CHAPTER-2

NATION, LOCATION AND IDEOLOGY

The literature survey in the preceding chapter was an attempt to contextualise our study of nation and nationalism as well as highlight some of the ambiguities involved in describing it. The present chapter aims to study the nature and operation of ideology embedded in South Asian Anglophone fiction dealing with history. It attempts to show certain forms of linkage between nation, location and the ideology of nationalism which dominates historical novels dealing with Partition in India and Pakistan and Civil War in Sri Lanka. Focusing on trajectories of religious, linguistic, class and anti-colonial ideologies, it suggests that ideology constitutes an important terrain for analysing the dynamics of postcolonial politics in South Asia. The chapter tries to show how the positioning of the novelists in a vantage point in history affords them the scope to develop their own perspectives on historical events.

The present chapter posits historical novel as a site to explore the bedrock of nation. It delineates how the sudden outburst of hatred between different communities on the basis of religion, language and class disturbed the basic fabric of the nation, destroying the much vaunted ideal of freedom, happiness, peace and equality. It assumes that the perspectives of the novelists are influenced by the place of their birth, their religious and linguistic and class affiliations as well as the encounters and insights gathered during the period of the historical events. The chapter covers the diverse dealings with the concept of ideology being a mechanism of power management and control over the people inhabiting a particular nation space.

In the context of South Asia it is often observed that the collective and celebratory perception of nationalism which developed during the anti-colonial movement faded into a divisive and elegiac tone in the post-independence period. The chapter undertakes a politically engaged reading of the texts to unveil the ideologically charged concept of nationalism which redefined the sense of identity in the newly independent nation. Furthermore, through a comparative analysis of the select texts the chapter addresses the lacunae in envisioning Benedict Anderson's demarcation of nationalism and ethnicity and his postulation of nation's "imagined community" and

"national consciousness" in print-capitalism in the context of South Asia. The study engages with historical narratives by novelists belonging to different religious and linguistic communities in order to explore the fluid connotation of nation.

This chapter begins by introducing the relationship between ideology and nationalism, novel and nationalism and ideology and identity of the novelists. It does this by building upon existing scholarship on these conceptual ideas enunciated by Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee, Hayden White, Aijaz Ahmad and a few others. The chapter then moves on to deliberate extensively on religious, linguistic, anti-British and class ideologies that govern the spirit of nationalism in the subcontinent. It focuses on post-independence narratives such Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*, Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Salman Rushdie's *Shame* to show how in the select cluster of historical texts the idea of nationalism is shaped by religion and underlying ideology of the novelists. An in-depth analysis of Sri Lankan novels such as Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*, Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef* and Ambalavaner Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* is undertaken to comment upon the influence of linguistic affiliation in configuring the ideology of nationalism in the island nation. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the anti-British ideology embedded in texts such as Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* and Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* in order to reveal the deceitful motives of the colonisers. Lastly, it analyses the convoluted politics of class ideology in select texts such as Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*, Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* and Gunesekera's *Reef* to expose the pitfalls of imagining homogeneous nation. Focusing on trajectories of religious, linguistic, class and anti-colonial ideologies as mentioned above the overall purpose of the study is to provide a nuanced understanding of nation.

Ideology and Nationalism

Ideology refers to a system of ideas which attempts to justify or attack a given social or political order. According to Austrian geopolitical theorist Robert Strausz Hupe and military strategist Stefan Thomas Possony ideologies may be regarded as drives as well as tools (Blanksten 3). As a drive ideology dominates the minds of the privileged sections and the leaders; at the same time it can be used consciously as a tool by the people in power in order to command greater obedience from the masses. The place of

ideology in nation-building in South Asian region cannot be overlooked. Political ideologies in this region share some common features: intense nationalism or nationalistic fervour, possessiveness regarding their national culture and symbols and a commitment to various forms of changes and development.

Terry Eagleton in his book *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991) states that ideology as:

> a dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it: naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable, denigrating ideas which might challenge it, excluding rival forms of thought and obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself. (Eagleton 5)

It may be inferred that Eagleton defines ideology as a socially constructed reality which is passed off as "natural" thereby rationalising and normalising the superiority of the dominant class over their subjects. Teun A. Van Dijk, a professor of discourse studies, echoes similar views in his book *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* when he states that "ideologies are the basis of dominant group members' practices (say of discrimination). They provide the principles by which these forms of power abuse may be justified, legitimized, condoned or accepted" (35).

Ideology itself is a contested concept. According to Marx and Engels, ideology induces false consciousness in workers under capitalism; ideology also refers to left and right ideologies such as Communism, Socialism, Conservatism, Liberalism that we come across in our day to day politics. Nationalism represents another type of ideology. It is the most important ideological component in South Asia as it created a sense of national unity to fight against the foreign powers. It is often considered as a mode of articulation of a common sense and common will in the Indian subcontinent. Nationalism inculcated among the common people the importance of national interests rather than specific interests. It took roots in the Indian subcontinent as a form of ideological articulation for independence and later emerged as a common thread of homogeneity which would unify people into a political community in the postcolonial era.

Aijaz Ahmad in his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1992) regards nationalism as a complex ideology. He states:

> Nationalism is no unitary thing, so many different kinds of ideologies and political practices have invoked the nationalist claim that it is hard to think of nationalism at the level of theoretical abstraction without dealing with the experience of particular nationalisms and distinguishing between progressive and retrograde kinds of practice. (Ahmad 7)

Ahmad believes that Jameson's characterisation of the third world in terms of its experiences of colonialism and imperialism lent impetus to his hypothesis of Third World Literature as national allegories. In his famous essay titled "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" (1986) Jameson states:

> All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel. (Jameson 69)

Ernest Gellner offers his views on nationalism in his famous book *Nation and Nationalism* (1995) where he states that nationalism has its own amnesias and selective principles which might be distortive and deceptive by nature. Nationalist ideology also suffers from false consciousness as it preaches cultural diversity but in reality it imposes homogeneity. Ernest Renan also echoes the same view in his essay "What is a Nation". Renan believes that deliberate forgetting plays a crucial role in the formation of nation. Julien Benda and Antonio Gramsci believe that intellectuals play an important role in making nationalist ideology work. They participate in political passions, class passions and racial passions and mingle it in their work.

In the book *Indian Nationalism: The Essential Writings* (2017) S. Irfan Habib, the editor, regards nationalism as a double edged sword. It is the strongest driving force in politics and the most malleable one. It causes strife around political, cultural, linguistic and religious identities. He is of the opinion that religion occupies centrality in visualising India and experiences show that various caste units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Benedict Anderson too sees nationalism as more closely aligned with phenomena like religion and kinship. Religion, kinship and nationalism are all based on faith and call for

sacrifice. There are different forms of nationalism based on religion, race, language and other divisions. Tom Nairn a Scottish political theorist in his book *The Break –up of Britain* (1977) has emphasised on the "janus faced" (Anderson 3) discourse of nationalism. According to him nationalism might be communal, authoritarian, friendly or hostile by nature.

The theoretical significance of Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1988) where he regards nationalism as a cultural phenomenon applies to South Asian novel dealing with history. Anderson states:

> My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy. (Anderson 4)

This means that nations are creations, constructions of human endeavour and to large extent products of meaning systems created by people concerned. It is often argued that the individual forms of nationalism attempt to project the general culture and values of the "national" people it claims to represent. With the help of culture and values an attempt is made to construct an ideal of national community. This culture and these values are signifiers and they constitute the political ideological discourse of national identity. The discourse in the long run lends impetus to the emergence of a new nation. So, nationalism can be regarded as bedrock through which the political ideologies seek to achieve legitimacy in order to form the apparent nation state.

Partha Chatterjee in his book *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1983) traces the relation between novel and nationalism. He states that "Even in the case of the novel, that celebrated the artifice of the nationalist imagination in which community is made to live and love in "homogenous time," the modular forms do not necessarily have an easy passage" (Chatterjee 8). This suggests that people are forced to conform to a particular idea of life. So, the contentment is deliberately disturbed in order to promote the ideal of nationhood. The discourses of

nationalism remains trapped within the framework of false essentialism. Etienne Balibar, a French Marxist philosopher has coined a term "fictive ethnicity" to describe the way a nation and its people are constructed with the purpose of maintaining unity (Balibar 349). Fictive ethnicity can be regarded as an integral part of the ideal nation because without it nation would only be an abstraction and patriotism would be obsolete.

Hayden White in his book, *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth - Century Europe* (1973), states that there are three kinds of strategies that can be used by novelists to gain different kinds of explanatory effect. Explanation by ideological implication is one such strategy. White believes "There is an irreducible ideological component in every historical account of reality" (White 21). Ideological strategy reflects the ethical element in the novelists' assumption of a particular position while describing a historical event. Mikhail Bakhtin in his book *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975) states that "there is no unitary language or style in the novel. But at the same time there does exist a center of a language a verbal ideological center for the novel" (Bakhtin 48). Aijaz Ahmad also believes that "When it comes to the knowledge of the world, there is no such thing as a category of the 'essentially descriptive', that 'description' is never ideologically or cognitively neutral…" ("Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness" 99). Linda Hutcheon in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) states that in the postmodern era the ideological and the aesthetics have turned out to be inseparable. Postmodern theory has taught us that instead of truth being illusory, it is institutional. Language is always used in the context of politico discursive conditions.

The historical novelists probably play an important role in supporting a particular view of a nation through the implicit ideology embedded in their fiction. The meaning of nation becomes layered because of the different ideological positions taken up by the historical novelists. In the history of modern nation state there is always a single founding revolutionary event that cannot be erased from the memory of the citizens. This event is presented by the historical novelists in the form of a narrative and the characters are often represented as the manifestation of the national personality. An illusion is created by the historical novelists that the characters belonging to a particular nation share certain common ideology. The imaginary singularity of nation formation is constructed by the writer by moving back from the present into the past.

Common race, language, religion and other such societal divisions inscribe people in a relationship of temporal community within a geographical location. Then national ideology enunciates in a prescriptive mode that these people are interrelated and they should constitute a larger community known as "nation". Nationalism as an ideology has utilised the idea of "nation" to achieve political independence in the Indian subcontinent. This has been explicitly represented by South Asian Anglophone writers in their novels dealing with partition history in India and Pakistan and Civil War in Sri Lanka. Attempts have been made by the historical novelists to show how nationalism instills a sense of belonging in which sentiment and emotion play an important role. The ideology of nationhood invariably gives priority to a particular section and suppresses alternative ways of classifying people. This in turn leads to radically different attitudes to the problem of integration and assimilation. In the course of time and space religion, language, class, race emerges as a reinforcing element within nationalist discourses. That is why South Asian Anglophone novelists present vibrant chaotic worlds where people are spirited, religion and politics matter profoundly.

Marxist philosopher Georg Lukacs in his famous book *The Historical Novel* (1955) emphasises on the importance of time and space in historical novels. According to him the characterisation of time and place bears deeper meaning. He says "certain crises in the personal destinies of a number of human beings coincide and interweave within the determining context of an historical crisis" (Lukacs 43). It is precisely for this reason time, location and ideology are interrelated in the progress of history. The South Asian historical novelists have projected this interrelation as crucial determinants of nationalist ideology as their emotional attachment to land and their personal experiences configure their views on nationality and imagined community in their novels. The analysis of the historical novels reveal how different competing and contradictory notions regarding Indian, Pakistan and Sri Lankan nation state exists side by side depending on the identity of the fiction writers and the community they seek to represent.

Religious Ideology

Novels such as Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988), Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) deal with the perturbing proceedings and complexities related to partition and miseries of the people affected by the event. The trauma created by partition is a major apprehension of South

Asian literature after independence. However a deeper analysis reveals the different underlying ideologies of the writers about similar historical events. Writers being human in nature are also affected by their desires and inclinations. Their creative output is influenced to a certain extent by their spatio-temporal location, their own experiences and the communities they represent.

For instance Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is inspired by an incident he encountered in the partition days. Few days before the partition of India, Singh was on his way to his home in Delhi. When he reached the outskirts he experienced a strange sight, a jeep full of armed Hindus and Sikhs celebrating their victory after killing all the villagers in a Muslim village. Singh being a Sikh from western Punjab found it difficult to imagine that he would never be able to return to Lahore again. This encounter inspired him to write a novel condemning the animalistic nature of human being arising out of religious ideology.

The bifurcation of Punjab into Hindu and Sikh dominated East Punjab and Muslim dominated West Punjab unleashed sectarian violence, communal rivalry and brutal uprooting on both sides of the newly created national border. Singh denounced the event vehemently in a press conference: "We must not forget the partition because it is relevant today. We must remember that it did in fact happen and can happen again. That is why I keep reminding people who clamour for an independent Kashmir or Nagaland to remember what happened to Muslims when some of them asked for a separate Muslim state…" (Chopra 170).

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* is also a politically motivated novel which throws light upon her own Parsi community and Pakistani perspective of partition. Sidhwa and Attia Hosain are considered as foremost women writers depicting the partition from Pakistani and Indian point of view respectively. Sidhwa admits in a conversation with David Montenegro:

> The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the partition of India and Pakistan... What has been written has been written by the British and the Indians. Naturally, they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I'd researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one just does not tolerate

> injustice. I felt whatever little I would do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I don't think I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what that facts were. (Roy 64)

Just like Rohinton Mistry and Dina Mehta, Sidhwa too describes the plight of her minority Parsi community and their struggle to cope with the hegemonic forces of the dominant community. A distinctive Parsi ethos is manifested in the novel. The novel presents the neutral, ambivalent and noncommittal attitude of the Parsis towards the historical event of partition.

Attia Hosain's novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* deals with the pre- partition and post- partition situation in Lucknow and specially its impact upon her own feudal Taluqdar class. Hosain portrays vividly the confrontation of the aristocratic class with the realities of partition which was initiated with the hope of providing new aspirations to common man by chasing away the Britishers and dismantling the hierarchical feudal society. The novel is evocative of her own experiences during the event of partition. Attia Hosain in an interview revealed the reason behind writing this novel. She said: "I wanted to write about that agonizing heart break when we were all split up and a brother could not see a brother and a mother could not be with her dying son and families that had been proud to always collect together when there were weddings or deaths or births or anything, cannot be together…" (Hosain).

Ahmed Ali's novel *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) set in pre-partition India deals with the decaying Mughal splendor and traditions of Muslim elite of Old Delhi after the advent of colonialism. Just like Attia Hosain, Ali portrays the confrontation of the royal class with the colonial powers. In an exclusive interview conducted by Carlo Coppola, Ahmed Ali states that his own experiences have moulded his novel *Twilight in Delhi*. The microscopic details of the city is based on his personal visits to the historical monuments and other places of importance as well as his astute analysis of people he came across in old Delhi.

> I went and met as many old people as I could and I watched everyone's actions as I walked down the street. I watched everything. I watched people as I went to the Edward Memorial Park and when I went to the Jama Masjid. I watched everyone—the pigeon sellers, the pigeon buyers, the pigeon flyers—all those

> wonderful kaleidoscopic scenes and crowds…I was trying to picture in my mind where the fights in took place between the Muslims and Indians on one side, and the British on the other, and where the cannons were fired from, and where the people, the spectators, watched the "fun," as they considered it. (Coppola 12, 13)

In another interview with literary critic Priya Joshi, Ali maintains the view that *Twilight in Delhi* is "a book about India" though it centers on the story of the fall of Mughal Empire and loss of its way of life. Ali also acknowledges that the novel is "written through the eyes of Muslims- of a Muslim family," but nevertheless he repeats: "but it's the story of India" (Anjaria 199).

Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame* (1983) also projects class, nation and religion as important elements of politics in Pakistan just like its Indian counterpart as depicted in the novel *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Rushdie himself. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a political allegory dealing with Indian politics while his novel *Shame* is a political allegory dealing with politics and ideologies which existed in Pakistan. Rushdie's *Shame* is also influenced to a large extent by his own experiences in the subcontinent. The narrator in *Shame*, who seems to be an alter ego of Rushdie, reflects on his position both as an insider as well as outsider. He states, "I tell myself this will be a novel of leave taking, my last words on the Earth from which, many years ago, I began to come loose. I do not always believe myself when I say this. It is a part of the world to which, whether I like it or not, I am still joined, if only by elastic bands" (Rushdie 28). This vantage position enables him to make critical comments on the issues facing postcolonial society.

A critical analysis of the above mentioned South Asian novels reveal that religion is an important element which governs the Indian subcontinent. Religion is the centripetal force connecting these novels. Different communities existed side by side in harmony with each other before the partition of the country. The induction of religion into politics poisoned the minds of people and unleashed violence and terror. Basically the impact of religious nationalism in India and Pakistan is a common thread that runs across these novels. Apart from religious ideology, class ideology, patriarchal ideology and anti- British ideology are other major preoccupation in these novels.

In the novel *Twilight in Delhi* Ahmed Ali brilliantly captures the religious sentiments of traditional Muslim families in Old Delhi by elaborating on fakirs and their distinct traits of averting impending dangers, muezzins and their azaans, Pirji and their ability to cure diseases, the month of Ramzan and the significance of Namaz. Apart from these practices they even trace the political decline of Mughal era to an aribitrary act of God rather than the failure of the Muslim Kings to defeat their enemies. For instance, Mir Nihal, Habibuddin and Kambal Shah engage in a discussion on the causes of the downfall of the Mughals. Mir Nihal and Habibuddin consider strategic failure and lack of political sense or judgement as the root causes of the defeat in the hands of East India Company. Kambhal Shah on the contrary provides a religious explanation. According to him the Mughal elders have separated the graves of two great mystics Hazrat Mahboob Elahi and Hazrat Amir Khusro by burying Mohammad Shah between them. This action has displeased God and so the result is the overthrow of the Mughal Empire by the British. Mir Nihal and his son immediately accepts this view because they consider Kambal Shah a great divine, a Qutab , an assistant of God who knows the secrets of God. Thus religious justification serves as a safeguard against the political inferiority imposed by the colonisers upon the Mughal Empire.

The novel *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh introduces us to the agricultural village of Mano Majra, a tiny village in Indo- Pakistan border. It is located near a railway station and just as in R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) the train station is the focus of life in the town. The day to day activities and prayer time for the villagers are timed by the railroad schedule. Trains play a significant role in the novel as it is the route by which the news of partition enters into the peaceful life of Mano Majrans. When the novel opens the innocent people of Mano Majra are not even aware that their country had been partitioned. They are untroubled by the convulsion of killing, looting, rape that shook other parts of the country. The fact that the Sikh priest considers Mullah's prayers as an indication for his own prayer time and intones a prayer in the temple indicates the kind of harmonious atmosphere that prevailed in India among various religious communities. The Gurudwara is the place where they discuss their common problems. All the three communities worship a three foot sandstone which they regard as their local deity. Singh delineates how the three communities existed side by side in Mano Majra "Mano Majra is a tiny place. It has only three brick buildings, one of which is the home of the moneylender Lala Ram Lal. The other two are the Sikh temple and the mosque.

The three brick buildings enclose a triangular common with a large peepul tree in the middle" (Singh 2). This setting actually hints at the kind of unity which was a living actuality in Mano Majra before the violence of partition swept in.

The communal harmony existing amongst different communities is also portrayed in the novel *Ice Candy Man* which focuses on pre and post partition scenario in Lahore through the eyes of Lenny, the child narrator. Sidhwa shows how the Muslims and Hindus could even fall in love with each other across religious distinctions through the character of Shanta, a Hindu Ayah and Ice Candy Man, the Muslim protagonist. The inter-religion love relationship is also depicted in the novel *Train to Pakistan* through the Sikh character Juggut Singh and Nooran, the daughter of a Muslim weaver.

Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* uses Hindu Ayah Shanta as a symbol for united India. She is desired by a group of her admirers belonging to different religious communities: Ice Candy Man, the Muslim protagonist; Sher Singh, the Sikh zoo attendant; a Hindu masseur; Hari, the gardener; the Muslim butcher, Sharbat Khan, a Pathan; and many others. In the pre partition days this group of people used to gather in a park and share each other's joys and concern. Sidhwa further shows that the Muslims and Sikhs even participated in each other's religious and social festivals before Partition. The village Pir Pindo, a Muslim village located to the east of Lahore, represents the communal amity which existed among different communities. Sidhwa shows how the village remains untouched by the fury of partition spread elsewhere. The Muslims of Pir Pindo and the Sikhs from the neighbouring village of Dera Tek Singh celebrate Baisakhi, the birth of the Sikh religion and of the harvest season together. When Imam Din, Lenny's family cook brings up the subject of communal riots in Bengal, Bihar and other parts, the Sikh granthi, Jagjeet Singh says:

> 'Brother,'…our villages come from the same racial stock. Muslims or Sikh, we are basically Jats. We are brothers. How can we fight each other?'
>
> 'If needs be, we'll protect our Muslim brothers with our own lives! (Sidhwa 56)

The Muslim Chaudhry of Pir Pindo too replies to Imam Din "I am prepared to take the oath on the Holy Koran that every man in this village will guard his Sikh brothers with

no regard for his own life!" (Sidhwa 57). Their statements reflect the united effort put up by the villagers against the communal riot plaguing pre-partitioned India.

Attia Hosain's novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* also represents the communal bond which existed among different communities before the horrors of partition marched in. Baba Jan, the Muslim patriarch and a formidable figure, has friends among other religious groups. His circle of friends includes Thakur Balbir Singh, a Rajput and Raja Hasan Ahmed of Amirpur, a poet and builder of palaces. Uncle Hamid, a commanding figure and the successor of Baba Jan is also a believer in secular ideology. Just like his father, he encourages peaceful coexistence among the Hindus and Muslims when he asserts that, "I always found it was possible for Hindus and Muslims to work together on a political level and live together in personal friendship" (Hosain 234). Hosain captures the multicultural life of pre-independent Lucknow with Ashiana, celebrating all the festivals like Shubrat, Diwali, Eid and Holi with equal pomp and splendour.

However with the passage of time religious intolerance spreads even in Lucknow. During a Muslim procession when the top of their tazia stuck in the branch of a peepul tree just outside the big Hanumanji temple the commotion starts. Though it is a holy procession of the Muslims someone begins to blow a conch in the temple to displease the Muslims. Some men start pelting stones at the heathen sounds. There is lathi charge and police firing to control the unruly mob. Asad is also injured in the mob violence.

Religious intolerance cropped up even in terms of watching movies. Evidence of this can be seen even in the remote border town of Q in Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame*. Immediately before the partition even going to movies had become a political act. The stone-godly being vegetarians made a famous film titled *Gai-Wallah*, a fantasy film where a masked hero roamed the Indo- Gangetic plain liberating herds of cattle from their keepers and saving them from being taken to the slaughterhouse. On the contrary the one-godly took interest only in watching non-vegetarian Western movies in which cows got massacred. The movie goers even attacked the cinemas of their enemies. When Bilquis's father Mahmoud passed a double bill into his Talkies deciding that both the films would succeed one another on the screen, the decision turned out to be a futile one. Both the communities, vegetarian and non-vegetarian stopped going to movies and even boycotted the Empire.

In Singh's *Train to Pakistan* also with the passage of time after the declaration of Partition in 1947 the same trains turn into ghost trains for the innocent villagers as trains arrive with loads of corpses and create panic among the villagers. The arrival of the trains gradually changes the peaceful relationship existing among different communities inhabiting the village. People belonging to different communities who had previously lived as family members grew suspicious of each other. Singh being a Sikh describes in his book that a train comes from Pakistan side full of slaughtered Hindus and Sikhs. On the contrary for the Muslim inhabitants: "Quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent … For the first time, the name Pakistan came to mean something to them—a haven of refuge where there were no Sikhs" (Singh 128).

The Sikhs started saying "Never trust a Mussulman," they said:

> The last Guru had warned them that Muslims had no loyalties. He was right. All through the Muslim period of Indian history, sons had imprisoned or killed their own fathers and brothers had blinded brothers to get the throne. And what had they done to the Sikhs? Executed two of their Gurus, assassinated another and butchered his infant children; hundreds of thousands had been put to the sword for no other offense than refusing to accept Islam; their temples had been desecrated by the slaughter of knife; the holy Granth had been torn to bits (Singh 128).

Similarly in the novel *Ice Candy Man*, a train arrives from Gurdaspur carrying mutilated bodies of Muslim passengers. Ice Candy Man's sister was travelling by that train. The ghastly sight turns Dilnawaz, the Ice Candy Man into a violent man possessed with frenzy and a strong urge to kill all the Hindus. He announces to his friends, "Everyone is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslims. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny bags full of women's breasts"(Sidhwa 149). This act of violence against the Muslims spurs him into revengeful actions. He shouts "…that night I went mad, I tell you! I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs I'd known all my life! I hated their guns… I want to kill someone for each of the breasts they cut off the Muslim women… The penises!"(Singh 156).The graceful Masseur, a Hindu and one of Ayah's admirers become victim of the animosity between Hindus and Muslims. The train scene turns Ice Candy Man into an irrational soul. He loves Ayah

from the core of his heart but the train scene makes him forget his love for Ayah. She is just a "Hindu" for Ice Candy Man and so he abducts Ayah.

The Ice Candy Man instigates people to take revenge upon the Hindus and the Sikhs. Similarly in *Train to Pakistan* the Sikh leader conducts an assembly in the gurudwara to incite the men and women present there to indulge in violence against the Muslim villagers. They instill the minds of the innocent villagers with narrow religious sentiment and urge them that it is a sacred act in the service of the Guru. The Sikh leader invokes a revengeful spirit among the Mano Majrans. He says:

> For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across. For each road convoy that is attacked, attack two. That will stop the killings on the other side. It will teach them that we can also play this game of killing and looting. (Singh 157)

In the above mentioned instances in both the novels, violence against other communities is considered as a religious act. So the role of religion is reversed from a source of peacefulness and sustenance to a source of violence. This misinterpretation of religion and religious ideals destroyed the peaceful co-existence of different communities and dismantled the fabric of a secular united India.

In the novel *Ice Candy Man* Sidhwa satirises all the chief political personalities of India. She shows her sympathy towards Muhammad Ali Jinnah by quoting Sarojini Naidu's praising of Jinnah as a pre-eminently rational and practical man, a man of worldly wisdom and splendid idealism. Sidhwa considers him as an "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity" (Sidhwa 160). Sidhwa cites in the novel the inaugural address of Jinnah in the Constituent Assembly session: "You are free. You are free to go to your temples, your mosque or any other place of worship in the state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of state…etc…etc…Pakistan Zindabad!" (Sidhwa 144).

Instead of focusing on the qualities of Gandhiji's personality Sidhwa throws light only on Gandhi's views on enema "An enema a day keeps the doctor away" (Sidhwa 87). She compares Gandhi to a clown and a demon. The narrator wonders why Gandhi is

so famous. Ice Candy Man questions the character of Nehru and his relation with Mountbatten and his wife. He says " …But that Nehru, he's a sly one…He's got Mountbatten eating out of his one hand and English's wife out of his other what-not… He's the one to watch! He's working in the Government House as a chaprassi these days" (Sidhwa 131). He also believes that the British Government has favoured Nehru. Thus the novelist to a certain extent sympathises with Muslims and Pakistan as a whole.

In the novel *Ice Candy Man,* Bapsi Sidhwa being a Parsi Pakistani woman writer gives voice to the ideology of the Parsi community who are generally excluded from the mainstream partition discourses. Parsis are known for their neutral ideology right from the time they arrived in India around 785 AD. The seeds of their accommodating and neutral nature follow from the famous incident after their arrival in India. Colonel Barucha in the novel narrates the anecdote to the Parsis. When their forefathers came to India, the Grand Vazir appeared on the deck with a glass of milk filled upto the brim. It was actually a polite message from the Indian king that his land is full and prosperous and so he does not want outsiders with a different religion. The ancestors of the Parsis stirred a teaspoon of sugar into the milk thus promising that they would get absorbed into his country and sweeten the lives of his subjects just as sugar sweetens a glass of milk. This intermingling nature of the Parsis have persisted generation after generation.

Colonel Barucha in a meeting of the Parsi community says, "We have to be extra wary, or we'll be neither here nor there…We must hunt with the hounds and run with the hare!"(Sidhwa 16). He warns Lahore Parsees to stay at home and out of trouble. He says that once India gets Swaraj there will be a struggle for power among Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs and the Parsis will be mangled if they dare to participate in that struggle for power. Dr Mody argues that neutral nature might invite problems for the Parsis: "Our neighbours will think we are betraying them and siding with the English" (Sidhwa 37). Colonel Barucha roars "Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land! We will cast our lot with whoever rules Lahore!" (Sidhwa 39).

Sidhwa also dwells upon the compassionate nature of the Parsi family. Lenny's mother and grandmother are concerned about the victims of partition. It is grandmother who ultimately recovers Shanta from her abductor and shifts her to a refugee camp at Amritsar. Hamida who replaces Ayah as the caretaker of Lenny is also a victim of

savagery. She was kidnapped by the Sikhs and discarded by her family. So, the novelist attempts to project the kind heartedness of the Parsis and their desire to serve the cause of humanity at large irrespective of their religious identities even during the horrors of partition era.

Khushwant Singh's religious side is evident in a subtle way in his novel *Train to Pakistan*. He attaches great significance to his own Sikh community in the novel. Though he claims to be an agnostic his religious consciousness emerges in his book *Absolute Khushwant: The low-down on Life, Death and Most things In-between* (2010) where he states that "Am I a Sikh first? No, I'm an agnostic. A free thinking sybarite! Unlike religious people, I like the good life. I was born a Sikh, I have a sense of belonging to the community." Khushwant Singh's other important works such as *A History of the Sikhs* (1963) and *My Bleeding Punjab* (1992) also deal with the identity crisis confronting the Sikh community.

In *Train to* Pakistan, Singh attempts to project the Sikh's in a positive way by emphasising their welcoming nature as evident in lines uttered by Meet Singh:

> "This is a gurdwara, the Guru's house- anyone may stay here" (Singh 37).

> "Everyone is welcome to his religion. Here next door is a Muslim mosque. When I pray to my Guru, Uncle Imam Baksh calls to Allah" (Singh 39).

Juggut Singh, the Sikh criminal is in love with Nooran, the daughter of a Muslim weaver who also happens to be the leader of the mosque. In spite of the religious rivalry plaguing the entire nation, Juggut is even prepared to sacrifice his life for the Muslim girl. A group of Sikh fanatics gather near the gurudwara and devise a plan to blow off the train carrying Muslim refugees evacuated from Mano Majra in order to send it as a gift to Pakistan. When Juggut comes to know about the plan he decides to thwart their intention. So, accordingly at the time of implementation of their evil plan, Juggut cuts off the rope tied across the steel pan thereby saving a train full of Muslim passengers including his love Nooran.

Through the character of Juggut, Khushwant Singh highlights the Sikh tradition of valour, heroic action and selflessness. Juggut emerges triumphant over caste and creed

distinctions. His thoughts widen from being a Sikh to a broad minded Indian. In order to rectify the misrepresentation of religious values Singh ends the text with Juggut's life saving spiritual act of sacrifice for the Muslim people of his village. His act is presented as a kind of expiation ritual in order to cleanse the community and nation as a whole of its past sins committed in the name of religion. A critical study of the novel reveals that Khushwant Singh refers to the repeated massacres of Sikhs by the Muslims. He doesnot dwell on the way thousands of Muslims were killed and women raped by the Sikhs. He focuses mainly upon the Muslim atrocities against the Sikhs.

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* portrays how the ideological differences between the mainstream leaders result in the failure of Pakistani nationalism. Two main protagonists in the novel Iskandar Harappa and Raza Hyder represent real political figures who existed in Pakistan's political scenario. Parallels are often drawn between Iskandar Harappa and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the former President of Pakistan and Raza Hyder and Zia-Ul- Haq, the former Army Chief of Pakistan. Iskander Harappa believes in Islamic socialists ideologies of economic and social equality and derivation of power from the public. Raza Hyder on the otherhand represents Islamic Fundamentalism.

The novel depicts how religion is used as an instrument by the leaders to gain power. Raza Hyder being a staunch follower of Islamic Fundamentalism asserts that Iskandar Harappa cannot succeed as the Prime Minister of Pakistan because Harappa and his party named Popular Front have offended God in the name of socialism. Raza Hyder announces: "God and socialism were incompatible, so that the doctrine of Islamic Socialism on which the Popular Front had based its appeal was the worst kind of blasphemy imaginable. Iskander Harappa never believed in God… so he was destroying the country while pretending to hold it together" (Rushdie 247). Raza Hyder projects himself as an ardent follower of Islam in order to gain popularity. He is depicted throughout the novel as a God fearing ruler who conducts himself as a faithful follower of Allah. He even seeks the advice of Maulana Dawood, an Islamic priest to run his Government. However, Raza emerges as a paradoxical character. On one hand, he is depicted as a military dictator and, on the otherhand, a strong religious personality.

The narrator an alter ego of Rushdie intervenes during the course of the novel to express his opinion on the subject of Islamic revival. He says that Islam failed as an effective unifying force in post-Bangladesh Pakistan because people tried to make it "an

almighty big deal" (Rushdie 251) instead of resolving the differences with the Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans and the immigrants. He thinks that so-called 'Islamic fundamentalism' does not spring from the common people, rather it is imposed on them by the autocratic rulers. The failure of Islam as a unifying element actually dismantles the justifying myth of the nation and the ultimate result is disintegration or a new dictatorship. The narrator is optimistic and he suggests that another possible option is the substitution of the old myth with a new one. He recommends three myths for the new nation: liberty, equality and fraternity.

Rushdie in his novel *Shame* provides an objective view of the nation. The year 1971 is important in the history of Pakistan because of the partition of the country on the basis of linguistic nationalism. The East Wing which later came to be known as Bangladesh received India's support during the war. Rushdie being an intellectual and a migrant writer provides an impartial opinion regarding the division of the country. He does not hesitate to express his vexation at outsider's involvement in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. The narrator in the novel says "the reconstitution of the East Wing as an autonomous nation and international basket case, was obviously engineered by outsiders: stone washers and damn-Yankees, yes." (Rushdie 179)

Rushdie even subverts the idea of Pakistan as a land of purity, holiness and God. Even though Pakistan is referred to as a land of God by Iskander Harappa in a UN meeting, Rushdie cites various instances of adultery committed by both men and women that defy the Islamic ideals of faith. For instance, the three sisters Chunee, Munni and Bunny create a mystery about their clandestine affair and the birth of an illegitimate son Omar Khyyaam. Again Raza Hyder's wife Bilquis also indulges in an extramarital affair with a theatre actor Sindbad Mengal. Iskandar Harappa also commits adultery by betraying his wife after coming into contact with Pinkie Aurangzeb. So, Rushdie provides an unbiased perspective of his own religious community.

Attia Hosain also provides a microcosmic view of pre-independent India after the induction of religion into politics. The Indian freedom movement suffered a major setback due to religious chauvinism which entered politics. Congress party claimed itself to be nationalistic and representative of Muslim as well as Hindu interest but in reality the hegemony of Hindu culture prevailed. It failed to conform to the ideology of true secularism despite having eminent Muslim activists in the party. This in turn led to the

rising popularity of the Muslim League as well as the division among the Muslims- the so called secular Muslims and the supporters of the League. The final result is the division of the country on the basis of religion. The novel in fact presents different conflicting ideologies such as Gandhian principle of non-violence and non-cooperation practiced by Asad, fundamentalist ideology followed by Zahid and Nadira, nationalist ideology propagated by characters such as Kemal and Nita Chatterjee and Marxist ideology of classless society propagated by the narrator Laila herself.

Attia Hosain emerges as a secular novelist. She does not hesitate to depict the rivalry existing even among the coreligionists, Shias and Sunnis. She also criticises the Muslim leaders for inciting hatred and violence and running away to Pakistan leaving their coreligionists. Through the narrator Laila, she praises the Hindus who saved Muslim people at their own personal risk. Sita and Ranjit saved Laila and her child during the communal violence. Laila apprises Zahra regarding the humanitarian work carried out by the Hindus to help their Muslim friends. She states "Do you know who saved all the others who had no Sitas and Ranjits? Where were all their leaders? Safely across the border. The only people left to save them were those very Hindus against whom they had ranted" (Hosain 304).

The above discussed novels represent the trauma of partition and sensitise the people of South Asia regarding the historical blunders committed by people due to religious sentiments, the consequences of which are still borne by the people of this region. According to Rousseau this dependence on religion is bad "when it becomes tyrannous and exclusive, and makes a people blood thirsty and intolerant, so that it breeds fire and slaughter, and regards as a sacred act the killing of everyone who does not believe in its gods." (Gupta 117) The undaunted communal frenzy actually subverts the religious sanctity associated with the creation of the utopian Hindu and Muslim states. Communal violence portrayed in these novels arouses our fear and reminds us of D.H. Lawrence's view "insanity specially mob insanity, is the fearful danger that threatens our civilization…" (Lawrence 287). The writers redeem a sense of faith in essential humanity through characters such as Juggut in *Train to Pakistan*, Lenny's mother and grandmother in Ice-Candy Man and Sita, Ranjit, Laila in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. However, the communitarian focus overpowers the humane dimension in these novels.

Linguistic Ideology

Novels such as Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994), Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef* (1994) and Ambalavaner Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* (1997) are saturated with Sri Lankan history. Just like their Indian and Pakistani counterparts religious, linguistic and political differences loom menacingly in Sri Lankan novels dealing with history. The contested space of nation during and after the Civil War in Sri Lanka is explored in these novels. The ethnic conflict and its ramification shaped by the overdetermined forces of the competing claims of nationalism by Sinhalese and Tamils, colonialism, class strife and neoliberal policies find expression in these novels.

The history of Sri Lanka is steeped in legends and myths. So, history and legends intertwine to construct the nationalist narratives of Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese and the Tamil people have two versions of their past and both the groups use "history" to validate their respective claims to be called the "original" Sri Lankan. The Sinhalese Buddhist and their claim of being the chosen guardians of Buddhism and the island nation Sri Lanka is based on Mahavamsa, a chronicle written in Pali around sixth century AD. According to this chronicle, the history of Sri Lanka begins with the arrival of prince Vijaya in the island nation which coincided with the death of Lord Buddha. Vijaya is considered as a founding father of the Sinhalese people. It is often said that Lord Buddha himself spoke about Vijaya's arrival and declared him as the preserver of the Buddhist faith in the island. The Tamils too have their own narrative of being the first settlers in the island. They argue that they also have authentic claim as old as the Sinhalese component. The Tamils emphasise that they have been inhabitants of Sri Lanka for atleast a thousand years. They had their own ruling bodies and system of government. Another extreme version even maintains that the Sinhalese were originally Tamils who converted to Buddhism. Thus the ethnic groups used history as a tool to stir up linguistic nationalism.

According to K.M. De Silva's book *A History of Sri Lanka* (1981), there are three major phases of Sinhala Tamil confrontation: the period between 1951 and 1961 dominated by the language policy of "Sinhala Only" by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and the subsequent rise of Sinhalese nationalism, the second phase dominated by Anti-Tamil pogrom culminating in the demand for a separate Tamil state , Eelam by Tamil United Liberation Front in the year 1977, followed by the most violent phase in 1980's, the Civil

War between Tamil Militants and the government of Sri Lanka. The Tamils began to engage in terrorist acts in the form of assassinations and suicide bombings and the Sinhalese too retaliated with massacres, tortures and persecutions. Politics, religion and language exacerbated communal rivalry among the Sinhalese and Tamils resulting in mass atrocities being committed by both sides. This communal hatred finds expression in the following lines from a poem "To a Student" by Kamala Wijeratne:

> But why can't your irises lock with mine?
>
> Our ears stop all unkind sound?
>
> Let us shake off these brand names
>
> and search for a herb that heals,
>
> And make a cooling poultice to cure mass lunacy.
>
> Leave behind those Ilions and Carthages to antique dealers,
>
> Let us plan fresh methodology to stop other Hiroshimas. (19-25)

Just like their counterparts in India and Pakistan the experiences of Sri Lankan writers have evidently informed their writings. Ambalavaner Sivanandan left Sri Lanka shocked by the violence of 1958 in Colombo only to find himself in the midst of another racial riot known as Notting Hill Gate riots in Britain. A political exile to Britain during the ethnic wars in Sri Lanka, Sivanandan had to face discrimination on the basis of colour in the hostland just as the discrimination he had to face in his homeland owing to his linguistic background. The cumulative effects of this discrimination prompted him to write on behalf of the minority and marginalised section in a particular society. He rose to prominence as the Director of the Institute of Race Relations in London. The Institute is known for its anti-racist, anti-imperialist and left-wing academic journal, *Race and Class*. The black socialist politics in Britain influenced him and their ideologies find manifestation in his novels *When Memory Dies* and *Where the Dance Is* (2000) as well as non-fictional works such as "Communities of Resistance" (1991), "Catching History on the Wing" (2008) etc.

Romesh Gunesekera was born in Colombo to a Sinhalese Christian community in the year 1954. He grew up in Sri Lanka and Philippines and finally moved to London in 1971. His novels such as *Noontide Toll* (2014), *Reef, The Sandglass*(1998)*, Heaven's Edge* (2000) foreground how the topography of Sri Lanka is materially and discursively constituted by ethno nationalism. The quest for the reclamation of lost paradise Sri Lanka is negotiated through the reality of war and conflicts that trouble such a journey. He says in an interview "I've always written out of urgency, because, any minute, everything can fall apart - including life" (Gunesekera). His novels delineate how the notion of national identity and individual and communal relationship to nation are in crisis due to the ethnic conflict based on linguistic nationalism.

Shyam Selvadurai was born in Colombo to a Sinhalese mother and a Tamil father, the members of conflicting ethnic groups. Their marriage was resisted by their family members due to the communal hatred between the two communities. So, it is not surprising that Selvadurai has been particularly interested in the sectarian violence pervading Sri Lankan nation. His family migrated to Canada in 1983 amid the escalating Sinhala- Tamil tension. His novels such as *Funny Boy, The Hungry Ghost* (2013), *Cinnamon Gardens* (1998) are dominated by ethnic conflict that has plagued the country for decades. An important factor that marks his novels is his own sexual orientation. Being gay, he throws light upon the fact how such leanings are little understood and strongly deplored in his country. Selvadurai's writings have been influenced by his own experiences in Sri Lanka and Canada. In an interview he said "What displacement did was give me a chance to see Sri Lanka from a distance. Also, I wouldn't have written or known how to write about being gay in a positive manner if I hadn't lived in Canada. Politically, I was shaped by my time in Canada in the early 1990s—the identity politics movement" (Selvadurai).

Ambalavaner Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies* is a three generational saga of a Sri Lankan family struggling for stable identity and unity amidst colonial and ethnic strife plaguing the nation. In this novel he lays bare the sufferings of both Sinhalese and Tamils in a country broken by colonial occupation and ethnic wars. He brilliantly conjures up the history of the island nation from the days of the hartal in 1920 to independence in 1948 to effects of language policy and rise of communalism in post-independence era. The story is narrated by Rajan, Sahadevan's son who unravels the

story of three lives: of Sahadevan, his father, himself and his foster son Vijay in three books.

Similarly, Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* traces the childhood of an upper-middle class boy Arjie struggling for his queer identity against the backdrop of competing nationalism between Aryan Sinhalese and Dravidian Tamils. The novel portrays how domestic and institutional spaces articulate exclusive linguistic and heteronormative ideals in order to legitimise ethno- religious chauvinism and patriarchal set up in postcolonial Sri Lankan society. Selvadurai engages in a critical analysis of the national identity building process from a position of doubly marginalised individual- his being homosexual and Tamil in a Sinhalese heteronormative national space.

Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef* is an enchanting tale where "nature" is used as a prop to depict the Sri Lankan scenario. It is the story of Sinhalese houseboy Triton's maturation against the backdrop of ethnic violence and social unrest in Sri Lanka. The political situation is always on the periphery of the novel as Triton and his master Mr Salgado, an amateur marine biologist are caught in the war politics of their country and forced to flee to England in 1972. The novel merges the idyllic memory of Sri Lanka and its present degeneration due to the Civil War. Parallels are drawn between socio political disintegration of the country and destruction of its natural ecosystems. According to a Sri Lankan writer Senath Perera, Gunesekera often cast Sri Lanka as a "spoiled paradise" and paints it with a gaze that is Orientalist by nature (Tantrigoda 75).

In the novel, Mr. Salgado refers to the image of the disappearing coral reef to warn people of the fragility of the island: "You see, this polyp is really very delicate. It has survived eons, but even a small change in the immediate environment – even a su if you pee on the reef – could kill it. Then the whole thing will go. And if the structure is destroyed, the sea will rush in. The sand will go. The beach will disappear" (Gunesekera 48). The destruction of the underwater ecosystem that is the coral reef by human activities such as bombing, mining and netting can be compared to the disruption of the pluralistic Sri Lankan society by fratricidal violence in the form of Sinhalese Tamil civil war. The deteriorating state of the coral reef acts as a symbol of worsening social ties in Sri Lanka. Mr Salgado warns his friends that if the reef keeps on vanishing the entire structure will be engulfed by the sea. Thus if the reef is a metaphor for the island then the

sea represents the violence unleashed by human beings in the name of religion and language.

Sivanandan in his novel *When Memory Dies* observes how Sri Lanka's mixed geographies and communal harmony are polarised by the riots. The South which is known for its hybridity becomes a terrain of violence after the passing of the Sinhala-Only Act. The chaos created by the army of Sinhala Patriots in Polannaruwa and Anuradhapura is described by a character called Fonny:

> Already Tamil shops in Main Street had been burnt and looted and a Tamil beggar stoned to death…They went to the government sugarcane farm two nights ago and drove the Tamil coolies out of the line rooms into the cane fields. And then … they set fire to the cane…and when they ran out, children, mothers with babies… they waited on the other side …like a game and hacked them to death. (Sivanandan 226)

The violence committed by the Sinhalese in the name of language and religion is reflected in the rape and death of Rajan's wife, Lali. Rajan, Lali and their son Vijay are travelling to Polannaruwa when they are attacked by a group of Sinhalese goons. One of them asks Rajan whether he is Buddhist by religion. Rajan replies in affirmative in fear of violent attack and then he is asked to recite the Buddhist "gatha". Rajan fails to recollect the hymn word by word and so they kick him. One of them shouts: "Tried to cheat us, did you, you son of a whore"…We will teach you a damn good lesson. Cheat us, hah, you Tamil bastard? We will show you what we do to Tamil cunts" (Sivanandan 234). Rajan loses his consciousness and they rape Lali. The next day Lali dies in a hospital and they even do not allow Rajan to see her mutilated body.

In the novel *Funny Boy*, the growing hostility and unrest due to linguistic sentiments are foregrounded in the chapter titled "Radha Aunty". After her arrival at Colombo, Radha Aunty, a Tamil lady falls in love with Anil Jayasinghe, a Sinhalese man whom she meets on the rehearsals of a play *The King and I*. Her love for a Sinhalese man is strictly prohibited by her family members. Arjie's grandmother Ammachi cannot accept Anil because she sees him just as "Sinhalese", the chief opponents of Tamils. She cries out to Appachi "What did I tell you? She was getting a lift from a Sinhalese. Only a Sinhalese would be impertinent enough to offer an unmarried girl a lift." (Selvadurai 58)

Ammachi even visits Anil's home to warn him. Later Radha Aunty goes to seek forgiveness for her mother's act. Anil's father too retorts back to Radha Aunty, "We are from a good family as well. High-country Sinhalese, we are. Last thing we also want is for our son to marry some non- Sinhalese… Our family name has been insulted. I shall not take this lying down. Be careful. We Sinhalese are losing patience with you Tamils and your arrogance" (Selvadurai 66).

Ammachi sends Radha Aunty to Jaffna to keep her away from Anil. Ammachi's aversion to any love relationship between Sinhalese and Tamils is shaped by her personal experience of the loss of her father during the escalating ethnic riot in 1958 over the Sinhala Only language policy. Janaki's description of the mutilated body of Ammachi's father shocks Radha Aunty "It was as if someone had taken the lid of a tin can and cut pieces out of him" (Selvadurai 59). Arjie is also introduced to the complex issue of race and communal rivalry through the experience of Radha Aunty. Arjie approaches his father to acquaint him with the communal strife. Arjie's father explains him how the Sinhaese wanted to make Sinhala the only national language and the Tamils opposed it. There was a riot and many Tamils were killed. Ammachi's father was also one such victim. So, Ammachi often talks about the Tamil Tigers in Jaffna and their demand for a separate Tamil country call Eelam. She says that she would be the first to go and live in it.

The ethno linguistically segregated Sinhala and Tamil medium schools assures the perpetuation of differences even among the school children. Arjie's parents bitterly quarrel with each other when his father puts him in a Sinhalese class. His father assures them that "Sinhalese was the real language of the future" (Selvadurai 61). Arjie notices the bitter atmosphere in school playground too. When there is a cricket match between Sinhalese and Tamil classes the atmosphere is very charged. There is none of the usual joking and the customary shaking of hands or patting each other on the backs. Arjie is prohibited to enter the territory of a Sihalese classroom. Salgado, a Sinhalese classmate questions him "How come you're in a Sinhala class? We don't want you here… Go to the Tamil class." (Selvadurai 215) The conflict between supporters of the principal of Queen Victoria Academy and Mr Lokubandara is also based on language. Black Tie, although a Buddhist wants the school to be for all races and religions. On the contrary

Lokubandara wants to turn it into an exclusively Sinhalese school. These instances show that Anti- Tamil pogrom has entered in the field of education too.

The hegemonic ethno nationalist narrative of the Sinhalese school is evident from their history books described in *When Memory Dies*. Vijay reads out a history book recommended for junior school: "The history of Lanka is the history of the Sinhala race. The land nourishes the Race, the Race civilizes the Land. Buddhism is the golden thread running through the history of the Race and the Land. Learn to honour the Land, the Race and the Faith" (Sivanandan 308). This type of description interlocks the nation with the race and in the process location, race and religion are construed as a cohesive elements in the formation of national identity.

Sivanandan however critiques the nationalist agenda of esssentialising identities by refracting them through the memories of ethnic minorities. He shows the malleability of the categories of religion and language in the form of familial relationship fostered by Sinhalese and Tamils in the face of the operations of sovereign powers. Rajan's accommodative nature is evident when he says "Perhaps space was a relationship: we had so much room because we had room for each other, and a way of belonging, perhaps, to ourselves and to others." (Sivanandan 138). Close friendship between Saha and Tissa and inter marriages between Rajan and Lali, Vijay and Meena against the backdrop of communal violence challenge linguistic chauvinism. Tissa's praising of Jaffna fellows as kind and generous, Sahadevan's stay with Tissa's uncle and aunt, the Wijepalas and their mutual acculturation of each other's food and dress habits highlight the bond shared by Sinhalese and Tamils amidst brewing ethnic conflict. Kotahena, a suburb part of Colombo with hybrid population of Hindus, Catholics, Buddhists and Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese and Malays and Burghers also contests the homogeneity of the Sri Lankan population.

Selvadurai, on the contrary, portrays the failure of Radha Aunty's clandestine relationship with Anil after the horrifying experience of being attacked on her train journey back from Jaffna. Mr Rasiah, a family friend of Appachi somehow manages to save her from the assault. The violence engendered by the Sinhalese has immediate repercussions on her family. They promptly decide to arrange Radha Aunty's marriage to a Tamil man, Rajan Nagendra. Arjie also comes to know about his Amma's affair with Daryl Uncle, a Sri Lankan descendant of the Burghers which did not succeed due to their

racial differences. Amma and Radha Aunty's love for men do not match the racial ideals of their communities. So, the nationalist paradigm does not allow their interracial affairs to flourish.

Arjie's father embraces his role as a neoliberal businessman by taking up the tourism business. He tries to insulate his family from the ethnic violence by maintaining good relationship with his Sinhalese partners. He reluctantly employs his friend's son Jegan in his business because of the young man's earlier ties to LTTE. When Jegan rebukes a staff for a legitimate error, Arjie's father sides with the staff reasoning that "As Tamils we must tread carefully, Jegan has to learn that. Even I have to be circumspect when I'm talking to the staff. If I was a Sinhalese, like Sena, I could say and do whatever I liked" (Sivanandan 190). The Sinhalese Tamil bitterness is apparent in the way Jegan's room is vandalised after this incident by one of the hotel employees. The religious differences pervade in the economic sector too.

Sivanandan's depicts the miserable plight of the Tamils and plantation labourers in the form of refugee camp known as Shantiyam. The camp remains "both inside and outside the nation: it is excluded from and at the same time included in the space of the national by its inscription within the very juridical and political structures that decree its exclusion" (Perara 39). Characters such as Sanji and Meena seek refuge in the camp in order to escape from the Sinhalese attack. The refugees live in a "sort of no-man's-land between the Tamils and the Sinhalese" (Sivanandan 355). The refugees exist in a kind of liminal zone but even then they are prone to Sinhalese attack. Sanji describes how a group of thugs in police uniform and army uniform came and "burnt them down and beat them down and took away Dr Raja, their friend, their hope"(Sivanandan 356) . Though the refugees are in a state of exclusion from the nation they are still vulnerable to attacks by the dominant community.

The disenfranchisement of the Tamils, their discrimination in classrooms, employment sectors, hospitals, their misrepresentation and erasure from history books and other such factors propelled Tamil militants to take up arms against the Sinhala majoritarian government and demand a separate state in the North known as Eelam for the Tamils. The territorial reconfiguration along linguistic and racial lines distorted the vaunted ideal of nationhood. One of the root causes of the failure of Tamil nationalism might be their demand for a separate homogeneous territory rather than re-configuring

the discourse of nation as a more inclusive terrain accommodating diverse faiths and promoting the values of justice, liberty and equality for all communities.

Benedict Anderson in his book *The Spectres of Comparisons* distinguishes between nationalism and the politics of ethnicity. According to him the former is based on unbound seriality and is universal in nature and the latter is based on bound seriality of governmentality in the form of modern census and electoral systems. Unbound serialities such as nation, citizens, and bureaucrats are imagined by means of print capitalism such as newspapers and novels. They provide opportunities for the individual to imagine themselves as a member of the society without face to face interaction. Bound serialities, Anderson suggests are constricting and produce the tool of ethnic politics. He believes that politics of nationalism and ethnicity arise on different sites and mobilise on different sentiments and fight for different causes (Chatterjee 130).

The point of departure from Benedict Anderson is that a close study of South Asian historical novels reveals that unbound seriality involving the ideas of nation and nationalism are largely influenced by bound seriality which classifies people on the basis of their religious and linguistic affiliation also. The historical novels portray how nationalism became contaminated by ethnic politics. So, to compartmentalise nationalism and ethnic politics as different categories especially in the context of South Asia will be misleading.

Anti- British Ideology

As far as their attitude towards the colonisers is concerned, Khushwant Singh in his novel *Train to Pakistan* does not say much about the controversial role of British and their failure to keep intact the peace and harmony between the major communities. Iqbal, an activist, who is sent by the Communist People's League in India to avert sectarian conflict, urges Meet Singh, the village leader to feel solidarity with the Indian National Army against England. But Meet Singh as well as the villagers consider themselves as loyal subjects of the Crown. They feel that they were better off under the British so they valorise British and their education system.

Sidhwa in his novel *Ice Candy Man* blames the British for sowing the seeds of hatred among different communities. She blames the Radcliff Commission for dividing

the Indian cities like a pack of cards: “Lahore is dealt to Pakistan, Amritsar to India, Sialkot to Pakistan. Pathankot to India” (Sidhwa 140). The arbitrary act of wrongly giving some cities to India might have far reaching consequences. Sidhwa accuses the British of siding with the Hindus and the Congress. The narrator states: “For now the tide is turned- and the Hindus are being favored over the Muslims by the remnants of the Raj. Now that its objective to divide India is achieved, the British favour Nehru over Jinnah. Nehru is Kashmiri; they grant him Kashmir” (Sidhwa 159). The British bequeaths a Muslim state to the Hindus without paying attention to the majority population inhabiting the region. The consequence of the arbitrary division is still borne by the subcontinent in the form of subsequent wars being fought between India and Pakistan involving Kashmir even in the recent times.

Attia Hosain in her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* offers an impartial view of the entire situation. She blames the British game of divide and rule policy for the unfortunate partition scenario in the subcontinent. When there is a verbal spat between Zahid and Zahra regarding Shias and Sunnis, Asad makes it explicitly clear that the British had taught them the lesson “Hate each other- love us” (Hosain 56). The British endeavoured to spread the idea that their presence is vital for improving the life of people in the subcontinent. Again when Zahid fears that there might be a riot during Muharram, Asad replies: “Maybe because there haven’t been any for too long, not even Hindu-Muslim ones. Something must be done to prove that the British are here to enforce law and order, and stop killing each other” (Hosain 56).

Hosain also describes the racial discrimination perpetuated by some of the Anglo Indian characters such as Sylvia Tucker, Mrs Martin, Joan Davis and others. They consider themselves to be the light givers to the darkest corner of the land. When Sita’s Uncle is arrested during the suppression of a local rebellion against the British, Sylvia keeps humming “Rule Britannia”. In fact she scolds her sister Myra for staying with the non-whites. She says “Can’t you keep away from wogs?” (Hosain 53). Joan Davis, Laila’s friend considers the Indians as a race apart. She says that the Anglo Indians have more in common with the English than with the Indians. So, they tried to maintain an air of superiority over the Indians.

In the introduction to the novel *Twilight in Delhi* (1940), Ahmed Ali gives vent to his anti-imperialist feelings. He launches a scathing attack upon the colonisers who have

tarnished the rich cultural heritage of old Mughal city Delhi. He mentions different injustices committed by the Englishman in the forms of Anglicisation, manipulation of history, economic exploitation, molestation etc. Ahmed Ali quotes a poem by Bahadur Shah in the introduction to explicate the upheaval caused by the British rule:

Ravished were the people of Hind

So unenviable their fate.

Whoever the ruler of the day saw fair

And free was put to sword. (xv)

Mir Nihal, the embodiment of the old Muslim culture bemoans the fate of Delhi under the yoke of a new regime of the Britishers. He finds it difficult to accept the hybrid culture of the new generation under the influence of Western culture. He doesn't like the outsiders redefining the practices of everyday life. He has a clash with his son Asghar for his adoption of Western costumes. Mir Nihal's hatred for foreign culture emerges in the lines "You are again wearing the dirty English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis in my house. Throw them away..." (Ali 13). Mir Nihal believes that they have lost their land, rich Urdu language and culture under Western influence. So, he doesn't allow Asghar to seek admission in Aligarh Muslim University. He feels that "It is all the evil doing of the Farangis who want to make Christians and atheists of all of us" (Ali 50).

While waiting to watch the procession organised for the coronation of King George V on the 7th of December, 1911, Mir Nihal recalls the scenes of carnage that took place before the Jama Masjid on the fourteenth day of September, 1857. Thousands of Mussalmans gathered in the mosque on that Friday to say their prayers. They came to know of Sir Thomas Metcalf and his armies plan to demolish the Jama Masjid which represented the "splendour of once mighty Hindustan" (Ali 145). The Mussalmans decided to fight in unison against the ravishers and they made up their mind to embrace death in the cause of the Motherland. They fought with patriotic zeal but the lack of arms and ammunitions resulted in their defeat. The mass atrocities committed by Metcalf's men emerge in the lines:

> In front stood Metcalf with his men, and all around lay the corpses of the dead. Already the vultures had settled to devour the carrion; and the dogs were tearing the flesh of the patriots who lay unburied and unmourned. As Metcalf saw the people with the swords in their hands, he open fired. Hundreds fell down dead on the steps of the mosque and inside, coloring the stones deeper red with their blood. (Ali 146)

Ahmed Ali juxtaposes Mir Nihal's feelings of grief and helplessness for the patriots with his contempt for the "chickenhearted" Indian Nawabs and kings and even the new generation who easily accept the authority of the Englishman and their Western ways of life. The Delhi Durbar of 1911 commemorated the dawn of British hegemony over the Mughal city. The preparations for the Coronation of George V as king-emperor of India "made Delhi look more like an exhibition" (Ali 135). The Durbar was initially a ritual practiced by the Mughal rulers but the colonial powers appropriated this indigenous idea to display their power openly and to generate "spectatorial gaze" (Anjaria 195) among the colonial subjects. According to a critic the staging of power helped in "demonstrating the permanence and grandeur of empire far more effectively than other, textual, forms of proclamation" (Anjaria 195).

The miserable destiny of Bahadur Shah, the Mughal Emperor and his progenies in the aftermath of colonisation is also portrayed in the novel. The Firangis had imprisoned Bahadur Shah and banished him and killed his sons. They had ruthlessly looted Delhi at the time of the Mutiny, marginalised the Mussalmans and turned them out of the city: "the city was dyed red with the blood of princes and nobles, poor and rich alike who had happened to be Mussalmans…" (Ali 138). The descendants of the dethroned king suffered from extreme poverty and starvation. Some of them turned into beggars and some drove bullock carts for their daily bread. Many princesses married into lower classes or served as cooks and maids. The dismantling of social ladder further intensified Mir Nihal's sadness and rendered him a helpless spectator to the decline of royal class.

A critical analysis of the novel reveals that Ali's main concern is to present an authentic picture of traditional Muslim life and culture. He mainly emphasises on the patriotic feelings of the Muslims towards their Motherland. One of the drawbacks is that he identifies Muslim people alone with the city and even amongst the Muslim people he

focuses only upon the Saiyyed class. Though he mentions about the Non-Cooperation Movement and the common fight of Hindus and Muslims in driving away the colonisers, he as such does not give any voice to Hindu population. In a way he tries to project the Muslim culture as the homogeneous culture of Mughal India. He engages in the practice of essentialising identities in order to project a united nation. Probably his sentimental attachment towards his community colours his perception in the novel. Ahmed Ali's premonition of his new identity after the partition of the country into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan might have propelled him to shift his allegiance towards the Muslim community.

Sivanandan in his novel *When Memory Dies* throws light upon colonial misrule which had sown the seeds of communal rifts in Sri Lanka and distorted the internal cohesion of the nation. The period of colonisation in Sri Lanka, 1796-1948, was pivotal in determining the future course of progress in Sri Lanka. During the colonial era the ethnic identities became solidified in order to serve the British interests. Uncle Para's expresses his resentment against the deceitful motives of the colonisers. He says:

"That is the legacy the British left us, he said: divide and rule, only this time Banda will do it democratically with the vote" (Sivanandan 222).

"the British took away their past, the Sinhalese took away their future"(Sivanandan 334).

Another character Rajan registers his accusation against Portuguese of obliterating the history of Sri Lanka: "But there is no story to tell, no one story anyway, not since that day in 1505 when the fidalgo Don Laurenco de Almeida…landed on our shores and broke us from our history…And no story of the country- or, if of the country not our story but theirs, the parangis"(Sivanandan 5).

The rewriting of spatial relation by colonial occupation is also portrayed in the novel. The sense of community and order among the traditional farmers in the Northern Sri Lanka was interrupted by the changes brought about by the British in the form of capitalism. The British propelled them into modernity by introducing railway lines, materialistic culture and flooding the markets with imported items. They shifted the economy from self-sufficient agrarian mode to capitalist modes of production resulting in the displacement and dispossession of farmers. Their hasty policies disturbed the

natural progression of the North and turned the fertile, lush and prosperous North into a barren and bleak land. The changed landscape of once vibrant Sandilipay indicates the transformation: “there were deep ruts in the lanes now and gaping holes in the fences, through which you spied a deserted house, its mud walls crumbled into ant-heaps to reveal a broken chair or table” (Sivanandan 213). The unnecessary poverty and scarcity created by the British transformed the North into an inhospitable terrain.

The Southern region of Sri Lanka occupied by the Sinhalese incorporated the transformations organically and so they continued to flourish. The spatial reconstruction of the North as an infertile, barren land by the British actually resulted in polarisation of the North and South. The Sinhala majoritarian Government too stalled any kind of socio economic progress in Tamil areas. This created the ground for the emergence of Tamil Tigers Movement in the North and reconstitution of the North as a dangerous territory. The separatist tendency initiated as a result of shift in economic system in North can be compared to Gellner’s idea of nationalism where he states that a set of structural shifts in the social transition from agrarian-based production to industrialism evokes nationalism.

In *Funny Boy*, Selvadurai attempts to show how the British modeled Sri Lankan public school projects itself as an emblem of ideal sexual and educational policy. In the chapter titled “The Best School of All” Arjie’s father insists on getting him admitted to Queen Victoria Academy in order to subvert his feminine traits and cure him of this so called perceived “funniness” by the heteronormative society. Queen Victoria Academy is considered as a nexus of character building by Arjie’s father. He says “The Academy will force you to become a man” (Selvadurai 210). His brother Diggy also warns him, “Once you come to The Queen Victoria Academy you are a man. Either you take it like a man or the other boys will look down on you.” (Selvadurai 211). Probably the adjective “funny” is used by the novelist to show how postcolonial society perpetuates the language of colonial “Othering”. By regarding him as “funny”, his family wants to impose compulsory heterosexuality in him.

In the novel, The Queen Victoria Academy with its Sinhalese and Tamils supporters and its imposition of nationalist masculinity stands as a microcosm of the heteronormative ethnocentric postcolonial Sri Lankan society. As noted by Tariq Jazeel:

> The Academy, like all schools, certifies systems and structures of culture through education. Here, the cultivation of raciological [sic] thinking is underpinned by manly masculinities, thus producing the exclusionary social topographies of not only school, but by extension the nation. Victoria Academy is both a microcosm of what is happening in Sri Lanka at this time (the late 1970s, early 1980s), and an agent of these processes. (Gairola 482)

Black Tie, a colonial subject, tries to win over the cabinet minister with a speech based on Newbolt's poetry. Arjie is asked by Black Tie to recite two British poems namely "The Best School of All" and "Vitae Lampada" on Awards day in order to prevent the Academy from becoming a Sinhalese school under the control of pro-Sinhala Vice Principal Lokubandara. Arjie undermines the two representative poems of British by jumbling up the lines and using lines of one poem to subvert another. So, Arjie's act disrupts the Principal Black Tie's upholding of colonial legacy of education. Arjie also avenges Black Tie's humiliation of his homosexual partner Shehan as an "ills and burdens" (Selvadurai 277) student.

Arjie is involuntarily dragged into a conflict between an inclusive but colonial school policy propagated by the Principal Black Tie and an exclusive Sinhala nationalistic policy propagated by the Vice Principal Lokubandara. Arjie being an ethnic minority member should have supported Black Tie's inclusive policy. Instead he confronts the authoritative colonial system of values perpetuated by British public school. Through Arjie's act Selvadurai challenges the gender ideals and values promoted by colonial pedagogy and lend support to a queer homosexual narrative.

Sivanandan in *When Memory Dies* registers his protest against colonialism by portraying its negative impact upon the history, culture, politics and economy of the country. Aunt Prema reveals to Sahadevan how the new governor was setting the working class against each other, Tamils against Sinhalese and Sinhalese against Tamils. The Tamil coolies from India were brought by the colonisers to work in the plantation estates of the South as cheap government workers. The novelist also shows how British introduced Sahadevan the simple villager to a materialistic extravagant city life and drinking culture thus bringing forth the nations spiritual death. Dhana, the Civics teacher and a communist observes the changing nature of the people brought about by the so called development agendas of the colonisers. He states:

> Everybody was a businessman now, or "into commerce", opened up by World Bank loans, IMF imports, tourism- a tout at least or a pimp or a procurer, self-employed, all right, but also self-seeking, parasitic, greedy…The get and spend culture was spreading like an oil slick to every town and village.(Sivanandan 310,311).

Sivanandan depicts how efforts made by the British to impose the English language among the natives actually led to the growth of radical nationalism. The Christian Missionaries indulged in proselytism in order to spread Christianity in Sri Lanka. The British used censuses to ease the functioning of their administration. The censuses emerged as the catalyst to further the process of division of the inhabitants because the categorisations imposed on them were strictly based on religion, class and caste. The Tamil immigrants from India and middle class Tamils in Sri Lanka took up English as a medium of instruction in order to gain the favour of colonial masters. The British started to favour the Tamils in civil service jobs and thus the Tamils started to develop an air of supremacy over the Sinhalese. The Tamils emerged as the benefactor of colonial economy. These steps taken by the British actually fuelled the rivalry between the deprived Sinhalese and the privileged middle class Tamils. Thus the colonisers attempt to create a homogeneous national space transformed Sri Lanka into an ethnic war zone.

Class Ideology

The Progressive Writers Association played a pivotal role in exposing class ideology. *Angare* a collection of ten short stories by Sajjad Zahir, Rashid Jahan, Ahmed Ali and Mahmuduzzafar published in 1932 laid the foundation for the establishment of the Progressive Writers Association, a significant literary movement of the twentieth century. According to Aziz Ahmed this book marks the declaration of war by the middle class youth against the restrictive social, political and religious institutions. These writers aimed at an unvarnished portrayal of human society. They protested against the economic and social inequalities and religious superstitions. The Progressive Writers Association formed in the 1930's lent impetus to the development of European Marxist ideology in India. This group which included writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Ahmed Ali, Premchand and others came to be known as left-wing activists. They brought to India's national consciousness issues of class struggle and social justice informed by

Marxist ideology. They drew attention to class and gender oppressions prevalent in India through their writings.

Novels such as Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Gunesekera's *Reef*, Sivanandan's *When Memory Dies*, and Hamid's *Moth Smoke* reveal the convoluted politics of class that is endemic to postcolonial nation. Attia Hosain's political background provided her the opportunity to come into terms with various nationalist movements. She herself claims in the introduction to the novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* that she was greatly influenced in the 1930's by left wing communists and Congress socialists "I was at the first Progressive Writers' Conference and could be called a "fellow traveller" at the time." Her own ideal of womanhood Sarojini Naidu the poet/politician was also a member of the Association. Attia had closely worked with the Association and so their ideologies resonate in her work.

In the novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* she focuses upon her own feudal landowning Taluqdar class. She rebels against the atrocities perpetuated by the land owning class against the proletariat through her protagonist Laila, a member of the feudal class. Laila believes that it is the feudal class which raised the demand for a separate nation for Muslims. But this class was itself divided into two groups – some of them supporting partition and some against it. This resulted in the splitting of their families too with some of them choosing Pakistan as a safe haven for Muslims while the rest staying back in India, their place of birth.

In the novel Hosain portrays elaborately the glories of the feudal Talqudar class as well as their frailties. The Taluqdars were zamindars with large land holdings and special rights and privileges. They had a privilege of audience with the British king also. They were proud of their own status. Uncle Hamid states, "I am a part of feudalism, and proud to be. I shall fight for it. It is my heritage..." (Hosain 234). The novelist depicts the hypocrisy of the feudal class too. The speech made by one of the members of the aristocracy during the visit of the Viceroy also highlights the superiority of the land owning class. He says "We, the Taluqdars of Oudh are a special class with special privileges…" (Hosain 152) and then he stumbles over the words prosperity and property: "We are aware that the property-er-prosperity of our tenants is our proper- prosperity," (Hosain 152).

Attia's close proximity to Marxism is evident from the way she provides a widely extensive feudal society with different classes of people such as the servants, gardeners, sweepers, cleaners, washermen, hookah bearers, etc. Several instances in the novel prove her sympathy for the marginalised class. Laila shares close relationship not with her upper class friends but with female servants, Nandi and Saliman. When Uncle Hamid beats Nandi and calls her "a slut, a wanton and a liar" (Hosain 28) for she is found in the garage with a cleaner, Laila flies to her rescue. When Zahra questions her if she is not ashamed of taking Nandi's side against her Uncle, Laila replies "Yes I am. I'm ashamed to call him uncle. I'm ashamed that you have no pity because Nandi is a servant girl." (Hosain 29). Laila also reproaches Zahra for her illtreatment of the sweeper woman. Zahra however retorts back "She's used to it. You just raise them an inch off the ground and they'll be making a foolstool of your head."(Hosain 45). Zahra's attitude reflects the ingrained superiority of the feudal class.

Attia Hosain shows the gap between the feudal class and their tenants using contrasting images. For instance, during the festival of Muharram, Ashiana, that is Laila's house is decorated and different dopattas are dyed in vibrant colours crushed from special flowers. On the contrary, the sweeper woman's children are depicted as naked and thin-limbed. These images symbolise the colourful and splendid life of the feudal class and impoverishment of the poorer section. In another instance the pomp and glory of Raja of Bhimnagar is presented along with the pitiable condition of his coolies to portray the insensitivity of feudal lords towards their subjects who toil day and night for their masters. The feudal class considers it as their right to oppress the lower class and regards it as a matter of principle.

When Saleem explains to Uncle Hamid that what they are facing is the struggle for power by the bourgeoisie he refuses to agree with him. He says that the Taluqdars have ancient rights and privileges of being rulers. Their rights do not conflict with the rights of common man. They have always been the guardian of the rights of common man. Uncle Hamid proudly asserts the donations made by them for the development of the city's educational institutions, gardens, bridges etc. Aunt Saira too protests "They cannot take what belongs to us. The land is ours" (Hosain 232).

Attia Hosain portrays the decline of feudal class through the changes that have taken place in Ashiana, the symbol of feudalism as well as Lucknow as a whole after the

partition set in. Laila the narrator visits her ancestral town after fourteen years. She finds that the feudal families are faced with the necessity of changing their habits of mind and their lavish way of life. The constitutional abolishment of feudalism has affected their socio economic status. It has also affected the maintenance of palaces, great houses and shops. The brothels and law-courts lost their best customers. This was the end of the royal era. Ashiana was also facing its worst time. The well preserved palace was occupied by refugees from West Pakistan. The garages and stables were empty. Laila shivered as she drove through the gates of Ashiana: "The marble slab, on which the neat black letters of my uncle's name were fading, was half-hidden by a wooden board…On both gateposts hung other boards on which large black letters called attention to the qualifications of a doctor, a dentist, a lawyer with names that originated from the far north that was no longer their homeland" (Hosain 271).

Thus Ashiana was a living symbol of the fading glory of the feudal system. Amid this decadence the working class were anticipating positive changes and prosperity. Agarwal's business prospered. He changed the configuration of the orchards and gardens of the Raja of Bhimnagar into sheds and godowns for a small factory. The melodious sounds of birds and scent of flowers and fruits were replaced by sounds of metal and shouts of workmen. The Agarwals took advantage of the situation by constructing cheap multi storeyed houses for the refugees. This in turn generated a lot of employment opportunities in the immediate vicinity. Nandi's husband and father prospered with the increasing demand for washermen, sweepers and bearers. Nandi's dream of her son occupying a position of power in a big office reflects the dream of the proletariat to rise up the social ladder in order to avoid marginalisation by the upper stratum of the society. She said "I will not let my son become like my people, washing the dirty clothes of others, standing in the waters of ponds and rivers, winter and summer. I shall send him to school, and one day, who knows, he may become a *babu* in a big office" (Hosain 292).

In the novel *Twilight in Delhi*, Mir Nihal's strong negation of Asghar's marriage with Bilqeece sheds light upon the class system prevalent in traditional Indian Muslim families during the Mughal era. Mir Nihal's family members take pride in their royal blood. They are Saiyyeds, direct descendants of Prophet Mohammad whereas Bilqeece comes from a family that has the blood of a prostitute or maidservant in it. When Begam Waheed pleads for her brother's choice of life partner, Begum Nihal retorts, "Money is

not everything. It's blood that matters. Their blood and ours can never mix well. The good-blooded never fail, but the low-blooded are faithless…They are Mughals, and we are Saiyyeds…In Mirzaji's wife there is the blood of a maidservant" (Ali 58, 59). Again when Begum Nihal musters courage and brings up the matter before her husband, Mir Nihal bursts out in temper "Have you gone made along with him? How can my son marry Mirza Shahbaz Beg's daughter? You don't want to bring a low-born into the family. There are such things as family honor and name. I won't have the marriage" (Ali 68).

However a comparative study of Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* reveals that Ali in spite of being counted among the pioneers of the semi-political and pseudo-literary Progressive Writers Movement fails to project extensively the class disparity prevalent in pre-partitioned Old Delhi. He neither shows his close proximity with lower class characters nor does he offer radical views on the class issue.

Mohsin Hamid's debut novel *Moth Smoke* (2000) also captures the vast economic gulf between the upper class and the lower class in modern day Pakistan. The novel departs from the cliché representation of orthodox Islamic city Lahore. Hamid engages in a candid portrayal of social evils such as class stratification, nuclear tests, drug abuse, smuggling and adultery prevalent in Pakistan. In an interview to the newspaper *Dawn*, Mohsin Hamid regards this novel as a very narrow social slice of the city. He says "It was a very specific reaction to Gen Zia Ul Haq's Pakistan that I grew up in; these things were not spoken about, but they were happening and I wanted to explore this." Probably Mohsin Hamid's diasporic identity provides him the vantage position to revolutionise Pakistani Anglophone Literature with new contents and include it within the nodes of globalisation and economic changes.

The theme of class difference is overtly explored in the chapter titled "What lovely weather we're having (or the importance of air-conditioning)". In this chapter Hamid portrays the economic gap between the elites and the masses in the form of paper presented by Professor Julius Superb at the Provincial Seminar on Social Class in Pakistan. His speech brings forth the class disparity prevalent in Pakistan:

> There are two social classes in Pakistan … The first group, large and sweaty, contains those referred to as the masses. The second group is much smaller, but its members exercise vastly greater control over their immediate environment and are collectively termed the elite. The distinction between the members of these two groups is made on the basis of control of an important resource: air-conditioning. You see, the elite have managed to re-create for themselves the living standards of say, Sweden, without leaving the dusty plains of the subcontinent. They are a mixed lot – Punjabis and Pathans, Sindhis and Baluchis, smugglers, mullahs, soldiers, industrialists – united by their residence in an artificially cooled world. They wake up in air-conditioned houses, drive air-conditioned cars to air-conditioned offices, grab lunch in air-conditioned restaurants (rights of admission reserved), and at the end of the day go home to their air-conditioned lounges to relax in front of wide-screen TVs. (Hamid 103)

The clear disparity between the upper class and the middle class is portrayed through the characters of Ozi and Daru. Ozi, the son of a retired Foreign Secretary Khurram Singh enjoys a privileged position because of his father's connections. When Daru introduces Ozi as the son of a corrupt father, Ozi boasts of his own position. He says,"I'm wealthy, well connected, successful. My father's an important person. In all likelihood, I'll be an important person. Lahore's a tough place if you're not an important person. Some say my dad's corrupt and I'm his money launderer. Well its true enough…" (Hamid 184). Ozi avails high quality education in United States whereas Daru's status compels him to be content with poor quality education inspite of scoring better marks than Ozi. Daru's PhD topic, centering on microcredit and small loans to lower income groups also revolves round the question of class equation.

The material conditions of Ozi induce class consciousness in Daru. Ozi has a Mitsubishi Pajero, a well-paid job, a foreign degree, a wealthy father and a beautiful wife, Mumtaz. Daru realises that it is the class that stands as a hurdle between his friend Ozi and himself. He resorts to illegal means of drug abuse and crime to fight against the social hierarchy. Daru's psychological inferiority resulting from Ozi's privileged life conforms to Marx's idea that "It is not the consciousness of the men that determines their existence but, on contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness." (Marx 69).

The novel delineates how the rich people use their material conditions to supplement their social status. For instance, in the beginning of the novel Daru is fired from his bank job owing to a complaint lodged by a rich client Malik Jiwan, a landlord and a politician. Without investigating the matter the branch manager dismisses Daru from service in order to please his black moneyed client. Similarly Ozi's Pajero gives him the license to drive rashly disobeying the traffic rules. He justifies his careless driving by saying "There are rules, you know. And the first is, bigger cars have the right of way." (Hamid 25) His unsympathetic attitude towards the poor people is reflected in the incident where he crushes a teenage boy to death while driving his Pajero. Daru is a witness to this incident. When Daru raises his concern for the boy, Ozi replies back "We'll take care of his family. I'll make sure they're compensated" (Hamid 97). Instead of expressing remorse and guilt he feels that money can compensate the death of a poor boy. Later Ozi bribes the police department and implicates Daru in the crime of killing the innocent teenage boy. These instances reflect how the rich people are above law and justice in Pakistan.

The middle class also indulges in exploitation of the lower class in order to compensate for the humiliation suffered by them in the hands of the upper class. Daru's treatment of his servant Manucchi reflects the same. For instance, though Manucchi is made to work like a slave labour day in and day out, his demand of his pending salary of several months infuriates Daru. He beats him terribly and says "Servants have to be kept in line" (Hamid 161). In another episode too Manucchi's advice to Daru not to sell "charas" invites his master's rage. Daru retorts, "This will not happen. I won't permit it. My servant will not tell me what to do" (Hamid 178).

Another victim of socio economic exploitation by the wealthy class is Dilaram, who runs a brothel house in Heera Mandi in Lahore. She explains to Mumtaz how she landed into the job of a prostitute. During her adolescent stage the landlord of her area compelled her to visit his house and when she went there, he raped her. The helpless plight of Dilaram is indicated in the lines "He kept making me come. He let his sons rape me. And sometimes his friends…Then I became pregnant" (Hamid 50). Then she recounts the series of events that followed and her eventual decision to stay at Heera Mandi after losing her honour. This instance reflects how the landlords control the life and destinies of the working class in their own area.

In the persona of Murad Badshah we see a class conscious person determined to topple the class hierarchy. His hatred for the rich people is evident in the lines "He loved load-shedding for this reason. It amused him to see the rich people on the grounds of their mansions …fanning themselves in the darkness…Indeed nothing made him more happy than the distress of the rich" (Hamid 104). He mobilises Daru to revolt against the upper class and their exploitation. Hamid probably instills the Marxist revolutionary spirit in the working class through the character of Murad Badshah who believes that when disparities between the rich and poor become too great, "the poor have the right to steal from the very rich" (Hamid 64). It is their duty to protect the primacy of the right to life because their inaction will encourage the upper class to continue their subjugation of lower class. Murad Badshah feels that people are fed up with subsisting on the droppings of the rich. He encourages Daru to join him in his venture of robbing the boutiques which represent "the soft underbelly of the upper crust, the ultimate hypocrisy in a country with flour shortages" (Hamid 214).

Mujahid Alam another character whom Daru meets at the Regal Cinema Hall is a firm supporter of socio economic equality. He blames the political system and the powerful for the lack of discipline and commotion in the cinema hall. He believes that the political system needs a change where justice and basic dignity as a human being prevail and people receive equal opportunities irrespective of their status at birth. He urges Daru and other like-minded people to work together for a change, "None of us can change things acting on our own. And to act together we need direction…A common direction towards a better end" (Hamid 226).

The class disparity in Pakistani society subtly indicates the failure of the unifying and equalising force of the religion of Islam. The differences perpetuated by the bourgeoisie section make the proletariat class spiritually hollow and psychologically dissatisfied and they indulge in all sorts of temporary pleasures such as heroin, charas, and cigarette. It remains doubtful whether the revolutionary means undertaken by Murad Badshah and Daru will dismantle the class hierarchy prevalent in the society or a classless egalitarian society will remain a utopian dream. However positivity regarding utopia can be drawn from Oscar Wilde's idea where he notes that progress is the ultimate goal even of utopia: "A map of the world which does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing.

And when Humanity lands there, it looks out and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias" (Geoghegan 38).

Sivanandan in his novel *When Memory Dies* focuses upon the miserable plight of the working class people who are subjected to oppression by their employers, the colonial masters as well as their own rulers in postcolonial era. In the late nineteenth century a common sense of victimisation in the form of long working hours, low wages, and poor working conditions united the working class from different sectors such as the carters, laundrymen, builders, cycle workers. The workers came from diverse communities, Sinhalese, Tamils, Indian Tamils, Burghers and others. The book traces the grassroot workers' movement initiated with the prospect of inclusive nationalism but unable to fulfill its aim because of petty bourgeoisie politics.

In the novel, Tissa's uncle Mr Wijepala popular as SW works in the railways. He is an active union worker and also one of the prime movers of the rail strike of 1912. He revolts against his employers and charges them of racial and religious bigotry. However his courageous nature does not go well with his English employers. They do not sack him from service due to his immense experience and popularity among the Workmen's Association but he remains unpromoted throughout. His wife Prema acquaints Sahadevan regarding the indifferent attitude of the employers. She recounts how Sirisena, a railway worker was run over by an engine. Mr Wijepala filed a compensation claim for the man's family but the management denied any such liability and blamed the worker's carelessness rather than the careless engine driver, Mr Russell. Wijepala and his friends claimed that Sirisena was exhausted from overwork. Some of the bosses' men even broke Mr Wijepala's legs with crowbar the day before the strike. The sufferings of the working class are not only restricted to railway sector. The working conditions of factory workers and plantation workers are also terrible.

Ramaswamy another unskilled labourer is unjustly interdicted by colonial Railway administration. During the rail strike, the bosses raise him to the position of a supervisor and put him in charge of the machinery. But when the strike is over he is demoted to the previous position. He revolts against his employers but he is dismissed from his service. The department sends him off because he is a coolie and entitled to nothing. The deplorable conditions of tea workers are also projected in the novel. All the hard work including weeding, draining, manuring and prunning are done by the estate

workers. The finished products are sent to Colombo where they are sold by auction to various big tea-houses and then shipped to England. The middle men involved in the tea bussiness draw in huge profit and privilege but the plantation workers get nothing out of it. Jeya's remark "Well, they don't starve, and they've got a roof above their heads. What more can they ask for?" (Sivanandan 100) reflects the indifferent attitude towards the workers. Furthermore, instances such as Jeya forbidding Para to drink water from a tap near the coolie quarters, Sahadevan's parents not allowing him to associate with the sons of labourers and postmen, the elderly chief clerk reprimanding Raman, an estate shopkeeper for having the arrogance of naming his son Sanjeevan meaning a "redeemer" which is too grand name for a low-caste labourer's son reflect the class distinction which prevailed in Sri Lanka.

Sivanandan lauds the efforts of two doctors in supporting the working class and their fight against their oppressors. Dr Lisboa Pinto, a Roman Catholic, lived and worked in the slums. He helped poor people, sick people and people without jobs. Pinto wrote in the *Ceylon Review*,"Let the rich feel for the poor workman and help the Ceylon Workmen's Union, and not try to smother in the labourer's throat his first cry for independence"(Sivanandan 54). Dr Lal also supported the "hartal" of the working class. Both of them stood up against the unjust labour laws and taught the strikers to stand up defiantly and boldly against the injustice so that the government will be forced to revoke the laws.

The workers movement against their employers can be seen as a part of a nascent anticolonial struggle. Sahadevan learns from SW regarding the labour movement which was initially outside institutionalised structures like party politics. The involvement of bourgeoisie leaders to represent the workers class turned it into a wrong direction. SW was doubtful of Goonesinha's role as a labour leader "All I know is that he is not a worker. And he is trying to organize the workers. From the outside in" (Sivanandan 56). The massive strike organised by Goonesinha turned out to be successful. The commercial firms like Walkers, Browns, Liptons and Harrisons came out in support of the government workers in the railways, the docks and the machine shops. Yet the strike ended abruptly in the fourth week owing to financial crisis and starvation. The strikers were also fed up of Goonesinha's endless negotiations. Goonesinha's party was eventually willing to compromise its ideals and collaborate with the British

administration. Tissa was entirely committed to his chief Goonesinha's policies. Tissa's explanation to Sahadevan regarding his Chief's plans bear testimony to the opportunistic and divisive policy undertaken by the Labour Union:

> It's all a part of the strategy,'…Don't you see? First, we get the workers into unions, like our Labour Union; then we get the unions into a federation, like the TUC; then we get the vote, and then, and then'…they vote for their party, the Labour Party; and then the Party has the power to help them. (Sivanandan 105)

In *Reef*, the houseboy Triton nevertheless being of the same nationality and religion as his employer is divided by his class difference. Triton's unquestioning reverence for his master's knowledge emerges in their conversation when Mr Salgado calls him a smart boy and offers him the scope of enrolling in a school. Triton replies: "No, Sir. I was sure, at that time, that there was nothing a crowded bewildering school could offer me that I could not find in his gracious house. All I have to do is watch you, Sir. Watch what you do. That way I can really learn"(42-43). His reply echoes the master-servant subservient relationship and the servant's awe of his master's educational and moral superiority.

Gunesekera refers to the landslide victory of the coalition government of old-fashioned leftists and new-style nationalists against the socialites in the General Election. A kind of radical uprise of Marxist philosophy is introduced through the character of Wijetunga, Mr Salgado's assistant. Wijetunga represents the dissatisfied masses and their oppression. Unlike the educated and wealthy socialites like Salgado, Nili and their friend circle, Wijetunga criticises the neoliberal policies and business oriented employers:

> All they see is pockets full of foreign money. Coming by the plain-load. Don't they realize what will happen? They will ruin us. They will turn us all into servants. Sell our children… You know brother our country really needs to be cleansed, radically. There is no alternative. We have to destroy in order to create. Understand? (Gunesekera 111)

Wijetunga draws Triton's attention to "the crisis of capitalism, the history of social movements and the future shape of a Lankan revolution". This hints at the failure of economic development and equality in post-independence Sri Lanka. However he instills

Triton with the hope of a better future "You say nothing to him, all right? Not yet. For now, brother, you cook. But one day…we will be able to live for ourselves" (Gunesekera 111).

Probably Wijetunga's philosophy and class exploitation that he perceives around himself motivates Triton to develop his own identity in the hostland. Triton takes great interest in the discussion of Mr Salgado and his friend circle regarding economic and social developments. He has a strong fascination with his master's class. He learns to integrate with the city and give up the claims of his past. His culmination into a cosmopolitan identity subverts the class hierarchies prevalent in the society. While Mr Salgado finds it difficult to come to terms with his exilic condition and returns to his own land, Triton sees it as an opportunity of self-development and a chance to free himself from the class distinction dominating Sri Lankan society. Triton concludes "I would learn to talk and joke and entertain, to perfect the swagger of one who has found his vocation and, at last, a place to call his own" (Gunesekera 180).

The analysis of the above discussed novels reveals that the mundane realities of upper class life conceal within itself the class struggles that go into the making of national life. It is observed that along with the hegemony of the upper class there is a concerted effort on the part of the working class to transform their condition of existence in the nation. It remains doubtful whether the revolutionary means undertaken by characters such as Laila, Murad Badshah and Daru will dismantle the class hierarchy prevalent in the society or a classless egalitarian nation will remain a utopian dream.

Conclusion

The texts discussed in this chapter unfold various aspects of nationalism that influence authors' subjectivity and interpretations of similar historical events. The takeaway from the chapter is that these postcolonial writers reveal how varied groupings on the basis of class, caste, religion, political allegiance and geographical differences prevalent in the Indian subcontinent endow the narratives with competing and incompatible nationalism implicit in the rhetoric of nation. It is found that religion and language provide the ideological framework through which a homogeneous imagination of nation is constructed. The emphasis on politics in South Asian novels infact allows a string of biases to permeate through the writer's mind and colour their as well as the readers

perception of truth. There is an undercurrent of the tension between politics of narration and narration of politics in the historical fiction dealing with nation.

After analysing the corpus of South Asian Anglophone historical fiction it is observed that these novels project a political dimension where the story of private individual and family destiny is intertwined with the embattled situation of the nation state. These novels conform to Frederic Jameson's view of third-world texts as "national allegories" (Jameson 69) as politics remain embedded either overtly or implicitly in most of the historical novels. The analysis repudiates criticism labeled against Jameson that it is a reductionist view overlooking the rich literary heritage of South Asia and reducing the writings of the Third World to one dimensional aesthetic.

From a comparative analysis of South Asian writers dealing with similar historical events it emerges that in their discourses of nationalism they frequently mediate between ideological and subjective spheres.The historical novelists juxtapose aesthetics and ideology of nationalism in order to project their own nation state. This characteristic justifies Aijaz Ahmad's view "When it comes to the knowledge of the world, there is no thing as a category of "essentially descriptive", that "description" is never ideologically or cognitively neutral" (Ahmad 99).The novelists unconsciously engage in a politically loaded description of their own nation which coheres with Hayden White's view that "There does, in fact, appear to be an irreducible ideological component in every historical account of reality" (21). It is noteworthy that the basis of national affiliation is contested as race, religion, language, class emerge as determinant factor in defining national identity in the Indian subcontinent. These factors ferment interethnic conflicts rather than upholding the idea of homogeneous nation. The novelists have questioned the monolithic coherence of the imagined community by portraying this polymorphous reality of South Asia.

After analysing the novels it is found that the different responses of the South Asian writers to similar historical events actually contest Benedict Anderson's idea that national imagination grows evenly through novel and newspaper, across all regions and that it is universal to all regions. These novels will evoke dissimilar responses from the readers of the novels based on their religious and class affiliations and their political allegiance. Again, the genesis of nationalism in "print capitalism" and idea of nation formation around national language as identified by Anderson do not seem to apply to

historical fiction taken up for the study. In the context of South Asia the nationalist sentiment draws its sustenance from historical consciousness of racial, religious, ethnic memory. The prolonged deprivation of their identity by the colonisers infuses in them the desire to assert their multiple forms of identity in the post-independence period. So, the proliferation of uniform nationalism around a national language seems untenable and detrimental to the development of pluralistic South Asian nations. The in-depth study of the novels also exposes the lacunae in Benedict Anderson's demarcation between politics of nationalism and ethnicity in the context of South Asia. It may be concluded that Anderson's model of nationalism does not apply to South Asian context. The specific findings of this chapter centering on Anderson's postulations have been further elaborated in the concluding chapter along with other overall observations.