

A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ARUNDHATI ROY AND KIRAN DESAI

(Dissertation submitted to the Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English)

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DECLARATION

I, **Zuchobeni**, hereby declare that the subject matter of my dissertation entitled **A Postcolonial Study in the Select Novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai**, is the bonafide record of research work done by me, under the supervision of Dr. Lemtila Alinger, and that the content of the dissertation did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, diploma or title etc in any other University or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in English**.

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *A Postcolonial Study in the Select Novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai* is a bonafide record of research work done by Miss Zuchobeni, Regn. No. 14/2019, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2017-19. Submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English, this dissertation has not previously formed the basis of any degree, diploma or other title and the candidate under my supervision. This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC Regulations May 2016 (amended) and the candidate has fulfilled 8th criteria mentioned in the University Ordinances for the submission of the dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Postcolonialism

Fanon states I will not make myself a man of the past.... I am not a prisoner of history; it is only by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom. (229-231).

The term colonialism is important in defining the specific form of cultural exploitation that developed with the expansion of Europe over the last 400 years. It refers to a set of critical attitudes taken towards colonialism. It emerged as a distinct mode of study only in the 1990's. Colonialism, thus instead of disappearing as the century goes on modified itself and developed into the neo-colonialism of the post-independence period. Bill Ashcroft et al. substantiate post-colonial theory in the following lines:

Post-colonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. (2).

Post colonialism is a vicious cycle of resistance and reconstruction, it involves discussion about various kinds of experience such as slavery, displacement, resistance, suppression, difference, representation, racial and cultural discrimination and gender issues. Ashcroft et all

states that the term 'post-colonial' has come to stand for "both the material effects of colonization and the huge diversity of everyday and sometimes hidden responses to it." (2-7).

The beginning of the theoretical and social concerns of Post colonialism can be traced to the 1950's. After independence the colonized countries felt the need to search for their own unique voice and identity. The following decades witnessed the publication of additional key texts that expressed the political, social and economic conditions of various subaltern groups. In 1960 George Lamming the Caribbean writer published *The Pleasures of Exile*, a text in which he critiques *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare through a postcolonial perspective.

Post colonialism as a theoretical literary movement originated in the mid twentieth century texts of Frantz Fanon. Fanon is one of the first figures of post colonialism. He was born in the French Antilles in 1925 and educated in Martinique and France. His publications include *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963); *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) and *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967), these books deal with the mechanics of colonialism and its effects on those it ensnared. Aime Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972) and Albert Memmi's *The Coloniser and the Colonised* (1965) are also some postcolonial texts of the same century.

Aime Cesaire was also an influential figure in the field of postcolonial studies. In her classic work *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972) which was originally published in 1955. Cesaire equates colonization with 'thingification' and claimed that colonization destroyed the great civilizations including the civilization of the Aztecs and the Incas and ruined the cultures and institutions, religions and national economies of societies which were once democratic, cooperative and fraternal (2-7).

Cesaire is also acknowledged for coining the term 'negritude'. He tried to make the native people who were alien to their own culture realize their internal strength. In his introduction to

Cesaire's distinguished poetry book *Return to my Native Land*, Kunene notes that negritude was essentially a doctrine "which asserts the blackman as a man with his own culture, his own civilization and his own original contributions"(20).

Albert Memmi a Postcolonial critique in his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized* offers a reading of the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized "the colonized is not free to choose between being colonized or not being colonized". (86). Colonialism creates the colonized just as it creates the colonizer. It sets the colonizers against the colonized and 'self-rejecting colonizers' against 'self-accepting colonizers'. "The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized". (56).

Memmi differentiates between the colonizer, the colonial and the colonized. "A Colonial is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonized person of equivalent social status" (10). Memmi states that the colonial is different from both the colonizer and the colonized; with the native he always tries to create a colonizer-colonized relationship but at the same time he does not belong to the real colonizer's group.

However, Postcolonialism as a literary movement gained momentum with Edward Said's monumental *Orientalism* (1978) which is considered the founder stone of postcolonial study and Bill Ashcroft et al.'s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). With the publication of these two books Postcolonial studies became much significant and gained recognition as a mode of literary study.

Postcolonial studies deal with the study of the postcolonial countries that have been under the colonial rule for many years. Their mode of study focuses mainly on the Third World Countries such as Asia, Africa, the Caribbean islands and South Africa. These countries have

been under the colonial impact for many years and as a result have lost their own voice in the process of colonization. The colonized countries have considered the European culture as a standard for their writings and as such they begin with an unquestioning acceptance of the authority of the European models. It is based on the concepts of otherness and resistance.

With the advent of postcolonial study the colonial countries have begun to challenge the authority of colonialism and try to find their own unique identity in the wake of Modernism. By the end of the nineteenth century, colonialism had developed into a system of a historical categorization in which certain societies and cultures were perceived as intrinsically inferior.

Thus with the rise of postcolonial studies the postcolonial countries are liable to find their voice in the midst of colonialism and try to escape European dominance and power by exploring their own cultures and by reclaiming their past and avoiding mimicry if they seek to avoid the authority of the colonizers.

Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory* states that:

For centuries the European colonizing power will have devalued the nation's past, seeing its precolonial era as a pre-civilized limbo, or even as a historical void. Children, both black and white, will have been taught to see history, culture and progress as beginning with the arrival of the Europeans. (Barry, 186).

The field of post-colonial studies now includes the vexed subjects of contemporary neo-colonialism: the identities and relationships of Chicano, Latino and hybrid subjectivities of various kinds. Thus, the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures.

Some of the major works of postcolonial literature include Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*(1958), Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*(1961), Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*(1988), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*(1981), Isabella Allende's *The House of the Spirits*(1982), J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians and Disgrace*(1990), Derek Walcott's *Omeros*(1990) and Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*(1992).

1.2. POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND PRACTISE.

M. H. Abrams states that Postcolonial Studies can be defined as “the critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other European imperial powers” (236).

Post colonialism refers broadly to the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture and human identity itself are represented in the modern era. By the mid century many colonized countries such as India gained their independence. Many scholars believe that this event marked the beginning of Postcolonialism or third-world studies, a term coined by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy.

Postcolonialism uses a variety of approaches to textual analysis such as Deconstruction, Feminism, Marxism, reader-oriented criticism, African-American criticism and Cultural studies. Post colonialism is concerned with subjects such as difference, universality, nationalism, postmodernism, resistance, representation, ethnicity, language, feminism, education, history, place and production discussed in one of the most prominent texts, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995), edited by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin.

Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back* lists a number of features that they feel recur in works of postcolonial literature. While there are several thematic parallels like, the celebration

of political and cultural independence, the reflection of the problem of home in the “construction and demolition” of houses and the theme of journey and exile; there are also several conspicuous similarities in narrative and linguistic features (27-28). These include sustained use of allegory and irony and use of techniques like magic realism and non-linear narratives.

Edward Wadie Said a Palestinian-American theorist and critic was born in Jerusalem. Educated at Princeton and Harvard Universities, Said taught at John Hopkins University as a professor and authored a number of books. Edward Said developed several concepts that are central to Postcolonial theory. Published in 1978, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is a key text in the establishment of postcolonial theory. According to Said, nineteenth-century Europeans tried to justify their territorial conquests by propagating a manufactured belief called Orientalism. Orientalism is based on the binary division created between the Orient and the Occident. The Orient is considered to be everything that the West is not and vice versa.

Said applied a revised form of Michel Foucault’s historicist critique of discourse to analyze what he called “cultural imperialism”: As M.H Abrams points this mode of imperialism imposed its power not by force, but by the effective mean of disseminating in subjugated colonies a Eurocentric discourse that assume the normality and preeminence of everything “occidental”, correlatively with its representations of the “oriental” as an exotic and inferior other. (237).

Homi K. Bhabha is one of the leading Postcolonial theorists and critic. Born in 1949 into a Parsi family in Mumbai, India Bhabha received his undergraduate degree in India and Master’s and Doctoral degrees from Oxford University. His major contribution to the field of

postcolonial studies is his belief that there is always ambivalence at the site of colonial dominance.

His major contribution is the idea that the intercultural space where hybrid identity is formed is a space of in-betweenness and liminality, which he calls the Third Space of enunciation. To enter the Third Space, while it shows the potentiality of constructing a non-fixed identity “generates a new sense of identity that may resemble the old ones but is not quite the same”. In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha writes:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of regenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. (70).

One of Bhabha’s major contribution to Postcolonial studies is his belief that there is always ambivalence at the site of colonial dominance. When two cultures intermingle, the nature and characteristics of the newly created cultures changes each of the cultures. Bhabha termed this process of commingling as hybridity.

Homi K. Bhabha in his essay *Of Mimicry and Man* describes mimicry as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (85). The one aim of discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – that is, ‘mimic’ the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance.

Homi Bhabha is one of the best known colonial discourse theorists, “whose analysis posited certain disabling contradictions within colonial relationships, such as hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry, which revealed the inherent vulnerability of colonial discourse.” (Ashcroft, 37).

The influential collection of essays *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (1989) stresses what it terms “the hybridization of colonial languages and cultures, in which imperialist importations are superimposed on indigenous traditions...” (237). The term 'hybrid' refers to the concept of hybridity, an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an important figure in postcolonial theory. She is the publisher of the English translator of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1976) and is well known for her critical work *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987) and also *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She is a postcolonial feminist critic and gives comments on the harsh treatment given to the women in the society by the dominant male society. She has coined an array of terms including –subaltern meaning of ‘inferior rank’. She gives the meaning of the word subaltern in her work *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*: “simply by being post-colonial or the members of an ethnic minority, we are not subaltern. That word is reserved for the sheer heterogeneity of decolonized space” (Spivak, 310).

Postcolonialism is a varied approach to textual analysis and assumes that literature, culture and history all affect each other in significant ways. Thus, the field of post-colonial studies has provided useful strategies for a wider field of global analysis. One of the terms emerging from post-colonial studies seems to solve some of the perceived problems inherent in descriptions such as ‘post-colonial’ and diaspora.

Indian writing in English is an integral part of post-colonial literature. Though it has its own distinctive stamp of Indianness, it displays some of the features of post-colonial literatures. It draws attention to issues of cultural difference in literary texts including issues of gender, class and of sexual orientation. So, the writers are obliged to define new sets of literary traditions. In a broad sense, postcolonial literature is writing which has been “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft et al, 2).

As Edward Said rightly observes, literature has contributed massively “as the shaper, creator, agent of illumination within the realm of the colonized” and played a major role in the “re-establishment of national cultural heritage in the re-instatement of native idiom in the re-imagining and refiguring of local histories, geographies, communities.” (3).

1.3 NEW HISTORICISM: AN OVERVIEW

Laden states that the critical practice of New Historicism is a mode of “literary” history whose “literariness” lies in bringing imaginative operations closer to the surface of nonliterary texts and briefly describes some of the practice’s leading literary features and strategies. (1).

New Historicism began in 1979-1980 with the publication of several essays and texts such as *Improvisation and Power* and *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) by the Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt, Raymond William’s *Marxism and Literature* (1977), and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and a variety of works by Louis Montrose, Michel Foucault, Terry Eagleton, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jonathan Dollimore, and others. In 1982, the founding of the journal *Representations* also gave further momentum to the New Historicist Theory. Cultural Poetics was first and aptly named New Historicism by one of its chief proponents, Stephen

Greenblatt, in the introduction to a collection of Renaissance essays in a 1982 volume of the journal *Genre*.

Literary Criticism during this time was influenced by New Criticism and the New critics discounted the importance of historical context, authorial intent and social contexts, choosing to focus instead on extremely close textual analysis. The New Critics gave much importance to the text and considered text as the main agent of literary criticism. New Criticism was revered by critics like T.S. Eliot, Alan Tate, Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren.

New Historicism focuses on the literary text as part of a larger social and historical context. The term New Historicism is fathered by Stephen Greenblatt in his well known book *The Power of Forms and the Forms of Power in the Renaissance* (1982). Greenblatt in *Towards a Poetics of Culture* expresses “the product of art as a negotiation between a creator and class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions and the institutions and process of society” (Learning to Curse, 158). A work of art is thus the product of a negotiation between the writer and the society or time he lives in. The work of a writer is influenced by the social circumstances he has been exposed to. Greenblatt thus says that self-expression is always the expression of something else, he recognizes how any utterance is implicated within other structures of power, culture and so on.

Stephen Greenblatt defines New Historicism as “a shift away from a criticism centered on ‘verbal icons’ toward a criticism centered on cultural artifacts” (Greenblatt, 3), and comments on the mutually beneficial roles of the historical and the literary. The most theoretical source for new historicism’s challenge to the new critical orthodoxy can be found in the work of

Michel Foucault. Foucault played a major contribution to new historicism and cultural materialism. New Historicists have drawn three premises from this work:

The idea that history is discontinuous, the argument that a given period is better understood as a site of conflict between competing interests and discourses than as a unified whole, and the redefinition of the role and function of power. (Foucault, 8)

New Historicism was mainly the work of Stephen Greenblatt, however it was also influenced by other Marxist and Structuralist philosophers. Michel Foucault's work played a significant contribution to the movement. Foucault studied the changes in the mechanism of power in the prison environment, including the theory of the panopticon of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), English philosopher and reformer.

Critical theories such as New historicism have given new perspectives on historiography and the writing of fiction. This approach becomes a textual practice whose tenets provide a useful inducement for the fictional writer in dealing with the socio-political reality. As Bressler mentions "New Historicism asserts that an intricate connection exists between an aesthetic object-a text or any work of art-and society, while denying that a text can be evaluated in isolation from its cultural context". (185).

The social and political constructs influences the writer to write a work of art. Ideology is an important element in the construction of any work of art. Ideologies are a set of ideas or beliefs that influence a person to behave or act. Ideology thus shapes a person and helps in the development of character and also influences the writer to produce a work of art.

Peter Barry states that New Historicism "represents a significant extension of the empire of literary studies, for it entails intensive 'close reading' in the literary-critical manner, of

non-literary texts” (170). New Historicism allows the reading of any kind of materials which opens up more room for analysis. It may include newspapers, magazines, documentations etc. It provides an array of possibilities for the critic to analyze his work as it provides more opportunities to explore.

The main tenet of the New Historist enterprise, Jean E. Howard says, “is to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible for contemporaries to see the ‘facts’ of their own time in a particular way- indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as facts at all”.

Bressler in his work *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practise* states that Stephen Greenblatt with a host of scholars opines that one’s culture pervades both critics and texts. Since the whole of society is intricately interlinked, so are critics and texts. They are both affected by the culture in which they are exposed to and it affects the way in which the texts are produced. Since all the critics are influenced in one way or another by the culture and society in which they live, New Historicists assume that they cannot avoid public and private cultural conduct. Thus, each critic will therefore arrive at his own distinct interpretation of a text.

As Lee Patterson has observed, “no single label can be usefully applied to the historicist enterprise as a whole” (3).

1.4 Introduction to Arundhati Roy

“Another world is not only possible; she’s on her way. . . I can hear her breathing.” (Roy, *Come September*, 44).

Among the Postcolonial writers in English Suzanna Arundhati Roy is one of the best- known representatives. An architect by training, Arundhati Roy was born on 24 November 1961, in Shillong to Mary, a Syrian Christian from Kerala, and Rajib, a Bengali Hindu tea planter based

in the north-east of India. Roy wrote and starred in the film *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*, and she wrote the script for *Electric Moon*, directed by her second husband, Pradip Krishen. She was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize in 2004 for her efforts toward social justice and peaceful conflict resolution. She also took part in the June 2005 World Tribunal on Iraq.

Her first novel *The God of Small Things* won the Booker Prize in 1997. Some Indian writers to win the prestigious Booker award includes V.S. Naipaul's *In a Free State* (1971), I.G. Farewell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), Ruth Jhabwala's *Heat and Dust* (1975) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981).

She is one of the promising writers among the Indian women writers with her first book selling over 3.5 lakh copies in just six months after its release. She has also written a number of essays, Roy thinks that in this age of corporate globalization a writer should use their skills, imagination and art "to recreate the rhythms of the endless crisis of normality, and in doing so, expose the policies and processes that make ordinary things- food, water, shelter, and dignity- such a distant dream for ordinary people" (*An Ordinary Person's Guide*, 106-107).

Rosemary Dinnage wrote in the New York Review of Books "Roy stretches the English language in all directions". The Booker committee's praise is equally memorable: "with extraordinary linguistic inventiveness Roy funnels the history of South India through the eyes of seven-years-old twins".

Some of her nonfiction includes *The End of Imagination* (1998), *The Greater Common Good* (1999), *The Cost of Living* (1999), *Power Politics* (2002), *War Talk* (2003), and *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* (2004). She was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award in January 2006 but she refused to accept it.

Arundhati Roy is a woman with a strong voice and opinion. She is outspoken and is involved in a number of political and environmental issues. Besides publishing two successful novels she has written a number of essays grappled with all the issues of big dams, industrialization, displacement, power project, privatization, globalization, terrorism, US imperialism, Kashmir and most recently the Maoist insurgency, and spoken out against the rise of Hindutva nationalism or Hindu right wing which has acclaimed her much criticism from different people and factions.

On 3rd August 1998, Roy wrote *The End of Imagination*; an angry impassioned critique against the bomb testing in Pokhran and also against nuclear testing and how it destroys our environment and our future generation in particular. She writes against the damage caused to nature by human activities and the consequences it will have on our future. She writes:

There can be nothing more humiliating for a writer of fiction to have to do than restate a case that has, over the years, already been made by other people in other parts of the world, and made passionately, eloquently and knowledgeably. I am prepared to grovel . . . Our fatigue and our shame could mean the end of us. The end of our children and our children's children. Of everything we love. (Roy, *The End of Imagination*, 04)

War Talk is a book written by Arundhati Roy between May 2002 and 2003. In this essay Roy explores the negative impact of war on society and gives a stand point against terrorism. She says “War is the key to distracting the world's attention from fascism and genocide” (Roy, 5). Roy writes against the background of threatened nuclear war with Pakistan and the rise of the fascism in India, the imminent war with Iraq and the never ending ‘war on terror’. She writes “there is no terrorism like state terrorism” (Roy, 43).

In the essay, *Come September*, Roy broadens her scope on the terrors of the World and talks about international attacks such as the attack on the World Trade Center. She takes the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 as her starting point but then moves on to talk about Chile, Palestine and Sanctions on Iraq, and finally gives a commentary on the way that the free market and its institutions undermine democracy itself. Roy then talks about the importance of power and how power is ruthless. She says: Though it might appear otherwise, my writing is not really about nations and histories, it's about power. About the paranoia and ruthlessness of power. (Roy, *Come September*, 14).

The God of Small Things is autobiographical in nature and contains autobiographical elements from her life as well as her grandparents. It incorporates, embellishes, and greatly supplements events from her family's history. Written over a time period of four years, Roy has projected the character Ammu as a representation of her mother Mrs. Mary Roy, who is a South Indian woman and marries a Bengali man. But due to their cultural differences the marriage ends with a divorce and she ends up taking care of her two children on her own.

Likewise in the novel Ammu is forced to leave her husband and bring up the two twins Rahel and Estha on her own. The setting of the novel further adds to the novel as M. Krishnan Nair, an eminent critic rightly remarks, "Roy has universalized Ayemenem, like Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Mocondo* and R.K Narayan's *Malgudi*". Thus, *The God of Small Things* is autobiographical in nature and projects her own life through the characterization and setting of the novel with a careful blending of fiction. As Roy states, "the texture is autobiographical, the incidents are not".

Her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* was published in 2017, twenty years after her debut. The *Washington post* comments on *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*:

This is a remarkable creation, a story both intimate and international, swelling with comedy and outrage, a tale that cradles the world's most fragile people even while it assaults the Sub continent's most brutal villains. . . It will leave you awed by the heat of its anger and the depth of its compassion.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness reveals the miracle of Roy's beautiful storytelling gifts. Satirical yet compassionate, it takes us on a journey of the past twenty years of Indian history through the eyes of different characters: Aftab a Hermaphrodite who later becomes Anjum as he transforms into a Hijra in Khwabgah –the House of Dreams. The vague and enigmatic S. Tilottama a third-year student at the Architecture School is involved in a string of affairs with Musa, Naga and Garson Hobart. It is a love story told with aching passion about the brokenness of the World and how love is the only thing that gives hope. Besides weaving a heart touching story of human emotions Roy shows the length of political unrest in Kashmir as Arundhati Roy dedicates the book "To, The Unconsoled".

1.5. INTRODUCTION TO KIRAN DESAI.

Kiran Desai was born in New Delhi, India on September 3, 1971 and lived in Delhi until she was 14. She then spent a year in England before her family moved to the USA. Kiran Desai essentially a diasporic writer of Indian origin created literary history by being the youngest woman writer to win the prestigious Booker prize in 2006 at the age of thirty-five. She is the daughter of the celebrated Indian writer Anita Desai. She completed her schooling in Massachusetts before attending Bennington College; Hollins University, where she studied creative writing, taking two years off to write *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998).

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, Desai's much heralded first novel was serialised in the *New Yorker* and included in the *Vintage Book of Indian Writing*. Eight years later, her second novel

The Inheritance of Loss was published in early 2006 and won the 2006 Man Booker prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. In addition, *The Inheritance of Loss* was selected as a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the year in 2006. It was also shortlisted for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction in 2007.

Kiran Desai is one of the most insightful novelists and has built a literary tradition with her mother Anita Desai. Both have explored in the Indian English novels major socio-political issues, moral, racial, immigration, psycho-analytical and essential man-human-relationships which are very much prevalent in the post-independence era. With psychological explorations in her fiction her mother Anita Desai has played a significant influence on her life as a writer, as she claimed that her prize winning novel was as much “hers as it is mine”.

Salman Rushdie describe *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* “as lush and intensely imagined”. The New York Times states that “the novel stands as a meticulously crafted piece of gently comic satire- a small, finely tuned fable that attests to the author’s pitch- perfect ear for character and mood, and her natural story- telling gifts”. In an interview, Kiran Desai classifies *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, “it is a comedy and it is satiric in many ways, I think, and it’s fantastic. It reads very much like a folktale or a fairy tale”.

Kiran Desai had stated that she wrote the novel “very much for myself...but I think anyone with a sense of humor would enjoy it”. It is a book typical of the Indian way of life and how people of India are superstitious by nature. The novel uses magic realism and blends fable-esque magic with satiric comedy and can also be read as a ‘bildungsromans’ novel.

Unlike the array of characters and the setting in Kerala to Assam described by Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* Kiran Desai has minimized the use of characters and setting in her novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* and used just one particular setting in the novel

concentrating only on the limited boundaries of Shahkot. The whole setting of the novel revolves around the confines of Shahkot and the guava tree which thus gets more attention and becomes concentrated and builds up as the novel progresses which gives it a more Narayanesque flavor of Malgudi. The whole setting of the novel revolves around the town of Shahkot and the Guava tree where Sampath moved in.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard which Desai completed as part of her M.F.A work at Columbia has a different background as compared to her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. It tells the story of a middle-class post-office clerk Sampath Chawla who wants to escape the failures and harsh realities of life and jumps into a Guava tree in order to become a holy man or a hermit. Sampath Chawla is in a sacred state of spiritual awakening in which only nature finds a place “concealed in the branches of the tree he had climbed, Sampath felt his breathing slow and a wave of peace and contentment overtook him...How beautiful it was here, how exactly as it should be . . .” (Desai, 50) .

In *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, Kiran Desai presents a fictitious small town called Shahkot in North India and shows how the Indians pay much attention to the hermits and spiritual Gurus and seek their help in every turn and course of their lives. When Sampath decides to settle in the ancient guava tree and becomes unexpectedly famous as a hermit Sampath’s position elevates not only in the society but also his own family as Mr Chawla states “Sampath might make his family’s fortune. . . Already there was a change in the way people looked at Sampath . . .” (Desai, 68).

Unlike her debut novel which was a comic fable and inspired by a real event, Kiran Desai undertook a totally different approach to her writing in her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. While her first novel introduces social problems in a light manner using satire and magic

realism, her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with rather serious issues of the loss of tradition in the wake of modernism and the problems faced by immigrants both in India and the United States. The primary setting of the novel is India, in the remote province of Kalimpong during the mid-1980's.

Kiran Desai has less in common with Arundhati Roy or Salman Rushdie than with the older generation of Indian writers including her mother Anita Desai and R.K. Narayan. Similar to R.K. Narayan's Malgudi stories Kiran Desai has conjured a small town Shahkot torn in between tradition and the wake of modernism in her novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*.

Her debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is an experiment of a comic fable and portrays the life of a single character, while her Booker winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is a portrayal and commentary on the modern world and focuses on a number of characters living in India and the United States. The significance of the novel lies in the fact that it explores a number of complex issues and can be interpreted in a number of ways. The multi dimensional aspects of the novel and the ways in which it relates to the modern way of life further add to the merit of the novel.

Hermione Lee, the head judge for the Booker Prize, describes *The Inheritance of Loss* as "a magnificent novel of humane breadth and wisdom, comic tenderness and powerful political acuteness". The *Inheritance of Loss* is a novel with its roots embedded in colonialism and looks into post-independence India and how India was affected by the influence of colonialism and its legacy on the people of India. It deals with a number of cultures, continents, race, religion and explores the ambiguities of post-colonialism and the pains of exile.

Kiran Desai is a vibrant author with innate artistic flairs. Her work is known for its rich and colorful language and detailed presentations of setting and characters. Her writing has much

resemblance with that of her mother Anita Desai as Hermoine Lee observes “Both write not just about India but about Indian communities in the world”. Thus, with her achievements Kiran Desai has joined the rank of highly celebrated Indian writers such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Laheri and Aravind Adiga.

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Chapter 2

2.1 Historicity in the novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai

“But what is in the past remains unchanged, doesn’t it?”

“I think it does change. The present changes the past. Looking back you do not find what you left behind.” (Desai, 208).

The 1930s and 1940s period was known as the period of pioneering writers whose works marked a remarkable development in Indian writing in English. Iyengar describes the 1930s as the seed-time of modern Independent India which witnessed important political events. The Indian novel in English got a definite shape in the hands of the three pioneering novelists – Anand, Rao and Narayan. An important fact is that they used history in their novels, not merely as a chronological interaction of facts, but a graphic chronicle of a whole community in the political, social and spiritual spheres at a particular juncture of history.

However, study of history really began only in the 19th century. The modern historians aim to reconstruct a record of human activities and to achieve a more profound understanding of them. Thought becomes central in historical activity. According to Peter and G.J. Cavanaugh, history is 'critical thinking about the past' (27). Webster defines history as 'the bridge between the past and the present' (14). Historicity is an important element in postcolonial writings. The historical information adds more to the works of a writer. History is central to writing any work of art. The addition of history adds more dimension and worth in literature. For Macaulay, history being the part of literature, "begins in novel and ends in essay" (73).

Elton states that “Historical knowledge gives a prevision, an insight to the understanding of future” (67). Historical knowledge is important because it gives us an insight into the past and

acts as a future guide for the postcolonial countries. It serves the purpose of giving better insight and prevision to the understanding of the future which is very important for the development of any developing country. The present can be altered with better knowledge of the past which acts as a moderator for a better future.

The true significance of historical literature lies in its aesthetic interpretation of salient historical and sociopolitical themes. The development of postcolonial theory can be studied and understood in terms of new socio-historic pressures. The political concepts that have shaped modern history- democracy, the citizen and nationalism no longer seem adequate for coping with contemporary realities. There is a constant need to delve into the past to know more about the past struggles of the people and also the need to protect and conserve the history and culture for the future generation.

Desai mentions the historical background for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* which was during the 60's, 70's and 80's. The turmoil and conflict led to the cold war between the two power blocs, the then Soviet Union and the USA. The two superpowers were engaged in a perilous struggle to globalize their respective ideas which were capitalism and socialism. In that particular time in history the conflict between capitalism and socialism led to a large number of countries fighting for freedom and gaining Independence. They instilled the concept of Independence in the mindset of the weaker countries for their own benefits and needs. People felt the need to gain freedom and become independent.

Kiran Desai attempts to inter mingle national politics and individual life in postcolonial India in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* through the portrayal of the character Gyan, an ethnic Nepalese who is from a lower class. Desai explores how the political unrest in Kalingpong affects the life of the poor and the lower class people. Gyan is a representation of a frustrated

Indian who sacrifices his love because a feeling of “martyrdom crept over him” (175) and he undergoes a transformation as the novel progresses “he finally submitted to the compelling pull of history and found his pulse leaping to something that felt entirely authentic” (160). “His voice an adamant that the Gorkha movement take the harshest route possible” (161). It serves as a gateway to explore a new world of subaltern in Kalingpong, India.

This conflict between the two superpowers can be seen as the backbone of Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. The history of decolonization comes from the European nationalism through the resistant energies of anti-colonial nationalism. This feeling of anti-colonial nationalism serves as a medium to inspire the oppressed and colonized people of the world who are under colonial dominance and gives them the knowledge to fight against the constant oppression which they undergo. Post colonialism is thus another name for globalization of history and culture. Desai gives a history of the GNLF Movement in the novel:

In 1947...the British left granting India her freedom, granting the Muslims Pakistan, granting special provisions for the scheduled castes and tribes... Except us. EXCEPT US. The Nepalese of India, in April of 1947, the Communist Party of India demanded a Gorkhasthan, but the request was ignored...we are laborers on the tea plantations, coolies dragging heavy loads, soldiers...No! We are kept at the level of servants (158).

Desai mentions about the history of the Gorkhas living in Darjeeling who wanted a separate state for themselves. From 1986-89, the Gorkhaland National Liberation Front (GNLF), led massive violent attacks in the struggle for their own state under the constitutional framework of India. However, this was denied in 1986 and they failed to obtain a separate administration from the Parliament. The novel opens with a newspaper report which sets the tone of the novel

“In Kalimpong...there was report of new dissatisfaction in the hills, gathering insurgency, men and guns.” (9).

The image and sensibility of India is truly brought out in her novel as politically India was hit by insurgency in 1980s. The poverty, cultural conflicts, customs and practices, unemployment and economic disparities with different Separatist movements affected the normal life of the people and caused havoc. Desai delves into the past to know more about the political movements that took place during that time as historical events have deep personal meanings.

With her innovative linguistic style and impressive narration, Arundhati Roy unfolds the secrets of her character's unhappiness and miseries. The novel shifts from past to the present, the narrative style includes magic, mystery and sadness. It blends fantasy and elegy and Roy adopts a narrative which is satirical in tone and charges the rigid age old caste system of India. She writes in a language that is influenced by Indian language and culture with a clear vision for writing. Her story is constructed and told brilliantly.

The God of Small Things is out of the ordinary, written in a language that is new and revitalized. It is richly textured with its colonial history, postcolonial issues and grounded in historical reality. John Updike talks about the political issues rising from the book by stating: “Treading Roy's maze, we learn a great deal about India-a vast, violent, circling, driving, ridiculous, insane, unfeasible, public turmoil of a nation” (156).

As in *The God of Small Things*, Chacko explains to Estha and Rahel:

History was like an old house at night with all the lamps lit. And ancestors whispering inside.

To understand history we have to go inside and listen to what they're saying. And look at the books and the pictures on the wall. And smell the smells. (52)

Roy has used the Kashmir dispute as the backdrop of her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The Gujarat riots, the Kashmir's genocide, the Iraqi war in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror are issues included in the novel. The Kashmir dispute is regarded as the most serious impasse in Indo-Pakistan relations after the British left India in 1947. The Kashmiris have been fighting for greater autonomy and freedom and has a history of human rights abuses perpetrated by Indian security forces especially in the Kashmir region.

Political issues with their historical backgrounds are also given due attention in the novel, when Anjum talks about the 'Flyover Story', and mentions that "the incident had happened in 1976, at the height of the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi that lasted for twenty-one months...Civil Rights had been suspended...A new law – the Maintenance of Internal Security Act...(34). Roy gives the readers a political insight of the country during the Emergency and how normal life was suspended through the characters in the novel. "I heard the reverberating boom of a hundred thousand or more voices raised together calling for freedom : Azadi! Azadi! Azadi! On and on and on" (180).

Arundhati Roy also gives an account of the history of the Hijras and how they were part of the mid eighteenth century through the character of Ustad Kulsoom Bi. Today, it is estimated that about 6 million transgender people live in India and their socio-political persecution has partially come to an end in 2014 when the Indian Supreme Court recognised them as "third gender". Kulsoom states that the Hijras were part of the court during the reign of Emperor Mohammed Shah Rangeela, the legendary lover of pleasure, music and paintings. When Emperor Mohammed Shah was attacked by Nadir Shah's cavalry he remained 'Unperturbed', "then, suddenly, amidst those soft, happy, lady-sounds would come the clearly audible, deep,

distinct, rasping, coquettish giggle of a court eunuch...” Ustad Kulsoom Bi would say “That is us. That is our ancestry, our history, our story. We were never commoners...” (51).

Arundhati Roy’s second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is set against the backdrop of the Kashmir dispute. Roy has used a number of historical references in her novel and also mentions about various Indian rulers such as Emperor Mohammed Shah Rangeela who was on the Peacock Throne in Delhi for almost thirty years. Roy also mentions about the Hindu festival of Dussehra and “the story of how Lord Ram, King of Ayodhya, vanquished Ravan in the battle of Lanka...” (86).

The tensions between the Indian government and the northern region of the subcontinent date back to 1947. There was tension mounting in the aftermath of Partition and the end of the British colonial rule, the region was contended by Pakistan and India, with a growing demand for separatism by local people. People wanted to have their own separate state and as a result led to a number of growing insurgencies in the country. As Biplap remarks in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, in this more than quarter-century-long conflict “Kashmiris mourned, wept, shouted their slogans, but in the end they always went back home” (181).

Use of slogans is another attribute used by Roy to intensify the political situation. Arundhati Roy explores the political conflict the novel by the use of slogans:

Jis Kashmir ko khoon se seencha! Woh Kashmir hamara hai!

The Kashmir we have irrigated with our blood! That Kashmir is ours...” (324).

Slogans are used with a mixture of languages “Bharat Mata Ki Jai! Vande Mataram!” (63), “Jai Shri Ram! and Vande Mataram!” (88), “Enough Is Enough! and End Corruption Now!” (102), “Thieves must have their hands cut off! Terrorists must be hanged!” (103).

And yet, though overtly political, the novel’s infusion of history and myth, fact and fiction, reveals how storytelling remains a powerful weapon to convey great truths about a modern fragmented country with its mythological past and an uncertain future. “People-communities, castes, races and even countries- carry their tragic histories and their misfortunes around like trophies, or like stock, to be bought and sold on the open market.” (195).

The hybrid narrative format, with the voices of the various characters, the juxtaposition of narrative modes and perspectives, the incorporation of songs and poems, the references to Hindu Itihasa all add to the beauty and complexity of the novel. Roy’s support to Kashmir independence reverberates with the traumatic images that the novel records: “Death was everywhere. Death was everything. Career. Desire. Dream. Poetry. Love. Youth itself. Dying became just another way of living” (314).

As a once colonized country, the pangs and bitter war of disappointment are prevalent in the modern society. The weight of the past hinders the society to move forward and build up itself. By adopting decolonization and the positive change that comes along with it, a country can re-built and redeem itself to become better. The past experience should serve as a gateway to a better and brighter future. As Roy quotes in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*:

It is our constant anxiety about that violence, our memory of its past labours and our dread of its future manifestations, that lays down the rules for how a people as complex and as diverse as we are continue to coexist- continue to live together, tolerate each other and,

from time to time, murder one another. As long as the center holds, as long as the yolk doesn't run, we'll be fine. In moment of crisis it helps to take the long view. (150,151)

Peter Lambert and Phillip Schofield remarks that some of the most original investigations of historicity are taking place in literary practices that are especially aware of changing conditions of life in space and time. The new historical literature of recent decades is part of the historical turn in literary studies. Historical literature articulates several issues which can contribute to current debate about the links between history and literature (169).

Thus historicity is an important element in postcolonial studies. A thorough study of the history of a particular country, nation or age helps us in knowing more about the particular age. It also helps in studying the different social constructs and ideologies which shape a particular society which was once under colonial rule. The colonial past and the history of their sufferings are brought out which helps to know more about the colonial history of a particular country. The colonial history of a once colonized country or nation can thus be studied thoroughly which will add more to the colonial history.

2.2 Historical Authenticity in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

A New Historical perspective of the non-fictional works of Arundhati Roy and fictional works of Kiran Desai shows that despite the different technique and aura they exuberate while writing, both the writers as part of a culture affected by colonialism try to bring out the postcolonial experience and neurosis in their writings. The historical authenticity of both the writers is brought through the portrayal of various events and characters in their writings.

India is home to many religious and political parties such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists. There is also the interference of British Colonialism and modern globalization with

its history of political rift among the various political parties and groups. Inspired by the socio-political history of the country, Desai and Roy combines elements of India's history and tradition in their writings which are mostly secular in nature. The political and cultural values of India can be reflected through a reading of their works which are historical in nature with details of historical background as the main backdrop of their writings.

The non-fictional works of Arundhati Roy speaks about critical junctures in the history of India and how it affected the people of India at different periods of time. It also reveals the different socio-political issues in India. Her choice of issues in her non fictional work reveals her own political slant about the issues of the country which are widely political in nature. These issues are similiarly addressed in her fictional works as well. Fiction allows more space for creativity as she constructs her own narratives and it gives her a wider scope to explore various other issues as well.

A Postcolonial study of the history of any colonized nation or country helps to know more about the distinct colonial past of the different colonized countries. All the colonized countries have their own distinct and unique social constructs. Thus New Historicism through the study of both non-literary and literary text adds to the study of the social construct of a particular age and how it defines the age with its own unique past and history by bringing out the various social, political issues of a particular society.

According to Laden:

The critical practice of New Historicism is a mode of “literary” history whose “literariness” lies in bringing imaginative operations closer to the surface of nonliterary texts and briefly describes some of the practice’s leading literary features and strategies. (1).

Another New Historicist critic Harold Aram Veenser stresses on the need of looking at non-literary text on par with literary text when he says literary texts and nonliterary texts circulate inseparably. New Historicism believe that a text can be sufficiently illuminated for close scrutiny when it is placed in context, here the context can be anything like documents linked to history, politics, culture, art, legal papers etc.

Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, activist, and human rights campaigner. In May 2004, Roy was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize, for her work in social campaigns and advocacy of non-violence. Roy’s reflection of the social issues in both her fiction and nonfiction reflects her governing ideology. Roy wishes for balance of power between the characters and makes the conflict between power and powerlessness as the main subject of her writings.

Talking about her fiction and non-fiction, Roy writes in her interview with Howard Zinn:

Fiction and non-fiction are only different techniques of storytelling. For reasons I do not fully understand, fiction dances out of me. Non-fiction is wrenched out by the aching, broken world I wake up to every morning. (13).

The End of Imagination inaugurated the non-fictional phase of her career and she talks about the social cost of nuclear weapons and its horrific consequences on the human society and how the common people are “trapped in an asylum” (7). For Roy the euphoria over nuclear tests

signifies “the end of imagination” which means “the end of freedom actually, because, after all, that is what freedom is” (22). However Roy writes “there is beauty yet in this brutal, damaged world of ours. Hidden, fierce, immense. Beauty that is uniquely ours and beauty that we have received with race from others, enhanced, reinvented, and made our own” (63).

In response to India's testing of nuclear weapons in Pokhran, Rajasthan, Roy wrote *The End of Imagination*, a critique of the Indian government's nuclear policies. It was published in her collection *The Cost of Living*, in which she also crusaded against India's massive hydroelectric dam projects in the central and western states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. For Roy, a writer should use their art, imagination and skills “to recreate the rhythms of the endless crisis of normality, and in doing so, expose the policies and processes that make ordinary things-food, water, shelter, and dignity-such a distant dream for ordinary people” (106-107).

The Greater Common Good is about the impact of Narmada Dam project and also of India's Nuclear Weapons programme. Roy hits the Indian government and the World Bank for being insensitive towards the people in the Narmada Valley and disregarding the interests of the uprooted, marginalized and dislocated tribe as building of these huge dams were commissioned without considering their impact on the people and also the environment.

The Algebra of Infinite Justice (2001) which is a collection of essays such as *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* won the 2005 Sahitya Akademi Award, India's most prestigious literary prize but she turned it down as a protest reaffirming her disagreement with the policies of the Indian Government. In the essay Roy deconstructs the concepts of empire, neoliberal capitalism, corporate globalization, and state terrorism with a degree of both passion and erudition that is truly astounding.

In her essay *The End of Imagination* Roy talks about the deprived India by stating that “More than 400 million of our people are illiterate and live in absolute poverty, over 600 million lack even basic sanitation and over 200 million have no drinking water” (26). Poverty and lack of education is a major issue which India is facing at present. The huge economic gap between the haves and the have nots is a major issue in India. Thus Roy tries to bring out modern social and environmental issues through her non-fiction.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness reverberates with a postcolonial instance in that it portrays a national allegory in the aftermath of the independence from British colonialism. Roy has skillfully painted a picture of modern India with all its chaos and issues of modernism. In a blend of fantasy and historical fiction, the novel depicts the ontological and environmental degradation of a world where the evils of globalization appear more harmful than those of the previous colonization.

Kiran Desai on the other hand writes with less urgency and is not outspoken as compared to Roy. Desai shows the colonial encounter between two competing nationalisms in her novel. She goes back to India during the 1980s during the time when India was hit by insurgency. The novel is set against the backdrop of insurgency rising in the North-east particularly the GNLFF movement with the motto “Gorkhaland for Gorkhas” (7), and raising slogans like “We are stateless” and “It is better to die than live as slaves” (126). This caused havoc in the lives of the people as there was “gathering insurgency, men and guns” (9), by disrupting normal human activities and creating conflict and chaos in the lives of the people. The Indian Nepalese were “fed up with being treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority” (9).

Kiran Desai also writes about the history of India and how it affected India as a postcolonial country. However she writes with less urgency as compared to Arundhati Roy in her writings. Roy is an outspoken social activist and she makes direct statements about the issues and current problems which the modern world is facing. She writes with an urgency of the current political, social and environmental issues through her non-fiction. Desai explores global issues such as globalization and multiculturalism through her fictional works which are reflective of modern postcolonial issues. Desai writes in a minimalistic approach and explores global issues that Indians face not only in the country but also abroad.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai tries to indicate and locate the blurring lines of the history of India from the colonial rule to the contemporary world. She skillfully presents the tormented past of India with her struggles and the modern multicultural India at present. The novel is set in the backdrop of the Gorkha National Liberation Front led movement in Darjeeling during the 1980s. Desai shows the shift from the colonial past to the present and how the people of India were affected through the process of colonization.

Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have both presented her characters as the victims of postcolonial issues and explore the postcolonial experience through despair and chaos in the lives of their characters. Their novels delve deep into the minds of the characters and are full of wisdom and parallels of the modern postcolonial society. While exploring the postcolonial experience in their writings, Roy being an active social activist writes with an outspoken and bold attitude in her fiction and non-fictional works, Desai writes with a more subtle voice in her fictional works

With many non-fictional essays to her credit, Roy thrives to bring out the major social and environmental problems of the modern world and is a true advocate of peace and

non-violence. Her essays are a reflection of the crimes against humanity and are brilliant for reasoning as most of her non-fiction essays were delivered as lectures and include a lot of statistical data and is different from her fictional works. Imbued with the zeal to mobilize the marginal and with a nonconformist nature, she belongs to the uncommon breed of writers and marks the emergence of an intellectual writer who is both political and public. Roy explores more complex social issues of the modern globalised world through her nonfiction which are also political in nature. As a humanitarian and political activist a number of political and environmental issues are also brought out in her essays.

Desai as a fictional writer is more on the personal level and explores the postcolonial issues on a more deep and personal level. Desai delves into the minds of her characters and explores their thoughts and sufferings more deeply. She is able to sympathize with each of her characters and show the kind of suffering and turmoil they have to undergo.

A new historical approach towards the non-fiction of Arundhati Roy and fictional works of Kiran Desai shows that despite the variations in their writing techniques, both the writers are concerned with the issues of the modern postcolonial world. Desai has created the postcolonial atmosphere in her writings through her characters and is full of wisdom and subtle parallels. Kiran Desai is more subtle with her explorations of the human conditions and the challenges of a globalized society and her novels beautifully, subtly and powerfully suggests. Roy on the other hand explores postcolonial issues through her nonfiction but she explores them in a more generalized way and brings out various problems of the global world. A number of environmental issues are also highlighted in her essays and her goal is to explore tenets of peace and non-violence through her essays and nonfiction

2.3 Social Realism in the novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai

Fiction or writing is not only a means of entertainment or serves the sole purpose to add literary value to a work of art. The horizons of literature can however be broadened and used as a means to study the society, the past and also used as a medium to expose the glories and follies of the society. Literary fictions are portrayals of the thinking patterns and social norms prevalent in the society. The basic function of a writer is his work of art rather than the social realism. As Bhabani Bhattacharya, a novelist of affirmation of life asserts:

Art must teach, but unobstrusively, by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach, but only by virtue of its being a vehicle of truth. If that is propaganda there is no need to eschew the word. (394).

During the decades that immediately preceded and followed Independence, there arose a galaxy of writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Sivaram Karant, Babani Battacharya, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, Kamala Markandaya, Remchand, and so on who pioneered the social cause and documented the social life of the people. Their writings were inspired by the time they were produced. Literary works began to be written with a view to mirror the social and political realities of the people and counter-hegemonic movements thus engaging the mission of social rectification.

Literature is no longer stoic and fixed as before with the modernist writers employing a number of modernist techniques which gives a writer the freedom to express in his own way. The writer is given the freedom to explore his potential to the fullest without any rules or limitation. Hippolyte-Adolphe Taine states that a literary work is “a transcript of contemporary manners” from which we can recover “a knowledge of the manner in which men thought and felt” (309). Contemporary novels act as a mirror of the age. The writers while revealing the inner consciousness of mind and their feelings also depict the socio-political milieu of the age.

Harry Levin states “the relations between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes; it is also the cause of social effects” (126). Art and literature are neither innocent entertainment nor independent of social forces. They are inextricably associated with ideologies and politics.

However, these writers do not write in the traditional realistic way of writing. As postcolonial writers their writings are modern with modern stylistic approaches. They blend fiction and reality and use poetic and symbolic modes to weave a novel with modern stylistic nuance. They follow the writings of modern writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Salman Rushdie. Using modernist approach of writing and employing techniques such as magic realism and shifting from past to present they try to bring out the social, historical and cultural details of the people of India after the colonial period.

With its amalgam of mytho-logical elements, drawn from Hindu epic narratives, and historical reconstruction *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a good example of a postcolonial novel where surreal and grotesque effects are intertwined with a fictional realist mode. India is home to many superstitious beliefs and in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* Roy includes superstition in her writing:

Nahiyaar, matmaro, Hijron ka maarna apshagun hota hai.

Don't kill her, brother, killing Hijras brings bad luck.

Bad luck! (62)

A special mention about the Hindu festival of Dussehra is given in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, “It was celebrated every year in the Ramlila grounds, just outside Turkman Gate. Every year the effigies of Ravan the ten-headed ‘demon’ King of Lanka, his brother

Kumbhakaran and his son Meghnad grew taller and were packed with more and more explosives. Every year the Ramlila...which Hindus believed was the story of the triumph of Good over Evil, was enacted with greater aggression..." (86).

In the second Chapter of her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* Roy mentions about the Partition of India and how it affected the people on India:

Then came Partition. God's carotid burst open on the new border between India and Pakistan and a million people died of hatred. Neighbours turned on each other as though they'd never known each other, never been to each other's weddings ...The walled city broke open. Old families fled (Muslims). New ones arrived (Hindu) and settled around the city walls. (13).

The partition of Indian affected normal life in India. There was conflict everywhere and there was chaos and confusion everywhere. There was constant fear of the war and there was no sense of love and belonging among the people as Nimmo said " 'No one's happy here. It's not possible' "Price-rise, children's school-admissions, husbands' beatings, wives' cheatings, Hindu-Muslim riots, Indo-Pak war -... The riot is inside us. IndoPak is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't". (23).

Roy shows how normal life in Kashmir looked like a distant dream for the people living there. The political turmoil and lack of peace and security has forced the people of Kashmir to act unruly "People – ordinary people, not militants – are attacking the forces. Kids on the streets with stones in their hands are facing down soldiers with gun... If the soldiers fire at them and kill a few, the protests just swell some more." (429).

Social and political issues are given due importance in their writings. Both Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai inherit a multi-cultural home atmosphere which provides them with a profound knowledge of Indian culture and raise some social issues existing in Indian society. Religious fanaticism and the promotion of one's own religion without the tolerance of other religion is a major issue of India at present. The Hindus are on a spree to promote Hinduism as the national religion as Roy states in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* "Today as the saffron tide of Hindu Nationalism rises in our country like the swastika once did in another..." (165).

Roy makes a reference to the swastika to prove her point that religious intolerance and forcing religion on people has never done any good to the society. India as a democracy has given all individuals the right to practice one's own religion without any hindrance. The promotion of one particular religion and the feeling of religious intolerance will only cause chaos and disruption in the society and it will make for a perfect war, "a war that can never be won or lost, a war without end" (181).

Mr. Aggarwal's speech in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* brings out the current political scenario of the country " "This is our Second Freedom Struggle. Our country is on the brink of a Revolution,'... 'Thousands have gathered here because corrupt politicians have made our lives unbearable. If we solve the problem of corruption we can take our country to new heights, right to the top of the world.'" (121).

Roy tries to picture the ironic future of the Indian society in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by stating that if people continued to wage war against each other without any solution the future generation will be bleak and have no humane feelings or love for their own fellow men "The younger men who would take his place would be harder, narrower and less forgiving. They would be more likely to win any war they fought, because they belonged

to a generation that had known nothing but war.” (437). Thus Roy mentions that if the present scenario of the Indian society does not improve then “One day Kashmir will make India self-destruct in the same way” (433).

Kiran Desai in her novel reflects on the various aspects of life. Desai explores the social life of the people of India. Globalization is central to the theme of her novel. She poses a number of questions relating to globalization and post colonialism. She delves deep into the culture and customs of the Indian society and shows the Indian way of life through different perspectives. Dr. Shubha Mukherjee observes:

With a touch of humour and irony, Kiran Desai explores into the inexplicable and mysterious world their beauty and truth lie within reach but invisible.

With the use of irony Desai shows how humans have more connection with animals instead of their fellow human beings. The cook laments how it is “Terrible to be a poverty stricken man, terrible, terrible, terrible....” (34). Sense of loss of love for our own fellow human beings is thus seen through the relationship between the judge Jemubhai and his dog Mutt, “Mutt was waiting for him at the gate, and the judge’s expression softened... In a second she went from being the unhappiest dog in the world to the happiest and Jemubhai’s heart grew young with pleasure.” (209).

The intensity of the situation is seen in the fact that Jemubhai never allowed the cook to have any kind of meat but let the dog Mutt enjoy this privilege, “It worried the judge that she should eat like this, but she’d already had the last of the meat... and the cook, of course never had the luxury of eating meat in the first place.” (288).

A number of social issues steaming from post colonialism are reflected in the novel. Immigration problem is one striking problem of postcolonial writings. The issue of illegal immigrant is brought out through the character of Biju who is working as an illegal immigrant in New York. He always dreamt of a better life for himself but instead he was exploited and made to shift from one job to another “in a space that should have included family, friends, he was the only one displacing the air.” (268). Displacement is an important feature of postcolonial writings. The Empire Writes Back states “a major feature of post-colonial literature is the concern with placement and displacement” (8).

A major concern in postcolonial literature is the problem of displacement and its consequence resulting in the loss of home. Thus, Biju felt lonely and sad in an alien country that did not provide him with any peace. His pathetic life makes him to realize that “Life was not about life for him anymore, and death- what would even that mean to him? It would have nothing to do with death.” (268).

In India, most of the contemporary writings are marked by an eschewal of the social content for artistic fineness. They shun away from social content in order to avoid the harsh reality which the modern postcolonial countries face or undergo after colonization. The question is significant why the contemporary Indian writers are so unconcerned about the stark issues of the society, such as the continuing exploitation and marginalization of the tribals and Dalits by the dominant classes. Desai and Roy however try to bring out these social issues in their writings and find means to amplify them.

Roy always has a cry for the poor, the Dalit Women and the discriminated one within the society and we can make out that in her later writings; among them some such are — *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *War is Peace*, *The End of Imagination*, *The Greater Common Good*

etc which depicts the façade scenario of the modern society where on one side the people were endorsed with fundamental rights of Democracy and on the other, those rights were snatched away by the big leaders of the nation in the name of development. The poor exploited people are however unaware of the physical and health hazards that these projects have on their health.

Desai's first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is filled with superstitious references. Desai uses magic realism to weave a satirical novel which is a modern man's chaos in the modern world and how he tries to escape reality. When Kulfi holds her new born baby in her arms she felt as though she was holding "a creature that looked as if he had come from another planet altogether, or had been discovered in the woods, like something alien and strange" (12).

Some of the beliefs and customs of the Indian people are very typical and are largely superstitious in nature. As a land of superstition, India is home to a number of social vices which hamper the growth of the country. By talking about these social vices in their writing they sow the seeds of awareness and realization in the minds of their readers. Roy states in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, "The falsehood of our 330 million mute idols, the selfish deities we call Ram and Krishna are not going to save us from hunger, disease and poverty. Our foolish faith in monkeys and elephant-headed apparitions is not going to feed our starving masses..." (164).

Desai and Roy's writings emerges to be novels of post-colonialism, discussing multifarious tenets of colonialism and those of the emerging response to colonialism. H. Hardless's remark which Sai finds in *The Indian Guide to Etiquette* conveys the stark reality of the Indian society and the notion that "Although you may have acquired the habits and manners of the European,

have the courage to show that you are not ashamed of being an Indian, and in all such cases, identify yourself with the race to which you belong” (199).

What Kiran Desai ultimately highlights is not just individual experiences, but rather the relationship between immigrants, exile, and foreigners who all grapple with the weight of history and society. Her characters fail to assimilate the new culture because they are unable to give up their original culture which in turn creates chaos in the life of her characters. Kiran Desai’s realistic portrayal of life on two continents, India and abroad creates a feeling of diaspora on multiple levels and demonstrates a deep concern for the social condition of the Indian society.

Writers such Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have both given attention to socio-political concerns in their writings. The subaltern or the lower class is represented in their writings which highlights the social and political problems and depicts the social reality of a certain society. Both Desai and Roy mention about the culture of India in their writings, their novels are a brilliant study of the Indian culture with its rich heritage. They present all the major characters as the victims of postcolonial issues. We come across the postcolonial, migration, history, subaltern and language through their writings.

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Chapter 3

3.1 Introduction to Subaltern

The cause is the consequence, you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich (Fanon 31).

The field of Post colonial theory is of recent origin but has gained recognition as the study of the subaltern or the other by reproducing the colonial experience of the subalterns in literary works. Postcolonial studies has gained literary significance with special reference to the subalterns after the publication of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1987), Ashcroft's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Homi K Bhaba's *Nation and Narration* (1990) and Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

Throughout history and in the twentieth century, the concept of subaltern studies is essentially difficult to define. The 1993 edition of *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* included 'history' for the first time as a context for defining 'subaltern'. In the late-medieval English, it applied to vassals and peasants. By 1700, it denoted lower ranks in the military. By 1800 G.R. Gleig (1796-1888) mastered this genre. After the Russian Revolution, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) began to weave subaltern identity into theories of class struggle.

The concept of the subaltern first gained recognition in the Italian Marxist political activist Antonio Gramsci's most widely known book *Prison Notebooks* written between 1929-1935, which later appeared as an article *Notes on Italian History*. Here, Gramsci refers to the

subaltern class as any “low rank” person or group in a society suffering under the hegemonic rule or the elite section of the society and denied active participation in the making of local culture and history. The term ‘subaltern’ underlines a subordinate position in terms of class, gender, race and culture and is a postcolonial mode of criticism.

Subaltern Studies began in England towards the end of the 1970’s with the proposal to launch a new journal in India initiated by a small group of Indian and English Historians. The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham published the influential volume *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1982. Simultaneously, the first volume of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* appeared in Delhi, with the specific aim of rectifying the “elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work” (35).

Three volumes of essays titled *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* was published by Oxford University Press which appeared annually from 1982, and in the next five years three more volumes were added to the collection which was all edited by Ranajit Guha. By 1989, Ranajit Guha and eight other collaborators had written thirty- four of forty-seven essays in six *Subaltern Studies* volumes as well as fifteen related books. In the first four volumes of *Subaltern Studies*, twenty essays treat peasant, worker, and tribal struggles; in the next six volumes, only five.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak the Indian- American post-colonial theorist was born on February 24, 1942 in Calcutta. She gained international recognition for her translation of Jacques Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*. Her groundbreaking essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) gave a new momentum to the theoretical debate of the concept of the Subaltern. It was first published in 1983, then revised in 1988, and then further revised in 1999. Her writings reflect the background struggle and oppression of women in the third world countries.

Spivak used the term 'subaltern' from Gramsci, to refer to the unrepresented group of people in the society (55). By subaltern Spivak means the oppressed subjects or more generally those "of inferior rank" (283). Spivak (1988), in her now famous paper, problematized the notion of subaltern agency. She pointed out that it is impossible for the subalterns to speak for themselves. Gayatri Chakraboty spivak in an essay titled, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" wrote: The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with woman as a pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not disown with a flourish. (308)

Ashcroft et al makes a distinction between colonialism and post-colonialism in *The Empire Writes Back*. Colonialism refers to a "period before independence" and post-colonial "cover all the culture affected by imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). All the colonized countries of the world have a subaltern identity. It is very difficult for these people to reclaim their own identity. Peter Barry states that subaltern identity "celebrates hybridity, and cultural polyvalency" (198).

The concept of 'subaltern' has been expressed more systematically by a group of scholars who formed the Subaltern Studies Collective and the series of edited volumes *the Collective* inspired by Gramsci and Michel Foucault. This initial Subaltern Studies Group was later joined by about another 36 scholars, who contributed in the 12 volumes of the Subaltern Studies series. Two decades later *the Collective* published twelve volumes and several essays with special focus on politics, history, culture and gender issues.

Through a new paradigmatic shift in 1987–89, subaltern studies more staunchly moved toward the study of fragmentary and incomplete subaltern consciousness. The project took a discursive turn when it moved away from its theorization of "subaltern politics" in the vein of

Antonio Gramsci and E. P. Thompson toward the politics of discourses and representation of the subaltern subjectivity. It significantly embraced the theorization of power and domination as propounded by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Edward Said.

As these elements of change became incorporated into subaltern theory, a new vista of inquiry opened up whereby the subaltern studies scholars started focusing on all the processes of the modern state, public institutions, and the representation of subaltern classes in its loci.

3.2 Representation of Subaltern in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

Postcolonial theory is interdisciplinary in nature. Literature sketches the vulnerability and struggle of subjugated human beings. A literary work involves a creative interaction between the writer and the social milieu. The novel as Lionel Trilling puts it is “a perpetual quest for reality” (205).

Power is an important factor which determines the fate of an individual. In his *A Preface to Democratic Theory* Dahl calls power a type of relationship in respect of capability and control. A person is powerful and has control over the society as long as he has the authority to control those under him. In every society the weaker section or the minority always face a number of problems which stem from the fact that they are the weaker section in the society.

Power is an important factor which determines the fate of an individual. A few people with power in their hands exploit this section of the society and use them for their own benefits. In a way these weaker section of the society are at the hands and mercy of the few people who hold power and authority. The weaker section of the society finds themselves at the mercy of a few powerful people who exploit them for their own benefit. The concept of subaltern in Indian writing covers not only the Untouchables but also includes all the marginalized, under privileged and poor section of the society. Subalternity is the condition where the oppressed

people face or suffer under all sorts of dominance. This dominance by a few people in power determine the life of the subalterns.

Subalternity is now a universal phenomenon and includes caste, race, gender, ethnicity and many other issues. Subaltern Studies recontextualizes, links, and resists the boundaries of a divided, traditional and hegemonic system. It also critiques and rediscovers hegemonic structures of ideology and power in the formation of an individual's identity in a society. The influence of traditional hegemonic system and the effect that power or the superior has on the subaltern and its impact on an individual's identity is brought out through subaltern studies. It tries to resist the dominance of the superior over the inferior or minor sections of the society. It tries not to stereotype people under a certain category or section.

The disorder and political unrest is intensified. The domination over the subaltern remains the same even after independence. The Nation cannot guarantee the well being and security of the untouchables or subalterns. Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have represented the various stages of struggles faced by the subaltern in post independent India through their creative writings. The struggles faced by the downtrodden or untouchables find a place in their works.

As a postcolonial theoretical practice, the discourse of subalternity expands its conceptual reach and has assumed a more responsible and realistic turn by displacing the western idea of knowledge and focusing on the importance of one's own culture. Culture is the essence of a community, every community has its own culture and tradition which makes it unique. Subalternity upholds the value and importance of culture and encourages the upliftment of one's own culture.

Gayatri Spivak's Theory of Subalternity reiterates the fact that "the subalterns cannot speak". (308). Indian English writers try to portray this social reality of the Indian society through their

writings. Arundhati Roy gives representation to the Dalit community in her novel *The God of Small Things*. Arundhati Roy addresses the plight of the most vulnerable citizens in contemporary India, such as the Untouchables or Dalits who dwell at the bottom of the Hindu caste system, an issue that can be equally traced in the tragic character of Velutha who belonged to the 'shadow class' in *The God of Small Things* which is set against the backdrop of the Naxal insurgencies of the 1960s.

Velutha is a representation of a caste subaltern who has no voice in the society and cannot speak. Mamachi said "Velutha less than she would a Touchable carpenter but more than she would a Paravan" (77). "Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footsteps so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprints" (73-74).

The book layers itself with multiple number of characters which makes it chaotic. There are numerous references about the subaltern section of the society in the book, particularly the about the Hijras who are a minority section in the society. For Ustad Kulsoom Bi, Hijras were 'chosen people' 'beloved of the Almighty'. The word Hijra means "a Body in which a Holy Soul lives" (27).

Arundhati Roy shows how the Hijras in India find a place for themselves where they are in minority through the character of Anjum a hermaphrodite. Anjum says "Everyone's on them. 'I'm not Everyone',". The hardships and struggles faced by the Hijras is brought out early in the novel, the moment Anjum was born, Jahanara Begum says "all things...had a gender. Everything was either masculine or feminine, man or woman. Everything except her baby... It addressed itself to her as a soundless, embryonic howl" (8). Roy further brings out the helplessness and pity of the Hijras when Nimmo Gorakhpuri, the youngest in the Khwabgah

states “ D’you know why God made Hijras?... He decided to create something, a living creature that is incapable of happiness. So he made us” (23).

The Hijras form a minority section of the Indian society without any legal rights of their own. The statement “I’m not Everyone,’ Anjum said” (29) and “We don’t really exist” (84) shows the identity issue of the Hijra and their need to have their own unique identity. As a child, Aftab as Anjum was earlier known as was subject to a number of discrimination. He was teased by the other children “He’s a She. He’s not a He or a She. He’s a He and a She. She-He, He-She Hee! Hee! Hee! (12).

Anjum’s own mother Jahanara Begum was unable to fully accept the fate of her child as she whispered to Hazrat Sarmad “This is my son Aftab... Look after him. And teach me how to love him” (11). Roy shows how Anjum’s father chose to sever all ties with his son and chose not to speak to him “Occasionally they would pass each other on the street and would exchange glances, but never greetings. Never.” (25). The life of the hijra is brought out during the night of ‘the Flyover Story’ as “They ran in blind terror, like ghouls, through the darkness and the rain...True, it was a routine bit of humiliation for Hijras, nothing out of the ordinary...It was nothing, but still, it was something.” (35).

The enigmatic S. Tilottama a third-year student at the Architecture School who “didn’t look like any of the pale, well-groomed girls...” (152) is mentioned, while other minor women characters like Mary, Gudiya, Bulbul and Bismillah are also given reference in the novel. Roy mentions a number of minor characters in her novel which adds more variation to the novel.

Kiran Desai also brings out injustice shown towards the subalterns in the wake of globalization in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* through the character of the voiceless cook who was “a poverty stricken man growing into an ancient at fast-forward. Compressed childhood, lingering

old age...the undisturbed settled smell of a lifetime of cooking, smoke and, kerosene” (19) and his son Biju who belongs to the “shadow class” (102) and was an illegal immigrant in America:

By offering a reprieve from NYC rents, they could cut the pay to a quarter of the minimum wage, reclaim the tips for the establishment, keep an eye on the workers, and drive them to work fifteen- sixteen-, seventeen-hour donkey days (146).

Kiran Desai shows how the lower section of the society are exploited even abroad. Biju left India to create a better life and find a better position for himself in America, however his situation did not improve and he did not get to live his “American Dream” (58). He was exploited at his workplace and he had to struggle and shift jobs constantly in order to make his needs and ends meet. Desai thus explores the struggle faced by the subalterns through the character of the voiceless cook and his son Biju and shows how oppression is carried out on the subalterns. Desai beautifully and painfully depicts the story of the immigrants and the subaltern section of the society in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Indian parents in their quest to fulfill their lost dreams put all their hope on their children. Their children serve as a means to fulfill all that they could never be. Likewise, the old cook in the novel also puts his hope on his only son Biju who worked as an immigrant in New York. As the cook hopefully laments “One day his son would accomplish all that Sai’s parents had failed to do, all the judge had failed to do” (85).

Desai also shows how the Indians are willing to undergo any kind of humiliation to improve their standard of living. They consider going to the States as a golden opportunity to elevate their social standing without knowing about the consequences of living as an immigrant in the States. They are willing to sacrifice their lives in order to maintain the high standard of living

as Biju states “In this room it was a fact accepted by all that Indians were willing to undergo any kind of humiliation to get into the States. You could heap rubbish on their heads and yet they would be begging to come crawling in...” (184).

Gayatri Spivak articulates a similar critique of Deleuze’s claim as quoted by Foucault and Deleuze in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* “every partial revolutionary attack or defense is in some way linked to the workers struggle” (272). This critique finds meaning in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. Discontentment among the majority section of the society which is the working class usually results in political unrest and the people become unruly in the struggle for freedom of their rights. This struggle by the working class usually sets the tone for the novels. Both the writer’s works are set against the backdrop of some struggle or discontentment by the working class.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai shows how in Kalimpong, high in the northeastern Himalayas “a series of strikes and processions had indicated growing political discontent...” (107). The novel is set in the backdrop of insurgency rising in the North- East where the people were tired of being ill treated in their own country, and subjected to discrimination “In our own country we fight for, we are treated like slaves...” (159). The Indian-Nepalese were tired of being treated like the minority in a place where they were in majority and wanted their own country or at least their own state:

One day fifty boys, members of the youth wing of the GNLF, gathered to swear an oath at Mahakaldara to fight to the death for the formation of a homeland, Gorkhaland. Then they marched down the streets of Darjeeling, took a turn around the market and mall. “Gorkhaland for Gorkhas. We are the liberation army” (126) “...we must unite under the banner of the GNLF, Gorkha National Liberation Front.” (159).

Desai thus ends her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* “Sai looked out and saw two figures leaping at each other as the gate swung open...”. Although Biju lost everything he had on his way back home to India Desai ends the novel in a positive note with both the father and son reuniting. There is a sense of happiness and joy in the reunion of the duo as Desai is hopeful for the future because “All you needed to do was to reach out and pluck it” (324).

Similarly, Arundhati Roy has also used the Kashmir Dispute as the backdrop of her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The India and Kashmir dispute finds itself a place in her novel and the whole novel is about the political clashes amidst the people’s cry for ‘Azadi’. “As Roy states “This was different, this Kashmiri chant. It was more than a political demand. It was an anthem, a hymn, a prayer... It made for a perfect war – a war that can never be won or lost, a war without end.” (181).

Roy explores how the lives of the normal people were affected by the dispute as people were forced out of their homes at gunpoint. Survival became a struggle for the people as “These days in Kashmir, you can be killed for surviving”. (268). The struggle for survival became a constant cry for the people in Kashmir. Death became a regular sight for the people as people were killed mercilessly for no reason. As a result there was a large number of graveyards which sprang up and every locality had its own graveyard. The intensity of the situation grew when there was no more space for graves and some graves became “double-deckered” (319) as the war progressed.

Foucault states that power is “always exerted in a particular direction with some people on one side and some on the other” (213). Power is a force which determines who is to be controlled by whom. A person in power always has an upper hand as opposed to a person who has no or less power. Arundhati Roy narrates an instance in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

where she shows the contrast between the high class in power and the lower section of the society. The economic reasons for subalternity are highlighted in the novel. As a result of globalization, in cities:

Skyscrapers and steel factories sprang up where forests used to be, rivers were bottled and sold in supermarkets, fish were tinned, mountains mined and turned into shining missiles. Massive dams lit up the cities like Christmas trees. Everyone was happy... (98).

But away from the city lights and advertisements, villages were also being emptied:

In slums and squatter settlements, in resettlements colonies and 'unauthorized colonies, people fought back... Where shall we go? the surplus people asked 'You can kill us, but we won't move,' they said... (98).

This sharp contrast in the living standards of the people in the novel shows the political, social and economic divide in the modern society. The postcolonial world has divided the society into so many sections that there is no stability in the world. There is unrest everywhere and there is lack of balance in the society. Roy shows the bridge between the rich and the poor by stating:

It was like a wartime ward. Except that in Delhi there was no war other than the usual one – the war of the rich against the poor. (190)

Caste subalternity is explored in the novel. Roy also shows how the poor soldiers suffered in the course of the war. S.Murugesan, a young soldier along with two other soldiers bled to death as their armoured jeep was blown up on the highway just outside Kupwara. Murugesan's

body was delivered in a coffin to his family in his village in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu.

However:

In his village the Vanniyars (who were not 'untouchable' would not allow the body of S.Murugesan (who was) to be carried past their houses to the cremation ground. So the funeral procession took a circuitous route that skirted the village to the separate Untouchables' cremation ground right next to the village dump. (317).

In *The God of Small Things* Roy artistically brings out the theme of Untouchability with the glass eye of Vellya Paapen who was Velutha's father. "Mammachi organized and paid for his glass eye. He hadn't worked off his debt yet...he felt that his eye was not his own" (76). Roy shows how the entire family had to be indebted to the higher class because of their lower class status. Velutha was not the only one who was indebted to Mammachi's family. His own father also had to suffer for belonging to the Paravan section of the society which was considered the lowest section in the caste hierarchy.

Further, Roy shows that whatever was considered normal and acceptable for the higher section of the society would be considered a grave sin if any of the untouchables or low class people did the exact same thing "While these were qualities that were perfectly acceptable, perhaps even desirable in Touchables, ...in a Paravan they could...be construed as insolence" (76).

The society judged the standard of a person's value on the basis of their caste and not by his morals, actions or deeds. Being a lower caste meant that they could never be right in their judgement. Gayatri Spivak claims that the appropriation of the workers' struggle is driven by desire- a desire to destroy any manifestation of power This manifestation of power finds illustration where Walter Benjamin comments on Baudelaire's critique of a passage in which Marx describes the "conspirateurs de profession" who have "no other aim but the immediate

one of overthrowing the existing government... their anger (is) not proletarian but plebian” (273). This sense of collective persecution has led to a growing ethno-nationalist subaltern identity.

Kiran Desai represents contemporary voice of South Asian Anglophone fiction, who is much concerned with Eastern and Western influences. In her acclaimed novel and her second work *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai closely examines issues of immigration and Western influences on non-western countries, colonial heritage and legacies. The novel discusses mainly the impact of postcolonial chaos within turbulent North-eastern India in the 1980s.

A significant contribution of postcolonial theory has been the reconceptualisation of identity of the subalterns. Many of the subaltern writers are diasporic in nature. Displacement and the question of identity between self and place forms an important aspect of Diaspora. The Oxford English Dictionary defines Diaspora as “the dispersion... the whole body of Jews living dispersed among the Gentiles after their Captivity.” Memory and nostalgia play an important role in defining diaspora. Writers of diaspora occupy a place of exile and cultural solitude which Homi Bhabha defines as the third space in his book *The Location of Culture*.

3.3 Women as Subaltern in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai

The woman remained standing where she had been deposited. A small, desperate, frightened figure, a traffic island on the crossroads to nowhere. (Roy 225).

Simone de Beauvoir feels that: “The situation of woman is that she is a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the other.” (301). Women are treated as “the other” they protested against the cruelty perpetrated on the women by portraying their responses and reactions. The spirit of revolt against mechanical life, mismatched marriages and wayward ways of their life partners was obvious in their writings. The protagonists of their novels are troubled and suppressed women of a typical Indian society.

Women in their socially pre-determined roles do not have the freedom to express themselves because of the rigid patriarchal society. There was no scope for women to do a critical re-evaluation of their own needs or even the norms of the society for a better and satisfied life. They have found voices in music, art and literature but were tied down by the rigid rules of the society which did not favor them.

Many Post-modern Indian writers have dealt with the theme of immigrant female experience from its different perspectives. The woman as subject in any literary discourse are primarily written in the masculine form and mostly interpreted in patriarchal terms. Their sufferings and hardships are thus neutralised. Thus these writers try to bring out their own individual and unique voices in their writings. Many Indian English writers such as Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy have begun to voice their concerns in their writings.

With the emergence of several Indian English women writers, fiction underwent a number of substantial changes and there was a change in the manner of how women were represented. There was a fine balance of Indian tradition and western modernity. Indian women are represented as women with unique culture and seen differently from the common western women. The women as subaltern find voice in the novels of Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy.

Autobiography or Women's life written from postcolonial nations has acquired strategic eminence from the point of view of the theorists. Not only Memories and diaries but some personal accounts have been captured as the woman's experience.

Kiran Desai a diasporic writer of Indian origin, represents the contemporary voice of South Asian Anglophone fiction and is concerned with Eastern and Western influences. She gives a fresh orientation to fiction. In her acclaimed novel and her second work *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai closely examines issues of immigration and Western influences on non-western countries, colonial heritage and legacies. She highlights most of the issues and themes of contemporary society in her works and deals primarily with life in India.

Desai and Roy as postcolonial writers bring out the injustice carried out to women as 'the other' in their writings. Gender, caste, class, and race are interlinked from postcolonial point of view. Mohanty quotes at some length in this context: Ideologies of womanhood have much to do with class and race. As they have to do with sex.... It is the intersections of the various systematic networks of class, race, heterosexuality, and nation that position us as women. (55).

In *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak states that women are victims of the "withholding of consumerism and the structure of exploitation," both founded in "patriarchal social relations" (288). As Desai writes in *The Inheritance of Loss* "The daughters were promptly deprived to make sure he got the best of everything from love to food. Years went by in a blur." (59). Kiran Desai states how "Some poor women suffered the fate of having their sons turn their back on them and ignore them completely after marriage" (78). Kiran Desai has truly brought out the injustice shown towards women in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* through the character of the judge Jemubhai and his harsh treatment towards his wife Nimi.

Kiran Desai shows how colonization influenced the Indians to develop a liking for the English culture through the character of Jemubhai the judge. The dilemmas of postcolonialism are depicted through his character “He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become...” (119). This westernized attitude of the judge and the colonial neurosis makes him to hate his Indian wife and torture her “he did not like his wife’s face, searched for his hatred... An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one” (168). This illiterate village girl. He grabbed at her again.” (169).

In the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre says:

The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite...they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouth full with high- sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home, white- washed. (7).

The colonial neurosis seen in the character of Jumubhai shows how the European way of life has an impact on his life and how he is being influenced by it. He constantly compares his wife to the English standards and when she is unable to live up to his expectations he starts hating her “his hatred was its own creature; it rose and burned out, reappeared of its own accord, and in her he sought only its justification, its perfection. In its purest moments he could imagine himself killing her.” (305). Desai shows how the anxiety and fear caused by the colonial neurosis forces Jemubhai to act harshly towards his wife.

Desai depicts her male characters as powerful and dominant. They try to maintain their power by exerting their authority over the female figures which are characters ranging from daughters to wives. As Desai writes in *The Inheritance of Loss* “The daughters were promptly deprived to make sure he got the best of everything from love to food. Years went by in a blur.” (59).

Though Desai's novels lack powerful women portraits, Desai shows that they are capable of taking their own decisions as Sai states "And she felt a glimmer of strength. Of resolve. She must leave." (323).

Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak* further says that a woman cannot "know and speak the text of female exploitation" and so, "the woman is doubly in shadow" (288). Likewise, in the novel Nimi is exploited and unable to voice out her feelings. When she spoke with fear "You are the one who is stupid". "For the first time he hit her, although he had wanted to before and fought the urge for sometime... "Stupid bitch, dirty bitch!" The more he swore, the harder he found he could hit" (304-305). Nimi thus lives like a shadow in her own house and lives a pathetic life with the judge Jemubhai, and even when she was sent away to live with her uncle he turned Nimi away from the door saying "You are your husband's responsibility," he said angrily. "Go back... if you have made your husband angry, go ask for forgiveness." (306).

Spivak states that the subaltern cannot speak for themselves as he is not self knowing and thus "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern as a female is more deeply in shadow" (287). Thus, Spivak states that "in the long run, cohere with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the advancement of learning and civilization. And the subaltern woman will be mute as ever." (295). Women do not have right to interfere in home affairs, their voices are suppressed. This indication of the residual effect of colonial domination is clearly visible in the life of the judge and Sai.

Arundhati Roy also shows the struggle and discrimination faced by women in her novel *The God of Small Things* through the character of Ammu who was divorced. "As for a divorced daughter- according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all." (45). Ammu was subjected to all kinds of discrimination from the society and her family. She had no voice

in her own home as her family members treated her as an outcast and “people avoided her” (45). The society held the view that a married woman had no position in her parent’s home.

This was “the fate of the wretched Man-less woman” (45) and as a result:

She developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in

Someone Small who has been bullied all their lives by Someone Big. (180).

Arundhati Roy further shows how the Indian women or daughter has no right to any property. They are not entitled to inherit anything from their parents. Ammu as a daughter worked hard in the factory as Chacko however she would not get anything out of it because “legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property.” (57). This is further enhanced in the way Chacko treated Ammu. Chacko says “what’s yours is mine and what’s mine is also mine.” (57).

Arundhati Roy brings out the life of the Indian women in the society specially that of a divorced women and shows how they are suppressed and discriminated by the society and also their own family members. They do not receive any kind of support from the society which looks down on them and treats them in an inhuman way.

The ill treatment of women is further intensified in the novel through the character of Pappachi. His harsh and violent behavior towards Mammachi also further added to Ammu’s misery as a child. They were beaten, humiliated and driven out of their home. He was very helpful and charming with other people, “but alone with his wife and children he turned into a monstrous, suspicious bully, with a streak of vicious cunning.” (180). As she grew older she learned to live with this injustice and cruelty that develops in “Someone Small who had been bullied all their lives by Someone Big”. (181,182).

Arundhati Roy explores social problems in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Roy shows how Indian women were thrown out of their homes because of their inability to conceive “The waiting room was full of distraught women who had been thrown out of their homes by their husbands for not being able to conceive.” (392). A woman who was unable to bear children was looked down by the society and considered a disgrace for her husband and family.

Arundhati Roy has explored a major social issue faced by Indians in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*: transgenders or Kinnar and Hijra as they are known in India. The Hijras form a part of the subaltern society in India with no political rights. The problems faced by the Hijras is brought into light through the character of Anjum earlier known as Aftab who “was a rare example of a Hermaphrodite, with both male and female characteristics, though outwardly, the male characteristics appeared to be more dominant... While treatment would surely help, there would be ‘Hijra tendencies’ that were unlikely to ever go away...” (17).

The subaltern women as ‘the other’ undergoes suffering mentally and also physically.

Likewise, Anjum in the novel undergoes a number of sufferings. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* the conflict between the body and the mind can be seen in the following lines:

The woman Aftab followed could dress as she was dressed and walk the way she did only because wasn’t a woman. Whatever she was, Aftab wanted to be her. He wanted to be her even more than he wanted to be Borte Khatun... (19).

However “his body had suddenly begun to wage war on him. He grew tall and muscular. And hairy...His voice broke. A deep, powerful man’s voice appeared in place of his sweet, high voice...” (23-24). Further his relationship with his family was also strained as Anjum’s father

“chose to sever all ties with his son...He never met Anjum or spoke to her again...Never...”
(25).

Nila Shah comments: “Roy’s work undoubtedly deconstructs the hidden ideology of patriarchal society that moulds a woman making a frontal attack on long-revered traditional assumption about women. It questions and disturbs the hegemony and social hierarchy.” (77)

Desai and Roy’s women in their novels are powerless in the society without any voice of their own. They constantly suffer and are inferior to men. However, at the end of their novels both the writers end the novels with a ray of hope. The women characters try to find their own unique voice and identity through the course of the novel. The women are hopeful of their future even though they undergo all kinds of sufferings and confusion throughout the novel. They are positive that the future holds a better life for them. Roy and Desai make it a point to give them a better tomorrow. They rise from their present circumstance to fight for a brighter future for themselves. Thus the authors give their women characters the freedom to rise from their hardships and misfortunes. They try to project the notion that suffering is not constant.

Bhabani Bhattacharya in *Women in My Stories* candidly confesses:

The women of India have more depth, more richness than men. The transition from the old to the new and the crisis of. value adaptation, strike deeper into the lives of women than the menfolk (2).

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CHAPTER 4

4.1 The Use of Language in Indian English Writing

“... make language stammer, or make it ‘wail,’ stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities.” – G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Indian English Writing has made a significant contribution in the field of fiction. Indian English fiction is only one and half century old. From the historical perspective, Indian English Literature has passed through several phases such as Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian Writing in English and recently Indian English literature. For its verve and resilience Indian English Fiction has turned out to be a “merituous outlet” (8).

Indian English Fiction established its pre-eminence in the 1930’s with the emergence of ‘The Big Three’- Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935), R.K Narayan’s *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938) which gave a new impetus to Indian English Writing. The first book written by an Indian in English was Sake Dean Mahomet’s *Travels of Dean Mahomet* published in 1793. Indian writers have revised the English language in terms of stylistic features and Indianized it. William Walsh opines :

It was in the 1930’s that the Indians began what has now turned out to be their very substantial contribution to the novel in English, and one peculiarly suited to their talents. (66)

The first World War had its impact on the novel. Walter Allen says “Novel is a working model of life” (1). After World War 1 Indian English novel became determinedly more realistic and less idealized. Much critical attention has been given to young Indian writers in the last two

decades. These novelists include Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Laheri, Manju Kapoor, Gita Mehta, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Sashi Tharoor and Ruth PraverJhabvala.

Indian Fiction in English despite its modest beginnings has made a mark in the world literature. After Independence R.K. Narayan and V.S Naipaul became India's root chroniclers since Indo-Anglian work of fiction was publishes in almost every decade since the 30s. The 80s were the turning point with the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Rushie became a trendsetter for his comtempories. The 90s also saw a deluge with Amit Chaudhuri, Mukul Kesavan, Chitra Bannerjee, Divakaruni and Abraham Verghese publishing events in the West.

The novel, according to Salman Rushdie, is "the crucial art form of... the post-modern age (424) "the most freakish, hybrid and metaphoric of forms" (425). In 1993, Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* won the *Booker of Bookers* which paved the way for other Indian writers to follow his footsteps. It determined a new era for Indian English writing. Other Indian writers to win the prestigious award includes Arundhati Roy in 1997 for *The God of Small Things*, Kiran Desai in 2006 for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* and Aravind Adiga in 2008 for *The White Tiger*.

Some of the female Indian English writers include Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Amrita Pritam etc. Among the postcolonial writers Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have added much to the tradition of the Indian literary scene with their much acclaimed works which earned both the authors the much acclaimed Booker prize Award. Srinivas Iyengar has described Indian English literature as "a Janus-faced literature" born of "a cross fertilization of two faithful cultures" (35) - Indian and European.

Arundhati Roy is the first Indian to win the prestigious Booker prize. Indian writing has a rich tradition but few writers have won the prestigious Booker prize. However, four books with Indian themes or by Indian origin writers have won this prestigious prize: V.S Naipaul's *In a Free State* (1972), I.G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) and Ruth Praver Jhabwala's *Heat and Dust* (1975).

Dr. A. V. Krishna Rao rightly remarks about the novel of post-independence era: "The post-independence novel clearly marks out a new phase of emotional and intellectual growth in Indian literature. The dislocation, the distemper and disenchantment of the post war and the post-independence have had their impact on the Indo-Anglian novel too." (10). The post war trauma and the after effects of the war greatly influenced Indian English writings. The bitter pangs of suffering and the displacement led to turmoil and confusion in the minds of the people both physically, emotionally and psychologically. This led the writers to find solace through the means of natural and spontaneous expression in order to find meanings in their sufferings and to find a solution through the means of writing.

Self expression is a matter of individual choice and depends on the skill which a person possesses in order to express in a language which is suitable to their own taste. As Indian English writers the Indian writers face a number of problems while expressing. The Indian writers have to write in a foreign language and thus it creates a kind of barrier while expressing.

Srinivasa Iyengar states that "no individual or nation can today have any proprietary claims over any language." (24). Language is the crucial medium of the Postcolonial writings. Language raises questions that help in resolving some basic social and moral issues of contemporary Indian society. English language has enjoyed its colonial legacy and therefore has become, the language of the Postcolonial writers.

Helen Gilbert states that “Postcolonial has become a convenient term to describe any kind of resistance particularly against class, race and gender oppression.” (214). In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft uses the term post-colonial to refer to “all the culture affected by imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (2).

Postcolonial writers reflect or mediate the history of modern India in their writings. They are involved in the creative process of transforming the rise and fall of the British Empire in India such as its emergence and consequences. They are also involved in bringing out the historical facts and transforming it into an art form such as the novel. Postcolonial novels reflect the social condition of the people during the postcolonial period and how the lives of the people were transformed during the colonial period.

Colonialism also has a definition in Oxford English Dictionary “an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak people by a large power”. Post Coloniality is a phenomena that refers to the political, economical, historical, cultural and actual living conditions of the newly independent African, Asian and South American States with the global system.

Postcolonial writings have been considered as novels of introspection as a result they are sometimes personal and confessional in nature. They become a cry of nostalgia for the common people and they idealize it to glorify their past or either use it as a medium to express their discernment, protest and disgust over their past. It becomes a source to express the political, social and economic condition of the nation. Mulk Raj Anand, a prominent novelist of the colonial times wrote 'of the people, for the people, and as a man of the people'. (Iyengar, 333).

There is a dire need for the Indians writers to produce something that is Indian in nature and which shows the real India without much adulteration of the Indian culture and way of life. M. K.Naik remarks:

perhaps the best argument in support of the view that Indian writing in English is a body of works worth serious critical consideration is the fact that the best in it has been taken seriously and subjected to minute appraisal by critics in both India and abroad... The steady interest it has aroused, in recent years, in English speaking countries shows that it has merits other than those of sheer novelty and exoticism (3).

4.2 A stylistical Overview of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai's writing.

Postcolonial writing underwent a major transformation with the advent of 1980's, a critical reflection on the postcolonial conditions could be read in literature with the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). Rushdie comments on how working in new language can be a therapeutic act of resistance, remaking a colonial language to reflect the postcolonial experience. The novel also employs elements of fantasy giving the novel added charm. Rushdie uses exalted diction, bold literary innovations and unconventional words in the novel.

Multiculturalism and globalization are important characteristic features of postcolonial writings. The intermingling of different culture has led to the growth and adaptation of many new cultures. This has led to the hybridization of different cultures and language. Hoogvelt defines hybridity as "a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (158).

Arundhati Roy writes in an inimitable style that ranges from descriptiveness to metaphorical overskill. Her novel blends magic realism, romance, melodrama, family and social issues. It is also autobiographical in nature. Roy defies conventional structure and time sequence in her novels. *The God of Small Things* is replete with symbols, metaphors, similes and imagery. Arundhati Roy uses fresh, vivid and appropriate similes and metaphors. The distinctive voice of the author echoes throughout the novel as it is written in the third person narrative, a technique used by writers such as Thackeray, Fielding or George Eliot. Like in James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Arundhati Roy limits the point of view to one character and makes it exclusive by limiting the thoughts to just one single character at a particular point of time instead of shifting points of many characters sequentially.

Her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* uses magic realism to weave a tale that is moving and demonstrates on every page the miracle of Arundhati Roy's storytelling gifts. The word magic realism is derived from the German word 'Magischer Realismus' a phrase used by Franz Roh in 1925. The term is usually applied by novelists such as John Fowlers, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie to name a few.

The strength of Roy lies in her visual imagery and her pictographic style of writing. She gives a pictorial image to her writing which is a delight for the readers. It adds another element to her writing style. The readers can get a more vivid picture through the way she expresses her writings. Roy also uses alliteration, and assonance in her novels. The use of irony and satire in her novels also adds a new element to her writings. Arundhati Roy blends English as well as Indian vocabulary and idioms in her writings. Her style of writing is neither pompous and showy, nor pure rife but a judicious blend of lucidity and dignity.

Arundhati Roy's novel breaks the conventional writing style in structure and time sequence. As a postmodernist writer she does not write in the conventional way. Rather she uses modern methods of techniques in terms of narration, plot and style. She uses narration in such a way that there are breaks in structure and time frame. She uses a number of linguistic devices such as stream of consciousness technique as used by the modernist writer Virginia Woolf in her writings. Roy also uses the flashback technique in her writing. The time sequence shifts from the past to the present.

As Jason Cowley states the time shifts and reversals in the novel serve "simultaneously to accelerate and delay the coming disaster. An atmosphere of foreboding, sometimes lapsing into portentousness, hangs over the narrative". (28) In this regard Roy belongs to the school of contemporary writers such as Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. Their writings do not follow any chronological pattern and shifts from the past to the present and future.

Roy also deliberately misspells the words in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* to give an authentic Indian touch to her writings " 'You are fery beautiful,' he said. 'A photo? May I?' " (52), "Thanks god my brother is born also black" (420), "Outside there is you fight and take up issues. But inside there is us only." (426).

A distinct feature used by Roy in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is the use of abbreviation "KGB (Kindergarden- Section B)" (37), "LIG (Lower Income Group)" (75), "Joint Interrogation Center, the JIC" (174), "STF, you know, is Special Task Force" (192), "LCSW, Licensed Clinical Social Worker" (196), "Trauma Symptom Inventory-2 (TSI-2), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)" (198), "Line of Control (LOC)" (272), Rashtriya Rifle (RR)" "JKP (Jammu and Kashmir Police)" (273), "MTP- Medical Termination of Pregnancy" (392), "PLGA- People's Liberation Guerrilla Army" (421).

Kiran Desai first gained recognition in the literary scene in 1997 when her excerpts found an honourable mention in Salman Rushdie's edited anthology *Mirrorwork: Fifty Years of Indian Writing*. She is a writer of modern English writing and her arrival heralds the beginning of a new voice in Indian English Writing. She has proved her worth by building herself a literary tradition and explores the vast canvas of the contemporary society in the perspective of globalization.

Desai was born in India and educated in India, England and the United States. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* was inspired by a real life event and was even serialised in the *New Yorker* and also included in the *Vintage Book of Indian Writing*. She is the youngest woman to win the Man Booker prize for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006.

Desai asserts that India is a land of multiculturalism. As a modern international expatriate Indian novelist, she analyses the postcolonial and postmodern set up of the expatriate Indians. She writes of the cultural hybridity of the postcolonial migrant and the expatriate condition of hybridity and diaspora in her writings. She belongs to the younger generation of Indian writers who write in English. She prefers American English and tries to make it Indianised. She is known for her detailed presentation of character and setting and also for her rich and colorful language. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is expressed through magic realism while her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* shows the social and political realism of the country.

One specific trait in her writing is that she writes in a realistic manner and includes real life situations. She skillfully blends comedy and fantasy in her writings. She is an insightful novelist and the sense of 'Indianness' finds expression in Indian English novels in many different ways and styles. Other techniques used by Desai include the use of Hyperbaton and

similes. She writes in a bewildering fascinating style. Another feature of Desai's writing technique is the use of capital letters in her novels.

The superstitious belief of the Indians is brought out in her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* through the use of humor and magic realism. It is an imaginative and witty portrayal by Desai to create a sense of the supernatural and create a comical effect. Desai brings out instances to prove the superstitious nature of the Indians, "The signs for marriage were not auspicious", " 'Dust or no dust, it is yet one more inauspicious sign,'" (62). Desai through the use of her linguistic prowess shows how the Indians respect hermits as "In Shahkot, we honour and respect our hermits" (115).

In her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai writes with compactness, crispness and compression and uses punctuation marks. She moves from the magic realism and satire in her first novel to a more complex novel which explores the problems of modern life. She brings her narratives and characters to life illustrating her themes and using ordinary people and bringing a realistic touch to her novels. Her characters are very much the regular people doing their regular things.

As a postcolonial writer Desai shows how globalization has affected the Indians. They have adopted the English way of life through assimilation and acculturation of foreign culture and in the process lost their identity have adopted the English way of life. Desai brings out this aspect of the Indian life in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* as Mr. Shah's wife "has left India a meek bride, scrolled and spattered with henna, so much gold in her sari she set off every metal detector in the airport – and now here she was- white pantsuit, bobbed hair, vanity case, and capable of doing the macarena". (150).

Nostalgia is another important feature of postcolonial writing and Desai explores this feature in her writings. The characters always long to go back to the past in an attempt to relive the good memories they once lived. As Biju was exploited at his work place he always thought about the carefree life he once had as a child, “he remembered bathing in the river, feeling his body against the cool firm river muscle, and sitting on a rock with his feet in the water... Biju found himself smiling at the memory of the time...” (270). As Pramod K. Nayar writes in his essay *Hybridity, Diaspora, and Cosmopolitanism*, Exiles tend to hold on to their traditions in an almost desperate effort to retain/reclaim their original culture. (57).

This sense of hybrid nature can be seen in the character of Jemubhai the judge in her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. The judge developed a love for the English people at a young age. He developed a sense of love for the English culture that he began to renounce his native Indian culture and became an anglophile. He began to love everything about the English people and hated the Indian culture and way of life “Undignified love, Indian love, stinking, unaesthetic love...” (38). His love for the English culture was so deep that “He retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow” (39). This led to the denial of his identity and individuality.

One effect of post colonialism is the feeling of displacement and alienation. A person tries to alienate himself from the society in order to escape the harsh reality of the modern world. Desai shows how the modern man tries to escape the harsh reality of the modern postcolonial world through the character of Sampath as he sat on a guava tree in order to escape reality “It was the right place for him to be; that is where he belonged” (78). Through the process of alienation the character tries to find peace within himself. As Kulfi talks about his son:

There in the midst of the chaos, her son's face had contained an exquisite peace, an absorption in a world other than the one he had been born into (78).

In *The Inheritance of Loss* the sisters Lola and Noni find themselves displaced “with the rotten luck of being in the exact wrong place at the exact wrong time when it all caught up – and generations worth of trouble settled on them” (241). Likewise Jemubhai the judge also feels alienated from the real world, his sense of loneliness is so deep that in the end he realizes that “a human can be transformed into anything. It was possible to forget and sometimes essential to do so” (308).

Thus both Jemubhai and Sampath are an embodiment of alienation and estrangement. Their loss of identity and the denial to accept their own reality leads them to alienate themselves from the society. Sampath tries to evince peculiar, unbecoming and negative response of colonialism by using alienation as a means to escape the reality of the modern colonized world. Sampath's dream-like life represents a journey deep within oneself, to the expanse of emptiness, reminiscent of the Buddhist ideal of nirvana – the being of nothingness. The character of Jemubhai reflects the ethos of alienation and perpetual mental migration from his actual world. The richness and diversity of Indian English writing can be seen in the works of postcolonial writers like Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

Much of Indian English Writing has been accustomed to the Western literary models and their surrender to the foreign cultural values. As postcolonial writers, both Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have contributed a lot to the field of Indian English Writing by creating an authentic literature out of their own personal experiences. Their engagement with contemporary postcolonial theory and innovative linguistic virtuosity adds new dimension and feature to

their linguistic and literary production as postcolonial writers. They explore the issues of postcolonial society in their writings particularly the Indian society.

4.3 Satire as stylistic device in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

The novel is postcolonial in nature and filled with satire and comedy which gives a new impetus to the novel. Satire is a literary device intend to correct individuals, countries or even the world by criticizing their follies and foibles and are usually meant to be funny. The use of satire helps in reducing the intensity of a serious matter or situation. Its greater purpose is often to provide constructive social criticism, using wit as a weapon and as a tool to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in the society.

In *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* Kiran Desai has used magic realism to create a sense of the supernatural and also to create a comical effect. The New York Times describes the book as “ ‘A meticulously crafted piece of gently comic satire-a small, finely tuned fable that attests to the author’s pitch-perfect ear for character and mood, and her natural storytelling gifts.’ ” It is based on a real life story where a man named Kapila Pradhan lived in a tree for fifteen years. Kiran Desai is a careful observer of behavior, with a fine eye for revealing details. Desai presents the dreams and aspirations of an Indian middle-class family in her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* and sustains the interest of the readers through the powerful command of her narrative technique. Desai’s rich imaginative coloring and humor makes the plot lively.

Desai has explored her setting from India to New York in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in The Guava Orchard* is set in India and follows a typical Indian setting. She uses sarcasm, a modern narrative technique throughout the novel. Further, Desai also uses satire in order to show how the Indian society set the norms and standards on how a

woman should look like or behave in order to be accepted as an eligible Indian bride in the society:

She must have a pleasant personality. Her character must be decent and not shameless and bold... She should be fair complexioned, but if she is dark the dowry should include at least one of the following items: a television set, a refrigerator... and maybe even a scooter. (57).

By the use of satire Desai brings out the harsh reality of the Indian society and how it expects its women to behave and act in a certain way in order to be considered a proper Indian lady. She shows the discrimination towards women when she states in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* "This, after all, is the boy's family. They're entitled to their sense of pride" (59). The use of satire minimizes the intensity of the situation and makes it lighter for the readers. It also adds an added element to the charisma of the novel by making it more engaging and interesting.

The use of satire makes the novel more fun and entertaining for the readers. Desai blends reality and fiction and weaves a story full of humor in her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. The incident where the monkeys discover alcohol, get drunk and causes havoc in the lives of the villagers is amusing "They devoured her entire supply and, drunk as could be, drunker than before, they returned to the Chawla compound... and, in true hooligan style, proceeded to turn everything they could upside down" (129) .

Desai also shows how the Indians put their trust in medicinal doctors and priests as described below:

A variety of cures may be prescribed,' he said. 'For example, medicines derived from the scorpion, the sea scorpion, the sea dragon and the sea mouse.'... They went on to the homoeopathic and Ayurvedic doctors, and to the naturopath who lived all the way in Kajuwala. (56).

Arundhati Roy uses language to the full in order to express through her writings. Language expresses the culture, identity of a person's thoughts and ideas. Roy is luminary among the contemporary writers and has control over her language. Caroline Moore asserts that Roy's novel displays "an exuberance as well as a freshness and unembarrassed immediacy which are rare in good fiction from this country" (102). Her use of language is almost like poetry sometimes. Madhu Benoit explains about Roy's art of storytelling: "she is not telling a story, but she is using a story, raising reader expectancies." (85).

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is packed with documents, slogans, banners, reports, notes, dairies, and storytellings and is overpopulated with characters, frequently achronological. Satirical yet compassionate, it channels the spirit of the transgressive-mystical in subcontinental poetry rarely found in Indian English writing. Written in a third person omniscient narrative, it is written in an often careless and haphazard style and yet capable of breathtakingly composed and powerful interludes.

Roy's humor and use of the language brings out the irony in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* "We do terrible things to each other, we wound and betray and kill each other, but we understand each other" (194) . Her language is full of literary allusions. She uses a wide range of vocabulary and invents new idioms in her novel. She includes dictionary titled "Kashmiri-English Alphabet" in her novel. She also includes posters, letters, diary entries, witness testimonies, etc in her writings.

Roy uses a careful blend of political satire in her novel, while giving a historical background about the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi, Roy mentions “Her spoiled younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, was the head of the Youth Congress...and was more or less running the country, treating it as though it was his personal plaything...” (34). Through this incident Roy mocks at the political condition of India.

Roy further brings out the conflict between India and Kashmir through the use of satire in the novel by mentioning an incident where an ‘explosion’ took place and ‘they shot to kill’ (323). Roy however makes fun of the serious situation by mentioning “that the explosion had been caused by a car driving over an empty carton of Mango Frooti...who was to blame? Who had left the packet of Mango Frooti (Fresh ‘n’ Juicy) on the street? India or Kashmir? Or Pakistan? Who had driven over it? ... Nobody was blamed... Life went on. Death went on. The war went on” (324).

As a postcolonial writer, Roy has explored various issues in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and asserts the continuity of her political and literary concerns in her writing. Written after two decades her second novel is a representation of the chaos and conflict of the contemporary Indian society and highlights a number of issues. She is a daring innovative writer

Many Indian writers have come up in modern times. They use a number of techniques such as interior monologue, flashback technique and stream of consciousness. However what makes Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai unique is the way in which they use language in order to create something beautiful and worthwhile using the Indian setting and exuding plethora of details. This brings a desirable quality of readability in their novels. Their writings portray the

Indian way of life in all its glory and fallacies through the use of satire. The use of satire provides an added charm to the novel and help in constructive criticism.

4.4 Analytical overview of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai's stylistic likeness.

With their own unique technique of writing Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have made a huge impact on the way Indian literature has affected the World literature. Agarwal states that “by technique we mean the pattern, coherence and sense of perspective imposed by the novelist's selection and explanation” (228).

While Arundhati Roy has written only two novels to her credit, Kiran Desai has written a number of books. However, Roy has written a number of non-fiction works. In her novels Roy sticks to the regular Indian setting and uses characters that are very much Indian in nature but reveal much more than the regular Indian way of life. Both her novels are set in India and deals with conventional themes. Her first novel *The God of Small Things* is set in Kerala her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is set in Delhi. Roy has used a number of techniques in order to create a novel that is unique. It includes letters, short stories, articles etc which makes the book different.

Desai on the other hand has explored her setting from India to New York in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in The Guava Orchard* is set in India and follows a typical Indian setting. She uses sarcasm, a modern narrative technique throughout the novel. The other technique used by Desai includes the use of hyperbaton and similes. Another feature of Desai's writing technique is the use of capital letters in the novel.

Another similar trait used by Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai in their writings is their use of political issues as the backdrop for their novels. The socio-political issue concerning hybridity,

immigration, insurgency, poverty, racial discrimination, social realism and intercultural communication finds expression in their novels. Desai has used the Kalimpong and the Gorkhaland agitation as the base of her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* while Arundhati Roy has used the Kashmir dispute for her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.

As postcolonial novels both the novels make use of the political issue in order to project how the lives of the ordinary people are affected by political uprisings and the consequences it has on the characters. The authors weave a beautiful tale in the midst of the chaos and confusion and shows how life goes on for every character despite the struggle and hardships. As postcolonial writers both writers have the experience of diaspora, the loss of cultural belonging and the confusion of national identity. They depict the emotional trauma arising out of growing migration and the impact of multiculturalism in an age of globalization and in the midst of contemporary challenges of life.

An important development in modern fiction is the blending of different genres leading to a range of new effects on the readers. Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai blend the real and the supernatural in their writings through the use of magic realism. As modern writers this technique allows the writers to explore more with their writings. This allows more avenue for the writers to experiment with their style of writing and create something fresh and exciting for the readers. The innovations and new techniques of writing provide richness to their novels.

C.Paul Verghese writes:

The Indian social, cultural, and linguistics set up has affected the features of the English

language as used by the Indian creative writers in English, especially the novelists, and

'Indian English' is only a variety of English-whose characteristics stem from the life and culture of the people of India. (103)

Repetition is another tool used by postcolonial writers. Samuel Taylor Coleridge used repetition of words in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Kiran Desai uses repetition of phrases in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* to show the intensity of a situation "Humara kya hoga, hai hai, humara kya hoga... "Beware.Beware.Keep away.Distrust" (22), "On and on" (30).), "terrible, terrible, terrible..." (34), " Ah ah ah ha ha, I know, I know" (101), "Copycat copycat... THEY DON'T WANT YOU!!!" "Fail, fail, fail" (164), Unfair unfair UNFAIR UNFAIR!", "YES! YES! YES!" (206).

Roy also uses repetition in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* , "Nahin! Nahin! Nahin!" (34), LouderLouderLOUDER (50)", " "India! India! India!" (97), " "Hi Mom! Hi Mom! Hi Mom! Hi Mom! Hi Mom...'" (111)", "Lalla! Lalla! Lalla!" (105) "Azadi! Azadi! Azadi!" (180), "hpsf hpsf hpsf hpsf...CUK!CUK!CUK!" (250), "You, You and You" (348), "Women are not allowed. Women are not allowed. Women are not allowed." (387).

Onomatopoeia is another style adapted by Kiran Desai in her writing "cows moed oo aaw,oo aaw" (57), " It rang again and then again. Tring tring tring tring" (97) "(b)ut the door shut itself along with all the doors in the house. Bang bang bang' (105). "Biju ran after a cow. "Hup hup" (187). "He felt frightened but also a little proud. "Ai yai yai ai yai yai," he said to himself "(120), "Oh, all the time. Rrrr-rrrr, you would hear them" (224) "The cook waved them away angrily, "shshshshsh," " (230), "Then he went back out with a sack of rice. "Hss sss hsss?" he hissed."(265), "stones hit the rooftops, BANG BANG BANG BANG" (275). "Backed up and went whroom whroom whrooming!" (316).

Roy in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* uses Onomatopoeia, “ ‘With garam-garam (warm) soo running down your thanda-thanda (cold) legs!’ ”, (34) “the bells on her anklets...went chhann-chhann-chhann.” (118), “The only sound was the slap-slap-slap of thousands of sockless shoes...” (325), “Baa baa black sheep” (147), “the faint thwack thwack of a shuttlecock meeting a racquet made its way into Amrik Singh’s office” (334).

Both Kiran Desai and Arundhati intermixes languages in their writings. In *The Inheritance of Loss* the cook laments “Humara kya hoga, hai hai, humara kya hoga,” he let his voice fly. “Hai, hai, What will become of us?”(8), “Pigs pigs, sons of pigs, soor ka baccha,” (23), “Angrez ke tarah. Like the English.” (105), “ Hota hai hota hai, you have to do it.” (179), “No ghas phoos, no twigs and leaves!”(212), “Mubarak ho aapko. Congratulations!” (271), “Go, will you?! Bhago,” (317).

Roy also intermingles languages in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, “Mussalman ka ek hi sthan! Qabristan ya Pakistan! Only one place for the Mussalman! The Graveyard or Pakistan!” (63)”, “Tum bin kaun khabar mori lait... Who other than you will ask for news of me?” (65), “(Murdabad! Murdabad! Down! Down! Down!)” (105), “Bhai baccha kiska hai? Whose baby is this?” (117). Besides using Hindi in her writings, Roy uses a mixture of Kashmiri and Urdu in her writings. Roy also intermingles languages through songs in her novel:

“Dil cheez kya hai, aap meri jaan lijiye

Why just my heart, take my whole life too” (123).

Use of Capital letters expresses anger, Desai employs this technique in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* “WHAT DID YOU SAY” (231) ,“YOU FOOL-...FOOL FOOL-”,“

SATAN IS WAITING TO BURN YOU ALIVE...YOU DON'T HAVE A MOMENT TO LOSE" (267), "WHAT ARE YOU SAYING???!!!" (319).

Roy uses capital letters in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* to begin a paragraph "FOR MONTHS ANJUM LIVED IN..." (63) "SHE HURT HER LEGS..." (202), "NAGAASKED TILO FOR ONE...", "THAT MORNING, AS HE LEAFED..." (245)

Her paragraph construction is sprawled and varies from one line paragraphs to one word paragraphs:

"You're married?!"

"That's it, man."

"Who did you marry???"

"Toys."...

"Toys."... (121)

Similarly, Arundhati Roy in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* also uses sprawled paragraph construction and her paragraphs vary from one word to one line paragraphs:

'Salaam.'

'Salaam.'

'You came.'

'Of course.'

'How are you? How was the journey?' (352).

Roy also uses oxymoron in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, “It was nothing, but still, it was something.” (35), “So we are remembered as the forgotten ones?” (51), “Be professional, be polite and have a plan to kill everybody you meet” (91), “Gruesome Beheading of Innocent Civilian by Militants” (274), “Cheerfully unconcerned or unworried about something” (298). “At least some horrible good has come of this night” (341), “ ‘Here it’s the same thing. Only the dead are free.’ ” (355), “I met her in the most horrible way... horrible yet beautiful...” (357).

Both Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy use hyperbaton in their novels. Desai in *The Inheritance of Loss* use “Bananafritterpineapplefritterapplefritterapplesurprise...” (64), “Muttoncurrymuttonpulaovegetablecurryvegetablepulao...”(207)

Roy also uses hyperbaton in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* “LouderLouderLOUDER” (50), “Rolypolyrolypolyrolypoly” (148), “ ‘ Appappappappappapapp’ ” (318), “workworkwork” (315), “*Slowsdownslowsdownslowsdownslowsdownslowsdown...*” (378)

Desai uses vulgar and abusive expressions in *The Inheritance of Loss* “uloo ka patha” (23), “gadas” (297). Roy uses slang sometimes mostly Indian in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, “ Wah! Behenka Lauda... Bhonsadi ke” (27), “Sarkar ki Maa ki Choot” (98),

Use of italics “*the doors won’t stay open forever...*” (47) “*Because of people like you!*” (164), “*name on the box so it say who it belong to!*” (98), “*You could use it for waterproofing!*” (194), “*Because you don’t deserve to*” (261), “*just happened to stumble into the stereotype...*”, (297), “*you are the one who is stupid*” (304).

Roy also uses italics in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* “*Forget about the broken chairs, they’re always hanging around*” (253), “*Otherwise things could get completely out of hand*”

(259), “Who’s there? what’s that sound? Stop or we’ll shoot!” (316), “Are you so-and-so? Son of so-and-so? Employed at such-and-such?” (329), “Motor boats. Many of them” (375), “Maybe the mannequin-shoppers are ghosts trying to buy what no longer exists” (412).

A comparative study of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai’s works brings out certain similarities between the two authors. Both the writers have won the prestigious Booker prize award and established themselves in the realm of serious writing in Indian English literature. Arundhati Roy won the Booker prize for her novel *The God of Small Things* in 1998 while Kiran Desai won the Booker prize for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006. The merit of both the writers lies in the fact that they use ordinary people to create extraordinary situations.

As Booker prize winners, the authors bring something new and fresh to the literary scene with their use of Indianized English and the Indian setting as a backdrop to their novels. The typical Indian life is portrayed in their novels with a perfect blend of language, technique and style which add contours to their writings. Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy have brought laurels to the Indian English Writing through their creative writing skills. Indian Women writers have excelled the global standards set by the postmodern and postcolonial writers by breaking all the barriers of writing.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai as postcolonial writers have contributed much to the growth of Indian English writing. The postcolonial neurosis can be seen in their novels through the characters and the circumstances of the various characters. They struggle to find their identity in a modern globalized world where there is lack of stability. Both Roy and Desai have been vulnerable to the changing social and political norms of their country as a colonized nation and to some extent faithful in representing the various issues of their age as postcolonial writers. Their writings illuminate the consequences of colonialism and global conflicts of religion, caste, race and nationality.

Post-colonialism as an approach involves many issues - language, men and women's roles in society, nationalism, political conflicts, globalization, multiculturalism and hybridism. It is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. The entire historical process and the European hegemony are studied in their writings. Indian writing in English is an integral part of, and a significant contribution to post-colonial literature.

The historical and social patterns of a country determine the cultural richness of that country. For the post-colonial writers, the study of history becomes a political act. India as a country has a rich culture and past which has developed over the centuries. This rich culture and historical values find a place in the works of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. As Ludmilla states:

Literature is seen not as a (passive) reflection of historical change, but as a significant (active) vehicle of it. Indeed, literary approaches are profoundly shaping the contemporary practice of history" (78).

They use historical and political issues as the main backdrop of their writings which brings out the struggles of the colonized people of India. Their writings serve as a form of excavation that can help a postcolonial writer return to the historical archive in order to reclaim, to preserve, rewrite, and reinvent one's past and know more about it. Through a historical reading of the novels the writer gains insight into the rich past of a nation with all its glory and history.

History plays a significant role in the post-colonial writings, particularly in India, or when it comes to the Indian context. For Ricour Paul, Fiction borrows as much from history as much history borrows from fiction (46). Roy and Desai use history as a medium to explore more about their country. In doing so history is a vicious ongoing cycle for Roy the process Roy is more on the

By studying the historicity of a particular nation, the cultural implications and ethos of the once colonized countries are brought out which helps to preserve the cultural identity of a particular country. The study of history finds meaning in the works of both Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. They try to bring out historical references in their writings and use history as a medium to explore the rich past and culture of India. The history of colonization and the pangs of suffering and disappointment it brought for the people are given references in their novel.

Both Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai through the delineation of various events and through the portrayal of many character and situations in their novels, indicate and alert the post-colonial world that colonialism, in some form or the other, has made this world its permanent home. As postcolonial writers, they have a mind which is not free from the process of colonization. The colonial process has left a deep impact in their minds and thus they are a true representative of the people living in a country which once was a colony and was under a superior colonizer.

Experiencing the growth of colonization and the effect that comes with it, the colonized people had been gaining supremacy over the language of their oppressors. It is natural for the colonized people to adapt the language of their oppressor. Since the very beginning of the post-colonial era the ever-emerging writers of the new literatures such as Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have been skillfully manifesting the response to colonialism in their writings and literary works.

Arundhati Roy is more direct and outspoken in her address of political issues and policies of the government in modern India. Through her nonfiction she can be more direct and sarcastic and is able to address the impact of these policies at various levels in society. Her own rationale about the socio-political upheavals is expressed through her nonfiction.

Kiran Desai does not directly address various issues but she is not unconcerned. Hers is a socio-emotional connection with the experiences of the common man. She feels deeply with her characters and is able to sympathize with them. Her representation of history is often of the relentless trend of change and the individual caught in its inevitable march.

Hybridization of language is an important aspect which comes with postcolonial writings and this can be seen in the works of Roy and Desai. Language is a medium through which the postcolonial writers try to express their own unique abilities. They use the English language with a blend of their native language such as Hindi and Urdu in their writings. It is used as a tool to express their deep concern and problems of the modern world. Their novels are also enriched with the typical common things of the day-to-day realities which we see in our daily lives which serve as a means to project the social realities of the colonized countries.

Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai are both postcolonial writers and write through the postcolonial perspective. As postcolonial writers they both employ similar modern literary

devices which make their writings colonial in nature. They use modern literary techniques such as magic realism, shift in narration, satire and irony in order to weave postcolonial novels which bring out the various social and political situation of the Indian society.

An inevitable comparison between the two writer shows that both the writers use different techniques and styles in their writings which makes them unique. Roy uses similes, imagery, abbreviation, metaphor, irony. She blends English language with Indian vocabulary and idioms. Her use of imagery which is fresh, appropriate and revealing makes it a great artistic achievement. Desai on the other hand uses punctuation marks, one word sentences, Onomatopoeia, Interjections, capital letters and repetition of phrases to express the intensity of a situation, she writes with compactness and crispness. Intermixing of English and Hindi words is used liberally in her writings.

There is also difference in the use of satire though both the writers use it. Desai uses satire on a less serious mood or tone to express simple mundane life events and happenings by making it more meaningful. Arundhati Roy on the other hand uses satire to express deeper more serious political issues. The use of satire makes the situation less intense and creates a lighter atmosphere. Despite their differences in writing it does not alter the fact that that their stylistic craftsmanship has a long lasting impression in the minds of their readers.

Roy and Desai's works present the life of the Indian people with all its culture, tradition and belief systems. They can be read as novels of social realism as it projects the life of the people of India. An important feature of the writers of realism lies in the fact that they highlight the cause and plight of the lowly, Dalits and Untouchables in their writings. The seamy and shadowy aspects of life are also given representation in the novel. They feel the need to impart and showcase the true picture of the downtrodden people of the society. The evils of the Indian

society through the various stages are brought out in their writings with a detailed description which includes historical facts.

Desai and Roy both draw attention to some issues faced by the subalterns through the depiction of stories about those people who are on outer edge of social structure and have to struggle for the basic things in life. The subalterns are given representation in their novels. The long colonial struggle had the most impact on the subalterns as they received the harshest treatment during the process of colonization. They show how the poor are not only subject to the corruption of the system which favors those in power and position. They dwell completely outside the political process because of their ignorance and the society which does not favor them.

As women writers both Desai and Roy pay attention to the needs of their women characters and are able to feel them more deeply. The harsh treatment that the male dominant society forces upon the women is brought out in their writings. The pangs of suffering the women characters undergo truly serves as a means for us to rethink about our society and how it has become so accustomed to the suffering of women. Our rigid society which always have fixed notion about how a woman should only live within the home and take care of the family is highlighted in their writings. The society as Roy portrays in *The God of Small Things* is very stern and judgemental to those women who defy the established codes of social morality and goes against it.

Desai and Roy ignite us to question ourselves and know the position of Indian women in our country and also how to improve their current social standing. Their novels are filled with moral intelligence which helps us reflect back on our society through a more neutral way and open doors for revitalizing our current society and how to find means and ways to improve our

society and the women in particular. They highlight the need to uplift women and the importance and role of women in the process of growth of a society. A society which does not work for the welfare and development of its women will never experience progress as women forms the backbone of any society.

The God of Small Things presents a realistic picture of the position of Indian women and their pain and suffering in a male dominating society without any distinct voice of their own. It can be seen through the characters like Ammu, Rahel, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and Margaret Kochamma. Roy presents the aspects of feminism and socialism and the postcolonial conditions that revolve around the social life of the women characters in the novel. They are subject to discrimination and male dominance in the novel. They are portrayed as always being under the care of the male subjects who exert their power over the females in order to prove their masculinity.

Desai has portrayed her women characters as frail and timid without any voice of their own as seen through the characters of Nimi in *The Inheritance of Loss* and Kulfi in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. Desai does not portray her woman characters as having a strong personality or strength of character. They are usually under the care of the dominant power which are the male characters. They struggle to find their own unique voice, and in doing so are exploited by the men in the novels.

Marriage as an institution is not successful as there is no love and understanding between the husband and the wife. The married life of Kulfi and Chawla in *The Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* and Nimi and Jemubhai in *The Inheritance of Loss* reveal this bitter truth. Both Roy and Desai elucidate the need for women to rise up from the repressing environment and to create their own space to survive in a male dominated society. They do not simply preach for

the liberation of their women characters in their writings but provide satisfactory life examples and parallels to show how to attain self-respect and self realization through their works.

As women writers Roy and Desai both talks about the experience of being a woman and shows how women are treated in the society. A major difference between the two writers in their portrayal of women characters is that Roy writes mostly about the Indian women and their struggles in their own homes and native places without much outer experience and exposure. Desai on the other hand as a diasporic Indian writer writes about how immigration effects the life of a woman and the amount of psychological and mental distress an immigrant woman face in a country which is not her own. She explores more complex modern issues faced by women in her writings. Her women characters are bold, modern and highly educated. The issues explored by both the women writers show how women undergo suffering during the different stages of history.

No matter how rich and ancient a country may be, it cannot prosper unless it adopts itself to the changing times. A number of significant social changes have occurred in India due to the people's craze for western values, manners and life-style. No culture can experience growth without a healthy amount of change. Positive change is a major need for any culture or nation to develop. No culture can remain static; it has to be influenced by the changing times in order to be enriched and emulated by others. The modern world demands a number of changes because of the changing social circumstances and growth. Globalization is one such phenomenon which brings people of diverse cultures and nations together.

Hybridity is a state that globalization automatically brings on its course as no culture is pure on its own, as it gets intermingled with different cultures in the process of colonization. Thus, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai are also exposed to a hybrid culture just like any other Indian

in post-colonial India. Their masterly blend of Hindi and English language shows the influence of the colonizer's language on them as postcolonial writers and adopting hybridity in their writings.

Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai are two strong unique women writers with a distinct voice of their own. Both the writers have won the prestigious Booker prize award and gained literary recognition not only in India but all over the world. A number of social and political issues are highlighted in their novels. While Desai has written only fictional works, Roy on the other hand has written a number of non-fictional works such as her essays which are a direct representation of the current situation of the country. There is urgency in her non-fictional works and she addresses the problems directly in her essays which are political, environmental in nature. Roy voices out the current situation of the country in her essays and tries to provide a social message to the people through her non-fictional works.

Roy and Desai also talk about the superstitious nature of the Indian society and show how superstition only causes doubt and fear in the minds of the people and hampers their everyday life. They display unrelenting faith in the superstitious practices. Observing the devastating nature of these superstitious beliefs, Roy ridicules them by unveiling how meaningless they are through several instances in her writings. They also stress and elucidate the need to rise up from the repressing environment and to recreate their own space to survive in a society which is unfair to them. India is a land of superstition. The superstitious practices of the Indians are brought out in their writings.

Both Desai and Roy raise some questions on post-colonialism and globalization. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* as a postcolonial text, is a history of lost dreams and suffering of the subaltern section of the society which includes the women of the society. Her second

novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is also postcolonial in nature. She explores a variety of issues in her novel and is a true representation of the modern chaotic India. We see the novel as an Indian social spirit with so many Indian elements. The colonial history is truly represented in her writings. Roy as a socially and politically committed novelist has done full justice to her writings.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) also presents all tenets of post colonialism such as illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, xenophobia, cultural conflicts, traditional values, customs, practices and multiplicity of language, religions, faiths which make the very essence of the Indian society and its spirit. *The Inheritance of Loss* describes colonial influence, multiculturalism, modernity, immigrants and pungent experiences of insurgency. The postcolonial commotion and racial discrimination, deteriorating human relationships and impacts of globalization is vividly shown in this novel.

Hence we can say that Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai have played the pivotal role of social critics as no authors can alienate themselves from society. A writer is influenced by the social circumstances they are part of. These circumstances play a major role in determining the works of any author. As belonging to a colonized nation which is still developing, the authors find the hostility and the injustice around them as a source of inspiration for their works. The social injustice and the problems of the modern world particularly India is brought out through their writings.

These two novelists, particularly Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai belong to the group of women who realize the strength of womanhood and believe in the importance of being a woman and the major role they play in the society. They try to unveil the sufferings of the women and promulgate the need to defy the age old patriarchal social set up that limits the

rights of the women through their narratives. They are aware of the point that they cannot totally alter or change the suppressive social system because of its rigid nature and inflexibility towards any kind of change.

Thus Roy and Desai suggest that we should be proud of our culture and heritage and try to preserve it because it defines and gives us an identity. Every culture is unique and special and thus we should learn to preserve and identify with the culture we belong to. The modern world is growing at a rapid pace with the process of globalization and multiculturalism, but in the process we should not lose our identity and race which defines us. We should learn to accept our culture and try to promote it because it gives us our unique identity.

A witty and imaginative world is portrayed through their writings and they state the importance of finding new outlook and perspectives from which to look at life in a subtle, non-conformist way. By portraying their characters in a manner through which we can find parallels with the modern society they depict the woes and struggles of the modern world. Thus, they support in making a consciousness that will accomplish and help in bringing about a positive and strong alteration in society through the process of decolonization. According to Frantz Fanon:

Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men . . . the tiling which has become colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself. (29-30).

By revealing and probing positive questions, giving revelation to it, depicting crucial realities of society they belong and developing the social philosophy they can in this context, it can be said that Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai as novelists in their own way has made such

awareness. The choice of themes, style, landscape, and images shows that both the writers are deeply rooted in their native and national culture and try to promote and preserve their culture.

As a post-colonial country, the most urgent need of the society is to repossess its own past to know more about it and take control of its own reality in order to reshape themselves and their identity in the contexts of their past roots which will help in the growth of a country. Roy and Desai through a historical view through their novels try to evaluate and reposition the past of their country and try to assert and glorify the images of identity, of myths, of culture, of community and of history. As a country with a colonial past and history Roy and Desai asserts the need to recognize the influence of colonialism and the psychological damage that the colonial period has had on the people of India and try to liberate ourselves from those invisible strands that bind us from becoming a developed nation.

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