

Indian American & Chinese American Literature: A Comparative Study Under the Lens of Post colonialism

Vijaylaxmi

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PREFACE

America is one of the first nations where a wide spectrum of immigrants' social and cultural life can be found to co-exist in terms of food, customs and conventions, language, politics, norms, traditions, outfits, marriage, families, lifestyle, religion and vivid set of doctrines through umpteenth colonies from every corner of the world; living and growing together at one place.

Years ago Europeans were the only settlers in America but today on an American street we can see Jews, Chinese, Indians, Africans, Arabs, Hispanics, Catholics and Russians and so on who have made it a multicultural and multidimensional nation. These vivid and varied groups or colonies arrived in America with their rich cultural baggage which in turn provided with an enriched source of literature. Literary works produced by migrants have become an integral part of American Literature as they have knitted it with vivacity that belongs to different parts of the world. Immigrant Literature has proved to be very significant in shaping, coloring and enhancing the American Literature of late 20 and 21st century. There are many notable migrant writers like Khaled Hosseini, Ha Jin, Azar Nafisi and Valdimir Nabokov who have become eminent writers in the realm of immigrant literature of America.

From this mini world residing in America, two superpowers have emerged on the forefront; one is India and second is China and both the nations are rooted in two of the most ancient civilizations of the world. Indirectly, today they have become the youngest colonizers. America which is the ultimate superpower is being colonized by the colonies living on its land. For example, markets in America are all flooded with products from China. Chinese and Indian food, from “chowmein to Paneer-tikka” remains in demand in every party and eatery. For

spiritual and physical strength, people are inclining towards Yoga. India has become the biggest supplier of labor, as they work more and better at low wages and in case of trade, China has taken the forefront. In the field of literature as well there are many notable writers from India and China who have bagged the highest honor for their works and have become well-recognized faces. From this myriad cultural ocean living in America, this research intends to take up specifically the works of Asian immigrants - Amy Tan and Jhumpa Lahiri, to study and explore the wide horizons of Immigrant Literature and its influence upon American Literature and the impact of American culture upon immigrants. It seeks to analyze the changing mindscape of immigrants' generation wise through their respective works. This research work is divided into four chapters.

First chapter, **Introduction: From Imperialism to Post-colonialism and Postmodernism**, traces the imprints of Imperialism, onset of colonialism due to industrialization, which leads to control culture, economy and politics, aftermath of post-colonialism and the concepts of anti-foundationlists under Postmodernism. It also includes immigration, particularly in context of America; and the significance of Asian Americans in the making of America.

Second chapter, **Jhumpa Lahiri: Reflections of Indian Immigrant Literature**, explores the Indian immigrant psyche under the influence of cultural consciousness, colonial consciousness and cultural relativism.

Third chapter, **Amy Tan: Colors of Chinese Immigrant Literature**, reflects the intense impact of cultural consciousness on Chinese immigrant psyche.

Fourth chapter, **Similarities and Differences between two Asian American Writers**, seeks to find the common threads and differences in terms of themes, settings and writing style.

Conclusion, seeks to outline the findings of research.

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION: FROM IMPERIALISM TO POST-COLONIALISM AND POSTMODERNISM

The world is nearly all parcelled out, and what there is left of it is being divided up, conquered and colonised. To think of these stars that you see overhead at night, these vast worlds which we can never reach. I would annex the planets if I could; I often think of that. It makes me sad to see them so clear and yet so far. (The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes)

Imperialism can be understood as an ambitious desire of humans under which the stronger community tends to expand its territory by exploiting and subjugating the weaker. Means opted for such expansions were basically war or direct military action. In its nascent stage, Imperialism was confined within the continents, since people were unaware and there was no information regarding existing parts or continents of the world.

With the discovery of the New World by Columbus; inventions like ‘compass for navigation’ and the travel accounts like ‘The Travels of Marco Polo’ aroused the curiosity in Europeans to explore the new lands and try their luck for prosperity outside their motherland. The stimulus was provided to the explorers in the form of grants by the respective rulers in Europe.

As a result of these explorations several colonies were formed in America, Africa and Asia. In-fact, there took a mad race to capture the largest and outmost areas in the new lands, this ultimately culminated into regular wars like- ‘Seven Hundred Year War’ between Britain and

France; conflicts & bloodshed between indigenous people and intruders who were none other than Europeans.

New inventions in the form of 'steam engine', 'spinning jenny' led to the development of industries. Newly established colonies became a great source of raw material to feed the fuel thirsty machines and industries. Europe became prosperous and people were quiet wealthy to invest in colonies for more profit since there was an availability of raw material and cheap labor.

Industrial development in Europe led to the political & administrative interference in the kingdoms and dynasties of Asia and indigenous set up of tribes in Africa & Red Indians of America. Gradually, this initial interference turned into direct political control by Europeans who could make laws, could change or mould them according to the need and selfish motives of their mother-land. For example, in Asia, British took complete control over India and Hong -Kong; in Africa they brought Egypt under their direct control. South East Asia was taken over by Dutch & Portuguese.

Colonies were a great source of cash crops like tobacco, sugar, tea, cotton, silk and rubber. In order to grow these crops Europeans bought slaves from Africa & Asia. Therefore, the establishment of colonies instigated 'slave-trade'. It began when Europeans, habitual of cool temperate type of climate; had to face harsh weather conditions in America, they employed slaves in the farms which later became the worst known inhumane treatment of man by man.

Due to industrialization, Europe produced ample manufactured products; colonies served as a dumping ground and provided a market for higher benefits. JAS Grenville in *A History of the World* (2005) mentions the greed of humans for material benefits reached to such an extent that 'right over colonies' and tussle over 'the area of influence' became one of the major reasons

for devastating World War I. The war treaty known as 'Versailles treaty' concluded WWI and this same treaty became the cause of World War II. By early 19th century almost entire Africa was broken into colonies by European powers. There was a regular conflict over colonial areas between Britain & France. In Asia too; Japan, which was initially a meek and isolated dynasty; followed the footprints of the West & soon turned into an imperial power. Korea was the centre of interest for Russia, China & Japan. Each one of these countries wanted to have greater area of influence in Korean region & nearby islands. Under the expansionist tendency of Japan, the nine months war took place between China & Japan in which China was utterly devastated & had to accept its defeat at the hands of a tiny island. Similarly, there were contentious issues between Russia & Japan over Manchuria; war took place between the two & Russia was defeated.

In order to maintain the control over colonies, the colonizers tried to modify the lives of the native population according to the best suited interests of the colonizers. They started intervening in the religious, social and administrative set up of the locals. The colonial academicians, scholars, commentators, first learnt the native languages & then, studied & translated the native literature, art, ideology & law only to prove that natives are not worthy of any comparison with Europeans or the English. Everything related to the natives was declared as dark, dull & primitive. So, colonizers pretended it as their responsibility to pull out the natives from the bleakness by introducing English educational system, by proselytizing and by favouring English law system as the sole provider of equality, justice & development. Therefore, Colonialism was not limited only to the economical destruction of colonies but it also ruined the religious, social and administrative structure of the local people. Pramod Nayar in his *Postcolonialism* (2010) writes:

Colonialism has three central features: (i) The governance of these non-European places by European administrators & rulers (through economic, political and military modes); (ii) The study of non-European cultures by European academics, scholars & scientists (in anthropology, literature, area studies); (iii) The slow transformation of native societies (through missionary work, English/European education systems, European modes of bureaucracy). (4)

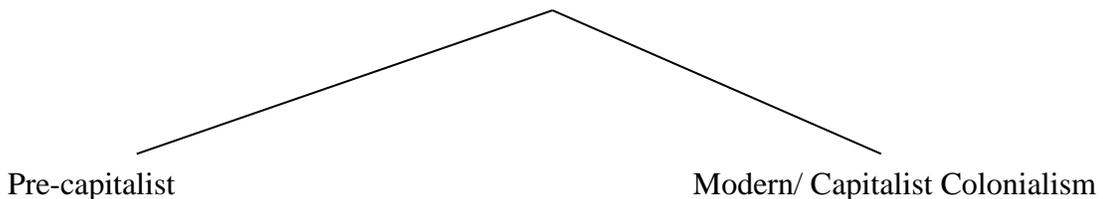
Colonialism	Imperialism
(i) Europeans exploited the non-Europeans by settling down in the colonies.	(i) Settlement was not a necessity.
(ii) It was basically a complete dominance in all the spheres- political, economical & cultural.	(ii) It was motivated by territorial expansion using direct military action.

The attempts to get rid of colonial exploitations gave rise to the process of “decolonization”. The roots of decolonization lie in the idea of “Nationalism” and “Nativism”. An introduction to modern education in science, language, law etc. gave an opportunity to the natives to understand French concepts like “Equality, Liberty & Fraternity”. They began to see the motives behind the propagation of foreign culture by missionaries and modern educationists. Modern education imparted in English language brought together the local people from different regions of the same country and also played a role in linking the revolutionaries from different

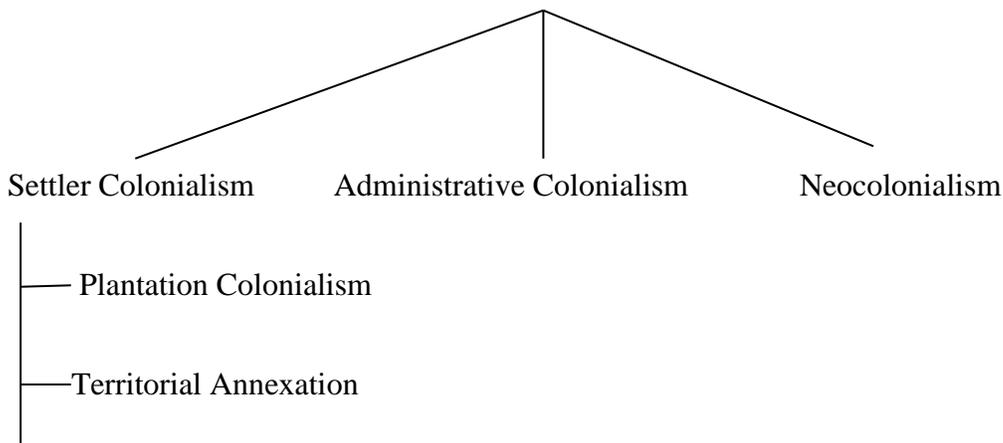
parts of the world. Education provided a passage to reach out to those translations which not only glorify the indigenous tradition but rate it far superior and advance in every subject, be it – astrology, medicine, mathematics or philosophy. This ignited the demand for respect towards the natives and freedom from foreign rule. Education enabled the educated natives to judge the injustice done towards the locals in legislation and execution of laws which were entirely framed keeping the idea of “Race’ in the centre. After the advent of “Nationalism”, the natives understood the make-belief world of the English and started working in the direction of breaking it in order to decolonize their land culturally, politically and economically.

Ania Loomba has given a detailed description of *Colonialism*. According to Loomba, “colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods.” (20) She has further segregated colonialism into ‘pre-capitalist and modern colonialism, settler and administrative colonialism, and neocolonialism.

Colonialism



Modern Colonialism



Before Europeans, the colonizers were guided by the desire for boundary expansion. Their expansionist theory was not capitalism oriented. In *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (2015) Ania Loomba wrote: “the Roman Empire stretched from Armenia to the Atlantic. Under Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, the Mongols conquered the Middle East as well China.” (20)

Modern Colonialism began with Europeans who conquered and changed the economies of the colonized states to strengthen the capitalism in Europe or mother counties. Colonialism practiced by Europeans involved different ways and modes to consolidate their grip upon colonized states. Among those modes, Settler Colonialism is one. In it, colonizers moved from the homeland to the colonies; by exercising oppression and domination, they gradually mixed with the indigenous population in certain colonies while maintaining the purity of their race in another. Plantation Colonialism is a type of settler colonialism with a slight difference. Under it, White colonizers drew in slaves from different parts of the world to capsize colonies in order to grow crops. Another type is Territorial Annexation; under it territories of a state were incorporated either by force or by agreements. Ania Loomba gave an example of such an annexation in her work *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (2015) as “...annexation of Louisiana, Texas, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and other territories by the United States.” (24)

Administrative Colonialism is also one of the ways used by Europeans. In it, there was no displacement of colonizers to the colonies. They exercised their authority, extracted benefits, and collected taxes through local administration or through regional rulers.

Yet another form of colonialism has risen in the recent scenario which is exercised by the West. This new form of colonialism is indirect in nature. According to Ania Loomba in *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (2015), “After World War II, formal colonization gave way to

more indirect control, largely through economic intervention known as neo-colonialism... such as the US control of South Vietnam... or more recently the US occupation of Iraq.” (25)

Western countries were rich and robust in their capitalism and they had abundant money which could not be invested profitably in the homeland as the labor was limited. Therefore, in order to save their capitalistic profits, the West invested in the colonies where the labor was cheap and human resources were in ample. The taking over of the world by European capitalism can be termed as imperialism. According to Ania Loomba in *Colonialism /Postcolonialism* (2015), “Direct colonial rule is not necessary for imperialism ...because the economic relations of dependency and control ensure both captive labor as well markets for European industry as well as goods. Sometimes the words neo-imperialism or neo-colonialism are used to describe these situations.” (27)

Colonialism was not simply an exploitation of the colonized land and its resources but it has also inflicted a great damage to the psyche of the colonized. Frantz Fanon, postcolonial theorist has shown his concern upon the destructive nature of colonialism. He argued against colonialism which he considered as dangerous for the physical and mental health of the communities suppressed and subjugated in colonies.

Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Mask* (2008) shows a deep impression of colonialism upon the psyche of colonized. The extent to which the mindscape and the inner realms got distorted and deformed has been aptly depicted in this work. Fanon has tried to throw light upon the grave feeling of inferiority generated in Blacks by the then French colonizers or by Whites at large. This feeling of inferiority spread like a plague among Blacks and eroded their life to such a

point that they started hating their very own existence. They began to relate the color of their skin with shoddiness, dirt, filth, unhygienic and barbarous; and equated themselves with animals.

Through *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008) Fanon has presented the strong craze among Blacks for everything that is White or whatever that can lessen the burden of their color and can provide an access in the White world for a better life. In this work, Fanon has broadly discussed three points:

- The impact of French language upon Blacks and an attempt of Blacks to master French. This is because they want to show that they are no less and are as intelligent as Whites and second, they want to get into the list of civilized. “The wearing of European clothes, whether rags or the most up-to-date style; using European furniture and European forms of social intercourse; adorning the native language with European expressions; using bombastic phrases in speaking or writing a European language; all these contribute to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements.” (9)
- The obsession for a White husband among Black women. They love white color because they regard it as a key to lessen their predicaments and to get completely get rid of the vicious circle of racism. They feel attracted toward white color because it gives a hope for a protective shield that can save a black woman from the injustices and cruelties meant for Blacks in the colonized world. “All these frenzied women of color, frantic for a white man...what they need is whiteness at any cost.” (31)

- The desire for a White wife among Black men. Black men see White women as a source or a way of achieving respect. They also relate it to the sense of manhood, the sense that is lost or shattered due to the effects of colonialism.

The heights of negative impact upon the mental health of colonized due to colonization, process of decolonization embedded with violence and the consequences of ‘war of independence’ are well narrated in Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* () Fanon attached varied connotations to the term ‘decolonization’. According to Fanon, decolonization is

- the process of substituting a group of people or community by another group or community
- a program which involves disorder
- when two contrary forces meet, decolonization takes place
- “If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well-known words: ‘The last shall be first and the first last’. Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence.” (28) Here, the last is the colonized and first is colonizer.
- Here, Decolonization suggests that in the process of decolonization the involvement of violence is inevitable.

According to Fanon, violence is the inseparable part of decolonization. He advocated that the presence of force is essential to counter another force. He saw violence as an instrument to free blacks from inferiority complex, dejection; and as an action which can restore their lost self-respect.

The growing aggression among the black natives against the continuous oppression led them to form an ideology, according to which Whites or colonizers understand the language of violence and force only. At several points in chapter one of the book, Fanon has emphasized upon the use of violence. The way colonialism employs violence to subjugate the natives and to rob them from their rights upon civil and economic affairs; similarly, it becomes essential to use violence to get rid from the clutches of colonialism. Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* () wrote:

...colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, no Algerian really found these terms too violent...every Algerian felt at heart: colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence. (48)

In the fifth chapter 'Colonial War and Mental Disorder' of *The Wretched of the Earth* () Fanon depicted a connection between various mental disorders and the struggle for independence. Experience of different violent situations led Algerians to different types of mental illness. This mental illness of the natives labeled them as born criminals and a theory was developed upon the criminalization in Algeria. This theory marked Algerians as frequent killers, savages and the killers who kill without any reason. But the roots of this criminal attitude, anger and an impulsiveness to kill, lied in the violent experience of Algerians that they had during war for independence. The cruelties like mass killing, putting the villages at fire, shooting the Algerians in a row, rapes and unbearable torture in police custodies left un-removable impression on the psyche of Algerians which led them to their irrational and abnormal behavior. Fanon has precisely given a detailed account of the impact of colonial atrocities upon human mind.

The concept of Postcolonialism is closely connected with the terms like imperialism, colonialism, decolonization, neocolonialism and postcolonial theory. It rises as a result of anti-colonial movements and the profound feeling of nationalism directed by the political leaders. It talks about the aftermath, when colonies attained independence; it narrates the ruined physical & mental situation in which the colonized were left to torn between ‘double consciousness’; it analyses the role of ‘mimicry’, ‘hybridity’ and ‘cultural domination’ with which the newly liberated natives are surrounded.

Postcolonialism is particularly important in setting up a connection among psychological, ideological, social, political, intellectual and aesthetic experiences of human beings. It also projects a link with other theories like Marxism, feminism, gay, lesbian and queer. All of these are interlinked as they emphasize upon human oppression in one or the other way.

In the realm of literature, post colonialism is considered as both a subject matter and a theoretical framework. As a subject matter postcolonial criticism deals with the analysis of literature produced by the colonized people or the literature produced in the colonial dominated cultures. As a theoretical framework postcolonial criticism talks about colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies in terms of social, political, cultural and psychology.

The language and lifestyle of the colonizers has mixed and merged with that of colonized to an extent that it is difficult to distinguish between and separate the two. Once the colonizers left the colonized territory, on surface it appears that colonizers have gone, they have liberated the colonized but in reality it is not so. They remain very much there on the land of colonized and make them feel their presence through their culture that was once imposed upon the colonized. The pre-colonial culture of natives and the imposed culture of British form a major

part of postcolonial criticism. This has given rise to postcolonial culture in which there lies a friction between the cultures of a colonized and colonizers because there is both acceptance and repulsion between the two.

Colonizers have only left the colonized land; they still rule those regions through cultural domination. They instilled British values and culture in their colonized subjects and the effect of it proved to be so immense that no matter how hard the earlier colonized people try to get rid of it, they cannot decolonize themselves and their community from the profound impact of *cultural colonization*. Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) wrote:

What has been left behind is a deeply embedded cultural colonization: the inculcation of a British system of government and education, British culture, and British values that denigrate the culture, morals, and even physical appearance of formerly subjugated peoples. Thus, ex-colonials were often left with a psychological ‘inheritance’ of a negative self-image and alienation from their own indigenous cultures, which had been forbidden or devalued for so long that much of the pre-colonial culture has been lost. (419)

Under the influence of ‘cultural colonization’ colonized people have developed a postcolonial identity. Postcolonial identity rises in response to colonialist ideology. It covers the concepts like mimicry, double consciousness, diaspora, un-homeliness, hybridity and nativism.

Colonialist ideology believes that colonizers, therefore, Europeans are the center of the earth. They are the only civilized and sophisticated race of people on the globe as they own highly advanced technology and therefore their culture is advance too, which is worthy to be imitated; and they consider the colonized as backward, uncivilized, ugly and barbarous.

Colonizers deem themselves as the epitome of perfect human beings; they believe that they are the embodiment of all the human virtues and goodness; and consider natives as inferior, different and less than fully humans. In the contemporary world when other cultures are negatively contrasted with the set standards of European culture, it is termed as *Euro centrism*. Edward Said has talked upon it in his work ‘Orientalism’. It talks about the breach between East and West, created by Europeans, Britain and America. The western countries present their people in a positive light by pointing out the origin of all the negative traits prevalent in east and boast on the belief that they are not tainted and are not a part of the ugly inferiority associated with Eastern countries. The west thinks that they have done a huge favor to east by colonizing one –third of the globe otherwise the colonized would have remained in the darkest zones of barbarity forever. Since the west considers itself as a savior or a protector of the East, therefore, the east should feel indebted to it for its mercy. Said has given the terms, occidental for West and oriental for East. Oriental covers China, Arab nations, Asia and Middle East and they are linked with all the possible negativity like cruel, evil, cunning, dishonest, and promiscuous; in contrast, Occident are shown as kind, honest, moral and straight-forward. The contrast between the two is clearly depicted in the example given by Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015). Tyson wrote: “Think of the cruel, deceitful Arab merchant in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, who is saved from prison by the young De Lacey, a European, whom Arab subsequently betrays.” (421)

Orientalism (1948) by Edward Said has made a significant contribution in establishing Postcolonialism as a theory for critical studies. It provides a frame in which East has been presented by Europeans. Said suggested that Orient has helped in defining the Europe by standing as a contrasting image to it. Said wrote: “The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is

also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other." (1) *Orientalism* broadly gave five notions or ideas about the Orient. First, Orient is timeless. It remains immersed in the antiquity, far from the modern and scientific touch of Europeans. Where Europe is presented progressive with regular changes in its history, East remains remote and unchanged. Second, Orient is manifested as strange. East has always been projected in the image of an absurd and unusually different. The Occident has imposed its ideology upon the Orient and presented it with the tags, such as - the East is like a child, it is immature, therefore, the West which is mature and which is like a grown up elder has to interfere to take care of the Orient. "The Oriental is irrational, depraved, childlike, different; thus the European is rational virtuous, mature, normal." (40)

Third, The Occident has transfixed the images of Orientals on the basis of race. For example Arabs are referred as killers and violent, Indians as lethargic, and Chinese as inscrutable. Fourth, the Orient is viewed with feminine attributes like weak, delicate, submissive, passive, luxurious, beautiful and attractive; and on the contrary the Occident is masculine, endowed with all the strengths and hence it seems right in the views of the Occident that the Orient should be contained in order to take care of it. Fifth, the Orient is the centre of all wickedness.

In response to colonialist ideology, postcolonial identity arose. The European modeled colonial subjects believed in European supremacy and denounced their own cultural values. They copied and imbibed British thinking and lifestyle in dress, speech and behavior to an extent that they remained different from the British only by blood. Postcolonial criticism called this phenomenon of imitating as *mimicry*. This gave rise to *double consciousness* in British modeled

colonized people, their consciousness was divided between two cultures; British culture which they considered as the epitome of supremacy on one hand and their own native culture as inferior and backward on the other.

Homi K Bhabha is an important critic who has made his contribution by adding the concepts like mimicry, the uncanny, otherness, ambivalence, stereotypes etc. to postcolonial theory. In his essay “Of Mimicry and Man” in *The Location of Culture* (2004) Bhabha suggests that the act of mimicry had never been in its complete form. It had always landed up somewhere ‘in-between’. The imitation of the colonizer by the colonized had never been in a complete form rather the imitation was always partial. It was because the colonizer had introduced the colonized with the limited English culture, they were transformed only to the level which could serve the English purpose of hiring civilized labor or servants who could help them in running the administration. Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (2004) says:

Grant’s dream of an evangelical system of mission education conducted uncompromisingly in the English language, was partly a belief in political reform along Christian lines and partly an awareness that the company rule in India required a system of subject provide the colonial with ‘a sense of personal identity as we know it’. Caught between the desire for religious reform and the fear that the Indians might become turbulent for liberty, Grant paradoxically implies that it is the ‘partial’ diffusion of Christianity, and the ‘partial’ influence of moral improvements which will construct a particularly appropriate form of colonial subjectivity...that ‘partial reform’ will produce an empty form of ‘the imitation of English manners which will induce them to remain under our protection’. (122)

Diaspora and *un-homeliness* further arose as a result of double consciousness. The colonized started looking at British education and culture as a way or a passage for a better and bright future. English language and British education became essential for securing a job or to get employed. That's how in the beginning, first, the colonized started drifting toward cities and gradually toward foreign regions especially UK and USA. The people separated from homeland or the land of origin came to be known as *diaspora* and consequently diasporas started belonging to more than one place and culture. They developed the belongingness to the land and its culture to which they migrated and the one that they carried along with them from the place of origin. The divided belongingness reduced them to a divided and unstable self; consequently leading them to what Homi Bhabha referred as un-homeliness. Quoting from Lois Tyson *Critical Theory Today* (2015), "To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee." (421)

Some postcolonial theorists believe that no society can remain stagnant, with the passage of time; changes are obvious to occur in a society or community which is dynamic in nature. Even if colonizers would not have colonized one-third of the world, it would not have remained the same as it was eons ago. When two communities with two different cultures come into contact, they bring modifications socially, culturally and economically. And the changes are never one-sided because of the cross-cultural impact. The culture of the colonized influenced European culture and vice-versa. For instance, Roman legions captured British Isles and modified Celtic culture. The influence of African study also impacted Picasso's art to a great extent. As a result many postcolonial theorists concluded that postcolonial identities are dynamic

and mix of both native and colonial culture; the process of evolving such identities is called *hybridity*.

Due to the increased cultural dominance of British, a threat of complete pre-colonial elimination arose in the natives. In order to save their originality and cultural roots, *nativism* and *nationalism* arose as a revolt against British cultural practices. Colonized people stressed upon their traditional practices and conventions to nullify the impact of western culture.

In the struggle between colonials and colonized, women were most adversely affected. They had to go through *double colonization*. At one side in the view of colonialist ideology they exist nowhere because of their race and culture and on the other side due to patriarchal ideology they were subjugated according to ancestral conventions and gender discrimination.

It won't be right to believe that colonialism was a matter of past. In fact it is a part of our very present; it still exists, though, indirectly. The developing or under developed countries are still clutched by world leaders or super powers like America. Through international corporations, the first world has controlled the political, economic, and cultural veins of the third and fourth world. This phenomenon is termed as *neocolonialism* as it indirectly colonizes the economically weak nations. For example, Japan has been such strongly influenced by America that it is considered as a western power after World War II.

Economic dominance is the direct result of neocolonialism which has further affected the culture of dominated countries. When natives of a vulnerable nation start giving an access to the culture of a foreign dominant nation, they give an easy permit to foreign agencies to modify their life and lifestyle as per the foreign choice. Gradually these foreign agencies sneak into their daily life and change it altogether. This process of substituting one's native culture with that of a

foreign culture is called *cultural imperialism*. Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) writes:

Cultural imperialism is a direct result of economic domination, consists of the “takeover” of one culture by another: the food, clothing, customs, recreation, and values of the economically dominant culture increasingly replace those of the economically vulnerable culture until the latter appears to be a kind of imitation of the former. American cultural imperialism has been one of the most pervasive forms of this phenomenon, as we see American fashions, movies, music, sports, fast food, and consumerism squeeze out indigenous cultural traditions all over the world. (425)

Postcolonial theory has succeeded in interpreting literature and many postcolonial writers have made their mark in the world of literature by their significant works. Some of them are: Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Salman Rushdie (India), Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua, West Indies), and Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Kenya), Nobel Prize winners – Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Nadine Gordimer (South Africa), Derek Walcott (St. Lucia, West Indies), Toni Morrison (the United States) and J.M. Coetzee (South Africa).

The of extreme level of subjugation and exploitation of the colonized and the presentation of the colonialist in a negative light is precisely given by Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) by giving an example of Joseph Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness”. Tyson wrote, “Achebe notes... despite Heart of Darkness obvious anti-colonialist agenda, the novel points to the colonized population as the standard of savagery to which Europeans are compared. Thus Achebe uncovers the novel’s subtext, of which the text does not seem to be aware.” (428)

Homi Bhabha called Gordimer's "My Son's Story" and Toni Morrison's "Beloved" unhomey novels, plus he stated the two women protagonists of the novels, Aila and Sethe as doubly marginalized. "Aila is unhomed because she is imprisoned for using her house as a cover for gun-running in an effort to resist South Africa's racist government; Sethe, because she has killed her baby daughter in order to save the child from the abuses of a cruel slave-master." (Tyson 428)

According to Derek Gregory, British and American colonization are 'going on' processes even in the modern age. Developing the ideas upon 'other' and Said's *Orientalism*, Gregory believes, the economic policy, military apparatus and transnational corporations are the reasons for the existence of present day colonialism.

People from third and fourth world look forward to first world as a source through which they can realize their dream of becoming successful and leading a luxurious life. It is evident from the rising scale of immigration that takes place every year. In the past western powers dominated one-third of the globe and in the present scenario it seems east is all set to take over the west. Hindus, Muslims, Chinese, Russians and others from South Asia, Middle East can be seen residing, working and even securing the citizenships in UK and USA. This phenomenon of east taking over west is termed as 'reverse colonialism'.

Today even in 20th century when colonized countries are all free to live and grow on their own; the signs of postcolonial impact are still visible. It appears as if the once colonized people have passed down the notion of 'shoddy' to the present generation. That is why in order to shun the shoddiness, majority of the people wish to migrate to west. For example, maximum of the IIT students wish to save a position in multinational companies through which their chances of

settling abroad increases, Silicon Valley in U.S.A. is the most appropriate example for such a settlement. For higher studies parents often prefer to send their children to USA and UK, even for vacations people prefer to choose places like Europe. This regular migration from east to west has given rise to contemporary reverse colonialism.

Immigration is the source from which America originated. After the settlement of Europeans, a new population of America came into existence through colonization, coercion and immigration. In the 17th and 18th centuries, English dominated the land. They took away the power and control from the Dutch in New York, overpowered many French and Spanish settlements. English Language and Law set the standards of the society in America. Two types of coercion also played the role in the making of American Population. One is the transportation of slaves from Africa; and second the transportation of American Indian, Spanish, French, Mexican and other populations through political deals, war settlements or purchase of territory. The influx of immigrants in America in 18th and 19th century can be broadly divided into four major waves:

The influx of first wave of migrants began before 1890 when no attention was paid to maintain the record of entrants in the country. In 1790, 60% of the population was English with an inclusion of Scots, Scots- Irish, Germans and people from Netherlands, France and Spain. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

These immigrants were motivated by a mixture of religious, political and economic factors. German sectarians sought religious freedom in Pennsylvania; Spaniards looked for Christian converts in Florida and the southwest and the Puritans in Massachusetts sought to establish a community restricted to members of their faith. Religious freedom

was made possible by political and economic freedom: the absence of coercion by overloads and the chance to prosper in a new land. (12, 13)

The peasants and artisans made the second wave of immigrants who arrived between 1820 and 1860. Poverty caused by Industrial Revolution insisted Europeans to fled to America. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

The second wave of immigrants who arrived between 1820 and 1860, fit well with American eagerness for people to help push back the frontier. Peasants displaced from agriculture and artisans made jobless by the Industrial Revolution were desperate to escape from Europe. New arrivals sent what came to be called “American Letters” back to Europe, encouraging friends and relatives to join them. (13)

The third wave started in 1880 during which countless number of Chinese, Japanese and Asian laborers migrated to different zones of western states. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

The third wave of immigrant started in 1880, when almost 460,000 immigrants arrived, and ended with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, when 1.2 million southern and eastern Europeans came mostly to the eastern and mid-western states. Several hundred thousand Chinese, Japanese and other Asian laborers settled in the western states. (13)

The parameters for the migration to US, changed after 1965. Migration became limited, restricted, qualities and skills based. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

Fourth-wave of immigrants arrived in the United States after 1965, when the preference system changed. Instead of giving priority to immigrants based on their national origins, with preference to those from Northern and Western Europe, the new system gave priority to people with US relatives and to a small number of people with outstanding accomplishments and skills. (14)

Initially the huge immigration became the cause of division and clashes in America. ‘Adapting and adjusting’ with diverse mental sensibilities gave rise to social intolerance. The admission and acceptance of foreigners in the New World became extremely difficult. They were often subjected to official harassment.

Immigration and immigrants have continually been criticized by those nativists abhorring the culturally and socially disorganizing presence of so many foreigners. Workers, native and ethnic alike, and often their labor unions lament the depressing effect on wages and living standards that results from the entrance into the country of so many low-wage foreign workers. (5)

In the beginning immigrants had to go through a very difficult phase. They had to struggle to make their place in the midst of well-established American society and its norms and trends. Clashes and discrepancies cropped due to difference in nationality, color, language, race and cultural trends. African Americans had to endure the atrocities inflicted upon them due to racial differences and experienced heights of discrimination which consequently incited Civil War. Mexicans, Chinese and Japanese were considered as menacing and inassimilable. Chinese immigration was stopped to a large extent in 1882 which affected Chinese American family formation and establishment. Chinese and other Asian immigrants who settled down on Angel

Island in San Francisco harbor were targeted to all sort of official harassment. In 1930s at the time of great depression, Mexicans and Filipinos were forced to return to their native land because local and state government were giving preference to white unemployed. During World War II, around 110,000 Japanese were thrown into internment camps. U.S. had to put a continuous check on the regular entrants from foreign lands by forming various immigrant policies from time to time. These policies have gone through three major phases: Laissez-Faire (1780-1875), Qualitative Restrictions (1875-1920) and Quantitative Restrictions (since 1921).

Under Laissez-Faire phase, federal, state and local government promoted immigration as there was a demand of workers in American factories. Federal government also encouraged immigration to strengthen their army. In 1840s immigrants made up about one-third of the regular soldiers. In Qualitative phase, the concern was shown for the qualitative influx of migrants. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

Woodrow Wilson, who was later elected president, shared the popular antagonism to the immigrants. He wrote, 'Immigrants poured in as before, but... now there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meanest sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks, where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population. (15)

The implementation of quantitative restrictions barred the entry of convicts and prostitutes. It specifically ceased Chinese immigration for ten years under the act of 1882 and it

was renewed every year till 1943. Quantitative restrictions were imposed to limit the number of immigrants allowed to enter the US.

If there were opponents and critics of immigration, then, there were optimists as well who favored, supported and defended immigrants to save the diversity and to honor the memories of their immigrant ancestors. With the passage of time, the initial rigidity, un-acceptance and intolerance towards migrants, and foreigners, melted away which gave rise to equal opportunities and security for all. Divisions and clashes in the society decreased and gradually diverse groups came to a peaceful settlement, diversity was valued and embraced. The most influential and recent example of ebbing hatred and differences, is the selection and winning of American President, Obama, an African American. People of America chose their President from the race which was once highly disliked. America can be compared to a *melting pot* where the society has shunned the differences to mingle up and assimilate varied cultures in order to produce a homogeneous society. Philip Martin in *Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America* (2003) writes:

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the leading metaphor for the incorporation of newcomers to America was a fusion of peoples in a ‘smelting pot’ (Ralph, Waldo Emerson), ‘cauldron’ (Henry James) or ‘crucible’ in which, historian Frederick Jackson Turner noted, ‘immigrants were Americanized, liberated and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics.’ The hero of Israel Zangwill’s popular play of 1908, ‘The Melting Pot’, echoed this sentiment when he cried out, ‘Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians – into the Crucible with you all! God is making the America! (35)

George Washington said,

The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges. (35)

‘Push and pull’ factor is one of the major reasons for immigration to US. People, who had lived in the midst of wars and had encountered conflicts and tragedies; they were forced to flee to America to save their lives. For example the conflicts and contradictions on the Ivory Coast had insisted around one million to migrate. The governments of those countries which do not work in the favor of people and turn malevolent by giving unjust treatment, people tend to migrate to a comparatively safe and secure place. For instance, more than one million have left Burma where the military government acted indifferent to the groups fighting for democracy. Another factor is religion; many countries try to impose the religion of the nation upon the people of other religions. Many Christians living in Arab countries have started migrating from Egypt, Iraq and Iran. Job opportunities have attracted people and particularly young people from under-developing countries or economically weak nations. They migrate with a hope and vision for a better lifestyle and a secure future. Once an immigrant gets settled, he or she tries to reunite with the family, which consequently results in the migration of family members. Young people seeking better educational opportunities at the higher levels, often look toward US.

These factors resulted in turning America into a multicultural and multidimensional nation. It has become one of the first nations where a wide spectrum of immigrants’ social and cultural life can be found to co-exist in terms of food, customs and conventions, language, politics, norms, traditions, outfits, marriage, families, lifestyle, religion and vivid set of doctrines

from various communities in different corners of the world. They are settled, living and growing together at one place. Therefore, America can also be equated to a *salad bowl*. People from various regions are free to practice and preserve their native culture which has probably made America stand first in the list of multicultural nation.

Years ago Europeans were the only settlers in America but today on an American street we can see Jews, Chinese, Indians, Africans, Arabs, Hispanics, Catholics and Russians and so on; they have made it a multicultural and multidimensional nation. These vivid and varied groups or communities arrived in America with their rich cultural baggage which in turn provided with an enriched source of literature. Literary works produced by immigrants have become an integral part of American Literature today as they have knitted it with vivacity dipped in the regional colors of their homeland. So we can say Immigrant Literature has proved to be very significant in shaping, coloring and enhancing the American Literature of late 20th century and the 21st century. Today, there are many notable immigrant writers like Khaled Hosseini, Ha Jin, Azar Nafisi and Valdimir Nabokov who have become eminent writers in the realm of American literature.

American Literature is a pure colorful amalgamation of - the adventures and invasions of colonists from Europe, skirmishes, struggle and conflicts of natives with colonists, American Puritanism, impact of American Civil War and burgeoning industrialization, rise of American Naturalism influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theory, dawn of American modernism with booming industries and material prosperity; and the special touch of vibrant cultural colors in the form of Immigrant Literature (Jewish American, Mexican/Chicano/Latino American, Asian American Writing- Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Asian Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Hmong.)

Early American Literature began with the real tales of English adventures by Captain John Smith and the account of historical events in the form of journals by John Winthrop and William Bradford. In the beginning the literature of New England was dominated by Puritan thoughts, which emphasized on hard work, sympathy and sobriety. The *Bay Psalm Book* (1640) was the first work published in the Puritan colonies. Edward Tylor was the most renowned Puritan poet whose metaphysical verse is compared with English poet George Herbert.

American Revolution changed the economic and social set up of America which is evident in the writings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and Philip Freneau. American Romanticism and Transdentalism further molded the tastes of American Literature. The literary works of Americans soon became popular in Europe. Washington Irving captured the attention of readers by producing American folk stories, James Fenimore Cooper captivated the readers by the adventurous sea stories and Wadsworth Longfellow by his morals oriented verse. Edgar Allan Poe well known for his detective stories, Hawthorne remembered for his works like, *The Scarlet Letter*. Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* are all time favorite American classics. Emily Dickinson is known for her unique use of dashes in poetry. Ralph Waldo Emerson is regarded as the major proponent of Transdentalism. His speech *The American Scholar* is considered as America's declaration of Intellectual Independence. Henry David Thoreau, another believer and representative of transdentalism; he is best known for his work *Walden*; it talks about simple living accompanied by natural surroundings.

The outbreak of civil war due to rising conflicts between north and south is very well reflected in American Literature. Romanticism was substituted by American Realism; more emphasis was laid upon everyday existence and class struggle. This phase of American Literature is presented in the works of Mark Twain, Henry James and William Dean Howells.

Regional scenes with social satire are traced by Mark Twain in his notable works - Huckleberry Finn, Life on the Mississippi and The Adventure of Tom Sawyer. Henry James is known for depicting the psychological consciousness of his characters; he was more interested in tracing the inner landscape of humans than their outer actions. James is considered as the exponent of psychological realism. His known works are – *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Ambassador*, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. William Dean Howells works revolved around rising middle class and their life style.

20th century in American Literature is marked by rising industrialization and material prosperity on one hand and the loss of spirituality on the other. This period comprises of Imagists movement led by Ezra Pound, poetry concerning spiritual crisis by TS Eliot, young artists who rejected established social and aesthetic conventions readily accepted the name given to them by Gertrude Stein – ‘the lost generation’. As a result writers like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, and E. E. Cummings came to the forefront with new ideas and forms to establish new values.

After Emily Dickinson and Whitman in mid 19th century, new poets came who were guided by their own will. Edwin Arlington Robinson wrote dark lines with pondering thoughts on mankind; Edgar Lee Masters, wrote in free verse for realistic biographies in *A Spoon River Anthology* (1915); Vachel Lindsay, is known for captivating rhythmical verse; Carl Sandburg, attempted to trace the day to day life in America; and Robert Frost, won worldwide fame for his verse written in extremely simple way.

Eugene O’Neill is widely recognized as the greatest American dramatists followed by Arthur Miller, William Inge and Tennessee Williams. Among the literary critics, H. L. Mencken,

Edmund Wilson, Lewis Mumford, Malcolm Cowley, Van Wyck Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, Yvor Winters, Lionel Trilling, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks took the forefront.

Works by immigrants found its way and recognition in American literature by 1980s and 90s, it includes the work of African-American (Nobel Prize-winner Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Gloria Naylor), Latino (Oscar Hijuelos, Rudolfo Anaya, and Sandra Cisneros), Native American (Louise Erdrich and N. Scott Momaday), Asian-American (Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan).

In 1850s, immigrants from Asia began migrating to United States in significant numbers. The news of gold rush attracted thousands of people from China, who arrived in California as cheap laborers to work in mining and agricultural industries and to complete the transcontinental railroad. Japanese and Koreans arrived in 1880s to work upon sugar plantations and gradually found their way to mainland. Punjabis settled in Canada shifted to Washington and California to work at lumber mills and agricultural fields. The 1965 Hart-Cellar Act eliminated immigrant quotas based on national origins and after the end of Vietnam War, a flood of immigrants and refugees entered US, making Asian Americans fastest-growing minority. Oh Seiwoong in *Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature* (2013) writes:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 14 million people in the United States in 2004 identified themselves as Asian Americans, making up the 5% of the total U.S. population. The bureau also predicts that the number will grow to 37.6 million by 2050, 9.3 percent of the U.S. (ix)

Asian American Literature deals with the lives of Asian immigrants who experienced an entirely different ambience surrounded by altogether strange culture, language, politics, law, traditions, food and the list is endless. Immigrant writers display two nations in their work. The nation to which they originally belong and second, the host nation, the ways and manners of which they try to embrace. The life of immigrants has always been the center of keen interest to study and observe. It is very difficult to substitute one's culture and tradition which is ingrained in blood with something which is unfamiliar and foreign. In an attempt to adapt and adjust with foreign ways, immigrants continuously undergo a conflict and struggle which is both mental and physical. Asian American Literature not only counts the changes and the degree to which it modifies the lives of immigrants but also the impacts that it made on the people of host nation. The sense of pulling into two opposite directions arises due to living with both native and foreign cultures simultaneously. Such a situation further raises the constant struggle to survive with the doctrines which immigrants bring along with them from their native land; another imperative factor is the sense of belonging and the sense of identity. Clinging to the culture which is their very own and opening up the door to a brand new one, leave the immigrants in an utter dilemma and fear to lose their true identity. Asian American Literature is like an umbrella term which covers all the aspects that dominates and affects the lives of Asian immigrants. In America, among Asian immigrants, the largest group in terms of national origins is Chinese, followed by Filipinos, Japanese, Asian Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Hmong.

Literature can be compared to a record book of major events occurred and occurring in the lives of human beings which are continuously affected by the changes at the level of society, politics and religion. Asian American Literature gives a detailed and comprehensive picture of the life of Asian immigrants in America right from their first arrival in the New World to present

scenario. Asian American literature from 1880 to 1920 is purely realistic in nature; the writers gave an exact depiction of racial hatred that Asians were subjected to, prejudices toward the belief and customs of Asians and a pining for the life in homeland which often made Asians nostalgic. Asians from China, Japan, India, Philippines and Korea were highly preferred for the work at sugar industries, gold mines in California, in agriculture and railroad construction. The continuous increase in the population of Asians became a threat for the white working class especially in North America. The competitiveness for work opportunities made the working class of America belligerent and unwelcoming toward Asians. The agitation and hatred toward Asians became apparent even in the literary works of various American writers. They presented Asians as heathens willing to seek ills in various forms like gambling, smoking, idolatry and sexual deviance.

In the midst of this racial hatred Asian American writers gave a precise and realistic description of their experiences in the biographies or auto-biographies. Examples of such texts are: *When I Was a boy in China* by Yan Phou Lee, *My life in China And America* by Yung Wing, *America through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat* by Wu Tingfang, *A Daughter of the Samurai* by Etsu Sugimoto. The early Asian American Literature also gives an account of harsh conditions that immigrants had to go through at Angel Island Immigration Station. Immigrants came with a dream of better life in America which was terribly shattered when they had to stay confined in the prison of Angel Island for months and in some cases for years.

The racial discrimination against Asian Americans continued but it took a different shape during 1941; during World War II Japan attacked and bombed America's Pearl Harbor. This brought a change in American perspective about Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese became fellow sufferers and Japanese who were considered as good and noble became despicable. The

phase from 1930 to 1950 in America was full of various political changes like “Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934” (Adams 50), concentration camps meant for Japanese, protests and uprisings against discrimination and wars like World war II and Korean War (1950- 53); the impact of these upheavals upon Asians is well captured in Asian American Literature. Bella Adams in *Asian American Literature* (1988) writes:

In February 1943, a year after Executive Order 9066 and, with it, several months of resistance within the camps in the form of strikes and uprisings, the US Army began to recruit volunteers on the mainland and in Hawaii to form the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The internees in this team and other adult internees were forced to answer a loyalty questionnaire. Depending on their responses to two questions in particular, this questionnaire exacerbated already difficult wartime relationships within the Japanese American community: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States...Will you swear unqualified alliance to the United States of America...?? Negative responses to these questions by draft-age Japanese American males, labeled ‘no-no boys’, saw them segregated for disloyalty and some were sent to prison. (52,53)

In the middle of such political upheavals many literary texts were published narrating the stories of these drastic changes. Some of those works are: *No-No Boy* by John Okada, *America Is In The Heart* by Carlos Bulosan, *Nisei Daughter* by Monica Sone.

During 1960s and 70s the uprisings and protests against racial discrimination reached at its height. It came collectively from Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos living in America. Two major movements during this period played an imperative role in securing Asians the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965). Freedom from racial dominance on the legal

front also brought in the liberty in the field of literature. The Asian writers who kept themselves limited to romantic and realistic side and did not dare to condemn the American dominance openly; they became free in their expression. Bella Adams in *Asian American Literature* (1988) wrote, “Poetry and drama also became more democratized in terms of subject matter and characterized by informal diction and direct reference in the service of class, race, or gender based oppositional politics.” (73)

Chinese switched on to such literary forms like talk-story and folk songs, they felt hesitant in using these forms earlier. Talk- story is basically a narrative about Chinese myths and traditions. Writers came up with these forms especially to support cultural nationalism which rose to question stereotypes, to break the silence and unveil cultural history.

According to Bella Adams in *Asian American Literature* (1988), to show the dissatisfaction and intolerance against the discrimination within various institutions and education system, various organizations were formed - the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA). This phase also witnessed the longest student’s strike that had taken place in the history of America for the first time. It was initiated to involve ethnic studies program in the curriculum and the opportunities for the Asians in staff recruitment. (75)

Such kind of protests also gave rise to violence against Asians. And it was the presentation of this violence that occupied the major space in the works Asian American writers during 1960s and 70s. Some of the prominent texts of this phase are: *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Jade Snow Wong, *Eat a bowl of Tea* by And Louis Chu, *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men* by Maxine Hong Kingston.

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston is a collection of Memoirs, published in 1976. Kingston gave it an autobiographical touch with old Chinese folktale, presenting Chinese American lifestyle in America. *The Woman Warrior* has become a most commonly taught text in modern university education and has also secured its place in the disciplines like American Literature, anthropology, Asian studies, psychology, sociology and women's studies.

The commencement of The Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965) in America further boost up the increasing number of Asian immigrants. People from South Asia came with the economic motives and from Southeast Asia, especially from East Asia, the refugees of Vietnam War rushed toward America in search of a safe zone. Bella Adams in *Asian American Literature* (1988) says, "Whether brought by law or war, this second, larger wave of Asian immigration meant that by the 1980s the Asian American population was predominantly immigrant." (107)

This enormous population of Asian Americans got divided; one side there was prosperous and successful Asian immigrants who were hardly affected by racism or hate-crime against Asians. Another side constituted those recent immigrants who were poor and struggling with their conditions to rise higher at the foreign land. During 1980s Asian American literary texts dealt with the complexity and ambiguity in thoughts and relationships between these two divided worlds of Asian Americans.

The literary works of this phase presented the discrimination and criticism within Asian American community. The fresh immigrants and refugees were often looked down and demeaned by their Americanized partners for their native lifestyle and thoughts which were totally different and unlike American. The mistreatment and ridiculing criticism given by

America born Asians to struggling Asian immigrants became a dominant theme of Asian American Literature during this phase.

Some of the important works of 1980s Asian American Literature are: *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa, *Tripmaster Monkey* by Maxine Hong Kingston, *Fob* and *M. Butterfly* by And David Henry Hwang, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee, *The Coffin Tree* by And Wendy Law-Yone.

Obasan is a novel by Joy Kogawa, Japanese-Canadian author. *Obasan* provides a picture of Canada's internment and persecution of its citizens of Japanese origin during World War II. This novel flashes the injustice, memories of war, identity, tolerance and prejudice against Japanese Canadian.

The capability and uniqueness displayed by immigrant writers helped them in creating a space for themselves in U.S. and also assisted in getting the recognition and attention of the publishers. As a result, new writers like Gish Jen, Gus Lee, Fae Myenne Ng, and Chang-rae Lee have made successful beginning with their novels. In poetry, David Mura, Gauet Hongo, Li-Young Lee, and Cathy Sony made their presence felt at national level.

Several literary anthologies came on the surface providing a wide choice for the teachers and students. The first literary anthology came in 1974, Aiiieeeee! The volume was reedited as The Big Aiiieeeee! It was followed by Jessica Hagedorn's *Charlie Chan Is Dead* (1993), encircling Asian American fiction and Garret Hongo's *The Open Boat* focused upon collected poems. Oh Seiwoong in *Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature* (1988) writes:

In 1992 Elaine H. Kim asserted that we were witnessing the start of a 'golden age of Asian American cultural production'. Looking at the shelves in major bookstores now,

are would agree that she was right. Moreover as multicultural education gained momentum in school curricula, works of talented writers of South Asian background- Meena Alexander, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Bharti Mukherjee have been making regular appearances in school syllabi and academic conferences. Following the terrorist attacks against the United States on Sep. 11, 2001, and the continuing unrest in the Middle East, public interest in works by authors of West Asian origin surged noticeably, creating momentum for rich cultural production from Afghan and Arab American authors. (x)

There are many notable immigrant writers who have arrived in the forefront by marking their presence through their powerful and enticing works in the realm of literature. Writers from Asia, pen their experiences in an entirely foreign land with altogether different culture, people, society, language, traditions, customs, food, living style and so on. They have recorded every details of struggle in figuring out their position and place as an immigrant in a foreign country. The first generation of immigrants was extremely concerned regarding their links and connections to their roots, hence made every possible effort to preserve it through their ethnical practices. Second generation of immigrants had to go through comparatively hard phase as they felt grinded between maintaining and balancing two identities simultaneously, one side as an Asian and other as an American. They felt pressurized when they had to act like a pretentious, in adopting and accepting the culture and values in which their parents had grown up while avoiding the ways and manners with which they found themselves surrounded. Consequently it results in the divided belongingness of second generation; hence they never feel completely Asian or American. Third generation was comparatively liberated and relieved from the traumas,

confusion and chaos of adopting this or that, as they embraced transnational attitude – beyond nations and boundaries.

These three phases of Asian immigrants are best reflected in the form of poems, novels and plays through which the writers captured the origin, growth and journey of Asian American Literature. It gets the recognition as a separate discipline by late 1970s. The earliest Asian American works like David Hsin-fu Wand's, *Asian American Heritage: An Anthology of prose and poetry* and another work *Aiiieeeee!*, an anthology of Asian American Writers marked the beginning of Asian American Literature. Since then there has been a seamless flow of novels, poems, autobiographies, memoirs and plays by the writers of Asian origin, contributing in the development of Asian American Literature. In an article "Asian American Literature: Leaving the Mosaic" (2000) Shirley says:

A survey of the publishers' lists on Asian American writing shows that in the 1990s, this discipline began to use a colloquial phrase, 'a hot property'. Its popularity in the early days of the new century can be generally linked to the success of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, to such African American authors as W.E.B. Du Bois of the early 20th century and Toni Morrison of more recent vintage, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1994. Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1978), the first American work to receive wide acclaim and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), which established that writer as a best-selling author, have given rise to other writers whose works are of such a range of appeal as to be found in supermarkets and college bookstores alike.(18)

Asian American Literature has succeeded in making its place and establishing itself as a discipline, it can be seen in almost all the universities of US offering higher education. Research scholars and students have made it popular by showing their keen interest in Asian American Literature. Journals like *Bridge* in New York City and *Amerasia* in Los Angeles played a key role in introducing the Asian American writers to the readers and in generating the awareness about their works. As a result, US bookstores have been filled with works of Americans of Filipino, Malaysian, Indian, Pakistani, Vietnamese, Korean and other descents, with women widely and notably represented. In the same article Shirley says:

The range of achievements in recent years is quite impressive. After the award garnered by Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, other Asian American Works found welcome readers and audiences. Cathy Song's novel *The River of Heaven*, helped solidify the reputation of the Asian American writing community in the 1980s, as did *M. Butterfly*, David Henry Hwang's startling theatrical piece, and Philip K Gotanda's drama, *The Wash*. (19, 20)

Not only in literature, Asian Americans have also been seen on the screens of Hollywood which brought a turning point in the history of Asian Americans in American media and popular culture. The impact of globalization can be seen on the film industry's representation of Asians and Asian Americans in mainstream and independent films. Few examples are: *Better Luck Tomorrow*, *The Guru*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Matrix*, *Charlie's Angles*, *Pearl Harbor* and *The Phantom Menace*.

The Indian and Hong Kong film industries prove to be the main sources for bringing the noticeable change in Hollywood. Indian films are well known for its musical romances as its

favorite genre. Its impact could be seen when Director Baz Luhrmann recycled American Pop for his Bollywood homage, “Moulin Rouge”. After the release of Gurinder Chadha’s, *Bend It Like Beckham* which is associated with Asian American life; and is a blend of east and west; American studios had to struggle for the rights over Chadha’s next film. Guiyon Huang in *Asian American Literary Studies* (2005) writes:

Hong Kong movies are known for dynamic action that makes the languorous iconography of American action stars pale in comparison. Its specific attributes are kinetic speed, often heightened with aggressively fast editing techniques, but based primarily upon the 3 acrobatics, stunts, gunplay, and other physical accomplishments that exhibit a specifically Asian martial arts heritage. The best known of the directors, John Woo, is known for the gun battles in which a favorite star, Chow Yun-fat, fights holding guns in both hands. (94)

In 1990s, Hong Kong style action film reached its zenith. Hong Kong action choreographers were hired for the blockbusters like *The Matrix* and *Charlie’s Angels*. Hong Kong style martial art movies appeared to be so interesting and appealing to Americans that the Chinese language film, *Crouching tiger Hidden Dragon* by Taiwanese American director Ang Lee became the first highest-grossing foreign-language film in the history of US. Importance was also given to actors of Asian descent, the major role of ‘Morpheus’ in *The Matrix* was given to Chow Yun-fat; and *Charlie’s Angels*, which is a remake of American television series replaces one of the three white leads with Asian American actress Lucy Liu.

Apart from Asian Literature and Asians impact upon Hollywood; Asians have proved to be beneficial for America and have contributed their level best in raising the country to its

present prosperous state. If we give a glance to the American past; we'll find how Asians have transformed the map of American agriculture, industries, trade and business. With their continuous industrious efforts, they lifted America to reach its present state of affluence.

The relation between East and West is not a matter of recent years. In fact it dates back to 11th century. Europeans had always been keenly enthusiastic about the riches of Asia. Asia was believed to have golden minarets and lavish Asians possessing luxuries of all kinds. In 13th century, Marco Polo, a young European covered around 15,000 miles of Middle East and Asia. He gave a fascinating account of rich customs, streams flowing with diamonds in *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The first Spanish ship, 'Manila Galleon' left Manila carrying Chinese Silk and porcelain ware to Aapulco in 1576. The growth in trade and exchange of goods also began immigration of Asians to America. Around 40,000 to 100,000 Asians from China, Philippines & South-east Asia travelled through the Pacific from Manila and landed in Acapulco, America. With the passage of time the emigration of Asians increased either because of internal conflicts or due to adversities cropped up due to European exploitation.

The terribly miserable condition of Chinese peasants provoked them to leave their land in search of gold in the distant lands of America. The discovery of gold in the American river of northern California attracted several Chinese to make their fortune abroad. But unfortunately only few could explore the gold and majority of them got trapped in the intricately knitted web of labor. They found it embarrassing to return to their land empty handed therefore they decided to stay abroad and get grinded on the farms of Whites.

The increased capitalism of America also increased the never dying requirement of labor force which was crucial to connect east America with its western part. Chinese fulfilled their

need and made it possible to connect east and west America by building transcontinental railroad.

Chinese immigrants were the people made up of metal bones. They not only survived in the midst of harsh cruelties and rigorous racial discrimination but also succeeded in proving their mettle to the west. They had not hesitated in doing all those jobs which White resisted or found menial or below their status to engage into. For Chinese no work was big or small, they did everything with the help of which they could survive and could also assist their families in China by sending the portion of whatever little they earned. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) wrote, “The Chinamen are ploughmen, laundrymen, placer miners, woolen spinners and weavers, domestic servants, cigar makers, shoe-makers, and railroad builders to the great benefits of the State...” (71)

Whites always considered Asians as inferior and on the basis of racial discrimination; they had always showered countless atrocities. But still they could not deny the fact that Chinese Asians are amazing at their work. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) wrote, “Sugar plantaters praised the Chinese for being prompt at the call of the bell, steady in their work, and quick to learn.” (74)

In agriculture, Chinese immigrants changed the face of American industry by taking it to unexpected heights. Americans got an opportunity to savor the taste of cherry and orange by the efforts made by two Chinese horticulturists. Ah Bing is known for breeding cherries in Oregon and Lue Gim Gong is known as ‘citrus wizard’. He grew juicy oranges and transported it throughout the country and also developed many other hybrid plants by various plant combinations. He is still remembered for turning Florida into a citrus industry.

As mentioned above, Chinese immigrants proved their accomplished skills in every sector whatsoever they came across. The working force and rapid development in the status of working class Chinese became a threat for Whites. They called them rats, beasts, and swine, the people who have come from Asia to rule the economy of America. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) wrote, “Chinese were also an economic danger according to Miller. They competed with white workers with their ‘machine-like’ ways and their ‘muscles of iron’...” (89)

Whites who were not willing to admit their own incapability, they accused Chinese for bringing all sort of ills like drug use, gang activity and prostitution while industrialists have always appreciated them as they found cheap labor to work in lumber, mining, fishing and agricultural industries. The present economical status of America that it has gained from its rocking industrial network; to some extent the credit for it can be given to immigrants for providing a robust economical base to their host nation. Its success story lies in the sweat of those Asian immigrants who had worked harder than its present 20th century hi-tech machines.

The second largest group of Asians that entered America was from Japan; the immigrants from Japan were called *issei*. People in the East had enough within their territory; they were self-sufficient people. Therefore in the pages of history we never saw or read East invading the West for the material goods. It was always West who was dependent upon the raw material available in the East and has always displayed its greed for possessing the riches of Eastern countries. China firmly declared that its celestial land has everything to fulfill the requirements of its people and had strictly prohibited the intrusion of Europeans. But the greed of Europeans for silk, porcelain and material goods turned them into wild beasts and they inflicted havoc upon China to pressurize it to open its ports for business. Similarly, Japan followed stringent rules not to let its people emigrate and outsiders to enter into its territory. America wanted to establish its

control in Pacific and found it difficult to digest this non-interference stand of Japan. Under the orders of Millard Fillmore, four navy ships loaded with American soldiers and detonators went to intimidate Japan. Under threat and force used by America, Japan had to open its port for trade.

Like Chinese, Japanese immigrants too have outstanding agricultural skills. America thrived under the skilled workmanship of Japanese skilled farm workers. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) wrote, “In 1900, there are thirty-seven Japanese farms in the united States with a combined acreage of 4,674 acres...they grew 95 percent of California’s fresh snap beans and peas, 67 percent of the state’s fresh tomatoes, and 44 percent of its onions.” (117)

Japanese immigrant, Shima became ‘potato king’ in United States. He owned 10,000 acres of land to grow potatoes and became one of the most successful Japanese farmers. Shima died in 1926 and left behind an estate of 15 million dollars. By 1910, Japanese spread to metropolitan cities like Los Angeles, San-Francisco and Seattle to flourish the Japanese owned businesses in restaurants, barbershops, poolrooms, laundries, grocery stores to serve their people and American society.

Asians became so successful because of being industrious and with the quality of easy assimilation that Americans and Europeans started feeling insecure. The rapid development and influence of Asians on western economy took away the sound sleep of Occidentals. They began to see nightmare in which the East takes over the West with the help of military power, booming economy, and constant immigration. In 1895, German Kaiser Wilhem II had a terrible nightmare in which he saw the East is all set to take over the West. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

He had dreamt that the great nations of Europe were threatened by ruthless foreign invaders from the East. Convinced that he had witnessed some terrible future event, Wilhelm commissioned a painting of his vision and sent reproductions to several European leaders and to President William McKinley. The painting shows the great nations of Europe – Austria, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia – represented as women warriors preparing for battle... The ‘heathen idol’ Buddha rides a Chinese dragon that represents ‘the demon of Destruction’ heading toward Europe. (123)

The dream of German Kaiser Wilhem II seems to have come true. In the past Japan almost became a superpower with its modern industries and powerful military. When Japan emerged victoriously in Sino-Japanese war and later in 1904-05 defeated Russians in Russo-Japanese War, America started viewing it as a major threat for the White race. The vision became precisely true when Japan played a crucial role in World War II with other axis powers who tried to colonize the West. But even if we analyze the present situation, Japan has contributed with other Asian countries in indirectly colonizing America. As mentioned above the Japanese played a significant role like Chinese in satisfying the agricultural needs of America; they have raised victoriously in building their own agricultural empires and Americans could be seen depending upon immigrants for the basic needs when it comes to laundries, grocery shops, poolrooms, barbershops and cooks meant for restaurants.

No native willingly leaves his land, family and relatives to get exploited at hands of foreigners. There has always been one or the other reasons for immigration. Korea was grinded between China and Japan; in the mad territorial competition between the two, the lives of the Koreans were ruined. They had to rush to America as refugees where the life was not easy either. They had to go through racial discrimination like other Asians.

In spite of all sort of discrimination; like other Asians, Koreans too made a significant contribution in converting California from an agricultural region to a million-dollar making city. They worked on farms, became tenant farmers and truck drivers.

The prohibition on the immigration of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans led to the shortage of farm workers; as a result of which planters and recruiters looked for South Asians, Filipinos and Mexicans as a substitute of their former workers. The South Asians, especially the agriculturalists from Punjab, people from Bihar, Calcutta and Madras, were exploited under British Raj. These regions were most adversely affected, therefore, in order to make their life better and to improve the lives of their relatives back at motherland; they travelled to America to seek fortune. South Asians were hastily hired for the work at Bellingham Bay Lumber Mill, the Morrison Mill, and Larson's Mill.

Filipinos from Asia also proved to be beneficial for Americans. America in its greed of colonial expansion took over Philippines as it served a good point for the exchange of trade with Asia. In 1500 Philippines was an important centre for Spain's Pacific empire and after 1898 it opened up a direct passage for America to trade with Asian countries. It also became a good source for America to buy farmlands at low cost and produce the crops for exporting. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

By the early twentieth century, the Philippines were identified as the next site in the United States' ongoing search for Asian labor. Filipinos were attractive for a number of reasons. First, they could enter the United States easily because of their status as U.S. nationals. Second, like Koreans, they could be used to compete with the Japanese

plantation workers in Hawai'i who were leading successful labor movements for higher wages and better working conditions. (177)

The Asians who always received the status of 'other' in America; they became crucial in WWII to fight in favor of the land which had showered nothing upon them other than hardships; they fought against axis powers and proved their loyalty toward America. Thousands of Chinese American served in all the branches of U.S. military. Chinese women rendered their services in the hospitals, factories, wartime shipyards and Red Cross camps. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) wrote, "More than 7000 Filipinos eventually served in the two Filipino regiments and contributed to the war effort in numerous ways, including operating behind enemy lines to destroy Japanese communications and providing military intelligence." (259)

The imprints of Asians could be seen on every walk of American life as result of which American life has transformed to a great extent. Chinese on American land are broadly divided into two categories. One is 'uptown, high-Tech Chinese' which includes scientists, powerful and wealthy businessman, capitalists, and professional elites. They have begun with their new ethnic residential regions on the outskirts of the city with Chinese restaurants, banks, Chinese-language newspaper, malls and grocery stores. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

Chinese make up more than one-third of Monterey Park's population in southern California, for example, giving the city the nickname of 'the first suburban Chinatown' while in New York City there are now numerous Chinatown spread across the five boroughs. (289)

Second, there are 'downtown, low-tech' Chinese who have covered the domains of waiters, workers, cooks and laundry-men. Chinese women supplies 85% of the working force in

garment industries. In the medical sector Filipinos could be easily seen. America has heavily filled in Filipino doctors, nurses and medical practitioners to counter the shortage of medical employees.

Indian immigrants have become the proud owners of maximum technology related jobs. They include highly educated professionals, scientists, surgeons, engineers and businessmen. Immigrants from Gujarat have owned more than half of the motels in U.S. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

Out of 46,000 employed Indian immigrants in the United States in 1974, 16,000 were engineers, 4,000 were scientists, and 7,000 were physicians or surgeons... The arrival of the so many highly educated and skilled workers has had a tremendous impact on American industry. Scholar A.L. Saxenian estimated that by 1998, Chinese and Indian immigrants had started over a quarter of the technology businesses in California's Silicon Valley and generated 60,000 jobs. By 2012, 15.5 percent of all start-ups were founded by immigrant entrepreneurs born in India. And almost half of the computer-related H-1B visas (given to highly trained workers with skills that meet current needs in the U.S. economy) were given to workers from India at the turn of the twenty-first century. Over one quarter of employed Indian-born men worked in information technology, and one third of Indian- born women worked in business, management, and information technology fields. (296, 297)

In the contemporary world the role of immigrants has changed. They are not connected to one particular country or region rather they have become transnational that is they belong to more than one place. Due to globalization, sometimes immigrants have to keep on shifting their

places as per the need and at times they settle permanently according to the requirement. While living in the host nations and by frequently changing their place, they have overcome with the dilemma of adopting this or that; and have attained a balance between the two.

One can live transnationally by tiny acts like buying certain things, the movies or TV shows that he/she watches and the news that he/she listens. For example, Indian Americans have managed to stay connected to their land through these tiny acts. They visit Indian grocery shops, buy Bollywood movies, cosmetics, clothes, hold double citizenships and so on. This way they stay connected to both the nations. Another important source is Media, with its help immigrants keep themselves updated about each other and about the homeland. For example, Chinese media cooperation covers the news related to Chinese immigrants as well as economic, cultural and political news in the homeland and the world. A Chinese immigrant without knowing a word in English can keep himself well acquainted about the happenings around.

Transnational do not carry only single or double identities; in fact they carry multiple and therefore they have become transnational. For instance, before moving to United States, most of the Koreans moved to Brazil or Argentina first. Similarly Asians who first migrated to Latin America and then to America, they became multilingual; they followed and regarded both Asian and Latin cultures while embracing the American. In New York City one can see the amalgamation of transnational identities. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

In New York City, Chinese Latino or Chino Cuban restaurants have served Chinese immigrants from Cuba since 1970s. Offering both Chinese and Chinese American cuisine to a diverse clientele, these restaurants bring Chinese, Latino, and American cultures

together. Koreans who grew up in Argentina and then remigrated to the United States use both Spanish and Korean in their work with Asian and Latino immigrants in the United States. Reconstructing their identities as Korean, Latino, and American, these migrants “float” back and forth between nations and communities, creating new diasporic cultures and redefining racial and ethnic identities at the same time. (367)

New trends in immigration are viewed. As Asia has emerged with a consolidated economy in 20th century and is expected to grow and widen up its horizons further, America is no more seen as the only destination by accomplished professionals and businessmen. The economic boom in India and China has offered many opportunities to the immigrants to return to their native land. Students after completing their degrees are seen returning to get hired by multinational companies. Erika Lee in *The Making of Asian America* (2015) writes:

Giridharadas, an Indian American who moved to India in 2003, explains the second-generation immigrants are increasingly exploring motherland opportunities ‘as economies convulse in the West and jobs dry up.’ The idea of moving to India, he continues, ‘is spreading virally in the émigré homes. (Lee 368)

Asian immigrants today have raised themselves above borders. Their to and fro journey in more than two nations have made them global and multidirectional. They have learnt to balance with ‘this or that’ along with their loyalties and identities in connection to two countries or more that they travel to.

The idea of Postmodernism suggests ‘a break’, ‘a cut off’ from the established beliefs, truths and practices set by Modernists. It is in stark contradiction with Modernism. The promises and visions for a better life and living conditions, shown by the industrial revolution proved to be

hollow for Postmodernists; various improving movements during modernism, in the field of art, architecture, advertising, music, politics and literature were questioned and rejected by Postmodernists. Postmodernism uphold concepts like differences, heterogeneity, hybridity, pluralism, regional, discourse and dynamic over similarity, homogeneous, purity, universal, objectivity and stagnant. Skeptic and anti-foundational notions are at the very core of Postmodernism.

At the centre of Modernism lies in industrialism, capitalism and military power. Industrial revolution changed the landscape of Britain and its people. Domestic production meant for immediate use was replaced by industries for mass consumption. This shift also brought a social change as people moved from rural to urban areas which gradually altered their habits. Profit oriented approach pushed the people from simple to complex life. In search of new markets and raw material, capitalism gave rise to globalization through which it reached the distant and unknown regions. This resulted in the exchange of culture, beliefs, ideas and information. Industrialization and capitalism gave rise to a more regularized and indirectly controlled society through bureaucrats, administration and political set up. The strictly organized societies lead to the formation of national boundaries protected by military- power. Chris Barker in *Cultural Studies Theory and Practice* (2000) wrote, “The processes by which industrialism, capitalism, surveillance and the nation-state emerged we may call ‘modernization’. ‘Modernism’ refers to the human cultural forms bound up this modernization (Berman, 1982)” (190)

Capitalism, blind in profit making, robed people from the simplicity in their lives; shifted them from rural to urban areas, turned them from rustic to mechanized and filled the society with complexities. The mad race for more and more profit, authority and power, plunged the world into two world wars and horrific events like concentration camps. Chris Barker in *Cultural*

Studies Theory and Practice (2000) says, "...modernism as a 'structure of feeling' involves pace, change, ambiguity, risk, doubt...These are underpinned by the social and cultural process of: individualization, differentiation, commodification, urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization." (192,193)

After Modernism, a new kind of society and culture emerged whose dimensions were set and determined majorly by mass media and popular culture. Our sense of reality about the world around is guided by what is presented to us through endless images produced by mass media. For instance, an advertisement advertizing a soap; ideally, its job should get over after giving the related information regarding the product. But media moulds it by connecting it to motherly affection towards the child, imposing an idea upon the society that if a mother is really concerned about the health and protection of her child; she will buy a particular brand of soap; hence, sending and spreading a notion in the society that all those mothers who buy a specific brand of soap are good mothers. Similarly economy is inextricably connected with the functioning of popular culture. It is the popular culture which decides what we should buy and hence it determines the level of production.

Another aspect of postmodernism is 'surface and style'. Appearance is given more importance than reality. The content, utility, in-depth meaning, merit, quality etc are undermined for the sake of 'surface and style'. Manufacturers claim of providing ample freedom to the consumers in terms of choice and have loaded the markets with such minuscule differences in the form of colors and designs, which put the consumers in a 'make-belief world' of choice. Example: the basic parts of a car will not change by adding few accessories. A car will remain a car with or without extra accessories, it cannot become an airplane. Jean Baudrillard calls such minuscule differences as "inessential differences". In his work *The System of Objects*, he says,

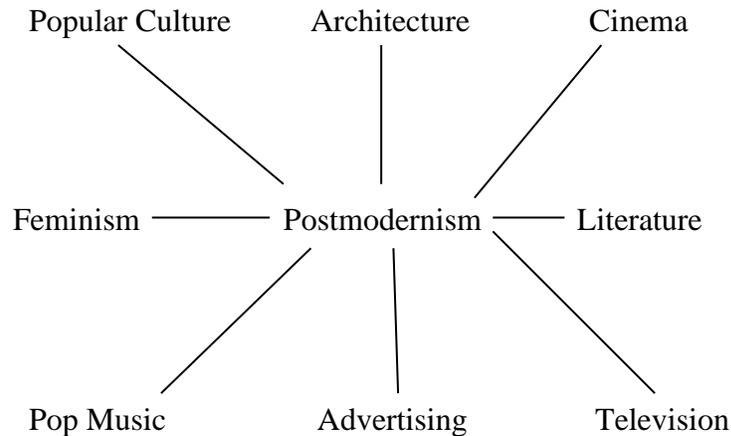
...our industrial society always offers us 'a priori', as a kind of collective grace and as the mark of a formal freedom, is choice...We no longer even have the option of not choosing, of buying an object on the sole grounds of its utility, for no object these days is offered for sale on such a 'zero-level' basis. (141)

Globalization, which is an outcome of industrialization, means different from Modern and Postmodern perspective. From Modern point of view, globalization turned the world into a united whole by connecting it through trade and commerce, and by minimizing the distances through internet and communication technology. This strengthens homogeneity by diminishing the differences through 'hybridity' and cultural imperialism. Hybridity makes it difficult to distinguish and cultural imperialism imposes an authoritative sameness. The agents of such homogeneity are transnational immigrants and transnational corporations. On the other hand, Postmodern celebrates heterogeneity. It runs counter to the meaning highlighted by Modernism. The rapid flow of migrants, information, culture and money has distorted the uniqueness and has given rise to conflicts, chaos, incoherence and confusion.

The rejection of Meta-narratives or grand stories is perhaps the most important characteristic of Postmodernism. It disapproves any legitimate theory, ideology, religion, art, science or knowledge which claims of finding the absolute truth, under which these domains try to set the parameters for the people to live and society to develop.

According to Dominc Strinati in *An Introduction To Theories of Popular Culture* (1995) Postmodernism has a contradictory stand in terms of different facets of life, for example, in terms of philosophy, architecture, cinema, television, advertising, pop music, literature,

feminism, politics and popular culture; it insists to think opposite to the trend or contradictory to the flow of time.



In Architecture, Modernism sidelined all traditional ways of constructing buildings, rather it used rational, scientific and technology based building patterns. Postmodernism rejected the meta-narrative of Modernism. It favored a mix of ideas from past and styles from different places. It used bright colors, embellishments and context based themes.

Similarly in Cinema, Postmodernism brings in past and present, modern buildings and traditional temples, regional languages all together on the screen. It gives ample room to style, narratives, wide content and characters with special effects.

Advertising is nothing but an agent which mediates between producer and consumer. Since 'style and surface' plays a key role in Postmodernism, it moulds and alters the real to suit the taste of masses. Advertisements are used to achieve certain agendas in politics by changing the perspective of the public. It helps in producing and consuming an idea. For example: In

recent 2019 Parliament election in India, certain words like ‘Intolerance’, sentences like ‘#voteforhatred’, ‘m bhi choukidar hun’ are advertised either in order to gain some political favour or to downgrade another political party. Similarly it is used to promote certain brands such as Cadbury – ‘is rakhi kuch acha hojaye kuch mitha ho jaye’ or ‘cadbury- rishton ki mithas’.

In Music as well, Postmodernism presents a mix from different genres, sounds and beats from different cultural identities and by bringing together modern and rustic instrumental, it gave way to rap, hip-hop, pop music, rock-n-roll. This new form of music melts away the wall of separation between High and Low culture and question ‘the music guided and produced according to serious rules’.

Skepticism rests at the centre of Postmodernism when it is seen from the lens of a philosophical movement. Poststructuralists, Derrida’s Deconstruction, Michael Foucault, Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard are some of the philosophers referred as anti-foundationalist as they question the validity of the established ideas.

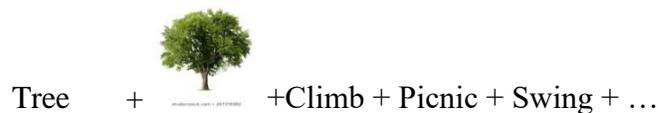
Post structuralism questions what Structuralism claims. According to Structuralism, the understanding of certain activities in a certain society is innate in human beings; the actions of human beings are guided by a preceding cognitive ability which is universal. Structuralism, basically rests upon the concept of signifier and signified, propounded by Saussure. According to him, there is a system of rules and regulations called as internal grammar which is universal and can fit into any system around the world to decode the meaning. This was rejected by Poststructuralists because such a system fixes the meaning without leaving any loose ends. For example,

Structuralism - Signifier + Signified = Object



But in Poststructuralism, it is always

Signifier + signifier + signifier...



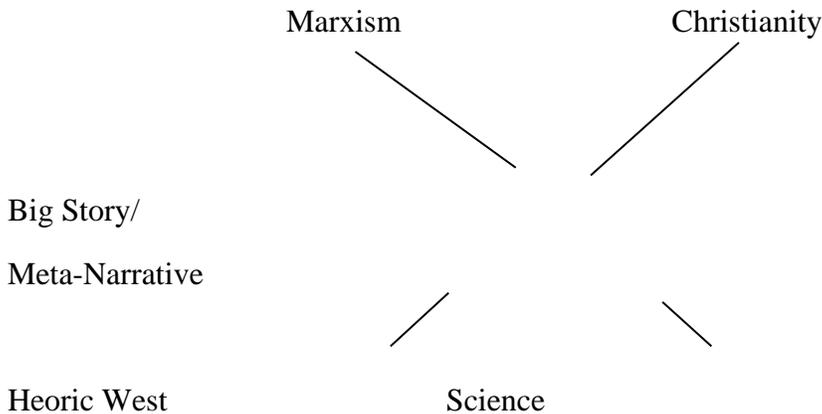
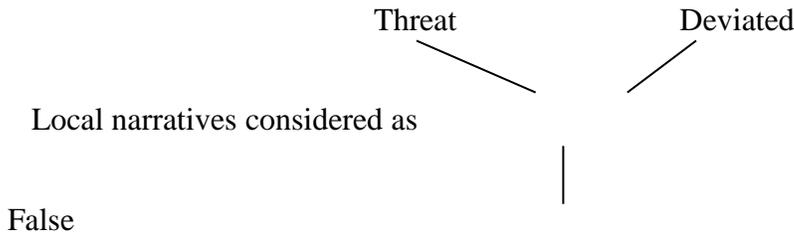
For Structuralists meaning lies inside the text, but for poststructuralists it comes from outside the text. For example, we understand a disastrous movie as disastrous because we can link the disastrous events of the film with some pre-existing ideas in our mind, may be related to flood, earthquake etc.

Through its system building approach, Structuralism tries to control the meaning. But it was challenged by Jacques Derrida's 'Deconstruction'. For Derrida signifier and signified are no guarantor of an exact meaning. For instance, word 'won', in English, means 'you are happy about the victory'. But in Polish, it means 'nice smelling'. Similarly, Spanish term 'oficina' means 'office' in English but in Portuguese 'oficina' means a 'workshop'.

For Structuralism, Color RED = Stop

For Post structuralism , Color RED can be = Danger, Passion, Warmth...

The most influential among the propagators of postmodern philosophy is Jean-Francois Lyotard. He is highly critical of meta-narratives or grand stories like, Marxism, Christianity confirming of granting redemption, science claiming to reach the absolute truth through reason. Instead of these meta-narratives which have become universal and permanent over the years, Lyotard, favors the individual or local narratives which come together to find a solution to a problem and dissolves after achieving the objective. It is unlike meta-narratives which seek to maintain a permanent position to dominate the world and legitimize the actions in a society according to the set ideology.



Jean Francois Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) writes:

I define postmodern as incredulity toward meta-narratives...The narrative is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages; its great goal. It is being dispersed in -clouds of narrative language elements - narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on. Conveyed within each cloud are pragmatic valencies specific to its kind. Each of us lives at the intersection of many of these. (xxiv)

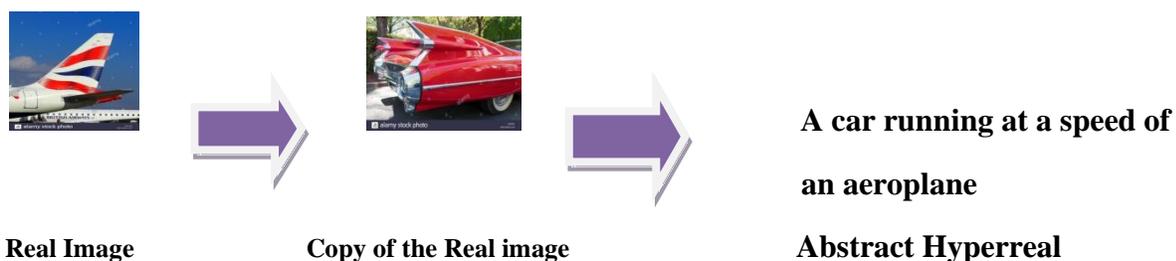
Lyotard considers knowledge as false and dominating, which is used as a tool to suppress the alternative or the difference. Knowledge is defined and determined by the wealthy, people who actually hold the position of power. This knowledge is modified to suit the interests of the privileged few and offered to the masses through computer technology to make it universal. Lyotard calls this production and distribution of knowledge as “mercantilisation of knowledge” (5). The sole purpose of knowledge has reduced to its sale and resale. Greater the production of information, greater will be its sale/exchange and greater will be the profit, which leads the path to greater power and control. He said, “the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory”. (5)

Jean Baudrillard, another prominent philosopher of Postmodernism, believes that Postmodern world is living within a system of images, where one cannot differentiate between the real and the image. When an image appears more real than the real, Baudrillard called it Hyperreal. Richard J Lane in *Jean Baudrillard* (2000) writes:

Baudrillard argues that there are three levels of simulation, where the first level is an obvious copy of reality and the second level is a copy so good that it blurs the boundaries

between reality and representation. The third level is one which produces a reality of its own without being based upon any particular bit of the real world. The best example is probably ‘virtual reality’, which is a world generated by computer languages and code. Virtual reality is thus a world generated by mathematical models which are abstract entities. It is this level of simulation, where the model comes before the constructed world, that Baudrillard calls the hyperreal.(30)

In his work, ‘The System of objects’, Baudrillard criticizes the meta-narrative of technology. Technological objects have changed the society into a consumer society. The meta-narrative of technology has driven the society into a hyper-real-functionality and hypermarket. Quoting an example from ‘The System of Objects’ by Jean Baudrillard; the American cars of 1950s were presented to the buyers with a useless attachment of ‘tail fins’. The ‘tail fins’ symbolizes an idea of measureless speed as the shape of ‘tail fins’ is based upon the model of tail fins meant for airplanes. But in reality, the ‘tail fins’ cannot turn the speed of a car equivalent to that of an airplane. It only gives the abstract satisfaction to the buyers.



In the world of technology, obsession has taken over utility. Objects are bought solely to gratify the psychological whims and fancies. For example, the basic functions performed by an old laptop are same as a branded ‘apple laptop’. But buyers associate a grace with the brand

‘apple’ which has nothing to do with the functioning; it is useful simply to satisfy an abstract sense. Baudrillard called it Hyperfunctionality. To term it more appropriately, he named it ‘gizmo’. Jean Baudrillard in *The System of Objects* (1996) writes:

This empty functionalism is well summed up by the word 'gizmo'. A gizmo does have an operational value, but whereas the function of a machine is explicit in its name, a gizmo, in the context of the functional paradigm, is always an indeterminate term with, in addition, the pejorative connotation of 'the thing without a name' or 'the thing I cannot name' (there is something immoral about an object whose exact purpose one does not know). The fact remains that it *works*. As a sort of dangling parenthesis, as an object detached from its function, what the 'gizmo' or the 'thingummyjig' suggests is a vague and limitless functionality - or perhaps better the mental picture of an imaginary functionality. (114)

Baudrillard opposed another meta-narrative in the form of Marxism. Marxism focused on ‘Production’, ‘Use-Value’ and ‘Exchange- Value’ while Baudrillard shifted the focus from production to ‘Consumption’ and from use-value to ‘Symbolic-exchange’. Marx’s prediction regarding the collapse of capitalism proved to be false as it is quite evident from the expansion of capitalism in the 21st century. Capitalism survived because symbolic –exchange never comes to a stop unlike ‘use or need value’ which comes to an end after the utility or need is fulfilled. According to Baudrillard, it is not ‘Production’ rather ‘Consumption’ which is working constantly to expand capitalism. Example:

Buying a Branded Phone



Use-Value=Communication

Selling that Phone



**Exchange-Value=Money received
after selling it**

**Putting it on the table just
to impress a friend**



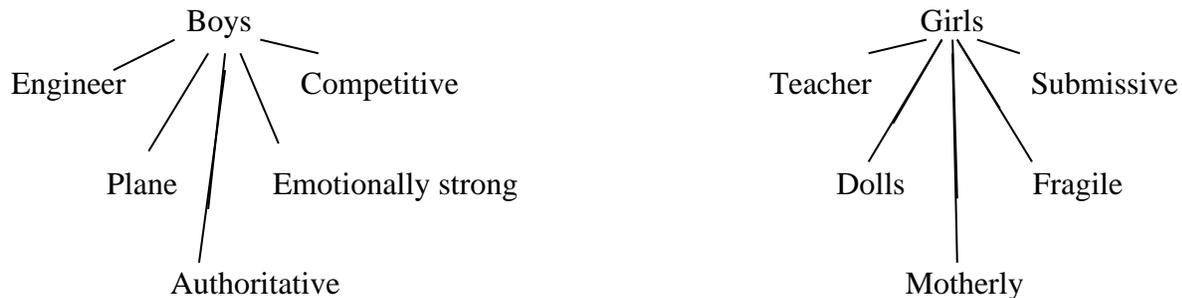
**Symbolic-Exchange=
Status/Fashion/Prestige**

Postmodernism rejected the range of meta-narratives set by Modernism for Feminism. In the light of modernism, first, Feminists believed that their condition will improve once they get voting right; it will put them equal to men. The group of liberals among women believed; women cannot attain equality until and unless they are placed at equal legal positions in respect to men or until they get equal representation in the government. Later, Feminists associated themselves with the idea of Marxism, believing that freedom from the oppression of men can be realized only by overthrowing capitalism. So, the whole big story or meta-narrative revolved around attaining 'equality' by bringing changes politically, legally and economically.

It is the Postmodernism, Radical Feminism and Psychoanalysis that provided a scope to Feminism to look beyond political, legal and economical structures created in the society. Radical Feminism emphasized upon 'the identity of woman' created and molded through pre-set social and cultural structures. It also tried to highlight that the 'Equality' which women craves for; its parameters are set by men. It focused upon a 'positive difference' of women from men. It is with this difference that it tried to bring a stop to the subordination of woman by man.

Psychoanalytic theory laid by Sigmund Freud was worked upon from feminist perspective. Their main argument was that the psyche of Women is different from men; not

because it is inborn; instead, it is due to the stereotypical environment in which boys and girls are brought up.



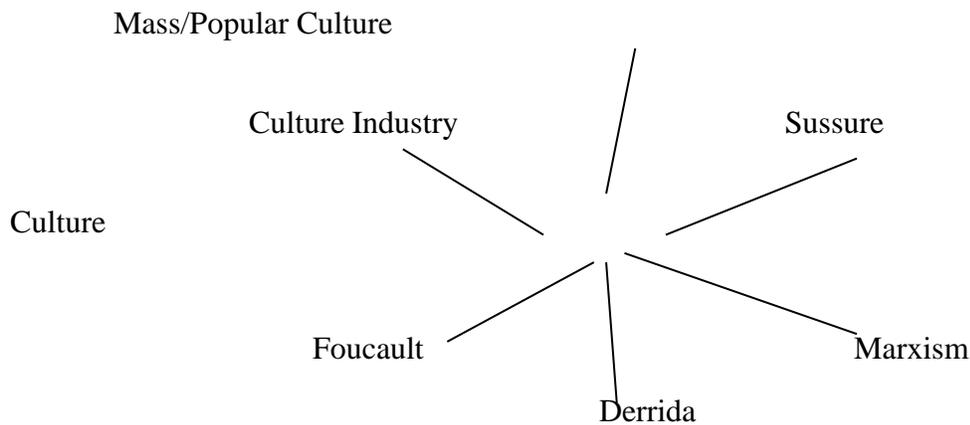
The most important contribution of Postmodernism in the realm of Feminism is that it indicated towards the ‘dual idea’ of Modernism. Modernism bifurcated the society into opposites, in which the masculine side is always stronger and feminine side is ‘inferior’, ‘other’ or subordinate to men. Postmodernism gave a scope to Feminists to realize this distinction and as a result Judith Butler’s work ‘Gender Trouble’ came which changed the Feminists thought altogether. Simon Malpas in *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory* (2006) writes:

Butler’s thesis is that gender, the identity of ‘woman’, is a fiction. She asserts that there is no essential subject, ‘woman’, but, rather, that this subject is created and maintained by the actions that are dictated by the concept. ‘Woman’ exists because women act in accordance with this identity; there is no essence of ‘woman’ beyond the acts that constitute gender identity. (99)

In the field of Literature also, there is a break away from the Modernists trends by introducing new techniques like ‘historiographic meta-fiction’, ‘pastiche’, ‘fragmentation’, ‘loose association’ and ‘paranoia’. Meta- fiction which suggests ‘beyond-fiction’; it attempts to

examine the fiction itself with a subtle line between fiction and reality. Pastiche is taking different styles and techniques from several artists/writers and mixing them together with tactics. Postmodern writers do not follow the trend of a unified plot and a definite ending rather they like to keep it open ended in which multiple approaches can be applied.

Popular culture forms a significant part of Postmodernism, since it emphasizes on the voice and interests of the people/masses and shifts the focus from the powerful and privileged few to the people in general.



Structuralism provides the base on which Culture rests. It helps in formulating the meaning through the system of language (langue) and everyday practices (parole). Meaning is generated from a system of signs which work as cultural codes (word, sound, image etc.) and the concept indicated through such signs is called signified. For example: there is no reason that why word ‘red’ is assigned to a particular color ‘red’. It is because it has come down to us through convention. Similarly, cultural codes are formed related to every aspect of life, for instance; traffic lights have its own cultural code under which ‘red’ means ‘stop’ and ‘green’ means ‘go’.

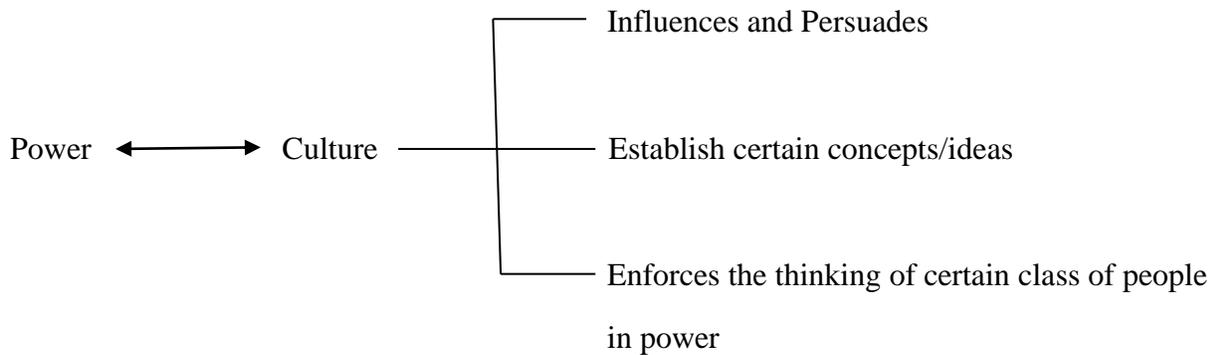
The concept of sign system is taken a step further by Bakhtin, who said that meaning cannot be pure and fixed, it is multifaceted and ambiguous. The sense/meaning generated by a sign depends upon speaker and the listener, it is a two way process. Similarly, the meaning that is interpreted by a reader after reading a text is grounded in his/her cultural background or cultural codes, these cultural codes vary from nation to nation, class to class, race to race and community to community. Similarly, Derrida too stressed upon multiple meanings associated with signs. As opposite to Saussure's idea of 'signifier + signified', Derrida gave the concept of 'signified + signified + signified...'

Chris Barker in *Cultural Studies Theory and practice* (2000) writes:

Cultural Studies has taken from Derrida the key notions of writing, intertextuality, undecidability, deconstruction, difference, trace, and supplement. These concepts all stress the instability of meaning, its deferral through the interplay of texts, writing and traces. Consequently, categories do not have essential universal meanings but are social constructions of language. This is the core of anti-essentialism prevalent in cultural studies. (100)

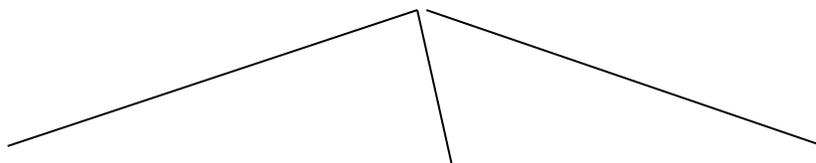
Foucault insisted on the role of history in the generation of meaning. Meaning arises out of certain specific historical conditions and the order of meanings is determined by the power in social practice. Where Derrida focused on - the infinite expansion of meaning, Foucault believed that meaning is temporarily made stagnant and it is regulated by the intrusion of power. According to Foucault, social or material relations are guided by power relations. For instance, students do listen to a their teacher in selecting what they ought to read and what not, since the teacher is seen as an epitome of knowledge, an authority which can decide which text is good for

the students and which is not. Students believe that Shakespeare is a universal, classical and great writer because the teacher presents him so; in reality if we analyze, Shakespeare was a writer of masses in his period, he gave every form of entertainment (violence, murder, sex, melodrama, supernatural...) demanded by the masses. The play of power can also be seen in the system of slavery. Slaves started considering themselves as secondary, inferior and only good for physical work because it was decided by the Whites who were powerful. In the similar way advertisements also exercise certain kind of power upon us through language and images; they persuade us to buy certain products.



Ideology and Hegemony plays a crucial role in shaping and in giving a meaning to cultural practices. An ideology can be in the form of faith, politics, taste, set of beliefs, set of ideas, fashion and so on; it acts like a screen, as a mediator between the dominant and the dominated. It can be viewed from three different perspectives.

Ideology and Hegemony



Karl Marx

Gramsci

Althusser

According to Marx, it is the powerful, the ruling class which decides the fate, the living conditions and the belief system of the class subordinate to them. For instance, the labors are tuned with idea that they are meant for labor only; the condition of physical laboring in the factories is something natural for them.

Gramsci argued that an ideology cannot remain the same for a long time. It can be questioned or can be rejected. According to him an ideology can be imposed with a combination force and consent.

Althusser took the concept of ideology a step further; he believed ideology trickles down slowly. As per Althusser, the institutions like family, school, colleges, policy makers, church, media etc. train us to believe, accept and practice certain ideology and a number such ideologies set a series of meaning which ultimately constructs a culture. These institutions act like instruments or agents that Althusser called “ideological apparatuses”. It is through these instruments that hegemony never appears like hegemony and therefore it is readily accepted.

According to Raymond Williams, “The idea of culture is a general reaction to a general and major change in the conditions of our common life.” For example during the advent of industrialization, first it was welcomed and social relations got shrunk within the new system of industry. Later it was disliked; isolation grew as result of mechanized social relations. But by modern and postmodern phase, it was accepted and machine production became mass production. Similarly, when the idea of democracy, first introduced in the society, there were doubts and suspicion. There was a fear regarding the power of new masses because the masses can put the interests, values and culture of the privileged few at stake. This fear was put aside

and it was followed by the idea of a community over individual beliefs and practices. By present age, it is again viewed with suspicion because of the emergence of new concepts like ‘mass democracy’ in the realm of ‘mass communication’.

The terms like Mass culture, mass democracy, mass communication and mass civilization etc. are frequently used; the origin of these terms is derived from the meaning of masses. Raymond William in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1960) writes:

Masses was a new word for mob... It seems probable that three social tendencies joined to confirm its meaning. First, there was a concentration of population in the industrial towns, a physical massing of persons which the great increase in total population accentuated, and which has continued the continuing urbanization. Second, there was the concentration of workers into the factories: again the physical massing, made necessary by machine-production; also, a social massing, in the work-relations made necessary by the development of large-scale collective production. Third, there was the consequent development of an organized and self-organizing working class: a social and political massing...on the basis of each tendency, the derived ideas have arisen: from urbanization, the mass meeting, from the factory...mass production, from the working class, mass action. (316, 317)

Mass culture is the culture of the common people or the set of practices popular among a large section of people. It is the everyday life; interests and values uphold and practiced by the masses. Mass culture or popular culture is considered as inferior and shoddy in comparison to High culture. Strinati Dominc in *An Introduction To Theories of Popular Culture* (1995) wrote, “...mass culture is a standardized, formulaic, repetitive and superficial, immediate and false

pleasures at the expense of serious, intellectual, time-honoured and authentic values.” (Strinati 12)

Mass culture is an outcome of mass society which is the result of massive industrialization and urbanization. The mass industrialized and mechanized population gathered in the cities is blamed for breaking, delinking and disintegrating the once closely knit society, for degrading the values and traditions in the past, for dismantling the belief in the authority of religion and for erasing the relation with agriculture.

Capitalism, media and the state lies behind in making a culture, the culture of the masses. They persuade and manipulate the tastes of the people in favor of what these institutions want them to consume. The mass culture is pushed down to the masses to be willingly and readily accepted by them through mediators in the form of TV, radio, cinema, news channels etc.. Adorno prefers to call it ‘cultural industry’ rather than ‘mass culture’, since it is not a culture which is chosen or arisen from the masses rather it is a culture which is designed, created and imposed from the top upon the masses for the sake of ‘profit’. In the essay “Culture Industry Reconsidered” (2002) Theodor W. Adorno says:

In all its branches, products which are tailored for consumption by masses, and which to a great extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to the plan...This is made possible by contemporary technical capabilities as well as by economic and administrative concentration. The culture industry intentionally integrates its consumers from above. To the detriment of both it forces together the spheres of high and low art, separated for thousands of years...The seriousness of high art is destroyed in the speculation about its efficacy...Thus, although the culture industry

undeniably speculates on the conscious and unconscious state of the millions towards which it is directed, the masses are not primary but secondary, they are an object of calculation, an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have believe, not its subject but its object. (98, 99)

Popular culture is seen as a threat to the ideas and values established by high culture or elites in the society because it attempts to dissolve the barrier between high and low culture and tries to erase all other distinctions through which purity and identity is maintained. Therefore, popular culture attempts to give way to a more homogenized culture where it is difficult to distinguish between art and folk art, between the culture of different communities as democracy and education gives them equal importance and hold them at same level. Adorno was critical of this idea in his essay, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' (2002) where he says, "Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together." (94)

While John Fiske holds an altogether different view in opposition to what Adorno believed. According to Fiske, a culture cannot be imposed, it develops from within. Popular culture is made by the people, altered as per the needs and abandoned when required to give place to a new system. John Fiske in *Understanding Popular Culture* (1989) says:

Popular culture is made by the people at the interface between the products of the culture industries and everyday life. Popular culture is made by the people, not imposed upon them; it stems from within, from below, not from above. Popular culture is the art of making do with what the system provides only commodities, whether cultural or material, does not mean that the process of consuming those commodities can be adequately

described as one that commodifies the people into a homogenized mass at the mercy of the barons of the industry. (25, 26)

From the endless ocean of culture, this research has taken the works of two Asian American writers - Amy Tan and Jhumpa Lahiri; to study and explore the wide horizons of Asian Immigrant Literature and the impact of American culture upon immigrants and vice versa. It seeks to analyze the changing mindscape of immigrants' generation wise through their respective works. Both the writers have penned the experiences of their communities living at a foreign land. Their work portrays the enriched colors of two primeval civilizations along with a modern touch which provides a broad platform for analyzing cultural consciousness, colonial consciousness, cultural relativism, high and low culture, postmodern feminism and the emergence of transnational.

CHAPTER – 1

JHUMPA LAHIRI: REFLECTIONS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT LITERATURE

Jhumpa Lahiri must not have thought that her nickname ‘Jhumpa’ will receive the world wide recognition one day. Through the art of painting with words, she painted the lives of immigrants on a foreign landscape. Jhumpa, gave various shades of immigrant experiences as she herself lived through it and therefore developed a deep sense of how it feels to be an immigrant. Lahiri, the Indian American writer was born to Bengali Parents in London. In Bengal there is a tradition of giving two names to the new born so she is Nilanjana Sudeshna by her good name (meant for public use) and her pet name is Jhumpa. Her family first immigrated to London and then to US. As she was brought up in Kingston, Rhode Island, she considers herself an American. Her parents wanted to bring her up according to Indian ways and manners and wanted to see the Indian values well preserved in their daughter. This desire to preserve the sense of culture in Jhumpa made her mother to organize regular visits to India which gave the writer plenty of opportunities to knit interesting plots for her stories.

Till the time Jhumpa reached the mature stage, she was continuously distorted by the questions related to immigration – alienation, isolation, adapting and adopting, ambivalence and so on which later became the major themes in her works. In an online interview on *postcolonialweb* Jhumpa says,

When I learned to read, I felt the need to copy. I started writing ten page 'novels' during recess with my friends' writing allowed me to observe and make sense of things without

having to participate. I didn't belong. I looked different and felt like an outsider. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

Initially she had to face ample rejections from the publishers for her early literary works. But success knocked her door with the publication of her short story collection, 'Interpreter of Maladies' which got published in 1999 and won her the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. The stories proved such a success that she won several awards in a row- O. Henry Award, PEN/Hemingway Award, The New Yorker's Best Debut of the Year and the story, 'The Third and Final Continent' was selected as one of the best American short stories in 2000. Her short story *The Third and Final Continent* was inspired by her father's experience as an immigrant. Her first novel, *The Namesake*, came in 2003, the film adaptation of which was released in 2007. Jhumpa made a cameo appearance as 'Aunt Jhumpa' in the film.

The themes in her writings are based upon her experience in India and America; the stress and tension between first and second generation immigrants and the living in two worlds (India and America) simultaneously. In an online interview on *bookbrowse*, talking about her characters affected by two different regions and nations, Jhumpa says:

When I began writing fiction seriously, my first attempts were, for some reason, always set in Calcutta, which is a city I know quite well as a result of repeated visits with my family, sometimes for several months at a time. These trips, to a vast, unruly, fascinating city so different from the small New England town where I was raised, shaped my perceptions of the world and of people from a very early age. I went to Calcutta neither as a tourist nor as a former resident -- a valuable position, I think, for a writer. The reason

my first stories were set in Calcutta is due partly to that perspective -- that necessary combination of distance and intimacy with a place. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

For Jhumpa, India has always been very important. America has always served the purpose of providing the setting for her stories but she never forgot to bring in India. The presence of India is always sensed through her characters and the story of their past; India is shown through their memories, in their yearning for the land of origin or through their talks about India, its people and traditions. In *The Namesake*, America is the real setting of the story but Calcutta formed the background. Every now and then, readers could see the characters 'living Calcutta' in America through cultural practices. Jhumpa has kept America as the main plot because she wanted to show her characters struggling on the land they live in and grow up; and present them with a choice to feel belonged or not to feel related with the adopted country.

Lahiri has always felt strong connections with her parents native place along with their adopted home in United States but she could not relate herself completely to one particular nation. A sense of homelessness and the absence of the feeling of 'being accepted' at a foreign land developed in Lahiri because she was grown up with the ties to three different nations. She never felt at home in America because for her parents, India was always their home, so there was always a 'looking back' for home. Unlike her parents, it was difficult for Lahiri to accept India as her home because she was not grown up there and had never felt herself as a part of it; the way her parents did. These pull and push in the thoughts of parents on one side and children on the other gave rise to the theme of 'difference in the opinions' between first and second generation immigrants. In an online interview on *bookbrowse* Jhumpa says:

The question of identity is always a difficult one, but especially so for those who are culturally displaced, as immigrants are, or those who grow up in two worlds simultaneously, as is the case for their children. The older I get, the more I am aware that I have somehow inherited a sense of exile from my parents, even though in many ways I am so much more American than they are. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

According to Jhumpa, the sense of loneliness, alienation, exile and the constant fear of losing the original identity inherited from the native land; is more precisely visible in the immigrant parents or first generation immigrants rather than their children. The problem with the first generation of immigrants who hold a strong bonding with the roots is that their children found it very complicating to belong to this or that; this state of confusion, consequently results in reducing them to the state of belonging to no land. This was what exactly Jhumpa Lahiri has experienced. In an online interview on *bookbrowse* Jhumpa says:

I never know how to answer the question "Where are you from?" If I say I'm from Rhode Island, people are seldom satisfied. They want to know more, based on things such as my name, my appearance, etc. Alternatively, if I say I'm from India, a place where I was not born and have never lived, this is also inaccurate. It bothers me less now. But it bothered me growing up, the feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

In first generation immigrants there has always been a fear of losing the true identity and the cultural ties with their homeland. They expected their children to live up to their expectations which comprises of exercising native culture in the daily life. This was definitely a difficult task for the second generation; to like, to practice and to continue to exist in a culture which they are

not acquainted with. Sharing her experience on *bookbrowse* about the conflicts she felt while growing up as a child of first generation immigrants, she says:

It was always a question of allegiance, of choice. I wanted to please my parents and meet their expectations. I also wanted to meet the expectations of my American peers, and the expectations I put on myself to fit into American society. It's a classic case of divided identity, but depending on the degree to which the immigrants in question are willing to assimilate, the conflict is more or less pronounced. My parents were fearful and suspicious of America and American culture when I was growing up. Maintaining ties to India, and preserving Indian traditions in America, meant a lot to them. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

For the first generation immigrants, the culture of America has always been a mystery, against which they felt very protective for their children. The fear continuously lurked at the back of their mind that their children would astray and would not follow Indian values. They were afraid that the children would be wrapped in American trends. They found it hard to approve and admit the realities they live in. For example, dating and developing friendships with Americans, listening American music, eating American food were the alarming signs for the parents as they felt that they are on the verge of losing their kids.

Jhumpa Lahiri's two novels, *The Namesake* and *The Lowland*, and her two collections of short stories – *Interpreter of Maladies* and *Unaccustomed Earth*, give a very fine description of Indian immigrant lives and experience at a foreign land. Being the daughter of Indian immigrants she got the opportunity to understand the dilemma, fear of losing the identity, confusion in adopting this or that and the grinding of thoughts and cultural practices between two different worlds. In a very simple writing style she depicted the lives of immigrants; the predicaments and

the mental traumas caused due to the separation from the loved ones and the land of origin have been presented through the characters in the novels and short stories with minute details.

Her Pulitzer Prize winning book 'Interpreter of Maladies' consists of nine stories with a setting in India, Boston and USA. The biculturalism, class and community, Indian diaspora, search for identity, gender roles, effects of colonialism and the transition from native to foreign, presented in the stories are very captivating. Jhumpa has succeeded in sensing and visualizing the delicate and sensitive combination of the land of origin and the host nation.

Interpreter of Maladies provides a wide panorama of changes in the lives of immigrants after immigrating to USA. The Indian customs and conventions, traditions and rituals, food and cooking, daily routine and habits are shown in the stories which have given rich details of Indian life and cultural practices. The characters are shown struggling, for making a place for themselves on a foreign land as it is depicted in *A Temporary Matter*, *The Third and Final Continent*, *Mrs. Sen's*, *When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine* and *This Blessed House*.

The Namesake presents the Indian immigrants and their children, it depicts the conflicts aroused due to a pull and push between the nativity which is not around and the foreign with which the first and second generation of immigrants are surrounded. The characters in the novel perfectly narrate the effects of colonialism, modernism, postmodernism, gender roles, culture and the change over the time in the form of transnationalism. *The Namesake* narrates the story of Gogol Ganguli who is born and brought up in America. Gogol always disliked the name given to him by his father, Ashok Ganguli. Gogol showed the resistance in accepting the Indian identity, culture and traditions to which his family belonged and he has always tried to escape it. In an interview on *bookpage* Jhumpa says:

The original spark for the novel was to write about a boy with a peculiar name, a name that sort of plagued him," Lahiri says. "In the process of writing the book, I realized that it was important and inevitable for him to accept his name, to realize that there is never a way to shed what is given to you by your parents. The book isn't so much about names per se. It's more about what we inherit from our parents - certain ideas, certain values, certain genes - the whole complex set of things that everyone gets from their parents and the way that, no matter how much we create our own lives and choose what we want out of life, it's very difficult to escape our origins. (Jhumpa Lahiri)

The Namesake

British left their un-dissolved and irremovable imprints on every sector of Indian life to such an extent that their presence can be felt to this very date. The first and foremost example of their presence in Independent India can be none other than English language. In order to kill a nation, its culture and society, one should kill its language first because language is the only tool with which the natives or the colonized can unfold the richness of their tradition, culture and history. This was what exactly done by British. They introduced English language through convent schools and gradually it spread all over India making its position as the second official language of the nation. It is so cleverly infused in Indian society that today its importance cannot be ignored. It is the first requirement for all the prestigious positions in the multinational companies and even in other areas of employment. In the job advertisements, the phrase, 'English is mandatory' can be most commonly read. During the interview sessions, the English of the candidates is judged and preference is often given to English speakers. Even at the level of society, people get impressed by English speakers and they are considered as educated in true sense. In the small cities one can get his/her work done easily by uttering one or two sentences in

English at a public office or a market place or while standing last in a queue for a ticket. While in the case of metropolitan cities, people can be seen conversing only in English, one can hardly find Hindi speakers in the malls like ‘Promenade’ (in Delhi); people prefer to use English over native language. In India, English has become a measuring tool to judge the level of education, standard and modernity in the individuals because of the dominant notion that is still lurking in the unconscious psyche of Indians that English is the language of elite class. Therefore, people often look down upon Hindi speakers. Parents along with education systems in India are striving hard to improve the standard of English in the schools. The recent example of such an attempt is – education system has introduced the program of ASL (Assessment of Speaking and Listening) in English. Such a program was not introduced for Hindi language as it considered as important as English.

British impact remains dominant in almost every walk of Indian life. Kids and elders prefer ‘maggie’, ‘pizza’ over homemade traditional food – ‘halwa’ or ‘puri’. On websites like ‘jeevansathi’ people prefer to put the profile pictures of their daughters’ in western dress so that they may not be considered as backward. Teenagers look out for western outfits because they believe, outer appearance plays a major role in framing their personality, and therefore they do not want to look outdated and old fashioned in ethnics. Such a psyche among youngsters has insisted the apparel brands and stores like ‘Fab-India (‘Celebrating India’, which was begun to promote Indian ethnics) to design outfits in Indian fabric patterned on western style. Another example is – in place of joint families, nuclear families have been given the preference.

English did succeed in molding and reshaping the outer appearance of Indians but the core of Indian soul has still preserved the beliefs and traditional conventions. Students still eat

curd with sugar before going out for an important exam. Big industrialists still perform 'havans' before the beginning of a new company or before starting a new project.

As a result, a new hybrid section of Indians has emerged which is both traditional and modern, they are both, uprooted yet rooted, separated yet linked, far away in the fog of modern atheism yet near to the belief in 'light of salvation'. For instance, in the schools, English speaking teachers are preferred but dress code implemented is 'sari'. Similarly in the advertisements under the column 'matrimonial', a very common statement is – 'wanted well-educated CULTURED boy/girl'. Another example can be taken from the way of 'birthday celebration'. In the morning, kids can be seen standing in front of the figurine of almighty with a 'tilak' on forehead and at night western style birthday party can be observed including a Christian style 'cake cutting' ceremony. Now a day's people celebrate 'Janamashthmi' by performing 'havans' first, followed by the cake at night.

This new section of Indians can be considered as a mixture of both east and west, they have assimilated and mingled with the foreign, have become bilingual, have adapted and adopted according to what is being given and presented to them. But in the case of present generation, many a times it give rise to conflicts when the generation today fails to understand whether it belongs to Indian traditional side or Indian western side which consequently results in ambivalence, identity crisis, uncertainties, confusion between 'this or that' and a question upon adopting and adapting. Such a situation of Indians with in India can be equaled with the immigrant experience of Indians.

In the works of Jhumpa Lahiri which are based upon Indian immigrant experience, the presence of colonial consciousness is very much apparent. The way Post-colonialism made its

influence in India, the way it ruled and imprisoned Indian psyche and guided it from colonial consciousness to cultural relativism can also be observed in the novels and short stories of Jhumpa Lahiri who has captured Indian immigrant experience.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Colonial Consciousness is defined as:

... is direct awareness or immediate experience, the content of mind as directly given to the experiencing person without the mediation of inference or any other intervening process. Early British psychologists (e.g. John Locke in 1690) used the term to designate the mind's awareness of its own operations, but in the 19th century consciousness came to mean not only thoughts, volitions, feeling, and images but also the data that come from outside, the perceptions and sensation. (282)

The colonial consciousness is very much apparent in Jhumpa's *The Namesake*. Ashoke Ganguli and Ashima are first generation immigrants. Ashoke Ganguli can be considered a colonizer and Ashima, a colonized. The British impact upon Ashoke is clearly visible. Like his grandfather, he has shown a great admiration for English writers. He had gone through all the possible English novels at an early age. He was penchant about Russian novels and writers. Being an Indian , Ashoke is expected to have a natural inclination toward India but he was nowhere seen in the novel showing any taste or flavor for Indian novels and writers.

As a teenager he had gone through all of Dickens. He read newer authors as well, Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham, all purchased from his favorite stall on College Street with pujo money. But most of all he loved the Russians. (12)

Indians grow up listening the moral tales of Ramayana or Mahabharata but in *The Namesake* grandparent is seen emphasizing upon reading the novels written by Russians and to

imbibe them thoroughly because lessons delivered through those stories can lead a person to the doors of success. The height of faith and belief in whatever is foreign was starkly presented through the remark made by Gogol's grandfather. He was fond of Russia and Russians and undoubtedly believes in them. "Once his grandfather said, "Read all the Russians, and then reread them. They will never fail you". (12)

The curiosity to move out of India and the eagerness to know more about the foreign land that Ashoke was residing in, can be seen in contrast to his passive and uninterested attitude toward his own country. Another example of his foreign taste can be seen when Ashima was admitted in the hospital; unlike Ashima who has read *Desh* numberless times, the only Bengali magazine that she brought on her way to America, Ashoke preferred American *Boston Globe*, and was more interested in knowing the events about the country he is residing in.

On the floor of the hospital, in a waiting room, Ashoke haunches over a Boston Globe from a month ago...He reads about the riots that took place during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. (10, 11)

The impact of English could also be seen upon the minor characters. It is pretty strange to see that Indians always associate a kind of respect and superiority to everything that is linked with west or English. Ashoke's parents interviewed Ashima, they asked her for reciting few stanzas from 'The Daffodils' rather than from any other book written in Hindi and Bengali. Mr. Ghosh who met Ganguli in train, was a great admirer of England. It was him who suggested Ashoke to move out and see the world. He took pride in talking about the cleanliness, well scheduled system of trains and the birth of his son in a British hospital rather than in an Indian one.

Ghoshe spoke reverently of England. The sparkling, empty streets, the polished black cars, the rows of gleaming white houses, he said, were like a dream. Trains departed and arrived according to schedule, Ghosh said. No one spat on the sidewalks. It was in a British hospital that his son had been born. (15)

Many Indians moved to foreign regions after independence in order to improve their living conditions and to improve the living conditions of the loved ones back at home. Ashoke too became determined to move to America for establishing himself as a distinguished professor. He was so firm in his decision that he paid no heed to emotional or sentimental pull of the family and therefore had not allowed anything to come in between him and his dream. After the accident that Ashoke met which almost took away his life, he started drifting away from India, away from his people, as if he is in a search of a more secure place, a place where there are negligible chances of trains colliding into each other. He wanted to make his career as a professor in America, a place which can promise him a secure future.

But as months passed, Ashoke began to envision another sort of future. He imagined not only walking, but walking away, as far as he could from the place in which he was born and in which he nearly died...his father bewildered...sibling had pleaded and wept... mother speechless, had refused food for three days. In spite of all that, he'd gone. (20)

Religion is an integral part of Indian life. It forms the base of Indian culture and traditions. Unlike other Indians, Ashoke has been presented as an atheist, a believer in Marx which is another sign of being foreign in taste. "He does not thank God; he openly reveres Marx and quietly refuses religion...instead of thanking God he thanks Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life" (21)

Ashoke has always been careful regarding his outfits. He took care that he is well dressed with a tie and formal pair of shirt and pants while going to the university or boarding a flight. He and Ashima also in a sense ridiculed the casual dress often chosen by the professor who provided them the compartment on rent. Selecting English formal dress code over Indian or American casual style shows that the English flavor of Ashoke is far more dominant upon him than Indian or American. The English formality can also be seen in the language they chose. For example,

The professor who has told Ashima and Ashoke to call him Alan, not Professor Montgomery as they first addressed him...They see him walking to Harvard Yard in a pair of threadbare trousers, a fringed suede jacket, and rubber flip-flops. Rickshaw drivers dress better than professors here, Ashoke, who still attends meeting with his adviser in a jacket and tie, thinks frequently to himself. (62)

Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (2004) writes:

...the figures of a dubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as 'inappropriate' colonial subjects. A desire that, through the repetition of partial presence, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. It is a desire that reverses 'in part' the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence. (88)

If we give a deep thought to his character then we'll find that he perfectly fits in the picture of a colonizer who colonized Ashima. British moulded and changed Indian psyche by infusing their ideologies forcefully or by persuasion. In the same light, the character of Ashoke

can be analyzed. He wanted a secure future, away from the place which involves accidents bringing early and untimely death. And he achieved all that he wanted, the way British achieved. A job as a professor, a secure career, an obedient wife and a well accommodated house. He lived his life on his own terms without getting affected the least by what Ashima wanted. In fact he succeeded in molding Ashima to some extent in order meet his ambitions. Throughout the novel, he was mostly occupied either with his research or his job as a professor.

The job is everything Ashoke has dreamed of. He has always hoped to teach in a university rather than work for a corporation. What a thrill. He thinks, to stand lecturing before a roomful of American students. What a sense of accomplishment it gives him to see his name printed under 'Faculty' in the university directory. (49)

The tiny but significant things for Ashima like the absence of her brother during Gogol's 'annaprasan' or failing to arrange a silver plate for the ceremony, missing the family that they left behind, missing their blessings and their role in the growing up of her son, Gogol. Ashoke had never bothered about such things. He seems to be contented after achieving all that he wanted to. Satisfied and contented, seems to be not much affected by his wife's wishes to go back to India and raise his son with the blessings of elders who were related to him by blood. Ashima's continuous sobbing and sleepless nights due to isolation failed to move him. Throughout the novel, we could not find him uttering the least consoling words for her. For Ashoke, his job seemed to be dearer but for Ashima it was her husband's happiness and the future of her children. Ashoke lives in a perfect unaffected zone. For instance, Gogol on his way to bus stop observed the 'GANGULI' written on the side of their mailer was reduced to 'GANG' followed by 'Green' scratched with pencil.

His ears burn at the sight, and he runs back to the house, sickened, certain of the insult his father will feel. Though it is his last name too, something tells Gogol that the desecration is intended for his parents more than Sonia and him. For by now he is aware, in stores, of cashiers smirking at his parents' accents, and of salesman who prefer to direct their conversations to Gogol, as though his parents were either incompetent or deaf. But his father is unaffected at much moments, just as he is unaffected by the mailbox. (68)

Gayatri Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988) says,

Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced. The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labour, for both of which there is 'evidence'. It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (287)

In the same the context Ritu Tayagi in her *Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories* (2014) says,

While postcolonial theorist struggles against the maiden colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting him as inferior, the task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated. She suffers from "double colonization" (a term coined by Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford and refers to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy). She has to

resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman.
(45)

Ashima appears like a colonized who surrendered, gave up what she wanted for the sake of her family, adjusted and adapted herself according to the foreign land and as per her husband's desire. She died every now and then, lived in sections, imagining herself and her son in the company of her parents and in-law's; but in reality she found herself facing the challenges every single day in New England. Her character represents a colonized, as she remained quiet and silently followed her husband without a complaint. She didn't want to stay in America, but stayed, found it difficult to raise her son along with household chores, but she managed, in the beginning the survival was difficult in the tiny compartments which were extra cold during winters and extra hot at the time of summers, but Ashima survived. When Ashoke became a full-fledged professor, they moved out of Boston against Ashima's wish. It was the city Ashima was little aware of, but her wishes remain unheeded as always.

But she has had complained none of this. She has kept her disappointment to herself, not wanting to offend Ashoke, or worry her parents. Instead she writes, in her letters home, of the powerful cooking gas that flares up at any time of day or night from four burners on the stove and the hot tap water fierce enough to scald her skin, and the cold water safe enough to drink. (30)

Unlike Ashoke, Ashima was deep rooted in her culture and in the legacy which was passed down to her by her elders. She was very much connected and sensitive toward the things which Ashoke remained indifferent and passive. The excitement was clearly visible in Ashima upon the thought of visiting India, it was unseen in Ashoke.

At breakneck speed Ashima knits sweater-vests for her father, her father-in-law, her brother, her three favorite uncles. They are all the same, V-necked, pine green yarn, knit five, purl two, on number-nine needles...The exception is her father's...she remembers to put in pockets for the deck of cards he always carries with him. (41)

The connection with her roots is also visible when she teaches her son to say 'Dida', 'Dadu' and 'Mamu', she makes an effort to introduce her son to his family tree through albums. This attempt is also symbolic of keeping her family close to her as she is afraid of losing the link with them; the way she lost the company of her people in India. Near the sea shore she said to her son, "Not so far... the waves retract... dark sand seeming to shift away instantly beneath their feet, causing them to lose their balance. I'm falling. It's pulling me in, she says." (53) The lines quoted above seem to indicate the commotion going inside Ashima. 'It's pulling me in' echoes the forceful dragging of Ashima into the New England, 'I'm falling' might be suggestive of her becoming a part of America much against her wishes and will.

Ashoke never molded or changed his decisions according to Ashima but she did. Ashima remained rooted to her land from inside but the changes in thoughts according to time and place were apparent. She took part in Christmas celebration with her kids, allowed her son to have American food occasionally, even tried to persuade his son to patch up with his ex-girlfriend whom she disliked earlier, felt connected with the place where kids were born and brought up and where her husband died, this change over Ashima becomes all the more clear when she announced her decision to stay six months in the city to which she could never relate herself completely and six months in the country where she was grown up, a land which resides in her.

Gogol and Sonia were second generation immigrants in the novel. They were put into the situations which were far more difficult for them to comprehend in comparison to Ashima. Atleast, Ashima and Ashoke knew that they belong to India and not America. But for their children it was difficult to imagine and to figure out their relation with the nation where they have not grown up, to live and embrace the customs of a land (India) which are foreign to them and reject the trends of the country (America) they are living in. They are in between two worlds, between two nations, divided between the two nations and not completely loyal toward any of the countries. This division often leads to conflicts and differences between parents and children.

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) writes:

Double Consciousness often produced an unsatable sense of self, which was heightened by the forced immigration colonialism frequently caused, for example from the rural farm or village to the city in search of employment. (Forced immigration, either as a quest for employment, including indentured servitude, or as a result of enslavement, scattered large number of peoples around the globe, and large populations of their descendents have remained in the diaspora, or separated from their original homeland.) This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by Homi Bhabha and others as unhomeliness...To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself : your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee, so to speak. (421)

This division, dilemma and confusion raised due to living between two worlds are more clearly visible in the character of Gogol rather than his sister, Sonia. Throughout the novel we see him living in sheer division, between the 'pull and push'. The culture enforced upon him by his parents, always tries to pull him towards their ideologies and set of beliefs or it will be more exact to say - restrict him from plunging into foreignness openly and freely. On the other side the American culture that he lives in, attracts him. In case of Gogol, a kind of race goes on between the native (America) and the foreign (India); and the native wins. The phrase 'go native' perfectly suits him. He got colored in the colors of American life; he surrendered himself to its ways and manners against the wishes of his parents. Examples for the same are:

Gogol hated to go for Bengali classes, rather than learning Bengali he wished to go for drawing classes.

They read handouts written in English about the Bengali Renaissance, and the revolutionary exploits of Subhas Chandra Bose. The children in the class study without interest, wishing they could be at ballet or softball practice instead. Gogol hates it because it keeps him from attending every other session of a Saturday-morning drawing class. (66)

American taste of Gogol is clearly visible in his choice of food. He also rejoiced his privacy, felt more comfortable in staying at a distance from the family, unnoticed and free. Gogol's drifting away from his family and its culture becomes evident when his family was at the airport to visit India. The fact that Gogol is primarily a US citizen and not Indian becomes apparent when Ashoke handed over two US passports meant for Gogol and Sonia and further asked for two Indian meals on the plane meant for himself and Ashima and not for their children.

This difference between Ashoke and Ashima on one side and Gogol on the other clearly suggests that the second generation of immigrants (Gogol and Sonia) is American first in appearance as well as in taste. Gogol also tried to hide his link or association with his family as if the revelation of his connection with his parents will spoil his American image. He was happy when he got a chance to sit in a section which was right at the other end, away from the allotted seats of his parents.

In the airport Gogol stands in the check-in line with his father, who is dressed in a jacket and a tie, clothes he still thinks to wear when riding on planes. 'Four in the family', his father says when it is their turn, producing two U.S. passports and two Indian ones. Two Hindu meals, please...On the flight Gogol is seated several rows behind his parents and Sonia, in another section altogether. His parents are distressed by this, but Gogol is secretly pleased to be on his own. (80)

Gogol and Sonia were not close to their relatives as Ashima and Ashoke were. On meeting the close ones in India, Ashima could never avoid the tears; both husband and wife appeared more confident and complete in a way that they never felt in America. Unlike in America, where the volume of voice has to keep in check as a matter of social manners, they felt free to speak louder with their relatives in India. Contrary to their parents, Gogol and Sonia felt no less than strangers in the midst of their very own people.

Gogol and Sonia knew these people, but they do not feel close to them as their parents do. Within minutes, before their eyes Ashoke and Ashima slip into bolder, less complicated versions of themselves, their voices louder, their smiles wider, revealing a confidence Gogol and Sonia never see on Pemberton Road. (81, 82)

In “Postcolonial Ambivalence and Phenomenological Ambiguity: Towards Recognizing Asian American Women’s Agency” (2016), Emily S. Lee explains Ambivalence as,

Ambivalence ascribes a psychological state marked by contradiction, when one is caught vacillating from one belief to the other, unable to resolve the contradiction. Psychoanalysis suggests that a person caught in ambivalence may cope with the contradiction by projecting onto someone else that which one despises in oneself. To be caught within the vacillations of ambivalence is debilitating. Although the colonizers’ project ambivalence onto the colonized- the colonized experience the ambivalent situation. They must live in the environment of ambivalence established by those in situations of power. (62)

Gogol is a split character. On surface he has projected the picture of a good obedient Indian son but beneath the surface he evolves into a son who is more American. Unlike in America; Indian families or Indian social and cultural codes, do not like that boys and girls get too friendly or get plunged into drinking and smoking. Gogol’s parents believed that their son is unaffected and safe, away from the casual lifestyle of American boys. But the reality was altogether different; Gogol not only gets affected but he was all immersed into western lifestyle. Smoking, drinking and changing girlfriends one after another became the part of his life which his parents were unaware of.

Assured by his grades and his apparent indifference to girls, his parents don’t suspect Gogol of being, in his own fumbling way, an American teenager. They don’t suspect him,

for instance, of smoking pot, which he does from time to time when he and his friends get together to listen records at one another's homes. (93)

Ashoke visits campus during parents weekend in October, the suite hastily cleared of liquor bottles and ashtrays and Brandon's bong for the occasion. (106)

Unlike in India, Americans prefer to have their own space without unwanted intrusion of the family. Americans don't behave the way Indians exercise full liberty to enter each other's room without knocking the door. The presence of parents could be seen in every small decision of their kids from the opting of subjects at a school to the selection a life partner. But in America it is all about individual's preference and personal choice. American preference for privacy and individualism got mixed into the Indian blood of Gogol. He likes to stay away from home and his family. He cherished his own privacy and undisturbed life, away from the intrusions of his father and mother. His stay with his own self became his home.

He is distracted by the telephone ringing, by his parents and Sonia talking and moving through the house. He misses Sterling Library, where he studies every night after dinner, and the nocturnal schedule of which he is now a part. He missed being in his suite in Farnam, smoking one of Brandon's cigarettes, listening to music (107)

Another example for the same could be taken from the scene in which Gogol referred his bachelor apartment (which he had taken on rent) as home. For Indians any roof under which the family resides become a home but for Americans, home is where they can seek personal freedom without any disturbance. "One weekend Gogol makes the mistake of referring to New Haven as home. 'Sorry, I left it at home,' he says when his father asks if he remembered to buy the Yale decal his parents want to paste to rear window of their car." (92)

Gogol has always tried to run away from his identity of being an Indian American. He no more wanted to be a part of the world to which his family belongs to. He felt embarrassed about the Indian ways and manners practiced by his family; he found them narrow and conservative. Gogol liked the free American atmosphere which appeared more appealing to him. Example for the above can be seen in Gogol's reluctance in going back to Massachusetts after spending four years in New Haven.

He didn't want to attend his father's alma mater, and live in an apartment in Central Square as his parents once had, and revisits the streets about which his parents speak nostalgically. He didn't want to go home on the weekends, to go with them to pujos and Bengali parties, to remain unquestionably in their world. (126)

Out of the four major characters in *The Namesake*, Gogol's character is the most complex one. We see Ashima's clear inclination towards her land, Ashoke remains in a kind of neutral zone, almost unaffected, Sonia is more of a transnational. The position of three of them is clear; they made it simple by opting one of the ends. Opposite to them Gogol hangs in the middle of two nations and two cultures. In spite of the fact that he does not like Indian culture over American, in spite of the reality that he cannot put his privacy and individualism at stake for the sake of his family, still there were few delicate strands which were still surviving inside him to keep him connected with his family and this connection does matter to Gogol.

For the first time Gogol realized his 'still existing' connection with the family when he lost his father. He did regret for changing his name from Gogol to Nikhil after acquainting himself with the reason behind being named as Gogol. He rejected Maxine when it came about leaving his mother and sister for her sake. It pained Gogol when he saw his mother without

vermillion in her parting and wrists without bracelets. He took care to stay with his mother for some time, taking over the duties which his father used to do. His 'still surviving' connection with the family came clearly on the surface when he rejected Maxine who wanted to part him from his family and to put more precisely, she tried to part him from his roots.

You guys can't stay with your mother forever, Maxine says when they are alone for a moment...What about New Year's Eve? She says...Do you still want to go to up to New Hampshire...It might do you good, she says... She glances around the room. 'To get away from all this'. 'I don't want to get away'. (182)

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) writes, "Today, this attitude – the use of European culture as the standard to which all other cultures are negatively contrasted – is called Eurocentrism." (420) In the above analyzed two characters (Ashoke and Gogol) the concept of high and low culture can be aptly applied. Ashoke has been constantly seen associating a greater sense of importance and a level of superiority to everything that is foreign, be it the 'Boston magazine', formal clothes with a tie and suit, Russian novels or the pleasure of teaching as a professor at a foreign university. For him, the standards of success are set by everything that is other than Indian and the satisfaction of accomplishment comes after attaining these standards. Gogol is seen trying to evade from every connection that links him to India, since he took these connections as a source of embarrassment.

Contrary to her brother, Gogol; Sonia's character is a simple one, far above from the complexities of borders and cultures. Her acceptance of New England without any dilemma became clear right on her 'annaparsanam' ceremony. "She plays with the dirt they've dug up

from the yard and threatens to put the dollar bill into her mouth. ‘This one, one of the guests remarks, ‘this one is the true American’.” (63)

She appears to be a transnational because she is balanced and unaffected by both the nations and their cultures and succeeded in assembling their characters equally in her personality, we never found her confusing or conflicting upon adopting this or that. She got happily married to a Jewish American without ending in a conflict or divorce which is shown as very common in the novel. We never saw her drifting away from the family the way Gogol did. She was equally concerned about her job and her mother for whom she decided to get an apartment near to the city where her mother resides. “Sonia is staying on with Ashima, thinking of getting an apartment in Boston or Cambridge so that she will be nearby.” (183, 184) She also sets a perfect example of mingling of two cultures without friction in between. We see her both in Indian and western outfits, celebrating both Christmas and taking part in Bengali ‘pujo’. Thomas Faist in “Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?” (2010) differentiates the concept of Diaspora from transnational as,

...‘transnationalism’ is a broader term than ‘diaspora’ in two respects. One concerns the scope of groups. Diaspora relates most often to religious, ethnic and national groups and communities, whereas transnational approaches connect to all sorts of social formations, including the ones already mentioned, as well as to phenomena such as networks of businesspersons and social movements. The other respect concerns the even narrower term ‘transnational community’. Postmodern conceptualisations aside, ‘diaspora’ most often relates to a form of transnational organisation spanning a specific country of origin and a set of host countries. In contrast, ‘transnational community’ encompasses a broader range of phenomena, such as cross-border village communities or borderland

communities. Thus, transnational communities encompass diasporas, but not all transnational communities are diasporas. (21)

When we talk about Indian hospitality, we find Ashoke and Ashima are always extra concerned and careful when it comes to the attending of guests. They never mind getting bothered or troubled themselves for the sake of their guests. Ashima remains cautious to line up the table with varied dishes in the honor of their guests. During regular Indian gatherings both husband and wife stay on their toes in order to make their guests comfortable in every possible way. Along with the mingling of cultures, the glimpses of cultural differences are also visible in *The Namesake*. Indian culture is well known for its ‘hospitality’, Indians stay concerned about the comfort and convenience of their guests. Contrary to this, in West, things are more practical. In India, things are taken care of in advance; they move a step ahead than their guests; realize, understand and fulfill their need before they ask for it. While in west guests are set free, they are given their space to feel free and go about on their own. Indian culture tends to keep their guests first and themselves secondary as a matter of courtesy. When Gogol stayed with Maxine’s parents, we come across such differences. “His own mother would never have served so few dishes to a guest. She would have kept her eyes trained on Maxine’s plate, insisting she should have seconds and thirds. The table would have been lined with a row of serving bowls so that there is more.” (133)

Contrary to Ashima, the character of Maxine’s mother suggests that Americans are humble and welcoming toward their guests but never keep them above and important than their comfort. They maintain a clear line between guests and hosts which is unlike Indians who treat their guests as God.

It is a different brand of hospitality from what he is used to; for though the Ratliffs are generous, they are people who do not go out of their way to accommodate others...

(136)

The element of Indian hospitality once again displays Gogol's critical attitude toward Indian culture. He compares his parents concern toward their guests with that of caterer's duty which is a sheer disrespect and insult not only for his parents but also for the Indian cultural practice.

Unlike Gerald and Lydia, who preside at the center of their dinners, his parents behaved more like caterers in their own home, solicitous and watchful, waiting until most of their guests' plates were stacked by the sink in order finally to help themselves. (141)

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward W. Said says: Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with such words and concepts as 'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion', and 'authority'. (8)

The element of west better than east, west superior and east inferior, is starkly present in the novel. The impact of colonialism upon the psyche of Indians is presented in such a natural manner that not even once the characters realized that they are rating themselves as lower and second or inferior in comparison to west. The preference is given to everything that is foreign, which includes manners, thinking, and habits etc. and in contradiction to this the native habits

and manners are ridiculed and are generally considered as disgusting. In the novel minor Indian characters gave a special treatment to the Ganguli family which returned from America; and they think that Ganguli's are not meant to live in a poor country like India. Even Gogol finds it embarrassing to see his parents are in the habit of eating with an open mouth. He was infuriated when his mother pointed out on his isolated stay at an apartment away from home but when Maxine gave the same remark, he took it absolutely normal. The West, the English or the foreign is always given the first preference, importance and is valued over everything that is Indian.

Oh, Nikhil, it's too awful," she eventually says on one of these occasions, barely three months they've met. 'I won't let you live here.' When his mother said more or less the same thing, the first time his parents had visited the apartment, he'd argued with her, hotly defending the merits of his Spartan, solitary existence. But when Maxine says it, adding 'you should just stay with me', he is quite thrilled. (139)

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) writes:

Cultural imperialism, a direct result of economic domination, consists of the takeover of one culture by another: the food, clothing, customs, recreation, and values of the economically dominant culture increasingly replace those of the economically vulnerable culture until the latter appears to be a kind of imitation of the former. American cultural imperialism has been one of the most pervasive forms of this phenomenon, as we see American fashions, movies, music, sports, fast food, and consumerism squeeze out indigenous cultural traditions all over world. (425)

Words like harsh, hard and adversities seem to have established a permanent connection with the East and opposite to this, the West is linked with all sort of goodness like comfort,

luxuries and prosperity. In *The Namesake* Indians are shown giving special hospitality to the relatives returned from America as they are considered as delicate and not habitual of living under the harsh and difficult Indian conditions.

Upon returning to Calcutta, Gogol and Sonia both get terribly ill. It is the air, the wind, their relatives casually remark, they are not made to survive in a poor country, they say. (86)

They have their feet traced onto pieces of paper, and a servant is sent to Bata to bring back rubber slippers for them to wear indoors. (82)

The theme, 'white is beautiful and dark is ugly' further emphasizes upon the element of 'west better than east'; the notion of all that is fair and white, therefore beautiful, can be imagined and realized only in west. Indian psyche in the novel associates the beauty with fair complexion which can be seen in west alone. On the other side 'dark complexion' in India is suggestive of tough and difficult life devoid of comforts and luxuries, and the life which is drenched in poverty. On the return of Ganguly family to America, Ashoke's friends apologetically remarked, "How dark you've become," his parents friends say regretfully to Gogol and Sonia." (87)

The Lowland

Susan Hekman in *Feminism* (2006) says,

One of the key aspects of postmodern thought is the claim that modernist thought is dualistic: it divides the world according to entities and their opposites. These opposites are always hierarchical and, most significantly, also gendered. For the modernist the

privileged side of the opposites that comprise the world is gendered masculine; the feminine is always the disprivileged 'other'. The masculine is the standard; entities defined as feminine are inferior. It is this element of postmodern thought that constitutes its appeal for many feminists. (98)

In the same context Susan further says,

Postmodern feminism has generated an ongoing controversy in the feminist community. Its defenders claim that the radical approach of postmodernism is precisely what feminism needs. Postmodern thought has revealed the dualistic, hierarchical and gendered structure of modernist thought. It has also revealed that unless we dismantle those dualisms that gendered hierarchy will remain in place. Thus, they argue, it is only by employing postmodern strategies that feminists can successfully challenge patriarchy. (99)

The character of Gauri in *The Lowland* can be set in clear and stark contrast with Ashima in *The Namesake*. Where Ashima remained rooted in her place of origin, Gauri was completely uprooted. For the former, family and family ties, native culture and customs were the priority, being in the foreign land, we rarely found the influence of west upon her. The latter got rid herself from every bonding and connection with the family. The western element of individualism seemed to be dominant upon Gauri; for the sake of her ambition she abandoned every relation including her daughter. She appeared to be contented in her isolation and undisturbed and practical life without much involvement of the outer world. Ashima remained glued to her past and found solace in it while Gauri shed off her past; it was haunting her and that's why she always tried to escape it. In order to throw mud over her past, to conceal it

permanently, she embraced and imitated western lifestyle. The aspects of western culture like individualism, living on their own, neither getting into the way of others nor allowing others to get into their way, are clearly visible in the character of Gauri. She is in complete separation from everything which she originally belonged to. She is purely in exile from her homeland, its culture and ethnic origin. Her character precisely sets an example of Post-modern feminist concept. Gauri breaks off the 'meta-narrative' which defines motherhood and which decides child as a sole responsibility of a woman; and the ideal woman is the one who sacrifices, suffers and behaves as an obedient wife. For instance, Gauri was not happy on receiving the compliment for her 'sari' from an American girl rather she was influenced by her outfits and wanted to look like her. "Gauri felt ungainly. She began to want to look like the other woman she noticed on the campus, like a woman Udayan had never seen her." (134)

Like other characters in Jhumpa's works, the character of Gauri once again presents the strong influence of West upon East. Gauri seems to run away from everything which could connect her with her past. In the example quoted below, we see her intense hatred toward her original identity and an immense desire to get rid-off it. She slipped into new western outlook; got her long hair shortened, replacing the 'sari' in her cupboards with western clothes.

On the dressing table was a pair of scissors that he normally kept in the kitchen drawer, along with clumps of hair. In one corner of the floor, all her saris, and her petticoats and blouses were lying in ribbons and scraps of various shapes and sizes, as if an animal had shredded the fabric with its teeth and claws. He opened her drawers and saw they were empty. She had destroyed everything... her hair hung bluntly along her jawbone, dramatically altering her face. She was wearing slacks and a gray sweater. (140,141)

Gauri had not felt the least guilt in breaking-off with her Indian identity. She was not least repentant for creating the mess by tearing and cutting of her Indian outfits. The animal like manner in which she destroyed her saris can be symbolic of her ferocious urge to trample over and crush her Indian identity forever. She gave an easy and permanent 'in' to new by discarding the old. Examples for the same: "not apologizing for the spectacular mess she'd made, just putting away new clothes she'd bought, then throwing the old things into garbage bags." (141)

One day they went into a sari store to buy sari for her grandmother and Deepa. White ones for her grandmother; colored ones for Deepa...Can we buy one for Ma? Bela asked. She never wears them Bela. (205)

Along with the change in looks, there was a striking change in her inner landscape as well. She used the western 'freedom' to break every shackle coming between her and her ambition. In the blind pursuit of her ambition she ignored her duties toward her family and neglected the needs of her daughter. Here, the dominant factor of west is 'I'; it seems to overlap the Indian family idea of 'We'. So dragged by the dominant factor of 'I', she left Subhash who brought her all the goodness; she also left Bela as a sole responsibility of Subhash. Her character showed a sheer separation from whatever she was belonged to in the past. Her decision was firm without slightest doubt and any touch of ambivalence. Gauri loved to stay aloof, away, at distance from everything which connected her with the past. For example, in the novel she found nothing to relate herself with other Indian women on the campus.

He was relieved to see Gauri mixing with the other women...The women seemed friendly. Who were they? I don't remember their names, she said... The enthusiasm she'd mustered in the company of others had been discarded. She seemed tired, perhaps

annoyed. He wondered if she had not really enjoyed herself, if she'd only been pretending... Should we invite few of them to our place, sometime...I don't want to spend my time with them...I have nothing in common with them, she said. (139,140)

Gauri was unlike other Indian mothers. In fact she had nothing in common with mothers. Whatever regular duties she performed for Bela seemed like an unwanted burden, it appeared as if she is paying off for the mistake of bringing Bela to the world. For Gauri her ambition and her career were dearer than her daughter. Unlike any other mother who cherishes motherhood, Gauri was on a wild hunt; it is a hunt for achieving her goals. When it comes to taking care and looking after for Bela, she wanted to hire a babysitter. Unlike the mothers in India, her first preference was her ambition which was above Bela.

She'd seen signs in the student union advertising babysitters, services provided by students and professors' wives. She began writing down some names and phone numbers...He told her no. Not for the money it would cost but on principle, not wanting to pay a stranger to care for Bela...It's common here, she said. (162)

The character of Gauri shows a strong desire to establish herself as a successful independent woman. She was jealous of Subhash's independency and she seems to have developed a dislike for living and surviving upon Subhash's favor or it would be more appropriate to say from Gauri's lens –'Subhash's mercy'. She started holding strong grudges against him for exercising his total freedom to move out for days to perform his research work. Gauri didn't want to stay confined within the duties of a mother and a wife; therefore, she waited for the right opportunity to break-off from family ties. We could also sense a kind of competition, a kind of race that Gauri projected in competition with Subhash. She represented a

typical western way when it is regarding the duties of husband and wife; she seemed to feel less and inferior in front of Subhash. She disliked Subhash's freedom to come and go as per the requirement of his job.

She waited for Subhash to take over, to allow her to leave, to attend her class or to study at the library...She begrudged Subhash's absence when he was at work, his ability to come and go...She resented him for going away for two to three days, to attend oceanography conferences or to conduct research at sea. (163)

It turned into a dare, a puzzle to solve, to keep herself sharp. A private race she felt compelled to turn to run again and again, convinced, if she stopped, that her ability to perform the feat would be lost. (174)

Gauri felt no connection with Bela, her relation with Bela seems to be nominal, her sentiments for her daughter were passive, and the little duties that she performed for Bella were because of Subhash. When Subhash caught her for being irresponsible as a mother as she got into the habit of leaving Bela all alone for the sake of her work at library and at other places, he reproached her and said, "My mother was right. You don't deserve to be a parent. The privilege was wasted on you." (175)

The day Gauri got an opportunity; she abandoned everything including Subhash and Bela without the least trace of sentiment which could hold her back to her husband and daughter or home. "I have not made this decision in haste...I have been thinking about it for too many years... I have moved to California, because a college has hired me to teach." (211)

Throughout the novel, the word 'animal' and 'wilderness' have been associated with Gauri. It seems to suggest that Gauri received an un-curtailed freedom, it appears as if an animal

has escaped from the prison and is free to practice its wilderness without any restriction. In India Gauri was confined within the walls of her in-law's house but after coming to America she took advantage of unrestricted freedom. In the examples quoted below, the association of Gauri with the words like 'animal' and 'wilderness' also seem to suggest the general wilderness and 'barbarous nature' that the West has always referred in context to East.

“Her animal whimpering startled him; it was the sound of the scream stifled by a clenched jaw, a closed mouth. An articulate but wordless fury.” (138)

“In one corner of the floor, all of her saris, and her petticoats and blouses, were lying in ribbons and scraps of various shapes and sizes, as if an animal had shredded the fabric with its teeth and claws.” (141)

“That wilderness was her only freedom.” (212)

The character of Subhash can be seen in the light of Hybridity. The term 'Hybridity' as mentioned in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2006) is,

The term has been most extensively articulated and theorized by Homi Bhabha. Bhabha introduces the term first within the colonial arena and he, amongst others, has since transported it to other fields of analysis in post-colonial contexts, where hybridity has now become a central term in discussions of multiculturalism and diaspora. It is, within Bhabha's theoretical lexicon, closely related to terms such as 'mimicry' and 'ambivalence', and is embedded within a wider framework of concern with what Bhabha calls the 'Third Space'. This 'Third Space' allows us to conceive of the identities of cultures in terms that transcend the binary dialectic between 'us/them', 'insider/outsider', 'inclusion/exclusion'. It also enables discussion of cultural difference in terms that do not

exoticize it for in such exoticism Bhabha detects an Othering principle that distances difference and disavows the constitution of the Self by the Other. (112)

The character of Subhash, Gauri's second husband seems to be a perfect mix of both east and west. He was conscious enough regarding his responsibilities as a son, husband and father and did his best to render his duties as best as he could. Like a responsible Indian son he provided the financial help to his parents and regularly visited them; for the well-being of his brother's wife and child, he married Gauri; protected and saved her from the unreasonable Indian conventions meant to be obliged by a widow. He played a role of an ideal Indian father for Bela. Unlike Gauri, he always looked for the time to spend and play with Bela. He was worried and concerned for Bela when she was going through nervous breakdown; he changed his schedule for his daughter to fill in the place of a mother. It was him who was against Gauri's idea of hiring a babysitter for Bela as he didn't want his daughter under the care of a stranger.

In the context of hybridity, Andrew Smith in his essay "Migrancy, hybridity and postcolonial literary studies" (2004) writes,

...hybridity implies the mingling of once separate and discrete ways of living. In the idealized liberal view this hybridization occurs on a level ground of equality, mutual respect, and open up against the harsher material and institutional realities of life, even in the most ostensibly tolerant of societies. At the theoretical level, we can note that this idea of "hybridity" as a synonym for diversity or multiculturalism continues to rely on the assumption that there were primeval, separate, and distinct cultural orders which are only now beginning to meet in the context of global migration. (251)

In Subhash, there is a balanced mix of both east and west. He despised and opposed the orthodox practices meant for widows. He argued with his mother for the sake of Gauri who was ignored to live a lifeless life like an object. Gauri was not allowed to eat fish and to put on colourful clothes, she was confined to her room, and she was not allowed to mingle with other members of the family. Subhash like an ideal Anglo-Indian discarded all the meaningless conventions and married Gauri to free her from the shackles of orthodox practices. The character of Subhash is presented under the western knowledge and education which is again used to provide a contrast between east and west. If we look into the past, the West has always projected it as a savior of East, as a beneficiary which is devoted to rescue the east from the clutches of uncivilized and barbarous practices. We can see the character of Subhash in the similar context. Subhash influenced by western education and thought is shown as a protector of Gauri from stringent conventional practices in the east.

Where is she? he asked. Who? Gauri...She takes her meals in the kitchen... He didn't say what came to his mind. That Udayan would have hated them for segregating her, for observing such customs. (92)

You've taken away her colored clothes, the fish and meat from her plate. These are customs, his mother said. It's demeaning. Udayan would have never wanted her to live this way. (114)

In the lines quoted below, Subhash exalted America as the only place with a hope and scope for a better, unrestricted life for Gauri and her child. The lines below reveals the mindset of an Indian representing the mindsets of many other Indians, according to which, all synonyms for the word 'goodness' can be linked only with America or the West at large.

...in America no one knew about the movement, no one would bother her. She could go on with her studies. It would be an opportunity to begin again...explaining that the child needed a father. In America it could be raised without the burden of what had happened...He told her not to think about what people might say, how his parents would react. If she went with him to America, he promised her, it would all cease to matter. (119)

The western touch has also influenced 'the father' in Subhash. He is unlike Indian authoritative fathers'. In India where there is a patriarchal form of a society, where children look up to their father to seek his permission before taking any decision; contrary to this, in America children have full freedom to take decisions for themselves and for being responsible for those decisions. Contrary to any Indian father, Subhash gave Bela full freedom to go according to her decisions, without imposing his ideologies upon her; he never bound her with Indian customs meant for daughters'. Neither, we find Subhash losing his temper on Bela's expecting a child before marriage. He never cross questioned her about her random trips from place to place. He gave her full space like any other western child expects to have.

He wondered if she would join, if may be she would want to go back to India. She was twenty-one, old enough to make such decisions. (221)

He had learned to set aside the responsibility he'd once believed would be his: to do his part to secure a daughter's future by pairing it with another person's. If he'd raised her in Calcutta it would have been reasonable for him to bring up the subject of her marriage. Here it was considered meddling, out-of-bounds. (262)

In India, it is disgraceful when a daughter gets pregnant before marriage. But Shubhash dealt with the situation in a balanced and gentle way.

I'm pregnant; she said...She wanted to keep the child. She wanted to become a mother...He began gently... And you are welcome here, always. (264)

In autumn her daughter was born. After she became a mother she told Subhash it made her love him more, knowing what he'd done. (271)

We can also compare the character of Subhash to a transnational. We can see him not much affected by the Indian conventional practices nor bothered about the bold decisions of the people and open culture of a western country. He seems to be perfectly balanced with the two – east and west. He is not out of his mind when Bela came to stay with him after getting pregnant before marriage. He is fine with his decision to get married after becoming a grandfather. He married Elise, his friend's wife and Bela's school teacher. His attitude towards Gauri is also like an American, not even once he tried to bring her back; neither he appeared much affected by her absence.

...Elise comes every day...When Dadu marries her I'll have a grandmother, Meghna said. (311)

The trip was a honeymoon, the man's first, though he was married once before... The man has gained two sons, a second daughter in addition to his own. There are seven children...There is no use wondering what might have happened if the man had met her in his forties, or in his twenties. He would not have married her then. (330)

The character of Bela is another example of a perfect second generation Indian immigrant. She lives and goes by her mind. She is not least bothered about her connection with India. We can see her in pure separation with the land and its culture. Her indifference was clearly visible when she was asked by her father to accompany him to India to see her grandmother. She is the second generation immigrant who is unaffected by the colonial consciousness and the cultural difference between east and west. The nature of her character also depicts her transnational attitude. She is like a wanderer, free from restrictions, who loves to keep on wandering from place to place, without getting attached to a particular place or people.

The summer after she graduated from high school she didn't travel with him when news came from Deepa, saying his mother had suffered a stroke. She told him she wanted to stay in Rhode Island, spend time with the friends from whom she'd soon be separated. (220)

It became her life: a series of jobs on farms across the country, some close by, others far. Washington State, Arizona, Kentucky, Missouri. Rural towns he had to look on a map, towns where she said sometimes there no stoplights for miles. (222)

In *The Lowland* colonial consciousness is clearly visible in the characters developed in Indian setting rather than the ones shifted to America. The 'Special treatment' or the 'welcoming VIP' kind of hospitality is given to the people who return from a foreign land. British had instilled this notion in the psyche of Indians that the west or English or foreign is better, superior and respectful, therefore it should always be rated higher and exclusive. The glimpses of such a psyche are visible in the minor characters of *The Lowland*. Deepa, a servant, referred Bela as 'Memsahib' because in pre-independent India, English women were called as 'Memsahib'

because they were believed to be educated, superior, higher in class, knowledge and status. Therefore, Deepa used it for Bela who visited her grandmother from a foreign land with foreign manners. Bela was considered too delicate to drink regular drinking water meant for Indians, so her grandmother instructed Deepa to boil and cool the water for Bela to drink.

Deepa wore a sari, and a gem in her nostril, and she called Bela Memsahib. (193)

Not that water. Give her boiled water. She's not made to survive here. (194)

In addition to the water that was boiled and cooled for her to drink, water was warmed every morning for her bath. Her grandmother said Bela would catch a cold otherwise, even though the weather was so hot. (195)

The examples of cultural differences and cultural diversity are also present in the novel. There is a wide difference between the thinking of east and west. In the west, decisions are based upon one's personal choice while in the east a stamp of permission by the elders of the family is always required before going to take any decision. Elders' action and reaction are always taken into count.

The difference was so extreme that he could not accommodate the two places together in his mind. In this enormous new country, there seemed to be nowhere for the old to reside. There was nothing to link them; he was the sole link. Here life ceased to obstruct or assault him. Here was a place where humanity was not always pushing, rushing, running as if a fire at its back. (34)

Individualism and nuclear families form the social structure in the west, opposite to it east is more based on joint family structure. Togetherness and joint families, is the core of Indian

social organization. Hence, the family ties and bonding among the members are less fragile in comparison to west.

He explained that daughters joined their in-laws after they married and sons stayed at home. That generations didn't separate as they did here. (67)

Extra marital affairs are a common part of western society; people do not bother much about such choices while in India it is entirely opposite, people opting for such choices are disrespected and often discarded from the society. While Subhash was in America, he got indulged in an affair with a married American woman.

His parents disapproval threatened to undermine what he was doing, lodged like a silent gatekeeper at the back of his mind. But without his parents there, he was able to keep pushing back their objection... (77)

The Third and Final Continent

In the works of Jhumpa, there is a kind of shift or to be more precise, there is always a kind of drifting away from the homeland. Characters in the novels or short stories have always shown moving away psychologically as well as physically from the land of their origin. In order to seek better opportunities and a secure future, Jhumpa has repeatedly shown her characters moving toward west. Through this drift, the psychological landscape of the Indian immigrants becomes apparent. It speaks about the illusion within which Indians are trapped. And the illusion is that if east wants to prosper then it has to seek the mercy of the west. Throughout her novels and short stories, we do not find a single character holding a high position, hired for a reputed job or running a decent business within the boundaries of India rather we witness the characters possessing the same in America.

In the short story *The Third and Final Continent*, right in the beginning, the writer has shown a band of aspiring Indian Bengali bachelors struggling to educate themselves in London. She has clearly presented them as poor from India who cannot even afford a decent accommodation. The narrator of the story exactly stated the adverse living conditions and the dream of young Indians to realize and live their ambitions in the west. The narrator said,

I lived in north London, in Finsbury Park, in a house occupied entirely by penniless Bengali bachelors like myself, at least a dozen and sometimes more, all struggling to educate and establish ourselves abroad.

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) wrote,

Because their technology was more highly advanced, the colonizers believed that their whole culture was more highly advanced, and they ignored or swept aside the religions, customs, and codes of behavior of the peoples they subjugated...colonizers saw themselves at the centre of the world; the colonized at the margins. (419)

This story also shows that Indian psyche is filled with the notions like west is superior in all the aspects of human life. The instances of the west being authoritative and to some extent dominant could be traced in the character of American landlady. We can sense this right from the first conversation between the narrator and the landlady. She was direct and strictly authoritative in her selected few sentences while the narrator seemed to appear small, meek and docile. Humility and politeness was completely missed from the speech and tone of the lady. For example, she straight away asked, “Who is speaking?” (176), “Harvard or Tech?” (177). On the contrary, the narrator used, “Yes, good afternoon, madame... I beg your pardon...Yes, madame.” (177) Even on the first meeting between the two shows the commanding nature of the

lady and the narrator as a submissive follower. The bossy lady showed no hesitation while ordering her guest to lock the main door and instructed him to do the same every time he enters the house. Another example: the lady was not contented to listen the narrator admitting the historical achievement attained by American astronauts as they became the first people from the entire human race who landed over moon. She insisted him to say splendid. “Say ‘splendid’!...Say ‘splendid’! the woman bellowed once again... Splendid, I murmured.” (179, 180). This meeting and conversation between American landlady and the Indian narrator somehow opens a tiny passage to analyze the meeting from a master-slave point of view.

There is a wide difference in the cultural aspects of east and west. Life is more individualistic and practical in the west; where emotions have little or no room. Whereas in case of East, it's not only the sentiments for relatives or people with little acquaintance but the emotions can be felt even for the streets which are often crossed, the market place which is regularly visited, the neighbors with whom smiles and greetings are exchanged. People in the east have the tendency to establish a kind of a link or a connection with what so ever they come across. This ‘connecting factor’ of the east can probably be considered as the reason for their successful development and easy assimilation in the west.

The similar connection can be observed in the story. The narrator adopted the son like duties toward the landlady who was hundred years old. He felt happy to warm the soup for her in the evening; he was worried for her when she retired to her lonely room or when left alone in the house where nobody was there to attend upon her requirements. He was concerned and worried about the mishaps that the old lady could meet during his absence. Despite the fact that he was just a renter, he felt responsible for her well-being. Many a times, he also gets feared imagining receiving the blame for if the lady meets some unwanted accident. He made sure to check her

before sinking into his bed. “At time I came downstairs before going to sleep, to make sure she was sitting upright on the bench, or was safe in her bedroom.” (189)

The character of the landlady and her daughter, Helen, is in sheer contrast with that of the narrator. There was a complete absence of a real ‘caring daughter’ in Helen. She appeared more like a nurse who would visit on fixed days of the week to do the formal needful. It seems to be irresponsible on the part of Helen to leave her hundred years old mother all alone in the house. When the mother shouted for Helen from downstairs, the narrator immediately felt to rush to her as fast as he could because he imagined her losing the balance and falling down on the floor waiting for an instant aid. But opposite to the narrator, Helen was perfectly relaxed and seemed to be in no rush. Examples for the care free attitude of Helen are shown through the repeated lines like,

“...Helen, who seemed to be in no hurry...” (185)

Unlike the narrator, Helen never feared for what could happen to her mother in the absence of an attendant. “Helen didn’t seem worried.” (188)

The nature of the landlady was also dry and it won’t be imprecise to call her rude or devoid of feelings. The narrator was not her son but living in the same house, though as a boarder, he felt responsible for her. It was out of sympathy that he never minded to spend little time sitting by her side. The worries and concerns that should be present in Helen, they were visible in the narrator. In spite of all this, for the landlady, the narrator was nothing more than a boarder, a man who is to pay the rent on every Friday. The narrator felt little hurt on the landlady’s total indifference during his de-boarding the house.

The last thing, she asked me to do was hand her the cane propped against the table, so that she could walk to the door and lock it behind me. “Good-bye, then,” she said, and retreated back into the house. I did not expect any display of emotion, but I was disappointed all the same. I was only a boarder, a man who paid her a bit of money and passed in and out of her home for six weeks. (191)

Immigrants have not only proved themselves professionally but have left their good impression on the society in America. Culture plays a crucial role in the making of an individual’s nature and personality. Indian culture is full of moral aspects like respect towards elder, dutifulness, humility and politeness. These factors form a very important part of Indians which they can never rid off, no matter where they migrate, no matter which culture they abide to; the shadow of their original culture follows them where ever they go and live. This is an ironical fact that in the stories; the characters try to escape from Indian identity for which they are appreciated and try to imitate the west probably because in their mindset they have fixed an ideal image of west which is superior and far higher than their very own.

In *The Third and Final Continent* we come across the instances which appreciate Indian virtues. Apart from the quality of being very humble and polite, the narrator was very punctual as well. He arrived to meet the landlady right on the time of appointment and therefore the lady could not restrict herself from commenting, “You’re punctual! the woman proclaimed.” (178) The story also brings up the quality of high adaptability in Indian immigrants. From the description about the landlady; it appears that she was a difficult lady to live with. But the narrator did live with her as a boarder and also gained a little praise for himself. Helen said, “Some of the boys run screaming. But I think she likes you. You’re the first boarder she’s ever referred to as a gentleman.” (185) The modesty in Indian women and the decency that is

reflected through their nature also bagged the praise from the old lady. Here, narrator's wife can be contrasted with landlady's daughter. The landlady found it inappropriate of Helen to put knee length outfits. On the contrary she appreciated narrator's wife, Mala, after observing her for a couple of moments. The feeling of 'being less or secondary' is again apparent in the narrator as he was doubtful of the old lady's statement; he thought she'll disapprove of certain things in Mala.

I wondered if Mrs. Croft had seen a woman in a sari, with a dot painted on her forehead and bracelets stacked on her wrists. I wondered what she could object to. I wondered if she could see the red dye still vivid on Mala's feet, all but obscured by the bottom edge of her sari. At last Mrs. Croft declared, with the equal measures of disbelief and delight I knew well: She is a perfect lady! (195)

Hell-Heaven

Cultural roots are the integral part of one's life; the presence of which cannot be denied and ignored. Lahiri's characters have mostly seen putting their original identity in the background with a desire to disguise themselves in foreign colors. But after the struggle and the umpteenth attempts to fit in the foreign culture, characters are generally seen returning to their roots. Hence the drift toward west and its influence upon Indians can be deemed as an important theme in Jhumpa's works.

Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* (2015) writes:

...colonized persons who did not resist colonial subjugation because they were to believe in British superiority and therefore in their own inferiority. Many of these individuals tried to imitate their colonizers, as much as possible, in dress, speech, behavior, and

lifestyle. Postcolonial critics refer this phenomenon as mimicry, and it reflects both the desire of colonized individuals to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were programmed to see as inferior. (421)

In *Hell-Heaven*, the character of Pranab was completely drenched in American life and lifestyle. He rejected the girl of his parents choice but also erased the signs of Bengali culture and life one after another. The drastic change in Pranab became apparent right from the entrance of Deborah in his life. He neglected the Indian line of decency which ought to be observed in the presence of elders. Pranab had not minded getting intimate with Deborah in front of Sudha and Shaymal who were like his brother and sister-in-law. One such instance was when four of them gathered on the dining table. “Sometimes they ended up feeding each other... causing my parents to look down at their plates and wait for the moment to pass.” (68) Yet another example of Pranab’s likeness of American lifestyle is shown when he declared that his wedding would be a Christian style wedding with a cake, a minister and Deborah in white dress and veil according Christian trends. The sudden change descended upon Pranab which guided him to move away from all the Bengali families in his acquaintance and on his wedding he kept them at bay. There were hardly few guests who were the relatives or friends from Deborah’s side. Pranab had invited only Sudha’s family. Gradually he shunned Bengalis and Bengal life; he avoided Bengali gatherings and ceremonies. Pranab in the disguise of an American was starkly visible through Pranab’s idea of teaching his daughters to converse only in English. The narrator of the story told,

... their two identical girls who were barely looked Bengali and spoke only English and were being raised so different from me and most of the other children. They were not

taken to Calcutta every summer, they did not have parents who were clinging to another way of life and exhorting their children to do the same.

The similar drift can be observed in Sudha's daughter, Usha. The more Sudha tried to glue her to Indian codes of morality, the more she drifted away. Usha was fascinated with Deborah's style of dressing, her loose hair and makeup free face. She started hating her mother for insisting her to put on *salwar-kameez* or insisting her for getting into an ankle length dress. When Usha enrolled in a college she began doing and concealing everything which her mother doesn't approve of or permit for. Usha plunged into all those habits like night-outs, drinking alcohol, late night parties with American friends and every other thing which can be considered inappropriate by Indian cultural codes.

The drift toward west or its influence could also be seen on Sudha who had always stood in its opposition. A kind of surrender could be sensed in Sudha, she had given up lecturing or forcing her daughter to stick to Indian culture rather she started sympathizing with her for receiving betrayals one after another by American boys and was seen supporting her daughter to find another suitable and good one. Sudha's rigidity melted away and became more harmonious with the surroundings she was living in. Therefore, the impact of western culture succeeded in waving away Sudha as well from her belief in the cultural practices of her native land.

With the fact of moving away from India and its culture; simultaneously, there is also a 'moving back' or a return to what was native. Although this 'return' was rarely seen in Jhumpa's works but in *Hell-Heaven*, it was evident in the character of Pranab. He divorced Deborah and tied a knot with a married Bengali woman. This act of Pranab clearly echoes that we cannot run away, cannot cease liking, we cannot stop admitting that nativity or our original identity stays

alive in the corners of our conscious which constantly reminds us of our past and our surviving connection with it.

Only Goodness

The tussle between Indian and American culture has proved to be disastrous and harmful as it has ruined the lives and families along with heightened mental traumas. The agony and strife between Indian immigrant parents and their children is apparent as parents want to keep them connected to their roots and children felt inclined towards American life.

Only Goodness starkly shows the tension between the first and second generation immigrants. Sudha, who is the second generation of Indian immigrants, ruined the life of her younger brother. In an illusion of providing the American life and its freedom to her little brother, Rahul; she spoiled him to such an extent that it became impossible for him to retrace his steps. Sudha always wanted to live an American way of life for which she was not permitted by her parents. She waited till college to not to disobey her parents but afterwards she did everything her parents would disapprove of; she was wise enough not to do those things in open rather secretly. So on surface she was a good and bright girl of her parents who were proud of her achievements in academics.

Sudha decided to help her brother live and experience American culture that she wanted to experience but couldn't because of her parents restrictions. Unconsciously she tried to live her childhood desires through the childhood phase of Rahul. She taught him the entire nuisance like hiding of liquor cans separately inside their rooms so that their parents could not discover those. They would drink and smoke after assuring that their parents have slept. Sudha was living in a big misconception; she thought she is assisting her brother to live a more natural way of

American life. She became so blind in this game of hide and seek that the idea of excess or being out of control didn't strike her even at once. She had not the slightest hint that the game of hiding liquor and lying for the same would turn her brother into an incurable alcohol addict. He lost his interest in studies, was locked up by the police for weaving his car on the road as he was under the influence of alcohol, he became the reason for bringing immeasurable insult for their parents.

Sudha taught Rahul all the ugliest things, harmful for the bringing up of a modest child. She accompanied him for the drinks but forgot to teach him the limits. She knew her boundaries and therefore succeeded in gathering prestigious degrees and settled herself quite well with husband, Roger and son, Neel. While the inclination toward American culture robs Rahul from all the pleasant sides of the life that he could have possessed if his parents would have checked upon the misdeeds of their daughter.

It has been aptly said that the extreme of anything is bad. Freedom without curtailment is dangerous. This story provides an exact vision of two lives, one under restrictions of Indian culture and another completely immersed in the freedoms offered by American culture; the former represented by Sudha, and the latter by Rahul. At the end of the story, Sudha somehow admitted the blame for spoiling the life of her brother, though vaguely. She told Roger, "...he hadn't even liked beer, and then about all the cans they'd hidden over the years and how eventually it was no longer a game for him but a way of life, a way of life that had removed him from her family and ruined him." (171)

The story clearly presents the way Indian immigrants get swayed by west and its culture. In one way it also raises a question- Why Indians feel such a strong urge and pressure to denounce the cultural practices of the land of their origin? Why they fail to put the trust in the

beliefs of their land? The presence of ‘cultural consciousness’ in Sudha, though in the fragmented form or in bits and pieces, helped her in shaping her career and settling down in her life. She did the things disliked by her parents but still feared about what they’ll think or how they’ll react on getting acquainted with the realities. On the suggestion of Rahul to go to the liquor shop at night; thinking of her parents, she denied. Rahul was surprised on her reaction and said, “Jesus, Didi. You’re almost twenty-four. Do you really still care what they think?” (132) In the story, the influence of west upon Sudha was clearly apparent. But we cannot deny the fact she remained in the limits only because a part of her conscious kept on reminding her about the dreadful consequences. This ‘part of her consciousness’ can be named as ‘cultural consciousness’ in the form of restrictions or the fear of losing the image of a responsible daughter in the eyes of her parents. Her culturally conscious mind always gave a thought to reconsider the things from her parent’s point of view. So it won’t be inappropriate to admit the fact that she was saved from spoiling her life in the fog of modernism.

Under the influence of American culture, Sudha managed to adjust her life and somehow succeeded in providing a meaning to it but she utterly failed to do the same for her brother. She instilled her fondness and temptations of the west in Rahul which ultimately shattered his life beyond any scope of correction. So, in *Only Goodness*, one can trace the ‘drift toward west’ in Jhumpa’s work.

Once in a Lifetime

India has always been known for providing spiritual enlightenment, internal peace and solace to the inner realm of human beings. People from West are generally seen visiting India in search of truth and to find the meaning behind the existence of humans and their life. Even the

people living abroad, generally the immigrants belonging to first generation prefer that their soul should depart the body on the land of their ancestors or their ashes should be waved in the sacred river Ganga.

But the scene in *Once in a Lifetime* is altogether different. The readers can meet the character named Parul who wished to spend the last few months of her life in a country far away from her native land and her dear ones. When people are close to death, they find nothing better than losing their last breath when surrounded by dear ones. But Parul, in the story desired to stay away from her parents, her relatives and her land. She wanted her ashes to be scattered not in Ganga rather in Atlantic. “But she’s made us promise we’ll scatter her ashes into the Atlantic.” (249)

After Parul passed away, her husband married a lady half his age and who had two daughters. The character of Chitra can be used in direct contrast with Parul. Where Chitra is representative of India and its culture at a foreign land and Parul can be seen as a drifter from her country and its culture. The filling of hair partition with vermilion is an important part of Indian married woman; its importance didn’t lessen for Chitra in America but Parul had shunned the traditional practice totally.

Parents drinking alcohol in front of children and children drinking along with mother and father is a rare scene in India. Generally alcohol bottles are kept secretly hidden and away from the sight of kids and mothers make sure to keep the children away from the portion of the house where elders of the family get together to drink. Chitra is shown as a typical Indian mother who doesn’t allow alcohol bottles in the house and who considers drinking habit not only unhealthy but immoral as well. That’s why Parul’s husband kept the bottles of ‘Johnnie Walker’ hidden

somewhere in the kitchen where it was difficult for Chitra to reach. Contrary to her it was absolutely normal for Parul to move around in the house drinking and sharing ‘Johnnie Walker with her teenage son and husband. Parul’s son, Kaushik said, “My parents had never been quiet about their fondness for Johnnie Walker, around me, around anyone.” (264)

Another example which shows Chitra in Indian light and Parul turning into American can be taken from the ending of the story which informs about Chitra’s moving to a more traditional house in the area where there were more Bengalis and an Indian grocery shop unlike Parul who had an inclination toward the modern set up of houses situated in the isolated places offering enough space to an individual.

...Chitra and the girls were moving to a more traditional one in a less isolated suburb of Boston. There were other Bengalis nearby and an Indian grocery in the town, things that were more important to Chitra than the proximity of the ocean and the Modernist architecture had been for my mother. (292)

In the works of Jhumpa, Indian immigrants have clearly shown ‘cultural relativism’ through the quality of assimilation and adaptation according to whatever situation they are put in. Some of them moved away from the conventional trends of India while rating the culture of a foreign land far superior and enticing which depicted the presence of ‘colonial consciousness’. Those who stick to traditional roots gave rise to elements like ethno or cultural consciousness which assisted in enhancing multiculturalism. Then, there could be seen a set of characters unaffected by boundaries and are at ease with both ‘this and that’ which has asserted the transnational mode of thinking. ‘Past’ has played an imperative role in Lahiri’s works, she used

it to create the stress and intensify the tension in the story as characters have experienced both inner and outer conflicts when came in contact with their past.

CHAPTER - 3

AMY TAN: COLORS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT LITERATURE

Amy Tan, born to Chinese immigrants, tried to trace the ties of mother-daughter relation. All her major novels remained dominant with the major theme of mother-daughter relation and the reminiscences of the life in China. She is best known for her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, which has been translated into 25 languages. The book has also been adapted into a film in 1993.

The themes employed in the works of Amy Tan are varied. Apart from the dominant theme of mother-daughter relation, memories of past in relation to present also play a significant role in her novels. It won't be inappropriate to call Amy, a personal storyteller as her personal experiences can be traced in the episodes of her stories. Violence and injustice against women is another major theme; the presence of which can be sensed in almost every chapter of her novels. She has taken the instances from the life of her own mother, the way her mother escaped from the brutality of first marriage in China and other atrocities women faced in the man dominated society. Her stories are also full of a wide range of Chinese festivals, traditions and beliefs – presence of haunting spirits and ghosts, symbolic meaning behind every happening, belief in the presence of life after death and family relationships are apparent on the pages of her stories. Looking back and peeping into the Chinese culture and making an attempt to know more about it, reveals Amy's efforts to establish a reconnection with her roots. The fear and pressure that Amy goes through in fulfilling her parent's expectations are also evident in her writings.

The Joy Luck Club

Chinese are very closely connected with their roots. In the past China did give an access to western influence but it did not let the west to wipe out its cultural values and heritage. For a very long time the nation remained at a safe distance from the impact of western powers and had no major contacts with other civilizations partially due to geographical barriers like huge Pacific Ocean on the east, unwelcoming plateaus of Tibet, deep ravines of the Burma border; second due to the 'self-sufficient' attitude of Chinese dynastic rulers. Chinese emperors and the people never liked any form of intrusion from outside. The Great Wall of China is one such example which evidently shows China's dislike towards the meddling of external forces in its internal affairs. The culture of a nation has the strength to keep its people united but without a strong bureaucratic check the diversity within a culture can lead to the fall of a nation. For example, in case of India, the country was not under one strong government rather there were regular splits and disputes among the regional kings which consequently benefitted the British to rule India. While in China, there was a dynastic rule which covered almost the entire nation and never allowed any religion or cultural practice or belief to create a split in the nation. As a result, China grew as a separate and isolated nation with its own way of living. W Scott Morton in his book *China* (1995) says,

The country is so large and the regional differences are so great that it might easily in the course of its history have broken up permanently into separate nations, as Europe did after the decline of the Roman Empire. What seems to have prevented this breakup in China was a relatively stable and powerful bureaucracy, which was the guardian of a common script and a common highly prized culture. (5)

The use of Talk-story by Amy Tan plays a key role in unfolding the cultural colours of China. E. D. Huntely mentions Linda Ching Sledge definition of Talk-story in *Amy Tan A Critical Companion* (1998) as

a conservative, communal folk art by and for the common people, performed in the various dialects of diverse ethnic enclaves and never intended for the ears of non-Chinese. Because it served to redefine an embattled immigrant culture by providing its members immediate, ceremonial access to ancient lore, talk story retained the structures of Chinese oral wisdom (parables, proverbs, formulaic description, heroic biography, casuistical dialogue) long after other old-country traditions had died. (32)

The culture of China consists of a strong belief in philosophies, superstitions, ghosts, life after death, Feng-Shui, dragons, social etiquettes, Chinese language, attachment with past, patriarchal system, feet-bound system, fortune telling, dragon bones, conserved and rigid society, belief in fate, Yin-yang concept and the touch of mysteriousness. Due to Sino-Japanese War followed by regular political conflicts, Chinese in bulk moved to America. They settled and got assimilated with the new lifestyle of America but nothing new could snap down their relation with their homeland or could destroy their firm faith in Chinese culture. Europeans could not penetrate and break down China; similarly, in the works of Amy Tan, the strong and dominant presence of cultural aspects shows that no westernization can break off their connection with Chinese culture and tradition.

Through the stories narrated by daughters and mothers in the 'The Joy Luck Club', Amy Tan takes her readers to China. Mothers and daughters even after living in America since 1949 are seen closely connected to the past. The writer herself born and brought up in America; but

major setting of the stories are based in China surfacing the traditions of the home country and keeping the host country (America) in the background. The stories are dominantly occupied and intricately wrapped with Chinese beliefs, rituals, conventions and customs.

Chinese have their own angle of analyzing and seeing the life, their perspectives are starkly different, they can see the reason behind every happening, and they can visualize the symbols hidden in every action which tries to give a hint about the upcoming events. The stories provide ample opportunities to peep into the mysterious world of Chinese.

The first story “The Joy Luck Club” narrated by Jing-Mei Woo depicts the desire to search for and to get linked with what is left behind and to make the past, the part of very present. The four ladies who arrived in America, including Jing-Mei’s mother, regularly meet to play ‘Mahjong’. The structure of the novel is similar to that of the arrangement in the game called ‘Mahjong’; it gave them an excuse to get nostalgic about their life in China. Ronald Emerick in “The Role of Mah Jong in Amy Tan’s The Joy Luck Club” (1999) says:

A brief overview of mah jong should be sufficient to reveal how Tan employs the game in the novel. Originating centuries ago, mah jong is the national game of China...the structure of the novel is the same as the structure of mah jong game. A complete game of mah jong requires at least sixteen hands: four rounds, each consisting of four hands and each hand representing one of the four players – or one of the four winds. Thus, the East round is followed in succession by South, West and North rounds. Like a game of mah jong, the novel is structured into four major divisions, each division consisting of four parts and each part representing one of the four mothers or one of the four daughters.

Therefore, the sixteen-chapter structure is the first indication that mah jong is a controlling metaphor for the novel. (38,39)

To keep the China alive in them, they tell stories and share their experiences that they had in China and the adversities which forced them to leave their homeland. Mei's mother had to abandon her two infant daughters by the roadside in China as she realized that her end is near. After arriving in America, she remained terribly restless for reconnecting with her daughters. Her restlessness could be seen in the numberless attempts that she made by contacting her relatives in order to search her daughters. "She had searched for years, written letters back and forth...And last year she got an address. She was going to tell your father soon... A lifetime of waiting." (33) Jing Mei's mother died, leaving her with the task to meet her sisters and acquaint them with their real mother. Emphasizing on the importance of philosophy in Chinese culture, Charles Alexander Moore in his book *The Chinese Mind* (1992) writes:

It has often been said that philosophy is more significant in China, in the life of even the common man, than in any other civilization in the history of the world. It has been said, too, that in China it is not necessary to be religious but it is necessary to be philosophical or at least possessed of a knowledge of philosophy. (1)

Chinese beliefs might appear meaningless or superstitious to some people but for Chinese, these beliefs hold a very significant place. There are various philosophical beliefs that Chinese believe in and which forms an integral part of their daily life. For instance, they always try to seek a balance in everything and believe that whenever any of the elements with which humans are constituted, goes out of balance, troubles don't take time to visit and knock the door. The impact of these philosophical ideas and beliefs made a dominant presence in Tan's works.

Patricial L. Hamilton in “Feng Shui, Astrology, and the Five Elements: Traditional Chinese Belief in Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*” (2009) says,

Another element of Chinese cosmology that Tan employs in *The Joy Luck Club* is *wu-hsing*, or the Five Elements, mentioned above in conjunction with astrology.⁴ The theory of the Five Elements was developed by Tsou Yen about 325 B.C. As Holmes Welch notes, Tsou Yen “believed that the physical processes of the universe were due to the interaction of the five elements of earth, wood, metal, fire, and water” (96). According to eminent French sinologist Henri Maspero, theories such as the Five Elements, the Three Powers, and *yin* and *yang* all sought to “explain how the world proceeded all by itself through the play of transcendental, impersonal forces alone, without any intervention by one or more conscious wills (55).

Jing-Mei’s mother was considered as a very wise woman who believed every human being is made up of five elements and whenever any of the elements increases more than adequate amount, things fall out of balance.

Each person is made up of five elements, she told me... Too much fire and you had a bad temper... Too little wood and you bent too quickly to listen to other people’s ideas, unable to stand on your own... Too much water and you flowed in too many directions, like myself, for having started half a degree in biology, then half a degree in art and finishing neither when I went off to work for a small ad agency as a secretary, later becoming a copywriter. (22, 23)

The story “Rice husband” narrated by Lena St. Clair gives a picture of mysterious Chinese world where her mother could see future happenings in advance. She predicted the

future by analyzing the simple ordinary events of daily life. Her mother had her own strange method of calculations and observations on the basis of which whatever she foretold turned out true. She announced beforehand that the baby in her womb will be born dead because the new apartment that they are living in is too steep. She declared in advance that their bank will run out of its money when she observed the opened store of plumbing and bathroom fixture. She predicted the death of her husband before a year he died as she saw the plant planted by her husband failed to recover as it had ruined its roots.

And just after my father died last year, she said she knew this would happen. Because a philodendron plant my father had given her had withered and died, despite the fact that she watered it faithfully. She said the plant had damaged its roots and no water could get to it. The autopsy report she later received showed my father had had ninety-percent blockage of the arteries before he died of a heart attack at the age of seventy-four. (173,174)

Superstitious beliefs form another important part of Chinese life. Even after living in America for years, Chinese Americans have stick to their age old beliefs. The book *The Joy Luck Club* clearly shows that the modern American ways could hardly bring any change in the behavior of Chinese immigrant mothers. In the story *Scar* we find a strange peculiar way of curing a dying relative. An-mei's grandmother, Popo was almost near to her death. Her daughter came and in order to save her mother she prepared a special soup cooked with her flesh along with varied special kind of herbs. Another unusual belief could be seen in Popo's act of holding her lips tight so that she can block the passage of her spirit to move out of her body.

My mother took her flesh and put it in the soup. She cooked in the ancient tradition to try to cure her mother this one last time. She opened Popo's mouth, already too tight from trying to keep her spirit in. She fed her this soup, but that night Popo flew away with her illness. (45)

Chinese have a very strong belief in spirits, ghosts and life after death. If something goes wrong in Chinese family, say a death or a member falling sick or when some other trouble descends upon the members of the family, they don't take time in blaming the ghosts or evil spirits of the offended ancestors. In *The Red Candle* Huang Taitai's husband fell sick and her mother-in-law immediately concluded that the ghosts want to kill her son. But later when he was cured, she believed the ghosts must have changed their intention and instead of robbing her son they must have got interested in taking away her grandson.

...his father was very sick and his family thought he might die...But his father lived and his grandmother was scared the ghosts would turn their attention to this baby boy and take him instead. (48)

The main protagonist of the story, Lindo Jong could not provide Taitai with a grandson. Instead of taking any medical aid, the lady of the house called the matchmaker to know the reason behind the problem. According to matchmaker, Lindo was capable enough to provide the family with grandchildren as the element of metal is lacking in her but she failed because of TaiTai had overloaded her with gold bracelets and other jewelry.

It's clear what has happened. A woman can have sons only if she is deficient in one of the elements. Your daughter-in-law was born with enough wood, fire, water, and earth, and she was deficient in metal, which was a good sign. But when she was married, you

loaded her down with gold bracelets and decorations and now she has all the elements, including metal. She's too balanced to have babies. (64)

Lindo Jong took advantage of these highly superstitious beliefs in Taitai's family to escape her miserable marriage. She succeeded in trapping Taitai in her fictitious dream. She made her mother-in-law, Taitai, believe that if her son, Tysun, will remain in this marriage, he'll die. According to her cooked up dream, Ancestors of the family came to see their marriage and in their honor the marriage ceremony was performed again. The ancestors were happy till the time their marriage candle was burning but when it blew off, it signaled Tysun's death. They instructed Lindo to leave this marriage and let the servant girl in the family take her place as they had planted a seed in her womb who will be Tysun's child and they also declared the servant girl as Tysun's true spiritual wife. Because Taitai was very superstitious, she was easily caught in the cleverly knitted web of Lindo. Lindo was allowed to leave for America with a ticket and ample amount of money to begin her life in the new land.

Belief in Feng-shui also occupies a considerable place in Chinese traditional system. Patricia L. Hamilton in "Feng Shui, Astrology, and the Five Elements: Traditional Chinese Belief in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*" (2009) says,

A third element of traditional belief in *The Joy Luck Club* is *feng shui*, or geomancy. The most opaque yet potentially the most important aspect of Chinese cosmology to Tan's exploration of identity, *feng shui* plays a pivotal role in Lena St. Clair's story "The Voice from the Wall," ... Stephen Skinner defines *feng shui* as "the art of living in harmony with the land, and deriving the greatest benefit, peace and prosperity from being in the right place at the right time" (4). The precepts of *feng shui* were systematized by two different

schools in China over a thousand years ago. The Form School, or intuitive approach, was developed by Yang Yün-Sung (c. 840–888 A.D.) and flourished in Kiangsi and Anhui provinces. Practitioners focus on the visible form of the landscape, especially the shapes of mountains and the direction of watercourses. The Compass School, or analytical approach, was developed by Wang Chih in the Sung dynasty (960 A.D.) and spread throughout Fukien and Chekiang provinces as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan (Skinner 26). The analytic approach is concerned with directional orientation in conjunction with Chinese astrology. As Walters notes, Compass School scholars have traditionally “placed greater emphasis on the importance of precise mathematical calculations, and compiled elaborate formulae and schematic diagrams” (10). Geomancers using this approach employ an elaborate compass called the *lo p’an*, astrological charts and horoscopes, numerological data, and special rulers. (131, 132)

The story “Voice from the Wall” further narrates the beliefs related to the ‘structure of the house’. Chinese have a firm faith in Feng-shui which is considered crucial to refer while deciding the structure and construction of the house or any building. In the story, Lena’s mother is shown under a terrible influence of superstitious beliefs. For most of the time she remained under the terror of her thoughts. When Lena with her family moved in their new apartment, her mother found the apartment too steep and she used this reason for the bad air to remain trapped in the house, which can result in the destruction of the family. Another mistake she pointed out in the house is - kitchen facing the wash room which indicates all the goodness will be flushed down the drain.

When something goes against your nature, you are not in balance. This house was built too steep, and a bad wind from the top blows all your strength back down the hill. So you

can never get ahead. You are always rolling backward...See how narrow this doorway is, like a neck that has been strangled. And the kitchen faces this toilet room, so all your worth is flushed away. (121)

Lena's mother had her own presumptions about the future happenings. She was hospitalized to deliver the baby and it came out with no brain, it was not a fully developed baby. And she told her daughter that she received prior intuitions, she could feel the baby was not willing to come out, she could feel his fingers holding her ribs to show the reluctance to move out because it was not completely grown.

There is a significant place of dragons in Chinese culture. Ronald Emerick in "The Role of Mah Jong in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*" (1999) says,

the colored dragons are also powerful bonus tiles in mah jong. Although in European mythology dragons are destructive and evil forces, in Chinese mythology the dragon is a "well-meaning creature" and a guardian of seas, lakes, and rivers (Sanders 48). Ancient Chinese culture revered the dragon as a source of rain, fertility, awe-inspiring power, and luck, and ancient Chinese people celebrated the dragon in two popular festivals each year (Sanders 48-49; Smith 9). Thus, dragons are symbols of good fortune, just as red, green, and white dragons are good-luck tiles in the mah jong game. (42)

A dragon may be a dangerous creature for the world but it holds a very significant place in China and in the lives of Chinese. In the story "Half and Half", Rose's mother has been shown believing in the existence of dragons. When the family was out for a picnic on the seashore, the tragedy struck and Rose lost her brother, Bing, in the waves of the sea. Rose's mother believed that Bing must be in the clutches of sea dragon. According to her belief, losing of Bing is the

result of the misdeed done by a family ancestor, he stole sacred water from the well and now water has taken the revenge upon the family by stealing away Bing. Rose's mother decided to appease the temper of sea dragon by sweetening the sea water and in order to free Bing from his coils, she threw a ring in the sea believing that this will distract the dragon making him forget about Bing and the pacified dragon with the ring will allow Bing to return to the surface. But Bing never returned.

An ancestor of ours once stole water from a scared well. Now the water is trying to steal back. We must sweeten the temper of the coiling dragon who lives in the sea. And then we must make him loosen his coils from Bing by giving him another treasure he can hide. My mother poured out tea sweetened with sugar into the teacup and threw it into the sea. And then she opened her fist. In her palm was a ring of watery blue sapphire...This ring she told me, drew coveting stares from women and made them inattentive to the children they guarded so jealously. This would make the Coiling Dragon forgetful of Bing. (148)

Social etiquettes, manners and humility are extremely valued in China. Parents make sure that their children properly observe these traditions and value their importance. *Four Directions* gave many such examples. Waverly wanted to get her mother's approval for getting married to Rich who was an American. She tried her level best to get him approved in the view of her parents. She planned and re-planned for creating the situations which can meet her desire. Finally she got an opportunity on her father's birthday. She directed Rich about the dos and don'ts.

But Rich who was little aware of Chinese way of humility and social behavior somehow failed in Chinese set of social decorum. For the dinner at Waverly's house he brought a bottle of wine which was not considered good by her parents as they don't even own wine glasses which

indicated that they do not appreciate the idea of drinking. Over that Rich gulped two full glass of wine without least hesitation while the rest took just a bit for the sake of taste.

Chinese have their way of showing humility. They show humbleness on the dining table by taking care of not to serve themselves first when accompanied by the elders or a guest rather the members of the family wait for the elder of the house to begin with the food first. Second, they take little servings from the dishes to make sure that enough is left for others on the table. When offered for the seconds or thirds, they don't straight away reject the offer which is considered as very rude. Even if they are full they accept a little from the offering for not hurting the feelings of the person who offered and the one who cooked. But Rich did exactly the opposite; he took big portions of shrimp and snow peas without caring that others have not even tasted a bite from those dishes. Further he refused to take seconds or thirds unlike behaving like his father who said he cannot restrict himself from taking another bite which is a way of suggesting the food cooked is very delicious; it is a manner of honoring the person who had cooked the food.

No matter even if the food cooked, does not turn out delicious or tasty, in China it is regarded as very disrespectful to criticize the taste of the food which is taken as a sheer insult for the cook. And Rich did exactly the same. Waverly's mother considered herself having an extraordinarily fine hand and experience in cooking. But she received the shock when criticized for the cooking that she was very proud of.

But the worst was when Rich criticized my mother's cooking...This is our family's cue to eat and proclaim it the best she had ever made. But before we could do so, Rich said,

‘You know, all it needs a little soy sauce’. And he proceeded to pour a riverful of the salty black stuff on the platter, right before my mother’s horrified eyes. (211)

In the story “The Joy Luck Club”, it appeared as Chinese have always seen America as a hope, a hope for the survival, for a better life and for the escape from the tortures and atrocities inflicted by Japanese during the war. China was burning due to its inner conflicts and with the territorial disputes with its neighbors. In the midst of such distress, Chinese in millions immigrated to America to rescue their lives and to improve the lives of the loved ones back at home.

The opening lines of the story “Two Kinds” as quoted below, precisely shows that Chinese saw America as a dreamland where they can be what they want to be. They can exercise their liberty to open a restaurant or can run any business of their choice or they can do a government job. They could see that their future and the future of their kids will be safe in America.

My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous...America was where all my mother’s hopes lay. (151)

Especially for Chinese women America has proved to be a biggest savior. The country has not only given them hope but has also rescued them from domestic violence, tormenting marriages and highly orthodox Chinese conventions. In “The Joy Luck Club” we found Jing-Wei’s mother had run from Kweilin (China) with her two infant daughters because the destruction inflicted by Japanese was heading towards Kweilin (China). She reached America

and met her second husband and began a new life far away from thundering and dreadful sounds created by Japanese bombs.

The story “Red Candle” narrates the escape of Lindo Jong from her miserable and unhappy marriage. Lindo was clever enough to trap her superstitious mother-in-law and husband in her fictitious dream according to which her husband will die if he stays in the marriage with her. Lindo’s plan worked she was allowed to leave along with a ticket to America and ample amount of money to begin a new life.

The story “The Voice from the Wall” gives another instance which explains how an English-Irish saved Betty St. Clair from the treacherous life that she had in China. After staying in the Angel Island Station for three weeks she was declared as a Displaced in the flood of immigration. Her husband changed her name from Gu Ying-Ying to Betty St. Clair which gave her a new identity. The lines quoted below can exactly trace the horrified mental condition in which she arrived in America and later rescued by her husband who provided her with a decent life.

I have a photo of my mother with this same scared look. My father said the picture was taken when Ma was first released from Angel Island Immigration Station...In this picture you can see my mother looks displaced. She is clutching a large clam-shaped bag, as though someone might steal this from her as well if she is less watchful. (115)

China has always remained in the blood of Chinese. They began to live in America but didn’t forget to create their own Chinatown in USA. New York is known for world’s best Chinatown. On visiting San Francisco, one cannot deny to admit that they have visited mini China or little China. Chinese carry the influence of their land wherever they go. Every section

of “The Joy Luck Club” is full of China based tales, beliefs, conventions, traditions, customs and rituals. Chinese immigrant mothers even after getting married to English Americans could not follow the new culture. They stick to their Chinese beliefs and practices.

In “The Joy Luck Club” we saw Jing- Mei’s mother used to take East corner of the table for playing ‘mah jong’. It shows her attachment for east and her belief that goodness begins from East. In her mother’s dialogue ‘direction from which the sun rises and, where the wind comes from’, sun and wind can be assumed to signify ‘life’. “I know her corner on the table on the East. The East is where things begin, my mother once told me, the direction from which the sun rises, where the wind comes from.” (25)

Language is an amazing source to stay connected to one’s culture and tradition. And if one has to destroy a culture, he should first destroy the language of that culture because it is the language which decides the life span of a culture. Judith Oster in *Crossing Cultures* (2003) writes:

To Shakespeare’s Mowbray, being banished from England has no consequence more devastating than being separated from his native language...Who and what he is or thinks or sounds like—all this will remain trapped (“cased up”) within him, or emerge, to his shame, as “tuneless,” broken, infantile—a frustrating phenomenon that immigrants unfamiliar with the language of their new home understand only too well...Who and what he is might well change, whether this remains trapped within or allowed exit and expression once he is no longer imprisoned by ignorance of another language, once he opens his mouth to raise the portcullis and free his tongue. Language, then, as well as image, is an aspect of our sense of who we are. (58)

Throughout “The Joy Luck Club” we see ample use of Chinese Language. Jing-Mei (second generation of Chinese immigrants) preferred to speak in English while her mother always replied in Chinese. “I talked to her in English, she answered back in Chinese.” (26)

Other such examples can be taken from the regular Chinese phrases used every now and then in the stories. For example:

“She said the two soups were almost the same, *chabudwo*. Or maybe she said *butong*, not the same thing at all.” (70),

“...a large platter of *chaswei*,
sweet barbecued pork...” (23),

“...shou, no respect...” (39),

“...ni, a traitor...” (40),

“...Ching! Ching! – Please, eat!” (42)

Despite of numberless differences in the culture, language and traditions, Chinese proved themselves as the people who can get easily assimilated. They mingled up with the main stream America while preserving their cultural habits simultaneously. We see Chinese immigrant mothers cooking Chinese food, talking in Chinese language, believing in Chinese superstitions, following Chinese philosophy, in spite of their conserved practices they kept a passage open for assimilation with west. They allowed their Chinese American daughters to tie a knot with English Americans. The novel is full of such examples.

Yet part of me also thinks the whole idea makes perfect sense. The three of us, leaving our differences behind, stepping on the plane together, sitting side by side, lifting off, moving West to reach the East. (219)

The lines quoted above are taken from “Four Directions” which suggests about the faded differences between Chinese and Americans. Waverly’s mother, Lindo who appeared to have a strict outlook upon Waverly’s idea of getting married to an English American, finally conceded to her proposal and things turned light and easy as she was seen suggesting the couple to visit China in October and Rich (Waverly’s would be husband) happily insisted Lindo to plan her visit to China along with them.

Another example of assimilation can be taken from the story “Half and Half” where we see Chinese daughter openly declaring her mother, “I’m American too” (133) Rose (Chinese) and Ted (American) were in love with each other. But parents from both the sides were not willing to give their approval for their marriage. Despite of their consent the couple decided to get married which serves as another evidence of assimilation.

“The Voice from the Wall” sets another instance of mingling east with west. Gu Ying-ying was rescued by an English-Irish American. She was terror struck in the middle of newly immigrated Chinese. He married her and gave her a new identity by changing her name from Gu Ying-ying to Betty St. Clair.

The Kitchen God’s Wife

Multidisciplinary pursuits like history, societal norms in the form of patriarchy and cultural practices are apparent in the works of Amy Tan. War between China and Japan became

the reason for Chinese to immigrate to America. Bella Adams in “Representing History in Amy Tan’s *The Kitchen God’s Wife*” (2003) says,

This novel is valuable because in representing a particular period of Chinese history, namely Japan's occupation of China during 1930s and the 1940s as well as the Rape of Nanking (1937)¹, promotes an analysis that resists two equally conservative, if not downright oppressive, ideologies: neocolonialism and Japanese revisionism. These ideologies exploit phenomenalism and theoreticism respectively, allowing neocolonialists to factualize literature and Japanese ultranationalists to fictionalize history. (9)

Past has always been an integral part of Chinese life. No matter where they go and reside in any corners of the world, they don’t forget to look back to see what they left behind. Amy Tan’s “*The Kitchen God’s Wife*” takes the readers deep into the original conditions of China during war. Through the story of Pearl’s mother the author has also tried to highlight the patriarchal society of China, the stringent rules of Chinese government, the status of women in China and the un-resistible belief in superstitions. The story begins in America but the major setting of the story takes place in China which can be understood as another sign of ‘China’s cultural dominance’ in the lives of Chinese immigrated to America.

Grand Auntie fell down in the aisle of the bus and received common bruises; doctors assured that there is nothing serious or worrisome about her health but Grand Auntie could sense her approaching death and therefore asked Pearl’s mother to prepare her will. The ability of an ordinary human to recognize the future happenings is something extraordinary and can be

considered not less than a magic. In the example quoted below we see that it was not just Auntie's prediction; the touch of conformity in her declaration was starkly visible.

But Grand Auntie said she couldn't wait for the doctors to find out what she already knew. So she made my mother write down her will, who should get the thirty year-old nubby sofa, her black-and-white TV set, that sort of thing. (13)

Grand Auntie and Pearl's mother went to Chinese Baptist Church till Pearl's father was alive but after his death they stopped visiting the Church. Whether Grand Auntie joined Church or followed Buddhism, it never made any difference in her beliefs in the superstitious practices for attracting good luck and avoiding the bad. Grand auntie was a devout Chinese, she had an altar with a Chinese God in her house and with various offerings in the Chinese style – oranges, incense sticks, cigarettes, and Jonnie Walker Red whiskey. So we see the changes were just on the surface, deep inside she remained a Chinese with a firm faith in Chinese beliefs. "I don't think Grand Auntie ever gave up her other beliefs, which weren't exactly Buddhist, just all the superstitious rituals concerning attracting good luck and avoiding bad." (19)

Chinese believe in the life after death. Another clear example of Chinese beliefs and rituals comes from the scene in which Pearl brought a packet from Sam Froom to hand over to her mother for Grand Auntie's funeral. There was spirit money inside the packet which can be used by the departed soul to offer as bribe on her way to Chinese heaven. And such practices are not just a part of ritual but also considered a way to show respect for the departed soul. "My mother snips the ribbons and opens the package. Inside are a dozen or so bundles of spirit money, money Grand Auntie can supposedly use to bribe her way along to Chinese heaven...What's to believe, my mother says testily. This is respect." (24)

It seems traditional beliefs have taken over and dominated every aspect of China and Chinese. Red color is considered as very auspicious in China. Chinese make use of it in everything good they begin with or for attracting good luck. Pearl's mother too used red banners for her flower shop and indeed she credited those red banners for the successful running of the shop. "My mother has always been very proud of those red banners... My mother claims these banners are the reasons why Ding Ho Flower Shop has had success flowing through its door all these years." (23)

Pearl's father died because he was suffering from cancer but her mother still believed it was due to the electrician. The electrician died due to cancer but before dying, he did electric fitting in their house and along with that fitting he transferred the disease in the house. Pearl's mother also believed in the theory of eight bad things. According to her a person is destined to die if he is not cured before the completion of eight bad things and once the circle of eight bad things gets over no one can save him; the ninth bad thing takes away the life for sure.

...that the electrician had been sick at the time he rewired our kitchen. He built that sickness right into our house, she declared. It's true. I just found out the electrician died of cancer, too...And there was also this superstition, what I came to think of as her theory of the Nine Bad Fates. She said she had once heard that a person is destined to die if eight bad things happen. If you don't recognize the eight ahead of time and prevent them, the ninth one is always fatal. (29)

During childhood kids are seen getting scared of ghosts and elders are seen helping them in waving off their unreasonable beliefs with an assurance that there is no ghost like thing that exists in the world. But the story of Pearl is altogether different. When Pearl was small she got

scared as she visualized a laughing ghost jumping out of the pumpkin. Instead of comforting Pearl, her mother started looking here and there in the room in search of ghost. This incident further emphasizes upon Chinese strong faith in supernatural things.

To this day, I can still vividly remember the laughing ghost that finally poured out of the pumpkin's mouth. My mother had come rushing into the room when I screamed. I was babbling tearfully that I had seen a ghost. And instead of comforting me, or pooh-poohing that it was just my imagination, she had said, "Where?" and then searched the room. (41)

To have and show 'face' in china is very important. It means respect which is an essential part of Chinese society. And they have their own ways of showing respect depending upon the situation. In order to show respect to a person who has passed away, a large gathering is appreciated with a large number of mourners making a loud cry to project that they are terribly grief stricken and want the soul of the dead should return to the body. If one doesn't cry on such an occasion, it is taken as very disrespectful. The similar instance can be taken from the scene when Pearl's father dies and in the Church during the service in the owner of her father, Pearl refused to cry. She had received number of slaps one after another from her mother as a punishment for being disobedient and disrespectful.

Not friends, maybe Chinese people from Vietnam. They came early, later saw we didn't have too many people to mourn Grand Auntie. So they talked to Auntie Helen, she gave them a few dollars. And now they're doing the old custom, crying out loud and acting like they don't want the dead person to leave so fast. This is how you show respect. I nod. Respect. (43)

Wenying Xu in “A Womanist Production of Truths: The Use of Myths in Amy Tan” (2009) says,

Mythologies are one of the most appetizing, saturating, and thus most vicious components of gender ideologies, for mythologies are capable of shaping female subjects who take as their own vital survival the perpetuation of existent social and sexual order. (85)

We get another glimpse of Chinese culture through ‘Kitchen God’s’ episode. Pearl’s mother narrated Kitchen God’s story to her granddaughter through which we are acquainted with the patriarchal society of China. The story talks about a dedicated wife of a rich Chinese. In fact the man was rich because of the day-night hard work done by his wife. But he turned unfaithful and brought in another wife; both of them together threw out his first wife. When all wealth of the rich was squandered, his second wife abandoned him. He was reduced to a beggar. By coincidence he reached to the house of a very benign lady who helped everyone in need; there he received a warm reception. But on discovering the reality that the owner of the house is none other than his own first wife, he got filled with remorse and out of guilt he jumped into the burning fire of the kitchen. The Chinese God head was impressed to see the extent of guilt in this man and decided to honor him by awarding the position of Kitchen God. In the entire story the wife’s dedication toward her husband, her loyalty, hard work, patience and everything about her was totally ignored and the irresponsible and unfaithful man was awarded; it clearly indicates toward patriarchal structure of Chinese society.

...this we call Kitchen God. To my way of thinking, he was not too important. Not like Buddha, not like Kwan Yin, goddess of mercy-not that high level, not even the same

level as the Money God. May be he is like a store manager, important, but still many, many bosses above him. (53)

The Kitchen God's Wife has revealed about many trends in China through the story of Pearl's mother. In chapter five of the novel we came across the practice of 'feet bound'. It was meant for the women. They had to go through this in the early stage of their childhood under which the growth of their feet was restricted or bounded. Chinese believed that the girl who escaped this practice would turn disobedient and prone to elope. The mention of 'feet bound' came in the scene in which Pearl's mother talked about her mother who was a modern Chinese lady of Shanghai. People believed that her feet were unbound and that's why she eloped. The fearless and audacious Chinese women who hesitated not the least in speaking their mind were considered ill-mannered and wild with no shame.

My mother was not like the Chinese girls Americans always imagine, the kind who walk around with tiny bound feet, choosing their words as delicately as they choose their steps. My mother was a modern girl. Many girls in Shanghai were. They were not peasants, nothing of the kind. When my mother was eight years old, her feet were already unbound, and some people say that's why she ran way (100)

Along with the cultural beliefs and practices, the novel also provides cultural differences. Unlike in United States where people spend the day on New Year in watching the parade, entertaining themselves by fireworks and involving into all possible source of fun, the New Year celebration in China is completely in contrast with America. People devote the day to sincerely think upon important issues, they try to get rid off debts before New Year as they believe if the

debts remained unpaid then they have to spend the next year in debts as well. According to Chinese, New Year brings ample opportunities to change their luck.

Our New Year celebration was not like what you have in the United States today – parades and firecrackers, lucky money for children, only fun, fun, fun. It was a day of thinking. According to our custom, when the new year began, not one single speck of dust from last year could remain. Not a single copper's worth of debt be left unpaid. And not a single bad word could fall from anyone's mouth for three days. (113)

They begin the preparations before a week during which they remove every possible sign of bad luck from the house. All the mending and repairing is done for attracting good luck. Things like a torn spot, a little hole, a missing clasp or button, a loose thread are the signs which bring adversity and are preferred to be removed before New Year. In China people believe if a hole remains in a pocket it drains away the wealth and power of the person. Something exactly the same we see Jiang Wei doing in the novel. She left a hole intentionally in the pocket of old aunt. "And then I smiled, remembering how I had secretly left a little hole in one of Old Aunt's jacket pockets. May be some of her powers would drain away." (117)

Chinese make sure that by New Year everything becomes perfectly spic & span, they try to remove every speck of dirt from the house, clean all those parts of the house which are left unheeded during the year.

I saw cotton batting of quilts had to be pulled out and beaten just so, the covers washed fresh, no dirty spots left. Table legs had to be wiped down with oil until the wood shined back lustrous bright, not greasy-looking. And everything had to be pulled back from the walls- cabinets and armoires- so you could see where all the dust, spiders' nests, and

mouse droppings were hiding. And I too heard the right way to scold a servant, the way New Aunt said: ‘Why is this dirty when you say it is clean?’ (113)

In West where parents stay concerned about the studies and career of their daughters, contrary to that in China, mothers stay worried and occupied in training their daughters to become good wives but no such treatment is meant for the boys so that they can become good husbands. Peanut’s mother woke up her daughter early in the morning so that she can learn how to organize and put the house in order. But Jiang Wei was not New Aunt’s real daughter, so the aunt was not least bothered to give Jiang the lessons important to run a house in order. But Jiang was wise enough to observe and learn. She learnt cooking, chopping and ordering the servants by watching her Old Aunt. “When I was young, I already knew everything must look good, taste good, mean good things. That way it lasts longer, satisfies your appetite, also satisfies your memory for a long, long time.” (114)

The cultural difference is apparent when Jiang mentioned the sharing of same room and bed with her cousin sister, Peanut; on the contrary in the West everyone has the right to their own privacy, everyone in the family has their own rooms which they prefer not to share. This indicates that in west individualism is more dear and precious to the people. Another difference can be observed in the attitude of kids. Where in China kids have to be obedient, in USA children go by their free will. Jiang Wei tried to teach the same lessons to her daughter Pearl which she learned while growing up, for example lessons in cooking. But Pearl found those lessons too boring and troublesome. “I learned all those lessons for my future. Oh, I tried to teach you these same things when you were growing up. But you never listened. You said, “It’s boring .too much trouble. I’d would rather eat MacDonald hamburgers instead.” (114)

People in China show a lot of interest in fortune telling and fortune knowing which further adds color to the Chinese culture and society. Chapter six of the novel brings us such an instance of fortune telling and it is presented in such a way that the reader won't doubt upon what was being done by fortuneteller and readily believes whatever presented by the author. Peanut and Jiang Wei visited the market for the New Year shopping. Both of them came across a fortuneteller who offered to change Peanut's fate. Peanut didn't want a husband from nearby place but this is what was read by the fortuneteller. She read a rhyme using the words 'nearby', 'happiness', 'East Sea', suggesting that she has changed her destiny, the local man whom she was supposed to marry, he has been sent to someone else and now her future husband will be from somewhere far East.

She also predicted the bad luck lurking over Jiang Wei. And indeed that bad luck came to her in the form of her husband Wen Fu. Later incidents in the novel revealed that he was the local man whom Peanut was intended to marry. But due to circumstances he fell as bad luck in Jiang Wei's life. So the magic done by the fortuneteller turned out true. When she said that she has chased away Peanut's future husband to someone else, that 'someone else' was none other than Jiang Wei.

But what she said was certainly true about me: Unhappiness was coming my way, and I did nothing to keep that speck from blowing in my eye. And this came true as well: Peanut did not marry the local boy she was supposed to get with first fortune. She married someone from Shanghai. And the local boy she chased away with a rhyming poem? Those leftovers went straight to me. (123)

There is a wide difference in the upbringing of children as well. In China respect is not taught, it is expected from the children to have it naturally. Where in United States children are all free to go by their own free will, free to exercise their independence and freedom and cherish their individualism, it's not so in China. In United States parents stay careful even while giving mild scolding to their kids as the kids have the right to go and lodge a complaint against their parents. In China when children become disobedient, parents can do anything to them as they are not questioned or pestered to give reason for their action toward children. "Nobody ever said to me, "Be good, little girl, and I will give you a piece of candy." You did not get a reward for being good, that was expected but if you were bad- your family could do anything to you, no reason needed." (132)

To bow down in front of elders, to act obediently, etiquettes and manners are most important habits that Chinese expect to see in their kids. Especially for girls, it is expected that they should act subserviently and should not be rebellious in their nature. Right from the childhood mothers make sure that they train their daughters in such a way that they prove to be good wives and the in-laws won't find it difficult to accept them. "...when I didn't bow down fast enough and beg for forgiveness-she would slap the side of my head. "So willful, that rebellious! What kind of family would want you for their son's wife?" (133)

Yet another trait of Chinese is - a strong will power. They were chased away from their native land during war with Japan, had undergone umpteenth number of atrocities due to inner conflicts in China. Adversities followed them even in USA, racial discrimination and heights of biasness tried to break them but they proved themselves rock solid. Chinese established their substance by becoming successful in a foreign country which is evident from the opening up of Chinese restaurants, Chinatowns in the major cities like New York. The same never dying will

power is visible in Jiang Wei. She lost her mother at an early age of six, she was sent to her uncle's house where she was mistreated by her aunts, she never received love from her father, later she was given in the hands of a brutal husband who treated her no less than an animal. In the midst of all these extremely painful conditions she survived and managed to keep her hope alive for a better tomorrow.

For many years after that, when times were bad, I would take out a pair of those chopsticks and hold them in my hand. I would feel the weight of the silver resting on my palm, solid and unbreakable, just like my hopes. I would dangle the chain that meant a pair could never be separated, never lost. I would pluck at the air, at nothing...I was still dreaming of celebrations I would hold, of happiness yet to come. (151)

The Bonesetter's Daughter

China and its attractions have always received a special place in Amy Tan's works. In *The Bonesetter's Daughter* she allows a passage to her readers to visit the world of dragon bones and the era in which various health problems were diagnosed with the help of those bones. Like her every other novel, the readers came across the ghost of a family member who was considered to be the cause the family's ruin. The story is full of Chinese strong belief in curses and superstitions. We also get a glimpse of horrific conditions under which Chinese survived during Japanese attack and civil war.

The presence of ghosts in the novel can be felt right from chapter one. In the example quoted below we see that Chinese can trace the supernatural message from the ordinary happenings in the daily life like breaking of bowls, barking of dogs, silence or phone calls. To the eyes other than Chinese; such things might appear absolutely normal but from Chinese

perspective these everyday happenings are capable of telling more than what others can comprehend. For example, the barking of dogs suggests something wrong is going to happen or a form of destruction is approaching. The character of Ruth's mother, Luling, provides the readers ample opportunities to see and understand the depth of Chinese belief in superstitions. The West which is rational in its approach; fails to understand the logic behind such beliefs and probably that is why the East appears mysterious to West.

Her mother, though, had often told Ruth throughout her childhood that shooting stars were really melting ghost bodies... To her mother, just about anything was a sign of ghosts: broken bowls, barking dogs, phone calls with silence or heavy breathing at the other end. (10)

Chinese belief in ghosts is a never dying thing, especially in the spirits of dead ancestors. They believe that the offended spirits can cause grievous harm. Luling stayed under the constant terror of the ghost of Precious Aunty who committed suicide. Unknowingly Luling gave lot of mental torments and pain to Precious Aunty by involving into heated arguments in which Luling spoke all ill about Aunty; all this took place right before few days Aunty died. Luling blamed herself for Aunt's suicide and as she failed to give her proper burial, Luling started believing that the curse of Precious Aunty is following her. For whatever wrong happened in her life; she took it as a result of Aunt's curse. Luling lost her first husband at the hands of Japanese, had gone through terrible conditions in Hong-Kong while waiting for her tickets and visa to USA. After arriving in America, happiness couldn't last for long in Luling's life. She lost her second husband in 'hit and run' road accident. She had to work hard for the survival of her daughter and for herself at a foreign land. Luling believed all these hardships descended upon her because Precious Aunty died after getting annoyed from her and she failed to provide her body a proper

burial, consequently the curse is following her and she is falling into the pitfalls one after another. The heights of her belief in the presence of Precious Aunt's offended soul becomes apparent in the example quoted below where she insisted her daughter, Ruth, to concentrate on what Auntie is trying to convey through her and write it down on the sand tray. This is another example of Luling's superstitious belief, she believed her daughter can see and communicate with the people who are dead.

She heard her mother speak again in polite Chinese: 'Precious Auntie, I did not mean what I said before you died. And after you died, I tried to find your body... I was crazy with grief... Ask her if my luck has changed. Is the curse over? Are we safe? Write down her answer. (86)

In the novels of Amy Tan, every Chinese immigrant carries a heart-rending story from their past. The un-revelation of the past or the attempts to keep the truth of their past as a secret from the family members not only caused misunderstanding but it further lead to loneliness and alienation. Luling too had her own heart-melting past, full of miseries. In China, she lost her father before she was born; he was murdered by her mother's suitor. She grew up in a perplexed state; Precious Auntie who was presented to her as a maid, loved her like a real mother and the mother of her cousin, Gaoling was introduced to her as her real mother who had always been indifferent and unlike mother. Luling often questioned herself regarding this dilemma which she constantly felt but could not dare to ask from any elder in the house. After the death of Precious Auntie, Luling was acquainted with the truth of her connection with Precious Aunt and the fact that Luling is considered as a bastard. Further she was struck with the chain of adversities as mentioned above but she never shared those with her daughter or never opened up with her cousin-sister about the layers of pain that she had concealed inside her. This led to the chain of

misunderstandings between Ruth and Luling. Ruth could never see the reason behind her mother's rigidity and unreasonable beliefs. She failed to understand her mother's fears. Luling emerged as a fighter in the novel, she endured every trauma with courage and her getting through those difficulties presented a strong character of hers. The differences in the culture led to loneliness. Ruth was born and brought up in American culture, far from the shades of Chinese superstitious beliefs and on the other hand Luling was a devout believer in Chinese set of doctrines, who never let her daughter peep into her past which could have made things better. This left them into two separate lonely zones because both of them failed to understand each other's perspectives. Luling's isolation can be precisely seen through the example quoted below. When Luling decided to connect her daughter with her past and with the Chinese roots, she asked Ruth to translate her Chinese manuscript into English, as a result of this, finally, things started to settle down. After knowing the truth of her mother's past, Ruth succeeded in developing a clear understanding about her mother's actions, beliefs and reactions. In Amy Tan's novels, un-revelation of past has always created stress and tension while revealing of it has worked as a lubricator between relations. In the following example, the level of Luling's loneliness is exactly captured. "That doctor don't even use telescope listen my heart. Nobody listen my heart! You don't listen. GaoLing don't listen. You know my heart always hurting. I just don't complain. Am I complain?" (108)

Amy Tan brought to her readers another attraction of China. It is the trend of using 'Oracle bone', also known as dragon bone. Amy took us to the era when use of dragon bones for medicinal purposes was at its height. Precious Aunt's father was a famous bonesetter. This medicinal art was not learnt from some medical school rather it came down to him from his ancestors. Where English doctors inject anesthesia in the patient's body to reduce the pain or to

make it numb, Chinese had their own medicines to make the patient unconscious. Precious Auntie was seen rubbing a little medicine inside the mouth of a child whose shoulder came out of its socket; within seconds child stopped crying and went to sleep. “The bones were well known for curing anything, from wasting diseases to stupidity. Plenty of doctors sold them. And so did Precious Auntie’s father. He used bones to heal bones.” (183)

Traditional Chinese methods of curing the patients are all together different from the ways of modern English science. Precious Auntie was a constant help to her father in most difficult cases. The example depicting the accomplished Chinese skill in medicinal science is quoted below.

For the most difficult cases, she helped her father put the injured man on a light latticework pallet of rattan. Her father lifted and lowered this by pulleys and rope, and she guided the pullet into a tub filled with salt water. There the man’s crushed bones floated and were fitted into place. Afterward, precious Auntie brought her father rattan strips that had been soaked soft. He bent them into a splint so the limb could breathe but remain still. Toward the end of the visit, the bonesetter opened his jar of dragon bones and used a narrow chisel to chip off a silver tiny as a fingernail clipping. Precious Auntie grounded this into a powder with a silver ball. The powder went into a paste for rubbing or a potion for drinking. Then the lucky patient went home. (188)

China had been a reserved nation and so were Chinese. They never liked the interruption of foreigners on their land or meddling of foreign elements in their internal affairs. One of the dynastic rulers once stated that China is a celestial land, self-sufficient and capable enough to fulfill its needs from its own land. The greedy foreigners were ever ready to encroach China,

sometimes for porcelain, and at times for its rich silk and other raw materials. When the treatment with the help of dragon bones was utterly famous in China, foreign scientists landed in China to make profit by starting dragon bone factories. Local people in the story were seen chasing away the foreigners. Chinese never liked the disturbing interference of foreigners in their life. The intrusion of foreign scientists resulted in the discovery of some of the bones which were considered as dragon bones were actually human bones for about a million years old and the price for the real dragon bones was expected to reach the sky. The business of many medicine shops was ruined and they had to specially mention on the medicines and on their shops – ‘no human parts’.

That was also the year the scientists, both Chinese and foreign, came to Dragon Bone Hill at the Mouth of the Mountain... We heard rumors that the foreigners wanted to start with their own dragon bone factories, and a dozen villagers went to the quarries with axes to chase them away. (201)

The rigidity of China could also be seen in their treatment of women. The right to read and write poems, freedom to ask questions, to play riddles, freedom to walk alone and openly admiring nature was meant only for boys or the men in Chinese society. Women were expected to act shy and submissive and were considered ill-mannered if show any kind of boldness. In China there was a famous trend of ‘feet-bound’. According to it the feet of the little girls were bound as Chinese believed it will prevent them from eloping during their teenage and save the name of their families from getting spoiled. Early marriage, domestic violence at the hands of husband and environment full of restrictions, was all that Chinese women were awarded with and destined to.

The novel is full of such instances which gives a clear picture of women's adverse conditions in China. When Precious Auntie rejected the marriage proposal of the dominant and powerful Chang, he took it as his insult. He caught her and misbehaved with her when she was returning from the well.

You think you can insult me, then walk away laughing?... As she tried to leave, Chang pinched her neck, saying he should break it, then shook it as if he truly might snap off her head like winter twig. But he threw her to the ground, cursing her... (196)

The cruelty crossed the heights when Chang murdered her father and her future husband. The ill fate chased Precious Auntie even in her husband's house. Her daughter was considered as bastard. She was given the position of a maid in the house to save the family from insult. After Precious Auntie's suicide, her daughter, Luling was threatened by her Aunt. She was intimidated to submit and marry Chang's son or else she'll be sold to some brothel.

The conserved picture of Chinese society is perfectly depicted in the novel. The upbringing of Precious Auntie into a bold and fearless girl became difficult for the society to digest. The range of Chinese mindset in case of women is exactly captured by the beliefs practiced in its society. Chinese society does not consider it good to give too much freedom to women or allowing them to go by their free will like men in China. The Bonesetter raised his daughter like a son; he gave her all those freedoms which were meant only for men; things like - to read and write, asking too many questions, playing riddles, walking alone, rather than acting shy and submissive; acting bold, using a candid tongue, were forbidden for the women in China. She was unlike other Chinese women who were meek and shy; she never hesitated in standing against the wrong or in using bold language to oppose the oppression, Chinese society does not

approve this kind of an attitude in a woman. Just because Precious Auntie had touched too many bodies while assisting her father in providing the treatment to the patients, very few families in the Chinese society considered her suitable for the bride.

So Precious Auntie freely followed her father around in his study and shop. She soaked the splint and plucked the moss. She polished the scales and tallied the accounts... She had touched so many bodies, living, dying, and dead, that few families considered her for a bride. (187)

In the stories of Amy Tan it is just not possible to not confront a ghost lurking here or there in the text. In 'The Bonesetter's Daughter' as well there are ample instances which suggest the rock solid faith of Chinese in superstitions and ghosts. On the wedding day of Precious Auntie when she was on her way to her would be husband's house; her father and husband were murdered by Chang. On reaching her husband's house, family members were not willing to make her the part of the family as Precious Auntie was already pregnant which has put the name of the family to stake. When the family was about to decide to abandon Precious Auntie, Baby Uncle's ghost (her husband) visited in Great-Granny dream and warned her about the dreadful consequences. He made it clear that if his wife is not honored in house or if she is abandoned to die then he and his wife's ghost will ruin the family. As a result of this warning Great-Granny wisely found the solution to save the name of the family from the insult and from the wrath of Baby Uncle's ghost. Precious Auntie was given a position of a maid for her own daughter, Pearl; to the society Pearl was shown as the daughter of Baby Uncle's brother.

But Great-Granny did not let this happen. Baby Uncle's ghost had come to her in a dream and wanted that if Precious Auntie died, he and his ghost bride would roam the

house and seek the revenge on those who had not pitied her. Everyone knew there was nothing worse than a vengeful ghost. They caused rooms to stink like corpses. They turned bean curd rancid in a moment's breath. They let wild creatures climb over the walls and gates. With a ghost in the house, you could never get a good night's sleep. (198)

Another such instance is seen during the discovery of oracle bones by foreign scientists. They declared some of the bones belonging to humans, million years old. One night, Precious Auntie saw her father in the dream, who informed her that the bones which she thinks are the remains of dragons, is a wrong assumption. Those bones were the remains of their ancestors. They took out the bones from their resting place and hence got cursed. It was the result of their ancestor's curse that her father and husband got murdered on the same day and she became a widow within few hours. He warned if she won't return the bones to their place, the cycle of destruction will continue and the whole family will be ruined. When Pearl questioned Precious Auntie upon the selling of bones and making money out of it; her response to Pearl clearly shows the impact of ghosts, the meaning hidden behind dreams and the impact of superstitions upon Chinese.

A million or ten million, she scolded with her moving hands, if we sell them, the curse will return. A ghost will then come and curse us and our miserable bones with it. Then we'll have to wear the weight of those million ingots around our dead necks to bribe our through hell. She poked my forehead. I tell you, the ghosts won't rest until all our family is dead. (203)

The Hundred Secret Senses

Magical Realism has often been used by the postcolonial writers to resist the imposed dominant culture. It has been employed in the literary works to demonstrate a kind of revolt against the dominant by giving space to what belongs to the minority in terms of culture, myths, traditions and belief. Under Magical Realism, magic is manifested in such a subtle way that the reader readily accepts it as real without any doubt. In the same light, Amy Tan deploys magical realism through the character of Kwan in order to establish a reconnection with China and its culture and to shed off the dominant American culture. Maggie Ann Bowers in *Magical Realism* (2005) says:

In recent English language magical realism, the dangers of including colonial racial assumptions have been lessened by the predominance of writing from the cross-cultural perspective of a narrator who possesses a predominantly non-European or non-Western cultural perspective...Writers such as Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston and Leslie Marmon Silko, writing during the last three decades of the twentieth century in the United States from three different American perspectives, each adopted the narrative device of magical realism...As they each explain, their cultural contexts include influences from dominant American culture (including their adoption of the originally European form of the novel) but also from their alternative cultural communities—the African Americans, Chinese Americans and Native Americans—all of whom have been persecuted by European Americans. Their aim is to challenge the dominant culture's authority and thereby lessen its power in order to articulate their communal histories which provide the necessary knowledge for establishing and articulating their cultural identities. (80,81)

Amy Tan's 'The Hundred Secret Senses' brings her readers face to face to the Chinese firm faith in life after death, rebirth and the never dying belief in ghosts. Like her other three novels discussed above, here as well the story begins in America but the major setting moves to China. There are two sisters, Olivia, the younger one, represents American perspective for every situation; Kwan, who is the elder one, fills the novel with Chinese stories of faith, belief, superstitions, ghosts, life after death and previous birth.

Once again we see the tension cropping up among the characters in the American setting of the story and the intervention of the characters past experience in China, leads to the resolving of conflicts and help the characters in developing a better understanding of their situations. The marriage of Olivia and Simon was on its verge to end but they found themselves freshly reconnected to each other and their relation got strengthened after spending the time together in Changmian, China.

The novel succeeds in bringing the readers closer to the culture and society of China as the reader is easily persuaded to believe in whatever told or narrated by Kwan. The clouds of doubts and suspicion rose when ghost stories were narrated by Kwan in the American setting of the novel; but such clouds fade away in China. Every story of Kwan linked the past with present and the life of previous birth with the present birth in such a subtle way that the readers fail to doubt upon whatever being narrated to them. Olivia who had always pushed away the thoughts which wanted to force her to believe in the stories of Kwan, finally submitted and admitted about her connection with Kwan and Simon in the past life.

Amy Tan has given complete opportunity to her readers to peep inside the lives of Chinese in China. She took them to Guilin and then Changmian, a village which is still miles

away from the modern touch; showed them Chinese congested markets; she allowed her readers to experience a risky, rough and horrifying taxi ride, she took them to Changmian caves, showed them the real customs of Chinese funeral procession, let them savor typical Chinese food and sense the chill of its weather. She offered all these privileges to allow her readers to feel and sense China in her writings.

When certain philosophical ideas or ideologies turned out difficult to comprehend then either they are considered as complex or mysterious. Similar is the case with China; right from the beginning, China has disliked the interference of foreign elements on its land, therefore, because of its aloofness, people in the world rarely received the opportunity to peep inside its culture, as a result of which its philosophical beliefs or ideas became difficult to comprehend or to believe in. Second, its language is one of most difficult to learn, so that can be another reason that people around the world avoided to learn and know about China. This made it appear mysterious.

‘The Hundred Secret Senses’ is full of mysteries. Olivia who is an American born Chinese found it hard to accept the stories of ghosts and people from the yin world. The dominance of ghosts in the novel begins right from chapter one. Olivia’s father was admitted in the hospital and he was near to death when he revealed the truth of his previous marriage to her mother. He told her that the ghost of his first wife came to his dream and warned him to own and accept the responsibility of their child or else face the consequences in the life after death. “Eleven years later, while he was dying in the hospital, the ghost of his first wife appeared at the foot of his bed. ‘Claim back your daughter,’ she warned, ‘or suffer the consequences after death!’ (5, 6)

In the beginning of the novel we see Olivia's mind turns on and off, tend to believe but then brush off the thoughts which insist her to believe in the stories Kwan. In the opening of the novel there are number of instances which repeatedly tell the readers and the narrator, Olivia, to believe in Kwan but the logics and the scientific side of human brain discards such initiatives. It is completely uncommon to see a human being's body working like a cell-phone battery recharger. Olivia had seen Kwan temporarily charging the battery of a cordless phone. Things for which science has no answer becomes canny. Kwan recharged the battery but could not explain how she did it. "I've also seen her temporarily activate a dead cordless phone just by pressing her fingers on the back recharge nodes. She can't explain any of this, and neither can I. All I can say is, I've seen her do these things." (16)

Yet another example of Kwan's being extraordinary and a doer of inexplicable - is her healing touch. Within seconds Kwan could tell the health problems of people. By simple hand shake she would explain the health problem or a disease that the person is going through even if the ailment is cured years before. Kwan had strange quality of healing by a simple press of her fingers or touch. People have named her touch – a healing touch. Kwan was not a doctor or a medial trainee in traditional medicines or the one who had learnt the art of healing in China; still, she possessed that quality. The mysterious touch and suspense in the novel intensifies when Kwan mentioned about the regular visits of the customers after their death at Spenser's drugstore where she worked and those ghosts kidding with her by calling her "Dr. Kwan". Spencer's drugstore had the provision of home delivery but the customers intentionally visited the store for meeting Kwan to experience her healing touch and for getting relieved from the pain or ache, though, temporarily.

She knows in an instant whether a person has arthritis, tendinitis, bursitis, sciatica – she’s really good with all the musculoskeletal stuff... fever arms, sour joints, snaky leg, and all of which, she says, are caused by eating hot and cold things together...When she puts her hands on the place where you hurt, you feel a tingling sensation, a thousand fairies dancing up and down, and then it’s like warm rolling through your veins. (16)

Kwan had the ability to sense what others fail to; it insists the human brain to believe in the stories of Kwan. Olivia was regularly hearing strange sounds in her apartment. Her husband tried to sideline the issue by comparing the sounds with that of a piano key, mourning of doves or scraping of ice. Everyone had their own logics behind the strange sounds but it was Kwan who turned out to be correct in the end. On consulting a structural engineer, he said that the sounds may be because of ‘useless radiator pipes’. Seismic safety consultant told that it is natural due to the settling down of wood frame. It was Kwan who straight away discards the thought of ‘ghost presence’ as Olivia was expecting rather Kwan suggested that it is the presence of a living person who is full of anger. “Very strange, she said. Someone here I feel this. But not ghost. Living person, full of electricity, stuck in wall, also under floor.” (108)

Kwan proved to be correct in her estimation; the source of those strange sounds was Paul Dawson who lived right beneath Olivia’s apartment. “As it turns out, Kwan was right about the sounds in the house. There was someone in the walls, under the floors, and he was full of anger and electricity.” (135) He was a member of a group which was involved in kidnapping ‘morally reprehensible’ women. The previous owners of Olivia’s apartment had also been noisy like them which had caused disturbance in Dawson’s morning meditation. To keep a check upon the doings of his neighbours, he installed electronic devices and speakers on his ceiling which was underneath floor of his neighbours.

When the police searched Dawson's apartment, they found an odd assortment of electronic equipment: tape recorders hooked up to his telephone, redialers, voice changers, sound-effects tapes, and more. He hadn't limited his terrorist activities to the telephone. Apparently, he felt prior owners of our apartment also had been too noisy, inconsiderate of his morning Zen meditation. When they temporarily moved out during a remodeling phase, he punched holes in his ceiling and installed speakers and bugging devices underneath the upstairs floor, enabling him to monitor the doings of his third-floor neighbours and spook them with sound effects. (??)

In China people practice a very strong belief in the presence of ghosts, life after death and in the connection of previous life with the present. According to Kwan, in her previous life she was Nunumu who had the power to see the dead people. To complete what is left in the previous birth, fate organizes the events in such a way that the incomplete will be completed in the present birth. It is because of the incomplete tasks that the soul lurks in between and fails to attain salvation. According to Kwan the ghosts that she mentions in her stories had a direct connection with her and her younger sister, Olivia. It won't be imprecise to say that Kwan possessed some sort of supernatural power as she kept on giving strange surprises to Olivia and the readers.

Kwan telephoned Olivia to convey the message of Lao Lu, a ghost who died a hundred years ago. According to Lao Lu, Olivia should not divorce Simon; rather three of them should visit China. He assures that everything will settle down once they arrive in China. Olivia received the shock when Kwan conveyed Lao Lu's next statement. He said that Olivia should not balance only the checkbooks but should also balance her life as well. Olivia was taken a back on realizing that a ghost can see exactly what she is doing while talking to Kwan telephonically.

Tst! Chopped head off over one hundred year ago. Now look fine, no problem. Lao Lu think you, me Simon, we three go China, everything okay. Okay, Libby-ah?... Lao Lu say cannot just balance check-book; see how much you got left. Must balance life too. (22, 23)

Yet another shock came when Olivia listened Kwan talking about the reason she is getting divorced. Olivia had never revealed the reason to Kwan or anybody but still Kwan knew it. The way Simon loved somebody who died before he and Olivia got married, exactly in the same way, in their previous birth Olivia loved someone else before Simon came into her life but later they got separated and it is their destiny that has brought them together once again in the present birth. The story of the previous birth goes parallel with the story in the present.

Lao Lu, you also know him, but not in this lifetime. Lao Lu said that you must stay together with Simon. This is our yinyuan, the fate that brings lovers together... Because in your last lifetime together, you loved someone else before Simon. Later, Simon trusted you with his whole life that you loved him too. (127)

Coincidence can happen once or twice but when it frequently takes place then one is insisted to believe in the planning of fate. It was Olivia's fate that took her, Simon and Kwan to China in order to reunite them. The way Olivia and Simon got separated in the present birth similarly they were separated in their previous birth. "Libby-ah, this afternoon I talking to my friend Lao Lu. He agree, you must go China – you, Simon, me together. This year Dog Year, next year Pig, too late. How you cannot go? This you fate waiting to happen!" (139) The manner in which the story unfolds, it appears that the fate is working upon what was left incomplete. Such a working of fate in the novel further increases a suspense and curiosity in Chinese beliefs.

Amy Tan does not show America as deeply in her novels as she presents China. It's very rare that her characters are shown experiencing a luxurious drive on the well constructed metal roads of America or enjoying and experiencing a natural view from the car. Contrary to this in 'The Hundred Secret Senses' there is a wide description of a taxi ride in China which followed not only the experience of bumpy roads but also includes the incident of a bus accident due to rash driving and the lack of immediate medical aid; a talk upon Chinese law, according to which if a vehicle runs over somebody, it is always considered the drivers fault no matter if the other has acted careless. Chinese immigrants took a ride in Rocky's taxi which gave a real road experience in China. "He routinely passes slower vehicles, clicking his fingers to the music. Each time he accelerates, the owl opens his wings slightly... I'm gripping my knees, then sucking air between clenched teeth whenever Rocky swings into the left lane to pass." (181)

Further Amy Tan has given an elaborated picture of a Chinese village, Changmian. She didn't do the same for any of the cities or country sides in America. Olivia and Simon were spellbound and for a moment became speechless on looking at the beauty of Changmian. The village was far away from any modern touch, there were no electric lines or tin roofs. It was cupped between two mountain peaks with clean rows of white-washed houses and tile roofs organized in the traditional pattern of dragon coils, ponds carrying the crystal clear water for irrigation, the village tremendously holds its purity without the least sign of modern pollution. They felt as if they were in a trance, as if they have entered a fairyland where everything is drenched with purity. It possessed every view that the tourists wish to see, a sacred Chinese village still entangled in the past, free from the modern fast-food points, vehicle-junk by the roadside and heaps of plastic waste. According to Olivia, Changmian is a perfect Chinese village worth to be visited by tourists. They were so captivated by its beauty that first they were not

willing to believe that Changmian is a real village, they took it as an artificial replica of a Chinese village from the past. They were so mesmerized by its purity that Simon and Olivia compared it with Chinese Nirvana.

I feel as though we've stumbled on a fabled misty land, half memory, half illusion. Are we in Chinese Nirvana? Changmian looks like the carefully cropped photos found in travel brochures advertising 'a charmed world of the distant past, where visitors can step back in time. (185)

The element of 'Willing Suspension of disbelief' used by S.T. Coleridge in his poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' seems to perfectly suit Amy Tan's 'The Hundred Secret Senses'. Throughout the novel the character of Kwan captivates the logical sense of the readers with the help of her spell that she created with her ghost stories. Her stories related to ghosts and after life fits in so well that the scientific or logical sense of human beings is left with no choice other than giving up contradictory thoughts and willingly accept and believe in whatever being narrated.

Once again Kwan surprised everybody in Changmian. Olivia, Simon and Kwan visited the village to meet Kwan's Big Ma. In the village nobody was aware about the bus accident; Big Ma travelled by bus to reach Guilin in order to see Kwan but unfortunately it met an accident and Big Ma lost her life. Kwan suddenly started crying while talking to the inmates of the village, her eyes got transfixed on stone wall, she lost her smile because she could see Big Ma's yin, therefore Big Ma's ghost which was suggestive of Big Ma's death. Kwan further informed that Big Ma died in the bus accident that they saw while coming to Changmian. "Big Ma, oh, Big Ma. Tears are streaming down Kwan's cheeks...How unlucky that you died on the day that I've

come home. A few women gasp and cup their mouths.” (186) In the village nobody was aware of neither bus accident nor Big Ma’s death. When an official came and announced Big Ma’s death, Kwan proved to be correct in whatever was foretold by her.

The funeral procession of Big Ma further reveals many more practices related to Chinese traditions. In China the dead person’s body is covered with seven layers of clothes on the top and five on the bottom. According to Chinese, seven layers of clothes are chosen for the top because it goes with the seven mourning weeks conducted for the deceased and five is connected with the things which link us to the mortal world, for example there are five senses, five elements. In the middle of this funeral section, Amy Tan also gave us a hint about Chinese government. The government believed that too many traditional beliefs and practices of superstitions can cause a hindrance in the development of the country that is why traditional customs were forbidden to conduct openly and religious practices in China are more of an individual affair rather than in big groups. That is why Big Ma was unable to answer all the custom related questions of Olivia. She said, “Ghosts and yin people were forbidden by the government for so long, now even she’s forgotten all the customs and their meanings” (217)

The role of hope, dream and wish also covers a significant part of Chinese culture. China is a country with umpteenth number of belief systems. People earnestly believe in the working of wishes. We come across one such incident where Kwan talked about a sharp-headed mountain right outside her village. It’s named ‘Young Girl’s Wish’. It is believed if one climbs the top of the mountain and makes a wish, it comes true. So when Kwan was a young girl she would raise little hatchlings and when they grew big enough to fly, she would took them to the top of the mountain with a belief that they would carry her wishes to phoenixes. There is another belief related to phoenix and the mountain. In the very old time, a girl climbed to that sharp-headed

mountain and flew away with her phoenix-lover. Since then it became a tradition. There is yet another belief related to this mountain, once there was a young girl who went to the peak of the mountain and with a wish to fly she jumped and fell on the earth and became a boulder. Kwan believed that one must dream, must make wishes, to stop dreaming and wishing is like stop making the attempts to change the fate.

Before leaving for America, Kwan too made three wishes and three of those got fulfilled. First, she got a sister whom she loved dearly, second she got a chance to visit China with her and third she wanted Big Ma to accept that she was sorry for sending her away. Big Ma did say her third wish, although, she said so after becoming a ghost. “She said she was wrong about the story of Young Girl’s Wish. She said all my wishes had already come true. She was always sorry she sent me away. But she could never tell me this.” (188)

By the end of the novel the suspicion and enigmatic nature of the story reached its zenith. The doubts seem to fade away as the scenes are so tightly intertwined with evidences that the readers willingly believe in the connection of present life with the birth in the previous life. All the logics and reasoning of the scientific mind failed when Kwan brought the music box of Miss Banner which she had hidden in her previous birth.

Kwan, Olivia and Simon are shown in a situation which went parallel to the situation in their previous birth when they were Nunumu, Miss Banner and Yiban. Yiban was believed to be lost in the caves; Nunumu and Miss Banner became anxious for him right near the archway. In exactly the same way, Simon was believed to be lost in the caves and Kwan and Olivia were waiting for him to return near the same archway. The mystery in the story crossed all the limits when Kwan went inside the cave and came back with the music box of Miss Banner. Inside the

box there was a box of herbal tea as well which Nunumu prepared for Miss Banner. Olivia was dumbstruck with the written evidences on the music box and the soothing effect of the herbal tea. Kwan said, “ ‘Herb.’ She switches to English. ‘From special tree, new leaf only, very sticky. I make for Miss Banner myself. Good for drinking, also just for smelling. Loosen you mind. Make you feel peace. May be give me memory back.’” (286)

Chinese believe, whatever happens has a reason behind it. So far Olivia took the stories narrated by Kwan as mere stories or just Chinese superstition. But while waiting for Simon near the archway, she realized that she has started believing in what she has always tried to ignore. To her the fictitious stories of Kwan started converting into a real life stories. In the lines quoted below the newly roused faith and belief in Olivia is exactly depicted which was missing when she was in America.

But in spite of all my logic and doubt, I can’t dismiss something larger I know about Kwan: that it is not in her nature to lie. Whatever she says, she believes is true. Like what she said about Simon, that she hadn’t seen him as a ghost, which means he’s alive. I believe her. I have to. Then again, if I believe what she says, does that mean I now believe she has yin eyes?... That she was Nunumu? And if that’s all true, the stories she told throughout these years...well, she must have told me for a reason. (288)

From the story of Kwan’s previous birth, Olivia remembered Kwan talking about the duck eggs that she had hidden and when they arrived in China she mentioned few of those duck eggs still might be left. “Duck eggs! ‘I made so many, ‘I could hear Kwan saying. ‘Maybe some still left.’” (317) The moment Olivia recalled this, she ran to the ‘Ghost Merchant’s House’ where the eggs were suppose to be lying beneath the earth since hundred years ago. On digging

the ground, Olivia did discover a jar with duck eggs. “I pulled out a blackened egg, then another and another. I hugged them against my chest, where they crumbled, all these relics of our past disintegrating into gray chalk. But I was beyond worry. I knew I had already what was left.” (318)

From then on Olivia understood the miracle of hope, belief and faith. She said, “And that’s fine, because I now believe truth lies not in logic but in hope, both past and future. I believe hope can surprise you. It can survive the odds against it, all sorts of contradictions, and certainly any skeptic’s rationale on proof through fact.” (319) The lack of these elements in her life created the mystery. When one fails to understand certain concepts or find something too difficult or complex to comprehend with scientific reasoning and gets beyond understanding, becomes mysterious. So through this novel Amy Tan has tried to bring the attention on hope, faith and belief which are the integral part of Chinese culture and society. It was no less than a miracle that the arrival of Kwan in Olivia’s life was with a purpose, with a reason and it was to complete the promise that she made to Miss Banner in her previous life. She came to reunite the lovers from past life. She came, reunites and left mysteriously in the lap of Changmian caves. Before visiting China, doctors declared Simon as infertile and therefore Olivia can never expect a baby. But another miracle took place, after their return from China, Olivia was three months pregnant and Simon’s medical reports turned out positive. Yet another miracle which just cannot be ignored was the marriage of Simon and Olivia which was on the verge divorce, it was back on its track. She admitted this fact when she said, “...No matter who Kwan really is, sister or not, I’m glad that she suggested we come to China.” (256)

The analysis of the novels above depicts that the intervention of the past in the lives of Chinese immigrants has worked as a lubricator. The revelation of the life in China, its belief

system, the role of Chinese ancestors in the lives immigrant Chinese, seem to have brought the characters in the novels at ease with their present. The meddling of the past melted the confusion and dilemmas in the lives of the characters which consequently helped them in developing a better understanding of their place, position and role in the family and the host nation. It also presented the heights of ‘cultural consciousness’ which is far more in comparison to ‘cultural relativism’; and ‘colonial consciousness’ was altogether absent. There was no trace of high or low culture; it was only China and Chinese culture that remained in the forefront from the beginning till the end of each novel.

CHAPTER-4

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO ASIAN AMERICAN WRITERS

The most common similarity between Jhumpa Lahiri and Amy Tan is that the immigration from Asia to America forms the foundation of their literary works. But in the books of Jhumpa Lahiri, characters seem to be more influenced by the new world; in order to make their place in a foreign land, they gradually drift away from family ties, land of origin, its culture and traditions. They have shown a tendency to project them as more occidental rather than oriental. They have shunned the traditions and culture considering them old and embarrassing to practice. A new form of identity is visible in the works of Jhumpa, her characters are more individualistic with a belief in “moving on” by locking the past in a trunk and kicking it out from their lives. For example there are many women characters who have preferred to adopt and adapt themselves according to western lifestyle as a choice. In the works of Jhumpa there is always a complexity presented in the family ties which becomes intense as the story introduces the traditions and conventions of homeland i.e. India. The connection with the past brings in conflicts and knots of tension in the story. Another point, there is always a drifting or a transferring of Indian characters to America which simultaneously changes the setting of the story from India to America and eventually the major portion and climax of the story grows and evolves in America while placing India in the background. One of the most important points regarding the strong influence of Occidentalism upon Indian characters is that Indian immigration was all about the personal choice to go and reside in America unlike Chinese who were forced to move out of their land to take refuge in America in order to rescue their lives.

On the other hand in the works of Amy Tan, readers can sense ‘a looking back’. For the characters in the books of Amy Tan, ‘a looking back’ is to think over what is left behind, something to which they should be connected but they are not, something about which they should be aware of but they are not acquainted with. The setting of her stories takes place in America but moves toward the land of origin that is China; unfolding the tales of its native land one after another. Her stories begin with a complexity in the characters and family ties but revealing of the past simplifies and resolves the misunderstandings and brings a kind of ease in the relations of characters. Amy Tan has pictured more of China than America in her stories. Her characters seem to pine for the reconnection with their roots. In Amy’s works one can trace the reunion with the past-life in the form culture and conventions; unlike the departing from the old in the writings of Jhumpa.

On the basis of this contrast between the works of two Asian American writers, to some extent we can assume Jhumpa’s works are more occidental in comparison to Amy Tan which seems to be oriental oriented.

There is a similarity in the characters of first generation immigrants, in the novels and short-stories of Jhumpa. Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli in *The Namesake*, Subhash and Gauri in *The Lowland* or the narrator in *The Third and Final Continent*, all these characters seem to have abandoned the land of origin for the sake of building a bright future in the host nation. In their case, the desertion of the native is a matter of choice. This choice can be referred as a preference to the high while neglecting the low. The selection between high and low is distinctly noticeable in the character of Ashoke Ganguli, and Pranab from the story *Hell-Heaven*. Ashoke Ganguli preferred working at a foreign university over Indian; held Russian writers in great esteem and longing to reunite with the family in India had hardly any effect upon him. Pranab associated ‘a

notion of superior' to every practice that is foreign in nature. He organized a purely Christian style wedding for himself; and made sure to teach her daughters to converse only in English. The presence of preference between high and low suggests the working of 'colonial consciousness' in the psychological background of the characters.

The identity of the first generation characters seem to have been divided between India and America; they failed to erase the impressions of the native completely from their conscious and hence remained 'culturally conscious'. This is visible in the attempts of Ashima Ganguli, who struggled to stay connected to her roots. Nothing could make her feel excited other than the idea of visiting the land of origin. She lived in her nation through her every day practices-cooking Indian food, knitting for her father and father-in-law, hosting Bengali parties and by acquainting her kids to their family tree through albums.

The characters stayed 'culturally conscious' but at the same time, they couldn't protect their psyche from getting affected by the culture of the host nation; so a kind of assimilation is surfaced which highlights the presence and practice of 'cultural relativism'. This is evident from the character of Ashima Ganguli, who decided to spend six months in America and another six in the nation which resides in her, the nation and its culture from which she couldn't depart herself.

The breaking off established ideologies prevalent in the mother country is also manifested. The character of Gauri disentangled herself from the web of Indian conventions meant for a wife and widows; she released herself from the onus of a mother and wife. Gauri did not hesitate the least in abandoning the house, her husband and daughter in the pursuit of her ambition. Any sign of guilt could not be traced in her for her actions. She does not resemble to the characteristics of an Indian wife or mother. Similarly, the character of Subhash, took a step

forward leaving behind the established role of an authoritative Indian father and a dominating husband. His character is not seen touched by any of the traits linked to the ideology of patriarchy.

Next, in the novels and short-stories of Jhumpa, characters are seen going from India to America and settled there permanently. Except the occasional visits to India, the development of the characters, the setting of the story, all the major actions, climax and ending takes place in America. India remains in the background, it keeps coming and going in the story through occasional references.

In the novels of Amy Tan as well, there is a similarity in the characters of first generation immigrants. Suyuan Woo, Lindo Jong, Betty St. Clair in *The Joy Luck Club*; Winnie Louie in *The Kitchen God's wife*; Lu Ling in *The Bonesetter's Daughter*; all these characters have starkly one thing in common- they have been through poignant pain and atrocities in the home country. They had to abandon the native land out of compulsion. For them it was not a matter of choice but a sheer force; a violent threat that pushed them out of their motherland. It was a run in the search of safety and not an ambitious desire for a lucrative career.

One of the most dominant aspects in the works of Amy Tan is 'cultural consciousness'. The first generation immigrants are seen mostly absorbed in the past, the intensity of their being nostalgic and the regular narration of the belief systems in China, somehow suggests that the culture in America could not make a considerable impact upon the first generation of Chinese immigrants. The pages of Amy's novels are full of China, be it the belief of Suyuan Woo's in 'humans made up of five elements' or Betty Clair's predictions about the death of her husband and the bank running out of money or An-Mei's description about the efforts made by her

mother to cure and save the life of her grandmother by preparing a soup from her own flesh or it is her grandmother's attempt to restrain the soul inside the body by tightly closing her lips; the presence of all these events and many more like these along with the absence of the cultural glimpse of the host nation (America) emphasize upon the absence of 'cultural relativism' in case of first generation immigrants. Since there has been occasional reference to the direct involvement of American culture, the appearance of high and low culture was absent, furthering the idea of 'no colonial consciousness' in Amy's work.

The audacity to walk away from the fixed ideologies and roles meant for women is also invisible in the first generation characters. They are seen under the constant stress and worries aroused due the belief in the wrath of ancestral spirits, ghosts, superstitious beliefs and a never dying danger that can befall upon them and their family because of the deeds in the past life.

Next, in the stories of Amy Tan, unlike Jhumpa's; characters are seen going from America to China. Her stories begin in America, but the setting of the plot, climax and ending takes place in China by putting the host nation (America) not in the back ground but somewhere in the smallest corner of her stories.

Second generation immigrants in Jhumpa's novels are affected in a negative sense when past intervenes in their lives. It distorts their mental peace and leads them to a dilemma to select between this and that, adopt and adapt which is followed by double consciousness and identity crisis. Gogol Ganguli in *The Namesake* aptly depicts the above mentioned case. He tried to meet the expectations of his parents by ensuring them that he has conserved the Indianness in him. On other hand he was constantly indulged in the culture of host nation (America), though secretly, which was despised by his parents. To force himself for practicing Indian traditions, to which he

could not relate himself completely, pushed him away from his family. He began rejoicing his stay far away from his parents where he need not bother about their likes and dislikes and he was free from regular interventions from Indian traditional norms and values taking place every now and then. The customs of the mother country which was left behind in the past became the reason of Gogol's fragmented life. He has often associated embarrassment and disgust with the cultural values of mother country. He equaled his parents to caterers during Bengali parties hosted by his family. There was an urge seen in the character of Gogol to find an identity for himself, and this became evident when he changed his name from Gogol to Nikhil.

Then, there are few characters which have risen above this and that; adopt, adapt and identity crisis. Sonia in *The Namesake* and Bella in *The Lowland* perfectly fit in the picture of a transnational. In Sonia, there were no signs of dilemma or any trace of mental conflict; she was at ease with both the cultures of host nation and the land of origin. She was not seen running away from her family or from the identity evolved in respect to her Indian origin. This is evident from her regular participation in Bengali 'pujo' and Bengali parties without any detest, her decision to marry an American did not land up in a divorce and like a responsible Indian daughter, she remained concerned about the well being of her mother as she shifted to a place near to her mother's residence so that she can attend upon her from time to time. Similarly, in Bella, there were no cues which suggest confusion and tension regarding her connection with two countries. At many points in the novel she has been referred as a wanderer, who cannot stay glued to one place. The nature of a transnational is quite perceptible from the names itself, her name 'Bella' and her daughter's 'Meghana' suggests her connection and undisputed link with two cultures or two nations.

Second generation immigrants in Tan's novels are seen rising resolved when past intervenes in the story. The past works as a problem solver and a conflict dissolver in the works of Amy Tan. Ruth in *The Bonesetter's Daughter* felt always offended due to her mother Lu Ling's erratic behavior and strict rules based upon Chinese belief system in ghosts. But after the revelation of her mother's past, Ruth got to understand the reason behind her mother's unreasonable behavior. After knowing the truth lying in the past, Ruth stopped reproaching Lu Ling for her regular pestering to know about the messages from ghosts. Ruth got in a better position to comprehend the strict Chinese rules, as she could see the reason and their significance in the light of the past life of her mother in China. Similarly in *The Hundred Secret Senses*, the meddling of the past in the life of Olivia helped her in seeing the reasons behind the 'yin world' (ghost world) of Kwan and eventually her journey to Changmian village in China, assisted her in discovering her family tree and her confronting with the evidences from her previous life and its connection to her present, dissolved the question and confusions hanging in her head right from her childhood. The accepting of Chinese philosophies not only became easier after intervention of past but also helped in developing a belief in them. So, the past in Amy Tan's novel proved to be constructive rather than destructive.

Similar is the case in *The Kitchen God's Wife*, for Pearl (daughter), concepts like – Respect, Feet-bound practice, significance of Red Color, ghosts, Winnie's (mother) firm belief in spirits; made no sense until she was acquainted with the upheavals and ordeals, her mother had to face in China. The behavior of her mother in the present is the outcome of her past experiences in China. Mother and daughter developed a better understanding of each other after the secrets buried in the past got exposed.

The narrative structure of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Namesake* can be analyzed through the kind of setting, complication and resolution she used. The title of the novel *The Namesake*, itself indicates the core of the novel. Namesake means 'to name same as another'; it suggests that the narrator not just named the son of Ashoke Ganguli as Nikoli Gogol (a Russian) but also the characters are arranged to perform the actions as other. In the novel, 'the other' is other than Indian. Example- Ashoke Ganguli wants to teach as professors in a foreign university, the dream which he made come true. The interests and daily practices of Gogol are more same as the daily practices of a child in a foreign country other than India. Minor characters like Moushmi, too, are seen trying to become same as another in their interests and actions. The characters striving to become as another, is most commonly seen in Lahiri's works.

"The job is everything Ashoke has dreamed of...What a thrill, he thinks, to stand lecturing before a roomful of American students. What a sense of accomplishment it gives him to see his name printed under "Faculty" in the university directory." (49)

"their children sound just like Americans..." (65)

In regard to Moushumi, she never wanted to be like her mother which suggests, she strived to be other than her mother.

"This assurance is important to her; along with the Sanskrit vows she'd had repeated at her wedding, she'd privately vowed that she'd never grow fully dependent on her husband, as her mother has. For even after thirty two years abroad, in England and now in America, her mother does not know how to drive, does not have a job, does not know the difference between a checking and a saving account." (247)

Spatial and temporal reference in *The Namesake* helped the narrator to shift the readers to past and present and more in American cities in comparison to Indian. **Temporal reference** which indicates the events taking place in America are

“ON A STICKY AUGUST EVENING two weeks before her due” (1)

“In Cambridge it is eleven in the morning, already lunchtime in the hospital’s accelerated day.” (5)

“THE BABY, a boy, is born at five past five in the morning.” (22)

Spatial references suggest the dominant presence of America in every chapter where as the presence of India could be seen in the first few chapters either through past memories or through an occasional trip to India. The rest remained occupied by American cities, streets, restaurant and universities. Examples:

“Cambridge streets, up Massachusettes Avenue and past Harvard Yard, to Mount Auburn Hospital.” (2)

Ph.D. in Boston (9)

“...the pistachio ice cream cones she treats herself to in Harvard Square.” (10)

“...twenty to MIT.” (29)

“...he calls the MBTA lost and found...” (42)

“...university town outside Boston.” (48)

“...67 Pemberton Road.” (51)

...first to Delhi...then to Agra to see the Taj Mahal...first journey outside of Calcutta,...(84)

“...he walks the thirty blocks, up Park Avenue and over to Madison.” (269)

Jhumpa Lahiri has made her readers actually see what she describes – America & India, the apartments or working place, university, restaurants etc. Through words she gives a **photographic effect** to the novel.

“The apartment is on the first floor of a three-story house, covered with salmon-colored shingles, surrounded by a waist-high chain-link fence. The gray of the roof, the gray of cigarette ashes, matches the pavement of the sidewalk and the street. A row of cars parked at meters perpetually lines one side of the curb.” (29)

“He is stunned by the house, a Greek revival...the pedimented window lintels, the Doric pilasters, the bracketed entablature, the black cruciform paneled door...with cast iron railings.” (130)

Lexical Cohesion in the character portrayal of the protagonist in *The Namesake*- Gogol, suggests a kind of never ending confusion and a conflict raised due to the intrusion of the past in the form of imposed values.

“...Bengali Renaissance...Gogol **hates** it...” (66)

“...,addressing his parents in **English** though they continue to speak to him in Bengali.” (75)

“he’s has come to **hate** questions pertaining to his name, hates having constantly to explain. He **hates** having to tell people that it doesn’t mean anything “in Indian.” (76)

“In spite of his parents’ sanction he feels that he is **overstepping them, correcting a mistake they’ve made.**” (101)

“I **hated** the name Gogol, he says. I’ve always hated it.” (102)

“...overwhelming, disorienting expeditions, either going to Calcutta, or sightseeing in places they did not belong to and **intended never to see again**” (155)

A similar arrangement of spatial and temporal references could be seen in Jumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*. Its setting begins from India and ends up in America. The scenes in the first three sections are occupied by the locations in India and the rest five sections shows American cities, city streets, PhD, universities etc. The rise of climax in which Gauri abandons Subhash and Bela takes place in America and in the same setting rest of the events took place along with occasional visits of the characters to India. Examples:

Temporal references:

“East of the Tolly Club...” (3)

“Then one evening, throwing over the putting iron from inside the club...” (8)

“Since childhood Subhash had been cautious...” (10)

“While Subhash stayed in clear view, Udayan was disappearing...” (10)

“All morning they’d watched...” (12)

“By autumn Sanyal and Majumdar had gone into hiding.” (23)

“Once more Subhash destroyed the letter.” (47)

“In autumn came the effigies of Durga, and in winter, Sarswati.” (54)

“In the second year of his Ph.D. Subhash lived on his own...” (62)

Spatial References: Through spatial references, we see the actions taking place initially at Calcutta, India and then shifted to various cities in America.

“East of the Tolly Club, after Deshapran Sashmal Road splits in two, there is a small mosque.” (3)

“They were admitted to two of the city’s best colleges.” (16)

“In Calcutta Charulata was released in cinema halls.” (17)

“a narrow corridor at the northern tip of West Bengal” (20)

“...peasants in the Darjeeling District revolting.” (20)

“...guerillas active in Bihar, in Andhra Pradesh.” (26)

“Subhash decided to apply to a few Ph.D. programs in the United States.”(30)

“It was a portrait of a city Subhash no longer felt a part of. A city on the brink of something; a city he was preparing to leave behind.”(33)

Lexical cohesion in the character of Gauri has been seen; she was referred as ‘animal’ at many instances in the *The Lowland*, which is suggestive of her bold and unconventional steps taken by her.

“Her **animal** whimpering startled him, it was the sound of a scream stifled by a **clenched jaw**, a closed mouth. An articulate but **wordless fury**. (138)

“...as if an **animal** had shredded the fabric with its teeth and claws” (141)

“”That **wilderness** was her only freedom.” (212)

“He had brought her to America and then, like an **animal** briefly caged, released her.”
(242)

In *Only Goodness*, the repetition of freedom, emphasize upon the ‘despise’ toward values and traditions of the mother country. It is suggestive of freedom from imposed values and rules.

“...if only to ensure that one day she would be set **free**.” (129)

“The **idea of excess**, of **being out of control**, did not appeal to Suddha.”(129)

“...ether abandoned or **liberated**.”(130)

“You’re almost twenty-four. Do you really still care what they think?”(132)

“Too many **freedoms**, too much having fun.”(143)

Spatial References in *The Third and Final Continent* suggests an example of a Transnational.

“I lived in **London**, in Finsbury Park...” (173)

“Are you new to **Boston**?” (185)

“I am from **Calcutta, India**.” (185)

Tan follows a simple writing style, easy to read and understand. Through the simplicity in language, artistically employed images and evoking of the memories of the past, makes her work interesting and absorbing. The quest of the characters to retrace the family ties and the

inquisitiveness to ‘know what is left behind’, creates an atmosphere of mystery and uncertainty in the novels of Tan. This creates the curiosity in the readers to know what happened in the past and what is going to happen next. In an online interview at neabigread Amy Tan say

Temporal references in Amy Tan’s work come through her regular use of flash backs, past memories and untold stories of Chinese immigrant mothers to the daughters born in America. In every novel the reader see the setting, first taking place in America and then shifts to China.

The **Temporal and Spatial References** in *The Joy Luck Club*:

“The **week** before she died...” (7)

“**Each week** one of us would host a party to raise money and raise our spirits.”(12)

“My mother started the **San Francisco** version of the Joy Luck Club...” (8)

“When they arrived in **San Francisco**...” (8)

“...unseen relatives **from Vancouver**...” (9)

“**In China**, everybody dreamed about **Kweilin**.” (10)

“I pushed toward **Chungking**, until my wheel broke.” (16)

“But **tonight**, there’s no mystery.” (19)

First person narration is used in all the selected works of Amy Tan. The stories are unfolded by the leading characters. By referring directly to the situations the characters bring out the deep thoughts and feelings. Examples from *The Hundred Secret Senses*:

“My sister Kwan believes she has yin eyes.” (3)

“I was sitting on a sticky vinyl chair...” (4)

“My mother has always suffered from a kind heart...” (6)

“I learned to make things not matter...” (7)

Magic Realism is visible in the works of Amy Tan. Ghosts, spirits, magic, superstition are brought in direct relation to the characters. The setting takes place in the modern day reality but gradually involves the belief systems which revolves around life in the previous birth and its connection to the present life, yin world etc. Instances from *The Hundred Secret Senses*:

“My sister Kwan believes she has yin eyes. She sees those who have died and now dwell in the World of Yin, ghosts who leave the mists just to visit her kitchen on Balboa Streets in San Francisco.” (3)

Example from *The Joy Luck Club*

“An ancestor of ours once stole water from a sacred well. Now the water is trying to steal back. We must sweeten the temper of the Coiling Dragon who lives in the sea. And then we must make him loosen his coils from Bing by giving him another treasure he can hide.” (147)

Back Story forms the major portion of Amy Tan’s novels. Her stories begin in the present which cover few pages initially and then stories and events from the past take over to occupy the utmost part of the narrative. These past event make sense by resolving the conflicts and misunderstandings between the characters in the current situation. Example from *The Kitchen God’s Wife*:

Winnie revealed her story and events from China to her daughter, Pearl, which eventually leads to the wall misunderstanding fall into pieces.

“...why you had to keep it a secret...Because then you would know ...You would know how weak I was. You would think I was a bad mother...I never thought you were a bad mother...You did...I didn’t...” (398)

“And we started laughing again. I was giddy. Here is my mother had told me the tragedy of her life...Yet we were laughing.” (400)

Frame Story is another important aspect of Amy Tan’s writing. All the stories are closely linked as they are embedded in a common background – stories from the past lives of the characters inextricably connected with experience of pain and suffering in China, patriarchal set up of the society, societal norms and traditions that were too gender biased. *The Joy Luck Club* perfectly presents the example of a ‘frame story’.

Multidisciplinary Pursuit- influence from history, sociology and cultural practices echo in the works of Amy Tan. A portion of *The Kitchen God’s Wife* aptly reflects the situations that took place during Sino-Japanese War. Sociology gives a clear picture of everyday life in China.

	JUMPA LAHIRI	AMY TAN
Cultural Consciousness	Cultural consciousness is starkly visible through characters like Ashima who shows a difference between the culture of a host nation and	Cultural consciousness is far more dominant in Amy Tan’s work. Almost all her characters are seen physically present in America but mentally living in

	mother country. The idea of distinction between this and that; ours and theirs is clearly seen.	China.
Colonial Consciousness	The notion of ‘high and low culture’; ‘west better than east’; the despise towards the values mother country is evident.	
Cultural Relativism	The incorporation of west into east through every day practices- food, festival celebrations, cross-cultural marriages. The characters are holding both ‘this and that’ within them.	Cultural Relativism is visible in the works of Amy Tan but not to the extent it is seen Jhumpa Lahiri. The influence of Chinese beliefs and practices remain dominant over western style of everyday life.
Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants Dilemma 	In Lahiri’s works, characters are seen standing face to face with the situations in which they have to choose between ‘this’ and ‘that’, between Indian or American; and sometimes they are seen compromising between their priorities and the expectations of the family.	While in Amy’s works characters are seen distorting between ‘this and that’.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st generation immigrants 	<p>1st generation Indian immigrants are generally the ones who immigrated to America in search of a lucrative career. These characters are often seen fragmented due to the adjustments that they were forced to make with host and native culture</p>	<p>1st generation Chinese immigrants are basically the refugees who were forced leave mother country due Sino-Japanese war. In order escape, they headed towards America. These characters had a clear inclination towards China and Chinese culture. They are not seen broken due to dilemmas raised while selecting between Chinese and American culture.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd generation immigrants 	<p>The impact of immigration is most strikingly visible on 2nd generation immigration. Identity crisis, alienation and lack of ‘sense of belongingness’ struck 2nd generation immigrants specifically.</p>	<p>In case of Amy Tan’s works, 2nd generation immigrants are more or less at ease; they are not seen longing for ‘sense of belongingness’ or isolation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of past 	<p>Past life and experiences of 1st generation immigrants and its presence in the form of values and traditions from the mother</p>	<p>While revelation of the past life in China to the 2nd generation Chinese immigrants played a role of conflict resolver.</p>

	country gave rise to conflicts in the lives of 2 nd generation immigrants.	
Setting	Jhumpa Lahiri's stories start from India and land up in America. Major events of the stories take place in America.	Amy Tan's stories begin from America and goes back in the past, revolving around the life spent in China and returns to present life in America with a solution for the conflicts between characters.
Characters	Characters are muddled and baffled between 'this and that' and 'adapt and adopt'	Characters are all absorbed single-mindedly with the past and culture and beliefs in China.
Geographic Location	As per geographic location there is more of America - Rhode Island, Boston, California, New York and less of India - Calcutta.	In case of Amy Tan there is less of America- in the initial few pages of the novels and more of China- Hong Kong, Shanghai, San Francisco's Chinatown, Kunming, Ping Yuen Fish Market, Chinatown library, Changsha
Narrative Techniques		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal References 	Temporal references helped in	Similarly, temporal references

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial References • 1st person narration • 3rd person narration • Flash Back • Back Story • Magic Realism 	<p>shifting the narrative to and fro; past and present</p> <p>Spatial references are used to indicate the events taking place in host and mother country</p> <p>Narrator of the novels is basically the writer.</p> <p>India in the background of the stories is often referred through flash backs.</p>	<p>are used to take the narrative back and forth i.e. to China and America</p> <p>Similarly, spatial references are used to the readers to China and America.</p> <p>Narrator of the stories is selected one among the characters and the role of narrator keeps on changing among the characters themselves. There is ample use of – I, We, You.</p> <p>Back story forms the major part of Amy’s novels, all the major events are narrated from the past</p> <p>Magic Realism is one of the</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multidisciplinary Pursuit • Frame Story		<p>important aspects of Amy Tan's work. Spirits, ghosts, belief connection with the past life are introduced in such a subtle manner that it takes the reader to the 'willing suspension of disbelief' of S.T.Coleridge.</p> <p>Echoes of history (Sino-Japanese War), sociology (patriarchal set up of society in China) and culture (beliefs and traditions in China), influences the stories of Amy to a great extent.</p> <p>There are stories within stories in the works of Amy Tan, for instance <i>The Kitchen God's Wife</i> does not cover the story of Winnie alone rather it narrates story of her mother and cousin Peanut as well. Another example is the series of short stories from four mothers and four daughters in <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>.</p>
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Language	Use of words from mother country – Desh, daknam, bhalonam,	There are more regional words in Amy’s novels in comparison to Lahiri. On every third or fourth page, the reader can see a Chinese word – Syin ke, wah-wah yu, syen do jang, ha-bu, dyansyin, hong mu, pai, chaswei.
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CONCLUSION

The intellectual History of the world and the social, cultural, economic and political history of the world have clearly presented the fact that the advent of a particular form of critical, theoretical and philosophical thoughts with its synchronic realities poses a relevant antithesis which interrogates the existing or dominant realities. The advent of post colonial discourses has challenged the complex realities of imperialism and colonialism. It on the one hand questions the discursive practices but on the other it also creates some dialectics or antinomy which results into the enrichment of the epistemic and cultural realities.

It is said that History cannot be erased, though it can be repeated. Similarly, Colonization which is a part of history now, it cannot be erased. Its traces can still be sensed even today; its imprints are visible on the society, language, culture, education and politics of the colonized. For instance, in case of India, British have left but their presence is still visible in the language, education and judicial system, in fact, the major part of the Indian Constitution is derived from British Constitution. The second part of the saying mentioned above, therefore, “history can be repeated”, aptly suits to the present form of Colonialism that is apparent in the form of Neo-Colonialism and Reverse Colonialism.

The induction of effects as a result of changes gives a way to the assimilation of different cultures and the evolution of brand new cultures. Cultural consciousness, Cultural relativism, Colonial consciousness, high and low culture and mass culture, under Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism has given a room for the propagation of new set of ideologies.

Asian American Literature has given ample opportunities to analyze the emergence of new set of ideas as it contains the amalgamation of cultures from the host nation (America) and home country of immigrants.

In the works of Jhumpa Lahiri the presence of Colonial consciousness is more strongly visible and its effects on the characters are starkly apparent in comparison to cultural consciousness. We can see Ashoke is colonially conscious; he rated west/foreign as superior and something which set the standards for all goodness and success that one aspires to attain. The notion of colonial consciousness is also noticeable in the minor characters who arrange special reception and act extra generously towards the relatives who return from a foreign land. It is also manifested by showing high and low culture; high culture represented by the West and low culture indicating towards East. Master – Slave connection in the case of American landlady and the narrator; and Colonizer – Colonized relation in Ashoke and Ashima further heightens the dominance of colonial consciousness.

Cultural relativism is apparent and is seen occupying significant place in Lahiri's novels. It has distorted the purity maintained by the characters as they bring together the traits of native and foreign culture. Ashima who was initially rooted in the culture of her nation, she developed cultural relativism as the influence of west succeeded in molding her to certain extent, she developed a connection with the foreign land and which is evident from her decision to spend six months at America and another six at the land of her origin. The character of Subhash has also set a perfect example of cultural relativism. There is a balanced mix of both East and West in him. His character manifested both Indian and American father, an Indian son and an American husband.

Cultural consciousness in the novels is overshadowed by colonial consciousness in the works of Lahiri. The character of Ashima precisely depicts cultural consciousness. Cultural differences are exactly captured through her role; her character highlights the difference between Indian and American culture in terms of food, clothing, traditional beliefs and practices. It is basically through her character that the presence of India and its culture becomes evidently visible in the novel.

The Postmodern perspective can also be observed in the novels of Jhumpa Lahiri. It is unmistakably present in the character of Gauri and Subhash. Gauri questioned and finally broke the meta-narrative of patriarchy which confines women to predefined roles – the roles of a mother, daughter and wife. She refused to act according to these predetermined roles and decided to choose her own way. Similarly, the character of Subhash dismisses the pre-established image of an authoritative Indian husband and father. He gave ample space to his daughter, Bella, to go about her decisions. He first saved his wife from the orthodox Indian practices and later, when she left, he did not question or argue with her as expected from an Indian husband. His character also rejects the Indian societal norms which set the parameters for its people on how to live their life and the society to develop under a controlled structure.

The presence of Transnational in the novels is also apparent. The character of Sonia and Bella aptly lives like a transnational. They were not seen affected by ‘this and that’ or ‘adopt and adapt’. They are seen at ease with both the traits of American and Indian Culture. The ‘role of past’ in the form Indian culture proves to be distracting, disturbing and ‘conflict creator’ in the lives of second generation Indian immigrants. Whenever it enters the scene, they are either seen in a state of repulsion or forcefully compromising with it. Its intervention creates stress and tension among the characters of first and second generation immigrants.

Cultural consciousness in the works of Amy Tan is dominantly visible and traces of colonial consciousness are absolutely absent. Talk story and magical realism in her works play a significant role in providing ample room for developing the cultural consciousness. Talk story is the device used by the writers to talk about myths, beliefs and philosophies of the homeland; Amy Tan has made use of it to present China and Chinese culture in terms of belief in ghosts and superstitions, role of past life in China and its significance in the present life in America, patriarchal society, societal norms, Chinese language and presence of China Towns in major cities of America. Magical Realism is used to surface a kind of protest against the dominant American society; the reference to myths, unscientific reasons and beliefs associated with homeland are presented with an intension to keep dominant American culture at the margins of the Amy Tan's novels.

Colonial consciousness vaguely comes in view and that too under the perspective of "West as saviour of East". Women characters are consecutively shown on a constant run to escape from the stringent Chinese patriarchal system and to evade other predicaments in the form of societal restrictions. At this point, West appears as a rescuer for the Chinese women characters; it saves and protects them from the evils of patriarchal practices like 'feet bound' and a biased attitude towards boys and girls, prevalent in China.

Cultural relativism is also overshadowed by cultural consciousness. Its presence is occasionally seen through cross cultural marriages between second generation Chinese immigrants and Americans.

Postmodern perspective becomes apparent through regular attempts made by first generation Chinese women immigrants to free themselves from the meta-narrative of patriarchy.

Their running away from the clutches of such a society serves as a rejection of this grand-narrative existing in Chinese society. To the character of Winnie, her abusive marital life was not acceptable so she left China. Similarly, the character of 'Precious Auntie' acted brave in giving blatant replies to the questions raised by the society on her bringing up as a boy by her father.

The 'role of past' in the form of China or Chinese culture proves to be 'conflict resolver', it helps in erasing the confusions and dilemmas that second generation of Chinese immigrants face in the absence of their acquaintance with the past. Its intervention helps in the development of better understanding between first and second generation immigrants.

In the works of Jhumpa Lahiri, there is kind of 'moving on' from the past which is present in the form of homeland and its culture while in the novels of Amy Tan, 'a looking back' is observed for the homeland and its culture. Lahiri's characters are seen drifting towards America as a matter of choice to become successful and in case of Amy Tan's stories; characters are pushed toward America due to regular wars and political conflicts in the home country.

In the characters of Lahiri, it is observed that they want to be like Occident while Amy tan's characters remain orient oriented. The stories of Lahiri start from India and lands up in America. In the novels of Amy Tan, the story begins from America but lands up in China. Pictographic effects in case of Lahiri's work predominantly shows American cities and places but Amy Tan takes her readers to China and Chinese villages. Cultural consciousness in Jhumpa Lahiri's work is considerably less while Amy Tan's work it is all occupied with it. 'Role of the past' leaves a noticeable negative impact on the characters in Lahiri's novels whereas it is seen that 'past' in Amy Tan's stories worked as glue, it positively connects the characters with their past and present.

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