech of the characters from the upper class is markedly different from the speech of the lower classes. The English language is also peppered with native regional languages whose examples have been amply illustrated. The rhythm of the speeches is influenced heavily by native inflexions. The speech differentiation also reveals the position of the character in relation to his social standing, or the lack of it in the society to the readers. The interaction of the contexts in an utterance lends beauty to the texts and creates clash of discourses and worldviews. The language is shot through with intentions. Even the names of people, places and streets are dialogical. It is important to note the precise relationship between heteroglossia and dialogism. Sue Vice differentiates between this two: “dialogism describes the way languages interact, while heteroglossia describes the languages themselves” (20). Both the writers’ language are therefore heteroglot and dialogic.

Rohinton Mistry and Aravind Adiga have some ostensible similarities: both Mistry and Adiga are settler colony writers – Canada and Australia are settler colonies.

The term is used in post-colonial/colonial discourse to refer to those European colonies where, over time, the invading Europeans annihilated, displaced and/or marginalized the indigenous people to become a majority non-indigenous population. So, "settlers are displaced from their own point of origin and may have difficulties in establishing their identity in the new place and often suffer discrimination as colonial subjects themselves" (Ashcroft et al, *Key Concepts* 211). They are not indigenous people of Canada or Australia, but they are no European colonizers themselves. The physical appearance of the writers ensures that they are in the marginal category so they do are susceptible to the trials of the diaspora. Both the writers belong to minority communities in India, Mistry – a Parsi and Adiga – a Syrian Christian so they do have the first hand experience of living the life of the marginal in India and again, the marginal in their hostland. An analysis of their works also reveals certain affinities. Both of them are concerned about the predicament of the diaspora as well as the subaltern. Both critiqued extensively about Hindu Fundamentalism and the Emergency under Indira Gandhi and its crippling effect especially on the lower caste sections. Rigged elections, corruptions endemic to Indian society are some of the other similar themes in their work.

A microcosm of Parsis is created, be it in the Firozsha Baag Apartment complex in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, the Khodadad Building in *Such a Long Journey*. Similar housing societies are found in Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* – Vishram Society (Tower A and B). And although the residents belong to different ethnic communities presently in the novel, earlier only Christians were allowed to stay. Community is therefore, an important element in their work. Elaborate ethnic traditions and rituals are given a detailed description and analysis in their works. The individual's quest for identity is also therefore, the community's search for identity as a marginal in the Hindu majority

India. What sets them apart from other writers is a keen sense of observation and an infectious wit that charms the readers.

Just like how the Subaltern Studies group of writers attempt to revise official history changed the course of history itself, Mistry re-writes it from the point of view of the victims and the oppressed who experienced the terrors of Emergency and the curtailment of basic fundamental rights. By showing the tragedies imposed on the people by the Emergency, Mistry denounces official representation and version of history as travesty. Forced vasectomy, detention without trial, curtailment of freedom of speech, expression and movement, a gagged media, shady family planning clinics are only some of the troubles that the government under Emergency imposes upon the people, especially the lower sections. Mistry enables the 'Other' – both the traditional Parsi and the working class poor of India to stake claim to be at the centre of his narratives. The Parsi identity is doubly problematic as he/she faces this crisis not only abroad but in India also. The Parsi identity often comes in conflict with the Indian identity. But when the expatriate goes abroad, he is weighed on the same scale and is unacceptable as any other Indians in the eyes of the Westerners. It is the collective fate of all marginalized groups where fate with generous help from the ruthless elite in power succeeds in denigrating them. Under the self-declared superiority of the whip-welding power with tacit social sanctions, the marginalized have to undergo violence, torture and all sorts of physical and psychological discrimination under the assumed 'centre' of the elites.

The marginal position of both the diaspora/immigrant and the subaltern are contested discourses. Some critics may say that diasporas are not in marginal positions with the justification that many of the diasporas occupy important positions in their host

land – scientists, doctors, engineers, writers, politicians, academicians, etc. and so outwardly they live a privileged life. They were also successful in leaving behind a life of mediocrity and so their dream of greener pastures is achieved. Their life is a testament to it. They are world citizens, transnational citizens in some critics' opinion so in that way they have the best of the world. They have their cake and they eat it too. So in this case, they appear to be confident and dominant world leaders. But they are only a miniscule section of the diaspora and often times their confidence mask a vulnerability of being the outsider, the marginal import. Adiga and Mistry succeeds in unravelling the façade and dismantles perceived notions of rigid definitions. Yes, diaspora is a thriving community. They are an important part of their host land as well as their land of origin. But however advanced and liberated they are, their lives still hinges on the periphery. The writers' works reveals these peripheral lives and their search for identity and belonging. The diaspora's distinctive physical feature that reveals their roots sometimes deter them in their lives, in their chosen host land and is a physical marker of their difference. Dialogism also occurs when "incongruous voices and styles press against one another inside a common arena" (Sudesh Mishra 58). In this case, the diaspora and subaltern are pressed together inside the common arena of marginality based on the authors' marginalized positions culturally and as expatriates. Sometimes in their writings, their characters and situations appear rather radical and forceful and a tad contrived. Perhaps it masks the anger of an elite class of writers who gets the possibility of using these representations to speak for themselves as they do seem to be writers who have political positions – critique of the democratic government policies, the Emergency, society in the throes of communal tensions and intolerance. Since critical dialogism is based on an evocation of such inherent mixture and double voicedness, while the scholar includes Diaspora and Subaltern as marginal entities, she

is not positioning them in the same category. Subaltern as marginals posits an altogether different ball game to diaspora as marginals. The 'otherness' of the subalterns does not stand in the same relation of 'otherness' of the diaspora. Yet, both stand nonetheless on the periphery. Each has negotiated its own stamp to stand out as an accepted critical genre of its own.

Mistry is a master narrator. His keen eye for details and brilliant insights is reflected in his characters. The resiliency of Om and Ishvar in *A Fine Balance* awes the reader. The hardships they had to undergo all their lives makes the average people's troubles so insignificant compared to theirs. The dogged resistance to face life head-on, not to give up despite the atrocities in their path, and barely surviving on their exiguous supplies is admirable. Fate sometimes seems to be playing tricks on them as temporary respites makes them feel that their troubles are finally over but another bigger problem bamboozles them. The prospect of the silver lining at the end of the tunnel keeps them going despite all the odds but it seems hell-bent on eluding them. It becomes just an illusion for them. But like the phoenix they rise above every tragedy that life throws at them and every time we think that they are over, that they couldn't possible overcome this tragedy, they then come whirling into the narrative. The story-telling prowess of Mistry strikes us deeply and he is able to capture and hold the readers' attention and garner the sympathy of the readers towards his unlikely heroes. What strikes the readers most is Mistry's ability to weave stories, link them together and bring them to epic proportions in the process creating a sea of humanity.

Mistry's texts are often termed as "Nostaligia Writing" by critics as his writings are a result of memory. In an interview, Mistry termed his creative process as "imagination ground through the mill of memory". It is, he further adds, "impossible to

separate the two ingredients" (Lambert). Memory of Bombay and its heady life seems to constantly inspire Mistry to pen it into black and white and to preserve it for posterity. To quote S. Ramaswamy, "Remembering, re-enacting, recreating that place, time, people with accuracy, understanding and insight is the vision of Rohinton Mistry" (54). The diasporic writers often have pangs of nostalgia often triggered by a memory of the past resulting in the creation of the imaginary homeland that Rushdie talks about. Whether it is *Tales From Ferozsha Baag*, *Such a Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance* or *Family Matters*, Mistry uses memory as a narrative technique. Bharucha rightly termed it as 'nostalgia conjured as re-memory'.

Mistry's fiction is a world of its own. His characters are all entwined together and his fictional world constantly makes reference to each other. These are intentional markers expressedly done by the author: signs left behind that signify an intention. In *A Fine Balance*, published five years after *Tales from Ferozsha Baag*, Dina Dalal discusses the issue of paying guests with her friend Zenobia and makes a reference to a Firozsha Baag incident: "Like what happened in Firozsha Baag remember" (FB 66). Again, in *Family Matters*, there is a reference to Firozsha Baag by Jal Coomy: "Just last week in Firozsha Baag an old lady was beaten and robbed" (5) and later in the novel references are made to *A Fine Balance*, this time the character Vilas referring to it as a great novel that he read laughing and crying alternately (210). The collection of short stories *Tales from Ferozsha Baag* are entwined more intimately to each other and often the characters find mention in more than one story and sometimes the narrative overlap so that it becomes a whole story in one. The narrative thread is found throughout the stories; it is just that they are narrated from different perspectives and narrators.

Adiga's wry, humour is revealed on several occasions. We relish it when Balram mispronounces mall in *The White Tiger* as '*maal'*. Ashok and Pinky hysterically laughs as Balram try to pronounce it correctly – '*moool*', '*mowll*', '*malla*' (WT 147). Again, Balram mispronounces pizza as 'piJJA'. Pinky promptly corrects it as 'piZZa'. But Ashok corrects Pinky that "there's a T in the middle. *Peet.Zah*" (154). Pizza is a western import. It is not an indigenous food and so as much as she wants to let on that she is modernised and as much as she professes to hate Delhi/India and would rather be in America, it is indeed difficult to get the India out of Pinky. Adiga also uses a lot of animal imagery and symbolism to lend a sense of gloom and terror to the doom of Masterji's fate that finally usher in the ultimate gothic demise of him: the image of the snake circling and curling up on him as he dozes off in the afternoon for the first time in his adult life. The snake's tongue flicking before him goading "You're next Masterji" (LMT 261); the image of a moth circling about the rotating blade of the ceiling fan and being ultimately sucked in by the whirlpool of air, " it drew closer and closer to the blades until two dark wings fluttered down to the floor" (263).

Adiga's acerbic, direct, no-nonsense narrative style is the perfect tool to write back to the centre/ the elites. The representations of subalternity is radical, darkly humorous, sometimes unrealistic, other times imperfectly real characters. His characters mince no words. There is no trace of the submissive, hesitant, docile attitude of the subalterns as in Mistry's novels. This is one marked difference between the approaches of the two writers. Adiga's subaltern characters are strong, assertive individuals albeit a denigrated, humiliated lot – Balram, Chenayya, Shankara P. Kinni. Balram takes matters in his own hands to rise to the top. He is determined to crawl out of his miserable low caste life by fair or foul means. Killing his own master and outrageously taking his name – Ashok Sharma is just another rung up the ladder for an entrepreneur

like him. Chenayya, the rickshaw cart-puller is another interesting character. He doesn't waste his time in wallowing in self pity. Shouting and cursing he takes on what life gives him and gives back in full measure. Shankara P. Kinni, the half-Brahmin half-Hoyka is considered to be worst off than merely belonging to low caste. He is an outcaste within both castes and a subject of ridicule. He replies back with a crude bomb blast at his institution – a symbol of society's oppression for a lifetime of ridicule and insults to his person – a half-caste bastard. Adiga's protagonists are not heroes per se. They are not exalted characters and do not possess noble traits. They have the Aristotelian tragic flaws. But still Adiga succeeds in humanizing them. They are figures of admiration and revulsion at the same time; we admire their tenacity to survive and we cringe at the not so noble methods they embrace to reach their goal. Yet, they are still able to capture and retain the reader's sympathy despite misgivings on several occasions. His narratives are of courage in the midst of dispossessedness, of despair unearthed from the unfathomed lives of people who are undistinguishable. Common villagers, landless labourers in the villages, towns and cities, beggars, marginal communities, cart-pullers, prostitutes and all people that dots the fringes of society finds a voice in his narratives and they challenge the readers to new heights of social awareness. They are narratives of resistance and change.

Mistry and Adiga have seen the best and the worst of both East and West as global writers. They are not merely spectators. Their creative juices flow from the comingling of their lived experiences. So when they write about the diasporic experience, rest assured their tales steam from their vast depository of memory and experience. Belonging to minority communities in India, they do have a repertoire of life at the fringes. So from one end of the spectrum to another – life as a minority in India to life as a diaspora – they turn their experiences into tales extraordinaire. A

panoramic view of what the world looks like from the margins and the borderlines is shown in their works. Their narratives give space and voice to the excluded and the dispossessed. In his foreword to Amnesty International's compilation of short stories entitled *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, "the best of imagined stories always carry the ring of human truth and reality, while real-life stories convey the joy of love and achievement or tell painful truths of the agony of inhumanity" (vii). Mistry's and Adiga's works thus carries this 'imagined stories' that carries the' ring of human truth and reality'. The writers' ability to shock and transfix people is unquestionable. The predicament of the diaspora as he/she shoulders dual responsibilities and navigate multiple cultures and assert his/her identity and the resisting voice of the subalterns – dispossessed and the obscure people in the fringes of society are realities. These marginal identities find voice in the narratives of these two writers, in the process enriching the literature of the world with their distinctive individual stamps marking them as writers to be reckoned with.

Works Cited

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2008. Print.

---. *Last Man in Tower*. Noida: Fourth-Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2011. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures.* 2nd ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. *Post-Colonial Studies: Key Concepts.* London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.

Lodge, David. *After Bakhtin*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.

Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance.* 1996. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Family Matters.* 2002. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. "Touched with Fire." Interview by Angela Lambert. *The Guardian*. April 26, 2002. Web. 24 June 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/apr/27/fiction.books>.

Ramaswamy, S. “Local Colour in the Tales from Firozsha Baag.” *Fiction of Rohinton Mistry: Critical Studies*. Ed. Jaydipsingh Dodiya. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1998. 54-60. Print.

Tutu, Desmond. Forword. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International. New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. vii-ix. Print.

Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. Print.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2008. Print.

---. *Between the Assassinations*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.

---."Taking Heart From The Darkness." Interview. *Tehelka* 5.38. 27 Sept. 2008. Web. 11 Dec. 2011. <http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=hub270908Takingheart.asp>.

---. "I highlighted India's Brutal Injustices: Adiga." Interview. *Rediff.com*. 16 Oct. 2008. Web. 22 June 2012. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2008/oct/16adiga.htm>.

---. "Roars of Anger." Interview by Stuart Jeffries. *The Guardian*. 16 Oct. 2008. Web. 6 Aug. 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/oct/16/booker-prize>.

---. "Provocation is one of the legitimate goals of literature." Interview by Vijay Rana. *The Indian Express*. 18 Oct. 2008. Web. 9 Nov. 2013. <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/-provocation-is-one-of-the-legitimate-goals-of-literature-/374718/>.

---. "The Sultan's Battery." *The Guardian*. 18 Oct. 2008. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/oct/18/aravind-adiga-short-story>.

---. "Smack." *The Sunday Times*. 16 Nov. 2008. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/culture/books/article131430.ece>.

---. “Last Christmas in Bandra.” *The Times*. 19 Dec. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2014. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/extracts/article2457455.ece>.

---. “The Elephant.” *The New Yorker*. 26 Jan. 2009. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/26/the-elephant>.

---. *Last Man in Tower*. Noida: Fourth-Harper Collins Publishers & India Today Group, 2011. Print.

Mistry, Rohinton. *Tales from Firozsha Baag.* 1987. India: Penguin-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Such a Long Journey*. 1991. UK: Faber-CPI Bookmarque, 2009. Print.

---. *A Fine Balance.* 1996. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. *Family Matters.* 2002. India: Faber-Thomson Press Ltd, 2006. Print.

---. Interview by Nermeen Shiekh. *AsiaSource*. Web. 30 Oct. 2012. <www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/mistry.cfm>.

---. “Touched with Fire.” Interview by Angela Lambert. *The Guardian*. April 26, 2002. Web. 24 June 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/apr/27/fiction.books>.

---. *The Scream.* 2008. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. 371-382. Print.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

Acheraïou, Amar. *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization.* Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Agarwal, Malti, ed. *English Literature: Voices of Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2009. Print.

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992. Print.

Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Aikant, Satish C, ed. *Critical Spectrum: Essays in Literary Culture*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2004. Print.

Amin, Shahid and Dipesh Chakrabarty, eds. *Subaltern Studies IX: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1996. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Anand, T.S., ed. *Humanism in Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005. Print.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 1991.

Arnold, David and David Hardiman, eds. *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha.* 1994. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures.* 2nd ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. *Post-Colonial Studies: Key Concepts.* London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.

Bammer, Angelika, ed. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994. Print.

Beverly, John. *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Bhadra, Gautam, Gyan Prakash, Susie Tharu, eds. *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. *Rohinton Mistry: Ethnic Enclosures and Transcultural Spaces*. Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003. Print.

Bhatnagar, M.K. & M. Rajeshwar, eds. *Indian Writings in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002. Print.

Bhautoo-Dewnarain, Nandini. *Rohinton Mistry: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print. Contemporary Indian Writers in English.

Boehmer, Elieke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. New York: OUP, 1995. Print.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Braziel, Jana Evans, Anita Mannur, eds. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. Print.

Bromley, Roger. *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. Print.

Brown, Judith M. *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.

Cann, Paul and Malcolm Dean, eds. *Unequal Ageing: The Untold Story of Exclusion in Old Age*. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009. Print.

Chakravorty, Swapan, Suzana Milevska and Tani E. Barlow. *Conversations With Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. London: Seagull Books, 2006. Print.

Chandra, N.D.R, ed. *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Theory and Practices*. Vol. I & II. New Delhi: Authors Press, 2005. Print.

Chatterjee, Partha and Gyanendra Pandey, eds. *Subaltern Studies VII*. Delhi: OUP, 1993. Print.

Chaturvedi, Vinayak, ed. *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. London: Verso, 2000. Print.

Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press, 1997. Print.

Dangle, Arjun, ed. *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature.* Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992. Print.

Danow, David K. *The Thought of Mikhail Bakhtin: From Word to Culture*. London: Macmillan, 1991. Print.

Das, Bijay Kumar. *Critical Essays of Post -colonial Literature.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007. Print.

Das, Sisir Kumar. *A History of Indian Literature 1911- 1956: Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy.* New Delhi: Sahitya Academy,1995. Print.

Desai, Shantinath K, ed. *Creative Aspects of Indian English*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003. Rpt. 1995. Print.

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

Dodiya, Jaydipsinh, ed. *The Fiction of Rohinton Mistry: Critical Studies*. New Delhi: Prestige, 1998. Print.

Fludernik, Monika, ed. *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006. Print.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. 4th imp. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

George, R. Marangoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*. London: University of California Press, 1999. Print.

Guha, Ranajit, ed. *Subaltern Studies 1: Writing on South Asian History and Society*. 1982. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

---, ed. *Subaltern Studies II*: *Writings on South Asian History and Society* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983. Print.

---, ed. *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1984. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

---, ed. *Subaltern Studies IV*: *Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985. Print.

---, ed. *Subaltern Studies V. Writings on South Asian History and Society*. 1987. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

---, ed. *Subaltern Studies VI*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

---, ed. *A Subaltern Studies Reader: 1986-1995*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.

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

Habib, Irfan. *Essays in Indian History*. Delhi: Tulika, 1997. Print.

Hirschkop, Ken, David Shepherd. *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1993. Print.

Hill, Robert W., ed. *Tennyson's Poetry: A Norton Critical Edition*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.

Holquist, Michael. Dialogism: *Bakhtin and His World*. 2nd ed. London & New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Hooks, Bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990. Print.

Jadhav, Narendra. *Outcaste: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Viking, 2003. Print.

Jain, Jasbir, ed. *Writers of Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice*. Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1998. Print.

Jaleel, Muzamil, et al. *People Unlike Us: The India that is Invisible.* New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2001. Print.

Jayaram, N., ed. *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print.

Joshi, Priya. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India.* Columbia University Press, 2002. Print.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fiction: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Kumar, Gajendra. *Indian English Novel: Text and Context*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002. Print.

Lal, Malashri. *The Law of the Threshold: Women Writers in Indian English*. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995. Print.

Lamb, Sarah. *Aging and the Indian Diaspora: Cosmopolitan Families in India and Abroad*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009. Print.

Lavie, Smadar and Ted Swedenburg, eds. *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.

Lodge, David. *After Bakhtin*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics.* Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996. Print.

Ludden, David, ed. *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia.* Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. Print.

Mandal, Somdatta, ed. *The Indian Imagination: Colonial and Postcolonial Literature and Culture.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 2007. Print.

Mathur, O.P. *New Critical Approaches to Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2001. Print.

McCutchion, David. *Indian Writing in English*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1969. print.

McLeod, A.L, ed. *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000. Print.

McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., 2010. Print.

Mehrotra, Arvind Krishna, ed. *A History of Indian Literature in English*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. Print.

Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.

Mittapalli, Rajeshwar, Alessandro Monti, ed. *Post- Independence Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2001. Print.

Morey, Peter. *Fictions of India: Narrative and Power*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press,2000. Print.

Morley, David. *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Mukherjee, Bharati. *The Tiger's Daughter*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1971 rpt. 1990. Print.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English*. Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

---. *The Twice Born Fiction*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print

Naik, M.K. *Twentieth Century Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2004. Print.

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

Narasimhaiah, C.D. *English Studies in India: Widening Horizons*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2002. Print.

Nasta, Susheila, ed. *Writing Across Worlds: Contemporary Writers Talk*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Nayar, Promod K. *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd., 2008. Print.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005. Print.

Pal, Adesh, Tapas Chakrabarti, eds. *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

---, eds. *Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 64.

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

Paranjape, Makarand R. *Another Canon: Indian Texts and Traditions in English*. New Delhi: Anthem Press, 2009. Print.

Paranjape, Makarand, ed. *In-Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2001. Print.

Patil, Z.N. *Style in Indian English Fiction: A Study in Politeness Strategies*. New Delhi: Prestige, 1994. Print.

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

Pechey, Graham. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Word in the World*. London & New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Piciucco, Pier Paolo, ed. *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors. Print.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen, Bhikhu Parekh, eds. *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

Pillai, Meena T., Anjali Gera Roy, eds. *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. Print.

Raghuram, Parvati, Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Brij Maharaj and Dave Sangha, eds. *Tracing an Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2008. Print.

Rai, Rajesh, Peter Reeves, eds. *The South Asian Diaspora: Transnational Networks and Changing Identities.* London and New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Rajan, P.K, ed. *The Growth of the Novel in India.* New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1989. Print.

Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

Raveendran, P. P. *Texts Histories Geographies: Reading Indian Literature*. Chennai: Orient BlackSwan, 2009. Print.

Reddy, K. Venkata, P. Bayapa Reddy, eds. *The Indian Novel with a Social Purpose*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999. Print.

Rodrigues, Valerian. *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.

Ross, Robert L, ed. *Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction: An Anthology*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999. Print.

Roy, Anjali Gera, Meena T. Pillai, eds. *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism.* Delhi: Pencraft Interbational, 2007. Print.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Confessions, 1782-89*. Trans. Angela Scholar. Ed. Patrick Coleman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Book Six. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books, 1992. Print.

---. *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002*. London: Vintage Books, 2003. Print.

Rushdie, Salman, and Elizabeth West, eds. *Mirrorwork: 50 Years of Indian Writing, 1947-1997*. Henry Holt, 1997. Print.

Ruth, Sura P, Kailash C. Baral, D. Venkat Rao, eds. *Reflections on Literature, Criticism and Theory: Essays in Honour of Professor Prafulla C. Kar*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2004. Print.

Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. Print.

Sadana, Rashmi. *English Heart, Hindi Heartland: The Political Life of Literature in India.* Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012. Print.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge, 1978. Print.

---.*Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994. Print.

Safran, William, Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Brij V. Lal, eds. *Transnational Migrations: The Indian Diaspora*. London, New York and New Delhi: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Satchidanandan, K. *Authors, Texts, Issues: Essays on Indian Literature*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. Print.

Selvam, P. *Humanism in the Novels of Rohinton Mistry*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. Print.

Seneviratne, H.L.,ed. *Identity, Consciousness and the Past.* Colombo: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

Sharma, S.D. *Studies in Fiction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2003. Print.

Shepherd, David, ed. *The Contexts of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998. Print. Studies in Russian and European Literature Vol. 2.

Singh, Karan, Amod Rai and Jyoti Yadav, eds. *Dalit Literature: Challenges & Potentialities*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. Print.

Singh, Neera, ed. *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/longing*. New Delhi: Book Plus, 2008. Print.

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

Sinha, R.C.P. *The Indian Autobiography in English*. New Delhi: S.Chand & Company Ltd., 1978. Print.

Srinivasan, K. S. *The Ethos of Indian Literature: A Study of its Romantic Tradition*. Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1985. Print.

Srivastava, Neelam. *Secularism in the Postcolonial Indian Novel: National and Cosmopolitan Narratives in English.* London & New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Surendran, K.V. *Indian English Fiction: New Perspectives*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002. Print.

Talib, Ismail S. *The Language of Postcolonial Literatures: An Introduction*. London: Routlege, 2002. Print.

Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1985. Print.

Varma, Sushma J., Radhika Seshan, eds. *Fractured Identity: The Indian Diaspora in Canada*. Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003. Print.

Verma, C.D. *The Exile-Hero and the Reintegrating Vision in Indian English Fiction*. Delhi: Sterling, 1991. Print.

Verma, K. D. *The Indian Imagination: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*. Palgrave, 2000. Print.

Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. New York: Manchester University Press, 1997. Print.

Vijayasree, C, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Harish Trivedi & T Vijay Kumar, eds. *Nation in Imagination: Essays on Nationalism, Sub-Nationalisms and Narration.* Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007. Print.

Walder, Dennis. *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation, and Memory*. New York & London: Routledge, 2011. Print.

Walker, Alan and Carol Walker, eds. *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*. London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1997. Print.

Wilson, Janet, Cristina Sandru & Sara Lawson Welsh, eds. *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium.* London & New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

ARTICLES, JOURNALS, REVIEWS, MAGAZINES, etc.

Agnew, Vijay. "Identity Construction in the Diaspora." *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses*. Ed. N.Jayaram. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011. 207-224. Print.

Ahmad, Aijaz. "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality." *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997. 276-293. Print.

Asnani, Shyam M. "Identity Crisis of Indian Immigrants: A Study of Three Novels." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 184-191. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Behera, Guru Charan. "Bakhin's Diologism: A Study of Intertextuality." *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice.* Ed. N.D.R. Chandra. New Delhi: Authors Press, 2005. 127-138. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. “The Third Space: Interview With Homi Bhabha.” *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 207-221. Print.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. “Repossessing the Master Tongue, Subverting the Master Narrative and Challenging the Metanarrative of History: Rohinton Mistry’s Fiction.” *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Eds, Anjali Gera Roy, Meena T. Pillai. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 40-54. Print.

Black, S. “Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines.” Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 41.3 (2006): 45-65. Print.

Carey, Glenn. Rev. of *Such a Long Journey*, by Rohinton Mistry. *Library Journal* 15 April 1991. 116. Print.

Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. 222-37. Print.

---. “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity.” *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. Ed. Anthony D. King. London: Macmillan, 1991. Print.

---. “ Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities .” *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. Ed. Anthony D. King. London: Macmillan, 1991. Print.

Hardiman, David. “Adivasi Assertion in South Gujarat: the Devi Movement of 1922-3.” *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 196-230. Print.

Jussawalla, Feroza. "'Hybridity', Our Ancestral Heritage: Minority 'Indian' Writers Speak of their Diversity." *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth Century Indian Literature.* Ed. Monika Fludernik. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006. 199-212. Print.

Kapoor, Kapil. "Keynote Address: Theorizing Diaspora and the Indian Experience." *Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora*. Eds. Adesh Pal and Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 27-41. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 64.

Kumar, Narendra V.L.V.N. "Rohinton Mistry's Tales from Firozsha Baag: A Note on the Use of Irony." *Indian English Fiction*: *New Perspectives*. Ed. K.V. Surendran. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002. Print.

Landy, Frederic, Brij Maharaj and Helene Mainet-Valleix. "Are People of Indian Origin (PIO) 'Indian'?: A Case Study of South Africa." *Geoforum* 35.2 (2004): 203-215. Print.

Masselos, Jim. "The Dis/appearance of Subalterns: A Reading of a Decade of *Subaltern Studies.*" *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. Ed. David Ludden. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. 187-211. Print.

Mishra, Charu Chandra. "Ecology and Identity Crisis in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction." *Indian English Fiction*: *New Perspectives*. Ed. K.V. Surendran. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002. Print.

Mishra, Dayashankar. "Shuttling Between Identities: Destiny of Diasporic Communities." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal &

Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 171-183. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Mishra, Vijay. Introduction. *Diasporas*. Spec. Double Issue of *SPAN* 34-35 (Nov. 1992-May 1993): 1-2. Print.

---. "The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diaspora." *Textual Practice* 10.3 (1996): 421-47. Print.

---. "Diasporas and the Art of Impossible Mourning." *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Ed. Makarand Paranjape. New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2001. 24- 51. Print.

Narayan, Shyamala A. "Changing Perceptions of the Nation in Indian English Literature." *Focus India: Postcolonial Narratives of the Nation*. Eds. T Vijay Kumar, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Harish Trrivedi, C Vijayasree. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. 34-47. Print.

Neuberger, Julia. "What Does it Mean to be Old?" *Unequal Ageing: The Untold Story of Exclusion in Old Age*. Eds. Paul Cann and Malcolm Dean. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009. 101-122. Print.

Pandey, Gyanendra. "The Prose of Otherness." *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*. Ed. David Arnold and David Hardiman. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 188-221. Print.

Patel, V.S. "Naipaul's Half a Life: A Study in Diasporic Experience." *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal, Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 251-258. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Rai, Amod Kumar. “Dalit Literature: Origin, Nature, Definition and Scope.” *Dalit Literature: Challenges & Potentialities*. Eds. Karan Singh, Amod Rai, Jyoti Yadav. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. 39-45. Print.

Ramanan, Mohan. “Some Reflections on Indian Diasporic Literature.” *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. 36-46. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63.

Ramaswamy, S. “Local Colour in the Tales from Firozsha Baag”. *Fiction of Rohinton Mistry: Critical Studies*. Ed. Jaydipsingh Dodiya. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1998. 54-60. Print.

Ramraj, Victor. “Diasporas and Multiculturalism.” *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996. 214-29. Print.

Rao, C.R.Visweswara. “The Dialect of the Diaspora: Rohinton Mistry”. *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. Eds. Adesh Pal & Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 63

Safran, William. “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return.” *Diaspora: Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (1991): 83-99. Print.

Sarkar, Sumit. “The Conditions and Nature of Subaltern Militancy: Bengal from Swadeshi to Non-Co-operation, c. 1905-22.” *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 271-320. Print.

Sen, Asok. “Subaltern Studies: Capital, Class and Community.” *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 203-235. Print.

Sharma, Charu. “Home Isn’t Home Anymore! Spaced Lives? The Hindi Bindi Club.” *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/longing*. Ed. Neera Singh. New Delhi: Book Plus, 2008. 133- 141. Print.

Singh, Manjit Inder. “The Human Worlds of Naipaul and Mistry.” *Humanism in Indian English Fiction.* Ed. T.S. Anand. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2005. 235-240. Print. Creative New Literatures Series- 78

Sivaramakrishnan, K. “Situating the Subaltern: History and Anthropology in the *Subaltern Studies* Project.” *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia*. Ed. David Ludden. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010. 213-55. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Grifiths & Helen Tiffin. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. 28-37. Print.

---. “Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value.” *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New Delhi: OUP, 1997. pp 190-222. Print.

---. “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern.” *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics.* New York and London: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Tölölyan, Khachig. “The Nation-State and its Others: In Lieu of a Preface.” *Diaspora* 1.1 (1991): 3-36. Print.

Tutu, Desmond. Forword. *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Amnesty International. New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2009. vii-ix. Print.

Weeks, Jeffrey. “The Value of Difference.” *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 88-100. Print.

Yadav, Jyoti. “Silence is not Surrender: Challenging the Caste Hegemony in Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance.*” *Dalit Literature: Challenges & Potentialities*. Eds. Karan Singh, Amod Rai, Jyoti Yadav. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2009. 179-186. Print.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

Adiga, Aravind. “Books of a Lifetime: Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison.” *The Independent*. 28 March 2008. Web. 17 Aug. 2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/book-of-a-lifetime-invisible-man-ralph-ellison-801474.html>.

---. “India’s Worst Fear: The Honest Politician.” *The Guardian*. 30 July 2008. Web. 17 Aug. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jul/30/india.scamsandfraud>.

---. “Bachelor Bigotry.” *The Guardian*. 28 Aug. 2008. Web. 17 Aug. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/aug/28/india.renting>.

---. “The Little Movie that Could.” *The Daily Beast*. 12 May 2009. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2009/05/12/the-little-movie-that-could.html>.

---. “How English Literature Shaped Me.” *The Independent*. 17 July 2009. Web. 17 Aug. 2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/aravind-adiga-how-english-literature-shaped-me-1749429.html>.

---. “A Tale of Two Artist.” *The Times of India*. 3 Mar. 2012. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/A-tale-of-two-artists/articleshow/12113959.cms>.

---. “Art of the Provincial.” *The Times of India*. 31 Mar. 2012. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/Art-of-the-provincial/articleshow/12472883.cms>.

Beattie, Steven W. Rev. of *The Scream*, by Rohinton Mistry. *Quill and Quire*. Canada: St. Joseph's Media, n.d. Web. 15 Sept. 2013. <http://www.quillandquire.com/review/the-scream/>.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H. M. Parshley. Penguin, 1972. Web. 05 April 2012. <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Reader.102/Beauvoir.I.pdf>.

Beth, Sarah. "Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: The Transformation of Pain into Resistance." *Sasnet*. n.d. Web. 10 June 2013. <http:// www.sasnet.lu.so/EASASpapers/4SarahBeth.pdf./>.

Bhabha, Homi K.,ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990. Web. 15 June 201. Web. <http://homepage.usask.ca/~wjb289/bigfiles/ POLST112/renan_what_is_a_nation.pdf>.

Brubaker, Rogers. "The 'Diaspora Diaspora.'" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005): 1-19. Web. 6 April 2012. <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/ soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/29_Diaspora_diaspora_ERS.pdf>.

Clifford, James. "Diasporas." *Cultural Anthropology*. 9.3 (Aug. 1994): 302-338. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656365>.

Craig, Amanda. *Literary Review*, March 1996. Web. 30 Nov 2013. <http://www.bookcrossing.com/journal/183986/>.

Crewe, Jonathan. "Defining Marginality?" *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 10.1 (Spring 1991): 121-130. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/463956>.

D'Cruz, Doreen. "Configuring the Dynamics of Dispossession in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* & Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things." New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 5, 2 *(*December, 2003): 56-76. Web. 24 April 2012. <http://www.nzasia.org.nz/downloads/NZJAS-Dec03/5.2_6.pdf>.

"Delhi Election: BJP's Vision Documents Northeast Indians Immigrants." *India Today.in*. New Delhi. 3 Feb. 2015. Web. 6 Feb. 2015. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/delhi-election-bjps-vision-documents-northeast-indians-immigrants/1/416727.html>.

Eagleton, Terry, Fredric Jameson and Edward W. Said. *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. London: University of Minnesota Press. 2001. Web. 9 Oct. 2012.<http ://gerusija.com/downloads/nationalism_colonialism%20and%20literature.pdf>.

Fakhri, Nargis & Freida Pinto. "Koffee With Karan: Season 4- Nargis Fakhri & Freida Pinto." *Koffee With Karan*. Startv, Mumbai. Television/Web. 19 Nov. 2014. <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1f91fg_full-episode-koffee-with-karan-season-4-nargis-fakhri-freida-pinto_tv>.

Ganapathy-Dore, Geetha. *The Postcolonial Indian Novel in English.* London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. Web. 03 April 2012. <http://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/61086>.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. UK: Polity Press, 1996. Web. 25 Jan. 2011. <http://ewclass.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2015/02/Giddens_-_Consequences_of_Modernity_17388b4f6c76919ffe7817f7751c61fa.pdf>.

Hirschkop, Ken. "Is Dialogism for Real? *Social Text* 30 (1992): 102-113. *JSTOR.* Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466470>.

"Indian Novelist Aravind Adiga Wins Booker Prize." *Agencies*. 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 09 Feb. 2012. <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/indian-novelist-aravind-adiga-wins-booker-prize/373637/>.

Krishnan, Lakshmi. "An Infernal History of India." *The Oxonian Review*. 9.8. 15 June 2009. Web. 11 June 2014. <http://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/an-infernal-history-of-india/>.

Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women*. 12th Print. Cambridge: M.I.T Press, 1989. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1869.pdf>.

Nyman, Jopi. Preface. *The Atlantic Literary Review.* Spec. issue on *Diasporic Indian Fiction*.3 .4 (Oct.-Dec. 2002): n.pag. Web. 5 June 2012.

Overdorf, Jason. "An Oppressed Voice Heard." Rev. of *Outcaste: A Memoir*, by Narendra Jadhav. *Asia Times.* 20 Sept. 2003. Web. 20 June 2013. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/E120Df02.html.>.

Prakash, Gyan. "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography." Social Text 31-32. Third World and Postcolonial Issues (1992): 8-19. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Nov. 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466216>.

Riesman, David. "Some Observations Concerning Marginality." *Phylon* 12. 2 (1951): 113-127. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/271565>.

Shevtsona, Maria. "Dialogism in the Novel and Bakhtin's Theory of Culture." *New Literary History* 23.3 (Summer 1992): 747-763. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Nov. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/409228>.

"The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga." Review. *The Telegraph*. Aug. 9 2008. Web. 18 Sept. 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/fictionreviews/3558130/Review-The-White-Tiger-by-Aravind-Adiga.html>.

Vajpayee, Atal Bihari. "Inaugural Address – First Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Conference." New Delhi: 9 Jan. 2003. <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in/ch1.pdf>.