

**Artistic Expression And Censorship: A Study**  
**of**  
**Select Banned Literary Work**

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**By**

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7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

***SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE***

This is to certify that dissertation entitled *Artistic Expression And Censorship: A Study of Select Banned Literary Work* is a bonafide record of research work done by Ms Aosenla Longchar, Regn No.6/2017, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2015 -17. 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 for the award of any degree, diploma, or other title and the thesis represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision.

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## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Aosenla Longchar, hereby, declare that the dissertation entitled *Artistic Expression And Censorship: A Study of Select Banned Literary Works* is a bonafide record of research work done by me, under the guidance and supervision of Dr Talisenla Imsong, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, during the period of my research(2015-2017), and it has not been submitted, either in full or in part, to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, or title.

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## CHAPTER – 1

# HISTORY AND IMPLICATIONS OF BANNED BOOKS

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history books have been banned for a series of reasons based on political, religious, sexual and social or moral grounds. Many people think that book banning was something that happened only in the past. However, the practice of banning and burning books exists till date. Every year, various attempts are made to ban books that are considered inappropriate for the readers, children in particular, as they are the ones greatly influenced by what they read and see, unless properly guided by parents and concerned authority. Thus, books are banned or either challenged with the best of intention to protect children from being demoralized or misguided. According to the American Library Association (ALA), which is the oldest and largest library association in the world, a challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group, while banning is the removal of those materials. Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather it is an attempt to remove the material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access to others. To challenge a book or material is the first step towards book banning. Thus according to the ALA, a successful challenge would result in removal of those materials.

The act of banning or challenging a book is a matter of serious concern as it restrict one's freedom to read. Banning a book deprives one from learning, to reason out the good and the bad and thus one fails to learn realistic problems. As mentioned earlier, books are mostly banned to protect students and young people, as the opposing side believes that books that encourage extreme violence, profanity or foul language should be banned in schools and libraries. It is to be noted that when a book is banned, everyone involved in it feels the impact – from the author, to the publisher but it is usually the readers who feels the greatest impact, particularly the students. Books that are part of a curriculum are there for a reason, they contain a message or theme or a life lesson that growing minds should be taught. And when these books are banned, students lose learning those critical lessons and ultimately lack imagination, thereby making them slaves to the

present world of technology. By reading and learning the diverse contents of books, one experiences creativity, as in the words of Lev Grossman, “Young minds – young brains – need stories and ideas like the ones in those(censored and banned) books in order to grow. They need ideas that you disagree with. They need ideas that I disagree with. Or they’ll never be able to figure out what ideas they believe in” (“Lev Grossman”).

To ban a book simply because the book contains something someone doesn’t like would be unfair because it will rob students of cultural diversity and will diminish their chance to view the world with an open mind. It is completely impractical to try and control the environment that children live in. All the violent or challenged things that parents are trying to keep away from their children, the political truth and mess that various governments are trying to destroy in this world will come to light for everyone and pretending they do not exist or trying to erase them instead of embracing them and learning from them to look forward for a better future is not the answer. Some of the greatest people on this earth have looked at their environment and formed their own opinions against society. Certain banned books teach students that they can carry on with them and it is their opinion that shapes their action.

## **1.1 HISTORY OF BANNED BOOKS**

Books have been banned since the past two thousand years. Some of the most controversial books in history are today regarded as classics. The Bible, for instance, is the most read book in the world today among the many books that have been banned over the past two thousand years, and so are the works of Shakespeare. Despite living in a free and modern society, the drive to ban or challenge books seems unavoidable. When we look back as early as 259-210 B. C., the Chinese emperor Shih Huang Ti is said to have buried alive 460 Confucian scholars to control the writing of history in his time. Then in 212 B. C., he burned all the books in his kingdom, retaining only a single copy of each for the Royal Library and those were destroyed before his death. In A. D. 35 the Roman Emperor Caligula opposed the reading of *The Odyssey* by Homer because he thought the epic poem expressed Greek ideas of freedom. Religious writings were not spared as well. In 1525, six thousand copies of William Tyndale’s English translation of the New Testament were smuggled and burned by the English church as the Church authorities believed that the Bible would be available only in Latin. Similarly in 1624, Martin Luther’s German translation of the Bible was burnt in Germany by order of the Pope. Some of Shakespeare’s plays

also landed in controversy for projecting the royal family in a dark shade. In the original version of *Richard II*, the king is being deposed from his throne. However it was not well accepted by the royal family. The scene was later removed from the play after Queen Elizabeth I ordered to remove it. Shakespeare's *King Lear* was also banned from the stage until 1820 in deference to the insanity of the reigning monarch, King George III. In 1885, the library of Concord, Massachusetts, excluded Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* from its collection as the book according to the committee was "rough, coarse and inelegant, dealing with a series of experiences not elevating, the whole book being more suited to the slums than to intelligent, respectable people." Later in 1929, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was banned in the Soviet Union because of "occultism." Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* was banned by the governor of Hunan province in China because according to him animals should not use human language and it was disastrous to put animals and humans on the same level. Thus, we see that the list of banned books seems to have no end.

A simple reason is enough to challenge or ban a book, simply because the contents of the book are unacceptable to a particular section of people, group or religion. In 1989, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* was banned in many Muslim majority countries, including India and a fatwa was issued against him because the contents of the book hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims which will be later discussed in depth in the chapters ahead. It is to be noted that the more controversial the book is, the more is the curiosity to read the book. Most of the controversial, banned books in history are now regarded as classics. Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* despite its controversial content went on to win the Whitbread Award in 1989. Though the book is still banned in many countries, yet I believe the book is being read by many simply for the pleasure of reading.

Children's classics such as Grimm's *Fairy Tales* and *Little Red Riding Hood* have also been banned – the former for being too violent and the later because Little Red Riding Hood gives her grandmother a bottle of wine, which according to some would encourage drinking among children. *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh, another children's favourite was banned because it encouraged children to "lie, spy, back-talk and curse". However, all these books went on to become the most read books among children despite great efforts to ban them. The most famous books banned in recent years are the *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* series for promoting

“unchristian magic”, but not everyone agrees to this. While there are some who believes that the Harry Potter books are wonderfully and imaginative books that encourage children to read more, there are also some who supports that the book should be banned as they have a bad and corrupting influence on kids. It cannot be denied that books are mostly banned to protect children from negative influence, immoral behavior and disturbing or confusing ideas. But at the same time every book has something positive and intellectual to offer despite its controversial content if only wisely read, with guidance from parents and elders, talking and reasoning out with them on what they have read. Thus, in the words of Judy Blume, “Let children read whatever they want and then talk about it with them. If parents and kids can talk together, we won’t have as much censorship because we won’t have as much fear” (qtd. in Safire 125). According to former ALA President Carol Brey-Casiano, “Not every book is right for every person, but providing a wide range of reading choices is vital for learning, exploration, and imagination” (American Library Association).

## 1.2 REASONS FOR BANNING BOOKS

As mentioned, books are banned judged on various grounds from political to religious issues and many more. Though the practice of book banning has somewhat diminished in democratic civilization, but literature is still threatened. Most of the time the main reason for a book being banned is when the novel tells a story against someone’s belief or religion and ends up offending the reader or feeling discriminated. While there are many people against book banning there are yet many, particularly parents of young adults who continue to censor and ban books that they feel are inappropriate for their children. Following are some common reasons on which books are banned or censored around the world-

- a. **Religious Ground:** Religious grounds have long been cited as one of the most common reasons for censoring books. Margaret Bald’s *Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Religious Grounds* (1998) gives a detail account of the history, titles, and censorship history of a large number of books by renowned authors and writers banned on religious reasons. It includes works by Aristotle, Confucius, Galileo, Descartes, Dante, Voltaire, Dickens, Calvin, Luther and many more. Even religious texts like the *Bible* and the *Quran* were banned for religious reasons. For instance, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century England, reading the Wycliff Bible was forbidden by the clergy for fear that the translation had

corrupted or misinterpreted the original text. The various religions of the world deal in absolutes and ultimate truth and thus expect this Truth to be divinely revealed and recorded accurately in the sacred texts and delivered in its most complete form to their religion alone. However, when intellectual or literary works come along and challenge those religious Truths, or simply don't adhere to them, it offends the particular religion. They burn or ban the books, condemn the author and sometimes leading to murder. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* was banned in many countries because even though it was a work of fiction, Christians especially the Catholic leaders took issue with its fictional assertion that Christ wedded Mary Magdalene and fathered her child.

- b. Political Ground:** Throughout history, tyrants, totalitarian states, church institutions and democratic governments alike have banned books that challenge their assumptions or questioned their activities. Political suppression also occurs in the name of security and to safeguard official secrets and is often used as a weapon in larger cultural or political battles. Political suppression most commonly occurs when books support or examine extreme political parties or philosophies such as fascism, communism, anarchism etc. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Marx, which is regarded as the founding document of Communism has been banned, burned and censored since its publication in many capitalist countries because of its political content. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) was also banned in many US countries for exposing the dark side of Belgian colonization of the Congo, by focusing on one of the largest acts of genocide committed up to that time. Also the book *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) by John Steinback was also banned because Steinback didn't give enough credit to the community for helping migrants while *Invisible Man* (1952) by Ralph Ellison was banned because of the book carrying content regarding black nationalism and Marxist ideas. Thus, we see that books have been banned by academic institutions and various political groups/countries or individual for political reasons ranging from inaccurate portrayals of history, the promotion of nationalism and Marxism, and dystopian propaganda.
- c. Racial Themes:** Books are often challenged and banned for being 'oppressive' and 'racially insensitive' towards a particular race or country. Such books encourage racism

among children and present a negative picture in the mind of the children. Mark Twain's *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is one of the most-challenged books of all time and is frequently challenged even today because of its frequent use of the word "nigger". Twain's depiction of blacks in the book, particularly Jim, represents the tendency of the dominant white culture to saddle blacks as childish, less intelligent than whites, superstitious beyond reason and common sense, and grossly ignorant of standard English. Thus, the book was no longer available for classroom use at the elementary and junior high school levels.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is another controversial book for its description of African people as 'savages'. It was Chinua Achebe who accused Conrad and his novel of racism which will be discussed in the chapters ahead. *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* (1964) by Roald Dahl, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) by Malcolm X and Alex Haley and *Gone With the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell are some books that were challenged and banned to some extent because of its racial content and portrayal of the black Africans in a 'dark image'.

- d. Presence of Witchcraft or Magic Themes:** Books that contain magic or witchcraft themes have always been a topic of controversy for concerned parents who feel that such books encourage children to practice witchcraft and make a child believe in magical world. Books such as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by L. Frank Baum and *The Harry Potter Series* (1997-2007) by J. K. Rowling are some common examples of books that were challenged due to its presence of witch and witchcraft- the former for portraying good witches which was "theologically impossible" since the opposing side believed that all witches are by nature evil; while the later was challenged for its content of witchcraft and is the most challenged book of the 21<sup>st</sup> century according to the American Library Association.
- e. Sexual Content:** One of the top most reasons of books being challenged or banned is its explicit sexual content. Very often parents and school boards have objected books that contain certain sexual passages inappropriate for young people and students. Many books

have come under the scanner judged on sexual ground. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) – a tale of an adulterous entanglement that results in an illegitimate birth was banned on sexual ground and has been called pornographic and obscene though there are no sex scenes and sexual language. Similarly, Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952) was challenged and called for ban in schools due to its “pornographic” passages. Many parents believed that it was too depressing and a real downer for young adults and students. Judy Blume's *Forever* (1975), Vladimir Nabakov's *Lolita* (1955) and *The Bluest Eye* (1970) by Toni Morrison are some other controversial books due to its sexual content.

Children's books like *It's Perfectly Normal* (1994) by Robie Harris and Leslea Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* (1989) are also being challenged for their frank discussion about sexual health and focus on LGBT issues.

- f. Social Ground:** Books are also banned based on various social grounds unacceptable to a particular society, group or religion. It may be due to presence of immoral acts portrayed in the book, age inappropriateness; presence of violence, alcohol and other acts that tend to demoralize one's moral or gives out a wrong message to the audience (readers). The category of censorship on social grounds is a bit more elusive than the other categories. Essentially, books under this ground “have been censored because their subject matter or characters do not conform to the social, racial or sexual standards of their censors” (*Censorship Histories of World Literature* 333). Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* (1850), for example, was censored by some earliest readers on the grounds that Hawthorne sided and sympathized with Hester Prynne as opposed to her husband.

### 1.3 BOOK BANNING IN INDIA

In India, the Government as well as few Indian states has banned a large number of books over the years. As the country moves ahead into the future in every aspect, the practice of book banning does not seem to be losing its ground. When we look into the history of books banned in India, most of it were banned or challenged either due to religious or political issues. In fact,

India's record in this respect is shameful when we consider India a vibrant, free and one of the largest democratic countries in the world. During the 1970's, it was assumed that the largest number of banned books related to perceived misinterpretation of India's policies and its leaders. Books and foreign magazines such as *Time* and *The Economist* are routinely banned for depicting Kashmir as a disputed territory. No wonder India is not the only country in attacking and banning books. Books are banned around the globe, even in the best democratic countries but more often in the past. Today many democratic countries are stepping out to protect their authors but, India seems to be moving in the opposite direction and instead promoting the protestors. Till date India continues to expose its authors to vicious and hurtful hatemongers in the name of religion, political and historical errors.

The Indian government has always argued to have banned books for the maintenance of law and order in the country but at times was unfair to the authors. Books were mostly banned because it was opposed by certain religious or political group. The pleas of the writers or scholars were very often ignored and their justification unheard. Such act often discourages a writer and hurdles the literary growth and free expression of speech. By curbing the artistic creativity of the writers, India will soon lose its identity in the world of literature. Having said that, in a multicultural country like India, it is indeed very difficult to maintain perfect stability especially when it comes to religion. And as we all know, religion is a very personal issue and hence sensitive. No individual or group would like to read a book or any other material that misinterprets its religious history, hurting the religious sentiments of the people. Very often, religion seeps into public life, into politics and literature, instigating waves of discord that manifest themselves through public demonstrations and litigations. It is thus very important that one should respect the religious sanctity of other religions as well. And as writers, one should know where to draw the line. Facts relating to religious history and politics should not be curbed or diluted.

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* for instance is a book that is being banned in India since 1988 accusing Rushdie of 'blasphemy'. The book outraged the Muslim community in India and around the world for insulting the sacred religion of Islam. The book however is a brilliant piece of literature for those who have a taste for literature and wise enough to understand that it is simply a work of fiction. It has been a decade since the book has been banned; however,

continuous campaign of harassment and intimidation against Rushdie still prevails. In 2012, he was prevented from making an appearance or even addressing the Jaipur Literature Festival through a video link despite the fact that the book is already banned in India and that he has not broken any Indian law. Few days later a similar scene occurred at the Kolkata Book Fair, where Tasleema Nasreen was forcibly prevented from releasing her book *Nirbasha* (The Exile) by a Muslim group – the All India Minority Forum. They accused her of “insulting Islam” and the publishers for “deliberately” organizing the release of her book at the fair simply to “hurt” the community. Thus, faced with fear of violence, the organizers of the Fair were left with no option but to give in. Such incidents of threat and violence create havoc and fear in the mind of the writers and ultimately hamper the growth of creativity to write. It is time now for India and every right thinking, educated and book lovers to retrospect and analyze where we are heading and where we stand today in the field of literature. Should books that were banned twenty years ago due to many reasons, political factors as one, should be still banned is another question that must be looked into. Likewise, many books that were banned by the British during their rule in India still remain banned without any consideration of whether the conditions under which the book was banned decades ago have changed. While many countries are doing away with book banning, India remains adamant in this aspect and every year adds up to new controversies and book banning. The act of banning books has now become a burning issue in India with every political group, public figures and various religious sects finding fault and controversial issues in every book. Books should not be read or understood from a perspective of a politician, religious-minded or a well known public figure or national hero. It is when we read book from literary perspective and language that we understand the creativity and imagination of a writer. Thus, both the writers and the readers should know where to draw the line.

### **1.3.1 BOOKS BANNED IN INDIA**

As mentioned earlier, a number of books had been banned in India before and in recent years. And surprisingly political and religious factors are the main reason behind many of the books banned. The list of banned books in India is never ending; given below are ten prominent books banned in India for its controversial content.

*The Satanic Verses* (1988) by Salman Rushdie created great furore among the Muslim community around the world. The book was banned in many Muslim countries including India

for allegedly insulting the legend, Prophet Muhammad. However, in 1988 the book won the Whitbread Award for novel of the year and was also a Booker Prize finalist in the same year. The book still remains banned in India.

*Lajja* (1993) by Taslima Nasreen is another book banned in India on religious ground for being offensive to the Muslims and insulting to Islam. The book provides a glimpse of anti-Hindu riots which erupted in parts of Bangladesh soon after the demolition of Babri Masjid in India on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992.

*Nine Hours to Rama* (1962) written by Stanley Wolpert was banned by the India Government in the year 1962. The book gives a fictional account about the assassination of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. It was banned for exposing the poor security provided to such an important leader of the country by the Indian Government, thus highlighting their incompetency.

*Jinnah: India Partition Independence* (2009) by Jaswant Singh was not well received in India and it led to his expulsion from the party. While official accounts of Indian history portray Pakistan's founding father Mohammed Ali Jinnah as the villain whose obstinacy led to India's partition at the time of Independence in 1947, Singh in his book portrays Jinnah as more reasonable than the way he is often portrayed in India. The book also criticizes the policies of Nehru and Sardar Patel.

*The Great Soul* (2011) by Joseph Lelyveld, a biography inspired by Gandhi's life in India and South Africa was banned in Gujarat, Gandhi's hometown for exposing Gandhi's sexual life and bigoted views. Though imposition of nationwide ban was abjured, yet the book is not let inside India by Customs Department.

*The Ramayana* (1954) as told by Aubrey Menen is among the many books banned on religious ground. Menen, an Irish-Indian satirist reinterpreted the Hindu epic Ramayana in a playful way that angered many Hindu leaders. The Indian Government banned the book in 1956 on the grounds that it could offend religious sensitivities.

*Mother India* (1927) by Katherine Mayo created an outrage across India and it was burned along with her effigy. The book gives an account of Indian society, religion and culture, the treatment of India's women, the untouchables, animals, dirt, and the character of its nationalistic

politicians. The book mostly dealt with the problems resulting from the marriage of young girls which led to an uproar across India. She was accused of being racist, pro-imperialist and Indophobic tracts that “expressed all the dominant prejudices of colonial society”.

*Rangila Rasul* (1927) which means ‘Promiscuous Prophet’ was written by Pandit M. A. Chamupati. The book describes the marital and sex life of Prophet Muhammad in an unaccepted manner which enraged many Muslims, thereby leading to the murder of its publisher Mahashay Rajpal. The book is still banned in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

*An Area of Darkness* (1964) by V. S. Naipaul is a travelogue detailing Naipaul’s trip to India in the early sixties. A deeply pessimistic work, the book conveys the acute sense of disillusionment which the author experiences on his first visit to his ancestral land. The book was immediately banned for its “negative portrayal of India and its people”.

*The Hindus: An Alternative History* (2009) by Wendy Doniger saw a major backlash in India, facing flak from Shiksha Bachao Aandolan Samiti and was banned for its controversial content, raising a debate over the country’s democratic structure. Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code prohibits books published “with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens in India, by words, either spoken or written... insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class” (“Section 295A”). After multiple lawsuits, the publishing company decided to withdraw the book, however it can still be found in some bookstores in India.

Thus, the list of books banned in India and around the globe is never ending. No form of free expression, be it theatre, cinema or art is safe.

## CHAPTER – 2

### ART AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Art is a diverse range of human activities in creating visual, auditory or performing artifacts (artworks), expressing the author's imaginative or technical skill, intended to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power. It includes the production of works of art, the criticism of art, the study of the history of art, and the aesthetic dissemination of art. Art maybe characterized in terms of mimesis (its representation of reality), expression, communication of emotion, or other qualities. Art constitutes an important vehicle for each person, individual, community and groups of people to develop and express their humanity, worldview and meanings assigned to their existence and development. People in all societies create, make use of, or relate to arts of different forms for means of expression and creation. The meaning of art is often culturally specific, shared among the members of a given society and dependent upon cultural context. The purpose of works of art is to communicate political, spiritual or philosophical ideas, to create a sense of beauty, to explore the nature of perception, for pleasure, or to generate strong emotions.

Art, in its broadest sense, is a form of communication. It means whatever the artist intends it to mean, and their meaning is shaped by the materials, techniques, and forms it makes use of, as well as the ideas and feelings it creates in its viewers. Art is an act of expressing feelings, thoughts, and observation. Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with the artist and with all those who simultaneously received the same artistic impression.

#### 2.1 THE ART OF LITERATURE: PAST AND PRESENT

Literature is written art- art in which a writing device is used to put words on paper. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (11th ed), literature is “writings whose value lies in the beauty of form or emotional effect” (477). Deriving from the Latin word *littera*, which means

“a letter of the alphabet”, literature is first and foremost mankind’s entire body of writing, after which it is the body of writing belonging to a given language or people and later, it is individual pieces of writing. To use the word writing when describing literature is itself misleading, for one may rightly speak of “oral literature” or “the literature of preliterate peoples.” The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page; they are there because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature is the organization of words to give pleasure, through them it elevates and transforms experience, through them it functions in society as a continuing symbolic criticism of values.

Literature is a form of human expression. But not everything expressed in words – even when organized and written down, is counted as literature. Writings that are primarily informative – technical, scholarly and journalistic are not counted among the rank of literature by most. Certain forms of writing, however, are universally regarded as belonging to literature as an art possessing artistic merit. The nature of artistic merit is however less easy to define than to recognize. The writer need not even pursue it to attain it. The purest literary form is the lyric poem, and after it comes elegiac, epic, dramatic, narrative, and expository verse. Though all forms of literature are written, some are meant for performance such as plays and video scripts, and some are mixed with visual forms to become comic books, cards or posters. Some forms of writing are primarily stage art or visual art. However, such works are also very highly respected as written literature too – art that can be both visual and literary.

Before 500 B. C., there was almost no written literature. A few pieces of literature did exist on clay tablets or carved in stone but most literature was still oral in those days. In fact, story-telling was a profession in more civilized ancient countries, where storytellers would memorize great classics of myth, legend, and truth from each other and repeat them to enraptured audiences. It was only after the fifth century B. C. that Papyrus – rough paper-like material made from reeds, came into use in Europe and Africa, and later on in the Far East. Some of the earliest classics of written literature began to appear from that period of history – the Old Testament of the Hebrew Bible, the works of the early Greek philosophers and playwrights, the Tao Te Ching of Lao-tzu, and other great works of art. As the centuries progressed to medieval times, there were more developments and literature began to grow. The medieval period thus saw the development of monasteries, universities, the courts of kings and princes collecting older writings from wherever

they could and collecting them in small libraries, and copying them by hand to share with others. Many works of art from oral traditions were written down such as myths, popular events and plays. But in any given century, the choices of “new works” to read were few.

The word “literature” is often associated with novels and fictional short-stories. It is quite surprising to note, telling made-up stories in written story form is a rather recent art. Thus, the novel and the short story did not really exist until after moveable type was invented in medieval period by Gutenberg. Today, with the spread of reading and writing, people have the ability and opportunity to sit down with a book of their own and actually understand what the words in it means. Literature began to grow both in quantity and variety. Now we have thousands of great works of literature to choose from, and thousands of quality minor works of literature available to readers, with more being produced every day. Today literature is not just confined to fiction and short stories or poetry and verse but we find literature being taken to another higher level where many prominent writers/artists reflect the current political, religious and social trends in their writings or through various art forms with great skill and poise.

## **2.2 PURPOSE OF ART AND EXPRESSION**

Art causes people to look a little closer at the social issues, at other people and their emotions, at the environment that surround them, and the everyday objects and life forms around them. It helps them see what is there but not easily perceived. The artist brings out that which cannot be seen or felt easily. It is when society sees and feels clearly on these things, it provides opportunities for change in thought or appreciation of the message behind the art. Art may include a range of artistic productions including paintings, sculptures, plays, novels, photographs, etc. Art is usually about self-expression because the artist feels strongly enough about what they are doing to try and put it into a form that they, and others, can come to terms with. We make art because there is something inside the creative person that needs to get out. The poet, musician, actor, and visual artist all have a desire to express what they feel and to create something of great value. Art fulfills an expressive function when an artist conveys information about his or her personality, feelings or worldview. It is a type of therapy or a form of meditation. Many do art for the pure joy of it.

In simple words, the purpose of art is to give pleasure and this is partly right. Indeed one can stand in front of a grand master's painting or listen to Mozart and be delighted. Yet, we may also weep at paintings of death or sorrowful dirges which are also surely, art. Art should be capable of moving us, stimulating emotions, though of course not everything that makes us happy or sad is art, but art and emotion are interrelated. Art suggests some degree of creativity. Copying another painting may require the skill of the artist, but surely is lesser art. Stimulation is far greater when there is novelty. The purpose of art, then, is to stimulate arousal that is appreciated. Art is a response not only to things in the world but to experience of the world, which lies inside the artist himself. And it is often an expression of what presses from within the artist without being elicited by externals. Music is a prime example. A Symphony, unless it has a programme and is devised to represent bird song, rain, battle and the like, is an abstract expression of a composer's conception. The impulse to make art, as with poetry, can result in the artist imparting a message, but the art lies not in the message but in the way it is conveyed.

According to Tolstoy's theory of art, art is about the expression of feelings and the joining of people together in shared experience of those emotions. Thus he says –

Art begins when a man, with the purpose of communicating to other people a feeling he once experienced, calls it up again within himself and expresses it by certain external signs. (Tolstoy 38)

Tolstoy claims that it is the 'infectiousness of art' as what qualifies art as art. He further states that however poetical, realistic, effectful, or interesting a work maybe, it is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling of joy and of spiritual union with another (the author) and with others (those who are also infected by it). It is the strength of this infectiousness that is 'the sole measure of excellence in art.' Tolstoy believed that the purpose of art should be enriching and morally useful and not done purely for its own sake (aestheticism). According to him, art cannot be defined as an activity which produces beauty. Beauty cannot be defined objectively, and therefore cannot be used as a criterion to define what is, or is not, art. The purpose of art is not merely to produce beauty, or to provide pleasure, enjoyment, or entertainment. Art is a means of communication, and is an important means of expression of any experience, or of any aspect of the human condition.

According to Tolstoy, good art is intelligible and comprehensible. Bad art is intelligible and incomprehensible. The more that art restricts itself to a particular audience, the more obscure and incomprehensible it becomes to people outside that particular audience. To the contrary, good art can communicate its meaning to most people, because it expresses its meaning in a way which can be understood by everyone. He states that the most important quality of any work of art is its sincerity. Any true work of art expresses original thoughts and feelings. He claims that any good work of art should be able to express thoughts and feelings which can be clearly understood by most people. Tolstoy argues that any explanation of such thoughts and feelings is superfluous, because art ultimately communicates feelings and experiences in a way which cannot be expressed by any words.

### **2.3 ART AND LITERATURE**

There are broadly two schools in art and literature. The first is ‘art for art’s sake’. “Art for art’s sake” is the usual English rendition of a French slogan, “l’art pour l’art,” which was coined early in the nineteenth century by the French philosopher Victor Cousin. The phrase ‘art for art’s sake’ condenses the notion that art has its own value and should be judged apart from any themes which it might touch on, such as morality, religion, history, or politics. The concept was adopted by a number of French, British and American writers and artists, and by proponents of the Aesthetic Movement such as Walter Pater. It opened the way for artistic freedom of expression in the Impressionist movement and modern art. The concept of “art for art’s sake” continues to be important in contemporary discussions of censorship, and of the nature and significance of art. The concept that art needs no justification, that it need serve no purpose, and that the beauty of the fine arts is reason enough for pursuing them was adopted by many leading French authors and in England by Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, S. T. Coleridge and Arthur Symonds. Edgar Allan Poe in his essay “The Poetic Principle,” argued that:

We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem’s sake [. . .] and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true poetic dignity and force – but the simple fact is that we would but permit ourselves to look into our own souls we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more

supremely noble, than this very poem, this poem per se, this poem which is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the poem's sake. (5)

The phrase “art for art's sake” is associated in the history of English art and letters with the Oxford don Walter Pater and his followers in the Aesthetic Movement. The artists and writers of the Aesthetic movement asserted that there was no connection between art and morality, and tended to hold that the art should provide refined sensuous pleasure, rather than convey moral or sentimental messages. They did not accept John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold's utilitarian concept of art as something moral or useful. They believed that art need only be beautiful, and developed the cult of beauty. Life should copy art, and nature was considered crude and lacking in design when compared to art. The main characteristics of the movement were suggestion rather than statement, sensuality, and extensive use of symbols.

Walter Pater became the champion of the theory of ‘Art for Art's Sake’. The central point of this theory was that the only function of Art should be to ‘give aesthetic pleasure’ ‘to give rapture to the soul’, ‘to give an elevating excitement to the soul’. Art should have nothing to do with moral preaching or teaching man ‘how to live’. Art should have no exterior motive beyond the aesthetic pleasure of the highest order that it must give. According to Pater, the true function of art is ‘to give nothing but the highest quality of aesthetic excitement of the moments of life as they pass’(*The Renaissance* 1354). That art delights and enriches the soul is its sufficient justification. It is a delightful experience in itself. When applied to literature, it means literature of power, as against the literature of knowledge. Literature of power gives new and beautiful shape to the facts of life. Whether written in prose or verse, it must add to the grandeur of thought, to the nobility of emotions, and to the elevation of the soul. Thus this approach would make art ‘not only good art, but also great art’.

Another proponent of ‘art for art's sake’ is John Keats, who is regarded as one of the pioneers for pursuing “Art for Art's Sake”, because in his poems, he creates an eternal world for truth and beauty. His world is against the unsatisfactory social reality, thus serves as a shelter for peace and tranquility and ever-lasting beauty. The great aesthetic value of Keats's poetry lies in that his great power of fancy and imagination have woven an astonishing picture of the beautiful things in nature, further leading to vivid demonstration of the relationship between man and nature. Keats's poems transcend the boundaries of senses, touching the very core of man's

spiritual world by the charm of its beauty. Beauty is an ideal for Keats. Keats wrote to Fanny Brawne in February 1820 that “I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered” (Kipperman 150). Keats has been described as the “prophet of Beauty”. He considered beauty as the main source of life and of inspiration and the only consolation he found in life. It was to him a source of joy: “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever” (*Endymion* 1.1). To Keats, beauty was the only way to reach knowledge. And he considered imagination as a means to reach perfection in beauty because we can imagine things as we want them to be. Keats believed that beauty felt through the imagination has not the limits imposed by reality. Beauty can be either physical or spiritual. They are not in opposition but interconnected since physical beauty is also the expressions of spiritual beauty. The only difference is that spiritual beauty is eternal while the physical one is temporal and decaying. What makes spiritual beauty eternal is the power of art which can reach perfection through the imagination.

The second school of art is ‘art for social purpose.’ In the first, art and literature are only meant to create beautiful or entertaining works to please and entertain people and artists themselves. They are not meant to propagate social ideas. If art and literature are used to propagate social ideas, they become propaganda. Some of the proponents of this view are Keats, Tennyson, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot in English literature; Edgar Allan Poe in American; Agyeya and the ‘Reetikal’ and ‘Chayavadi’ poets in Hindi; Jigar Moradabadi in Urdu; and Tagore in Bengali. The other theory is that art and literature should serve the people, and help them in their struggle for a better life, by arousing people’s emotions against oppression and injustice and increasing their sensitivity to suffering. Proponents of this school are Dickens and Bernard Shaw in English literature; Walt Whitman, Mark Twain and Harriet Beacher Stowe in American literature; Flaubert and Victor Hugo in French; Goethe and Schiller in German; Tolstoy, Gogol and Gorky in Russian; Premchand and Kabir in Hindi; Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Kazi Nazrul Islam in Bengali, and Nazir, Josh and Manto in Urdu.

In both the schools, there have been great artists and writers. Shakespeare and Kalidas can be broadly classified as belonging to the first school of ‘art for art’s sake’. Their plays serve no social purpose beyond providing entertainment and an understanding of human impulses and motivations. When we look at the works of Shakespeare, he had no intention to reform society or

combat social evils. Yet he is an artist of the highest rank. One is amazed by his insights and portrayal of human psychology and the springs of human action, whether it be his tragedies or comedies. His characters are so full-blooded that we can recognize them from our own experience as actual human beings. Similarly, Kalidas's *Meghdoot* is nature and love poetry at its highest level. The depictions of the countryside in the poem are astonishing in their beauty. Nevertheless, Kalidas has no social purpose in his works. On the other hand, Bernard Shaw writes his plays almost exclusively with a social purpose- to combat social evils and reform society. His plays are a powerful denunciation of social injustices and evils. Dickens in his novels attack social evils in England in his time. Thus, we find art have its sole purpose varying from different writers and artists. Apart from these, art has had a great number of different functions throughout its history.

- a. **Basic Human Instinct for Harmony, Balance and Rhythm.** Art is not an action or an object, but an internal appreciation of balance and harmony (beauty) and therefore an aspect of being human beyond utility.
- b. **Experience of the Mysterious.** Art provides a way to experience one's self in relation to the universe. This experience may often come unmotivated, as one appreciates art, music or poetry. As in the words of Albert Einstein, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science" ("Albert Einstein").
- c. **Expression of the Imagination.** Art provides a means to express the imagination in non-grammatical ways that are not tied to the formality of spoken or written language. Unlike words, which come in sequences and each of which have a definite meaning, art provides a range of forms, symbols and ideas with meanings that are malleable. Artists use their imaginations to transform our knowledge and understanding of the world. The power of imagination is clear in the work of American artist Andy Warhol who said, "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself" ("Andy Warhol"). Thus, we need the thinking – the imagination – of an artist to lead the way forward in the complex world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- d. **Communication.** Art at its simplest is a form of communication. Illustrative arts, such as scientific illustration, are a form of art as communication. Emotions, moods and feelings are communicated through art. According to Steve Mithen, "[Art is a set of] artefacts or images with symbolic meanings as a means of communication" (153). Art is one of the best ways

of communication between human beings because it overcomes even the language barrier because it is supposed to touch people's heart without the need of using any word.

- e. **Art as Entertainment.** Art imitates life, and that's what makes it an important part of our being. There are various forms of art – contemporary and conventional. There is music, movies, theater, literature, fine arts, visual arts, graphic designing and much more that can be explored in this area of interest which ultimately serves as a source of entertainment in today's living. Art is not only a form of expression, but it is also a stress buster in present hectic time. It takes our mind off from hassles of our lives and also provides us with knowledge from all around the globe. Television, internet, cell phones, gaming consoles, gadgets and gizmos are some forms of art that serves as the main source of entertainment today.
- f. **Art for Political Change.** In *Art Power*, Groys argue that art has its own power in the world, and is as much a force in the power play of global politics today as it once was in the arena of cold war politics (2-5). One of the defining functions of early twentieth-century art has been to use visual images to bring about political change. The intersection of arts and political activism are two fields defined by a shared focus of creating engagement that shifts boundaries, changes relationships and creates new paradigms. Both activist and artist work in the challenges of the unknown and the unpredictable, never truly able to determine the outcome and forever questioning if there is more to be done.
- g. **Art for Social Causes.** Beautiful art can be both awe-inspiring and intriguing. While some art awakens the creativity or beauty inside of us all, stunning works of art makes us really think about deeper issues. No matter the level of intensity of the piece, great artworks cause most people to stop, if even for just a moment, to have an emotional experience, which is why art created to raise awareness for a cause can work so effectively. For instance, Vicki Boatright's *Safe Animals Safe Kids* mural aims to raise awareness for animal and child abuse and domestic violence. Likewise, *The Water Tank Project* art created by Eteri Chkadua to create awareness of the worldwide water crises. Alongside of the paintings are tours, educational events, and a symposium to inspire fresh views on global water issues. Thus, art can be used to raise awareness for a large variety of causes such as awareness on cancer, human trafficking, pollution, human rights and many more.

## CHAPTER – 3

### CENSORSHIP

The term ‘censorship’ comes from the Latin word, *censere* which means “to give as one’s opinion, to assess” (“Censor”). Censorship is a word of many meanings. In its broadest sense, censorship is the suppression of artistic expression, ideas, free speech, public communication or other information which may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as determined by the government officials, media outlets, church authorities or other groups or institutions or the artists themselves. It is an attempt to suppress the expression or to alter or restrict information. It may take place at any point in time, whether before an utterance occurs, prior to its widespread circulation, or by punishment of communicators after dissemination of their messages, so as to deter others from like expression. Censorship occurs in a variety of different media including speech, books, music, films and other arts, the press, radio, television, and the internet for a variety of reasons including national security, to control obscenity, child pornography and hate speech, to protect children, to promote or restrict political or religious views, and to prevent slander and libel. Censorship has been a hallmark of dictatorship throughout history. Many countries provide strong protection against censorship by law, but none of these protections are absolute and frequently a claim of necessity to balance conflicting rights is made, in order to determine what could and could not be censored. Governments, private organizations and individuals may engage in censorship. However, the ideology and methodology of censorship varies greatly on both domestic and international levels, as well as public and private institutions. When an individual such as an author or other creator engages in censorship of their own works or speech, it is referred to as self-censorship, and there are no laws against self-censorship.

In the modern context, censorship is an effort by a government, private organization, group or individual to prevent people from reading, seeing or hearing what may be considered as dangerous to government or harmful to public morality. Censorship maybe exercised on political, religious, or moral grounds, making the offense one of treason, heresy or obscenity. At different times censorship has been undertaken by the State, by the priesthood, and by unofficial groups. In a restricted sense censorship refers to the work of a person or agency with the

authority to come between the producer to publish, and the consumer to acquire knowledge of, the censored materials. In a looser interpretation the term is used to describe the enactment and enforcement of laws that restrict the freedom to publish unless these laws deal with the protection of the rights of others, as in cases of slander, libel, or copyright infringement. The rationales for censorship have varied, with some censors targeting material deemed to be indecent or obscene; heretical or blasphemous; or seditious or treasonous. Thus, ideas have been suppressed under the guise of protecting three basic social institutions: the family, the church, and the State. However, not all censorship is equal, nor does all arise from government or external force. People self-censor all the time and such restraint can be part of the price of rational dialogue.

Censorship and the ideology supporting it can be traced back to ancient times, and that every society has had customs, taboos, or laws by which speech, dress, religious observance, and sexual expression were regulated. In Athens, where democracy first emerged, censorship was well known as a means of enforcing the prevailing orthodoxy. Indeed, Plato was the first recorded thinker to formulate a rationale for intellectual, religious, and artistic censorship. In his ideal State outlined in *The Republic*, official censors would prohibit mothers and nurses from relating tales deemed bad or evil. Plato also proposed that unorthodox notions about God or the hereafter be treated as crime and that formal procedures be established to suppress heresy. Freedom of speech in Ancient Rome was reserved for those in positions of authority. The poets Ovid and Juvenal were both banished, and authors of seditious writings were punished severely. The emperor Nero also deported his critics and burned their books. Later on, the organized church also joined the State as an active censor. The Biblical injunction, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain” is clearly an early attempt to set limits on what would be an acceptable theological discourse (*King James Version*, Exod. 20:7). Censorship is no more acceptable for being practiced in the name of religion than for national security. Confronting censorship always involve some part of ourselves and our common history that is both painful and deep-seated.

In a global context, governments have used a powerful array of techniques and arguments to marshal support for their censorship efforts. One of the earliest, as noted, is the religious argument. Certain things are deemed to be offensive in the eyes of the Deity. These vary from

country to country, religion to religion, and even sect to sect. They are mostly, though not always, sexual in nature.

### 3.1 HISTORY OF CENSORSHIP

Censorship has followed the free expressions of men and women like a shadow throughout history. Throughout history, societies practiced various forms of censorship in the belief that the community, as represented by the government, was responsible for molding the individual. The most famous case of censorship in ancient times is that of Socrates, who was sentenced to drink poison in 399 B. C. for his corruption of youth and his acknowledgement of unorthodox divinities. Censorship was considered a legitimate instrument for regulating the moral and political life of the population in ancient societies. The ancient view of censorship, as a benevolent task in the best interest of the public, is still upheld in many countries, as in China. This notion was advocated by the rulers of the Soviet Union (USSR) who were responsible for the longest and most extensive censorship era of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The content of important texts and the dissemination of knowledge were tightly controlled in ancient Chinese society as is much information in modern China.

Free speech, which implies the free expression of thoughts, was a challenge for pre-Christian rulers. It was no less troublesome to the guardians of Christianity, even more so as orthodoxy became established. As more books were written and copied and even more widely disseminated, ideas perceived as subversive and heretical were spread beyond the control of the rulers. Consequently, censorship became more rigid and punishment more severe. The invention of the printing press in Europe in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century also increased the need for censorship. Although printing greatly aided the Catholic Church and its mission, it also aided the Protestant Reformation and “heretics”, such as Martin Luther. Thus the printed book also became a religious battleground.

In Western history the very term censorship took on a whole new beginning with the introduction of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Pope Paul IV ordered the first *Index of Prohibited Books* in 1559. The *Index* was issued again twenty times by different Popes. The last *Index of Prohibited Books* was issued in 1948 and then finally abolished in 1966. The lists of

books banned for their heretical or ideologically dangerous content, were issued by the Roman Catholic Church. The most famous of authors that the Catholic Church banned is undoubtedly Galileo (1633), and the most famous victims of the Inquisition's trials must be Joan of Arc (1431) and Thomas More (1535). The Catholic Church also controlled all universities, such as the famous Sorbonne University, and also controlled all publications. The church decreed in 1543 that no book could be printed or sold without the permission of the church. Then in 1563, Charles IX of France decreed that nothing could be printed without the special permission of the king. Soon other secular rulers of Europe also followed and used systems of governmental license to print and publish to control scientific and artistic expressions that they perceived potentially threatening to the moral and political order of society.

The English-speaking world began wrestling with issues of censorship in the seventeenth century. John Milton targeted the powerful bureaucratic system of pre-censorship practiced in late Medieval Europe in his much disputed speech "Areopagitica" to the parliament of England in 1644. Milton vigorously opposed the Licensing Act that Parliament passed in 1643. His passionate and strong defence of free expression finally contributed to the final lapse of the Licensing Act in Britain in 1694. His "Areopagitica" also became one of the most quoted arguments for freedom of expression, and still remains today a true beacon of enlightenment. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries represented a time of reason in Europe. The rights, liberty and dignity of the individual became political issues, subsequently protected by law in many countries. Sweden was the first country to abolish censorship and introduce a law guaranteeing freedom of the press in 1766, then Denmark-Norway followed suit in 1770. Today, the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States (1787) guarantees freedom of speech and the press. It is regarded as the root of the comprehensive protection of freedom of expression in western countries.

Although censorship lost ground as the most frequently used legal instrument during and after the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, governments maintained laws curbing freedom of expression. The restrictive instruments are now legislative acts on national security, criminal acts on obscenity or blasphemy, or libel laws. In the United States, formal censorship never existed. But the libel law could sometimes serve the same purpose; thus American courts became the testing ground for free expression. This was also the case in Britain after the lapse of the Licensing Act

in 1694. The courts became the new controllers in many countries that embraced the principles of freedom of expression. Libel laws were often subject to broad interpretations, allowing for continued restraint, harassment, and persecution of artists, journalists and other intellectual critics that challenged the contemporary concepts of national security, blasphemy and obscenity.

The art world – a realm populated by masterpiece often hailed for their transgressive, controversial and taboo characteristics, regularly butts against standards of decency and good taste in the fight for freedom of expression. Throughout history works of art have been altered, silenced and even erased due to unacceptable content, whether the motivations for censorship were religious, social or political. Art is often understood as a comment upon, or reflection upon our society. Artists are capable of showing us a mirror of our own actions, beliefs, or political systems. Directly engaged with aesthetics, they are also capable of influencing the way we see our surroundings, or challenging the beliefs of their predecessors. Art has a particularly potent ability to polarize and offend. While the broad success of artists such as Tracey Emin or Marina Abramovic might suggest we are in a daring era of uncompromised free speech, artists continue to face censorship by political and religious authorities, protestors and occasionally, gallerists themselves.

Many works of art which are today regarded as exemplary or outstanding were originally subject to censorship by political or religious figures that deemed their content inappropriate or offensive. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy, the strong influence of Catholicism saw a number of artists denounced as irresponsible proponents of the immoral or unholy. In 1565, under orders from Pope Daniele de Volterra, a pupil of Michelangelo made revisions to the Sistine Chapel fresco, *The Last Judgement*, adding loin cloths to figures which Michelangelo had originally left unclothed. The act earned the promising young artist the nick-name “Braghettone” (the britches-maker) – an unfortunate diminution of his broader capabilities. Centuries after Michelangelo’s figures were forcibly clothed, nudity continued to shock the public, with new styles of production and different approaches to the figure perpetuating the idea of the body as the battleground. In 1600s, Michelangelo’s frescoes received a barrage of outraged comments from visitors who saw not skill, but obscenity. Then in 1865, Edouard Manet’s *Olympia* came under the scanner for depicting a reclining female nude, draped across cushions with many outraged observers who described the work as “immoral” and “vulgar”. Similarly, many other

works of art – *Sleeping Venus* (1510) by Giorgione, *Venus of Urbino* (1538) by Titian, *The Naked Maja* by Francisco de Goya, *The Death of the Virgin* by Caravaggio and classics like *The Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci were all subject to censorship for similar reasons.

While works depicting nudity have sparked outrage for centuries, works of art which are stifled or destroyed because they offend those in power led to political censorship. One of the most prominent contemporary examples of an artist persecuted for political reasons is Chinese artist and activist, Ai Weiwei, who produces works which directly criticize his native government's approach to democracy and human rights. He was detained for three months in April 2011, with Chinese state media describing him as a “deviant and plagiarist.” The censorship of politically-motivated art works can paradoxically increase their visibility. Where work is censored, media bodies may initially respond with a broader focus on the implications for human rights and a right to freedom of expression. For those who feel that art should be a forum dedicated to the freedom of expression, censorship is nothing other than problematic. In cases of political censorship, artists are revealed to be socially responsible figures, whose practice seeks to highlight and change the society it comments upon. The fact that art is still capable of provoking political unrest, violent debate, and protest is an attestation of its value and power. It is also an indication of its complexity; inextricably linked to notions of liberty, truth and justice, art continue to attract the attention of those who prefer it to be silenced.

### **3.1.1 CENSORSHIP AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEWSPAPERS**

The newspaper has been a part of our daily life for several centuries. They have been a way for the public to be informed of important events that are occurring around the world. Newspapers have undergone dramatic changes over the course of history withstanding censorship from several institutions and individual as well. The history of newspaper is an often dramatic chapter of the human experience going back some five centuries. In Renaissance Europe handwritten newsletters circulated privately among merchants, passing along information about everything from wars and economic conditions to social customs. The first printed forerunners of the newspaper appeared in Germany in the late 1400's in the form of news pamphlets or broadsides, often highly sensationalized in content. In the English-speaking world,

the earliest predecessors of the newspaper were *corantos*, small news pamphlets produced only when some event worthy of notice occurred. The first successively published title was *The Weekly News* in 1622. It was followed in the 1640's and 1650's by a plethora of different titles in the similar format. The first true newspaper in English was the *London Gazette* in 1666. For a generation it was the only official sanctioned newspaper, though many periodical titles were in print by the century's end.

In America the first newspaper appeared in Boston in 1690, entitled *Publick Occurrences*. However, published without authority, it was immediately suppressed, its publisher arrested, and all copies destroyed. The first successful newspaper was the *Boston News-Letter* started by postmaster John Campbell in 1704. Though it was heavily subsidized by the colonial government the experiment was a near-failure, with very limited circulation. However by 1783, there were forty-three newspapers in print. The press played a vital role in the affairs of the new nation. Many more newspapers started representing all shades of political opinion. Soon the establishment of newspapers followed in other countries as well, catering to a growing public demand for news and information. The first newspaper appeared in 1610 in Switzerland, in the Habsburg territories in Europe in 1620, in England in 1621, in France in 1631, in Denmark in 1634 and Italy in 1636, in Sweden in 1645, and in Poland in 1661. In some regions of India, however, newsletters had been circulated since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The rapid growth of newspapers represented a huge improvement as a source of information for the literate people of Europe. However, it also increased the authorities' worry that unlimited access to information would be harmful to society and public morals, particularly in times of war or internal crisis. Thus the Licensing Act of 1662 was enforced in Britain until after the Great Plague of 1664-65. In Germany, the press was effectively inhibited during the Thirty Years War (1618-48), through censorship, trade restrictions and lack of paper for printing. Such means of censorship, even today, may effectively hamper the development of the free media in many countries. Censorship as a means of controlling communication has existed since classical antiquity. However, it became significantly more important in the early modern period with the invention of printing, which enabled the easy reproduction of texts in large quantities. Initially, it was the church which imposed censorship, though institutions of the state soon became involved as well. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the campaign against censorship and for freedom of the press began

in England, where substantial success was achieved as early as 1695. On the other hand, in France and Germany, freedom of the press was not achieved until later. In European history, censorship was not only used as a means of political, intellectual and cultural control within the state, but was also used to prevent the cross-border transfer of information and ideas deemed unwelcome.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the press in most of Europe was frequently subject to strict censorship. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of an independent press, as censors gradually had to cede to demands for a free press. Yet this was also an age of strict press censorship in countries such as Japan. The country's first daily newspaper, the *Yokohama Mainichi*, appeared in 1870, a time when arrests of journalist and suppression of newspapers were all too common. Also colonial governments such as Russia and Britain exercised tight control over publications in their domains. Examples are Russia in the Baltic, and Britain in Australia, Canada, India and Africa. In Australia full censorship lasted until 1823, while in South Africa a press law was passed in 1828 to secure a modicum of free press. Later in South Africa, politics of racial division prevented press freedom. The total suppression during South Africa's Apartheid era was only abandoned in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the centuries-long struggle against censorship and for freedom of the press seemed to have been won in large parts of Europe, particularly in terms of the formal legal position, though the limits of freedom were still contested in many cases, conflicts repeatedly arose for political and moral reasons. In Germany, as stipulated in section 30 of the Imperial Press Law, freedom of the press was suspended after the declaration of war on August 1, 1914. In France as well, freedom of the press was suspended by a decree of August 2, 1914. The prescribed censorship lasted until 1919. In Great Britain, the introduction of formal censorship would have contradicted the long tradition of freedom of the press. Thus Britain did not have a censorship law even during the First World War. While the British army had already attempted during earlier wars to prevent the press from damaging its own country, these efforts had little effect. The representatives of the organized press agreed not to publish military secrets in 1912, and to get authorization before publishing information which might be security relevant. Thus, a self-censorship of the press existed in practice in the United Kingdom during the war.

As we look back into the history of media and the newspaper in particular, censorship has always been a threat to free expression, self-censorship in particular. Even today, editors and publishers of the press are often victims of censorship from various political groups, individual and social organizations, and in turn unable to give proper and accurate information or news to the public. However, certain information and news need to be restricted based on security reasons and for the welfare of the general public. Indeed, since its inception newspaper have continued to serve the people providing insights around the globe despite the imposition of censorship from various quarters.

### **3.1.2 APARTHEID CENSORSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa is a country that has been through two very different systems of government which gives their current structure a unique foundation. The South African regime of Apartheid (1950-1994) remains one of the most inhuman and unjust regimes in modern history. Under Apartheid, all economic, industrial, agricultural, military and social power was in the hands of the few whites that settled in South Africa decades ago. Native blacks were refused South African citizenship and were left to survive with the lowest of labor such as mining, factory work, and farming. Apartheid in South Africa was partially kept in place with restrictions on the flow of information. The magnitude of censorship and banning of expressions in South Africa during the Apartheid regime was truly paranoid. The list of banned items included any object carrying the African National Congress symbol, buttons, T-shirts and lighters etc as well as objectionable literature, folders, posters, films etc. The state attempted to draw a veil of secrecy over the intensification of repression through detention without trial, house arrests and the torture and killing of opponents from the 1960s onwards. Music and Literature were among the modes of anti-apartheid resistance from the 1960s onwards. Literature and music supportive of political opposition or that was deemed sexually permissive was banned. Some journalists, authors and musicians even left the country to escape prosecution while many others who stayed were persecuted.

In relation to media during the Apartheid Era, South Africa's media system strived to keep social order with government intervention. Most of the country's media power was concentrated with the Dutch minority that dictated the country's politics and constitutional accountability. The theory of authoritarianism best describes South Africa during this time. Throughout the years of

oppression, South African journalists had to juggle multitudes of legislative law that prevented any reporting that criticizes the government. Many of these censorship regulations became the subject of many international affairs. Till the late seventies, the mainstream press was either conservative, Afrikaan-language papers or liberal, the English-language papers. Any types of newspaper that reflect the views of the majority or that did not align with the views of the minority were never allowed to operate. Despite the world looking down negatively at their media regulation practices, the white minority only strengthened their grip on what content was leaked out. Examples of such blatant censorship include reporters witnessing shootings and not being able to report about it until official verification was passed.

There is nothing, amid South Africa's vast censorship apparatus, preventing the country's media from publishing the information that a prominent prisoner, none other than Nelson Mandela has contracted a potentially lethal disease. When Mandela contracted tuberculosis in July 1988, the first Newspaper to publish the fact was a British Sunday Paper, after which the news was published by newspapers in Holland and Denmark. It was only after three days that the South African editors woke up to the fact that their country's best known and most widely supported political figure might be dying. The 150 hours of silence on the part of the South African media speak volumes about the state of the South African press. The power to ban publications was held by the minister of the Interior under the Publications and Entertainments Act of 1963. Under the act a publication could be banned if it was found to be undesirable for reasons such as obscenity, moral harmfulness, blasphemy, causing harm to relations among sections of the population, or being prejudicial to safety general welfare, peace, or order of the state. Thousands of books, newspapers, and other publications were banned in South Africa from 1950 to 1990. Battered by years of government invasions into its right to publish and three years of all-out assault, the South African media is a shadow with endless newspaper banning, suspensions, and seizures.

Under Apartheid, the mainstream print media were accused of either actively or passively colluding with government. Broadcasting was controlled by the state with the national state broadcaster operating as propaganda for the government. However in the 1980s, their status quo was challenged by the launch of a number of anti-apartheid weekly newspapers supported by foreign funders. Independent journals and newsletters began publishing over the same period,

targeting audiences and issues neglected by the commercial media. The Apartheid government threatened by these publications, banned many of them for periods and detained some of the editors and journals working for them. However, the transition to democracy in the 1990s under Mandela marked a radical departure, with openness and transparency declared primary aims. Clause 16 of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution of 1996 guarantees that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.”

### **3.1.3 CENSORSHIP IN THE UNION SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC (USSR)**

Censorship in the Union Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) remains one of the longest and most comprehensive censorship in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Censorship in the Soviet Union was pervasive and strictly enforced and was extensive in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Imperial Russia. Russia’s long history of censorship has been well documented in numerous publications both by Russian and Western experts. The Russian empire had a long tradition of strict censorship and was slow to adopt the changes that central European countries had implemented a century before. Censorship reforms began in Russia in a single decade of tolerance, from 1855 to 1865 during the reign of Tsar Alexander II. There was a transition from legislation on pre-censorship (determining arbitrarily in advance what may or may not be permitted) to a punitive system based on legal responsibility. The press then enjoyed greater freedom and more radical ideas were voiced. But censorship laws were re-imposed in 1866 practically eliminating the basic ideas of the reform. Only half a century later the law of 1905-1906 abrogated pre-censorship. Later on April 27, 1917 all forms of censorship was abolished by the Temporary Government. Sadly, this freedom was short lived, as the decrees only were in force until October 1917. Thereafter, following the formal separation of the church and the State in 1918, a new, long and extensive era of strict censorship began under the revolutionary rulers of the USSR, lasting until the end of the 1980s.

In the spring of 1918, a decree was issued formally separating the church and the State. Strict prohibitions imposed on religious bodies and nationalization of all church property

followed. In 1922, the central censorship office was established, known for short as Glavlit. Its role was to purge the Soviet society of all expressions regarded as destructive to the new order and contagious to the minds of people. The Glavlit thus had absolute authority to subject the performing arts and all print media to preventive censorship, and to suppress political dissidence by shutting down “hostile” newspapers. The strict authority and meticulous practice of Glavlit covered not only the USSR but also all Soviet occupied countries. In the early 1920s during the time of Lenin and Trotsky, however, writers and artists were granted creative freedom, provided they observed the rule of not engaging in overt political dissent. This leniency maybe attributed to the regime’s recognition of the importance of intellectuals for not conveyance of the new ideals. Although the majority of intellectuals were opposed to the revolution, many artists and intellectuals supported the revolution’s ideals of equality for all and freedom from slavery and poverty.

Russian artists had embraced the ideals of the European Modernist Movement, already in 1915 forming the visionary Avant Garde aesthetic movement which survived until 1932. Thus the first years of the new order saw a degree of innovation in literature and the arts, in stark contrast to the overall political rigidity of the regime. All leniencies ended with the Stalin regime, during which the censorship system became more elaborate and the methods of purging increasingly sinister. The regime authorized printing, banned publications and prevented the import of foreign books. All media in the Soviet Union were controlled by the state including television and radio broadcasting, newspaper, magazine and book publishing. This was achieved by state ownership of all production facilities, thus making all those employed in media state employees. This extended to the fine arts including the theater, opera and ballet. Art and music was controlled by ownership of distribution and performance venues. In the case of book publishing, a manuscript had to pass censorship and the decision of a state owned publishing house to publish and distribute the book. Books which met with official favor, for instance, the collected speeches of Leonid Brezhnev were printed in vast quantities while less favored literary materials were published in limited numbers and not distributed widely.

The Russian State Library in Moscow, the former Lenin State Library, holds the largest collection of banned publications published after 1917 in Russia. Initially the collection was modest containing mainly religious, anti-Bolshevist and anti-Leninist publications. The

collection however grew soon, following internal party conflicts of the 20s and 30s and the Stalin purges. The majority of banned books were written by persons who were purged during the reign of Stalin. After World War II, the Department of Special Storage began receiving foreign books and periodicals on a regular basis from Glavlit; foreign “Rossica-Sovietica”, social-economic and military publications, and all literature by Russian emigrant authors, irrespective of subjects. By 1988 when “perestroika” began, the Department of Special Storage was closed down.

Throughout the history of mankind, power holders have been keen on having control over the content and distribution of public information in a society. Authoritarian and totalitarian regime of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has created the most complicated and all-embracing machineries of manipulating information and public opinion by using the mass media and censorship. There is no point in accusing the prime Russian libraries of having deprived the bulk of the readers of tremendous arrays of both Russian and foreign literature, fiction and scientific literature alike. Guilty of that many years long monstrous process of intellectual robbing of the people is neither the Department of Special Storage nor the Glavlit itself but the totalitarian regime of the USSR.

### **3.1.4 CENSORSHIP IN LIBRARIES – A MORALITY CONCERN**

Libraries are advocates for the freedom of the press and the freedom to read. However, there are astonishing numbers of threats to that freedom occurring in libraries today. Censors try to use the power of the State to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove from public access information they judge inappropriate or dangerous, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material. However in most instances, a censor is a sincerely concerned individual who believes that censorship can improve society, protect children, and restore what the censor sees as lost moral values. Censorship in libraries is by no means a recent practice. Libraries have been the target of censorship since ancient times. History is littered with facts of destroyed library collections, and libraries themselves have far too often become flaming pyres. As early as 221 BC, the deliberate burning of a library was recorded in China. Although government-instituted censorship had apparently been abandoned in most

western countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> and most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, public concern for offensive literature did not subside. Public libraries were expected to act as the benevolent guardians of literature, particularly books for young readers. Consequently this gave teachers and librarians' license to censor a wide range of books in libraries, under the pretext of protecting readers from morally destructive and offensive literature.

In liberal-minded countries such as Sweden and Norway, surveillance of public and school libraries remained a concern to authors and publishers even through the later part of the century. Even in the United States, surveillance of books in schools and libraries were carried out. One of the most stunning examples is Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* which was first banned in 1885 in the Concord Public Library (Massachusetts). Despite the Library Bill of Rights, the library profession's interpretation of the First Amendment of the US Constitution, public and school libraries in the US still face demands to remove books of "questionable content" from groups claiming to represent the interest of parents or religious moral codes. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rulers have used the burning and destruction of libraries extensively as warnings to subversives and as method of ethnic language purging, as was the case in Sarajevo and Kosovo. In 1991 the Serbian government banned Albanian as a language of instruction at all levels of education. During the period of 1990-99, all libraries in Kosovo were subjected to the burning or destruction of the Albanian-language collections.

Censorship ignores history. When libraries choose to carry materials that maybe offensive to some people in the community, they do it with a view to the future. What matters isn't that an idea is popular or unpopular today, but that it may have an influence that will eventually be significant. Not all determinations of the relative value of ideas and works are correct, and eventually, libraries will discard items that haven't lived up to their promise. But to select or reject works simply because some people find their ideas to be offensive would be to eliminate vast amounts of valuable human thought, and the very lack of access would preclude further study and use of that knowledge. Libraries are repositories for humanity's knowledge. They are our past, our present and our future. They are much more than store-houses for books, and include many other forms of data. The information available in libraries must be accessible to all people, regardless of education, age, or economic status.

The library as an institution supports a concept that we call the “commons of knowledge”. This is a concept with a large philosophy behind it, and it begins with the idea that humans, as a species, are distinguished from other animals because of what we know, and because we know that we know. The library’s role is to provide access to as much as possible of that knowledge, both past and present. But libraries do not have infinite book budgets or unending shelf space, and so they must select materials to be included in their collections. A library walks a fine line between the creation of a coherent collection of our world’s knowledge and censorship.

### 3.2 TYPES OF CENSORSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS

Almost everything at some point could be placed underneath a category of censorship. Depending on where people are located and who or what is going on in one’s nation or even community, public media on the television, internet, radio, music, movies and books could be censored. There are different forms of censorship implemented every day. Following are the most common forms of censorship that we come across in our everyday life.

- a. **Political Censorship:** This is a form of censorship by the government that occurs when information is withheld from the citizens mostly to prevent hateful expressions and to avoid rebellious acts or embarrassment. Political censorship also exists when a government attempts to conceal, fake, distort, or falsify information to the public. The government often has the power of the army and the secret police, to enforce the compliance of journalists with the will of the government to extol the story that the government wants people to believe, at times even with bribery, ruin of careers, imprisonment, and even assassination. Democracies do not officially approve of political censorship but often endorse it privately. Over the course of history, many nations and political organizations have utilized political censorship to manipulate the public. Independent journalism did not exist in the Soviet Union until Mikhail Gorbachev became its leader; all reporting was directed by the Communist Party. Foreign newspapers were available only if they were published by Communist Parties. Censorship also takes place in capitalist nations. In 1973, a military coup took power in Uruguay, and the State employed censorship. For example, writer Eduardo Galeano was

imprisoned and was later forced to flee. His book *Open Veins of Latin America* in which he describes the effects of European and later United States economic exploitation and political dominance over Latin America was banned by the right-wing military government, not only in Uruguay, but also in Chile and Argentina. The best-known contemporary example of political censorship is China's censorship of the Google search engine, known as the "Golden Shield Project", which prevents Google from displaying search results of some human rights websites, websites promoting Tibetan independence, references to the 1989 Tianamen Square protests, and others. A famous example in fiction is George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) in which the main character works as a civil servant in the department responsible for altering or destroying historical information which the government wishes to keep secret.

The rationale behind political censorship is that the political party in power can protect itself from revolution if the public is kept uninformed. From a political perspective, censorship has rightfully always been associated to dictatorship. Although political censorship often helped governments organize their ministries and organization in a better and more effective manner, it is a force against globalization and should not have a place in a modern democratic society. Also censoring of the information might in turn project a wrong image of those in power. Henceforth, the government should not control the people rather it should be the other way round. Political ideas should be used to improve countries rather than destroy them.

- b. Religious Censorship:** Religious censorship is defined as the act of suppressing views that are contrary of those of an organized religion and the means by which any material objectionable to a certain faith is removed. It is a form of censorship where freedom of expression is controlled or limited using religious authority or on the basis of the teachings of the religion. Religious censorship has a long history and is practiced in many societies and by many religions. This often involves a dominant religion forcing limitations on less dominant ones. Alternatively, one religion may shun the works of another when they believe the content is not appropriate for their faith. Censorship by religion is usually performed on the grounds of blasphemy, heresy, sacrilege or impiety – the censored work being viewed as obscene, challenging a dogma, or violating a religious taboo. Defending against these charges is often difficult as some religious traditions

permit only the religious authorities (clergy) to interpret doctrine and the interpretation is usually dogmatic. For instance, the Catholic Church banned hundreds of books on such grounds and maintained the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (list of prohibited books), most of which were writings that the Church's Holy Office had deemed dangerous, until the Index's abolishment in 1965. Some works named in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* are the writings of Desiderius Erasmus, a Catholic scholar who argued that the Comma Johanneum was probably forged and *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, a treatise by Nicolaus Copernicus arguing for a Heliocentric orbit of the earth, both works at the time contradicted the Church's official stance on particular issues.

Similar methodology has been carried out under Islamic theocracies, such as the fatwa (religious judgment) against *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie, ordering that the author be executed for blasphemy. The concept of free speech and freedom of belief are not acceptable to Islamic states. Their concept of blasphemy is absolute: no one is allowed to criticize or question Islam, not to attempt to convert Muslims away from their religion. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, printed materials and books are censored on their religious and scientific content if it is deemed to be "unIslamic". Salman Rushdie is famous as a victim of Islamic international censorship, now having spent many years in hiding as a result of publishing a work of fiction that featured Muhammad.

- c. **Moral Censorship:** The removal of materials that is considered obscene or morally unacceptable is called Moral Censorship. It is the suppression of materials that the public considers offensive and vulgar and inappropriate for the youth to view or read. According to the *New World Encyclopedia* (2008):

Moral Censorship is the means by which any material that contains what the censor deems to be of questionable morality is removed. The censoring body disapproves of what it deems to be the values behind the material and limits access to it. ("Censorship")

Pornography, for example, is often censored under this rationale, especially child pornography, which is naturally censored in most jurisdictions in the world. Moral censorship is the most common type of censorship, but it is the most problematic as well. The problem with moral censorship is the narrowing definition of obscenity. While political censorship comes from the government or organizations, moral censorship

comes from the public. Given the complexities of the issues regarding moral censorship, it is important to research the variables in such a movement before committing to a particular ideal surrounding it. The subject of moral censorship is a heated one, but it is also important to discuss issues pertaining to it at the present context.

- d. **Internet Censorship:** Internet censorship is the control or suppression of what can be accessed, published or viewed on the internet. It may be carried out by governments or by private organizations at the behest of government, regulators, or on their own initiative. The extent of internet censorship varies on a country-to-country basis. While most democratic countries have moderate internet censorship, other countries go as far as to limit the access of information such as news and suppress discussion among citizens. Internet censorship also occurs in response to or in anticipation of events such as elections, protests, and riots. Earlier the internet was monitored by the Internet community rather than by government or official organizations in order to avoid government interference so as to promote freedom of speech and lack of prejudice. However, governments and other bodies have been increasingly monitoring the internet after concluding that self-monitoring was no longer adequate to solve emerging issues that includes increase in criminal activity on the internet, the evolution of the internet as a social phenomenon, the diversity of internet users, and the advent of various political doctrines on the internet.

Internet censorship thus exist to prevent people from viewing harmful or sensitive content, promote particular religion and political ideas, control internet related and internet communicated crime and to monitor the billions of people on the internet with varying opinions and preferences.

## **EFFECTS OF CENSORSHIP**

Censorship is something that takes place in every country all around the world. Not all countries share the same forms of censorship or the same amounts of censorship, but in one way or another, all societies are affected by it. In a general sense censorship is the supervision and control of the information and ideas that are circulated among the people within a society. We are now living in a fast changing world and it is very important that one needs to be informed of what is happening around the world and within the society that we

are living in. Irrespective of age, caste or religion, freedom to read or express should be the choice of the individual. When we think in-depth, censorship has its effects on educators, readers, media, writers, publishers and librarians. Educators are trusted with a big role to educate children. However, when parents demand censoring in schools, educators are limited to what they can use and how they can use it when it comes to teaching children. It prohibits Educators from being able to share their knowledge about the world to children. Educators have control and power over what is being taught and censorship can make this control and power one-sided.

Librarians and censorship is a battle that never ends. Libraries are places where people find literature and information they need and librarians must take this into consideration when selecting library materials. School librarians are trusted by administrators, parents and students. This puts them often in a position of struggle and a position of control. They must remain subjective and not allow personal feelings and beliefs to affect their judgment and choices. In public libraries, librarians must follow the Library Bill of Rights which states that they are to fight censorship as best they can. School libraries tend to follow what the educators and parents think is best, even if it is against the first amendment.

Media censorship is another means that can really hinder a society because media is such a large part of people's lives today and it is the source of all information; if the information is not given in full or truthfully then the society is left uneducated. Poland and Ukraine experience this type of censorship but Ukraine experiences it more often of crisis. Such censorship is a setback in today's world. International communication and globalization are such major advances in our world today and in such a context if the information given to the societies is one-sided and only what the government wants them to hear, then such society cannot fully understand and accept other countries and cultures. Censorship shelter people from the reality and make them know something wrong.

Finally, readers are the reason writer's put their thoughts and message on paper. Ironically they are short-changed by censorship because the ideas, thoughts and messages of writers are being kept from them. Readers are being controlled by censorship. It forces the views of an individual or group upon a reader – what is offensive to one might not be to another. Censorship affects readers from seeing things from a different perspective and

different from the way they think. It limits what readers are exposed to. On the other hand, writers are negatively impacted by censorship because it can be constricting and controlling. It limits and controls their creativity. It can prevent the writer from having his views, thoughts and ideas being delivered to the readers. It prevents writers from expressing what they want to and the way they want to. They may be unable to publish what they want or even if they are published, censoring can greatly reduce the number of people writers have the ability to reach. It can also have an impact on the number of books sold, impacting the financial stability of writers. As a result it may discourage some writers from writing and hinder their prospect of being a good writer. Thus, we may rightly say that censorship is probably the foremost reason to lower people's right to freedom of speech.

### **3.3 PROS AND CONS OF CENSORSHIP**

Censorship is all about perspective – whether one's thinking and ideas is limited and restricted or the care free, open-mindedness with the quest to know anything. Censorship will always be a heated debate, both sides having its pros and cons. Censorship is common in modern societies, and it is also a very divisive issue. Religious conflicts often times can be avoided by the censorship of certain material that people deem insulting or offensive. Censorship can be used to prevent politically motivated propaganda. Plagiarism can be prevented as well. It also prevents companies from spreading inaccurate or exaggerated claims about their products or other companies. On the other hand, freedom of speech is compromised. It hinders upon the freedom of the press. It shelters people from things that they need to know about. Censorship of books, plays and movies may affect the overall feelings and meaning of the writing. Many proponents think that the use of it will establish a balance in things that ought to be written and said, while opponents are criticizing on the foundation of threats that it poses to people's right to speech. Thus, it is important to explore the pros and cons of censorship to determine whether it is essential or not.

#### **Pros of Censorship**

**A. National Security:** It is important to have some kind of censorship in the country, especially now that information is readily available in the internet. Sensitive military and

government information can be removed from view. This is necessary because potential terrorists and people that wish to do harm to the country will not have access to information that would give them the intelligence that they need to do it.

- B. Child Protection:** Censorship prevents children from being exposed to offensive things like pornography and intense racism. If there is censorship, children will not be exposed to sensitive issues that need to be kept from the innocent minds and eyes of children. Thus censorship limits what materials children are exposed to and henceforth prevents the minds of children from becoming corrupt. Censorship in a way does not mean restraining the expression of people but in fact it is imposed to protect them.
- C. Peace and Order:** In times of disasters and calamities, people can easily get affected once they panic. If there is no censorship, it will be easy for people to spread rumors and cause havoc. Censorship can limit what can be shown on television and published on newspapers, thereby maintaining a peaceful environment and things in order.

### **Cons of Censorship**

- A. Promote Negative Agendas:** When it comes to a dictatorial type of government, the leader can control the media and newspapers, even the internet. If a government leader is corrupt, he or she can easily keep the atrocities from the people and instead, come up with news and information showing a good image of him or her.
- B. Constitutional Rights Violation:** Censorship cuts the right of the people when it comes to free speech and self-expression. Opponents of censorship argue that this is a violation of the people. If rallies and demonstrations are not allowed in society, the public will not be able to express their views. This also includes news media and television. Dictators often control television networks and prohibit airing of news which can harm their reputation.
- C. Art Suppression:** Art has many forms and this includes painting, writing, entertainment and speech. With censorship, all these can be controlled and even totally banned. Many people believe that art is a form of self-expression and no one should be prevented from obtaining and giving out information. However, censorship will always remain a divisive issue between supporters and critics. People will always express different views but it boils down to one thing, it should have limitations of its own.

**CONCLUSION:**

Censorship can be explicit, as in laws passed to prevent select positions from being published or propagated, such as China, Saudi Arabia and United States; or it can be implicit, in the form of intimidation by government, where people are afraid to express or support certain opinions for fear of losing their jobs, their position in society, their credibility, or their lives. Censorship is regarded among majority of academics in the Western world as a typical feature of dictatorships and other authoritarian political systems. However, since the invention of the printing press, distribution of limited production leaflets has often served as an alternative to dominant information sources. Technological advances in communication, such as the internet, have helped overcome censorship to a certain extent. Throughout history, mass protests have also served as a method for resisting unwanted impositions. Censorship presents a danger to an open, democratic world. Freedom of speech has come to be seen as the hallmark of a modern society.

Despite the threat posed by censorship we must at the same time understand that not all forms of censorship are illegal nor all government censorship is unlawful. When private individuals agitate to eliminate TV programs they dislike, or threaten to boycott the companies that support speech of others, but their actions are perfectly legal. In fact their protests are protected by the First Amendment right to freedom of speech. We have laws against “obscenity” in art and entertainment and these laws allow the government to punish people for producing such acts or materials. Thus censorship has both its advantages and disadvantages and at the end of the day it is the individual or the censors who decides what to be censored.

**CHAPTER – 4**

**THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF *THE DA VINCI CODE***

**AND**

***THE SATANIC VERSES***

Dan Brown is an American author of thriller fiction born on June 22, 1964 who is best known for his 2003 bestselling novel *The Da Vinci Code*. His books are ultimate fixtures of excitement, ecstasy and exhilaration for those who love secrets, codes, symbols and conspiracies. Set in a 24-hour period, they engulf the mind, body, heart and soul of the readers completely with the themes of cryptography, keys, symbols and codes. Brown's interest in code-breaking and covert government agencies led him to write his first novel *Digital Fortress* in 1998. His other books include *Angels and Demons* (2000), *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), *The Lost Symbol* (2009) and *Inferno* (2013). Interestingly all the aforementioned novels have the same protagonist, Robert Langdon, a Harvard symbology expert and includes historical themes and Christianity as motifs that generated wide controversy.

#### **4.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF DAN BROWN'S *THE DA VINCI CODE***

*The Da Vinci Code* (2003) by Dan Brown is a popular suspense novel that generated wide criticism and controversy due to its alleged misinterpretation of core aspects of Christianity and the history of Roman Catholic Church. The book attacks Christian beliefs relating to the reliability of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the organization of the early church, and the activities of church leaders during Christianity's formative years. The book basically condemns the entire faith of Christianity as nothing less than a wicked fraud. However, despite the controversial issues *The Da Vinci Code* projected some important themes that need to be discussed. One of the most important themes in the novel is the power of women and how powerful they can be. The book highlights how often women are underestimated and yet able to push themselves ahead

despite what people think of them. Throughout the novel, we find Leigh Teabing and Robert Langdon constantly patronizing the main female character, Sophie Neveu. But on numerous occasions, she has proven them wrong. For instance, when the men of the group are unable to solve the code, they leave Sophie completely out of the conversation, but as soon as she sees the code she solves it immediately, leaving the two men flabbergasted. Sophie is represented as a tough, intelligent, quick thinking woman who is physically capable, qualities that go against the stereotype. Being the only female cryptologist in her workplace, police officer, Bezu Fache, often expresses his doubts on her capability:

Women not only lacked the physicality necessary for police work, but their mere presence posed a dangerous distraction to the men in the field (Brown 55).

However, we find that Sophie Neveu is just the opposite of what Fache proposes. Throughout the novel she proves herself to be a valuable asset to her partnership with Robert Langdon. Soon after Fache made his statement on Sophie's capability, she comes to Langdon's rescue in the gallery, and it is Sophie that leads the car chase away from the authorities, thereby proving herself to have the 'physicality'. She is consistently shown to have a sharp mind and a formidable intellect as she is able to not only work out riddles and clues, but can also apply her mind under pressure, which she demonstrates when throwing the GPS tracking dot onto a moving vehicle.

Brown continues to use Fache as an epitome of sexism. In his narrative, Sophie's stern features are a surprise to Fache. When Sophie remains calm and professional in her explanation of the numeric code, and walks off with certainty, Fache questions her sanity: 'Is she out of her mind?' (Brown 67). Lizbeth Goodman writes in *Literature and Gender* (1996) that 'to be labeled "mad" is to be designated as incapable of conforming, to be made disposable, to be hidden away where surface appearance no longer matters' (144). So Fache wonders at her sanity when Sophie does not conform to how he feels that women should behave. However, Sophie isn't the only female in the novel who is strong and determined. Sister Sandrine, who is a nun in the church of Saint-Sulpice, is a lookout for the Priory of Sion. But since she is a woman many people do not consider her a threat and she is not taken into account. Dan Brown brilliantly includes and portrays the various characters of women in the novel, thus making these women an inspiration to many people and thereby also displays the power and intelligence of a woman.

The conflict between knowledge and religion is another important theme in the book. Brown makes many references to the fact that much of the information within the Bible is metaphoric, and that a lot of what religion is, is people's interpretation of this information. He illustrates how many people who work in science refuse to respect people's beliefs, but he more clearly shows that many religious people feel that the church should have nothing to do with science. They both somewhat acknowledge that the other is there, but they don't want to have anything to do with the other. Bishop Aringarosa is a perfect example for that. On many occasions he says that the church shouldn't ever be involved with scientific experiments and that the church is of a different caliber than the knowledge based population. Brown also shows how the church refuses to believe the existence of Jesus's descendants, and works to rid the world of such evidence by trying to find and destroy the Holy Grail. Through these different stories within the novel Dan Brown shows us a different side of religion and faith:

Every faith in the world is based on fabrication. . . . Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory, and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday School. . . . Should we have a flag and tell the Buddhists that we have proof the Buddha did not come from a lotus blossom?. . . . Those who truly understand their faith understand the stories are metaphorical (Brown 369 – 370).

At one point in the novel, Langdon says that the secrets of the Grails should be preserved in order to allow people to keep their faith. He also thinks that people who truly believe in God will be able to accept the idea that the Bible is full of metaphors, not literal transcripts of the truth. In other words, people's faith can withstand the truth. According to Teabing, from the very beginning Christianity was not an original religion, but rather artificial, created with one purpose only – to control the masses:

‘It was all about power,’ Teabing continued. ‘Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally stole Jesus from his original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power. . . .’ (Brown 316).

The novel is thus a perfect way of showing that each religion is based on an event that may not be quite true, but people who are really getting something out of their religion are the ones that understand that their religion could be based on a metaphor or a fabrication.

Another theme in the novel is the subjectivity of History. Through this novel, Dan Brown shows us that what we are taught might not always be the truth and how history books might not be correct.

History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books – books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, ‘what is history, but a fable agreed upon?’ (Brown 276).

*The Da Vinci Code* raises the question of whether history books necessarily tell the only truth. In the novel, Brown has incorporated commonly told stories about the past, and has shown modern interpretations of them, such as those of Jesus’ life, the pentacle, and the Da Vinci fresco *The Last Supper* that point out small details which leads us to question the version we have always heard and read. For example, the fresco – *The Last Supper*, which most people have heard that it is a painting of 13 men, and at the end of the supper they all drink out of one glass, the chalice. But in the story we learn that there is actually one woman in the picture – Mary Magdalene, and that each person has one wine glass. In the novel, Brown also provides his own explanation of how the Bible was compiled and of the missing gospels. The novel thus shows how history is just a one sided account, and that one should never fully believe a story but rather look at it from another side as well and constantly try to interpret the stories that we have always heard.

Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* has many different themes throughout incorporated with interesting life lessons. The novel depicts that women are second to none and that they should not be underestimated. Dan Brown also shows how one should understand one’s beliefs in order to really get something out of them. We also learn that we should always be questioning the things we hear. The various themes in the novel are thus reminders of things we already know but are often overlooked.

#### 4.1.1 SYMBOLS IN *THE DA VINCI CODE*

Symbols are always present in our daily life in various forms – movement, sound, statement, color or an object. Symbol is used as substitute for its interpreter because of its similarity. According to Morris, “A symbol is a sign produced by its interpreter which acts as a substitute for some other sign with which it is synonymous” (qtd. in Noth 54). According to Laurie G. Kirszner a symbol is “a person, object, or idea that in addition to its literal or denotative meaning suggests a more complex meaning or range of meanings” (248). Richard Ellman in his book *Reading Poems* writes:

As an object or an action, then symbol, represent itself. And at the same time has a larger meaning than it ordinarily has – a meaning which can often be multiple or ambiguous. Symbols are more suggestive than figures of speech, usually more complex, and often harder to interpret (xlili).

The meaning of symbol depends on its place. One symbol may mean different meaning if we bring the same symbol into a different place. Symbols are thus used to represent something else than what it appears to be. It is grown by the society and adopted through generations. One example of symbol is literary work. Literary work is a picture of human life in written form and one type of literary work is novel. Symbols in literary work have its own meaning and one can only find its meaning through the story of the novel. Symbol in literary work is different with symbol in daily life. For instance, a watch or a clock denotes time; however as a literary symbol in a particular work, it might seem to suggest just the passing of time, or it might convey anything from a character’s inability to recapture the past to the idea of time running out, or it might suggest more than one of these ideas. Thus Kirszner states:

You should not concentrate on finding the one true equivalent for a symbol; in fact, this kind of search is very limiting and not very productive. Instead consider the possibilities, the different meanings as symbol might suggest. Then consider how the various interpretations enrich the other elements of the story and the work as whole (*Literature, Reading, Reacting, Writing* 249).

Symbols expand the possible meaning of a story, thereby heightening interest and involving readers in active participation in the text. In Shirley Jackson’s *The Lottery* (1948) the mysterious

black box has some symbolic significance. Though the black box is important purely on literal level as a key component of the lottery, the box has other associations as well, and it is these associations that suggest what its symbolic value might be. In this regard, the black box has a significant symbol. Thus, symbols encourage readers to probe a story for values and ideas and weigh the suitability of a variety of interpretations. It serves as a means that invites questions and exploration and the answers to these questions reinforce and enrich the story's theme.

Symbol in literary work can be grouped into two categories – symbol as an iconic and symbol as a connotative sign. Symbol as an iconic sign has its roots from aesthetic. The definition of it opposes the symbol as arbitrary sign. Based on Hegel, symbol is a form that symbolizes the content of idea. The form and the idea share same quality but there is still independent quality in the form. According to Hegel, symbol is:

A significant fact which in its own external form already presents the content of the idea which it symbolizes. . . . Though the content which is significant, and the form which is used to typify it in respect to a single quality, unite in agreement, nonetheless the symbolical form must possess the same time still other entirely independent of that one which is shared by it, and is once for all marked as significant (qtd. in Noth 117-118).

The idea of symbol as an iconic sign is emphasized by Saussure. According to Saussure symbol is defined as motivated sign. There is quality shared by the signifier and signified. The quality shapes the form that can best represent the signified. According to Saussure:

One characteristic of the symbol is that it is never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, there is a rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just any other symbol, such as the chariot (qtd. in Noth 118).

Symbol as a connotative sign is different with the other sign because symbol as connotative sign has additional meaning. According to Noth, "The connotational view of symbolism characterizes symbols in contradiction to other signs as having a 'surplus of meaning'" (118). This surplus of meaning or the connotation is in contrast with the denotative.

**A. The Holy Grail** –*The Holy Grail* is generally known as The Cup of Christ – the cup that was used to share wine in the Last Supper, the last dining of Jesus and His disciple. It is also believed that the cup was used by Joseph Arimathea to catch the blood of Jesus during his crucifixion. But in Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Holy Grail* is the literal meaning of Sangreal. It is a collection of document that reveals some dark secret.

“according to the Priory of Sion, the Holy Grail is not a cup at all. They claim the Grail legend - that of a *chalice* – is actually an ingeniously conceived allegory. That is, that the Grail story uses the *chalice* as a metaphor for something else, something far more powerful.” He paused. “Something that fits perfectly with everything your grandfather has been trying to tell us tonight, including all his symbologic references to the sacred feminine” (Brown 176).

From Langdon’s statement we come to know that *The Priory of Sion* always keeps the meaning of Christ’s cup used at the Last Supper. *The Holy Grail* is a symbol that refers to a holy woman. It is a symbol of sacred feminine and goddesses and the link between them is chalice. Both Holy Grail and sacred feminine consist of two words – Holy and Grail, sacred and feminine. Holy is synonymous with sacred, related to God and Grail is the symbol of womanhood. Womanhood is associated with feminity or everything that is feminine or related to woman. Chalice comes between *Holy Grail* and sacred feminine as a link because chalice is the ancient symbol of female. It resembles a cup or a vessel, or more important it resembles the shape of womb because the chalice looks like the letter “V”. Womb can only be found in a woman and it has always been associated with woman. It is from womb that man is born to the world and because of this reason, women were considered holy in the past. In *The Da Vinci Code* the symbol of chalice referred to the story of Mary Magdalene who was suspected as Jesus’ Wife – the womb of Jesus’ bloodline. The *Holy Grail* thus relates to Jesus.

The Holy Grail or *Sangreal* the word with the French word *sang* or Spanish *sangre* – meaning ‘blood’ (Brown 174).

The *Holy Grail* in the book symbolizes the legend of Jesus and Mary’s bloodlines. Mary was the chalice that bore the royal bloodline of Jesus. She was the womb that bore the lineage. This

legend has been spread for over 2000 years by The Priory of Sion that held an important role to keep the secret of Mary Magdalene.

“The legend of the Holy Grail is a legend about royal blood. When Grail legend speaks of ‘the chalice that held the blood of Christ’ . . . it speaks, in fact, of Mary Magdalene – the female womb that carried Jesus’ royal bloodline.” . . . “the greatest cover-up in human history. Not only was Jesus Christ married, but he was a father. My dear, Mary Magdalene was the Holy Vessel. She was the chalice that bore the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ. She was the womb that bore the lineage, and the vine from which the sacred fruit sprang forth!” (Brown 270).

**B. Pentacle:** The pentacle is another important symbol in the book. A pentacle is a five pointed star formed from five lines intersecting each other. Generally pentacle is always related to pagan religion or usually known as devil worship. But in *The Da Vinci Code*, pentacle is a pre-christian symbol that relates to nature worship in which the ancients dream about the harmony of the world through balance of masculine and feminine. A pentacle is the symbol of sacred feminine or divine goddess. More specifically it is the symbol of Venus, the goddess of sexual love and beauty:

This pentacle is representative of the female half of all things – a concept religious historians call the ‘sacred feminine’ or the ‘divine goddess.’ Sauniere, of all people, would know this. . . . In its most specific interpretation, the pentacle symbolizes Venus – the goddess of female sexual love and beauty (Brown 40).

The novel *The Da Vinci Code* is thus Brown’s work to reveal some great secrets of feminine symbols in Leonardo da Vinci’s works. The symbols of The Last Supper and The Holy Grail symbolize Mary Magdalene, who was an important woman to Christianity and Jesus’ life. The Pentacle on the other hand reveals the secret of a sacred feminine, Mary Magdalene.

#### 4.1.2 RELIGIOUS HISTORY IN *THE DA VINCI CODE*

Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* raised public interest in the origins of the Bible and of the central Christian doctrines such as the divinity of Jesus Christ. The book, though a work of

fiction seems to declare that everything about Christianity is a lie. In fact the novel itself reads, “Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false” (Brown 235). According to the book, true Christianity was started by a Jesus Christ whom others viewed as just another prophet. Moreover, he was married, and his wife none other than Mary Magdalene, who not only bore his child but was also chosen by him to lead the church. After Christ’s death, the other apostles, especially Peter, were enraged about Mary being Christ’s successor. She therefore fled to France in fear of her life, where she raised Christ’s daughter. Thus, the novel shows Christ’s lineage intermarried with French royalty, resulting in the Merovingian bloodline of kings.

In the novel, we find Mary portrayed as a whore to erase the evidence of her powerful family ties. We see that Mary Magdalene’s story would have been lost forever had it not been for her protectors. They chronicled Mary’s life, and even catalogued her descendants. The church relentlessly sought to annihilate all documents relating to her identity and “her family’s rightful claim to power” (Brown 278). This ongoing attempt by Roman Catholic authorities to eradicate all evidence of “the true story of her life” went on for centuries. However, the church’s diabolical plot failed because a group of truth-honoring knights stepped into the conflict. These warriors known as the “Knights Templar” were organized by a brotherhood called the Priory of Sion, a secret group allegedly founded in 1099 by the French King Godefroi de Bouillon. He was believed to be a descendant of Jesus and Mary, who according to the book formed the Priory so the truth would be protected and passed on to future generations. It is believed that Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Isaac Newton, the Italian painter Botticelli, the French author Victor Hugo, and many other historical figures were all supposedly Grand Masters of the Priory. For proof of Leonardo’s involvement, Brown says that one need only look at some of the artist’s most famous paintings. They supposedly contain symbols and codes that reflects Leonardo’s own worship of the sacred feminine (or the goddess), his disdain for traditional Christianity, and the truth about Mary Magdalene.

The novel involves a quest for a redefined holy grail. Rather than being the cup used by Christ during the Last Supper, Brown claims in his work that the grail is Mary Magdalene. And this secret has been passed on by the Priory to its followers. Brown claims that da Vinci left clues in his artwork, especially The Last Supper painting. The book centers on the idea that sitting to the right of Jesus in the painting is Mary Magdalene rather than the Apostle John. In

one of the most ridiculous claims of the book, Brown's "Grail historian", Leigh Teabing stated "More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament. . . . The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the Pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great" (Brown 195). Though it is true that Constantine convened the Council, but there is not a single mention from any primary documents from the Council of Nicaea that supports the notion that the Canon of Scripture was discussed. There were never 80 competing gospels either as mentioned in the novel.

In the novel, Dan Brown also portrays church history as one long assault against women and what he called "the sacred feminine", which was allegedly honored throughout pagan cultures. The church has certainly had its share of mistakes since its inception; after all, it is made up of sinful men and women who make mistakes. However, Christianity has done more to elevate women to equality than any other belief system because the Bible states that both male and female are made in God's image (*New International Version*, Gen. 1.26-27). Brown seems to elevate women in his book by discussing "the sacred feminine" and "the goddess". The book's protagonist, Robert Langdon, tells Sophie, "The ancients believed that the male was spiritually incomplete until he had carnal knowledge of the sacred feminine. Physical union with the female remained the sole means through which man could become spiritually complete and ultimately achieve *gnosis* – knowledge of the divine" (Brown 261). When one have a closer look at this statement, it is hard to imagine something more demeaning to women. It conveys the message that the only way men could achieve knowledge of the divine was to have physical union with women. Thus, countless women would simply be used as a means to an end. Rather than endorsing the Bible's instruction to love one's wife as Christ loved the church (*New International Version*, Eph. 5.25), the novel rather seem to endorse using women as sex objects.

According to the novel, the Roman Emperor Constantine I suppressed Gnosticism because it portrayed Jesus as purely human. The novel explains that Constantine wanted Christianity to act as a unifying religion for the Roman Empire. He thought Christianity would appeal to pagans only if it featured a demigod similar to pagan heroes. Jesus was merely a human prophet, not a demigod. Therefore, to change Jesus image, Constantine destroyed the Gnostic Gospels and promoted the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which portray Jesus as divine or semidivine. Also there is mention in the book that the Bible was a product of man –

Constantine. Teabing says: “The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds” (Brown 250). There is no way Constantine could have “invented” the Bible, since the canon of the Bible did not come into existence until 380 A. D. , 50 years after Constantine’s death, when the Catholic Pope, Damasus I, held a council at Rome which infallibly decided which books would make it into the Old Testament and New Testament.

Also in the book, Brown portrays a negative image of the Roman Catholic Church. Opus Dei, formally known as The Prelature of the Holy Cross, is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church that teaches that everyone is called to holiness and that ordinary life is a path to sanctity. *Opus Dei* is a Latin word which means “work of God”; hence the organization is often referred to by members and supporters as *The Work*. It was founded on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1928 by Jose Maria Escriva. Throughout the novel, Opus Dei members are presented as monks. Like all Catholics, Opus Dei members have great appreciation for monks, but in fact there are no monks in Opus Dei. It is simply a Catholic institution for lay people and diocesan priests, not a monastic order. In the book, Opus Dei members are falsely depicted murdering, lying, drugging people, and acting unethically, thinking that is justified for the sake of God, the Church, or Opus Dei. However, Opus Dei is a Catholic institution and adheres to Catholic doctrine, which clearly condemns immoral behavior, including murder, lying, stealing, and generally injuring people. Its mission is to help people integrate their faith and the activities of their daily life. There is a large number of inaccuracies in the picture of Opus Dei painted by the novel. Silas, the murderous “Opus Dei monk” uses a cilice and flagellates himself. Some members of Opus Dei do practice voluntary mortification of the flesh, which has been a Christian tradition since St. Anthony in the third century, and it has also been practiced by Mother Teresa, Padre Pio, and slain archbishop Oscar Romero. Critics have accused the book of depicting the order as misogynistic; a claim which the order’s defenders say has no basis in reality because half of the leadership positions in Opus Dei are held by women. In the novel, the head of Opus Dei travels alone and makes momentous decisions on his own. However, the fact is the head of Opus Dei is usually accompanied by two other priests called *custodies* or *guardians*. Decision making in Opus Dei is “collegial”: i.e., the head has only one vote.

*The Da Vinci Code* describes Opus Dei as a “sect” or a “cult”. The fact is that Opus Dei is a fully integrated part of the Catholic Church and has no doctrines or practices except those of

the Church. Opus Dei is an institution that seeks to help people integrate their faith and the activities of their daily life. It complements the work of local Catholic parishes by providing people with additional spiritual education and guidance. The book further depicts Opus Dei being made a personal prelature as a reward for “bailing out” the Vatican bank. Neither Opus nor any of its members helped “bail out” the Vatican bank. The Church’s authorities made Opus Dei a personal prelature in 1982 because they recognized that this new canonical category was a good fit for Opus Dei’s mission and structure.

Many of the ideas that the book promotes are anything but fact as claimed by the author and so it goes directly to the heart of the Catholic faith. Brown’s story is little more than a well-crafted, cleverly written diatribe against Christianity, especially its Roman Catholic sector. In the book, we find that Opus Dei and the Vatican are covering up the story of early Christianity, including the secret that Jesus fathered a family. A monk, guided by the head of Opus Dei, goes on killing spree to keep the secret under wraps. Opus Dei’s members are projected in the novel as people who harm other people and even Silas is presented as a person who commits serial murder. In pursuing the Holy Grail, the novel even uses the word “monster” to describe Silas because of his physical appearance which is very scary. It thus brings negative image to the institution and its members that exist in real.

The novel, though a work of fiction, contains a ‘fact’ page where Brown claims the factuality of the work. However, the book lacks accuracy and misinterpretations of history. Also his misinterpretation of the Bible poses serious threat to Christianity and raises doubts on its belief. Also, throughout the novel, Opus Dei members are always represented doing something negative and project a negative image of the organization. Thus, beyond the issue of whether or not Christianity is true, readers must also ask themselves that is far more basic to the story: Does it correctly present historical events? Does it accurately represent Christian teachings? Henceforth in Brown’s own words, “When you finish the book, like it or not, you’ve learned a ton” (qtd. in Garlow 9).

## 4.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *THE SATANIC VERSES*

Salman Rushdie is a British-Indian novelist, born in Bombay on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1947 – the year of India's freedom, partition and emancipation from the British rule. Rushdie is one of the most controversial writers of our time and is remarkably associated with many path breaking attempts in literature. Rushdie's vivid clarity of thought, lucid narration, dry humour and eloquent expression of his whimsical ideas glamoured the literary world. His narrative style, blending myth and fantasy with real life, has been described as connected with magic realism. Rushdie's first novel *Grimus* was published in 1975. His second novel, the acclaimed *Midnight's Children*, was published in 1981. The book received accolades for being Rushdie's best, most flowing and inspiring work. Apart from many other awards, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1993. The novel narrates key events in the history of India through the story of pickle-factory worker Saleem Sinai, one of 1001 children born as India won Independence from Britain in 1947. The critic Malcolm Bradbury acclaimed the novel's achievement in *The Modern British Novel*: 'a new start for the late twentieth century novel' (419). Rushdie's third novel *Shame* (1983) depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan by basing his characters on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Zia Ul-Haq. Apart from the style of magical realism, the book has been greatly influenced by the immigrant outlook of which Rushdie is so very conscious.

None of Rushdie's post – 1989 works has had the same critical reception or caused the same controversy as his fourth novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 that caused wide controversy in the Fundamentalist Muslim world, due to its irreverent depiction of the Prophet Muhammad. The novel offended many Muslims because of its portrayal of Islam as a deceitful, ignorant, and sexually defiant religion. On February 14, 1989, a fatwa promising his execution was placed on him by Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran, for blasphemy and he was forced into hiding under the protection of the British government and police. Despite the controversy surrounding the novel, it went on to win the Whitbread Novel Award in 1988. His other works include *Haroun and The Sea of Stories* (1990) – a children's book, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), and *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015).

Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1989) is a controversial novel that emphasizes on various aspects of the world, including the Muslim religion. Although the novel can be

misinterpreted based on Rushdie's offensive remarks about Islamic cultures, his representation of religion, culture, and character identities reveal an innovative style of writing, which keeps the reader engaged. As one learns more about each character in the novel, we discover the relationship between ethnicity and identity, which play a significant role in character development and plot of the story and is interrelated to the theme, personal identity. Based on the *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* the term exile is the idea of a separation and distancing from either a literal homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin (Ashcroft 92). Exile is represented throughout the novel between Saladin and Gibreel, from leaving Bombay to leaving London for Bombay. In chapter 3, Saladin prepares to head back to London from Bombay after completing an acting gig. He states, "I escaped your clutches long ago . . . you cannot drag me back" (Rushdie 35). Saladin's statement indicates that he feels trapped into the Indian culture, because regardless of how much he tries to escape India, he cannot get rid of his Indian heritage. The concept of exile indicates the significant role that cultural distinctions play in personal identity. Although various characters are associated with the physical separation of cultural origin, their individual identities are engraved in this ethnic origin, which ultimately defines who they are.

According to Ashcroft, ethnicity is the human variation in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns and ancestry, rather than the mortifying generalization of race and its assumption of humanity divided into fixed, genetically determined biological types. An individual's ethnic group is a powerful identifier because while the identifier chooses to remain in it, it is an identity that cannot be denied, rejected or taken away by others (80). The perception of exile and ethnicity are interrelated with identity, as the characters in the novel struggle to discover their Indian identity through various experiences. Each character's Indian identity is portrayed as a mystery that holds different meaning that is build up of culture, history, and personal experiences. Saladin attempts to find his identity, and as the story progresses, he has a different perception of his personal identity and his Indian heritage. Gibreel on the other hand struggles to find his identity through his profession of acting who is later diagnosed with schizophrenia in England. When Gibreel is diagnosed with schizophrenia, he begins to lose his faith in god and feels that continuing his religious rituals was pointless. Although Gibreel decides to be agnostic, his religious past appears to have shaped his character, which raises the concern of personal and cultural identity that he seeks. Both Saladin and Gibreel transforms into

angels and demons, which symbolize the good and the evil engraved in individual identities, which brings to the next theme of the novel – the struggle between good and evil.

In *The Satanic Verses*, the narrator tends to view the plot as an epic battle between Gibreel, the angel of good, and Saladin, the devil of evil. Rushdie reinforces this framework by giving these characters their supernatural qualities. Good and evil in the epic battle between Gibreel and Saladin often refer to two main areas: national/ethnic identity and religious faith. Gibreel's status as an angel is closely related to his crisis of faith, and his transformation begins shortly after he develops the conviction that God does not exist. On the other hand, Saladin's metamorphosis into the devil is inextricable from his quest to assimilate entirely into British culture and his association with oppressed Asian and African immigrants in England. Like the other magically deformed creatures who escape from the hospital, Saladin assumes his devilish form because English racism has transformed him with its power of description. Many other situations also take the form of a fight, or confrontation between good and evil ideas in the novel for a variety of reasons including religious faith, political persuasions, racial identities, and positions of power. In Gibreel's dream world (where prophets battle non-believers, pagans and poets), in the volatile political context of 1980's London (where immigrants are demonized, oppressed and harassed), and in the lives of the many supporting characters, there is often an interplay and battle between notions of good and evil, or of the demonic and the angelic. In all of these situations, the novel strongly suggests that good and evil are rather confusing and shifting categories. At various points, Rushdie seems to be implying that good and evil are nothing more than man-made notions defined and based on what is most convenient for the group or person in the position to judge.

#### **4.2.1 MAGIC REALISM IN *THE SATANIC VERSES***

The term 'Magic Realism' originated during the 1920s in Europe, in the writings of the German art historian Franz Roh in the Italian journal *Novecento*, edited by writer and critic Massimo Bontempelli who used the term "Magischer Realismus" to describe a strong wave in the arts toward realism in works that were characterized by sharply focused and unsentimental

representations of regular subject matter. He presented Magic Realism as a reaction to expressionism and used it to refer to a style of surrealist painting. Magic Realism spread from Germany to many other European countries, and subsequently to North America. Although in many ways the movement was soon overshadowed in Europe by the Surrealist movement, it flourished to a considerable extent in America.

The term 'Magic Realism' was adopted into literature by Latin American authors who combined the theories of Roh and Bontempelli with French surrealist concepts of *the marvelous*. "Magic Realism" can also be taken to be a derivative of the term *lo real maravilloso* (or Latin America's "Marvelous Reality"), a term coined in 1949 by Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980), a Cuban cultural historian of Latin America. Carpentier came up with the term in his introduction to *The Kingdom of This World* which became the manifesto for Magic Realism in the vital phase of the New Latin American Novel born in the late 1940s. The fantastical qualities of this style of writing were heavily influenced by the Surrealist movement in Europe of the 1920s. Continually fractured by regional wars, border conflicts, internal disputes, regimes of various political persuasions, Magic Realism was the ideal choice of genre for the New Latin American Novel.

Magic Realism is a literary movement associated with a style of writing or technique that incorporates magical or supernatural events into realistic narrative without questioning the improbability of the events. According to this new phenomenon, unreal things are treated as if realistic and mundane, and mundane things as if unreal. Plots, while often based on real experiences, incorporate strange, fantastic, and legendary elements, mythical peoples, speculative settings, and characters that, while plausible, could also be unreal, and combine the true, the imaginary, and the nonexistent in a way that makes them very difficult to separate. What is striking about works employing Magic Realism is their ability to infuse their narratives with an atmosphere steeped in the indigenous folklore, cultural beliefs, geography, and history of a particular geographic and political landscape. Though historically, the settings in magic realist are correct, the events that occur may appear improbable, even unimaginable. Characters change into animals, slaves are aided by the dead, time reverses and moves backward, while other events occur simultaneously. Thus, magic realist works can be said to present the reader with a perception of the world where nothing is taken for granted and where anything can happen. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* defines, "Magic realist novels and stories have,

typically, a strong narrative drive, in which the recognizable realistic mingles with the unexpected and the inexplicable, and in which elements of dream, fairy-story, or mythology combine with the everyday, often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence” (616).

This new technique allowed writers to illuminate the mundane by means of fabulous and early writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Miguel Angel Asturias, and Alejo Carpentier, Juan Carlos Onetti, and Juan Rulfo adopted the technique, paving the way for the Latin American boom in the 1960s and 1970s, influencing the major novelists of the generation like Julio Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Varga Llosa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Although early writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Carlos Fuentes used elements of magic and fantasy in their work, it was not until the publication of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in English in 1970 that the movement gained public recognition and became an international phenomenon. Limiting Magic realism to just Latin American phenomenon would be unfair to the genre itself because it has had master exponents from various parts of the world such as Gunter Grass from Germany, Salman Rushdie from India, and Angela Carter from England among others. Thus, Gunter Grass’s *Die Blechtrommel*(*Tin Drum*,1959), Milan Kundera’s *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*(1979), and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*(1981) and *The Satanic Verses*(1988) have been described as magic realist novels.

*The Satanic Verses* was first published in the United Kingdom in 1988. The book drew immediate condemnation from the Islamic world and was banned in many Muslim majority countries, including India. *The Satanic Verses* controversy also known as the Rushdie Affair was said to have divided “Muslims from Westerners along the fault line of culture” (Pipes 133). By incorporating Magic Realism into his fiction novels, Rushdie reveals a deeper understanding of reality. The very opening of the novel begins in a magical real fashion, when a plane bound for India to Great Britain is hijacked and blows up over the English Channel. On board the plane are two Muslim men – Gibreel Farishta, a middle aged Indian movie star and Saladin Chamcha, an English actor and expatriate Indian. They miraculously survive the explosion and carry on a conversation during their fall from the plane. During the fall, they both gets transformed into the roles they will be carrying through the whole story:

But for whatever reason, the two men, Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to this endless but also ending angeldevilish fall, did not become aware of the moment at which the processes of their transmutation began (Rushdie 5).

From the beginning they are predestined to be inseparable in their ways and lives – one becomes devil, the other angel – two sides of one coin.

In the novel what is impossible in realism is not only feasible but also realized in magic realism. The fall is made real and the characters are thrown down to survive and change their lives by entering a new life. “‘To be born again’, says Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, ‘first you have to die. Ho ji! Ho ji! To land upon the bosomy earth, first one needs to fly’” (Rushdie 3). The fall is also associated with the metamorphosis- change of people’s essence. “Higher Powers had taken an interest, it should have been obvious to them both, and such Powers (I am, of course, speaking of myself) have a mischievous, almost a wanton attitude to tumbling flies. And another thing, let’s be clear: great falls change people” (Rushdie 133). The author here reveals that he is not only the creation of the character’s destiny but also the one who decides what is true. He is the Higher Power (as he claims) that dictates the direction of the story and creates the reality of his own world. And it is upto the reader whether he believes in what the author is proposing or not.

The main magic-realist elements in the novel are fall and metamorphosis (transformation). These two notions are considered magic in the sense that they occur suddenly, without any warning and the people concerned are unprepared and have no time to cope with the changes around them properly. However, they reconcile with their destiny but since the characters are not well prepared for the new situation (entering a new life in a foreign country), transformation is required. Each of them looks at their fall from a different point of view, but the highest power in the story is the narrator and he has the uppermost decision. The reader can only speculate why he has chosen the roles he has. “I know the truth, obviously. I watched the whole thing. . . . I’m making no claims at present, but I can imagine this much, I hope. Chamcha willed it and Farishta did what was willed” (Rushdie 10).

The use of metamorphosis is perceived as the power of racist definitions of the Other, as experienced by the Third World immigrant community in the United Kingdom. This is clearly

shown when Chamcha is admitted into a hospital where he meets other people transformed into animals (for instance a manticore). Chamcha asks the manticore how it is possible that so many people are metamorphosed and subsequently finds out that the “native inhabitants” on England(non-immigrants) are responsible for it. ““But how do they do it?” Chamcha wanted to know. ‘They describe us’, the other whispered solemnly. ‘That’s all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct”” (Rushdie 168). It follows, that the immigrants as Other are in reality defined and described in terms of degrading and animalistic racist stereotypes.

What amazes the readers is the notion how the characters in the novel show an acceptance of the magic that takes place in the real world. Chamcha’s own metamorphosis into a devil with horns, cloven hooves and enlarged phallus is not seen by the police who are taking him away as anything extraordinary. It seems that Saladin himself (or perhaps together with the reader) is the only character that is surprised by his transformation:

What puzzled Chamcha was that a circumstance which struck him as utterly bewildering and unprecedented – that is, his metamorphosis into the supernatural imp – was being treated by the others as if it were the most banal and familiar matter they could imagine (Rushdie 158).

This clearly supports the view that immigrants are generally considered as inferior animals. Though this comparison of immigrants to animals or devil is rather exaggerated, Rushdie wants to direct the attention to the problem of racism and xenophobia. Thus, the device he regards as the most effective is the magic-realistic use of metaphor and conflict between reality and fiction.

Not only does Chamcha undergo the metamorphosis into a goat but also Gibreel is changed, though not as markedly as Chamcha. At the beginning of the novel (after their fall) it is not clear whether Gibreel has somehow changed or not. However his future metamorphosis (which is more mental than physical) is foreshadowed shortly after landing on the earth. Saladin transformation into a goat-like devil is highly visible, though almost nobody is surprised. On the other hand, Gibreel’s transmutation develops throughout the whole novel and is treated more as a case of schizophrenia. Nobody believes in him when he claims he is the Archangel Gibreel. He is possessed by the need to help other people but he fails. One of the interpretations of Gibreel’s

mental transformation is that his real problems begin only when his dreamworld leaks into reality and he starts behaving as if he were the archangel of his dreams. Gibreel's dreams comprise half of the novel. The world of his dreams looks like a mythological world but at the same time quite real. In *The Satanic Verses* dreams and visions has its place since these concepts are evidently among the elements of magic realism.

One of the important elements in the novel is the presence of dreams. Gibreel's dream goes through the whole novel and creates a great part of the plot. In the works of Magic Realism the use of a frame story is quite usual, and in most cases the frame story is explained as a dream. Here in the novel, the plot is set in a fictional city of Jahilia where miracles and mythology are a commonplace. At first Gibreel is aware of the fact that it is only a dream, but suddenly he takes part in it, which he is not able to comprehend and becomes puzzled. Eventually dream becomes reality, and Gibreel Farishta believes that he has become the archangel Gabriel in order to save London from apocalyptic destruction. The world of magic and the real world are mixed again – inside the head of Gibreel but with the consequences in the outer world. Not only Gibreel has strange dreams, also Saladin's dreams are important though not as vivid as Gibreel's. He dreams of a little boy riding a bicycle. Later on, while walking in a park he sees the scene from his dreams. The magic world of dreams thus becomes mingled with the world reality. What increases the magical substance of this dream is the discovery that another male character, Jumpi Joshi, also has the same dream.

Most of the magical events and details occur in one's dream. It is natural since the dream is something that happens in one's subconscious. In the fictitious city of Jahilia there appears a girl Ayesha who is surrounded by thousands and thousands of butterflies. Their presence originates in a myth about their sudden disappearance after the death of a holy woman who died at the age of two hundred and forty-two and their re-appearance one hundred and one year after their departure. The butterflies encircle the girl (who claims to be a prophetess) and serve as her clothes. In almost every magical realist fiction there appears at least one ghost. They are the figures that live in the gap between two worlds – the world of the death and the world of the living. Also, in the novel a ghost of Rekha Merchant (Gibreel's ex-lover) pursues him wherever he goes (in England). She is the personification of Gibreel's unresolved past. She killed herself

because he left her and now she wants to revenge herself. “‘What do you want’, he burst out, ‘what’s your business with me?’ ‘To watch you fall’, she instantly replied” (Rushdie 200).

Magic realism in the novel is omnipresent. Although not always explicit in the plot, the reader is aware of its presence owing to imperceptible references to miracles and other magical happenings. “the surrealism of the newspapers, in which butterflies could fly into young girls’ mouths, asking to be consumed, and children were born with no faces . . .” (Rushdie 24). It shows that magic has its place in otherwise realistic space. *The Satanic Verses* mainly deals with the notions of fall and metamorphosis that become real. Rushdie’s use of magical realism in the novel is to draw the attention of the readers to the problems of an individual either in the eastern or western world. The characters are all immigrants, who emigrated from East to West and are strangers in a new country. Thus, Rushdie employs Magic Realism to describe the difference between two worlds or the attitudes towards them. Eventually, readers does not have to believe in everything that is described in the fiction and for that reason the magic in the text is not anyhow explained, only the author (who regularly enters the story) maintains that what happened is really true. Thus, in the words of Rushdie:

A book is a version of the world. If you don’t like it, ignore it; or offer your own version in return (Rushdie 1992, 412).

#### **4.2.2 ISLAM IN *THE SATANIC VERSES***

*The Satanic Verses* provoked great controversy in the Muslim community because of its portrayal of Islam as a deceitful, ignorant and sexually defiant religion. Islam is one of the largest religions in the world, with over 1 billion followers. It is a monotheistic faith based on revelations by the Prophet Muhammad in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Saudi Arabia. The Arabic word *islam* means “submission,” reflecting the faith’s central tenet of submitting to the will of God. Islam strongly opposes idolatry, polytheism, associating anything or anyone with God. In fact Islam’s creed in Arabic begins with a negative: Not is there a god except God. It contrasts sharply with the contention of Muhammad’s Arab contemporaries that God had associates. Some of these associates are even mentioned in the Qur’an; among them are three female deities: al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat. Each had a shrine in separate places not far from Mecca in Arabia, where

Muhammad was born and began his mission. According to Islamic tradition, the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet over the course of 20 years, revealing him many messages from God. Muslims recognize some earlier Judeo-Christian prophets – including Moses and Jesus – as messengers of the same true God. But in Islam, Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets, whose revelations alone are pure and uncorrupted.

One of the central features of the Islamic faith is that the Quran is the exact word of God. The Quran is thought of as “the word of God – an intrinsic part . . . of the Divine Essence” (Ruthven, 8). As Daniel Pipes observes, in Judaism, the central feature is the covenant between Abraham and God, in Christianity the central tenet is that Jesus is the son of God, whereas in the Islamic faith it is the book itself which is the most essential tenet (Pipes, 56). Thus, as he claims, no Muslim may question the authenticity of the Quran, since this is to raise doubts “about the validity of the faith itself . . . usually seen as an act of apostasy.” (56) Despite the fact that most of Muslims are broad-minded about many things, yet many are reluctant to question religious issues. In a strict sense, religion is not just a part of life for many Muslims; life is rather a part of religion. An Arab proverb illustrates the seriousness of the religious issue: “Kill me, but do not mock my faith” (Appignanesi 93).

*The Satanic Verses* questions the nature of faith through a portrayal of its origins. Although no explicit mention is made of any specific religion or book, a secondary narrative within the novel is clearly engaged in a metahistorical rewriting of the founding of Islam and the genesis of the Qur’an. The questioning of the Qu’ran itself was serious enough, but we also come across several insulting descriptions of Muhammad, or Mahound in the novel, such as his temptation and his manipulative nature. Muhammad is referred to as “Mahound” in the book, a slur used by the European crusaders to denote the demonic false prophet of the Moors. Even the names of Mahound’s wives and companions are the same as those of the historical Prophet. Further, Mahound divides his life between the oasis of Yathrib and the town of “Jahilia.” The Prophet Muhammad’s life was similarly divided between exile in Medina – which was known in pre-Islamic times as Yathrib – and Mecca. Muslim historians and scholars use the word “Jahilia” to denote pre-Islamic Mecca. The Arabic word means “ignorance”, meaning ignorance of God in pre-Islamic times. Rushdie however insists that his way of portraying Muhammad was not in order to degrade him, but merely to make him more vivid and “even more worthy of admiration”

(Rushdie 1992, 18). As he claims, even “the greatest human being must struggle against themselves as well as the world” (Rushdie 1991, 18). According to Malise Ruthven, *The Satanic Verses* “mounted a twofold challenge to the Almighty”, by attacking the sacred text itself as well as the Prophet (Ruthven 7). Not only did the novel challenge the absolute authority and authenticity of the Quran, but furthermore, by satirizing Muhammad, picturing him in a brothel as a conman – the novel questioned the moral integrity of a man revered almost as God (7).

Islamic tradition considers the Prophet Muhammad human. Criticism of him is sacrilege, but not blasphemy. Casting doubt on the divine revelation itself, however, is blasphemy according to Islamic law. Muslim scholars and religious leaders saw Salman Rushdie’s rewriting of the incident of the satanic verses as a deliberate distortion of Islamic history. To them Rushdie is guilty of a double blasphemy – the first being the profaning of the Qur’an, in all senses of the word, and the second being the deliberate distortion of Islam and Islamic history. However, it can also be easily argued that many of those who protested against the book without the means to judge or to evaluate the facts within the fiction ended up the dupes not of Salman Rushdie but of their own imams, mullahs, and community leaders. The grassroots protests against *The Satanic Verses* began with the circulation of photocopies of selected passages of the novel. The leading protestors had read only these pages, devoid of context, and countless more had merely been told about the book before being exhorted to protest. The question, however, of how any one community or individual responds to *The Satanic Verses* remains rooted in issues of cultural difference and culturally encoded readings.

## CHAPTER – 5

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF *THE HEART OF DARKNESS* AND *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*.

In this chapter, a thematic analysis on Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) will be discussed in brief. Both these novels have been controversial because of its content, the former for its portrayal of Africa as “the other world” and the later for its theme of racism. However, despite the content, both the novels depict social issues faced in a society or in an individual's life.

#### JOSEPH CONRAD: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Joseph Conrad was born in Berdichev, Poland in 1857. Conrad's contribution to the world of literature is profound and indifferent. He is regarded as one of the great modern writers of England. Although some of his works fall in the romanticism category of literature, he is widely known to be a modernist. His intense writing style and accounts of actual and fictional adventures of dangerous, exotic places earned him the reputation of being a remarkable storyteller. Conrad's novels reflect his concerns with the complex individual, and how sympathy and imagination can blur clear judgment – which is essential to life. The character development in Conrad's work is engaging and powerful. Conrad developed an elaborate, beautiful English prose style and probed many of the deep questions of modern fiction in his short stories and novels. His work was by turns adventurous and darkly pessimistic, interested in the traditional virtues of steadfastness and courage while also concerned with the epistemological lacunae that define modern existence and perception (“Joseph Conrad”).

Conrad's service at sea took him to many foreign ports and cities, including Australia, the Malay states, Borneo, Gulf of Siam and the South Pacific Island. His trip to Africa through the Congo River became an inspiration and a rich source of information for his famed novel, *Heart of Darkness*. The East Indies in particular attracted Conrad greatly, becoming the backdrop for many of his works. His first novel, *Almayer's Folly* was published in 1895 followed by a number

of noted works – *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* (1897), *Tales of Unrest* (1898), *Lord Jim* (1900), *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1903), *Youth* (1902), *The End of the Tether* (1902), *Typhoon* (1903), *Nostramo* (1904), *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906, semi-autobiographical), *The Secret Agent* (1907), *A Set of Six* (1908) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911). His book, *Chance* (1914) proved to be a turning point for Conrad before which he was faced with financial difficulties despite being a published author. Many of Conrad’s books were adapted to screen of which some distinguished ones are *The Sabotage* (1936) based on *The Secret Agent*, *Lord Jim* (1964) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979) based on *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad was offered Knighthood in 1924 and honorary degrees from five universities, both of which he declined. Conrad died of a heart attack on August 3, 1924 and was buried at Canterbury, England.

In recent years, Conrad’s work has been at times attacked for its racism (most notably by Chinua Achebe) and at times lauded for its portrayal of imperialism and colonialism. He remains one of the most complex figures of modernism, capable of spinning entertaining yarns of life at sea that turn out to explore unexpected philosophical depths. Arguably his most influential work remains *The Heart of Darkness* (1899) – depiction of a journey into the darkness of the human psyche. Conrad’s work later influenced numerous 20<sup>th</sup> century writers, from T. S. Eliot and Graham Greene to Virginia Woolf, Albert Camus and William Faulkner. His books have been translated into dozens of languages and are still taught in schools and universities. Thus in the words of Edward Said:

Conrad’s achievement is that he ordered the chaos of his existence onto a highly patterned art that accurately reflected and controlled the realities with which it dealt. His experience, as both man and writer, is unique in English literature: no expatriation was as complete or as complex as his, no literary production as profoundly strange and creative (*Joseph Conrad* 196).

## **5.1 THE HEART OF DARKNESS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

*The Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad is one of the most well-known works among scholars of classical literature and post-colonial literature. Not only is it thought provoking and exciting, but also considered to be one of the most highly stylistic in its class,

blending its use of narrative, symbolism, deep and challenging characters. It is a literary work that has been interpreted in many ways and has elicited a lot of discussion both around its narrative structure and its plot. *The Heart of Darkness* is the exploration of complex human nature as well as the relevant matter of colonialism. The novel had its origin in Conrad's own personal experience – his voyage to the Congo River.

Conrad wrote *The Heart of Darkness* in the context of colonialism, its nature and its destructive result which is the primary theme of the novel as well. Colonialism is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. In *The Heart of Darkness*, the author, Joseph Conrad explores the nature of colonialism. He reveals the horrors of colonialism and is cynical of the entire process. In the narration of Marlow, Conrad mentions the Roman conquest and thereby establishes the truth that colonialism existed since the early period of human civilization – “I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago” (5). The very nature of colonialism has not changed much from Roman times to his day, except that the tools and weapons used have become more sophisticated. The main purpose and the results have stayed the same. Conrad illuminates the secret evils of colonialism and the European capitalists approach through Marlow's journey up the Congo and his search for the European Kurtz who exploits the natives by imposing violence. In the novel, Kurtz, who is extremely hungry for power and position, colonizes the interior of Africa called Congo. An individual's lust for wealth and possession, and a desire to suppress others can result in colonialism. In the name of civilizing and educating the natives, Kurtz is exercising his immense power to dominate them – physically, economically, and even sexually. He justifies his deed under the cover saying that he is bringing light in the lives of savages, but the irony is that he is over-shadowed by the darkness of his own self, the primitive self.

Joseph Conrad shows that one of the purposes of colonialism is the suppression of the Native's beliefs and traditional way of life. The Europeans, on face level, seek to convert the inhabitants of the Congo region to the European way of life. Marlow's aunt believes as much when she states that he will participate in, “weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways” (15). Marlow's aunt sees the traditional ways of life of the Natives as “horrid”. She believes that the European system is the only system that should be followed. The Europeans

enlist the help of the Natives in procuring ivory, and the Natives seeing a more lucrative opportunity, abandon their villages to work for the Europeans, and in the process change their ways of life. The Europeans believe that the Natives are beneath them and in need of being cultured. Kurtz also believes that the Natives are in need of being humanized, improved, and instructed in the European way of life. Despite the high and noble aspiration of civilizing the Natives, Conrad reveals that after the Natives have abandoned everything to follow the Europeans, the true face of colonialism is revealed. He explains that colonialism is a brutal and savage process. The Natives are lulled into a false sense of security and later become slaves of the European colonizers. To the Europeans, the Natives are valuable as long as they are productive and supplying ivory and other goods to them.

Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of plain, abandonment, and despair. . . The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die. They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, - nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom (22).

The Europeans as we see did not care about the health and working conditions of the Natives as long as they were productive. This vivid observation by Marlow as he enters the grove of death illustrates just how cruel the colonizers are with respect to what happens when the Natives are no longer able to work. They are left to fend for themselves and slowly waste away, starving, unable to find food to eat. When a fire burns down a storehouse full of goods a Native is beaten because “they said he caused the fire in some way” (32). Thus the Europeans who have travelled to Africa to humanize the Natives instead treated them severely and inhumanly.

Not only do the Europeans show cruelty and brutality towards the Natives, but it also shows their greed towards each other, which is another theme of the novel. They are only interested in advancing within the company, making more money and shipping the most ivory for their profit. Thus Marlow states:

They beguiled the time by backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was as air of plotting about that station. . . . The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account (34).

Through this passage, one can see that all that mattered to the Europeans was self-promotion and making huge money. In the novel we find that the manager often talks of having someone hanged (referring to Kurtz and the Russians) so that he will have no competition and able to advance his career. All that is important to him is the acquisition of money and power. To the Europeans it is imperative that they attain wealth, power and prestige. Consequently, the brutality and savagery of colonialism and the Europeans causes the Natives to fear the colonizers, and the Europeans use this fear to their advantage to get what they want. Conrad finally explores the true purpose of colonialism – to obtain all of the natural resources of the land for profit and in the process lay waste to the country. The Europeans are far more interested in ivory than in civilizing the Natives. Marlow observes that the procurement of ivory, the greed of the Europeans, is the purpose of colonialism. Kurtz, the embodiment of Europe, states: “My ivory . . . my Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my--- everything belonged to him” (72) and “Save me! – save the ivory, you mean” (93). From these statements one can perceive that colonialism is all about acquisition of land and resources that results due to one’s greed for more power and wealth as the Europeans and Kurtz in particular. In *The Heart of Darkness*, Conrad is disdainful of colonialism and he reveals that colonialism is simply a brutal competition for dominance and control in a foreign land where the only thing that matters is getting to the top.

Another important theme of the novel is exemplified in the title itself – the darkness of the human heart. The theme of darkness has been used in the novel to relate it with the Africans and the darkness of human nature. In the book, the narration by Marlow takes place in Thames tidal estuary. Earlier in the novel, Marlow remembers how London, one of the biggest and also wealthiest cities in the world was treated as a dark place during the Roman reign. The idea that the Romans colonized the Britons is similar to that of Belgians colonizing the Africans. Darkness as a theme that lurks beneath the surface even in a place where people are civilized seems prominent and is explored in Kurtz’s passive understanding of the African way of life. The

author has excellently used poetic language to give the clearest view of physical setting and the effects of outer setting to the inner landscape of Africa. From the onset of his arrival in Africa, Marlow is shocked to see the chaos and cruelty of the Outer Station where work seems to serve no purpose and the Natives are dying of overwork, starvation and neglect. The Europeans have come to Africa, ostensibly as Marlow's aunt believes, as "emissaries of light" (27) to spread civilization among the "savages" but in reality to get wealthy from the abundant ivory and they will stop at nothing to succeed. As his journey continues upriver, Marlow feels the influences of his experiences as he says he was becoming "scientifically interesting" (50) evoking the Belgian doctor's assertion that those who go to the Congo change "inside" (26). When Marlow finally reaches the Inner Station in search of Kurtz, he is appalled to discover the depths of Kurtz's depravity. Kurtz has "taken a seat among the high devils of the land" (82). Kurtz has been succumbed to the lure of ivory and wealth, sinking so far that he even erected the heads of rebels on poles around the Inner Station. These are the actions of a person whose initial intent was to do a benevolent act for the Natives. Although there is nothing concrete about the darkness, the precipitous falls of those that come into contact with it serve to warn that the 'darkness' is a dangerous, destructive entity that has substantial capacity for nullification (Shestopaloff). The novel thus gives the notion that darkness is not strictly limited to a continent as Africa in the novel, but darkness of humanity can appear anywhere. Just like Kurtz, darkness can infect the soul of any person.

### **5.1.1 NARRATION IN *THE HEART OF DARKNESS***

It is impossible to adequately understand *The Heart of Darkness* without examining the narrative strategies employed. The final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a change not only in theme but also in the technique of narration. The change in the narrative technique was twofold – the distancing of the author from the text and a scrambling up of the narrative in terms of chronology. In the novel, Conrad used frame narrative which is also known as narrative within narrative. In frame narrative, one narrator makes frame by introducing and explaining the events at the beginning, then handing over the narrative to another narrator and at last again resuming the narrative himself. The first narrator remains apart, but still he is with the crew members and is one of them. In the novel, the first narrator remains anonymous, who according to some critics

is none other than the author himself. Thus, Conrad is the first narrator and he narrates in such a way that sometimes his identity merge with the second narrator, Marlow. The first narrator's introduction gives entry to the central issues that Marlow is going to deal with in the rest of his narrative: the gloomy role of the city as a center of civilization, the nature of imperialism, an individual's ability to explore one's mind and reach to the core of the subconscious. Conrad does not involve the narrator directly in the course of events, and keeps him apart so as to critically observe all the characters and deliver it to the readers. The two narrators were designed artfully and they were successful in describing the chain of events one after the other.

Marlow is the principal narrator in *The Heart of Darkness*. He is introduced in the beginning of the novel by an anonymous narrator who talks about his past life and career. Marlow is used as a device, a figure created by Conrad to carry on the narration, to report on events and to examine and observe individuals and events partially. Marlow, the narrator is highly symbolical. He represents the spirit of adventure and the love of exploration. Conrad's interest in the first person narration is quite clearly understood. He regards all human experiences as the trials and tribulations of human life. Marlow is an imaginary narrator invented by Conrad in *The Heart of Darkness*. He is a retired sailor who resembles Conrad himself but at the same time he differs a lot. Marlow speaks and narrates the whole story which constitutes the texture of the novel. The first narrator then becomes the listener to Marlow's story but he speaks again at intervals when Marlow stops for breath or for reconciling upon whatever he has said. Thus the narration in the novel seems a complex affair because it begins with a narrator who introduces Marlow and then Marlow becomes the chief narrator.

The narrative technique in *The Heart of Darkness* involves not only a dislocation of time but also two narrators – an immediate witness and a frame narrator who recounts the heard tale. Conrad's departure from accepted time sequence is not as radical as that of Joyce, Faulkner and Woolf, it is nevertheless a determined step in that direction. The second narrator's account is not immediate and current but refracted by the memory of a past and distant time. This reconstruction of the past is not linear for there are stray comments about things yet to be realized such as Marlow's future visit of Kurtz's 'Intended'. According to Jakob Lothe in *The Cambridge Companion To Joseph Conrad*, the use of a narrator is a distancing device (168; ch. 9), and hence, the use of two narrators in the novella indicates Conrad's need to distance himself

from the events he is writing about. The whole narrative is divided into three chapters and it is interesting that the each shift from one chapter to another ends in the crucial moment in Marlow's approach to Kurtz. At the first break, Marlow just hears about Kurtz and becomes eager to see him thinking that he might be an idealist. From this point, the narrative is carried further by Marlow. At the second shift, he becomes too curious about Kurtz just before discovering about his real truth. Each pause and shift has significant value in the narrative demanding listener's attention and their reaction upon the incident. From then on, the rest of the narration is taken over by the first anonymous narrator. According to Edward Said in his book *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*, Conrad has used 'retrospective method' (viii) to convey what he could not mediate upon at the time of the experience. In the course of the narrative, Marlow moves back and forth to introduce past in order to understand the present and the interrelationships of past and present.

*The Heart of Darkness*, the most famous of Conrad's pilgrim's progress for our pessimistic age, ends with the suggestion that truth is unendurable in the context of everyday life, that what one needs in order to maintain the belief in safety and comfort is some sustaining illusion to which one can be faithful. The story closes with the frame narrator looking over the tranquil waterway of the Thames, which for Albert J. Guerard, "seemed to lead into the heart of a long, immense darkness" (33) – Conrad's longest journey into the self.

### **5.1.2 RACISM IN *THE HEART OF DARKNESS***

Racism spread throughout the world especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and many racist groups tried to impose the civilization and their values because they believed that they had different abilities and different characteristics, so the racist powers used different strategies or ideologies in order to put down the power of the other races making them less human. Slavery, segregation Nazism and apartheid, all represent the word racism but racial discrimination and slavery were considered as the darkest sides. *The Heart of Darkness* described the Africans who were the victims of European supremacy and their economic growth, so the use of race and racism helped them in their mission. The rise of European expansionism and imperialism in Africa led to the expansion of racist ideologies because imperialists were obliged to use such racist methods to achieve their goals. Racism is an act of showing difference between people according to their race. According to Oxford's definition "racism is unfair treatment of other races or belief that

some races of people are better than others” (“Racism”). In other words it is the belief that race account for differences in human characters or ability that a particular race is superior to others and it is a term used to describe the negative feelings of one ethnic group or people towards another. Racism denotes race based on prejudice, violence, dislike, discrimination or oppression, and this kind of superiority is generally based on skin colour, but sometimes it is considered as a kind of discrimination against a particular race’s culture, belief or traditions.

Africa which was a blank area in European maps of the world became the goal for many European countries. The cause with which the Europeans tried to dominate different parts of Africa is explained by the power they had resulting from industrialization and also they believed that they were superior to the Africans and that they had the right to rule everything in Africa. Europeans tried to implant in the minds of the Africans that black race was an inferior one, and the European mission or the European presence in African continent was very important to bring the right religion and superior civilization because it was their burden. So racism in Africa had different purposes and the goals of European empires especially France and Britain who went there in order to develop their economy because Africa was colonized and pillaged by these European countries for its resources and wealth. In addition many African countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Congo Niger, were the victims of European greed for power and money. European powers were obliged to use racist attitudes in order to get raw materials and territories which led to the expansion of religious and theories that supported the white race. The famous European expansion in Africa was the French and the British.

*The Heart of Darkness* is Joseph Conrad’s experience in the Congo in 1890. The story is one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s novels when many European writers tried to depict the world of colonialism and imperialism of European countries in Africa and Asia. The novella is often read, discussed, criticized in literature programs throughout the world. It is a work that allows us to tackle a variety of topics, and is therefore responded to in a variety of ways. The work itself as one critic puts it “might most usefully be considered hyper canonized” (Mongia 104). In the novel, Conrad used Marlow as a character who recounted his experience of the time in the Congo or in Africa in the early mid of the 1890’s during the colonial era. The Congo was the best example in which Conrad told his experience of how much the colonial powers were racist because the novel reveals the hypocrisy of the colonial missions in the Congo in particular and Africa in general.

Conrad in his novel used strong images about how much colonization damaged white colonizer's souls because of their bad treatment and greed towards black Africans. Racism in *The Heart of Darkness* was clear from the beginning of the novel. Marlow started recounting his experience by saying to his fellows: "I do not want to bother you much with what happened to me personally" (Conrad 10). He further says that his trip to Congo was a strange and disturbing one because of what he had seen there and his statement works as an alert to his fellows. The novel gives a clear image about how the natives or the Africans were ill-treated as slaves or objects rather than human beings because of colonialism and the greed of imperialism:

Black figures strolled about listlessly pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing, stream ascended in the moonlight the beaten nigger groaned somewhere (Conrad 10).

The Europeans believed that the blacks or niggers as they called them lived without any purpose or goal because they had no civilization, no education and even no religion. They also believed that the black people in Congo behaved as animals and their attitudes annoyed them a lot:

It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks – these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast (Conrad 20).

Darkness is seen everywhere in Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and it is considered as the most powerful sign of racism and imperialism in Africa in general and Congo in particular. As Marlow went deeper and deeper into the Congo, he started to discover the greed and horror and also the abuses and hypocrisy of the imperial system and imperialists who were interested in money, land and power. Marlow witnessed illness and inhumanity, people who suffered under the white empire and treated as machines. The black Congolese were forced to do hard works and enchained at the same time to each other resulting in slavery. In the novel, we find total denial of any civilization in Africa because Europeans believed that the Africans were uncivilized and that is why Marlow described his trip as a journey back in time as he had said: "going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginning of the world" (Conrad 48).

Thus the Europeans adopted all means of racism in order to get what they want which ultimately led to the misuse of power that reflected the evils of colonialism. Marlow insisted on the suffering of the Africans because they were alive physically but morally dead as shadows. Each statement in the novel reflected the suffering of the Congolese who were forced to work under the white master's control who adopted all types of violence and racism in order to frighten, or kill the Africans. Congolese in the novel had no names, they were only dead people or shadows or rather black shapes suffering starvation and diseases:

They were dying slowly – it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of diseases and starvation. Lying in the greenish gloom (Conrad 24).

The Europeans entered Africa and tried to spread their religion, their language and their civilization because they believed that it was their responsibility to spread the superiority of their civilization. They also believed that their mission was to lighten the dark continent of Africa. However, we find in the novel that the European acts were against their mission of civilization because their presence was not for the benefit of the Africans but their interest was on their natural resources especially ivory.

Kurtz, who was the chief of the inner station in Congo, was a man of great talent who intended to be the man of virtue. His goal before establishing himself was to civilize and help the natives of Africa. He was sent to the Congo for the purpose of bringing morals and European enlightenment to the colonists in which Africa was considered as a savage and mysterious continent. However, Kurtz was transformed from a man of European enlightenment and morals to an evil or monster because of his greed, and he became inhuman. In fact, Kurtz reflected the British colonialists who saw themselves as a people of great ideas, but their civilization abused the Africans and took their raw materials and their wealth. Kurtz turns out to be the greatest monster of all because he had forgotten his morals and his mission of civilization and rather became a thief who took the wealth of the natives by force instead of trading for it. He misused his values which became power and he started to treat the natives as animals rather than people. He obliged the blacks to work for his benefit and were forced to carry heavy baskets under his control. He took the dark situation of the Congolese in order to establish himself. Thus, Kurtz

represents the British colonialism in the novel, which claimed to civilize and educate the natives but their actions showed the opposite because they were interested in wealth not in people.

Through *The Heart of Darkness* Conrad puts many perspectives of racism and imperialism right on the table but allows the readers to develop his/her own opinions. Conrad's work exposes certain truths regarding the chaotic atmosphere of post-colonial states worth examining even though the novella's holistic view of imperialism is rather ambiguous and racist statements undoubtedly exist. Many readers had classified Joseph Conrad as racist. Chinua Achebe believed that Conrad was more racist in his novel *The Heart of Darkness* because of his ugly description towards the Congolese and that the novel supported the white colonizer's behaviors towards the natives. However, V. S. Naipaul provides an appropriate resolution to Achebe's reading of the novel as an unquestionably racist piece of literature when he says:

We read at different times for different things. We take to novels our own ideas of what the novel should be; and those ideas are made by our needs, our education, our background or perhaps our ideas of our background. (*Conrad's Darkness* 213)

Conrad didn't write the novella to the extreme of racism. Overall, the natives appeared better humans than the Europeans. In fact, Conrad's ignorance led to his conformity to racism. His ignorance of not completely "granting the natives human status" leads him to social categorization. C. P. Sarvan wrote in his criticism, quoting Achebe: "Conrad sets up Africa as a foil to Europe, a place of negations . . . in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest" (281). The novel thus gives a real image of what happened during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Congo was just an example. Conrad paid more attention to the damage that colonization did to the souls of white colonizers.

## **5.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS IN *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD***

Nelle Harper Lee, better known by her pen name Harper Lee, was an American novelist born on April 28, 1926. She was widely known for her first and only novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* published in 1960. The book won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and in 2007 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of freedom for her contribution to literature. The novel deals

with the irrationality of adult attitudes towards race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The plot and characters of the novel are loosely based on Lee's observations of her family and neighbors as well as an event that occurred near her hometown in Monroeville, Alabama in 1936 when she was ten years old. In the novel various themes can be seen, which project the intricacies in the novel. One of the primary themes is evidently the problem of racial prejudice and it is revealed throughout the novel at some point or the other, but is highlighted in the Tom Robinson trial.

Racial prejudice is a rigid and unfair generalization and assessment which is done by certain people toward the other people without knowing clearly about them. In the novel, the author wants to show the readers that racial prejudice can be met everywhere and every time in social life. Racial prejudice that happened and existed during the Great Depression in the Maycomb society is clearly pictured in the novel. It is present throughout the novel in the people of Maycomb's everyday life. The title *To Kill a Mockingbird*, refers to the prejudice of Maycomb against the people who have done nothing but good for the community. A mockingbird in society is someone who continuously helps people and does good things. In the novel, Tom Robinson is the most obvious mockingbird. He ends up suffering for a crime not committed by him. The trial of Tom Robinson in the novel shows the best example of racial prejudice. In his trial, Tom Robinson is misjudged and mistreated because he is black. Mr. Gilmer, who is Tom's prosecutor, calls him "boy" and uses a tone of voice which one would use when talking to the lowest creature on earth and makes him look foolish, simply because Tom was a black. Though all evidence produced by Atticus makes it clear that Tom is innocent, yet he is found "guilty". This verdict is clearly based on the fact that Tom is black, but also that, a black man felt sorry for a white woman – "I felt right sorry for her" (Lee 217). This statement would have brought any jury of Southern America to outrage in the 1930s. To them it was not right for a black to feel pity for any member of the white community.

### 5.2.1 THE UNCONVENTIONAL HERO OF *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

Unconventional hero or Antihero is a literary device used by writers for a prominent character in a play/book that has characteristics opposite to that of a conventional hero. A hero is generally admired for his bravery, strength, charm, ingenuity etc while an antihero is typically clumsy, unsolicited, and unskilled and has both good and bad qualities. “Antihero” as a literary term, entered literature in the nineteenth century with Dostoevsky, and its usage flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. However, the antihero protagonists or characters have been on stage since the early Greek drama. The notion of “hero” sets the base for “antihero”. In every century, there are heroes peculiar to their time; meanwhile, antiheroes continue to live as well, though not as abundant as heroes in number. However in contemporary literature, antiheroes have begun to outnumber heroes as a result of historical, political and sociological facts such as wars and literary works have tended to present themes of failure, inaction, uncertainty and despair rather than heroism and valour.

The “Unconventional hero” or “Antihero” is a difficult, ambiguous and contradictory term to explore, and thus it is a concept that evokes many possible interpretations. Antihero is first used in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel *Notes from Underground* (1864) in place of hero or protagonist (Brombert 1). In the final part of the book, the underground man who is the narrator and the protagonist points out that he made a mistake by writing his memoirs because there is no point in showing how he had spoiled his life. Dostoevsky confesses that “a novel needs a hero, and all the traits of an antihero are expressly gathered together here” (*Yeraltundan Notlar* 152). With underground man, Dostoevsky portrays a contrary example of a hero who does not satisfy the expectation of readers, but still dominates the novel as the main character. The antihero in the picaresque tradition has its roots much earlier. Written in the seventeenth century, *Don Quixote* (1605) is a parody of chivalric quest, and according to Chris Baldick, a scholar in the field of literary criticism and terminology, the antihero Don Quixote is regarded as the exemplary figure for the rogue antihero. One of the unheroic characteristics of this picaresque novel is that the author displays the picaro’s subjected idealistic heroism in a parodic manner (Baldick 13). As the antihero of the mock-heroic novel, Don Quixote has a unique sense of heroism which lacks the decency, nobility and aristocracy of romances and epic.

Antihero has “unheroic” qualities in meaning and function; however he is still the chief character in the technical sense. Antihero can serve a great purpose if used skillfully. In Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the protagonist Atticus Finch is not the typical modern hero – he is neither angst-ridden nor decontextualized. He is a widower, a father, a lawyer and a neighbor – an ordinary man living his life in a community. Yet he stands as a supreme example of the moral life, and he communicates that morality to his children, and ultimately to the community through his actions. A hero is a person who is known for certain achievements and qualities. Atticus is known for many qualities he displayed in the novel, as well as various achievements which makes him a heroic character. Atticus Finch is a hero because he defended a black man in court, proved his abilities and intelligences, and cared for everybody equally. During a time when black people were thought to be lower than white people, Atticus defended a black man in court. He said to his children, “I’m simply defending a Negro, his name’s Tom Robinson,” (Lee 75). It required a lot of confidence and caring for Atticus to defend Tom, and the black community knew that Tom did not stand a chance without Atticus’ help. They respected him and looked up to him as a hero and they showed this when they stood up for him in the courtroom. Reverend Sykes said to Scout in the courtroom, “Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father’s passin’,” (Lee 211). The entire group of black people who were there stood up for him. Also, the parishioners at Calpurnia’s church made Jem and Scout feel welcome when they visited the church. This showed that the black people also respected Atticus’ family. If Atticus was just trying his best in a difficult circumstance, then he would not be as respected as he was by the black community. The black people greatly acknowledged the qualities that Atticus displayed by defending Tom and looked to him as a hero because of these qualities.

Atticus’ ordinary heroism embodies three components – the call for critical reflection on the self, the rule of compassion, and the law that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird. His heroism is illustrated in scenes where he confronts mad dogs. When a mad dog named Tim Johnson appears on the main street of Maycomb, Heck Tate, the sheriff, refuses to shoot the mad dog himself and turns the job over to Atticus. Atticus allows himself to be the target of an irrational force and to absorb its violence as he acts to protect innocent people. This stance, his putting himself between the innocent and danger, characterizes the man. Mad dogs are easy; the courage to deal with a mad dog involves taking a concrete action – picking up a gun and shooting. Human beings are difficult; to respect their humanity, especially when they are wrong, makes concrete action

difficult. In defending Tom Robinson, Atticus has to find a way both to respect the humanity of even his most belligerent opponents and to protect his innocent client. Like the dog infected with rabies, the citizens of Maycomb are infected with Maycomb's "usual disease," racism, which makes them just as irrational and dangerous as Tim Johnson. Atticus' neighbors and friends, therefore, are those "mad dogs" that he must confront. In an attempt to confront their irrational fears and to educate them that "Maycomb had . . . nothing to fear but fear itself" (Lee 10), Atticus must find a different kind of courage than that of picking up a gun, the kind of courage that one has when "you know you are licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what" (Lee 116). This definition of courage provides the transition from facing the animal in the street to facing the citizens of Maycomb.

The real mad dog in Maycomb is the racism that denies the humanity of Tom Robinson. Atticus takes on that mad dog. He appeals to the jury in the terms of his ethic. Arguing that the legal system is the place where community codes and caste systems must be left behind, Atticus asks the jury to think rationally and critically, to ask themselves "Do you really think so?":

A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you have heard . . . in the name of God, do your duty (Lee 208).

Atticus also asks the jury to acknowledge Tom Robinson's humanity, to have for Tom the compassion that Tom had for Mayella Ewell. Atticus finishes his argument with a prayer: "In the name of God, believe him" (Lee 208). Though Tom Robinson is convicted in the end, Atticus wins a small victory – the jury's deliberation lasts well into the night. He makes Maycomb question itself in a way no one else could, even though they, like Mayella, cannot bind love to power and act in creative justice.

Fred Erisman in *The Romantic Regionalism of Harper Lee* (1973) calls Atticus Finch an Emersonian hero who is able to cast a skeptical eye on the conventional ideas of goodness, to supplant those virtues that have lost their value, and to preserve those that work (135). Edwin Bruell says Atticus is "no heroic type but (is like) any graceful, restrained, simple person like one from Attica" (660). Atticus Finch, the novel's protagonist and hero, who raises two children in a single-parent home, chooses to bring them up with morals that conflict with the common

everyday behavior of those in the community. Atticus represents those individuals who realize the existence of a moral right in one's attitude toward others. Carolyn Jones points out that Atticus provides the children with the ultimate symbolic gesture in the novel (53-63). Giving the children air rifles for Christmas, Atticus tells them it is a sin to kill a mockingbird:

I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird (Lee 90).

Atticus, a man who practices positive and good moral ethics, is not condescending or snobbish about his beliefs. Thomas Shaffer discusses the ordinary man Atticus represents by claiming that:

Disposition, more than the crisis, illustrates how it is that virtue is a matter of seeing with the self and learning to see with the self, and how moral life – and heroism too – are revealed in the ordinary (190).

Atticus demonstrates that moral integrity requires people to look out for and respect one another regardless of differences. Atticus stands at the novel's heart and as its moral and ethical center: a man who knows himself and who, therefore, can love others.

In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* there is a sharp contrast between good and evil, and that is what made Atticus such a powerful character. He proved himself to be a hero who exhibits bravery, strength, and modesty when faced with objection during Maycomb's quarrel for justice. Without a doubt, Atticus proves that anybody can stand for what he/she believes is right.

### **5.2.2 CHOICE IN *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD***

Many characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are compelled to make difficult, heart wrenching decisions that have no clear right answers. Harper Lee presents many of these important decisions or choices in the novel as moral dilemmas or situations that require a choice between two difficult alternatives where both the alternatives have unpleasant aspects and questions morals and ethics. A person is put in an awkward position, with their mind saying contradicting things. These dilemmas are presented in many different ways in the novel. Making a choice or

deciding to do the right thing is not always easy especially when everyone else is on one side and you are on the other side all by yourself. Atticus Finch was faced with a similar choice but to a greater extent. He decides to take Tom Robinson's case even though he is certain to lose. Atticus was known as a man who was "the same in his house as he is on the public streets" (Lee 51). That was the standard he lived by. He was incapable of doing anything that would broach the inviolable sanctity of his conscience. He made the honorable decision, even when that decision was unpopular – to defend Tom Robinson who was a black. His decision brought a slew of insults and threats to him and his family, but he was willing to bear the onslaught with his head held high. It was a difficult choice for Atticus especially when his sister and loved ones did not support his decision and doubted on it. He does the job that must be done, but that other people are unwilling and afraid to do. Thus Miss Maudie, Atticus' neighbor, tells Jem and Scout that "there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them." (Lee 237). Literary Critic Wayne C. Booth writes that the plots of great stories "are built out of the characters' efforts to face moral choices. In tracing those efforts, we readers stretch our own capacities for thinking about how life should be lived" (187). Hence, Atticus' moral choice to represent Robinson not only builds up the story plot but also inflicts upon the readers to think on how life should be lived and how the choices we make bring about a change around us.

Another important moral choice that Atticus makes is the decision not to go ahead and arrest Boo Radley for killing Bob Ewell at the end of the novel when Boo intercedes and saves Jem and Scout from being hurt or killed. There arises a moral dilemma for Atticus Finch to decide if Boo Radley is a mockingbird. This is a hard decision for Atticus to make, because he is a lawyer and he is sworn to uphold the law, not circumvent it. He knows that if he were to obey "the letter of the law" then he should tell the truth, but instead, he doesn't lie, but remains neutral. He is a character with impeccable integrity and that is what makes it so hard. However in the end, he makes the difficult choice of choosing the well being of Boo Radley over the strict interpretation of the law. In the beginning of the novel, Scout and Jem are told that it is okay to practice their shooting on annoying birds like crows and other nuisances, but they never should kill a mockingbird because all these birds do is sing all day and make people happy. They are innocent and fragile little birds. When Atticus explains to Scout why he has decided not to turn Boo in, he asks her if she understands and she replies, yes, that it would be like shooting a mockingbird. She

has learned the lesson from Atticus' hard decision. We also find Heck Tate, the Sheriff of Maycomb County, who also decides against arresting Boo Radley for Bob Ewell's death. Tate knows that Boo had stabbed Bob but he also knows that if Boo goes to trial then it will ruin the justice that happened because he saved Scout and Jem. Moreover, he will not get a fair trial because people will not be any different towards Boo than they were towards Tom and another innocent man will be harmed. Atticus believes that his son, Jem had killed Bob Ewell and that he cannot live with himself or his son if he says one thing and does another, so he states that he wants his son to stand trial if he had killed Bob. Atticus planned on going to court and resolving it but Tate finished what he was saying – "It ain't your decision, Mr. Finch, it's all mine" (Lee 303). Later Atticus realizes that Boo Radley killed Ewell and it is Boo who Tate is trying to protect and they finally agree that Ewell did fall on his own knife, a decision Scout fully understands. She reminds her father that charging Boo Radley with murder would "sort of like shooting a mockingbird." Thus we find that both Atticus and Tate make difficult choices not for any personal gain but for the welfare of Maycomb County that ultimately brings about a change in the long run.

## CHAPTER – 6

### CONCLUSION

This chapter will be a summing up of the various aspects of art and expression, and censorship that have been discussed in the previous chapters with reference to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and analyzing the aspects of artistic expression in the mentioned books. Also, we will discuss the various elements and themes that led to the censorship of such books and its impact.

As mentioned, literature is a form of human expression through arts that include fiction, creative nonfiction, essays and poetry; the performing arts such as dance, theater and film; and the visual arts, which include painting, sculpture, mixed media and installation art. Exposure to and understanding of the arts is key to developing qualities of responsible citizenship. The arts encompass a broader spectrum of our lives. A lot of what artists do is telling stories and as such help us make sense of our world, and broaden our experience and understanding. The arts enable us to imagine the unimaginable, and to connect us to the past, the present, and the future, sometimes simultaneously. Great literature, films and visual art transport us to different places and cultures; great art even allows us to see ourselves and our own community through a different lens. For instance, to see *King Lear* performed on stage helps us confront our own complicated family dynamics. As such literature helps to inspire other mediums of artistic expression as well. Challenging and powerful literature can set the stage for amazingly powerful and compelling representation in other forms. Thus, art inspires, provokes and even offends and thus raises the question - "Should art be ever censored?"

History proves that art has been censored and will continue to face it if some people do not like certain things. The limit to which a society should place restrictions on artist's ability to express often results in debate. The restrictions polarize opinion. Censorship has always remained an integral part of artistic world. Whether in modern U. S. or in ancient Rome, it has

existed in every society and in every period. Censorship becomes necessary if art challenges the strong beliefs of any society in terms of religion, political or ideology that often results in offense. One must understand that there is a difference between offensiveness and artistic merit. When artistic merit turns into offensiveness, censorship is required. The censorship of art is must to stop unrest and violence linked to religious and political concerns from spreading in a country. Thus, free expression that is objectionable and appals shocks or disgusts cannot be approved. There is difference between revolutionary art and abhorrent art. Revolutionary form of art brings constructive changes but offensiveness always humiliates a section of society.

Having said that, a free society is based on the principle that each and every individual has the right to decide what art or entertainment he or she wants or does not want – to receive or create. Once we allow the government to censor someone else, we cede to it the power to censor us, or something we like. Freedom of expression for ourselves requires freedom of expression for others. It is at the very heart of democracy. The tastes and acceptable norms in a society keeps changing, thus, there is no such thing as an ‘immoral book’ or ‘moral book’. A book is either badly written or well written. It is the same concept with all forms of art. There is in fact no need to find moral guidance in entertainment shows, songs or books as it is meant solely for pleasure. Art is the mirror image of the culture, the period in which it is produced. It reflects all the positive aspects as well as the uncomfortable, dark stuff prevailing in society.

Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* for instance, is a rich and complex literary novel, by turns ironic, fantastical and satirical. Despite what is often said, mostly by those who haven’t read it, the book does not take direct aim at Islam or its prophet. Those sections that have caused the greatest controversy are contained within the dreams or nightmares of a character who is in the grip of psychosis. According to Rushdie, one cannot simply “drag” two chapters “out of the whole”, but must read the novel in its entirety, since by singling out passages, one loses sight of “the actually existing book” (Rushdie 1992, 5). The novel as a literary form is among the highest expressions of mental freedom and must be treasured and defended. Most critics of the book have focused on the novel’s treatment of the Islamic religion and have frequently overlooked the fact that *The Satanic Verses* is, after all, not a religious tract but a work of fiction blended with magic realism thereby bringing out the artistic creativity of the author. Thus, the book, as a work of art – rich imaginary detail blended with keenly observed facts and carefully crafted levels of

expression, deserves to be appreciated. These artistic aspects of the novel are far more deserving of critical attention than the novel's religious content. Censoring such work of great artistic art only hampers the artistic creativity and freedom of expression is restrained. In the long run, great works of art may not be seen or produced.

Readers or humans in general, love to come up with strange or suspicious explanations for strange behavior. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* heralds the arrival of a new breed of lightning-paced, intelligent thriller that surprises the readers at every twist, absorbing at every turn and utterly unpredictable right up to its astonishing conclusion. While the artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals depicted in the novel – Leonardo Da Vinci's paintings, the Gnostic Gospels, Hieros Gamos etc all exist, it is not to be forgotten that *The Da Vinci Code* is a novel and therefore a work of fiction. Hence, the characters and their actions are obviously not real but the real elements are interpreted and debated by these fictional characters. The story, as Brown states on his website, serve as a catalyst and a springboard for people to discuss the important topics of faith, religion, and history. True to that, the book has raised public interest in the origins of the Bible and of central Christian doctrines such as the divinity of Jesus Christ. Such topics are important and valuable to study. The book has in fact opened the discussions, for the Christians in particular, how much truth they know regarding the history of Christianity and to find the truth, the only way is to read the Bible.

Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* is a reminder of man's inhumanity to man. The book depicts the violence, hatred and racism of its time because of which it was challenged for removal from US schools. In the novella, one can see the European imperialism to its utmost extent. Though Conrad's narration is a bit ambiguous, we are able to observe the brutal outcome of imperialism. Edward Said in his "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*". *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) states:

This imperial attitude is, I believe, beautifully captured in the complicated and rich narrative form of Conrad's great novella *Heart of Darkness*, written between 1898 and 1899 (24).

The novella is thus a work of great art that reflect the evils of imperialism knitted in its complicated narrative form. In other words, the novella depicts social issues and the need to

address them. On the other hand, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* addresses moral issues. Lee uses situations throughout the book to force readers to examine moral issues and discern right from wrong and the vital importance of standing up for truth and justice, as Atticus displays in the novel. The book is a true piece of literature and Atticus' message should be heard in the midst of all the global conflicts that we hear of on the news every day. To think of children suffering across the world because of a tyrannical regime or an unfair justice system is a depressing notion. Thus, whether such books have changed the world for better or for worse is debatable. But, in a very concrete way, they have helped to keep our history alive and have opened the door to discuss and think of the various issues around us. Every book impacts the reader's mind in a way or the other. It should be left to the individual to what kind of book or for that matter, any form art, he/she indulge in.

No writer ever really wants to talk about censorship. Writers want to talk about creation while censorship is all about anti-creation and negative energy. Censorship is a tool that stops one from doing what he/she wants. The creative act requires not only freedom but also the assumption of freedom. If the creative artist is afraid of the consequences of his choice of subject, then his choices will not be determined by his talent, but by fear. If we are not confident of our freedom, then we are not free. Subsequently, when censorship intrudes on art, it becomes the subject; the art becomes "censored art", and that is how the world sees and understands it. Censorship is not good for art, and it is even worse for artists themselves. The work of Ai Weiwei survives but the artist himself has an increasingly difficult life. The poet Ovid was banished to the Black Sea by a displeased Augustus Caesar but the poetry of Ovid has outlived the Roman Empire. The poet Mandelstam died in one of Stalin's labor camps, but his poetry has outlived the Soviet Union. Thus, we can assert that art is stronger than the censor. Artists, however, are vulnerable.

With so many book challenges and bans arising everyday across the globe, it is not the readers or the children who need safeguarding; it's the books. Books are among our best teachers. They teach us history, vocabulary, social skills and new ways of thinking and help us to progress as a society and as individuals. Thus, books should not be banned or censored for being unique and provocative but instead embrace them. What concerns many parents and censor board is the content of vulgar, pornographic, abusive and racist depiction in the work of art that

may have a negative impact among children and young students. However, with various technology and internet services, be it children or adults, one is exposed to such works in one way or the other. As such, it is the responsibility of the parents, elders and teachers to guide children and young students understand such works of art in a proper way instead of imposing ban or restricting them. Looking at the present scenario and the pace at which everything around us is advancing rapidly in terms of education, religion, technology, literature, art and so also the negative vibes of such advancement, young students must not be restrained to read and understand books that depicts the reality around them. Only then, creativity, imagination and solution will spring from the young minds.

Censorship is a tool that hinders the artistic growth of an artist. It thwarts and limits his creativity and expression. Every artist is unique and gifted in his own way, and it is only through art that his uniqueness is displayed. But when censorship comes between the artist and his uniqueness, it takes away the artist' soul and another great work of art tend to disappear. Thus, at the present age, one must do away with censorship and book banning but in fact, encourage artists to come up with more artistic and creative work.

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