Cosmopolitanism in Indian English fiction

Mostafa Azizpour Shoobie

University of Wollongong

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author.

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Recommended Citation

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au
I, Mostafa Azizpour Shoobie, declare that the current thesis that is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, at the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong, is entirely my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Mostafa Azizpour Shoobie

February 2016
ABSTRACT

During colonial times, local cultural expression wrestled with the global as represented by the systems of empire. The ideal subject or literary work was one that could happily inhabit both ends of the center-periphery in a kind of cosmopolitan space determined by imperial metropolitan and local elite cultures. As colonies liberated themselves, new national formations had to negotiate a mix of local identity, residual colonial traits and new forces of global power. New and more complex cosmopolitan identities had to be discovered and writers and texts reflecting these became correspondingly more problematic to assess, as old centralisms gave way to new networks of cultural control. On a general note, it can be argued that the novels written in the context of the postcolonial cultural politics after the successful attainment of national independence question how a nation is to be made while recognizing its relation to globalization. The strong waves of globalization enforce sociological, political and economic values in developing countries that may not be readily acceptable in those societies.

In this thesis, I want to argue that select novels by Indian writers in English largely present a kind of micro cosmopolitanism which preserves nation as a primary site for social and cultural formation while opening it up to critique. Despite the varied but broadly elite cosmopolitan positions of the writers, they all depict characters working towards a cosmopolitanism from the grassroots, rather than a top-down practice. Furthermore, globalization and its effect (cultural, economic or otherwise) are viewed with varying degrees of suspicion that can prevent possibilities of more fluid forms of belonging and border-crossing.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My praises go to my incredible supervisory team, past and present: Paul Sharrad, Tony Simoes da Silva, and Michael Griffiths. I had a rocky start, a rocky midway, and a rocky finish. Paul has always been patient beyond imagination, a guru who continued to help me clear my vision with his superb supervision in Indian English fiction. Tony and Mike helped me all the way with their theoretical knowledge that enabled me to sharpen my discussion and find nuances necessary for independent scholarship. I can’t thank them enough and that’s a fact.

I am appreciative of the University of Wollongong for my UPA (University Postgraduate Award) and IPTA (International Postgraduate Tuition Award) for my entire student time. Such financial provision certainly rested my soul at inner peace to focus more on my thesis.

I stay humble before my family who has always been a great source of support and succor since I left home in 2008 to pursue my higher education overseas. With completion of this PhD, I’m sure my father is happy that I have finally managed to match his own degree!

At last, I want to commend my buddies Fabian, Mehrdad, Mohammad, Elahe, Emiir, Nader, and Mehdi. I had a lot of fun with you and I’m always ready to call you my friends when you take the call!
NOTES

This thesis uses the formatting standards and American English spelling recommended by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). As such, the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition, 2009 has been the primary source of reference.

Apart from direct quotes, where my own ideas or wordings echo or are supported by secondary material, I have indicated appropriate sources in brackets.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS CERTIFICATION .............................................................................................. i
ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................ ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... iii
NOTES ....................................................................................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .......................................................................................... v
INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 8
   The Cosmopolitan Novel .................................................................................... 11
   Statement of the Problem ................................................................................ 12
   Significance of the Study ............................................................................... 14
   The Aims and the Outcomes of the Study ......................................................... 18
   Research Methodology .................................................................................... 19
   Chapter Outline ............................................................................................. 20
CHAPTER ONE: COSMOPOLITAN THEORY .................................................... 23
   Introduction ....................................................................................................... 23
   Cosmopolitanism: Inception in Ancient Greece ............................................. 24
   Cosmopolitanism: Early Modern Era and Enlightenment ................................ 26
   Cosmopolitanism: Recent Restoration ............................................................ 33
   Cosmopolitan Perceptions .............................................................................. 38
   Critiques of Cosmopolitanism ....................................................................... 49
   Cosmopolitanism in India ............................................................................... 53
CHAPTER TWO: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH ............................................ 55
   Introduction ....................................................................................................... 55
   English Literature in India: Birth of the Novel ............................................... 55
   Post-Independence and the Rushdie Phenomenon ......................................... 65
   Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 71
CHAPTER THREE: NATION AND THE COSMOPOLITAN NARRATION ....... 74
   Introduction ....................................................................................................... 74
   Arundhati Roy ................................................................................................... 76
   Kiran Desai ....................................................................................................... 89
   Aravind Adiga .................................................................................................. 100
   Roy, Desai, Adiga and the Cosmopolitan Question ....................................... 106
INTRODUCTION

By the end of the colonial era, the unavoidable issues of forming a national culture underlying political independence had gained attention, and many literary scholars and authors began to produce literature and theories, which aimed to reflect the experiences of colonized people before, during, and after a colonial rule. This phenomenon, often called ‘postcolonial literature’, touches upon numerous themes, including, for instance, national identity, subalternity, cultural imperialism, diaspora, representation and resistance, ethnicity, feminism, and the use of the English (as the language to be used to write back to the former colonizer), to name only a few. My insatiable personal interest in the topic was generated when I read Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* in 2000. I found myself fascinated by the author’s masterly weaving of events through the use of magic realistic elements to question, deconstruct, and recreate identity, rootedness, and mobility in the context of an England undergoing high waves of immigration. As a consequence, I wrote my Master’s thesis with a focus on Homi K. Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity and temporality of time and space, being some of the key issues in the field of postcolonial literature.

In recent times, the world, its people, and its events have increasingly become more interconnected and have experienced a globalizing process through “transcultural encounters, mass migration, and population transfers between East and West, First and Third Worlds” (Cheah "Cosmopolitanism" 486-96). As a result of this process of international integration, the concept of cosmopolitanism, first popularized by such
humanists as Erasmus and later formalized as an ideal by Kant in the late nineteenth century (Steiner 457-58), has been revisited by many theorists, both in liberal political philosophy and in postcolonial literary studies. Cosmopolitanism cannot be definitively defined, since its meaning and definition and descriptions differ among contemporary writers and theorists both in favor of and opposing it. However, in rather general terms, cosmopolitanism is a concept that tends to recuperate a form of universalism, which is based on a notion of shared belonging or shared responsibilities (N. Srivastava 158) and challenges conventional notions of ethnic, racial, and national belonging and identity (Vertovec and Cohen 1).

Whether we are aware of it or not, the idea of cosmopolitanism as an ideal of human community, which had been sidelined for quite a while, is now back as a topic of scholarly discussion, if not also as a principal ideal for social harmony. Therefore, the way we react to this widespread phenomenon is important in determining economic, social, political, and cultural spheres of our lives. It is crucial to distinguish between cosmopolitanism and globalization. While globalization as a term describes the emergence of international economic, political, and cultural linkages between countries and the intensification of these linkages in recent times, cosmopolitanism, as Hannerz imagines it, is “first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences” (Hannerz "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture" 239). A detailed discussion of cosmopolitan theories, their inception, development, and recent resurgence in humanities is taken up in the next chapter (Chapter One).
In the past couple of decades, Indian writers in English have assumed an active role in producing literature in the context of, and itself dealing with, global and cosmopolitan trends of the world today. While the global is mainly attributed to the neo-liberal deregulation, a creation of free markets or simply a worldwide system of finance, the cosmopolitan predates this as far back as the Enlightenment, which paved the way for debates around human rights and the duties tightly pertinent to the maintenance of the human culture in the world.

Some of critical the changes that are required for a cosmopolitan future are part of the process of globalization. Globalization is often seen as a set of changes such as “neo-liberal deregulation, the creation of global markets, free-trade enforced by the WTO” (Guibernau 431) or as a global financial system.

In their fiction, writers such as Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Chandra, Aatish Taseer and others have produced works of fiction that question our presuppositions concerning the politics of belonging and identity. Examining some of my favorite post-Rushdie Indian authors writing in English, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga, this thesis will look into how these novelists portray the cosmopolitan, what constitutes their fiction as cosmopolitan and the ways by which their works attempt to challenge their readers’ presuppositions of identity, home, and mobility.
The Cosmopolitan Novel

The current study is an extensive discussion of a type of novel that I call “cosmopolitan”. Not normally a definitive category of fiction, it is incumbent on me to clarify this concept which will be the basis of all the other chapters that follow.

I define the cosmopolitan novel as one that deals with, espouses, questions, and/or problematizes the concept of cosmopolitanism. This kind of novel thematically engages with the various aspects of cosmopolitanism, i.e. mobility, economy, politics of identity and belonging, etc. to position itself within the discussions of cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan writer is one who positions himself/herself (or is positioned) as a cosmopolitan (either directly and self-proclaimed or indirectly by his/her location). It should also be noted that a novel can circulate as a cosmopolitan commodity, independently of its author (for instance, after winning literary awards and then being marketed on a worldwide scale by influential publishers). This particular characteristic of the cosmopolitan novel, i.e. its global circulation, does not occur in a vacuum; the nation it represents will play a prominent role in the reception of the author and/or his cosmopolitan fiction. In the case of India and its postcolonial literary productions, scholars and authors loom large as the globalization of publishing coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of an ex-empire at which point, Indian writers and their books received immense literary notice and economic sales.

In other words, the cosmopolitan novel is one that engages with thematic components of cosmopolitan theory (mobility, family, identity, etc.). Furthermore,
this type of novel is circulated among a cosmopolitan readership around the world. And finally, the cosmopolitan novel is the creation of writers who live or carry themselves in a cosmopolitan style.

The three novels primarily addressed in the current thesis, The God of Small Things, The Inheritance of Loss, and The White Tiger all represent such features in a complex dynamism that emanates from their authors’ respective socio-political standpoints in a cosmopolitan context. I argue that all three novelists are cosmopolitan Indian writers of English albeit in various degrees and capacities. The rationale for such a suggestion is that they write to or about a cosmopolitan space while dealing directly or indirectly with a national landscape, the outcome of which has been enhanced by the Booker Prize win and the publishing industry. An in-depth discussion of the criteria of choice will be set up in Chapter Three.

**Statement of the Problem**

In the past two decades, Indian novelists in English have attracted a wide range of readership and even have won prestigious book prizes around the world, the biggest one being the Booker Prize (from 2002 the Man Booker), won already by four authors: Salman Rushdie (1989) with Midnight’s Children, Arundhati Roy (1997) with The God of Small Things, Kiran Desai (2006) with The Inheritance of Loss, and the most recent prizewinner, Aravind Adiga (2008) and his first novel, The White Tiger. On a general note, it can be argued that all of these novels deal with or even challenge the process of nation-making regarding its encounter with waves of globalization and its sociological, political and economic aspects. In so doing, they
depict the nation as generally being predicated on micro-cosmopolitanism, a form of cosmopolitan practice that prioritizes nation and operates from below, while suspecting and resisting the border-crossing of real cosmopolitanism. To be more specific, the postcolonial model has given Indian writers an opportunity to examine India’s limitations in engaging with these new aspects that are being reinforced within the nationalist framework. While Indian writing in English was set up as part of a nationalist project and still is assessed as such, in the past few decades, its writers have gained immense popularity and entered the globalized space of Anglophone literature. This has caused a concern for Indian critics, especially those espousing nationalist critical models.

As far as many Indian literary critics are concerned, contemporary cosmopolitan writers write for an International rather than a national audience, which has turned into a point of endless debate and controversy. On the one hand, some nationalists tend to criticize such novelists as outsiders whose works not only undermine the nation’s pride, but also create a false image of an ideal society as we see in the three novels that I have chosen to work on. On the other, Indian cosmopolitan writers, intellectuals who have drawn their readership from the globe, try to move beyond the nationalist reactionaries and show that to dismiss alternative, cosmopolitan narratives as less authentic and therefore, inferior to national writers is myopic, missing out on the realities of a fast-changing society as diverse as India. For a detailed examination of this argument, please see Chapter Three.

In order to challenge such a conservative nationalism, such cosmopolitan intellectuals as Roy, Desai, and Adiga, not to mention Rushdie among others,
endeavor to expose the ruse lying at the heart of the nation-state, in which “the classes are deceived, the upper classes deceive” (Brennan *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* 108-9). For these writers who are part of the contemporary cosmopolitan world, there is yet another problem to tackle: how the ideals of mobility are to be represented in relation to ongoing ties to the home nation. In short, the cosmopolitan writer challenges some of the most powerful restraining forces of Indian society: caste, family, and political corruption and, in turn, suggests that India take a more open-minded attitude to a globalizing world. Additionally, the repute of postcolonial critical paradigms tends to support and subvent cosmopolitical ideals and concepts such as hybridity, subversion of top-bottom systems of rule, and anti-essentialism, all practices that clearly undermine serious nationalist principles.

**Significance of the Study**

As time has unfolded, cosmopolitan theory and practice have increasingly become diverse and at times contradictory across various disciplines, and as a result of this, a gap can be seen between the concept of cosmopolitanism and its application to literature in general and postcolonial literature in particular. However, the postcolonial studies have largely gone from nation to diaspora to transnational without engaging with the cosmopolitan in a meaningful way due, perhaps, to its suspicion of the universals. As the debates around this transition gather momentum, Bruce Robbins notes, the global flows of transnational cultural traffic (Robbins "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism" 1-19) is leading to a proliferation of qualifying
adjectives, including what Benita Parry calls “an emergent postcolonial cosmopolitanism” (Parry 37-45). The term postcolonial seems, according to Amanda Anderson, to be “more attentive to situatedness than the word cosmopolitan that celebrates mobility, detachment, and voluntary identification” (Anderson "Cosmopolitanism, Universalism, and the Divided Legacies of Modernity" 91). I, thereby, argue that cosmopolitanism needs to be a discussion point in the postcolonial literary studies. In so far as the existing scholarship around the concept and how it has been implemented in the so-called cosmopolitan novel goes, the discussions have mainly been formed within the nationalist framework. The harsh way the three Man Booker Prize novels were treated among Indian critics and the Indian Left (for instance, by the Communist Party of India— a Marxist party which forms the largest Left Front) shows the depth of Indian nationalism’s audacity in attacking novels that enjoy global readership and are backed by Western publishers. I will talk about this in Chapter Three.

As I write in January 2016, a survey of articles and books published in various journal databases (MLA International Bibliography etc.) shows that the body of literature written about the cosmopolitan novel is growing, with implications of cosmopolitan theories being shaped across various disciplines such as history, politics and philosophy (Weik von Mossner; Suárez Müller; Menon and Prezioso). Nevertheless, the three novels under study here have not been analyzed mainly from a cosmopolitan perspective except in limited instances. The God of Small Things brings up one search result in a 2010 article from Hana Waissrová that compares cosmopolitans in the novel to Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake. The author
believes that Roy is promoting “a new and healthy patriotism, as if to resist the problematic needs of nationalism [while offering] a critique of bad ‘traditions’ (for example, arranged marriage and domestic abuse)” (Waisservá 130). The article, however, neglects the author’s position as a locally relevant cosmopolitan under constant attack from Hindu nationalists and patriots.

*The Inheritance of Loss* has been left out of cosmopolitan discussions except for Berthold Schoene’s *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (2009) in which he is highly critical of Desai’s understanding of cosmopolitan ideals. He believes that *The Inheritance of Loss* is an underdeveloped work that exhibits Desai’s inability to “see the world outside the gridwork of nationalist enclaves [and in doing so] fails to imagine any new cosmopolitan forms of belonging” (Schoene 141). This is a crude statement about the highly complex working of the novel and Kiran Desai herself, and throughout this study, I will elaborate on the cosmopolitan aspects of the novel.

*The White Tiger*, which happens to be the most recent novel of the three, has not been looked upon from a cosmopolitan perspective and previous studies have analyzed it, for instance, for its use of *Fanonian* violence as an emancipating factor (Schotland 2-4) or its “Naipaulian disgust” (Jani 243) in treating fellow underclass Indians, among others.

So, I would like to make a case for Indian cosmopolitan novels being underexplored in terms of their depiction of transnational and globalizing trends in the world thereby offering greater potential for innovative expansion and praxis. In addition to this deficit, a closer look at the available scholarship around Indian Writing in
English reveals that Western and Indian critics tend to assess the works produced against what Salman Rushdie’s massive success has brought about since the 1980s. Rushdie exhibits the features of a postcolonial giant whom Timothy Brennan envisions; one that grapples with “paradoxical expectations of a metropolitan public” while sustaining an affiliation with immigration and international communications (Brennan Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation). To Rushdie’s accolades, Neil Lazarus testifies, claiming that it looks as though there were only “one author in the postcolonial theory canon. That author is Salman Rushdie” (Lazarus 771). As a result of this, he has regularly become a lens through which to look upon other writers’ works and evaluate them.

However, the current study decenters the long-lasting cynosure in Indian English postcolonial literature [Rushdie], takes some load off his shoulders, and instead focuses on the three abovementioned authors, establishing a distinct strand of criticism for a new generation of thriving voices in fiction. In so doing, this research supplements and questions the attention to Rushdie as the Indian writing in English harbinger among global literary circles and readers. The novels under study will be looked at from a particular angle which aims to open up and expand the nationalist structure of interpretation to a more cosmopolitan outlook.

Another significant aspect of my work is that it revisits and critiques easy images of cosmopolitanism as an ideal supported by rootless intellectuals and elites, demonstrating that a cosmopolitan novel can be non-elitist and locally relevant even as it also writes to a cosmopolitan readership. Many of the discussions around cosmopolitanism deal with the concept within the First World countries and tend to
overlook Third World ones. Therefore, I am situating the current thesis in both contexts to prove that while authors in a country such as India are localized and rooted, they can also be perceived as cosmopolitan.

And finally, this research will focus on thematic topics prevalent in recent cosmopolitical criticism: redefining home, its (dis)establishment with regards to family, how, what type of, and to what degree mobility can bring about change in the status quo of the society, leading to a state of escapement from the limitations of national or nation-state reactionaries and unscrupulous politics of the Indian society.

**The Aims and the Outcomes of the Study**

The major aim of the current study is to show how cosmopolitanism is perceived and negotiated in three Man Booker prize-winning novels of Indian English literature: *The God of Small Things* (1997), *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), and *The White Tiger* (2008). I want to illustrate the extent to which the novels show that cosmopolitan ideals can be achieved through migration and mobility, foreign trade, radical acts of escape from the boundaries of social and religious conservatism, and political corruption in India. This, of course, works closely with the authors’ positions within an Indian national and also a global context.

The selected fictions that will be critically read and evaluated in this study reflect upon the waves of globalization in and the quality with which they can cause the country to move forward. To address this problem, three major questions about the
concept of cosmopolitanism and its ideals will frame and furnish the way for the analyses of the texts:

1. Is cosmopolitanism a solution to or an escape from the national reactionaries?

2. Is cosmopolitanism very hard, almost impossible, to achieve to the full in India?

3. How can mobility resist the powerful forces or sources of entrapment such as family, caste or gender?

The outcome of this research will make an important contribution to the existing literary scholarship around the Indian postcolonial and cosmopolitan novel. Through focusing on burgeoning alternatives to Rushdie as the internationally approved author in the field, this thesis will critique the nationalist structure of interpretation and then establish a cosmopolitan outlook.

**Research Methodology**

From a general perspective, the current research focuses on three Indian novels written in the English language and through close reading analyzes their texts in the ways they depict social practices, political agitation and expedient upsurges, cultural interactions and clashes amongst different characters in various situations throughout the novels. To reach that goal, informed by postcolonial and cosmopolitan theories, the texts will be scrutinized with a thematic approach to see how they deal with such prominent issues, ideas, and ideals as family disorientation,
mobility and diaspora, and how they get twisted out of their original meanings and realizations in a cosmopolitan sense in the Indian context.

By positioning the selected texts within sociological formations and changes, this study will deploy close reading of the texts and look for thematic representations of cosmopolitanism. I will read the texts against the cosmopolitan theory to produce insights into the dynamics of this concept with regards to the novels’ problematization of social and political corruption and inequality.

I also take a look at the publishing industry and reception history that undeniably elevate the exposure of a work produced within a nation such as India to a whole new level of global circulation.

**Chapter Outline**

This thesis consists of seven chapters, including the current introduction and a concluding chapter.

The first chapter stages an outline of the cosmopolitan theory. It traces the concept back to its Stoic roots and delineates the ways in which philosophers, humanists, and social theorists in the sixteenth century and afterward formulated and developed cosmopolitanism out of its rough mold.

The second chapter discusses Indian writing in English. It shows a historical background of the use of English as a mode of literary production in India and the ways it helped popularize Indian writing in ways that would not have been possible if the text were produced in one of the numerous languages of India.
The third chapter lands us in the realm of critical discourse and the responses the novels received in terms of their representation of India. With a look at biographical facts about each author, I discuss how the novelists are perceived as cosmopolitans in and out of India (among Western as well as Indian literary scholars) and what differentiates them in that regard. This chapter sets out the basis for a deeper discussion of what cosmopolitanism might mean in such Indian cosmopolitan novels.

The fourth chapter discusses the manifestations of family and its traditional and historical centrality to Indian society in the past couple of decades. It produces close readings of the novels in their thematic orientations in family-related issues such as domestic violence, gender politics and the changing nature of the family in India with regards to the transnational experiences if individuals as a mode of escapement from social and economic boundaries.

The fifth chapter presents the concept of mobility as an indispensable part of the cosmopolitan discussion in the world of today. The chapter further explores the scope and theoretical foundations of mobility and how it relates to the transnational and cosmopolitan ventures of so many characters across all three novels.

The sixth chapter circulates around the concept of home, the politics of belonging, and the various ways a place is definable as home. This is significant in relation to the migrants’ emotional and physical attachment to a particular notion of home or multiple homes or essentially no home at all.
The seventh chapter is a discussion of literary prizes in general and the Man Booker Prize in particular. The chapter addresses the relationship between postcolonial literature and the publishing industry and how the former has possibly shaped the ways in which literary organizations impact the production and dissemination of literary commodities. In doing so, I will argue that the literary prizes play an important role in the cosmopolitan outreach of texts produced by Indian English writers which, in turn, opens up new avenues of social, political, and cultural discourses.

The thesis will be concluded by recapitulating and reflecting upon the aims and significance of the study and the findings that help shape responses to the ongoing debates around the concept of cosmopolitanism in Indian English. Furthermore, it suggests fresh ways to continue the conversation on mobility and family values in the Indian context in the future.
CHAPTER ONE: COSMOPOLITAN THEORY

Introduction

In the past several years, the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ has become a favorite of many theorists and scholars in various disciplines such as liberal political philosophy, social economy, and politics.

To be fair, academics and theorists cannot agree on a unified definition of the concept of cosmopolitanism— this stems from the fact that cosmopolitanism is such a multifaceted concept that incorporates so many intertwining elements: moral, political, economic, and cultural among others. The term refers to many dimensions of human consciousness and experience, so it is crucial to take note of how it has been conceived and perceived by scholars and philosophers in the past centuries.

Another area of interest in this chapter is the recurrence of cosmopolitanism as an academic tool for inspecting notions of belonging, migration identity, and oneness in a world that is going through globalization and transnationalism. According to Srivastava, the fact that cosmopolitanism is popular in critical theory can be seen as a response to “restrictive notions of identities and identitarian politics” (N. Srivastava 157). In this regard, it is important to look at the relation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism and whether or not the two are compatible in any way in a time when the world economy has become so much interdependent owing to globalization.
Cosmopolitanism: Inception in Ancient Greece

Etymologically, the term ‘Cosmopolitan’ is a French word ultimately derived from Greek. It has double roots: ‘cosmo’ and ‘polis’. Pythagoras used ‘kósmos’ to indicate that there is order in the world. The second part is ‘polis’ which means “city” or “city-state” and also implies individual membership in that political community. In short, a cosmopolitan is one who is considered a citizen of the universe rather than belonging solely to such smaller categories as race, ethnicity, village, city or even nation. So the person living anywhere within a city or region would see himself belonging to every corner of the whole world regardless of his geographical location.

According to Conversi, the idea that the whole universe is one’s city and therefore, one belongs to the entire world was first introduced by the Stoics in about 300 BC (Conversi 34-39). The Stoic thinkers believed that man is a rational agent and has certain inalienable and common rights and citizenship in a shared Kosmopolis.

As Wood writes, the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero stretched and defined the theory of justice that was put forth by the Stoics. He believed that humans possess “reason and speech” (Wood 88), two capacities that enable them to uplift a universal standard for morality to establish laws (both natural and civil). For Cicero, cosmopolitanism meant that the whole world population that was equipped with reason and speech was deserving of a universal system of care and focus.

There were several other rhetoricians and philosophers who contributed to the universal justice and how cosmopolitanism should be exercised to ensure its
security. Dante Alighieri, for instance, observed that “mankind constitutes a single community: *humana universitas est quoddam totum*” (Black 97) which means that all human beings can and should be able to live next to each other in tranquility. He asserts that above and beyond any specific unalikeness such as religion, the “world is our fatherland” (Alighieri 42) which resonates with a cosmopolitan outlook. Another example is Giovanni Battista Vico who called for an acceptance of “the history of mankind as a unity following its providential course, subject to the same universal laws” (Conversi 35).

In the Age of Reason, in Voltaire’s opinion, even though “men commit a stupendous number of unjust acts in the fury of their passion” once their power of reason returns, it makes “human society endure, a cause subordinated to the need which we have one for the other” (Kohn 228). This feeling of mankind’s universality characterized all representative writings of the eighteenth century. So famously, Montesquieu claims initially, “if I knew something useful to my nation but ruinous to another, I would not propose it [...] because I am by necessity a human being, whereas I am a Frenchman by chance. He follows that with “if I knew something useful to my fatherland which were prejudicial to Europe, or something which were useful to Europe and prejudicial to mankind, I would consider it a crime” (Kohn 228). Montesquieu possesses a cosmopolitan outlook and maintains that the coexistence of human beings is both natural and essential and through this process of being together, man can attain happiness and joy in this world. However, a drawback of this approach is that if Montesquieu’s perceived “crime” is coupled with nationalistic agendas, cosmopolitanism and nationalism become incompatible. This
is one of the early considerations of such incompatibility between these two notions— I will discuss this at more length further on in this chapter.

**Cosmopolitanism: Early Modern Era and Enlightenment**

Cosmopolitanism was steadily coming to the fore in philosophical discussions, but it was still not quite popular in the humanist era where the unity of all religions was emphasized. There are exceptions to this rule, nevertheless. The most prominent figure of the humanist era that revisited ancient notions of cosmopolitanism was Erasmus of Rotterdam. In his 1517 prefatory letter to Philip of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht, titled ‘Querela Pacis’ [A Complaint of Peace], Erasmus wrote a beautiful plea for peace that advocated the unity of mankind despite its categorization into countries and nations. By virtue of “all the reasons Nature has provided for concord” (Erasmus 291), he believed, all nations and religions must show broadmindedness towards all human beings for them to live in social harmony.

However, the most vigorous and animated discussions around the concept of cosmopolitanism were held during the Enlightenment. Many factors contributed to the permeation of the urge towards or interest in cosmopolitanism in the works of the major authors of the Enlightenment. First, the world was explored ever increasingly by traders, and empires were expanding. Second, powerful empires would embark upon voyages of discovery to reach other parts of the globe. And third, Hellenistic philosophy was in fashion again (Brown 549-88), so thinkers during Enlightenment viewed “all races and all continents with the same human interest and concern”(Kohn 228). 26
Nonetheless, during this period, nationalism started gradually to become a political concept; one’s claim to one’s nation was prominent, and the cosmopolitan ideals were no longer wanted or desired. The French Revolution caused a movement away from cosmopolitanism as what was glorified and extolled was essentially national and nationalistic. For a notable instance, Maximilien Robespierre, the French Revolutionary politician, had a rather selective interpretation of cosmopolitan ideas and the universal rights of man, meaning they were valued only if they were for a national cause and in the national interest (Rapport 333). Unfortunately, wars and their devastating aftermaths changed the way world leaders looked at political interplays, and jingoistic nationalism replaced cosmopolitanism. Of course, there had always been rumors of conspiracies by imaginary foreign fronts which were repeated to give politicians a precondition and enough justification, as Rapport argues, “to turn cosmopolitan principles on their head and to transform them into xenophobic axioms” (Rapport 333). Thenceforward, the specter of war loomed, which “ensured that the more narrowly defined national interests won over the universal application of the rights of man” (Rapport 333).

There were other nationalist movements in Europe that, in one way or another, were related to liberal nationalism and rational cosmopolitanism by way of focusing on the common ideals of shared belonging, transcending birthplace, ethnicity and dialect. In Italy, as Kohn writes, Italian intelligentsias were inspired by the French revolution and forged their own Risorgimento (Italian Unification) to “fuse the longing for human happiness and for the resurrection of ancient greatness into a modern nationalism” (Kohn 509). With the active role of pivotal figures in
Risorgimento such as Vincenzo Gioberti and especially Giuseppe Mazzini in merging universal as well as nationalistic ideals (Chapman 27-29), Italy could have gotten closer to actualizing this long-standing wish; nevertheless, this movement did not survive long enough to be molded into a strong paradigm. Within the next 100 years, the elite liberal nationalism in Italy turned into the most intolerant creed: fascism. And once again, cosmopolitanism waned and flag-waving nationalism reigned and their relationship became more complicated.

Perhaps Germany is the country where we can observe best how cosmopolitanism and nationalism interacted with each other. Liah Greenfeld’s point on the process of cosmopolitanism in Germany is intriguing. According to her, nationalism was not really popular among intellectuals who for the most part supported and followed the Aufklärung (German Enlightenment) which was more cosmopolitan than anything else (Greenfeld 310-14). In Germany, the arrival of the Enlightenment is frequently attributed to the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who stressed his longing for a universal and global government in a famous 1795 cosmopolitan manifesto “To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”. In this manifesto, Kant emphasized that all human beings hold equal value and therefore, there is a need for a cosmopolitan model of rule. However, we can see that even Kant’s cosmopolitan political project was not without its downsides and controversies.

Rooted in a rationalist vision of the world, Kant’s formulation places the Western nation as its central subject and gives full authority and right to it in determining its ideal of progress and conviviality or peaceful coexistence between countries (N. Srivastava 159-60). Kant’s writings did at times exhibit instances of personal
prejudices. It was he, after all, who wrote disparagingly that “the Negroes can become disciplined and cultured, but never civilized [...and] the Whites are the only ones who will always strive towards perfection” (Kant 878). Even though many Enlightenment philosophers, including Kant, held genuine cosmopolitan attitudes, there were indeed instances where they could not wholly pull back from the biases that were profoundly ingrained in their consciousness. Daniele Conversi alleviates this harshness by noting that during the eighteenth century, racial supremacy was a dominant discourse and not an exception (Conversi 36) and therefore, as Louden states, Kant’s theory and philosophical arguments are more original than his commonly held racial discriminations (Louden 105). In spite of Kant’s relentless efforts in delineating cosmopolitanism in the form of an international government and also the pervasiveness of the Aufklärung among the elites, cosmopolitanism was soon to be substituted with something of an entirely different nature. After the Napoleonic invasions of the early nineteenth century, Germany experienced an upsurge in nationalism. Two centuries later, nonetheless, Enlightenment cosmopolitanism still is looked upon as an era that spawned ideas as well as debates among scholars which continue to this day.

As globalization was more consistently shaping the world markets in the nineteenth century, detractors were starting to work against it. German philosophers and social scientists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were suspicious of the legitimacy of cosmopolitanism in light of its ideological echo of market capitalism. Globalization would unbind many nation-state limits in the name of global marketing and consumption. Provocatively though, Marx and Engels saw cosmopolitanism as a
legitimatizing factor in offering the citizens of the world ‘free’ trade in which one’s own nation or faraway lands made no real difference and what lay beyond one’s society was valorized in a postnational cosmopolitanism (Szerszynski and Urry 462).

Here, once again, the divide between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is widened. As Pheng Cheah argues, Marx’s “proletarian cosmopolitanism is no longer just a normative horizon of world history or a matter of right growing out of international commerce. It is a necessary and existing form of solidarity grounded in the global exploitation that has resulted from the global development of forces of production” (Cheah "Cosmopolitanism" 490). Cosmopolitanism served the cause of the bourgeois which exploited individual freedom and mutual benefits to their own interests, making a lot of revenues and leaving behind a whole proletarian class. Marx and Engels flirted with the idea of all proletariat in every country having essentially shared features and common interests:

It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the state and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its external relations as nationality and internally must organise itself as a state (Marx and Engels 25-6).

The *Communist Manifesto*, from which the above quote comes, ends with the following sentence: “*Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch!*” which can be translated as: “Workers of the world, unite!” Marx had an ideal of a society that was without class and desired a non-state in the wake of the proletarian revolution which can be seen as a type of cosmopolitanism wherein humans possess equal worth.
So far as the philosophical backbone of the concept of cosmopolitan goes, Marx’s postnational cosmopolitanism is dissimilar to Kant’s pre-national cosmopolitanism. According to Cheah, Kant could not grasp the enormity of the material interconnectedness that market capitalism would bring about. Nevertheless, Marx’s “socialist cosmopolitanism is an anti- and post-nationalism that reduces the nation to an ideological instrument of the state” (Cheah "Cosmopolitanism" 490). For him, the nation could be characterized as identifiable with the bourgeoisie, which hindered the construction and sustaining of a global network of proletarian consciousness. These distinctions become relevant to the varying ways through which Roy, Desai, and Adiga perceive cosmopolitan competency in an Indian context; moreover, each novels’ take on globalization as a strong force of market capitalism differs across the three novels which may tell us something about each authors’ own cosmopolitan consciousness (refer to Chapter Two).

Kant’s ideas, however, remain relevant to the early development of some of the cosmopolitan organizations of the world. The League of Nations (formed in the first half of the twentieth century) shares many similarities with Kant’s ideals. And more recent of course is the formation of the United Nations, which structurally implements some of Kant’s principles of creating global peace and spreading it throughout the entire globe (Kleingeld 315). In the post-Cold War era, there are continuous debates about the most proper way to uphold and diffuse peace in the world.

Another instance that pertains to peacekeeping activities on a global scale is the International Criminal Court. While it is reminiscent of Kant’s cosmopolitanism in
particular and Enlightenment cosmopolitanism in general, it exceeds them to a significant degree. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an attempt to eliminate the absolute jurisdiction of the state over its individuals, positioning those individuals within international law. This assures us that if an individual commits a crime, he is responsible before international laws in ways that overrule state interventions (Milton 3).

To sum up the discussion so far, as Kant posited in his enchiridion *Perpetual Peace*, human beings should feel morally responsible toward their fellow human beings irrespective of their citizenship— this ethical duty lies at the heart of cosmopolitanism. I will talk about this necessity later in this chapter. Organizations such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the Red Cross to name a few, all signal a realization of Kant’s ideals. As an addendum to the moral cosmopolitan duty, justice and respect for everyone are also followed by supporters of cosmopolitanism and encourages individuals to stand up for human rights and against racial discrimination, domestic violence against women and children, and other small evils.

Despite the fact that cosmopolitanism and nationalism had originally common intellectual bases in the idea of natural rights (during the Enlightenment), their interests diverged inevitably once a real-life application was to be made. I have briefly touched upon a few of such diversifications but a more comprehensive scrutiny of the tumultuous relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism will follow later. At least, it is clear that cosmopolitanism discourse offers the potential to address such issues and incompatibilities and to resolve them. If
anything, social problems emanate from too little rather than too much use and pursuit of cosmopolitan ideals in real life.

**Cosmopolitanism: Recent Restoration**

Unlike decades ago when connecting to other people living in another part of the world was ridden with difficulty, today and with the help of technology, we can relatively easily get in touch with anyone, anytime, and anywhere around the globe. The development of the technology of contact (which is a hot topic in mobility studies today) has brought together different parts of the world, more than ever before. For the past couple of decades, tourism, adventure-seeking, migration, diaspora, exile, and more recently the Internet and social media have become indispensable parts of our life, whether or not we understand them fully or agree with them.

Common sayings and phrases such as “it is a small world” or Marshal McLuhan’s famous “the global village” (McLuhan 31) make much more sense now that we are experiencing the interrelatedness of peoples, economies, political agendas, and cultural phenomena across the globe. As a result of globalization, the assumption that one entity can be or should be totally segregated from another is losing its credibility at an increasingly rapid pace.

Globalization and the opening of world markets have blurred the boundaries between most facets of human coexistence (e.g. national affinities, cultural values, etc.) while helping differences fade away, and altogether cultivating a new consciousness among peoples of the world. This phenomenon, frequently referred
to as ‘cosmopolitanism’ by scholars across various disciplines, has witnessed an extensive restoration in the past couple of years. It has contributed to the production, dissemination, and reception of scholarly works produced in many fields. Politicians, philosophers, sociologists, and literary critics, among others, actively engage in ongoing debates over what this interlinkage may mean to our everyday lives and how it will affect our lives ultimately in positive or negative ways on planet earth. In short, as sociologist David Harvey notifies us, “cosmopolitanism is back” (Harvey 592). However, we need to ask ourselves two very critical questions: First: What are the implications of cosmopolitanism in today’s world? And second: What makes a person cosmopolitan?

To answer the above questions, we need to make a few foundational notes. First, cosmopolitanism is not perceived in the same way in different disciplines and in different countries. This matters to a high degree as the current study situates cosmopolitanism within a particularly literary and Indian context. To be fair, scholars and theorists cannot agree on a unified implication of the concept of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is a many-sided concept and thus does not lend itself to simplifying and integrating illations. Second, location plays a pivotal part in any engagement with cosmopolitanism. This largely arises from the historical praxis of cosmopolitanism, which heavily depends on the location of enunciation. To tackle these two issues and answer the two questions, political philosophers and sociologists have tried to provide us with, certain ‘types’ of cosmopolitanism that let us analyze them with more ease and exactitude.
In perhaps simplified terms, cosmopolitanism is an ideological standpoint that gives all humans an equal, moral value only because of their shared belonging to humanity. The cosmopolitan outlook is all-inclusive; it can function on all levels: individual, communal, national, and above all international. Looking back at Kant’s ideals in *Perpetual Peace*, the establishment of cosmopolitan organizations (UN, ICC, Red Crescent, etc.) has changed the political relationships between nations and individuals on many levels. However, identifying the implications and exercising these ideals in real life has been the subject of constant debate and contention. Cosmopolitans are often the subject of scathing arguments, mostly from nationalists who argue that not only are cosmopolitan ideals practically unattainable but they also vastly endanger the efficient functioning of the world’s nations.

According to Amanda Anderson, one of the most important and productive aspects of cosmopolitanism is detachment. She writes, “Cosmopolitanism endorses reflective distance from one’s cultural affiliations, a broad understanding of other cultures, and customs, and a belief in universal humanity” (Anderson "Cosmopolitanism, Universalism, and the Divided Legacies of Modernity" 72). The self-distancing that Anderson is pointing to is an attempt to widen one’s consciousness to a broad range of affinities that sit above familial, religious, economic, community, and national boundaries. Objective detachment arises when mobility becomes a prominent player in the discussions of cosmopolitanism today (for an elaborate discussion, please refer to Chapter Two). Whether the mobility is physical or intellectual, the concept itself is crucial in actualizing cosmopolitanism,
either from below or from above. Those who espouse cosmopolitanism, Anderson argues, are constantly engaging themselves with a sundering practice, aimed to exploit the “capacious inclusion of multiple forms of affiliation, disaffiliation, and reaffiliation, simultaneously insisting on the need for informing principles of self-reflexivity, critique, and common humanity” (Anderson *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* 30). It should be borne in mind that the cosmopolitanism Anderson favors is a layered one that takes into account the specificities of position and location, rather than an abstract universalism. Specific location and temporality, as previously mentioned, are a crucial, yet implicit part of world citizenship. With a craving for fragmentation and distancing himself from close-knit affiliations, a cosmopolitan moves about locations, regions and countries neither feeling a total stranger nor fully ‘at home’ anywhere. Cosmopolitan detachment is seen by its critics as a celebration of otiose rootlessness. The very idea is suggestively embedded in the word itself: ‘cosmopolis’ takes the world as a big city, and the city as a world, hence transcending every national and narrow-minded outlook. It is not to say that a small city is incapable of being cosmopolitan; cosmopolitanism, as we have defined it before, is about mentality rather than physical landscape, though mental limits can be determined by location in time and place.

A cosmopolitan is a citizen of the world and thus does not have to be concerned about settling on a location which necessarily stands in harmony with his own nation. He returns to a city, taking little to no notice of it as being totally his own. However we develop our mindset and approach the case, the city continues to be a
powerful precondition of change. In *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha holds that: “it is to the city that the migrants, the minorities, the diasporic come to change the history of the nation” (Bhabha *Nation and Narration* 320). As a result, we can see a transparent possibility of nation and nationalism and cosmopolitanism merged. In order for a nation to change its history, it needs migrants, exiles, cities, and ‘flâneurs’.

The temporality and the traditional privileges of any certain location of any such groups play a significant role in the nation-forming process. Bhabha identifies with the performative side of nation-forming and sees the city as a *space* in which existing social classes and groups merge into new social movements: “It is there that, in our time, the perplexity of the living is most acutely experienced” (Bhabha *Nation and Narration* 320). Bhabha’s understanding of the city as a performative site is a necessary element in realizing cosmopolitanism in the way that it deals with the concept of home (for more, please look at Chapter Five).

We have to understand the significance of location and locatedness in the transnationalizing world of today. Different locations, be it a metropolitan city such as New York or London or a rural area in Karnataka, can be seen or can function as cosmopolitan sites. However, there is a possibility that the definitional orientations of location could be misread and misinterpreted. As Abbas writes:

> In the modern era, which corresponded to the economic and political dominance of Western nations, cosmopolitanism by and large meant being versed in Western ways, and the vision of ‘one world’ culture was only a sometimes unconscious, sometimes unconscionable, euphemism for ‘First World’ culture (Abbas 771).
Abbas is concerned about the political and economic dominion of the West in some ways influences the way the concept of cosmopolitanism may be essentialized as a sole reference to the ‘First World’ as dictating an ideal while earmarking the ‘Third World’ as secondary, insignificant listeners. Thus, cosmopolitanism should not be taken for granted and there is a need to carefully observe the different sides of this notion. Undeniably echoed of here are Kant’s pejorative remarks valorizing the ‘white race’ above others [e.g. ‘Negroes’] and therefore, legitimizing their often brutal detribalizing missions only because they do not inherently possess the core ‘white’ value in them.

Now to address the second question (on what makes a person cosmopolitan), let us first see what some of the most common perceptions of cosmopolitanism are.

**Cosmopolitan Perceptions**

Cosmopolitanism can be interpreted quite differently across various disciplines such as political economy, history, cultural studies, among others. For Vertovec and Cohen, cosmopolitanism as a concept functions as a “middle-path alternative between ethnocentric nationalism and particularist multiculturalism” (Vertovec and Cohen 1). It is different from both nationalism and multiculturalism, the latter term meaning an acceptance of diversity within nation-states while cosmopolitanism is not limited to nation-states and in point of fact supersedes them across the world. Cosmopolitanism is far from nationalism in that it offers an openness of individuals to cultural and social entities in the whole world while nationalism always treats individuals as embedded elements within a nation.
On a more complex level, cosmopolitanism may also refer to global citizenship and a universal system of equal opportunities. Forming transnational frameworks, connecting social movements and activities around the world are some of the ways by which cosmopolitanism can serve its purpose. Through mass migrations and mobilities, cultural identities are shifting quickly and more hybrid ones are created. Such hybridized identities constantly problematize the traditional notions of belonging and identity that lean towards fixedness and solidity; instead, they indicate a new capacity to engage in a cultural variety. Cosmopolitanism is also about approaching human issues with a sense of moral duty. I am not indicating that nationalism ignores moral duty. Rather, I argue that cosmopolitanism differs from the nationalistic approach to moral duty in that it offers a critical detachment and self-distantiation and a more general, encompassing moral duty that is not shared or propagated by nationalist agendas that champion moral duty to a collective idea such as nation.

Moral duty, I believe, is a signifying factor in the cosmopolitan construction of the novels due to the fact that all three novelists have expressed their feelings of dutifullness in voicing their concerns about social issues that are ailing India. Put differently, Roy, Desai, and Adiga’s way of engaging with the nation-cosmopolitan relationship in India is the core component of my discussion in this study (see Chapter Two).

Similar to Kant’s vision of cosmopolitanism, human beings must work towards the beneficence of fellow human beings without taking into account their ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, geographical situation, etc. There is
undeniable interconnectedness between human conditions around the world and people mutually influence other peoples. Indeed, empirically we all know that any threat to one can be a threat directed to any other human being. A cosmopolitan approach presses moral concerns about what justice demands globally and also tries to provide relevant responses to those shared human conditions in question.

The first and most ancient theme in political cosmopolitanism is *global justice*. Also sometimes referred to as universal justice or cosmopolitan justice, it is universal in its scope and application, and can reasonably include all persons globally. Cosmopolitan philosophers from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment were frequently trying to clarify the conditions of universal justice and from this ethical position, tried to criticize unfair moral and political practices of their time. Passed down centuries of struggle and development, as Brown and Held maintain, the more contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism are still concerned with what constitutes a “condition of global justice and the exploration of what moral, political, and economic responsibilities are owed to every member of the human species” (Brown and Held 9-10). The most pivotal question here, therefore, is about what is owed and must be paid up to others as a matter of justice.

As opposed to conventional paradigms in International Relations that usually focused on state and nationality, cosmopolitanism is basically about moral obligations owed to all humans based on only one factor: humanity. In all its simplicity, cosmopolitanism ignores such factors as race, gender, nationality, culture, religion, and political affiliations. Catherine Lu maintains that cosmopolitanism, as a political theory, is based on “the acknowledgement of some notion of common
humanity that translates ethically into an idea of shared or common moral duties toward others by virtue of this humanity” (Lu 245). In other words, ethics and morality, which are to be secured in human existence, are the elemental components of cosmopolitanism worldview. From this basic ethical orientation, Brown and Held suggest that cosmopolitanism as a political theory generally posits three corresponding moral and normative commitments.

First, the primary unit of moral concern is individual human beings, not states or nations or any other forms of communitarian or political association. Even though this moral concern for individual beings does not rule out localized obligations, or render states “meaningless”, cosmopolitanism takes a firm stand on so-called ‘universal commitments’ to value the moral worth of individuals everywhere. Second, there is a universal code of morality to be followed, which is based on duty to other individual human beings. This concern should be applied equally to anyone, regardless of any national or localized criterion. Pogge, in this respect, believes that “the status of ultimate concern attaches to every living human equally” (48-9). So a cosmopolitan outlook ensures, or at the least tries to ensure, that there is an unbiased commitment at work, which attends to all human beings equally, regardless of where one is born and raised, and also irrespective of whether one is politically correct (if we can actually characterize a person that way in the first place). And third, the cosmopolitan is a citizen of the world that must be treated with equal respect anywhere around the world. Thomas Pogge argues that a cosmopolitan approach to the world transcends any traditional state-centric model and in so doing, strongly urges a liberal, moral, individual, egalitarian, and universal
right for any human being. Transparently, this right goes beyond conventional borders of the state *while* also insisting that these moral features must be taken as key regulative and normative principles in fixing global institutional structures.

*Cultural cosmopolitanism* can be interpreted as an attempt to unfold how a culturally pluralistic world responds to global justice. In its simplest form, cultural cosmopolitanism argues for moral responsibilities and obligations that supersede or even violate localized obligations, which come based on aspects of race, culture, and nationality. Cultural cosmopolitanism comprises two interrelated components:

First, this sort of cosmopolitanism generally asserts that all individuals are made of multifarious cultural identities. By the same token, human beings already identify with an array of cultural obligations (Waldron "What Is Cosmopolitan"). Given these two premises, it is possible that any human being, just like any culture, can accommodate a cosmopolitan identity beyond their immediate cultural border without also abandoning the important features of their cultural belonging. With regards to this notion, cultural cosmopolitanism will ultimately want to offer a response to “communitarian critiques” that often advocate justice bound to the communal borders of nationality (Miller; Tan).

A second related point is that cultural cosmopolitanism often seeks common universal principles that involve all human activities and cultural structures. Cultural cosmopolitans support those moral duties that unify human beings around the world and stress their communality rather than their differences. The issue to be addressed is how to foster this ethical orientation and educate people about it; this
is where we see cross-disciplinary aspects of this multifaceted notion: globalization, slow codification of international legal norms (Habermas 267-88) or self-prescription of a cosmopolitan foreign policy (Kaldor 334-50; Caney 191-212; Archibugi 312-33).

These two major themes of cosmopolitanism (i.e. global justice and cultural cosmopolitanism) remind us of what Stoics such as Epictetus or Seneca proffered. Asserting a cosmopolitan view of the world, they believed that all people are manifestations of the one universal spirit and as a result, there cannot be a difference between them in terms of wealth, social rank, ethnicity, etc. They proposed that human beings should live like brothers and help each other during times of privation. And here, too, cultural cosmopolitans hold out that human beings are citizens of two worlds (the world of gods as well as that of men); therefore, they have duties to both, i.e. a local culture which is given to people by birth and another culture, shared among all humans, that is “truly great and truly common”.

The concept of cosmopolitanism has been continually in contention ever since its inception and the arguments around it have become more vigorous in recent decades. Some of these critiques are made by cosmopolitans who have revisited their ideas in the past couple of years and have rightly found weaknesses in them and endeavored to better their standpoint.

From a cosmopolitan outlook, justice has to be independent of nationality and citizenship, and ought to apply to everyone in equal measure. In other words, as
Tan puts it, “cosmopolitan justice is justice without borders” (Tan 1). However, a significant flaw of the cosmopolitan consciousness lies in the perception that a cosmopolitan is unable to constitute connections and commitments that bind people to local attachments, the most important being nationality (Beitz 291; Tan 1). When viewed meticulously, cosmopolitanism seems at odds with nationalism and patriotism.

In the past decade or so, nationalism has seen a resurgence in the world despite all the effects of globalization that have eased cosmopolitan awareness into the lives of the ordinary people. Samuel Scheffler believes that a tidal mass of nationalistic aspirations seems to have emerged, and the last few decades have also witnessed the rise of nationalism, which seems to disregard cosmopolitan objectives: “[both] the particularist and globalist ideas have become increasingly influential in contemporary politics, and one of the most important tasks for contemporary liberal theory is to address the twin challenges posed by particularist and globalist thinking” (Scheffler 67). We can observe the most acute conflict between the two sides. It can be argued that so long as cosmopolitanism finds affinity in universality, it indirectly undermines and eliminates a sense of belonging to a specific location. Therefore, the political cosmopolitanism is somehow different from cultural cosmopolitanism as the latter can actually belong socially or politically to a nation while staying more flexible.

A cosmopolitan may unceasingly belong everywhere but at the same time to no particular space. Therefore, we can conclude that the largest demarcation between nationalism and cosmopolitanism stems from territorial claims; there is a
contention between territories in cosmopolitanism as opposed national dimensions (Rovisco and Nowicka 380). This face-off can be constructive or destructive.

Martha Nussbaum, a staunch believer in cosmopolitanism, argues that world citizenship rather than patriotism or nationalism should be the basis for good society. She rejects both nationalism and patriotism because they have exclusivist conceptions of belonging, hence rendering them incompatible with cosmopolitan principles (Nussbaum). Craig Calhoun casts doubt over the alleged incompatibility between the two:

It is not at all clear (a) that cosmopolitanism is quite so different from nationalism as sometimes supposed, (b) whether cosmopolitanism is really supplanting nationalism in global politics, and (c) whether cosmopolitanism is an ethical complement to politics, or in some usages a substitution of ethics for politics (Calhoun "Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism" 427).

However, he points out the importance of cosmopolitanism for two reasons. First, as we are experiencing it, the whole world is now intensively interconnected. Second, the need for cosmopolitanism is fueled by anxieties over identity politics and multiculturalism. In fact, many commentators have expressed their worries over the fact that efforts to emphasize the difference in lifestyle undermine the common culture required by democracy. For instance, Ulrich Beck mentions another issue regarding cosmopolitanism and how it is changing the world. We mentioned previously that the world is now interconnected more than ever before. From a cosmopolitan point of view, these interconnections are a source of moral obligations for everyone. Attractive as it seems, cosmopolitanism refers at once to a fact about the world in general, particularly in this era of globalization and a
desirable response to that fact. While globalization doesn’t prevent national belonging, it has led to a loosening of world economy limitations— that which is marketable must be sent to all corners of the world. However, globalization may indeed generate mobility and cultural change that either reduce or consolidate partisan allegiances.

Beck maintains that cosmopolitanization links two processes: descriptive and normative and their distinction is often unclear (Beck *Cosmopolitan Vision* 24). Nonetheless, we can argue that neither this interconnectedness nor the diversity of cultures in the world is essentially a source of merit. After the 9/11 attacks, the people of the world, Americans above all, saw that interconnectedness and diversity turned into a source of fear instead of felicity, terror instead of triumph, and dissociative fortification instead of associative friendliness. Hence the strong sense of incertitude about the necessity for an appreciation of diversity and to hold a sense of ethical responsibility towards distant strangers. It may also suggest that there is a need to think about distant responsibility while maintaining a margin of safety.

Perhaps that is why a critic of cosmopolitanism, Anthony Smith, writes that world citizenship is a ‘dream’ with a long history from ancient Rome and the Stoics and their hope for the unity of humanity in a community of virtue (Smith). He quotes Herder’s (1976) “nationalist” outburst that:

> The savage who loves himself, his wife, and his child … and works for the good of his tribe as for his own … is in my view more genuine than the human ghost, the … citizen of the world, who, burning with love for all his fellow ghosts, loves a chimera.
The savage in his hut [has] room for any stranger ... the saturated heart of the idle cosmopolitan is a home for no one.

His remarks are an echo of Kant’s ‘savage versus civilized’ argument. By drawing a line of contrast betwixt the ‘barbarism’ of the American tribes and ‘civilized’ nations, Kant is highly critical of the so-called ‘civilized’ nations’ approach to war:

The primary difference between European and American savages is that, while many of the latter tribes have been completely eaten by their enemies, the former know how to make better use of those they have conquered than to consume them: they increase the number of their subjects and thus also the quality of instruments they have to wage even more extensive wars (Kant 116).

Smith considers cosmopolitans idle, which is quite ironic because a cosmopolitan in today’s world is perceived to be highly mobile and too busy to settle down in one particular place in a particular time.

As discussed before, globalization, migration, multiculturalism, etc. are among the processes and circumstances that have led to a reinterpretation of the concept of cosmopolitanism. So, two questions seem pertinent. One, can we ever live with each other at peace? And two, as human beings, what do we all have in common?

There have been many growing political issues such as protecting human rights, criminal activities and terrorist attacks (9/11 and its aftermaths, Persian Gulf War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) that are beyond the handling capacity of a single state or nation. What is more, political and economic processes of globalization are increasingly impacting upon the accustomed sovereignties of the nation-state. Some nations have developed new alliances such as those for free
trade, fighting terrorism, etc. and more recently, collaborative tendencies for multinational military interventions. However, calls for an emergent cosmopolitan order beyond the nation-state system have not been accepted without challenges.

But the curiosity to know about the ‘unknown other’ provokes and entices those who depend on a more monocultural background. Stuart Hall, drawing on Waldron’s 1992 argument, suggests that people are no longer inspired by a single culture that is coherent, integrated and organic. Instead, transnational migrants have enriched and changed the cultural repertoires of many people. As he explains:

> It is not that we are without culture but we are drawing on the traces and residues of many cultural systems, of many ethical systems— and that is precisely what cosmopolitanism means. It means the ability to stand outside one’s life written and scripted by any one community, whether that is a faith or tradition or religion or culture – whatever it might be – and to draw selectively on a variety of discursive meanings (Hall 26).

Hall’s spatial assumption that cosmopolitanism involves standing outside one’s life or being inside one’s nation and still open to otherness, as we will discuss in the following chapters, practically almost never happens. This widening of consciousness and clash with alterity and the ‘unknown other’ can be seen in cosmopolitan cities as well as in the homes ordinary locales. As David Held notes, the recent generations of people brought up with Yahoo and CNN show a sense of global identification. The integral sense of being global or the “consciousness of the world as a single place” (Robertson 132), is in tandem with the various forms and meanings of the concept of cosmopolitanism that academics, scholars, and philosophers have been voicing in the past couple of decades. This growing
consciousness fosters what Beck calls a “banal cosmopolitanism” (Ulrich Beck and Sznaider 8), in which everyday nationalism is circumvented, and we experience ourselves as integrated into global processes and phenomena. In this regard, the term has ramified to denote its multifarious variations: “actually existing cosmopolitanism” (Robbins "Comparative Cosmopolitanism" 1), i.e. plural and localized forms such as “rooted” (Appiah 91), “discrepant” (Clifford 369), “vulgar” or “demotic”(Gilroy 67), and “plebeian” (Brennan At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now 39). For many people, then, a sense of global commonality is emerging (Beck "Cosmopolitan Sociology: Outline of a Paradigm Shift" 20).

I will indicate the representations of such cosmopolitanism when analyzing the novels in future chapters.

**Critiques of Cosmopolitanism**

A frequent attack on cosmopolitans is that they are elites who have access to the resources necessary to travel, learn other languages and absorb other cultures. From a historical viewpoint, there is certainly truth to this claim since for the majority of the people of the world, who have lived their lives within the cultural space of their own nation or ethnicity and never stepped the foot out of their limited circle, a cosmopolitan experience was never a possibility, let alone a choice. Nonetheless, Poole argues that in the contemporary world people can potentially communicate with a variety of diverse cultures and understand them (Poole 162). Apart from that, travel and immigration have placed diverse people from different cultural, social, political and religious backgrounds alongside each other and have
had them interact at workplaces, street corners, in markets, neighborhoods, schools
and recreational areas. As Hiebert puts it, this interconnectivity has generated
countless examples of a non-elite form of cosmopolitanism, a so-called “everyday
or ordinary cosmopolitanism where men and women from different origins create a
society where diversity is accepted [and] rendered ordinary” (209).

In addition, cosmopolitans are often seen as deviant and ‘rootless’ agents who
refuse to define clearly their belongings to certain locations, ancestry, citizenship or
language (Waldron "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative" 754). As
Hollinger (1995: 89) writes, “Cosmopolite or cosmopolitan in the mid-nineteenth
century America meant a well-traveled character probably lacking in substance”
(89). Here, the word ‘substance’ likely refers to a quickly identifiable character
 attribution, most prominently a sense of loyalty to a single nation-state or cultural
identity. Chauvinistic and/or totalitarian governments, such as those of the Soviet
Union, Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy, earmarked cosmopolitans as rootless
treacherous enemies of the state. Jews and gypsies, both deemed to be without
attachment to a particular land, were, therefore, prosecuted and “shunted into the
charnel houses of the holocaust and the bleak camps of the Gulag” (Vertovec and
Cohen 6).

Cosmopolitans are stereotyped as being the privileged, bourgeois, politically
uncommitted elites. They have been associated with wealthy jet-setters, corporate
managers, intergovernmental bureaucrats, artists, tax dodgers, academics and
intellectuals, all of whom maintained their condition “by virtue of independent
means, expensive tastes, and a globe-trotting lifestyle” (Robbins "Comparative
Importantly, while it is true that a postcolonial elite and an international labor migrant or an exile have each equally left their country and made a sojourn to another, the way they perceive, integrate, and assimilate into the new situation can vary drastically. Pnina Werbner sensibly cautions us before attributing the ‘cosmopolitan’ adjective to any of these groups. She refers to Ulf Hannerz’s contention that we cannot really legitimately label labor migrants cosmopolitan. In point of fact, many of these migrants do hold to their local cultural and religious practices in their cosmopolitan destination and do not show any willingness to engage with the Other, locals, representatives of more circumscribed territorial cultures, and transnationals. It is also possible that these migrants are actively prevented from such engagements (Werbner "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism" 497). Therefore, despite the new media and communication tools of today and how readily people can quench their thirst for cultural otherness, this is not a very deeply rooted cosmopolitanism. The mobility of people such as tourists, exiles, expatriates, transnational employees and labor migrants will not inevitably turn them into cosmopolitans. There are other factors at work: a ‘true’ cosmopolitan must have a culturally open disposition and interest in a continuous engagement with another culture. In addition to a specific disposition, John Tomlinson also insists that real cosmopolitans should have a sense of commitment to belonging to the world as a whole (Tomlinson).

All that said, Vertovec and Cohen believe that there is an increasing recognition that ‘cosmopolitan’ philosophies, institutions, dispositions, and practices – expressions of ‘actually existing cosmopolitanism’ (Robbins "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism" 248).
Cosmopolitanism") exist among a wide variety of non-elites, especially migrants and refugees. This approach to cosmopolitanism underlines the positive, socio-culturally and politically transformative meanings of the term (Werbner "Global Pathways: Working Class Cosmopolitans and the Creation of Transnational Ethnic Worlds"). And this is the sense that James Clifford employs to describe how the term cosmopolitanism helps to undermine the ‘naturalness’ of ethnic absolutisms, recognizes ‘worldly, productive sites of crossing; complex, unfinished paths between local and global attachments’ and ‘presupposes encounters between worldly historical actors willing to link up aspects of their complex, different experiences’ (Clifford 362).

In the same vein, Hannerz notes that even if the so-called ‘bottom-up’ cosmopolitans may have cosmopolitan experiences, they will be unlikely to be recognized as cosmopolitans in their own environment (Hannerz "Cosmopolitanism" 77). A cosmopolitan consciousness should be an open, experimental, inclusive and normative consciousness of the other cultures. It should also have elements of self-questioning and ‘reflexive self-distantiation’ from one’s own culture, which require the cosmopolitan to be aware of the fact that other cultures, values, and mores have equal validity with his or her own (Werbner "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism" 497-98). It should be remembered that we cannot truly generalize a rule by which to distinguish who is more open and ready to interact with a new cosmopolitan environment. Moreover, some environments are more cosmopolitan than others. As a result, we can conclude that a large part of the
answer depends on context and how a multi-layered cosmopolitanism is perceived vernacularly by different people, whether elite or populace.

**Cosmopolitanism in India**

So far, I have delineated various conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism that have been passed down to us, in some cases, from many centuries ago. I want to point out that cosmopolitanism is, nonetheless, locally relevant. Further, it is essential to note that in most of these discussions, cosmopolitanism is related to or compared against nation, politics, and law whereas the current study will lean more towards a discussion of cosmopolitanism as a state of mind, a way of being in the world, and the quality of interpreting culture in literature.

Different countries produce distinctive forms and definitions of cosmopolitanism that are different from other countries. In the Indian case, we should note that many factors contribute to India’s unique mode of cosmopolitanism (or lack thereof): language, race, religion, geography, demography, and political history, to name a few form a multilevel dynamics that makes research a challenging task.

India shows great potential in terms of having cosmopolitan cities that, according to urbanism expert Annick Germain, exhibit a modern style of urbanity that may be enforced with ethnocultural diversity, art festivals, an openness of public spaces, etc. (Germain and Radice 126). Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, and Mumbai in that regard conform to the global idea of cosmopolitan-ready cities. The large pool of different nationalities that are present in such cities makes them globalized sites of negotiation. As we can see in *The White Tiger*, even though Balram opposes the
idea of global amenities and their presence in Bangalore, he, nonetheless, benefits from them.

As mentioned before, cosmopolitanism in India has varied shades that are part of India’s distinct and diverse cultural, linguistic racial and ethnic composition. India’s composite nature has evolved over centuries of assimilative and amalgamative efforts (Yarram and Shetty 48). However, despite its multicultural openness to the flow of population, a recent sociological survey across India’s most cosmopolitan cities concludes that a universal value system is not possible in India. The study further reveals that each city holds a cultural specificity (e.g. regarding its esteem of female power or readiness to break away from conventions), that is different from the other cities. This may mean that embracing a cosmopolitan outlook completely is not something that many in Indian society either want or are ready to achieve to its full extent. I will verify these claims in the following chapters when I look at mobility as a staple of cosmopolitan ideals in challenging conventional systems of beliefs in India.
CHAPTER TWO: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Introduction

Indian writers have been producing literary works across many languages in multiple forms for centuries. However, over the past 200 years, many writers have opted to produce a body of work in the English language—this is often referred to as ‘Indian English literature’ or (IEL). In this chapter, I would like to look at the historical development of literature in India in English, particularly the novel as a literary form in pre- and postcolonial India. Of interest also are the critical responses to novels published by both native and diasporic Indian writers on a national and international level. I would like to show how Indian English fiction has been molded first out of colonial presence, and then as a national machinery: i.e., a tool which works within and toward nationalistic agendas in post-independence India, and finally as part of a global literary publication for an international readership. Of crucial relevance are, also, the implications of each phase for cosmopolitanism.

English Literature in India: Birth of the Novel

English literature has been around in India for about one and a half centuries. In 1794, the first book written by an Indian author in English was published in England: The Travels of Dean Mahomed, which was a travelogue by Sake Dean Mahomet (Sheikh Din Muhammad) (Mahomet 138-40).
In 1834, a functionary of the East Indian Company, Thomas Babington Macaulay, wrote a historically important Minute about the importance of introducing English to Indians:

> We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the west... in India English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seat of government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East (Jussawalla 1).

With Macaulay's *Minute on Education* of 1835, the British rulers of India decided to officially introduce the English literature and English language as the language of instruction in the colonial school system (Trivedi 176). As Gauri Viswanathan points out, this led to a functional selectivity in what to include in syllabuses. In *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, she states that this inclusion was not to demonstrate the superiority of English culture per se but to act as a “mask for economic exploitation, so successfully camouflaging the material activities of the colonizer” (Viswanathan 20). The carefully engineered propagation of English literature among Indian native in the secular schools as well as Christian missionary schools was carried out to stabilize the authoritative status of the British rulers. In light of doing so, Robert Louis Stevenson was “the only prose writer prescribed for study in the BA English literature syllabus at the University of Allahabad from the 1890s right through to the 1970s” (Trivedi 176).
Macaulay also held disparaging ideas about Sanskrit and Persian which, in his view, were defective languages that fostered ignorance and barbarism (Embree 286) while he considered English to be a language that abounds with “works of imagination”, believing also that those who have a knowledge of it are vastly intellectually superior (Sullivan 144). Therefore, he praised Indian natives in England who were fluent in English, as he saw this linguistic ability as essential in critically and precisely discussing political or scientific questions. The novel was looked upon as a valuable tool for literary forms of expression and one that was not known in the Indian traditional literary heritage. The novel is a historical form of literary expression, but India had championed myths in Hinduism (Mahabharata and Ramayana or the Vedas, among others) as a major literary form (Sullivan 114). For instance, Mulk Raj Anand wrote in a 1982 essay about the difference between epic recitation and the novel by laying down his propositions regarding what the ambitions of any Indian writers had (and should) be:

The novels of Indian English writers [...] echo Indian consciousness [...] and the novelists are advance guard writers in so far as they bridge the gulf between the surviving narratives in the languages of India and the residual influences of modern techniques in the West, [e]specially in regard to timebound moments of heightened awareness, symbolic of all time, and the Joycean stream of consciousness (Anand "Roots and Flowers: Content and Form in Untouchable and Kanthapura" 47-60).

Indian English literature was initially influenced by the Western novel. Early writers used an unadulterated English language to convey experiences that were Indian. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s Rajmohan’s Wife, published it in 1864, is one of the earliest Indian novels produced in the English language and employs a stilted
‘Victorian’ language. However, later on, the language used was a vernacularized form of English as it had absorbed vocabulary and rhythms from the main Indian languages. For instance, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. The first modern Indian English novels are generally believed to be K. S. Venkataramani’s *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan the Patriot* (1934) which were concerned with the tenacious social, cultural, and political problems of India (Riemenschneider 4).

The Indianization of English was soon to become an essential part of the criticism of Indian Writing in English. It is ironical that writing in English had its own merits, one of which was acting as “the impetus to creativity” (Jussawalla 2). It is commonly assumed that a novel written in the English language by an Indian writer can only be justifiable if it exudes a peculiar sense of Indianness (Brunton 199-200). The novels, then, were to be evaluated based on their expression of some national quintessence as well as their literary excellence as fiction. It is ironic that an imported form and language becomes a catalyst for energizing local writing in vernacular languages. At the same time, the Indian English novel became localized.

Indian writers writing in English have sometimes faced criticism for deserting Hindi or their own regional language in return for writing in what was considered an “alien language” (Kachru 274). Nevertheless, and perhaps driven by such criticism, the Anglophone mode linked story closely with local national cultural and social assertiveness. For instance, anti-colonial sentiments and the Gandhian struggle for
literation can be seen in Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938). Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975) is another example of a ‘Partition’ novel that serves national interests.

Hostility to writing in English, and to uncritical use of Western literary forms was exacerbated by Fredric Jameson’s famous article on third-world literature. In it, Jameson argues that the novels of all third-world nations share one thing when they develop out of a totally Western representational machinery. He calls them “national allegories” (Jameson 69) that refuse or fall short of the Western modernist novel that splits the private and the public, the poetic and the political. So one’s private struggle is always considered to be an allegorical demonstration of one’s national, public embattled situation. Literary critic Aijaz Ahmad has contested Jameson’s sweeping statement as being essentially overgeneralizing. He contends that not all texts that are produced in a postcolonial era by virtue of geographical origin may be categorized as national allegories (Ahmad "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" 12). Ahmad goes on to maintain that one’s personal experience may connect oneself to a “collectivity—in terms of class, gender, religions” so to allegorize individual experiences but not necessarily involving the “nation” (Ahmad "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" 14-15).

One of the main questions in the critique of Indian writing in English at the time has been the author’s treatment of Mahatma Gandhi, who was the major figure in India’s fight for independence from British rule. Gandhi represented an ideal Indian nation in its most basic form: self-mastered, self-realized, and simple. Iyengar positively assesses his influence on Indian English literature:
Gone were the old Macaulayan amplitude and richness of phrasing and weight of miscellaneous learning. Gandhian writing was as bare and austere as was his own life; yet who will say that either the one or the other lacked the fullness of fulfillment? (Iyengar 273)

R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand both employ Gandhi as a character in their writing. Nevertheless, Gandhi was not impressed with the novel as an autonomous art form and considered it generally being about “love and lies and making them gullible with fine words” (Anand "The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie" 13) which he communicated to Mulk Raj Anand. Gandhi preferred a truthful and straightforward way of reforming the Indian nation while Mulk Raj Anand believed that the novel could make people think about real issues that were presented as stories. As M.K. Naik points out, at this juncture in the Indian history, Indian fiction in English had blossomed hand-in-hand with the revitalization of the “grassroots of Indian society” (Naik "Gandhiji and Indian Writing in English" 361-62). For Naik, the novel served as an instrument that was vitally concerned with the social conditions and values of the Indian population that was undergoing a new consciousness through its fight for freedom. Novels of various dispositions were all invested in the national discourse, and reactions to them were not the same. As Buchi Babu reminds us, India’s peculiar racial, social, and political climate possessed both a great deal of variety and also an emphasis on Hindu nationalism that led to a combatant milieu which pressurizes the writers for what they endeavor to discover and canvas (Babu 139-40).

Narayan bears out Gandhi’s effect on the literature that was gradually becoming “inescapably political” to the point that many other aspects of the novels produced
in that era were becoming less and less about the psychological, comedic, and social factors constituting the stuff of life (Jussawalla 159). Anand’s *Untouchable*, Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma*, and Kamala Markandaya’s *Some Inner Fury* are among those works of fiction that criticized Gandhianism and, in doing so, stirred anger among critics such as Uma Parameswaran, Meenakshi Mukherjee, and M.K. Naik. Parameswaran, for instance, denounced Narayan’s novel for its treatment of Gandhi as a common man (Parameswaran 65). Mukherjee, outraged by Anand’s satirical description of Gandhi towards the end of *The Untouchable*, dismisses his novel’s artistic worth as being overshadowed by its “documentary importance” (Mukherjee "Beyond the Village: An Aspect of Mulk Raj Anand" 240). As Jussawalla suggests, Anand was then, branded an anti-Gandhian and thereby an anti-nationalist (Jussawalla 170). However, despite the emotional response of the Indian nationalist critics, Narasimhaiah commends Rao’s stylistic experimentation appropriate to the Indian subject matter (Narasimhaiah 44).

In a sense, the development of Indian English literature was a response to the expression of Indian nationalism. In so far as India’s national assertive jactitation is concerned, Indian writers both local and overseas, whose works critique Indian society and the nationalist movement, are often targeted and vilified. As Narasimhaiah writes, the social complex of Indian society at times does not take pride in works that are acknowledged by an audience outside one’s own state or country. Instead, he asserts that national pride can be manifested as parochialism (Narasimhaiah 7). As an example, he mentions how R. K. Narayan was once called a *drohi* (traitor) by a regional writer for having his writings spread to a worldwide
audience thousands of kilometers away and ignoring the local Indians (Narasimhaiah 8). This practice of smearing a writer’s reputation has indeed continued to be visited upon writers who achieve international success and accolades to this day (for a more detailed read, see Chapter Seven on the Man Booker Prize).

It cannot be denied, however, that the ongoing discussion about authenticity is here to stay; that the cosmopolitan writers will insist desperately on being considered Indian while the Hindu nationalist critics earmark them as non-Indians or even in the business of mocking Indians. Despite all the suspicion around the novel in the nationalist eye that sees cosmopolitan writers as disloyal and free-floating, the novel, even as a Western form of literary expression, now participates in a global cosmopolitanism that elevates the local subject and brings it to international recognition and attention.

The use of a language that is native to a former colonizer offends exponents of inherently authentic/vernacular writing. However, it can be argued that the novels written in English revisit and redefine what counts as English— a cursory look at the indigenization of English in the works of Mulk Raj Anand and Salman Rushdie, among others, reveals this literary backlash. Additionally, because of the role of the English language, writers writing in English can educate the world about local realities. Thus, the importance of the novel in Indian English literature cannot be denied, even if its effects can be debated.
Besides the early venerated figures of Indian English literary prose (Rao, Tagore, Narayan, Anand, etc.), later novelists such Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgonkar, and even later Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, and Vikram Seth (among others) have produced works that reflect the spirit of an independent India that is in a ceaseless struggle to transform the centuries-old British influence and in doing so establish a new, emancipatory identity. Indian English fiction was propagated by a new generation of writers who used English as a means to voice their individualism and identity which was no longer an imitation of the British model that was popular among the earlier generations of Indian writers. Their literary products were not simply a reworking of Indian literary traditions, although they did draw on them. Indian English novel, then and now, continues to function as the conduit for a national story in varying capacities and with varying degrees of conviction.

Markandaya, for example, wrote with a solid command of the English language, but her situation was viewed as disconcerting within the nationalist Indian English fiction landscape due to the fact that she was writing about India from abroad in a way that was identified as Western and perhaps alienated. Indian critic C. Paul Verghese finds issues with Markandaya’s creative writing effort. For him, such writers as Markandaya fail to find a suitable way to render an “Indian consciousness” (Verghese 110) without resorting to exoticism.

As Edward Said notes, postcolonialism has two stages. In the first stage, political sovereignty is the goal for a recently decolonized state. However, once that becomes a given, “the charting of cultural territory” (Said 209) finds prominence in the postcolonial milieu. The former colonies begin to create a new imagination of
their respective identities that is based on a fragmented history of colonial identity. Writers remap art, culture, and literature while acknowledging such differences as those of gender, ethnicity, caste, religion. Religion was somehow neglected or pushed aside during the secular Nehruvian era but gained attention as ethnocentric discourses emerged within the postcolonial context (Perumal 302-04).

Because of the focus on national unity and pride and the extensive sway of patriarchy, literary critics often used to discourage writings on topics that “disturb the decorum of society” (Rana 242). However, an evident breakthrough in Indian women’s writing in English arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s in such works of Anita Desai as *Cry, the Peacock, Where Shall We Go This Summer, and Fire on the Mountain*. Desai is often credited as the writer who shifted the novel from traditionalism to a more modern outlook by her perceived focus on the “new woman” ideal in male-dominated society. She tried to stress the desire on the part of Indian women writers to be given equal opportunities to exercise their observatory prowess in documenting Indian social landscapes (S. Srivastava 48-49). Desai and her contemporary female writers in the 1970s tended to write in a self-confident, and in Desai’s case, perhaps radical tone in order to address thematic issues that were suffocating the women in India. Her 1977 National Academy of Letters Award-winning novel *Fire on the Mountain* displays Desai’s radical urge to alter the age-old gender imbalance in the traditional Indian society.

This new period in the history of the Indian novel displayed narrative skills and stylistic courage on topics that were thematically novel and while also renegotiating the social and political issues of through their characters’ self-realization. Bhatnagar
argues that Desai’s work shows a departure from the literary imprints of Bhattacharya, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand in her feminine style that champions female individuals who try to carve out a newly self-realized and self-fulfilled identity (Bhatnagar 1). Desai’s breakthrough paved the way for other female writers in the next generation: Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Manju Kapur.

The shift towards a critique of the nationalist status quo in the work of women writers could also be observed in the works of Nayantara Sahgal. Sahgal was born into India’s political elite Nehru family. She had a Western-style upbringing and education, so her elite position and cosmopolitan outlook allowed her to use the novel in English as to critique local issues protected by her use of as an international vehicle. Her novel *Rich Like Us* (1985) is a notable example. It is set during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s declaration of the twenty-one month State of Emergency. From 1975 until 1977, Indira Gandhi made huge constitutional changes to Indian governance to subdue political disturbances. The Emergency deeply influenced the writers of the era to the point that Anjali Roy calls it “one post-independence crisis in Indian democracy” (Anjali Roy 385). Sahgal’s *Rich Like Us* is a historical and political fiction that debunked the political corruption of the ruling party and the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during this era that was laden with political unrest and heavy-handed censorship of the press.

**Post-Independence and the Rushdie Phenomenon**

In the past three decades, Indian English fiction has witnessed a massive expansion of authorship and readership unmatched by its previous iterations. As Paranjape
argues, Indian English fiction was soon to become an internationally relevant phenomenon rather than a total national and local entity. He cites Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* as one of the biggest success stories of the 1990s in terms of its revenue—it made over a million dollars (Paranjape 401). This was coupled with the fact that the Western publishing industry became increasingly interested in putting works of fiction by Indian authors who were themselves transnational and cosmopolitan.

We can compare this generation with the early generation of the Indian English novelists. Anand, Narayan, and Rao all lived in the West for some time, but their primary engagement was with India. Anand’s grappling with the age-old injustice perpetuated by the Indian caste system in *Untouchable* can be seen in all three novels in this thesis: Velutha, Biju, and Balram form a trilogy of low castes who continue to struggle to make a living. On a language level, as Padma Mckertich states, the use of English was distrusted not only because, as mentioned before, it was a foreign language, but also because its users were from an elite group of Indian society (Padma 16-17). Tabish Khair argues that the Big Three (Anand, Narayan, and Rao) mainly represent the upper-class and upper-caste milieu. And the refusal of texts in English for Saraswati awards, among others, all pointed to a manifestation of a suspicion about the use and applicability of English as a language to communicate Indian realities. Interestingly, in the new generation of writers, the use of Sanskrit has been seen as a literary maneuver to gain grounds in the Western literary scene. For instance, Ramachandran lashes back at Rushdie’s use of English by claiming that he is working at “a mere chutnification and serves
only to reinforce the Western idea that Indians use a form of pidgin English or Butler English” (Ramachandran 31). Meenakshi Mukherjee criticizes Vikram Chandra for using of Sanskrit words in his novel Love and Longing in Bombay as a way of ‘orientalizing’ his contemporary material for a Western readership. Chandra dismissed the allegations in an article published in the Boston Review (Chandra "The Cult of Authenticity: India’s Cultural Commissars Worship ‘Indianness’ Instead of Art").

The second generation of Indian writing in English produced highly outstanding works between the 1980s and the 2000s that surpassed the number of novels published in any previous periods. One obvious aspect of the new novel in India was that far more Indian English writers— including in the case of first novels— would get published by such powerful publishers as Random House, Picador, and Faber and Faber. As a point of comparison, Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable was initially rejected by nineteen British publishers in 1953 only to be noticed by Wishart after receiving a favorable recommendation from E.M. Forster (M.K. Naik 35). So in perspective, a point can be made here that Anand, who was writing in colonial times in sympathy with anti-colonial struggles, could not find a publisher for his novel. Ultimately, he was dependent on patronage from the country whose power he was, in fact, challenging.

The second wave of Indian English, on a linguistic level, exhibited a highly significant feature, quite different from that of the novels produced in the decades prior. The older generation Indian English novelists had a self-consciousness about “using the tongue of the august master” (M.K. Naik 37). The “Big Three” (Rao, Narayan, Anand)
struggled with this experience. However, the new generation that was born and brought up in postcolonial India, and who would later form the majority of the Indian diasporic writers, did not get entangled in this self-consciousness regarding the English language. It was due to the fact that the English language no longer functioned as what Naik calls “colonial baggage” (M.K. Naik 37) but rather functioned as a tool that had been mastered through education and could now be used to the advantage of its promulgators by adding an Indian flair to it. They scrapped the old practice of including an appendix of Indian words and their meanings that were used in the text that, for example in Rao’s *Kanthapura*, amounted to a sixty-page long glossary in the US editions. This begs the question of whether such works are indeed even novels.

The new Indian generation of Indian novelists parted ways from the bequeathed styles of Rao (metaphysical reflections), Anand (reformist ardor), and Narayan (ironical uneasiness of life) and instead probed into the lesser known plateaus of fiction such as phantasmagoria, absurdity, comedy, thrillers, romances and linguistic pyrotechnics. These genres were derived from the postmodern forms of novel, especially the Magic Realism that was popularized among Latin American literary giants such as Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende. The other differentiating factor of the new novel in India during the 1980s and afterward was its growing global sensibility. Even though Rao and Anand had lived in the West for many years, their primary subject was the Indian nation and Indian identity under global modernity. However, their postmodern successors may be considered their cosmopolitan counterparts. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* can conveniently
be seen as the point of departure from the old ways of the Indian English fiction and a popularizing element in the decades that followed.

Rushdie was arguably the first of the novelists to reach international literary stardom and it can be reasonably argued that winning the Booker Prize bifurcated the reception of Indian English literature on an international level into pre- and post- Rushdie generations and left an indelible mark on the global success of Indian English literary commodities. The new novel’s claim to success culminated when in 1981, Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* became a rage around the world and netted the esteemed Booker Prize for a work that displayed a postcolonial agony within a new yet historic nation: dealing with fragmentation of identity, a sense of loss, and resort to nostalgia for an imaginary homeland. Rushdie’s worldwide success is noteworthy because he could be heralded as the first diasporic Indian writer to enter the sphere of Western readership with panache. It cannot go without saying that Rushdie’s success was challenged in less than a decade when his notoriously controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* earned him a death fatwa from the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran in 1988. The blasphemy issue that involved years of living under constant surveillance and in fear of attempted murders is in stark contrast to Rushdie’s fiction and nonfiction vision of a postcolonial literature writer. In ‘*In Good Faith*’, and with regards to *The Satanic Verses*, he states that such literature:

> celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure (Rushdie *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* 393).
As opposed to the nationalistic agendas of such works as *Mother India* (a classic Bollywood movie by Mehboob Khan) that promulgate linearity and pedantic correctness and are geared to a fixed notion of home, Rushdie takes a cosmopolitan position that values border-crossings and precariousness and which would trickle over to such later novels as *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995). Overall, the body of works produced by Rushdie shows his determination to be, as Timothy Brennan puts it, following Tagore, “at home in the world” (Brennan *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*).

Rushdie’s legacy, both linguistically and in prizewinning success, has continued ever since in many other fiction writers who are of Indian descent but form a network of overseas Indian literary figures: V. S. Naipaul, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Chandra, Kiran Desai, Aatish Taseer, and Rohinton Mistry. Stylistically, long after the thirst for Englishness and Americanness has died out, Indian English fiction appears to have established an Indianized or nativized form of the English language. Local languages constructions, lexicons, and idiomatic expressions keep adding an Indian feature to narratives designed to be consumed by both Indian and international audiences. The effect of such literary production and consumption cannot be clear-cut, though. While a cosmopolitan Indian writer can be local as well as overseas, the location wherein one resides cannot totally account for one’s openness to cosmopolitan ideas. The same could be said about the readers, whether or not they are Indians or Westerners although Western readers may have a bigger opportunity of reaching a more cosmopolitan consciousness through reading such literature.
Mukherjee argues that the themes that the older generation of Indian English writers dealt with were predictably “pan-Indian: the national movement, partition of the country, the clash between tradition and modernity, faith and rationality” (Mukherjee "The Anxiety of Indianness" 173-74). Nonetheless, what Rushdie left behind was a novel engagement with narratives of dislocation and disengagement in a post-national India. As Paranjape points out, whereas the earlier generation of Indian writers in English constructed a national voice and expression to accommodate the requirements of a freshly decolonized nation in the early impetuous days of nationalism, the new generation of writers undermined the master narratives of the nation with their deconstructionist styles and themes (Paranjape 402). The attention paid to the minorities (Parsis, expatriates, immigrants, and above all women) meant that new forms of discourse were challenging the established nationalistic norms of literary creation.

**Conclusion**

The old and new Indian English novels have been juxtaposed by a number of literary critics to show points of difference and departure. Viney Kirpal maintains that the old Indian novel characteristically possessed solemnness and self-consciousness as opposed to the new novel that seems to be uninhibited in relation to its approaches to reality. Far from laying claims to idealism and sentimentality, Kirpal supposes, the new Indian English fiction deploys an experimental approach to forms and themes (Kirpal 344). Instead of sticking to national politics, new novels question the validity of master narratives and the ethos of nationalism while conveying a sense of
cosmopolitan consciousness. Like Rushdie, the new generation of prose writers that followed applied multiplicity and multiculturality to their pursuit of an identity that was often sought in the lives of displaced, marginal modern protagonists. They confronted conservatism in language use and opted for a brisk and irrepressible form of literary expression to vocalize India’s enormous economically underprivileged populace.

English is no longer a foreign language in India; rather, it is the [associate] official language of India in states as diverse as Assam and Meghalaya (Naik "At the Millennium Dawn: Conclusion" 249) which makes any claims of writers to specialty futile. Naik is critical of Rushdie’s viewpoint in that regard and calls him “the chief culprit” when it comes to such comparisons (Naik "At the Millennium Dawn: Conclusion" 251). Naik is referring to Rushdie’s introduction to The Vintage Book of Indian Writing in English: 1947-1997 wherein he disparagingly asserts that the Indian writers’ body of work produced in English far outweighs most of what had already been written in India’s other sixteen official languages (Elliott). Another critique of Rushdie is geared towards his characterization of people in general and women in particular as rather flat and powerless. Sudhir Kumar points out that Rahul, Pananjape’s protagonist in his novel The Narrator: A Novel pokes humor at Rushdie’s representation. He mentions that such characters (e.g. Saleem, Shiva, Padma, etc.), given real-life incarnations, would gather to haunt Rushdie for their lack of staidness and breadth (Kumar 138). And lastly, there have been numerous attacks by Hindu nationalist critics who accuse the new generation of novelists of writing disparagingly of India to secure sales in the West. Moreover, those critics
question the authenticity of such narratives in the face of India’s multicultural, multiracial, and multifaith aspects. I will touch upon those imputations in future chapters.

In short, the writers in the post-Rushdie era have tried to find their own uniquely creative voice to sidestep the perils of exoticism that became a dominant literary tag attached to the consumerization of India for an international audience. In the next chapter, I will discuss specifically how Roy, Desai, and Adiga, among others, have managed to shift the world attention from Rushdie towards a new generation of fiction writers who manufacture a new image of India for the Western readership.
CHAPTER THREE: NATION AND THE COSMOPOLITAN

NARRATION

“Nationalism of one kind or another was the cause of most of the genocides of the twentieth century. Flags are bits of colored cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people's minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead.”

(Arundhati Roy War Talk 49)

Introduction

All three novels primarily considered in this thesis—The God of Small Things, The Inheritance of Loss, and The White Tiger—have won the Booker Prize and their global circulation endows them with a cosmopolitan function or aura which has been independent of their writers’ relation with the home and the world. These novels have demonstrated in different states of feeling modes of “belonging, and practices of citizenship in an increasingly pluralized cosmos” (Stanton 2) that are true to the cosmopolitan ethos. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that their respective authors, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga, exhibit various types of a cosmopolitan outlook, competence, and orientation. They share comparable and contradictory stances in terms of the states of feeling, modes of belonging and ‘un-belonging’, and practices of citizenship in a world that is increasingly experiencing pluralization, and nationalism at the political level within India and beyond. In what follows, I will take a more focused look at each of these
novelists and their perceptions of cosmopolitanism and authenticity and how they are opposed by critics who claim that these authors are detached from the reality of the Indian society.

To initiate my discussion, I want briefly to reiterate Robbins’s take on the ever-evolving nature of cosmopolitanism in moving from being an “ideal state of detachment towards a reality of reattachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance” (Robbins Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress 3) and a commodity that is neither strictly Western nor particularized and privileged. His point becomes especially pertinent when we discuss questions of authenticity and whether or not it has much to do with the geographical disposition of a writer, either writing to a nation or writing back about one with a sense of detached conviction. Moreover, I would like to argue that through their novels, these writers challenge the dualist conceptions such as citizenship and nationality in the process of transnational migrations as portrayed in the lives of so many characters. Characters might go through transnational movements, yet their citizenship and Indian nationality are in conflict. Through various strategies and visions, the novels in question continue to attest to the persistence of the nation as a structure of feeling and a site of emotional investment. In tune with Etienne Balibar’s nuanced understanding of the cosmopolitan, rather than proclaiming that national borders have disappeared, these novels show us the “vacillating” nature of such borders and their contested positions (Balibar 220). As a result of so many such nuances, we can observe complexities around the notions of family, mobility, community and
nation, their interchanging inception, transformation, amorphousness, and deterioration.

**Arundhati Roy**

Suzanna Arundhati Roy (1961—) was born in the state of Assam. Her mother, the social activist Mary Roy, is a Syrian Christian from the state of Kerala. Her father was a Bengali, who managed a tea plantation in Assam. Roy and her brother were still very young when her parents divorced. Mary Roy returned to her parents who lived in Ayemenem, a small conservative rural town in Kerala. Mary Roy’s unsuccessful marriage, divorce and supposedly ‘shameful’ return engendered obdurate hostility towards herself and her children. Under these circumstances, Roy and her brother were deprived of formal education, leading Mary Roy to start an informal school of her own. Perhaps the seeds of rebellion with a cause were sown in young Arundhati at precisely that point. With her only fiction to date, the Shillong-born novelist won the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 1997 and was “hailed as a voice of an emerging nation”. Exhibiting prose lyricism, time shifts and thematic wanderings throughout, *The God of Small Things* became the first biggest selling book by a nonexpatriate Indian author.

Over the past seventeen years, she has devoted her energy to the world of nonfiction, to the social welfare of the powerless and to political activism. In her homeland, she actively crusades against India’s most urgent political challenges: nuclear tests, dams (for example the Sardar Sarovar Dam), the occupation of Kashmir, Hindu nationalism, terrorism, industrialization and rapid development and
the emergence of a super-wealthy elite and the 800 million citizens who still live on less than twenty rupees a day (Arundhati Roy "Is India on a Totalitarian Path? Arundhati Roy on Corporatism, Nationalism and World’s Largest Vote"). On a global scale, Arundhati Roy is a spokeswoman for the anti-globalization movement, seeing it as a force threatening the locatedness of the poor Indian mass. She has also written in jarring tones about Narendra Modi, the fifteenth and current Prime Minister of India. She has, of course, provoked a backlash in the wake of all these statements and stances.


In a 2008 interview with the *Times of India*, Roy expressed her support for the independence of Kashmir from India. According to her, the half a million separatist protesters is a clear indication that Kashmiris desire secession from India, not union with it (Ghosh). Both the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have harshly criticized Roy for her remarks. Satya Prakash Malaviya, a senior Congress Party leader, asked her to withdraw her historically incorrect, “irresponsible statement” (Agency). He remarks that Roy needs to brush up on her historical knowledge that “the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to
the Union of India after its erstwhile ruler Maharaja Hari Singh duly signed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947. And the state, consequently has become as much an integral part of India as all the other erstwhile princely states have" (Agency). In 2010, she was charged with sedition for the comments by Delhi Police for expressing “anti-India” opinions but the central government declined to press charges (Jebaraj).

In his essay on Roy, Shah Alam Khan discusses how Roy has been labeled as “anti-national”. Khan points to the fact that Roy has occasionally come under fire from both the rightists and leftists in the Indian political scene as well as from the intellectual class. Many have written her off as a minor nuisance that can at best be described as a fanatic bohemian who verbalizes the Indian nation’s problems “emotively” (S. A. Khan) without offering any resolution.

Roy openly denounces Hindu nationalism as fascism, fights for the rights of India's Muslim minority, and cautions that the rapid urbanization of the country, marginalizing minorities and rural households, borders on genocide. In her view, India is in “a genocidal situation, turning upon itself, colonising the lower sections of society who have to pay the price for this shining India” (Elmhrist). She equally depreciates the previous Indian PM, Manmohan Singh as a “pathetic figure as a human being” whose democracy only works “for a few people, in the better neighbourhoods of Bombay and Delhi” (Elmhrist). She warns us about the sham democracy in India that has turned on its poorest citizens while the government spends $34 billion on the defense system. In Field Notes on Democracy, she presents a scathing critique of India's political and judicial systems, both at the
center and at the state level: “Every 'democratic' institution in this country has shown itself to be unaccountable, inaccessible to the ordinary citizen and either unwilling or incapable of acting in the interests of genuine social justice” (Johnston). For Roy, the only path to social justice is non-violent resistance. In reaching her goal, she continues to stay committed to India’s disenfranchised millions.

When asked to differentiate between nationalism and religious fundamentalism in terms of which was the bigger evil in India, she responded: “Why do we have to be hierarchical thinkers? The nationalism is a form of religious fundamentalism. The kind of hyper-nationalism that you have in India is a kind of religion” (Ali).

Roy resourcefully opposes the global corporatization and multinationalization of India which she identifies as a new form of imperialism that devours the large destitute majority of the world’s largest democracy (India). The neo-imperial course of time creates subsidiary heads, some dangerous byproducts that arouse suspicion and fear: “nationalism, religious bigotry, fascism, and of course terrorism” (Arundhati Roy War Talk 103), all welcome by the government and the Indian elite. The elite can globe-trot to its “imaginary destination near the top of the world” while the dispossessed and downtrodden are “spiraling downwards into crime and chaos” (Arundhati Roy War Talk 105).

She accuses the Prime Minister, Home Minister, and the Disinvestment Minister of selling India’s infrastructures to corporate multinationals in an attempt to privatize water, electricity, coal, education and telecommunication. These “reforms”, she
believes, push people off their land and out of their jobs so that “hundreds of impoverished farmers are committing suicide by consuming pesticide” (Sirothia).

Roy repeatedly states that her works of fiction and nonfiction embrace one central motif: the relationship between power and the powerless. As the disparity between rich and the poor widens, India’s open arms to “free market”, she argues, will undermine democracy as each corporate organization is increasingly becoming more avid to reach their “sweetheart deals” (Arundhati Roy War Talk 106). "The nation state is such a cunning instrument in the hands of capitalism now. You have a democracy that strengthens the idea of the nation as a marketplace" (Jack). The role of the global corporates in this process is that of an intensifier of the globalization of money, goods, and services but not “free movement of people” therefore, despite going through a transnational experience, the poor are still unable to achieve mobility because of a higher order that discounts them and their needs to grow. This is the type of cosmopolitan detachment that excludes expatriation.

Despite Roy’s focus on nation, her international breadth of commentaries and analysis of the issues surrounding universal justice (core to cosmopolitan ideals) allows us to see her as a micro-cosmopolitan.

In her next series of political essays, Listening to Grasshoppers (2009), she broadens her examination of the dark side of contemporary India where she looks closely at how religious majoritarianism, cultural nationalism, and neo-fascism simmer under the lid of the supposed world’s largest democracy. The combination of Hindu
Nationalism and India’s neo-liberal economic reforms in the early 90s is now turning India into a police state (Arundhati Roy *Field Notes on Democracy: Listening to Grasshoppers*). Contrary to the charge from her critics, that she only exacerbates debate around social and political problems without proffering solid solutions, Roy does put forth her thoughts on the way to cope. The way forward is through civil disobedience operating through such media as, music, and literature until the mass realizes its power to demand change in the government practice. Moreover, she believes that as one way to move forward, India needs to purge itself of Gandhi’s “casteist tendencies” (Viju "Mahatma Gandhi Was a Casteist, Arundhati Roy Says").

In her July 2014 “Mahatma Ayyankali” address— in memory of the state’s renowned dalit leader— at the Kerala University, she criticized Gandhi for branding black prisoners “kafirs” during his time in South Africa – a term indicating that they were uncivilized, liars and had no scruples. In response to the allegations, MS John, professor and director of School of Gandhian Thought and Development Studies at Mahatma Gandhi University, said it was a mistake to view Gandhi as someone who emerged fully formed. “The early Gandhi was not a radical personality. He evolved. The comment that he made about black prisoners was due to his own experience of threat of sodomy by inmates while he was jail” (Viju "Mahatma Gandhi Was a Casteist, Arundhati Roy Says").

Poet and activist Sugathakumari lashed back at Roy: "Gandhi knew the culture and roots of India in all its depth and it is unfortunate that Arundhati Roy has made this statement for cheap publicity," (Viju "Arundhati Experiments with Truth Again?"). Ironic as it may seem, the novel was first met with a wave of censure and even
resentment from prominent sections of the Indian left, particularly those associated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist). They felt that the novel has an explicit attack on the late CPM leader, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, in the way it showed the Communists as being complicit in caste oppression and for peddling “bourgeois decadence” through its representation of “sexual anarchy” (Jani 191).

Such provocations in Roy’s body of political and activist writing frame her signature as an author. The vision of cosmopolitanism that emerges from her anti-nationalist ideas and rejection of agendas put forth by the Hindu nationalist government can be read from as early as her novel *The God of Small Things*.

It took Roy four and a half years to finish *The God of Small Things*. The book topped the *Sunday Times* bestseller list in London, and it became the bestselling book in the English language in India. Now, Roy spends most of her time traveling across the globe talking and writing, giving the world what she thinks is the insider’s view of every possible protest and human rights violation. This has garnered her many critics. One writes, “Her activism is futuristic and well-meaning but her hysterics and the sense of doom she pegs to all that she says and does are a bit on the offensive side” (Singadi 42).

*The God of Small Things*, which is set in a remote part of Kerala, renders a location in the heart of the exotic tropics of the Malabar Coast that is particularly interesting to the Western readers. Roy’s framing of the novel’s events with global and national historical details such as the moon landing, the farmers’ revolt in West Bengal that spiraled into the Naxalite movement, references to the E.M.S. Namboodiripad (first
Communist Chief Minister in Kerala), and Robert Wise’s 1965 release, *The Sound of Music*— to name a few— all are in tune with her interwoven Indian national allegory. According to Singadi, Roy is well aware of the success formula that was set by Rushdie’s unprecedented and widespread international readership around two decades ago by *Midnight’s Children*: “the autobiography, the bits of history, [and] the play with words” (Singadi 43). Therefore, Indian writers in English successfully indulge in “strategic exoticism” to sell best (Huggan 81). There had been allegations that Roy walks in the footsteps of Rushdie, both in style and in essence. When asked how she felt about the novel’s obscenity charges which were reminiscent of (but not as severe as) Rushdie’s death fatwa, she denies such comparisons. Roy argues that Western critics have a tendency to “peg an identity” (Jana) on the new authors that come along in India because it makes their job easier. She, nevertheless, admits that her own reading of writers from the American South such as Mark Twain and Harper Lee have had an influence on her: “I think that perhaps there’s an infusion or intrusion of landscape in their literature that might be similar to mine. […] Human relationships and the divisions between human beings are more brutal and straightforward than those in cities, where everything is hidden behind walls and a veneer of urban sophistication” (Jana).

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* was awarded the Booker Prize in October 1997. It has been translated into forty languages and sold more than six million copies across the globe. It is in this context that the novel faces highly critical reviews that berate the author for reducing “India’s 50 years of freedom […] to some three hundred and fifty pages of filth and froth” (Singadi 45) or a novel that is
at best a “chronicle of deaths foretold” (Menon 3). A number of literary critics such as Merritt Moseley attribute the win to the Booker Prize committee’s failure to recognize and acknowledge previous years’ more deserving entries: Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* and Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh* and their attempt to make up for that oversight (Moseley "Recent British Novels" 678).

Roy’s rise to literary stardom was made possible when her publishers embarked on global tours to advertise the book and its young, beautiful and *authentic* Indian author even though at about the same time, Sabu Thomas and G.M Idikkula, two lawyers from Pathanamthitta in Kerala, had filed an obscenity case against Arundhati Roy on grounds of her erotic depiction of an intercaste love affair and “violating all decency [that] pollutes the minds of the people” (Sreedharan). The *New York Times* columnist, Elisabeth Bummiler sees the court proceeding as a winning factor for Arundhati Roy. She observes that “Mr. Thomas’s summons is not tragic news for Ms. Roy’s American publisher, Random House, whose representatives are happy to talk about an obscenity complaint that can help sales in the United States” (Bummiler).

In contrast to the previous attacks, Salman Rushdie embraced and warmly welcomed the advent of a new voice in Indian English fiction: “The Keralan writer Arundhati Roy has arrived to the accompaniment of a loud fanfare. Her novel [...] is full of ambition and sparkle, and written in a highly wrought and utterly personal style” (Rushdie "Introduction" viii). However, Rushdie’s words of praise were clouded by many heavy-handed detractors. Lakshmi Gopalkrishnan, for instance, accused Roy of “incubating” the book for four and a half years to deliberately time
its release to coincide with India’s Golden Jubilee celebrations (Gopalkrishnan). Another critic pointed to the role of careful marketing of the novel and the emergence of a “Roy phenomenon” (Mongia 105). Notwithstanding possessing an authentic Indian image, the critics believe that Arundhati Roy’s audacious cosmopolitanism is blended into the mix and escalates the exotic value of her book in order to boost sales. In a direct reference to the aforementioned formula of success for Indian English fiction writers after Rushdie, Mongia states that Roy’s novel is “hardly any different from a tourist brochure or travel guide” and, in fact, is a sensual literary promissory note written for the viewing pleasures of the Western publication companies and their readers (Mongia 105).

The use of Roy’s ‘image’ has been another target for critics to take issues with the marketing of *The God of Small Things*. While it is not entirely in her ability to stop the publishing industry to make such provisions, Huggan finds such an incident noteworthy. He sets the bar even higher by referring to Roy’s physical image as yet another meticulous strategy in the mysterious and lush exotica the book endeavors to canvas. A novel drafted by a writer who, as he puts it, is “incorrigibly photogenic”, *The God of Small Things* benefits from Roy’s alleged “bohemianism” and “exotic looks” for self-promotion and oriental marketability. However, they all come at a hefty price. From Huggan’s perspective, Roy’s historicity and “Conradian” primitiveness show the “continuing presence of an imperial imaginary” that lurks behind the prolifically successful production and dissemination of Indian English fiction to the global audience. The novel, as a result, stands in “metonymically for India itself as an object of conspicuous consumption” (Huggan 77; 81). Marta
Dvorak reads *The God of Small Things* similarly, calling it a “neocolonial commodification” of India for the Western reader’s taste for the exotic by way of using “domesticated mythological sensibility, its topographical details, its interpolation of Malayalam words, and description of every sphere of social life” (Dvorak 77).

Roy’s novel arguably had a timely publication date. Under a decade after the immense popularity of Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* (1988), Roy published her book in the fiftieth year of the country’s Independence. The novel can be looked at as a trenchant critique of Indian society, its rigidified caste system, its patriarchy within marriage and family, and of how social conservatism punishes any transgressions of codes and values of conduct in violent ways. It also takes a critical stand in its depiction of intimate human relationships, creates a “poetic prose” (Lane 97), and opens a new chapter in the use of new literary forms of expression in fiction. The narratorial strategies employed by Roy in the novel are reminiscent of Rushdie’s innovations in storytelling such as hybrid forms of writing, compound neologisms, extravagant capitalizations, sentence fragments and excessive paragraph breaks.

If the novel deploys a cosmopolitan detachment to critique national failings, it also uses the same stance to criticize globalization and the ways in which it is responsible for the elimination of cultural differences and the imposition of a global homogeneity that undermines dichotomous discourses of core and periphery and self and other. Globalization, in this vision, helps to perpetuate and at times exacerbate these binaries. According to Chitra Sankaran, “globalization, though it
professes to homogenize the human condition, seems actually to polarize it in extreme ways” (Sankaran 106).

The cosmopolitan critiques of globalization remain tainted by their lines of dissemination and circulation. As Hardt and Negri propose, such local specificities do have global resonance and hint to an increasingly cosmopolitan breadth in an era of globalization (Hardt and Negri 56-57). In the same regard, there is a subtle relational tension between the way Roy is critical of global capital and its nationalist instantiations and her benefiting from it. On the one hand, Roy is a vocal critique of Western capitalism through her anti-globalization writings. On the other, her only novel was a big hit primarily because it rode on the wings of such capitalistic machinery in the publishing industry that culminated with a Booker Prize win. So I would like to argue that Roy’s stance as an author/activist is one that wants to engage with the nation (especially with the rural places where the country’s poorest live) while using her cosmopolitan disposition as leverage. Roy’s internationally privileged position exists in a space that is complicit with the cosmopolitan values that enable the global circulation of her books. There is a tradeoff that is taking place between the authorship and the publishing machines are at work to safeguard sales and profits (more in Chapter Seven).

The social criticism of Roy is the brightest part of the novel that cruelly exposes the hypocrisies, envies, and desires of an underestimated strata of society that is tied down to the sociopolitical realities existing in the regionally contextualized boundaries of the South Indian State of Kerala, both in form of caste and class issues as well as the gender bias rampant in the traditional layers of the Indian mass
(Adhikari 5). Her novel portrays a widening chasm between the Westernized cosmopolitan elites of the Third World and their conservative counterparts, at times nationalist, reactionary or both, whether rich or poor. The massive class difference in India has taunted Roy: “the people of India have been... loaded onto two convoys of trucks (a huge big one and a tiny little one) that have set off resolutely in opposite directions. The tiny convoy is on its way to a glittering destination somewhere near the top of the world. The other convoy just melts into the darkness and disappears” (Arundhati Roy The God of Small Things 2-3).

In The God of Small Things, India is portrayed as inherently and somehow clandestinely bifurcated into the bright, shining India and the dark, grim India. In contrast to what had been promised to the Indian masses during Nehru’s 1947's midnight ‘Tryst with Destiny’, the caste system endured, further undermining the proper accumulation and fair distribution of wealth among different social classes.

So from a postcolonial and cosmopolitical perspective, Arundhati Roy engages the Indian society in terms of caste, nation, religion, and wealth and tries to show that the majority of the nation is still living in the darkness, misery, and conflict but still holding to a dream of ‘tomorrow’. It must be pointed out, nevertheless, that Roy is both a critical voice against unrestrained globalization in favor of the nation and also a social activist in the hope of creating a micro-cosmopolitanism of an Indian untouchable, subaltern origin, perhaps a cosmopolitan nation. That combination is extremely hard to achieve, but Arundhati Roy insists that her reader imagine it.

For Roy, in spite of the fact that her novel can be read as a harsh criticism of Indian political corruption, there is a glimmer of optimism: “naalay” [tomorrow] is the one
word that finishes her novel. Her ways of imagining cosmopolitanism are comparable to yet at times very different from Desai’s and Adiga’s.

Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai was born in India in 1971 and lived in Delhi until she was 14. She, then, spent a year in England, before her family moved to the USA. She completed her schooling in Massachusetts before attending Bennington College, Hollins University, and Columbia University, where she studied creative writing, taking two years off to write *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. She first came to literary attention in 1997 when she was published in the *New Yorker* and in *Mirrorwork*, an anthology of 50 years of Indian writing edited by Salman Rushdie. She contributed the closing piece in the book: ‘Strange Happenings in the Guava Orchard’. In 1998, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, which took her four years to complete, was published and received positive reviews: “I think my first book was filled with all that I loved most about India and knew I was in the inevitable process of losing. It was also very much a book that came from the happiness of realizing how much I loved to write” (Sinha 131).

Some eight years later, her second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, was published in early 2006 and won the 2006 Booker Prize. When speaking of the novel’s protagonist Sai, in relation to own life, she says, “[t]he characters of my story are entirely fictional, but these journeys (of her grandparents) as well as my own provided insight into what it means to travel between East and West and it is this I wanted to capture. The fact that I live this particular life is no accident. It was my
inheritance” (Shourie). By inheritance, Desai is referring to her upbringing as a young teen who left India to live in the West and receive a world-class education at American universities. Undeniably, Kiran Desai’s transnational and literary inheritance is attributed to her cosmopolitan and privileged family as she is the daughter of the famous novelist Anita Desai.

Despite her how background, Kiran Desai focuses much of *The Inheritance of Loss* on the remote north of India, subject to ethnic, political divides and on emigrants from the South Asian subcontinent and other parts of the world to England and the USA. In literary terms, the phenomenon of transnational laborers eking out a living in the USA or England has not been mapped out extensively. The migrants, all of whom are illegal, come from several continents and cohabit, by compulsion, in the crowded, dingy basements of ethnic restaurants in New York. By placing this variety of geographies alongside each other, the novel depicts how a globalizing world that creates new social and economic gaps can also put the migrants through a learning experience of challenging their own ethnic and social traditions and barriers during the time they spend together.

Diaspora, since the 1990s, has generally been theorized as the displacement of individuals and groups from their homeland through exile and migration and their re-anchoring in their host countries. Diaspora, viewed from the standpoint of a double national and cultural belonging, has prompted a rethinking of the idea of a nation, its borders and the way it protectively excludes its internal components. Nevertheless, according to some scholars, recent uses of the term diaspora have gone through a shift from being originally an alternative paradigm for the nation,
and from a preoccupation with the construction of diasporic identities as culturally hybrid, to the conceptualization that diaspora and the experience of diasporic subjects and communities are predicated on such factors as class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexuality (Parreñas and Siu; Braziel and Mannur). Desai’s novel focuses on the material experiences of various ethnic diasporas in the context of late twentieth-century capitalism, yet, still takes into account class and ethnicity issues, in a way departing from earlier conceptualizations of diaspora. Sabo argues that Desai’s denial of a celebratory attitude to mobility and hybrid cultural identity is her attempt to “re-politicize the genre of South Asian diasporic narratives [with contemporary diasporic South Asian authors such as Rushdie, Ghosh, Roy, Lahiri, among others] by way of a renewed attention to topical themes and narrative form (Sabo 376). She takes both of these in various ways: diaspora represents both a socio-political formation and a formal narrative strategy that extends from this formation, underscores socio-economic inequities in the world, and invites readers to think critically about immigration and global capitalism. The novel interweaves several parallel stories.

The demands of the Nepali-Indian minority group for statehood in Kalimpong, the Himalayas, during the mid-1980s, form a crucial part of the novel. Central to the novel are the trials and tribulations of Biju, a downtrodden cook’s son who has migrated illegally to the US where he joins a transnational labor force toiling in the basement kitchens of New York City’s ethnic restaurants. His life runs parallel to that of the oldest character in the novel, Judge Jemubhai, a middle-class Patel, who travels to a colonial, racist England as a youth, prior to independence (circa 1939) to
study law at Cambridge and returns home as an alienated Anglicized Indian who admires things English, and holds contemptuous views of things Indian rendering him a “foreigner in his own country” (K. Desai 32). He is an ambivalent character who, in order to subdue his sense of innate inferiority before Englishness, internalizes a make-believe English superiority in himself. To borrow Homi Bhabha’s famous coinage, Jemu has metamorphosized into a “mimic man” (Bhabha "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" 122). He is Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect, albeit spuriously. The inherent ambivalence of colonial mimicry produces a desired other that is close to the subject but not quite there. Jemu’s desire for an authentic British identity through mimicry make him a mimic man; nevertheless, his recurring slippages at the heart of a colonial England remind the readers that he still is an Indian. He is not concerned a bit about breaking away from meaningful bonds between his people and himself. Yet, his experience in the UK has troubled him so much that upon his return to a postcolonial India, he transforms himself into a ghastly personage with “the fake English accent and the face powdered pink and white over dark brown” (K. Desai 193). He despises his wife’s looks since she is doomed to be inferior compared to her blond and tall English counterparts.

It is interesting to see how the Judge’s and Biju’s travels underscore the historical continuities between colonial and neoliberal times as well as the ways in which postcolonial subjects and economic migrants feel marginalized in a capitalist America. Desai is careful, of course, to delineate their class, caste, and legal status disparity, in spite of which their experiences and opportunities in their host
countries turn out to be similar at one time, different at another. The cosmopolitanism that is experienced by Biju and the Judge is hollow. The Judge’s venture into a colonial England does not grant him any more cosmopolitan confidence and consciousness than Biju who struggles as an illegal migrant in the US. Biju’s and the Judge’s lives are compared and contrasted to Sai’s, the Judge’s granddaughter. The outcome of an interfaith, inter-caste marriage (a Zoroastrian father and a Hindu mother), Sai is brought up by English nuns in a convent, another aspect of an exilic life. Like her grandfather, Sai is an Anglophile, who is more comfortable speaking English [which she deems is better than Hindi], and can’t have a constructive conversation in Hindi with the cook.

The novel encompasses the experience of diasporic dispersion in India, England, and the USA, along the lines of colonialism, nationalism, and globalization. From a transnational perspective, it seems to pose a question to the readers and critics: how can and should we accommodate illegal immigrants, the stranger, in the nation-state, taking ethical responsiveness and responsibility into account, reminiscent of cosmopolitan ideas, and ideals.

Desai’s novel shows up the limitations of Stoic ideal cosmopolitanism in showing “actually existing cosmopolitanism” (Robbins “Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism”) to be flawed, even dangerous. In The Inheritance of Loss, Biju exemplifies a plebeian cosmopolitan (Brennan At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now 39), one who is by definition unrefined or coarse in nature or manner and whose cultural dissonance and mutual lack of or rather selective solidarity with fellow migrants in
the US is an indication of a new cosmopolitanism that is non-elitist. The Judge is in pursuit of a kind of *demotic* cosmopolitanism in so far as he seeks “civic and ethical value [and not terror] in the process of exposure to otherness” (Gilroy 75). Alas, a colonial England is not the best place and time for such a venture, and he soon finds out that his commitment to this learning experience is unrequited by the locals. This terrorizes the Judge so deeply that he can never recuperate from his psychological fears until the end of the novel.

What all these branches have in common is the fact that cosmopolitanism has lost its ready connotations of social and economic privilege, and now extends to less elitist forms of experiences of the subaltern. However, Wilson cautions us about dismissing cosmopolitanism’s notoriously elitist character too easily and regarding “the ‘immigrant as global cosmopolitan,’ carrier of some liberal and liberated hybridity” (Wilson 80). As less celebratory views point out, the concept is arguably too abstract and detached to have equitable effects: for instance, political rights for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. At the same time, ideal cosmopolitanism underrates the power of nation-states that aim to shape cultural identities (Brennan *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*; Malcomson 233-45). What is more, cosmopolitan openness toward foreigners and curiosity about their cultures is unable to change power imbalances. In its defense, in aesthetic dimensions, cosmopolitanism offers the possibility of cultivating feelings of empathy and of forging cross-cultural conversations. Drawing on Anthony Kwame Appiah’s notion of conversation as a cosmopolitan tool we can see that Desai’s novel uses conversation as a metaphor for imaginative engagement with the experience and
ideas of others, whose ultimate aim is to develop “habits of coexistence” (Appiah xix) with “particular strangers” (98).

Although Appiah advocates shared values as a basis for sympathy and solidarity, he does not offer a clear portrait of the stranger—of situations when the stranger is real, rather than imaginary, and of how one could carry on conversations with others, defuse conflicts, and bridge differences. *The Inheritance of Loss* depicts precisely such situations and underscores the difficulty of carrying on the conversation with Others in the context of a shared history of political violence.

Upon meeting a Pakistani co-worker in one of the ethnic kitchens in New York, Biju, an Indian immigrant, finds that “he could not talk straight to the man; every molecule of him felt fake, every hair on him went on alert. / Desis against Pakis. / Ah, old war, best war” (K. Desai 25). Nonetheless, Biju and the Pakistani later become friends in mutual opposition to their exploiters.

Despite Appiah’s underestimate of the potential for conflict with strangers, the novel unfolds an embodiment of an *everyday* cosmopolitanism, or in Gilroy’s term “demotic”, that is based on “mundane encounters with difference” in contemporary multicultural societies (Gilroy 67). Gilroy stays optimistic about this bottom-up approach that places value on ordinary exposure to otherness, but the novelist seems to proffer that cosmopolitan encounters in such “contact zones” as these should be viewed as sites of contamination, negotiation, and conflict, and not simply as opportunities for inter-ethnic conversation (Sabo 378).
It should not come as a surprise that Desai’s immigrant protagonists will not be able to attain cosmopolitan ideals. For them, New York City is not what Jacques Derrida calls a “city of refuge” (Derrida 2), governed by the laws of hospitality and where illegal immigrants may find sanctuary. Rather, in their horrid experience, New York City is a series of overcrowded basements and minimal wages – and this, in itself, represents a particular kind of cultural experience that encourages vernacular forms of cosmopolitan engagements. What is common among these immigrants is their poverty, marginality, and inability to find solace in their own fragmentary ethnic communities. As a consequence, they become part of an ethnically diverse and transnational labor class. Yet these diasporic characters, especially those with high reliance on their national and religious values have a lot to learn in handling such situations. Simultaneously, a laborer can for once get firsthand experience of how the rest of the world sees his nation. For example, Biju would have never come to understand the global dispersal of Indians and the Indophobic attitude it has engendered in the world:

From other kitchens, he was learning what the world thought of Indians: / In Tanzania, if they could, they would throw them out like they did in Uganda. / In Madagascar, if they could, they would throw them out”, and the same treatment applies to Indians in Nigeria, Fiji, China, Hong Kong, Germany, Italy, Japan, Guam, Singapore, Burma, South Africa, and Guadeloupe (K. Desai 86-87).

In *The Cosmopolitan Novel*, Berthold Schoene wonders whether this reference in any way reflects Desai’s own experience as an expatriate (142) and whether this is how one figures out subtle nuances of crucial differences in a cultural landscape. He writes “Desai thinks of her characters in terms of the passport they hold, and she
fails to imagine any new, alternative (multitudinous, cosmopolitan, inoperative) forms of belonging” (142).

Another factor that all immigrants in the novel share (despite all their cultural and religious differences) is their constant struggle with the effects of colonization and racialization in the USA. Thus, Biju has come across a situation he has never encountered before in his life: how to relate to diasporic others that are so different from him. According to Sabo, *The Inheritance of Loss* has a cosmopolitan project to “conceive of diaspora networks despite, or because of, tenuous inter-ethnic bonds” (387). In short, Kiran Desai’s portrayal of Indian immigrants in New York City is a starting point for enlarging diasporas’ borders through thinking about other disenfranchised ethnic subjects, and thus for conceptualizing broader cosmopolitan engagements in the age of global capitalism.

Desai employs a diasporic tool with an emphasis on the protagonists’ class and cultural capital. Taking into consideration, Biju’s, Sai’s, and the Judge’s different movements, the novel exhibits a deep rift that characterizes the novel’s view of immigration and diaspora. Far from an exclusive celebration of diaspora, Desai warns us about the conflicting and complicating results of transnational migration to and from nation-state and the cost of such dislocation irrespective of the opportunity for re-inventing oneself. Sai, the Judge’s granddaughter and Gyan’s love interest, represents this idea in the novel. A while after living with the Judge’s and seeing her love with Gyan wane, she finds it intolerable to stay in India for much longer. In as much as Biju or the Judge had transnational aspirations, the novel, depicts them stuck and immobile. However, *The Inheritance of Loss*, finishes with
the possibility of Sai (and not Biju or the Judge) leaving India and succumbing to the hardships and obstacles while keeping a careful eye on the limits of a cosmopolitan outlook.

In short, the ties the novel has to more than one country creates a transforming landscape of global interaction wherein individual characters are confronted with different ideological imperatives in their connection to an imagined collective across geopolitical conflicting fronts (Liu 115). The novel does not insist on any puritanical definition of transnational and cosmopolitan experience, but rather opens up new ways of perceiving geocultural complexities. At the same time, *The Inheritance of Loss* holds a preeminent position in the way it represents the Indian nation and its struggle with issues of caste, religion, immigration and labor migration to the US in the lives of its major characters. According to Prasanta Bhattacharyya, the fates of all the principal characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* are indisputably tied to the fate of a nation that has continually been on a centuries-long journey (Bhattacharyya 222). *The Inheritance of Loss* expresses national disillusionment in its images of family breakdowns complicated with guilt and the “ill-omened trajectory of illicit love burgeoning in breach of traditional boundaries” (Schoene 136). Desai’s novel is set in a notoriously sectarian, conflict-ridden Northeastern Kalimpong in the Himalayas, wherein during the mid-1980s, an Indian-Nepalese ethnic group was pushing for the foundation of an independent country, Ghorkaland, figuring in real historical terms Rushdie’s earlier metaphoric depiction of the difficulties of creating a unified nation in his *Midnight’s Children*. 
Desai, globe-trotting and cosmopolitan of her own accord, has penned a novel that foregrounds diaspora and mobility at various levels. Apart from Jemubai and Biju’s travels, Desai briefly notes two young diasporic females, one a reporter for the BBC and the other a CNN newscaster, and a few Indian students living and studying in the US but does not provide an extended description of their lives.

One of the elderly sisters in the novel asks: “What [is] a country but the idea of it?” In that context, globalization might come across as an appealing antidote to the winnowing sectarianism of nationalism. Already in the late 1980s, globalization was growing virally across continents promising to overcome historical disjuncture between the first and third world countries with mass migrations of labor forces. This phenomenon destroyed so many local economies as cheap labor was being used to produce expensive products. This is precisely what the activist Roy opposes in her political and humanitarian efforts: the fact that world corporatization is devouring *weaklings* at a local and national level.

By focusing on the material experiences of various ethnic diasporas and on the phenomenon of diasporic dispersal in the context of late twentieth-century capitalism, Desai problematizes the factors that influence diasporic and transnational experiences: class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexuality. As opposed to Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, Desai’s novel renders homelands “imaginary” (Rushdie *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*) and unsatisfactory host countries. Kiran Desai is relentlessly suspicious of bottom-up cosmopolitanism and, in fact, its existence at all. As the novel exposes it, migrant
and diasporic characters’ actions have a limited transformative potential in their host societies and even within their own diasporic communities.

As to why this is so, we should look upon Desai’s position as a cosmopolitan novelist who is radically different from Roy and Adiga. Kiran Desai primarily associates cosmopolitanism with the Indian elite classes, of which she is a member because she comes from privileged beginnings and, therefore, continues her jet-setting adventures. In Desai’s version of cosmopolitanism, one who can afford to experience a feeling of cultural kinship in the world is more capable of widening his cosmopolitan consciousness. This also takes place with regards to the literary practices that create intertextual connections to authors and texts located elsewhere—the most visible indication being the global circulation of the novel through Western publishing companies independent of the novelist’s disposition. By contrast, subaltern immigrants in the USA lack the luxury of such cross-cultural conversations, yet they also experience encounters with difference. In their case, cosmopolitanism should be construed not as “a cultural disposition” (Tomlinson 185) that views distant cultures as possibilities for personal enrichment, but rather as a feeling of empathy for and openness towards the Other.

**Aravind Adiga**

The youngest novelist of the trio discussed here, Aravind Adiga, was born in Chennai in October 1974. In 1980, his family went back to Mangalore and lived there until 1990 when his mother suddenly passed away. He moved to Australia with his father and then did a Bachelor’s degree at Columbia University followed by
a scholarship awarded to undertake an M. Phil in English literature at Magdalene College, Oxford. His adventurous spirit then led him to a career in journalism. He first interned with the Financial Times and then got a job with Time magazine. In 2003, he moved back to India (Delhi) and in 2006, he settled in Mumbai where he was living when he won the Man Booker prize for writing The White Tiger.

Drafted as a series of informal missives addressed to Wen Jiabao, the then Chinese Premier, Adiga’s debut novel supposedly marks a long-awaited literary and aesthetic departure from Salman Rushdie’s legacy in Indian English postcolonial writing. The novel received worldwide praise, mostly from the Western critics. Most notably, as quoted in The Daily Mail, Michael Portillo, the then Chair of the Booker Judging panel, celebrated the novel as “an intensely original book about an India that is new to many of us” (Thomas).

Rollicking and confessional, the novel charts the struggling rise of a poor rural rickshawala’s smart son, Balram, to become a fugitive entrepreneur in Bangalore's economic boom, something that Adiga himself took advantage of back in the early 2000s when he was transitioning from academic life to journalism— for three years, Adiga did fieldwork in India as a South Asian correspondent while working for Time Magazine (Kapur).

In spite of the fact that the narrator’s tone in The White Tiger is quite ironic, his comments can also be read as a serious commentary on the contemporary Indian society and posed immediate questions to about increasing divide between the deprived and the affluent. Perhaps, one important aspect of the novel, evocative of
Mulk Raj Anand’s exposé of the day-to-day life of an untouchable caste member, is Adiga’s depiction of the lives of ordinary people who find their fate in the exploitative hands of their wealthy masters.

The novel outraged Indian critics who saw the novel as a perfect guide to “Dark India: a series of extensive footnotes for the benefit of Western readers” (Ghoshal). Somak Ghoshal contends that Adiga’s narrative is a “best bet” for novelists originating from a country of a billion to depict the miserable lives of the subalterns who were squeezing out a life far away from the sparkling India of the vast, populous cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore.

Apparently dissatisfied with Adiga’s critical view of India’s “economic miracle”, Krishna Singh calls the novel a brutal confession, revealing the rot at the center of the so-called “three pillars of modern India: democracy, enterprise, and justice” (K. Singh 100). This interpretation was welcomed by the Booker jury since it showed the “dark side of India— a new territory” (as quoted by Krishna Singh from Sunday Times of India, 2008). Shobhan Saxena smells a deep conspiracy behind the prize:

The west is once again using our poverty to humiliate us. Seeing the award as a stamp of disapproval on India’s poor social indicators, a recently published Indian author calls The White Tiger “a tourist’s account of India”. He raises questions about the intentions of Adiga who grew up in Australia and went to elite universities in England and the U.S....Adiga’s story may remain the view of a professional observer, who failed to see anything good about the country he traveled through as a journalist, always recording and never experiencing anything real. It could be mere suspicion, but it takes care of our guilt (Saxena).
Here, we see national pride playing out against the view of critical cosmopolitan detachment as amounting to careless prejudice.

M.Q. Khan accuses Adiga of deliberately remaining oblivious to the fact that the India as depicted in the novel is neither the whole India nor the “real” India wherein there are “some good persons […] and] rulers who have a good deal of humanity to uphold faith, truth and honesty” (M. Q. Khan 93). He is particularly upset with *The Economist* describing the book as giving “glimpses of Real India” which he attributes to Adiga’s own personal observation. He dismisses the novel as lacking literary worth and claims that every “alert and sensitive mind” will be disappointed and dejected by what he will find in this dark, untrue portrayal of India.

*The Guardian* reviewer Kevin Rushby, while commending the book for creating a parable of India’s changing society, expresses his concerns about Indian writers like Adiga, who have either been living in the West or have been educated. In his opinion, Adiga pictures India, the homeland as invariably a place of “brutal justice and sordid corruption” (Rushby). In this India, the poor are always dispossessed and victimized by their “age-old enemies”, the rich. Like Singh and Saxena, he denounces Adiga’s view as both fundamentally that of a stranger and superficial, reminding his readers that there are so many alternative Indias, uncontacted and unheard. He finally hopes that an “outsider” like Adiga would one day immerses himself deeper in the country and recounts its greater stories. This brings us to the final comment made by Khan when he quotes B. Jayamohan:
Indian English writing and crossover films are a particular genre of creative works popular in India and abroad now. But they can be never addressed as Indian works. The India they narrate is the India in the wishful thinking of the average Westerner. The real India is in the native Indian writings – we’ll discover it one day (M. Q. Khan 97).

Adiga is influenced by Charles Dickens and his style. He writes in an era when globalization and privatization are increasingly changing the way nation-states function regarding the ease and speed of transnational experiences and global market expansions. Among such fast developments, Adiga situates his novel to present how the values of the Indian society are being corrupted.

In spite of the fact that Adiga was born into a prominent South Indian family, migrated to Australia with his family, and was educated at Columbia and Oxford universities, he has taken a different path compared to Indian writers of a previous generation. Unlike figures such as Salman Rushdie, established in the West, Adiga has never been able to settle anywhere long enough. While having a “cosmopolitan” resumé, he has mentioned in interviews that he lives in a tiny flat in the bustling city of Mumbai whose roar of swarming crowds and cars shakes his windows days and nights. It might come as a surprise that he decided to settle in India despite international recognition and alluring beckoning of foreign shores: “I never did very well as an immigrant. I’ve lived in several countries and [have] been a disaster everywhere” he reveals to a reporter (Barber). Contrary to what Rushby has to say about Adiga’s foreign taste, he himself maintains that India has been the only country in which he has done well; it is where he lives and therefore, to become a successful writer, he has to succeed there since his “primary audience” is right there.
According to him, at the time of penning the novel, he used to live in a building much similar to that of Ashok Sharma’s while sitting down and writing his epistolary remarks to the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. Thus, he feels that he does not need to leave India and, in fact, plans to stay there to tell more stories from the heart of the subcontinent.

A key theme of the novel is the idea of Dark versus Light Indias, two countries in one in other words, which is redolent of Arundhati Roy’s elusive metaphor for the Indian nation, loaded onto “two convoys of trucks”, a tiny one leading to dreamland, and the rest melting into Darkness. Roy’s analogy seems to work perfectly for The White Tiger (Balram) and his quest for freedom. Similar to the cook’s son in The Inheritance of Loss, Balram is also a low caste character who leaves his family behind in search of a better future, not the one the rigid caste system has in store for him. Through great effort, he mobilizes (and frees) himself from a village in Laxmangarh to arrive at a city where he gradually lifts himself up among a mass of browbeaten Indians gathered in a tight ‘chicken coop’ built and owned by wealthy landlords. Therefore, the novel can also be studied from a micro-cosmopolitical perspective in which change is meant to be brought about from below, rather than from the elite. Probably the most apparent indication in the novel of such an approach is the master murder Balram plots against his “half-baked” cosmopolitan yet politically venal master. In that regard, the book has often been perceived by nationalists as an attack on “India Shining” Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)’s 2004 election slogan which aimed to disseminate a feeling of security and economic
optimism in India. Nevertheless, the book, according to Adiga, can be about both Shining and Dark India the substantial gap between them:

At a time when India is going through great changes and, with China, is likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society...criticism by writers like Flaubert, Balzac and Dickens in the 19th century helped England and France to become better societies. That’s why I am trying to do— it’s not an attack on the country, it’s about the greater process of self-examination (Rediff.com).

That the West has reviewed the book positively is not necessarily because of the novel’s focus on poverty and social ills in India, nor does Adiga’s social critique mean that he is hostile to India. There should be a distinction between the state and the people; while the novel is a harsh criticism of the Indian system of governance, Adiga aims to make a passionate case for the better treatment of the poor comprising two-thirds of the country’s population. As a result, it is not surprising to know that the book has sold in excess of 200,000 copies in India alone, which is an indication that not everybody was angry with it in India.

Roy, Desai, Adiga and the Cosmopolitan Question

While Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga may be considered cosmopolitans, the level of their cosmopolitan competence and consistency are not identical. A frequent attack on cosmopolitans is that they are elites who have privileged access to travel, learning other languages, and absorbing other cultures “by virtue of independent means, expensive tastes, and a globe-trotting lifestyle” (Robbins "Comparative Cosmopolitanism" 248). From a historical viewpoint, there is certainly truth to this claim since for the majority of the people of the world who
lived their lives within the cultural space of their own nation or ethnicity and never stepped their foot out of their limited circle, a cosmopolitan experience was never a possibility.

Out of the three of the aforementioned authors, Desai and Adiga have elite beginnings with education and upbringings in US and UK while Roy comes from a relatively humble background (Smyrl; Callahan). Therefore, in terms of travel resources, Roy clearly falls short of being an elite cosmopolitan, though this has since changed slowly.

Nonetheless, as Poole argues, in the contemporary world, people can potentially communicate with a variety of diverse cultures and understand them (Poole 162). Apart from that, travel and immigration have placed diverse people from different cultural, social, political and religious backgrounds alongside each other and have had them interact at workplaces, street corners, in markets, neighborhoods, schools and recreational areas. As Hiebert puts it, this interconnectivity has generated countless examples of a non-elite form of cosmopolitanism, a so-called “everyday or ordinary cosmopolitanism where men and women from different origins create a society where diversity is accepted [and] rendered ordinary”(209).

This is certainly relatable to Arundhati Roy. She does not possess a privileged background but through her literary career and Booker Prize, she has been able to exploit and experience the world outside India without intending to do so initially. She never left India to pursue educational ventures in the West, and in staying ‘at home’, while subjecting home to a critically detached if passionately engaged
critique, she showed that cosmopolitans are not deviant and “rootless”. Waldron writes that cosmopolitans are usually subjected to such name-callings and are believed to be agents who refuse to clearly define their belongings to particular locations, ancestry, citizenship or language (Waldron "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative” 754).

Indian cosmopolitan writers are often under constant attack from Hindu nationalists for lacking in “substance” (Hollinger 89). Here the word ‘substance’ is likely a reference to a characteristic that is quickly identifiable, most prominently a sense of loyalty to a single nation-state or cultural identity. A look at previous totalitarian and chauvinistic governments in the world, such as those of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy retells this repeating pattern. They always earmarked cosmopolitans as rootless treacherous enemies of the state (Vertovec and Cohen 6). As a result of this standpoint, all three novelists have encountered similar allegations of selling the country to the Westerners through writing books inflated with exotica that keeps Western readership at the top of the priority list while not being committed to the truth.

In that regard, Arundhati Roy’s political and cultural cosmopolitan presence is unique. In *Midnight’s Children*, Salman Rushdie signifies the ironic fact that “cosmopolitan intellectuals were to be located in English far more briskly than was the case during the colonial period” (Ahmad "Reading Arundhati Roy 'Politically'” 41) but in Roy’s case, she has taken a different path. Through her prosaic techniques, she maintains culture socially relevant to the provincial, the vernacular, without resorting to exoticism and estrangement. She champions the destitute local
amongst the mass waves of globalization and corporatization in so far as allowing the characters to migrate as an elite or international labor migrant or even an exile. The way Roy’s characters perceive, integrate, and assimilate into the new situation can vary drastically. Pnina Werbner sensibly cautions us before attributing the ‘cosmopolitan’ adjective to either of these groups. She refers to Ulf Hannerz’s contention that we cannot really legitimately label labor migrants cosmopolitan. In point of fact, many of these migrants do hold to their local cultural and religious practices in the cosmopolitan destination of theirs and do not show any willingness to engage with the Other, locals, representatives of more circumscribed territorial cultures, and transnationals (Werbner "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism" 497).

Roy’s male and female characters, Chacko, Ammu, Baby Kochamma, Rahel, and Estha, do indeed find the chance to travel either nationally or internationally for educational or labor seeking purposes. However, their grasp of and engagement with the world that surrounds them is different: not broad enough to bring about lasting changes in terms of cosmopolitan practice. Despite the new media and communication tools of today and how readily people can satisfy the thirst for cultural otherness, it is still not very deep and rooted cosmopolitanism. The kind of mobility that Roy gives to her characters will not inevitably turn them into cosmopolitans. As John Tomlinson argues, we need to look for other factors at work: a ‘true’ cosmopolitan must have a culturally open disposition and interest in a continuous engagement with another culture. In addition to a specific disposition, he also insists that real cosmopolitans should have a sense of commitment to
belonging to the world as a whole (Tomlinson). At least for Roy, her nation-focused political views exclude her from being fully a cosmopolitan to an extent.

Kiran Desai’s implicit conception of vernacular cosmopolitanism generates its own set of problems. As mentioned before, she exposes the ignorance of Biju as an Indian illegal migrant worker. He is ignorant of the fact that no matter how well into a cosmopolitan city he has crawled illegally to find a job, he still is in a supposed “Little India” where he clashes constantly with fellow toilers from Pakistan:

Biju considered his previous fight with a Pakistani, the usual attack on the man’s religion that he’d grown up uttering: "Pigs, pigs, sons of pigs." (K. Desai 77)

While generally it is true that the concept of cosmopolitanism, as opposed to the past, is nowadays perceived more like a tangible experience of everyday people with no privilege requirements, the outcome is not measurable and/or imaginable. The Inheritance of Loss showcases a variety of cosmopolitanisms (plebeian, rooted, demotic) yet in practice, Desai’s overall view of their actual applicability is not very optimistic.

That aside, we should note that The Inheritance of Loss pictures an India that is both a mirage and mire, elusive and inviting, bleak but brilliant. It is perhaps so because of the way Desai feels about the Indian nationalist government and its strangling writers’ surveillance. In a recent interview with PEN International, she remembers some notorious examples of Draconian treatment of writers simply because their writing does not represent India (or a part of it) or an individual character in an agreeable manner: “I’m thinking of the (2010) banning of Rohinton Mistry’s book in
the state of Maharashtra and its withdrawal from the syllabus of Mumbai University. This happened long after the book was written but it had just come to the notice of Shiv Shena (a nationalist political organization) who burnt the book (for insulting the leader of the party). At the same time, the head of Bombay University’s English Department received death threats and had to go into hiding” (Clarke). She mentions that because of her portrayal of Nepalese insurgencies in her *The Inheritance of Loss*, she received threats even from local government in Darjeeling:

“It was only when the book started to receive attention (it won the Booker Prize in 2006) that this became a problem. In Darjeeling, there was a group of people who felt I hadn’t portrayed them as they wished to be portrayed... At that time, I was told I shouldn’t return to Kalimpong. I got threats that they were going to burn my book in the street and while this was minor in comparison to what other writers face, I still don’t feel welcome. I haven’t gone back” (Clarke). Roy, who resides in India, has to suffer the same level of resentment for her involvement in anti-Hindu politics. But Desai’s elite position in the literary world, she may hold, cannot and should not be jeopardized by unrequited love-seeking of an unruly Indian motherland.

It is crucial to understand that the Man Booker Prize or indeed any Western attention works seamlessly as a scapegoat for the Hindu nationalists to earmark their targets; they harshly criticize authors in state-owned / supported media outlets, threaten them, even burn their books to ensure that what gets published would not depict any critical enquiry or negativity.
Roy hails from an anomalous section of India (Kerala) with the highest degree of literacy and was not a cosmopolitan to the same degree and in the same way. She wrote to the Indian nation, but her book hit the Western literary circles and international publishers, thus turning her life around. Desai is, on an entirely different level, a self-professed foreigner to India who has left it when she was a teen to pursue life and higher education in America. By contrast, Aravind Adiga sits between Roy and Desai bridging a space or rift that has been caused between those two poles.

Adiga has lived in Australia and America for many years and is considered a cosmopolitan elite with a distinguished family lineage (Kamila and Belgaumkar) but his journalistic sense of storytelling takes him back to India in physique. He has chosen to live in Mumbai because for him, living in Mumbai helps him to write to the national space with firsthand directness and tangibility. Dissimilar to his own upbringing, Adiga chooses to empower the low-caste and give them an unprecedented possibility to experience “bottom-up cosmopolitanism” which may or may not work; they will be unlikely to be recognized as cosmopolitans in their own environment (Hannerz "Cosmopolitanism" 77). How he does this is interesting. Pnina Werbner states that a cosmopolitan consciousness should be an open, experimental, inclusive and normative consciousness of the other cultures. Balram’s adventure into the world of dirty local politics is clandestine and careful. However, he does possess a feature that characterizes a cosmopolitan outlook: “self-questioning and ‘reflexive self-distantiation’ from one’s own culture” (Werbner "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism" 497-98). Balram’s ultimate escape from his own
culture exhibits an innate drive to know the world, extend consciousness, and embrace change. His counterpart, Ashok, on the contrary, does not reflect upon India as it really is. Instead, he has his romanticized, elitist understanding of how traditional India works and wants to change it without understanding its depth of corruption. In the course of time, he is dissolved, leaves no trace, and is replaced by a young Balram, who has observed his master’s eventual cosmopolitan pitfall. He does best by sticking to the *glocal cosmopolitanism* present in an IT-laden Bangalore.

We should not also overlook that Adiga’s cosmopolitanism consciousness is forward-looking: Balram or the White Tiger, despite being ill-literate, ill-famed, and ill-mannered focuses his attention on China as India’s twin supreme technological power of a readily foreseeable future (if not even today).

**Conclusion**

Indian writing in English has come a long way in the post-Rushdie era with the cultural and political developments of the Indian society by local as well as overseas Indians who continue to enjoy a universal readership and literary accolades that had been bequeathed to the later generation of Indian English fiction writers. Roy, Desai, and Adiga all belong to this category and they are all cosmopolitan and all have endured Hindu nationalist hostile responses for writing their novels— even (in Roy’s case) had their house attacked and vandalized (Buncombe). However, they have been resolute in their cosmopolitan ways in spite of the fact that the three are fundamentally different. Whereas Roy and Adiga feel a geographical connection to
India and decide to remain there, Desai chooses to avoid the pressure that the writers who are critical of the Indian government undergo.

All three novels contain thwarted cosmopolitans: Chacko, Rahel, Jemu, Biju and Ashok. This can be linked to the shortcomings of the Indian nation in its encounter with the transnational and cosmopolitan. So far as the discussion about the transnationalism is concerned, the new wave of Indian English fiction writers seems to be challenging the notion that the Anglophone elite is the only group capable of managing between the nexus between nation and transnation. The Indian nation does not seem to be easily pliable to cosmopolitanism that is shipped to it from outside. Rather, it favors a rooted, vernacularly perceived cosmopolitanism that is well-situated within a national context while maintaining openness to transnational experiences.
CHAPTER FOUR: FAMILY AND INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss how the manifestations of family and its traditional and historical centrality to the Indian society have been transformed in the past couple of decades. My analysis will center the ways in which the novels under study engage with themes such as domestic violence, marital dissolution, sexual harassment of female household members, patriarchal power grip, and the importance of family from a traditional viewpoint among others. Later, I will present an argument in relation to transnational experiences of individual/families as a mode of escape from the boundaries and limitations of traditional mores.

Family in Traditions

The family is a unique institution in that it is at one and the same time both a private and a visibly public institution. It oscillates between the most intimate to the most impersonal in its various contexts which may be local, national, or transnational. The family is traditionally regarded as the ultimate abode of peace and composure and seen to be crucial for the “production and replenishment of human capital” from generation to generation (Fortes 1-4). Being the smallest unit of a community, family and its structuring of kinship have been highly valued in both religion and literature such that one finds idealization in family orientations. In the Indian context, similar to that of any other ancient civilizations, there are many
scriptural references to the importance of family and the way members need to heed, respect, and obey their parents and elders in order to achieve spiritual advancement.

According to the Manu Smriti (Veylanswami 10-11) and later Classical Sanskrit texts, there are four ashrams (stages) of life in an age-based social system: Brahmacharya (Student Life), Grihastha (Family Life), Vanaprastha (Retirement) and Sanyasa (Preparation for Salvation).

Traditional Indian family values are core to these stages: respecting the elders, taking care of parents during senility, giving worth to one’s Guru or spiritual teacher, contributing to society and humankind through selfless seva (service), and passing on cultural and ancient heritage to the next generation. These values are essentially different from what is considered normal in standard Western societies: the rebellion of child against parents, stressing individuation over extended family kinships, and radical acts of detachment from family.

The modern Indian state’s religious, spiritual, and revolutionary leader, Mahatma Gandhi had a traditional view of marriage that saw it as a beautiful sacrament between two people that comes naturally. He believed that in modern times, marriage had unfortunately come to be regarded as purely as a physical union and not a prelude to the divine (Prabhu and Rao 267).

For Gandhi, family is the stepping stone for the love that incarnates in couples and moves them toward the Divine. He repeatedly talks of the sanctity of marriage and the threats Western cultural influence might bring upon this social institution.
Despite having a traditional perspective on marriage, he was not a blind endorser of some less desirable facets of Hindu practices. Gandhi opposed *suttee* which is basically the burning of widows after their husbands’ demise in order to prove absolute, undivided loyalty (S. Gupta 98). He spoke up for the rights of children and protecting them from forced child marriages. Thus, we can see that even in a traditional context, certain changes were possible.

The nationalistic assertion of authenticity and tradition is accompanied for the most part by fiction writers who propagated in their stories a focus on extended family units and strength of child-parent ties in India as opposed to what Western scholars such as Louis Wirth see as the natural prerequisites of urbanization and modernization within (Mukherjee 7).

That the family is an essential part of a woman’s expanding consciousness is clearly evident in Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day*, where Bimla is speculating intense reminiscence: “she saw how her own house and its particular history linked and contained her as well as her whole family with all their separate histories and experiences” (A. Desai 182). The novel graphs the unhealable hurts of a family with a history of isolation and scornful anger between siblings Bim and Raja whose struggle for keeping their family ties is a metaphor for the Partition of India and Pakistan. The novel is a dramatization of the significance of “house” and “family” in showing the intricate relationships, both negative and positive, forming around kinship.
The family received a great deal of attention during the first few decades of the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India, which tended to contest the widely held view of the unchangeableness of the Indian family. The family in India has been gradually undergoing significant transformations in recent times and in this chapter I will touch upon some of these avenues of change in sociological studies and the literary reactions to these alterations, accompanied by some examples from Indian English fictions before analyzing the three selected novels.

The Change of the Unchangeable

The literature produced on Indian society and culture by Christian missionaries, historians, and sociologists suggests certain changes are affecting the traditional Indian system. Some of these changes are attributed to Western influence, the industrialization of the country, modernity, and greater population mobility (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 17). Some of the changes that have challenged the Indian society include legislative measures relating to widow remarriage, a woman’s right to property, the practice of child marriage, dissolution of marriage distressing different communities, and domestic violence. According to the 2001 censuses, India consists of 192.7 million households spread over 0.59 million villages and about 5,000 towns. The large population of the country and its extreme diversity form major impediments to the formulation of comprehensive national policy.

The traditional Indian family has almost vanished from urban India and is now replaced by nuclear families. Females are becoming household heads with single-
female parenthood being on the rise. The occurrence of tension and marital conflict between couples is increasing, which leads to separation and divorce, matters that were relatively rare during the past centuries. To this, we can add the increased freedom of marital choice, the decreased rate of child marriages, the diminution of the importance of kinship ties, greater involvement of females in decision making, an increase in the mean age at marriage of female from thirteen years in 1901 to 18.3 years in 2001, the rise in the level of female education, and a decline in total fertility rate from 4.9 in 1971 to 2.76 in 2009 (J. P. Singh "The Contemporary Indian Family" 129-66). Arundhati Roy’s real and fictional stories exemplify such change. Therefore, a whole range of changes to the Indian family system— down to its core values and functions— are detectable which in turn pose a new set of situations.

Once the salient feature of the Indian society since time immemorial, the joint family has been experiencing major changes in the past century, in particular on an urban level. According to Singh, even in rural India, the size of the joint family has decreased enormously against the increasing the size of nuclear families (J. P. Singh "The Contemporary Indian Family" 134-40). Education and more lucrative jobs in cities that may yield better opportunities induce families to leave rural areas, and this can lead to a severing of clan and community ties. In *The White Tiger*, Ashok and Pinky are considered part of the extended family by Ashok’s fraternal clan despite their residence overseas.

The nuclear family has now become the characteristic feature of Indian society. According to the latest National Family Health Survey (2005-2006), three in five households in India are nuclear. Nuclear households are defined in the NFHS-3 as
households with “a married couple or a man or a woman living alone or with unmarried children (biological, adopted, or fostered), with or without unrelated individuals. The proportion of nuclear households is higher in urban areas (sixty-three percent) than in rural areas (fifty-nine percent)” (Bhat et al. 23). While nuclear family constitutes sixty percent, extended and joint family or households comprise a mere twenty percent followed by “eroded families” (single members or unspoused households) with about eleven percent (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 18). Examples are all the ‘eroded’ families in *The Inheritance of Loss* (the Judge, Biju, Sai etc.). With industrial growth, rural to urban migration, the nuclearization of families and the rise of divorce rate are likely to increase steadily, which will eventuate in an increase of single-member households.

Male elders in Indian families, commonly referred to as ‘Karta’ in Hindi, were the primal authority figures in joint households and were treated with respect, regard, and submissiveness (G. R. Gupta 78). They were the ones who would give consultation on all important family matters such as building a house, buying and selling property and arranging marriages, etc. The young generation of today, especially those who have taken higher education, is unlikely to show the same amount of deference which the previous generations exhibited towards their male elders. The patriarch’s wife would head women in the household. Younger females would not be given an opportunity to practice self-assertion even in raising their own children. Widows were kept under the unifying household roof where that they were meant to be voiceless members of the family. The Buffalo in *The White*
Tiger and Chacko in The God of Small Things represent authority figures who try to foist their opinions on the rest of the family members.

Today’s joint and extended households in India are comprised of parents who, especially in urban areas, encourage their educated sons and daughters-in-laws to be independent decision-makers (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 21). A similar situation is now coming to existence in rural areas where parents are beginning to take a less than central position role in managing the household affairs, and more authority is given to the children. With higher levels of education and greater degrees of exposure to the outside world, the sons and daughters of today do not see themselves as obliged to follow parental advice or patronage. Chacko’s marriage to Margaret in The God of Small Things and Sai’s parents’ elopement and eventual marriage in The Inheritance of Loss are two such instances of individual decisions over parental advice.

The authority structure within the family is slowly but surely changing. According to the newest National Family Health Survey (2005-2006), about 14.5 percent of households are headed by females, up from 10 percent from the previous NFH Survey-2 conducted between 1998 and 1999 (Bhat et al. 23). Most of these female heads are usually independent and are able to sustain the livelihood of their households in the absence of their husbands, either because of death, divorce, or employment transfer to long distances. In the past, joint families would hardly ever give such a chance to females to head an entire household. In the novels, we see such changes. In The God of Small Things, Mammachi becomes the head of the Rahel family. Ammu is now single-parenting Estha after Rahel moves away. And in
The White Tiger, Kusum, Balram’s grandmother functions as the conniving boss of the family.

Very early marriage has for a long time been among the traditional values of the Indian society, especially the Hindu majority. The mean age at marriage for females was around thirteen in the 1901 and 1931 censuses (J. P. Singh “Problems of India’s Changing Family and State Intervention” 22), and this age was quite common amongst other communities as well. Post-Independence India experienced a massive increase in age of marriage with the 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act and its latest amendment in 1978 whereby boys and girls would be required to be twenty-one and eighteen years of age to be legally married, respectively (Gulati 1225-34).

The NFH-3 and UNICEF’s ‘The State of the World’s Children’ 2010 report reveals that still more than half of women are married before the minimum legal age of eighteen; the mean age for marriage is about 17.2 years. The average age of marriage for men, by contrast, is around 23.4 years. Urban women marry more than two years later than rural women: 18.8 years versus 16.4 years among their rural counterparts (Bhat et al. xxxi; UNICEF 33).

A new law banning child marriage was passed in December 2006. The law provides certain positive initiatives for the intervention of courts to prevent child marriages that are usually solemnized during festivals such Akshaya Tritiya, Akha Teej, Ram Navami, Basant Panchami and Karma Jayanti (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 23).
India has largely been an endogamic society wherein marriage would occur within the same particular group or caste in accordance with the law or customs of scheduled tribes being in the same vein. The Judge in *The Inheritance of Loss* is a Patel, who follows the same pattern in his marriage. Nonetheless, tribal communities practice clan exogamy. Singh writes that polygamy, or more specifically polygyny, has long been a prominent aspect of the Indian family with Muslims taking the lead from Hindus in that regard (K. S. Singh 8). As modernity influenced Indian families along with a rise in the level of literacy among Indian households in urban and rural areas, polygyny has receded even among Muslims.

In Aatish Taseer’s 2012 novel, *The Temple Goers*, we can see a different type of marital practice in which the narrator is not legally married to his partner, but since he is a cosmopolitan returnee, his cohabitation with Sanyogita is tolerated by his family and peers. Aakash is a gym trainer who is in love with Megha, a girl of an economically higher status. He is put behind bars, and she is murdered once their decision to marry each other is revealed (Taseer 279-80). The novel shows how sternly Indian society can react to anyone who dares neglect the invisible traditional and caste-related marriage laws of the land.

Marriage has always been exalted and treated with utter respect by the Indian mass, with both the religious system and such social mechanisms as caste and community protecting it from crisis and instability. As mentioned before, the elders, whose words were held up with subservience, provided sustenance to the institution of family and marriage, even at the cost of denuding individuals of their personal choice in the face of the communal sentiment or public opinion. For Hindus, as an
instance, marriage is considered to be a life-long sacrament for the couple to uphold, rather than a social contract binding them together so long as it is mutually affectionate (Chandrasekhar 339; J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 23). Pursuant to Hindu scriptures, a major desideratum of life is marriage that man and woman must enter into as a phase to fulfill the fourfold stages (or *ashrams*) of progression to spiritual enlightenment. That is precisely the reason for most Indian women to persist in their marital affinity despite being frequently the target for mental and physical violence. Furthermore, in a society where virginity is the most highly valued virtue of a female before marriage, the chances of a widow getting remarried are very slim, and she always has to bear the unpardoning eyes of some sections of society upon her for her hard decision to annul a marriage in the first place. In *The God of Small Thing*, Ammu is a good example of such victimization. It is interesting that Ammu is loosely based on Arundhati Roy’s own mother, Mary, who had a broken marriage to a Hindu tea planter in Assam (Smitha 88).

Despite all these considerations, there has been a noticeable change in the perspective around the alleged ‘sanctity’ of marriage in the recent past, especially in urban Indian society. As opposed to past beliefs, marriage is no longer viewed always as a *sacred* and *divine* act of union between a man and a woman, but it has rather been conceptualized in terms of nurturing companionship, relationship, and friendship (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 23). Still, marriage among Indian families is quite resilient: only 1 in 100 marriages in India ends up in divorce, but this number is slightly increasing in urban areas. These
days, in cities, the practice of arranged marriage is beginning to change with more incidents of extra-marital relationships, higher rates of marital including open gay and lesbian relationships, a delay in the age at marriage, higher rates of marital commotions along with more egalitarian gender role attitudes among men and women. Singh argues that shifting values among the younger generation, particularly those in big metropolitan cities and belonging to the upper stratum of society have eventuated in higher divorce rates which means that marriage as a social institution is in imminent problem or danger (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 24). The current generation is not content with all the responsibilities and limitations that the marriage in the older system would expose them to; as a result, they are ready to erupt, end a marriage, and even remarry, which is an indication of their dissatisfaction with their previous relationship. In actuality, all three novels selected for study here show modern couples separating and divorcing.

Rupa Bajwa’s 2004 debut novel, The Sari Shop, recounts the story of a twenty-six-year-old Ramchand, orphaned at six and forced to work after the eighth grade at Sevak Sari House, the finest sari store in Amritsar, Punjab where the author hails from (Bajwa). The novel is a self-assessing, self-questioning, and self-improving journey for its protagonist who undergoes a moment of epiphany and learns more about the widening gap between the India of the lowly and impoverished and the India of the moneyed and refined. Just as in many other efforts at canvassing a transition from innocence to moderate illumination, The Sari Shop tells us about Ramchand’s foray into the world beyond and his angst at encountering drunkenness
and sexual violence in the marriage of poor, then unemployed, factory workers. Despite his rebellion against ‘the system’, his employer and workmates reclaim him as a member of their particular extended family.

Vikram Chandra’s “Kama”, the centerpiece of his Love and Longing in Bombay (1997) is yet another example of an intricately bleak descent into the heart of darkness amidst broken marriages and carnal desires in Bombay and its raging corruption in the life of a police inspector Sartaj Singh. All that can end up with violence, betrayal, indecency, and a dive into the netherworld (Chandra Love and Longing in Bombay 75-162). The novel is a good example of micro cosmopolitanism with people’s connection to each other in the modern city but in local rather than globalized ways.

In India, violence has always been primarily male-driven and women and children tend to be on the receiving end of it, to be humiliated and tortured (J. P. Singh "The Contemporary Indian Family" 156-57). Even though legislative measures have been taken up in defense of victims of violence throughout the twentieth century, and in spite of the fact that women are becoming highly educated and hence more economically independent, domestic discrimination and violence against women is rampant (J. P. Singh "Social and Cultural Aspects of Gender Inequality and Discrimination in India" 168). A study shows that around forty percent of Indian females experience a form of violence by an intimate partner of theirs. According to a survey, around 30 percent of men in five districts of Uttar Pradesh have acknowledged coercing and abusing their female partners physically and mentally (UNC; J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 7). Therefore, it is far from astonishing to observe among Indian households a
patriarchal violating domination that commits heinous acts such as wife battery and even forced incest. The uttermost level of indecency in these matters makes it difficult for women to report the issues to the police or law courts for reparation. In 2005, the government passed an anti-domestic violence act which aims to address the gender-based violence of the Indian women adequately. Women are now facing two challenges: helping their children to prosper in their education and become successful people in the society and gradually becoming economically self-sufficient.

A very strange fact unveiled in the NFHS-1 was that women actually conformed in some way to being disciplined through coercion by their husbands—three out of five mentioned that it was acceptable to be physically challenged when they neglect household chores and taking care of the children, which are both traditionally normative gender roles. Many people have maintained that the traditional joint family in India is the happiest form of cohabitation, affection-giving, and emotive transaction. Therefore, even with its failings in real life, the very concept of home as the ultimate abode of calm and composure can provide reassurance and social belonging. In The Inheritance of Loss, Jemu’s wife, or indeed her family, do not oppose his maltreatment of her. For them, she belongs to her husband, and he can treat her without being challenged or questioned. In a comparable fashion, in The God of Small Things, Mammachi is abused by Pappachi verbally and even physically but once again since he speaks as the authoritative figure of the family (karta), he is not stopped until later by Chacko.

With the rise in the level of education and exposure to mass media, women tend to have a greater awareness of the notion of gender equality and confidence in such
institutions as family courts and voluntary organizations working for women. Yet there is no sign of abatement in gender-related violence. This has been represented in recent Indian English novels.

Akhil Sharma’s 2000 novel, *An Obedient Father*, is a miscellany of various heinous acts of violence and sexual harassment against women in particular and family values in general. Ram Karan, a debt collector, is a child molester who raped his own daughter Anita until she bled two decades ago and back at the present time is trying to do the same to Asha (Anita’s little daughter and his granddaughter). As vile as it seems, Ram Karan, since he is a male elder, can get away with his incestuous deeds until Anita decides to let her close relatives know, with hopes of finding support. To her amazement, however, besides a few female relatives (such as her aunt) the rest of the clan will not pay attention to her claims and plea for help. Ram Karan makes use of Anita’s widowhood and poor financial condition, offering her a monthly allowance to keep her silent (Sharma 242-3). Her mother, Radha, is unable to cope with this situation and finds solace in becoming an atheist to emancipate herself from a hypocritical use of Hindu codes of conduct. Akhil Sharma does not have a positive perspective towards the future either. Despite all her mother’s efforts to keep her from further psychological and physical harm, Asha is not safe in the Punjab. She is oftentimes molested for being a girl in the first place and then for having a mother who has a rape history of her own. The only contrasting scenario the novelist pictures for us is Anita’s sister Kusum who marries Ben, a Westerner, who treats her with respect and care in London. At the end of the novel, Kusum returns to India and to end Asha’s misery, agrees to adopt her and remove her and
take her overseas. This suggests that cosmopolitanism can indeed be a critical and distanced (or disaffected) analysis of home. According to the novel, India’s dirty politics and violent patriarchal society cannot be suitable for the newer generation and departure is a plausible answer to escape from boundaries and limitations that can only perpetuate backwardness. Therefore, there seems to be a link between the idea of cosmopolitanism as a distanced (disaffected) analysis of home.

In the novels under study, Rahel, Sai, and Pinky are strong female characters whose education and exposure to a bigger and more cosmopolitan world enables them to stand up against atrocities that they encounter.

Children account for about thirty percent of the total Indian mass, many of them quite vulnerable to factors that can jeopardize their health, education, and social status. With credible estimates ranging between 60-115 million, the country has the biggest number of working children in the world, prone to toiling away as domestic serfs or field workers for long hours (Waghamode and Kalyan 1). Around 12.6 million children are involved in hazardous jobs. The Ministry of Labor (Government of India) added more hazardous occupations to their ban list along with domestic servanthood, working in hotels, teashops, and restaurants. The Child Labor Act amendment also placed a ban on employment of children below the age of fourteen, but according to Waghamode and Kalyan, it has not been successful (Waghamode and Kalyan 2). This problem is addressed with clarity in *The White Tiger*, which is based on the adventures of a child laborer in a world of depravity.
According to Singh, apart from poverty and caste-related social exclusion that operate as underlying causes of child labor, poor quality of education or a complete lack of schooling in their parents lead many children to impoverishment and destitution. It is estimated that around forty percent of these children are out of school (J. P. Singh "Problems of India's Changing Family and State Intervention" 25; Saini 2).

Poor parents in rural areas look upon their children as resources to generate income to support the family business. The ‘White Tiger’ does not get enough schooling to help him break away from the cycle of rural poverty, so his time is mostly spent aiding his family and earning money to give to his grandmother, Kusum.

Caste-related child labor and slavery can be traced back to as early as the 1930s when Mulk Raj Anand published his first novel around a sweeper’s life (Anand Untouchable). Untouchable recounts the story of Bakha, eighteen years of age, virile and youthful, who rinses latrines and sweeps houses and roads in Northern India. Poverty-stricken, Bakha’s family have always been despised and oppressed in a society that places one’s caste above everything else, and the events during one of his life’s days allow him to open his eyes to the bitter facts and social wrongs of the Indian society: caste, religious difference, traders among others. The most unrelenting truth about Bakha is that he is considered a polluting agent; hence, he needs to take the utmost care not to touch anybody or let anybody touch him by accident—he is beaten once because he bumps into a passerby inattentively. About a century later, the life conditions of children in India have not been improved to a
much better state. Add to poverty the growing number of the population since then and the overpowering poorness. A novel of protest, Anand’s cause is taken up more than seventy years later, this time by Adiga and his *The White Tiger* whose protagonist refuses to be victimized by the rich through resorting to emancipatory violence. Similarly, in *The God of Small Things*, Velutha is the poor child of a low-caste paravan family who needs to toil in the Ayemenem House forever, and there is no way out for him.

**Family Issues in the Three Selected Novels**

On a general note, the protagonists in the novels feel entrapped by a member of their entire family household whose caste status may further add to the burden and are in constant struggle to break free. In the process of this escape, the main and minor characters come to a crossroad at which they pay the price at not less than sacrificing their family in exchange for liberation. Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* exemplifies this radically and violently.

Whether family is based on marriage between two Indians of the same caste, two English people, or an Indian and a Westerner, it seems bound to fail. The caste system in India is certainly a decisive factor in determining who has which profession and is able to marry whom, especially in the case of arranged marriages. In a rigidly hierarchical familial and social structure of India, a person’s life is mapped out by family or caste. This has been contested and critiqued in recent times in Indian English fiction.
Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things is a noteworthy exploration of how a lower-caste man begins an affair with a higher-caste woman. Another aspect of this new outlook on the family is when characters in the novel try a simple act of mobility to avoid a limiting India and escape to the global sphere. Nevertheless, this does not make a person any more cosmopolitan or transnational. Chacko and Rahel are good instances of this. Perhaps Chacko had the prospects of improving and widening his consciousness by studying in England and/or marrying an English girl, but still his deep-etched Indianness (his looks, behavior, and class) hinders these ambitions. There is, moreover, an indication in all three fictions that the authors have harshly problematized the glorification of the nation as family and vice versa.

Arundhati Roy’s only work of fiction to date problematizes the traditional customs and values regarding family in India that leaves the reader wondering about the various familial hurdles that occur both in Ayemenem and outside of India. With an acute perception of gender inequality within the Indian household, Roy challenges the traditional beliefs around females—such as the perception of their being weaker or less important than their male counterparts in Indian society. There are a number of nuclear families, each with their own specifics, that comprise a larger family under the authoritative rule of Pappachi, the karta, or the senior patriarchal figure of the novel. He holds oppressive control over his wife, the almost blind Mammachi, and often beats her with “a brass flower vase” (Arundhati Roy The God of Small Things 47). Next in authority in the household is yet another male character, his son, Chacko, who holds a privileged position compared to his sister Ammu evinced in that he has the freedom to leave the family on a Rhodes scholarship to
study in England while Ammu, the family’s daughter is expected to get married. The novel does not have a satisfying record of stable marriages.

Ammu has divorced an alcoholic and self-indulgent Baba, who has fled to Australia to pursue a security career. Even at an early state of marriage, their relationship is shown to be full of stutters, moments of hesitations, banality, and anger which find no way of solace or retribution. She is the victim of domestic violence by her husband and sexual predation by an Englishman, Mr. Hollic, Baba’s boss at the tea estate in Assam. Baba cannot be less committed to his own family because for him it represents a burden and discomfort. He even refuses to take his son Estha along with him. Despicable and irresponsible, Baba is the sole example in the novel of someone whose escape from family seems to have somehow worked.

Now the female single-parent, Ammu’s only wholehearted love is for a low-caste handyman, Velutha, which of course is intolerable by the social standards of their time. Their love affair is forbidden because he is an untouchable paravan worker from the caste of fishermen whose family has worked for the Ayemenem House over generations. Ammu’s relationship with Velutha has two major bases: she is happy finally to have found a person who treats her with dignity, and who is kind to her beloved twins. She finds in Velutha a love she always dreams of while still being married legally to a ruthless far-flung Baba. Their cross-caste relationship cannot exist within the family and Ammu and Velutha find a sense of security in the lush jungles of Ayemenem where they have their secret rendezvous. This is the only space that is not under strict social surveillance wherein a moment of privacy can be shared near the river that separates the two castes.
The family and love between Ammu and Velutha can never be allowed to grow into a marriage because according to the tradition (Hindu or Indian Christian), marriage is not an individual option but a social institution aimed at cementing a social position. Velutha is framed by an invidious Baby Kochamma on a rape charge. Even though both Ammu and Velutha are modern individuals, Ammu is locked up in her family’s house and Velutha, whom Roy calls ‘The God of Small Things’ (in truth The Biggest Inheritor of Loss) is imprisoned and dies shortly after from police brutality. Ammu later dies too, which shows that their attempts to escape have failed. Ammu is a woman and Velutha a caste underdog, both suffering discrimination, the former from her genetic family and the latter from his supposed political family, the Communist Party of Ayemenem that lets him perish. Communism offers a cosmopolitan dream of living in a classless, casteless society and Ammu’s escape from Ayemenem to Calcutta and Assam suggests a kind of cultural cosmopolitanism within the nation space. The novel shows a failed form of cosmopolitanism from below and suggests that the social conventions of India are to blame for impelling two disaffected people into a transgressive act perfectly normal within a different society, which it then destroys. In short, the novel proffers that a casteless (hence outlawed) love that is preferable to the normative relationships that yet fail to hold (e.g. Baba’s and Chacko’s).

The sexual abuse of children plays a major role in this novel. As a child, Estha is molested by the “Orangedrink Lemondrink man” who runs the refreshment counter at Abhilash Talkies—a movie theater in Cochin City (Arundhati Roy The God of Small Things 47-48). The fact that Ammu fails to realize the horrid frustration of her
son and starts unknowingly to flirt with the molester makes Estha and Rahel detest her. Years later when Rahel returns to Ayemenem, she spends an intimate time with her brother; she commits an unexpected act of incest with Estha to reconcile their separate years of anguish. Just like their mother, Rahel and Estha are willing to break with their social, familial, and religious requirements to find some more sustaining comfort of belonging.

Rahel’s interracial marriage ends in dissolution as well. As a child, she shows no respect for strict laws. She always finds herself entrapped by strict regulations, both at the Convent from which she is ultimately expelled and in Ayemenem, which is prejudiced against her, just as it is towards her mother Ammu. She shows signs of alienation from others in the very society into which she was born and raised. However, after becoming romantically engaged to an American Larry McCaslin, she moves from being single to being a wife who Roy describes as a passenger who “drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge” (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 18), implying that her marriage to Larry is only temporary and that she will break away once she is ready to board the flight to the next phase of her life. Roy relates this tumultuous peculiarity to the “vast, violent, circling, driving, ridiculous, insane, unfeasible, public turmoil of a nation”(Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 19). But Rahel’s escape from here family in India for another one in the US fails to produce cosmopolitan belonging and she, being a woman, is encaged behind glass taking money in a gas station, where we see the failure of a dream.

The male counterpart to Rahel is her uncle Chacko, a self-proclaimed anglophile who moves around the comfortably off social circles of an English society, only to
realize that his warmheartedness and love for England in general, and Margaret in particular, is in actuality unrequited, that his passion for his family lacks immediate substance in a society that finds his foreigner’s earnestness towards itself out of place. Chacko accidentally meets Margaret at a cafeteria, and the two become romantically engaged, followed by a marriage that does not last long. Margaret realizes how different, flabby and lazy an Indian male like Chacko is, making him intolerable. Their eventual dissociation is an exasperating experience for Chacko, who is then only starting to blend into the English society—with his adoption of an English food culture, to his rowing for Balliol which keeps his body well-built. Chacko escapes his dysfunctional and parochial family in Ayemenem to better his social status, but he soon finds out that his new English family finds him awkward, if not loathsome. He, after all, is one specimen from the “sly [and] dishonest” nation of India, to quote his racist father-in-law (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 240).

If family at home is not perfect, being overseas prevents stable alternative family relations. The original Indian family, by contrast, looks welcoming. The fact that the travelers have a root in India, making them a colonial other, hinders their comfortable mingling into the white society. They experience the uncomfortable ambivalence explained by Homi Bhabha in which they are simulacra of themselves yet marked by a disjunctive difference: “white but not quite” (Bhabha *The Location of Culture* 89).

In the Ayemenem community choked up with treachery and deceit, Chacko’s heightened social status due to living in England vanishes quickly; he goes from an
achieving scholar in England to being a nasty, remiss, overweight Indian pseudo-communist. It is important to note that his ex-wife and daughter’s visit to India, followed by the sudden drowning of Sophie Mol lies at the heart of the novel’s unfolding plot. Chacko once mentions to his sister’s twins during their childhood that Ammu calls Pappachi a “chhi-chhi poach” (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 51-52) which in Hindi means someone who wipes ordure, a metaphor that, Chacko explains, refers to an Anglophile. Both abroad and at home, such divided loyalty prevents real cosmopolitan equanimity and undermines a stable marriage.

Contrary to Chacko’s and Rahel’s escape to the West, Chacko’s ex-wife Margaret undergoes a reverse escape: moving from England to India (which reminds us of Pinky’s reverse mobility from the US to India in *The White Tiger*). Widowed by her husband Joe’s sudden death in a car crash, Margaret takes Sophie Mol to a journey to Ayemenem to visit her biological father. Sophie Mol is the offspring of a transnational marriage. Roy describes her physicality and complexion as decidedly Western— light eyes and skin very much distinguish her from her native Indian twin cousins— but with “Pappachi’s nose” (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 118).

Baby Kochamma, however, in a brief moment in their first encounter mentions how she reminds her of Ariel, the sprite in the Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*. Sophie Mol like Ariel also conjures a tempest: her visit to Ayemenem is a turning point in the novel. She quickly befriends Rahel and Estha by way of her charm or because of the twins’ education, which has ingrained respect for Western cultural authority. She soon gets their support for their adventures across the river towards the History House, the house of the untouchables. The fact that she loses her life while
crossing a boundary [a river] is an indication of the improbability of a successful transnational existence for her and her ripped-apart family.

Roy’s characters, male or female, always try to escape their familial status quo but find themselves moving in a vicious circle on a soggy ground, the more they tread, they deeper they immerse. Chacko, scholarly, educated, athletic, mobile, in a transnational marriage, is ultimately still himself, in a petrified stereotypical Indian shelf that casts a shadow on a clear understanding of the dynamics of the world around him. Second, Margaret, born and raised in England, lacks the competence in order to sustain a transnational matrimony, to know that Chacko might be in England but he is not entirely out of himself. Margaret’s failure in their marriage and subsequent attachment to an Englishman (Joe) to play father to her daughter proves that deep down, she must have unconsciously believed what her distrusting father opines over Indians: a people masterful at deceit and dissimulation. If Chacko has learned something from his experience in the West, it seems to be his passing defense of his mother against his wife-abusing father, Pappachi.

The second novel of the trio, Kiran Desai’s 2006 novel also explores the intricate workings of traditional families in India and the way the new generation is responding to this institution.

Erratic violence and sexual abuse against women can be seen in the life of the central character, the Judge, Jemubhai Patel, who ridicules, rapes, and beats his wife that he married when she was obviously legally below the age of consent. This is very ironic. The novel sets up the colonial figure of the Judge as a Chief Justice
who violates women, including his own wife so as to ironize the experience of colonial justice. When young, he moves to a colonial England with high hopes of getting an excellent education in law in Cambridge. Another aspect of domestic violence which involves caste status is the constant physical punishment of the cook who toils in Jemu’s house.

There is no national family for Jemu in India, but he feels that the former empire (the UK) can offer him some hope of belonging. Jemu seems to see himself as an Indian becoming English by imitation and mimicry. But like many other Indians, Jemu is not used to eat with knife and fork (just like Westerners).

Far from being the paradise he was always looking for (like any other place in the world), India, on his return as an adult, proves to have poor, apathetic people who turn his hopes to despair; developing a strong inferiority complex annoys him deeply, by living next to an English people who treat his otherness with arrogance and scorn: skin color, bodily scent, eating habits, etc. Even his landlady refuses to pronounce his name, instead giving him an English name: James. His life in England is lonely: he speaks to nobody and nobody speaks to him. Even old people refuse to sit next to him on the bus. Beautiful English girls tease him: “phew, he stinks of curry” (K. Desai 39). He is dejected in a country he once had so many high opinions of, with a heart full of aches and unuttered words. From his idealized England, Jemu plummets into a world of darkness and misery. His return to India as an educated practitioner of law with hopes of introducing order and rightness into a judicial system of India is one of despair. The Judge’s travel is to escape family and community ties in search of a personal gain, but his failure abroad translates to
bigger letdowns back home. That he picks a deserted house on a remote spot in the mountains is an indication of the grandeur of colonial English era that sits above the majority of the society in solitude.

Neither England nor India accepts him, leaving him deranged, gliding between Englishness and Indianness, finding no point of reliable reference in his later life. His abusive treatment of his wife and servant reek of colonial egotism, a state of mind that everybody in the house despises yet no one is able to evade. There is a conflict between the transnational aspirations of the judge and the traditional values of his wife. He forces her to learn English, but she shows no inclination, which the judge thinks is from her stubbornness in avoiding progress and change.

The second family in the novel is the cook and his son Biju. The cook is comparable to Velutha’s character in the sense that both are trapped within a rigid caste system. The cook has always been exploited and teased by the judge but is not able to fight back simply because he is too weak a person, who works for the sake of his only son despite extreme privation. The cook has invested all his hope in his son, Biju, whom he sends illegally to the United States to find a good job, become financially independent, and finally take him over to end his misery of living with a grim judge who is not able to come to terms with his broken dreams of integrating with the colonial English. Biju’s migrational experience of escaping the harsh realities of the caste system is transnational, yet, we can see that he does not develop transnational practices and customs to the full. Toiling in ethnic restaurants and sleeping in dirty rooms with many other illegal migrant workers from other parts of the world, Biju’s consciousness and horizon are not widened, and he still seems to
be an Indian, in and out of himself. Chacko, Rahel, and Baby Kochamma and Biju all escapes to the global sphere but because of his social and economic status, Biju’s level of access to a cosmopolitan competence is quite low: half-baked, if any. Biju detests America because there he is not finding the glamorous life he thought he would be living: no matter where he is, he is going to work long hours, be badgered by his superiors, and be paid a pittance. We can argue, however, that Biju does learn a little bit more about how the world outside India thinks of Indians. Nothing to be proud of, of course; he hears from other migrant workers that Indian laborers are not welcome anywhere in the world for their reputation of slyness and dishonesty. Biju’s encounter with the female Indian students in New York is key to his understanding of being Indian outside the nation. The girls seem to have no real care for India; they belittle Biju’s accent and aura. He ultimately becomes a return migrant but once back to Sikkim, unknowingly walking into a guerrilla area, he is stripped of his clothes and robbed of all the gifts he had bought for his father. The novel ends with the reunion of the cook and Biju while the sun is throwing gleams of light on the mountaintops. Biju has failed in his mission of gaining a transnational and cosmopolitan outlook.

Opposed to Biju, who represents a return migrant to India, Sai is sent back to India to revisit her roots, but her arrival at the Judge’s house is not welcome at all. He is old, arrogant, and aggressive and cannot put up with Sai’s rival presence. Just like the Judge, Sai is anglo-educated, is interested in English and in a way represents an overseas Indian but with the biggest difference of all: Sai is a strong-willed girl who
will not tolerate the Judge’s imposing presence and abusive behavior towards the cook. She proves to Jemu that change will occur in the household.

Sai is the daughter of an interfaith marriage between a Parsi father and a Hindu mother (the Judge’s daughter), which was not approved of by their parents, hence their elopement to Russia. We can see the same pattern at work here: two young lovers abandoning [escaping] their families because they felt they were trapped within social confines of a rigid society. Sai returns to India to see if she could change things only to realize that it is impossible. Her burgeoning love interest in Gyan is troubled when he engages in the Gorkhaland secessionist movement; just like Velutha, Gyan is naïve to think that his collaboration in a political movement will bring protection to him. Disappointed, Sai finds India too constrictive and decides to depart. Biju returns and she leaves. She is young and educated, so there is a good chance she is going to have a better life outside India (but no family).

To conclude, education is seen to be a pivotal factor in The Inheritance of Loss. The Judge and Sai both value it high above other things. But the generational difference between the two makes their experience utterly different. Jemu returns to India and finds that his education is not that much valued, and Sai realizes that in order for her to become successful, she needs to get out. There are no extended families in The Inheritance of Loss except for the original arranged marriage of the-judge-to-be and his young wife. The cook has no wife (dead), and the main characters in Sai’s social circle (the hill people) are all single.
Adiga’s *The White Tiger* shows the most radical representation of a rebel against family and its values. Balram is the unnamed son of a rickshaw puller who is entrapped in his birth family by a sordid, domineering grandmother, crafty in village politics. She wants to marry him off just like his brother in order to make a better living from the dowry they receive from the girl’s family. Balram is not unfamiliar with destitution: mother dead, father to die coughing up blood in a public hospital that has no doctor on duty. Escaping his family, Balram goes to Delhi to find a job as a driver for a local seigneur who happens to be involved in dirty national politics. What makes Balram conscious of his situation is his escape from one family in exchange for servitude to another family. His is different from the large mass that feels obliged to stay a good servant until death. The school inspector that visits him earlier realizes this and names him ‘The White Tiger’, a rare creature. From working for the zamindar family, and later for their US-returned son and his Westernized wife, Balram realizes that family is the one thing that is holding him back. Therefore, he comes up with a solution that shocks many readers of the novel: he rejects all families to save his own hide, on his way to become an *independent* entrepreneur. Killing his master Ashok brings down a similar fate upon his own family, but Balram pays this cost. Importantly, the only remnant of his family is his young nephew sent by his grandmother to be taken care of, but Balram is well-aware just as he killed off his familial commitments, there is a strong possibility that the young boy will do the same to him later on. Therefore, he always makes sure that the drivers who work for his agency never get too close to him, just like a family he has learned to avoid. Balram’s solution seems to indicate a larger family: the Indian nation that has
always kept its offspring in a coop. One after another, the roosters and chickens get slaughtered despite the fact that they key to freedom is within the cage, but there is one thing that deters them from breaking away from bondage: the fear that by doing so, the masters get back to them by putting their family next in line for butchery. Balram is ready for this. Outside the coop, he is a family of one, with no addendum or extension, starting up a business in Bangalore with dirty money he obtains after murdering his master to become a capitalist master himself.

Interestingly, Balram does not escape to the global sphere: he believes India's future lies within a modern, locally informed technocracy, a form of glocalization seen in the influx of branches of US-owned mega companies such as Yahoo towards the end of the novel.

Ashok represents the return migrant son of an affluent feudal family, who is married to an American-born Indian wife who has a Westernized attitude towards everything. Ashok means to supply the antidote to the hardline politics of home and family in India. He has high aspirations to bring about fundamental changes to the land of their origins with the expertise and wealth acquired from being educated and working in the west. He says to his wife:

Look, when I came back, I really thought it was going to be for two months, Pinky. But...things have changed so much in India...this place is going to be like America in ten years. Plus, I like it better here (Adiga 89).

He is family oriented, too. When he hears that Balram sends most of his salary to his family, he says: “Good, Balram. Good. Family is a good thing” (Adiga 144). The unforeseeable hurdles that block his way, however, lead Ashok to question this...
simplistic idea. Fresh in India, Ashok is revered as a Western-educated personality who has the support of his father and brothers and “the Great Socialist”, political leaders they support. Ashok later realizes that they are all involved in local and national dirty politics and tax avoidance. This he despises most about his family and India. He had a romanticized picture of home and family, which is typical of return migrants (similar to Biju from The Inheritance of Loss). Furthermore, his Western ways are not welcome in the Delhi: “This is India, not America” he is told (Adiga 121). He questions his family’s attitude towards lower-caste servants: “Do you have to hit servants, Father?” to which his father responds: “This is not America, son. Don’t ask questions like that” (Adiga 72) but he refuses to beat Balram. The political system of India looks like a “fucking joke” to Ashok, who compares it to the democracy he has seen in the West. His brothers do not like this and think Ashok is speaking denigratingly about India, like Pinky: “You sound like your wife. Things are complicated in India, Ashok. It’s not like in America. Please reserve your judgment” (Adiga 137). Ashok, unlike traditional men in India, does not suppress his wife simply because she is a woman and women have no word in things that are handled by men. His father admonishes him to control his wife (through physical coercion) because that is how men are meant to behave in India. But Ashok’s overseas experience has taught him cosmopolitan sensibilities. He believes in human freedom of choice and expression and equality of men and women, in stark contrast to his zamindari family’s traditional values. The Darkness starts to daunt Ashok who is helplessly making a lot of effort to stay positive in spite of Pinky’s insistence on India’s inability or unwillingness to lend itself to a non-locally informed change.
India not only refuses to change, but it is also managing to make Ashok yet another failure in the face of the overarching global economy. Notwithstanding his strong belief in a modern concept of a fluid family, Ashok gradually declines ethically and morally. He abuses his wife, in the exact way that his immediate family always wanted him to, which eventuates in Pinky’s sudden departure back to New York. Ashok’s extended family degenerates and so does his own. He ends up riding in Balram’s car picking up prostitutes from clubs and falling down from the pedestal the locals had placed him on his arrival in India. Balram sums up this deterioration: “Ashok. He returned from America an innocent man, but life in Delhi corrupted him” (Adiga 197).

Towards the end of the novel, The White Tiger mentions that had he been educated, he would have had better chances of survival and prosperity in the world. He promises the reader to provide assistive observation of his young cousin’s education so that he can uplift himself and break away from his caste doom.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the shift that can be seen in the representation of family in three novels and it is losing traditional and historical centrality to the Indian society in the process of modernization, migration, and higher education. I also showed that domestic violence against female households is still an issue in India which results in the dissolution of marriages and/or abrasive behavior among male members of the family as evident in all the novels. Caste is another factor in determining how families can act and interact within the Indian society. And finally,
I explored the transnational experiences of individual/families as a mode of escape from the boundaries and limitations of the India’s younger generation.

The Judge travels to avoid family ties while Biju’s migration is geared toward fulfilling family relationships. Sai’s parents form a nuclear family, but since their interfaith marital bond is not acceptable by the society, they need to escape India (to Russia) to be able to strengthen their tie. Traditional families are beset by caste, race, clan, and gender divisions. Many characters try to escape nuclear families beyond region and nation, but their plans are thwarted. But at last, the violent underpinnings of Indian social orders end up asserting themselves.

In the context of cosmopolitan modernity, family does not really function as a site of belonging in its nationalist sense. The novels suggest that circulation in the global and potentially cosmopolitan cultures can lead to the loosening or, at least, challenging the core traditional and hard-line family values in Indian society in urban as well as rural areas. For instance, females are no longer seeing themselves as inferior to their male counterparts by realizing that an education can give them a better chance of finding a good job and, therefore, financial independence. The modernization of such society in the process of globalization along with transnational experiences in the past decade or so plainly indicates that changes are happening. And as such, the globalized family (nation) is more cosmopolitan.
CHAPTER FIVE: MOBILITY AND INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION

Introduction

Given that being cosmopolitan entails being at a reflective distance from one’s birthplace or country of citizenship, then it implies that some kind of physical or mental movement is, in effect, at work. The world is experiencing a mobility turn, a turn that highlights how all social entities such as a single household or large-scale corporations assumes many different forms of actual and potential movement. Mobility studies connect analyses of multiple aspects of economic and social life across time and spaces. Such analyses are generating theories and methods that help us understand that “social relations are stretched across the globe” and can be organized and/or achieved “on the move and contingently as processes of flow” (Urry, *Mobilities* 6).

Literature in general and postcolonial literature in particular are more often than not concerned with mobility. Be it the characters created by the authors or indeed authors themselves, the urge to mobility is frequently seen in many works produced in the past couple of centuries. Instances are travel novels or those that deal with a form of physical or mental, intellectual movements: *A Passage to India* (1924) by Edward Morgan Forster, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) by John Steinbeck, and *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1975) by Paul Theroux. In the postcolonial era, a number of authors from former colonies moved overseas and began to produce literatures as a way of fighting cultural imperialism. The novels under study and their novels have been written by postcolonial Indian writers.
whose position with regard to the mobility of their books and/or themselves within international literary circles and their ongoing grapple with the Indian nationalist politics is the subject of constant debate.

As a term in contemporary social sciences, mobility refers to the potential for movement of people, goods, ideas, as well as the broader social implications of those engagements. In the 1990s, the social sciences paid particular attention to the historical and contemporary significance of social and individual movements; the centrality of mobility urged scholars to begin to consider various forms and patterns of mobility. What interested them was to understand how these mobilities lie “at the center of a constellation of power, the creation of identities and the microgeographies of everyday life” (Cresswell 551). As Sheller and Urry point out, the often static perspective of social science at the time has slowly changed. This gradual turn of events transformed a static social science perspective into a more deliberate scrutiny of “the systematic movements of people for work and family life, for leisure and pleasure, and for politics and protest” (Sheller and Urry 208).

Mobilities studies observe the movements that the forces that propel or limit those movements. Even though mobility study is very vast, the significant contributions to the existing literature have invariably come from scholarship in anthropology, cultural studies, and migration studies (Sheller and Urry 207).

Mobility is an indispensable part of the cosmopolitan discussion; the ability to move, physically or intellectually, establishes an individual’s access or exposure to a widened consciousness through transnational experiences. Literature, too, under
processes of globalization, involves the movements of books and authors and so, in representing the cosmopolitan, also engages with themes and motifs of mobility.

**Theoretical Foundations of Mobility**

The works of the twentieth-century sociologist, George Simmel constitute one of the theoretical reservoirs of mobilities studies. Following Simmel, mobility studies scholars show that human beings have a “will to connection” with the increasing tempo of life in urban areas. The fast pace drives both its socio-economic formations as well as the psychological forms of the “urban dweller”. The celerity of such movements may bring about chaos and complexity in the system of relationships. Another source of the theory comes from the postmodern conceptualization of space and spatiality, and a distinct look at locations as entities in motion, subject to continuous readjustments and reconfiguration. Another body of theory deals with how social networks relate to the formation of complex patterns of change. The social relationships that are created across time and space today are mostly happening through the use of contemporary information technologies. But such interactions are minimizing actual chance meetings and more networked connections (Sheller and Urry 215-17).

**Different Mobilities**

According to Sarah Jain, the term “mobile” or “mobility” can signify four main meanings (Jain 385-404). First, mobile means that something is moving or, indeed, can move physically or otherwise. Instant examples are mobile phones as well as
the mobile people, hospitals, etc. In this sense, mobility is a feature of both people
and things. For the most part, as Urry argues, mobility connotes a positive
reinforcement except in what is termed as ‘hypermobility’ as Adams points out
(Urry *Mobilities* 7). In *The God of Small Things*, Baby Kochamma’s attachment to TV
is one such form of mobility that allows her to be in touch with a Western lifestyle,
albeit in a superficial capacity. In *The White Tiger*, Ashok is shown in several
instances to be busy with his cellphone, signifying his physical as well as mental
mobility despite his geographical distance to the US.

The second sense of the term mobile refers to a rowdy crowd, a rabble or simply a
mob. Since the medieval times, the mob has always been considered a troublesome
throng for a couple of reasons: it is mobile and that gives it freedom to avoid social
regulation and control by ruling authorities within the boundaries of society (Thrift
582-604). Biju’s friends in New York at the ethnic restaurants that he works in fit in
this category. Although they are a mobile mob, they cannot be considered
cosmopolitan.

Third, mobility can act as a vertical element and refer to upward or downward
*social* mobility which is commonly deployed in established sociology/social sciences.
Mobility is here vertical. Social mobility is predicated on an assumption that a
reasonably definite hierarchy of positions exists by which one can compare their
starting position within such hierarchies (Goldthorpe; Kelley 326). The Judge in *The
Inheritance of Loss* and Balram in *The White Tiger* are good examples of this sort of
mobility. For the former, his mobilizing educational pursuit in England is to achieve
an upward social mobility. The same can be said about the latter who is desperately
trying to improve his social status in a society heavily influenced by the caste system.

Fourth, mobility can indicate migration or semi-permanent geographic movements.
Contrary to the previous vertical sense of the term, this type of mobility expands
over a horizontal sense of being on the move. So, it is pertinent to the times when
one moves from one place to another in search of a better life or to escape
destitution, famine, war, and other human disasters. For this kind of mobility, Sai
from *The Inheritance of Loss* and the twins Rahel and Estha from *The God of Small
Things* act as dependable instances who move in and out of India in search of a
better life.

All three novels deal with the idea of a mobile nation during the course of
globalization. As William notes, there are many types of mobilities in the
contemporary world, some of which are highly dependent upon passports, visas,
residence and labor qualifications although others are much less so (Williams 309-
10). These new social routines are producing spaces that are ‘in-between’ home,
work, and social life, forming ‘interspaces’. These are places of recurrent mobilities
where groups congregate, involving the use of mobile phones, laptops, text
messaging, etc. In this case, we are faced with virtual homes brought about by
virtual movements that can create a mental cosmopolitanism. Balram in *The White
Tiger* is a character who realizes the potentials of Bangalore as an interspace IT
mecca for international companies such as Yahoo. Desai mentions the Indian CNN
and BBC broadcasters who are successful in America and England in this regard.
Modes and Methodologies

To study and comprehend the metaphorical movements between center and periphery, we require a set of physical and infrastructural conditions to be met: the availability of routes, maps, vehicles, transfer points etc. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, novels of the early twentieth century deal with the physical and infrastructural conditions of mobility such as the railways and postal systems. For instance, The Great Railway Bazaar (1975) by Paul Theroux chronicles a four-month train travel from London through Europe, Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, among others. Indian social critic Pandita Ramabai's American Encounter: The Peoples of the United States (1889) is a nineteenth-century Indian woman's adventure into the American society refracted through the lens of British colonialism. Apart from the role of the railway system, epistolary novels, epitomized by their use of missives as a form of a literary vehicle are another example of the representation of the importance of mobility in literature. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s Frankenstein (1818), Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1897) and more recently, Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger (2008) best represent this kind of mobility.

Mobility studies focus on the flow of people, objects, books, cultural goods, and more metaphorically the movement of ideas. One aspect of mobility studies is the investigation of the cultural mechanisms through movement occurs in distinct forms: family migration, studying abroad, illegal border-crossing and smuggling. Such types of mobility are marked as ‘serious’ while others, such as tourism and (until recently) study abroad, are regarded as relatively trivial. For instance, the
Indian female students living in New York in *The Inheritance of Loss* belong to this sense of mobility. Not only have they opted to rent a private apartment, but they also sport a Ganesh statue in their living room already fragrant with smoldering incense. So even though they are in the US, they have managed to import their cultural goods.

On a different level, mobilities give us an analytical tool to examine the feeling of rootedness. There is an obvious oxymoron at hand here: mobility cannot be perceived without paying attention to the glacial weight of that which is constrained and stationary. In fact, one of the most remarkable features of mobility is its ability to decentralize or make obsolete ideas, belief systems, expressions, and long-held traditions that naturally see mobility as a threatening force to reckon with. Cultures and traditions are often discussed as local and rooted entities not mobile or global, thus, the cultural mobility experiments produce results that are rooted temporally and locally (Greenblatt 1-4).

In cosmopolitan Indian English fiction that is the subject of this thesis, I would like to argue that rootedness is now interpreted differently. Whereas rootedness often in mobility studies means a physical attachment to a particular place, mobility in the cosmopolitan arena of today does no longer have to necessarily happen in a physical capacity; the intellectual or cultural mobility that I have touched upon earlier can occur without physically having to move. This is not to say that any physical mobility can or should conduce to cosmopolitanism.
Mobility, Freedom and Un-Freedom

Historically, much literature on social inequality ignored the complex ways in which the notion of ‘space’ makes significant differences in understanding economic, political and cultural processes that produce and reinforce social inequalities (Massey). However, over the past two decades, many analyses of social inequality have begun to address such deficiencies, critiquing national ‘social mobility’ studies and drawing upon different sources to reveal the specificities of various non-national class and other structures and cultures (Devine et al.).

More generally, it is increasingly understood how various mobilities fragment national societies through the emergence of local, regional, subnational, networked, diasporic and global economies, identities and citizenship (Urry Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century). Scott concludes that there is “no longer any territorial coincidence between the political forms of states, the flow of economic transactions, and the cultural and communal boundaries of “societies” (Scott 253). Especially significant are the flows of people, monies, environmental risks, taxation revenues and information which partially evade control by national states who increasingly function as ‘gamekeepers’ or regulators rather than ‘gardeners’ (Urry Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century). For instance, in The Inheritance of Loss, the Gorkha movement militias and their global costumes form such a flow of people that try to avoid the control of the Indian state government.
With regard to the capitalist class, Scott argues that ‘national capitalist classes themselves are being increasingly fragmented along the lines of the globalized circuits of capital and investment that they are involved in’ (Scott 312). Some claim there are emergent ‘transnational capitalist classes’ that are highly mobile, detached from national class contexts and that will through their ‘mobile habitus’ develop global solidarity and cohesion (Scott 312-13). Likewise, there has been the growth of powerful professions whose taskscapes (a term in anthropology that refers to a series of related activities) are partially global and who can be said to dwell in many places along diverse routeways. Reich argues that as “barriers to cross-border flows of knowledge, money, and tangible products are crumbling, groups of people in every nation are joining global webs” (Reich 172). As a further consequence, determinants of status within a given society are as much derived from these global informational and cultural flows as they are from status processes endogenous to each society. Specifically, multiple mobilities become central to the structuring of inequality within contemporary ‘disorganized’ societies. Bauman summarizes what he sees as the significance of this:

“Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values— and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times” (Bauman 2).

Postcolonial literature is one that is aimed at the freedom of former colonies in expressing their experience of colonial times through increasingly intensified cross-bordering and transnationalism. Authors of Indian postcolonial literature in English have used their position to challenge the nation-making process in a time when
globalization is affecting the entire world in so many ways, economically, politically, literary, or otherwise.

Networks establish the new social morphology of our societies, and the dispersal of networking logic considerably transforms the function and the consequences (Castells 469). Castells argues that the “network society” is made up of systems that are powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies. These various interdependent systems dating from around 1990 spread virtual connections around the world and bring very many virtual objects into the background of much everyday social life, in particular through those flickering “screens” and how life increasingly occurs upon those screens (Turkle).

Specific others are not so simply “there”; or rather they are or may be there but mainly through the mediation of very many virtual objects distributed in relatively far-flung networks. There are various consequences. First, there is increasingly “connected presence” (Urry Mobilities 212) where small gestures or signs of attention are significant in indicating that others are there but at a distance. Second, family and friendship become networked rather like much economic life; network membership becomes crucial. The pickle factory in The God of Small Things is an economic site from which we do not get a good sense of how it is, in fact, networked into the family and out into the community. In a similar fashion, Velutha sees himself networked within the local Communist Party; nevertheless, his networks fails him in the end because his father is still tied to the old fixed network of caste obligations.
Indeed, the apparently different domains of work, family, and social life are becoming more networked, more similar to each other, more self-organized and more interdependent (Larsen, Axhausen and Urry). Third, there are increasingly important global microstructures: “structures of connectivity and integration that are global in scope but microsociological in character” (Cetina 215).

The sole work of Arundhati Roy in the realm of fiction is a fluid saga of movement and mobility, with various characters that look upon mobility as a liberating opportunity or initiative to escape social and economic boundaries in pursuit of a better future. In general, we can see that marriage is looked upon as a means to actual mobility. Ammu, the beautiful mother of Rahel and Estha, is stuck in a strict traditionalist family wherein an authoritative Pappachi rules. She escapes to Calcutta but still has to marry. Her marriage to Baba collapses quickly and he leaves her in despair and flees to Australia. She moves back to ‘home’ and her small town and then moves out of the family and Ayemenem’s social restricted space. In this case, marriage works as a two-way social entity that on the one hand limits or traps people in arranged marriages. On the other, the act of marriage helps people mobilize themselves and escape into realms that were not possible.

Her secret love affair with Velutha, a man of the lower caste of the paravans is beyond the tolerance of social traditionalists in Ayemenem. Velutha has never done any harm to the family and has worked as the trusted handyman for a long time by then. But, as they grow closer to each other, Velutha is able to hope for a kind of vertical mobility in which through loving Ammu he lifts himself up in the class structure. He is able to do so because his membership of the local Communist Party
will support him. Society, however, frowns upon his attempt at a mobilizing venture and does everything to stop him, even if it costs his life. Ammu, being a woman, lacks political and family support and has to move into precarious individual efforts at business ventures.

Chacko is an anglophile by confession. At a young age, he receives a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford. For an Indian of his status in Ayemenem, higher education at such a prestigious university is an excellent opportunity for him to be able to move into new social circles, at the heart of a former colonizer. He marries an English girl, Margaret thinking it will improve his status in the host country, but in fact, he ‘marries down’ in the class system and is, at the same time, unable to rise above brutal racism. Margarets’ parents make this point very clear by opposing to their marriage. Therefore, Chacko grasps a realization of the impotence of education and marriage to make him a man of higher status in the eyes of an anglo race that earmarks him and his nation as “sly and dishonest” (Arundhati Roy The God of Small Things 240). Chacko’s mobility is a story of a failure: His reverse mobility back to Ayemenem is a plunge into a tarnished collective consciousness of being Indian again. His former wife, Margaret is lead to move ‘upwards’ as an English tourist visiting a Third World country, but this is also a ‘downward’ mobility, as she is both a divorcee and a widow.

Rahel is a rebellious girl from an early age. Just like her mother, she finds Ayemenem to be too constrictive of a society to thrive in, mostly because of the gender inequality that is instilled in the rural Indian households. Rahel escapes this by moving out to Delhi to study, where she meets her future husband, an American
Larry McCaslin. For Rahel, mobility is both physically and psychologically positive. The fact that she no longer lives with her family means that she no longer has to tolerate Chacko and Pappachi’s commands.

However, Rahel’s transnational mobility can be categorized as unsuccessful. In Kotayyam, she has always been the hardheaded female that the society neither understands nor tolerates. After the dissociation of her marriage in America, she resorts to working odd jobs and ultimately ends up in a gas station where she sits behind a glass shield answering to customers and getting harassed occasionally with indecent proposals. Therefore, no matter where she is or what type of educational degree she has. Rahel’s mobility, be it to the West or back to Ayemenem, results in anguish and loss.

Rahel’s twin brother Estha goes through a geographical movement after his parents’ marriage is broken. He is shipped off to Assam to live with Baba to distance him from family conflicts. In his older age, he is often seen by the locals walking for long hours, but this mobility is a sign of entrapment: he walks in circles. He has no network and thus returns to the source of his trauma.

Baby Kochamma, Rahel and Estha’s aunt, also escapes a narrow life by moving across boundaries to court Father Mulligan, but her love is not reciprocated. Her erratic behavior shames her family, so her father sends her to a convent and later to the US for education since trying to marry her off has not been successful. Education fails to help her move socially since her degree is only in ornamental gardening and American knowledge does not equip her to work in tropical Kerala.
Her return to Ayemenem induces gradual decline. Her access to global mobility, the satellite dish, and TV, results only in banal cosmopolitanism and turns Baby Kochamma into a dishonest, aggressive, and plotting aunt to the twins, Rahel and Estha, and their mother.

The twin’s father, Baba, escapes his marital responsibilities and goes away to Australia to work as a security guard. The novel does not specify how his life turns out after that but gets the point clear that he never writes back to learn about his children or wife who in fact dies in his absence.

In short, the global movement of ideas, money, and tourists in *The God of Small Things* does not produce any comfortably established at-homeness or transnational justice. Mobility networks may seem to offer some consolation by way of a broader cosmopolitan outlook, but the force of family and small town society overrides any hope of comfortable detachments.

Kiran Desai’s Booker winning novel limns *multiworlds* within a framework of global circulation and mobility. In India under British rule, the Judge, Jemubhai Patel, moves to a colonial England in pursuit of higher education in law to improve his position in Indian society after return and right wrongs in the judicial system of India. His experience of mobility troubles him deeply since he always feels inferior to the English people and shamed by their arrogant treatment of his otherness (including skin color, bodily scent, eating habits, etc.), an experience similar to that of Chacko’s in *The God of Small Things*. Even higher education is not the elixir for an anglophile Jemu. It generates an inferiority complex so that upon returning home,
he shows minimal familial aspirations and compensates by becoming remote and grim about the Indianness of things. Jemu’s experience of a transnational mobility is only skin deep: he eats an English breakfast, plays chess, and cares for his female dog. Living transnationally has not made him even a bit more sensitive to any cosmopolitan ideal of human equality and worth. The proof is that he beats up his low-caste cook for every nonsensical reason only because he looks down at him as inferior in intellect. We should, of course, take note of his caste of Patels. He gets married to a beautiful girl of higher economic status only because he needs the girl’s family’s monetary support for life. Jemu’s experience of movement is quite impressive: he is mobile around India and the UK, but his privileged access to mobility provides him with only a temporary release and turns into immobility in Kalimpong where he spends his later years. It can be argued that the imperial network sustains him in India by keeping him mobile, but also isolates him from other networks so that he has nowhere to go when Independence comes.

The Judge’s lower-caste counterpart who escapes India into the global scene is Biju, an illegal labor migrant to the US who is in search of a better life in the dreamland. As opposed to the Judge, Biju maintains a close emotional bond with his father by sending him letters. His life in America is pitiful since he is— like the gypsies in the Notre Dame du Paris— “sans papiers, sans domicile”, paperless, homeless. This is an acute reminder that in real life mobility or the urge to move upward or forward is very much based on citizenship and economic means. Biju represents the whole hoard of naïve illegals that live with the lowest living standards no matter where they reside: India or America, the world is one big prison for people like Biju. As is
the case with many labor forces in the West who live miserable lives, they start to idealize their home country; they assume that returning home is the way out. To their distress, India, the motherland, is not welcoming to its children: Biju is stripped down to his underpants and robbed of all his belongings before being able to reunite with his father. He is at best a failed example of social and transnational mobility that recedes in his aspirations and finds himself declining steadily with everybody else in India. Biju’s use of mobility puts him in touch with other ethnicities and races in a cosmopolitan city such as New York, yet his traditional, narrow, racial, and national values do not produce cosmopolitan results.

Sai, the Judge’s granddaughter, is the outcome of an interfaith, cross-communal marriage between a Zoroastrian father and a Hindu mother. Their marriage was frowned upon by both families because it was breaking the ‘homely’ stability of traditional family foundation. These two factors historically divided the Indian nation into clans that have learned to stay away from each other and keep social interactions among one another under thorough scrutiny. Sai’s parents’ daring act of breaking with convention can be interpreted as a form of liberating mobility in the face of education and city modernity. They elope to Russia which helps them to avoid harassment from their respective families and to concentrate on their own life ambitions. Sai, after becoming an orphan, is brought up by English nuns in a convent, so her lifestyle is Western. Her journey to India in the hope of visiting her family roots is reminiscent of Sophie Mol’s trip to Ayemenem in *The God of Small Things*; they both are born outside India and are now moving to a country they have never visited before. Like Sophie Mol’s, Sai’s arrival in a small, isolated part of India...
(Kalimpong) causes dismay. Her opposition to Jemu’s treatment of the cook is an unprecedented challenge to the male authority figure that cannot be tolerated by Jemu. Therefore, she realizes that any elongation of her stay will jeopardize or even terminate her aspirations in life. It is hard to tell if Sai’s downward social mobility lets her develop a fully-fledged cosmopolitan consciousness.

There are a few other types of mobility that are outlined briefly in the novel. For example, Noni’s and Lola’s daughters have been recruited by CNN and BBC, as a newscaster and a reporter, respectively. We do not get to hear anything firsthand of their experience save for the mothers’ accounts of their glorious time in America and England. At least, the novel represents these two superpowers in a positive light.

Furthermore, the novel describes an encounter between Biju (who works as a food delivery person) and some Indian girls who live and study in New York City. In their particular example, we are for the first time observing a different category of transnational Indian travelers who can actually afford to live comfortably in a shared accommodation that is filled with an air of Indian femininity: a familiar emanation of newly washed hair, “gold strung Kolhapuri slippers” (K. Desai 49), and a steadfast Hindu belief in a chunky Ganesh brought all the way from India for decoration and superstitious purposes. Their privileged ability to take mobility for granted speaks for their willingness to finish their studies and probably stay in America eventually. In a sense, they represent a form of detached if not rootless cosmopolitanism and they stand in steep contrast to Biju who cannot for a moment stop thinking of his poor father and is thus planning his return to India.
Gyan, a member of the nationalist Gorkhaland movement that seeks to establish an independent state, is in fact following a human rights agenda in a society that lacks justice. Similar to Velutha in *The God of Small Things*, he is coaxed into a form of communitarian or social cosmopolitanism by which downtrodden workers can feel respected and equal to other members of the society. Nevertheless, it is a form of banal cosmopolitanism as satirically evident in the mobility of consumers and media goods affecting the ‘Gorkha’ political militants:

Did they see themselves from a perspective beyond this moment, these unleashed Bruce Lee fans in their American T-shirts made-in-China coming-in-via-Kathmandu?

(K. Desai 157)

The enforced mobility of the Swiss Father Booty to the Siliguri airport and exile marks the end of an older era when colonialism was for the best and the commencement of a nationalistic purgation to eradicate colonial residues.

And finally, the phone conversation between the Gujarati restaurant owner in New York and a fellow countryman is a good example of an Indian migrant who denies any ties to his country. He struggles to put on an American accent while the phone marketer apparently knows he is yet another fellow Indian judging by his name. He shows neither respect to nor yearning about his people back in India and refuses to buy call plans to call his family and relatives back there. For him, even the technology of contact, a prevalent aspect of a transnational world experience represents a kind of backwardness, a path that threatens all his achievements in
America, however small, and places him on the same level with the peoples he once was one of and now looks down upon.

Roy’s analogy of the India of the poor moving towards a desperate fate seems to work faultlessly for the White Tiger (Balram) and his quest for freedom. Similar to Biju, the cook’s son, in The Inheritance of Loss, Balram is also a low-caste individual who leaves his family behind in search of a better future, not the one the rigid caste system in India and the traditional views of the family household have envisaged for him.

He is born to an indigent family, like many millions of Indians who live in small villages of India and is destined, by default, to melt into the dark mass of slaves living and working only to please the needs of their masters. Balram, nevertheless, realizes that to succeed, he first needs to unshackle himself from the limitations of his family, especially his grandmother who abuses him for her own benefit (reminiscent of the plotter Baby Kochamma in The God of Small Things). He refuses to get married young and bring the dowry of the girl because he feels his ambitions in life cannot be contained in such mundane methods. He realizes that marriage in the village will end his chances of prosperity. Therefore, through smart insight and agility, he mobilizes and frees himself socially and physically by moving out of Laxmangarh to the city and gradually lifts himself out of a mass of browbeaten Indians gathered around in a tight coop built and owned by affluent landlords.

Balram’s mobility is vertical: from a micro-cosmopolitical perspective, the real change in the welfare of the rural Indians must come from below, rather than from
the urban elite. As a point of interest, the occupation Balram manages to obtain is that of a driver, a mobile object of transport crucial to mobility studies today. As a metaphor for his social backwardness despite being mobile, he loathes his “half-baked” cosmopolitan yet politically venal master (Ashok) when he punches keys on his cellphone (yet another iconic commodity of mobilization and the technology of contact). Balram cannot deal with the fact that although Ashok is physically sitting in the back seat, he is mentally in communication with San Francisco thousands of kilometers away. This practice of mobility by his naïve master stands in opposition to Balram’s view of a mobility from below while still being rooted nationally.

His ultimate murder of Ashok and taking the next train to Bangalore indicates, once again, Balram’s urge for social mobility. He is now supported by possessing a large amount of money that can finally help him actualize his dream of becoming a social and economic entrepreneur. The actualization of his “half-baked” cosmopolitan ideal necessitates aggression and violence; but, for Balram, these can be discounted so long as his entrepreneurial venture lands him a car rental service in a rapidly globalizing Bangalore with all kinds of IT technology headquarters being erected at the end of the novel.

On the other end of the master-slave spectrum, with Balram (The White Tiger) on one side, stands an Indian long resident in America, Ashok, who exhibits all kinds of naïveté typical of returnees from the West back to India. Balram glorifies Ashok as a cosmopolitan role model who is mobile and open-minded and has even given up his excellent life in America and come back to India to set things right. His wife, Pinky
Madam, is an Indian born in America who does not act submissively, as women are traditionally expected to behave.

The longer Ashok stays in India, comparable to Sai from *The Inheritance of Loss*, the more detestable the situation become for him. The first person to signal this clearly is Pinky, who calls India “a fucking joke” (Adiga 7) and demands that Ashok return with her to America. Her firm tone and language is unheard of among Ashok’s enterprising but culturally traditional household.

Perhaps the landmark incident that fells the cosmopolitan Ashok in Balram’s eyes is when Pinky’s hit-and-run accident is about to cost Balram a long period of jail time for something he had no part in. Pinky leaves him and returns to the US, and so in truth leaves him vulnerable and defenseless, in the corruption and saturnalia of Delhi. Once proud and untainted, Ashok loses his sense of self-worth. His gradual deterioration indicates a cosmopolitan’s difficulty dealing with a nation he has become so different from, that he is also unable to change and indeed succumbs to being changed by it at long last. As a detached cosmopolitan, Ashok is suddenly exposed as he lacks a network to support him and counter-balance the forces of family and nation. No longer the intelligentsia, just another concupiscent male, Ashok falls prey to the class-based wrath of a driver whom he trusted and thought humble, yet stupid.

In conclusion, what we can call Ashok and Pinky’s *reverse mobility* is disastrous, not unlike that experienced by Margaret and Sophie Mol and Sai from *The God of Small Things* and *The Inheritance of Loss*, respectively. They all become debilitated in
confronting a nation that refuses their ideals of freedom of thinking, drastic change informed by a Western viewpoint, and the equality of everyone in the name of human dignity.

**Conclusion**

Today, mobility is not only a question of settling in a new place or migrating; more generally, it raises the question of its different forms. Kesserling has distinguished between centralized, decentralized and virtual mobility (Kesselring). Indeed, it is no longer necessary to physically move in order to be mobile. People can remain where they are while communicating and working together. A new sort of relationship has developed between time and space so that it has become easier to bridge many miles in a short time and to see one another without ever meeting. Consequently, the morphology of social networks has been altered and social relations have become more fluid (Bonnet, Collet and Maurines 141).

The novels in question take on a fluid representation of the concept of mobility in its various forms and types. In its most popular kind, many characters in all novels experience a physical form of mobility: Rahel, Chacko, Baba, Baby Kochamma, Margaret, Sophie Mol, Jemu, Sai, Biju, Balram, Ashok, and Pinky. The country of one’s origin and one’s citizenship are important factors that need to be noted. Both *The God of Small Things* and *The Inheritance of Loss* somehow portray Indianness as being a letdown for people who aspire to prosper in UK or US. Examples are Jemu (the judge) and Chacko who experience the same kind of discriminatory behavior while getting a higher education in England.
Class- or caste-wise, Velutha, Biju, and Balram belong to the lower end of the society and experience a vertical mobility that tends to ameliorate their social position within the Indian society via different means. For Velutha, entering an intimate relationship with a woman of higher caste and joining the Communist Party are attempts to achieve such positional advancement. For Biju, escaping India as an illegal labor migrant in the US, at first, seems to appeal to his inherently naïve understanding of the global world around him but that only lasts until he perceives of his misery even in America. For Balram, finding a job at a local master’s home is the pathway to freedom from class/caste restrictions that have always engulfed him.

Mobility could also be seen as a widening of mental horizons and apprehending the intricacies of the workings of the world as it passes into an era of mass globalization and transnationalization with or without actually moving physically. For Rahel, who since childhood is looked upon by the Ayemenem residents as a social misfit, a daring act of escape to America exposes her to the bitter fact that gender plays a determining and deciding role in the level of hardship and success of an individual’s mobility. As Rosi Braidotti states, for women to be “free to move around [and] to go where one wants is a right that women have only just started to gain” (Braidotti 256). Although Biju journeys to New York physically, he is never totally out of his closed-minded Indian self. He callously earmarks his Pakistani co-toilers as a cunning people whom he needs to avoid as a true Indian. His idolization of the Motherland India is yet another indication of his inability to become more open and accommodating to other nationals with whom he shares a workplace and dormitory.

In *The White Tiger*, Balram soon realizes that for him to be successful, he needs to
be rooted in Bangalore, the technological hub of India where new global technology
giants (such as Yahoo) are beginning to start operation. With the ample money he
has stolen, he can easily embark on the next plane out of India to start a dream life,
but his close observation of Ashok and the way his life unfolds as a returned Indian
changes his mindset. He has become glocal, global (in tandem with the trends in the
world) yet stays local and relevant to India.

Finally, the use of technology is an aspect of mobility that affects peoples’ social
interaction. Baby Kochamma’s extensive US satellite TV watching distances her from
the realities of life in the Ayemenem and lets her ornamented garden perish. The
restaurateur that Biju wants to work for even will not bother to use a telephone to
call his family back in India while Biju writes letters and mails them to his father.
Ashok, despite sitting physically in the car with his wife Pinky, is using his cell phone
to stay mentally present in San Francisco. Pinky does not mind that but Balram
shows an immediate hatred towards a technology that in his mind renders one’s
presence irrelevant.

Mobility, in its various aspects, is an important dimension of cosmopolitan
dispositions of competencies and openness (Beck *Cosmopolitan Vision*; Urry
*Mobilities*). However, travel alone— particularly in its regulated or “fordist” form—
is clearly not enough to constitute a cosmopolitan identity although transnational
connections of various types certainly help (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis 110-11).
The competency that allows a cosmopolitan outlook is an individual’s cultural ability
to know, command, and enact a variety of cultural knowledges and repertoires.
According to Hannerz, individuals should be able to switch cultural codes as
required as part of cultivating a sense of intercultural mastery (Hannerz "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture" 240). For him, the cosmopolitan is definable as having “an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences” and a “willingness to engage with the other” (Hannerz "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture" 239). In *The White Tiger*, Balram’s willingness to engage with the Chinese premier is an ironic attempt at achieving a cosmopolitan outlook coming from an ill-lettered individual who feels obliged to participate in a conversation with the head of a superpower state. However, on a general level across all the novels, we can observe that the cosmopolitan ideals of competencies and openness are never realized to the full for various reasons that were mentioned before. After all, the type and degree to which the novels aspire may be termed *half-baked cosmopolitanism* that, given the current state of political and nationalist affairs in India, may never become fully operational or actual at least in near future.
CHAPTER SIX: HOME NOT SO SWEET HOME

My humanity is in feeling we are all voices of the same poverty. They speak of homeland. My homeland is the rhythm of a guitar, a few portraits, an old sword, the willow grove's visible prayer as evening falls.

— Jorge Luis Borges

Introduction

Often associated with family, the concept of home, as a focal point in one’s life and one’s geography of movement, has simultaneously been challenged and reexamined through a panoply of theories and perspectives, both in sociology (Tomaney) and in literary studies (Brydon) which will be discussed in this chapter. Diana Brydon, for instance, has written extensively in the past couple of years on home and belonging in postcolonial and diaspora literature across a variety of fields. She focuses on how home is visualized under globalizing conditions and the ways in which the notion of cosmopolitanism regularly becomes relevant to home in new spheres (Brydon 4-7).

The emergence of transnationalism in migrancy studies offers scholars fresh insights into the ways wherein new settlers, labor migrants, and cosmopolitan globetrotters engage with the concept of ‘home’ in their day-to-day lives. The concept of home occupies a central position in the mental or physical process of migration but how
home is defined and re-defined in a globalizing world remains a debatable topic across various disciplines in social economy, political sciences and of late in literature. The challenge, according to Simon Gikandi, is to theorize and clarify these globalizing processes and conceive globalization outside and beyond the traditional home and the nation-state (Gikandi 628-32). We can find modes of engagement beyond the nation for reconceiving home while we do not deny the importance of the nation-state as an original and traditional space of engagement.

What I suggest in this chapter is a set of questions regarding the meanings that migrants attach to their mobility and settlement experiences. I would like to discuss in depth how the three Indian cosmopolitan novels (The God of Small Things, The Inheritance of Loss, and The White Tiger) give contrasting interpretations of home, some relaying it as a resiliently steady and bounded territory while others conceptualize the people-place politics as more of a shifting and mobile body of engagement. Therefore, I focus on the perplexities and tensions that arise from the mobile as well as sedentarist approaches to the concept of home in the lives of the Indians that opt to leave India in pursuit of a better life in either the US or the UK. I am also interested in interrogating the glorification of India as a home by the Indian government nationalists and the ways in which such exaltation clashes with cosmopolitan consciousness, mobility, and the politics of belonging.

**Home**

At its most basic, a home is a kind of place (Easthope 128), which conforms to the widely accepted portrayal proffered by sociologist Thomas Gieryn. He states that
for a place to be home, it requires three “necessary and sufficient” features: a geographical location, a material form, and investment of meaning and value (Gieryn 264-65). The concept of home seems to be the positively perceived place where once feels familiar and safe, thereby making it easy for individuals to have strong social, psychological, and emotional attachments (Easthope 136).

First and foremost, the location of home as a geographical entity is definitely variable through an act of mobility and migration either domestically or internationally. It can also be multiple; meaning that a person can have more than one home or simply be without one— which is to say homeless. Another version of home is the one on the move, as is the case for military and civilian personnel at sea and in this way, it does not need precise coordinates. The same can be said about the scale of home, from a small house to a village, town, city, state or nation of one’s birth and most notable of all, the whole world, i.e. in accordance with the notion of cosmopolitanism, making oneself a citizen of the world.

Second, a home has a material form or “the bundle of stuff” (Kusenbach) that somehow define its component parts. While the material aspect of home in Western and global cultures often focuses on household objects, food, tools etc. (Arnold et al.), the oriental materiality of home may or may not share the same set of objects and components. As a result, it is safe to assume that there are no universal features to the material form that characterizes home around the world among various cultures. In light of cosmopolitan theory, home is defined in several different ways. Since cosmopolitans are thought to be people on the move, they might have different homes in different places at different times— and they might
call all of these home. What is more, the theory of cosmopolitanism implies that the whole world is one’s home so that places this imaginary capacity well above the more confined and exclusivist ideas of home such as a village home, a city home or ultimately a national home.

The third and probably most important characteristic of home, above the previous two, lies in the fact that home is endowed with meaning and value, which shapes its location and material form (Easthope; Gieryn). Pertinent to the structure of home, it is vital that we think about a few basic questions, answers to which will aid us in formulating a cosmopolitan resolution to the concept of home: a) What are the general and particular meanings and values that characterize home? b) Where do the values and meaning emanate from? c) How do values and meanings of home influence one’s life before, during, and after migration?

Sociologist Jan Duyvendak proposes that there are three sentimental ingredients in the making of home: familiarity, haven, and heaven (Duyvendak 38-39). Even though it is not necessarily associated with positive reinforcement or recall, familiarity emphasizes an individual’s in-depth knowledge of a location that they call home. The individual’s familiarity with a location is often linked to a lack or lessening of fear and an increasing sentiment of comfortableness and rootedness. The second ingredient, haven, refers to “the feelings of safety, security, and privacy” (Duyvendak 39). The third and most innovative component of home, according to him, is heaven, a component that can be associationally multidimensional:

[it is] a public place where one can collectively be, express and realize oneself; where one feels publicly free and independent. Home here embodies shared
histories; a material and/or symbolic place with one’s own people and activities (Duyvendak 38).

As the definition above delineates, the concept of home in its third characteristic, *heaven*, allows the widening of the concept beyond one’s private abode to include larger more public locations such as village, cities, regions and even nation states. In this sense, home not only references selves and individuals but also pertains to holistic sensibilities that are shared by a larger group of people on various scales from small to large (one’s home into one’s country).

Duyvendak’s idea of home seems to be taking on a less material meaning in favor of a more symbolic, even ideological one. So, in spite of the fact that home has holistic and inclusive overtones, he observes, the sentiment of home— for instance, as in home territory or homeland— is a highly “selective” experience. Thus, be it haven or heaven, feeling at home is not something we have everywhere or with everyone; it is a sentiment that “seems to entail including some and excluding many” (Duyvendak 39). And on a more general level, as Cheah states, the nation-state is often seen as a “particularistic straitjacket” that confines belonging and tries to stabilize the “intense mobility and transformation that characterize[s] modern societies” (Cheah *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* 20).

Nevertheless, in theory, cosmopolitanism attacks this exclusivism and paints borderless modes of belonging. According to one basic tenet of cosmopolitanism, one should feel at home everywhere in the world— hence the idealism that is inherent in the cosmopolitan theory. But this is not the case. According to Massey, a disposition to a place-based identity, belonging, and “obsession with heritage”
naturally leads to exclusivism and “outright antagonism to newcomers and ‘outsiders’” (Massey 26). Nonetheless, cosmopolitanism too relies on an exclusionary binary itself. Tomaney criticizes the working assumption of the cosmopolitan theory for being exclusivist and contradictory. He argues that the theoretical understanding of attachment to place is often conceptualized in the binary terms of liberal cosmopolitanism versus illiberal localism (Tomaney 660-63). Cosmopolitanism, at least in its association with elitist mobilities, can thus be essentializing in its quest for ideals of universal liberation and mobility at the cost of depicting the local and the rooted in a constraining manner (Marotta 114).

The postcolonial literary project was at the start a national project of creating a homely culture. However, Anglophone writers need a language in which the writers and readers feel at home to tell of a home that is estranged and diasporic. Moreover, the postcolonial project enabled writers to embark on a quest for minority voices, finding a home in the national literature that led to attempts in actualizing cosmopolitan ideals.

As a result, cosmopolitanism may appear to be an impossible contradiction or an inherently particularist concept that would espouse the sort of “us” and “them” binaries it purports to denounce. This argument becomes significant as we juxtapose the Indian novelists’ personal views on the concept of home and how their novels that have circulated the Western world through the Booker Prize recognition envisaging home on both a private as well as a more symbolic level.
However, we can ask to what degree cosmopolitan idealism is tarnished in the face of the politics of home in an Indian cosmopolitan elite and their Western readership?

**Feeling at Home**

There are different aspects (concrete and symbolic) that construct feeling at home that need to be considered. For one, there are particular perspectives that relate home to an apparently located place. Even when we are speaking about a home that is mobile, we still picture a *material* place where we feel at ease and at home. However, Duyvendak argues that home may not be a material or geographical space and that the feeling of at-homeness can come from or be attached to a “virtual space” (Duyvendak 36). The idea that virtual realities or the technology of contact are changing the world (for instance the use of laptops, tablets or smartphones to be related to another part of the world without necessarily being there in person) makes talking about the fixedness of home difficult.

For another, there are community forms of home that constitute “sacred structures” (Manzo 50) that bind people together. Religion and nationalism are among these forms. And finally, there is the physical materiality of a place called home that comes into consideration. As Blunt and Dowling suggest, while home may at some levels be described as immaterial, it is often followed by a *concrete* reference or projection. Therefore, home as a “spatial imaginary” is rarely purely symbolic. It almost always sits at the intersection of ideas, feelings, and memories (Blunt and Dowling 2).
The difficulty in discussing feeling at home is that the concept of home is reflective and subjective in many ways and generalizations would be exclusionary, leaving some other forms of feeling at home (especially more abstract ones) aside. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie describes the importance of a physical presence in a comparable fashion:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge— which gives rise to profound uncertainties— that out physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the Mind (Rushdie *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* 10).

The point Rushdie is making here resonates throughout the lives of all three novelists: Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga and the stories they are narrating of the Indias of their minds. Roy’s and Adiga’s acclaim in the Western world after receiving the Booker Prize confirmed them in their choice to live in India because they prefer to be locally relevant to the Indian people that they write about. Desai, nevertheless, has opted for the exilic life choice due to the harsh realities of the life of a writer in India and the way her book was perceived as an attack on India. Even though all three are cosmopolitans, they differ in their interpretation of and disposition towards the concept of home and their ways the characters struggle to find home. Reading the novels, we can see that homeland is physical as well as imagined or remembered from diasporic space. As Johnson suggests, the movement of cultural products in this process affirms “the lost, buried, and
foreclosed narratives within the space and time of the nation” (Prentice, Devadas and Johnson xvii).

**Cosmopolitanism: Feeling at Home Everywhere?**

The world and the people residing in it have in the past couple of decades become increasingly interrelated through what might be called globalization. The universalizing process of globalization has had people of the world experience a feeling of sharedness and belonging through “transcultural encounters, mass migration, and population transfers between East and West, First and Third Worlds” (Cheah "Cosmopolitanism" 486-96). The interconnectedness arising from such population mobility should lead us to examine how the concept of cosmopolitanism is at play in postcolonial literary commodities, along with the politics of home and belonging and the shared responsibilities that they entail.

Cosmopolitanism, by an early definitional disposition, means that any certain individual, by way of a common thread of humanity, is a “citizen of the world” who has the inherent right to feel at home everywhere, and to move about the globe irrespective of their country of birth, social and economic status, political views, sexual orientations etc. However, this is axiomatic when further investigation reveals much more complications than in real-life situations.

Contemporary social theory talks extensively about the concepts of home, diaspora, exile, migrancy and “nomadology” (Noyes 161) but according to Morley, the concept of home, amidst the hyper-mobility of such theory, needs a more in-depth exploration (Morley 427-28). In our modernizing world, freeing people from
localism and particularism (both among staples of cosmopolitanism) through transnational migrancy and mobility is considered to be the accepted norm among sociologists “whereas local attachment is rather regarded as a deficiency and deviation from this norm” (Gustafson 668) but there are opposing voices too.

For instance, Morley criticizes the essentialism attached to and the uncriticality of such notions of “mobility, fluidity and hybridity as [being] intrinsically progressive” (Morley 427). He argues that many a time, the processes through which people can refashion their identities are not consistent or equal; some are forced into identity politics not of their choosing. This nuance brings to mind the caste and class identification in all the three novels that determines and defines home for individual characters.

Moreover, it is important to note that as places lose their particularity, the feeling of bonding that one feels towards them fades away. But the level of mobility by which this process escalates rests heavily upon various factors such as social and economic status. Sociologist James Jasper relates these conditions to the academics who theorize elitist cosmopolitanisms:

> Academics are notoriously rootless, beginning with college and graduate school but often continuing later, as the most successful are happy to move from one university to another, every few years, in pursuit of higher salaries and prestige. As a result, perhaps, they have spun elaborate theories about the importance of meritocracy (from which they think they benefit), but few about the benefits of staying put. They would claim that their real community is that of colleagues scattered around the globe. ... Their ideal is the cosmopolitan equally at home in Chicago or Frankfurt; but is this person really at home anywhere? (Jasper 248)
This is relevant to the novels especially when we notice that many characters are leaving their home in pursuit of education in England or America, which shakes their connection to their homeland. For now, the home no longer exists in a traditionally accepted format: fixed, fixated, located. It has shifted and turned into something different which is no longer defined as a static entity (Nowicka 72). The “roots paradigm” (Duyvendak) is to be accompanied with a “routes paradigm” to understand how people on the move feel about the new places that they find comparable to or make like home. In this instance, the impression that “routes” leave is less of rigidified geographies and more of deterritorialized mobilities that altogether are more in tune with transnational networks (Blunt and Dowling 199).

Is this a deplorable development in itself? In the next section, I undertake a reading of the novels (while noting their authors’ cosmopolitan position) to see how these mobilities are shifting the notion of home.

**Home, the Novels, the Novelists**

In *The God of Small Things*, *The Inheritance of Loss*, and *The White Tiger*, we encounter many characters that have a dubious grasp of what home might be and exhibit different levels of affiliations with their country of birth before, during, and after a mobilizing transnational experience. From a cosmopolitan point of view, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga all have had the opportunity to have a Western education, a kind of privilege that is not accessible to many. *The God of Small Things, The Inheritance of Loss, and The White Tiger* all recount stories of home, dislocation, exile, and returning. Home, as put forth before, should possess
three basic attributes: familiarity, the feeling of ease and safety, and a symbolic attachment or communality among members of a group (e.g. a village, or a nation).

Not so in these novels, which depict it as *not so sweet home*.

In Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, we have a house presided over by men: Pappachi is the elderly patriarch who is not a bit shy to beat his wife Mammachi around the house and in doing so does not face any objection from the other members of the family except once by Chacko after his return from Oxford. The females of the house feel confined at home: Ammu, her daughter Rahel, and Baby Kochamma. Chacko, the family’s only son, feels not at home in India. For him, England is a country that he should live and study (and later get married) in. From a postcolonial perspective, Chacko’s mentality may be explained in inferiority complex terms. For Chacko, even though India has the familiarity and haven features, it does not give him independence and a collective of which he can be fond.

Receiving a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford elevates his pride and social status in Ayemenem, among the locals, and has him thinking of making England his home. In the UK, a highly educated yet still bound to his national identity, he is unable to feel at home: he is not indulged by his wife and her family distrusts him. Chacko’s transitional move, making a home in the UK based on an education in Oxford is not enough to enable him to construct his home because he is missing the third feature: *haven*. He is not capable of connecting to the collective history of a colonial England. When he returns to the Ayemenem House, he surprisingly confronts his father and stops Pappachi’s abusive behavior towards Mammachi. Although this commendable action is the result of a Western education,
in the grander scheme of matters, he is a male challenging and taking the lead over another male in their home. So the incident is not much more than a male power play at home to establish dominion.

Moreover, the drowning of Sophie Mol in the river that separates the Ayemenem House and the History House symbolically reminds Chacko and ex-wife Margaret that just as Chacko could never fully feel at home in England, Margaret will not feel safe in Ayemenem either.

The other character that loses his touch with reality is Estha. After having been sexually molested in his childhood, he cannot feel at home with others in Ayemenem. Estha has lost all the three fundamental characteristics of home (familiarity, heaven, and haven) and lives in constant fear. What we know of him in his later years is that he can be seen by the locals walking around the village for the entire day not talking to anybody. For him, the lush nature of Ayemenem is the safest place (just like Velutha) which metaphorically takes him in and gives him shelter. There, he feels familiar, safe, and connected in a Romantic way.

His twin sister, Rahel, resorts to pursuing a university degree in Delhi to move away from her daunting home. Her marriage to an American and the ultimate migration to the US have a similar outcome to that of her uncle Chacko. She once felt encaged in her home in Ayemenem because the traditional male domination and the society did not grant her equal independence and freedom. During her life in the United States, she realizes that feeling of at-homeness is not quite still there. After her divorce, she works at a gas station where she feels unsafe and uneasy. This is when
she realizes where home is for her: it is where Estha is. Rahel’s transitional mobility yields emotions of extreme loss that she seeks to recuperate by reuniting with Estha. She consummates a sexual relationship with him as a way of relieving years of pent-up tension and fear. Roy positions Rahel and Estha’s incestuous resolution in order to subvert the commonly accepted norms of home and family to give them a choice of alternatives to what the society expects.

Velutha, the untouchable handyman of the History House, constructs yet another aspect of the concept of home. Velutha takes Ammu, throughout their secretly held meetings, to where he genuinely feels at home: in the haven of a familiar, lavish natural beauty. Roy’s descriptive language when she paints the scenery for the reader is stunning:

The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun. The nights are clear, but suffused with sloth and sullen expectation (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 1).

However, nature in its guise as home cannot protect Velutha against intruders. Even though he is a supporter of the communist party in Ayemenem, he is abandoned by it to face the police on rape charges. Velutha and Ammu’s home is concrete yet imaginary; they can never feel safe together, and their love for each other is not tolerated by a larger rigid society. It is ironic that the communism, that he supports naively, promises in a cosmopolitan fashion that all workers of the world must unite (Marx and Engels) in brotherhood. Alas, even this kind of cosmopolitanism from below is doomed in a society that keeps the untouchables at a distance.
The question of caste and social status reminds us of an imperative issue about how one acquires a certain identity better than one’s previous one through the process of migration. Social critic, Ghassan Hage, argues that migrants who travel to a new nation can “accumulate nationality” through a number of ways including learning the language, the accent, the duration they stay overseas, and practicing the national-specific cultural practices of the new country (Hage 54). Pierre Bourdieu argues that “habitus” or a person’s individual personality, values, and sensibilities that are acquired through activities and experiences is a deciding factor. These tendencies and norms leave lasting dispositions and mental structures that are hard to break down (Navarro 13). The individual may travel, but other factors determine the potentiality of real change. Hage mentions elements such as “looks, [and] a class-deprived capacity to intermix with others from different cultures (cosmopolitanism)” may grant a person some kind of proximity to the dominant national culture which can quicken the process of assimilation and the accumulation of “national capital” (Hage 54). In the novels, we can see that these factors do play a decisive role in the fates of the Indians on the move.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the Judge’s story is closely comparable to that of Chacko’s. He is a controlling husband. By traveling to the University of Cambridge to study law, Jemu attempts to rise in his social status and improve the judiciary system in his Indian motherland. But the colonial England repels Jemu; he is a highly intelligent and accomplished student at his college. But, he does not feel at home. Uneasy, unsafe, uncertain. Just like Chacko, by virtue of being an Indian in a colonizer’s land, the concept of establishing a new home in a first-world country
loses its glitter. Jemu returns to India, equipped with knowledge, to correct the order of things judicial, but the system overpowers his individuality. The arising depression and the fact that he even cannot force his wife into new ways (learning and speaking English for example) leaves Jemu at a loss.

The Kalimpong house that Jemu decides to reside in for his late years is a fake colonial duplication: remote, luxurious, lofty, and yet void of human interaction, safety, and rootedness. He has failed to make the UK home, and now he is unable to create a homely facsimile in Kalimpong. He commands the cook to do all kinds of things and harasses him physically and psychologically in order to quench his desire for ruling and domination, reminiscent of a colonizer’s desire for domination.

Pheng Cheah reflects upon the idea of the global cities exemplified in such famous instances as New York, London, and Tokyo: “[these are] integral sites for producing and reproducing the organization and management of a global production system, and a global marketplace for finance” (Cheah Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights 31). Kiran Desai’s intelligent placement of Biju within a global city then comes into relief. He is the most attached character in the novel. Despite undergoing a transnational migrancy experience, and living in a cosmopolitan society, he is pushed down the social strata once again because of his illegal migrant status that is borne out of his low-caste position and the inability to apply for labor migration legally. As Saskia Sassen notes, this is because the geography of centrality and marginality has developed into a new paradigm (Sassen 140). Far from being about less developed countries versus developed countries, this inequality is evidently present within global cities in developed countries. In
spite of the fact that Biju is positioned, albeit illegally, within a global economic order, he does not feel at home in New York; there is no sense of familiarity, heaven, and haven attached to New York in his mind. He does not associate the city and his workplace with comfortableness nor can he have a feeling of security and ultimately a collective attachment to the global community of New York.

From a cosmopolitan perspective, as Sassen reminds us, national attachments and identities become weaker for “global players and their customers... [as major cities] contribute to denationalize the corporate elite” (Sassen 111-12). But this is not the case with Biju. As an Indian national, he often feels threatened by and shows aggression toward other migrant laborers in the restaurant, especially the Pakistanis. Biju, at last, cannot form a definite cosmopolitan shift as, according to Hage’s conception, he is still so rooted in his upbringing and identity capital.

He finds it deplorable that a Gujarati restaurant owner in a global city such as New York denies any ties to his mother country of India. That man belongs to the more elite group of “denationalized” (Cheah Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights 32) migrants who have lifted themselves high enough to distance themselves from the typical illegals such as Biju. His refusal to buy phone plans to reconnect with India is an indication that for the Gujarati restaurateur, the technology of contact (a modern staple of transnationalism) is irrelevant. As opposed to Biju who yearns to go back to India, which remains his home, the owner, though struggling, remains happy to stay in New York and indulge in the globality of the United States, far away from the peoples he once was one of and now looks down upon as less worthy.
In a refreshing turn of events, Kiran Desai engages Biju with a group of playful young Indian international students in New York who speak English and are living in a private residence, showing their financial ability to stay comfortably in America. As we can see, they even have a statue of the Hindu God, Ganesh in their residence to make it more like “home” but this usage is more parodic and tokenistic than real—hence making Biju feels uneasy and lampooned.

Perhaps, Saeed Saeed, Biju’s illegal Indian-born Zanzibari coworker stands as his opposite. While Biju cannot feel at home in America, he, through intelligence and guile, assimilates into the global culture of New York to finally get what he always dreamed of: an American passport. Biju’s vision of home is the house he was born into. For Saeed, it is where he can go legally with a strong passport as opposed to his own weak passport.

Biju’s father, to whom Biju sends occasional letters in order to stay connected, does not share the same feeling about home as his son. He only hopes his son can make enough money one day to take him to the US away from the abuse he is suffering every day from the Judge. Biju’s physical distance from India brings down strong feelings of homesickness to the point of idolizing his homeland. Like Rushdie, he begins to have “distortions of memory” (Rushdie Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991 10) of India that are simultaneously honorable and suspect. At the dénouement of The Inheritance of Loss, Biju finds himself in danger once he steps into the guerrilla-ridden Sikkim and loses all his material gifts and belongings, right before a reunion with his father.
In Adiga’s *The White Tiger*, there are two very different notions of home. First, home means slavery and confinement for Balram in the village. He must work under a domineering grandmother’s power grip and roll over on command. He escapes to Delhi to find work in a Zamindari family’s mansion. In spite of the fact that he still serves as a lowlife worker, he has the opportunity to meet Ashok, a freshly returned Overseas Indian who stands in stark contrast to him in realizing home.

Ashok and his wife Pinky are back from their home in San Francisco to help out Ashok’s father, but as the story unfolds, Ashok is unable to see the real Indian motherland for what it really is. Far from his idealized imaginary homeland that he intends to transform for the better with his Western mindset and higher education, India is just as or more corrupt than when he left it many years back. The complications that he runs into in his homeland of India may better be explained by a phenomenon that Arjun Appadurai calls “ideoscope” (Appadurai 37-39). An elite intellectual, Ashok is unsettled by a vast breadth of fluidity and diasporic advantage and thus believes that he can inject “new meaning-streams” (Appadurai 37-39) into the discourse in his original home. He cannot be further from the actuality of matters. While maintaining contact with his life back in the US using his cell phone, Ashok tries hard to reconnect with his Indian home while having extreme disagreements with Pinky over what home is. Balram’s conniving religiosity (when he pretends he was praying to a Hindu God while he was snoozing) to fool Ashok is comparable to the young female Indian overseas students in *The Inheritance of Loss*, who have a statue of Ganesh in their home in New York City in a tokenistic fashion.
For him, as it was the case with those girls, religion should be used in gaining a personal advantage especially if it can lure an unsuspecting rich overseas Indian returnee into believing it. This imminent parochialism is the original pitfall of a cosmopolitan Ashok who fails to read between the lines; he is much blinded by his cosmopolitan prowess that he cannot see himself slowly submerging into the corruption rampant in his home in India. He even begins to beat Pinky for not obeying his orders, reminiscent of Pappachi and the Judge, two more cosmopolitan failures.

The home that Balram envisages for himself in Bangalore is built to gain self-interest within the global outsourcing of, what Cheah calls, “white-collar jobs” in the Southern state of Karnataka that create a progressive implication of a kind of “technocrat” cosmopolitan consciousness (Cheah *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* 34). He knows that if he ever decides to make his own home, it should be still in India and not overseas because he lacks proper education, and even education alone will not be enough. Ashok, Chacko, and the Judge are good examples. In short, Bangalore in Balram’s viewpoint possesses states of familiarity, heaven, and haven. Although he is appalled to see the enormous multinational and global companies such as Yahoo slowly putting up their signs in Bangalore, he indulges in his feelings of interconnectedness to top American companies while continuing to live in India.
Conclusion

The novels seem to offer a vision in which more educated characters are less happy about their current home, be it in the village or a city or within a bigger community or ultimately nation. In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy problematizes the notion of home, both in Ayemenem and abroad. Perhaps Chacko’s confessional words to the twins provide a clue to the concept of home: “Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore” (Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* 53). Herself a harsh critic of world globalization and the industrialization of the underdeveloped sites of India, Arundhati Roy, growing up, always felt at home among the “so-called lower castes or Dalits” who were kept at a distance by both Christians and upper-caste Hindus (Deb). And this continues to this day as Roy still firmly believes that waves of globalization and corporatization will be detrimental to the local specificity of the grassroots. Even though her home in Delhi was attacked and besieged in 2010 by a BJP women’s organization following Roy’s remark on Kashmir’s right to independence (Bowcott), she refuses to leave India and remains to shoulder the struggle to voice her opinion on social issues and humanitarian causes.

*The God of Small Things* shows Roy’s distrust of the UK or the US for not possessing the characteristics of home: *familiarity, heaven, and haven*. In congruence with her social and political beliefs, she suggests that home must be situated within the boundaries of India and not abroad. Roy’s ideal of home is one wherein the Dark India dwindles and the Light India comes out victorious but that necessitates the
abolition of the economic gap between the rich and the poor. She finishes her novel
with “Naaley” (tomorrow) that tragically yet sanguinely promises a dimmed hope in
the future— it is a gesture towards an everyday cosmopolitanism or
cosmopolitanism from below that champions the neglected underclass majority.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, a more dynamic set of questions regarding the concept of
home emerges. Kiran Desai is by far the least locally-relevant novelist of the trio;
she is not afraid to show her discontent with the way she and her book were
treated in India by nationalist critics and thus prefers to live abroad. She has also
spoken against the nationalistic extremist atrocities that the writers back in India
face. In her novel, the concept of home, I think, is bilateral. For one, Jemu who goes
to make the UK his home fails and is tossed back to a desolate home in an eerie
home in Kalimpong. Similarly, for another, Biju’s transnational experience is another
failure at conceptualizing a cosmopolitan outlook and feeling at home in the US.
Desai’s description of Biju’s reunion with his father at the mountainous site of
Kanchenjunga indicates that a true home for Biju is where his family is: India: “The
five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with the kind of luminous light that made
you feel, if briefly, that truth was apparent. All you needed to do was to reach out
and pluck it” (K. Desai 325). Desai implicitly tells us about a few new homes that are
working out pretty well. Lola who has a great deal of disdain for India sends her
daughter Pixie to the UK: ‘‘Better leave sooner rather than later,’’ she had advised
Pixie long ago: "India is a sinking ship. Don’t want to be pushy, darling, sweetie,
thinking of your happiness only, but the doors won’t stay open forever. . . .'' (K.
Desai 54). For Lola, the Indian state is a major letdown while having a daughter in
England whom she visits occasionally is a source of pride. She even points out the popularity of the elite Indian girls: “Everyone in England wants an Indian girl these days! (K. Desai 329)”. Desai pits this fascination with the UK with Mrs. Sen’s own vanity about her own daughter, Mun Mun who works for CNN in the United States (K. Desai 73). In this regard, *The Inheritance of Loss* is partly about the debate over which country serves as a better home for Indian elite cosmopolitans: the UK or the US which are contrasted with the colonial context of Jemu and the illegal migrancy of Biju.

A different account of the concept of home can be seen in Desai’s narrative in the text referring to the GNLF or the Gorkha National Liberation Front. Gyan, a young Nepalese math tutor, joins the party and like Velutha becomes a naïve flag waver. The liberation movement was designated to defend the “homeland” of the Nepalese in the Darjeeling area during the 1980s. The main objective of the party was to establish the Gorkhaland state within India. In this specific case, the home that the Gorkhas aim to make is within an Indian state which gives rise to many political conflicts in the region. The Gorkhas that Desai portrays do not feel at home in India: they cannot teach their native language to their children; the jobs they apply for naturally go to Indians while they constitute about eighty percent of the population. Gyan’s development from naiveté to maturity in the course of his quest for a homeland (K. Desai 272) costs him his romantic relationship with Sai. Lastly, Kiran Desai, though in passing, mentions the assassination of Indira Gandhi by the Sikhs “in the name of their homeland” (K. Desai 276) while Biju is away. Here, the homeland that the Sikhs are protecting is in actuality their most sacred temple.
(Harmandir Sahib) that was raided at Indira Gandhi’s behest. Therefore, it can be seen that the notion of home is multifarious and at times at odds with state or national interests.

Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* sits comfortably between the other two novels. Adiga’s protagonist Balram feels that caste is the original home any Indian is born to; he tends to call it the “Rooster Coop”. Adiga’s take on home is ambivalent. As a cosmopolitan novelist, Adiga has lived in the West including Australia and England for many years, however, just like Roy, he lives in India and spends his time between Bangalore and Mumbai so that he can keep his personal touch on the lives of the poor Indian mass he writes about. Balram and Ashok are the two sides of the same coin: they both like India as home but they originate from very different beginnings. One comes from the Light and the other from the Darkness.

The widening divide between the poor and the rich is what drives the whole novel ahead: for Adiga to place Balram in Bangalore at the end of the novel is a sign that India is both homely and unhomely. It is homely when a poor or low caste manages to fight his way up the economic rungs of a rigid social system. It is familiar, heaven, and haven. It is unsafe and unwelcoming when the individual is a cosmopolitan returnee that wants to rehome back to India. In that case, the Indian nation becomes unfamiliar, the society becomes unsafe for this elite yet naïve class of cosmopolitan overseas Indians, and they feel disconnected from the majority of the Indian population who lack education and resist change.
Adiga shares Roy’s idea that economic factors play the most important role in the ill fate of the Indian population who are bound to caste and class and economic restrictions and are unable to escape. In point of fact, the Pickle Factory family business that separates the members of the family illustrates that in The God of Small Things, home and family are perceived as economic and commercial sites of contestation between the siblings rather abodes of peace, familiarity, and safety. As for Roy’s protagonist, Adiga’s idea of home is rooted in material possessions and commercial gains. His most important family member that remains at the front gate of the house is a buffalo (Adiga 13)! In his adult life, Balram construes home and family in financial terms only: a group of taxi drivers he calls family but keeps them at a distance to avoid problems.

Arundhati Roy’s way of addressing the economic issues and creating a feeling of at-homeness for the impoverished Indian masses, controversially enough, has been through debunking myths around Gandhi and his social ideals. Insofar as the nonviolence policy of Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, she states, India can never be a powerful country like US or China if the practice continues (Jadid). In her opinion, the hopeful tomorrow of the Indian nation in their homeland can only be achieved by criticizing social injustice inherent in the caste system and is perpetuated by it. Ashok’s wife Pinky’s perception of home stays in striking contrast to her husband’s. Observing the social injustice and political corruption rampant in rural as well as urban sites of the local and state government in India, she quickly realizes that India cannot be a safe home for the overseas Indians who leave their home in the UK or the US to improve their home nation. She draws a line between the nation and the
state—the former comprised of the people and the latter consisting of the exploitative political agendas to preserve one sector’s grip over the people. A cosmopolitan home for Pinky is only viable in San Francisco where she is treated equally with her male counterparts (including her husband); the state only ruins this constructed home for Pinky as well as for Ashok. As a matter of fact, there are only a handful of supposedly successful rehomings throughout the three novels: Pixie, Lola’s daughter who works as a BBC reporter back in London, the young female Indian international students in New York City, the Gujarati restaurateur in *The Inheritance of Loss* and Balram in *The White Tiger*.

Otherwise, the feeling of at-homeness is absent across the three novels for the most part which in part reasserts the implied unrootedness of their cosmopolitan authors whether home refers to “a physical structure or an emotional space for warm social relationships”, (Kusenbach 73). Cosmopolitanism valorizes mobility against sedentarist approaches to the concept of home but this cannot be so close to the realities of many characters in the novels. One’s fate in succeeding to develop a cosmopolitan outlook does not only rely upon their ability to think differently and embrace diversity but is also highly dependent on who they are as a human being, their country of birth, their looks and what I call the power of the passport.

Cosmopolitan belonging is one that gives full rights to individuals to live and work anywhere in the world without paper (Elliott; Negri and Hardt 91). Based on the case study in the 1996 demonstrations around the alien workers in France, Negri and Hardt suggest that the capital production in countries such as the United States
is dependent upon the influx of workers from subordinate regions. Since the modern fundamental constitutional principles link right and labor, a political demand to reward the players of capital with some kind of *global citizenship* in the country where they live and work (Negri and Hardt 91-92) is one possible resolution to the cosmopolitan ideal of home for the mass of labor migrants around the world.

That many people around the world are denied citizenship and their individual human rights reveals that the nation-state is still concerned with sovereignty and its citizen-subjects (Calhoun "'Belonging' in the Cosmopolitan Imaginary" 533). At the moment, as Schueth and O’Loughlin propose, states and nation-states continue to function as “the primary political units” that set up the borders, homelands, and belonging to or in opposition towards people or states beyond those trajectories (Schueth and O’Loughlin 927-28). Some believe that the change in this perspective takes place through generational change which needs time to reach fruition. As Norris notes, the younger generation grows a greater likelihood of cosmopolitanism (Norris 155-77) and if it holds up its pace, in the future we can expect to see more resistance to the hegemonic nation-states in favor of greater liberty and opportunity. Global trade and the interconnectedness it implies is on the rise more than ever, which means more people will be moving around and change homes, belonging, and territory. Feelings of home and belonging are a constant point of debate among literary scholars and sociologists and in that regard, there cannot be a clear-cut description of what it actually is. Nevertheless, the novels surveyed here do not exhibit the concept of home in an affirmative and vibrant light.
So, I would like to conclude that cosmopolitans, depending on their physical appearance, original passport, social caste, class or status, and wealth struggle to negotiate the concept of home be it a fixed physical entity with material belongings or a more of a pipe dream of an imaginary homeland.
CHAPTER SEVEN: LITERARY PRIZES,

MANUMISSION OR HELOTRY

Introduction

Writers asserting national cultural identity against Eurocentric colonialist values and literary canons entered an international network of exchange that relied upon a cosmopolitan group of publishers and critics. Writers working in English themselves were part of a cosmopolitan mobility and in India this has become more the case since the deregulation of the national economy allowed international publishing houses access to the Indian market.

Powerful publishers and literary agents are now performing a leading role in the promotion of the local vis-à-vis the global while this promotional act culminates at the very many annual international literary prizes ceremonies and the social media hype created around them.

It might be the case that the literature produced after the colonial era and by cosmopolitan authors is the one that steals the limelight when it comes to literary prizes. With this comes the question of the writers’ and the publishing industry’s integrity and whether or not winning a literary award is an emancipating or limiting factor in one’s literary career. I would like to explore how select cosmopolitan literature is dealing with its own propagation by literary publishers. Of interest also
are the ways in which various literary organizations contribute to and have an impact on the production, distribution, and consumption of literary commodities. I shall then relate this argument to the Man Booker Prize and the politics of this award and how it functions with regards to the cosmopolitan literary consumption.

The discussion in this chapter will be situated in the Indian context and its prizewinning novelists, Roy, Desai, and Adiga— with some reference of Rushdie who has had a deep influence on the growth of the Indian postcolonial fiction. I am ultimately interested in arguing that despite its inherently and historically colonial nature, and its supposed inclination toward works coming from authors born or bred or even writing about former or post-colonies, the Man Booker Prize is a cosmopolitan opportunity that gives writers a much needed financial boost. The situation is not all one-sided though. The prize money can actually work as a double-edged sword. In one respect, the prize definitely boosts book sales and draws Western and worldwide attention to the authors and their novels. But from a nationalist perspective, winning a Western award may lead to an exoticization or “Bookerization” that identifies a nation in a certain way, directing attention away from other local writing so that it may later become a hard-etched picture, difficult to erase. In the case of the Indian Booker winners, this doubleness is a fascinating field for discussion.
Literary Awards: A Brief History

For centuries, royal patronages were awarded to minstrels, dramatists, and essayists (Winegarten 65-75). They would mostly come in the form of monetary benefits and a sense of prestige.

The literary prize in our modern times is a complex institution that, depending on its conception, can set the tone, value, and genre hierarchy for authors and their works. For example, the Man Booker Prize aims at the best literary prize and does not deal with crime fiction, science fiction, or romantic novels, for which there are separate awards. Literary prizes may be influential in shaping an individual writer’s career paths, generating a subsequent boom or a perceived decline, feted early or late in the course of their writing career. Upon success in receiving an award, writers’ chances of widening their readership and economic growth and of attaining celebrity status ascend rapidly and thence the writers will somehow be bound to factor in consumption requirements in future literary productions.

The modern cultural prizes commenced in the early twentieth century when the Swedish Nobel Prize for Literature was first introduced. The founder, Alfred Nobel, stipulated in his last will that the money that he had garnered be used to provide prizes to people who confer the “greatest benefit on mankind” in physics, chemistry, peace, physiology or medicine, and literature (English 28). The Literature Nobel Prize laureate earns a gold medal, a diploma bearing a citation, and a sum of money, the last item depending on the overall remuneration of the Nobel Foundation that year (Rivers).
Within three years of the first Nobel Ceremony in Stockholm that awarded the literature prize to Sully Prudhomme (1839–1907), a French poet and essayist (Nobelprize.org), several other prizes were launched: Joseph Pulitzer introduced a series of annual literature and journalism prizes in 1917 in America (Topping), and Le Prix Femina was started in France in 1904 by a group of writers (Femina). And the legacy of Nobel has continued to this day with a proliferation of literary and cultural awards.

Just like the elevation and deflation of writers in the Athenian era wherein the winner would be given prizes and covered in pride, and then subsequently entangled in the politics and economic aspects of patronage, modern prizes present the same possibilities of consecration and desecration. Claire Squires quotes Pierre Bourdieu on this: “consecrations” occur when an artist is recognized and honored for his work, being elevated in status, but soon may lead to financial circulation, promotional touring on a national or even better international level, and finally petty politics (Squires).

In other words, “journalistic capital” (English 51) that relates back to social and literary visibility and celebrity mediates and transforms the economic and cultural capitals of the age of maturity of literary prizes towards the late twentieth century and into the current millennium. In fact, over the past three decades, unprecedented numbers of postcolonial authors have successfully managed to acquire such visibility, stardom, and prominence in the Western canonical ‘stable’ after they received a sizable literary award such as the Booker or the Nobel.
The Booker Beginnings

In the global cultural economy of today, moving from the professional associates to the corporate backup of the arts has become a reality of modern literary prizes that guarantees publicity, celebrity (and at times wrathful literary fencing or even scandal). In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu comments that “lack of success is not in itself a sign and guarantee of election to the status of those who have “cultural capital”... while some box-office successes may be recognized, at least in some sectors of the field, as genuine art” (Bourdieu 23). This remark tells us a disturbing fact about what goes on underneath: prizes very frequently equal sales; the more sales, the more profit and fame. The Booker is no novice player in this game. Throughout its contradictory history, the Booker has accumulated a reputation that can hardly be matched by fellow competitors such as the younger British rival the Baileys, with its all-female judges and nominees. The Booker Prize sits in a most prestigious cultural sphere where the prestige that the winning writer and novel receive is beyond what any other prize has to offer.

The Booker Prize, modeled after the Prix Goncourt in France, was established in 1969 (Maschler) and is known to be attuned to a multicultural consciousness and to the “postcolonial cachet” of many of its winners (Ponzanesi 58).

In 1835, British brothers George and Richard Booker began their entrepreneurial adventures in Guyana (or British Guiana as it was known during colonial times) to take advantage of the natural resources of the land, namely the sugar. The company was resettled to London after independence and remained there until the
present time. In the early 1960s, and during the chairmanship of Jock Campbell, the company established its Booker’s Author Division in order to purchase the copyright on well-known authors such Ian Fleming, Dennis Wheatley and Agatha Christie (Strongman vii). This practice proved to be profitable so it continued. The award began in 1968 when Booker McConnell Ltd, which was a firm “dealing in sugar, rum, mining machinery, and James Bond” (Stoddard), announced a £5,000 prize for fiction to be awarded to a British or Commonwealth author. Ian Fleming, the creator of the James Bond series of spy novels, according to the Booker’s 1994 annual report, suggested to Campbell that the company pump some of its huge revenue into the literary community, and the idea was welcomed by the Booker organization although Fleming never received full credit for it (Pederson).

It was by then known as the Booker-McConnell Prize, the Booker Prize or simply the Booker. Later in 1969, the Booker-McConnell company gave its first award to Percy Howard Newby for his novel *Something to Answer* for. How and why would a colonial British company in the sugar trade (Booker McConnell) and a rum provider to the British Royal Navy (Man Group) band together to sponsor a fiction award that recognizes postcolonial writers almost two centuries after their inauguration? Back in 1969 when the prize was first announced, David Powell, a *Guardian* columnist, bemoaned the fact that the prize was awarded to novels only (Stoddard). This brings a question to the mind: why novels per se? In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said points to the striking relationship between the expansion of empire and the novel:
The novel, as a cultural artifact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other. Of all the major literary forms, the novel is the most recent, its emergence the most datable, its occurrence the most Western, its normative pattern of social authority the most structured; imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible to read one without in some way dealing with the other (Said 84).

More than three decades later, in 2002, the Man Group, which is a British leading alternative investment management business headquartered in London, appropriated the prize-funding role. Hence the altered naming: Man Booker Prize. This decision has continually increased the stature for the Man Group, which seized this opportunity to promote their “brand in a very healthy way” (Aisbitt). Ever since, the Booker has become one of the most recognized cultural institutions in the English-speaking world.

In so far as the colonial past of the company goes, Hugh Eakin remarks that the Booker judges’ “recognition of postcolonial authors carries the dubious tincture of the company’s history” (Eakin 2) in a way to encourage and support postcolonial works of fiction. The Booker can be seen as a postcolonial response to an imperial past when “the Empire writes back” (Bill Ashcroft). On the one hand, the winners have largely been a diverse range of nationals from formerly colonized countries whose works reflect their colonial experience and postcolonial struggles in setting up a newly hybridized identity. On the other, it may be that Great Britain, the erstwhile colonizing forefather, has now stepped forth to embrace these writings in an enriching way, but also in a way that repossesses its former subjects in a new mode of imperial patronage.
The Booker has played an influential role in the rising consciousness of the global dimensions of the fictions produced in the English language as opposed to the former belief that English literature is meant to be the literature of England (and perhaps including American literature at best). However, in the past three decades, the Booker has encountered an unprecedented flurry of books from English-speaking countries other than the UK or the US. For example, in the 1980s or 1990s, the Booker shortlist is centered on works by other than Britain. As Richard Todd writes, “This reflects a new public awareness of Britain as a pluralist society, and has transformed the view that... English language fiction from ‘abroad’ meant fiction from the United States” (Todd 83). Pico Iyer’s oft-quoted Time Magazine cover story, "The Empire Writes Back" sums this up convincingly (Dalrymple; McCarthy 26):

Where not long ago a student of the English novel would probably have been weaned on Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh and Aldous Huxley, now he will more likely be taught Rushdie and Okri and Mo - which is fitting in an England where many students' first language is Urdu. The shelves of English bookstores are becoming as noisy and polyglot and many-hued as the English streets. The English language is being revolutionised from within. Hot spices are entering English, and tropical birds and sorcerers; readers who are increasingly familiar with sushi and samosas are now learning to live with molue buses and manuka hedges.

Both Todd and Iyer, among other critics, are of the belief that Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children has been the watershed novel that catalyzed the emergence and appreciation of a wide range of novels from many countries other than the United States.
The Man Group has a distinctly positive attitude towards their various funding activities (including but not limited to the Man Booker Prize, Man Booker International Prize, Man Asian Literary Prize, and other charities and initiatives around the world. As the Chairman of the company speculates, these kinds of activities are helping the company satisfy their clients, the general public on the one hand and improving the company’s image in an agreeable fashion (Aisbitt).

The Booker Judges and Criteria

Judging any literary prize involves tough decision-making in itself, but to actually confront the Man Booker Prize panel of judges is daunting. Ion Trewin, Literary Director of the Booker Prize Foundation, commented on the Man Booker Prize in 2013, saying: “from the very beginning of what was originally called the Booker Prize there was just one criterion— the prize would be for “the best novel in the opinion of the judges” (Trewin).

He states that the Booker’s initial aim has always been to increase the reading of quality fiction and to attract “an intelligent general audience”. And the press release that announces the prize elaborates the financial motives behind the Booker in a salient manner: “The real success will be a significant increase in the sales of the winning book [...] that will to some extent be shared not only by the authors who have been shortlisted but, in the long run, by authors all over the country.”

According to Trewin, the Booker Prize judges are not confined to any “in-group” of literary critics, authors, and academics over the decades, the judging panel has included “poets, politicians, journalists, broadcasters and actors” (Trewin). This is an
indication that the Booker has what Trewin calls a “common man” approach to the selection of the juries that helps the “intelligent general audience” trust the prize.

The Booker Prize Management Committee meets early each year primarily to discuss amending the rules (if necessary) and then to decide on a Chair for that year’s proceedings. The longlist usually consists of thirteen novels while the luckier shortlist novels comprise of five to six (Todd 67). This in return results in significant interest in sales (for some books immediately and for some a decade), especially when we take into account the idea of publishing both a longlist and a shortlist—they create a state of excitement that definitely contributes to the Booker Prize’s success and influence in the economics of the book trade and its heightened chances of fame for the shortlisters. As a result, the Booker shortlist acts as a layman’s consumption guide to the world of quality fiction whose final victor is then placed in the commercial as well as literary canon in the West.

There have always been controversies surrounding the Booker Prize’s judging. Although the Booker judges are supposed to stay away from commenting prior to the awarding of the prize as well as to steer clear of commenting on other judge’s vote, a few instances of protocol breaks have been seen. Richard Todd mentions John Bayley’s account of the 1994 proceedings as one that “arguably oversteps that mark” (Todd 69). Also as quoted in Tod, Martyn Goff admits that at some point, other judges may have exercised “unpredictability” in their judgment that cannot suit the Man Booker Prize’s guidelines and terms of reference: “Highbrow critics sometimes object that although the Booker is the most prestigious in the world of the English novel, all such prizes tend to commercialize art. I find this rubbish. On
the contrary, I think that fashion and pretension are the great enemies of all fine art today!” (Todd 70)

**The Booker and the Three Novels**

In October 1997, the judges’ decision to announce Arundhati Roy’s debut novel *The God of Small Things* turned out to be controversial. Roy’s novel had already been a strong seller since its publication and soared even more from already rising sales after its shortlisting only a month prior. The favorable decision was accompanied by the Chairwoman of the judges, Gillian Beer, as quoted in Thampi, who commended the book as follows:

> With extraordinary linguistic inventiveness, Arundhati Roy funnels the history of south India through the eyes of seven-year-old twins. The story she tells is fundamental as well as local: it is about love and death, about lies and laws. Her narrative crackles with riddles and yet tells its tale quite clearly. We were all engrossed by this moving novel (Thampi).

Arundhati Roy’s reaction was modest: “There is no such thing as a perfect book. If there had been five different judges, there might have been another winner. It is as much luck as worthiness” (Lister). According to *The Independent* reportage of the night, Roy refuted the idea that winning the Booker would force her to write another book: “The Booker Prize is about my past not my future. I will only write another book if I have another book to write. I don’t believe in professions” (Lister). And she has stuck to her words to this day—she has dedicated her life to social activism away from the world of fiction in spite of the rumors that she has a new
novel due for publication as of late 2014 (Anthony) although there it has not been published yet (January 2016).

A check for £21,000 was given to Roy in a ceremony at Guildhall in the City of London to top the excitement of the Booker night. However, the occasion was not all gay and merry. It became evident that 1996’s Booker panel Chairwoman, Carmen Callil, had berated the novel on TV and scoffed at it for even being on the shortlist, let alone winning. She called the novel, an “execrable” book (Glaister). Lisa Jardine, a Guardian correspondent at the ceremony and later a Booker judge in 2002, reported that there was a whisper of disapproval around the Guildhall by critics who were ready to “trash” Arundhati Roy before Professor Beer announced her the winner of the 1997 prize (Trinca). Irrespective of the judges’ opinions, the win made Roy into an international figure, giving her an aura of the cosmopolitan that would underpin her later anti-nationalist critique. In doing so, it also confirmed a new kind of cosmopolitan reader initially manufactured by Rushdie’s winning of the Booker and the Commonwealth and postcolonial literary constructs.

Nine years later, Kiran Desai’s second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* met with a unanimous decision of the Booker judges in 2006. The judging panel was headed by Hermione Lee who commended Desai and “the strength of the book's humanity” which gave it the winning edge. “It is a magnificent novel of humane breadth and wisdom, comic tenderness and powerful political acuteness,” Professor Lee said. "Her mother will be proud of her” (Ezard). As opposed to Callil's denunciation of Roy's win, John Sutherland, chairman of 2005 Man Booker judges praised Desai and *The Inheritance of Loss*: “Desai’s novel registers the multicultural reverberations of
the new millennium with the sensitive instrumentality of fiction, as Jhabvala and Rushdie did previous eras ... It is a globalised novel for a globalised world” (Ezard).

Kiran Desai’s win was significant in two other secondary ways. On the one hand, she won a £50,000 prize while being the youngest woman to win, aged 35. On the other, she won the prize for which her novelist mother, Anita Desai, to whom the novel is dedicated, had already been shortlisted three times. Desai pays homage to their strong relationship: “[t]he debt I owe to my mother is so profound that I feel the book is hers as much as mine. It was written in her company and in her wisdom and kindness” (Ezard).

In an interview with *India Today* shortly after the win, Kiran Desai does allude to the fact that if one sees “behind the scenes” one becomes conscious of how much awards are down to luck. Winning a prestigious prize such as the Booker can, to a great extent, depend on which books are put forward by the publishers and also on the fact that once a well-published author puts a book out, the publishers may readily turn their attention to those instead. The Booker prize for Desai has definitely been a mitigating factor that takes away much of the anxiety and doubt since it is “hard to get published” (Sircar). The money, nevertheless, did not get to her immediately: the “agent” had it, so for Desai to be able to keep on writing, “she had to go into teaching and even took up two teaching jobs” (Sircar) before the money came to her. Even though Desai envies the writers residing in India, she poignantly states that the “publishing world is pretty heinous” (Sircar). But she thinks that it is still much easier if you get published in the West because there is not much power, by comparison, in the Indian publishing world. As late 2015, this is
arguably no longer the case in point as the Indian publishing, currently valued at $3.9 billion, is pegging a 20% annual growth (Mallya), with around 55% books written in English. Furthermore, the gradual popularity of e-books and self-publishing has made it much easier for writers to get themselves out in the market that was once monopolized by premium publishing houses (Kaushik). The tide is turning and Indian writers no longer have to get published in the West to become well-known.

In another interview with *The Guardian Australia*, Desai admits that she is cognizant of the inherently colonial nature of the Man Booker prize but keeps a confident, more pragmatic perspective towards it:

Mmmm, I know. Someone said to me, ‘Will you turn down the Booker prize because it is a commonwealth prize?’ And I said ‘I’m not crazy!’ It’s also a hedge fund, so you have big-business qualms about that. There’s all kinds of reasons to turn it down (Barton).

And finally, the third novel in this study, Aravind Adiga’s first novel *The White Tiger*, won the £50,000 Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2008. Michael Portillo, Chair, was broadcast live on the BBC Ten O’ Clock News, at the awards dinner at the Guildhall, in London:

[The novel] prevailed because the judges felt that it shocked and entertained in equal measure […] It undertakes the extraordinarily difficult task of gaining and holding the reader’s sympathy for a thoroughgoing villain. The book gains from dealing with pressing social issues and significant global developments with astonishing humour.
Adiga points to the core theme of his novel at the ceremony i.e. the schism between the rich and the poor that is eroding a common culture that once existed. He believes that the drift may result in extensive and dire consequences: “terrorism and instability” (Higgins). And that is perhaps that is why the book has high sales in India which, Adiga thinks, needs more books like this.

The book was published by Atlantic Books, making it their first prize after being shortlisted two times prior. Toby Munday, chairman of Atlantic, was in a state of emotional disbelief. Time correspondent and an old friend of Adiga, William Green, present at the same table with him along with people from the UK publishing house after the announcement reports that to Munday, this was not just a literary victory but a profitable one: “[h]e reckons the book could now sell as many as a million copies worldwide, including 500,000 in the U.K. alone” (Green).

**Post-Booker (Dis)order**

As for the media reception, Graham Huggan writes that the Booker, originating from a carefully controlled colonial past, acquired its fame and popularity because of its sharp “media management” (Huggan 107) and how it received unprecedented coverage by newspapers and magazines, and above all was televised on BBC in 1981 in the same way Academy Awards were featured on TV. That was, of course, the year that Salman Rushdie won the Booker Prize for his *Midnight’s Children*. The Booker foundation tries its best to ‘glam up’ the televised award ceremony as much as possible. Former Chairman of the Booker, the late Sir Michael Caine noted that to keep these standards high (and definitely *air-time worthy*), a handsome cost is
involved: “In the beginning, the selection process and the prize were 70% of the expenses and the ceremony was 30%. Over the years, these proportions have been reversed” (Caine 9). This brings us to the fact that there have been many changes over the past two decades or so in the consumption of serious literary fiction in Britain and around the world in response to the development of the Booker and its shortlist controversies. Right now, it is all about the gaze. The gaze of book traders, publishers, agents, and even betting shops at a ceremony on the surface and enormous complications underneath (Todd 74). And it is indeed a gala of its own merit: “a lavish dinner ceremony staged at London's Guildhall and broadcast live over television”(Moseley "Recent British Novels" 613-23) that houses the nominees and embittered past losers all under the same roof and in the process attracts a lot of attention.

It cannot be denied that the Booker can make or break one’s literary career. Booker Prize winners have enjoyed a triple-fold or even quadruple-fold sales, immediately or for their future publications, which creates a potential for literary prestige, economic prosperity after film adaptations. For instance, the Australian ‘Living Treasure’, Thomas Keneally’s Schindler’s Ark, a Booker winner in 1982, was later adapted by Steven Spielberg into the movie, Schindler’s List, that later won multiple Academy awards. Similar has been Michael Ondaatje’s destiny with The English Patient, the film contributing to heightened interest in the original book, upscaling future book sales, and maximizing their overall commercial appeal. Perhaps the most radical of such economy of spectacle was the “unreadable” novel of James
Kelman, *How Late It Was, How Late*, in 1994 that earned him a Booker Prize and television coverage (English 34; Huggan 109).

This questionable Booker legacy, Todd believes, has been a major contributor to the commercialization of the Anglophone literature throughout its international popularity and shaped in fiction writes a desire on the writers’ side to write in a *prizewinning fashion*. Therefore, a number of critics have voiced their concern over this impact. As Merritt Mosely writes, the Booker “…exercises an influence in the publishing world and, more surprisingly, on the minds and enthusiasms of people well outside that world” (Moseley "Recent British Novels" 613). *The Economist* published a scathing review of the Prize in 1990 titled: *Who Needs the Booker? Sorry State of Britain’s Literary Prize* in which the Booker is seen as a blatant collaboration of “writing and commerce” (Economist 21-27). According to Huggan, the “media-circus aspect” of the Booker exposes an intervention that clouds the judges’ sound judgment so that they are often accused of “nepotism, chauvinism, or petty squabbling” (Huggan 108).

Booker Prize has, thus, become one of the universal and vital instruments of postcolonial cultural transaction and conversion of literary popularity in cultural economy in recent years, to the extent that writers can feel a pressure to resist or escape the “effect of “Bookerization” (English 108) on our contemporary cultural life. It has also contributed largely to the production of cosmopolitan readers around the globe.
The Indian Booker

There is a strong presence of the concept of imperialism and coloniality in the Booker Prize-winning novels from India, including Midnight’s Children. The novels collectively endeavor to problematize the binaries left out from the colonizers’ discourse and reimagine and recreate an identity of their own on a local and global level. As the works of V.S. Naipaul and Rushdie signal, a new battle is now happening as the argument about the center and periphery includes core ideas such as mobility, translation, and hybridity. These postcolonial writers conceive what might be termed, once again, a writing-back to the center in the Great Britain from former colonies (Brennan Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation 61; Bill Ashcroft 6).

The thematic prevalence of migrational issues, questions of home, culture of ethnic displacement and realignment, and rise of hardline nationalism show the core ingredients of the postcolonial reaction to the former colonial dominance in fiction. These responses, at the same time, speak of the experiences of such developments during and after the era of decolonization and the diaspora of a global and shifting world. The essential tool for such confrontation, the English language, is no longer a representative of England, but rather any work of fiction written in the English language.

The Booker is a prize for a novel written in English and consequently is a measure of the “porosity and assimilative strength” (Strongman 234) of the English language as an agent of cultural exchange. Nevertheless, an important question to probe would
be this: is there a perceived pattern in the postcolonial novels that gives them better winning chances over other novels? Could a case for bias be made based on the statistical inspection of the victors? So, it is important to signify what gives respect: the choice pattern (prize) or the novels chosen.

Over the course of the Booker Prize awards and shortlistings, there can be seen an increasing number of novels selected from the margins, post-imperial accounts of the people formerly colonized by England. In the past fifteen years or so, the number of such postcolonial novels has gone up which indicates to a supposition that decentralized Anglophone literary fictions are now met with applause, fame, and, of course, economic gains for their authors.

According to Strongman, the Booker is still an anglocentric prize, as evidenced in the thematic concerns that often seem to attract the judges’ attention or favor (Strongman 257). At least on a surface level, the Booker does appear to be more inclined towards novels that register many of the persisting themes and significant events in the evolution and devolution of Empire. Although the Prize can emphasize the local national identities of writers as ‘consumable difference’, at the same time they insert both writer and text into a global economic and cultural space that confers on text and reader a cosmopolitan appeal.

In the following section, I will discuss how Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga were received both in India and abroad, before and after their Booker wins.

Graham Huggan in *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* calls attention to a link “between postcoloniality as a regime of value and a cosmopolitan alterity
industry” (Huggan 12). Huggan’s exotic is not an inherent quality to be found in certain people, discrete objects, or specific places, but a particular way of perceiving things that “effectively manufacture otherness” (Huggan 14). Huggan is involved in a contradictory statement here when espousing cosmopolitanism and alterity. Whereas alterity is concerned about the state of being different, especially in respect to one's identity within a culture, a cosmopolitan outlook’s aim is to erase this sensibility of otherness, not to help it linger or grow. The Booker privileges works that highlight difference, alternation, and identity politics as well as modes of cosmopolitan detachment.

Similar to him, Aijaz Ahmad views Third World literature in English as a Westernized imagination of some essential Third World exotic difference, thus turning it into a “global merchandising tool” (Huggan 65; Ahmad “Indian Literature: Notes Towards the Definition of a Category” 243-44).

**Arundhati Roy**

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, winner of the 1997 Booker Prize is a poetically composed fiction of post-Independent India. It expresses a pervasive wretchedness and nostalgia about the construction of national and individual narratives of loss, displacement, and longing between past and present. Fractured in storytelling and lyrical in prose, Roy’s novel historicizes Kerala after Independence during the 1960s and afterward microcosmically in Ayemenem that hints at the bigger picture that is India.
The novel and its prize have become attached because the literary circles of the West seem to have an obsession with exotic diversity, which *The God of Small Things* caters all too conveniently. In Victor Segalen’s opinion, the exotic is an amalgam of anything and everything “foreign, strange, unexpected, surprising, mysterious, amorous, superhuman, heroic, and even divine, everything that is Other” (Segalen 35). For Aijaz Ahmad, Arundhati Roy has managed to champion the vernacular, the grassroots, the local, without necessarily resorting to the exoticism of the post-Rushdie era when the Western audience would naturally expect a spiced-up India. Ahmad praises Roy’s decision to avoid outlandish accounts of India in order to appease Western readership (Ahmad "Reading Arundhati Roy 'Politically'" 108). *The God of Small Things* is in fact also a novel with a transnational outlook. Many characters feel tied down by caste, class, economy, and gender so they decide to make themselves mobile in hopes of betterment. The local region is affected by international consumerism, World Bank farm loans, and capitalist tourism. Roy’s winning novel shows us that even a story of the grassroots cosmopolitanism, can relate to the Booker Prize’s overall mission and become recognized for it.

Others read Roy’s novel as showing a “Conradian” primitiveness that shows the “continuing presence of an imperial imaginary” lurking behind the prolifically successful production and dissemination of Indian English fiction to the global audience. The novel stands in “metonymically for India itself as an object of conspicuous consumption” (Huggan 77; 81). Marta Dvorak reads *The God of Small Things* similarly, calling it a “neocolonial commodification” of India for the Western
reader’s taste for the exotic by way of using “domesticated mythological sensibility, its topographical details, its interpolation of Malayalam words, and description of every sphere of social life” (Dvorak 77).

The novel met with widespread accolades in the West but faced significant disapproval in India. As has been the case with many other Indian fictions in the Booker circle, a novel that garners acclamation abroad is targeted by nationalists as a complete sellout of national interest. The interplay of sexual desires and individuality is yet another aspect of the novel that critics may find contrived to ensure definite sales values in a Western market (Strongman 244). But, the novel’s marketability in the West happens within a different frame of discourse. Roy’s postcolonial, intertextual adventure is embroidered with numerous references to Western and local canonicity. On the one hand, the novel makes use of Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Book*, William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. On the other, it draws profoundly from Indian traditions for instance *Mahabharata* in chapter twelve ‘Kochu Thomban’ when Rahel watches a performance.

Based on the harsh criticism the novel and its circulation in the West, how did Booker Prize seem to have changed things around for Arundhati Roy in terms of her marketability in the West? Huggan sets the bar a bit too high by referring to Roy’s physical image as yet another meticulous strategy in the mysterious and lush exotica the book endeavors to canvas. A novel drafted by a writer who is “incorrigibly photogenic”, *The God of Small Things* benefits from Roy’s alleged
“bohemianism” and “exotic looks” for self-promotion and oriental marketability. However, they all come at a hefty price.

In fact, to oppose such objectification, after receiving the Booker Prize, Arundhati Roy shaved her hair completely and went to live with the Maoists in Madhya Pradesh. She wore baggy pants, carrying herself like a “cosmopolitan Delhiite” (Boyd). Roy’s outrageous choice of cutting her hair is anything but a publicity stunt to multiply sales; as Roy herself states in an interview, she does not want to be confined and de-fined in the West by her looks and beauty and instead focuses on what’s inside (which is conversely what Huggan capitalizes on to validate his point). All in all, Roy’s decision to look and dress differently is a reaction to the Booker in order to avoid being objectified or commodified by the publishing industry. So if she shows a cosmopolitan awareness of international economies and trends, she also emphasizes local allegiances opposed to the forces of globalization that accompany a cosmopolitan empowerment.

Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai won the Booker Prize in 2006 for her second novel The Inheritance of Loss that continuing the literary achievement and international praise of the Indian postcolonial writing in English after Rushdie and Roy. The novel holds a notable position in the way it represents the Indian nation and its struggle with issues of caste, religion, emigration and labor migration to the US in the lives of its major characters. It also problematizes our understanding of transnational experiences of different characters in England and the United States.
Literary awards generally bring forward questions as to how a literary text is validatable intrinsically. The world of today is one of global cultural economy wherein “asymmetrical power relations” (Frenkel 78) are marking the way nations are perceived in Western literary circles through rewarding these prestigious tokens of praise.

As put forth before, a prevalence of Indian writers among the shortlisted texts in the Booker necessitates a closer scrutiny of the politics that undergirds the Prize and its relationship to India. It can, then, be argued that the Booker Prize is mediated by a postcolonial politics of loss at the hands of a former colonizer; to fulfill the Western textual stereotypes of postcoloniality is what gives a fiction an edge to contend earnestly for this particular award. So, the loss of former colonies by the colonizer implies a sense of patronage that allows the ex-colonies to continue to feel linked to their old patrons.

Kiran Desai’s winning novel is one of loss— a fateful tale of a nation that has continually been on a centuries-long journey, even sixty years into the Post-Independence era (Bhattacharyya 222). This supposition agrees with the underlying politics of the Booker Prize in which the line between the “Britishness and the rest of the world” (Frenkel 79) are now negotiated through the Booker Prize. Moseley Merritt illustrates this as follows:

Reregistering a perennial complaint, Dalya Alberge observed in The Times that “none of the six novels contending for Britain’s most prestigious literary award [in 2000] is set in modern Britain”. This refers both to the common complaint that novelists won’t write about contemporary life (or, if they do, prize juries won’t
reward them for it) and to the anxiety about domination by non-English authors (Moseley "The Booker Prize 2000" 441).

Therefore, the Booker Prize can act as a redeemer, a pandering to a cosmopolitan guilt about a colonial past and its effect on the former colonies of the Great Britain. The tensions of empire are yet again at play when the Booker, as Britain’s most prestigious award" is reincarnating a hegemonic power relation between the Britain and its former Commonwealth serfs.

Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* communicates a history of loss and letdown that has happened post-empire. The tales of the old judge and his young granddaughter, the cook and his son, among others, are instances of mapping of an Indian diaspora inflected by disillusionment. The novel is written with poetic style and narratives that float back and forth across times in colonial and postcolonial eras, places, and characters. Just like Chacko’s anglophilia in Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, the cantankerous Judge cannot recover from his inner yearning for his colonial venture into England and the loss within a framework that asserts the irreconcilable nature of a postcolonial history.

As a cosmopolitan writer, Desai’s novel focuses on diaspora and mobility as requisites of cosmopolitanism. Her cosmopolitan position is dissimilar from Arundhati Roy’s and Aravind Adiga’s. Desai primarily associates cosmopolitanism with the Indian upper classes, of which she is a member— coming from privileged beginnings and continuing on her jet-setting adventures. By focusing on the material experiences of various ethnic diasporas and on the phenomenon of diasporic dispersal in the context of late twentieth-century capitalism, Desai
problematicizes the factors that influence diasporic and transnational experiences: class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexuality. As opposed to Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, Desai’s novel renders homelands “imaginary” (Rushdie *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*) and replaces them (at least in a temporary manner) by an anchorage in the host countries. It depicts postcolonial India as a place of bitterness and unrelenting historical determinism. Graham Huggan (Huggan xi) argues that even though these writers might have “capitalized on the ‘politico-exotic’ appeal of their novels, they have still succeeded in sustaining a critique of exoticism in their work.

In Desai’s version of cosmopolitanism, one who can afford to experience a feeling of cultural kinship in the world is more capable of widening his cosmopolitan consciousness. This also takes places with regards to the literary practices that create intertextual connections to authors and texts located elsewhere— the most obvious indication being the global circulation of the novel through Western publishing companies independent of the novelist’s disposition. Her work can be seen a mockery of identity politics and national belonging, so the Booker prize win denotes an identification with her diasporic cosmopolitanism.

As a result, Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* communicates the mechanisms of loss in a colonial and postcolonial India that destabilizes the central characters of the novel in their quest for a career, love or redemption. The Booker Prize, once more, in this case, has favored a particularity, a new version of the old tensions of an empire where India is expected to bear a politics of loss. So the Booker prize proves to favor not so much a fully cosmopolitan author but a more palatable late imperial one.
Aravind Adiga

Aravind Adiga’s novel has been a Booker favorite. The text lands a different blow to the previously recognizable aesthetic and literary ethos of writers such as Salman Rushdie, Roy, and Desai. Adiga comes from comfortable and elite beginnings. Life in Australia and America for many years is not too common among Indian writers, which makes him an elite cosmopolitan with a distinguished family lineage (Kamila and Belgaumkar). Winning the Booker Prize in 2008 has been the biggest achievement of his career since but he always had a strong, adventurous journalistic sense of storytelling which forces him back to live in India. He chose to live in Mumbai because that helps him to write to the national space with firsthand directness and tangibility. It is crucial to understand that the Man Booker Prize or any kind of Western attention works well as a scapegoat for the Hindu nationalists to earmark their targets; they harshly criticize authors in state-owned / supported media outlets, threaten them, even burn their books to ensure that what gets published would not depict any critical enquiry or negativity.

Nevertheless, dissimilar to his own upbringing, Adiga chooses to empower the low-caste and give them an unprecedented possibility to experience “bottom-up cosmopolitanism” which may or may not work; they will be unlikely to be recognized as cosmopolitans in their own environment (Hannerz "Cosmopolitanism" 77).

In spite of the fact that the narrative voice in The White Tiger is deeply ironic, the narrator’s comments offer serious commentary on contemporary Indian society and
put immediate questions to the increasing divide between the deprived and the affluent. Perhaps, one important aspect of the novel, evocative of Mulk Raj Anand’s exposé of the day-to-day life of an untouchable caste member, is Adiga’s take on the lives of ordinary people who find their fate in the exploitative hands of their wealthy masters.

Unsurprisingly, the novel stirred some controversy among Indian critics who felt the novel had turned out to be a perfect guide to “Dark India: a series of extensive footnotes for the benefit of Western readers” writes Somak Ghoshal in an article published in The Telegraph India (Ghoshal). He contends that Adiga’s narrative is a “best bet” for novelists originating from a country of a billion to depict Darkness and the miserable lives of the subalterns who are squeezing out a life far away from the sparkling India of the huge, populous cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore.

For some Indians, The White Tiger is an appalling regression. As the stereotypical image of India as the land of utter destitution and exotica was beginning to change to a more modern, high-tech, and prosperous nation, Adiga’s novel is a hard blow that plunges the Shining India campaigns back into the dirt again. Anjali Kapoor, a freelance editor, in an interview with The Telegraph, expresses his disdain for Adiga and his novel:

I used to hate Naipaul for talking contemptuously about India, about how cleaners mop the floor in restaurants by crouching and moving like crabs and all that talk about Indians defecating in the open,” said a freelance editor, Anjali Kapoor. “Adiga is the same, focusing on everything that is bad and disgusting (Dhillon).
Others scoffed at the very idea that a debutant writer such as Adiga could be possessive of enough substance to win such awards; one example was Ravi Singh, the editor-in-chief of Penguin India, who initially refused to publish *The White Tiger* (R. Singh). Obviously, next to his well-founded fellow compatriot, Amitav Ghosh and his *The Sea of Poppies*, Aravind Adiga would be a “dark horse” (S. Roy).

The overall theme of the novel is servitude, which allows the novelist to problematize the former binaries of master-slave in colonial times and well into the postcolonial India. This power play is best evident in the surreptitiously unrequited and ambivalent competition between Balram and his US-returned master Ashok. Adiga replaces the prism of colonialism with that of neocolonialism in a novel that has an Indian untouchable not serve an Englishman but fellow Indians while turning nationalistic discourses of freedom upside down. What most commentaries highlight is Balram’s sensational poverty and his murder rather than his cosmopolitan detachment.

Adiga has been the last Indian recipient of the Booker Prize and the wait for the next one is approaching a decade. After winning the prize, he still continues to live in India and has used the fame and massive sales Booker brought to him in excess of 200,000 copies in India alone (Burke) to his advantage. He has written two more novels: *Between the Assassinations* (2008) and *Last Man in Tower* (2011), the first of which had an initial run of print run of 16,000 copies and was considered a success in India (Tripathi).
Conclusion

In this chapter, I touched upon the general aspects of literary publishing industry. Publishers now recognize the commercial necessity of attracting minority ethnic writers within global literary publishing. Companies solidify their dominant positions by incorporating postcolonial writers for global distribution (Brouillette 57). It is undeniable that such dominance has effects on writers’ choice of material or attitude toward it. It may also mean that the specific selection of texts determines the success of a particular literary work or author.

I discussed the possible underlying motives of the Booker Prize and the tendency to award prizes to Indian postcolonial authors. The prize seems to have been awarded to texts that examine the colonial and postcolonial experiences of the Commonwealth countries in relation to their previous colonizer i.e. the Great Britain. Recent patterns of immigration have characterized a relatively prosperous class of writers that are educated professionals and are cosmopolitan in their thoughts and writings: Rushdie, Roy, Desai, and Adiga just to name a few. They have managed to mingle their social privilege with subversion: writing in English, about the lowest strata of the Indian nation, while making them available for Western viewership and consumption (Brouillette 87). This is where the literary awards come into play.

I argued that the colonial history of the Man Booker Prize can, at least to some degree, be indicative of England’s attempt to redeem its occupancy history by rewarding works of fiction that present England today as a multiculturally accepting
and diverse society. Furthermore, the fact that cosmopolitan writers from a variety of countries have managed to win the Prize showcases Britain’s eagerness to showcase its cultural diversity in a pleasing manner. So, the globalization of the publishing industry necessitates the globalization of the worldwide cosmopolitan literary consumption contents. Globalization plays a central role in the prosperity of the winning books. The Booker Prize wants to see itself as contemporary and cosmopolitan in its cultural reach and it selects accordingly. Also, India, from Indira Gandhi onward, has been trying to see itself as global and cosmopolitan which justifies the ways prestigious prizes in the publishing industry matter to the author and India on separate levels.
CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I discussed the relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. I situated my discussion within the Indian postcolonial novels written by post-Rushdie authors that are considered cosmopolitan, either by the circulation of their books in the West or the globalized consciousness they have developed through their critiques of the nationalist politics. The clash of ideas between the nationalist and the cosmopolitan has generated many discussions in Indian English fiction, most prominently in *The God of Small Things*, *The Inheritance of Loss*, and *The White Tiger*. In these novels, the reader’s presuppositions of home and family relations are contested. Home is no longer a fixed, Edenic location of emotional support and replenishment. Rather, as portrayed, home might turn out to be an entrapping element that holds one back from widening one’s intellectual horizons. Family also changes its meaning: traditionally identified with home, it loses its conventional establishment as a determined point of return, becoming a mobile entity.

Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga all won the Man/Booker but their position regarding cosmopolitan values differs widely. Roy is a self-confessed anti-globalization activist who fights for human rights and global justice: two of the hallmarks of cosmopolitanism. Even though she is writing in India and about India, she sits in a cosmopolitan space that mobilizes her and her novel beyond the customary national boundaries. Desai is an antithesis of Roy in that regard. Her decision to live abroad is possible because of the international reputation of her
mother and her family’s higher status in Indian society. Many of her critics believe that Desai’s writing from a cosmopolitan space about a national home country is elitist. This is far from implying that her novel is void of a cosmopolitan outlook. Desai is both critical of and suspicious about the transnational experience of Indian illegal laborers whose primary concern is to make a living abroad instead of consciously developing a cosmopolitan perspective. Adiga seems to adopt middle-path. He is a member of an elite family in India with years of Western education, but his residential place of preference is ultimately Mumbai. The Hindu nationalist push-back they all three face is basically of a similar strand of libel; that they are sellouts who monetize the exotics of Indian society to appease former Western colonizers. The battle continues to confront any author who steps into the Indian cosmopolitan novels’ publishing industry.

Cosmopolitanism in its cultural form entails an argument for moral responsibilities and equity that surpass localized obligations. Instead of race, culture or nationality, cosmopolitanism seeks common universal principles that involve all humans in equal terms. All novels critique the caste system of India that has historically and systematically kept a large part of Indian society in a poor condition and appeal for the moral cosmopolitan responsibilities. Roy, Desai, and Adiga all have their own way of appealing to global justice for India. *The God of Small Things* questions the ideal of cosmopolitanism manifested in the Communist ideals in which a low caste paravan is not covered by the equity central to Communism. *The Inheritance of Loss* includes a judge and a guerrilla group that seeks micro justice, both of whom fail to push their agendas forward. The pursuit of equity and justice in *The White Tiger* is
what drives the central character out of a small village into the big city that may corrupt whoever walks into it. However, the end of the novel shows us that Bangalore is a beating heart for the future India where multinational mega companies are helping to decrease unemployment and improve the local economy.

Although the novels engage with London or New York they set up parochial oppositions such as Delhi, Ayemenem and Kalimpong that constrain possibilities. Desai challenges the quest for moral responsibility and global justice in the big city as the site of the cosmopolitan; New York is not a cosmopolitan locality for labor migrants who toil in ethnic restaurants with low payments. Similarly, Roy does not represent New York or Washington in a positive light either; Rahel is still struggling to make a living working in an Indian restaurant and in a gas station. Finally, Adiga drops the hammer on New Delhi as a cosmopolitan site; he shows how a cosmopolitan Indian returnee can perish in the Indian capital city that he naively seeks to make home.

Throughout these novels, we can observe that certain characters opt to leave their homes (and therefore, their immediate families), and set off for either the United States or England for different reasons such as furthering education, employment or simply becoming a migrant worker. The mobility of these characters plays an intriguingly important role in the development of plot and influences their lives once they return to their homeland. Exilic and down on their luck, for the most part, their coming back is almost always unfortunate, mostly because of their “half-baked” cosmopolitan orientation or just like the entrapping as well as liberating nature of family, mobility can be advantageous and disadvantageous. However, the extent
and the type of mobility at work in these three novels remain open to contestation. Therefore, the question of how we are to read and evaluate Indian writing in English when it deals with Indians moving around the contemporary world remains a problem to be addressed. This thesis takes a fresh look at how the cosmopolitan novel can be a liberatory project as well as a confining attempt to deal with the constraints of family, nation-making, class and caste, and religion.

Such novels mainly imagine the Indian nation grounded upon a sort of microcosmopolitanism that prioritizes nation. The cosmopolitanism they show builds from the grassroots instead of the elite stratum of the society. Moreover, a certain level of suspicion over the effects of globalization (either cultural or economic) has been developed that will thwart or, at least, slow down border-crossing of real cosmopolitanism—one that favors a fluid and unrestricted belonging to one’s nation. Even though the novels are framed by a nationalist sense because they are dealing with the topic of the Indian nation-making both inside and overseas, my findings suggest that they are concerned with cosmopolitan sites in India such as Delhi, Bombay or Bangalore. I want to add that their struggle to define an Indian cosmopolitanism expresses itself as banal or half-baked cosmopolitanism in India.

In saying that, I remind the reader that the novels of many other long-established authors in the post-Rushdie era, mentioned in passing in this thesis such as Vikram Chandra, Amitav Ghosh, Akhil Sharma, and Aatish Taseer, can be studied for future research about the national-cosmopolitan relationship. The Booker Prize focus has now shifted away from Indian novels. Since the 2008 victory of Aravind Adiga, Indian writers have only been shortlisted—Sunjeev Sahota, Neel Mukherjee, and
Jeet Thayil in 2015, 2014, and 2012, respectively. Therefore, perhaps, now is a better time to analyze the effect of the Booker on the Indian cosmopolitan fiction after the hype around a preconceived pattern of preference for exotic Indian novels has subsided. Furthermore, the Booker can be compared and contrasted with its peer organizations such as the Sahitya Akademi, Pulitzer, Nobel, and Bailey’s Women’s Prize for Fiction, among others. Such scrutiny can distinguish between the Booker Prize and others in their conducting and treatment of the cosmopolitan literary consumption in the world today.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Brydon, Diana. "Earth, World, Planet: Where Does the Postcolonial Literary Critic Stand?" *Cultural Transformations: Perspectives on Translocation in a Global*


Morley, David. "Belongings: Place, Space and Identity in a Mediated World."


Print.


Sabo, Oana. "Disjunctures and Diaspora in Kiran Desai’s the Inheritance of Loss."


---. "Social and Cultural Aspects of Gender Inequality and Discrimination in India."


Viswanathan, Gauri. *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India.*


