Nonconformity in Indian English Fiction:

A Study in Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy

Dissertation

submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam

for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in English Language and Literature

by

C. Thomas John

Mahatma Gandhi University Research Centre in English

Mar Athanasius College

Kothamangalam

2006

Declaration

I, C. Thomas John, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled 'Nonconformity in Indian English Fiction: A Study in Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy', submitted for the award of the degree of Ph. D. at Mahatma Gandhi University, embodying the results of my bona fide research, has not formed the basis of award of any degree or diploma or any other title.

C. Thomas John

Research Centre in English,
Mar Athanasius College,
Kothamangalam.
20.3.2006

Mahatma Gandhi University Research Centre in English
Mar Athanasius College
Kothamangalam
20.3.2006.

Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'Nonconformity in Indian English fiction: A Study in Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy', the result of bona fide research carried out by Mr. C. Thomas John under my guidance and supervision, has not formed the basis of award of any degree or diploma or any other title.

Dr. Jose George
Research Supervisor

Dr. JOSE GEORGE ,Ph. D.
Mahatma Gandhi University
Research Centre in English
M. A. College, Kothamangalam
KERALA - 686 666, INDIA

Acknowledgements

I am happy to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Jose George, Research Supervisor, for his help and guidance at each and every stage of my research.

I remember Dr. R. Viswanathan, former Reader in English, University of Calicut, with a great sense of gratitude for his valuable suggestions regarding the research topic.

I would like to express my gratitude to the librarians whom I contacted during my research, especially the librarians of Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam and St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth.

I sincerely thank Dr. Santhosh V. M., Lecturer in English, Payyannur College, for providing me with books and articles, which have been of great help to me in writing this dissertation.

I am greatly indebted to the Principal of St. Aloysius College, Elthuruth and my colleagues, Dr. Pius T. K., Dr. T. Muraleedharan, Mr. Shaji Pathrose and Ms. Betsy Paul for their support and co-operation during the course of this research. I sincerely thank Fr. Antony K. D., my former teacher and at present my colleague, for being a source of inspiration in the pursuit of academic excellence.

Let me express my thankfulness to my wife, Jessy, who helped me in several ways to complete this work.

I am greatly thankful to Mr. E. J. T. Das Kolathingal for the meticulous care in e-printing this dissertation.

C. Thomas John

Preface

Nonconformity is very rarely used in literary analysis. This study is an attempt to find out its various possibilities in literary criticism, especially in the critical studies on Indian English fiction. The objective of this study also includes how nonconformity as a yardstick can be applied to assess the progress Indian English fiction has achieved in recent years. As a tool of criticism, it analyses the tendency of Indian English fiction to express its dissent from the colonial, social, linguistic and epistemological influences.

In the Indian English fiction of the last few decades, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy are in the forefront. They very effectively represent the resistance mode of the Indian English fiction with their noted works *Midnight's Children, A Suitable Boy* and *The God of Small Things*. This study tries to prove by these representative novels that the concept of nonconformity may be critically held against the whole body of Indian English fiction.

For the documentation of this dissertation, *MLA Handbook* 5th ed. is used.

The commonly used abbreviations are *MC, SB* and *GST* for *Midnight's Children, A Suitable Boy* and *The God of Small Things* respectively.

Abstract

Nonconformity in Indian English Fiction: A Study in Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy

The study focuses on the various aspects of nonconformity in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children (MC)*, Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy (SB)* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things (GST)*. It explores the attempt of these novelists' rebellion against the accepted and existing social norms, linguistic principles and epistemological bias. It also encompasses how they demand redress in these realms. As part of the study, nonconformity is held as a basic principle bringing about a change in historiographical, linguistic and social aspects.

In the study of Rushdie, nonconformity is applied to *MC*. It explores the fantastic mode of historiography. It includes how this new mode is brought forward through "perspectives" on history replacing the "hard facts" of the traditional historian. It also includes how the basic tenets of a literary fantasy bring about a rejection of the realist tradition and construct "superior alternate, secondary worlds." How Rushdie approaches history with the principles of a literary fantasy, not for the reconstruction of what has happened but for "a continuous playing with the memory" of what has happened, is also part of the study.

Vikram Seth's *SB* is analysed to show its language of irony in its attempt to resist the established marital custom. The subtlety of expression pervading the whole novel is central to the study. "Dissimulation" of irony is applied to the structure of the novel and its chief characters in order to explore the novel's subtle meanings. For this,

the "naïve spokesman" with his "invincible simplicity" is brought forth. The study also refutes a set of critiques viewing the novel as a clarion call for social conformity by bringing out the difference between "the explicit expression" and "the implicit meaning."

In the case of Arundhati Roy, the study analyses how she frames "nation language" in *GST*. For this, she makes the novel's language "a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse." The study also analyses the "relexification" device used in the novel. It also includes how she displaces Standard English with "the exigencies of mother grammar, syntax and vocabulary."

In the concluding chapter, the study focuses on the convergence of the three writers in their linguistic appropriation for framing a new Indian idiom. It also includes how the "linguistic contrarieties" of this new language become the "actual language" conveying the tensions of the people. The study concludes showing the attempt of Rushdie, Seth and Roy at expressing a typical Indian sensibility in Indian English. It also refers to these writers' attempt to go "beyond the Englishness of the English language," which is a significant step towards decolonizing the mind.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

In literary history nonconformity has a special place. It makes various literary movements possible. Conformity to the same literary rules and thought-patterns would not have created the diverse literary movements and rich literary products seen today. Instead, there would have been a whole body of vain repetitions. A great dissatisfaction with the previous literary movement causes the birth of a new one, possibly a better one. Thus terms like disagreement, protest, resistance, etc. become key terms in literary history pointing towards the ever-continuing literary phenomenon marked by the term nonconformity. The whole literature seen today would have become defunct, if a nonconformist attitude had not inspired the writers and critics. There wouldn't have been Renaissance, Romanticism, the age of Verisimilitude, Modernism and Postmodernism without nonconformity. And, the world literature wouldn't have had great writers like Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, James Joyce, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky et al without the same concept. Every new literary period replaces or modifies the previous one because

it becomes sterile. Thus, for example, in English literature, the Romantic revival took place in the 18th century, which replaced Neoclassicism because Romanticism could not conform to the strong traditionalism of Neoclassicism. Therefore the birth of a new literary era. In various ways the writers, too, may be considered as nonconformists either with regard to the literary form they use or the subject they choose or both of them. Shakespeare is considered a great genius in drama not only because he skillfully makes use of the subjects he borrowed from various sources but also because he radically renews the methods of characterization and stage devices of the Elizabethan period, and thus, resists and rejects the old. Cervantes does not want to conform to the conventions of chivalric romances and resists them in his *Don Quixote*. James Joyce turns his back to realist mode and brings in the technique of stream of consciousness in several of his novels. The writers' nonconformity to various aspects of life includes, among other things, nonconformity to social aspects, political philosophy, linguistic features, gender relations and ethical views. It is the basis of social activism and subalternity. In short, it pervades almost all aspects of human culture and one of the prime principles of progress.

Progress in every age is led by a few in the field of science, philosophy, literature, economics, etc. In the 20th century, one who took

the sense of nonconformity to most fields of knowledge is Michel Foucault who is highly critical of the social and political order of the century. He questions "universal truths" (Rabinow 4). He asks certain radical questions on Western political philosophy, which has "its devotion to such abstractions, first principles, and utopias – i.e., theory" (Rabinow 5). He declares that the "task is to cast aside these utopian schemes, the search for first principles, and to ask instead how power actually operates in our society" (Rabinow 6). He analyses the working of power in societies and believes that "the point of engaging in political struggles [...] is to alter power relations" (Rabinow 6). Nonconformity at the socio-political level is intended to redefine power relations. It asks the sort of questions that Arundhati Roy asks in *The Greater Common Good*: "What is at issue now is the very nature of our democracy. Who owns this land? Who owns its rivers? Its forests? Its fish?" (3). For distributing power democratically and evenly in a democratic age, Foucault says: "What we need, however, is a political philosophy that isn't erected around the problem of sovereignty, nor therefore around the problems of law and prohibition. We need to cut off the King's head: in political theory that has still to be done" (Foucault, "Truth and Power" 63). Postcolonial theories speak of the same notion by their call for decolonizing the mind. Nonconformity in Indian English fiction as typified in Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy proclaims

the need for cutting off the king's head and decolonizing not only the socio-political theory but the literary theory as well.

Indian English fiction has had a separate literary entity since the times of R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. Before them, writers would have shaped their literary works keeping in mind the British or American models exclusively. That age is well over. Among the many varieties of the English language seen in the modern world, India has a distinct place for its language and eventually, for its literature also. Until recently, Indian English literature was confined to only a few writers. But the scene has changed. India has made its presence on the world map of literature with a bang for the last few decades of the 20th century. About this new trend Salman Rushdie says:

> On the map of world literature [...] India has been undersized for too long [...]. Fifty years after India's independence [He wrote this in 1997.], however, that age of obscurity is coming to an end. India's writers have torn up the old map and are busily drawing their own. (Rushdie, "Damme...for You"61)

This Indian literary revolution is made possible through both the language and content. A thorough Indianization process has become the hallmark of Indian English literature. One of the triumvirates of this literary revolution, R. K. Narayan, felt its necessity as back as 1964. According to him: "We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language, through sheer resilience and mobility, is now undergoing a process of Indianization in the same manner as it adopted U. S. citizenship over a hundred years ago [...]" (qtd. Agarwalla 73). He confirms the fact that for conveying the Indian reality, an Indian variety of English is required. It is a difficult process to convey a typically Indian experience through a foreign language without missing the spirit of the story. Yet Indian writers are able to do it. Raja Rao voiced its need as early as 1938.

> One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us [...]. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English.

> We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. (Rao 296)

For taming the English language to serve the needs of the writer, almost all the Indian writers have interladed English with the regional languages. And they have been highly successful. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao have been leaders in this line. Among the new, there are many. Salman Rushdie may be considered as their leader with his historic novel *Midnight's Children* published in 1981. He exploits several aspects of the language, such as borrowing words from regional languages, compound words, relexification, etc. What he does through this significant novel is that he "managed to unmanacle the Prometheus of subcontinental English" (Nair 50). Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy, among umpteen numbers of others, make a similar feat in the nineties. In the case of Arundhati Roy, the aspect of linguistic appropriation is separately dealt with in a subsequent chapter. And in the case of Rushdie and Seth, it has been touched upon in the Conclusion: An Area of Convergence.

From the beginning of the twentieth century on, Indian English fiction has taken up the national freedom movement, history, feminism, gender relations, social reform, issues of the subaltern, etc. as its subject.

All these subjects have been dealt with in the novels with an acute sense of protest against the prevalent social system. Novels of freedom movement resist the influence of the British. R.K Narayan, Nayantara Sahgal and Raja Rao discuss such subjects of freedom movement among several other subjects. Mulk Raj Anand projects the theme of social reform. Kamala Markandaya deals with gender relations. Anita Desai chooses feminism in several of her novels. These are to mention some of the novelists at random to show how they respond to the decadent social order. All this culminates in *Midnight's Children*, winner of the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of Booker Prizes in 1993. It is "that fictional creation which in a way pulled together all the earlier phases of the Indian English novel – the historical, the social, the political, the psychological, the metaphysical – into one holdall of a book – and concurrently revolutionized the fictional technique" (Kirpal 68,69). With this novel alone, Rushdie could be a trendsetter influencing "a new crop of writers in English" such as Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Allan Sealy, Shasi Tharoor, Nina Sibal, Rohinton Mistry (Rege 343). All these post-Rushdie novelists acknowledge *Midnight's Children* as the precursor, particularly regarding their conception of the relationship of the individual to the nation and to history. Furthermore, it offers ample material and scope to a novelist desirous of subverting and dismantling power structures. As a result,

> Official versions of history, patriarchal versions of womanhood, and institutionalized versions of the subaltern are the discourses that are being contested and undermined by the post 1980s' Indian English novelists. They destabilize given versions, undermine them for their ideological underpinnings, and subvert them with the installation of newer versions to correct the relations of power in contemporary Indian society. (Kirpal 70)

Many novelists of the eighties and nineties attempt to deconstruct the theories of a patriarchal society. They attack the conservative assumptions on women. Shashi Deshpande and Nayantara Sahgal openly question the social system which makes an ideal woman, wife and mother. A similar theme is handled by Arundhati Roy in the nineties. Though most novelists of the last decades of 20th century are aware of the postmodernist and poststructuralist models of thinking and writing, they focus on reforming the society. "This is what Rushdie meant when he said that the important difference is that for him 'books are about the world' whereas in Euro-American postmodern writings, the world outside the text does not exist" (Rushdie, "Interview 1984"). Indian English novels are not uncertain about their intent. Certainly they show some postmodernist tendencies in the eighties and nineties, but they are not

full-scale postmodernist novels. They reflect typical Indian experiences with a focus on social aspects. But, is Indian English capable of transferring the actual experiences of Indian psyche? This is a question very often asked by critics especially when Indian English literature is compared to the literature in regional languages.

The argument in favour of the many felicities of writers in regional languages is mooted by both critics and writers. The essential part of the argument is that the writers in regional languages enjoy a closer relation to their mother tongues than Indian English writers who use an "alien" language (Rao 296). This is because the writers in regional languages naturally know the dialectal forms of a language, the cultural nuances of a region, the oral tradition, folk tales, riddles, rhymes, religious overtones, etc. of their respective languages. The writer who writes in the language of his region is capable of bringing in the reverberations of the society around him into his literary work. This is denied to the writers in Indian English. According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, " English in India [...] functions on relatively fewer registers and it would not have been surprising if this remained a permanent liability, allowing the novelist to operate only within a limited parameter"(83). This argument sounds to be reasonable and might be true about some writers in Indian English. But in the case of Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth, it is

far from the truth. Because they write with great felicity taking in the cultural nuances of the people whose fictional experience they render in their works. For this, they resort to various techniques including "relexification" of the English Language (Zabus 314). As part of this study on nonconformity in Indian English fiction, the linguistic features of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* have been analysed in chapter four titled Linguistic Iconoclasm and Artistic Creation. And, in the case of Vikram Seth and Salman Rushdie, their linguistic merits have been assessed in the Conclusion.

Salman Rushdie has been a model writer for many writers in Indian English fiction since the publication of *Midnight's Children* in 1981. Almost all the novels he has written question certain accepted principles of history, politics, language or religion. Most of them draw their material form India or the Indian subcontinent. He points out some undesirable aspects of life that cross his mind. Nonconformity is the right term to qualify his works. Because of this nonconformist feature of his works, controversy, indeed, seems written into Rushdie's fiction. He is determined to bring out his version of the truth. For doing so, he feels that fiction is the most powerful medium. He states that

> 'the speaking of suppressed truths is one of the great possibilities of the novel, and it is perhaps the main reason why the novel becomes the most dangerous of art forms in all countries where people, governments, are trying to distort the truth. The novel requires no stage, no film crew, and no gallery to hang in. It can be made by one person in a room and read, secretly if necessary, by another individual in another room. This makes written words the hardest messages to ban. In my own writing, I have tried to bring things out from under various carpets, and I suppose that I may go on doing so'. (qtd. Reder viii)

He is very serious about the tool of writing and he thinks that he can effect a change at least in the minds of his readers. He believes that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it. And particularly at times when the State takes reality into its own hands, sets about distorting it and altering the past to fit its present needs, the making of the alternative realities of art, including the novel of memory, becomes politicized. For such redescription, in several of his novels, he takes up history as the subject. It is obvious in the case of *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*. And in *Satanic Versus*, it is religion he redescribes. In *Midnight's Children*, he not only offers a mere redescription of the

history of Indian subcontinent but a new mode of historiography by means of the fantastic. For he believes in the writing's sheer power to resist.

Historiography is the art of writing history. It also includes the evolution and techniques of writing history. Down the ages, it has undergone a series of changes in accordance with the thought patterns of various people in different countries. In the pre-classical times, the Greeks had historical awareness from ballads and epics. In the 5th century B.C. itself, Herodotus showed a scientific method of observation of various events and things and tried to give a rational explanation to various events and phenomena, though he had a number of shortcomings in his method. Later Thucydides followed Herodotus's method. Both of them, to a great extend, relied on eyewitnesses. In the Hellenistic period, Greek historiography started the "*compilation*" method (Sreedharan 19). In this method materials were to be drawn from authorities, i.e., from previous historians who had already written histories of particular societies at particular times. Romans in the beginning followed the annalistic method. Cato and Livy are the well-known Roman figures in the field in the beginning. Later Tacitus relied on other histories, speeches, letters and traditions of old families for writing history. Plutarch followed the biographical method of historical interpretation.

This is to cite a few examples of the development of historiography in two countries. In a similar way it developed in various parts of the world. In China, there were world famous historians like Confucius, Szuma Ch'ien, Pan Ku and Szuma Kuang. In India, in the ancient times, Puranas were the earliest form. It underwent a lot of changes down the ages.

Medieval Christian historiography came into being in the West and the most important figure was Venerable Bede. Then there was the influence of Renaissance on it with historians like Biondo, Bruni, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Bodin, et al. They were followed by the scientific revolution rejecting all supernatural explanations prevalent until then. A skeptical secular spirit came into existence in the beginning of 17th century itself led by Francis Bacon and Descartes with their foundations in science and philosophy. Gradually the old tradition gave way for the new for which reason was the watch-word. Later, Vico tried for the convergence of history in the 18th century. Then came the enlightenment historians such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, David Hume, William Robertson, et al. They were followed by the romantic reaction against rationalism. Rouseau, as its pioneer in the 18th century, exalted feeling above thought. Though he had no direct relation to history, his philosophy influenced many historians after him and most important among them was Herder. With the influence of Romanticism, a

humanization process took place in history. Hegel (1770-1831) can be remembered in connection with the Romantic-Idealist historical movement. He gave importance to thought based on reason as the mainspring of history. He developed the dialectical method. Later nationalism became the focus of history in the 19th century with its exponents Droysen, Sybel and Treitschke. Then positivism became the key principle in historiography because historians in this stream wanted to record things beyond the possibility of doubt or dispute. Positivism stands for actual, absolute, dependable knowledge, i.e., knowledge derived by the application of scientific methods of inquiry, as in the normal sciences. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) were the high priests of this movement. Their attempts paved way for the growth of a new kind of history marked by a meticulous care for details. In the 19th century Karl Marx in collaboration with Friedrick Engles formed the philosophy of dialectical materialism. "Dialectical materialism seeks the essence of the historical process in the changing material conditions of human life" (Sreedharan 197).

The 20th century upheld history with a great scientific temperament and mixed it with a skeptical note. This aimed at the development of accurate knowledge. The first skeptical note struck by Nietzche in 1874 was reverberated again in the 20th century. The

exponents of this spoke against a lifeless scientism. Yet historiography's scientific method of research and investigation progressed with the blessings of John Bagnell Bury (1861-1927) and George Macaulay Trevelyan (1876-1962). There came a renewed interest in philosophy in historiography with Spengler and Toynbee. In the 20th century itself, Benedetto Croce and R.G.Collingwood provided a philosophical justification of the relativist mood in historiography. James Harvey Robinson in the 20th century upheld a new history. And in his book titled *The New History* (1912) he argued that "The New History was to be deliberately present minded in the sense that it would be immediately useful in explaining the present" (Sreedharan 233). C.A.Beard followed his line of thought in this regard. Along with this side of historiography, Economic History and Social History too developed. The 20th century also witnessed the development of Total History.

The twentieth century witnessed structuralism in history, Gramscian influence on historiography and postmodern views of historiography. Structuralism in history focuses on "the analysis and interpretation of historical phenomena and historical change in terms of geographical, economic [...], mental structures and systems". Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) tried to bring forth a "humane variant of historical materialism" for social change. Postmodernism provided a different sort

of historiography, which has not been practised until recently. But it too has derived its various aspects from the previous methods of writing hiistory. Its various aspects such as "a loss of faith in modernity, progress and Enlightenment rationality" have affected historiography as well. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was one of the masters who defined postmodernism and redefined historiography (Sreedharan 281).

Foucault voices the view that in postmodernism, history has no constant human subject which enables us to identify a coherent or constant human condition or nature. He also points out that history cannot show any rational development. He argues in "Nietzsche, genealogy, history" as follows:

> 'Effective' History differs from traditional history in being without constants. Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men [...]. History becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being – as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. (124)

Foucault sees in the past haphazard conflicts and not order, incessant struggle and not general agreement. And he believes that struggle is

necessary because human beings are entangled in the web of contingency. Since human life is so fixed in contingency, discontinuity, inequity and struggle are the results. History reflects a similar feature. He explodes the myth about objectivity and argues that every historical event is a certain perspective. He admires Nietzsche and upholds his perspectival knowledge.

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is analyzed with this principle underlying the perspective of history. For projecting a new mode of historiography, Rushdie uses the method of the literary fantasy. This aspect of the fantastic mode of historiography is analyzed in chapter two.

Vikram Seth may be considered both as a writer in one of the regional languages in India and as an Indian English writer. It is a metaphorical way of saying that he writes in an Indian regional language. It speaks about the quality of his writing and the version of English he uses. It is almost like a regional language, though basically it is English. Seth's *A Suitable Boy* is an excellent example. And, this novel will be able to defend the Indian writers in English in the context of the disparaging comments made recently by the Indian writers in regional languages against Indian English writers. The controversy would have probably triggered by the unkind comment made by Rushdie about the

lack of quality of the writing in regional languages compared to that of Indian English writing.

The regional writers variously view the Indian English writers as "creative travel writers, necromancers and artificial western flowers". Some of them even consider that "Indian writers in English (IWE) find themselves in a strange place: the emotional content is missing, as is the real core of the Indian experience". Balachandran Nimade comments about the recognition Indian writers have internationally as, "There is something suspicious [...] about this business of overnight success". A Hindi writer, Rajendra Yadav, calls Indian English writing "so second-rate" with "exotica or erotica" for the Western reader. For Gurdial Singh it is "sex, violence and adventure" which would sell in the West, and would make the readers of these books "intellectual pygmies". Nirmal Verma says: "Only one per cent of IWE are able to link themselves to the culture of their region, its real life, its metaphors and images". B. Jayamohan says: "They don't sound natural". Gangopadhyay comments that IWE "lacks nuances". Balachandran Nimade's another comment is the most unkindest cut of all. He says: "But the IWE are worse than colonial, they are so removed from their own ethos – addressing neither the Indian people nor their values, they produce for a different market.

They are a mess". This is the gist of the arguments, levelled against Indian English writers in general (qtd. Reddy 54-62).

There is ample proof to show that the regional writers have not targeted Vikram Seth. Not because they spared him deliberately, but because the quality of his writing would escape their ire. His Booker prize-winning novel, *A Suitable Boy*, testifies this. It is fully set in India, in the imaginary State of Purva Pradesh. It is Indian to the core, in its milieu, characters, life portrayed, and issues and above all, in its language. It uses Indian English, which has recently acquired the status of one of India's languages. U. R. Anandamurthy says about this as, "There are as many Englishes as there are regional languages" (qtd. Reddy 48). The narrative of *A Suitable Boy* is in English which is fully adapted to carry the weight of the Indian experience. Seth achieves this as any eminent writer in a regional language does it, or even in a better way. His version of English is fully capable of transferring the emotional content of the story in a natural way. The nuances of seeking marital alliances, Indian political scenario after independence, social and cultural aspects are authentically portrayed. Its linguistic styles with dialogues, regional words and usages evoke the right atmosphere of the Indian life of nineteen fifties, which makes the novel realistic. It reads as if written in a regional language. The English language is not a constraint for him

in transferring the nuances of Indian life of which he has the first hand knowledge. He speaks about his use of the English language as, "English accommodates precision, levels of grayness and colour, irony and ambiguity. Born in free India, I don't see English as the language of the conquerors; it is as much my language as it is of the British or the Americans" (qtd. Ramnarayan 2). He writes with great transparency but not bluntly without literary merits. There are several ideas to read in between the lines. He has a vision about his art. About this he says: "Ambiguity is not just an exercise of linguistic skill, it is intrinsic to human life" (qtd. Ramnarayan 2). This is the very stamp of his style in *A Suitable Boy*. Even while rendering a fully Indian experience in totally adapted English, he differs from the Indian custom of seeking for suitable boys and girls. The difference is expressed in a very subtle way. An artistic nonconformity to the age-old custom of matrimony. He accomplishes it through the language of irony. Chapter three discusses the novel's nonconformity to the Indian tradition of finding out suitable boys and girls. Seth defines writing as, "allusive, elusive and illusive" (Ramnarayan 2). *A Suitable Boy* confirms his view. The narrative of the omniscient author of the novel cannot be taken in as such directly. It eludes the understanding of the plain reader and therefore gives him/her an illusion about its meaning. The whole novel has to be understood as an extended irony. The third chapter attempts to unravel the elusive

meaning of the novel applying to it various aspects of irony. And, it also relates how the language of irony is used to resist the established social norm of matchmaking and how this resistance becomes social nonconformity.

The Booker prize winner in 1997, Arundhati Roy, is well-known today as a social activist. The Sydney Peace Prize that she won in 2004 is a recognition for her activist role. Since the publication of *The God of Small Things* and the subsequent media attention she enjoyed, she has committed herself to the cause of the marginalized. It is evident in the services she has been rendering to the NBA since 1999. Her interest in human welfare and progress is revealed when she criticizes the Indian government in "The End of Imagination" against the nuclear test. Again, she points out the cruelties of the Bush regime in Afghanistan in "Brutality smeared in peanut butter". She inflicts another blow on the world's policeman in "Peace and the new corporate liberation theology" for the U. S. invasion in Afghanistan and its occupation in Iraq. In *The Greater Common Good*, she brings out the absurdity of progress in constructing the Narmada reservoir displacing thousands of adivasis. *The God of Small Things*, among several other things, is the fictional representation of the problems of the subaltern. Art and activism are united in her fiction and non-fiction works. Peter Bosshard has rightly

stated it on the blurb of *The Greater Common Good* as, "It is inspiring to see art becoming activism for the true common good, and activism becoming a piece of art". Her activistic role was evident when she willingly served a symbolic one-day imprisonment in Tihar Central Jail in 2002 for the cause of the NBA. Her solidarity with the underprivileged was again manifested in her rejection of the Kendra Sahitya Academy award in 2006 to protest against the government's indifference to the people displaced by the developmental projects of the government. In her rather short literary-activistic career she has always expressed her love for the subaltern. In *The God of Small Things*, she shows it by rendering the pathetic life history of Velutha, a Paravan. This is by way of showing up the oppressive nature of the feudal society. The ultimate aim of this literary endeavor is to resist the oppressive forces in the society without conforming to them. And it is in line with the postcolonial literature.

Racial and ethnic differences are "best thought of as *political constructions* which serve the interests of certain groups of people" in postcolonial literature (McLeod 110). Velutha is severely punished in *The God of Small Things* because he goes beyond the established norms of the society to have his relationship with Ammu. He is disqualified to have such a relationship with Ammu because he belongs to a different ethnicity. "Members of particular ethnic groups [...] might find

themselves disqualified from certain positions [...]" (McLeod 111). Velutha faces discrimination and is forced to accept something worse than the death penalty for his mistake. There are several other issues as well in the novel built up on subjects such as gender relations, feudal patriarchal dominance, family relationship, etc. And, all this is rendered through a suitable language. Understanding the significance of a suitable language to render the experience of the characters, she has chosen a new version of English. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their introduction to *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* mention the importance of language as follows:

> Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language. The control over language by the imperial center – whether achieved by displacing native languages, by installing itself as a 'standard' against other variants which are constituted as 'impurities', or planting the language of empire in a new place – remains the most potent instrument of cultural control. (283)

In the same introduction they record how the writers and critics respond to this dominance of the imperial language in the post-colonial phase.

"There are several responses to this dominance of the imperial language, but two present themselves immediately in the decolonizing process – rejection or subversion" (283). And, Arundhati Roy, after Rushdie and Seth, chooses the second alternative.

Even after the colonial years, many governments still use English as their official language as part of the "colonial inheritance" (McLeod 122). But many critics and writers use it differently from its standard form which evolved in Britain. This is to suit the requirements of the various experiences they render. The Australian poet Judith Wright remarked as early as 1965 about how he adapted English to new uses. He says that "the true function of an art and culture is to interpret us to ourselves and to relate us to the country and the society in which we live" (qtd. McLeod 122). Arundhati Roy, in *The God of Small Things*, interprets the story of the marginalized people using the medium of the English language which is highly adapted to a new use, i.e., for the true cultural transference. For this, she disregards the norms of its standard form, especially the norms of grammaticality and acceptability set by native speakers of the language. She reworks it changing it from its standard version into something new and more suited to the fictional experience which mostly takes place in Kerala. Bill Ashcroft gives the theoretical basis of such a reworking of the English language in his essay

"Constitutive Graphonomy: A Post-Colonial Theory of Literary Writing" as follows:

> All language utterances are produced and received in specific contexts and emerge from unique situations. Meaning depends upon the moment of textual production and the *place* where texts are produced. Each limits and determines the range of meanings available to a text. So, when English is used in a once-colonized location, the specifics of the site of textual production will necessarily force its meanings to *change*. The new forms of 'english' which result are deliberately proclaimed to be *distant* from the received norm, and offer a means for English speakers in the settler colonies to conceive of their difference through their language'. (qtd. McLeod 123)

Arundhati Roy differs from the received norms of British English. This aspect is studied in chapter four with the British parameters of grammaticality and acceptability. In her hands it becomes almost a different language bearing the experience of the marginalized people. In the process of subverting Standard English, she gives it a local nature. It "is made to bear the weight and the texture of a different experience. In

doing so it becomes a different language" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 284). She adapts Standard English to "the exigencies of mother grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and by giving a shape to the variations of the speaking voice" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 284). She constructs "an 'english' which amounts to a very different linguistic vehicle from the received standard colonial 'English" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 284). U. R. Ananthamurthy acknowledges this ability of Arundhati Roy, like other eminent Indian writers in English, to convey the Malayali culture in her version of English as, "the best of IWE do manage to convey the ambience of the provincial language and ethos. Arundhati Roy's contribution, for instance, is an English whose energy comes from Malayali culture and ambience" (qtd. Reddy 58). She is successful in her effort. Chapter four analyses her use of the English language in a detailed manner.

The term nonconformity is apparently a negative term. It refers to the failure to conform to a rule or a set of rules, or a failure to conform to normal social conventions. It gives out a sense of protest and resistance. But an examination of the history of social and political dissent demonstrates that there have been a number of law-abiding citizens who believed that they had been led by their conscience to break the law over certain specific issues. Mahatma Gandhi is an excellent example in

Indian history. Similarly, in the political history of the United States, Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King Jr. have expressed their nonconformist stance to an authoritative tradition. Thoreau showed his dissent from the tyranny of any political system as early as mid-nineteenth century by giving the call to break any inexpedient law. Martin Luther King advocated the use of nonviolent means in 1950s and 60s to end racial segregation against the will of the White majority. His dissent from the domination of the White led him to be instrumental in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination in public accommodations, facilities and employment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. So, despite the apparent negative sense of the term, nonconformity refers to a bright future in the socio-political scenario. This study focuses on the repercussions of nonconformity in Indian English fiction represented by Rushdie, Seth and Arundhati Roy. They break some of the linguistic and literary laws of their times in order to take Indian English fiction to the untrodden paths of novelty and a better future. The analysis encompasses their nonconformity to the accepted mode of historiography, the tradition of matrimony and the established linguistic parameters.

Chapter 2

The Fantastic Mode of Historiography: Voicing a Different View in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

A quarter of a century has passed since the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. In the nineteen eighties, it was on top of its popularity, especially because it won the Booker Prize in 1981. But unlike most such "award-induced successes", it continues to be read and discussed long after the media-hype stopped. In the beginning, it was seen as a novel about a "fantastic protagonist whose birth coincided with the independence of India". But later various critical views came up. It has been assessed as a novel about history, nation and politics with overtones of post-colonial literature. It questions the traditional methods of historiography in its bold language and narrative mode. Aspects of fairy tale, autobiography and history commingle in its narrative. It differs from the accepted sense of reality rejecting the mode of realism itself. And, it includes a number of postmodernist impulses. Set in the Indian subcontinent between 1915 and 1977, its main body deals with the official history of the subcontinent. It attracted critical attention immediately after its publication in 1980 not only in England, where the

author lived, and in India, the country he narrated, but the entire world over and it was later translated into several languages. It was awarded the Booker of Bookers (the best book in twenty five years of Booker history) in 1993. In its mode of writing, rejecting the realist tradition of narration, it takes up the fantastic mode for bringing about a new style in historiography (Mukherjee 9).

Realism is based on mimesis. In this mode a work of art is considered as an imitation or "representation of the world", and "the primary criterion applied to a work is that of the 'truth' of its representation to the objects it represents or should represent" (Abrams 37). It tries to present an accurate imitation of life as it is. The characters are usually of the middle class or the working class and their ordinary experiences are rendered in it. Such a work gives the reader the illusion of actual experience, adhering to chronological time sequence. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie presents ordinary people and their ordinary and often extra ordinary experience, but he rejects realism. Even when his protagonist, Saleem Sinai, claims that he is saying the recent history of India, there are many lapses of time sequence. And the ordinary experiences of his characters, especially those of the protagonist, are mingled with those of fantasy. In the beginning of the novel itself the narrator-protagonist, Saleem Sinai, says: "And there are so many stories

to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane!" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 9). In this way, the reader is time and again cautioned against taking the novel as a realistic work retelling the modern Indian history in the realist mode.

One of the basic tenets of literary fantasies is its rejection of the realist tradition. They are free from the conventions and restraints of realistic texts. Breaking the chronological time concept they cannot afford to maintain unities of time, space and character. Very often the distinction between animate and inanimate objects fades and self and other, life and death are seen as the same. The literary works in this mode of writing transcend reality escaping the human condition and constructing alternate and secondary worlds. Thus these literary works try to fulfil a desire for a better, more complete and unified reality providing vicarious gratification both for their characters and readers. Even though they escape from the day-today reality, the social context is of paramount significance for them for they are produced within, and determined by, their social context. In other words, a literary fantasy, rooted in a certain social atmosphere, attempts to transcend the cultural constraints of that particular society and to make amends for the same. It

is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss.

Midnight's Children analyses Indian history. Its protagonist, who was born on the day of India's Independence, does this. Accepted versions of history are intervened by other characters, too. It is made by letting the events of the nation and Sinai family take place simultaneously and making them inseparable from each other. Several aspects of Indian history are reverted including its false consciousness of nationalism. Events from the Amritsar massacre to the period of Emergency are closely examined and connected to the Sinai family. It is mainly through Saleem, history is reanalyzed. Certainly, the novel lacks the objectivity of the formal historian in the traditional sense of the term since it is through Saleem's consciousness every aspect of the history of recent India re-emerges. In this regard, Saleem speaks to Padma, his listener, as: "Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 211). This is the sort of difference between the new historiography that Rushdie upholds in his novel and the traditional one founded upon objectivity.

What his character, Saleem, says about memory's truth and its heterogeneity is the basis of postmodern historiography. F.R Ankersmit describes this postmodern view as "history is no longer the reconstruction of what has happened to us in the various phases of our lives, but a continuous playing with the memory of this" (293, 294). Rushdie confirms this aspect of his novels in general calling them as "novels of memory" (qtd. Cook 25). Very often this sort of a history lacks the chronological order and therefore fragmentary. In order to say it, stories, legends and chronicles are intermingled. It "exposes the fictionality, the constructedness of all the metaphors and narrative conventions implied in national history" (qtd. Mukerjee 16). Thus, instead of the official history, the version of Saleem's history, which is a "subaltern version of history" with "subversion and also sub-version", is projected (Mukerjee 18). In fact, it is an imaginative version of history allowing us to see the official history in any possible way. Thus it throws light on certain new ways of historiography.

A series of debates has been going on since the last few decades of the twentieth century on the principles of historiography and the nature of history. Whether writing of history has to maintain its links to empiricism, realist notions of representation and truth or to consider it as a narrative representation independent of realistic notions is under

discussion. In the postmodern literature the second mode of historiography has already gained momentum. Saleem Sinai not only has his peculiar historical consciousness, but through this, he challenges the notions of objectivity and reality. "Reality is a question of perspective; the further you get from the past, the more concrete and plausible it seems – but as you approach the present, it inevitably seems more and more incredible" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 165). In this sense, every historical record is an arbitrary way in looking at the historical text. "How both upper and lower case histories, being 'meta-historical' constructions, are, like all constructions, ultimately arbitrary ways of carving up what come to constitute their field" (Jenkins 8). Nothing is an objective way. *Midnight's Children* focuses on "*the end of the peculiar ways in which modernity conceptualized the past; the way it made sense of it*" (Jenkins 8). The postmodern critiques bid farewell to the realist, empiricist, objectivist and documentarist ways of writing history unlike some of the professional academic historians who still think about historiography. The postmodern approaches are counterposed against the traditional history's claims of realism, empiricism, objectivity and documentarism.

It proves that empiricism is not only a theory but also an inadequate one. The "hard facts" of the traditional historian have been

resisted and seen from different angles in *Midnight's Children* (Jenkins 12). The postmodern approaches are for the "relativist type variants" of history (Jenkins 13). They undercut both the correspondence theory of truth and problematicize the generally associated notion of internal coherence and consistency found within the objectivist position. Thus postmodern critiques reject traditional history's claim that it studies the past ostensibly for the past's own sake as different from the study of the past for the ideological sakes of the proletariat, women, blacks, etc. They welcome other histories, which are considered fakes by traditional historiography. Salman Rushdie makes use of this sort of an approach in examining the history of recent India. For which he inter-connects the Sinai family and India in a way, which might be considered fantastic. In this regard Saleem Sinai says: "That was how the history of our family once again became the fate of a nation" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 313).

The usual way of assuring that there is a "pretext" of national history as it appears in encyclopedias and textbooks is debated in *Midnight's Children*, especially through the fantastic coincidence in the Sinai family and in the national history (Kortenaar 29). It is believed that Rushdie has very closely followed Stanley Wolpert's *A New History of India*, which is the political history of India. It is the history of the

middle class nationalist politicians. It follows the official version of recorded events such as the origin of India and the chronologically narrated events. It doesn't ever enter beyond the middle and intellectual classes and it has nothing to do with the subaltern. Rushdie reanalyzes this so-called official history especially from the perspective of Saleem Sinai, making use of the method of writing a literary fantasy.

A literary fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility. The rules of traditional artistic representation in the realist mode and reproduction of the real are rejected in it. A cursory examination of the origin of it reveals that it is characterized by this subversive function. Its oldest genre is *menippea*. Mikhail Bakhtin places some of the modern fantasists such as Dostoevsky, Gogol, Edgar Allan Poe as the direct descendants of this traditional literary genre, which rejects the demands of historical realism or probability. It moves easily between this world, an underworld and an upper world. It fuses past, present and future together. It includes states of hallucination, dream, eccentric behaviour and speech, personal transformations and extraordinary situations. It allows violations of the generally accepted, ordinary course of events and of the established norms of behavior and etiquette. Eventually, there is a breach in the stable, normal course of human affairs and events and free human

behaviour from predetermining norms and motivations. It does not claim to be definitive or conclusive. It lacks finality and interrogates authoritative truths and replaces them with something less certain. Regarding this, Bakhtin says that the fantastic serves not in the positive embodiment of the truth, but in the search after the truth, its provocation and, most importantly, its testing. He points towards fantasy's hostility to static, discrete units, towards its juxtaposition of incompatible elements and its resistance to fixity. Spatial, temporal, and philosophical ordering systems dissolve and unified notions of character are broken in it. Through its "misrule", it permits "ultimate questions" about social order or metaphysical questions on life's purpose. It violates social propriety because it fails to accept a closed, unified, or omniscient vision. For Bakhtin, the *menippea* is linked with the notion of carnival, which is a public activity, a ritualized, festive event. In the carnival, everyone is an active participant and everyone communes in the carnival act. The carnival life is life drawn out of its usual rut. Carnival is a temporary condition, a ritualized suspension of everyday law and order. Rejecting the realist tradition of historiography, Rushdie welcomes many of the menippean and carnivalesque features in *Midnight's Children.* Its protagonist, Saleem Sinai, and the Sinais are active participants in the national history of India. That is, Indian history as retold by Saleem, and

his family is linked to the most significant incidents in the history of the nation. This is an important narrative principle of the novel (Jackson 15).

Midnight's Children describes the experiences of three generations of Sinai family living in various places such as Srinagar, Amritsar, Agra, Bombay and Karachi. Saleem Sinai, the member of the third generation, is the narrator. He works at a pickle factory by day and records his experience by night. The novel's structure founded upon the history of the subcontinent is revealed before the reader as Saleem says it to Padma. The first part of the narrative is set before the Indian independence in 1947. It begins in the valley of Kashmir with the first man, Aadam and his wife and later they become part of India. The second part of the narrative deals with the independent India and this comes to an end with the war between India and Pakistan. And, the third part describes the events leading to the formation of Bangladesh and various political situations in India. What is more important than this sketchy structure of the narrative is Rushdie's mixing up of the experiences of Sinai family with the events of Indian history. "From the beginning Rushdie maintains a continuous effort at synchronizing national and domestic life, so that the odyssey of the Azizes and the Sinais also becomes the odyssey of the nation" (Banerjee 26).

The birth of Saleem and India takes place simultaneously. Regarding this Saleem describes as, "at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 9). Thus he says that he "had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, [his] destinies indissolubly chained to those of [his] country" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 9). So in the very beginning of the novel itself Rushdie strikes his first note of the domestic cum national theme. A few days later, the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, writes to Saleem a congratulatory letter regarding this happy coincidence. "Dear Baby Saleem, My belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of that ancient face of India which is also externally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own!" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 122). Even baby Saleem feels about his importance in the history of the nation. "That's enough for the moment, about the first days of Baby Saleem – already my very presence is having an effect on history; already Baby Saleem is working changes on the people around him" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 130). Later in the novel, as it is documented in history, Indira Gandhi was accused of electoral rigging during the campaign in 1971 and the thirteen-day labour of Parvati, a fictional character, and Indira Gandhi's thirteen-day trial occur simultaneously. And for Parvati a son

was born in June 1975, and along with this total fictional aspect of the novel a historic incident in Indian history takes place, i.e., the clamping of emergency by Indira Gandhi. Quarrels at the midnight children's conference mirror the quarrels in the Indian parliament. Similarly, Sinai family members witness historical events. For example, Saleem's grandfather Aadam Aziz is an eyewitness to the Jalian Wallah Bagh massacre. Later, Saleem finds himself in a language demonstration, which was conducted in connection with the division of States based on linguistic differences. Saleem says about this as, "In this way I became directly responsible for triggering off the violence which ended with the partition of the State of Bombay, as a result of which the city became the capital of Maharastra" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 229). Again, Saleem is seen participating in the planning of a *coup d' etat* in Pakistan. "Not only did I overthrow a government – I also consigned a president to exile" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 349). Thus, events which are connected to Saleem and his family are interpreted in such a way that they seem to affect the nation. A series of connections between the Sinais and the nation are made that the reader has the genuine doubt whether these are realistic representations.

A literary fantasy is rooted in the realistic and gives the reader a sense of reality but very soon moves to the impossible. In a secular

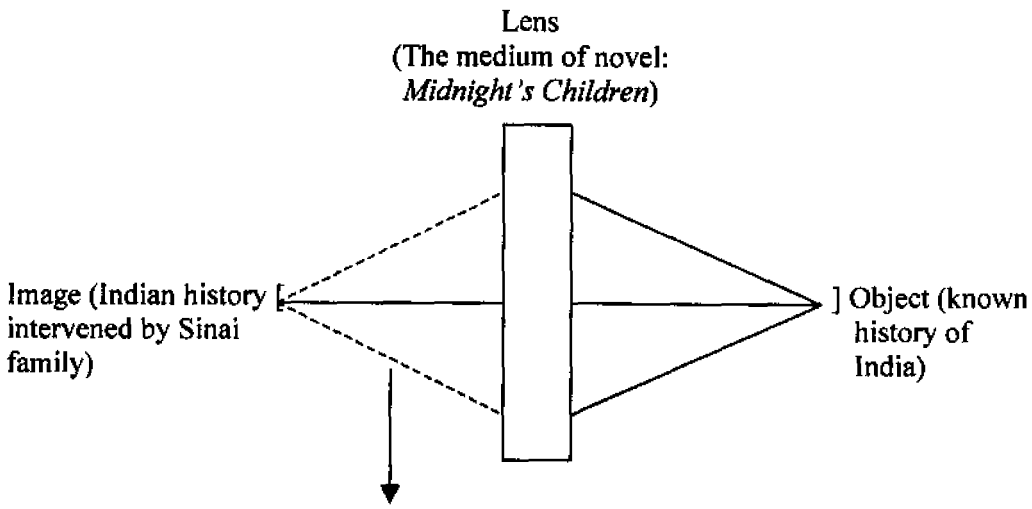
culture, fantasy does not invent super-natural regions, but presents a natural world inverted into something strange, something other. It becomes domesticated, humanized, turning from transcendental exploration to transcriptions of a human condition. Thus the proper function of fantasy is to transform this world. In accordance with the working of literary fantasies, Rushdie builds up the structure of his novel by making many connections between the Sinai family and the developments in Indian history. These seem to be rather strange yet they are turned to transcriptions of a human condition with the presence of flesh and blood characters. Thus fantasy functions on a twin-principle. Initially it is mimetic or realistic in presenting an object world objectively in the traditional sense of the terms, and then moves into another world, which is unrealistic representing apparent impossibilities. In short, fantasy is a desire for otherness in a secularized culture. It is not the displacement into regions of heaven or hell but is directed towards the absent areas of this world, transforming it into something other than the familiar, comfortable one.

With the new vision of historiography Rushdie leads the readers to the absent areas of Indian history, and through his protagonist, he transforms it into something other than the familiar and established history. Instead of an "alternative order" in history, *Midnight's Children*

creates "alterity", i.e., the established Indian history is "re-placed and dis-located" with the intervention of the Senais. This process of "transformation and deformation" in literary fantasies is known as "paraxis" signifying "par-axis, that which lies on either side of the principal axis, that which lies alongside the main body". Thus paraxis is a "telling notion in relation to the place, or space, of the fantastic, for it implies an inextricable link to the main body of the 'real' which it shades and threatens" (Jackson 19).

Midnight's Children has, as its principal axis, the official Indian history. And very often this main body, i.e., official history, is threatened by the paraxis, though paraxis does not exist realistically. Having come into being as a technical term in optics, paraxial region is an area in which light rays seem to unite at a point after refraction. In this area, the object and image seem to collide. But in fact neither the object nor the reconstituted image genuinely resides there. In literary fantasies this paraxial area is taken to represent the spectral region of the fantastic, whose imaginary world is neither entirely real (object), nor entirely unreal (image), but is located somewhere indeterminately between the two. This is the paraxial structural positioning of literary fantasies. But they have the grounding in the real, which is a significant characteristic of them.

The main body of *Midnight's Children* comprises the events based on Indian history, beginning from the Amritsar massacre and ending in the clamping of emergency. And, alongside this main body or principal axis, the fantastic events are set. They are part of the paraxis or paraxial region. Both of them, i.e., the events of the main body and the events of the paraxis, are interwoven bringing about a new mode of historiography in the novel. A diagrammatic representation of the main body and the paraxial region of the novel is given below.



The paraxial region (the fantastic representation of history). (Jackson 19)

The paraxial area in *Midnight's Children* may be considered as the intervention of Sinai family in the history of India. So it is not real as it is not the object, i.e., it is not the history of India itself. But it cannot be fully rejected as unreal because it is the image of the object. That is, what

Saleem Sinai says is rooted in the official history of India. So, in *Midnight's Children*, there is realism but what Saleem says is mixed with the image of the object, i.e., the intervention of the Sinais in Indian history. Therefore, the fantastic is located somewhere between the real (object) and unreal (image). This is the fantastic mode in *Midnight's Children.*

In the very beginning of the novel itself, Rushdie triggers off the fusion of the fantastic and the real, i.e., the main body and paraxis. The birth of Saleem on 15th August, 1947 is the first instance. Later, there is the description on the birth of a thousand other children "on the stroke of midnight" on the same day just at the moment of the Indian independence (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 9). And, these children are endowed with extra-ordinary abilities. The letter of the first Prime Minister to Saleem congratulating him can be read along with the celebration of independence. Saleem recalls the difference made by his birth as: "Horn-templed, cucumber-nosed, I lay in my crib, and listened; and everything that happened, happened because of me"(Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 133). What is part of the official history of India is its independence on 15th August, 1947 and the festive mood and celebration that follow. This is part of the main body of the novel. The paraxial region alongside the main body includes the thousand and one children born exactly at the

moment of Indian independence, their extra-ordinary abilities and the congratulatory letter written by the Prime Minister. These are part of pure fantasy fused with the official history of Indian independence. All these incidents, real and unreal fused, show India's great expectation for the future. By way of projecting the coincidence of the birth of Saleem and other children and Indian independence, Rushdie points out the typical Indian way of marking great occasions by finding out personal correspondences to them. In this regard Saleem says:

> As a people, we are obsessed with correspondences. Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things, make us clap our hands delightedly when we find them out. It is a sort of national longing for form – or perhaps simply an expression of our deep belief that forms lie hidden within reality: that meaning reveals itself only in flashes. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 291).

Maybe, Rushdie is making fun of this meaningless endeavor of making correspondences. But certainly this fantastic presentation of the exuberance of Indian Independence is with a definite structural pattern. In this pattern, the exuberance is reversed and a bleak future for India is presented in the subsequent parts of the novel. Again, it is done through

the fusion of the real and the unreal, i.e., official history and fantasy or main body and paraxial region. In the mid-way of his narration, Saleem comments as, "Midnight has many children; the offspring of Independence were not all human. Violence, corruption, poverty, generals, chaos, greed and pepper pots [...]" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 291). And the novel ends prophesying utter chaos for the forthcoming generations.

> Yes, they will trample me underfoot, the numbers marching one two three, four hundred million five hundred six, reducing me to specks of voiceless dust, just as, all in good time, they will trample my son who is not my son, and his son who will not be his, and his who will not be his, until the thousand and first generation, until a thousand and one midnights have bestowed their terrible gifts and a thousand and one children have died, because it is the privilege and the cause of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in piece. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 462).

The concluding passage of the novel is also the paraxial region of the novel going alongside the main body: the independence history. But this fantastic presentation beginning with the birth of Saleem, going through the letter sent by the Prime Minister, the birth of other midnight's children, their supernatural abilities and the final bleak situation very effectively criticizes the actual history of post independence India which faced boarder insecurity, wars, unemployment, corruption, political manipulations, etc. The fantastic fringe of the main body history allegorically presents the bleak picture of India through the novel. Thus the introduction of the paraxial region considered to be the unreal, is set against the category of the real, a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference. Here the difference is the difference seen in the official history which speaks high of the post Independence era, which is actually bleak. In short, the novel gives the picture of "the ones born on the historic midnight of 15 August 1947, who are eventually suckered and *funtooshed* by expedient politics" (Sharma, Discussion page). Fantasy re-combines and inverts the real, but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real. The fantastic cannot exist independently of that real world which it seems to find so frustratingly finite. Thus fantasy's function is to look beyond the so-called real world, which is frustratingly finite. Saleem himself testifies to the necessity of the fantastic in his story. "I must press on; because,

having (for the moment) exhausted this strain of old-time fabulism, I am coming to the fantastic heart of my own story, and must write in plain unveiled fashion, about the midnight children" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 195). In *Midnight's Children* the thrust is on finding out the dark areas of history, spaces behind the visible.

In "Nietzsche, genealogy, history", Michel Foucault questions the finiteness of traditional history. He argues that effective history is without constants and it introduces discontinuity into our very being. The validity of the continuity of the traditional history is often questioned. The very purpose of history, according to him, is "to seize the various perspectives, to disclose dispersions and differences, to leave things undisturbed in their own dimension and intensity" (125). One of the basic principles of postmodern approach to historiography is this finding out of the dark areas of history through various ways of narrative representations where truth becomes highly relative. "Truth of a statement is relative to the position of the person making the statement" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 213). Therefore this approach generates "a pervasive lack of confidence in the ability to find the truth or even to establish that there is such a thing as the truth" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 213). The presence of relativism in historiography questions the ideal of objectivity. "If truth depends on the observer's standpoint, how can there

be any transcendent, universal, or absolute truth, or at least truths that hold for all groups for many generations?" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 213,214). In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie reveals some dark areas of history through the mode of fantasy, which is highly relative: the perspective of Saleem and perhaps Rushdie's too. Foucault speaks about this aspect of history in "Nietzsche, genealogy, history": "The final trait of effective history is its affirmation of knowledge as perspective" (126). All this points out the fact that Rushdie advocates a new method of historiography through the mode of literary fantasy in *Midnight's Children.*

In order to substantiate this new mode of fantastic historiography, Rushdie presents various incidents. Foremost among them is the change of Saleem's own parentage. Amina Sinai gives birth to Saleem in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947 (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children 9*). Half an hour before her, a poor street singer's wife gives birth to another child. It is at this moment Jinnah proclaims the birth of Pakistan. After sometime, the nurse, Mary Pereira, swaps Amina's son for the street singer's. The reason is that she is in love with a political revolutionary and thinks that she is doing a benavolent act by transforming a poor boy into a rich one. Thus the actual Sinai boy grows as Shiva, and the poor boy as Saleem Sinai. The swapping of children is

almost like a realistic narration. Yet it is part of the literary fantasy. The fantastic plays upon difficulties of interpreting events or things as objects or as images, thus disorientating the reader's categorization of the real. The part of official history here is the independence of Pakistan and India on August 15th, 1947. The swapping of children by Marie Pereira is an example of lampooning of the people who are filled with wrong notions of false social revolutionary fervor. But this incident cannot be taken as a mere fantasy for the purpose of lampooning. On the other hand, it presents the possible changes in the established historical notions and says that no historical account is finite.

Midnight's Children presents the historical non-finiteness further when Saleem, the narrator of the novel, wrongly mentions the date Mahatma Gandhi was shot at. Similarly, his account of the war between Pakistan and India is built upon newspaper reports collected from both countries contradicting each other. On another occasion he says that Valmiki dictated his manuscript of the Ramayana to Ganesh, which is actually what Vyasa did with Mahabaratha, etc. All these are very close to real, yet aspects of fantasy. Here, Rushdie maintains the postmodern stand that it is impossible to know what is true and false objectively. Similar course of events can be seen in *Shame* too, which is about Pakistan. The examples also show the irony in the official history of the

countries. Saleem is not a reliable chronicler. What Saleem presents is the process of memory in interpreting past events. And the significance of events varies according the narrator. Saleem says about this as: "Think of this: history, in my version, entered a new phase on August 15th, 1947 – but in another version, that inescapable date is no more than one fleeting instant in the Age of Darkness" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 194). Rushdie emphasizes his unreliability by way of his false account. Thus he stresses the theme of the novel, which is the denouncement of the centrality of historical factuality or the objective truth about history. In *Imaginary Homelands*, he speaks about the false historical account crept into *Midnight's Children*: "When I first found out my error I was upset and tried to have it corrected. Now I am not so sure. The mistake feels more and more like Salman's; its wrongness feels right" (qtd. Peterson 37).

In the novel, Saleem rejects his own rendering: "To tell the truth, I lied about Shiva's death" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 427). Thus Rushdie makes the reader see the truth only with a questioning mind. On another occasion, Saleem thinks about his own importance as a historian: "Already my very presence is having an effect on history; already Baby Saleem is working changes on the people around him" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 152). This is a sarcastic statement, which is actually

intended to undermine historians' undue importance in claiming "involvement with mighty events and public lives"(Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 205). This is again emphasized using the language of irony when Saleem deems himself as an authority on history, the only one source of history. "It is possible even probable, that I am only the first historian to write the story of my undeniably exceptional life-and-times. Those who follow in my footsteps will, however, inevitably come to this present work, this source-book, this Hadith or Purana or *Grundrisse,* for guidance and inspiration" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 287). By this ironic statement from Saleem, Rushdie emphasizes his stance on history, i.e., like Saleem's interpretation of the past, which is highly unreliable, there are only interpretations of history, not a single authority but various perspectives. F.R.Ankersmit speaks about this situation in his article "Historiography and postmodernism": "We no longer have any texts, any past, but just interpretations of them" (278). And there are many interpretations on the same event. This is proved by another fantastic event in the novel.

Dr. Aadam Aziz sees his patient, who is his would be wife, through the perforated sheet, part by part. And when he sees her in entirety he is surprised to know that she has a different appearance. Rushdie uses this metaphor of the perforated sheet to poke fun at the

purdah tradition of Muslims. But it also reveals the fragmented view the historians have, triggering a number of doubts about history's authenticity. About this Rushdie says in the *Bandung File* that "everything we know is pervaded by doubt and not by certainty" (qtd. Nair 62). This doubt is central to the postmodern view of information theory, which doesn't close off but goes on multiplying. The first principal law of postmodernist information theory is the law that information multiplies.

> One of the most fundamental characteristics of information is that really important information is never the end of an information genealogy, but that its importance is in fact assessed by the intellectual posterity it gives rise to. Historiography itself forms an excellent illustration of this. The great works from the history of historiography, those of a de Tocqueville, Marx, Burckhardt, [...] proved repeatedly to be the most powerful stimulants for a new wave of publications, instead of concluding an information genealogy as if a particular problem had then been solved once and for all: 'Paradoxically, the more powerful and authoritative an interpretation, the more writing it generates'. (Ankersmit 282)

The metaphor of the perforated sheet is intended to give such a view that a certain version of history does not end with that supposedly entire and objective version but generates new ones. And, this is also a word of warning for the reader against taking Saleem's history as the only and entire truth.

There are various similar fantastic incidents in the novel. They make possible a different view of historiography. The war between Pakistan and eastern side of Pakistan, which becomes Bangladesh later and in which Saleem is on the side of Pakistan, is such a one. On his return to Delhi he lives in a slum. Then he moves to Bombay where he writes his story and works in a pickle factory. And in the final part, he is with thirty pickle jars in front of him, corresponding to the heading of the chapters. There is an empty jar representing the future. All this is part of the literary fantasy and nothing to do with the official history of India except for the war between Pakistan and East Pakistan. But these aspects of the novel very effectively project the idea that the individual has a certain role in the history of the nation and vice-versa. Here Rushdie proves the fact that anyone can have his particular perspective of history. It is not something passed from the authorities to the subjects. It can

affect people in various ways and that is history's part in the life of a people.

Jean-Francois Lyotard describes the postmodern perspective of historiography in his essay "The postmodern condition" as follows: "Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy" (37, 38). This is not merely about knowledge, but can also be about the historical knowledge, which does not have the same relation to everyone, and each one is not related to it in the same way as the experts have described it in the authoritative texts. Saleem confirms how he affected history as,

> Sensing Padma's unscientific bewilderment, I revert to the inexactitudes of common speech: By the combination of 'active' and 'literal' I mean, of course, all actions of mine which directly – *literally* – affected, or altered the course of, seminal historical events, for instance the manner in which I provided the language marchers with their battle-cry (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 238).

The official history and events of fantasy are fused in several other incidents too. They include Parvati's pregnancy and the emergency. The first one is an event of fantasy and it is related to the official history. Similarly the quarrels in the midnight children's conference mirror quarrels in the parliament, which are part of the official history. Another such significant interpolation into the official history is Dr. Aadam Aziz's involvement in Amritsar massacre in 1919. He was in the middle of the crowd but because of his sneezing, he miraculously escapes from the bullets of the British army. Here, Rushdie projects the British outrage in India with the fantastic intervention of Dr. Aadam Aziz. In another incident Saleem finds himself in a language demonstration procession which is a prelude to the division of India on linguistic basis. But Saleem's presence is a mere fantastic invention. Then he participates in the conspiracy of a coup d' etat in Pakistan. Here his involvement is fantastic but coups are the integral part of Pakistani politics. The character of Mian Abdulla, who closely corresponds to Sheikh Abdulla in Kashmir, is also a fantastic invention. In another fantastic event, violence in the country corresponds to the violence on Saleem's body, such as a teacher tearing a tuft of hair from his head and his loss of a finger. In yet another fusion of fantasy and history, Saleem becomes an anonymous human dog on the side of Pakistan fighting against East Pakistan. He is endowed with a wonderful olfactory sense, which is used by Pakistani

leaders to sniff out Mujibur Rahman. Saleem's transformation as a human dog is in accordance with the fantasy's thrive to become other. Otherness is not located elsewhere: it is read as a projection of merely human fears and desires. The desire of Saleem in assisting the Pakistani army to find out East Pakistani leader, Mujibur Rahman, makes him a human dog. On another occasion, he becomes "a sort of radio" after a curious accident in a washing-chest (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 166). This curious ability of Saleem enables him to turn in to the inner voices of his schoolteachers and his cleverer classmates, and pick information out of their mind (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 171). The human radio property in him is further developed in the novel. The reader is informed of the fact that he not only picks up the children's transmissions and broadcasts his own messages, but also functions as a sort of national network by opening his transformed mind to all the midnight's children. Thus he could turn his mind into a kind of forum in which they could talk to one another through him (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 227). Later, Saleem claims to have acquired the characteristics of ghosts (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 381). These fantastic instances may be considered as a selection from a series of the fantastic the novel presents. These magical powers of the protagonist of the novel are not given at a stretch. But, they are very well fused with the progress of the history of the nation, such as Amritsar massacre, Saleem's involvement with the

language demonstration, war between Pakistan and East Pakistan, mention of Nehru as the Prime Minister of India, etc. Thus even amidst the fantastic, the novel refers to the realistic. This apparent historical realism in the garb of the fantastic is the focal point of the narration. Saleem calls this: "Matter of fact descriptions of the outré and bizarre, and their reverse, namely heightened, stylized versions of the everyday" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 218).

This wide range of fantastic events cited above always intervene and interpolate into the official historical events that the version of official history presented in *Midnight's Children* seems to be subverted from its monological reality. "It [fantasy] subverts dominant philosophical assumptions which uphold as reality a coherent, single-viewed entity, that narrow vision which Bakhtin termed monological" (Jackson 48). The reason for this subversion of reality with the use of fantasy is for presenting a different view of historiography rejecting the traditional single-viewed entity, the concept of factuality and objectivity. Postmodern approaches, too, are in agreement with this line of demystication process of single-viewed entity, factuality and objectivity. "Such demystification can thus 'free up' historians to tell many equally legitimate stories from various view points, with umpteen voices, emplotments and types of synthesis" (Jenkins 20). Thus, equipping the

historians to write a different version of history is one of the prime concerns of *Midnight's Children.*

Using the benefit of the paraxial region, Rushdie explodes several myths of Indian history, which are considered the official and established ones. Regarding the version of history presented in the novel, he makes the comment in an interview as, "Let us never believe that the only way people in power tell us to look at the world is the only way we can look, because if we do that, then that's a kind of appalling self-censorship" (qtd. Nair 51). In line with this view, *Midnight's Children* is about various possible interpretations of historical texts. They give us the provision of an alternative view of history. The characters in the novel could raise fundamental doubts in readers' minds regarding several aspects of history including its certainties. In his Bandung File interview, he makes the comment, "The one thing you learn as a historian is just how fragmented and ambiguous and peculiar the historical record is" (qtd. Nair 57).

Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Neville Kirk, Robert Braun and Hayden White hold a similar view as the one projected in *Midnight's Children.* They advocate the view that history is not something which emerges from the center, or written for the center; it is

made up of the perspectives from the margin. But traditional historiography holds the view that the world history has a distinct direction. And in this view, Europe is the most developed area in the world. The rest of the world is at different stages of development but below Europe. But the actual history of the world, when looked from the margin, gives an entirely different view. Jean-Francois Lyotard expresses a similar view when he defines the term, postmodern "as incredulity toward metanarratives" (36). Metanarratives or grand narratives include every narrative that claims to make truths or ideologies controlling our life. They seem to be concerned about the progress and liberation of humanity and seek the meaning and direction of European history. They have a totalizing character. Due to their influence, world history appears to be continuous and unitary. But the postmodern view poses strong skepticism about the universal historical narratives. It promotes multiple histories instead of universal historical narratives. Furthermore, according to this view, every historical text is a construction and thus ultimately fiction. *Midnight's Children* has to be understood in the light of this postmodern principle of history as multiple narratives and fiction.

On several occasions in the novel, Saleem reaffirms the multiple natures of narratives. It is metaphorically presented when he says that a

thousand and one children may represent an equal number of possibilities or retrogression.

> A thousand and one children were born; there were a thousand and one possibilities which had never been present in one place at one time before; and there were a thousand and one dead ends. Midnight's Children can be made to represent many things, according to your point of view: they can be seen as the last throw of everything antiquated and retrogressive in our myth-ridden nation. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 200)

This may be taken as many perspectives a single incident of history is capable of generating.

The fictional quality of history is revealed throughout the novel both through its structure and content. Its structure is mingled with the known history of India and the Sinai family saga. The latter one is a distinct example of fiction. At the content level, very often Saleem refers to the way he tells Padma his own story and the country's. This reveals both the self-reflexive nature of his story and its imaginary nature. For instance, in the middle of his narration, he says: "I am trying to stop being

mystifying" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 338). A little later, he is planning to frame a story by joining together the broken memories of his family life. Here, he welcomes the quality of imagination even in retelling his story, which runs in parallel lines with the nation's. "Of my last miserable contact with the brutal intimacies of family life, only fragments remain; however, since it must all be set down and subsequently pickled, I shall attempt to piece together an account" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 389, 90). Saleem plainly says that his account is not at all realistic whether it is of the nation or of his family. He says that it is his own invention. Yet, he asserts that he has the right to do so.

> My special blends: I've been saving them up. Symbolic value of the pickling process [...]. Every pickle-jar (you will forgive me if I become florid for a moment) contains, therefore, the most exalted of possibilities: the feasibility of the chutnification of history; the grand hope of the pickling of time! (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 459)

This kind of a self-reflexive and fictional narration of his family's story and the nation's is clinched up by saying that his account is not the final one, nor is he satisfied with his own account. "The process of revision should be constant and endless; don't think I'm satisfied with what I've

done!" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 460). This is the view on history the novel presents: many possibilities.

Both postcolonial and postmodern fictions express a rejection of the dominant discourses. Both of them use the writers' views, which are provisional ones. They never speak about an eternal truth or the only truth. But their truths are partial and fragmentary. And they advocate the view that only such truths are possible. No narrative can prevail in a natural way, since there are no longer any natural hierarchies, only the ones we construct. Rushdie holds this postmodern view close to his heart. In one of his interviews, he speaks on the postmodern experience as,

> 'From the powerful, wealthy, confident certainties of the nineteenth century, the West has arrived at a moment beyond consensus, a fractured time, in which doubt, anxiety, and a kind of rudderlessness dominate life. This loss of certainty has been in many ways – for example, in the arts – of great value. Just as an atom, when split, releases colossal energy, so the old, rigid orthodoxies of colonial Europe produced, by being broken, the unparalleled outburst of newness and

> excitement that the modernist [postmodernist] movement has been'. (qtd. Peterson 39)

After the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, when he faced the death sentence declared against him by the Iranian religious leader Khomeni, Rushdie responded challenging the prevailing narratives as,

> 'One day they may agree that – as the European Enlightenment demonstrated – freedom of thought is precisely freedom from religious control, freedom from accusation of blasphemy. Maybe they'll agree, too, that the row over *The Satanic Verses* was at bottom an argument about who should have power over the grand narrative, the Story of Islam, and that that power must belong equally to everyone. That even if my novel were incompetent, its attempt to retell the Story would still be important. That if I've failed, others must succeed, because those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as things change, truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts'. (qtd. Peterson 39)

It is in this spirit of viewing grand narratives differently, Rushdie has written most of his novels. Several of them analyse national history. And, their protagonists are historians or critics of history, like the narrators in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. Rushdie gives his notion on historiography through his narrative representation of national history. Having specialized in History, he would have understood the folly of grand narratives and a single national history. Through his fictional representations, he encourages his readers to think differently and have individual perspectives. He very often creates different fictional levels in his works so that his works are ambiguous, which is a characteristic postmodern feature known as polyphony.

In a similar way, postcolonial theories, too, argue that master narratives give only a certain view of history. Therefore the postcolonial theoreticians consider official history as a construction influenced by a certain discourse. So, they, through their works, try to subvert the concepts of history built by the earlier grand narratives. In this regard Linda Hutcheon maintains the view that narrative models based on European conceptions of continuous chronology and cause-and-effect relations are utterly inadequate to the task of narrating the history of the New World. This is the reason for writers to choose other models. *Midnight's Children* is a telling example for representing the ideological

perspective of this new wave of historiography, which views "all historical representations as fictional" (Peterson 48).

In *Midnight's Children,* Rushdie gives such a fictional representation of the history of India, and *Shame* presents the image of Pakistan. In *The Satanic Verses* there is a dispute not only with Islamic fundamentalism but also with British history writing – or with all discourses which claim to pronounce incontrovertible truths.

In Midnight's Children, Rushdie uses the metaphor of center vs. periphery and openly confronts different aspects of Indian history. His purpose is to show a different way of viewing history. In the very structural pattern of the novel, which is closely knit by events in national history and Sinai family events, the voice from the periphery can be heard. It is the voice of Saleem Sinai who says the national history. It is his own version. The shift in the Sinai family genealogy takes the reader by surprise because it turns out that the midnight child whose birth the newspapers celebrated along with the independence of India is not Saleem; the man who broke his toe is not his father; Dr. Aadam Aziz is not his grandfather. Thus there can be radical corrections in the Sinai family genealogy. This is nothing but an allegorical way of saying that a

shift in the history of the nation is also possible with various perspectives from various quarters.

In the context of the retelling of the history of Indian subcontinent and suggesting a new mode of historiography by Rushdie in *Midnight's Children,* there is a pertinent question about the nature of historiography in general asked by the historiographers in the traditional camp who stick to the notion that realism in historiography should be "bound up with notions of 'objectivity', 'reality', and 'truth'" (Braun 418). The question is how any history, whether it is of a subcontinent, nation or the world, can be retold or written in a fictional representation without ever adhering to factuality. They argue that representation should have a direct link to past reality based on facts. And factual reality is the unquestioned aspect of any history. Evidence and proof are the twin-means to establish the truth of it. Thus they establish that "historiography displays an inexpungible realism" (Braun 418). To them the historiographers and theoreticians in the postmodern camp give a very convincingly relevant reply citing the most significant historical event in the twentieth century, viz. the Holocaust. The crux of the argument is that the narrative representation of the historical reality through various ways of emplotment doesn't weaken its direct link between factual statements and ways of representations but very often conveys its meaning very

effectively to the forthcoming generations. Furthermore, the postmodern approaches consider facts as constructions of reality rather than mirrors of it. And any representation is a mode of meaning production rather than a re-enactment of the past. Therefore historical reality is "a web of constructions of distant minds and representations themselves. In this way, historical representation displays an ineradicable element of relativism" (Braun 418,419). In this regard in 1990, almost half a century after the Holocaust, the Hungarian writer and Holocaust survivor, Inre Kertesz made the comment that "we may form a realistic view of the Holocaust, this incomprehensible and confusing reality, only with the help of our aesthetic imagination" (qtd. Braun 419). It is in the aspect of its inevitable aesthetic imagination and relativism Hayden White in his "Historical emplotment and the problem of truth" relates Art Spiegelman's *Maus*: *A Survivor's Tale* in which the events of the Holocaust are presented in the medium of the (black-and-white) comic book (396). This satirical comic book portrays Germans as cats, Jews as mice, and Poles as pigs. "The manifest content of Spiegelman's comic book is the story of the artist's effort to extract from his father the story of his parents' experience of the events of the Holocaust" (White 397). Thus, the story of the Holocaust told in the book is framed by a story of how this story came to be told.

> But the manifest contents of both the frame story and the framed story are, as it were, compromised as fact by their allegorization as a game of cat-and-mouse-and-pig in which everyone – perpetrators, victims, and bystanders in the story of the Holocaust and both Spiegelman and his father in the story of their relationship – comes out looking more like a beast than like a human being. *Maus* presents a particularly ironic and bewildered view of the Holocaust. (White 396)

At the same time it is one of "the most moving narrative accounts of it" that the author [White] knows, "and not least because it makes the difficulty of discovering and telling the whole truth about even a small part of it as much a part of the story as the events whose meaning it is seeking to discover" (White 396). *Maus* is not an example of traditional historiography, but a representation of the past events or at least of events that are represented as having actually occurred. It is "a masterpiece of stylization, figuration, and allegorization. It assimilates the events of the Holocaust to the conventions of comic book representation, and in this absurd mixture of a 'low' genre with events of the most momentous significance" *Maus* manages to explode the myth about the arguments against the "limits of representation in general" (White 396).

A similar literary case can be seen in Gorge Orwell's *Animal Farm* in British literature. He portrays "the animals taking power and finding in it their own corruption" (Evans 220). This allegorical novel has close correspondence with the Soviet Union before its disintegration. Being highly satiric of the socialistic set-up, it brought out the political situation in the Soviet Union. Here, literary representation and history become one. *Maus*, at a metaphorical level, does the same. *Midnight's Children* not only retells historical events of the Indian subcontinent basing on the mode of literary fantasy, but suggests a new way of historiography. Thus literary representation of history in the postmodern era becomes a very powerful tool of historiography with "a nostalgia for a pre Socratic early history" (Ankersmit 295). Because, the earliest means of history of the Greeks was epic. The deeds of their ancestors were conveyed to the forthcoming generations through narrative epics. "The stories they told one another were not mutually exclusive, despite their contradicting each other, because they inspired above all ethical and aesthetic contemplation" (Ankersmit 295). This is made possible because of their very powerful metaphorical dimension. Thus, "the metaphorical dimension in historiography is more powerful than the literal or factual dimensions" (Ankersmit 294). Rushdie projects such a new dimension through the fantastic mode of *Midnight's Children.* In the first part of the novel itself, Saleem proclaims about the powerful metaphorical

dimension of reality. He says: "sometimes legends make reality, and become more useful than the facts" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 47). So, Rushdie refers to the metaphorical aspect of reality and history. History can convey its message even if it is metaphorical. Furthermore, there is nothing called reality. But there are only perspectives on reality with messages about them. "Reality can have metaphorical content; that does not make it less real" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 200).

Midnight's Children is not about what history was but about different possible dimensions historiography can appear to be in a novel. And, this is revealed through one such dimension being framed in it, i.e., the dimension of fantasy in historiography.

The emphasis of the fantastic is upon the invisibility. But in our culture the "real" is equated with the "visible" (Jackson 45). Eventually, the eye has dominance over other sense organs. Therefore the unreal is the invisible.

> That which is not seen, or which threatens to be un-seeable, can only have a subversive function in relation to an epistemological and metaphysical system, which makes 'I see' synonymous with 'I understand'. Knowledge,

> comprehension, reason, are established through the power of the *look*, through the '*eye*', and the '*I*' of the human subject whose relation to objects is structured through his field of vision. (Jackson 45)

The fantastic seeks to reveal this invisible area which is away from "I"/ "eye" (Jackson 45). By a fantastic characterization of Saleem Sinai, Rushdie does this.

Saleem's life and the public affairs are very closely inter-connected. This is the first step of the fantastic presentation. And then, he or his family members are allowed to influence and intervene most of the national events: the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy, Quit India Movement, Cabinet Mission, freedom movement, Muslim League and its role, riots and bloodshed subsequent to the Independence, Five Year Plans, reorganization of Indian States, language riots, Chinese aggression, the theft of the sacred relic from the Hazratbal mosque, Pakistan war, liberation of Bangladesh, the Emergency, chaos, communal tensions, religious fanaticism, etc. In all these, either Saleem or one of the Sinais is a participator or sometimes even an active initiator throwing light on the dark areas of these incidents. The events are not described with the traditional sense of the real. On the other hand, the real is influenced and

distorted by the unreal, i.e., Saleem as the active initiator of the Indian history: integral part of its independence, participator in its wars and almost all its public affairs.

By making Saleem and to a certain extent his family members active participants in history, Rushdie shows the new approach to historiography, i.e., it can be of the common people, and public affairs and private lives can interpenetrate. In this regard Neville Kirk says: "People are not 'passive sensors of given facts and recorders of their given conjunctions'. Rather, as the 'agents' of history – in the sense of being 'active initiators' rather than 'passive instruments' – people do shape, in part by means of language, their inherited and determined conditions of existence" (328,329). Yet, such a history has an integrated sense.

In the traditional concept, everything about history strives for only one unified history of the nation or world. It does not think about the possibilities of having history centered on minor groups nor does it promote the history of the subaltern. Center is always invariably the ruling class and history protects and prompts their interests. But in the postmodern era, there is a vast change in this outlook. The history from periphery is made possible. The left out areas have been crept into the

framework of the new historiography. It leaves out the aim of a unified history. In the words of Ankersmit, "Within the postmodernist view of history, the goal is no longer integration, synthesis, and totality, but it is those historical scraps which are the center of attention" (291). In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem points out such historical scraps left out by the national history. "Scraps of memory: this is not how a climax [in traditional historical texts] should be written. A climax should surge towards its Himalayan peak; but I am left with shreds [...]. Well then: I must content myself with shreds and scraps: as I wrote centuries ago, the trick is to fill in the gaps, guided by the few clues one is given" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 426, 427). On filling in the gaps, history sometimes fills in them with decadent aspects passed unnoticed in history. In "Nietzsche, genealogy, history", Foucault refers to this aspect of effective history as, "It unearths the periods of decadence and if it chances upon lofty epochs, it is with the suspicion – not vindictive but joyous – of finding a barbarous and shameful confusion" (125). Saleem, by birth or by right, is not capable of intervening the national history. But by saying his story and his family's, Rushdie intermingles it with the nation's. Thus he shows a new method of historiography in which ordinary people have a role. Here, his goal is not integration but to show the fact that any number of histories which include people in the margin is possible. To make it possible, it is not enough that he finds out the mistakes in history

books and corrects them. On the other hand, he uses the fictional representation of history using the mode of literary fantasy.

The usual themes of a literary fantasy are invisibility, transformation and dualism. The thematic concerns generate psychological states like narcissism, hallucination, dream and paranoia. And sometimes, differences between human and animal and male and female are blurred. And, on the structural level there might be uncertainty and impossibility through hesitation and equivocation.

Saleem, as the narrator cum historian, of *Midnight's Children*, shows many features of a literary fantasy. For sometime, he is in the role of a narcissist being aware of his own importance and admiring himself as a historian. He says: "Already, at the age of nearly nine, I knew this much: everybody was waiting for me. Midnight and baby-snaps [...]" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 152). He calls himself as "the first historian" and claims that people who follow him will get his "guidance and inspiration" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 287). By presenting him as an authoritative historian, Rushdie sarcastically parodies historiographers who claim that history has to be authoritative and monological. He does this by presenting Saleem as a narcissist in accordance with the practice in literary fantasies. But later, he undergoes

a metamorphosis and becomes a historian who lost his control over the world, which undermines his presentation of his own importance. In the middle of the novel he poses himself as the master of history looking at the country as a puppet theatre. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 225). But at the end of the novel, he loses all his control. He says: "I am left with shreds, and must jerk towards my crisis like a puppet with broken strings" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 426). This transformation is also a usual feature of literary fantasies. By this sort of a shift in the nature of the central character, Rushdie shows the fact that Saleem's attempt in the beginning to become central part in history would have influenced him to falsify it. Thus Rushdie hints at the folly of taking in the trustworthiness of official history. Several times there are hints in the novel regarding the manipulation of history. Saleem's first attempt was by rearranging history cutting out headlines from newspapers and putting them in new places to give them a totally different meaning than they originally had. "I began to cut pieces out of newspapers" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 259). This is followed by his "attempt at rearranging history" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 260). From this role of the manipulator he becomes a historian without any control over what he does. It is in accordance with the literary fantasy's transformation technique. Here Rushdie points out the fact that no history is foolproof. Every version has to be

approached with doubt. Thus through the fantastic aspects of the chief character, he questions the conventions of historiography.

Similarly, hallucinations and dreams are part of literary fantasies. Rushdie uses them in the case of his characters and thus relates them to the historical aspects of the novel. Ahmed Sinai is hit by a slow degeneration after ruined in business for the second time, but people around him do not observe this change because he keeps up appearances. He has several dreams and therefore many false things appear before him. He thinks he bought a nightingale but actually it is a painted budgie. Then he buys an Alsatian puppy with a noble pedigree. But the nobility of its pedigree is merely imaginary. It dies of syphilis. Later in his conversation with Methwold, he invents a fine genealogical table for himself, which he believes in. But actually he has a humble origin. On another occasion, Saleem says that he became aware of the development of other midnight's children and the goings-on in the country due to a bicycle-accident. "And then, as a result of a jolt received in a bicycle-accident, I, Saleem Sinai, became aware of them all". (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 196). A little later in the novel, he says: "When I was ten: nothing but trouble outside my head, nothing but miracles inside it" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 207). These hallucinations and dreams are the features of literary fantasies, which show metaphorically that

similar cases may be possible regarding historians as well. Rushdie's aim here is to point out pitfalls of traditional historiography in which only the magnificent past of the country is emphasized.

Dualism is another important feature of literary fantasies. When Saleem is in East Pakistan, he loses his memory and is drained of history. He is not himself until he gets his past back. Since his loss of memory, the first person narrative shifts into third person. This sort of a dualism shows the various standpoints from which one can interpret history resulting in double views or several views. This is an integral part of the fantastic. It is impossible for the reader to arrive at a definitive version of truth. Any accurate account of events, or reliable interpretation, recedes further and further into the distance; or, rather it is an equivocal truth, which is fore-grounded as the very subject matter of the tale. This equivocation is produced by a tension between the voice of a 'he' and of an 'I'. In other words the narrative creates confusion of pronouns and of pronoun functions that the reader is never confident as reading a third-person omniscient narrative where an objective, authoritative (authorial) voice, knowing all, tells the meaning of events. A similar uncertainty is produced by postmodern approaches to historiography as well. A definite truth is not history's purpose. It doesn't promote integration and totality. Rushdie does this through the fantastic representation of history where

the reader is kept uncertain as to whether what was given in the name of true experience was true or not. The narrative voice is that of the confused/confusing 'I' at the center of the tale. Saleem says: "I must describe, as nearly as possible in spite of this filmy curtain of ambiguities, what actually happened" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 87). This confusion steadily progresses when he says on another occasion: "I'm afraid of what must be told next, but the revelation will not be denied" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 278). It certainly confuses the reader when he says: "I am trying to stop being mystifying" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 338). On another occasion he says: "But I digress" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 224). Again, in the middle of his narration, he has the doubt: "It was – or am I wrong? I must rush on" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 413). Later, he is drained of his memory and he is excluded from his inner world. And on another occasion his telepathic power disappears. All this leads the reader to have a confusing view about the first person narrative of Saleem. So the uncertain vision of the protagonist of the fantastic is spread to the reader through a conflation of narrator and hero.

Very often Saleem's blurred vision and ignorance become the most objective perspective. At the same time, since the story is mixed with the real, it is not possible to distance his experience as being merely the

product of his fevered mind. And, this aspect of fantasy rules out the dismissal of the story as peculiar to that individual mind or subjectivity. This confusion is caused due to the shift between an 'I' and a 'he' in the narrative voice and the fusion of the real with the fantastic has as its cause and effect an uncertainty of vision, a reluctance or inability to fix things as explicable and known. Thus the fantastic problematizes vision (is it possible to trust the seeing eye?), and language (is it possible to trust the recording, speaking 'I'?). This is in correspondence with the postmodern view of historiography. By allowing several voices of history it problematizes the concept of a single truth and questions the authority of the all-knowing historian. Saleem is the best example for this sort of an equivocal approach with regard to the truth's authenticity. Because in *Midnight's Children* what is dealt with is the relationship of the individual to the world with the structuring of that world through the I, the consciousness which sees (through the eye), perceives, interprets, and places self in relation to a world of objects. This relation is a difficult one and therefore the vision can never be trusted. Here, the self is that of Saleem, the narrator. And his vision is not trustworthy because it is only an individual's perspective of the world. And according to this principle of the relation between 'I' and the world, "doubles or multiple selves" come into existence (Jackson 50). This is because the self transforms into selves. In the novel Saleem has his changeling Shiva and then the other

midnight's children with whom he has an easy accessibility at the level of the mind breaking all language barriers. The principle behind this "multiplication of personality, taken literally, is an immediate consequence of the possible transition between matter and mind: we are several persons mentally, we become so physically" (Jackson 50).

Everything that is done as part of the literary fantasy in *Midnight's Children* gives a new perspective of historiography, which is seen in the relationship between the self and the world. Fantasy thus gives us a clue to the limits of a culture, by foregrounding problems of categorizing the real and of the situation of the self in relation to that dominant notion of reality. Thus it is the identification, the naming of otherness, which is a telling index of a society's religious and political beliefs. Postmodern approaches to historiography promote the same view regarding the relation between the self and the world or past. Therefore what is achieved in such a method is not an objective world or past, but a past, which is highly subjective. Thus historiography, like fantasy, goes beyond the limits of the traditional methods of historiography with the principles of objectivity, truth and documentation.

Invisibility is another feature of literary fantasies. Objects would not be visible in the same way as they appear in the world or they will be

totally invisible. On the way back from Bangladesh, Saleem and his companions cannot see properly in the thick jungle which is a hint at history's invisible path. On another occasion, Saleem says: "To take my mind off the jolting darkness I entered, with extreme caution [...]" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 214). Again he has the realization about himself as: "It took me a little while to realize that my picture of myself was heavily distorted by my own self-consciousness about my appearance" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 219).

Exaggeration is another important feature of literary fantasies. In *Midnight's Children* Saleem, the narrator, on many occasions exaggerates the events he narrates. Thus Rushdie points out the usual mistake of historiography that there may be exaggerations, especially when history is written to safeguard the interests of some people. Saleem says:

> All my life, consciously or unconsciously, I have sought out fathers. Ahmed Sinai, Hanif Aziz, Sharpsticker Sahib, General Zulfikar have all been pressed into service in the absence of William Methwold; Picture Singh was the last of this noble line. And perhaps, in my dual lust for fathers and saving-the-country, I exaggerated Picture Singh. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 426)

To show that his life is the integral part of Indian history, he uses the hyperbolic language. He says: "Public announcements have punctuated my life" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 280).

The postmodern view of historiography is always different from the traditional view, which is based on objectivity, reason and documentation. The postmodern view gives importance to the relativist type of historiography, which promotes perspectives. Furthermore, it gives importance to the difference between the present and past. According to Ankersmit, "In the postmodernist view, the focus is no longer on the past itself, but on the incongruity between present and past" (294). Literary fantasies are not rooted in reason in the traditional sense of the term. There might be incongruous aspects between the traditional reason, which is based on objectivity and verifiability, and reason in fantasy, which is highly subjective and moves on propelled by the uncontrollable imagination. So the fantastic looks, anti-rational, or it can be considered as the inverse side of reason's orthodoxy. It reveals reason and reality to be arbitrary, shifting constructs, and thereby scrutinizes the category of the real. Contradictions surface and are held antinomically in the fantastic text, as reason is made to confront all that it traditionally refuses to encounter. The structure of the fantastic narrative is the one

founded upon contradictions. Rushdie resorts to the mode of fantasy particularly to show the contradicting view historiography in the postmodern era can make. It looks contradicting and anti-rational because it promotes subjective and relativist history. One's reason may be anti-reason for another. He is convinced that this has to be the hallmark of historiography. It goes beyond the generally accepted view and even to the invisible and impossible just like fantasy, which establishes and develops an artifact, that is, plays the game of the impossible. "A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility". The really fantastic happens only when "the ground rules of a narrative are forced to make 180 degree reversal, when prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted." So it is a break in the acknowledged order of reason, an eruption of the inadmissible within the changeless everyday legality (Jackson 21).

Midnight's Children, written in accordance with the features of a fantasy, seems to oppose the orthodoxy of reason in the case of historiography. And, it is for opposing and contradicting the prevailing perspectives on historiography, Rushdie chooses the mode of the fantastic for the novel. The features of fantasy, which are anti-rational, pervade almost every page of the novel. The birth of a thousand and one children

on August 15, 1947 is the first instance. It is followed by their super natural gifts. They get accessibility to the goings-on in others' minds. They influence various national events. Saleem meets his childhood friends neatly piled up in a pyramid of corpses. He is endowed with the qualities of a sniffer dog. He falls apart. Aadam Aziz goes on cracking. Roads crack. The water reservoir explodes. Thirsty cats invade the houses. Midnight's children are sterilized. They convene conferences in their head like a radio station. All these examples seem to be incongruous and anti-rational. But they are made to be the integral part of the novel, so that they may, by the novel's structure itself, give a picture of history, which is different from the traditional one.

Skepticism is considered as an approach to learning as well as a philosophical stance. "Since the Greeks, a certain amount of skepticism about truth claims has been essential to the search for truth [...]" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 213). This is directly applicable to historiography as well. What this principle promotes is the relevance of multiple voices to establish and communicate the truth. The simple reason behind this view is that nobody can be omniscient about everything in the world. "Since no one can be certain that his or her explanations are definitively right, everyone must listen to other voices. All histories are provisional; none will have the last word" (Appleby,

Hunt, and Jacob 217). What Rushdie does in *Midnight's Children* is to introduce this democratic practice of history, i.e., the need for "an ever growing chorus of voices" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 217). Thus, instead of certain grand narratives, postmodern approaches to historiography invite several different narratives from periphery silenced by the grandnarratives. According to Gabrielle Spiegel, "Our most fundamental task as historians is to solicit those fragmented inner narratives to emerge from their silences" (270). Fantasy, too, functions on a similar principle.

Just like postmodern approaches to historiography, which promote inner narratives to come out from their silences, fantasy promotes what is silenced or absent in the actual world.

> 'Fantasy embodies a 'negative subjunctivity – that is, fantasy is fantasy because it contravenes the real and violates it. The actual world is constantly present in fantasy, by negation. Fantasy is what *could not have happened*; i.e., what *cannot* happen, what cannot exist. The negative subjunctivity, the *cannot* or *could not,* constitutes in fact the chief pleasure of fantasy. Fantasy violates the real, contravenes it, denies it, and insists on this denial throughout'. (qtd. Jackson 22)

Thus fantasy opens onto the unknown spaces. And this opening activity is disturbing because it denies the solidity of what had been taken to be real. And, this opening activity goes on in fantasy. It cannot be closed off. It lies inside closed systems, infiltrating, opening spaces where unity had been assumed. Its impossibilities propose latent other meanings or realities behind the possible or the known. Breaking single, reductive, truths, the fantastic traces a space within a society's cognitive frame. It introduces multiple, contradictory truths: it becomes polysemic.

Rushdie uses all this in *Midnight's Children* to give historiography a new method. He makes use of most of the features of literary fantasies to bring about such a method. "Historiography today has burst out of its traditional, self-legitimating, theoretical jacket and is therefore in need of new clothes" (Ankersmit 279). And Rushdie gives it the jacket of a literary fantasy.

For those who deny the role of imagination or literature, *Maus* is an apt reply. Saleem Sinai is "a critical historian" of Indian subcontinent on two counts: the first one is the people's voice he represents, and the other is his imaginative outlook given to every event in the novel (Price 92). While the traditional historiographers write about the governmental

history, the official history or about the great figures, Saleem's history stands for a million's voice.

> His past acknowledges the teeming millions of the Indian populace that are forgotten in most histories of India that prefer to focus on the great figures of history. Saleem's past affirms the creative power of the imagination to construct our 'reality'; it is imagination, specially metaphoric construction, that permits us to structure our world and make 'true narratives'. (Price 102)

Thus Rushdie shows his conviction in imagination and the role of the artist in historiography, opposing the notion of objectivity and truth of political, social and cultural historians. He differs from them. It is his nonconformity to the accepted mode of historiography by means of a literary fantasy.

Chapter 3

Irony as the Vehicle of Deviation in Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*

Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* is set in the background of post-independence India. It follows the developments in four linked families in Calcutta, the province of Purva Pradesh and its capital Brahmpur. Along with the story of four families, it deals with a wide variety of topics such as Indian history, politics, law, familial customs, crowd psychology, communal riots, urban and rural tradition, dress, cricket, love, marriage, extra-marital relationship, friendship, unpremeditated accidents, failures, feuds, reconciliation and even shoe manufacture. The over-anxiety of Mrs. Rupa Mehra, one of the chief characters in the novel, about the marriage of her daughter, Lata, to "a suitable boy" is the unifying story line of the novel (Seth 36). Based on this, the story of four inter-connected families such as Mehras, Kapoors, Khans and Chatterjies progresses. Written in the realist fashion, the novel reveals its discontent with the established social norms, particularly in the case of marriage, in a very subtle manner. For this, Seth uses the language of irony. This

chapter discusses the use of irony, which brings forth the novel's shades of deviation from the established social norms.

Irony makes use of an indirect language. In *A Suitable Boy* the fictional structure is based on irony. Here, Seth does not resort to the direct method of story-telling. He comes to the essential aspect of the novel only through an indirect language. What the poet uses as his metaphor, Seth accepts as irony. By saying his story metaphorically, he risks saying it "partially and obscurely." But if he doesn't take the risk, *A Suitable Boy* will cease to be a novel and become a piece of advice. So, "a principle of indirection" is central to the novel. Every incident in the novel conceals this principle of indirection, yet each one functions in an organic relationship. That is, the novel is not a collection or a mere assemblage of stray incidents about the life of Lata, Mrs. Mehra, Kabir, Mr. Kapoor, Haresh, et al, but a stable organic structure built in its ironic language. Every incident is related to other incidents and thus the structure of irony is made firm in the novel (Brooks 472).

The fictional quality of *A Suitable Boy* arises from the inter-relationship of the incidents, which become the integral part of the novel's structure. The context of each incident becomes part of the ironic structure. For example, the irony of the very title, *A Suitable Boy*, the most pungent phrase repeated in the novel, is fully revealed from the

various incidents of the subsequent text, which is its context. In other words, only when the reader reads the full text, the title gathers its full ironic meaning and he understands its intrinsic relevance. This speaks of the contextual importance of the ironic language. Each significant phrase, statement or incident is modified by the context and the context contributes to the structure of the novel. This "obvious warping" of an incident by the context and the whole of the novel is ironical (Brooks 473). This means that a certain incident in the novel implies quite the opposite of what it purports to say literally in a particular context and definitely with regard to the total effect of the novel. Through this skilful disposition of the incidents in their contexts, a complete reversal of the literal meaning is connoted.

The crucial point of irony is its dissimulation. There is a marked difference between what is asserted and what actually the case is. The novel, *A Suitable Boy,* from the very beginning to the end asserts the significance of a suitable boy in the life of several girls including that of Lata. But the novel's actual intention is not to point out the significance of suitable boys in the life of girls. It is indicative of a different way of choosing spouses. Various circumstances in the novel firmly point out the folly of finding out a suitable boy and thus make the novel a typical

example both for its structural irony and, through it, a deviation from the established social norms of matrimony.

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* begins with the sentence, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1). Never in the actual sense does the reader see the realization of this statement in the course of the novel. On the contrary, he can see the fact that a single woman wants a rich husband. This is considered to be an excellent example of verbal irony. That is, the implicit meaning the speaker intends is different from what he vehemently asserts. Similarly, the explicit expression of the speaker on a certain issue usually has a different implication.

In the novel, on many occasions there are firm references by its characters to the need for a suitable boy in the life of certain woman characters. But on seeing the general tone of the novel, one understands the implication of a different attitude from the side of the author. Through the very title itself, he makes fun of the frantic effort of Indian parents for finding out suitable boys for their daughters. In the beginning of the novel, Dr. Kishen Chand Seth advises Mrs. Rupa Mehra regarding the need for a suitable boy for Lata. "Yes. She must be nearly twenty. Far too late. Parvati got married when she was in her thirties, and see

what she got. A suitable boy must be found for Lata" (Seth 36). Based on this piece of advice given to Mrs. Rupa Mehra by Dr. Kishen Chand Seth, it is too early for the reader to take this as an instance of verbal irony intended by the author. But several subsequent references to the need for a suitable boy confirm the opposite attitude the author has. In a letter written to Kalpana, Mrs. Rupa Mehra repeats the same phrase. "Now the time has come to get Lata well settled, and I must look all out for a suitable boy" (Seth 43). Several of Seth's characters very often say the same key phrase. And for Mrs. Rupa Mehra a suitable boy for Lata works as a mantra. Her ambition itself in life is to find out suitable boys for her daughters. In a letter to Savita and Pran, she writes as, "If only I could find a husband like Pran for my Lata, I would die contented" (Seth 311). For the same purpose, she seems to be worried all the time. The author's comment about her life is "Mrs. Rupa Mehra thrived on worrying" (Seth 441). And this worry functions as the key aspect of the narrative for its progress. On another occasion, she is planning to go to Delhi and thinks: "Kalpana Gaur will have to help me to find a suitable boy at once" (Seth 448). On meeting her, she says to her: "I want you to find her [Lata] a boy at once" (Seth 548). On another occasion, Haresh judges Mrs. Mehra's nature as "exacting and pragmatic in her criteria for a suitable boy for her daughter" (Seth 908). Even after becoming utterly happy on learning Lata's intention to marry Haresh, her mission

continues with regard to finding out suitable spouses to her children (Seth 1307). She tells Varun, her second son, "You too will marry a girl I choose" (Seth 1343). So almost always the phrase, a suitable boy or, sometimes, a girl is used in the novel. But, Vikram Seth does not really mean the significance of a suitable boy or girl literally. He refers to his/her unsuitability when chosen by the parents. This sort of irony of words is frequently used in the novel. That is, "words are caught up by circumstances and charged with a fuller meaning than the speaker meant" (Wimsatt Jr. and Brooks 44).

Maan Kapoor, like Latha, is also under a similar pressure from his family for accepting a suitable girl of his father's choice. His father, Mahesh Kapoor, is the Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh. He is a well-educated man. Nevertheless, he wants to maintain the family custom of choosing suitable spouses for his children and thus have compatible marriages in his family. He speaks to Maan Kapoor: "What is good for your brother is good enough for you" (Seth 6). When he tries to resist his father's choice for him, he exerts his pressure saying: "We chose well for Veena, we have chosen well for Pran, and you are not to complain about our choice of a bride for you" (Seth 7). On understanding his father's decision, Mann Kapoor is greatly grieved. He has no affection for his fiancée. Yet he has to conform to his father's decision.

> Maan began to think about his fiancée and her family and became depressed about his engagement, as he usually did when he gave it any thought. His father had arranged it, as he had threatened to do; Maan, taking the path of least resistance, had gone along with it; and now it was an ominous fact of life. He would sooner or later have to get married to her. Maan felt no affection for her – they had hardly met each other except in the company of their families – and he did not really want to think about her. (Seth 98, 99)

Reading the passage mentioned above, it is very difficult for the reader to think that Vikram Seth promotes the case of suitable boys and girls. If at all the boys and girls conform to the choice of their parents, it is their last resort, viz. because they cannot have their choice. The novel is developed into the notion that it is not advisable. Though the boys and girls in the novel conform to their parents' choice literally, Seth, their creator, confirms the opposite of it through his medium of irony. Only a careful reader understands his intended irony.

In *A Suitable Boy,* Vikram Seth persistently uses the language of irony and thus he sustains the duplicity of meaning. For effecting this sort of a different meaning writers of structural irony use

> a naive hero, or else, a naïve narrator or spokesman, whose invincible simplicity leads him to persist in putting an interpretation on affairs which the knowing reader – who penetrates to, and shares, the implicit point of view of the authorial presence behind the naïve *persona* – just as persistently is able to alter and correct. (Abrams 81)

In the case of structural irony the speaker (a character) is unaware of the author's intention, whereas the reader shares the author's intention. In *A Suitable Boy,* Seth's naïve spokesperson is Mrs. Rupa Mehra who appears always in a frantic search for a suitable boy for Lata, her daughter. The reader understands the difference between the intention of Mrs. Rupa and the real intention of the author, which is the exposition of the hollowness of arranged marriages after a long trawl by parents for suitable boys. That is how Seth uses irony as a medium for his deviant path.

In the very beginning itself of *A Suitable Boy*, the reader sees Mrs. Rupa Mehra as a fully satisfied mother with the marriage of her elder

daughter, Savita, to Pran. And very soon she begins her next mission of finding out a suitable boy for Lata, her younger daughter. She tells her, "You too will marry a boy I choose" (Seth 3). With this, Seth gets ready for the use of a grand ironic language in the novel. Mrs. Mehra's order to Lata in the third page itself is the first mild note of irony he strikes and it will be obvious when one goes through the full breadth and width of the novel and its repetition (referring to the need of a suitable boy) at every important stage of the narrative. She herself is highly conscious of her advice to Lata and tries to choose a boy for her, especially when she learns that Lata is in love with Kabir, a Muslim. Thus Mrs. Mehra plays a pivotal role in the action of the narrative from the very beginning till the end. But her role gives an opposite meaning. "Irony of action occurs when deeds are caught up out of an agent's grasp and charged with a meaning the very opposite of what was meant" (Wimsatt Jr. and Brooks 44).

Reading the novel, one may think that Seth revels in depicting the anxieties of a lower middle class mother through Mrs. Rupa Mehra in his ironic language. But when he reads between the lines, he understands this celebration of the search for a suitable boy reveals the reason behind it. This involves certain sociological factors, which have been prevailing in post-independence India for a very long time. The first and foremost

among them is the dowry system. So in the apparently comical anxieties of a middle class mother, one of the evils of the society is concealed. Mrs. Rupa Mehra represents a lower middle class mother and must be aware of the consequences if she could not raise as much dowry as the bridegroom's family demands.

> In today's India, this social problem [dowry] has assumed a monstrous form, where thousands of dear daughtrers were burnt for inadequate dowry. No contemporary Indian writing in English has cared to probe the miseries and agonies of mothers of many daughters, with scant resources and who are bogged down in the quagmire of caste, religion and tradition. (Agarwalla 12)

So by making all the effort, Mrs. Rupa Mehra avoids the dowry for her daughter. Thus she functions as the novelist's spokesperson to bring forth his social nonconformity to a much-rooted social system in India. He communicates his message by making Mrs. Rupa Mehra the representative of Indian mothers and allowing her to be the butt of ridicule before the readers. Every mother who is in frenzy for a suitable boy in order to avoid a huge dowry seems to share the ridicule with

Seth's spokesperson, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, and eventually points out the ridiculous social system, dowry.

The most suitable boy for Lata, according to Mrs. Rupa Mehra, is Haresh Khanna, a Khatri. One of the most important reasons for her to choose Haresh is that he would not ask for a dowry, the other being the fact that his caste matches with Mehras. She sets her eye on him the very moment Kalpana Gaur mentions his name to her. And the thought that there wouldn't be any dowry gives her great relief. "As for a dowry (continued Kalpana in her curvaceously looped script), he isn't the kind of man to ask for it, and there is no one to ask for it on his behalf" (Seth 562). This is a valuable piece of information for Mrs. Rupa Mehra and she is elated because of it. That Haresh is after her own heart is evident from the letter, which Kalpana Gaur writes to Haresh.

> The point is that Mrs. Mehra has a young daughter Lata – and she was so impressed by you that she wanted to know if there was any possibility of anything being arranged between Lata and you by way of matrimony [...]. She saw you that evening and was extremely impressed. She thinks it would be a boy of your type who would have made Lata's late father happy. (Seth 566)

Seth's ironic language is at its best when he allows the reader to see Mrs. Rupa Mehra functioning vigorously to avoid the mobilization of a huge dowry for Lata. She does this without ever sacrificing her idea about her social status in a caste-ridden society. Here, the novelist seems to be highly critical and ironic in his description. When she knows that Kabir Durrani, a Muslim, is Lata's lover (Lata is a Hindu, Mehra), her status concept does not allow her this possible inter-religious marriage for her daughter, even though she would have understood by that time that the possibility of a marriage between Lata and Kabir Durrani would not trouble her with the demand for a huge dowry. Yet, she avoids the occurrence of such an alliance because it is considered as a social taboo in India. It is a taboo not only as early as 1960s and 1970s, the period in which the novel is set, but as recently as 1995, two years after the novel was published.

> In the aftermath of the horrible Indian partition and the resultant communal frenzy, in 1951-52, it was unthinkable, on the part of Vikram Seth, to show an inter-religious marriage between Kabir Durrani and Lata. Even in 1995, the showing of the marriage of a Muslim girl with a Hindu boy in *Bombay* [movie], directed by Mani Ratnam, has

> raised dust of controversy, among Hindus and Muslims. (Agarwalla 28)

Seth questions this taboo about the inter-caste marriage and the pseudo social status through his extended irony revealed very subtly. And that is the most important aspect of the social nonconformity that Seth brings forth in the book. Lata's feeling toward Kabir itself is revealed as part of the slow and gradual building up of this irony. He uses part of the structural irony when he allows Mrs. Rupa Mehra to react in a frantic manner on hearing from Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor that Lata walked with a boy on the banks of the Ganga. She speaks about her as "shameless Lata" and expresses her anxiety about the absence of a suitable boy for her saying "who will marry her now" (Seth 180). Her violent reaction includes even resorting to name-calling (Seth 180). "The wretched girl asks me who told me. No one told me. It's the talk of the town, everyone knows about it. Everyone thought you were a good girl with a good reputation – and now it is too late" (Seth 181). On hearing that Lata's lover is a Muslim, Mrs. Rupa Mehra takes it as the worst offence in her life. "A Muslim [...]. What did I do in my past life that I have brought this upon my beloved daughter?" (Seth 182). Her orthodox belief about the purity of caste is nowhere better expressed than in this context of Lata's love affair with Kabir. She firmly thinks that it is degradation for

the family. Her notion about it is revealed before us as: "It was one thing to mix socially with Muslims, entirely another to dream of polluting one's blood and sacrificing one's daughter" (Seth 183). The author reveals these evils in the thought pattern of our society through intruding into the psyche of Mrs. Rupa Mehra. Later, he wants to show the reader the absurdity of conforming to the philosophy of such a person of caste phobia, which he does through Lata's conformity to Mrs. Rupa Mehra's decision.

Lata's final decision to marry Haresh Khanna is certainly in conformity to the decision taken by Mrs. Mehra. The irrationality in the decision is clear when the reader is allowed to know that Lata conforms to the authoritative decision of her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who represents the society. On the occasion of the marriage of Savita to Pran, Arun, her own son, speaks about her incapacity for sane thinking. "But once Ma got it into her head that this Kapoor chap was suitable, it was impossible to dissuade her. It's impossible to talk reason with Ma; she just turns on the water-works" (Seth 11). This incapacity for reason is the incapacity of the society as well, which Seth exposes in the novel. The medium of exposure is irony. A casual reader does not notice the inability of Mrs. Rupa Mehra for sound reasoning. Eventually, he might not understand the society's stern position regarding its irrational

tradition. By finally allowing Lata to conform to this tradition, Seth questions it. A careful reader knows that it is just the opposite of a suitable boy he wants to confirm in the novel.

When Lata is preparing to back out from her affair with Kabir, Seth allows her to contract the disease of the irrationality of the society. She writes about it in a letter to Kabir (which she decides not to send): "If you think I was unreasonable, well, perhaps I was [...]" (Seth 459). Thus Seth exposes the thoughtlessness in the Indian tradition.

Seth demands the understanding of the subtle shades of meaning from the reader even when he literally celebrates the glories of Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to find out a suitable boy for her daughter. But he indirectly ridicules Mrs. Rupa Mehra through his sarcastic language. For the application of such a technique in literary works, "the meaning" is "subtly qualified rather than simply reversed, and the clues to the ironic counter meaning under the surface statement" are "indirect and unobtrusive"(Abrams 81).

The vital issue that Seth foregrounds in the novel is often unseen. When one reads between the lines, he will have the question in his mind regarding the literal conclusion of the novel. It is the marriage between

Haresh and Lata. Is this the real conclusion Seth wants to bring forward? No. Lata's marriage to Haresh is a compromise with herself because she is too powerless to put up a resistance to her mother and eventually to the prevalent social custom of matrimony. But this powerlessness in Lata is not natural when her behaviour and decisions on former occasions are considered. Even after her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, has made a hue and cry about her love-affair with Kabir, the intensity of her love for him is in the least reduced. Seth describes her decision as, "No matter what happened, she would meet him as planned, tomorrow. She told herself again and again that the path of true love never did run smooth" (Seth 183). This is the mind-set of a powerful Lata, and her powerlessness cannot be written off as casual. On the other hand, it is a deliberate twisting of the normal course of the novel with the intention of creating victims of the society. Lata is the most significamt example. Her contempt for the arranged marriage is clearly depicted when she makes her comments about her sister's (Savita's) marriage, which, according to her, nullifies the identity of the girl (Seth 15). Her sneer is at its peak when she thinks about the name of her own house, which is "Prem Nivas" (Seth 15). "Prem Nivas for a start: the abode of love. An idiotic name, thought Lata crossly, for this house of arranged marriages" (Seth 15). For such a girl of independent mind and free spirit, an arranged marriage is a punishment. Even while talking to Savita about Kabir, Lata "grew more

elated" (Seth 174). Then why did she forsake him in the end? Here, the authorial voice, through irony, functions as the true answer.

Lata's decision to marry Haresh occurs at the very end of the novel. This gives rise to a tragic hero, Kabir, the person who has been depicted as mature and thoughtful, besides being heart and soul for Lata. The author gradually and carefully develops her relationship with him. Seth allows them the span of about eighteen months so that a strong relationship may be developed. It takes a number of meetings before coming to its maturity. In his presence, she is filled with uncontrollable emotional upheavals (Seth 144, 145). And his absence makes her think of him (Seth 146). She developed an inexplicable attraction towards him (Seth 147). Her upset moments are removed instantly at his thought. "She thought of Kabir and instantly cheered up" (Seth 149). Their courting progresses steadily. "Kabir was smiling. He put his arm around her shoulder and, instead of protesting, she let it remain. It seemed to be in the right place" (Seth 166). His kisses were returned with the exchange of "I love you" (Seth 170, 171). This is the way a strong love affair progresses to be culminated in matrimony. But Seth cuts it short with the plan for the marriage of Lata to a suitable boy. He juxtaposes the parentally permitted love scenes between Lata and Haresh with the emotionally involved love scenes between Lata and Kabir. In the case of

her meetings with Haresh, she is least interested. When Haresh tries to show his affection in one of their meetings by placing his arm on hers, she warns him immediately against being "mean" (Seth 1148). He walks away fallen hearted. Seth definitely makes the relationship between Lata and Haresh dull, and gives the message that, for Lata's sake, it has never to be permitted. On the other hand, he glorifies the relationship between Lata and Kabir. He gives enough hints that it would be a marriage of true minds. Yet it is the emotionally compatible marriage which is nullified by the caste-wise compatible marriage of Lata to Haresh. The reason has been already cast. It is caste.

The non-compatibility of Kabir's caste with Lata's sends shock waves through Lata. On hearing Kabir's surname from him, she responds with pain. "I know. Hearing him say it so casually brought all the cares of the world back on her head" (Seth 171). All on a sudden, she loses her courage and becomes a prey to the society's norms on marriage. "It's all important. Don't you know what it means in my family?"(Seth 171). By disarming Lata of her courage to court the man whom she loves, Seth hints at the rigidity of the society in not relaxing its matrimonial norms so that true love may be central to marriages. Kabir speaks to her on this aspect of love and marriage. "Kabir held her hand and said, you love me. And I love you. That's all that matters" (Seth 171). Lata is convinced of

his comforting words and understands it fully well. Yet Seth shows the incapacity of the society in admitting true love as the real basis of marriage by changing the mind of Lata in favour of Haresh. Seth never promotes the marriage between Lata and Haresh. His last minute twist is intended to show this through the language of irony. And the reader understands his real intention. "Structural irony depends on a knowledge of the author's intention shared by the audience" (Abrams 81).

Kabir's emotional upset cannot be written off as casual. On the opposite, it is one of the focal points of Seth's nonconformity. By giving birth to a tragic hero through Kabir, he points out how the very thought of a marriage between a young man and a woman can be nipped in the bud for the noncompatability of their castes. Here, an Indian society, which gives undue importance to caste, is exposed with its shattered human minds. By giving Kabir the underdog image, Seth shows up the society's harsh refusal of his righteous role as the husband of Lata.

The society is represented chiefly through Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Lata. By saying the story of a suitable boy who conforms to the societal norms, what Seth in fact intends is the very questioning of such a conformist attitude prevalent in the Indian society. He does this through the characterization of Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Lata. In the case of the

former, he does it by bringing forward her comical anxieties to find out a suitable boy for Lata.

The questioning of the conformist attitude is brought about in the case of Lata by effecting an abrupt change of her mind. That is, all on a sudden she sees Kabir as an unsuitable boy and Haresh becomes a suitable boy for her. Towards the end of the novel Lata tells Malathi, her friend, about her feeling towards Kabir. "I'm not myself when I'm with him. I ask myself who is this – this jealous, obsessed woman who can't get a man out of her head [...]" (Seth 1296). This is the lame excuse for rejecting Kabir invented by Seth himself. That's how he brings out the society. Malathi herself tells Lata that her feeling towards Kabir shows her passionate love for him. "Oh, Lata – don't be blind – exclaimed Malathi. It shows how passionately you love him" (Seth 1296). But, Lata takes passion itself as the reason for rejecting Kabir. It is really the lame excuse Seth himself brought in so that Lata may be in conformity (iterally) to the society. Any reasonable reader understands the real message Seth intends. It must be passionate love itself, which is the pivot of any successful married life. And lack of passion in the love-relationship is good reason for the failure of such a relationship. One of the memorable heroines of Russian literature, Anna Karenina, rejects her husband, Mr. Karenin, because he lacks passion in their married life. So,

passion is deemed as a prerequisite for any successful love relationship between a man and woman. And Lata sees it as a disqualification. The reader cannot take it literally. It has to be understood as part of the programme of the author to present the irony of the situation and give the reader his message in a subtle and artistic manner. He shows Lata's situation as the situation of an average girl of middle class Indian society. When she rejects Amit as an unsuitable boy, she thinks reasonably. "I don't see myself as his wife at all" (Seth 1296). She also says: "For me, marrying Amit would be madness" (Seth 1297). This reason is lost when she thinks about Kabir.

Lata accepts Haresh very soon. The person whom she criticized as mean has a sudden increase of value in her assessment. She says: "Haresh is practical, he's forceful, and he isn't cynical" (Seth 1297). In two pages of the novel, Seth completes Lata's transformation from a girl of free will to a girl of docile nature. For making her so, he endows Haresh with a few qualifications. Kabir is finally rejected because he is "ethereal" (Seth 1299). So the ethereal nature of Kabir and the practical wisdom of Haresh are compared and the practical wisdom wins in the end. This is definitely an unbelievable account. This is the hallucination of an intimidated mind. Intimidated by the society, Lata comes in terms

with its norms. Her friend, Malathi, asks her a series of questions about her feeling for Haresh, which she could not answer at all. Questions like:

> 'And it's completely obvious you don't love him. Have you thought this thing through, Lata, or are you just making up your mind in a sort of trance? [...]. Do you like the idea of sharing your possessions with this man? Of making love with him? Does he attract you? Can you cope with the things that irritate you about him – Cawnpore and paan and all that? Please, please, Lata, don't be stupid. Use your brains. What about this Simran woman – doesn't that bother you? And what do you want to do with yourself after your marriage – or are you just content to be a housewife in a walled compound full of Czechs'? (Seth 1297)

These are the very questions Seth wants to ask every woman to be married. He asks these questions through Malathi. None of the questions are about caste but all of them are about life. For these questions, Lata has no definite answers. The only direct answer she has is: "He hates to see anyone's talent wasted. He encourages them" (Seth 1297). From such an answer, she proves that she is affected by the weight of caste on her. "Lata's lack of emotional attachment to Haresh" is obvious in her

description on him (Dey 20). In fact "they do not even operate on the same vibes" (Dey 20). Her "explanation bringing in factors [defending her choice for Haresh] neither shown nor developed in previous hundreds of pages, serves only as a smokescreen" (Dey 20). Seth shows her as a prey succumbing to the caste demon by making her sacrifice her life and Kabir's future at the alter of caste.

The two characterizations of Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Lata are the best examples of Seth's structural irony. Almost up to the very end of the novel Lata and Mrs. Rupa Mehra are portrayed as two individuals of distinct and different views on various things. Mrs. Rupa Mehra seems to be rather imposing her views on Lata. In the first part of the novel itself, Seth hints at this nature of Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Lata's strong resistance to it in a satirical description.

> What was good enough for her mother [Mrs. Rupa Mehra] and her mother's mother and her mother's mother's mother should be good enough for her [Lata]. Lata, though, had always been a difficult one, with a strange will of her own, quiet but unpredictable – like that time in St Sophia's when she wanted to become a nun! But Mrs. Rupa Mehra too had

> a will, and she was determined to have her own way, even if she was under no illusions as to Lata's pliability. (Seth 22)

This satirical and humorous description of Mrs. Rupa Mehra and Lata inaugurates Seth's attack on the Indian tradition of matrimony. The first line of the above passage speaks about what is good for Lata's "mother's mother's mother" is certainly a dig at the age-old Indian belief in homo-caste arranged marriages (Seth 22). This first phase attack gathers momentum in the course of the novel and is in full gear in the last phase of its structural irony when Lata, "a difficult one" with "a strange will of her own", decides to back out from her affair with Kabir and to marry Haresh (Seth 22). Lata always shows a will of her own. She has her independent views on several things. As for example, she defends the presence of two Muslim ministers in Nehru's ministry against her mother's casteist objection to it. She says, "Ma, I don't agree at all. He's the Prime Minister of India, not just the Hindus. What's the harm if he has two Muslim Ministers in his Cabinet?" (Seth 172). And she freely expresses her feeling against her other suitor, Amit, rejecting him outright. She thinks about him as, "to convert him into a husband was absurd" (Seth 1289). The girl who is capable of having a will of her own is subdued to the point of being docile when she accepts the decision of

her mother regarding her marriage. The novelist deliberately makes this paradoxical state of Lata's mind. And it becomes the last stage of the structural irony in the novel. By doing so, he reveals the pathetic plight of Lata, which shows up the rigid caste-ridden society. Throughout the novel Lata goes about with an independent spirit. But Seth disarms her of her weapon of free will and it is only in the final phase she behaves in accordance with the literal meaning of her name, "vine" or dependent (Seth 22). It in turn means that she depends on her mother and eventually on the society at large for her marital existence. From the very beginning, Seth has worked out the novel in such a way as to have this ironic last phase ending.

All on a sudden, Lata considers family as the first stumbling block between herself and Kabir. The author finally changes Lata, who courted him for a very long period of time. Now she tells Kabir: "Because of my family," she cannot marry him (Seth 906). She knows that she doesn't like the opinion of the family. They are not qualified to give their opinion about her marriage. Yet the family entangles her. She speaks to Kabir: "However much they irritate me, I can't give them up. I know that now. So much has happened. I can't give up my mother" (Seth 906). She could not change her mind, though "her heart ached for him (Kabir)"

(Seth 907). As the author allows Kabir to see gradually the strong resistance of the society to any change in its system, the reader too comes to know about its tight hold on tradition. Kabir understands "the pressure of the family, the extended family that enforced a slow and strong acceptance on its members" with much dismay (Seth 907). So, he has to accept the role of the victim enforced on him. Seth presents the failure of their (Lata and Kabir's) combined efforts to swim against the society metaphorically. When they courted each other in love "no doubt the boat had been rowing against the current of society, upstream towards the *Barsaat Mahal*" (Seth 982). But rowing upstream against the current of the society is abruptly stopped, and by letting Lata deem Haresh as the suitable boy, Seth gives the picture of the rowing downstream along with the society. This is included as part of his structural irony. This last phase transformation of Lata's personality is obvious when the reader understands her feeling for Kabir even at this juncture. Even when Amit, her other suitor, kisses her to win her hand, she cherishes the image of Kabir (Seth 1137). "She was dreaming – of a kiss – but it was of Kabir that she was dreaming, the one who was absent, the one who above all others she should not meet, the most unsuitable boy of them all" (Seth 1138). Thus Seth gives her the image of a tragic heroine. "The tragic hero [...] moves us to pity because, since he is not an evil man, his misfortune is greater than he deserves [...]" (Abrams 174). Lata moves

the reader to pity because she is a loving and lovable girl with an independent spirit. She loves Kabir, the most suitable boy for her, whole-heartedly. Yet the society smothers her independent spirit making her a tragic heroine. Though she cherishes the image of Kabir, Seth, the omniscient author, tells the reader he is the most unsuitable boy. This contradiction is presented before the reader so that he may understand the irony of it. The society functions as the villain in the name of tradition. Thus Seth exposes the inexpediency of a tradition through his extended irony. Lata's decision used to be her own in everything. It is changed to the silent acceptance of her mother's decision in the case of her marriage. In the final stage of her separation from Kabir, she merely tells him about her proposed marriage to Haresh as, "Ma wants me to marry him" (Seth 1287). So from the role of a tragic heroine, Seth makes her a buffoon and thus extends his ironic language. And for this buffoon state of her personality, she blames everybody and herself. She tells Kabir: "Ours [our marriage] wouldn't work. No one else will let it work. And now I can't even trust myself" (Seth 1287). Thus Seth extends his irony by giving another tragic hero image to Kabir.

Kabir understands his plight and in his sad mood says: "I'm the one who's been rejected [...]" (Seth 1287). But he has no redemption

from his pathetic place because Seth deliberately makes his ladylove immune to his feelings, of course influenced by the society. The ludicrousness of the situation is again revealed through the deliberate ironic scheme, when Lata, even after her decision to marry Haresh, feels: "Even now I almost feel it's he who's left me – and I can't bear it" (Seth 1332). And as a substitute for Kabir, the society gives her Haresh, the person about whom she says in a conversation with him: "But if we don't even understand each other when we speak [...] what possible future can we have together?" (Seth 1149). In the last part of the novel, Seth gives a cock and bull story ending to Lata and Haresh relationship. He says: "She [Lata] liked him [Haresh]" (Seth 1292). This can be seen as the inevitability of any marriage forced upon two persons, because the rigid society not only chooses the suitable boys and girls but also compels the continuity of the married life of misfits. So, through another ironic stroke, Seth allows Lata to like Haresh.

Mrs. Rupa Mehra, Lata's mother, represents the society. She expresses the anxieties of a middle class Indian mother, especially when she is widowed. She is capable of making shock waves throughout herself if anything of her family life goes against the society around. She is a fully developed representative of a rigid society. So, on hearing the

Muslim name of Lata's lover, Kabir Durrani, she is horrified. "The three deadly syllables [of the surname Durrani] had their effect. Mrs. Rupa Mehra clutched at her heart, opened her mouth in silent horror, looked unseeingly around the room, and sat down" (Seth 182). This is the expression of the society crystallized in Mrs. Rupa Mehra. Literally, Seth does not go beyond the boundaries set by the society. But what he actually does through his ironic vehicle is the shattering of the set boundaries.

The case of the unsuitable boys is contrasted against that of suitable boys. When Mrs. Mehra writes to Kalpana that "she [Lata] is getting involved with unsuitable boys, and I cannot have that", her rigid conventional mind-set is best revealed (Seth 44). For her "one's own community creates a sense of comfort" (Seth 45). This also means that she is comfortable with no other community except herself. This conventional psyche of Mrs. Mehra is the reflection of the society's own rigidity where parents' comfort very much depends upon the marriage of their child to someone of their own caste and the combatability of horoscopes. This thought pattern little cares for the comfort or matching of the minds of the boy and girl who enter into matrimony. To upset the thought pattern of the parents is to upset the smooth functioning of the

society. What Seth does in the novel is the bringing about of this upset through Lata, one of the chief characters, almost until the end of the novel. But the last moment twisting of the novel's normal course of direction is apparently intended to give it a conclusion demanded by Mrs. Mehra and the society. But a careful reader understands its irony and it gives profundity and novelty to the theme of nonconformity.

That Lata's character has been deliberately subdued by Seth to the stature of the girl who accepts her mother's choice of a suitable boy towards the end of the novel is intended to give not only Kabir but to Lata herself a victimized condition before the reader. They are really the victims of the cruel social norms embodied in Mrs. Mehra. It is obvious that a girl like Lata, who questions the validity of the suitable boy chosen by others for Sativa, cannot accept the suitable boy, Haresh, chosen by her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra. She expresses her independent view saying, "What I can't understand is how – well, it was other people who decided he was suitable for you [Sativa] – but if you didn't find him attractive" (Seth 174). Such a girl of independent mind set is finally brought to the stature of "vine" which is the meaning of her name (Seth 22). "And yet, Lata was named after that most pliable thing, a vine, which was trained to cling: first to her family, then to her husband" (Seth

22). Even the very name of the protagonist, which Seth has selected, is with the intention of an extended structural irony. The omniscient author in the beginning of the novel explains the meaning of her name. The clinging nature of her personality is revealed in the end of the novel. In between these two sections, Lata is described as a rebel with her own view on various things. But, all on a sudden, in the end, she becomes a vine for which the explanation has been given already. It definitely reveals the pre-planned motive of the author for an analysis of the Indian society. When Mrs. Rupa Mehra repeats the word "vine," the author's irony is obvious. "Lata, you are a vine, you must cling to your husband!"(Seth 22). These comments both by the author and his character refer to the marginalization of women in the society. But by presenting this condition, especially in the case of Lata's marriage, he suggests a new system, which is not embraced by Lata and approved by Mrs. Rupa Mehra or the society.

By bringing together two victims of the society, Lata and Haresh, what Seth brings forward is the futility of suitable boys and girls chosen by the parents and approved by the society. Lata's sympathy for Haresh, her would-be husband, points out this ludicrous situation when she reveals her mind on the issue. "Poor Haresh – he too had been pursuing

an impossible relationship, and here too the difficulty was a similar one" (Seth 908). She refers to his affair with Simran, a Punjabi girl.

Society is the villain of the novel, *A Suitable Boy*. Its functionaries are represented by Mrs. Rupa Mehra, Dr. Kishan Chand, Varun, Arun, Meenakshi, etc. who do an unintentional harm by being mere cogs in the wheel of society. What Vikram Seth does is to rebel against this custom using a powerful ironic language.

David Myers, the author of "Vikram Seth's Epic Renunciation of the Passions: Deconstructing Moral Codes in *A Suitable Boy*," assesses the novelist and his novel as, "Vikram Seth is so nineteenth century old fashioned, however, that in *A Suitable Boy* he suggests that the meaning of life is to be found in arranged marriages, the renunciation of sexual demonicisms, and tolerant participation in the comic parliament of family togetherness" (80). It is evident that Myers takes *A Suitable Boy* literally. And this literal meaning is not at all the focal point of the novel. Seth does not advocate arranged marriages as the ideal ones. In fact, he regrets that love marriages are vehemently opposed to in the Indian society. For bringing about this message, he uses the tool of irony. He allows Lata to

undergo an abrupt transformation towards the end of the novel. She is allowed to make the pros and cons of her life. Very suddenly and outright, she rejects Kabir Durrani giving the reason that she will be totally swayed in his presence and cannot use her reason. Then she accepts Haresh Khanna as her husband, the person found out for her by her mother. This is certainly not the reason to say that Seth advocates arranged marriages. Here, he reveals in a comic and ironic way, the Indian mothers' hunt for suitable boys. For every decent unmarried young girl, the form of a handsome young man in love with her might make emotional upheavals and passionate ripples in her. It is quite normal and can be considered as the first stage of premarital love for her would be husband. In an abrupt ironic twist at this point, Seth makes Lata say that this is not good for life, because she will continue in the same helpless state even after marriage. Here, one has to state the fact that every married person knows that the premarital emotional upheaval on seeing the partner does not quite continue in the marital life.

Lata Mehra's "passionate denunciation of passion" as mentioned by Myers is a medium for Seth to convey his dig at the marriage of convenience or arranged marriages (80). Myers considers this as "the decidedly moralistic slant that Seth has given to the climax and

conclusion of his novel" (80). In order to substantiate the point of the denunciation of her passion for Kabir, Myers cites Lata's explanation to her best friend Malathi:

> 'I'm not myself when I'm with him. I ask myself who is this – this jealous, obsessed woman who can't get a man out of her head – why should I make myself suffer like this? I know that it'll always be like this if I'm with him.'
>
> 'Oh, Lata – don't be blind – 'exclaimed Malathi. 'It shows how passionately you love him –'.
>
> 'I don't want to,' cried Lata, 'I don't want to. If that's what passion means, I don't want it. Look at what passion has done to the family. Maan's broken, his mother's dead, his father's in despair. When I thought that Kabir was seeing someone else, what I remember feeling was enough to make me hate passion. Passionately and forever.' (Seth 1296)

It is surprising to know that Myers did not understand the full import of "passionately and forever" said by Lata (Seth 1296). This is really comic. Lata rejects Kabir for she is afraid of passion. This is the very passion that destroyed Maan and eventually his family. She doesn't pay heed to Malathi's words that passionate love between a man and woman is the first step to matrimony. On the other hand, she sees its negative side as in the case of Maan. Lata's immature mind is revealed before the reader. Everyone knows that passionate love is the basis of every family. At the same time, it can be destructive if it is placed on the wrong person. Here, what Lata does is to make a wrong comparison to negate an absolutely right thing, viz. Maan's passion for Saida Bai is compared to her passion for Kabir. This is deliberate from the side of the author. His powerful irony and wit are targeted to expose the society, its blind negation of love marriages.

It is true that Myers in the same essay admits the importance of passion in the life of a person. He says:

> Although Western culture is full of literary and operatic examples of the destruction of order and harmony through passion, there is nevertheless commonly an affirmation by authors of that destructive passion as the bringer of the highest bliss to the individual soul and therefore also by definition the bringer of the meaning, however brief, to the inspired, sensitive individual. (81)

Seth actually wants passion to be the bringer of bliss for every person by showing its negation by Lata, a distinct example for his irony. Myers does not defend his statement that Lata is practical in her choice for the suitable boy, Haresh Khanna. If Haresh is practical in his life because he is in the shoe trade, the same can be said about Kabir Durrani. He has definite plans for his future. Myers says: "Vikram Seth, however, would perhaps argue that his decision to create rhetorically persuasive, fictional discourse in favour of sexual repression is made as a protest against the demonstrable destructivity of untrammeled passion" (83). This has to be rewritten as: Seth uses passion and sexual repression in protest against a rigid society, which doesn't accept them. Myers says that Lata's rejection of romantic life is worth pondering over. He gives the reason as:

> Given divorce rates, casual promiscuities and the frequency of crimes of passion in the West, perhaps we Westerners need to ponder carefully her decision and her commitment to self-control and a planned marital life, once, that is, that we have overcome our culturally ingrained disappointment and distaste for Lata's rejection of romantic love. (83)

Myers represents the first world. And he is ready to favourably analyse and then adopt the pattern of Lata's rejection of romantic love because in first world nations, passion is on many an occasion the villain. This is merely because of the misplaced human virtuous instinct, passion. Passion, if placed rightly, will definitely be considered as a virtue, not as the harbinger of evils such as divorces, promiscuities, crimes, etc. Perhaps, people in the first world nations consider passion independent of good sense. If it is not wedded to good sense, it is likely to be detrimental to the well being of passionate people. So, it is the people who have to be careful in being passionate with good sense. Passion remains to be a positive aspect of human life. And only for being passionate, if Myers wants to favour Lata's rejection of romantic love, his decision is lopsided and misplaced. Through the negation of the true love between Lata and

Kabir, Seth brings forth the meaninglessness of such a situation due to coercion by mothers like Mrs. Mehra. He reminds the readers of being vigilant against such a situation in life. Myers' argument is that "Lata is not marrying Haresh: she is marrying a symbol of what Vikram Seth would like to proclaim as his hope for a new India – an ambitious, pragmatic, anti-snobbish, working-class, self-made Indian man" (84). This is the denotative meaning. But one has to look for its connotation. With regard to Haresh Khanna, nobody has any objection concerning his hard work, pragmatic approach and anti-snobbish attitude to life. But these virtues of Haresh cannot be used to nullify Kabir Durrani's personality. Haresh is virtuous in his own right, so also Kabir. Both of them are good in their own spheres. Myers uses Haresh's quality to negate Kabir's goodness. This is not fair.

Myers speaks about the "base passions" in the novel (89). "They are to be found just as much in politics, religion, domestic and public power lust, and careerism" (89). In the case of love, too, if it is misplaced, it becomes a base passion. This is what Myers means when he speaks about passion in the culture of advanced countries. But, between Lata and Kabir, it has always been elevated and not base.

Why Lata finally agrees to marry Haresh is the result of brainwashing by the society. In the final phase of the novel, Lata functions as the naïve spokesperson in the novel. Until then it was her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra who functioned in this role. In both the cases, the reader penetrates to the implicit point of view of the authorial presence. Till Mrs. Mehra prepared Lata to accept Haresh as her suitable boy, Mrs. Mehra's frantic search for the suitable boy is presented before the reader. By doing so, Seth allows us to see the ludicrous situation in which Mrs. Mehra is involved and he allows the reader to correct her concept of the suitable boy. In the final phase, it is Lata who becomes the naïve spokesperson and the reader is able to alter and correct her interpretation of her own relationship with Kabir Durrani, which is overwhelmed with passion. The reader is also allowed to see the implicit point of the author when Lata negates passion. Through these two chief characters, Seth deviates from the path of a suitable boy of the Indian society.

James Buchan remarks: "Why Lata – a sweet creation [...], chooses the suitor she chooses is not clear" (qtd. Piciucco 163). For the reader it becomes clear only when he realizes the authorial presence behind the mystery and enters into the language of irony. Unlike many

other novels, for understanding *A Suitable Boy*, the connotations are very significant and they become the structure of the novel. No incident is abstract. From the very title to the very end of Lata's last minute acceptance of Haresh, every incident in the novel bears the pressure of the context and has its connotation modified by the context. Its relevance, its propriety, its rhetorical force and even its meaning cannot be divorced from its context in which it is embedded. The reason for Lata's choice of the suitor she chooses becomes clear only because Haresh is "a suitable boy" in accordance with the parental norm (Seth 36). Only when the reader understands the connotation of this often used or implied phrase in the larger context and along with the co-incidents of the novel, the novel becomes complete. Otherwise, the abrupt change in Lata baffles many a diligent reader. But once he unravels the mystery with the tool of irony, its potential irony becomes overt. Lata succumbs to the pressures of the society for which Haresh is the most suitable suitor. This is sarcastic, which is one feature of irony. Seth demands the reader's participation in conveying the novelistic experience of *A Suitable Boy* because he uses irony as its special and characteristic strategy. If the reader misses to understand this figure of speech in his novel, he may take it as rhetoric on suitable boys. However, Seth is triumphant in being persistently ironic and till the very end of the novel sustains the "duplicity

of meaning" pointing out the unsuitability of boys and girls chosen as per the parental norm (Abrams 81).

Chapter 4

Linguistic Iconoclasm and Artistic Creation in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

The innovative way of the use of the English language in *The God of Small Things* has brought Arundhati Roy international acclaim. When she was awarded the twenty-ninth Booker Prize in 1997, the Booker Committee made the comment on her that she was "an architect in literary circle moulding language in all shapes and sizes as was never done before at least in the Indian literary context" (qtd. Surendran 50). The use of the language questioning the rules of the same is a means for foregrounding a series of implied questions targeting some of the accepted customs in the society. In the words of Shomit Miller, "very rarely do you get someone who can tear apart the rules [of the language] and give you something that is fresh and not pretentious"(qtd. Surendran 51). The attempt in this chapter is to have a close look at the use of English that is her own variety and the iconoclastic attitude to the Queen's English. Her brand of English very often deviates from the standard conventions.

The God of Small Things is considered as a "protest novel, which is radical, subversive and taboo-breaking" (Surendran 50). It is about transgressions. The children go beyond the boundaries demarcated by the adults. Ammu breaks an oppressive patriarchal norm and is labeled "*veshya*" (Roy 8). Velutha swims across a casteist society, but loses himself mid-stream. He becomes a victim of the third degree torture of Kottayam police. Both of them attempt to break the taboos and traditions of a closed society and finally succumb to its inhuman conventions. Rahel and Estha are treated illegitimate. The novel reveals the helplessness of several of its characters that are crushed by the guardians of the law. It is an attempt to show up the ridiculousness of the established order of a society: its orthodox conventions, its hypocrisy and its sexist and casteist stance. It is a novel on politics, social taboos, familial relationship, gender bias and religious practices. Like classics, it questions the evils in the established customs and practices in the society. The use of the English language itself is foremost among various ways by which Arundhati Roy challenges the admissible practices in the society.

The rules for the use of the English language are enforced even on the native speakers until recently in the form of prescriptive grammar. But lately, it is the descriptive grammar, which has got currency. In Britain and other English speaking countries and countries like India

where it is taught as a foreign language, the descriptive variety of grammar has become popular. The reason for its popularity is the relaxation of the rules and the replacement of the rules with the use itself. That is, first the use of the language and only after that, the grammarians are expected to describe the language and extract the rules observing the use of it. But the most important aspect of this variety of grammar is that its rules are modelled on the variety of English used consistently by a large group of native speakers.

> A grammar that prescribes rigid rules of correct use is called a prescriptive grammar. Traditional grammars tended to be prescriptive. Structuralists believed in descriptive grammar. While a descriptive grammarian describes the rules elicited from the actual use of language by native speakers, a prescriptive grammarian very often prescribes rules and norms. (Syamala 166-167)

The word "native" in the quotation cited above requires attention because this chapter is not on the native English writer's innovative use of the language. This is about the use of a non-native writer's or an Indo-Anglian writer's variety of English, namely, Arundhati Roy's English, who hails from a third world country in south Asia, precisely from a tiny

State in the second most populous country in the world, India. She learnt English as a foreign tongue. After learning it as a foreign tongue, she has used it in *The God of Small Things* as the master of it asserting suggestions of deviation in its use and rebelling against the native speaker's descriptive or prescriptive fallacy. This rebellion is total and pervades the whole novel. In order to know the depth of it, one has to understand the seriousness of at least the norms of the grammaticality set by the native English grammarians. "A construction is grammatical if it is systematically used by a set of native speakers" (Mohanan 4).

Descriptive grammar emphasizes the variety of English used by native speakers. And for a variety of English to be acceptable, its sentences should inevitably be grammatical. Arundhati Roy manages to deviate from the norms set by native speakers and has yet been accepted by them. Having analyzed the novel, John Updike acknowledges her ability to go beyond the prescriptive and descriptive norms set by native speakers in his article "Mother Tongues: Subduing the language of the colonizer" as given below:

> The spread of English throughout the world, via commerce and colonialism and now popular culture, has spawned any number of fluent outriggers capable of contributing to

> English literature. Some, like most Australians and Americans, write English with no thought of an alternative; others like, certain inhabitants of the Caribbean, Ireland, Anglophone Africa, and India, write it against a background of native tongues or patois that are abandoned or suppressed in the creative effort – an effort that to a degree enlists them in a foreign if not enemy camp, that of the colonizer. *The God of Small Things,* by Arundhati Roy (Random House; $ 23), a work of highly conscious art, is conscious not least of its linguistic ambivalence. It takes place in India's southern state of Kerala, where the local language is Malayalam; phrases and whole sentences of Malayalam, sometimes translated and sometimes not, seep into the book's English, whose mannerisms – compound and coined words, fragmentary sentences, paragraphs a word or a phrase long, whimsical capitalization – underline the eccentricity of the language in relation to the tale's emotional center. (156)

One may take this as a rebellion against the accepted rules of the language, though the author does so unconsciously. This is nonconformity to the greatest means of human transaction, viz., language.

Malayalam words, phrases and sentences used as such (with English spelling) in the novel on a large scale give the novel a local colour adding to its natural appearance and artistic beauty. Even before Arundhati Roy, writers have used local words and phrases in the texture of their works, but not at this rate. She has used them without ever sacrificing the quality of the novel. This method of writing is considered as "relexfication" in line with the African mode of writing (Zabus 314).

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy conveys an unfamiliar message to the world in English, which is made new. For this she frames a new idiom, which is basically English, yet, the variety of English, which is capable of carrying the weight of the unfamiliar message. This may be called the "relexification" technique. The term is originally used to refer to the African writing with "the relexification of one's mother tongue, using English vocabulary but indigenous structures and rhythms." The purpose of such a method is to simulate the African language in the "Europhone text." With this method, every aspect of the English language, such as lexis, phrase, morpheme, word formation, semantics and syntax, is modified. So, "relexification" is "the making of a new register of communication out of an alien lexicon." In the case of Africa, the European language is the alien language and from which the process of "relexification" forges a new language. *The God of Small Things*, in

the Indian context, can be considered as a fertile site of "relexification" (Zabus 314).

When the police inspector retorts Ammu saying that the police never take statements from "*veshyas*" (instead of using the English word "prostitutes"), this Malayalam word gives the sentence an extremely natural touch and speaks volumes about the "police language" (Roy 8). On the other hand, its English substitute "prostitute" will never fit in here, for it cannot give out the cultural background and shock of a taboo that the word "*veshya*" can imply. Similarly, Rev. Iype is locally called "*Punnyan Kunju*" (Roy 23). The sneer expressed through this nickname can never be expressed through its equivalent "little blessed one" (Roy 23). For a description of "*Paradise Pickles and Preserves*", the author argues, "*Ruchi lokathinde Rajavu* [...] sounded a little less ludicrous than *Emperors of the Realm of Taste*" (Roy 46). On another occasion, a level-crossing lunatic is presented as counting "*onner, runder, moonner*" instead of "one", "two", "three" (Roy 64). This instance too shows the most fitting language a character can use even though the novel's medium of language is English. Then the slogan-shouting Kerala workers have been shown in the procession shouting "*Inquilab Zindabad*" and "*Thozhilali Ekta Zindabad*" which will lose all its effect if translated into English (Roy 46). She makes use of the folk songs as "*Thaiy thaiy thaka thaiy thaiy thome !*" and "*Enda do korangacha,*

Chandi ithra thenjadu?"[...] *Pandiyil thooran poyappol nerakkamuthiri nerangi njan"* (Roy 196). Similarly a few lines of a popular Malayalam film song appear as "*Pandoru mukkuvan muthinu poyi,*[...] *Padinjaran Kaattathu mungi poyi*[...], *Arayathi pennu pizhachu poyi* [...] *avane kadalamma kondu poyi*" (Roy 219-220). These are to cite but only a few from the novel.

Arundhati Roy uses the English language with indigenous words, phrases, folk songs and rhythm in order to simulate Indianness in her English novel. This is the Indianization of an Anglophone text, which Achebe refers to in the African background as "Africanization or Nigerianization of English" (Zabus 315). It is not the Standard English language she uses, but an unfamiliar English, which constantly suggests the presence of Malayalam, the mother tongue of the novel's characters. Though it is the clolonizer's language she uses, it is constantly threatened with the new version of the colonized.

What is the reason behind this extensive scheme of incorporating pure Malayalam words, phrases and lines in her novel? She must have felt that the cultural transference is the most important aspect of the story and not a slavish adherence to the rules of the language. Since every language has its own inimitable genius, she expresses it through the

selective use of Malayalam in the novel with the ultimate aim of bringing forth the cultural shades behind the words. About effective translation Susan Bassnett says:

> Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, the translation involves the transfer of 'meaning' contained in one set of language signs into anther set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also. (13)

What Bassnett says about translation is apt in the case of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things.* Instead of the narrowly linguistic approach of the transfer of meaning of her story, through the selective use of Malayalam, she makes a perfect cultural transfer. Thus the novel conveys Malayali concepts, thought-patterns and linguistic features in the English language. "Relexification" also seeks to decolonize the colonial literature and to affirm a new and revised literature of the colonized (Zabus 314). And for this, she goes beyond the linguistic criteria imposed on the writer by the rules of the given language. A list of Malayalam words in English collocation used in the novel is given in the appendix[1].

Roy conveniently forgets the strictest impositions made by the so-called owners of the English language on the use of it. She does so because it is easy for her to depict the cultural background of the story as convincingly as if it had been written in Malayalam. Yet all those who understand the English language might read and appreciate it with all its Malayalam words.

To go beyond "the Englishness of the English language" is the phrase Rushdie uses to refer to the effort of G.V. Desani in *All About H. Hatter* (Rushdie, "Damme ... Scene for You" 58). This is very much applicable to Ms Roy's effort in *The God of Small Things.* The overlooking of even the basic rules of the language is seen in the use of certain English sentences in the novel.

The English language is adapted to the new environment of Kerala culture. It is not any more the language of Britain or other English-speaking countries alone. It is the language of the once colonized India as well. In terms of its vocabulary it is still English to a certain extent. But its grammar is not in accordance with that of Standard English. Its syntax is changed from the SVO pattern to, sometimes, VO alone, and at other times, a mere group of words without ever adhering to the rules of

grammaticality. On many occasions it becomes the easiest means of communication as in Malayalam, yet retaining the English vocabulary. Arundhati Roy revolutionizes the use of it bidding farewell to its many an item of grammar. "It is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience, and sensibility [...]" (Braithwaite 311). In this changing environment, Arundhati Roy little cares about the British original grammar. Ungrammatical sentences, subjectless sentences, words and phrases written in the reverse order, new coinage to suit the occasion, etc. seep into the web of Malayalam words, phrases and sentences written profusely in this English novel. The sentences like "The front verandhah bare" (Roy 2), "Free funerals" (Roy 4), "Past Sophie Mol's yellow church" (Roy 13), "Never. The. Less" (Roy 55), "Dead as a doorknob" (Roy 118), "That her shoulders shone, but her eyes were somewhere else" (Roy 176), "He and She" (Roy 237), etc. are some examples from a long list of 'un-English' English sentences filling the novel from the beginning to the very end. The rigid syntactic pattern of English sentences has been heavily upset in all the examples given above and appended at the end [2]. Yet, the meaning is readily and impressively conveyed, which is considered as the foremost ability of a writer.

In the context of ungrammaticality in the novel, it is important to note the view of the writer on the variety of language she has used. After she has won the Booker prize, Alice Fraux, the editor of *The New Yorker*, in an interview asked the writer about the use of "unexpected full stops, rouge capital letters and unpredictable punctuation [...]"(Dwivedi 182). Ms Roy's reply was a little jocular but of significance regarding her view on the language. She said: "It was because she had not studied grammar" (Dwivedi 182). This might be to "unarm the critics, but she has deviated from the accepted norms of grammar" (Dwivedi 182). In a covert way she says that it is not necessary to use the English language in accordance with the norms of native speaker's grammaticality. She is sure that it is not necessary to study the native speaker's rules on grammar nor is it required to know Standard English and write a book that is accepted world over by the English speaking communities.

Arundhati Roy tries to sever herself from the 'great tradition' of English language in several ways. Her variety of grammar, syntax and capitals are some of the examples. She deviates from the conventions in order to highlight cultural nuances of the source language of her story. She knows that "language affirms a set of social patterns and reflects a particular cultural taste" (New 303). So, she doesn't imitate the language of another culture blindly. She has modified it in the process of creating

the story of Ayamenam. She knows that the words borrowed from Malayalam have their own resonances and connotations as "poda patti" and "themmadi kuzhi" indicate (Roy 90, 321). For such borrowings an appropriate environment is required. She gives this through her own syntax. Thus she evokes the voices of the society she writes about. The vocabulary is inseparable from its syntax, which gives a suitable rhythm to the narrative. Similarly, her paragraphs, too, are used to attract the attention of the reader in a special way. They are, in many cases, very short: single word, phrase or sentence paragraphs used to maintain the deliberate pace of the novel intending to arrest the attention of the reader. In this regard also, she deviates from the 'great tradition.' They can be as short as a word like "Ever" (Roy 3), or a little longer phrase like "A rushing, rolling fish-swimming sense" (Roy 30), or even a sentence like "She had a dry rose in her hair" (Roy 340). They appear on almost every page of the novel and are appended at the end [3]. Through this unconventional paragraph construction, Arundhati Roy renders a new charm to the resistance story.

The post-colonial writers use the English language "outside the English cultural ambience" and it is not the indigenous vocabulary alone which makes the difference between their writing and that of the colonizer (New 304). Along with the indigenous words, it includes the

rhythm of the spoken idiom of the story, its culture, its folk tradition, its mannerisms and geographical details. Arundhati Roy tries to reflect them through her language. She very often deviates from the rules for using capitals, too. The unlawful capitals are used to express the significance of words and phrases. On this count, too, she has revolutionized the use of the language. Most of the capitals appear in the middle of the sentences or at their end as "Rahel [...] her battle against Real Life" (Roy 5), "The Loss of Sophie Mol" (Roy 15), or "Touchable Policemen" (Roy 303). The abundance of them in the novel reflects her reluctance to stick to the rules of the language as appended at the end [4].

The unlimited freedom she enjoys in using the capitals has invited severe criticism from the critics of traditional vein. Nevertheless, it too contributes to the innovative use of the language where the old tradition crumbles paving way for the birth of a terrible beauty.

The language of *The God of Small Things* contrives to communicate a certain cultural sensibility, i.e., the cultural sensibility of Rev. Ipe's family, Mr. Chacko who is an Anglophile and Kochumariam who is a servant in Mr.Chacko's household. That is, the culture of an upper class Orthodox Christian family and their whereabouts. Along with the Anglophile Chacko and the partriarchal attitude expressed even

by his abused mother, the novel proceeds to express the double morality practised in the society and the plight of the underclass, Paravans. The novel is certainly a slice of the Ayamenam life in the recent history of Kerala. For depicting the story of a different cultural background, a different language has to be used, not the standard variety. For which, Arundhati Roy coins new words, uses compound words and sometimes, even sentences treated as long words. Of course, for this, she uses standard and non-standard lexical and grammatical items in a very close relationship. The lexical items of her own contrivance contribute substantially to suit the peculiar atmosphere of the story. A random selection of such items from the novel verifies to its authenticity.[5] The new coinages definitely create a new atmosphere suiting to the story's emotional content. Moreover, they make the reader hear the story in a differing voice, which is also part of the author's artistic creation.

Another important aspect of linguistic iconoclasm appears in the novel in the form of using tropes. Poets and novelists use them in their works but in a traditional and accepted manner. What Roy has done is to use them in an entirely different and arresting way.

"Figurative language is the result of the writer's deliberate departure from usual word usage to gain strength and freshness of

expression" (Coles 16). It is generally used to achieve special meaning or effect. But some of them, by over use, have become clichéd terms and therefore do not serve the purpose of being effective. Ms Roy has used entirely novel tropes that every one of them draws the attention of the reader. Simile is foremost among them.

"In a simile a comparison between two distinctly different things is indicated by the world 'like' or 'as'" (Abrams 61). Examples of them from various pages randomly selected are given in the appendix.[6]

It is not the use of simile, which is remarkable in her writing. Rather, its extreme novelty and the radical way of her imaginative selection make her writing significant. And in them, she has dexterously combined the visual, auditory, gustatory and olfactory images.

In *The God of Small Things*, the mechanics of the language have been employed along with the activities of life as a corollary. For instance, the twins in the novel are very fond of reading backwards which they regard as a perfectly justified right of theirs but they are punished by Miss Mitten, the tutor. They take their revenge on Miss Mitten, which is shown in the form of their enjoyment on seeing another reverse seen in the novel. "A few months later Miss Mitten was killed by a milk-van in

Hobart, across the road from a cricket oval. To the twins there was hidden justice in the fact that the milk-van had been *reversing*" (Roy 60). For the reader the reverse reading and the reversing of the milk-van are united in the word. This is a new trick that Roy brings about by way of linguistic creation with a nonconformist attitude to the traditional methods and with a great sense of humour. "They showed Miss Mitten how it was possible to read both *Malayalam* and *Madam I'm Adam* backwards as well as forward" (Roy 60).

> This, indeed, is a classic example of the novelist's 'subversive' style of presentation. It not only evokes the image of a post-colonial sensibility where backward reading of certain statements and words very tellingly takes into its stride the postmodernist technique of parody by 'subverting' the language, but also serves thereby to soothen the egos, powers and conventions of a traditional format. Reading backwards evokes the 'subversive' tendency to outwit the imposed Western colonial impression as it is different from the mirror-image of the words. Furthermore, it is indeed significant that this kind of reading becomes quite metaphorical in the present text as the whole vision of the

> novel has an advance-and-recoil rhythm. (Sinha and Tripathi 156)

In another incident, the extraction of foreign objects lodged up in the noses of Rahel and Lenin at Dr. Verghese Verghese's shows the well-balanced use of language to incorporate the life experience. "She [Rahel], the granddaughter of an Imperial Entomologist, he [Lenin] the son of a grass-roots Marxist Party worker. So, she a glass-bead, and he a green gram" (Roy 132). And, the novelist's wry comment that "politics lurked even in what children chose to stuff up their noses" shows the integral part of the life and language cluster resulting in humour (Roy 132). On another occasion Comrade Pillai's son Lenin is asked to recite "Friends, Roman, Countrymen...lend me yaw YERS" (Roy 274). Yet, on another occasion, Mammachi pushes Veluthas's father (Vellya Paapen) with great strength after he informs her of Ammu's affair with Velutha. "He was taken completely by surprise. Part of the taboo of being an untouchable was expecting not to be touched. Of being locked into a physically impregnable cocoon" (Roy 256). For Ms. Roy, language is the best medium to show the nonconformity to a decadent tradition and also to show her resistance to an imposed formula of language itself.

Roy has been classified as one of the literary luminaries of the present times. She could invent a new method of story telling in a totally novelistic way of linguistic appropriation. Robbe-Grillet says about this: "What constitutes the novelist's strength is precisely that he invents, that he invents quite freely without a mode [...]" (qtd. Surendran 53). This inventive genius of the writer pervades every aspect of the linguistic criteria, whether it is the use of capitals, brackets, punctuation, syntactic pattern of sentences, adjectives, determiners, prepositions, etc. Regarding these aspects of the language, she "stands apart from the conventional way in which the novelists make use them" (Surendran 54).

The purpose of the innovations made by Roy is to make use of the variety of language that people actually speak. Fielder observes this ability of the writers as "to speak to the people [...] means to speak in the language of the people rather than in some artificial tongue invented by some academician precisely for the purpose of creating an elitist or hermetic art" (qtd. Surendran 57). With the reversal of the order of letters, deviation from grammar and usage, repetition of negatives, slang, etc., "the novel is perhaps more important for the innovativeness in language than for anything else [...]. Thus, in every sense Roy's novel deviates from the convention which makes it a unique event" (Surendran 58). This is the linguistic iconoclasm showed by Roy for artistic creation.

As John Updike has said "a novel of real ambition must invent its own language, and this one does" (159). It has not only invented its language, but has used it in an artistic way to present one of the saddest stories in human history.

On the world map of English literature, India has a distinct mark because of a new generation of writers including Arundhati Roy. In this regard, Rushdie has said about Kiran Desai, one of the new generation writers: "She is very much her own writer, the newest of all these voices [of Indo-Anglican writers], and welcome proof that India's encounter with the English language, far from proving abortive, continues to give birth to new children, endowed with lavish gifts" (Rushdie,"Damme,...Scene for You" 60). This is true about Arundhati Roy also. She is her own writer to the core. She is a linguistic iconoclast. But she does not leave the broken linguistic icons as such. She creates new and more beautiful ones from the broken pile. Her aesthetic theory seems to focus on creating a different linguistic environment for her story and forming new linguistic items for expression, dispensing with the old ones.

Bharata is considered to be one of the greatest aestheticians who has framed the principles of Indian aesthetics. In his attempt to describe

the parameters of a good literary work in *Natya Sastra*, he gives a prominent place for "aucitya." He says that excellence (*guna*) or defect *(dosa*) does not inherently pertain to anything externally. But, according to the situation, a certain thing is either suitable or not. And, understanding the suitability of something in a situation is excellence. Improper placing, like placing a necklace at the foot and an anklet round the neck, can produce laughter and ridicule. A poet commits the greatest crime against *rasa* if he introduces heavy verbal ornamentation in places where *rasa* has to be effectively portrayed and where the absence of any figure itself is the perfection of art. The proper placing of things in such a manner as to suit *rasa* and the avoiding of things not suitable to it form the essence of artistic expression. This is propriety, a*ucitya.* It is harmony and in one aspect, it is proportion between the whole and the parts, between the chief and the subsidiary. The *aucitya* of the language used in *The God of Small Things* lies in the harmony between its story and the medium. Roy chooses the most suitable forms of the language such as Malayalam words written in English collocation, fragmentary sentences, one-word paragraphs, subjectless sentences, etc., to depict a story of oriental background. The voice of the voiceless cannot be expressed in a better way (Raghavan 246).

Arundhati Roy uses novel ways of using the language, which are certainly tempered with *aucitya* (propriety), in order to give a start to the reader in accordance with the shocking atmosphere of the story. In this regard, her method of presentation may be considered as making use of the "defamiliarization" method, which Viktor Shklovsky speaks about in his seminal essay "Defamiliarization". He argues that the ultimate purpose of literary art is "estrangement" or "making strange", displacing language out of its usual, workday meaning and freeing it to stimulate and produce fresh linguistic apprehensions of language itself and of the world. Ms. Roy consciously or unconsciously makes use of this particular property of the language. She does not use the age-old language hackneyed by use and overuse. It is true that even much before Ms. Roy, there have been an array of literary figures who dealt with the suffering of the subaltern as she does in *The God of Small Things*. But her work gets the arresting attention of the readers world over because of the entirely fresh presentation of its story. As the Russian formalists argue, she could give emphasis on the "form and structure over content." And because of its form and structure, its content draws the attention of the readers (Lemon and Reis 260).

Shklovsky attacks the aesthetic theory about the essence of art being "thinking in images" which is central to Anglo-American poetic

imagism and in New Criticism (Lemon and Reis 260). Ms. Roy's estrangement is brought about through several linguistic approaches such as her peculiar capitalization, fragmentary sentences, one-line paragraphs, using local words within English sentences, new coinage, etc. Along with these linguistic methods, she relies on images as well. But this is not in the traditional way of using images. So, even though "thinking in images", she makes the defamiliarization possible by juxtaposing images in a totally fresh manner (it has been dealt with in the use of tropes in this chapter). It seems that Roy's novel is a synthesis of both "estrangement" as far as its language is concerned and "thinking in images" considering the use of its tropes (Lemon and Reis 261).

> The purpose of art, according Shklovsky, is to bring back the sensation of life. It [art] exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', [...] (Lemon and Reis 264).

This imparting of the new sensation of things is effectively made in *The God of Small Things*. Velutha's suffering is seen as if for the first time. The images used are fresh and suiting to the occasion. For example, just

before Velutha is taken into police custody from the History House: "They heard the thud of wood on flesh. Boot on bone. On teeth. The muffled grunt when a stomach is flicked in. The muted crunch of skull on cement. The gurgle of blood on a man's breath when his lung is torn by the jagged end of a broken rib" (Roy 308). These short sentences, in some cases not even sentences but mere phrases, give an exact picture of police brutality invoking auditory images such as "thud of wood on flesh," "boot on bone," "on teeth," "the muffled grunt," "the muted crunch of skull" and "the gurgle of blood" (Roy 308). This is followed by a series of visual images.

> Unlike the custom of rampaging religious mobs or conquering armies running riot, that morning in the Heart of Darkness the posse of Touchable Policemen acted with economy, not frenzy. Efficiency, not anarchy. Responsibility, not hysteria. They did not tear out his hair or burn him alive. They did not hack off his genitals and stuff them in his mouth. They did not rape him. Or behead him. (Roy 309)

In this case of a series of visual images such as "rampaging religious mobs," "conquering armies running riot," "the Heart of Darkness," etc.,

the introducing word of comparison is "unlike" and the negative word "not" is used to highlight what the policemen actually did (Roy 309). The estrangement becomes contemporary even at the cost of the rules of grammar on certain other occasions. For example, when Ammu goes to the police station to enquire about and admit her relationship with Velutha, the novel reads as: "But Baby Kochamma hadn't taken into account the Unsafe Edge in Ammu. The Unmixable Mix – the infinite tenderness of motherhood, the reckless rage of a suicide bomber" (Roy 321). In this case there is the use of unlawful capitals in phrases such as "Unsafe Edge", and "Unmixable Mix" which definitely invite the attention of the reader (Roy 321). Again, the phrase "the reckless rage of a suicide bomber" is an image from the modern-day terrorism (Roy 321). To cite another example for the novelist's attempt to displace language out of its usual, workday meaning, Estha's case may be considered. When he is taken to the police station along with Rahel to verify to the truth of Velutha's crime, he is offered Coca-Cola. "So once again, in the space of two weeks, bottled Fear for Estha. Chilled. Fizzed. Sometimes Things went worse with Coca-Cola" (Roy 313). Here, the novelist not only relates his experience when Coca-Cola was offered but relates his psychological aversion to it revealing how he associates it to "the Orangedrink LemonDrink Man" experience in Abhilash Talkies (Roy 103). In short every incident in the novel is depicted in an asserting way.

Ammu's divorce and the third-degree torture of Kerala police become incidents fresh in the memory of the readers. The twins in the novel may be perceived as the first twins in history. Both the characters and incidents in the novel are worth recalling because of the novel's technique, defamiliarization. The "automatism" of perception is in several "strange and wonderful" ways resisted (Lemon and Reis 265, 270).

Arundhati Roy uses a language which is closest to the characters' own language. The "linguistic contrarieties" found in the novel are the integral part of such a language used to convey the failings in the society (New 305). It really communicates the pathetic plight of the small gods in the society. The novelist's success lies not only in replacing the old tradition through her language and the new method of story-telling with any other form but with the artistic form which is *The God of Small Things*.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: An Area of Convergence

Indian sensibility in Indian English literature has been the slogan of Indian Writing in English since nineteen thirties. This principle touched its heights in nineteen eighties and nineties. Salman Rushdie may be considered as the leader of the second wave of a full Indianization process after the trio, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand in nineteen thirties. Bill Buford, in his Comment about Indian Writing in English titled "Declarations of Independence: Why are there suddenly many Indian novelists?" and published in The New Yorker, welcomes this new movement as follows:

> And to be an Indian novelist is to be something that has been changing, utterly, especially since 1981. That was the year that Salman Rushdie published "Midnight's Children", a book that [...] made everything possible. "Midnight's Children" showed Indian writers that great novels could be fashioned from Indian stories, with an Indian sensibility and a distinctly Indian use of the English language. (8)

The world literary community with open arms has accepted the new spurt in this Indianization process. Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy are the new arrivals in this new host of Indian English writers, after Rushdie himself. Their medium is Indian English. The Booker Prize they have won is a sign of their linguistic and literary merit. As Buford remarks generally about the new Indian writers, their language is "more exacting – more precise, more clearly articulated – than the language might be in the hands of a British or American author [...]" (8). Thus, finally "a new kind of English is finding a voice, a distinctly Indian English, one that is at once local and international, of its culture and of the globe" (Buford 8). Certainly, finding a new English for serving the Indian purpose is, in other words, a rejection of the accepted. It is nonconformity to the English language of the British or to the colonial English. This act of going "beyond the Englishness of the English language" is the first step towards "decolonizing the mind" (Rushdie, Damme...Scene for You" 58).

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, a postcolonial writer, states that for decolonizing the mind, one has to reject the colonizer's language itself. He says: " I believe that my writing in the Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialistic

struggles of Kenyan and African peoples" (290). Thus he rejects English itself as a medium. Thiong'o's rejection is one of the ways in decolonizing the African people. Another way, still relevant, is appropriating the English language in accordance with the local needs. Rushdie, Seth and Roy along with an eminent group of many other Indian writers in English have accepted the second way of the decolonization process. On account of such a literary activity, English is no more treated as the language of the colonizer alone. It is the language of the once colonized as well. In India it is treated as a regional language, maybe without a particular region to which it is restricted. It is a *lingua franca* in South India, and a highly Indianized tongue all over India.

Chinua Achebe speaks about the English language as a vehicle to convey his African experience as: "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surrounding" (qtd. Thiong'o 286). What Achebe says about his African experience in an altered English language is true about the Indian English writers as well, especially Rushdie, Seth and Roy. They have altered English to suit new Indian surroundings. Thus they bid farewell to the centuries-old language of the colonizer, resisting the colonizer's usages and formulas on grammaticality and

acceptability. According to Thiong'o, "the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (287). In 1947, India was free from "the physical subjugation", and after that historic event, over fifty years, it is now free from its "spiritual subjugation" (Thiong'o 287). It is not the way Thiong'o visioned it, i.e., by the rejection of the language of the colonizer, but by developing it in accordance with the regional requirements. There is nothing to be ashamed of what Indians have done, when the history of languages is traced. The few original language families in the world have developed according to local needs, and today there are many modern languages. The Indo-European language family is a typical example. Similarly when it was time for India to develop its own English, it developed Indian English. The development was by leaps and bounds, a little over fifty years and a little forceful too. Let Indian English writers be proud of it.

The three writers, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy, who are under discussion here, with their works such as *Midnight's Children, A Suitable Boy* and *The God of Small Things* respectively, converge here in this area of linguistic appropriation. For this, they have used various methods of language appropriation. The "translation" of regional languages into English and "equipping them in the process for

new societal" demands, construction of new structural forms, supply of new usages, maxims and folk songs and addition of new lexicon and phonology of the regional languages are some of them (Kachru 295). "Relexification" is another significant method (Zabus 314). This is the method of "making of a new register of communication out of an alien lexicon" (Zabus 314). Originally, it is the way of relexifying "one's mother tongue using English vocabulary but indigenous structures and rhythms [...]" (Zabus 314). But in the case of Rushdie, Seth and Roy, they have relexified the English language with regional vocabulary, often maintaining English structure. On certain occasions, to bring in the typical Indian experience, the indigenous rhythm is kept in tact. Thus, they could fashion a new English language out of the Indian regional languages. It solves an artistic problem. That is, it renders Indian concepts and thought patterns in the English language. At another level, it decolonizes the language of the colonial literature.

A thorough Indianization process to render the Indian psyche is made in the works of Rushdie, Seth and Roy. This new variety of English is in accordance with the "linguistic and cultural ecologies" and "sociological contexts" of India (Kachru 294). They have proved that the English language can be successfully used "outside the English cultural ambience" (New 304). And for the same success, they have secured the

Booker Prize based in England. As a result of this indiginization of English in India, to which many other writers also have contributed, English in India has become "nation language" (Brathwaite 311). This is a term Edward Kamau Brathwaite uses to refer to English used on Caribbean islands. He describes its nature as follows:

> Nation language is the language, which is influenced very strongly by the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage. English it may be in terms of some of its lexical features. But in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sound explosions, it is not English, even though the words, as you hear them, might be English to a greater or lesser degree. And this brings us back to the question [...] can English be a revolutionary language? And the lovely answer that came back was: it is not English that is the agent. It is not language, but people, who make revolutions. (311)

All the features of Caribbean nation language might not be applicable to the new variety of English in India. The main limitation is that several linguistic regions influence English in India. In South India itself, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada influence it, not to mention the

linguistic influences in North India such as Hindi and other North Indian languages on it. On account of these several linguistic, local and ethnic influences on it, English in India seems to be several nation languages. They reflect several aspects of Indian heritage. When the rhythm of Malayalam is audible in *The God of Small Things*, in *A Suitable Boy* several aspects of Bengali and Hindi can be seen, and *Midnight's Children* is filled with linguistic features of Hindi and Urdu.

Rushdie, Seth and Roy have revolutionized Indian English. Theirs is the literature of the Indians, the marginalized, the middle class and the ordinary people, because they use the appropriate language to express the Indian psyche. Such a language for a new purpose, as W.H. New entitled his essay, is "New Language, New World" (303). In the same essay he describes it as:

> Literature which uses the actual language – the sounds and syntax – of the people becomes, then, an arena in which the people's political and psychological tensions can find expression. The linguistic contrarieties that are part of such 'actual language' both derive from and convey the tensions in the society. And the literary form that can sustain the verbal tensions becomes a means of celebrating, or exposing,

> or at least recognizing and communicating particular social realities. (305, 306)

Arundhati Roy projects the actual tensions of the subaltern classes in an English that looks and sounds like the language of the region. Rushdie makes a thorough Indianization of the language reverting even the structure of the English language to render the people's history of India by means of the literary fantasy. Seth brings out the tensions of the upper middle class in fifties through their version of the English language. All these three resist the colonial English by finding new ways of language appropriation. They have modified it in the process of rendering the Indian experience despite the incompatibility of the Indian thought and a foreign language. Writers like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o have rejected

> the English language as a suitable vehicle for local expression, asserting the incompatibility of local thought and English words, English syntax, English style. Others, adhering to the notion of a single English literary tradition, find England's literature to embody the excellences to which 'peripheral' literatures must aspire [...]. Whether the impulse is to attach oneself to Great Traditions or to sever oneself from them, there is general agreement in all these

> stances about one thing: language affirms a set of social patterns and reflects a particular cultural taste. Writers who imitate the language of another culture, therefore, allow themselves to be defined by it. The best of the Commonwealth writers who do use English, however, have done more than just use the language; they have also modified it, in the process generating alternative literary possibilities. (New 303)

Rushdie, Seth and Roy use local expression with the proper fusion of Indian experience and English words, syntax and style. They make a new literary tradition through their works rejecting the English literary model. Without blindly imitating the original English language, they modify the language through their literary endeavor confirming the independent position of Indian English fiction in world literature. In the case of Arundhati Roy, her modifications of the English language have been discussed in Chapter 4: Linguistic Iconoclasm. Rushdie and Seth in *Midnight's Children* and *A Suitable Boy* respectively converge with her in this area of "generating alternative literary possibilities" by effecting modifications of English in their works (New 303).

In *A Suitable Boy,* Vikram Seth relexifies the English language with umpteen number of typical Indian phrases and usages, which do not form part of Standard English. "Exams are coming up, Malatiji, and you are still buying novel? Twelve annas plus one rupee four annas makes two rupees altogether. I should not allow this. You are like daughter to me" (Seth 47). Instead of "Exams are approaching" which is a Standard English usage, Seth prefers to characterize Dr. Kishan Chand, an old man, with a typical Indian English usage. And "annas" refers to India's monetary terminology of 1950s. Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor, another character, addresses her husband "Minister Sahib", "Pran's father" or "my this" because "my husband" is unacceptable in most regional languages of India (Seth 177). In a similar vein Mrs. Rupa Mehra addresses her husband "he" or "him" (Seth 206). All this is because Seth wants to transfer the typical Indian experience through the "actual language" of the people (New 305). The typical Hindi rhythm is maintained in the characterization, which is distinct to any reader. Once, the Raja of Marh while watching the Kumbha Mela shows his irritation saying "Hurry up, Hurry up! (Jhaldhi, Jhaldhi!) Shouted the Raja, as he stumbled down the long ramp to the sands. Where is this Sanaki Baba's camp? Where do all these sister-fucking pilgrims come from? Isn't there any organization? Get me my car!" (Seth 705). This is also typically Indian English in Hindi rhythm. Some of the typical Indian political slogans too do the

magic of Indianization of this English novel. They are: "Baitar ka MLA kaisa ho?" cried someone from the podium. "Ramlal Sinha jaisa ho!" shouted the crowd (1173). "Zindabad!" (1171). Another character in the novel, Professor Jaikumar speaks English in a Tamil accent. "Our typical young university teacher, he began, is overworked when he is junior – he has to teach yelementary prose and compulsory Yinglish. If he is yinnately conscientious, he has no time for yennything else. By then the fire is out –" (1272). Thus Seth renders the South Indian experience also. For rendering the Muslim dialect of North India, Seth uses words of Urdu origin such as "Chhose Sahib" (102), "the Nawab Sahib" (271), "Huzoor", "Ammi-Jaan" (321), "Abba Jaan" (27), etc. On another occasion, Rasheed says about his father's marriages as "Marte Gae, karte gae" (699). These are but a handful of examples of Indianization from over one thousand pages long novel, which permeates Indian in its content as well. Seth builds up a new idiom of English, which carries the weight of the Indian experience.

Salman Rushdie too converges with Arundhati Roy and Vikram Seth in this aspect of "relexification" of English (Zabus 314). Having come to surprise the readers in 1981 with *Midnight's Children*, he still continues to be a model for a crop of Indian English fiction writers. His capacity for making a new idiom out of the English language for

rendering the nuances of Indian experience is praiseworthy. His language seems to be mixed with several languages; a relexification process takes place in *Midnight's Children.* There is a sharp contrast between his language and Standard English. He uses, what Brathwaite calls, "nation language" voicing the actual language of the people (Brathwaite 311). For this, along with Standard English, he uses Hindi and Urdu, a mixture of Hindi and English and Bengali and English. Thus he brings into the pages of the novel the spoken idiom of English in India. Saleem, the protagonist of *Midnight's Children,* realizes the inability of Standard English when he speaks about divorce. "*Talaaq! Talaaq! Talaaq*! The English lacks the thunderclap sound of the Urdu, and anyway you know what it means" (62). "Begum Sahiba", "Purana Qila" (80), "Allah" (81), "bhai" (83), "Sahiba" (87), "Maharaj" (91), "No, not so quick, janum" (91), "Ganapati Bab" (93), "Mumbadevi" (93), "Schaapsteker money" (140), "Hey, you! Alla you! Hey, whatssamatter?" (182), "Roundandroundand"(186), jelly-like worry" (244),"tightertighter" (250),"Hooligans" (348), "[...] and now Tai Bai leaning out of a window shouts, 'Hey, bhaenchaud!' Little sister-sleeper, where you running?" (320), "Arre baap, Saleem, you remember" (379), etc.

Language is one of the areas where Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy meet. Each one of them uses the English language in a highly innovative way so that it can carry the weight of the actual

Indian experience. Rushdie uses the Indian version of the English language so as to suggest a new idiom of historiography by means of the literary fantasy. Thus, he shows his disagreement with the so-called national history and historiography, i.e., nonconformity to the prevalent system. Vikram Seth shows up the folly in the matchmaking in India using a language, which has "a suggestive power well beyond the immediate and lexical meaning" (Thiong'o 287). He too draws from the vast body of Indian English idiom to build up his powerful ironic language, which presents his nonconformity to the system of finding out suitable boys and girls. It is the language of protest and it shows nonconformity to the existing system, but he always holds the principle that the beauty of art is in concealing art. Arundhati Roy voices her strong protest in a language hitherto unknown in the history of Indo-Anglian literature. She projects the cause of the gods of small things, the subaltern, exposing inequalities in a casteist and patriarchal society. Each one of them shows their literary protest to separate areas of human life. For Rushdie, it is his nonconformity to historiography; for Seth, to matchmaking; and for Roy, to discrimination of social classes. Rushdie presents his nonconformity through the medium of literary fantasy; Seth through the language of irony; and Roy through breaking the rules of Standard English artistically. Though, they deal with different areas

subject-wise, the three of them converge in the case of developing Indian English further to render typical Indian experiences.

When India celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its Independence in 1997, Rushdie made a survey of Indian English fiction. In it he highlights the aspect Indianness in Indian fiction. He writes: "Whatever language we Indians write in, we drink from the same well. India, that inexhaustible horn of plenty, nourishes us all" (Rushdie, "Damme...Scene for You" 57). What Rushdie says in general about Indian English fiction is precisely true about himself, Seth and Roy. In the case of the use of the English language, each one uses Indian English, but a different variety of Indian English. Whether it is relexified with Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu or Bengali, it is Indian English transferring Indian experiences.

Nonconformists probe into the laws or normal social conventions and find out the abnormality or inexpediency about them. A good deal of history of the mankind is about dissidents' history. Nonconformity is the hallmark of progress. In a constantly changing world the laws are changed for a better future by protest. In the Indian literary arena, too, nonconformity has a prominent place. Writers are thrown into such a writing career by a personal sense of responsibility, combined with a set

of external reasons. As a group of Indian writers, they may feel that they are cast out of the existing structures and placed in a position of conflict with them. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan are nonconformists in several ways about several aspects of life, language and literature. They are the initiators of this impulse in Indian English literary tradition. A good many others including the eminent G.V.Desani with only one novel, *All about H. Hatter,* have followed them. In its continuation Rushdie joined the circle of these nonconformists in the early eighties and Seth and Arundhati Roy joined them in the nineties. When Indian English fiction traverses farther with great energy and diversity, it will find out new methods of nonconformity. And, nonconformity as a tool of literary analysis may be applied to the whole corpus of Indian English fiction. It is a productive area both for literary study and for creative writing.

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Appendix

[1] Sometimes, for Malayalam words English adjectives have been used such as "foolish pallathi" and "silver paral" (Roy 203). "Communist patcha" (Roy 27). "Konukku earrings" (Roy 30). "Mundus" (Roy 52). "Thanks, *keto*! He said. "*Valare thanks*" (Roy 70). " *Ividay*" (Roy 71). "Modalali Mariakutty" (Roy 80). "*Poda Patti*" (Roy 90). "*Eda cherukka*" (Roy 101). "a piece of poratha" (Roy 116). "Modalali" (Roy 122). "Aiyyo" (Roy 128). "Punyam Kunju?" (Roy 129). "oower oower" (Roy 129). "*Aiyyo Paavam*" (Roy 131). "*Orkunnundo*?" (Roy 134). "chakka velaichathu" (Roy 138). "ammoomas" (Roy 138). "appoopans" (Roy 138). "namaste" (Roy 139). "kappa and meen vevichathu" (Roy 140). "*Ende Deivamay! Eee sadhanangal*!" (Roy 143). "*Veshays*" (Roy 161). "*Chakko saar vannu*" (Roy 171). "Mundus" (Roy 172). "Kodam puli tree" (Roy 172). "*Ickilee*" (Roy 177). "Aiyyo *kashtam*" (Roy 177). "*Kandu,*" (Roy 178). "*kandoo,*" (Roy 179). "*Sundarikutty*"(Roy 179). "*Oower,*" (Roy 182). "*Kushumbi*" (Roy 185). "Akkara" (Roy 196). "*Enda da korangacha, chandi ithra thenjadu?*" (Roy 196). "Theyyom, Theyyom" (Roy 197). "vallom" (Roy 202)."pallathi, paral, koori, karimeen." (Roy 203). "Papera" (206). "Aiyyo, Mon! Mol!" (Roy 208). "koojah" (Roy 209). "idi-appams", "kanji and meen" (Roy 210). "*Thaiy thaiy*" (Roy 211). "Pandoru mukkuvan" (Roy 219). "mittam" (Roy 219). "Arayathi pennu" (Roy 219). "Pathil Ammai" (Roy 223). "Chachen" (Roy 223). "kuthambalam" (Roy 229). "rakshaa" (Roy 230). "Churidar and Sherwani" (Roy 240). "*the Modalali Mariyakutty*" (Roy 257). "Addeham" (Roy 270). "Mon" (Roy 270). "avalose oondas" (Roy 273). "*Oru kaaryam parayattey*" (Roy 277). "*keto*" (Roy 277). "Allayedi" (Roy 278). "*koo-koo kokum* (Roy 285). "Enda?" (Roy 287). "sari palloos" (Roy 297). "Madiyo" (Roy

310). "pallu" (Roy 315). *meeshas*" (Roy 318). "themmadi kuzhi" (Roy 321). "*Rombo maduram*" (Roy 323). "*Chappu Thamburan*" (Roy 339). "Naaley" (Roy 340).

[2] "The front verandah bare" appears in the midst of a paragraph without a main verb (Roy 2). It is followed by a single-word sentence "Unfurnished" (Roy 2). In the very next paragraph a subjectless sentence appears as "Born from separate but simultaneously fertilized eggs" (Roy 2). "Short creatures with lion shadows, patrolling the Blurry End" (Roy 3). This sentence neither has a main verb nor does it follow the rules prescribed for the use of capitals. "Free funerals" (Roy 4) and "Lying broken on the hot church floor, dark blood spilling from his skull like a secret" (Roy 6) are again sentences without a main verb. "Sicksweet" is another two-word combination of a sentence (Roy 6). And it is followed by "Like old roses on a breeze" (Roy 6) which is without a verb. Words run into each other in certain sentences. For example, "The singing stopped for a 'Whatisit? Whathappened?' and for a furrywhirring and a sariflapping" (Roy 6). Such words are abundantly seen. "Gently. *Tap, tap*" are sentences with one word and two words respectively (Roy 8). They are followed in the same page by a verbless sentence: "Or for that matter, *illegitimate*" (Roy 8). "*Where to*? the click was meant to mean" is another sentence, which bids farewell to the principled way of using punctuation (Roy 8). Here the question mark appears right in the middle of the sentence. Sentences of similar nature are given below.

"Stopped talking altogether, that is" (Roy 10). "A barely noticeable quietening" (Roy 10). "Never intrusive" (Roy 10). "Never noisy" (Roy 10). "A quite bubble floating on a sea of noise" (Roy 11). "Unspeakable. Numb" (Roy 12). "And once a bird that flew across" (Roy 12). "Rugged. Wrinkled by the sun" (Roy 13). "Like a fisherman in a city" (Roy 13). "Past the new, freshly baked, iced, Gulf-money houses built by nurses, masons, wire benders and bank clerks who worked hard and unhappily in faraway places. Past the resentful older houses tinged green with envy, cowering in their private driveways among their private rubber trees" (Roy 13). "Past Sophie Mol's yellow church. Past the Ayemenem Youth Kung Fu Club" (Roy 13). "Just quiet" (Roy 14). "But Rahel Comrade Pillai knew well" (Roy 14). "After all these years" (Roy 14). "Trains. Traffic. Music. The stock market" (Roy 15). "From school to school" (Roy 15). "In Mammachi's violin case. In the scabs of the sores on Chacko's shins that he constantly worried. In his slack, womanish legs" (Roy 16). "Like a fruit in season. Every season. As permanent as a Government job" (Roy 16). "Into false hair buns and how well they burned. Into life and how it ought to be lived" (Roy 17). "Nor even, in fact, of a superficial one" (Roy 17). "Not when Mammachi died. Not when Chacko emigrated to Canada" (Roy 18). "With a sitting Down sense" (Roy 18). "Given to him in love. Something still and small. Unbearably precious" (Roy 19). "Someone watching. Looking out of the window at the sea. At a boat in the river. Or a passer-by in the mist in a hat" (Roy 19). "That the two things fitted together. Like stacked spoons. Like familiar lovers' bodies" (Roy 20). "To return to Ayemanem. To Estha in the rain" (Roy 20). "That he had looked at her and walked straight past. Into the rain. As he did with everyone else" (Roy 20). "A stranger. Swollen. Noxious" (Roy 21). "Rahel's dead grandmother's jewellery. All of it. Winking rings" (Roy 22). "The young girl and the intrepid Jesuit , both quaking

with unchristian passion. Using the Bible as a ruse to be with each other" (Roy 24). "Just to be near him. Close enough to smell his beard. To see the coarse weave of his cassock. To love him just by looking at him" (Roy 24). "For a Breath of Fresh Air. To pay for the Milk. To Let Out a Trapped Wasp (which Kochu Maria was made to chase around the house with a towel)" (Roy 28). In these phrases both ungrammaticality and whimsical capitals can be seen. "After all those years" (Roy 29). "*She*" (Roy 29). "And the fishermen in their boats. And the fish" (Roy 30). "Too thin for jelly and too thick for jam" (Roy 30). "And how much" (Roy 31). "Cold handcuffs with a sourmetal smell. Like steel bus rails and the smell of the bus conductor's hands from holding them" (Roy 31). "Rain. Rushing, inky water. And a smell. Sicksweet. Like old roses on a breeze" (Roy 32). The memory of swollen face and a smashed upside-down smile. Of a spreading pool of clear liquid with a bare bulb reflected in it" (Roy 32). "Preserved. Accounted for" (Roy 32). "Imbued with a new meaning" (Roy 33). "Long before the Marxists came" (Roy 33). "In clear view. For every one to see" (Roy 35). " In a house full of memories" (Roy 36). "Two beads on a rubber band" (Roy 37). "Straight, Neat" (Roy 39). "By candlelight. In a hospital with the windows blacked out" (Roy 40). "For a holiday. To a clinic perhaps, for treatment" (Roy 42). "On his head. His legs. Hips back and shoulders" (Roy 42). "And no more dreams" (Roy 42). Or twiddle their nipples. With a spanner: like Chaplin in *Modern Times*" (Roy 43). "A foolish jeweled bride" (Roy 43). "An unmixable mix" (Roy 44). "With tailfins" (Roy 47). A sort of contained cruelty" (Roy 51). "Who speaks Malayalam and wore mundus" (Roy 52). "To matter" (Roy 53). "For the oceans to part. For the mountains to rise" (Roy 54). "Tomatoes. In the tar on the roads. In certain colours. In the plates at a restaurant. In the absence of words. And the emphasis in eyes" (Roy 55). "Never. The. Less"

(Roy 55). "A hundred times. Forwards" (Roy 60). "And Parsees" (Roy 61). "Yearning marshmallows with cloudy children behind them" (Roy 62). "An alarm clock" (Roy 63). "Except Murlidharan" (Roy 64). "The smell of smoke. A wind screen wiper" (Roy 72). "Caste Hindus and Caste Christians" (Roy 73). "Velutha who oiled the water pump and the small diesel generator. Velutha who built the aluminium sheet-lined, easy-to-clean cutting surfaces, and the ground-level furnaces for boiling fruit" (Roy 76). "Or done" (Roy 76). "An unwarranted assurance. In the way he walked. The way he held his head" (Roy 76). "That he had been to prison" (Roy 77). "At least not until the Terror took hold of him" (Roy 78). "More than touched" (Roy 78). "Not even a Paravan's" (Roy 78). "To destroy what he had created" (Roy 78). "Of red fish curry cooked with black tamarind" ((Roy 79). "And a white shirt over a black back with a birthmark" (Roy 79). "Like a normal family" (Roy 79). "Crisp and dusty" (Roy 80). "Ten to two. Still no train" (Roy 82). "Mother, father, brother, husband, bestfriend" (Roy 83). "Their father" (Roy 84). Or gobble" (Roy 84). "And Ammu's" (Roy 84). "An honour" (Roy 89). "Just the whisper of an unwillingness to subsist on scraps offered by others" (Roy 91). "Stiff. Dark blue. Difficult to get out of" (Roy 91). "Chocolate with a twist of coffee" (Roy 92). "Rahel at the bathroom door. Slim hipped" (Roy 92). "A lizard on a map on her faded T-shirt" (Roy 92). "Sometimes" (Roy 92). "The arch of his instep" (Roy 92). "Tight plums" (Roy 93). "A sister a brother. A woman a man. A twin a twin" (Roy 93). "In their irreconcilable far-apartness" (Roy 93). "Head thrust forward. Silly smile. Bosom swinging low. Melons in a blouse. Bottom up and out" (Roy 95). "Like friends" (Roy 95). "About Velutha or the spit bubble" (Roy 96). "Flying. Weightless. Up two steps. Down two. Up one" (Roy 98). "The orange too orange. The lemon too lemon" (Roy 98). "And old carpets" (Roy 99). "Two knees and a

fountain" (Roy 99). No melons in their blouses" (Roy 99). Like stickers on a card" (Roy 99). "Past angry Ammu. Past Rahel concentrating through her knees. Past Baby Kochamma. Past the Audience that had to move its legs again. Thiswayandthat" (Roy 101). "His lemontoolemon, too cold" (Roy 105). "And so, out the gate, up the road, and to the left. The taxi stand" (Roy 112). "Old clothes rolled up. Damp towels" (Roy 112). "Jumping lights" (Roy 113). "Very much less" (Roy 113). "Because water always helps" (Roy 113). "Tailfins aflutter" (Roy 113). "Magic flying carpet" (Roy 114). "That they came in different sizes" (Roy 115). "His disgusting, after-sweet sweet" (Roy 116). "Slow out. Slow in. A predator's lazy blink" (Roy 117). "Nine years old. Last seen when she was red and wrinkled" (Roy 117). "Barely human" (Roy 117). "Which, knowing him, he probably had" (Roy 117). "To learn her. Imprint her on his memory" (Roy 117). "The shape of her puckered, constantly moving mouth" (Roy 117). "The spaces between her toes" (Roy 117). "Messages being sent from here to there" (Roy 119). "A New government selling up its systems" (Roy 117). "Organizing the division of labour, deciding who would do what" (Roy 117). "Something big" (Roy 118). "Dead as a doorknob" (Roy 118). "A Joe-shaped hole in the universe" (Roy 118). "Rose-lipped and Syrian Christian nowhere" (Roy 118). "Perhaps because of the way Chacko said it" (Roy 118). "Like a sad fish with fins all over" (Roy 118). "The acrid aftertaste of a Little Man's first encounter with Fear" (Roy 119). "And whether he had been seeing Comrade K.N.M. Pillai lately" (Roy119). "Among them Comrade K.N.M. Pillai" (Roy 120). "A pawn in the monstrous bourgeois plot to subvert the Revolution"(Roy 121). "He and She" (Roy 122). "Upstream in the mornings. Downstream in the evenings" (Roy 123). "More rice, for the price of a river" (Roy 124). "Splay-footed, cautious" (Roy 124). "To change lives" (Roy 124). "Of Rigour and Air-

conditioning" (Roy 126). "Toy Histories for rich tourists to play in" (Roy 126). "Like the sheaves" (Roy 126). "Overcome by the smell of food" (Roy 127). "Silenced by the humming of cooks. The cheerful chop-chop-chopping of ginger and garlic. The disembowelling of lesser mammals – pigs, goats. The dicing of meat. The scaling of fish" (Roy 127). "Under grass" (Roy 127). "To beat to death a careless bus driver" (Roy 128). "And not a pickle-eater" (Roy 129). "The Christian bourgeoisie had begun to self-destruct" (Roy 131). "As proud as a pearl in an oyster" (Roy 133). "As though standing sideways was a sin" (Roy 135). "Like well-whipped eggwhite" (Roy 137). "Their families had come to meet them" (Roy138). "With an end to grinding poverty in their Aristocrat suitcases" (Roy 140). "With cement roofs for their thatched houses, and geysers for their parents' bathrooms. With sewage systems and septic tanks. Maxis and high heels. Puff sleeves and lipstick" (Roy 140). "White" (Roy 143). "Because of a calamitous car crash" (Roy 143). "Because of a Joe-shaped hole in the Universe" (Roy 143). "Twitching to join someone else's feet" (Roy 148). "Cruel" (Roy 155). "Silhouetted against the sun. Buffed and beautiful" (Roy 155). "In Ammu's writing" (Roy 156). "On several counts" (Roy 162). "Where real death was" (Roy 162). "No trains, no crowds" (Roy 162). "Her hair, her skin, her smile. Her voice" (Roy 163). "To your feet or hair" (Roy 164). "Like a sole peeling off an old shoe"(Roy 164). "Technically" (Roy 165). "Off-white and gold" (Roy 166). "Old, unusual, regal" (Roy 166). "Scars of old beatings from an old marriage. Her brass vase scars" (Roy 166). "And the salt" (Roy 167). "Her Man. Her only Love" (Roy 168). "Disjuncted sex from love" (Roy 169). "The Hulk Hogan addict" (Roy 170). "With pencils up his nose" (Roy 171). Jet-lagged and barely awake" (Roy 172). "To read her like a bank note" (Roy 174). "Barebodied" (Roy 174). "His autumn leaf at night" (Roy 174). "Contoured and hard" (Roy 175).

"Helping Vellya Paapen to count coconuts" (Roy 175). "Calling her Ammukutty" (Roy 175). "The man or her own child. Or just their world of hooked fingers and sudden smiles" (Roy 176). "Sloughed off like an old snakeskin. Its marks, its scars, its wounds from old wars and the walking backwards days all fell away" (Roy 176). "That her shoulders shone, but her eyes were somewhere else" (Roy 176). "That *she* had gifts to give him too" (Roy 177). "Cold and hot at once" (Roy 177). "To rewrap them in its old, scarred pelt and drag them back to where they really lived. Where the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much" (Roy 177). "Shaking" (Roy 177). "With fountains in Love-in-Tokyos" (Roy 179). "And backward-reading habits" (Roy 179). "Rustle. Lunge. No more toad to hop from stone to scummy stone. No more prince to kiss" (Roy 187). " Designer pectorals" (Roy 188). "The river" (Roy 190). "As were the ladies in Ayemenem" (Roy190). "Or affection" (Roy 190). "Deep rust brown" (Roy 190). "Whole. Like a python" (Roy 191). "Stumbling through their parts, nursing someone else's sorrow. Grieving someone else's grief" (Roy 191). "Or seek redress" (Roy 191). "Regurgitated whole" (Roy 192). "A gift. The promise of a story" (Roy 192). "Of brass lamps lit and dark, oiled wood" (Roy192). "Or pineapple squash perhaps. With ice. Yellow in a glass" (Roy 194). "The sound of their hammering echoing dully under the brooding, storm-coming sky" (Roy 195). "Angular, spiky" (Roy 196). "A boat to carry provisions. Matches. Clothes" (Roy 196). "Not yellow" (Roy 198). "That on the day History picked to square its books, Estha would keep the receipt for the dues that Velutha paid" (Roy 199). "That he plucked them from the minds of passers-by the way children pick currants from a cake" (Roy 199). "Crawling backwards with a broom" (Roy 200). "An old river silence" (Roy 200). "Sometimes audible to other people. Sometimes not" (Roy 200). "Stiffening starched saris" (Roy 201). "By the

river" (Roy 201). "Through the kitchen, past Kochu Maria fast asleep. Thick-wrinkled like a sudden rhinoceros in a frilly apron" (Roy 201). "A mobile republic" (Roy 202). "And a One Two and" (Roy 202). "Where the current was swift and certain (downstream when the tide was out, upstream, pushing up from the backwaters when the tide was in)" (Roy 203). "The water brown and murky. Full of weeds and darting eels and slow mud that oozed through toes like toothpaste" (Roy 203). "In dire need of sunlight. It needed scraping, and cleaning, perhaps, but nothing more" (Roy 204). "Like a combined hat that dripped" (Roy 205). "Soon. Too soon" (Roy 207). "Jesus in a mini" (Roy 209). "Sleeping a dog's sleep" (Roy 212). "Now" (Roy 212). "On Kuttappan like a cloud, on Jesus like an offering" (Roy 213). "The boat that Estha sat on, and Rahel found" (Roy 213). "And rinse" (Roy 214). "Tumbling through the green afternoon heat" (Roy 214). "Followed by her brother and a yellow wasp" (Roy 214). "Carelessly, over those burnished chocolate ridges. And left patterned trails of bumpy gooseflesh on his body, like flat chalk on a blackboard, like a swathe of breeze in a paddy field, like jet streaks in blue church-sky" (Roy 215). "Smashed" (Roy 216). "The God of loss? The God of Small Things? The God of Goose Bumps and Sudden Smiles? Of Sourmetal Smells – like steel bus-rails and the smell of the bus conductor's hands from holding them?" (Roy 217). "Unequally" (Roy 218). "A curl from Velutha's backyard. Ammu picked it out" (Roy 220). "The smell of her" (Roy 220). "Unclouded by passion or desire – that pair of dogs that sleeps so soundly inside children, waiting for them to grow up" (Roy 221). "Like the kisses of cheerful one-armed men in dreams" (Roy 221). "That her cup was full of dust. That the air, the sky, the trees, the sun, the rain, the light and darkness were all slowly turning to sand" (Roy 222). "That sand would fill her nostrils, her lungs, her mouth. Would pull her down, leaving on the surface a

spinning swirl like crabs leave when they borrow downwards on a beach" (Roy 222). "Like an arrow directing a lost traveller" (Roy 222). "An inexperienced lover" (Roy 222). "Not big in itself" (Roy 223). "Big only because the rest of her was so slender" (Roy 223). "Perhaps two" (Roy 223). "Married a Bengali. Went quite mad. Died young. In a cheap lodge somewhere" (Roy 223). "Fumes that wrinkled youth and picked futures" (Roy 224). "Whose door, Chacko, crazed by grief, four days after Sophie Mol's funeral, would batter down" (Roy 225). "Hacking its hair off. Breaking every bone in its body. Snapping even the little ones. The fingers" (Roy 225). "Twin millstones and their mother. Numb millstones" (Roy 225). "The glint of Ammu's needle. The colour of a ribbon. The weave of the cross-stitch counterpane. A door slowly breaking" (Roy 225). "Looming over them. A chrome door handle in his hand. Suddenly strangely calm. Surprised at his own strength. His bigness. His bullying power. The enormity of his own terrible grief" (Roy (226). "And wash his clothes with crumbling bright blue soap" (Roy 227). "Flatmuscled, and honey coloured. Sea-secrets in his eyes. A silver raindrop on his ear" (Roy 227). "A tusk towards the stars" (Roy 228). "Their truncated swimming pool performances. Their turning to tourism to stave off starvation" (Roy 229). "To apologize for corrupting their stories. For encashing their identities. Misappropriating their lives" (Roy 229). "Or the smell of your lover's skin" (Roy 229). "His only instrument" (Roy 230). "Unfeasible. Condemned goods" (Roy 230). "With unions of their own" (Roy 230). "Or smokes a joint. Good Kerala grass" (Roy 231). "Structure" (Roy 231). "Karna Alone. Condemned goods. A prince raised in poverty" (Roy 232). "A warrior reduced to infancy. The ecstasy of that kiss" (Roy 233). "Equivocated. Made a small adjustment, took a somewhat altered oath" (Roy 233). "The wind and thunder" (Roy 234). "Listed all the wrongs that each had done the other" (Roy 234).

"Cringing the next. Bhima toying with him. Both stoned" (Roy 235). "Under the rose bowl" (Roy 235). "Even Kunti, the soft one with breasts" (Roy 236). "Comrade Pillai. Ayemenem's egg-breaker and professional omletteer" (Roy 236). "He and She. We and Us" (Roy 237). "Like someone at a fancy-dress party" (Roy 240). "Thin and young, scowling from the sun in their eyes" (Roy 240). "A scowling cloud with eye-brows" (Roy 240). "Another waitress in another café" (Roy 241). "That he read Classics. And rowed for Balliol" (Roy 244). "Who made love to her with a passion that took her breath away" (Roy 245). "Not bad-looking. Not special" (Roy 245). "That she was uncertain about her feelings for him" (Roy 245). "Without her family's consent" (Roy 246). "That he did not apologize for the cigarette burns in the new sofa"(Roy 247). "To even smaller, more dismal rooms" (Roy 247). "The stern, schoolteacher-shaped hole in the Universe (who sometimes slapped) " (Roy 250). "London – Bombay – Cochin " (Roy 250). "Not ill or asleep" (Roy 251). "For leaving her there alone over the week-end while she and Chacko went to Cochin to confirm their return tickets" (Roy 251). "Bewildered Twin Ambassodors of God-knows what. Their Excellencies Ambassadors E. Pelvis and S. Insect" (Roy 253). "Which, in a way, it was" (Roy 254). "Generation for Generation" (Roy 255). "Skin to skin" (Roy 255). "Every night. Rocking on the water. Empty. Waiting for the lovers to return" (Roy 256). "The lovers. Sprung from his loins and hers. His son and her daughter" (Roy 256). "At least not in these circumstances. Of being locked into a physically impregnable cocoon" (Roy 256). "Offering to kill his son. To tear his limb from limb" (Roy 256). "A ship of goodness ploughing through a sea of sin" (Roy 257). "His mouth on hers" (Roy 257). "At baptisms and birthday parites" (Roy 258). "Baby Kochamma the Plan"(Roy 258). "Picture him" (Roy 258). "A mer-child" (Roy 258). "Or when"(Roy 259). "A Paravan" (Roy 259). "A divorcee with

two children" (Roy 259). "Injured. Incredulous" (Roy 260). "Brief, cryptic, to the point"(Roy 262). "So different from the amused Rumpled Porcupine she had met that longago Oxford morning at the café"(Roy 263). "The sad singing" (Roy 263). "Their wide khaki shorts rigid with starch"(Roy 265). "Buckingham Palace and Big Ben. Shops and people" (Roy 267). "Incomplete" (Roy 267). "Like a fruit in season. Every season" (Roy 267). "With arm freckles and back freckles. With a blue dress and legs underneath" (Roy 270). "Contained his expansiveness" (Roy 275). "Some day eventually" (Roy 277). "An encouraging pat on his back. A reassuring arm around the shoulders" (Roy 284). "Thick spit" (Roy 284). "Stunned" (Roy 284). "Each leaf. Each tree. Each cloud in the starless sky" (Roy 285). "The clear lines to smudge" (Roy 285). "Glutinous" (Roy 285). "Sleep and wake up in another world" (Roy 285). "Lumpy vomit dribbling down his insides. Over his heart. His lungs. The slow thick drip into the pit of his stomach" (Roy 286). "Very young" (Roy 289). "*Then better*" (Roy 290). "Three children on the river bank" (Roy 291). "To mourn its passing" (Roy 293). "With fish in it" (Roy 293). "A pair of damp dwarves, numb with fear, waiting for the world to end " (Roy 294). "Little Man" (Roy 294). "Hands in his lap" (Roy 295). "With no intention of ever getting up" (Roy 295). "Like a joke" (Roy 296). "A yolk addressing a sea of boiled eggs" (Roy 298). "Her nightcap. A clenched-smile soda. Tangy teeth in the morning" (Roy 299). "Grown into their mother's skin. The liquid glint of her eyes in the dark. Her small straight nose. Her mouth, full lipped. Something wounded-looking about it" (Roy 300). "Grey in the stationlight. Hollow people. Homeless. Hungry. Still touched by last year's famine" (Roy 301). "A humpy pool. And went on with her life" (Roy 302). "The Kottayam Police. A cartoonplatoon. New-Age princes in funny pointed helmets. Cardboard lined with cotton. Hairoil stained. Their shabby khaki crowns" (Roy 304).

"Cormorants. Adjutant storks. Sarus cranes looking for space to dance. Purple herons with pitiless eyes. Deafening, their *wraark wraark wraark*. Motherbirds and their eggs" (Roy 305). "A jewell in the velvet jungle" (Roy 305). "Still" (Roy 305). "Sealed. Healed. Untapped" (Roy 306). "With brushes dipped in nature's palette. Moss-green. Earthbrown. Crumbleblack" (Roy 307). "Asleep" (Roy 308). "Structure. Order. Complete monopoly" (Roy 309). "Fresh" (Roy 310). "And the pens and socks. Police children with multi-coloured toes" (Roy 312). "With strains" (Roy 313). "All over the floor" (Roy 313). "Which left the police saddled with the Death in Custody of a technically innocent man" (Roy 314). "Caked with mud. Drenched in Coca-Cola" (Roy 315). "And walking people" (Roy 316). "The beatings" (Roy 317). "As children" (Roy 318). "Bright" (Roy 319). "A pumpkin with a monstrous upside-down smile" (Roy 320). "For ever" (Roy 321). "That Estha be Returned" (Roy 322). "Not an awake light" (Roy 323). "His eye on the main chance. Free bus rides. Free funerals. Free education. Little Man" (Roy 325). "To touch the words it makes. To keep the whisper" (Roy 327). "Or Needs from Feelings" (Roy 328). "Or the undercurrent of sexual jealousy that emanated from Mammachi" (Roy 329). "Feral" (Roy 331). "To a better, happier place" (Roy 332). "Her smooth brown skin. Her shining shoulders" (Roy 332). "So *certain*" (Roy 333). "The fish. The stars" (Roy 334). "A cloudy kiss" (Roy 335). "Willed this to happen. The twin midwives of Ammu's dream" (Roy 336). "Frantic. Frenzied. Asking to be let in further. Further" (Roy 337). "A secret sliding-folding panel" (Roy 338). "No future" (Roy 338). "An antiquated philosophy" (Roy 339).

[3] "Ever" (Roy 3). "Not old" (Roy 3). "Not young" (Roy 3). "But a viable die-able age" (Roy 3). "Satin lined" (Roy 4). "Brass handle stained" (Roy 4). "Estha and Rahel had not seen each other since" (Roy 9). "It hadn't changed, the June Rain" (Roy 10). This is also an example for whimsical capital. " He walked past the village school that his great grandfather built for Untouchable children" (Roy 13). "As for Rahel" (Roy 15). "Rahel said nothing" (Roy 21). "Or was he?" (Roy 21). "*She is living her life backwards*, Rahel thought" (Roy 22). "A rushing, rolling fish-swimming sense" (Roy 30). "As per their books" (Roy 30). "*Yes, it was him*" (Roy 32). "And how much" (Roy 33). "Of course that was then. Before the Terror" (Roy 38). "Like polishing firewood" (Roy 44). "On other days she had deep dimples when she smiled" (Roy 45). "Looming in the Heart of Darkness". (Roy 54). "History's smell" (Roy 55). "Like old roses on a breeze" (Roy 55). "Chacko told Rahel and Estha that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I" (Roy 57). "The sound of a thousand voices spread over the frozen traffic like a Noise Umbrella" (Roy 65). "Unfortunately, before the year was out, the Peaceful part of the Peaceful Transition came to an end" (Roy 67). "His surprised eyes were open" (Roy 69). "A bun" (Roy 70). "A banana" (Roy 70). "Entered" (Roy 78). " Loved" (Roy 78). "By far. By far" (Roy 78). "Marching" (Roy 79). "There were so many stains on the road" (Roy 82). "Squashed Miss Mitten-shaped stains in the Universe" (Roy 82). "Squashed frog-shaped stains in the Universe" (Roy 82). "Rahel followed Estha to his room. Ammu's room. Once" (Roy 91). "*Old*" (Roy 92). "A viable die-able age" (Roy 92). "That was a Good Sign" (Roy 96). "Estha Alone of the uneven teeth" (Roy 97). "The shadows of the fans were on the sides of the screen where the picture wasn't" (Roy 99). "The camera soared up in the skyblue (car-coloured) Austrian sky with the clear, sad sound of church bells" (Roy 99). "Click. And click" (Roy 114). "Rahel

stood in the hotel room doorway, full of sadness" (Roy 115). "None tonight. Nothing unusual. Just Binaca bubbles" (Roy 116). "The sheets were coarse, but clean" (Roy 117). "She asked him for a divorce" (Roy 117). "A cold moth lifted a cold leg" (Roy 118). "They dreamed of their river" (Roy 122). "With fish in it" (Roy 123). "With the sky and trees in it" (Roy 123). "And at night, the broken yellow moon in it" (Roy 123). "Both things had happened" (Roy 124). "It had shrunk. And she had grown" (Roy 124). "On warm days the smell of shit lifted off the river and hovered over Ayemenem like a hat" (Roy 125). "Further inland, and still across, a five-star hotel chain had bought the Heart of Darkness" (Roy 125). "A small forgotten thing" (Roy 127). "The man hadn't" (Roy 129). "The nodder nodded as Rahel's ancestral lineage fell into place for him" (Roy 129). "The waiting room was full" (Roy 132). "A tide of panic rose in Rahel" (Roy 133). "That was Lenin then" (Roy 134). "Now he had a house and a Bajaj scooter. A wife and an *issue*" (Roy 134). "They weren't speaking to each other at the airport (Roy 137). "Chacko didn't slap her" (Roy 137). "Fondly" (Roy 137). "Red betel spit stains spattered their kangaroo stomachs like fresh wounds" (Roy 138). "Red-mouthed smiles the Airport Kangaroos had" (Roy 138). "Airport garbage in their baby bins" (Roy 139). "Ammu watched with her handbag" (Roy 140). "Chacko with his roses" (Roy 140). "Fatly" (Roy 141). "Fondly" (Roy 141). "Ammu never noticed" (Roy 142). "Lay. Ter" (Roy 146). "And a Novel" (Roy 146). "Rahel groped behind the row of books and brought out hidden things" (Roy 155). "A smooth seashell and a spiky one" (Roy 156). "Little Ammu" (Roy 159). "Who never completed *her* corrections" (Roy 159). "Who came back to Ayemenem with asthma and a rattle in her chest that sounded like a faraway man shouting"(Roy 159). "Estha never saw her like that" (Roy 159). "Wild. Sick. Sad" (Roy 159). "But for the Time Being, she said, until she made her decision, she

was keeping Estha's presents away for him" (Roy 160). "She never saw her again" (Roy 161). "She was their Ammu *and* their Baba and she had loved them Double" (Roy 163). "Blind Mother Widow with a violin" (Roy 166). "A crow stole some soap that bubbled in its beak" (Roy 169). "Collapsed fountains" (Roy 172). "Flattened puffs"(Roy 172). "Ammu saw her go" (Roy 175). "He had high cheekbones and a white, sudden smile"(Roy 175). "She hoped it had been him" (Roy 176). "Simple things" (Roy 176). "For instance, he saw that Rahel's mother was a woman" (Roy 176). "And truth be told, it was no small wondering matter" (Roy 180). "She was just that sort of animal"(Roy 180). "Click. And click" (Roy 183). "Kochu Maria watched with her cake-crumbs" (Roy 186). "The Fond Smiles watched Fondly" (Roy 186). "Slimly. Wasting. Croaking" (Roy 187). "She had no plans" (Roy 188). "No plans" (Roy 188). "To let it be, to travel with it, as Velutha did, is much the harder thing to do" (Roy 190). "Rahel lifted her head and listened" (Roy 192). "The earthly remains of Paradise Pickles and Preserves" (Roy 192). "Past glass casks of vinegar with corks" (Roy 193). "Past shelves of pectin and preservatives" (Roy 193). "Past trays of bitter gourd, with knives and coloured finger-guards" (Roy 193). "The dying froth made dying frothy shapes" (Roy 194). "Fire burn, banana bubble" (Roy 195). "The gauze door closed" (Roy 197). "She turned to Estha bent over the scarlet broth in the black cauldron" (Roy 197). "India was a free country" (Roy 197). "If he wanted to" (Roy 198). "Rahel's fingers were Yellow Green Blue Red Yellow" (Roy 198). "Slow out" (Roy 198). "Slow in" (Roy 199). "As long as no one succumbed to its artifice and unsickled it with a cigar" (Roy 199). "A disbelieving lizard's blink" (Roy 201). "High-stepping chickens in the yard" (Roy 201). "Red ants on yellow stones" (Roy 201). "Past the factory" (Roy 201). "Tumbling barefoot through the greenheat, followed by a yellow wasp" (Roy 202). "Knock on it and it made a hollow

knocked-on sound"(Roy 202). "And what was he sitting on?" (Roy 202). "White termites on their way to work" (Roy 202). "White ladybirds on their way home" (Roy 202). "The Meenachal" (Roy 203). "Slowly the old boat sank, and settled on the sixth step" (Roy 204). "There were no keys or cupboards to lock" (Roy 208). "*Her* children, an insane whisper whispered to him" (Roy 212). "Hoping, praying, that Ammu hadn't woken up and found her gone" (Roy 214). "Shadows that only he could see" (Roy 215). "He could do only one thing at a time" (Roy 215). "The sea was black, the spume vomit green" (Roy 216). "Fish fed on shattered glass" (Roy 216). "Night's elbows rested on the water, and falling stars glanced off its brittle shards" (Roy 216). "He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors" (Roy 216). "He left no footprints on the shore" (Roy 218). "The night postponed till further notice" (Roy 218). "Because the truth is, that only what *counts* counts" (Roy 218). "The simple, unswerving wisdom of children" (Roy 218). "Skin that flaked and shed like snow" (Roy 222). "Ammu shivered" (Roy 222). "Ammu worried about madness"(Roy 223). "Hooded in her own hair, Ammu leaned against herself in the bathroom mirror and tried to weep" (Roy 224). "For herself" (Roy 224). "*My* house, *my* pineapples, *my* pickle" (Roy 225). "The killer and the corpse" (Roy 225). "*That* is their mystery and their magic" (Roy 229). "He becomes a Regional Flavour" (Roy 231). "Perhaps not" (Roy 231). "She invoked the Love Laws" (Roy 232). "The air grew warmer" (Roy 234). "A Wake" (Roy 238). "A Live" (Roy 238). "In the right-hand corner of the photograph, a man wheeling his bicycle along the kerb had turned to stare at the couple" (Roy 240). "Until Chacko walked into the café one morning" (Roy 241). "Meanwhile, another customer (a regular), had arrived unnoticed, and waited to be served" (Roy 243). "Until the day she married him she never believed that she would ever consent to be his wife" (Roy

244). "The timing of the wedding couldn't have been worse" (Roy 247). "Steady" (Roy 248). "*Thimble-drinker* " (Roy 251). "So they had" (Roy 253). "With that olfactory observation, that specific little detail, the Terror unspooled" (Roy 257). "Mammachi lost control" (Roy 258). "Baby Kochamma broke down" (Roy 261). "The God of Loss" (Roy 265). "The God of Small Things" (Roy 265). "He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors" (Roy 265). "The metallic clink of handcuffs in someone's heavy pocket" (Roy 265). "He broke the eggs but burned the omelette"(Roy 281). "Just the effort of lifting his arm to knock exhausted him" (Roy 286). "History walking the dog" (Roy 288). "He left no ripples in the water"(Roy 289). " The God of Loss" (Roy 290). "The God of Small Things" (Roy 290). "Naked but for his nail varnish". "Out" (Roy 293). "His sister" (Roy 299). "Echoing stationsounds" (Roy 300). "The air was thick with flies" (Roy 301). "Everybody knew" (Roy 303). "Past a deepblue beetle balanced on an unbending blade of grass" (Roy 305). "Onwards" (Roy 305). "Hairy fairies with lethal wands" (Roy 306). "*Quick Piss*" (Roy 307). "Man's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor deify" (Roy 308). "Men's Needs" (Roy 209). "And" (Roy 310). "Still they brought out the handcuffs" (Roy 310). "Click" (Roy 311). "Half an hour past midnight, Death came for him" (Roy 320). "*That* wasn't in the papers" (Roy 324). Where people were sent to Jolly Well Behave" (Roy 325). "They had known each other before Life began" (Roy 327). "He did" (Roy 332). "The scurrying, hurrying, boatworld was already gone" (Roy 336). "But what was there to say?" (Roy 338). "She had a dry rose in her hair" (Roy 340).

[4] "Anyway, now she thinks of Estha and Rahel as *Them* [...]. *They'd* Be" (Roy 3) which is a single sentence paragraph as well. "Rahel [...] her battle against Real

Life" (Roy 5), which is a single sentence paragraph with two unruly capitals at the end. It is followed by a two sentence paragraph with two whimsical capitals at the end of the second sentence. "She showed Rahel Two Things" (Roy 5). Immediately in the next paragraph the second word is again capital. "Thing One [...]" (Roy 5). "Ammu explained later that Too Briefly meant For Too Short a While" (Roy 7) is an example of several whimsical capitals and a single sentence paragraph as well. "Two weeks later, Estha was *Returned*" (Roy 9). This is followed in the same page with a sentence which carries the word "re-Returned" (Roy 9). "Returned" is used several times in page 11 and "re-Returned" in page 13. "He dismissed the whole business as the Inevitable Consequence of Necessary Politics" (Roy 14). "The Loss of Sophie Mol" (Roy 15). "That Big God" (Roy 19). "Worse Things kept happening" (Roy 19). "The Senior Sisters" (Roy 24). "the Sowing and the Reaping" (Roy 31). "that Estha be Returned" (Roy 31). "a Twin Expert in Hyderabad" (Roy 31). "the Love Laws" (Roy 33). "HOWEVER, for practical purposes" is part of a single line on the page before Chapter 2: Pappachi's Moth (Roy 34). "*What Will Sophie Mol Think?*" (Roy 36). "His Special Outing Puff. His favourite Elvis song was Party" (Roy 37). "this Unsafe Edge" (Roy 44). "half-Hindus Hybrids" (Roy 45). "the Earth Woman's life" (Roy 54). "Reading Aloud Voice" (Roy 55). "control her Hopes yet" (Roy 58). "a Bad Sign" (Roy 58). "a Highly Stupid Impression" (Roy 60). "the Air" (Roy 61). "the Level Crossing Divinity" (Roy 61). "Mercurochrome" (Roy 61). "Comrade" (Roy 65). "Trade Union" (Roy 65). "Restrain the Hand of the Reactionary Anti-People Congress Government at the Centre" (Roy 67). "Touchables and Untouchables" (Roy 69). "Little Ammu" (Roy 74). "Grief and Trouble" (Roy 78). "a Male Chauvinist Pig" (Roy 83). "Litt-le Bird" (Roy 87). "Design for Life" (Roy 91). "Life began" (Roy 93). "Defeat" (Roy 96). "He needed Height" (Roy 96).

"Estha Alone" (Roy 96). "The Man" (Roy 97). "Things She'd Done For People, and Things People Hadn't Done For Her" (Roy 98). "*Identified*" (Roy 98). "Big Man" (Roy 100). "Estha EXITED" (Roy 101). "Theatre Offence" (Roy 103). "Thank God" (Roy 105). "Other Hand" (Roy 105). "Alone" (Roy 115). "the Big Light" (Roy 116). "HAVE to love their own children Most in the World" (Roy 118)? "Human Nature" (Roy 118). "The Hotel People" (Roy 126). "Real Person" (Roy 131). "Atmosphere in Waiting Room", "Screams", "Behind Curtain", "Healthy Fear" (Roy 132). "Loved," "Beginning" (Roy 135). "Day of the Play" (Roy 136). "Chinese Bangle" (Roy 142). "Air," "Thoughts," "Things" (Roy 142). "Small Things" (Roy 142). "A Far More" (Roy 145). "Indo-British Behaviour" (Roy 145). "EVER" (Roy 148). "Jolly Well" (Roy 148). "Public" (Roy 149). "Hotweather" (Roy 150). "Recover" (Roy 151). "Prer NUN" (Roy 154). "Esthappen Un-known" (Roy 156). "Frozen Time" (Roy 160). "Men's Needs" (Roy 168). "Needs from Feelings" (Roy 169). "Small Things" (Roy 173). "The Big Things" (Roy 173). "Townspeople" (Roy 174). "Official Greetings" (Roy 175). "the Play" (Roy 178). "Someone Small" (Roy 181). "Someone Big" (Roy 182). "Play" (Roy 185). "*Antly Afternoon Gnap*" (Roy 186). "Beautiful Ugly Toads"(Roy 186). "Would the Thin People" (Roy 188). "Would Genocide" (Roy 188). "Real Father" (Roy 189). "the Terror" (Roy 190). "Touchable Policemen" (Roy 190). "Other Thing", "Other Hands" (Roy 191). "Two Thoughts" (Roy 192). "Think in" (Roy 193). "Two Thoughts" (Roy 194). "a Stirring Wizard" (Roy 195). "Thought Number Three" (Roy 196). "Angry-coloured" (Roy 197). "That History" (Roy 199). "Terror "(Roy 199). "History's Plans" (Roy 200). "Fisher People" (Roy 200). "a Nowel" (Roy 200). "The Red Agenda" (Roy 200). "Afternoon Gnap" (Roy 200). "Air was Alert and Bright and Hot" (Roy 201). "Really Deep" (Roy 203). "Silence" (Roy 203). "to

Wait" (Roy 203). "Other Side" (Roy 204). "Linger" (Roy 204). "Old Boat" (Roy 204). "Swimming Spiders" (Roy 204). "Death" (Roy 206). "He" (Roy 211)? "His Fountain" (Roy 211)? "Afternoon Gnap" (Roy 214). "Estha-the-Accurate replied" (Roy 217). "the God of Loss, the God of Small Things" (Roy 220). "Life had been Lived" (Roy 222). "Inbreeding" (Roy 223). "Age and Death" (Roy 223). "Not to Know" (Roy 224). "Each, no Other" (Roy 225). "Lay Ter" (Roy 225). "Advance Birthday Present" (Roy 226). "His" (Roy 226). "Great Stories" (Roy 229). "Real World" (Roy 241). "Man," "Twin Sons" (Roy 242). "Optimist," "Pessimist" (Roy 242). "Café Ethics" (Roy 244). "Laugh" (Roy 244). "Rumpled Porcupine's" (Roy 244). "Scholar" (Roy 245). "Other Waiters", "Other café" (Roy 247). "a Fat Man" (Roy 247). "Touchable kitchen" (Roy 255). "the Walking Barkwards days", "Loyally and Love" (Roy 255). "Men's Needs" (Roy 258). "Touchable" (Roy 259). "Returned" (Roy 264). "(A wake, A Live)" (Roy 266). "Heart of Darkness" (Roy 267). "Memory" (Roy 267). "*Work*" (Roy 268). "Old" (Roy 269). "Unemployment" (Roy 269). "Man of the House" (Roy 272). "Fracture" (Roy 274). "Change" (Roy 279). "My Dear" (Roy 279). "Union " (Roy 280). "Over throwers", "To Be Over thrown" (Roy 280). "Small Thin" (Roy 280). "Rights of Untouchables" (Roy 281). "Rehired" (Roy 281). "History's" (Roy 281). "Party" (Roy 287). "Really Deep" (Roy 289). "History House" (Roy 289). "Orange drink" (Roy 291) "Thought" (Roy 292). "Other Side" (Roy 292). "To-do lists" (Roy 297). "Time" (Roy 302). "Official Version" (Roy 303). "Touchable Policemen" (Roy 303). "Work" (Roy 310). "Fear" (Roy 313). "Alone" (Roy 323). "Not Ever" (Roy 325). "Watcher" (Roy 328). "Death by Drowning" (Roy 329). "Small Price" (Roy 336). "The Big Things" (Roy 338).

[5] "thunderdarkness" (Roy 10), "the suddenhudder of the cold puppy" (Roy 15), "schoolgirl faces" (Roy 16), "absurdly beautiful" (Roy 18), "soapslippery arm" (Roy 23), "fishswimming sense" (Roy 30), "Sicksweet" (Roy 32), "divorceehood" (Roy 44), "mother-walk" (Roy 44), "Man-less woman" (Roy 45), "fallingoff noises" (Roy 58), "Weatherwise or otherwise" (Roy 83), "Yesyesyesyesyes" (Roy 86), "A viable die-able age" (Roy 92), "bottomless-bottomful" (Roy 109), "the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man" (Roy 115), "Meeters from the Met, and Greeters from the Gret" (Roy 142), "easy-to-understand laugh" (Roy 143), "wifely luggage"(Roy 168), "getting-outedness" (Roy 172), "Sad-About-Joe silence" (Roy 173), "Rumplestiltskin-like dance" (Roy 182), "Stickysweet, and meltybrown" (Roy 183), "the tragic hood of victimhood" (Roy191), "kind-schoolteacherly voice" (Roy 201), "Driftless drifthood" (Roy 203), "A staved-off sandess" (Roy 239), etc.

[6] "The old house on the hill wore its steep, gabled roof pulled over its ears like a low hat" (Roy 1). "[...] church swelled like a throat with the sound of sad singing" (Roy 4). "He began to look wiser than he really was. Like a fisherman in a city" (Roy 13). "[...]he would call out, in his high, piping voice, frayed and fibrous now, like sugarcane stripped of its bark"(Roy 14). "She spent her holidays in Ayemenem, largely ignored by Chacko and Mammachi (grown soft with sorrow, slumped in their bereavement like a pair of drunks in a toddy bar) [...]" (Roy 15). "[...] the loss of Sophie Mol grew robust and alive. It was always there. Like a fruit in season" (Roy 16). "Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge" (Roy 18). "That two things fitted together. Like stacked spoons.

Like familiar lovers' bodies" (Roy 20). "A pale daymoon hung hugely in the sky and went where they went. As big as the belly of a beer-drinking man" (Roy 87). "She felt like a road sign with birds shitting on her" (Roy 161). "And once more the yellow church swelled like a throat with voices" (Roy 6). "Jewelled dragonflies hovered like shrill children's voices in the sun" (Roy 202). "Touching it with their tongues, sucking it like a sweet" (Roy 17). "The loss of Sophie Mol [...] like a fruit in season" (Roy 267). "History's smell. Like old roses on a breeze" (Roy 55). "They are as familiar as the smell of one's lover's skin" (Roy 229).