CHAPTER ONE

FRAMING THE GARDEN IN THE NOVEL

Abstract

The chapter frames the critical contexts in which the garden is read and understood in fiction. This includes an enquiry into the etymology of the garden and an understanding of its Edenic implications alongside its historical, philosophical, botanical and imperial underpinnings. The chapter also outlines the theoretical presumptions and critical frameworks undertaken in the study of gardens in the thesis. Finally, it offers an overview of chapters where gardens are framed in national, gender-informed, spiritual and ecological structures.

I

Hypotheses

i. Gardening is embedded in social and cultural webbings;
ii. The Edenic imagination finds its way into literature from antiquity to present;
iii. Colonial botany is implicated in gardens in the metropolis and the colonies;
iv. The trope of cultivating extends to self-fashioning of the individual and planetary configuration.

Arguments

i. The trope of control or taming is central to the idea of gardening
ii. The metaphor of Eden extends itself to national, gendered, religious and ecological implications
iii. The representations of the garden from the nineteenth to the twenty first century suggest a shift from the pastoral to the political
iv. The myriad forms of gardens and gardening in estate, backyards, farms, parks, conservatories etc. suggest how in shaping plant life we make sense of the world and are shaped by the same

II

Review of Literature

The review of literature is divided into subsections keeping in mind the trends and types of critical works in the seven clusters that eventually inform the objectives, arguments, key ideas, and core chapters of the thesis.

Garden: Meaning and Metaphor

A garden may be defined as an enclosed green space linked to horticulture, botany, floriculture etc. Viewed broadly, parks and lawns and even vast green spaces merging into the countryside form part of the garden space. Tom Turner notes how the act of enclosing is central to the various understandings of the garden space. He refers to how "the words 'garden', 'yard', 'garden', 'jardin', 'giardino', 'hortus', 'paradise', 'park', 'parc', 'parquet', 'court', 'hof', 'kurta', 'town', 'tun' and 'tuin' all derive from the act of enclosing outdoor space" (1). Apart from these, he mentions the Old English 'geard' meaning 'fence.' In *The Meaning of Gardens: Idea, Place and Action* (1990), the editors Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester Jr. note the varying implications of the word 'garden' which signifies the religious symbol of paradise, a place of retreat, an emblem of power, its place in landscape architecture, as a ground of oppositions. They mention "faith, power and ordering, cultural expression, personal expression and healing" (10) as the "six muses of the garden" (10). This can be extended to imply how the garden variously functions as a sacred space, both worshipped and forbidden, as a space defining control, dominance and taming, of cultivation of identities: national and gendered, a space of contemplation, rest and recuperation, a site offering herbal salves and resurgence of planetary health in the Anthropocene through reclamation of space and creation of nature. The garden also exists as an actual place and the changing forms of the different kinds of gardens such as parks and the backyard gardens suggest the changes brought about by the processes of urbanization. As an action, gardening involves interaction with our immediate surroundings and suggests connections, respite and stewardship and also acts as a space of contemplation.

Campbell defines the garden as "a planned outdoor space distinguished from its surroundings by either a formal enclosure or a marked stylistic difference" (1) and "a

metaphor of the imposition of order" (1). Raymond Williams in *Keywords* (1976) draws links between garden and culture, the latter word having its roots in the word "colere" meaning, among other things, "cultivate" (49). This idea of cultivation lends itself to the processes of ordering, of landscapes and the people therein. The first of this tending can be seen in the way a particular style of gardening or culturing becomes a marker of wealth and culture itself, symbolizing the tastes and aesthetic sensibilities of the owner, especially in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England. Again, the act of culturing implies some form of control and extends to the ideas of husbandry whereby the soil is made to yield and has parallels with the act of seeding of female body.

Garden History

A look at the history of gardens reveals that such spaces are never devoid of socio-cultural motives. Each of the different types of gardens—landscape, plantation, hortus conclusus or the enclosed garden, botanical, parks, lawns, backyards, rooftop gardens—serve to further specific notions related to nation building, divinity, ecology, class, sexuality etc. For example, the English landscape garden espoused by such architects as Lancelot Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton defined notions of Englishness and democratic ideals as a way of countering French gardening styles with topiaries that reflected strict control of nature and French subjects. Similarly, the creation of botanical gardens exude national pride and dominance of nature as plant specimens from all across the globe including colonies are brought to be studied, classified and displayed. The hortus or the Medieval enclosed garden acquires gendered overtones when likened to a female body in literature. The making of parks signify the creation of natural havens in an urban setting and also an exclusivist space dedicated to aesthetic and recreational purposes, which often comes at an ecological expense and raises questions of environmental justice. Many of the parks and lawns in colonies housing clubs often function as remnants of colonial regime and carry the legacy of classism with British pastimes, restrictive entries and prescribed codes of behavior. Such exclusivist use of space is countered in the rooftop garden which symbolizes ecological resuscitation while exemplifying judicious use of space.

This leads us to a critical examination of such ideas as nationalist narratives woven into garden spaces and styles. To that end, spaces such as plantations, parks, food gardens and even entire nations such as the New World modeled on an Edenic paradigm

of industry and righteousness reflect how the garden ideal is fundamental to the conception of a nation, more so in the case of England and the U.S.A. The corollary of the idea of the nation as an Eden is its gendered understanding where the landscape is seen as an inviting virgin waiting to be tamed. Conceptions relating to the garden find parallels in the gendered implications of ploughing the ground where the land is seen as female and lends itself to the metaphor of taming. Apart from its nationalist and gendered implications, the space and metaphor of the garden might also be read as a sacred space, that is, a space where the divine might be contemplated or even a potent space seen as dangerous and an abode of magic and mystery. In literature, the secret gardens are seen as abode of fairies (Bihet 148) and often symbolize spaces teeming with transgressive feminine desires, both of which are seen as dangerous and as forces of profanation. The creation of the secret gardens in the form of safe havens and the acting of the stewards of the land through cultivation replicates the creation of paradise and imposing of order on chaos, both of which have religious implications. In addition, the act of stewardship holds ecological implications where the creation of small scale gardens in nooks and pavements induces the creation of nature. The garden is seen as a recurring figure in Anthropocene fiction, featuring variously as nature lost in the image of an Edenic past and as a way of amelioration of ecological problems through sustainable cultivation. This calls attention to the garden as a space and an idea replete with ideological possibilities and a text offering a cultivation of such ideologies.

Tom Turner's *Garden History: Philosophy and Design 2000 BC- 2000 AD* (2005) traces the history of the types, forms and rationale of garden making shaped by Western philosophy from 2000 BC to 2000 AD. The author broadly classifies gardens as ancient, classical, West Asian and Islamic, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical and Romantic, Eclectic, Abstract and Post Abstract. He notes how the idea of enclosing is central to gardening and how such enclosing of space can be traced back to 10000 BC in West Asia after which the settlement and urbanization associated with the same spread out to the east and west.

Turner discusses Egyptian gardens which included vegetable gardens and horticulture as examples of ancient gardens. These included gardens carried out with the help of irrigation (39), palace gardens such as Akhenaten's gardens etc. (45). The gardens in ancient Egyptian harems (47) are referred to by Turner as "a dormitory

establishment with fertile women, productive gardens" (47) underlining the gendered implications of land-as-female body to be cultivated. Tomb gardens such as the garden of sycamore trees around Osiris' tomb (51) can be seen as some more examples of ancient gardens.

In the nature worshipping cult of Greece, the groves became sacred spaces frequented by gods. Turner notes how the classical Greek gardens were sacred groves which were characterized by statues of Greek deities. The interconnections between the idea of the sacred and the Greek gardens can be seen, for example, in the groves of academe where philosophers such as Plato discussed the interconnections between the Greek Gods, man and nature (75), or even in Homer's account of palace court gardens, particularly the garden of Alcinous (77), his references to Minerva and its sacred grove in Odyssey (78) etc.

Speaking of Islamic and West Asian gardens, Turner observes how the word 'paradise' has its origins in the Persian word 'pairidaeza' meaning 'enclosure' (121) which was later applied to walled garden with "a rectangle divided into parts by water channels" (162). Turner refers to how Zoroastrianism in pre-Islamic Persia observed such "contrasts between good and evil, order and chaos, desert and cultivation" (129) and might have provided the ideological impetus for the ordered Islamic garden. He speaks of "chaharbagh (the quadripartite garden, from chahar, four, char, and bagh, garden)" (129) as "an enclosed space divided into four parts by water channels" (129). The idea of divine perfection, of symmetry, an idea originally originating in Plato's theory of forms, also influenced Islamic garden making (133).

Turner refers to how the Assyrian king Tilgath Pileser I made large hunting parks boasting of plant specimens from the kingdoms he had conquered (122). This kind of park, Turner notes, might be seen to be the predecessor of the botanical and zoological gardens (122). The conquest of foreign lands along with their flora and fauna can also be seen as the precursor to the botanical imperialism that the European countries undertook by collecting exotic plant specimens to adorn their gardens, and later, for scientific study.

The best remaining examples of Persian style gardens are the Mughal gardens in the subcontinent such as Ram bagh, Shalimar bagh, Nishat Bagh, the garden at Taj Mahal. Turner refers to how on arriving in India, Babur was disappointed with the Indian

terrain which he found “too flat” (148) and lacking in running water for gardens (148). He managed with the site at hand and after the completion of the garden near Agra said: “Thus, in unpleasant and unharmonious India, marvelously geometric patterns were introduced” (148). Gardens, therefore, become a tool of conquest, and, as Herbert says, “a stamp of civilization” (19) and the apparently chaotic Indian landscape was ordered with geometrical chaharbaghs.

This history invites a close enquiry of the garden as a space housing the sacred and thereby inviolable and sometimes dangerous. Garden alongside tombs points at the coexistence of death and regeneration while gardens housing the dead can be seen as spaces to be revered and feared. The green outside surrounding the household, especially sanctuary-like spaces or enclosures like the secret back gardens might serve as sites where the divine, the dead and the otherworldly or the mystical might be located. The Islamic conception of paradise offers impetus to the ideas of a sacred land which in turn forms the foundational narratives of many nations.

Turner writes how symbolism took the centre stage in Medieval culture and how its architecture was a reflection of the same (170). While beauty and ostentation were seen with suspicion, gardens, as sacred sites of contemplation and as symbolizing paradise were encouraged. He notes how in the Medieval period “everything in the visible world was believed to be in the image of an eternal Form” (172). This paves the way for the garden to be seen as a perfect space, to be created out of wilderness, actual and moral, and maintained in its perfect form, materially and morally. Symbolism and order in the Medieval period is believed to be divinely ordained and nature is looked upon as a text to be deciphered. The Medieval art and architecture and the influence of forms drawn mainly from Plotinus was brought by St Augustine to Medieval and Renaissance art (174) and whose influence might be seen in the mathematically ordered gardens (175). Turner identifies the religious import of Medieval gardens as “Eden had been a garden; the Jewish Song of Solomon laid the foundation for Christian gardens of love” (179), “Christ spent the night before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane; the first mosque was a garden; the scene of St. Augustine’s conversion in Milan took place in a garden” (179). The asceticism of the age and its gardens is undercut by the floral symbolism suggesting sexuality, that is, lilies representing the purity of Virgin Mary or

roses for courtly love, for example, the latter best expressed in writings such as *Roman de la Rose* (181-183).

While pleasure parks near castles had already begun to be seen in the Medieval period, the shift from small scale enclosed gardens to gardens as artworks took place in the Renaissance. This was signaled by a renewed interest in classical learning in the period (Turner 218). Writings like Boccaccio's *Decameron* present narratives of young men and women frolicking in gardens, evoking an image of paradisical pleasure (Turner 217). The gender politics at work can be deciphered from the fact that Medieval gardens managed by ladies had now shifted to gardens designed by males and representative of their pride and learning (218). The scale of Renaissance gardens further hint at this gendered divide as it seeks to replicate those of Romans in classical times (222) as opposed to the "sequestered gardens for their womenfolk" (222). Countries borrowed and were influenced by each other's gardening styles, as Charles VIII, after invading Italy in the late fifteenth century, for example, was impressed by the geometrical knot gardens which appeared glorious in front of humble Medieval gardens of his French land (231). On the other hand, nations used gardens to assert a distinctively national identity as in the case of Holland which resorted to designing gardens after a Dutch style after its independence from Spain (233). Gardens also became a tool for national rivalry and a symbol of personal power and pride as suggested, for example, by the case of Henry VIII, who built his estate with the specific aim of outdoing Francis I's and named it Nonsuch, meaning "to exceed all others" (235).

The period of enlightenment and the developments in science saw the rise of Baroque gardens which were grand, built on geometric principles (Turner 263-265) and symbolized confident anthropocentrism. This period saw the development of what is known as Cartesian gardens influenced by Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (265). Turner writes how "scientists looked for 'laws of Nature', a phrase invented by Descartes, and critics looked for 'rules of taste' to distinguish good art from bad art" (265-266). The most prominent example the Baroque gardens are Louis XIV's Versailles which is characterized by grandeur and staggering scale and "conceived as a palatial centre of government for an absolute monarch, Louis XIV" (294). The English found this garden to be 'overbearing' (294) and was not appreciated by garden critics such as Horace Walpole (294).

The eighteenth century styles displayed a marked distinction between the French and English where “the primary role of French Baroque estates were courtly gatherings and stag hunts” (302) while “the role of English landscapes, in marked contrast, was to provide a balm for the soul” (302). This period saw the rise of the landscape gardens “in step with the progression from neoclassicism to Romanticism” (303). Turner notes how Romanticism “saw enclosed gardens evolve into open landscapes” (305). Referring to A.O. Lovejoy, Turner notes how Romanticism in England saw the world as “an englischerGarten on a grand scale” (309). The development of the English landscape gardens in this period can be seen in three stages, the first of which are influenced by the Grand Tours and landscape paintings (321), the second displaying less of classical influences and consisting of natural looking landscapes suited to English climes as opposed to Baroque gardens in the continent (321) while the third consisted of gardens the Picturesque style (321).

The nineteenth century saw the rise of eclecticism in garden design (355). The exotic plants specimens brought to Victorian from across the globe fit into this scheme of mixed styling (365). The garden became “a means of transporting the imagination to far-away places and far-off times” (368). The nationalist ideologies of different countries are seen to have a bearing on nineteenth century gardening styles. The French sought to revive the national glory Louis XIV’s reign (374-375) while Germany drew inspiration from its nature worship in antiquity, its Romantic and ecological literature and a general nationalist resurgence (375). England looked to gardens in Shakespeare and Olde England (375) and American garden styles were still largely influenced by European styles while gradually giving way to a desire for homegrown garden design in the twentieth century (375).

The twentieth century garden design is characterized by abstract and post-abstract garden designs. While the abstract style referred to functional gardens with “analytically clean lines, freedom from ornament, simple colours and geometrical elegance” (394), the post abstract styles pointed at “a retreat from the clinical purity of abstraction and a return to the realm of stories, symbols and meanings” (394). The abstract style saw “house as a machine for living” (431) and gardens as “space for outdoor living and exercise grounds for machines” (431). The late twentieth century sought complex garden designs replete with allusions (422).

In *Flora's Empire: British Gardens in India* (2011), Eugenia Herbert gives an account of gardens made by the British in India. Taking into account the idea of England as a "nation of gardeners" (xii), Herbert explores the horticultural imprints of the British who planted gardens as a way to recreate home and to make sense of the wild landscape that they encountered. She writes how "the history of gardens in England provides intriguing parallels with the history of British imperialism" (1), as they "gained confidence in their ability to create new forms" (1).

She notes how the British gardens in India were a curious amalgamation of European and Eastern traditions (37). For example, the gardenhouses had been modeled on the parks back home while consisting of Indian trees rather than British oaks (37) or in some of the earlier estate gardens such as Khasganj, the zenana garden was a remnant of the Mughal period (37). One of the first kinds of gardens planted by the British in India in the seventeenth century was the ones possibly modeled after Mughal gardens and built inside forts and factories near the ports to where the merchants living nearby could shelter themselves in (24). Later in the century, they built fruit and flower gardens in the middle of cities (26). They then took to building country houses and garden houses in the eighteenth century as a way to come out of their cramped enclosures (26). Herbert notes how Madras is home to many such country houses (28) and how the British residency in Hyderabad came to be modeled after the parklands designed by Capability Brown and William Kent back home (33). References to these designers and landscape garden find their way to Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, where people Rushworth wishes to model his landscape using the services of Brown's successor, Humphrey Repton.

British women especially took to gardening in India in order to mitigate boredom by growing English blossoms (36). They relied upon the services of the Mali who would save them the scorching heat and dirt (40). This invites attention to links between gardening and manual labour. The upkeep of beauty in the colonies requires the service of natives, seen mostly as labourers working for or subjugated by the empire, while the white mistresses refrain from soiling their hands. Thus, while the consumption of beauty is the prerogative of the colonizer, the labour is to be carried out by the 'other.' This has parallels with engagement of slave population for the overlooking of plantations in the colonies. At the height of the empire in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, beautiful country houses with estates landscaped to the latest fashion were supported by

wealth coming from the colonies, as suggested by such novels as Jane Austen's Mansfield Park. Here too, the labour involved in the production of beauty at home takes place elsewhere and carried out by someone else.

Gardening took place in army cantonments as well which saw military men as garden enthusiasts echoing, as Herbert observes, Winston's Churchill's statement that "war and gardening are the natural preoccupations of men" (40). Here gardening is seen as a masculinist enterprise where men are engaged in nation building by tilling and stamping of England on foreign land, apart from serving in the colonial army.

Herbert notes how gardening manuals by writers such as Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson were popular in England in the Victorian period and became the site of debates over different styles of gardening (42). These made their way to British India where instructions were laid out on "soils, temperatures, manure, watering, drainage, tools, growing from seed, grafting, pruning, transplanting, potting, kitchen gardens (best kept out of sight), noxious insects, lawns, and conservatories, along with designs for flowerbeds adapted from England and the continent" (43). These instructions thus foreground aesthetics pushing any kind of "ugliness" associated with food production to the backdrop. The flowerbeds brought from the home country to be planted here can be seen as the forming of miniature Englands in the colonies. Herbert notes how one of these manuals by Grace Gardiner and Flora Annie Steel mention how gardens offer the much needed respite from the sight of dusty landscapes in India (45-46). The manuals directed to the aesthetic ends thus become ideological tools propitiating the need to beautify "ugly" colonies through gardening.

In a rumination of the creation, use and symbolism of the park as a public space envisioned and designed by landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, Elizabeth Blackmar and Roy Rosenzweig offers in *The Park and its People* (1992) a history of the Central Park in New York city. The objective of the work, as the writers point, is to offer a story of the people involved in the making of the park, that is, the people behind the funding and conception of the project, people who had to be evicted from the site and the New Yorkers and their relation to the park (3). They note how the park came to symbolize, among other things, the "redeeming power of nature" (2) and "juxtaposition of the city and nature" (2). The writers point to how the park contains conflicting ideals of exclusive use and a democratic space. Originally conceived of as a

space for leisure, the park sought to impose a code of conduct through various prescriptions and prohibitions. Later, it debarred people from laboring classes from frequenting the grounds. The site of the park is in uptown Manhattan which housed workshops and industries and the arrival of the railroad in the 1840s invited workers and immigrants who flocked to the town (62). In order to mitigate the "'nuisance' of workshops, hogpens, and asylums" (63), the uptown elites wanted a park "both as a way of screening out new poor residents and their associated trades (an early form of zoning) and as a means of removing the existing poor population" (63). Newspaper reports described the park dwellers who were poor immigrants engaged in workshops as filthy and miserable. Eventually, these people termed 'squatters', with 'shanties' (68) were evicted from this space, without compensation. The park, seen as offering pastoral pleasures and an Eden in the middle of a city (108) had to banish its inhabitants which points at the history of exploitation that underwent the creation of the American Eden.

Edenic Metaphor

The Edenic metaphor is fundamental to the conception of the American nation. The Puritans saw the New World as an Eden offering refuge and endless possibilities. The centrality of this metaphor was solidified by the myth and symbol of the 1950s, heralded by Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* (1850). This manifests in "the image of an agricultural paradise in the West" (139) by tilling the uncultivated or "virgin" land. R.W.B. Lewis' *American Adam* (1955) premises itself on the idea of the new world as the Garden of Eden, "as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World (5)". In this Eden, he sees the American man in an Adamic role, free of past shackles, exuding promise and out to fulfil his divine covenant to turn the wilderness into a garden. This myth is built on the image of "the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history" (1) and modelled after the Biblical Adam before the Fall from Eden. Lewis sees this myth as a recurring trope in writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, Hawthorne, Henry James etc.

Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* (1975) speaks of the gendered implications of such Edenic projection. She writes how "Eden, Paradise, the Golden Age, and the idyllic garden, in short, all the backdrops for European literary pastoral,

were subsumed in the image of an America promising material ease without labour or hardship, as opposed to the grinding poverty of previous European existence" (6) and how this symbolises "regression from the cares of adult life and a return to the primal warmth of womb or breast in a feminine landscape" (6).

The Edenic metaphor can be seen at work in Raymond Williams' analysis of the nostalgic return to the past in *The Country and the City* (1973). He observes how the writers in each age constantly look to a Golden Age in the past to an apparently uncorrupted version of nature and each time the search for Old England and its organic community referred to something which was far from pristine (14). This presents a problem of perspective and looking back at Eden and an understanding of the pastoral mode of writing might offer some idea as to why one resorts repeatedly to the idea of 'good old days' (12).

In *Reinventing Eden* (2003), Carolyn Merchant notes an all pervasive influence of the Edenic myth on all of Western culture. She writes how this Edenic metaphor makes its presence felt not just in ecological or Western narratives but also in the creation of exclusive urban spaces such as gated communities, parks. At the centre of such cultural symbolism is the idea of recreating Eden on earth through technological or ecological undertakings. She calls it "the most important mythology humans have developed in order to make sense of their relationship with the earth" (2) which has served to be the impetus for "turning wilderness into garden, 'female' nature into civilised society, and indigenous folkways into modern culture" (2).

More recently, Stephen Greenblatt notes the potency of the Edenic myth in *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* (2017). He traces in this myth a fixation with the story of origins. As seen by St Augustine of Hippo, the Garden came to be seen as a sinful place and Eve the progenitor of sin which subsequently led to the archetype of the dangerous women. With Milton's *Paradise Lost* the story of Edenic transgression came to acquire secular overtones as Adam and Eve were seen prone to human failings. He notes how with Darwin's theory of evolution, this story of origins was shifted to a different point of origin altogether but nevertheless metamorphosed into another origin tale characterised what he saw at a national park with two chimpanzees frolicking around and quickly moving to the thickets.

The Garden and Philosophy

In Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), gardening suggests a return to the more important businesses of life. The maxim "Cultivate your own garden" is pitted against the loaded philosophical arguments relating to the world such as questions relating to the purpose of life, justice, righteousness, greater good, suggesting a return to the material than the ideal. Candide, the nephew of a baron, encounters a series of adventures, tragic happenings such as murder, sexual violence etc. before finally escaping to a farm in Constantinople. Here he and his friends learn of the mufti being strangled and ask an old man if he knew of the same to which he says: "But I never enquire what's going on in Constantinople. I am content to send my fruit for sale there from the garden I cultivate" (89) and how his work on his farm keeps the three evils of "boredom, vice and need" (87) at bay. Here gardening becomes a metaphor for the stoicism with which one has to go about in life and is a critique of an overt optimism that often ends in disillusionment. As opposed to spending our energies in dealing with philosophical questions, the book suggests that happiness lies in doing faithfully the task assigned to one, without thinking much of anything else.

In "Of Other Spaces" (1986), Foucault discusses the garden as a heterotopic space. Foucault defines heterotopia as spaces "that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect" (3). He mentions the Persian garden or the chaharbagh as a heterotopia of juxtaposition whose four parts represent four different parts of the world (6). He mentions carpets as sorts of "gardens that can move across space" (6). Such gardens replicate divine forms and reflect images of heaven on earth. Garden structures often serve as sanctuaries in an estate offering privacy or natural havens in the form of parks in the towns which mirror the ideas of oases in the desert or Eden in moral wilderness. The garden designs and architecture designate a certain status on its owner and is often indicative of his tastes and wealth or even the might of nation as seen in the form of botanical gardens. As a heterotopic space, the garden suspects or neutralizes such relations as it offers keys on how such glorious landscapes are built on foundations of violence , putting to question the legitimacy of Edenic bliss. In the space of the garden the old order is inverted and new set of relations invented where working the land as opposed to aesthetic distancing becomes the marker

of national glory as in the case of victory gardens, or even in a gothic nighttime garden which offers a sense of unease and fear as opposed to comfort and control.

Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) traces the roots of the Holocaust in the organizational efficacy of the bureaucracy in a modern state which he compares to gardening. He refers to how modern culture is garden culture (91). Bureaucracy sees the modern society as existing in a state of nature which is to be 'mastered' or 'improved' (18). The modern state requires, Bauman states, not the complacency of the gamekeeper but the acumen of a gardener who is ready to take out or 'exterminate' any weed threatening the harmony of the state (57). He writes how "All visions of society as garden define parts of the social habitat as human weeds" (92). Further, "like all other weeds, they must be segregated, contained, prevented from spreading, removed and kept outside social boundaries; if all these means prove insufficient, they must be killed" (92). According to Bauman, the Holocaust was the result of modernity's obsession with an efficient, smooth functioning bureaucracy and a spick and span system that "eliminates" useless elements rather than kills the innocents. The disciplining of bodies is here likened to the taming of nature in the form of gardening whereby the "useful" are sustained and undesirable growth is weeded out.

The Garden and the Empire

In *Green Imperialism* (1996), Richard Grove underlines links between the history of conservation and the imperial experience. He writes how the search for Eden provided the impetus for colonisation, from setting up of botanical gardens to colonising whole islands, and coincided with an awareness of the destruction of nature by the resource exploitation of the empire. He mentions how by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, conservationist activities such as forest conservation were well underway in the colonies and aided by the writings of people like Alexander von Humboldt who was influenced by the ecological worldview of the Hindus. Such activities, he observes, included species conservation in botanical gardens and frequently underlined the process of recreating and saving the paradise on earth.

In *Colonial Botany* (2007), Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan look at the colonial implications of the science of botany which involves "the study, naming, cultivation, and marketing of plants in colonial contexts" (2) and which "was born of and

supported European voyages, conquest, global trade, and scientific exploration" (2). The transfer, trade and cultivation of plants aided by the study of botany is key to the enrichment and sustenance of the empire and serves the purpose of turning the world into a controlled garden. Writers in the volume talk about how European botanical gardens in the home country such as the Jardin du Roi were a key figure in such plant transfers as the plants procured for such gardens marked the glory of the nation (Mukherji 22-23). The African slaves carried along with them seeds from their home country and planted them in their own little gardens forming "the botanical gardens of the dispossessed." (Carney 215)

Similarly, Jayeeta Sharma's *Empire's Garden* (2011) draws attention to the literal and metaphorical implications of gardening operating in the context of the cultivation of tea in Assam during the British Raj. The text offers cues as to how the discovery of tea in Assam paved the way for taming the lush green vegetation of Assam and turning the wilderness into a garden (3), leading to large scale movement of people and change in demography. The discourse of improvement or "unnati" (5) making its way in Assam in the nineteenth century and implied agrarian or industrial progress can be seen as a dominant feature of this Edenic project in the state (5). Here, it is interesting to note how a similar discourse of improvement came about in relation to garden design in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and extended to imply a process of taste and culture. The idea of improvement in the colonial context can thus be seen as the offshoot of landscape design.

Recent Literature on Plants

McCarthy's "Beyond Romantic Nature": Ecocriticism's New Shades of Green" discusses ecocriticism's expanding horizons to include relations between economic oppression and exploitation of the non-human, discussion of built environments and interrelationships between human and non-human rather than a study of "nature." To that extent, the profusion of arboreal and botanical literature in the past two decades suggest a renewed interest in the politics of plant acquisition, cultivation and transplantation leading to alterations in worldview. Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World* (2001), aims to offer an evolutionary trajectory through the plant's perspective by taking into account four different species- apples, tulips, cannabis and opium. While humans feel they are in control of plant cultivation and decide upon

which species should survive and which ones perish, Pollan states that the a particular plant species evolves itself in ways that the humans find profitable or attractive, thereby playing on human desires. This perspective removes humans of their confident anthropocentric position and instead presents them as partners in a co-evolutionary process.

Underlining the discomfort and horror humans face on suddenly coming face to face with the agentiality of plants Dawn Keetley and Angela Tenga's*Plant Horror* (2016), trace such moments of unease in such popular texts and films such as *Harry Potter, Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight, The Day of the Triffids* etc. Elizabeth Hope Chang's *Novel Cultivations* (2019) lays out a map of plant figures in the Victorian novel, especially romance, fantasy and the gothic, and examines their implications in the botanical imperialism, transplantation and cultivation. Through her focus on writers such as Charlotte Bronte, H.G Wells, Frances Hogdson Burnett among others, she presents an understanding of plant consciousness brought about by an increasing presence of strange, exotic and sometimes dangerous species now a part of the home gardens.

Anna Burton's *Trees in Nineteenth Century English Fiction: The Silvicultural Novel* (2021)looks at how trees make their way to the nineteenth century fiction and are implicated in what he calls a "silvcultural tradition" which is "a web of writings about trees that are enmeshed in their constant cross-referencing and borrowing from one another" (2). Using the picturesque conceptions of William Gilpin as lynchpin, he takes into account the arboreal imagination operating in such writers as Elizabeth Gaskell, Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy.

Other essays that discuss arboreal poetics include John Charles Ryan's "Passive Flora? Reconsidering Nature's Agency through Human-Plant Studies (HPS)" and "Phytopoetics: Human-Plant Relations and the Poesis of Vegetal Life.", "'Old Trees Hold Memory': Aboriginal Australian Perspectives on Memory, Trauma, and Witnessing in the Arboreal World.", "Australia.", "Cultivating Botanical Wisdom: Durian Narratives and the Plant Posthumanities.", "Literary Ethnobotany in Aboriginal Australia: Oodgeroo Noonucal's Poetry as Biocultural Activism."

Literature and the Garden

In literature, the garden has symbolized a space of retreat, paradisical bliss, childhood innocence, pristine nature, among other things. For example, Andrew Marvell's poem "The Garden" offers perspectives on the garden as a respite from the world. While people chase material goals, it is in the garden that one can find true solace, as the speaker notes. The poem dwells on how the garden's beauty surpasses those of the women the men are in love with. Alluding to the Greek myth of Apollo and Daphne, the speaker observes how the Apollo chases Daphne only for her to be converted into a laurel. The pleasures of the garden, its sights, sounds and smells, the tastes of its fruits, far supersede any another pleasure. The speaker further notes how the Edenic state before the arrival of Eve was truly paradisical. The garden here thus becomes a symbol of pastoral retreat. The paradise in Milton's *Paradise Lost* symbolizes a blissful state of co existence with all other creatures. With the presence of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge alongside the Tree of Life, it also symbolizes transgression that leads to loss of paradisical innocence. This symbolism of the loss of the paradisical state extends to themes of nostalgia, loss of ecological harmony, bodily innocence and becomes a metaphor of blissful spaces and states of existence.

Recent studies in literature take into account this ideological aspect of the space and act of the garden and seek to describe various ways in which the garden shapes our understanding of the world. Works published from 2000s to present on the depictions of gardening in literature attest to the growing significance of the area in nature, gender and postcolonial studies. Shelley Saguaro's *Garden Plots: The Poetics and Politics of Gardens* (2006), for example, undertakes a thematic enquiry into garden in literature from the twentieth to the twenty-first century across the world. Saguaro seeks to show that "gardens and gardening are political" (xiii) and focuses on plots by way of conspiracy or subversion, a plot of land and the narrative plot (xiii). She notes that gardens and gardening are political and bear implications relating to botany, modernism, colonialism. She discusses, among others, texts such as Virginia Woolf's 'Kew Gardens', Katherine Mansfield's 'Memory' in order to explore how the garden figures in such modernist women writers while she takes into account Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*, Toni Morrison's *Paradise* etc. to understanding the garden's role postcolonial discourses.

Jennifer Munroe's *Gender and Garden in Early Modern English Literature* (2008), points at the gendered division of cultivation and landscaping in the sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Using examples from popular gardening texts, Munroe seeks to show how there existed separate manuals for men and women on gardening and how these instructed men on landscaping larger gardens and women on planting humble flower gardens.

In her *Garden Plots: Canadian Women and their Literary Gardens* (2013), Shelley Boyd notes how the bush garden or wilderness has formed part of the Canadian national imagination as codified by texts such as Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden: Essays on Canadian Imagination* (1971). In this book, she shifts the attention from wilderness and focusses on domestic garden plots that have appeared in the texts of Canadian women writers from nineteenth to twenty first century and that have hitherto not received scholarly attention. Her work takes into account the writings of five Canadian women writers—Susanna Moodie, Catherine Parr Trail, Gabriel Roy, Carol Shields and Lorna Crozier—in order to understand their experiences in kitchen gardens, as settlers coming to terms with their new environment, and the resulting redefinitions of paradise.

Jennifer Atkinson's *Gardenland* (2018), looks at examples of gardening in American literature and popular culture to examine shifts in the country's horticultural engagements from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. The nineteenth century garden writing, for example is dominated by the divide between leisure and play, that is, gardening for beautification and gardening for the sake of productivity. She points out Charles Dudley Warner's *My Summer in a Garden* (1870), as a key nineteenth century text signifying the coming together of work and play in the garden (21). She points to how in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), the farm work which requires labour is frequently pitted against scenes of repose in the garden or against beautiful flower gardens in the city that align more with the ideals of garden for the Boston elites like Miles Coverdale (22-32). The idea of gardening here can be contrasted with that of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), which offers a critique of the Puritan American nation visualized as Eden which requires constant pruning and taming of human impulses. Atkinson reads early twentieth century American garden writing in such texts as Willa Cather's *My Antonia* (1918), and Charles Chestnutt's *The Conjure Woman*

(1899). She argues that these texts critique large-scale mechanized gardens that were rapidly changing the landscape and people's relationship with the land and food (see 69, 77). She also discusses how the 1960s and 1970s showed an increased awareness relating to the harmful effects of convenience foods and a growing aversion to foods in supermarkets. She uses Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) as a key text underlining the destructive effects of pesticides, toxic gardening, and farming practices that generate synthetic and harmful food cultures (94-95). As a reaction, she argues, this era saw the rise of co-operatives, slow food movements that aim at re-sensitising oneself to the taste and goodness of food. Greenmarkets on New York pavements were filled with fresh produce by farmers (96).

Atkinson mentions how such writings as John McPhee's "Giving Good Weight" (1975) (95) and *A Sense of Things* document the way touching the vegetables, weighing them by hands, smelling them the person is reconnected with the food as part of soil and the processes of gardening, a shift away from the view of food as something that is available in supermarkets. Atkinson then goes on to examine instances of gardening in science fiction to highlight the issues relating to the environment, urbanization etc. She writes:

> Indeed, if gardens are a realm where people seek experiences and pleasures denied to them in their everyday lives, then the fantasies at work in the mid-century farmers' markets throw light on an impoverished modern condition where scientific reductionism had disenchanted human relations to nature (including food) and even estranged individuals from their own bodies and biological processes. (98)

Sue Edney's *Ecogothic Gardens in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2020), projects the garden in prominent nineteenth century Anglophone writing as an example of the Gothic nature. Traditionally the garden is seen as an example of nature tamed and as a symbol of the pastoral. However, taming already implies violence and turns the garden into a space of control, discipline and power. In this case, the gardener is seen as an invader and controller who not only controls nature but also what visitors to the garden get to see. The logic here is that the garden, if not tamed adequately, would cause a "creeping return of excluded vegetation" (Hughes xv). Here we already see a struggle

between ‘wild’ and ‘controlled’ nature that might overthrow controlling devices or ideologies.

While studies on the ecogothic are overly concerned with the menacing and mysterious wilderness and forest spaces, not much attention is paid to the gothic implications of garden spaces. The duality of the Paradise garden opens it up to Gothic speculations and is a recurring presence in fiction. Edney suggests “that humans are, now, insecure on the earth they wished to consider a ‘garden’ is a feature of the resurgence of the interest in the Gothic as a genre” (4). In other words, the uncanny finds itself in the discourse of the Anthropocene. The volume looks at uncanny plants in H.G Wells, John Ruskin’s inability to come to terms with the garden at Brantwood, plants seeking vengeance in Wilkie Collins, the enchanted garden of the Victorian period as an abode of mysterious beings as fairies in *The Secret Garden*, entanglement in Hawthorne’s ‘Rapacinni’s Daughter’ among others.

The thesis builds up on this body of work on gardens and fiction by offering comprehensive perspectives on the nationalist thrust of gardening, the agricultural roots of gender formation and the deploying of gardening as an ecological activity which is anti-establishment in nature. It seeks to go beyond postcolonial implications of garden-making to understanding the very structures that engendered cultural imperialism and nationalist fervor and the roles of green spaces and cultivation in the same as seen in works of fiction from nineteenth to twenty first century. The thesis seeks to contribute to existing scholarship by taking into account the links between colonial apparatus, religion and the metaphor of cultivation of the land and the self as well as delving into the paradisical notions of the garden as pristine nature and sexual bliss and transgression. The following section offers an overview of the core chapters of the thesis.

III

The Garden and the Nation

The English landscape garden of the late eighteenth century is a marker of the nation’s ideas of class, taste and culture. Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* writes how the country estate gardens in literature present a pastoral symbol, a landscape of bounty, and carefully excludes the labour and people behind its upkeep, making it look

like the natural order of things (32). The pastoral, by definition, prioritises beauty over utility and was implicit in the landscape aesthetics of the period, evident in the work of architects like Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton who would flatten out or remove anything that would come in the way of the view. The English landscape garden, a supposed reflection of nature, is thus achieved through a removal of any seemingly ugly form in the landscape.

In *Mansfield Park* (1814), Austen critiques this kind of significance attributed to beauty which is achieved through the pushing aside of the facts of production. Rushworth wishes to radically alter and improve his Sotherton estate by handing it over to Repton and does not want to have anything to do with the process. Mary Crawford shares his view and states how the improvement at her uncle's estate was an absolute horror as they witnessed the dirt and dust. In a similar vein of how anything seemingly ugly should take place out of sight. Henry Crawford, an improver himself, suggests the farmyard to be entirely removed at Edmund's living at Thornton Lacey. Fanny, on the other hand, wishes to witness the process of Sotherton improvement and appreciates the gradual improvement at Mrs. Grant's garden where the latter was herself involved. As Edward Said notes how the mention of plantation slavery is met with an eerie silence in the narrative, this further goes on to show how the Antiguan garden involving labour, dirt and exploitation to pushed aside to make way for the beautiful Mansfield estate.

This pastoral picture of the nation was overturned in the twentieth century when in the wake of the world wars and the subsequent food shortage, nations were called upon to grow their own food. With beautiful estate gardens making way for the farm land, labour took the centrestage in the national narrative. Through the cultivation of such gardens, nations were seen as cultivating victory and thus these gardens came to be known as 'victory gardens' (Along with the shift to utility, the national fabric was defined by another change whereby women came to be a part of the work force.

Cecilia Wygant in *Cultivating Victory* (2013), writes how the feminist movements across nations paved the way for an increased visibility of women in the labour market and facilitated the formation of The Women's Land Army (6). Rhys Bowen's *The Victory Garden* (2019) depicts scenes from the victory garden cultivation in the twentieth century. Emily Bryce, an twenty year old free spirited woman from an aristocratic family enrolls herself in the Woman's Land Army inviting the ire of her

family and challenging the national ideal of femininity, that of the angel in the house. The image of the beautiful women taking a stroll in the estate gardens in Austen's time is replaced by the image of women cultivating the farm gardens in the novel.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the garden metaphor is central to the nationalist fabric of Puritan America of the seventeenth century which finds itself creating a new Eden out of the hostile wilderness in the New World. The Puritans arriving in America, escaping the suppression of the Old World, saw this land as a paradisiacal heaven, a New Zion, and it is this myth that Hawthorne draws upon in this tale of sin, retribution and suppression nature—human and non-human. The narrative presents scenes from the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony where Hester, a young married woman is convicted of adultery and made to wear the letter A as a badge of shame for the rest of her life. Commenting on and critiquing Puritan strictures and hypocrisy, the narrative makes use of the metaphor of gardening or culturing to draw parallels between the suppression of human desires and the literal taming of wilderness forming the foundational myth of the American Eden.

The narrative of the New Eden and the American nation are again explored in Paul Auster's *Moon Palace* (1989) where the protagonist Fogg and his journey and experiences across the country undermines the optimism associated with the myth seen as the basis of the American Dream. In one of the episodes where the penniless Fogg escapes to Central Park, the narrative offers cues as to how the park, a national symbol, fails to be a democratic site and shelter Fogg, in a reenactment of its non-democratic and exploitative foundations where marginalized communities dwelling on the park site were evicted for the purposes of beautification of the city. The Central Park episode alongside other Edenic images in the narrative also hint at similar dispossession and removal of the Indians from the American, in a metaphoric clearing of wilderness for the new garden world, pointing at the exploitative foundations of the New Nation.

The Garden and the Sacred

As an act of imposing order on nature, gardening transforms chaos into cosmos. This act of cosmicising, as Eliade writes in *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957), is a way of turning a space into a sacred space. In *The Secret Garden* (1911), the three children-Mary, Dickon and Collin discover the garden- locked up for ten years and gone wild-and

clear up some space turning it into their hideout. This can be seen as a replication of the colonizer settling in a territory and civilizing the same. The garden is seen as animated by Magic which, Durkheim states, "takes a professional pleasure in profaning holy things" ((40) and which was seen with suspicion in the Victorian period. Using Marcel Mauss' observations on Magic the chapter seeks to show how the sacralising process of the garden involves a turning of Magic into a sacred providential force akin to the appropriation of Orientalist Magic by colonial specialists.

The *hortus conclusus* or the enclosed garden symbolic of Virgin Mary as depicted in the Song of Songs is a sacred space. In *The Forgotten Garden* (2008), this idea is overturned as the garden at the end of Blackhurst Manor inhabited by Eliza comes to be seen as a dangerous space of forbidden sexuality and female creativity. Writing fairy tales in the garden, Eliza comes to represent something of a fairy herself, an entity which came to seen with increasing fear and bemusement in the Victorian era, and associated with unrestrained sexuality (Silver 9). The image of the virgin as the enclosed garden or the *hortus conclusus* is overturned by Eliza who has a child with Nathaniel in the cottage. The garden with its teeming energy poses a threat to sacred space of the Victorian household with angels in the house overseen by a patriarch.

The dangers of profanation of the sacred space lead to violent acts of expulsion and purification. In *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013), Rohan's garden, a microcosm of the nation of Pakistan, mirrors such acts of violence undertaken in order to protect the land of the pure. The paradise garden in Islam is seen as a sacred space and a microcosm of the world. In the garden, Rohan lays the foundation of his school named Ardent Spirit by sprinkling soil brought from six sacred Islamic sites and reenacts the carving out of Pakistan from a colonial territory. The school which was later shifted to another site, in a reenactment of the moving away of Pakistan from paradisiacal vision, came to be sabotaged by fundamentalists and extremists who sought to purge the land of dissidents. The garden also becomes the site of contemplation of the fall of Islamic glory as the pomegranates in the garden lead to discussions on the fall of Granada, the place named after the fruit and a holy Islamic site. Rohan also speaks of how the natural world as the emblem of God's providence came to be profaned by the advent of science and botanical inquiry.

Mircea Eliade notes how the sacred is marked by a break in space, that is, a break in its homogeneity. The sacred space, he notes, is opposed to the geometrical understanding of the world whereby space is demarcated and mapped to be bought and sold as property and commodity. Michael K's act of gardening in Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), offers a staunch critique of such desacralisation. Not sure of whether it is actually his mother's ancestral property, K nevertheless scatters her ashes in the ground which "marks the beginning of his life as a cultivator" (59). He takes to gardening for its own sake and sees himself as a steward taking care of the earth. He experiences what Eliade calls "hierophany" (11) or a "manifestation of the sacred" (11) and is overwhelmed and filled with gratitude while eating from the first crop of pumpkins. The sacralised land of the garden however soon meets with the homogenising forces of the state which takes over the place and fills the ground with landmines where pumpkins existed. The doctor who meets K at the camp sees him as a mystical figure who does not garden for the market but is instead a steward of the earth.

The Garden and Sexuality

Gardens and the act and metaphor of gardening lend themselves to gendered and sexual implications. While the wilderness has gothic associations the garden is imbued with pastoral overtones. In the space of the garden, nature can be shaped, managed and given understandable forms. Nature is seen as an unruly female to be tamed and cultivated by men. The space of the garden is thus equated with desirable femininity. The Medieval hortusconclusus or the enclosed garden is equated with Virgin Mary, her sexuality closed and protected. The garden of Eden is seen as a sinful space where Eve is tempted and in turn tempts Adam. In *Sons and Lovers* (1913), we find how such equation of women with different kinds of garden makes Paul make sense of the different kinds of femininity that he comes to encounter. His mother, in whose garden he has his first impressions of nature, is equated with find the domestic space of home which he tries to break away from. Miriam exhibiting passion in forms other than Paul's liking, is equated with a nunnery garden while Clara is seen as Eve sinning in a paradisical garden and tempting Paul with her free spiritedness.

The husbandsman takes possession of the land the way he possesses the female body and seeds the same. Here fecundity is seen as a male attribute whereby the men act upon the women and land which are seen as passive. This is noted by Simone de

Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) where she looks at the history of agriculture to understand the roots of the gendered worldview. This idea is used to reflect upon the garden metaphor in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), where the masculinist impetus of the Edenic myth of creation and the gendered understanding of garden seeding is subverted. The protagonist Evelyn initially seems to be in an Adamic role by symbolically taking possession of the American wilderness by impregnating Leilah, a woman equated with the American chaotic landscape. Later, he is abducted and taken to Beulah- an underground facility operated by a group of women and headed by Mother who first equates herself with the garden of Eden, playing on the traditionalist notion of the garden as a woman's body and then turns Evelyn into the same Eden by castrating him and seeing him as a prairie waiting to be seeded by semen collected in their sperm bank.

Doreen Massey in *Space, Place and Gender* (1994), notes how women in the home and hearth and men going out and about earning their bread or socializing leads to a gendered demarcation of spaces. She notes how such spaces as parks, streets can be seen as male spaces owing to the presence of the 'flaneur'—a term originally used for the male frequenting public spaces in Paris and associated with male gaze (234). The idea of the flaneur is used to understand the sexual implications of the park and garden spaces in *Lolita* (1955). Humbert, a pedophiliac, sees America as the land of parks and gardens where 'nymphets' (15) frequently appear. He finds himself frequenting the parks and takes up the role of flaneur gazing at girls.

The botanical explorations lead by men where nature in the form of plants is procured and tamed in the home gardens and even converted to valuable resources adding to personal and national coffers has gendered implications. In *The Signature of All Things* (2013), Henry Whittaker who idealizes Joseph banks travels far and wide in order to first procure plants for Banks and later, for his own business venture and soon turns into a pharmaceutical magnate. His White Acre estate is one of staggering dimensions and its gardens and greenhouses are the centre of his business ventures involving pharmaceutical plants. Henry's character and enterprise is suggestive of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 77) while his father, the caretaker and gardener at Kew, quietly going about his work and taking care of plants and seen as weakly by his son is be read as an example of 'subordinated masculinity' (Connell 79).

The Garden and the Anthropocene

Donna Haraway notes how the discourse surrounding the Anthropocene is dominated by a feeling of cataclysm on one hand and a supreme confidence on technological fixtures on the hand. A nostalgic return to the idyllic past is one of the ways of coming to terms to with the changing landscape of the present. Such landscapes often seen as a way of Edenic bliss of childhood innocence is often located in the country which Raymond Williams is traditionally sees as a place of innocence (Williams, *The Country* 1) and features country houses and gardens. This kind of response, Emma Marris notes in *The Rambunctious Garden* (2011), undermines any conservation activity in the present as it does not take into account hybrid landscapes of the present as nature.

As the idea of pristine wilderness is practically nonexistent in the present times, she urges people to take note of the backyard spaces and pavements etc. and to create "rambunctious gardens" (2) or nature that can be created everywhere. Phillipa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) focuses on garden nostalgia as a return to a Victorian past and a failure to take account of the existent possibilities of conservation. Tom, who is made to stay in the cramped up flat of the Kitsons in twentieth century England, finds respite as he slips to a fantastic Victorian garden at the thirteenth stroke of the clock. The actual site of this idyllic garden, which comes alive at midnight is a neglected backyard in an urban setup and this juxtaposes the two kinds of spaces differentiated by time. The juxtaposition also draws attention to how such backyards are not considered nature enough, a fact noted by Marris, thus ignoring any ecological effort in the urban landscape.

Haraway uses the term 'plantationocene' (Haraway et al. 556) which refers to the systemic relocation of plants and humans set in motion by the plantation system and fuelling massive geological changes(Haraway et al. 557). Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* (2009) is a critique of plantationocene as depicted in the previous novel in the trilogy *Oryx and Crake* (2003) where large plantations mostly operated by machines serve to generate profits rather than quality food and overthrow small planters. Here the environmentalist group named God's Gardeners take to gardening in an abandoned rooftop and offer an ecological way of life. As a way of 'making kin', (Haraway, *Staying* 2), the Gardeners see the wildlife as human companion and reclaim park spaces in order to bury the dead which they believe will merge with the plant life.

The pastoral image of the parks in the colonies is undercut by its colonialist insinuations. The space of the park presents an image of an ordered space, an alternate to nature in the urban areas, a beautiful space devoid of labour. In JhumpaLahiri's*The Lowland* (2013), the Tolly Club and its park grounds become a nostalgic image of an age bygone for some, like Subhash and Udayan's father, and this image is undercut by Udayan's observations on the park's exclusivist land use. As opposed to such recourse to the pastoral, Bela's gardening initiative in the urban areas points to an alternative way of reclaiming nature in the Anthropocene, positing an ethic of stewardship.

IV

The garden in fiction should thus be seen in continuum with its critical reception in art history, philosophy and mythology. These branches lend the act of gardening and the Edenic metaphor its ideological imperatives. Central to the idea of gardening is taming which cuts through national, gendered, religious and ecological imperatives. Apart from its immediate aesthetic or utilitarian ends, gardens have been linked since antiquity, as the history of gardening tells us, with the processes of civilizing, of nation, of the female body and of nature.

Agriculture, for instance, gave rise to permanent settlement, which, in turn, made way for urbanisation and, by implication, civilisation. The conquest of nations and imperialism is seen to take on botanical forms where the planting of gardens on foreign soil imply a taming of the same on one hand, and, on the other, flora is carried from the colonies and acclimatized to home turf. The act of gardening therefore implies an act of nation and empire building. This is also done by way of gardening styles such as the English landscape garden or by cultivating food in the spirit of nationalism during wartime.

Philosophically, the garden is seen as a heterotopic space by Foucault who sees the garden, particularly the Persian garden or the 'chaharbagh' as containing multiple spaces and a microcosm of the world. In another case, the example of gardening in Voltaire's *Candide*is looked at as a way of mindful engagement in work which prevents one from misery. Bauman sees the act of gardening as a metaphor for the modern state's bureaucratic organisation, control, disciplining, taming and weeding, its opposition to the state of nature which led to the Holocaust. The Edenic overtures of the garden invite

religious associations where it is seen, for example in Christianity as a nostalgic site to be looked back on and in Islam, as a site of perfection. The gardens often represent attempts to recreate such spaces of perfection, bliss and contemplation on earth. Entire nations such as Pakistan or the Puritan New World are modelled on the idea of purity of paradise and blissful heaven respectively.

The idea of taming the wild takes the form of oppression as individual forms of expression are curtailed. Gardens aid in nation building in the form of plantations and parks. While one becomes the marker of slavery and exploitation and provides the raw material and wealth for the functioning of the estate, the other serves as beautiful city spaces, often built to the further national glory, and at the cost of dispossession of hundreds. Further, the idea of taming can be extended to the taming of female body by male redoing of the land-as-body trope. Cloistered gardens in the Medieval England or the zenana gardens are examples of how the gardens serve as emblems of virginity and female segregation respectively.

The explorers' accounts of foreign lands contain tales of the virgin land waiting to be tamed. Ecologically speaking, the garden plays a significant role in narratives surrounding the Anthropocene. While on one hand, the garden serves as the image of the nature lost in the form of lost Eden and nostalgia, scholars like as Emma Marris note how it offers hope by way of urban gardening, reclaiming of city spaces, and creating more nature by way of stewardship. An appraisal of these issues requires us to examine these in their literary counterparts which offers perspectives into how the ideological schema of gardening shapes the individual and in turn, the planet.