

Chapter I

Introduction

Literature is more than just a historical or cultural artefact; it is of timeless significance. The term postmodern applies to the period after the Second World War (1939-45). Postmodernism is a moment that started against modernism. “It is an umbrella term which includes feminism, post structuralism, postcolonialism and deconstruction” (Taylor 112). Postmodern era starts after modern era and refers to the contemporary age. Best opines that “Transformation to postmodern society is bound up with fundamental changes that are transforming from warfare to education to politics, while reshaping the modes of work, communication, entertainment, everyday life, social relations, identities, even bodily existence and life forms” (116).

Postmodern age is an age of doubt and scepticism; scientific reasoning and technological innovation. The past and future go hand in hand; the past dissolves in the present, making the future ambiguous. Postmodernity believes in plurality and fragmentation than visualising any concept as a unified whole. In literary criticism structuralism was followed by post structuralism and deconstruction. These literary paradigms were the parameters upon which the postmodern ideology is established.

The structuralists aim at analyzing the structures of the text and the manner in which the author conveys the meaning in a text. They include Saussure, Jakobson, Levi Strauss, Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin. The post structuralists give a different theoretical approach to the texts. The writers who come under this term are Barthes, Foucault, Kristeva, Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, Hillis Miller and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who aim at close reading of the texts. The postmodern texts aim and analyse the various conditions prevalent in the twentieth century. Cultural studies by Raymond Williams deal with the role of literature in everyday lives. The Marxist literary critics George Luckas and Ferdinand

Jameson are concerned with class conflict between the capitalists and labourers. New Historicism aims at analyzing historical concepts through literature.

Edward Said coined the term 'orientalism' and brought out the difference between the orient and the occident in relation to the power exercised by the colonizer and the colonized. His book *Orientalism* written in the year 1978 deals with the impact of European conquest in colonising the nations. His book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) is about instilling imperial culture on the colonised nations. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-) spoke of the subaltern and challenges the legacy of colonialism through her cultural and critical theories. She hails from West Bengal in India. She has written critical essays on Marxism, feminism, deconstruction and postcolonialism.

Homi K. Bhabha (1949-) has coined the term 'Hybridity'. He is from the Parsi community in Mumbai. His book *Location of Culture* delineates the concept of 'New Internationalism' which deals with the history of postcolonial migration, the narrative of cultural and political diaspora and the major displacements. Homi.K. Bhabha explores the dynamics of colonization through literary texts. Postmodern writers use intertextuality as a tool to analyse a text. The texts explore personal identity and cultural identity. The disintegration of the colonial systems, the decline of capitalism, the rise of the global media, the contribution of novel as a dominant art and techniques like pastiche and bricolage are some of the features of postmodernism.

Postmodern literature comprises of those works which are of literary worth produced during the post World War period. Postmodernism applies to not just literature but any field of art with characteristics such as fragmentation, disjointed narratives and existentialism. Some of the postmodern writers are Kurt Vonnegut, Salman Rushdie and Umberto Eco. Their works analyses systematically and comprehensively on postmodern account of cultural movement. Literature of the era is analysed through a prism of postmodern features. It is an

aesthetic, literary, political or social philosophy. Philosophers like Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924- 1998) analyses a postmodern world from a post structuralist perspective. He refers to postmodernism in relation to cultural changes. He introduced the concept of metanarrative.

Jean Baudrillard (1929-) understood modernity as a cultural connection characterized by constant change in the pursuit of progress. He is a French Postmodern writer and thinker. His postmodern world is one of hyperreality. It is a world which is dominated by entertainment, information and communications technology. Baudrillard considers “Postmodernism is a play of appearances. He also argues that in postmodern world we are involved in empty and meaningless play of media” (Stephen 44). Various master narratives such as Marxism and structuralism were considered as methods of achieving progress. Postmodernism as a literary phenomenon owes its existence to the cumulative impact of a number of pursuits and disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, linguistic philosophy, literary theory besides others, all united with an awareness of the ideological colouring in areas of inquiry which was thought to be objective.

Literary postmodernism is thus a movement that seriously contested the so called humanist basis of modernism. The global catastrophes that happened in the early part of this century, such as fascism, world wars and murder of Jews and modernist movement have influenced literature. These catastrophes are seen to have sprung from the ideology implicit in modernism, especially totalitarianism. “As a cultural term, therefore, postmodernism points out to a crisis of authority” (Pillai 78). Totalitarianism is usually treated specially as the authority vested in western-European culture and its institution. Burdened with a scarring memory of imperialism, western writers, artist and intellectuals boldly called into question the credibility and validity of western civilization as such and launched a scathing attack on its liberal humanism which received a further impact from the agony faced by Vietnam War which, led to the collapse of liberal humanism in America and western Europe.

The postmodern literature is a subversion of modernist technique with a view of disrupting traditional linear presentations, deconstruction and metafiction. The resultant literature pronounced a new hypothesis about reality, man, history and the authority of artists is characterized by black humour on the one hand and apocalypse on the other hand. Given the contemporary cultural situation, the postmodern text reveals in its construction of a world which can be termed as valueless vaudeville. Black humour signals moral displacements. Irony, black humour and pastiche are the hall marks of postmodern writer's style. Irony informs the postmodern text and the ironic condition of the textuality itself. Postmodern writers often treat serious subjects like World War II, the cold war, conspiracy theories and depict history ironically and humorously. Metanarrative is a style employed essentially in postmodern writing in which author wants to make reader aware of its fictionality of history and factual details in literature.

Postmodern authors choose serious subject like war and depict history in a novel way. Linda Hutcheon in her *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) and *Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) discusses historiographic metafiction as the form of writing that blurs the line between fact and fiction. Intertextuality is often employed by postmodernists. The literary works incorporated within the interwoven fabric of story is deemed as intertextuality. Julia Kristeva, a postmodern critic writes on intertextuality as a postmodern construct:

Intertextuality is the term coined and expounded by Julia Kristeva in her interpretation of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism in her seminal work 'Word, Dialogue and Novel'. The theory of intertextuality postulates that a text cannot exist alone as a self contained, hermetic whole. It is shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures. The writer is a reader of texts and texts as structures of writing in a narrow sense, text as signifying matters in a broad sense before he is creator of texts. Therefore the work of art gets

inevitably inflected with references, quotations and influences of every kind.

(Waghmare 2)

Allusions from many texts and quotations integrated in the literary text make it rich. Intertextuality is an acknowledgement of previous literary works. Pastiche means combining together or pasting two parallel literary works into a new narrative voice. Thomas Pynchon, Margaret Atwood and Umberto Eco use many allusions from other fictions and form a collage. Elements from detective fiction, science fiction and war fiction, songs, jazz culture are brought together to form a pastiche in various writings.

Jorge Luis Borges (1899), the Argentinean writer whose influence on the post war writers in English is note worthy. The subject matter of Borges writing is that he feels human mind itself is the maker of fictions. The postmodern writers present “fictions both as works of imagination and constructs of the mind” (Pillai 42). As a writer of metafiction Borges influenced metafictional writers such as Thomas Pynchon and John Barthes. Metafiction is rewriting fiction or fictionalizing fiction. Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughter House Five* (1969) is a perfect example of metafiction. It is a science fiction which talks about journey into space. It is a postmodern myth of liberation from confinement. “Metafiction is essentially writing about writing or ‘foregrounding the apparatus’ making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader and generally disregards the necessity for ‘willful suspension of disbelief’” (Das 30).

Italo Calvino (1923-1985) is an Italian journalist, short story writer and novelist. His novel *If on a Winter Night a Traveler* (1979) is good example of metafiction where they deal with a process of creating a novel or a reader attempting to read the novel of the same type. Metafiction is termed as fictionality of fiction or writing about writing. Poiumena is a term coined by Alistair Fowler which is a type of metafiction which talks about the process of creation. Salman Rushdie (1947-) is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His novel

Midnight Children (1980) deals with partition and the process of creation of independent India. The novel won Booker Prize for fiction in 1981. Fragmented and non-linear narratives are used in variety of ways by Salman Rushdie for the sake of presenting history ironically which can be termed as historiographic metafiction.

Ismael Reed's *Flight to Canada* (1998) and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughter House Five* (1969) are novels that have employed temporal distortion. It is a literary technique that uses a non-linear time where the author jumps forwards and backwards in time in accordance with historical or cultural references. In Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* (1998) Abraham Lincoln uses a telephone. Julia Kristeva (1941) is a Bulgarian psycho analyst, French novelist and a feminist. She has coined the term intertextuality which is a postmodern terminology. She is one of the prominent post structuralist's along with Roland Barthes, Todorov, Jacques Lacan and Levi-Strauss. Intertextuality literally meant shaping the meanings of a text by borrowing quotations and allusions from another text. The term has been coined by Kristeva in 1986 which was followed by the postmodern authors to enrich their writings with borrowings from other texts.

The themes of postmodern fiction are surrealistic in fashion where many fantasies, outlandish and dream like qualities are used in the novel. Earlier example of surrealism is Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1928) is a Columbian short story writer, screenplay writer, journalist and novelist known as Gabo affectionately in Latin America. His *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is a perfect example of magic realism. The novel shows that history not only moves in circles but in cycles. The history of Maconda is the major focus of the novel. Magic realism has an oxymoron and binary opposition of realism and fantasy entwined into a concept. Salman Rushdie and Italo Calvino have used this technique in their novels. For a postmodernist there is no order or systems and search for an

order is like a dream that is unfulfilled like aspiring for something that does not exist and so they introduce the fantastic or impossible elements into a narrative that is otherwise normal.

Many postmodern authors have focused on a psychotic disorder called paranoia which is a type of schizophrenia. It is a kind of mental delirium which slowly changes the personality of the person leading to delusions and hallucinations. The postmodernist does not believe in order but understood that chaos is the norm of existence. The characters when they violate the established order face disorderliness in excess and leads to a particular delirium called paranoia. Ken Kesey in his *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) is a perfect example where the theme of paranoia is focussed. In this story the hegemony of the white versus the red Indians is highlighted. Mc Murphy the Red Indian liberates the inmates of an asylum from the rigid imperial nurse who is a servant of the oppressive social system.

Maximalism deals with fragmented narratives and Minimalism deals with narratives in which the reader involves in the process of creation. Jean Francois Lyotard felt that the postmodern literature had a particular way of narration and the stage is set for various types of debates and narrative systems. Metanarratives present the world from only one perspective, even when it can make sense from several different angles. Trying to force everything to be seen only through one point of view is referred to as ordered existences. The term can be used abstractly or figuratively to describe a certain view or interpretation of something, but it is derived from examining the political and social domination that has been exercised over smaller nations and minorities by imperialism and ethnocentrism.

Postmodernism tends to give voice to the voiceless peoples segregated to the margins thereby postmodern literature accepts and respects differences. The idea that all groups of colonised people, black and minorities, religious groups, women, the working class have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and accepting their voice as authentic and legitimate is essential to the pluralistic stance of postmodernism. The different

situations of everyday life and the mini-narratives that are provided by people through folk wisdom, myth, popular stories, and legends may have inconsistency and relativism, but it is these narratives and stories that present the situations of the ordinary and that of the marginal people to a very great extent.

Postcolonialism is a parallel theme to postmodernism and has many features which are similar. Postcolonial literatures are based on few theories. Alterity is a term which is known as different or the 'other'. The characters are depicted as socially, politically and linguistically inferior to the dominant colonial culture. Diaspora literally means dispersion and dislocation. The author who dislocate from the place voluntarily or involuntarily is called a diasporic writer. One of the dominant themes of postcolonial literatures is diaspora. The writers dealing with diaspora are emigrants or immigrants share their lives and experiences of the native land and the adopted land. They form a narrative voice in the background of the novels to expose the problems faced by the colonized nation which underwent drastic changes under the imperialism of the colonizer.

Ambivalence is a theme used by the writers to analyse how the colonizer subject the natives as inferiors when compared to them. Hybridity is a postcolonial term which refers to the condition where the colonizer and the natives mingle through marriage and are transformed into cross cultural society; politically, economically and culturally. Ethnicity often is referred to as identity in an alien nation or under colonization. The term 'Hegemony' used by the writers refers to the power exerted by the colonizer. Language plays an important role in postcolonial literatures where techniques like magical realism, mapping or cartography and metanarratives becomes pivotal in literary text. Race and the subaltern are some of the key terms used by the postcolonial writers. Literature of the last two decades has focused on the displaced people and the disrupted value system.

Marxist and post structuralist's can be categorized as postmodern art forms as they are grounded in history and parody. Marxism brings out the difference that existed between the elite, bourgeois class and the working class. Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a German philosopher and his ideas regarding the rebellion of the labourers towards the capitalists is the prominent theme called Marxism. Marx was against selfish individualism and looked for socialistic or classless society where everyone is equal. "Marx was aware of the structural evil that existed in feudalism and industrial society. He understands that the working class was exploited by the capitalists. Marxism stands for justice and fair wages and rights of the labour class or the poor" (Stephen 15). The post structuralist's idea overlap and contribute to postmodernism. Postmodern writers use the themes of post structuralism to give a different tone and narrative voice. A text is said to be dialogic when it has many voices. Heteroglossia and polyphony are some of the techniques used by the writers to show that the text has multiple narrative voices. Heteroglossia is a narrative that blends the views through hybridity of languages.

Michael Foucault (1926-1984) born in Poitiers, France was a politically active person who supported the subaltern. He questions conventional bourgeois morality. Foucault rejects the misuse of power by the dominant and has expressed concern of the subaltern. Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) a French philosopher introduced the theory of deconstruction. Derrida's theory of binary oppositions such as men/ women, good/ evil, east / west, love / hate, sacred / secular helped in comprehending the social structure. The meaning of sign in a text is not static but arbitrary so the sign signified differently to different people thereby producing multiple theories and this idea is one of the brilliant themes discussed in the novels of postmodern writers. According to Derrida every word is a sign and the play of meaning results in uncertainty. Logocentricism deals with the binary opposition of speech over writing where the meaning of a sign or word is ever changing. The text has multiple interpretations.

“Writing for Derrida is a metaphor. He is not merely concerned with the binary oppositions of writing and speech but on difference. Meaning for him is not fixed but provisional and always a condition of difference” (Wolfreys 66). The text has no particular meaning and is subject to various interpretations by multiple authors. This is the type of reading that is found in postmodern and post structuralist fiction.

The Russian formalism by Mikhail Bakhtin, subaltern theory by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘self’ and the ‘other’ by Edward Said and various other writers of diaspora focus on multiculturalism. Dialogism is a term coined by Bakhtin in his work *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981). The text has dialogue with other texts or authors. He dealt with polyphony in his analytical work on *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1984). Bakhtin feels a text is said to have heterodiegetic narration where there is a different narrative voice other than the author. Polyphony has many voices present in a text. Dialogism meant multiple perspectives and multiple voices. Derrida’s deconstruction of Saussure’s structuralism is one of the interesting themes in postmodern theoretical development.

Postcolonialism records the exploitation of the natives by the colonizers who plunder their land and resources for their selfish motives. The European colonizers acted as the centre and marginalized the colonized nation. They exercised power through their language by spreading culture and imposing their religion. Postcolonialism aims at analyzing the lives and identity of the decolonized people. The cultural identities of the colonizer and the colonized could be reflected through postcolonial readings of literature. Postcolonial theories propounded by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Spivak focus on the influence of colonialism in literature. The postcolonialists studied culture and societies of the colonized nations. The psycho analytical criticism written by Freud, Lacan and Harold Bloom delves deep into the conscious and unconsciousness of the reader, author and the text.

Postcolonial literature is a body of literary writing that deals with European colonization in Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Pacific. Postcolonial literatures discuss the problems and consequences of decolonization in a country where political and cultural subjugation of the colonized people is combined with themes of racialism and colonialism. The term postcolonial is not synonymous with post independence. Literatures of postcolonial nations have found common legacies of colonialism in their literatures. A number of expatriate writers, immigrant writers and diasporic writers are increasing by leaps and bounds. Literature that is written in English by the non native writers belonging to various nationalities are flooding the national market with many awards and accolades like Booker prize, Pulitzer prize and Governor General award and Nobel prize.

The writers of postcolonial literature include Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Janet Frame, Salman Rushdie, and Les Murry. Canadian writers such as Susanna Moodie and Katherine Parr Trail describe the Canadian landscape in their writings. Northrop Frye and Douglas Le Plan motivated landscape in their writing.

The growth of postcolonial literature in Canada talks about creation of social and cultural self. Canadian literature is obsessed with cultural identity.

Shades of modernism and postmodernism are found in the poets and novelists of Canada...Stylistic revisionism and magic realism in fiction, concrete, semiotic, and kinetic varieties in poetry, and the expression of the absurd in the theatre may all be traced in the works of these writers. (Rahman 9)

Canada has transformed from a colony to a nation. It can be called a postcolonial country as it had struggled to free itself from the legacy of the colonizer to get self definition. Canada has a dual settler identity as a colony and as a colonizing force:

The clash of the British and the French settlements in the seventeenth century, the American Revolution, the establishments of the united states, the influx of the 'loyalties', and the British immigration to Canada following the Napoleonic wars are some of the significant landmarks in the history of the Canadian nation. (Rahman 13)

Canadian culture is pluralistic and rich and focuses on language to form a positive nationalism. Canada was a bicultural nation with Anglophile and Francophile community. Canada's dominant cultures were originally British and French. Later on Canada became a multicultural society with the passing of Multicultural Act in 1988. Canada then became a home of diverse population and writers. The second problem faced by immigrants is assimilation into a new Canadian culture. The third problem is multiculturalism which allows the immigrant to preserve their culture and allows the political and economic integration with the Canadians.

Canada is believed to have come from two Spanish words 'aca' and 'nada' meaning nothing here. Canada attained its sovereign status as a confederate country in 1867 by the British North America Act of 1867. Canada was a colony of the British Empire. Despite facing the regime of ten provincial governments and one federal government Canada is able to form its own identity. The pluralistic and ethnic Canadian Literature has contributions from ethnic writers belonging to many cultural backgrounds. Canadian tradition has emerged out of English, French and American influences. Canadian society is compared to a mosaic for it encompasses various ethnic races thus maintains diversity as its characteristics. Canada has dual historical identity both as a colony and colonized country under the imperialists. They became an independent nation after Anglophile and Francofile biculturalism was integrated by the Multicultural Act.

Canada is a nation which stands unique as a nation that depended on immigration from the beginning. Of the two Canadian dominant groups the French settled at Quebec and the British in Ontario. Their generation constituted the major strength of Canadian population. The Second World War made a turning point in Canadian history as people who were devastated by the war started pouring into Canada from Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Eastern Europe. One part of the immigrant population in 1970 was from the Asian countries like Hong Kong, India, Philippines, China and Japan. Though Canada proudly deems itself as a multicultural land, the immigrants did face discrimination. The Canadian Act was also careful about the infringement of criminals in the society. The immigrant whose status was economically low was subjugated by the natives. The slogan 'Keep Canada white' is also one of the reasons for discrimination. So writings of the immigrants definitely focus on the centre and the margin in society and hegemony between the binary oppositions of 'self' and the 'other' that operates in a subversive manner which leads to discriminative practices.

All the south Asians are immigrants and their literature is torn between the chimeras of home and exile and the slogan of non discrimination and globalization only aggravates their pain. The Asian writers are engrossed in Canadian multicultural mosaic; though they have established themselves as Canadian writers yet they reflect the past. The Canadian diasporic literature comprises writings of immigrants who either came directly or through England to Canada. Ondaatje came from Sri Lanka through England. Ondaatje arrived in Canada in 1962 and his writings have enriched the modern Canadian Literature.

Canadian literature has authentically reflected the changing socio-political context. The country's literature influenced immigrant authors in the recent times. The Canadian writings began as imitative of colonial literature and later it has paved its own style of writing which reflects national characteristics. There are writings about the Metis and the native Aborigines. Beatrice Culleton and Maria Campbell are some of the writers who write about

native Canadian tradition. The immigrants of New England Puritans in Canada along with American loyalists started publishing journals in 1760. They are Henry Kelsey, Samuel Hearne, and Sir Alexander MacNeice. The hegemony of the centre and the other operates among the Canadian writers who are the 'centre' and the immigrant writers are the 'other' as they are the marginalized and represent the subaltern.

The major theme focussed by Canadian writers is identity crisis; be it the native writer or the immigrant writer. Robert Kroetsch defines identity as "we haven't got an identity until somebody tells our story. The fiction makes us real" (63). Identity construction takes place in the third space or the immigrant land. Identity is constructed through language, myth, history, psychology, gender and race. Canadian identity is delineated by Dr. Salat as: "Cultural pluralism and disparity are the other factors which contribute to the continuation of the Canadian enigma of identity since they thwart its growth of a homogeneous or monolithic Canadian identity" (xv).

Foucault has coined a term 'Heterotopia' which is unlike utopia or dystopia. According to him, "Heterotopia is a counter site like a resting place, a sanatorium, a prison or a theatre, counter site where "all other real sites that can be found within a culture are simultaneously represented, contested and invented" (qtd in Jasbir Jain 102).

The first Canadian novel is *The History of Emily Montague* (1796) by Frances Brooke. The novel deals with love, religion and politics especially of Quebec Garrison. Few noteworthy Canadian Novelists were John Richardson (1796-1854), whose *Wacousta* (1832) was a national historical novel. It was the first novel to be published outside Canada. It was published in Britain and pirated in America. T.C. Halliburton's (1796-1865) *Clockmaker* (1836) followed him. William Kirby (1817-1906) has authored *The Golden Dog* (1877), Sir Gilbert Parker (1862-1932) wrote *The Seats of the Mighty* (1896). Since 1900 Canadian novels were based on strict realism, the regional novels were predominantly authored by

women. Robert Kroetsch wrote on prairie literature. He believed in demythification of tradition through language. Robert Kroetsch was influenced by post structuralist's theories.

Margaret Atwood (1939) is the best known Canadian novelist. She has many novels and awards to her credit. She is currently short listed for Governor General Award for fiction for her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). It is a dystopian novel that champions the injustice that is meted out to the handmaids. Her novels reflect on feminist themes. Her writing career and publication started from her early childhood. She represents the social cause and fights against the atrocities that are committed in the society. Her poems have confessional elements in them. She writes speculative fiction. Some of her famous novels are *The Orynx and Crake*, *The Edible Women*, *Alias Grace* and *Surfacing*. EJ Pratt (1882-1964) is an eminent poet of Canada with many poetic collections to his credit. He has won the governor general award for poetry thrice.

Margaret Lawrence (1926-1987) is one of the major diasporic writers whose novels reflect upon African tradition. As a British Columbian national she migrated to England and Somaliland and her novels are called Manawaka novels. She has written her novels based on the fictitious place called Manawaka. She has written many novels which include *Diviners* (1974) *The Stone Angel* (1964), *This Side of Jordan* (1960) and a short story collection *The Prophet's Camel Bell* (1963) and all her works reflect African tradition. She has many poems and novels to her credit. Canadian fiction has grown swiftly and gorgeously. Over the last two decades, Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Michael Ondaatje, Alice Munro and Mordecai Richler have received international recognition.

Etymologically diaspora means dispersion; in the postcolonial context diaspora has extended to mankind. Migration has become inevitable and it is one of the major themes discussed by the diasporic writers. People migrate to different geographical locations under various circumstances like imperialism, civil war, refugees, as workers, for political reasons,

for better living: voluntary and some are forced. The term diaspora began very early with the Jews. After constructing the tower of Babel it is believed that people acquired new languages and therefore people of the same tongue dispersed to various countries. In The Holy Bible the Israelites migrated to Egypt and again to the Promised Land, Canan. The term has been broadened nowadays to show how various people from their native country migrate to different geographical locations. An Indian Scientist Arjun Appadurai has coined the term 'Ethnoscape' to denote "the migration of these people who cross national boundaries and find their way to alien societies in which they live" (191).

The immigrant writers who have migrated from various countries have dealt on postmodern themes. They include Salman Rushdie, Arunthathi Roy, Jumpha Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Michael Ondaatje, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Homi K Bhabha, Spivak, VS Naipaul, Edward Said, and Neil Bissoondath whose works were focused on multiculturalism. M.G. Vasanji, Anita Rao Badami and Janice Kulyk Keefer, Chitra Banerje Divakaruni, Anita Nair, Gita Hariharan, Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie and Rohinton Mistry are some of the diasporic writers. Joy Kogowa is a Japanese Canadian diasporic writer and Neil Bissoondath is an émigré from Trinidad to Canada. Edward Said is a Canadian of Jewish origin.

Sri Lanka is a colonized nation which has faced immigration of the colonizers during the colonial regime of the British, Dutch and many other European nations. So Sri Lanka is eulogized by Michael Ondaatje as the nation rich in natural resources and plundered by the foreigners who were amazed by its exotic beauty and wealth. In his fictional memoir *Running in the Family* he describes Ceylon during the colonizers time as Serendip, Ceylon, Zeolan and Ratanpedia. The island floats on the blue Indian Ocean and appears like a pendent in the ear of India. The Tamils occupied the northern province and many were plantation workers. The Sinhala populated the other regions. After independence the colonizers had to leave for their nations. The civil war broke after the independence because of the Sinhala

only Act and the Tamil population were disenfranchised. So the Tamil people migrated to many countries around the world as workers and refugees. As a result Sri Lankan diasporic writing emerged.

Many Sri Lankan diasporic writers left the island as children and adolescents. Some of them are Michael Ondaatje, Ashley Heple, Rajiva Wijesinha, Romesh Guna Sekara, Michelle De Krester, Shyam Selvadurai, a poet Rienzi Cruz, Jean Arasanayagam and Yasmin Goonaratne. Their literature included the ambivalence between native and alien culture which is reflected as the hegemony that existed between home and exile: the prodigal and the native. Some of them like Sunil Govinnage left their native country in full maturity and their writings varied in their literary sensibility. Reinzi Cruz is a Canadian who is an émigré of Sri Lanka. He is a poet who came to Canada in 1965 and his collection of poetry *Flesh and Thorn* (1975) is a passionate and personal experience about Sri Lanka. His poems have Sri Lankan words like Frangi pani, Kadju-pulang and Buddhists philosophies show him as a prodigal in Sri Lanka and alien in Canada. Ondaatje's poems 'Handwriting' too has reference to Sri Lankan sensibility and Buddhist reflections.

The third world writers who are invariably from different nationalities have formed a niche in Canada and they express the trauma of dislocation, marginalization in an adopted society which is echoed through their writings. They had to face many challenges and cross many hurdles like cultural polyphony and racial demarcation. Some of them have become universal writers and have acquired progress and popularity. Their collective writings reflect their otherness in a new country. Defamiliarizing the familiar and familiarizing the unfamiliar is practised in the works of diasporic writers. The term defamiliarization was coined by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky. Nariman gives a scathing comment about Canadian multicultural policy:

The Multicultural department is a Canadian invention. It is supposed to ensure that ethnic cultures are able to flourish, so that Canadian Society will consist of a mosaic of cultures- that's their favourite word, mosaic-instead of one uniform mix, like the American melting pot. If you ask me, mosaic and melting pot are both nonsense and ethnic is a polite way of saying bloody foreigner. (qtd in Malak 50)

Displacement, transplacement, post-ethnic diasporic identity, the concept of home and belonging, changing position in the transnational global culture are some of the themes used by Canadian diasporic writers. These writers have found a third space. Michael Ondaatje is a Sri Lankan born Canadian writer who has migrated to Canada after his sojourn to England as a small boy and then to Canada as a matured artist. Ondaatje has tried to express his identity through his poems *Rat Jelly* (1973) that draws on family history and south Asian cultural references. *The Dainty Monsters* has an epigraph from Sanskrit. The poems include dates, letters and reference to Uswetakeiyawa a fishing village of Sri Lanka and the civil wars. Michael Ondaatje like Kroetsch follows postmodern techniques. The Burghers were a mixed community of Dutch and native parentages in Sri Lanka. They were white to the natives and brown to the colonized. Ondaatje left his native country very early with an identity of a displaced citizen.

Michael Ondaatje is one of the few widely acclaimed expatriate writers. A Canadian poet and a novelist, Ondaatje bears the influence of complex inheritance. Michael Ondaatje is the co-winner of the 1992 Booker Prize for his novel *The English Patient*. He was born in Sri Lanka on September 12, 1943 formerly known as Ceylon, in Kegalle, a town about fifty miles from Colombo. He was the second son of Mervin Ondaatje and Graetian. He had three elder siblings, Christopher, Gillian and Janet and two half sisters from his father's second

marriage, Jennifer and Susan. His family owned a tea plantation and was part of the well established Ceylonese elite.

Mervyn Ondaatje was a severe alcoholic who mortgaged and sold most of his ancestor's land. He belongs to the Burgher community of Dutch-Ceylonese descent which was a prominent section of Sri Lankan society. His parents divorced in 1945 and he moved to Colombo with his mother. He joined St. Thomas College Boys School modelled on British tradition. Ed Jewinsky one of the biographers of Ondaatje says "Being familiarised with the British tradition at school Michael was influenced by the American Pop culture and especially fascinated by the western" (20). In 1952 he left for England at the age of nine to join his mother who established a boarding school. He was never to see his father again but they wrote letters and communicated. He viewed his uncle Noel as a father figure. He learned about his father through his relatives. He migrated to Canada at the age of nineteen before Multicultural Act was passed in 1988. Ondaatje prefers the facts of his private life not discussed and he says in his fictional memoir *Running in the Family*: "While all these names may give an air of authenticity, I must confess that the book is not a history but a portrait or 'gesture'. And those listed above disapprove of the fictional air I apologize and can only say that in Sri Lanka a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts" (RF 238).

The Burghers were descendants of European colonists who settled in Sri Lanka during the sixteenth century. Ondaatje's ancestor arrived in Ceylon in the seventeenth century and cured the governor's daughter with a strange herb and was rewarded with land, wife and foreign name. The Ondaatje's emerged as big tea estate owners and held all the respectable positions as doctors, lawyers, land owners, jockeys, government jobs, priests and botanists. His father became alcoholic and his mother had to leave for England. Ondaatje was two years old when his parents divorced.

His mother suffered great financial crisis and had to migrate to Lancaster to open a destitute home. Michael and his sister were left in Sri Lanka with their relatives. He went to England at the age of nine to join his older brother and mother and joined Dulwich College in London. He experienced South-East Asian diaspora at a very early age. Later he followed his brother Christopher to Montreal in Canada in 1962 when he was nineteen where he enrolled for UG programme in English and History at Bishops University in Quebec. Canada was undergoing a social and political change during that time. The country faced a stream of immigrants in 1960. He migrated to Canada in 1962 and his teachers encouraged him in both Bishop's and Queen's universities and Anthony. R.Gunaratne in his paper on Michael Ondaatje opines that "he proved a fledgling Cuckoo in a thriving nest of post modern poets" (202). He began his literary career as a poet. He studied at Bishops University and was awarded the President's prize for English. He fell in love with Kim who was a senior to him by fifteen years and they had two children Quintin and Griffin. In 1965 he completed his BA degree and moved to Toronto University where he engaged actively in various literary activities. In 1965 he was awarded the Ralf Gustafson award for poetry and the Norma Epstein award in 1966. His poems were published in Raymond Souster's Anthology *New Wave Canada* and he acquired Canadian citizenship in 1965.

He won international acclaim for his poetry and later for his novels. His poems are more intimate than his prose. He was awarded the E. J. Pratt Gold Medal for poetry along with Wayne Clifford. He met many writers in coach press and became a Professor at University of Western Ontario. His first collection of Poems *Dainty Monsters* appeared in 1967. He taught in the University of Western Ontario. His poetry collections had various themes of creativity and civilizations. His next collection of poetry *The Man With the Seven Toes* was published in 1967. He made a thirty five minutes film documentary *Sons of Captain*

Poetry followed by another film *Carry on Crime and Punishment*. The third book of poems *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* was published in the year 1971.

His poems won the Governor General Award in 1970. Billy is more about Ondaatje's personal world. He made a documentary film 'Sons of Captain Poetry' about his friend B.P. Nichol. In 1967, he completed his M.A. thesis on 'Mythology in the poetry of Edwin Muir: A study on the Making and Using of Mythology in Edwin Muir's Poetry'. He was interested in myths and archetypes which are reflected in his works. He was involved in a movie called 'Clinton Special' and said he wanted to direct films on what he has written. He had to leave University of Western Ontario because he refused to complete Ph.D degree which was a prerequisite to be employed as a Professor in the university. However he got a job at Glendon College, York University. He came across a newspaper clipping about Buddy Bolden which became the object of his theme for his first novel *Coming through Slaughter* (1976). The novel received the co-winner of the Books in Canada First Novel Award. Then he collaborated for the film version of Robert Kroetsch *Badlands*.

He was awarded the Governor General Award for his 1978 poetry collection, "*There's a Trick with a Knife I'm learning to Do.*" He visited Sri Lanka in 1978 and again in 1980 which inspired him to write a memoir *Running in the Family* (1982). He interviewed his family, friends, read archives and researched in order to patch up the past history with the present reality. In order to search his roots he spent five years in Sri Lanka to collect material. As a visiting Professor to University of Hawaii in 1981 he met the television journalist and producer Linda Spalding. He separated from his wife Kim the following year. The poems *Tin Roof* (1982) and *Secular Love* (1984) talks about the painful experience of separation and loss. His third novel was published after five years

In the Skin of a Lion (1987) records the construction of the migrant land Canada. He has established a national and international reputation for this novel. This novel won him the

Order of Canada Award. His poetry collection *Secular Love* recounts the trauma of separation from his wife Kim. Death and catastrophe are the themes that are present in the poem. He was awarded the Toronto Book Award, Toronto Arts award, Trillium Book Award and the Governor General Award. His next novel *The English Patient* (1992) was a box office hit when the film version of it directed by Anthony Minghella won him nine Oscars. Ondaatje became a world renowned writer by this time. The novel was the first Canadian book to be awarded with the prestigious Booker Prize award for fiction. He published *Handwriting* a collection of poems after six years. The novel *Anil's Ghost* published in the year 2007 grapples the story of war torn Sri Lanka between three factions, the government, Tamils and Sinhalese. He was honoured with Sri Lanka Ratna award by the former Sri Lankan president Chandrika Kumarata Tunga on 11, July, 1988. This is the highest honour given by the government of Sri Lanka for foreign nationals.

His latest novel *Divisadero* (2007) is a novel that talks about broken family and relationships and survival under estrangement. His most recent novel published in the year 2011 *The Cat's Table* is semi autobiographical. The protagonist undertakes his journey to England as a small boy in coast liner called Oronsay through Suez Canal and Mediterranean. The author was a nine years old boy who had the experience of travelling alone and independently to join his mother. He is nick named as Mynah by the small boys who travel with him. Cat's table means the lowest part of the ship which serves as the dining for the captain. Cats table meant captain's table. Other than these works Ondaatje has to his credit collections of critical works, children's stories, few more anthologies of poems, editorial works and has shown interest in films. At present he is an editor of a Magazine 'Brick' along with his wife Linda Spalding.

Coming through Slaughter recounts the life of a pioneer Jazz musician and Cornetist Buddy Bolden of New Orleans. He was an African- American who went mad in 1907 while

giving a performance at republic day parade. He goes to an asylum and the circumstances that leads to his mental delirium are brought out through many postmodern themes. The society of New Orleans and a new art form Jazz is evocatively narrated by the author.

Running in the Family (1982) is a fictional autobiography of the author who sketches Ceylon during Dutch colonial rule and his prestigious family coupled with traumas and breakdowns. The life he led in Ceylon with his family members is brought out through disjointed narratives, interviews, diaries, maps and through memory. He travelled twice to Sri Lanka to create this fictional memoir. The novel is a postmodernist text which lends itself to varieties of readings. The novel is a surrealistic mixture of facts and fiction, truth and hearsay, narrative prose and evocative poetry.

In the Skin of a Lion published in the year 1987 recounts the immigrant's life in Toronto. The novel has a subtitle 'The Novel'. The next location of Ondaatje's novel is his adopted land Canada. He discusses the themes of multiculturalism faced by the immigrants who are Finnish, Bulgarians, and Macedonians. He explores through the protagonist Patrick who comes as a migrant to Toronto and focussed on the building of the city. The novel records the historical facts of an extraordinary story of building the landmarks of such as the bridge, RC water plant etc in Toronto. The novel brought him fame throughout Canada. Set in the 1920's and prolongs up to the 90's, the novel gives an unofficial story of the immigrants whose labour bears witness upon the landmarks of the city. He has used myth of Babylonian legend to explore the quest for identity of these characters.

The English Patient published in the year 1992 is set in Italy during the Second World War. It can be termed as postmodern as well as postcolonial novel that sweeps through time and space, countries and invigorates the readers with variety. The confluence of four characters Hana, Kip, Caravaggio and the burned English patient in a devastated Italian villa and their quest for exploration of their self forms the main focus of the novel. The novel ends

with the apocalypse of bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki which is the highlight of the novel. The novel was awarded the Booker Prize. The film version of the novel *The English Patient* which has recently been made into a film won nine Oscars.

Anil's Ghost published in 2000 gives a different portraiture of Sri Lanka, a war ravaged land with death, murder and bombings. Anil Tissera as a UNO member undertakes a journey to detect the violation of human rights by the government. There are three factions fighting, one is the antigovernment insurgent groups, the other is the separatist guerrillas in the north and the government which tries to quell the upheaval. She is joined by Gamini, a doctor and Sarath an archaeologist. Anil is a representative of the UNO and their findings under mysterious circumstances form the base of the novel.

Divisadero is a latest novel which is set in North American Province of California. A beautiful farm in sylvan forest and mountains forms the background. The novel has two parallel stories. Anna, Coop and Claire along with their widowed father live in a farm at Petaluma. They migrate due to family circumstances and personal problems to various places. Anna researches the life story of French poet Lucien Segura which forms a parallel to her own past. The novel is an artistic achievement of Ondaatje. The novel brings together layers of history, belonging, memory, intertextuality, parody and pastiche.

The fictions of Michael Ondaatje tell stories differently and explore the multicultural visions of postcolonial countries. The ideas of relocation and replacing are the diasporic themes of Ondaatje's fictions. His fiction contains historiographic metafiction, imaginative reconstruction of the past and self-reflexive narratives. His novels have many postmodern themes, theories and techniques. It also discusses the contribution of post structuralists and Marxist themes which are similar to postmodern themes. He is not only a postmodern author but also a transnational writer. Historical legendary figures form the basis for his characterisation. The major strength of Ondaatje's novels is his presence in the novels as an

insider, outsider and narrator. His novels explore personal and universal quest. The novels also deal with identity crisis through different characters.

The concept of defamiliarization is embedded in his novels. Ondaatje is aware of his roots which belong to the Dutch and it is obvious through his Dutch surname. As a Canadian author Ondaatje has crossed boundaries to attain self definition in the global context through each of his novels with a different approach. The geographical space and time, various intersections of political events are reflected through his novels. The use of various modern tools like photography, cartography and cinematic techniques gives singularity to his novels.

The novels of Michael Ondaatje are fictional explorations of journeying through, immigration, multiculturalism, search for roots and self definition in a racial and multicultural society in the global context. The dissertation probes how each of these concepts are dealt in each of his novels taken for analysis and inferences that could be drawn from the study of Michael Ondaatje's select novels.

The dissertation proposes to analyse Ondaatje as a postmodern writer and examines various themes and techniques that are underpinned in his novels. Before analyzing Ondaatje's life and works a brief survey of postmodern themes and techniques in general has been undertaken to apply them to the works of Michael Ondaatje. According to Barbour, "Postcolonialism also takes a sideways step in Michael Ondaatje's writings (qtd.in.Gunaratne 204). Post structuralists themes and Russian formalism have contributed to Ondaatje's writings. The aim of the project is to apply the postmodern ideologies to the select novels of Michael Ondaatje. Critics like Linda Hutcheon place Michael Ondaatje as a postmodern writer. Ondaatje's wealth of literary knowledge and his wide experience pave ways for analyzing him as a postmodern writer and various literary techniques contributing to his writings.