

Postmodernist Perspectives: A Study of the Select Novels of Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**



Research Supervisor
Dr. Naveen Kumar Mehta
Head & Associate Professor
Department of English
SUBIS, Sanchi, Raisen

Submitted By
Muskan Solanki
Ph. D. Research Scholar
Department of English
SUBIS, Sanchi, Raisen
Enrollment No. – En16-00008

Department of English
School of Language, Literature and Arts
Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies
Sanchi, Raisen (M.P.)
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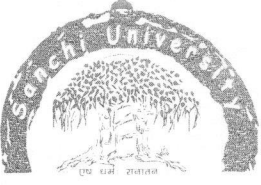
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Dr. Naveen K Mehta
Associate Professor & Head
Department of English,
SUBIS, Sanchi, Raisen

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***Dedicated to my dear Nana Ji
(Late Shri Kedar Singh Sikarwar)...***

PREFACE

The age of Postmodernism is quite interesting but at the same time bewildering as well. The reason being that on one hand it follows few aspects of modernism but on the other hand it negates modernism by stating it as irrational. The word 'post' in postmodernism is a prefix which means 'after' or 'later than'. It is more than the 'next phase' of an already existing trend. The use of 'post' enabled the new philosophers and thinkers to deny and negate all that had happened earlier and to reach a point of post-progress, post-history, post-reason and a realm in which consistency, connectedness, general truths had lost their validity.

The term 'postmodernism' was first used by Arnold Toynbee in 1947 to describe a contemporary western world in crisis, when people struggled to make sense of a century characterized by conflict and mass genocide, leading to the questioning of traditional moral values and beliefs. The postmodern period is greatly influenced by the critical theories such as Post-Structuralism, Existentialism, Nihilism, Psycho-analysis, Apocalyptic theory, Surrealism, Deconstruction etc. The common themes and techniques of postmodern period are the use of Irony, Playfulness, Black humor; Intertextuality, Pastiche, Metafiction, Fabulation, Poiumena, Historiographic metafiction, Temporal distortion, Magic realism, Technoculture and hyperreality; Paranoia, Maximalism, Minimalism and Fragmentation.

It is instrumental in exploring and developing new methodologies viz., localism, deconstruction, fragmentation and the like. It accepts the differences of truth, reality, rationality, culture and language so that each and every section of society can find their due representation. Postmodernism believes that it is impossible to have a correct description of Reality.

The postmodern novels depicted the problems faced due to the dislocations caused by war, anguish and horrors of the holocaust, the anxieties of atomic age and also encompassed

the use of magical realism, metafiction, and the graphic novel. Modern novels exhibit a playfulness of language, less reliance on traditional values, and experimentation with how time is conveyed in the story. The representative postmodern novelists are Alice Walker, Truman Capote, Alex Haley, Erica Jong, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, John Barth, Kurt Vonnegut, William S. Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon along with others. The post-war years also witnessed the introduction and increase in the number of women novelists. Among them Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch have contributed significantly and their works represent elements of postmodernism in plenty.

However, it is very important to mention that less research studies have been attempted to explore the different aspects of postmodernism especially on the select women novelists, therefore, the present research study has been taken and the emphasis is given on the select novels of these women novelists that represents postmodern perspectives. In order to deal with such an immense domain of research, the present research study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is titled Introduction and thus, is introductory in nature and provides an outline survey of English Novels, it highlights the concept of Modernism and Postmodernism and discusses the select novelists and their contribution. The major emphasis is given on the writing techniques and themes incorporated in postmodern literature.

The second chapter is Emotional Intensity and therefore, it explores the emotional intensity in Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. This chapter analyses human nature and emotions, it unfolds psychological significance of human behaviour and relationships and presents intricacies of human relationships as observed in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The third chapter is about Existential Pursuit in Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori*. It covers issues such as the notion of fear and death, complexities and uncertainties of human life and modern versus old value system.

The fourth chapter is on Vices and Virtues as portrayed by Iris Murdoch in her novel *Under the Net*. This chapter discusses appearance and reality, shows significance and importance of silence, symbols and images and explores philosophy of Solipsism. The fifth chapter presents a critical study on Conflicting Conditions in Iris Murdoch's novel *The Bell*. This chapter is very helpful in developing a critical understanding of religious and spiritual pathways, gender binary issues and challenges and emergence of new relationships. The penultimate chapter i.e. sixth chapter discusses Moral Vision in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*. It covers thematic aspects related to ethics and morality, love and obsession and self-delusion and nostalgia in the select novel. The chapter number seventh is concluding in nature and therefore it has an overview of previous chapters, it presents major findings and discusses future scope of the study.

Thus, the present research study makes an attempt to understand the thoughts, ideas and views of postmodernism and its influence on the select novels. To study the major critical theories propounded by the postmodern thinkers and philosophers that influenced postmodernism as well as to explore the postmodern techniques and perspectives in the select novels of the British Postmodern women novelists. The research study examines the idea of existentialism; the intensity and power of emotions/feelings; analyses the concept of realism, symbolism, moral vision and conflicting conditions as portrayed in the select novels of Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Title	Abbreviated Form	Year of Publication	Edition cited in the present Research Study
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie	PMJB	1961	Penguin Modern Classics, 2000
Memento Mori	MM	1959	Virago Modern Classics, 2018
Under The Net	UTN	1954	Vintage Books, 2002
The Bell	Bell	1958	Vintage Books, 2004
The Sea, The Sea	SS	1978	Vintage Books, 1999

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An Outline Survey of English Novels
 - 1.2 The Concept of Modernism and Postmodernism
 - 1.3 The Select Novelists and their Contribution
-

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Outline Survey of English Novels

The amalgamation of plot, character, thought, action, dialogue, setting of an event and a narrative technique resulting into an extended story in prose is generally termed as novel. The story of the novel is centered on human emotion, feeling and experience. The novel forms an important part of English Literature. It serves various purposes differing from its reader to reader. For some, it could be the most apt way to escape from the grim realities of life, whereas, for some it is the way of experiencing an entire new world. A novel has a huge canvas to paint. It has plethora of characters holding their own individual aura, personality and attitude pictured after fixing the canvas in accordance with the plot of novel. It offers the readers a pleasure of reading either in public or private, suggests a new meaning to life or an opportunity to create something on their own. Thus, while reading a novel, a reader gets connected to the story and hence it satisfies the human nature and caters to the need of every sort of ideologies of human mind. According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

the term novel is derived from Italian *novella*, meaning ‘tale, piece of news’, and is now applied to a wide variety of writings whose only common attribute is that they are extended pieces of prose fiction. The term ‘extended’ is being used in regard to the length of the novel as the length of the novel varies greatly and how long a novel should be to be a novel not a novel or a long short story or a short novel or a *novella*. In contemporary practice, a novel is generally agreed to be between sixty thousand words to two lac words (477).¹

The subject matter of the novel has undergone a sea change with the passage of time. Earlier, the novels dealt with the social, political, religious and psychological issues. The stream-of-consciousness technique emerged in the writings of modern novelists. On the contrary, the postmodern novels written post the Second World War highlights the situations raised post-war years. It also focuses on the fragmentary nature of life, dark humor, ambiguity and on the top of all discarding the notion of absolute truth.

The novel is one of the most popular and widely used genres of literature in current times, irrespective of the fact that it originated and developed much later after other genres such as poetry and drama. The novel as a genre of literary fiction writing reached its apex in the Eighteenth century and later flourished during the Victorian era. However, the origin of the novel may trail back to the ancient Greece and Rome. The medieval stories known as ‘romances’ epitomized the tales of love and adventure, as seen in *The Satyricon*, a Latin work of fiction written by Gaius Petronius in first century and *Metamorphoses* (sometimes referred to as *The Golden Ass*) by Apuleius. They are known as the Roman novels. Later, around the fourteenth century the Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) also composed a collection of novellas – *The Decameron*. Like Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, it also painted the life of that time. Hence, it is often regarded as a gem of classical early Italian prose. In Italian, such works are termed as ‘novelle’, meaning a ‘piece of news’, ‘tale’, or simply ‘a fresh story.’

Murasaki Shikibu, a noblewoman authored the world's first novel in the early eleventh century. *The Tale of Genji* (1010) which is a classic work of Japanese literature often reckoned as the first modern psychological novel but it is still debatable as there were works composed earlier. The other prominent precursors of this form of writing are Thomas Malory, his widely known

Middle English Prose romance *Morte d'Arthur* is regarded as a fine example of romance i.e. story or series of stories of the legendary past.

The Elizabethan England inherited much of the classic works in English from the medieval age or the Fourteenth Century Literature. It acquired as heritage Chaucer's highly finished tales and the moralized stories of John Gower. It received the pastoral poetic romances and collections of novelle from famous Italian poets such as Torquato Tasso and Aristo. The Renaissance writers gathered ideas from various foreign works such as the tales of necromancy from Germany, the adventurous stories of shipwrecks and pirates from France and Greece and the picaresque novel from Spain. Elizabethan writers acquired inspiration from various influential writers and their works belonging to the early years.

The form and subject matter of Elizabethan novel or fiction has transformed a lot and the age witnessed a variety of fiction such as:

- the Romances of John Lyly, Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge;
- the Pastoral novel of Philip Sidney;
- the Picaresque novel of Thomas Nash and
- the Realistic novel of Nicolas Breton (Mundra 243).²

The Elizabethan fiction writers were both romantic and realistic and so laid the early foundation for English novel in the form of writing prose fiction. In the order of publication, the most prominent was John Lyly who wrote *Euphues* and *The Anatomy of Wit*. *Euphues* presents the story of a young man who left the University of Athens to see the world, develops a romantic friendship with a young man of his age whose ladylove gets attracted towards him and thus it

builds one of the first stories of the eternal love triangle. Lyly's *Euphues* is more important for its style rather than its subject matter.

Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge were among the keen followers of both Eupheism and the writings of Lyly. Greene's novels were inspired by Lyly but were moral in tone and highly romantic. His some of the major works were *Pandosto*, *Menaphon* and *Mamillia*. Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* was one of the gems produced in the Elizabethan age. It was written as a pastoral romance and often regarded as a main source of inspiration of William Shakespeare's famous pastoral play *As You Like It*. Similarly, Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, a pastoral romance; Thomas Nashe's picaresque narrative *The Unfortunate Traveller: or, the Life of Jake Wilton* and Thomas Deloney's realistic tales such as *Jake of Newbury* and *The Gentle Craft* were some of the noteworthy works of the age. The Spanish masterpiece *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes is other great name in the field of novel writing.

The English novel took a turn in the latter half of the seventeenth century. From the heroic romances that were prevailed earlier, the novel shifted to realism and true and practical depiction of the problems of Middle class society. The readers were more keen into science and technology and thus the tradition of romance declined.

The Royal society formed in 1660 exercised a potent influence in bringing the readers and the writers on the path of sanity, rationality; realism and urged them to sever all ties with romancers moving in a world of fanciful delights, vague imaginations and chimeras. Thus after a few decades of the seventeenth century English fiction took to new lines of realism, and if traces of romance still continued as in tales of roguery and adventure, they were kept subordinated to the over-

powering passion for realism. This change from romance to realism, from roguery to morality was mainly brought about by John Bunyan, Aphra Ben and Daniel Defoe (Mundra 450-451).³

John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim Progress*, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, *The Holy War* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are great examples who paved the way for later novelists. Aphra Ben is one of the first English woman writers to earn her living by her writing. She adapted to the changes in attitude and taste of writing of her age and wrote attentively. She broke all the cultural barriers and served as a literary role model for later generations of women writers. She is remembered for her novel *Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave*.

It is still debatable as to which piece of work could be credited as being the first English novel as many critics consider Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1719 as the first English novel. It is believed that English Fiction really begins with Defoe. Though, there are other critics who favor Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* or *Virtue Rewarded* published in 1740 as first English novel due to its well-crafted plot and technique. As a matter of fact, Samuel Richardson is regarded as the originator of the form of novel and rightly referred to as the Father of English Novel. All these noteworthy writers had a deep influence and played a major role in the development of English Fiction during the seventeenth century.

There was a phenomenal growth of novel during the eighteenth century as there was a steep decline of the theatre and drama and also there was a rise in the publication of periodical essays and even in its readership by common people. The novel also provided a wider scope of treatment for the inner life of common people; their motives and feelings. The eighteenth century witnessed prolific novelists such as Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Mrs. Radcliffe who

all enriched the English novel by their exceptional works. During this period the Four Wheels of the English Novel also emerged and helped to sow seeds for the Modern novel.

The prominent figure Henry Fielding authored many eminent novels including the celebrated picaresque novel *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* or *Tom Jones* as well as *Joseph Andrews*. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* is a direct response in form of a parody to Richardson's *Pamela*. The other two prominent pioneers in this genre are Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne. Smollett is best known for his picaresque novels such as *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* and so on. His writings influenced later nineteenth century novelists such as Charles Dickens. Sterne is still remembered for his masterpiece *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* and *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. The later novelists of the eighteenth century include Oliver Goldsmith who authored the earliest domestic novel in English *The Vicar of Wakefield: A Tale, Supposed to be written by Himself*. Fanny Burney is among the first great woman novelists who published *Evelina* in 1778. Horace Walpole, William Beckford and Mrs. Ann Radcliffe are such other prominent figures in the genre of novel writing.

The nineteenth century marked the development of novel in various aspects. It reformed and refined the stylistic art of writing novel completely. Jane Austen is one of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century Literature. Her domestic novels received huge popularity and attained unmatched perfection. She was a realistic novelist among the other writers of her age. Her notable novels include *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion* and so on and so forth. Sir Walter Scott initiated the historical novel with a blend of picaresque details combined with romantic feelings. He popularized historical romances which paved the way for later historical novelists such as Dickens and Thackeray.

Scott's major emphasis was on nationality rather than the individuality of his characters. He used historical facts combined with his romantic imagination. He was deeply interested in the Scottish life and discussed Scottish culture and tradition in his novels. Muriel Spark being a Scottish writer was highly influenced by Scott. There are various intertextual elements in her novels taken from Scott's work. Some of his well-known novels include *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *Old Mortality*, *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth* and *The Talisman*. The other minor novelists after Scott were William Harrison Ainsworth, George P. R. James, Charles Lever, Thomas Love Peacock, Mary Godwin Shelley and so on. Mary Shelley was a Gothic romancer. Her novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* published in 1818 is considered an early example of science fiction and gained wide popularity as well. It paved the way for the scientific romances of the modern age.

The Victorian age is regarded as the age of the novel because during this period the genre of novel flourished and made phenomenal progress. "The novel is a vehicle best equipped to present a picture of life lived in a given society against a stable background of social and moral values... (Mundra 193)." ⁴ Therefore, the social backdrop of the age helped the novel to grow and develop.

The early Victorian novelists such as Benjamin Disraeli, Anthony Trollope, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Reade focused on the social, political, economic aspects of the Victorian society rather than the Middle Ages or the life of romance. Realism became a chief characteristic of the Victorian novel. The Victorian novelists followed the path of Scott and the age witnessed huge number of historical novels. Charles Dickens was one of the most important figures in the genre of novel writing in fiction. With his exceptional writings, the art of composing novel transformed and entered a new phase. He has incorporated the use of autobiographical elements, humor, pathos and thus developed more complex plots. His novels are

of great human interest as his main motive was to reform the society. He very aptly portrays the life of London including both lower and middle class people. He has painted a whole world of evergreen characters. His celebrated novels are *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Hard Times*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and so on. Few other novelists such as Charles Reade also carried the tradition of Scott's historical novel. He is best known as the author of *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

During the Victorian era, the novelist who was often reckoned as next best to Charles Dickens was William Makepeace Thackeray. He was proficient in writing the novels of idea. He is known exclusively for his novel *Vanity Fair*. He is best known for the use of irony and satire in his works. Few readers and critics rank *The History of Henry Esmond* as his greatest work as it expressed the Victorian values with utmost depth and realistic touch. The novelist who stands midway between Thackeray and Henry James is George Eliot. She was the center point between the old and the new novel. Her actual name was Mary Ann Evans. She used the pseudonym George Eliot for publishing her novels. Some of her popular works are *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner* and *Middlemarch*. Her novels are noted for psychological as well as philosophical insight and realism.

The other important minor novelists of the late nineteenth century include the political and social novelist Charles Kingsley. He was a social reformer and had a keen interest in history as clearly reflected in several of his writings such as *The Heroes*, a Children's book based on Greek Mythology. His other historical novels are *Hypatia*, *Hereward the Wake* and *Westward Ho!* He is highly acclaimed for his novel *Alton Locke* which is about social injustice faced by workers and agricultural laborers. Other novelists and their novels which gained readers attention and praise were Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, *North and*

South, *Sylvia's Lovers* and so on. Anthony Trollope is noted for his series of novels collectively known as the *Chronicles of Barsetshire*. His novels raised very topical matters comprising social, political and gender issues. His novel *Phineas Finn* is also a significant work throwing light on his insights and thoughts about the politics of that time.

Quite contrasting to the writings of Jane Austen, thirty years later arrived the brilliant phase of Brontë Sisters. Among the three, the eldest sister Charlotte Brontë contributed great novels which became classics of English Literature. Her works include *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and *The Professor*. She published under the pen name of Currer Bell. Emily Jane Brontë is best known for her only novel *Wuthering Heights*, which holds a significant status in English Literature. She published her works under the pen name Ellis Bell. The youngest member of the Brontë literary family Anne Brontë authored less as compared to her sisters and couldn't receive much popularity and readership. Her two novels *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Like her sisters, Anne also published her poems and two novels under a masculine pseudonym Action Bell. They also jointly published a volume of poetry entitled *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Action Bell*. The reason behind adopting the masculine names was to avoid the prevailing prejudice against female writers of that time. Although they retained the first letter of their names and therefore Charlotte became Currer Bell, Emily became Ellis Bell and Anne became Action Bell.

Towards the later nineteenth century, the two novelists who acquired the limelight were George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. Meredith was a satirist who focused more on the character psychology rather than the plot of the story. His novels include *The Shaving of Shagpat*, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *Evan Harrington*, *The Egoist*, *Diana of the Crossways* and so on and so forth. He anticipated psycho-analytical ways and methods to study the head and heart of his characters. Thomas Hardy was one of the most prominent Victorian novelists, who gave new

insight and depth to the English novel. He was highly influenced by Romanticism and the poetry of William Wordsworth. His notions about the Victorian society were very critical and especially of the declining status of rural people of Britain. He reckoned himself first as a poet and later as a novelist. Though he is highly acclaimed for his novels such as *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. His novels are set in a semi-fictional region of Wessex. The novels often portray tragic characters, who, are in constant battle with their own human passions and social circumstances.

The twentieth century or the Modern age witnessed arrival of new values and approaches in the field of social, political, economic and literary life. "The literature and life of the modern age governed more by realism than by romance" (Mundra 323).⁵ The rapid growth in Science and Technology gave materialistic sense to the traditional values of life. The modern age became the age of machinery and gave rise to the commercialization of art, literature and music. The sense of spiritualism and religion has lost its true sense and materialism has taken its place in the modern age. The loss of values and tradition created a feeling of frustration and pessimism in the humans. The problems of modern life are clearly reflected in the works of modern age writers.

In modern times, the novel has proved to be the most apt medium of instruction and delineation of social problems of the age. According to Hugh Walpole, twentieth century is the age of great novels rather than novelists. Though, novel gained popularity in the Victorian age yet it achieved glory and heights in the hands of the modern novelists like Henry James, Samuel Butler, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennet, John Galsworthy and Joseph Conrad. They are known as the Edwardians. They were the early modern novelists. After this, a new chain of novelists came known as the Georgian novelists including Hugh Walpole, Somerset Maugham, Charles Morgan and J. B. Priestley. Later, challenging the writings of both Edwardians and Georgian novelists

came a new era of modern novelists like Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. The post-war years also marks the arrival of new and fresh set of novelists.

The modern novel primarily focuses on the social issues and a way to escape from the harsh realities to a world full of romance and adventure. Similarly, it also provides a medium to discuss prevailing issues in detail. Initially, the modern novel was considered as the *novel of ideas*. There is a touch of realism in the novels of this age. The modern novelists bring forth into light the importance of human psychology and the role of emotions in life. The modern novelists incorporated the stream-of-conscious technique to reveal the internal ongoing psyche of the characters, which is the key aspect in understanding of an individual. The modern age witnessed the beginning of new types of novel such as detective fiction, science fiction, biographical fiction and psychological fiction as well. Thus, with the arrival of Modern literature, the genre of novel became popular and the most used medium for expressing ideas. The popularity of novel grew immensely and thus it developed different kinds and genres. Such as:

Table 1

Popular Types of Novel

S. No.	Types	S. No.	Types
1	The Historical Novel	9	The Detective Novel
2	The Picaresque Novel	10	The Social Novel
3	The Epistolary Novel	11	The Proletarian Novel
4	The Sentimental Novel	12	The Psychological Novel
5	The Domestic Novel	13	The Stream of Consciousness Novel
6	The Gothic Novel	14	The Anti Novel
7	The Science Fiction Novel	15	The Nouveau Roman (New Novel)
8	The Regional Novel	16	The Bildungsroman

Source: Based on Review of Literature

Henry James is the renowned American-British author who holds a very distinctive place in the history of English novel. He was a prolific writer and produced a variety of novels, short stories, criticism and autobiographical sketches. He is considered as a chief transitional figure between realism and modernism. His famous works are *The American*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and so on. He also presents his theory of novel in his critical work *The Art of Fiction*. George Moore and George Gissing are the other writers of the age. They both are realists and depicted the harsh sufferings of life in their works realistically. Moore's notable works are *A Modern Lover*, *Spring Days* and *Esther Waters*. The other novelists of the age are James Matthew Barrie, Samuel Butler, Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy.

Rudyard Kipling is the most versatile writer of the modern age. He was born in India and his works are full of Indian touch and sensibility. The Indian life and culture is clearly seen in his novels. Kipling is also known for his portrayal of animal life in his works. Kipling's famous works are *The Jungle Book*, *Kim* and *Captains Courageous*. H. G. Wells is regarded as a key novelists of the modern age. He was a prolific writer and produced a number of novels, short stories, works on history, satire, social commentary and even biography and autobiography. He is often remembered for his science fiction novels. He was a true futurist and it would be apt to say that he was very much ahead of his time and in his thinking. His novels delineated with issues on time travel, invisibility, nuclear weapons, space travels and many more. He was a progressive writer and thinker. His most well-known science fiction works are *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds* and the military science fiction *The War in the Air*. Joseph Conrad is one of the most reputed and greatest novelists of the early modern age. His most prominent novels are *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Typhoon*,

Nostromo and so on and so forth. He was a romanticist due his depiction of exotic beautiful lands and his own experience and memory of sea-life. Being a moralist, he focused on the emotions of betrayal and deception. He considered betrayal as one of the greatest sins. He often reflects the principle of trust, fidelity and faith among humans.

The novel writing proliferated from 1918 to 1985 in the hands of remarkable novelists like D. H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. They contributed significantly to the development of modern novel. While discussing the modern novel, the development of the 'stream of consciousness' technique is prerequisite. The term stream-of-consciousness is derived from William James's passage *Principles of Psychology*. However, the technique was first employed by the Russian writer Vsevolod Mikhailovich Garshin in his short story '*Four Days*.' According to the *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, "Stream-of-consciousness is a mode of narration characteristic of early literary modernism in which a character's thought and sense-impressions are presented directly, without conventional dialogue or description and, in many cases, without punctuation" (364).⁶ Virginia Woolf rightfully remarks that, when perfected, the technique of stream-of-consciousness should 'make us feel ourselves seated at the center of another mind.'

James Joyce is regarded as 'a prodigious creative mind' famous for his multi-dimensional novel *Ulysses*. It is a parody of Homer's *Odyssey*. His work *Ulysses* is highly acclaimed because of the incorporation of various literary styles and notably the stream-of-consciousness. His other celebrated novels are *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Finnegans Wake* and a short story collection *Dubliners*. The other most promising novelist of the modern age is E. M. Forster. His prominent novels are *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *The Longest Journey*, *A Room with a View*, *Howards End*, *Maurice* and so on. His most celebrated novel is *A Passage to India* published in

1924. His works deal with class differences in society and hypocrisy in people and system. The other prominent novelists who contributed to the modern novel are J. B. Priestley, Frank Swinnerton, Sir Hugh Walpole, Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley and the like.

The twentieth century marks the period of growth of novel and especially the dominance of women novelists. Around 1930's, the women novelists came into lime light and their works started to get noticed and praised by the readers. They began representing the feminine understanding and issues in their works. The women novelists of the twentieth century are Henry Handel Richardson, May Sinclair, Humphrey Ward, Sarah Grand, Elizabeth Bowen and Ivy Compton-Burnett, Rose Macaulay, Mrs. Clifford, Dorothy Sayers and so on and so forth.

The most distinguished women novelists of the age are Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Agatha Christie and others. Dorothy Richardson is the British author, journalist and an important feminist writer of the modern age. She incorporates feminine point of view and feminine experiences in her works. She tried her hands in the psychological analysis as well. She brilliantly presents the female psychology in her works. She is among the earliest modern novelists to practice the narrative technique of stream-of-consciousness. Dorothy's autobiographical novel sequence *Pilgrimage* published in 1917 is regarded as a notable work of literary modernism. It comprises of thirteen volumes, which she termed as "chapters."

Katherine Mansfield is one of the most noted modernist writers. She wrote short stories and poetry. Her well-known works are *Prelude*, *To the Bay*, *The Fly*, *The Garden Party* and so on. She is praised for her subtle psychological art, her depiction of single emotion and mood as well as intensity of feelings. Agatha Christie is the most popular modern English writer of detective and mystery fiction. She is known for her sixty-six detective novels and fourteen short story

collections. Her murder mystery play *The Mousetrap* published in 1952 is the world's longest-running play. She wrote few of her works under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. She is related to the literary movement of Golden Age of Detective Fiction. The plots of her novel are highly intricate in nature and often follows English detective story formulae and revolves around the fictional private detectives such as Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. Her famous works are *Murder on the Orient Express*, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, *Partners in crime*, *The A. B. C. Murders* along with others.

Virginia Woolf is among the most distinguished and celebrated novelists of the twentieth century. She holds an important place in the history of English novel. She is often reckoned as a pioneer of the narrative device of stream-of-consciousness. She gave it a new touch and twist which is clearly seen in her novels. She followed the technique of internal monologue. She became an integral part of London's literary society during the war period. Her famous works include *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando*. *A Room of One's Own* an extended essay by Woolf also received wide readership. In her essay, she talked about the social injustice and ill practices against women. The repressions faced by women and the lack of freedom and expression are some of the major concerns raised by Woolf. She was one of the central figures in the feminist movement and truly inspired her readers about feminism.

With the demise of great novelists like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the creative phase of English novel also ended. The period since the Second World War witnessed a huge break in the writing tradition of novel. This transition or shift from modern marked an arrival of a new era termed as the postmodern era. The post-war years observed emergence of a new distinctive generation of writers and a renewed pattern of writing English novel. There were many writers

who began their writing career before 1945 but extended it post the war time as well such as Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, George Orwell, Samuel Beckett and the like.

The novel post 1945 and 1950 is also of great importance as there was a revival of the social and liberal novel. The situations raised after war period enhanced the use and value of novel. The major post-war novelists are Kingsley Amis, Anthony Powell, Anthony Burgess, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Doris Lessing, William Golding, John Braine, Alan Sillitoe, John Wain along with others. By the 1960's, the technique of fabulation by Robert Scholes began to emerge as a powerful tool in the English novel. The new set of writers who began their writing career and achieved wide popularity are Margaret Drabble, A. S. Byatt, David Lodge, Angela Carter, Martin Amis, Ian McEwan and so on and so forth. According to Nimavat, the generation of Postmodernist British novelist is divided into four groups:

- I. The Survivors of the Thirties
- II. Post-War Poets
- III. The Angry Young Men
- IV. Golding & Others (89-90)⁷

By the 1950's, the writing trends and tendencies of novel writing prior to the war years exhausted and a new revival emerged by the end of the Second World War. The postmodern novelists right away rejected the notions and pattern evolved by the modernist writers. The postmodern period is evident of the increasing anguish, terror and horror of holocaust and end of the world, the anxieties and worry of atomic age and the changing nature of human.

Evelyn Waugh was a prolific novelist and a journalist. His well-known works include *Decline and Fall*, *A Handful of Dust*, *Put out More Flags*, *Scoop*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Sword of*

Honour, The Loved One and many more. He wrote humorous novels and was famous for his satires about the modern world. He reflected Catholicism in his works evidently. His works reflect his dislike for the ways of modern civilization and the pride and vanity of human desires. Graham Greene was a novelist and a playwright notable for his depiction and exploration of human emotions. He dealt with the condition of the people of the twentieth century. His narrative capability is the strength of his works. His notable works are *The Man Within, The Ministry of Fear, The Heart of the Matter, The Quiet American, The Human Factor* and the like. Both Waugh, Greene along with George Orwell belongs to the Survivors of the Thirties group as their tone was traditional and they remained detached from the modernist realities and writing pattern. Orwell wrote under the pen name Eric Blairs and is famous for his political satire on Stalinism and totalitarian state *Animal Farm* published in 1945. His other famous novels are *Burmese Days* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

C. P. Snow and Anthony Powell are considered as the historians of the post-war period. Snow became popular for his lecture on *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* in 1959. Powell composed excellent comedies and he owes his major work to John Aubrey, the seventeenth century anecdotal biographer. He is highly acclaimed for his sequence of novels entitled *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Snow, Powell along with Joyce Cary are regarded as Post-war poets due to their wide recognition and popularity after war years. Though, they started writing before the war but gained adoration and appreciation only in the postwar years.

Around mid-1950's, a new group of British dramatists as well as novelists belonging to the same period emerged. They got recognition by the British media and accredited a title as The Angry Young Men. Initially, the title was first used by Leslie Paul in his autobiography published in 1951. The members of the group belonged to the young British working lower-middle-class and

became prominent in 1950's. The cultural and political disillusionment of postwar period is reflected in the novels of this group. Due to their background related to working class, they often remained angry and showed their disappointment and criticized the life of 1950s Britain. According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

‘Angry Young Man’ was used to refer both to the protagonists of hard-hitting fiction and drama and to their authors, who frequently shared with their characters a provincial, working-class background. But while critical of the privileges of the metropolitan elite and the fatuousness of consumer society, these young men rarely articulated anything approaching a political vision, and were prone to expressions of nihilistic despair and bouts of misogyny (38-39).⁸

The writers associated with this group are John Osborne, John Wain, John Braine, Doris Lessing, Colin Wilson, Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe and the like. The notable novels of the group are John Wain's *Hurry on Down*, *The Angry Decade* by Kenneth Allsop, John Braine's *Room at the Top*, Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis. John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* became the representative work of the group.

The postwar years witnessed a number of publication by the women writers including Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch, Margaret Drabble along with Elizabeth Bowen, A. S. Byatt and Penelope Mortimer. Muriel Spark is a Catholic writer. Her writing style is very crisp and clear. “She is a highly original talent, that has affiliations with both the wit of Waugh and the vision of Greene” (Prasad 222).⁹ Her stories are created via compact world yet intensely imagined and depictions of evil surrounding in the unexpected corners of the world and moments in character's lives. Her novels are focused and the diction or economy of words is the remarkable quality of

Spark. Her famous novels are *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Memento Mori*, *The Comforters*, *The Driver's Seat* and so on. Iris Murdoch, a novelist and a philosopher, famous for her highly philosophical and deep novels reflecting her interest in the philosophy of existentialism and solipsism. Her notable novels include *Under the Net*, *The Bell*, *The Sea The Sea*, *The Sandcastle* and the like. Margaret Drabble is a true feminist writer. She explores and highlights the confusion of the modern women regarding their freedom and rights. Her well-known works are *The Milestone*, *The Needle's Eye*, *The Ice Age* and the rest. The other eminent postwar or contemporary writers are William Golding, V. S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Angela Carter, Ian McEwan and so on and so forth.

Thus, this sub-chapter sums up with a brief outline survey of English Novels beginning from the Elizabethan till the contemporary period. It covers the major novelists, their notable works and how the novel as a genre of literary writing evolved and gained popularity in the modern and postmodern times.

1.2 The Concept of Modernism and Postmodernism

The term modern is derived “from the late Latin *modernus*, formed from the earlier *modo* (recently) by analogy with the adjective *hodiernus*, meaning ‘of or pertaining to today’ (*hodie* = today) (Macey 259).”¹⁰ It takes multidimensional forms but modern is often used as the opposite of ‘traditional’. Thus, it implies a break or departure from the tendencies of past or prior to the modern times. It is the development post the enlightenment period. According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Modernism is

a comprehensive but vague term for a movement (or tendency) which began to get under way in the closing years of the 19th c. and which had a wide influence internationally

during much of the 20th c. The term pertains to all the creative arts, especially poetry, fiction, drama, painting, music and architecture. There have been various theories as to when the movement (or its tendencies) was at its height (some suggest the 1920s for this) and as to whether the modernist movement is actually over. Some have suggested that modernism, as an innovative and revivifying movement, was played out by the late 1940s, and that it was then that postmodernism began. In fact, such movements, of their nature, do not just start and stop; the evolution is gradual. The impetus and energy of one diminishes (but continues) as the momentum of another burgeons (441).¹¹

Modernism and modernist tendencies initiated from various places and at different intervals of time. It was active and fruitful

in France from the 1890s until the 1940s; in Russia during the prerevolutionary years and the 1920s; in Germany from the 1890s and on during the 1920s; in England from early in the 20th c. and during the 1920s and 1930s; in America from shortly before the First World War and on during the interwar period. Thus, it was a European and transcontinental movement, and its principal centers of activity were the capital cities (442).¹²

In literary history, the modern literature is considered which is being written since the beginning of the First World War i.e. in 1914. “This period has been marked by persistent and multidimensioned experiments in subject matter, form, and style, and has produced major achievements in all the literary genres (Abrams and Harpham 285).”¹³ Though the beginning of modernism as a movement commenced in the early 1900s and continued till the 1940s and 50s. The great poets like W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden and Dylan Thomas; the notable novelists such as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson,

Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Graham Greene and Doris Lessing; the well-known dramatists G. B. Shaw, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard are the major contributors of the modern period. The modern age proved fruitful and important in terms of literary criticism as well because the age gave birth to the most innovative and influential critics like T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis and William Empson.

The modern period in literature granted writers and critics a sense of liberty to innovate and interpret things from a newer perspective. Therefore, the age also identifies the arrival of various movements and tendencies such as futurism, formalism, structuralism, Stream-of-consciousness, the establishment of various groups like Auden Group, Bloomsbury Group, War Poets, Black Mountain Poets and New Apocalyptic and so on.

As far as literature is concerned modernism reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style. It is particularly concerned with language and how to use it and with *writing itself*. Thus, structuralism was from the outset closely connected with modernist tendencies, though the theories of structuralism did not gain a strong foothold until the 1960s, by which time postmodernism was well established as a new movement (Cuddon 442).¹⁴

The complete understanding of the modern period is inadequate without the delineation of other conceptions from philosophy, sociology and aesthetics. Virginia Woolf captures a very essential experience of modernism when she remarks, "in or about 1910, human character changed" (Macey 257).¹⁵ Many critics and literary figures proclaim that something changed in the

first decades of the twentieth century especially in 1922 – the period which saw the publication of *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses*, and *Jacob's Room* and marked it as ‘the year of modernism.’

The modern period is the period that suffered from huge changes and transitions globally. The modern age possessed amazing potential for both emancipation and destruction: the wars, industrialization, atomic energy, space exploration, genetic and biochemical engineering and telecommunications. These extreme situations changed the complete scenario of the twentieth century literature and the writers began to reflect and address these intense changes and conditions of oppression, fear, deterioration and the probability of an apocalyptic world. The writers in turn focused more on the individual as a free entity rather than on society and how an individual adapts to the constant changing scenario. The modernist writers became experimental in their writing approach and abandoned all the traditional and old forms of writing techniques and promoted free verse. The shift from society to the individual provided them an opportunity to look down on the inner psyche and conscious of the individual and depicting the inner human thought. This led to a newer form of narration called the stream-of-consciousness technique. The development of psychological theories by Freud, Darwin, Jung, Bandura, William James; as well as the sociological theorist like Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx provided intellectual aid to writers.

The two great World Wars affected the entire world and simultaneously the adverse ramifications were also seen on the literary figures and writers as well. The society was transforming into more inharmonious, dissonant and absurd place gradually. The violence, horror and extremities of war made humanity to lose their faith from humanity. The modern writers portrayed this absurdity and irrationality in their works. They also innovated the traditional idea of symbolism and provided it a new breath. Unlike the earlier writers, they dispensed freedom to

their readers to interpret the hidden meaning of symbolism as per their imagination and encouraged open-ended or ambiguous narratives having multiple interpretations.

Postmodernism in contemporary scenario is the most discussed and simultaneously the most perplexing and arguable subject in every field including art, architecture, philosophy, literature, politics and even other domains such as music, films and so on and so forth. Though, there is no unanimous view about the beginning of postmodernism, as the characteristics of postmodernism began to come into notice at different intervals of time. It is a period in the realm of literary context that developed post Second World War i.e. 1950s or toward the end of the twentieth century. The prefix ‘post’ in the word postmodernism implies that it arrived after the modern period in English literature. It is radical departure from the modern thinking and outlook. It emerged as a reaction against the idea of modernism. The postmodern period bloomed in the late 1960s and 80s. As per *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

Postmodernism is a general term used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies which have taken place in literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, etc. since the 1940s or 1950s. Postmodernism is different from modernism, even a reaction against it. It is no easier to define than many other –isms. Like them, it is amorphous by nature (552).¹⁶

The term ‘postmodern’ was initially used by the German philosopher Rudolf Pannwitz and later “it resurfaced in the work of the Spanish literary critic Federico de Onis in 1934” (Pandey 60).¹⁷ In English, the term first appeared in 1939 by theologian Bernard Iddings Bell and afterwards in 1947 by the historian Arnold Toynbee. The usage of the term is also attributed to Charles Jencks in 1947. By 1950’s and 1970’s the idea of postmodern is seen in the field of literary criticism and architecture as well. The term postmodernism began to hold its grip in the

intellectual world with the publication of an American periodical 'A Journal of Post-modern culture and religion' in 1972. The notion of postmodern paved its way into philosophy by 1980's, but only in the form of post-structuralist philosophy and as a reaction against modernism.

There are three different registers: postmodern, postmodernism and postmodernity and defining all of them in one perfect definition is a difficult task.

Postmodernity is the state or condition, and postmodernism is the ideology which affirms the relativism, pluralism, contextually, liberation and deconstruction. It goes against metanarratives and hegemony; it challenges the power structures. Colonialism, imperialism and dominance are questioned by postmodernism (Stephen 24).¹⁸

According to *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, postmodernity usually refers to a historical period subsequent to modernity, whilst 'postmodernism' tends to refer to the cultural and above all artistic manifestations of that period (307-308).¹⁹

In postmodern world, everything including the traditional values, notions of marriage, structures of writing, shift to virtual reality and technology etc. is undergoing changes in fleeting speed. As a result, the ideology of postmodern offers every individual a sense of liberty and freedom to act and choose as per their will and understanding.

Postmodernism does not approve any center so it is centerless. The features of postmodernism are also recognized as rapidity, indeterminacy chaos, disorder, secularism, openness, rejecting the absolutes, anti-foundationalism and post-structuralism. Fragmentation is another nature of postmodernism. It is anti-hierarchal and anti-totalizing (Stephen 24).²⁰

The arrival of postmodernism does not necessarily mean that modernism is over and finished, still there is no clear line of demarcation between modernism, postmodernism and beyond. There were several avant-garde movements in the field of arts and literature that initiated in the modernist period yet their influences continue with some alterations and innovation in the postmodernist period.

The postmodernist literature describes certain features such as being non-traditional and against authority and significance. It exhibits experimental techniques displayed in the *nouveau roman* and the anti-novel. The other features include parody and pastiche, magic realism, new modes in science fiction, eclectic approach, aleatory writing and popularity of neo-Gothic and horror story. The major aspect of postmodernism is the growth of Marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic criticism. It shares a close proximity to post structuralism as well. The time around 1960s-1980s when the postmodernism reached its early zenith, various novelists like Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Alain Robbe-Grillet; poets such as Ishmael Reed; Marxist critics like Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton published their works. It was in the year 1967 when Jacques Derrida presented his first paper entitled *Of Grammatology* outlining the major principles of deconstruction.

In a Speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4, 1994, Vaclav Havel, then President of the Czech Republic, said:

The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds. These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. They are periods when there is a tendency to quote, to imitate,

and to amplify, rather than to state with authority or integrate. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements. This state of mind or of the human world is called postmodernism.

This speech outlines the essence of Postmodernism in all its forms; the mixing, the disintegration, and the instability of identities.²¹

Postmodernism is a rational and thoughtful change in terms of newer perspectives. Contrary to modernism, which is man-centered; postmodernism is completely centerless. The postmodern thinkers believe that the truth and reality are mere social constructs and need to be reconstruct or deconstruct. “Postmodernity reacts to modern worldview and stand for a new science, a new spirituality and a new society.”

Graham Beatie points out six shifts in relation to modernism and postmodernism, as follows:

1. Rational to Experimental
2. Individual to Community
3. Uniformity to Diversity
4. Mechanic to Organic
5. Exclusiveness to Pluralism
6. Progress to Centrelessness (Stephen 30).²²

Postmodernism is greatly influenced by the French critical theories propounded by the French philosophers and sociologists such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger and along with other major theorists, they developed the postmodern philosophy. The Key Representative thinkers and authors of the postmodern age are:

The key philosopher who is accredited as the one “to put the first postmodern cat among the modernist pigeons” (Woods 19)²³ is Jean-Francois Lyotard. Jean Francois Lyotard is a French thinker, who is best known for his notions about postmodernism and the impact of postmodernity on human condition. He has authored *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) and emerged as one of the most important philosophers of postmodernism. He defines postmodernism as “*incredulity towards metanarratives.*” His book is a direct attack on modernity.

It opens with the grand assertion that ‘Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age’ (*Postmodern Condition* 3). Dating the advent of this postmodern age as the end of the 1950s, ‘the completion of the reconstruction of Europe’, the main argument is that the era is marked by the demise of ‘*grand histoires*’ or an ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ (*postmodern condition* xxiv) and the emergence of ‘*petites histoires*’ or ‘*micronarratives*’ in their place (Woods 20).²⁴

Indeed, Lyotard prefers mini or micronarratives in place of grand or metanarratives. He regards “metanarratives as violent and tyrannical in their imposition of a ‘totalizing’ pattern and a false universality on actions, events and things” (20-21).²⁵ Lyotard remarks that, “a work can become modern only if it is first postmodern” (22).²⁶ It is indeed a paradoxical claim by him. For him, “postmodernity is an attitude, an ‘incredulity towards metanarratives.’ It means that ‘postmodernity’ need not necessarily come after modernity; it means not modernity at its end, but in its nascent state, which is constant” (23).²⁷

“If Jean-Francois Lyotard was the founder of this new French ‘religion’ of postmodernism, then Jean Baudrillard might be regarded as its high priest” (25).²⁸ Jean Baudrillard is a French

philosopher and theorist often associated with post-structuralism and postmodernism. He is often known for the concepts of hyperreality and Simulation. Baudrillard's conception of postmodernity is founded upon three principal ideas – simulation, implosion and hyperreality. Like Lyotard, Baudrillard claims we have entered a new postmodern era of simulations which is governed by information and signs and a new cybernetic technology (26).²⁹ His major works are *Simulacra and Simulation* and *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*.

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) is a remarkable French philosopher and principal theorist of Deconstruction. He is a major foundational figure in the area of post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy. Since his first published work *Origin of Geometry* in 1962, he continued to have a profound effect on the literary criticism and literary studies globally. He published more than forty books and a number of essays. His well-known works are *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967), and *Margins of Philosophy* (1972).

Michel Foucault is a French Philosopher, literary critic and political activist. He supported homosexuals and the marginalized in many of his works. He is often associated with structuralism, post-structuralism and postmodernism. His major works are *The History of Madness in the Classical Age* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *Discipline and Punish*, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, *The Abnormal*, *The Madness and Civilization* and *The Order of Things*.

Frederic Jameson is an American Marxist thinker and literary critic. He is a notable figure in postmodernism due to his analysis of contemporary cultural trends as well as analysis of postmodernism and capitalism. His renowned works include *The Political Unconsciousness* and *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Other prominent figures are Richard

Rorty, Paul De Man, Ihab Hassan, Jurgen Habermas, Irving Howe, Leslie Fiedler, Stuart Hall and others.

The most acclaimed and the representative works of the postmodern age are Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning Novel *Beloved*, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Cat's Cradle*, Ishmael Reed's book of poetry entitled *Conjure: Selected Poems*, Pynchon's postmodern novel *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Overnight to Many Distant Cities* by Barthelme, Frederic Jameson's essay "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", Julia Kristeva's *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* and so on and so forth. Donald Barthelme is a well-known American short story writer and novelist. He is regarded as an avant-garde or postmodernist, who is known for his postmodernist and playful style of writing short fiction. His major publications include: *Sixty Stories* (1981), *Forty Stories* (1987), *Snow White* (1967), *The Dead Father* (1975), *Paradise* (1986) and *The King* (1990). Thus, Barth, Pynchon, Beckett, Graham Swift, Malcolm Bradbury, Barthelme along with others have contributed significantly and worked to develop the narrative techniques that are linked with postmodernism. Except these the writers such as Niall Lucy, Brain McHale, Andrew Gibson, Linda Hutcheon, Hassan and others have contributed their works in order to understand the genre and techniques of postmodern literature and its narrative.

Thus, the salient features of postmodern literature can be summarized as:

1. The use of past, myths and history.
2. Postmodern style is self-reflexive and promotes the idea of metafiction.
3. It is a hybridized form as it celebrates fragmentation; fragmentation of narrative, language and mixing different genres.
4. Irony, black humor and apocalyptic vision plays a major role in postmodern fiction.

5. Ambiguity is the key factor in postmodern fiction, as readers are left in middle to have their own interpretation and to trust what they perceive on their own. Conventional ideas of reality are questioned.
6. A postmodern novel is marked by the presence of a number of narrative voices.
7. The postmodern novels are open-ended as they only offer the problem and not the solution or a conclusion to it. So that the readers can have their own conclusion as per their constructs.
8. It focuses on delivering various images to the readers rather than a fixed truth.
9. abolition of any form of cultural divide between high and low culture.

Postmodernism is widely used in the field of literary studies and works and simultaneously the most debatable as well. The main themes, style and techniques of the postmodern age is the use and incorporation of Derrida's idea of deconstruction which is the basic premise of postmodernism. The disintegration of the concepts such as the nature of language, idea of knowledge and notion of universal truth. Postmodernism gave rise to the extension of subjects like cultural studies and multiculturalism. It broadens the subject area in contemporary period. In literary writing, the re-occurrence of same characters in different novels is seen, the use of irony, parody and pastiche; prose poetry, authorial intrusion where the author speaks directly to the characters not like a character of the novel etc. The self-reflexivity is the main element of postmodern novel. The use of simulacrum characters has also become one of the major technique of postmodern writing. Postmodernism also gave rise to various movements like feminism, Marxism and poststructuralism. The common theme and writing techniques of postmodern novel are:

Intertextuality is a term coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966-69 in her study of Bakhtin's work on dialogue and carnival. It refers to the inter-relationship and the interdependence of literary texts with the works of past. Any piece of literary text is not an isolated phenomenon instead it is the 'absorption and transformation of another.' A writer seeks inspiration from the writers of past or from their contemporary writers and refers to their works. It may be a deliberate effort on the part of author or can be coincidental as well. Her idea of intertextuality is different from other theorists such as Barthes, Genette and others.

The basic premise of the theory of intertextuality is that any text is essentially a mosaic of references to or quotations from other texts; a text is not a closed system and does not exist in isolation. It is always involved in a dialogue with other texts...Intertextuality is not simply a matter of influences which pass from one author to another, but of the multiple and complex relations that exist between texts in both synchronic and diachronic terms. 'Influence' is simply one mode of intertextuality (Macey 203-204).³⁰

Though, often critics point out that the use of intertextuality signifies the lack of originality of postmodern writing but postmodern writers believe that the use of intertextuality aids in exemplifying the meaning of a text.

Pastiche simply means to combine or paste various elements together. It is somehow related to intertextuality. "The Italian word *pasticcio* means 'a medley of various ingredients: a hotch-potch, a farrago, jumble', and is the etymological root of the word pastiche" (Lewis 172).³¹ It involves mixing multiple genres and elements of literature in order to create something new and unique. "It is a patchwork of words, sentences or complete passages from various authors or one author. It is, therefore, a kind of imitation and, when done intentionally, may be a form of parody"

(Cuddon 517).³² Pastiche reflects the character trait of postmodernity of being chaotic and pluralistic but at the same time it is quite unique as well.

Metafiction “is essentially writing about writing or ‘foregrounding the apparatus’, making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader and generally disregards the necessity for willing suspension of disbelief” (Ravi 181).³³ It is a piece of fictional work which reflects on the fictionality of the work. The readers are being made aware of the fact that they are reading a fictional work. It clarifies the readers that a fictional work cannot deliver the pleasure of or access to a real world. “Metafiction is often most closely associated with postmodern literature of the late 20th c., and is commonly understood to be motivated by a perception of the shortcomings of the realist fiction” (Cuddon 431).³⁴ **Historiographic Metafiction**, the term was coined by Linda Hutcheon. It encompasses all the fictional works that fictionalizes the actual historical events, figures or instances from the past.

Employing Irony, Playfulness and Black Humor in literary works is the prime feature of postmodern fiction. The use of irony is not a new concept as it was first recorded in Plato’s *Republic* as well. “In most modern critical uses of the term ‘irony’, there remains the root sense of dissembling, or of hiding what is actually the case; not, however, in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects” (Abrams and Harpham 184).³⁵ Irony is of various types including verbal, structural, stable, unstable, sarcasm, Socratic, dramatic, tragic, cosmic and romantic irony. Gradually, the use of irony became more frequent and by the end of eighteenth century, irony was seen more as a philosophical vision of looking the entire world rather merely as a rhetoric device. The postmodern authors often treat serious subjects in a playful and humorous manner in order to avoid boredom and heaviness of text. **Fabulation** was first used by Caxton in *Fabulator* in 1484. Later, it was re-introduced by Robert Scholes in his book *The Fabulators*

(1967). Fabulation challenges some traditional concepts of literature and integrates other elements such as use of magic and myth, notions of storytelling and elements from popular science fiction. It involves allegory and use of strange and dreamlike effects to enhance the appeal of the text. It rejects the concept of realism. It is used to describe the anti-novel.

Poioumena is a kind of metafiction in which the subject is about the process of creation. It is also a specific type of metafiction. The term was coined by Alastair Fowler. The novel *The Comforters* by Muriel Spark is a great example as it deals with creation of a book and incorporates several hints or metaphors on the process of creating the book in the story. **Temporal Disorder** or **Temporal Distortion** involves the use of fragmentation and non-linear narratives, often for the sake of irony. It is the most used technique in postmodernist literature in order to add irony in the text. It simply means to disorder or distort the linear coherence of the narrative, for example, distortion in time. The unity of time plays a significant role here in order to disrupt the past, present and future.

Magic Realism incorporates the use of still, sharply defined, smoothly painted images of figures and objects depicted in a surrealistic manner. The term was coined by Franz Roh in 1925. The themes and subjects are often imaginary and assert a dream-like quality, the impact on readers is quite powerful and effective.

Some of the characteristic features of this kind of fiction are the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or bizarre, skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, arcane erudition, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable (Cuddon 417).³⁶

Technoculture and Hyperreality the term Hyperreality was first used by Umberto Eco and later was discussed by Jean Baudrillard as well. Baudrillard said that postmodernity was a shift into hyperreality in which simulations have replaced the real. In the postmodern world, the information and technology have occupied a prime place in the lives of people and hence the understanding of the real is vastly affected by the notion of hyperreal or the simulations. The use of science fiction techniques to address postmodern issues, the cyberpunk fiction, the novels and comics demonstrating temporal distortion and pastiche as well as focus on technoculture with a mix of futuristic technology and a slight tint of Victorian culture are the new emerging features of postmodern novel writing. **Paranoia** and paranoid anxieties are reflected in many postmodernist writings. There is no existence of ordering system and thus in the age of postmodernism the search for order in chaos is absurd and fruitless. It is seen in the distrust of faith, ambiguity, non-linear narratives. “Paranoia, or the threat of total engulfment by somebody else’s system, is keenly felt by many of the dramatis personae of postmodernist fictions” (Lewis 176).³⁷

Fragmentation is the technique of breaking something into many pieces or separate parts. In postmodern writing, the technique of fragmentation is used to break the novels into several parts and pieces. According to John Hawkes, the true enemies of the novel are plot, character, setting and theme.

After 1960’s, many authors did their best to sledgehammer these four literary cornerstones into oblivion. Either plot is pounded into small slabs of event and circumstance, characters disintegrate into a bundle of twitching desires, settings dwindle to little more than transitory backdrops, or themes become so attenuated that it is often comically inaccurate to say that certain novels are ‘about’ such-and-such” (Lewis 173).³⁸

The postmodernist writers discarded the use of traditional narrative style and distrusted the wholeness and organic composition of traditional stories. The most significant option to show and celebrate the fragmentary nature of a work is by providing multiple and ambiguous ending. The writers began crafting multiple denouements and letting it drop on reader's ability to take the story to its culmination. Another means opted by writers is to break up the whole text into fragments by separating them using space, titles, numbers or symbols. The use of multiple fonts, different scripts and other miscellaneous changes were incorporated by writers to incorporate fragmentation.

Maximalism is the use of grand language and details in the story. It involves each and every minute detail which minimalist writers often leaves. It is somehow disorganized and lacks emotional content. **Minimalism** is the opposite of maximalism as it only presents the most necessary elements and promotes the economy of words. Minimalist writers' choice of diction is very poignant and judicious. The writers only depict the general context and allows reader's imagination to carry forward the story of the work. They avoid meaningless details. The characters are also unexceptional and unlike maximalist characters are taken from mundane life. **Use of Analepsis and Prolepsis** simply means the use of 'flashback' and 'flashforward' technique to make narrative non-linear and interesting. It is used to disorder the narrative discourse. The looseness of association is one of the techniques to disrupt the smoothness of the novel and offer a fragmented feel to the reader.

Thus, this sub-chapter covers the brief concept of modernism and the modernist writers and their works. It also discusses the age of postmodernism and its chief characteristics as well as the major themes and writing techniques of the age. Postmodernism is quite a vast topic to cover and therefore, it has much potential, scope and relevance for future study as well.

1.3 The Select Novelists and their Contribution

Dame Muriel Sarah Spark (1918-2006)

Born as Muriel Sarah Camberg in the Bruntsfield area of Edinburgh, Scotland on February 1st 1918, Spark gained worldwide popularity and repute of any Scots-born writers of her generation and acquired a huge amount of readers from every corner of the globe. The sheer excellence and quality of her writing helped her to become the Dame of the British Empire and thus she became renowned by the name Dame Muriel Sarah Spark. “In her lifetime, the novelist Dame Muriel Spark's own story was one of intrigue, punctuated with family estrangements, a bitter divorce and enigmatic relationships. In death, it seems, she has left another untold story.”³⁹

She was raised by a Scottish-Jewish father Bernard Camberg, an engineer, and her Anglican-English mother Sarah Elizabeth Maud, also a Presbyterian. She received her education at James Gillespie's School for Girls (1923–35), which served as the model for the Marcia Blaine School in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. There she was highly influenced by one of the teachers – Miss Christina Kay, who later served as an inspiration for the character of Miss Brodie herself. At the age of seventeen, she attended Heriot-Watt College. She engaged in teaching English for a short span of time. She married Sidney Oswald Spark, on 3rd September 1937 and moved with him to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). They had one child together but soon drifted apart. Later, Spark abandoned her only son when he was six in order to devote all her attention and time to writing.

Due to the outbreak of War, she eventually returned to Britain in 1944 and settled in the Kensington area of London and worked with the Foreign Office in the Political Intelligence Department. Later, she served as a General Secretary of the Poetry Society as an editor for Poetry

Review from 1947 to 1949 and later worked in publishing offices. This period of her life formed the setting to a number of her early novels such as *The Girls of Slender Means*, *The Comforters*, and later novels like *Loitering with Intent*, *A Far Cry from Kensington* and so on. In the year 1954, she decided to join Roman Catholic Church which she regarded as an important step towards becoming a novelist. Her later novels clearly reflect her association with the English Catholic tradition.

Muriel Spark seriously initiated her writing career only after World War II and as a result she is also regarded as a Post-war writer. She wrote under her married name only. Initially she began writing poetry, biography and literary criticism but later switched to writing novels. Her interest in composing poetry made her to publish her own collection of poetry entitled *Collected Poems I* in the year 1967. Gradually, she switched to fiction writing after winning a short story competition organized by the *Observer* newspaper. She wrote biography of great personalities such as Mary Shelley, John Masefield and Emily Bronte. In a total life span of nearly eighty-eight years, she significantly contributed towards World Literature in terms of both quality and quantity as well. She authored almost twenty-two novels on varied subject and themes of remarkable value. Her novels are generally short and brief but written elegantly. She composed collection of short stories as well as poetry, play, children's book and many more. She published two biographies and her autobiography as well. She also tried her hands in Criticism and also wrote Essays and Articles. In short, Spark covered every genre of writing with great style, wit, justice and aptness. "Critics regard Spark's novels as her strongest genre, but her short stories are also well constructed and intriguing."⁴⁰

Her first novel, *The Comforters* came in 1957 and was followed by a number of novels, most notably *Memento Mori* (1959), *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960), and *The Bachelors*

(1961). They examined the inherited moral ambiguities in human as reflected by the characters in the novels. Her later novels were satirical in nature with a tint of reality and she added a new element of social criticism in her works. *The Abbess of Crewe* (1974), *Territorial Rights* (1979), *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965), *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963) and *Not to Disturb* (1971) are some of Spark's later novels. Spark's life and specially her geographical locations in novel reflects her love for Scotland and its surroundings. Her apt topographical description and artistic growth is the result of her childhood spent in Edinburgh. Her recent works include novels like *The Only Problem* (1984), *A Far Cry from Kensington* (1988), *Symposium* (1991) and her collections of poems and short stories.

She became an officer in British Empire in 1967 and later Dame of the British Empire in 1993 for her contribution and services to literature. She has received various awards and recognitions including the Italia Prize, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for her novel *The Mandelbaum Gate* in 1965, the Ingersoll Foundation TS Eliot Award in 1992 and various other awards. Spark also wrote her autobiography entitled *Curriculum Vitae* published in 1992. She used her archives and records of all her professional and personal matters which helped her to write her autobiography. Though she declined the permission of publishing her biography by Martin Stannard as she "found fault with the biography, in particular revelations about her private life, and withheld permission for it to be published."⁴¹ Miss Penelope Jardine, a well-known artist, the literary executor of Muriel Spark's estate and her best friend for many decades holds the approval rights for her biography. According to A. S. Byatt, "She was very upset by the book and had to spend a lot of time going through it, line by line, to try to make it a little bit fairer."⁴² Later, the biography was published posthumously in July 2009 after three years of her demise.

Spark lived for about forty years till her death at the age of eighty-eight in the year 2006 in a Tuscan farmhouse along with her friend Miss Jardine. They both were questioned on having lesbian relationship to which they always denied. As per her will, she left her entire fortune to her friend and confidante Miss Jardine and disinherited her only son. “She also bequeathed to Miss Jardine the responsibility for approving, or not, the biography.”⁴³

At the time of her death, Dame Muriel, whose last novel, *Aiding and Abetting*, was published in 2001, was about to begin her 21st book, said Miss Jardine, who also revealed: “Muriel had travelled so much, all over the world, but she did miss Scotland. At one point we seriously considered moving back to Edinburgh, but it never happened.”⁴⁴

The present research study has undertaken two novels by Muriel Spark viz. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) and *Memento Mori* (1959). “Her tales are psychologically interesting because Spark is reluctant to reveal all that her characters think and feel; in consequence, readers are forced to evaluate the stories, think about issues from a different perspective, and try to fill in the gaps.”⁴⁵ Through her novels, she tries to deliver the aspects of moral truth. The most distinctive element in Spark’s writing is her creation of the characters, who reflects the vices and virtues of a common man and thus providing her readers to connect with them. She leaves space for her readers to have free interpretation as per their choice and understanding. Like Iris Murdoch, Spark also highlights the difference between the good and the evil in the world.

A complete exhaustive list of works by Muriel Spark is presented below.

Table 2**Muriel Spark's Significant Contribution towards World Literature**

S. No.	Title of the Work	Publication Year	Genre
1	<i>The Comforters</i>	1957	Novel
2	<i>Robinson</i>	1958	Novel
3	<i>Memento Mori</i>	1959	Novel
4	<i>The Ballad of Peckham Rye</i>	1960	Novel
5	<i>The Bachelors</i>	1960	Novel
6	<i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i>	1961	Novel
7	<i>The Girls of Slender Means</i>	1963	Novel
8	<i>The Mandelbaum Gate</i>	1965	Novel
9	<i>The Public Image</i>	1968	Novel
10	<i>The Driver's Seat</i>	1970	Novel
11	<i>Not to Disturb</i>	1971	Novel
12	<i>The Hothouse by the East River</i>	1973	Novel
13	<i>The Abbess of Crewe</i>	1974	Novel
14	<i>The Takeover</i>	1976	Novel
15	<i>Territorial Rights</i>	1979	Novel
16	<i>Loitering with Intent</i>	1981	Novel
17	<i>The Only Problem</i>	1984	Novel
18	<i>A Far Cry From Kensington</i>	1988	Novel
19	<i>Symposium</i>	1990	Novel
20	<i>Reality and Dreams</i>	1996	Novel
21	<i>Aiding and Abetting</i>	2000	Novel
22	<i>The Finishing School</i>	2004	Novel
23	<i>The Go-Away Bird and Other Stories</i>	1958	Short Stories
24	<i>Collected Stories-I</i>	1967	Short Stories
25	<i>Bang-Bang You're Dead and Other Stories</i>	1982	Short Stories
26	<i>The Stories of Muriel Spark</i>	1985	Short Stories
27	<i>The Complete Short Stories</i>	2001	Short Stories
28	<i>The Fanfarlo and Other Verses</i>	1952	Poetry
29	<i>Collected Poems - I</i>	1967	Poetry
30	<i>Going Up to Sotheby's and Other Poems</i>	1982	Poetry
31	<i>Doctors of Philosophy</i>	1963	Play
32	<i>Child of Light: A Reassessment of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley</i>	1951	Biography
33	<i>John Masefield</i>	1953	Biography
34	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	1992	Autobiography
35	<i>Tribute to Wordsworth: A Miscellany of Opinion for the Centenary of the Poet's Death</i>	1950	Criticism
36	<i>A Selection of Poems by Emily Bronte</i>	1952	Criticism
37	<i>The Bronte Letters</i>	1954	Criticism
38	<i>Emily Bronte: Her Life and Works</i>	1953	Criticism
39	<i>My Best Mary: Selected Letters of Mary Shelley</i>	1953	Criticism
40	<i>Letters of John Henry Newman</i>	1957	Criticism
41	<i>Voices at Play</i>	1961	Short Stories and Plays
42	<i>The Very Fine Clock</i>	1968	Children's Book
43	<i>The French Window and the Small Telephone</i>	1993	

Source: Based on Review of Literature

Dame Jean Iris Murdoch (1919-1999)

Jean Iris Murdoch was born on July 15, 1919 in Dublin, Ireland. She was brought up by Anglo-Irish parents, Irene Alice and Wills John Hughes Murdoch. She grew up mostly in London, Hammersmith and Chiswick but often visited Ireland during childhood for holidays. Her interest in the country is reflected through her topographic description of landscape and places in her novels. Murdoch was the only child and grew up without siblings, though she stresses that it was a happy period of her life. She began writing at a very tender age. She received her early education in progressive independent schools. She entered Froebel Educational Institute, London at 1925 and later Badminton School in Bristol from 1932 to 1930. From 1930 onwards until 1942, she attended Somerville College, Oxford in order to study English but shifted her interest towards Classical Moderations and Greats. It was 'more human literature' focusing on classics of ancient Rome, Greece, Latin, Greek and ancient history and philosophy. After receiving her degree in 1942, she went to London and worked as Assistant Principal in the Treasury until 1944.

During this phase, she invested her time in writing books before her first novel *Under the Net* was published in 1954, but all the books never appeared since as few were rejected. She became an Administrative Officer with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, where she worked in refugee camps and been transferred to Brussels, Innsbruck, Belgium, and Austria. She finally left the UNRRA in 1946. Following the war, she developed her interest in Sartrean Existentialism and as a result studied philosophy at Newnham College, Cambridge from 1947-1948. She became a Fellow at St. Anne's College, Oxford in 1948 and taught philosophy until 1963. She was named Honorable Fellow in 1963. From 1963 to 1967, she was Lecturer at the Royal College of Art.

In 1954, Murdoch met Mr. John Oliver Bayley, who was also a Fellow of New College, Oxford. They both got married in 1956 and their marriage lasted for about forty-three years until Murdoch's death. John Bayley (1925-2015) was a renowned British literary critic and writer. Around mid-1990's, Murdoch's health deteriorated and in 1997 she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and died on February 8, 1999. In 1998, her husband Bayley wrote a book entitled *Iris: A Memoir of Iris Murdoch* which was adapted as a film named *Iris* by Richard Eyre in 2001. He wrote few more books like *Elegy for Iris* (1999), *Iris and the Friends: A Year of Memories* (1999) and *Widower's House* (2001) about his life with Murdoch and marriage to fellow author and his wife, who suffered from grave disease in her last years of life. Although, through the books it was revealed that Bayley throughout their marriage tolerated the acts of infidelity and adultery caused by Murdoch.

Murdoch's first published book was *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* published in 1953. It was a critical study about Jean-Paul Sartre, who was a French philosopher, writer, literary critic and a notable key figure in the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology. Murdoch's book was the first work about Jean-Paul Sartre to be published in English. In 1944, when Murdoch joined the wartime relief operation, UNRRA, in Brussels, she met Sartre in person and was highly impressed and influenced by his existentialist philosophy. As Richard Todd remarks,

Murdoch's time in Brussels was of particular importance to her intellectual life and direction; it was here that she first encountered the existentialist movement, which was to have such importance in the redirection of wartime and post-war philosophy both on the continent and in Britain (16).⁴⁶

Like Sartre, Murdoch is also reckoned as a philosophical novelist; whose novels are highly psychological and at the same time reflecting deep philosophical elements. She was vastly influenced by Sartre's philosophical and political thoughts as well as the literary aspects of his writings. Her novels echo a sense of existentialist readings. Being a post-war novelist, she was highly fixated on the disturbing intellectual years at the end of the war, she contemplated over the changing notions of human nature, the relation of individual to society and self to other. During her literary growth around late 1950s, the influence of other writers such as Samuel Beckett, Raymond Queneau and Ludwig Wittgenstein is clearly visible through her writings. Murdoch, during her later years, refined her writing style and philosophical attitude as all the influences surpassed her early phase of writing career and she paved her own path for knowledge.

Murdoch's first novel, *Under The Net* was published in 1954, and gained wide recognition. Her overall literary output is prolific as she produced twenty-six novels, few short stories, plays and collections of poetry as well as her remarkable essays on philosophy. She won many awards and recognitions for her exemplary output in the field of literature and philosophy such as James Tait Black Memorial Award, Whitbread literary award for fiction and the Booker Prize. In 1987, she was made a Dame Commander of Order of the British Empire. Her novel *The Bell* also received huge popularity. Both these novels are regarded as the Early Phase Novels by Murdoch.

Her novel *The Sea*, *The Sea* received the Booker Prize and is highly philosophical and reflects Murdoch's keen interest in philosophy, symmetry and moral goodness of human beings. Murdoch's novels are very relevant in the contemporary times as they discuss the prime issues of human life and similarly reflects the postmodern perspectives and writing style.

A complete list of her prominent works is listed below:

Table 3

Iris Murdoch's Significant Contribution towards World Literature

NOVELS			
S.No.	Title of the Work	Publication	Award Received
1	<i>Under The Net</i>	1954	
2	<i>The Flight From the Enchanter</i>	1956	
3	<i>The Sandcastle</i>	1957	
4	<i>The Bell</i>	1958	
5	<i>A Severed Head</i>	1961	
6	<i>An Unofficial Rose</i>	1962	
7	<i>The Unicorn</i>	1963	
8	<i>The Italian Girl</i>	1964	
9	<i>The Red and the Green</i>	1965	
10	<i>The Time of the Angels</i>	1966	
11	<i>The Nice and the Good</i>	1968	
12	<i>Bruno's Dream</i>	1969	
13	<i>A Fairly Honorable Defeat</i>	1970	
14	<i>An Accidental Man</i>	1971	
15	<i>The Black Prince</i>	1973	James Tait Black Memorial Prize
16	<i>The Sacred and the Profane Love Machine</i>	1974	Whitbread literary award for Fiction
17	<i>A Word Child</i>	1975	
18	<i>Henry and Cato</i>	1976	
19	<i>The Sea, The Sea</i>	1978	Booker Prize
20	<i>Nuns and Soldiers</i>	1980	
21	<i>The Philosopher's Pupil</i>	1983	
22	<i>The Good Apprentice</i>	1985	
23	<i>The Book and the Brotherhood</i>	1987	
24	<i>The Message to the Planet</i>	1989	
25	<i>The Green Knight</i>	1993	
26	<i>Jackson's Dilemma</i>	1995	
SHORT STORIES			
1	<i>Something Special</i>	1957	
PHILOSOPHY			
1	<i>Sartre: Romantic Rationalist</i>	1953	
2	<i>The Sovereignty of Good</i>	1970	
3	<i>The Fire and the Sun</i>	1977	
4	<i>Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals</i>	1992	
5	<i>Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature</i>	1997	
PLAYS			
1	<i>A Severed Head (with J. B. Priestley)</i>	1964	
2	<i>The Italian Girl (with James Saunders)</i>	1969	
3	<i>The Three Arrows; The Servants and the Snow</i>	1972	
4	<i>The Servants</i>	1980	
5	<i>Acastos: Two Platonic Dialogues</i>	1986	
6	<i>The Black Prince</i>	1987	
POETRY COLLECTIONS			
1	<i>A Year of Birds</i>	1978, 1984	
2	<i>Poems by Iris Murdoch</i>	1997	
Source: Based on Review of Literature			

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CHAPTER - 2

EMOTIONAL INTENSITY: *THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE*

- 2.1 Human Nature and Emotions
 - 2.2 Unfolding Psychological Significance
 - 2.3 Intricacies of Human Relationships
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CHAPTER – 2

Emotional Intensity: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

“Emotions are the engagements with the world.”¹ Emotions aid in decision making and involve judgment of good and bad. They are directed toward someone or something and possess a significant goal or purpose. They are understood and relished differently by every person. Emotions are the coordinated set of responses and may include verbal, physiological, behavioral, and cognitive element. They are associated with perception, thought, and even the interpretation. *A Concise Dictionary of Philosophy* defines emotion as, “in its widest sense emotion is applicable to all affective phenomena including the familiar “passions” of love, anger, fear, hatred, etc. as well as pain and pleasure” (164).² Being emotional, according to *Macmillan English Dictionary*, “is related to feelings and the way they affect the life of a person” (453).³ Intensity means “strength or a very strong level of thought and attention” (748).⁴

Michael C. Graham says that, “all Emotions exist on a continuum of intensity.”⁵ It means that emotions keep on changing gradually and slowly over time or in very slight stages without any clear signs. It is the point where the emotional intensity of each individual differs. Emotional Intensity is the strength of any behavior or emotional experience that a person feels. It requires dedication and complete surrender to someone or something. Therefore, Emotional Intensity can be understood as the capacity or degree to which an individual understands his/her own emotions; and how he/she reacts on certain situations. Emotional Intensity or emotional sensibility is “the degree to which something makes an individual concentrate a lot or use a lot of emotion” (748).⁶

It can be measured by assessing the Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient of the individual.

Muriel Spark's novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is an ideal novel to study and understand the emotional intensity, human nature and intricacies that arises due to certain mishaps in the life of human beings. The novel's characters are so lively that a reader gets attached to them and is able to share the emotion to that of the character in the novel. The remarkable thing about the novel is its moral ambiguity. It provides readers an opportunity to assess the characters and evaluate them based on their level of understanding. As Rashid remarks:

On first glance, the plot sounds like a classic "school" narrative, like *Dead Poet's Society*, in which a brave teacher challenges the structures of a traditional institution and teaches her children to think for themselves. But the novel is actually a much darker look at the role of such a teacher on the lives of a group of girls, and by the end, it's not easy to know whether you're supposed to sympathize with Jean Brodie or not...Who is right and who is wrong, therefore, is not necessarily the point of this novel: the important thing is that the book lets the readers sit with the moral ambiguity.⁷

2.1 Human Nature and Emotions

The philosophy of Impermanence addresses the concept of change. Impermanence is one of the main principles of Buddhist beliefs which asserts that all of conditioned existence, without exception, is "transient, evanescent, and inconstant."⁸ All the things in life is temporary and is subject to death and decay. The world in which we reside in is ever-changing and so do the humans. Even 'the self' of human is not constant and is altered with the passage of time. Human as an

individual grows and develops with period of time by incorporating changes in self. The change can either be positive or negative as per the surrounding of the human being.

Human Nature is the fundamental set of qualities or characteristics, including varied ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving, reacting and acting, which are inherent and comes naturally. It encompasses the attitude, traits and range of behavior shared by all humans. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* states human nature as “the fundamental dispositions and traits of humans.”⁹ Human nature is the essential essence of who we are collectively as human beings. It captures the crux of humanity. The views on human nature are colored by the influence of people and the ideas of their diverse culture and sub-culture. The existence of human nature separates an individual from the rest of the world.

Dictionary of Psychology describes human nature as “the characteristics of all mankind. The term implies innate rather than acquired characteristics and is often used to rationalize or excuse failings” (189).¹⁰ *APA Dictionary of Psychology* defines human nature as, “the generally innate but flexible characteristics of humankind as a whole, comprising the set of behaviors, attitudes, and dispositions that typify the human race. The concept of human nature has been rejected by several schools of modern thought, notably Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism.”¹¹ Most people struggle to understand the currents of human nature which often creates conflict in relationship. The great Classics of literature are all about human nature and as a result it helps in the better understanding of human nature and emotions. It is certain for human nature to have emotional responses. It is natural tendency in humans everywhere to easily read each other’s emotions from their faces as facial expressions of basic emotions that are universally recognized and understood.

Since time immemorial, human nature prevails at the prime focus of philosophical discussions. Many ancient and modern philosophers have put forward their ideas of understanding human nature and are still debating whether human nature is innate and biological or can be nurtured with the process of socialization and education. Initially, the Classical Greco-Roman philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Xenophone and Aristotle studied human nature and believed the best way to live is by reasoning. Plato, Xenophone and Aristotle also followed the works of Socrates and studied human nature. The classical Greco-Roman perspective on human nature says that goodness should reflect in an individual's actions which is only possible when human exercise the faculty of reasoning.

Every human soul has a nature divided into rational and irrational appetite. The rational part should control all the desires by exercising reason. The Chinese philosophers such as Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi stated their views on human nature and focused on the innate goodness of human beings. There are different perspectives put forward by Christian theology, Hinduism (Vedantic, Buddhist, Jain, Sufi) and even modern scientific theories by sociologists, biologists and psychologists such as Darwin, Freud, Carl Jung, Marx, Russell along with others also paved the way through the discussions on human nature.

The civilized humans are considered as rational beings incorporating intelligent ways for satisfying the life's motives. Humans are also emotional beings – has the ability to think and contemplate over their emotional state. It is hard to imagine life without emotions and feelings. Often emotionless people are compared to robots or cyborgs and said to have leading a mechanical life. In short, for a human being in order to attain understanding of the self and surrounding; it is mandate to focus on one's nature, emotion and personality. These are the key elements which outlines the overall character of an individual. Intellect and Emotion are the governing forces for

an individual. A person is driven either by head or by heart. Every individual is different and holds different capacity to showcase his emotions.

“A strong feeling deriving from one’s circumstances, mood or relationships with others is generally referred to as Emotion.”¹² Emotions are the responses towards any internal or external event. It can be either short-lived or can have a long lasting impression on an individual’s personality. It is universal as each and every human being experience emotions. Therefore, sometimes, emotions are often reckoned as a window into human nature. Emotions are the intuitive feelings which are contrasted with logical reasons and knowledge.

Emotions are not mere the subjective states or the bodily responses as feelings because they have purposes and consequences. They are the occurrences or the dispositions that why people behave in a certain way. There are number of emotions and feelings that an individual experience in the course of a day such as love and hate, happiness and sorrow, attraction and repulsion, feeling extremely low and negative and at times full of zeal and positivity. “Life would be dreary without such feelings. They add color and spice to living; they are the sauce which adds pleasure and excitement to our lives” (Morgan et al. 310).¹³

Emotions which are highly intense and easily aroused can be at times very troublesome, as they can alter with the decision making and lead a person to do miserable things. An emotion is many things at once. Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) in their review, listed ninety-two definitions of emotions by different writers. A comprehensive definition of emotion should encapsulate:

- i. something about the way we feel when we are emotional,
- ii. mention the physiological, or bodily, basis of emotional feelings,

- iii. include the effects of emotion on perception, thinking and behavior,
- iv. pointing out the driving, or motivational, properties of certain emotions such as fear and anger,
- v. refer to the ways in which emotions are expressed in language, facial expressions and gestures.¹⁴

These are the aspects and facets of emotions. Emotion is a subjective feeling state which can influence perception, thinking and behavior; usually accompanied by facial and bodily expressions; often has arousing and motivational properties. The root of the word emotion was adapted from the French term émouvoir, which means “to stir up”, “to move out” or “to agitate.” It means to arouse, to evoke or induce an action or behavior. Emotions in some way motivate our actions and thus are the life energy of conduct and culture. According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “Emotion is a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body.”¹⁵ Emotions play an essential role when connecting to others.

In order to understand the Emotional Intensity, it is important to understand emotions in the context of human nature. Though, comprehending human nature and emotion seems to be a trivial exercise; it's rather not. Human nature is as complex as a web of spider; entangled in knots tied due to emotional state. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is a short and compact novel. It is striking for its depiction of human relationship and the exchange of emotions and feelings that takes place in order to fulfil the ideas of relationship. It deals with variety of emotions but the novel is centered on the act of betrayal, leading to great agony, pain, broken trust and death of the relationship. The omniscient narrator of the novel, towards the beginning informs the readers of

an act of betrayal that is going to take place. Miss Brodie shall be betrayed by one of her girls in the Brodie set.

Spark's characters in the select novel requires deep penetration into their minds in order to understand the crux of their nature and their varying emotions. Spark provides a deep insight of their psyche to analyze their nature and personality. Every character in the novel is going through some internal crisis and most often this crisis is the result of their own sensitive nature. The novel offers deep character study of two major female characters – Miss Jean Brodie and Sandy Stranger.

Miss Jean Brodie is a self-deceiving character driven by her own will and ideals. She is a dictator and likes to rule over the school and her girls as per her own views. She selects few girls and name them 'Brodie set', who will always remain faithful and loyal to her. She tries to fulfil her own personal motives through their support. Miss Brodie fails in her endeavor because she fails to understand the complexity of human psyche. Both of them engages in a psychological battle to gain power but ultimately leads to a path of frustration in life.

Miss Jean Brodie is one of the greatest characters of Muriel Spark. She is such a magnificent fictional human creation, as she showcases all the goodness and faults of her like a normal human being. She is a relatable character and manages to create a bond with the reader. She is a bizarre type of character, quite eccentric and self-centered in her ways of living. She is an egotist, as throughout the novel she talks excessively about herself, her 'prime' and about her life experiences. She also manipulates the mind of her students via her own experiences. She is a teacher at the Marcia Blane School for Girls in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Miss Jean Brodie is depicted as a spinster. She is a single woman who lost her beloved in World War I, and lives alone. She travels a lot and thus asserts great knowledge. Living a lonely

life, she devotes herself and her prime completely to the profession of teaching. She forces her thoughts on students not wanting to know their perception of life. Like Hitler, she wants to enjoy full power and control over her Brodie Set. She selects her students whom she can trust or whose parents Miss Brodie could trust of not lodging complaint against her.

In order to understand the crux of Sandy's nature, her surname is the key. Sandy's act of betrayal is prompted by the sense of betrayal that she feels as a student by her teacher. Her understanding of Miss Brodie's betrayal to her students' trust by manipulating their desires and dreams instigates her to the act of betraying. Miss Brodie is shattered by the act of betrayal and loses her composure and poise. She tries desperately to find her betrayer but is never successful in her endeavor. Initially she suspects everybody other than Sandy and addresses her concerns to Sandy. To this query, Sandy responds in a very insightful manner: "Sandy replied like an enigmatic Pope: 'If you did not betray us it is impossible that you could have been betrayed by us. The word betrayed does not apply...'" (PMJB 126). This statement further underscores Sandy's belief that Miss Brodie never deserved their unflinching loyalty.

Sandy grows up witnessing the various betrayals that Miss Brodie intentionally and unintentionally puts into motion. As a child, Sandy is scared of being nice to Mary because she does not want to disappoint Miss Brodie. She thus betrays her own self, her psyche in order to adhere to a false set of ideals that are nourished by Miss Brodie. She perceives that Miss Brodie betrays the sense of trust placed in her as a teacher by instigating Rose to start an affair with Mr. Teddy Lloyd and manipulating Joyce Emily to join the war. As a befitting reply to her teacher, Sandy puts into action the ultimate act of betrayal that will irrevocably alter their status quo. Nevertheless, this act of betrayal affects Sandy deeply and the unassailable guilt which she denies, instill in her the need to lead a cloistered life.

Muriel Spark succeeds in capturing the enigmatic nature of the human mind in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Miss Brodie and Sandy's opposing ideologies form the crux of the main narrative. The novel achieves wide popularity and an eternal acclaim as it very precisely addresses a number of decisive issues related to human nature. Miss Brodie, being a fascist, discards the notion of emotional accountability towards her students. The image that she creates in front of her students is quite misleading and deceptive. It is her wicked and shrewd nature that at the end, changes the course of life of every character in the novel. She is portrayed as a delusional character and throughout the novel dwells into her own apprehensions and projections of mind. She abandons all the moral parameters and moral goodness just for the sake of maintaining her self-image. She is an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini and a "born Fascist" (PMJB 125).

She advocates and supports her ideology instead of thinking about the repercussions that it may have on the psyche of her set. When she learns about the act of betrayal against her by her own set, she becomes devastated and crushed emotionally. Thus, the novel achieves its motive of discussing and throwing light on the aspect of human psychology especially on human nature and emotions. There is plethora of characters in the novel exhibiting varied human nature and emotions. Spark brilliantly discusses the issues of Fascism, Calvinism, Transfiguration, and the relative nature of 'betrayal' in the novel.

2.2 Unfolding Psychological Significance

Muriel Sparks' masterpiece *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* covers an important aspect and phase in the life of any child i.e. the school life. Except home, school is the only place, where a child spends maximum time. The teacher plays a significant role on the overall development and growth of the child. The select novel offers an apt story line to understand and unfold the

psychological significance of a teacher-student relationship. Psychological simply means related to human mind, feelings and cognition. It involves any notable influence and effect on the evolving mind. *APA Dictionary of Psychology* defines psychological significance as, “the extent to which an effect found in a research study is relevant to the attitudes, cognitions, beliefs, and behavior of humans. For example, a finding that describes how individuals function in a variety of different settings would have psychological significance.”¹⁶ The novel is written in the form of Bildungsroman, also known as the ‘formation novel.’ According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

the term Bildungsroman is more or less synonymous with *Erziehungsroman* – literally an ‘upbringing’ or ‘education’ novel. Widely used by German critics, it refers to a novel which is an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine (usually the former). It describes the process by which maturity is achieved through the various ups and downs of life (77).¹⁷

Similarly, the story of the select novel also revolves around the formative stages of psychological and moral growth of the adolescent girls. It can be regarded as the novel of education and novel of formation. The form of novel further minutely helps to study the psychological influence of Miss Brodie on her set. Among all the pupils in school, Miss Brodie has the few chosen ones. They were known as the ‘Brodie Set.’ There were six ten-year-old girls namely Monica Douglas, Rose Stanley, Eunice Gardiner, Sandy Stranger, Jenny Gray and Mary Macgregor. The story covers the lives of Brodie Set from age twelve to eighteen, and thus indicating how Miss Brodie molds them and their adult lives. She provides her set unorthodox education on unconventional topics as varied as poetry, makeup, Italian fascism under Mussolini,

and her own love life. She tries to pose her own interests and insight on the girls' timid minds. She intends to mold her set into "the crème de la crème" meaning the best person in a particular thing.

A good teacher is regarded as a blessing for life. Behind every student's success, a teacher plays a major role. The novel unfolds some very dark events in the lives of Brodie set as one of Miss Brodie's students commits suicide, another gets involve in a sexual relationship with her teacher whereas another one spies on them. Sandy, not only spies on her teacher but also betrays her. Miss Jean Brodie creates no boundaries between her and her set. She asserts a very strong influence over her set both in a positive and a negative sense.

In terms of positive influence, she teaches her set in unconventional way to live a life. She focuses on insight and instinct. She gives them practical and true knowledge of life. But on the other hand, she forgets making her set beneficial members for society. Although, Miss Brodie and her set of six girls spent quiet of time bonding, but, Miss Brodie fails to create a team spirit and a sense of friendship among them. None of them had anything in common except their continuing relationship with Jean Brodie. As they grew older, they all drifted apart.

Miss Brodie is truly a passionate teacher. She is dedicated towards her profession of teaching. She never had any ill notion in regard to any of her students. Her intentions are pure and sublime. She just wishes to impart practical wisdom to her girls. She wants her girls to be aware of what is happening around them and to liberate from orthodox norms and conventions. But this openness and frankness of her acts as a sort of an intrusion because in a very critical age of adolescence where there are changes related to physical and cognitive development, the age where puberty hits and attains a sexual maturation, Miss Brodie aroused the sexual curiosity of her students by discussing her love affair with her dead lover Hugh. As a result, Sandy and Jenny

become interested in talking and discussing about sex, fantasizing and writing about it. They called it the “research” (PMJB 17). They even pen down the imaginative story of intercourse between Miss Brodie and Mr. Lowther.

During this time, another girl, named, Joyce Emily Hammond, who is a rich outsider and new fresher to the school is sent by her rich parents to Blaine as a last resort. She desperately hopes of becoming a member of the Brodie set. Later, encouraged and inspired by Miss Brodie, as her own desire, she runs away to fight in the Spanish Civil War and support Franco. Unfortunately, Emily dies in a train wreck En route. This unfortunate mishap is itself evident of the strong impact of Miss Brodie on Emily’s psyche. Initially, she becomes desperate to become one of the girls of Brodie set. Emily always tries to remain in Brodie’s good books and thus forms a blind allegiance with Brodie which results in her untimely death.

Towards the end of the story, Sandy being frustrated from living a dual life under the guidance of Miss Brodie approaches Miss Mackay. She announces that she is interested “in putting a stop to Miss Brodie” (PMJB 125). She advises Miss Mackay to use politics as a weapon against Miss Brodie. She says, “But you won’t be able to pin her down on sex. Have you thought of politics?” She tells Miss Mackay about Miss Brodie’s side interest in fascist politics. She says, “She is a born Fascist, have you thought of that?” (PMJB 125). Miss Mackay finally in possession of incriminating evidence to dismiss Miss Brodie, blames Miss Brodie for Joyce Emily’s death as she was the one who meddled in between and instigated her to go to the war. Miss Brodie was forced to retire at the end of the summer term of nineteen thirty-nine on account of teaching Fascism in class.

By middle age, Sandy adopts a new religion and converts to Roman Catholic Nun by a new name – Sister Helena of the Transfiguration. She wrote a famous psychological treatise entitled “The Transfiguration of the Commonplace.” In the end, it is seen that a young man arrives to the convent to interview Sandy and asks her “What were the main influences of your schooldays, Sister Helena? Were they literary or political or personal? Was it Calvinism?” (PMJB 128) to which Sandy responds: ““There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime.” (PMJB 128) It is clear that among all of the Brodie set, Sandy is the only one who was deeply influenced by their strange yet influential teacher. Although, she is the one who betrayed her teacher and the very fact remains as a mystery to Miss Brodie as which girl among her set betrayed her. She questions Sandy, “I wonder if it was Mary Macgregor betrayed me? Perhaps I should have been kinder to Mary” (PMJB 77).

2.3 Intricacies of Human Relationships

Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus defines intricacy as, “complicated or perplexingly detailed” (400).¹⁸ *Macmillan English Dictionary* defines intricacy as, “the complicated parts or details of something such as a system or problem” or “a complicated pattern or form” (755).¹⁹ *Collins Dictionary* defines it as, “the quality or state of being intricate or complex.”²⁰ Human relationship according to *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* is “a state of being related.” It also signifies a connection or an emotional association between two people (636).²¹ *Macmillan English Dictionary* defines it as, “the way in which two or more things or people are connected with or involve with each other and how they behave with each other.” It can be a simple or romantic relationship as well, especially one that continues for a long time (1192).²²

Human relationships or association is the backbone of human civilization. Human Civilization cannot flourish and prosper in isolation. Even the process of reproduction in humans demands an establishment of a relationship. A relationship can be established either in two or more

individuals or between a group of individuals. It simply means interaction and connection between different individuals from all walks of life. According to Gonsalves,

a relationship is any kind of association or connection between people, whether intimate, platonic, positive, or negative. There are four basic types of relationships: family relationships, friendships, acquaintanceships, and romantic relationships. Other more nuanced types of relationships might include work relationships, teacher/student relationships, and community or group relationships.²³

Human Relationship or interpersonal relationship refers to a strong bond between two or more people which is the result of either some common liking or interest. The two different individuals are attracted towards each other due to some common goal or motive, gradually develops a connection which becomes stronger as time progresses. Every relationship must be reciprocal in nature i.e. it can only be sustained for long run if both the individuals are equally committed and interested in it. There are various types of human relationships:

1. Friendship
2. Acquaintances
3. Love or Romantic Relationship
4. Platonic Relationship
5. Family Relationship
6. Professional Relationship

Friendship is a bond or connection with people who are not related to family or relatives. A friendship is one of the most important and strongest relationships that people share after family. According to *Macmillan English Dictionary*, “a friend is someone you know well and like is not

a member of your family” (566).²⁴ A good and true friendship can only be created if both the individuals are respectful, supportive and share common ideas and interests. The understanding of two individuals or a group is the key factor and foundation for any relationship.

Acquaintance is a state of being acquainted or familiar with a person, slightly less deep than of friendship. In short, a person like neighbor, work or college colleague and so on. Still, it is important to maintain harmonious relationship with such acquaintances to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Any relationship based on love, passion, intimacy, trust and respect can be regarded as a romantic relationship. In a loving and romantic relationship, both the individuals feel attracted to each other mentally, physically and emotionally. A romantic relationship may exist between a man and woman (heterosexual relationship), man and man (homosexual/gay relationship), woman and woman (lesbian relationship), between spouses or married couples, life partners (long-term unmarried relationship) and so on. Both the partners in a romantic relationship shares a special bond that they do not feel for anyone else. Contrary to this, a platonic relationship is the friendly relationship but does not involve any physical intimacy. There are no feelings of love and desire attached with the other person. The connection is merely of friendship and nothing else.

Family relationship is the one where individuals are related by blood or through the institution of marriage. It includes parents, siblings, other relatives such as – cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents and so on. Family, specially parents plays a vital role in the life of their children. They are the source of motivation and provides guidance and support at every stage of life. This form of relationship generally lasts for life-long and it is the first relation that a child creates and encounters. The overall personality of a child depends on the values and morals

instilled in him since the birth. The strong bond with family provides ability to establish other healthy relationships outside the family such as friendships, professional relationships and the like.

Professional relationship encompasses individuals working together in the same organization. It could be work place, school, college or any other institution. Individuals who shares professional relationships with are known as colleagues. Professional colleagues may or may not like each other but they have to maintain a harmonious relationship to avoid unnecessary conflict at work place. Professional relationship may also include employer-worker relationship, student-teacher relationship, boss-employee relationship and so on and so forth.

Emotions play a very pivotal role in formation of various relationships and connections. Intricacies and conflicts in any form of relationship is quite common and natural. Two different individuals forming a bond often encounters events where there is disagreement and disapproval on any matter. “Relationship conflict is a disagreement between people (e.g., partners, friends, siblings, or co-workers). The root of the conflict might be something like a difference of opinion, experience, taste, perspective, personality, or beliefs.”²⁵ “It may also result from either personality clashes or negative emotional interactions between two or more people.”²⁶

Spark’s novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* offers the readers to establish an understanding of interpersonal-human relationships and especially the association of professional relationship shared between a teacher-student, teacher-teacher and a teacher-principal and to other authority. Somewhere around early 1930s, Edinburgh, Scotland; six ten-year-old girls of a class at the Marcia Blaine School begins their course of two years of instruction with Miss Jean Brodie, a charming teacher at the Junior school who claims again and again to be in her “prime.” As a teacher, Miss Brodie holds a very different outlook altogether and a different pedagogy. She never

hides anything from her students and her life is like an open book in front of them. She shares every minute detail of her life including her interests and love life with her set. She is a revolutionary teacher in respect to the period of that time and in her ways of teaching. She breaks all the conventional ways of teaching and imparting knowledge and goes a long way to make her 'Brodie Set' aware of social life conduct and acquire a new sense of being.

In the novel, it is quite evident that Miss Brodie fails to maintain a harmonious professional relationship with anybody in the school. Including, the headmistress of Blaine, Miss Mackay, as she often criticizes the ways of teaching adopted by Miss Brodie. According to her, "Miss Brodie's pupils are being vastly informed on a lot of subjects irrelevant to the authorized curriculum" (PMJB 5). Miss Brodie discusses about Mussolini, the Italian Renaissance painters, skin cleansing steps, love lives of Charlotte Bronte and of Miss Brodie herself and so on and so forth. She rarely teaches her girls the topics related to history or mathematics. Instead, she claims that "Art is greater than science." She comments "Art and Religion first; then philosophy; lastly science. That is the order of great subjects of life, that's their order of importance" (PMJB 25). Except this, she discusses with them poetry of Keats, Shelly, Tennyson and so on. She gives lessons on self-grooming, makeup, world cultures from Italy to Egypt as well as the rise of Fascism and Nazism.

The headmistress of Blaine, Miss Mackay, was sort of a conservative educator. She believes Stanley Baldwin's notion of "Safety First." To which Miss Brodie says "Safety does not come first. Goodness, Truth and Beauty come first" (PMJB 10). Miss Mackay, since the beginning, suspects and disapproves Miss Brodie's educational and teaching methods. She believes that they are unethical and diverted from the school policy. She wishes that Miss Brodie should resign and join a more progressive school that shares with her visions and methods. But Miss Brodie dismisses the idea. Miss Mackay puts a lot of effort and energy to dislodge Miss Brodie by

occasionally interviewing girls in order to find evidence against Miss Brodie. Even she also attempts to break the Brodie Set. But Miss Brodie is very dear to the girls and they were loyal to their beloved teacher as well. They all share a single emotion of love and loyalty towards Miss Brodie that she instilled in them towards her but unfortunately the emotion was not the same among girls in respect to each other.

Miss Jean Brodie has a very domineering persona in and around the Marcia Blaine School for girls, in Edinburgh. She is not portrayed as a usual and a typical teacher. She never shares her personal affairs with the other members of the school staff except her former pupils “whom she had trained up in her confidence.” The other staff members of her school were quite skeptical about her notions of teaching and wanted her to leave Blaine and join a more progressive school. On this Miss Brodie says:

It has been suggested again that I should apply for a post at one of the progressive schools, where my methods would be more suited to the system than they are at Blaine. But I shall not apply for a post at a crank school. I shall remain at this education factory. There needs must be a leaven in the lump. Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life (PMJB 9).

She is pictured as a mighty woman as Spark writes “with her dark Roman profile in the sun.” The Brodie set firmly believes that she would never resign and “If the authorities wanted to get rid of her she would have to be assassinated” (PMJB 9).

Miss Brodie is an independent teacher in her ways. She never follows the given class schedule. Instead of teaching English Grammar and History lessons to the girls, she talks about her life experiences and love life with Hugh. She instructs her classes that, “If anyone comes along

in the course of the following lesson, remember that is the hour of English Grammar” (PMJB 12). It is clear that Miss Brodie intentionally or unintentionally enforces the habit of lying in her students. She says that it is better not to utter a word in difficult situation. “It is well, when in difficulties, to say never a word, neither black nor white. Speech is silver but silence is golden” (PMJB 13).

Miss Brodie as teacher fails to establish a healthy relationship with her students as well. Her presence in the lives of students is more like intrusion and she behaves as a dogmatic teacher. She makes future plans for her girls, like crafting a love affair between Rose and Mr. Lloyd, as her own proxy. Being a teacher, this is indeed an evil intrusion. As the girls turn sixteen, Miss Brodie determines that she can trust Sandy absolutely as her informant and confidant. Miss Brodie was fixated on the idea that Rose should have a love affair with Mr. Lloyd as her proxy. She assigns Sandy as her spy and says, “Sandy will make an excellent Secret Service Agent, a great spy” (PMJB 109).

In the novel, there are other staff members at the Senior Section in school such as Miss Lockhart, the science teacher. Unlike Miss Brodie, she regards every student as equal and did not establish her opinion based on their personalities and for what they are “famous for.” Miss Lockhart wins to create a good repo with her students and even with the other staff members as well. The other teachers at Marcia Blaine School for Girls include Mr. Teddy Lloyd, the art teacher. Mr. Gordon Lowther is the music teacher for all grades. Both of these men love Miss Brodie, but Miss Brodie is passionate only about Teddy Lloyd. Once, they both gets involve in a love scene, which was witnessed by Monica Douglas. She shares this incident with Sandy and Jenny resulting into a sudden eruption of sexual thoughts in the girls’ psyche. Miss Brodie soon gives up her love for Teddy Lloyd, as he is married with six children. Instead, she commences an affair with the

unmarried Mr. Lowther. Towards the end, Mr. Lowther marries the science teacher Miss Lockhart. After completing the course of two years with Miss Brodie, at the age of twelve the girls got promoted to the senior School. At senior school, they were taught by excellent teachers such as the science teacher, Miss Lockhart yet in a very conventional manner. The girls retained their group status of Brodie set and their routine visits to watch ballet and have supper at Miss Brodie's house.

Thus, it is evident that though Miss Brodie is highly progressive teacher and is open with her students yet she fails to establish an amicable relationship with her set. Her thoughts are genuine and she never wishes any sort of adversity in the life of her set but her rigid behavior and self-driven opinion drives away every relationship. Intricacies in relationships are often the result of self-opinionated behavior where an individual fail to discuss events with others and thus it breaks the foundation of relationship.

To conclude, it is appropriate to say that Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is one of the greatest classics of the postmodern period. The incorporation of intertextuality, the fragmented nature of the story, excessive use of flash-forwards and flashbacks and a single omniscient narrator makes it notable in terms of writing style. It is great piece of metafiction writing where the readers throughout the novel were aware of the fictionality of the work. Thus, it marks the presence of every element to make it a postmodern reading.

Postmodern novels are both complex and has a certain degree of openness to it. The content of the novel is fragmented and carries an ambiguity that offers the readers to interpret the analyze the characters. As a reader, the novel is quite interesting but at the same time, it makes it questionable that whether Miss Brodie is really good and holds good values. Sometimes, the reader

approves the educational methods of Miss Brodie as she truly opens a new world to her students. She never ever tries to hide something from them. But she wants them to see the world with her eyes. She has many faults and limitations including her hubristic desire for life, habit of lying, desire for control and power. Yet, she finds a special place in reader's mind and heart for being nice and unique.

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CHAPTER – 3

EXISTENTIAL PURSUIT: *MEMENTO MORI*

3.1 Fear and Death

3.2 Complexities and Uncertainties of Human Life

3.3 Modern versus Old Value System

CHAPTER - 3

EXISTENTIAL PURSUIT: *MEMENTO MORI*

Existential concerns with the very existence of an individual. Pursuit means the act of pursuing something, a sort of a hobby or recreational activity done regularly. Thus, existential pursuit may be defined as an act of creating, finding and establishing a sense of existence of the self with regular alterations. In philosophy, it relates to the existentialism. After the end of the Second World War in 1945, literature suffered with a huge shift from conflicts of politics and the objective reality to the new emerging philosophies such as phenomenology, existentialism and structuralism. Existentialism posed a question before all forms of authority and belief. With this phase of transition, various literary developments also took place such as the Theatre of the Absurd, existential absurdity and ultimate isolation of human existence (Habib 219).¹ Existentialism is one of the most popular philosophical movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It emphasizes on the uniqueness of each human existence by freely making its self-defining choices.

Existentialism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining his/her own destiny, through an act of will. Existentialists stressed the fact that we are all free and responsible for what we can make of ourselves (Nimavat 241).²

Existentialists consider the dynamic nature of human as a key problem which can only be addressed ontologically i.e. by addressing the nature or essential characteristics of being and of things that exist. The philosophy of existentialism influenced other branches of studies as well

such as Psychology and Arts. Though it is a very loosely defined movement and does not hold a great impact as a whole.

Some of the key philosophers are Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) a Danish philosopher who is considered to be the first and leading existentialist philosopher; Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) a German philosopher also associated with the philosophy of Nihilism; Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) a German philosopher best known for his contributions in the field of phenomenology, hermeneutics and existentialism; Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) a French philosopher and one of the leading figures in the philosophy of existentialism, phenomenology, Marxism and twentieth century French philosophy; Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) a French writer who had a very remarkable influence on feminist theory and feminist existentialism and Albert Camus (1913-1960) a French philosopher who is commonly associated with absurdism as well.

The recent developments and growth in the field of industries and technology created aloofness and alienation among humans and have also affected the psyche of people and drifted them from nature. As a result, existentialist writers focused on the themes of alienation, identity crisis, addressing the importance of an individual and his choices, absurdity, meaning and authenticity, social criticism and religion. One of the major concerns raised by existentialists was the anxiety issues among individuals regarding life, death, extreme situations or any unforeseen happenings and uncertainties. According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

In philosophy, the terms *exist* and *existence* denote something active rather than passive and thus are closely dependent on the Latin root *ex*, ‘out’ + *sistere* from *stare*, ‘to stand’.

The term existentialism means ‘pertaining to existence’; or, in logic, ‘predicating

existence'. Philosophically, it now applies to a vision of the condition and existence of man, his place and function in the world, and his relationship, or lack of one, with God (259).³

Existentialism is highly inspired by the ideas and thinking from Kierkegaard and his well-known books like *Fear and Trembling* (1843), *The Concept of Dread* (1844), *Sickness unto Death* (1848) and so on. In his works Kierkegaard re-stated and elaborated the belief that “through God and in God man may find freedom from tension and discontent and therefore find peace of mind and spiritual serenity” (Cuddon 260).⁴ By promoting such Christian thinking and ideas, he became the pioneer of the Christian existentialism that was prevailed over many centuries. After him the horizons of existentialism were explored and expanded by twentieth century German philosophers such as Heidegger and Karl Jaspers and later seeking inspiration from them the European philosophers like Nikolai Berdyaev, Miguel de Unamuno, J. de Gautier, Benjamin Fondane founded the school of atheistic existentialism.

Muriel Spark was deeply influenced by the idea of existentialism and especially from the works of Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir. Spark in her remarkably witty novel *Memento Mori* discusses old age and the changes that the age carries with itself. She deals with the psyche of old characters and presents different attitude and perception of them. She presents the irony of the greatest truths of the human life i.e. Death. There is no single protagonist in the novel but multitude of elderly characters, who all are almost above the age of seventy. They are basically a circle of elderly people – relatives, friends and even rivals from the past. They indulge in arguments, hold grudges and jealousies against each other, worry about their inherited wealth and making of their wills. In short, they think about everything except the arrival of their death.

A. L. Kennedy remarks, *Memento Mori* is Spark's third book and probably marks her real debut as a mature novelist. He further adds –

With *Memento Mori* we meet a varied and large assembly of characters, motivations and viewpoints – all in what was then a beautifully rendered contemporary '50s setting – while deftly, playfully, insistently and wisely Spark spins us out until we are face to face with death itself. Our death, the character's death, the death of abilities, capacities and joys – the death of everything (MM ix).

3.1 Fear and Death

As mentioned in the *Dictionary of Psychology*, “Fear is a strong emotional reaction involving subjective feelings of unpleasantness, agitation and desire to flee or hide” (156).⁵ Fear is a basic human emotion and the physiological template of human anxiety. It is a strong feeling and a response induced by a perceived danger or threat. It is closely associated with the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety is a state of nervousness to an uncertain event or anticipated future danger. In a situation of being terrified or feared or even frightened, an individual can either eliminate it, escape it and ultimately can resign to it.

Fear is among the seven universal emotions. Though, fear is considered as a negative emotion, it is essential to cope with the unforeseen danger and to gather courage to face the threat. A fear mainly arises due to some dreadful condition. It can be physical fear, emotional, mental or even imagined. Fear is of two types: the situational fear and the psychological fear. The situational fear is the irrational fear such as phobia which can be controlled over a period of time. It arises only when an individual encounters such events. The psychological fear arises due to over thinking and thus is basically created by mind.

Fear is a survival mechanism and when fear is experienced in the brain, it has a physical or a biochemical reaction in body. It alerts the nervous system and the release of stress hormones cause certain physical bodily changes. By observing such changes like increase in heart rate and fluctuating blood pressure, sweating, numbness of body and such, an individual can feel the fear around. It is also known as ‘fight or flight response.’ It also has an emotional response which is quite personal as it depends on the person as how he/she takes it. The physical reaction of fear is same but emotionally it depends on the human whether to take it in positive or negative manner.

According to Bharata Muni’s *Natyashastra*, there are eight rasas or principal emotions. The terrible sentiment (Bhayanak rasa) is one of those eight rasas. The sthayibhava or the durable mental/psychological state of bhayanak rasa is Bhaya (fear). The sthayibhava of bhaya is innate and ever present in a dormant state in human, which only arises when triggered by certain transitory feelings. Bharata calls these transitory states as vyabhichari bhavas. There are thirty-three transitory states among which death (marana) is one. The terrible sentiment of fear is aroused due to presence of certain determinants like seeing supernatural elements such as ghost, fairy, creepy noises like cry and howling of animals, staying in empty houses and old mansions, forest, darkness and even by presence of death. This creates fear in an individual resulting into restlessness, anxiety, state of terror, imagining things and the like. “Bharata mentions three varieties of this sentiment – feigned fear, fear caused by wrong actions and fear from the apprehensions of danger” (40).⁶

Fear is the most common reaction to any event or object. But when the fear begins to interfere with the ability to respond and function then it becomes phobia. According to Williams, “Fear is nothing more than the expectation that something bad will happen. The opposite of fear,

by the way, is not courage, but the expectation that something good will happen. In other words, the opposite of fear is FAITH (trust in the future)” (34).⁷

The biggest and the most common fear among human beings is the fear of death. As Williams remarks, “what do we really mean by “the fear of death”? It simply means that one who fears death believes it is synonymous with the extinction or annihilation of the self. In other words, once we die - poof! - we no longer exist; we're gone forever” (34).⁸ Human beings, at times develop an irrational fear of death which is harmful. Fear is a state of living and imagining of things in future. According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “fear is an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.”⁹

The post-war years gave rise to the issues related to anxiety, fear, quest for identity and existential crisis extensively, as a result, the postmodern age developed a major focus on the theme of paranoia. According to *Dictionary of Psychology*, “Paranoia is a psychotic disorder characterized by highly systematized delusions of persecution or grandeur with little deterioration” (287).¹⁰ Paranoia is reflected in the literature through the emotion of fear, fright and paranoid anxieties. Also via non-linear narratives and ambiguity of text. It is “baseless or excessive suspicion of the motives of others.”¹¹ In terms of Psychiatry, it is

a mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions and the projection of personal conflicts, which are ascribed to the supposed hostility of others, sometimes progressing to disturbances of consciousness and aggressive acts believed to be performed in self-defense or as a mission.¹²

It involves feelings of extreme and irrational distrust and doubt, suspicion and being attacked or targeted by others. An individual develops anxious feelings regarding unseen threat or conspiracy and plotting against him/her.

“Death, the first of the last four things to be ever remembered” (MM 226). The mentioned quote is the last lines from the novel *Memento Mori* by Muriel Spark. The phrase Memento Mori is a Latin term which means ‘Remember that you must (have to) die.’ According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*,

Memento comes from the imperative form of "meminisse," a Latin verb that literally means "to remember." (The term *memento mori*, meaning "a reminder of mortality," translates as "remember that you must die.") The history of "memento" makes it clear where its spelling came from, but because a memento often helps one remember a particular moment, people occasionally spell the term "momento."¹³

It is an artistic or symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death. The expression of Memento Mori developed with the growth of Christianity, which emphasized on the concept of Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and the salvation of the soul in the afterlife. As mentioned in the Penny Catechism, “the four last things to be ever remembered are Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven” (52).¹⁴ A Catechism or the ‘aims of human life’ is a form of summary of the doctrines of the basic principles of Christianity. It serves as a learning introduction to the sacraments used in the Christian religious teaching. The manual is in the form of questions followed by the answers.

Muriel Spark in her novel *Memento Mori* aptly highlights the first of the last four things to be ever remembered i.e. Death. The novel revolves around the expression of death and the

emotions of fear, anxiety, grief and depression which go hand in hand with death. It also focuses on the complexities and uncertainties that arise in an individual's life due to the notion of death.

Death, as simply put is the point in life at which an organism ceases to be alive. Life is the journey gradually approaching to its ultimate destination which is Death. Death is known but still unknown. The unknown and the uncertain leaves an individual in mystery leading to worry and anxiety. Death anxiety or thanatophobia i.e. fear of death is caused by constant worry and thoughts about one's own death. It is a dreadful feeling of solicitude when one thinks of the process of dying or ceasing to 'be.' Robert Joseph Langs, a famous psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, distinguishes three types of death anxiety. The Predatory death anxiety, Predation or predator death anxiety and the Existential death anxiety. The Existential death anxiety arises from the basic knowledge of certainty that human life must end. It is the most powerful form of death anxiety. The basic mechanism through which humans deal with this existential death anxiety is Denial.

Denial is the root cause of all the actions such as maniac celebrations, expressing violence against others, opting various ill methods in order to avoid death, breaking and violating rules and attempting to gain extraordinary wealth and power. These existential pursuits are triggered by death related trauma but are often emotionally costly and damaging to self and others. The mere thought and idea of death haunts and terrorize mankind. Death is the final destiny of mankind, yet people deny and fears from it. The fear of death is indeed universal.

According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "death is a permanent cessation of all vital functions: the end of life."¹⁵ Death/demise/extinction/total cessation of life is a universal process that is bound to happen in every living organism's life. Death is shrouded by mystery and often

with predispositions and superstitions of mind. In modern times, the understanding of death has become vital and of utmost importance.

Every culture has its own definition and philosophy of death. In many religions and cultures such as Egyptian culture, there is an idea of an 'afterlife' and the notion of judgement based on good and bad deeds of a person. As per Buddhist belief, the role of death is very pivotal. It says that death is a constant reminder to cherish and value of being born as a human being. The uncertainty of death motivates people to not to perceive life for granted. The four events or sights witnessed by Gautama Buddha were the old age and the consequences related to old age, the sick and diseased person with pain and suffering, the third site was of a dead body and lastly the site of an ascetic finding the reason behind the sufferings of human life. These events motivated him to find the reasons behind the happenings in life and finally to attain liberation and enlightenment.

According to Hindu beliefs, there is an eternal soul or *atma* that resides in a body temporarily and leaves it when the body is no longer able to hold it. This may be due to mental or physical reasons. It says that body is merely a vessel and the soul keeps filling and leaving it as per the *Karma* of human beings. Thus, death is a state of forgetfulness of previous life's experiences and happenings. The Islamic view of death suggests that death is merely a parting and disconnection of soul from body. It is break from the earthly life and a beginning of an afterlife. The earthly life is full of obstacles and problems and acts as a stage to prepare for the afterlife. The modern and postmodern novelists view death as a transitional stage between the worldly and afterlife and do not hold the traditional view of perceiving and depicting death as painful and fearful.

A Concise Dictionary of Philosophy defines death as:

In existentialist philosophy, death is a very important concept. Man's anxiety and anguish are the outcome of the imagination of the death, which cannot be avoided. Heidegger's important slogan on death is that "None can die on my death by proxy." According to early Wittgenstein "Death is not an achievement in one's own life (134)."¹⁶

The leading cause of death is either by infectious diseases or by aging-associated diseases. Generally, people are afraid and scared of dying and the mere thought and discussion about death causes them discomfort and lends them into a state of fear. The responses of people to the idea of their own death differs from people to people. The novel is about how people perceives death and mortality. The characters in the novel have different outlook and reaction after receiving the message from the unknown caller.

The characters in the novel are so fearful that they try to control the inevitable the death itself. Spark adds an element of supernatural as the major event due to which the fear is triggered among individuals is the anonymous telephone call. The calls from the unknown caller bearing the threatening message is the ultimate warning to the characters to perceive death seriously. The novel *Memento Mori* narrates a series of dreadful events evoking emotions of fear, fright and death. Death is inevitable but the constant reminder of approaching death makes it more fearful and hard to accept. The entire plot of the novel is driven via mysterious phone calls by an unknown caller, who is never identified and only utters 'Remember you must die.'

The anonymous caller initially approaches Dame Lettie Colston and later it covers the relatives and acquaintances of her as well including her brother Godfrey Colston and his wife Charmian Piper. Alec Warner, Percy Mannering, Guy Leet and the retired police inspector

Mortimer. Two of their maid servants – Mrs. Mabel Pettigrew and Miss Jean Taylor plays very pivotal role in the novel. The novel aims at digging up the fear arising due to old age and death. The novel reflects element of mystery which in itself leads an individual to the state of fear and anxiety.

In the novel, Lisa Brooke, a seventy-three-year-old woman is the very first character to attain death post her second stroke. Though nine months ago, she decides to reform her life but could not do much about it. Percy Mannering, an eighty-year-old poet, attends her funeral but seems to be, in fact, ‘in a state of excitement.’ “Lisa’s death had filled him with thrilling awe, for though he knew the general axiom that death was everyone’s lot he could never realize the particular case; each new death gave him something fresh to feel” (MM 15). This incidence in the novel hints at a different level of interpretation where the poet feels excitement and a new fresh feel after the demise of a character. The idea and feeling of attending a funeral or someone’s death can differ from person to person. Being a poet, for him, it is a new feel that can be expressed in his writings.

The emotion of fear is felt by Lettie Colston after receiving the anonymous calls. She shares the mishap with her friend Miss Taylor, who advises her to stop receiving the telephone. Lettie confesses to her that, “I am feeling the strain. Imagine for yourself every time one answers telephone. One never knows if one is going to hear that distressing sentence. It is distressing” (MM 33). Miss Taylor suggests her to ignore it but Lettie says that “it troubles me deeply. It is a troublesome remark” (MM 33).

The character of Miss Taylor crafted by Spark shows her philosophy as well. Miss Jean Taylor, an eighty-two-year-old woman, who also served as a housekeeper for twenty years to

Charmian, is a highly influential and philosophical character. The other characters like Lettie Colston and Alec Warner often visits her to seek advice on various issues and shares the happenings of life with her. She asks Lettie to obey the message of the telephone call. She says, “It is difficult for people of advanced years to start remembering they must die. It is best to form the habit while young” (MM 33).

The novel also mentions about a Maud Long Medical Ward for aged women. It has twelve occupants ranging from age seventy to ninety-three and above. All the occupants have different perception of death. For some of the occupants, it was hard to accept the old age and the mere thought of approaching death makes them anxious. There were few, who were ready and brave to face death whole heartedly. They used to indulge in discussions on death. For instance: “What if your fears were correct? What if we died next winter?” “Some of us may die next winter in any case. It is highly probable” (MM 46).

Granny Valvona was positive about death and not fearful about it. She used to reply, “I am ready to meet my God, any time.” To which Granny Duncan adds, “But, not before time” (MM 46).

There are other patients as well in the ward who seems very fearful and frightened about death due to their declining health and several diseases. “They kept looking expectantly and fearfully at the entrance to the ward whenever anyone was heard approaching, as if watching for the Angel of Death (MM 115).”

There is a character in the novel, Dr. Alec Warner, the old sociologist, who since the day turned seventy started his research study and contemplation on Old age. He gave his ten years to studying the old age. For the past years, he had been visiting to the St. Aubrey’s Home for mental

cases and to certain elderly patients for his unofficial research (MM 55). He used to note down all the information in cards and “all of them, by his instruction, to be destroyed at his death” (MM 56). He had a wide collection of books on gerontology and senescence. He also used to visit Miss Taylor in Maud Long Ward. Miss Taylor also doubted that it was Alec Warner behind the anonymous telephone calls, as he was keen to note the reactions of people on the issue. “She asks, Are you tormenting Dame Lettie? I may be wrong, but it is the sort of thing, isn’t it, that you would do for purposes of study? An experiment -? (MM 63-64).” Though, Alec denies to the accusation but still Taylor remains doubtful about Alec. She also thinks that if not him, maybe he has employed someone to call people in order to study them.

As mentioned earlier, Dame Lettie Colston was worried about the calls bearing threatening message. She tries to gather her strength and makes up her mind that “No one, is going to kill me through fear” (MM 103). She longs for a strong friend to draw strength from. “Whom, she thought, can I draw Strength from? She considered her acquaintances one by one – who among them was tougher, stronger than she?” (MM 104). She thinks of everyone – Godfrey is selfish, Charmian feeble, Taylor is bedridden, Alec Warner has not got strength one needs. At last she thinks of Tempest Sidebottom whose mere thought gave strength to Lettie. In surprising turns of event, the next day Colston’s receives the news of demise of Tempest against the battle of cancer.

As the story of the novel progresses, the study finds that maximum number of characters in the novel meet the inevitable – the death. The two major characters Godfrey Colston and his wife, Charmian Piper also receives the call from the unknown caller. Mrs. Pettigrew says to Godfrey that, “This is all imagination” (MM 122). For Godfrey, it was not easy to take that. He says, “It’s preposterous, when we pay our rates and taxes, to be threatened like that by a stranger” (MM 126). He further adds, “It’s upsetting, one might easily take a stroke in consequence.”

Charmian advises him to consult Mrs. Pettigrew, their housekeeper, as she thinks that, “She is a tower of strength.” Later that day, Charmian also encounters a phone call:

‘Is that Mrs. Colston?’

‘Yes, speaking.’

‘Charmian Piper – that’s right, isn’t it?’

‘Yes. Are you the reporter?’

‘Remember,’ he said, ‘you must die.’

‘Oh, as to that’, she said, ‘for the past thirty years and more I have thought of it from time to time. My memory is failing in certain respects. I am gone eighty-six. But somehow I do not forget my death, whenever that will be.’

‘Delighted to hear it,’ he said. ‘Good-bye for now.’

‘Good-bye,’ she said. ‘What paper do you represent?’

But he had rung off (MM 128-129).

Charmian Colston (Piper), the eight-five-year famous novelist, suffered with various loss of faculties, memory loss, forgetfulness and even imagining things. Her husband Godfrey arranged two housekeepers for her – Mrs. Anthony and Mrs. Mabel Pettigrew. Surprisingly, the effect of the anonymous telephone on her psyche seems quite opposite to that of other characters in the novel. On one hand when other characters such as Lettie, Godfrey, Mrs. Anthony and so on were in the state of denial after hearing the anonymous voice and were filled with anxiety and fear; Charmian, on other hand, “felt overwhelmed suddenly with trepidation and pleasure” (MM 129). She prepared tea for herself, she lifted the heavy kettle and moreover, she managed to do things which was earlier impossible for her. “She felt strong and fearless” after receiving the call.

Spark, through the character of Charmian, tries to depict that it is the understanding of the self that how a person perceives anything whether in a positive or a negative manner. There are characters in the novel who are fearful of the approaching death, few characters are even not

considerate of their death and are indulge in the monetary affairs and preparation of their wills and testaments, whereas there are characters who are not at all afraid of death and welcomes it with open arms. Charmian is one of the strongest characters in terms of mental and psychological attitude. She even says to Godfrey that the call should be treated as it deserves to be treated. “Neither more nor less” (MM 126).

Henry Mortimer, a seventy-year-old former Chief Inspector analyses the Hoax-Caller case as the police was unable to track the anonymous caller, who was calling elderly people and threatening them by saying ‘Remember you must die.’ The voice of the caller varies from “very young, middle-aged to elderly” as reported by the people. He remarks that, “in my opinion the offender is Death himself” (MM 144). All the characters including Godfrey, Charmian, Lettie and her maid Gwen, Mrs. Pettigrew, Alec Warner, Janet Sidebottom along with others gather at Mortimer’s house to discuss the case. After having their discussion, they all assembled in the dinning-room, where Henry Mortimer says:

If I had my life over again I should form the habit of nightly composing myself to thoughts of death. I would practice, as it were, the remembrance of death. There is no other practice which so intensifies life. Death, when it approaches, ought not to take one by surprise. It should be part of the full expectancy of life. Without an ever-present sense of death life is insipid. You may as well live in the whites of eggs (MM 153).

Janet Sidebottom agrees to Mortimer and says, I consider that resigning ourselves to death is most uplifting and consoling. The religious point of view is too easily forgotten these days” (MM 153-154). Charmian thinks of the unknown poor young man as very lonely and sad. She

says, “He may be lonely, and simply wanting to talk to people and he rings them up” (MM 154). Mrs. Rose thinks that the fellow is trying to put the fear of God in them.

The police in their investigation assumed that it is not one man but a gang at work. In the novel, Mortimer at several occasions philosophizes the critical situation and says, the one factor which is constant in all your reports are the words ‘Remember you must die.’ He adds, “It is, you know, an excellent thing to remember this, for it is nothing more than the truth. To remember one’s death is, in short, a way of life” (MM 154). Most of the people including Charmian, Janet Sidebottom, Miss Lottinville and Mrs. Rose agrees with the thought of Mortimer.

Spark’s treatment is highly witty. She installs the character of Mortimer in order to provide calmness and a sense of relief among the rest of the characters in crisis. He asks them to read philosophical sermons because it helps to pass the time. Mortimer’s wife, Emmeline, agrees with her husband’s theory and says that, “Death is the culprit. And I should like to have seen their faces.” To which Mortimer replies, “It’s a personal opinion. One can’t make up one’s mind for other” (MM 155-156).

After everybody else’s leaves Mortimer’s house, he receives a telephone call. He answers it and within a few seconds puts down the receiver. He thinks, “How strange, that mine is always a woman. Everyone else gets a man on the line to them, but mine is always this woman, gentle-spoken and respectful” (MM 156). This event hints that Mortimer also received the hoax-call earlier but never shared it with anybody else including his wife. He takes the incidence in a very light and healthy manner. His outlook remains positive and tries to impart the positivity among all others who are suffering from the scary message of the mysterious caller.

On the death of Granny Green due to arterio-sclerosis, Alec Warner visits the Medical ward to discuss it with Miss Taylor and asks, “Did she make a good death?” He further adds, “I always like to know whether a death is a good one or bad one. Do keep a look-out” (MM 171). Miss Taylor hated him for this comment, though she says, “A good death doesn’t reside in dignity of bearing but in the disposition of the soul” (MM 171).

It is Lettie’s eighty-first year, the fear and paranoia of the telephone call hit her hard. She gradually becomes mad and suspicious of everything around her. Her maid Gwen declared her mad and the house haunted and had left. She becomes reckless and visits Miss Taylor again at the ward. Taylor tries to calm her down and says that:

In my belief, the author of the anonymous telephone calls is Death himself, as you might say. I don’t see, Dame Lettie, what you can do about it. If you don’t remember Death, Death reminds you to do so. And if you can’t cope with the facts the next best thing is to go away for a holiday (MM 179).

Lettie slowly losing her faculties and her eyesight has become weak; and the paranoia and fear of death was making her insane. Her maid Gwen had abandoned her. Gwen shares this with her boyfriend and he thinks of it as an opportunity and leak the information to the robbers in exchange of money. That night, the robbers entered her house and after a chain of events, battered her to death with Lettie’s stick. Four days passed but no one including her own brother inquire about her. Lettie being scared of the unknown calls disconnected her telephone line and makes herself secluded from the outside world.

The postmodernist view put forth by Spark suggests that people in grief or fear of death must seek to transform their painful feelings and incorporate some practical solution in order to

move along with the pace of life. In the novel, the characters such as Godfrey, Charmian, Mortimer also receives the call but takes it in healthy manner and still moves forward with their life. Unlike, Lettie, who meets a tragic end to her life due to the fear of death, which is bound to happen to every living being.

3.2 Complexities and Uncertainties of Human Life

Human life is made up of events both pleasant and unpleasant. Complexities and Uncertainties are an integral part of human life. It is a state of being complex, intricate and entangled within the happenings of life. An individual's thoughts and life experiences makes the occurrences in life quite complex. *Macmillan English Dictionary* defines complex, "as an emotional problem caused by unreasonable fears or worries" (282).¹⁷ It defines complexities as, "features of something that make it confusing or difficult to deal with" (282).¹⁸ On the other hand, uncertainty or ambiguity in life makes people more worrisome. It is a condition of being uncertain about future events and leaves an individual in a state of doubt and flux. *Dictionary of Psychology* defines uncertainty as, "the state of belief when one does not fully believe, when one is unsure" (403).¹⁹

Human life cycle consists of six stages: foetus, baby, child, adolescent, adulthood and elderly. Each life cycle has its own complexities and uncertainties. Spark's novel *Memento Mori* is a very realistic portrayal of the complexities and uncertainties of the elderly life. Though, the art of presenting the idea is very exhilarating and in a fun manner to provide a sense of laughter to the readers. Uncertainty in life is an unavoidable part of life yet it creates high level of stress among humans. It is a well-established truth and a fact that Certainty is death whereas uncertainty is in living.

The novel *Memento Mori* aptly depicts the complexities of old age. The most striking feature of the novel is that almost all the characters are over the age of seventy and by the end of the novel they meet the inevitable – the Death. The old age is the age of complete transition of body, where it slowly begins to deteriorate to meet the final end. This process naturally raises the fear of uncertainty in life. In the novel, the characters are seen worrying about the arrival of their death. The unknown and sudden arrival of death makes it more complex. It becomes more severe and complex, when the elderly people receives death news of their relatives and closed ones. The novel is about old and elderly people – their concerns and actions. It reflects the worries that comes handy with the old age particularly the concern of preparing the will and the people included in it, the various ailments and degradation of faculties of old age and even the doings of the past that haunts the last phase of life.

During old age, the main fear that haunts the elderly people is getting neglected and thrown out of the family. The young people try avoiding the elderly and put them in complete social isolation i.e. lack of contact with other people. It is the age when health completely and gradually deteriorates. The age is engulfed by several diseases and according to novel the old people faces the ‘loss of faculties’ i.e. the loss of vision or eyesight, physical energy, weakness, loss of memory, the raise in harsh temper and rigidness and several old age diseases like dementia, Alzheimer’s and so on.

The old age people often face the loss of their spouse and friends that make them feel alone and isolated. Anxiety and depression are the arriving symptoms of the old age around sixty years of age. Godfrey Colston, an eighty-seven-year-old man in the novel is obsessed by the question of old people and their faculties (MM 12). Throughout the novel, he is seen asking questions regarding faculties of people. Surprisingly, he never accepts the loss of his own faculties and

towards the end due to loss of his faculties, meets with a car accident and later dies of pneumonia which had set in from the shock.

The vast amount of complexities raised in old age are natural and tends to happen. It's a circle of life. Though, in the postmodern world or the contemporary times, there are various other issues and complexities inflicted by individuals themselves. In old age, the tension and anxiety about preparation of wills and wealth is a major concern for many elderly people.

In the novel there are few instances where the characters receive the news of death of a near one while reading Obituaries in the paper. For instance, Godfrey discovered in *The Times* obituary the next morning that Lisa Brooke died (MM 13). This is a sort of a reality check to the characters in the novel regarding the surprise and shocking arrival of death.

In one of the instances in the novel, Miss Jean Taylor and Dame Lettie Colston were discussing about the old age that feels 'like a wartime'. Miss Taylor remarks that "Being over seventy is like being engaged in a war. All our friends are going or gone and we survive amongst the dead and the dying as on a battlefield" (MM 31).

Being next door to death is a condition that drives the action of many of Spark's plots as her characters seek by the rewriting of wills (like Lettie Colston, Lisa Brooke and Granny Barnacle) ...Many of Spark's plots are about those who plot to shape life to their own advantage when death comes knocking at the door (Craig 25).²⁰

The uncertainty of death makes people anxious and worried about their wealth, the well-being of their loved ones; and as a matter of fact, they begin preparation for making wills and testaments and dividing their wealth among their children and younger generation. Lisa Brooke, the very first character who dies in the novel, transfers all of her fortune to Mrs. Pettigrew, her

housekeeper. This creates a huge fuss among the family members – Ronald and Janet Sidebottom, who should inherit by rights. “They hoped to contest Lisa’s will if possible, on the grounds that Lisa, when she made it, was not in her right mind, and probably under undue influence of Mrs. Mabel Pettigrew” (MM 28). Later, throughout the novel there is continuous battle and issues on the same event.

Dame Lettie Colston, who died as a result of fear and paranoia of her approaching death and the threatening phone calls, throughout the novel is fixated on changing her will. She suspects everyone to be the man behind telephone calls. She sometimes put Eric in her will and later Martin. Eric Colston, is her fifty-six-year-old nephew and the son of Godfrey and Charmian. He is a novelist like her mother but they both never get along in the novel. “Eric is out again, for one. Martin is put in again. That’s the other nephew in Africa” (MM 90). After her demise, when Mortimer searched her house for clues, “They found twenty-two different wills amongst her papers, dated over the past forty-years” (MM 211). Emmeline Mortimer comments on her as being a, “silly woman, to change her mind so often” (MM 211).

In the novel, it is observed that many elderly people towards last phase of their life, often revisits their memories of past and when they were young. Thus, the novel also signals at creating good memories while young, as in old age, it is only the memories that provides a relief to people. Spark leaves a crucial teaching not to hold grudges towards the old age to anybody and it is good to let go all the memories that haunts the last phase of life.

The novel aptly raises the issue of the acceptance of the old age and the changes that takes place along with it. Due to old age, many adults send their old parents to the old age homes and medical wards so that the faculty will take care of them. In order to release from their duties, they

neglect and send their elders far. Similarly, in the Medical ward, initially it becomes tough for patients to accept this change. They even feel shock “by being called Granny” (MM 9). Charmian also begins to think that due to her old age, Godfrey is planning to send her to an Old Age Home. This makes her anxious and she begins to cry.

The novel through a young character of Eric depicts a harsh truth of life. The people in their young age and adulthood avoid seeing and meeting the old people because it gives a sort of intimation to them that someday they will also get old. Godfrey also rebukes Eric and says, “men of that age and type can’t bear the sight of old people” (MM 101).

The characters like Charmian and Godfrey are seen having the fear of disclosure towards the last phase of their life. Their marriage was not a successful union but still they both somehow managed to get through. It is evident in the novel that they both had committed infidelity in their past but decides to remain silent. This silence made their marriage silent but they both stand together while bearing the weight and guilt of their past. These events were disclosed by Miss Taylor to Alec Warner as a study for Alec. Taylor rightly remarks here that, “There is time for loyalty and a time when loyalty comes to an end” (MM 175). Craig remarks,

It is in *Memento Mori*, however, a novel full of characters who are trying to control the consequences of their coming deaths, that Spark introduces her most surreal intersection between the world of time and material causation and the possible intervention in that world of the supernatural...The Death should use the modern medium of the telephone to make the pronouncement that the listener ought to remember their own coming death gives the novel the surreal supernaturalism which is typical of many of Spark’s narrative inventions (28-29).²¹

Towards the end of the novel, Alec Warner, who devoted his life to study the old people, lost his entire notes and records in a fire (MM 223). Taylor advises him, “Try to start all over again, Alec. You will find a lot of it will come back to your mind while you work.” To which he replies, “I could never trust my memory, as I trusted those notes.” (MM 224). He thinks that “he was really dead, since his records had ceased to exist.” Taylor consoles him, “That’s rather a metaphysical idea for you, Alec. For in fact you are not dead, but still alive.” She rightfully remarks that, “We all appear to ourselves frustrated in our old age, because we cling to everything so much. But in reality we are still fulfilling our lives” (MM 224).

3.3 Modern versus Old Value System

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Value System as, ‘the system of established values, norms, or goals existing in a society.’²² As per *Collins Dictionary*, ‘the value system of a group of people is the set of beliefs and attitudes that they all share and the set of values according to which people, a society, or organization regulate their behaviour.’²³

A hierarchy of values that all moral agents possess, demonstrated by their choices. Most people's value systems differ, making the imposition of a singular value system by the state a source of constant social warfare. This is an individualistic concept. One's value system is molded by one's virtues or vices.²⁴

According to *A Concise Dictionary of Philosophy*,

Values are socially accepted norms to evaluate objects, persons, and situations that form part and parcel of society. Value system is the backbone of a civilized society. Values may change from one society to another society and also from time to time. There are both

material and non-material values. For example, every society abides by certain moral values which form part of non-material values (391).²⁵

The values are the set of specific belief, opinion and idea of an individual that governs and guide human behavior. Generally, the value system in an individual is established by birth depending on the culture and the family background they are raised with. The young children often adopt the value system that they perceive and receive in the family and tend to believe it as right as it belongs to a particular culture that they are conditioned with.

Adopting or choosing any value system depends on the preference of an individual. The arrival of modern and postmodern age offered people the liberty to question and reason in every matter and subject. This gave people an opportunity to opt for ethical decision-making in order to weigh and question the essence and foundation of the values they are receiving. The modern readers find it apt to evaluate the values and norms and afterwards sticking to it as their behavioral conduct. The conflicts and chaos arises when people or social groups meet belonging to different value system. The turf between modern and old value system is endless.

Memento Mori is exactly what it says – an aid to the contemplation of our demise, a reminder of our one, irreversible truth. In the novel, there are instances that captures the difference of opinion and values among characters. At the crematorium chapel, when Lisa Brooke's last rites were taking place and as per Christian rituals the coffin was slowly sliding, Godfrey, "who was not a believer, decided once and for all to be cremated when his time came" (MM 15). During Lisa's post-crematorial party, Godfrey again makes a comment on the rituals.

‘What is your feeling about the service?’ said Tempest.

Godfrey looked round at the waitress. ‘Very satisfactory,’ he said. ‘That older one handled that Mannering very well, I thought.’

Tempest closed her eyes as one who prays for grace. ‘I mean,’ she said, ‘poor Lisa’s last rites at the crematorium.’

‘Oh,’ said Godfrey, ‘you should have said funeral service. When you said the service, naturally I thought -’

‘What do you feel about the cremation service?’

‘First rate,’ said Godfrey. ‘I’ve quite decided to be cremated when my time comes. Cleanest way. Dead bodies under the ground only contaminate our water supplies. You should have said cremation service in the first place’ (MM 24).

The comment shows Godfrey’s insensitivity towards the value system and beliefs of others. While discussing the matter with Charmian and Mrs. Anthony, the discussion got heated up and turned a bit ugly.

‘I have quite decided to be cremated when my time comes,’ said Godfrey. ‘It is the cleanest way. The cemeteries only pollute our water supplies. Cremation is best.’

‘I do so agree with you,’ said Charmian sleepily.

‘No, you do not agree with me,’ he said. ‘R.C.s are not allowed to be cremated.’... Ask Mrs. Anthony, she’ll tell you that R.C.s are against cremation.’

‘Mrs. Anthony, you’re a Roman Catholic, aren’t you?’ said Godfrey. ‘Do you believe in cremation?’

‘Well,’ she said, ‘I don’t really much like the idea of being shoved away quick like that. I feel somehow it’s sort of -’

‘It isn’t a matter of how you feel, it’s a question of what your Church says you’ve not got to do. Your Church says you must not be cremated, that’s the point.’

‘Well, as I say, Mr. Colston, I don’t really fancy the idea-’

‘*Fancy the idea . . .* It is not a question of what you fancy. You have no choice in the matter, do you see?’

‘Well, I always like to see a proper burial, I always like-’

‘It’s a point of discipline in your Church,’ he said, ‘that you mustn’t be cremated. You women don’t know your own system’ (MM 26).

This particular conversation shows Godfrey’s different approach of thinking. Being a Christian, he raises his inquiry and states his own decision of being cremated going against the norms of his religion. As per Christian rituals, the body of the deceased person is buried and not cremated. The reason stated by Godfrey was logical and according to the raising issues of contemporary times. Spark via adding this conversation tries to depict the liberty offered to public to reason and follow their value system as per their psyche and understanding.

The Old Value System says that the inherited wealth of a deceased person goes to the family and the relatives, or as per the instructions provided by the person in their respective wills. Spark, in the novel, portrays an entirely different approach and outlook. As, Lisa Brook’s will clarify that her entire fortune is bequeathed, “to my husband if he survives me and thereafter to my housekeeper, Mabel Pettigrew” (MM 28). Similarly, there are other characters in the novel who favors the idea of bequeathing their entire fortune to their housekeepers. The modern world

has completely transformed the value system. In the old age, the elders expect from their younger generation to provide proper care to them but instead the financial and monetary gain blinds them. The greed for money and inherited wealth ruins the unity and bond of family. Their own children send them to old age homes and as a result there are various cases, where, people transfers their entire wealth to their housekeepers, who were there for them during the last phase of their life.

In foreign Culture, it is a common practice for children to live separately from their parents. The establishment of Old Age Homes, Medical Wards for Elderly has also promoted this practice. In Indian Culture, though, still it is rare to see children living separated from their parents. In the novel, Charmian initially feels bad and anxious of leaving her house but then willingly shifts to a nursing house in Surrey at last.

In the novel, there is an incidence where Miss Taylor and Lettie were discussing about the growth and achievement of modern technology especially the medical growth, due to which patients are recovering from grave diseases and living longer and happy life. Lettie comments on the patients at Ward that, “these creatures are too disturbing...One wonders, really, what is the purpose of keeping them alive at the country’s expense” (MM 176). Miss Taylor replies:

For my part, I would be glad to be let die in peace. But the doctors would be horrified to hear me say it. They are so proud of their new drugs and new methods of treatment – there is always something new. I sometimes fear, at the present rate of discovery, I shall never die.’ (MM 176)

She further adds, “Of course the principle of keeping people alive is always a good one” (MM 176).

Thus, Spark's novel *Memento Mori*, though written in 1950s, clearly propagates a postmodern thought. The novel clearly states that the World where an individual resides is full of change and disruption. The humans make the life more complex as in a state of confusion and chaos, its human nature that tends to focus on the complex issues rather than searching for a simple solution. "Complexity is the inherent human nature."²⁶ Being emotional beings, the constant worrying, stress, anger, frustrations, guilt makes the life even more critical. As seen in the novel too, the characters try to control everything in life but unfortunately it is not the case. According to David A. King,

the novel was inspired in many ways by Spark's own conversion to Catholicism in 1953, as well as hospital visits to see old people she had known as a child. Spark wrote that "when I saw them I was impressed by the power and persistence of the human spirit. They were paralyzed or crippled in body, yet were still exerting characteristic influences on those around them and on the world outside. I saw a tragic side to this situation and a comic side as well."²⁷

The novel also reflects the incorporation of some of the postmodern techniques such as intertextuality and paranoia. There is reference made to various famous literary writers and lines quoted from different works in order to enhance the meaning of the text. Zoë Strachan rightfully remarks,

Across such a glittering oeuvre as Spark's, *Memento Mori* continues to stand out for the contemporary reader. Its structure and tone are pitch perfect, and it has an uncanny knack for making us laugh while making us think. The two central female characters are wise, loveable and deeply memorable, if that is we are to be allowed to retain our memories. At

the same time as being absolutely specific and of its period, it is universal. For what could be more timeless, more perennially disruptive to our psyches, and more consoling than the counsel given by the anonymous caller throughout *Memento Mori*? And how would each of us answer, if we took the call and were told to remember we must die?²⁸

Spark begins the novel with three epigraphs, the first by W. B. Yeats's *The Tower*, musing on the absurdity of aging; second by Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation*, description of the elderly, and finally The Penny Catechism.

In the novel, Percy Mannering, the poet, writes a Shakespearian sonnet entitled 'Memento Mori,' the final couplet of the first version being,

Out of the deep resounds the hollow cry,
Remember – oh, remember you must die.

The second version being,

But slowly the reverberating sigh
Sounds in my ear: *Remember you must die.*

The third being,

And from afar the Voices mingle and cry
O mortal Man, *remember you must die.* (MM 198-199)

Thus, the novel *Memento Mori* disseminates the threatening message to remember that one must have to die at some day. In respect to the postmodern world, where there is unending chaos, arrival of apocalyptic end of the world, with upgradation of atomic and nuclear power, beginning of pandemics and deadly diseases, and dependence on virtual world; the novel in a comic manner tries to remind the readers of the inevitable – the death itself.

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CHAPTER - 4

VICES AND VIRTUES: *UNDER THE NET*

4.1 Appearance and Reality

4.2 Silence, Symbols and Images

4.3 Philosophy of Solipsism

CHAPTER - 4

VICES AND VIRTUES: *UNDER THE NET*

Human existence always dwells in dichotomies and duality of things; good and evil, mind and body, right and wrong and so on. As human life progresses, an individual builds his/her character by acquiring certain qualities of head and heart and attaching his self to specific values and ethics. Vices and Virtues are an integral part of an individual. In lucid terms, vices are the bad habits and as *Cambridge Dictionary* defines, “a moral fault or weakness in someone’s character such as greed, envy, pride and lust.”¹ It may also imply to immoral behavior and activities. *Collins Dictionary* interprets vice as “a bad habit which is regarded as a weakness in someone’s character, but not usually as a serious fault.”² As per *Macmillan English Dictionary*, “Vice is a habit or personal quality, extremely bad and immoral behavior” (1595).³ The opposite of Vice is Virtue. “Virtues are the moral goodness and good quality of an individual” (865).⁴ According to *Macmillan English Dictionary*,

1. virtue is a good quality or habit that a person has, especially a moral one such as honesty or loyalty.
2. a quality that is useful in a particular activity.
3. a way of behaving in which you do what is morally right and avoid things that are morally wrong.
4. an advantage or good feature that something has that makes it better than something else (1599).⁵

Etymologically, the term virtue is derived from the Latin word *virtus* encompassing all the “excellent qualities of men, including physical strength, valorous conduct, and moral rectitude.”⁶ Thus, virtues are the traits of moral excellence in an individual; the individual is being judged based on the moral conduct and goodness or simply the virtues and therefore, virtues are regarded as a foundation of an individual’s character. According to Christian beliefs, there are four Cardinal virtues viz. temperance, prudence, fortitude and justice. Christianity merged the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love from the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians in the New Testament of the Christian Bible, authored by Paul the Apostle and Sosthenes in Ephesus. Combining all these, makes up the seven virtues. As per Christian teachings, there are Seven Deadly Sins and Seven Christian Virtues/Heavenly Virtues:

Table 4

List of Seven Deadly Sins and Seven Christian Virtues

SIN	VIRTUE
Pride	Humility
Envy	Kindness
Gluttony	Temperance
Lust	Chastity
Wrath	Patience
Greed	Charity
Sloth	Diligence

Source: Based on Review of Literature

The numerous literary writers as well as ancient and modern philosophers also studied and put forward their idea of vices and virtues. Iris Murdoch being a philosopher-novelist paid much attention towards the moral goodness of a character. She was greatly influenced by philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Raymond Queneau. Murdoch's novel *Under the Net* is also dedicated to Queneau. It is Murdoch's first published novel, which is a blend of Murdoch's philosophy in a picaresque form of novel. The characters in the novel portray the traits of both vices and virtues inhibited in them. The novel studies how these qualities affect the actions of individuals and thus, it is apt to study the concept of Appearance and Reality. The perception of a person as it appears versus how it is actually in reality. The novel is infused with imagery and symbolism. Murdoch's novel has a significant and very deep role of silence as there are various allusions to silence and each time the interpretation is different. Through this novel, Murdoch also portrayed her idea of the philosophy of solipsism through the protagonist of the story James Donahue (known as Jake).

4.1 Appearance and Reality

The concept of 'Appearance' and 'Reality' is concerned with the ways they are perceived by an individual. Both the concepts of appearance and reality are being discussed in Indian and Western contexts at great length and depth. The process of assessing and differentiating between the appearance and the real is based on an individual's knowledge and the power of conscious to develop an understanding of others. Iris Murdoch in her novel, *Under the Net*, deals with the conditions raised due to the conflicts that arise in assessing between the apparent and the real. In human life, the misunderstanding and conflicts are caused due to the failure of human consciousness that fails to understand other people, different situations and realities due to limitations of knowledge. Often an individual desires to learn the reality; but the ego, prior

understanding and knowledge of events, situations and experience of the self, devoid him from reaching to the reality.

An individual through the constant process of thinking and using the limited knowledge projects numerous other possibilities and thus, drifts away from the path of reaching to the reality. The individual wanders in between his/her projections and believes on different appearances. It is evident through Murdoch's writings that she had seek her inspiration from philosophers such as Plato and Simone Weil. It was hard on her part to separate art and philosophy and thus gave both a common platform.

According to *Macmillan English Dictionary*, "appearance is the way that someone or something looks, when this is different to the way it really is" (55).⁷ Contrary to this, as *Oxford Dictionary* defines reality as, "what is real or existent or underlies appearances or likeness to original" (625).⁸ The major difference between the appearance and reality is appearance is what something looks like and how it appears to an individual after gathering all the existing knowledge and senses but the reality is the true state of things and how they actually exist without any falsifications and absence of facts. Appearance may be wrong, deceptive, biased and misleading and there is possibility that it is not always true. On the other hand, reality is genuine and the exact true form of things as they are.

In terms of literature, the use of the concept of appearance and reality is old and since the time of Shakespeare was used frequently. Among writers, the theme of appearance versus reality is very common and it is reflected through the characters, their dialogues, various events in the novel that are not what they appear to be. The appearance and projections hidden in the psyche of

characters carries veiled expressions and hidden layers of meaning which only becomes clear and transforms into reality towards the end of the novel.

According to *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, appearance - reality distinction is, “the knowledge that the appearance of an object does not necessarily correspond to its reality.”⁹ “Metaphysics is the science that seeks to define what is ultimately real as opposed to what is merely apparent.”¹⁰ The in-depth view on the philosophy of appearance and reality can be studied through the works of various philosophers such as Rene Descartes (*Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1641), Immanuel Kant, George Berkeley, Bertrand Russell, F. H. Bradley (*Appearance and Reality*, 1893) and so on and so forth.

Under the Net is a story fixated on the life of its protagonist James Donahue, who is more famous by the name Jake. He is portrayed as a young reckless and penniless artist, who does very little work for his living, likes to live in rent free houses and wishes to stay out of any sort of personal relationships. Murdoch depicts Jake as a wanderer, on a constant quest to extinguish his thirst for the unknown – his thoughts and the journey of his life. He carries a care-free approach towards life and due to this, he suffers and drives from one place to another because of his misunderstandings. His misunderstandings are the result of his failure to distinguish between appearance and reality.

Jake is constantly being compared and contrasted to the other major character in the novel, Hugo Belfounder. Hugo is one of Murdoch’s most significant characters, as through his character, she unfolds the psychological theories in the novel. He is depicted as a very gentle and good soul, comprising of all moral and intellectual goodness. He is sort of a philosopher and thinker in the novel. Jake is described as an antithesis of Hugo. “Hugo is quiet and meditative, whereas, Jake

hops around from situation to situation as quickly as one thought changes to another. His actions are completely spontaneous; he cannot have a concept in his mind without physically playing it out to see where it will lead him.”¹¹

The notion of appearance and reality is seen in the beginning of the novel, when Jake introduces his friend and a remote cousin, Peter O’ Finney, known as Finn. Jake says that,

But people do get the impression that he is my servant, and I often have this impression too, though it would be hard to say exactly what features of the situation suggest it. Sometimes I think it is just that Finn is a humble and self-effacing person and so automatically takes second place. When we are short of beds it is always Finn who sleeps on the floor, and this seems thoroughly natural (UTN 2).

Throughout the novel, Finn remains silent and does not say much. Though, the description provided by Jake hints at his humble nature, many of Jake’s friends think of Finn being cracked, but he is one who more often gets Jake out of trouble. By his appearance, Finn seems to be naïve as he follows Jake around but still in reality as Jake says, “he knows very well indeed what he is about” (UTN 2).

The happenings in Jake’s life are the result of his actions. Due to his inability to interpret his thoughts, he fails to capture the reality and dwells in between his own projections of his mind. The major theme of the novel revolves around the emotion of unrequited and unfulfilled love. Jake accidentally falls in love with Anna Quentin, a folk singer when Jake first met her. She frequently changes her profession in the novel and tries her luck in acting career. Jake, who appears and claims to stay far away from romantic relationships is often seen dwelling between the dichotomies

of life. He says, “I hate solitude, but I am afraid of intimacy” (UTN 33). He loves Anna but never thinks of marrying her. He says,

But marriage remains for me an Idea of Reason, a concept which may regulate but not constitute my life. I cannot help, whenever I consider a woman, using the possibility of marriage as an illuminating hypothesis which is not in any serious sense an instrument of the actual. With Anna, however, I did come near to taking the thing seriously; and that, although I’m sure she would never have said yes, was perhaps why I let myself drift away from her in the end (UTN 32).

Jake’s pre-conception of his thoughts and believing on the things as they appear in front of him, he is unable to meet with the reality. He thinks that Anna would never say yes to him and thus it’s better to drift apart. He never confesses his love to Anna and soon they part their ways. Anna goes to France to sing Folk songs and Jake spends his life at normal pace. Later, in the novel, when they both meet at the Mime theatre, then also Jake refuses to try out his relationship with Anna. Anna tries to revive their relationship but soon gives up and instead she falls for Hugo. She is highly impressed and enthralled by his thoughts that liberates and inspires her.

Throughout the novel, Jake seems to live in his own appearances of mind. He is portrayed as a lazy person who likes to spend his life like a parasite. His friends Hugo and Finn along with others advise him to work for his living but he never listens to them. He runs away from jobs opportunity and makes his basic living by translating books. He shifts from one to other thing and never finds what he is actually seeking in life. Towards the end, leaving his own senses and appearances that he created in his mind, he decides to settle down and get a job. He finds out the reality that he is capable and smart enough to pursue a job and earn his daily living. “I was

nevertheless feeling impressed, at the point which our story has now reached, and not only by my having got the job, but also by the efficient way in which I turned out to be able to perform it” (UTN 257-258).

Magdalen Casement (known as Madge) one of Jake’s friends, is in love with him but Jake refuses to marry her. In the opening chapters, it is revealed that Jake and Finn were living in Madge’s apartment rent-free. Later on, Madge asks them to leave the place as Samuel Starfield (known as Sacred Sammy) is about to move in with her. Samuel is a bookie and a wealthy person, who according to Jake “is a man that lives on other people’s vices” (UTN 10). He is a schemer and plotter, who plays and plots ill games against people in order to earn money. He along with Sadie Quentin, plot against Hugo to gain a movie contract with a famous moviemaker. Madge deeply loves Jake and she is the only character till the end, who tries to offer help to Jake. She even tries to offer a job to Jake but he rejects due to his own conflict and deceptive appearance of his thoughts. Jake works as a translator for his living. He translates the books of a famous French author, Jean Pierre Breteuil, who writes mediocre stories. He has translated many of his works such as *Le Rossignol de Bois* (*Wooden Nightingale*), *Les Pierres de l’Amour* (*Stones of Love*) and many more. But towards the end, he receives a literary prize for her best writing for her recent novel entitled *Nous Les Vainqueurs* (*We the Victors*), which Jake have not read.

Dave Gellman, one of Jake’s friends says to Jake that “I specializes in translating Breteuil because that’s the sort of book I wish I could write myself” (UTN 18). Jake negates the view of his friend and says, “I just enjoy translating, it’s like opening one’s mouth and hearing someone else’s voice emerge” (UTN 18). Jake always desires to publish his own original works and this incidence challenges him to compete with Breteuil in order to prove his own worth and that he is not just a good translator but also a great writer as well.

This incidence shook him completely as it is the point where reality hit him hard. As he always considers Breteuil's works insignificant and of low level writing. It was hard for Jake to accept the fact that the same author whose works he used to translate have won a huge literary prize for writing.

I stood still in the middle of the pavement. Why was this absolutely unbearable? Why should it matter to me so much that Jean Pierre had pulled it off? ...To say that I was jealous was to put it too simply. I felt an indignant horror as at some monstrous reversal of the order of nature: as a man might feel if his favorite opinion was suddenly controverted in detail by a chimpanzee...Jean Pierre had no right to turn himself surreptitiously into a good writer. I felt that I had been the victim of an imposture, a swindle. For years I had worked for this man, using my knowledge and sensibility to turn his junk into the sweet English tongue; and now without warning me, he sets up shop as a good writer (UTN 215-216).

It is quite apparent through Jake's behavior that he was not ready to face the reality and was happy and content in his deceptive appearance. He blames Jean Pierre and thinks that he turns out to be a rival in their business partnership. He says, "Why should I waste time transcribing his writings instead of producing my own? I would never translate *Nous Les Vainqueurs*. Never, never, never" (UTN 216).

Madge informs Jake that Jean Pierre's latest novel is about to be get adapted for an English film and the job for translating it automatically lands up with Jake. She tries to convince Jake to take up the job but Jake being difficult, denies the reality and dwells into his own conflict of thoughts. He asks Madge, "You're offering me a sinecure" (UTN 221). "A sinecure is when you get money for doing nothing." Madge replies, "But isn't that exactly what you've always wanted?"

Jake looked into the amber depths of his glass. “Perhaps, but I don’t want it now.” Jake refuses the opportunity of a lifetime and making money due to his inner conflict of thought. Later, Jake begins to realize that it is the real life and soon a “a great truth became apparent to him that nothing in the world is more important than money” (UTN 227-228). “Money. The heart of reality. The rejection of reality the only crime. I was a dreamer, a criminal. I wrung my hands.” (UTN 228).

After having the conversation with Madge, Jake thinks that why he denied to take up the job that was coming easily to him. He always portrayed himself as care-free, reluctant and doing as little work that furnishes his daily needs especially of alcohol and sitting at pubs in order to forget about his solitude. He says:

I felt a sort of confused lassitude. I was being offered a great deal of money; and it was not at all clear to me why I was refusing it: if what I was doing was refusing it. What was more important, I was being offered the key to the world in which money comes easily, and where the same amount of effort can produce enormously richer result: as when one removes a weight from one element to another. As for my conscience, I could catch up with that in a few months. In time I could earn my keep in that world as well as the next man. All I had to do was to shut my eyes and walk in. Why did the way in seem so hard? I was in anguish. I seemed to be throwing away the substance for the shadow. What I was preferring was an emptiness of which I could give no intelligible account whatever (UTN 223).

In one of the other instances in the novel, it is revealed that Jake due to his own thinking and projections of his mind distances himself from Hugo. They both actually met when they were volunteering for a medical research. They spend several days together, talking about philosophy

and discussing intense subjects. Hugo is the contemplative one and his concepts inspired Jake to publish their conversation in a form of a book. The book got published and achieved few readerships.

Although, later on, Jake regretted for not taking prior consent from Hugo for publishing Hugo's thoughts as his own and decides to distance himself from Hugo without letting him know the reasons for his sudden departure. Time passed and when they both finally met at the hospital, they resolve the conflict and a harsh reality again hits Jake. Jake thinks that Hugo might be angry on him and may put him behind the bars for copying his thoughts. It is entirely Jake's imagination that misleads him into breaking their friendship. The reality being that Hugo is totally unaware of Jake's motives and his decision to leave.

"I was afraid to see you, Hugo." Jake said.

Hugo said, "I can't understand you, Jake. I don't see how anyone could be afraid of me. I never could see why you cleared off like that before. I wanted to talk to you very much then. There was never anyone I could discuss with like you. We might have discussed that stuff of yours... That book of yours."

"Do you mean *The Silencer*?" Jake asked.

"Yes, that thing. Off course, I found it terribly hard in parts. Wherever did you get all those ideas from?" (UTN 280).

Jake then confesses that it was his ideas that Jake took and transformed a bit. He says to Hugo that he feels ashamed. Instead, Hugo motivates him to write more original stuff like that. Jake finally realizes that there is not something he did to offend Hugo but a misunderstanding that he ignited due to his perception. He could have sorted that misunderstanding and saved his

friendship but rather he was blinded by his own apparent images of false and untrue facts and thus was unable to see the reality.

Thus, the study unfolds the instances where the protagonist of the novel encounters situations where he is in a flux between the apparent and the reality.

Miss Murdoch wants to gain a precarious balance between transcendence and reality by presenting a real man's real experience in terms plausible enough to be credible but also fantastic enough to whet the reader's appetite for reality rather than for the distortions of all theories about reality. The "unutterably particular" is always absurd (Baldanza 37).¹²

There is an ongoing quest in Jake's life from the beginning till the end of the novel. In his work, *The Silencer*, Jake quotes Hugo's view and writes that, "All theorizing is flight. We must be ruled by the situation itself and this is unutterably particular. Indeed, it is something to which we can never get close enough, however hard we may try as it were to crawl under the net" (UTN 98). "Although quest and flight are apparent opposites, it is obvious that the one can easily be mistaken for the other – and no more easily than by the man who wills to deceive himself."¹³

In the mid of the novel, Jake thinks about the distinction between the appearance and the reality and says, "Wherever the line was to be drawn between appearance and reality, what I now experienced was for the real" (UTN 212). Though, it is the incidence when he goes to see Madge but his thought reveals that he is aware of the concept of appearance and reality but himself fails to assess the reality till the end of the novel. Jake accepts it all at once towards the end and says:

I had so littered my life already with compromises and half-truths. I could have picked my way through a few more. The twisting halls of falsehood never cease to appal me, but I

constantly enter them; possibly because I see them as short corridors which lead out again into the sun: though, perhaps, this is the only *fatal* lie (UTN 231).

Despite of so many vicissitudes in Jake's life, he remains active throughout the story and comes to terms with reality in the end. Although, his situation remains the same towards the end as it was in the beginning – jobless, penniless and homeless. The only thing that is transformed in him is his ability to embrace the reality and discard all his deceptive ideas and appearances of his mind. Initially, Jake distorts reality by lying and avoiding it but latter he achieves a state to remain calm and accept things in their true form. According to Ejupi et al.,

Jake, of course, lives by his own ideas and distorts reality by hypotheses, but being on the other hand, rather curious in verifying the truth of his assumptions. Being an epitome of a truth seeker he faces defeat. From the beginning up to the end, he has lived by his own concepts. He has lived in a world of fantasy, covering the truth and facts with the net of his own imagination. His hypotheses fail, but he does not fail to accept reality. It is true that he reaches this at the end of the novel, but the most important thing is that he is a changeable being. What makes him different is that he has got rid of his ideas and has embraced the reality.¹⁴

Along with Jake, the other major as well as minor characters also suffers from this issue and encounters various obstacles and dilemma in life. Ejupi et al. believes it is

because of spiritual blindness, that the characters suffer defeat – in life, in day-to-day concerns, in love, and in their self-assured plans. Their spiritual blindness is conditioned by the society. Society itself “explores” them and they cannot understand it. They just go on living “under its net”, without realizing that the truth has deeper roots than they think.

It is society which conditions people. We all fail when it comes for the revelation of truth. We cannot blame Jake for his wrong ideas, because society distorts reality for him. It happens just like in real life.¹⁵

4.2 Silence, Symbols and Images

Iris Murdoch's novel is a rich blend of symbolism and use of perfect and suitable imagery. Along with the incorporation of symbols and images, the most striking feature of the novel is the role of silence. Silence is one of the strongest and the most powerful emotions that humans can manifest. Silence is the state of absence of noise, either occurring in the outside world or of the inner thoughts. It is a total state of emptiness of every medium of sound – even speech. In Indian Aesthetics, silence or *shanta* is considered as the ninth rasa. The *Śāntarasa* (shantrasa) denotes a state of complete tranquility and calmness. It is also referred to as an emotion of emotionlessness i.e. a state of complete blankness, empty and void and free from any thought. It is achieved through philosophical thoughts and moreover, knowledge of truth and when it is relished, it provides stability to self by clearing the chaos of the conscious mind.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines silence as, “forbearance from speech or noise; absence of sound or noise.”¹⁶ A person can choose to remain silent in events of danger, moments of spirituality and when the person faces some hard times such as revelation of truth, acceptance of knowledge, realization of a thought or at times when left speechless due to shock or being overwhelmed. In literature, silence is often used as a narrative tool to enhance the effect on the psyche of readers.

Symbols are something or someone that is used to represent some hidden idea or thought. In literature, the incorporation of symbols as a tool to exemplify the meaning is prevalent and ubiquitous. *Dictionary of Critical Theory* defines symbol as:

In the semiotics of Peirce (1932, 1934), a symbol is a type of representamen in which the relationship between signans and signatum (or signifier or signified, in the more familiar terminology of saussure) is a learned or imputed contiguity. Unlike an icon or index, a symbol, such as the scales that symbolize justice, requires the interpreter to know and understand the conventional code governing its meaning (373).¹⁷

According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

The word symbol derives from the Greek verb *symbollein*, ‘to throw together’, and its noun *symbolon*, ‘mark’, ‘emblem’, ‘token’ or ‘sign’. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or ‘stands for’ something else. As Coleridge put it, a symbol ‘is characterized by a translucence of the special in the individual’. A symbol differs from an allegorical sign in that it has a *real* existence, whereas an allegorical sign is arbitrary. Actions and gestures are also symbolic. A literary symbol combines an image with a concept (words themselves are a kind of symbol) (699).¹⁸

In literature, the technique of imagery or using images is to represent and reflect any symbol. The images are created in the mind of readers in order to connect more with the story and characters of the novel. The character detailing, picturesque, topographic details and creative use of language aids in creating varied range of images in the minds of readers while reading the piece of work. According to *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*,

the terms *image* and *imagery* have many connotations and meaning. Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience. An 'image' does not necessarily mean a mental picture (354).¹⁹

In the novel, there are various allusions to silence. There are several moments of silence created by the novelist and every time the silence holds a different meaning as an emotion. The moment when Jake and Finn are thrown out of the house, they sit and remain silent for a while. It shows their helplessness as they had nowhere to go and no money to rent a place. "I sat down on the other case, and for a little while we were silent" (UTN 2). One of the reasons that Jake likes Finn is because he hardly speaks. Finn follows Jake everywhere but never utters and questions him.

Mrs. Tinckham is the most stable, resolved and untangled character in the entire novel. "She is a kind of Earth-mother figure to whom everyone comes to be consoled."²⁰ She owns a newspaper shop that is full of cats. Jake often visits to seek counsel from her and share his life's happenings. It is only place where he goes at the beginning and at towards the end of the novel. Mrs. Tinckham is a great listener and never divulge any secrets of her customers to anyone; this is why her customers trusts her. "Mrs. Tinckham like an earth goddess surrounded by incense...She is equal to a law of nature in respect of her reliability. She can keep counsel too" (UTN 14). Jake truly respects her. He says, "A woman who does not talk is a jewel in velvet. I am devoted to Mrs. Tinckham" (UTN 15). Jake likes Mrs. Tinckham because she listens to him for several hours and only speaks when necessary that too offer him some piece of advice.

According to Baldanza, “*Under the Net* is distinguished by its complex set of references to the theme of silence, which is closely related to that of the quest and which prevails in the saint-artist dichotomy” (40).²¹ The central essence of the novel lies in the relationship between Jake and Hugo. Jake during his time with Hugo at a medical-experiment center falls completely under his philosophical spell. He was captivated and enthralled by Hugo’s philosophy of silence along with his other views. Jake remarks that, “As my acquaintance with Hugo is the central theme of this book...” (UTN 62).

Initially during the experiment, Jake and Hugo did not exchange a single word for two days. “Two days passed during which we did not exchange a single word. He seemed, indeed, absolutely unaware of my presence” (UTN 65). There is complete silence of speech which lasted for two days but post the period of unbroken silence, they engage in endless conversation and exchange of ideas and views on almost every domain of subject including art, politics, literature, religion, history, science, society and sex (UTN 66). “But they talked primarily about the impossibility of embodying truth in words. Hugo’s obsession with particulars and his hatred of general theory lead him to see any act of classification and most uses of language as falsifications...” (Baldanza 40).²² During these conversations, Jake begins to see the whole world anew. Jake remarks, “In conversation he was completely without any sort of desire to score points, and although he often silenced me, he seemed unaware of having done so” (UTN 72).

The relationship shared between Jake and Hugo is said to be that of Artist and Saint. Because, a role of an artist is to convey and transmit ideas whereas saints are the medium through which the ideas are being passed on further. Hugo shares his views with Jake without even knowing that this exchange of thoughts will inspire Jake to publish his first book entitled *The Silencer*. Jake “kept it in a form of a dialogue between two characters called Tamarus and

Annandine” (UTN 74). “Annandine is but a broken-down caricature of Hugo” (UTN 99). The book is completely based on Hugo’s thoughts and philosophy. Jake reads one of the conversation from the book randomly that says:

For most of us, for almost all of us, truth can be attained, if at all, only in silence. It is in silence that the human spirit touches the divine. This was something which the ancients understood. Psyche was told that if she spoke about her pregnancy her child would be a mortal; if she kept silent it would be a god (UTN 99).

Later, Jake distances himself from Hugo. Hugo leaving the work of manufacturing firecrackers, begins putting his money into films. It is worth mentioning that Hugo produces a lot of silent films which used to be called “expressionist” (UTN 77).

In the novel, the theme of silence is also apparent when Jake finds about the Riverside Miming Theatre, where Anna works and the “audience is requested to laugh softly and not to applaud” (UTN 38). A mime artist portrays the story through acting but only using body motions, gestures and facial expressions and it does not involve speech. Jake enters the mime theater and there was nothing but the silence. He says, “An oppressive silence surged out of the place like a cloud” (UTN 38). Jake thinks that Anna’s interest for silent drama and mime acts is the result of her interactions with Hugo. Baldanza rightly remarks:

The references to silence are often embedded deeply in the matrix of the novel: when Jake is caught on Sadie’s fire escape, he saves himself by playing deaf and dumb. Later, as he faces insuperable personal problem, he holds a silent “conversation” with Franz Hal’s portrait of a cavalier in the Wallace Collection – the first of many cases where communing with paintings signalize central moral crisis in these novels. On a trip to Paris, he offers his

beloved city the question of her appeal for him, only to be answered by a muted echo of the name "Paris" (40-41).²³

The research study finds that Mister Mars, a popular movie-star dog is one of the most interesting characters in the novel. He has performed in several movies. He never makes any noise and never barks, not even when Jake and Finn were stealing him from Sammy's apartment as a leverage to gain Jake's transcript back from Sammy. Mister Mars is getting old and is being forced to retire as a performer. Soon, Jake becomes attached to him and in the end of the novel decides to keep him as his own friend. The theme of silence is reflected through the silence of Mister Mars as well. Unlike other dogs, Mister Mars is quite silent and never barks at all. Jake remarks, "He would lie so silent for long periods that I would think that perhaps he had gone away, and start looking for him with my eyes; only to find him lying close to me and looking at me" (UTN 251).

In another event where silent plays a major role is when Jake and Hugo together plans to escape from the hospital. During their route to escape, to maintain utmost silence is the key in order to avoid attention from the hospital guards. At that point, every noise made by them gives readers an auditory image and sound to feel the risk of getting caught. There are various allusions and references to Silence in the entire novel at different occasions. Murdoch has very brilliantly incorporated silence in order to provide a real feeling of the emotions to her readers. Silence is present when the characters are sad, happy, face comes face to face with reality, in a state of shock and in order to avoid a conflict. "Throughout *Under the Net* Murdoch juxtaposes the "dignity of silence" with the "vulgarity of speech" and thematically stresses the purity of silence" (Bove 39).²⁴

Other than being full of silences, the novel is highly symbolic and full of images. The title of the novel is itself symbolic of the invisible 'net' in which the characters are trapped. For Hugo,

the net is the language which acts as a barrier to transmit the true feelings and inner thoughts. For Jake, the net of chaos is his own mind that fails him to differentiate between appearance and reality. And for each and every character in the novel, like in real life, there is hidden net under which the characters are stuck and somehow tries to reach out of the net and seek reality. “Here the net is not seen as a trap through whose meshes one tries to escape, but as something thrown over truth” (Bhandari and Bembi 76).²⁵

Along with this, the use of Mime theater is also symbolic where there is absence of speech. The protagonist Jake is being depicted as a translator symbolizes his inability to communicate his own ideas and due to this he becomes a mouth piece for other writers. Hugo, the most ideal and philosophical character in the novel is earlier seen as a manufacturer of fireworks. His passion in fireworks is symbolic due to his interest in the formlessness of things and similarly the fireworks displays the formlessness that he craves in life. He abandons creating fireworks when the art critics begins to classify his work into styles and switches to making of watches, a form of spiritual meditation of Hugo. Unlike Jake, who hates contingency and desires enough reasons and a perfect form in everything, Hugo on the other hand, is free from all these bondages and thus, embraces truth and reality.

The novel consists of frequent use of imagery in terms of its topographic description of the places where characters are living and travelling and also the auditory images. The setting of the novel plays a vital role in Murdoch’s novels. The readers are constantly made aware of the geographical area including the streets of London and Paris. “Jake even criticizes different parts of the city, stating that he prefers certain neighborhoods or sections of the city to others. The names of actual rivers and bridges, as well as the names of pubs, are often mentioned.”²⁶

Thus, the detailed and minute description helps the readers automatically to see the setting of the background of the story. The auditory images used by Murdoch such as the sound of the typewriter, the murmuring and purring and so on also provides the readers a real feel of the happenings in the novel. Even every time the silence is used in the novel, it feels as if truly everything and every object in reality has gone silent for a while. Jake also remarks that, “We lay so in silence for a long time. The universe came to rest like a great bird” (UTN 47).

4.3 Philosophy of Solipsism

The philosophical concept of Individualism suggests that only individual things are real; and that nothing exists but the individual self. It fosters a tendency in people to act without having prior reference to others. It is a social outlook that encourages complete independence and self-sufficiency and self-sustenance of an individual. It forthwith rejects the intrusion of any other person, society and state on the individual. Similarly, the philosophy of solipsism implies that the self is all that exists. It promotes the notions such as self-absorption, self-centeredness, egoism and the state of complete unawareness of the views of others.

Etymologically, the term solipsism is derived from the Latin words *solus* and *ipse*. *Solus* means ‘only’ and *ipse* means ‘self.’ In its true spirit, it is quite synonymous with the terms selfishness and egotism. All philosophies such as Cartesian *Cogito, ergo sum* (‘I think, therefore I am’), Edmund Husserl’s Phenomenology and the Existentialism of Sartre, “take as their starting point the immediate experience of an individual consciousness that tends to lapse into solipsism as they have difficulty in establishing the existence of other consciousness” (Macey, 359).²⁷

Solipsism sees the self as one and only reality. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines solipsism as, “a theory holding that the self can know nothing but its own modifications and that

the self is the only existent thing.”²⁸ It is a form of extreme egocentrism. *Macmillan English Dictionary* states, “solipsism is the theory that the only thing you can be certain about is your own existence and your own thoughts and ideas” (1361).²⁹ The word solipsism comes from a French satire known as *La Monarchie des Solipses* written by Giulio Clemente Scotti in 1652. The term began to use in English around nineteenth century.

“Solipsism, in philosophy, is an extreme form of subjective idealism that denies that the human mind has any valid ground for believing in the existence of anything but itself. The British Idealist F. H. Bradley, in *Appearance and Reality* (1893), characterized the solipsistic view as follows:

I cannot transcend experience, and experience must be my experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond my self exists; for what is experience is its [the self’s] states.”³⁰

In the novel, Jake Donahue, the protagonist is presented as a solipsistic figure; driven by his ego, selfishness and self-centeredness. He is highly self-obsessed and neurotic. He describes himself as, “I am something over thirty and talented, but lazy. I live by literary hack-work, and a little original writing, as little as possible...I have shattered nerves” (UTN 20). Due to his shattered nerves, “he can’t bear being alone for long.” Because of this, he lives with his friend Finn. Being highly self-centered, Jack never gives attention to Finn and often ignores Finn’s words. Jack lives with Finn because of his own convenience and says, “That’s why Finn is so useful to me.” They sit for hours talking and at times without uttering a word but Jake never pays attention to Finn’s thoughts. Jake likes to be protected and Finn often does rescue him from unwanted situations. Jake aggress that, he is a parasite and likes to live at his friend’s houses rent-free.

The novel is written in picaresque form and depicts all the happenings in Jake's life. He has great friends and acquaintances like Finn, Anna, Madge, Hugo, Dave, Lefty, Sadie and so on, who always supports and motivates him to do great things in life but he always takes them all for granted. "He is self-involved to an extent that Anna, Sadie, Hugo, Lefty, Dave and more than anyone else his friend Finn, each has an identity only as an extension of his own self" (Bajaj 34).³¹

In the novel, Jake's friends are introduced gradually, but slowly they all depart from Jake's life as well due to his own account of being so engrossed in self and not giving proper treatment to his friends. Anna being in love with him, part her ways with Jake as he is unable to take their relationship seriously. Madge also leaves Jake in order to live with Sammy. Dave and Lefty, though supports Jack but remains as merely an acquaintance for Jake. Hugo and Jake shares a long friendship together but due to Jake's self-interpretation of their friendship, he distances himself from Hugo.

Among all, Finn shares the strongest bond with Jake, but Jake never pays attention to Finn's speech and thoughts. As a result, Finn leaves him and goes back to his house in Ireland. Later, Finn sends a letter for Jake which leaves him in distress and shock. Finn shares his willingness to go to his home several times but Jake never pays attention to him. The more shocking thing for Jake is that Mrs. Tinckham knew about Finn's departure as he informed her before leaving. Jake says, "The notion that Finn had made a confidant of Mrs. Tinckham came to me for the first time and rushed in an instant from possibility to probability" (UTN 315). Although, Finn have told Jack this but he never believes him. Jake remarks, "I felt ashamed, ashamed of being parted from Finn, of having known so little about Finn, of having conceived things as I pleased and not as they were" (UTN 316).

The novel is a striking portrayal of Jake's moral growth and moral progress. Murdoch in her novels always pay emphases towards the moral goodness of her characters. Though, beginning his journey as a solipsistic figure, Jake undergoes a complete transformation towards the end of the novel. He matures as an individual and realizes his faults of misinterpreting people around him. Jake always desires to become an actual real novelist but his own shortcomings diverts him to achieve his goal. "But more than the anxiety of influence, his habit to distort the actuality to suit his own wishes hinders his growth from being a hack writer to a real novelist. Murdoch draws attention to this particular aspect of Jake's neurotic self" (Bajaj 34-35).³²

Thus, through the character of Jake, Murdoch aptly tries to convey her opinion of the solipsistic nature of humans. Though, it is evident that since the post-war years, the tendency in people of becoming self-centered, self-obsessed and egotist has increased abundantly, yet, Murdoch discards this notion and promotes the internal moral goodness of human beings. Jake, being egocentric, falls out of various relationships and bond of friendships. At last, he realizes the importance of people around him. Irony is that, he accepts that he "can't bear being alone for long" (UTN 20) still he fails to maintain his relationship with others. "His journey from self-righteous, self-obsessive neurotic awareness of people and environments is a journey from appearance to reality" (Bajaj 38).³³ Kiernan Ryan rightly remarks in the Introduction to Murdoch's *Under the Net*,

With 'a wrench which dislocated past, present, and future', he realizes that he has got everything wrong all along, that he's guilty 'of having conceived things as I pleased and not as they were.' His solipsism has made him misconstrue the motives and emotions of everyone close to him by viewing them through the filter of self-serving fantasies (UTN xv).

By the end of the novel, Jake comes to the state of realization that everything and every situation in life cannot be conceptualize and understood at once. He again visits Mrs. Tinckham and meet the kittens. He lifts the kittens and analyses the difference in their appearance and purity of breed but accepts the way they are rather than explaining it in the form of words. The words which according to Hugo lies. “Actions don’t lie; words always do” (UTN 291). The last scene reflects Jake’s transformation to a philosophical being like Hugo. Hugo always advised Jake that, “Some situations can’t be unraveled, they just have to be dropped” (UTN 291).

Initially, Jake is seen in a philosophical dilemma and perplexity but by the end he suffices all the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of his mind. *Under the Net* is a highly philosophical novel as Murdoch seek her inspiration from various philosophers including Wittgenstein, Sartre and Raymond Queneau (one of the precursors of the literary theory of postmodernism). Though, it is Murdoch’s debut novel, it shares an association with the works of ‘Angry Young Men’ brigade including Kinsley Amis, John Wain, Philip Larkin and John Osborne. Murdoch herself owes to the fiction of Beckett’s *Murphy* and Queneau’s *Pierrot Mon Ami*. The novel still offers the sense of the contemporary life and can be considered as a postmodern novel in terms of its writing techniques that includes the application of intertextuality and also the readers are made aware of the fictionality of the work by addressing the names of real places and other things.

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CHAPTER – 5

CONFLICTING CONDITIONS: *THE BELL*

5.1 Religious and Spiritual Pathways

5.2 Gender Binary Issues and Challenges

5.3 Emergence of New Relationships

CHAPTER – 5

CONFLICTING CONDITIONS: *THE BELL*

In general terms, a conflict is a clash or disagreement between two or more groups or individuals. A conflict between two persons or even a conflict with the inner self raises an incompatibility between two things that cannot be simultaneously fulfilled. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* defines conflict as, “the tension in a situation between characters, or the actual opposition of characters. There may also be an internal conflict like Hamlet or a conflict that occurs between a character and society or environment” (152).¹ According to *the Dictionary of Psychology*, “a conflict is any situation in which there are mutually antagonistic events, motives, purposes, behaviors and impulses etc.” (88).² A conflict may also be understood as:

1. a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one,
2. a state of mind in which a person experiences a clash of opposing feelings or needs, and
3. a serious incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interests.³

Conditions are “the circumstances or factors affecting the way in which people live or work, especially with regard to their well-being.”⁴ Conflicting Conditions are the events or issues inflicted due to certain disagreements between two individuals. It may be a conflict of idea, choice, opinion, belief or advice. It may also arise in an individual’s mind when hovering in a situation of conflict of choice between two things. Thus, Conflicting Condition is a state of an individual, where there is chaos and confusion in the head and heart to choose the right pathway between multiple options available. The conflict and confusion go deeper due to certain other forces that impact the decision-making of the individual such as family, society, own self and the quest

between choosing the religious values or the spiritual values of self. The current chapter discusses various conflicting conditions raised by Iris Murdoch in her novel *The Bell*.

The Bell is Murdoch's fourth novel published in 1958. *The Bell* forms the last novel of Murdoch's 'Early Novels', the others being *Under the Net* (1954), *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956) and *The Sandcastle* (1957). Among Murdoch's early novels, her last novel *The Bell* is considered to be the best and highly acclaimed. According to A. S. Byatt, "The Bell is a novel about people who have ideas, people who think, people whose thoughts change their lives just as much as their impulses or their feelings do" (Bell x). The novel is highly realistic and deals with the issues such as religion and spirituality, beauty of nature, virtue and moral goodness. The one of the key concerns highlighted in the novel by Murdoch is homosexuality. Unlike, Murdoch's rest of the early period novels, *The Bell* "is less melodramatic and less willing to deploy the devices of the romance" than many of her other works (Nicol 49).⁵

The novel's setting and background is appealing and in fact, appropriate for understanding the concept of religious and spiritual journey and different pathways walked by the characters. Through this novel, Murdoch tries to depict the evils of the materialistic age by showing the desire and craving of characters for the spiritual life. There is also a major role played by the past actions and experiences of the characters that are being revealed gradually as the story unfolds.

5.1 Religious and Spiritual Pathways

Humans are bound to follow a fixed path in their life or to pursue a course of action leading them to either religious or spiritual liberation. Religious is concerned with religion. Following religious pathways means committing to the practice or adherence to religion. Sticking to any specific religious pathway demands a high level of dedication and purity. Being religious signifies

devotion to a religion or belonging to a specific monastic order. According to *Macmillan English Dictionary*, “religious is related to religion or the beliefs and practices of a particular religion and strongly believing and carefully obeying its rules” (1194).⁶ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* states it as, “relating to or manifesting faithful devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality or deity or devoted to religious beliefs and observances.”⁷ A religion, whereas, is a belief in a spiritual or metaphysical reality accompanied by some rituals or practices relating to the belief system. Some definitions of religion are as follows:

1. Religion is a means to ultimate transformation. (Frederick Streng, *Understanding Religious Life*)⁸
2. A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. (b) [Religion is] the self-validation of a society by means of myth and ritual. (Émile Durkeim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*)⁹

Merriam-Webster Dictionary explains spiritual as, “of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit or things of a spiritual, ecclesiastical, or religious nature.”¹⁰ *Collins Dictionary* defines spiritual as, “Spiritual means relating to people's thoughts and beliefs, rather than to their bodies and physical surroundings.”¹¹ *Cambridge Dictionary* interprets it as, “of or relating to the inner character of a person.”¹² A pathway is a course of action or a path that one walks on to attain the desired goal. An individual can choose any of the two pathways be it religious or spiritual to attain peace and contentment in life.

Though both of these terms are often used interchangeably and are not exactly diametric opposites, yet there is a slight difference in interpreting and understanding them. Almost, every religion seeks to attain the ultimate answers to life, death, universe, soul and so on. Every religion's beliefs are based on some set principles and always tries to reach the paramount and quintessential knowledge of truth and reality. The end goal of every pathway to religion is to attain liberation and freedom from the circle of life. As a result, all the practices, norms, rules and belief system of a religion is set according to the ultimate goal. Following a certain religion or spiritual pathway, it becomes easy for an individual to ease the chaos and turmoil of the inner self and work towards attaining peace.

Religious and Spiritual are the two pathways or routes to discover the truth and reality. To an extent, both are the same and possess many similarities and are correlated to each other. Though opting for any religion or religious pathway is entirely a personal thing and depends on the choice of the individual, yet various external factors affect the choice of a person. Most often, a person follows the same religion that is followed by his/her family.

In contemporary times, some people rationally opt for the religion that suits their approach and mindset. By choosing a religious pathway, a person surrenders the self to the set system of attitudes, beliefs and practices of a particular religion and serve and worship the deity and God of the religion. Contrary to this, a spiritual pathway is slightly different from the above-stated pathway, as it focuses on the connection of the self with the divine and implies a more profound experience of connection of a soul to the divine. According to Christina Puchalski, "Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and the significant or sacred."¹³ Spiritual pathway offers the individual to think rationally and follow

the inner self as there is inner light hidden within every individual that guides them on a virtuous and moral path. It helps to introspect self and reach to the inner soul.

Generally, the origin and formation of any religion are based on the life, teachings and beliefs of any historical or archetypal figure like Jesus Christ, Shri Krishna, Gautama Buddha and the like. These figures are considered to be holy and highly evolved creatures and the epitome of an ideal human being. The teachings and sermons imparted by them are carried forward through oral tradition and via writing the hand-written scriptures.

Religious followers worship them like God and thus, it acts as the basis of certain religious practices, rituals and a belief system in the society. While religious practices can be regarded as theoretical and the system is blindly followed by the people, on other hand, spirituality can be referred to as the practical application of the teachings and lessons of a religion rationally. For example, the Buddhist teachings and lessons are applicable in practical life and thus, it is up to the followers to first practice it and then follow it. Spiritual followers are not rigid and may follow various practices from different religions as well. The sole motive of spiritual followers is to attain peace in life.

The difference between being religious and being spiritual can also be understood as – in real life, few people are highly religious but are not spiritual and similarly, some people are spiritual but do not follow any religion or religious practices. It can be said that spirituality comes from within by following the inner-self, whereas, being a religious, traditional and fervent follower of any religion is the result of having blind faith and dependence on any religion to follow a fixed and certain pathway to reach the state of eternal peace. It is apt to say that religious pathway connects the individual with the outer world, while on the contrary, the spiritual pathway connects

the individual with the inner self. A religion is important for a nation as whole, whereas, a spiritual pathway is for the individual.

Religious and Spiritual pathways are the two approaches to explore the reality and truth of life. Following a religion offers objective experience as it focuses on the external world – worshipping idols, going to specific holy places and shrines, reading scriptures, following particular rituals and so on. The attention and focus is shifted towards an object in order to gain experience. Spirituality is the internal awareness of the self and focuses on the interiority rather than the external world or exteriority. As such, spirituality is much more about inner understanding than outer worship. It is search for inner soul, a higher self and a divinity that resides within a person.

Religious pathways are well-structured, organized and based on certain rules and norms that governs the behavior of its followers. Spiritual pathways are not rigid and restricted, instead it is actually a pathless path govern from within and leads to discovery of true self. There are no rules and is guided by self-intuition. It somehow promotes individualism as an individual decides to set spiritual course on its own and leaves everything behind in order to meet with the divine. Religious practices are very rigid, traditional, orthodox and conservative, whereas, the spirituality is flexible and focuses more on progressive thoughts and views. Spiritual growth is a slow and gradual process and thus adapts change to acquire moral goodness and for overall development of self. Often, religious practices are performed in groups and communities, where people share same ideas and ideologies. There is no such distinction or division in spiritual practices and hence, all are treated equally.

A religious system works on the principle of faith. A religion demands unbreakable faith and acceptance of its teachings and values. To follow the religious pathways, one need to

competently surrender and adhere to the religious beliefs to attain the ultimate salvation. In religious system, it is not mandate to validate their teachings. Spiritual practice is more about experience rather than faith. There are various spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, silence, practicing focus and attention and contemplation to expand consciousness and ability to experience it.

Although, choice of any pathway depends entirely on the individual, yet, in religion to some extent there is emotion of fear that governs the actions of the person. Spirituality discards notions of fear, anxiety and worry, and favors a healthy and compassionate approach and environment to walk on the path of awakening. The aim of spiritual practice is to create a world full of love and peace. Therefore, both the pathways are essential, though they are different in their approach but both of these leads to the same path. The religious pathway is an outward journey and spiritual pathway is an inward journey.

Murdoch's novel *The Bell* is set in perfect premises and background that offers an in-depth study of the characters who yearns for spiritual life in the profane and temporal world. The novel is set in Imber Court, a huge country house belonging to a small Anglican lay religious community in Gloucestershire. It is situated next to Imber Abbey, a convent associated with an enclosed community of Benedictine nuns. The Imber Court belongs to Michael Meade, the central character of the novel. "Imber Court itself had been for several generations the home of Michael's family" (Bell 79), although, Michael himself never lived there. For him, the house was way too much expensive to manage and was mostly used during war time and often by Government department.

Later, when the house became vacant, he thinks of selling it but his attraction towards the place makes him terminate the idea. Michael played a crucial role in transforming his estate and

letting it to a lay religious community for a better purpose. It's been almost a year but still Michael is uncertain about the future of the court. "The Imber community, which had not existed for very long and was in an experimental stage, worked on the land, running the small market garden which supplied the needs of the Abbey and left some produce over the sale" (Bell 42).

The story unfolds from three different perspectives of Dora Greenfield, Michael Meade and Toby Gashe. Initially, the story begins with the perspective of Dora and she plays the central character. Dora Greenfield is a young former art student married to Paul Greenfield. In the very first page of the novel, it is revealed that "she left her husband because she was afraid of him" and six months later decides "to return to him for the same reason" (Bell, 1). Paul Greenfield, is an art historian at Courtauld Institute and is thirteen years older than his wife. He comes from an old family of German bankers and is quite wealthy as well.

Dora and Paul's relationship is quite volatile and at the verge of breaking apart. Paul's habit of haunting her with telephone bells and letters becomes a great torment for Dora and as a result of fear and guilt she decides that, "the persecution of his presence was to be preferred to the persecution of his absence" (Bell 1). Dora, since her marriage remains unhappy and thinks that she is incapable of being happy and says, "she could be happy neither with her husband nor without him" (Bell 1).

Dora never values herself and thinks that Paul also thinks of her as a bit vulgar due to her taste and choice of clothing and living. She likes to meet her old friends and acquaintances like Sally and Noel Spens, but due to Paul's strict behavior, she misses out on many things that she likes to do. Paul loves Dora but is a bit strict towards her which infuses a negative feeling in Dora. She likes to live her life freely but with Paul she has to live a multiple life that she hates. Paul is

very analytical and critical about everything and exactly knows what he wants in life. He says to Dora, “I want to do my work and be married to you. I want to fill your life as you fill mine” (Bell 6).

Dora after leaving Paul and spending few months having fun and growing a love affair with Noel, decides to go back to her husband again. Paul whose been now working on fourteenth-century manuscripts belonging to an Anglican convent in Gloucestershire is the guest of a lay religious community which lived beside the convent. He accepts Dora’s return instantly and instructs her to meet him at Pendelcote. Dora being a little anti-religious suspects the strangeness of the place. She thinks, “What, in any case, was a lay religious community?”

Dora’s ignorance of religion, as of most things, was formidable. She had never in fact been able to distinguish religion from superstition, and had given up her own practice of it when she discovered that she could say the Lord’s Prayer quickly but not slowly. She lost such faith as she had without pain and had not had occasion to re-consider the matter (Bell 8).

She wonders if Paul might have taken any interest or part in a religious practice. She thinks whether or not Paul believes in God and if so how he has spent his life thinking and judging Dora. Though, Dora is not depicted as a religious character yet she possesses qualities of heart and is quite rational in her approach. During her travel, she offers her seat to an old lady despite being tired and thinking over it. Later, she remarks, “What is sweeter than the unhopd-for reward for the virtuous act?” (Bell 12). During her journey, she observes two other gentlemen travelling to Imber Court as well. Among those two, one is Toby Gashe, one of the central characters from whose perspective the story is being narrated further and other is James Tayper Pace. Toby is a

boy around eighteen years of age and is determined to study at Oxford but before getting admitted there, he decides to have a tour of Imber Court along with his mentor.

Dora along with Paul, Toby and James Tayper Pace reaches to Imber Court and rushes to attend the 'compliance' i.e. the last of the canonical hours. Dora as usual being unaware of the meaning of compliance thinks it of as some sort of religious service. Mrs. Mark leads them towards the chapel, where the high priest is exchanging words with the congregation. All this time, Dora is fearful of Paul and thinking about the moment when they will be alone. Her feelings of fear by now is overflowing but at the same time she is also surprised to see the drastic change in Paul's behavior. She wonders, "Whether, happily, his mind was turned to higher things, or whether the religious scene had wrought some change in his feelings. She must remember to ask him, some time when he was in a good temper, whether he believed in God. It was absurd not to know" (Bell 29).

Dora is not a believer and therefore, unaware of the norms and rituals of the chapel is forced by Sister Ursula to cover her head as it is "customary" there. Dora tries to cover her head with a handkerchief but soon takes her leave from the room and checks out the entire court and nearby Abbey. "The hall was spacious, and devoid of decoration: no flowers, no pictures" (Bell 30). Later, Mrs. Mark introduces her to the rest of the members of the community like Peter Topglass; Mark Strafford; Pathchway, caretaker of the market-garden which financially supports the community's affairs and working; Father Bob Joyce, the Father Confessor, Sister Ursula, the extern sister and liaison officer with the Abbey; Catherine Fawley, little saint and finally Michael Meade, the leader of the community. Dora being disinterested of the place thinks of her Whiskey bottles.

The title of the novel is highly symbolic and refers a legend that is being narrated in the novel several times. Paul, being the avid reader of manuscripts discloses to Dora the significance of bell and an old legend associated to the bell of the Abbey. He says,

This is very old foundation; you know:

There have been Benedictine nuns here on and off since the twelfth century. The present order is Anglican, of course, but still Benedictine. Anyhow, sometime in the fourteenth century, that was before the dissolution, the story runs that one of the nuns had a lover. Not that that was so very unusual I daresay at that time, but this order had evidently had a high standard. It was not known who the nun was. The young man was seen climbing the wall once or twice and ended up by falling and breaking his neck. The wall, which still exists incidentally, is very high.

‘The Abbess called on the guilty nun to confess, but no one came forward. Then the Bishop was called in. The Bishop, who was an especially holy and spiritual man, also demanded that the guilty one should confess. When there was still no response he put a curse on the Abbey, and as the chronicle puts it, the great bell “flew like a bird out of the tower and fell into the lake.” ’... ‘The guilty nun was so overwhelmed by this demonstration that she forthwith ran out of the Abbey gates and drowned herself in the lake’ (Bell 38-39).

Paul remarks Dora after narrating the legend that, “you of course, identify yourself with the faithless one” (Bell 39). Dora replies, “she was probably forced into the order. People were in those days” (Bell 39). The statement by Dora signifies her notion that she might also have forced into the marriage and in the state where she is, though she married Paul with her own conscience yet she feels like a caged-bird in the marriage. The legend whether true or not is clearly an indication of the fact that any choice of religion or spirituality is personal and cannot be forced

upon an individual. The legends according to Paul, “usually have some truth behind them” but there are slight chances that they are merely the mediums to regulate fear among the community members to put them in order.

Paul adds that, “the bell’s name was Gabriel.” He says there is no records regarding the ghost of the nun ever seen but, “there is a story about the bell ringing sometimes in the bottom of the lake, and how if you hear it portends a death” (Bell 39).

From chapter fourth onwards, the story is narrated from the perspective of Toby Gashe. Toby wishes to live at Imber Court with the community members but his accommodation is arranged in one of the other Lodge cottages with rest of the members of the community whom he had not yet met. Toby holds “a thoroughly romantic conception of community life” (Bell 42). Since the day James Tayper Pace “had come to give an address in the school chapel and had spoken of Imber, Toby had conceived a passionate desire to go there” (Bell 42).

Toby is a keen practicing Christian and idea of living at the Imber Court moves him very much to his core and decides to dedicate his life. “He was greatly attracted by the idea of living and working, for a while at least, with a group of holy people who had given up the world” (Bell 42). He is keen to live and experience a monastic life of order and a set of rules, norms and system. Toby is also impressed by the personality of James Tayper Pace, “with his combination of masculine vitality and Christian candour” (Bell 43). Toby has enrolled himself at the Oxford as an engineering student and decides to spend his one-month summer holiday at Imber before leaving for Oxford.

The character of Toby portrayed by Murdoch is keen to enter and experience the monastic life. Contrary to Dora, who is feeling trapped and caged in the religious life of rules and customs,

for Toby it is by his choice and willingness that he decides to enter a religious pathway. For Dora, living again in confined space gives her a nostalgic feeling of her life before marriage. “As Dora looked around the room it occurred to her how nice it was to live once more in a confined space which one was free to organize, with small resources, as one pleased” (Bell 57). The bare and empty room at Imber Court brought back her memories of her past life. She tries to make the room look nice and arranges the wild flowers that she picked near the lake into a careful bouquet and puts them into mug. To Dora’s surprise, Mrs. Mark dismisses her idea of decorating the place and instructs her to throw them away. She says, “We never have flowers in the house. We keep everything here as plain as possible. It’s a little austerity we practise” (Bell 58). She asks her to fit in and follow the rules of the community like the rest of the members.

The community discards the practice of personal decorations in the room and tries to imitate the monastic life as closely as possible. It believes that it is a sound discipline to give up the idea of self-expression as a small sacrifice. The community rules seem to be a little strange for Dora to follow yet she agrees to fit in though unwillingly. Mrs. Mark providing a little tour of the Imber Court and befriending her with the rules of the community informs her about the special Sunday morning service at which an address is given by a member of the community (Bell 59). On her tour, Dora learns about one of the other rules of the community. Mrs. Mark says:

We never discuss our past lives here. That’s another little religious rule that we try to follow. No gossip. And when you come to think of it, when people ask each other questions about their lives, their motives are rarely pure, are they? I’m sure mine never are! Curiosity that is idle soon degenerates into malice. I do hope you understand (Bell 60).

The perspective of narration changes from Toby to Michael Meade. It is revealed through his perspective that, “as a younger man he had intended to become a priest, but had failed to do so, and had spent a number of years as a schoolmaster” (Bell 79-80). He is portrayed as a homosexual character and the one major past event of his life complicated and troubled his desire to become a priest. Therefore, he decides to convert his ancestral home in a lay religious community. Many people join the community in order to seek God and peace but fails to do so, as they fail to surrender themselves completely in service of God in account of some vices in their inner self.

“Setting the story in a religious community enables Murdoch to address, in detail but in an uncontrived way, the question of how to determine spiritual meaning in an increasingly atheistic world” (Nicol 51).¹⁴ Meade’s encounter with the Abbess changes his life and plans for the Imber Court completely. The Abbess imparts the “idea of making the Court the home of a permanent lay community attached to the Abbey, a ‘buffer state’ ...between the Abbey and the world, a reflection, a benevolent and useful parasite, an intermediary form of life” (Bell 80). According to the Abbess, there are several people, “who can live neither in the world nor out of it”, and Michael is one of them (Bell 80). She further adds:

They are kind of sick people, whose desire for God makes them unsatisfactory citizens of an ordinary life, but whose strength or temperament fails them to surrender the world completely; and present-day society, with its hurried pace and its mechanical and technical structure, offers no home to these unhappy souls (Bell 80).

The Abbess’s realistic talk surprises Michael and he agrees with her in setting up a place for such people who are ‘disturbed and haunted by God’ (Bell 81) and who all are unable to find

work which satisfies them in the ordinary world. The Abbess instructs Michael about their duty that:

it is not necessarily to seek the highest regardless of the realities of our spiritual life as it is in fact it is, but to seek that place, that task, those people, which will make our spiritual life most constantly grow and flourish; and in this search, we must make use of a divine cunning. ‘As wise as serpents, as harmless as doves’” (Bell 81).

Almost all the characters in the novel, who join the lay religious community in order to seek peace and solace in life fail to do so as they have some or other flaw in their character. They all are compelled to follow the strict rules of the community and to never indulge in any gossip and inquire about their past lives. But the past lives of the characters’ act as an agent to withdraw them from seeking peace. Dora yearns for a spiritual life as a free-spirit rather than a religious person caged in the walls of confinement. She is continually being haunted by her past activities and people who are involved with her. She also tries to escape Imber Court and leave Paul, once she manages to do so and leaves for London but later comes back.

In Imber Court itself, she indulges with Toby and later develops romantic feelings for Michael. Like Jake Donahue in Murdoch’s novel *Under the Net*, the character of Dora is also driven by her fit of “solipsistic melancholy” (Bell 188). Paul is consumed with the sinful feeling of jealousy and tries his dominance over Dora. Michael on his account of conflict of his identity of being homosexual faces torments in life and later is made to leave Imber Court. His encounter with Toby is the point of fall in his life. For Toby it is the very first homosexual encounter of his life, though towards the end, he establishes an understanding with Michael. James Tayper Pace

also begins his training as a missionary but instead ends up running settlements and arranging boys' clubs in London.

In the novel, the main point of difference and conflict between the religious and spiritual pathway and between the 'ethics of judgement' and 'ethics of love' is clearly visible in the two sermons imparted by James Tayper Pace and Michael Meade. "The novel has a dialogical balance typical of Murdoch's writing. This is most clear from the way that the sociological/philosophical subtext is conveyed, via two sermons given in turn by James and Michael. Each open with the line "The chief requirement of the good life", each considers the question of innocence, and each uses the image of a bell to reinforce what they have to say" (Nicol 53).¹⁵ Both James and Michael's sermons are opposites as, for James:

The chief requirement of the good life is to live without any image of oneself. I speak, dear brothers and sisters, as one who is most conscious of being remote from this condition. The study of personality, indeed the whole conception of personality is, as I see it, dangerous to goodness...Ideals are dreams. They come between us and reality – when what we need most is just to precisely to see reality. And that is something outside us. Where perfection is, reality is...We should rather work, as it were, from outside inwards. We should think of our actions and look to God and His Law (Bell 133-134).

He suggests the community members to "consider what is enjoined and what is forbidden" rather than "what delights us and what disgusts us" (Bell 134). He says, "We know it from God's Word and from his Church with a certainty as great as our belief" (Bell 134).

Truthfulness is enjoined, the relief of suffering is enjoined, adultery is forbidden, sodomy is forbidden...These are the rules by which we should freely judge ourselves and others

too. All else is vanity and self-deception and flattering of passion. Those who hesitate to judge others are usually those who fear to put themselves under judgement (Bell 134).

Contrary to this, Michael's views are exact opposite and he says,

The chief requirement of the good life is that one should have some conception of one's capacities. One must know oneself sufficiently to know what is the next thing. One must study carefully how best to use such strength as one has (Bell 206).

It is the positive thing that saves...In each one of us there are different talents, different propensities, many of them capable of good or evil use. We must endeavor to know our possibilities and use what energy we really possess in the doing of God's will. As spiritual beings, in our imperfection and also in the possibility of our perfection, we differ profoundly one from another. How different we are from each other is something which it may take a long time to find out; and certain differences may never appear at all (Bell 209-210).

Michael's views are entirely different and his notions of being different is an address to Toby as well to make him understand the difference of identity that people carries. For Michael himself, accepting his own identity is the main issue of his life and he wishes to explain people to cherish their own individual identity. His views are very contrasting to that of James as Michael pays attention on different individuality and thereby, the different experiences that people gain from life. He says "each one of us has his own way of apprehending God...God speaks to us in various tongues" (Bell 210). Michael believes that the, "Spiritual power is indeed like electricity in that it is thoroughly dangerous. It could perform miracles of good: it could also bring about

destruction” (Bell 113). Michael promotes the spiritual pathway that is different for all in terms of experience. He adds,

Each one of us apprehends a certain kind and degree of reality and from this springs our power to live as spiritual beings: and by using and enjoying what we already know we can hope to know more. Self-knowledge will lead us to avoid occasions of temptation rather than to rely on naked strength to overcome them (Bell 210).

Michael says that one should also relive and retain his innocence. Like James, he also makes use of the image of bell and says, “the bell is subject to the force of gravity. The swing that takes it down must also take it up” (Bell 210). He explains that “one must learn to understand the mechanism of our spiritual energy, and find out where, for us, are the hiding places of our strength” (Bell 210-211). “We must work, from inside outwards, through our strength, and by understanding and using exactly that energy which we have, acquire more. This the wisdom of the serpent” (Bell 211).

In order to perform routine duties, it is necessary to be in sync with the inner spiritual reality. In the novel, the characters of Dora, Toby and Michael yearns for a spiritual fulfillment and it is evident through their views and approach that leads them towards the spiritual pathway. In the end, the lay community gets dissolve; Dora leaves Paul and begins her life as art student and Toby leaves for Oxford. Michael joins the party of naturalists at Faroe Islands. The characters of James Tayper Pace, Mrs. Mark, Sister Ursula are the followers of the religious pathways. In the novel, Catherine remains in the flux between her religious values and her self-identity and ends up trying to commit suicide by drowning in the lake as a result of her mental breakdown. It is revealed

in the novel that she falls in love with Michael which is strictly opposing as her being a nun, which puts her in crisis and she ends up in a worse state. Nick commits suicide as well.

Thus, this sub-chapter concludes by reflecting upon the conflicting conditions that arises in the life of an individual as a result of constant dilemma and turf between the religious and spiritual aspect of self and following the right pathway in order to seek truth and reality and embrace the state of peace.

5.2 Gender Binary Issues and Challenges

The term gender simply means a class, kind or a division into masculine or feminine, and sometimes other categories like neuter or common, and animate or inanimate. Sex is a category such as ‘male’ or ‘female’ into which sexually-reproducing organisms are divided on the basis of their reproductive roles in their species. It is identification of a person as either man, woman or other and associating them with a social role or set of behavioral and cultural traits, clothing and so on.

“The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn’t have the weight of gender expectations” (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*).¹⁶

The terms sex and gender are quite simple to understand as they appear to be the most straightforward descriptions of the basic characteristics of human beings. Sex refers to the physical and biological difference between male and female. Gender, on the other hand, is a social and a cultural construct. It refers to all the characteristics and expected behaviors that a society considers appropriate for being masculine and feminine. Sex refers to male or female, whereas, gender refers

to masculinity and femininity. Sex is inherited, and on the other hand, gender is learnt through the process of socialization.

It is a socially constructed device through which a society controls its members and makes them to follow the set behavioral patterns as expected by a male or a female in a certain way. Sex is what you're born with; Gender is what you're given. Gender emphasizes that masculinity and femininity are products of social, cultural and psychological factors and are acquired by an individual in the process of becoming a man or woman. Thus, gender can be seen as an artifact of social, cultural and psychological factors which are attained during the process of socialization of an individual. Therefore, the meaning of sex and gender, femininity and masculinity fluctuates within societies and cultures across the globe.

Therefore, the key differences between Sex and Gender is that, Sex is biological and it is a division between male, female and neuter. It shows visible differences in genitalia and related differences in procreative function. Whereas, Gender is a socio-cultural construct and it is a division into masculine, feminine and other LGBTQIA+. It refers to masculine and feminine qualities, behavior patterns, related roles and responsibility, etc. It is variable as it changes under the influence of time, geographical and socio-cultural settings.

The *Dictionary of Critical Theory* explains gender as:

The term gender traditionally refers to both the classification of nouns and their corresponding modifiers as 'masculine', 'feminine' and 'neuter', and the sense of being male or female. A distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' began to be made in English in the 1970s, largely as a result of the impact of feminism and women's liberation, and Gender Studies subsequently emerged as a specific academic discipline...The introduction of gay

sexuality and identity into discussion of gender tends to make the issue more complex as gay sexuality is not necessarily modelled on a binary masculine/feminine model, with one partner playing the 'male' role, whilst practices such as cross-dressing and deliberate role-playing further unsettle gender differences. Talk of gender can, it is argued, actually perpetuate stereotyping by inadvertently promoting monolithic and unchanging models of masculinity and femininity (Watney 1986). Such criticisms, which lead to the emergence of queer theory, can be reinforced by appeals to deconstruction and the theories of postmodernity that seek to undermine all binary oppositions and to free desire from its constraints (156-157).¹⁷

"The term 'binary' denotes 'composed of two', 'twofold'; as in a binary star, 'one of a pair of stars held together by gravitation.' Language, too, has countless binary oppositions: up/down; slow/fast; sense/nonsense; truth/falsehood; black/white; man/woman – and so on" (Cuddon 77).¹⁸ It is "a concept or belief that there are only two genders and that one's sex or gender assigned at birth will align with traditional social constructs of masculine and feminine identity, expression, and sexuality."¹⁹ As per *Collins Dictionary*, "the gender binary is the idea that every person is either completely male or completely female or a system by which every person is categorized as having either male or female gender."²⁰ Gender Binary can be interpreted as:

1. A view of gender whereby people are categorized exclusively as either male or female, often basing gender on biological sex.
2. Gender binary (also known as gender binarism, binarism, or ambiguously genderism) is the classification of gender into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine, whether by social system or cultural belief. In this binary model, sex, gender, and sexuality may be assumed by default to align, with aspects

of one's gender inherently linked to one's genetic or gamete-based sex, or with one's sex assigned at birth. For example, when a male is born, gender binarism may assume the male will be masculine in appearance, character traits, and behavior, including having a heterosexual attraction to females. These aspects may include expectations of dressing, behavior, sexual orientation, names or pronouns, preferred restroom, or other qualities. These expectations may reinforce negative attitudes, bias, and discrimination towards people who display expressions of gender variance or nonconformity or whose gender identity is incongruent with their birth sex.

3. The gender binary, also referred to as gender binarism, is the classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine. It is one general type of a gender system. As one of the core principles of genderism, it can describe a social boundary that discourages people from crossing or mixing gender roles, or from identifying with third forms of gender expression altogether. It can also represent some of the prejudices which stigmatize intersex and transgender people, especially those that are genderqueer-identified — individuals who may not always fit neatly into the gender binary.

The term describes the system in which a society splits people into male and female gender roles, gender identities and attributes. Gender role is one aspect of a gender binary. Many societies have used the gender binary to divide and organize people, though the ways this happens differs between societies. A universal aspect of the gender binaries is that women give birth.²¹

Gender Binary only encompasses the two-fold dimensions of being either male or female and therefore, in the contemporary times the concept of gender binary is being rejected by many

people around globe. Not each and every person identifies themselves as male or female and often regarded as non-binary. Non-Binary signifies “not consisting of, indicating, or involving two”, and when it specifically comes to gender, non-binary is a word that helps give voice to a diverse range of gender identities.

Non-binary people have a gender identity that does not fit into the male/female binary. They are often included under the umbrella term of transgender, a community that refers to people whose gender identity does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. While transgender and non-binary people are often discussed as a group, there are many distinct genders within this group. There are those whose gender identity:

- isn't fixed, such as gender-fluid people;
- experience a variety of masculine, feminine, or androgynous identities, such as pangender people;
- do not identify with any gender, such as agender people; and more.²²

Non-binary is not limited exclusively to the conceptualization of a person as a man or a woman. A person may decide the gender identity beyond these two categories. The concept of gender can be understood by categorizing it into few divisions: gender identity and gender expression. Gender identity is the way a person conceives self as either male or female or both or neither. It is a personal sense of self and entirely a personal experience. Gender expression is the way a person communicates and expresses self, based on the set norms and behavioral pattern.

The sexuality or sexual preference or sexual orientation also differs from person to person as it is personal and person's emotional and sexual attraction and it is one's own tendency of sexual attraction to a particular sex. There are various categories such as: Heterosexuality,

Homosexuality, Bisexuality and Asexuality. There are various other tags or labels assigned to describe the gender identity of a person such as: cisgender, transgender, gender queer/non-binary, intersex and so on.

The modern growth of education system and literature as a tool for imparting knowledge and raising critical issues have aided in the emergence of a new branch of studies i.e. Gender Studies. It is a development post the flourishing of Feminism and later various other disciplines also emerged in order to study the issues and challenges related to gender and especially the LGBTQIA+ community. Gender Studies is a multidisciplinary field that studies and analyses the meaning and role of gender as well as gender identity and gender representation.

It is very significant for the development of any nation in order to explore the areas of gender backwardness and possible intervention mechanisms that can prove to be effective in improving the situation of women, gay, lesbian and other members of the community. It is also important to analyze the current situation of women and other genders across the globe based on a select set of indicators covering issues of work, education, health, survival, safety and women's participation in private and public decision-making. Thus, Gender Studies is the need of the hour to battle against the inequality and discrimination across the nation. Gender Equality is in itself a goal and a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.

The acronym LGBTQIA+ is a broad term and is gaining wide usage and popularity. It is being used by LGBTQIA+ community and it is a rapidly evolving abbreviation that stands for people of all genders and thus encapsulates a wide group of people. The LGB denotes the sexual identity of people and stands for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual. The T in LGBTQIA+ have different

connotations and meanings, though it signifies gender identity viz., trans, transsexual and transgender. The QIA signifies questioning/queer, intersex and asexual.

The plus in the acronym denotes the comprehensive and expansive nature of the term and further adds various other communities as well. The term has grown since its initial usage and now it is known by the term LGBTQIAAPP. The rest of the letters means ally, pansexual/omnisexual, androgynous, genderqueer, two-spirit, demisexual and polyamorous. Thus, LGBTQIA+ is an umbrella term and the plus indicates that new terms related to new gender identity can be added to it.

The acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community and their rights has created a major transformation in the field of literature and literary studies. The emergence of Gender Studies, Gay Literature and others as entirely separate field of studies also prompted various writers and even members of LGBTQIA+ community to publish their works. “Christopher Isherwood said it best when he explained that being gay does not involve the act of sex; instead, it is the proclivity or the ability to fall in love with another member of the same gender” (Nasrullah).²³

Often, in gay literature there are themes related to LGBTQ and the appearance of various homosexual characters in the narrative of the work. The writers try to depict the emotions of the characters through their writing. Iris Murdoch is among the most influential and productive British novelists of the post-war years. She claims herself to be a realist and raises issues related to human behavior, moral goodness and even the grave and serious issues of contemporary times. Homosexuality is one of the major concerns that she deals with in her novels. Her novel *The Bell* depicts the secret homosexuality of Michael Meade and it is noteworthy that after publication of

her novel *The Bell*, at least one homosexual character and issues related to it appeared in almost every novel she wrote.

Michael Meade, the owner of the Imber Court, who since a young age desires to become an ordained priest but leaving his religious vocation becomes a schoolmaster, is the victim of his gender identity in the novel. He is a homosexual character and falls in love with a school boy, Nick Fawley. Nick is the twin brother of Catherine Fawley. Michael and Nick are the members of the lay religious community at the Imber Court. The details of their acquaintance is unknown to anyone in the community including Catherine. The character of Michael is presented as a spiritual character who is of the opinion that one should embrace his real personality and thus, he rejects the notion of James that *suppressio veri* is equivalent to *suggestio falsi*” (Bell 99).

Michael’s first encounter with Nick was about fourteen years ago, when he was a young schoolmaster of twenty-five and Nick was a school boy of fourteen years of age. “Michael Meade at twenty-five had already known for some while that he was what the world calls perverted” (Bell 99). Michael was seduced at the age of fourteen when he was at school and also had two homosexual love affairs which “remained among the most intense experiences of his life” (Bell 99). Though, Michael at entering at the University tries to encounter members of the other sex, despite this, “he found himself unmoved by women.” He thinks that his religion may establish a quarrel with his sexual habits and feels corrupt. Later, he seeks counsel from a priest and gives up his practice which he thinks as his vice and returns to his practice of religion. After leaving Cambridge, he joins a school and for the very time he encounters with Nick and is really moved by seeing him. By the second year, Michael also become “aware too that Nick was directing towards him a more than usual intensity of interest” (Bell 101).

Michael was perfectly aware that Nick's charm were beginning to move him in a way which was more than casual. He knew himself to be susceptible without for a second feeling himself in danger, so confident and happy did he feel in his plans for the future. The fact, too, that he had never before felt attracted in this way by a person so much younger than himself contributed to make him regard his affection for Nick as something rather special but in no way menacing (Bell 102).

Murdoch very minutely deal with the emotions shared and relished by Michael and Nick rather than making homosexuality a taboo issue. The prime focus of the novelist is to highlight the emotion and feeling that grows in the individual, in spite of them belonging to any gender identity. Michael neither feels guilt nor distress but feels only the pleasure that he is gaining by the proximity between Nick and him. Soon, for both Michael and Nick, it become hard to conceal their emotions. They both spend a great time together and realize the reciprocation of feelings between them. Murdoch very brilliantly and aptly draws the emotions shared between them which are pure and genuine. "The talk of lovers who have just declared their love is one of life's sweetest delights. Each vies with the other in humility, in amazement at being so valued" (Bell 104-105). "Michael felt, strangely, no guilt, only a hard determination to hold to the beloved object, and to hold to it before God, accepting the cost whatever it might be, and in the end, somehow, justifying his love" (Bell 105).

For Michael, his love for Nick seems to be a selfless attachment. Despite of the norms of religion, he wishes to continue his love with Nick. On the other hand, Nick betrays Michael and informs the Head about the encounter and even with false statements and makes Michael guilty of the act. Nick informs that, "Michael led him unwillingly into an adventure which he did not understand and from which he had throughout been anxious to escape" (Bell 107). As a

consequence of this, Michael is to take immediate departure from school and “a carefully worded letter from the Headmaster to his Bishop destroyed completely his hopes for ordination” (Bell 107). Michael feels guilty for corrupting a young boy and thinks that he must be hanged and drowned in the depth of the sea.

At the Imber Court, Michael develops an attractiveness towards Toby Gashe. After few encounters with him, Michael kisses Toby. “Toby’s knowledge of homosexuality was slight” (Bell 164), and like all inexperienced people, “Toby tends to make all-or-nothing judgements.” Initially, he regards Michael as a “paragon of virtue” and later thinks him as full of failures and blemishes. He grows a feeling of disgust and fear in self. “He felt a definite physical repugnance at having been touched in that way. He felt himself menaced” (Bell 164-165). Toby seems in confusion and decides to resolve the matter with Michael. Later, Toby agrees not to disclose the matter further and says, “I quite understand. As far as I’m concerned, I’ll bury the matter completely” (Bell 173). Michael seems to be in distress as he thinks that “Nick might think of him unfaithful” (Bell 167).

Toby thinks that, “one loved either men or women, and if one was unfortunate enough to develop homosexual tastes one would never be able to live a normal life thereafter” (Bell 178). The incidence is observed by Nick and later he warns him to confess it to James Tayper Pace. Nick also accuses Toby of flirting with both Michael and Dora. Nick remarks, “I’ve seen your love life in the woods, tempting our virtuous leader to sodomy and our delightful penitent to adultery. What an achievement! So young and so extremely versatile!” (Bell 267). Toby confesses everything that happened between him and Michael. Later, James sends Toby to his house and questions Michael. Michael thinks that it is the revenge of Nick as he “forced Toby to play exactly the part which Nick himself had played thirteen years earlier. Toby had been his understudy indeed” (Bell 307).

Nick have again ruined Michael a second time completely precisely in the same way. In the end of the novel, Nick shoots himself and Michael thinks that, “his revenge could not be more perfect. It was perfect now” (Bell 309).

Murdoch depicts the homosexual issues through the characters of Michael, Nick and Toby. In the novel, there are gender-binary issues as well reflected in the married life of Paul and Dora. Due to certain differences, it becomes impossible for Dora to live with Paul and between the battle of religion and spirituality, she opts for her own spiritual freedom. James Tayper Pace out rightly rejects the notion of homosexuality and calls it forbidden in Christian religion. He also articulates derogatory comments on Dora and considers her a bitch and calls Nick a ‘pansy.’ There are various issues and challenges presented in the novel regarding gender-binary and non-gender-binary aspects that can be further studied on.

The novel offers a realistic portrayal of the society and like any postmodern novel, left the readers in doubt and question to whether Dora will continue with her studies or again will go back to Paul and similarly regrading Michael that whether he will completely embrace his homosexuality or will abandon it and suppress his feelings. The quest of religious and spiritual pathway is the ultimate battle of an individual that persists till end in the novel. The readers are also left to resolve this conflict of choice.

5.3 Emergence of New Relationships

The emergence of new relationship occurs when an individual observes certain character traits and a pattern of behavior in another individual which he/she lacks or misses in self. In order to complete, a void of emotional or physical desire, an individual approach another to fulfill it and make it as a whole. The advent of any new relationship is gradual and begins with few minor stages

i.e., initially merging and exchanging of thoughts, rise of doubts and queries, a conflict between denial and acceptance, disappointment and finally a stage of decision.

The postmodern novelists took this advent and emergence of new relationships thoughtfully and at the same time very critically as well. The rapidly changing conditions and scenario of the post-war years has transformed the equations of human and every minute foundation from relationships to theoretical aspects. The postmodern era offers every individual to question about the existence of man, God, nature; about the reliability of truth; and moreover, to resolve every query of mind as per their own understanding and interpretation.

The postmodern era views everything from a different perspective and carries a different approach to analyze things. The postmodernists discuss human as a new entity and covering various aspects related to it like human nature, life and death, emotions and feelings and mainly the structure of new relationships. Human emotions and relationships cannot be covered in any said definition or a single tag because they are evolving gradually. The post-war years have seen establishment of new relationships between two individuals, between two groups and even in between two countries as well on account of some common desire and need.

In the postmodern novels as well, the writers focus on the emergence of new relationships based solely on the need of the individual. In the select novel, *The Bell*, the story unfolds emergence of new relationships between characters and simultaneously with the new beginning there is termination of the old relationships as well.

The character of Dora in spite of being married, develops an extra-marital affair with Noel Spens. He is a young reporter and in fact a slight acquaintance of Paul. Noel's accurate mockery of her husband Paul eases something in her heart. Being a free-spirited person, Dora begins to feel

caged and like a prisoner under the supervision of Paul. “The temptation to escape from Paul’s elegant and untouchable flat to go drinking with Noel and Sally was simply too great” (Bell 6) for Dora. She is too careless in her marriage life with Paul and thus, he becomes suspicious of her. He lays traps for Dora and she easily falls for it. She is both scared of him and feels a sense of disgust against Paul. She also decides to leave him in order to live with Noel.

Paul is portrayed as a true religious figure and a blind follower of his religion’s beliefs and code of conduct. He sees marriage as a sacred and a pure knot between them and every time forgives Dora. When Paul was convinced that she had really gone he sent her a meticulous and characteristic letter:

You see I have no legal obligations. But I have arranged for forty pounds a month to be paid into your bank account until such time as you come to your senses and return to me. I don’t want you to live in penury. On the other hand, you can hardly expect me to support you lavishly in a state of demoralized and brutish debauch, and shortly no doubt in adultery. You are fortunate to be able to know that my love for you remains unaltered (Bell 6-7).

Dora accepts his money and spends that on drinking and living a lavish life. She moves to Chelsea with Noel Spens but she soon realizes that, “she had no other life to escape into” (Bell 7) and now depends on Noel. She thinks of herself as an “irresponsible Bohemian” and later on, finally decides to go back to Paul again.

The emergence of homosexual relationship between Michael and Nick is also one of the central highlights of the novel. Michael developed a relationship with Nick in the past but the relationship lasted for few days as Michael suffered from a bitter and harsh betrayal from Nick’s side. Nick also loved his company and even approached him uninvited but it is certain that due to

religious pressure and fear, he complained against Michael. Murdoch's description of their bond and moments is very precise and genuine but still they drifted apart.

Michael's encounter with Toby is quite complex, as Toby is totally unaware about the feelings of Michael. It is apt to say that may be for Michael it was hard to forget the relationship he shared with Nick and as a rebound relationship, he becomes attracted towards Toby. Toby being not attracted towards Michael in other sense, he ends up in dismay, though he clears it with Michael and they decide to bury the matter. Toby begins to question his own identity and soon finds that he is attracted towards Dora. He thinks, "Was he attracted by women? The fact that he had not so far been had bothered Toby, till this moment, not a whit. Now it worried him and he began to want to be immediately reassured" (Bell 178).

Though, it is only Toby's infatuation towards Dora and there is no further such development in their relationship. Toby settles his relationship with Michael and they both continue their healthy relationship.

In the novel, the most unique and refreshing relationship emerged between Dora and Michael. Initially, in an encounter between Michael and Dora, there is an evident spark seen in their bond. "She remembered the touch of his hand upon her neck. Their strange experience had created between them a tremulous beam of physical desire which had not been present before" (Bell 75-76).

Towards the end of the novel, when the lay religious community dissolve, everyone left except Dora and Michael. Michael stays in order to visit Catherine at hospital and also because of some affairs and market-garden. Michael and Dora forms a co-dependent relationship with each other. Dora begins doing cooking and catering and all sorts of work suggested by Michael. Dora's

presence also did not trouble him at all. “She was useful, she knew nothing, she guessed nothing and she did not judge” (Bell 311). Dora is unknown about the gender identity of Michael and she thinks that Michael and Catherine shares a relationship together. As a relief, Michael also never clarifies it to Dora and is happy with her being unknown of the truth.

Soon, “a curious dream-like peace descended on Imber. The distinction of days was unclear. Meals were served at odd times and often sat over lengthily” (Bell 312). Michael and Dora begins to spend their time talking about their childhood and sharing other memories. Dora decides that there is no point in returning back to Paul and that she would only run back again. She decides that, “she should vacillate between submitting through fear and resisting through resentment” (Bell 313). “During this time a curious relationship grew up between Michael and Dora, something undefined and wistful which had for Michael a certain ease and *douceur*” (Bell 313). Though, Dora is little in love with him but there is no such feeling in Michael for Dora. Moreover, he thinks that he is grateful to Dora and could do no harm to her.

The relationship between Dora and Michael appears to be pure and genuine. Michael separates himself from Dora. This, made Dora to emerge as a strong woman and she started searching her own identity in the patriarchal society. She keeps herself away from the company of Paul, Noel and Michael, so as to attain peace.

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CHAPTER – 6

MORAL VISION: *THE SEA, THE SEA*

6.1 Ethics and Morality

6.2 Love and Obsession

6.3 Self-Delusion and Nostalgia

CHAPTER – 6

MORAL VISION: *THE SEA, THE SEA*

The word moral is related to the principles of right and wrong in behavior. An individual possesses a sense or self-conscience that governs them and offers an ability for taking ethical judgments and differentiating between the right and the wrong and between the good and the evil. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines moral as, “concerning or relating to what is right and wrong in human behavior.”¹ It is “concerned with the principles or rules of right conduct or the distinction between right and wrong; ethical.”² *Cambridge Dictionary* explains moral as, “relating to the standards of good or bad behavior, fairness, honesty, etc. that each person believes in, rather than to laws.”³ According to the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, moral is defined as, “the lesson to be learnt from a story, poem, fable, play – or indeed any work which purports to teach anything either directly or obliquely” (445).⁴ *Macmillan English Dictionary* discusses moral as:

- relating to right and wrong and the way people should behave,
- based on what you believe is right rather than what the law or rules say is right,
- principles of right and wrong behavior that are generally accepted by a society, and,
- something that you can learn from a story or an experience (921).⁵

According to *The Routledge Dictionary of Philosophy*, the term moral is:

Concerning habits, customs, ways of life, especially when these are assessed as good or bad, right or wrong. Among things we call moral are theories, arguments, outlooks, rules, reasons, virtues, people, books, actions, intentions, and, perhaps, desires and feelings. There is an important ambiguity between ‘moral’ as against ‘immoral’ and ‘moral’ as against ‘non-moral’. People are normally called moral only in the first sense; problems can be moral only in the second. An immoral principle is still a moral principle in the second sense, as against, say, a legal or aesthetic principle. ‘Morality’ is similarly ambiguous. ‘Amoral’ (which properly means ‘non-moral’, not ‘immoral’) is seldom used in philosophy (265).⁶

The term vision signifies an ability to see or perceive things or an insight developed by a person after going through some experience or gaining understanding of things. It is “an experience in which a personage, thing, or event appears vividly or credibly to the mind, although not actually present, often under the influence of a divine or other agency.”⁷ *Macmillan English Dictionary* defines vision as, “the ability to think about and plan for the future, using intelligence and imagination, especially in politics and business” (1599).⁸ Thus, moral vision is a sense of the things that matter and are meaningful and possess a certain degree of value and worth with regard to humanity. It is ability to think for future purpose by incorporating moral values and morality.

The Sea, The Sea is Iris Murdoch’s nineteenth novel published in 1978. It constitutes the Later Phase Novels of Murdoch including *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980), *The Philosopher’s Pupil* (1983), *The Good Apprentice* (1985), *The Book and the Brotherhood* (1987) and *The Message to the Planet* (1989). All these six novels are “deeply philosophical, deeply religious, full of

mysticism and imbued with the mystery of personality to a much greater extent than earlier novels” (Spear 89).⁹ Her novel *The Sea, The Sea* won the 1978 Booker Prize for the best novel written in English. In her later period novels, the psychological dominance is very apparent as compared to the physical violence, death, treachery as seen in her previous novels. All the six novels are quite lengthy and are focused on the idea and thoughts of religious discussions and about God and goodness. Religious thoughts and ideas along with the questions of morality, use of supernatural powers and mystical experiences emerge as key themes in her novels.

“In *The Sea, The Sea* religious thought centers on James; though the actual discussion of his Buddhist beliefs occupies only a few pages, we are throughout made aware of his essential goodness, in contrast to Charles’s apparent lack of understanding of moral concepts” (Spear 89).¹⁰ The novel is written in first-person narrative and has an ‘artist’ as narrator. “*The Sea, The Sea* is built to last, and has an exemplary universality. The house by the sea, the life of the theatre, erotic obsession, the contrast of simple and sophisticate, the artist and the ascetic soldier, the different women, its ‘types’ have the durability and strength of great art” (Conradi 230-231).¹¹

The introductory part of the novel is named as ‘Prehistory.’ The central section of the novel titled ‘History’ is divided into six parts, and the last reflective section is the Postscript: ‘Life Goes on.’ The title of the novel is derived from Paul Valery’s great poem ‘The Graveyard by the Sea’ published in 1922. “The novel is essentially not about God but is concerned with morality, with religion, with the concept of Goodness, with truth and with characters who have mystical powers which affect most of the other people with whom they come in contact” (Spear 106).¹²

Murdoch’s ability to create an exceptional fictional world of her own is noteworthy. Her novels are intriguing and possess a quality to engage the curiosity, intelligence and imagination of

the readers. The plots of her novel are intricately woven and depict the complexity of human nature and human relationships. Her well-crafted characters are the way to examine the emotional, spiritual and intellectual pursuits of real life. Her works are highly realistic and at the same time quite mystical as well. The blend of realism and mysticism is unique and apt. Murdoch believed that life should be like her novels – ‘intellectually adventurous and morally serious.’

The Sea, The Sea is a self-told story of the central character Charles Arrowby. He is a famous London Theatre director and playwright who is above the age of sixty years and finally retires from the world of limelight. He moves to a remote location, and lives at a house near the sea, known as Shruff End. He begins writing his memoirs and diary. The entire novel is a tale of his obsessions with the past memories of his parents, grandparents, friends, his brother James and his fixation on his adolescent love with Mary Hartley Fitch. His obsessions are clearly evident through his living style, his writing techniques and his delusional mind. “Charles is entirely engrossed with himself and it is not until almost the end of the novel that his solipsism is jolted and he is forced to reassess the story he is narrating” (Spear 97).¹³

Murdoch’s writing throws light on the aspects of morality, on love and its various forms, on reality and the role of memory. It illuminates the emotion of jealousy, love, and a discussion on the morality and ethics. It also highlights the feeling of nostalgia and habit of self-delusion in the characters of the novel. The novel has several allusions made to Shakespeare and various other writers making it a postmodern reading. Most of Murdoch’s novels, present the theme of saint and the artist and likewise the select novel also depicts the theme of artist versus saint. “*The Sea, The Sea* is a beautiful, complex, ironic novel, which confronts our major demons: fear, jealousy, vanity, envy, the pain and confusion of misplaced love, and the impulse to violent action, whether on the battlefield, or in the privacy of the home” (John Burnside SS xvi).

If *The Black Prince* meditated *Hamlet*, *The Sea*, *The Sea* meditates *The Tempest*, which Murdoch in 1969 had called ‘perhaps my favorite of all plays. It is to do with reconciliation and virtue and the triumph of virtue’ (Conradi 232).¹⁴ In the novel, Charles is to suffer from the Prospero’s Metabolic Syndrome.

6.1 Ethics and Morality

Ethics are the principles relating to right and wrong conduct. These are the standard principles that govern the conduct of a person. According to the *Dictionary of Psychology*, ethics is “the branch of philosophy concerned with that which is deemed acceptable in human behavior, with what is good or bad, right or wrong in human conduct in pursuit of goals and aims” (146).¹⁵

Perhaps, on the dominant view, an enquiry into how people ought to act in general, not as means to a given end. The primary concepts are then ought, obligation, duty, right, wrong, though not in all their uses. For the other main view, the primary topic is value and the primary concepts are the valuable, the desirable, the good in itself. All these notions are normally included under ethics, though the second group can also be excluded as belonging rather to axiology, the study of value in general (in aesthetics, economics, etc., as well as ethics). An ethics based primarily on value can be called an axiological ethics (Proudfoot and Lacey 125).¹⁶

Etymologically, the word ‘ethics’ is being derived from the Greek term ‘*ethikos*’ which itself again is derived from the Greek term *ethos* (character) and from Latin term *mores* (customs). Thus, it provides the idea that how individuals must choose to interact with one another. In philosophy, ethics defines what is good for both an individual and a society as a whole. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* states ethics as “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad

and with moral duty and obligation; a set of moral principles: a theory or system of moral values; the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group; a guiding philosophy; a consciousness of moral importance and a set of moral issues or aspects (such as rightness).”¹⁷

Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. The field of ethics, along with aesthetics, concerns matters of value; these fields comprise the branch of philosophy called axiology. Ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. As a field of intellectual inquiry, moral philosophy is related to the fields of moral psychology, descriptive ethics and value theory (“Ethics”).¹⁸

The field of ethics or moral philosophy encompasses developing, defending, and recommending concepts and ideas of right and wrong behavior. These ideas are immutable as they are not relative to the changing situations and the desire of people. The study of ethics is broadly divided into three major areas:

1. Meta-ethics is concerned with the theoretical meaning and aspects.

Meta-ethics, unlike normative ethics (that is, ethical theory and applied or practical ethics), does not try to evaluate actions or people as good or bad, better or worse, but investigates the nature of ethical properties, attitudes, judgements; the assumptions that lie behind our moral practices. Within meta-ethics, views can be broadly divided into realist or antirealist (Proudfoot and Lacey 247).¹⁹

2. Normative ethics is concerned with the practical means of determining a moral course of action. It examines standards for the rightness and wrongness of actions.
3. Applied ethics is concerned with what a person is assigned to do in a particular situation. It attempts to apply ethical theory on real-life situations and involves specialized fields such as engineering ethics, bioethics, geoethics, political ethics and so on.

The distinction between views of ethics and views in ethics is reflected in two groups into which ethical questions are often divided. These are usually contrasted as ethics/morals, meta-ethics/ethics, philosophical ethics/normative ethics or meta-ethics/normative ethics, the subject as a whole being called ethics, moral philosophy or sometimes morals (126).²⁰

Thus, ethics or moral philosophy is the discipline which is ultimately concerned with what is morally good or bad and right or wrong. It involves every system or theory of moral values and moral principles that consists of issues related to human value, morals, morality and moreover, the standards by which human actions can be judged or assessed as right or wrong. It also aids in practical decision making and acquiring an ethical code of conduct.

The terms ethics and morality are closely knit together. “Ethics or moral philosophy is the branch of philosophy which addresses questions of morality. The word ethics is commonly used interchangeably with morality, and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group, or individual” (“Morality”).²¹ Morality is the ability to recognize a distinction or difference between binaries: good and evil, right and wrong and so on. Morality is a character trait, a feature or even mental disposition of behaving in a manner intended to produce morally good results. It can also be understood as a practice of paying respect and being

obedient to the set rules of right conduct and behavior. It refers to set of social rules, customs, traditions, beliefs, or practices which specify an ethical code of conduct on which a human is judged. It assesses the right and wrong behavior and what is acceptable in society to live together in peace.

Though, there are many philosophers and critics who do not distinguish between morals and ethics and use them interchangeably, yet few are of the opinion that there is slight difference between them. Not theoretically but on the basis of its practical application. Morality and moral values can be personal and self-authorized, whereas ethics are the set rules and standards of a society, community or religion. For an instance, there are situations when an individual is not morally wrong in his self-opinion but still in the eyes of society he is immoral due to his actions. Morals can alter and change over a period of time and with certain facts and experiences, whereas, ethics are set principles and standards.

Morality is not fixed and permanent but it is changeable with time. The set of moral principles might vary as per the religion, different regions, family and personal experience of an individual. In the field of psychology, there are various theories that discuss the evolution and acceptance of certain moral principles by an individual. Such as:

1. Freud's Morality and the Superego: Sigmund Freud suggested moral development occurred as a person's ability to set aside their selfish needs were replaced by the values of important socializing agents (such as a person's parents).
2. Piaget's theory of Moral Development: Jean Piaget focused on the social-cognitive and social-emotional perspective of development. Piaget theorized that moral development unfolds over time, in certain stages as children learn to adopt certain

moral behaviors for their own sake—rather than just abide by moral codes because they don't want to get into trouble.

3. B.F. Skinner's Behavioral Theory: B.F. Skinner focused on the power of external forces that shaped an individual's development. For example, a child who receives praise for being kind may treat someone with kindness again out of a desire to receive more positive attention in the future.
4. Kohlberg's Moral Reasoning: Lawrence Kohlberg proposed six stages of moral development that went beyond Piaget's theory. Through a series of questions, Kohlberg proposed that an adult's stage of reasoning could be identified (Morin).²²

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

Morality seems to be used in two distinct broad senses: a descriptive sense and a normative sense. More particularly, the term "morality" can be used either:

1. descriptively to refer to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (such as a religion), or accepted by an individual for her own behavior, or
2. normatively to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational people (Gert).²³

In the novel, the character of James Arrowby, Charles cousin becomes the central focus for the moral and religious and ethical thought in the novel. Charles, being the protagonist, at times seems to be immoral and unethical in his approach and conduct. He describes himself as "I am over sixty years of age. I am wifeless, childless, brotherless, sisterless, I am my well-known self, made glittering and brittle by fame" (SS 4). He retires from the theatre and claims that "there has been a moral change" in him. He gained wide popularity as a director and had many love-affairs in his past life. He says: "Clement Makin was my first mistress. When we met I was twenty, she

was thirty-nine” (SS 35). He adds, “she always fought mercilessly for those she loved, and then she became totally immoral; she lied and cheated for them, she trampled upon rights and upon hearts...God rest her restless soul” (SS 35-36).

Charles conception of the self seems to be righteous and moral but his actions are quite contradictory and opposite to what he claims. He says that,

I am not very highly sexed. I can live perfectly well without sexual relations. Some observers have even thought I must be homosexual because I did not have perpetual mistress! I hate *mess*. Perhaps my morally hygienic mother somehow taught me to. And I have never liked the complicit male world of foulmouthed talk and bawdy. Of course I have had not a few love affairs. But I never bribed a woman into bed” (SS 41).

Charles have had many love-affairs and encounters with various women like Lizzie Scherer, Rosina, Jeanne, Rita, Doris and so on. His love for Lizzie was an innocent love. He writes:

I began to love Lizzie after I realized how much she loved me. As does sometimes happen, her love impressed me, then attracted me. I was directing a season of Shakespeare. She fell in love with me during *Romeo and Juliet*, she revealed her love during *Twelfth Night*, we got to know each other during *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Then (but that was later) I began to love to her during *The Tempest*, and (but that was later still) I left her during *Measure for Measure* (when Aloysius Bull was playing the Duke). I recall very clearly that occasion when I first realized that Lizzie loved me. She was playing Viola. (This was during Lizzie's brief 'shining period', her *annus mirabilis*.) It was the production in which Wilfred Dunning, who usually played Sir Toby Belch suddenly insisted on playing Malvolio (SS 53).

Charles had no conception of marrying Lizzie and he told her, “the affair was temporary, that my love for her was temporary, and doubtless her love for me was temporary” (SS 55-56). Charles remained very straightforward in his love-affairs and never took disadvantage of any woman but through the entire story his obsession for Hartley’s love is clearly visible. It is the point, where, he diverts from his path and performs certain immoral acts.

He forces Hartley to renew their past relationship despite of the fact that now she is married and have a family of her own. His obsession is so high that he forgets about their age, family and even her will and consent. He abducts her and locks her at his own house. Hartley remains faithful and finally returns to her husband. Lizzie and Rosina are also morally corrupt characters, as they desire to get Charles back in their lives and similarly, Charles, out of sheer jealousy tries to break their relationship with their counter mates.

Throughout the novel, James Arrowby appears to be ethical and moral and have a moral vision. He is quiet mystical and mysterious, yet, he helps everybody around him. He is the only character to talk about religion. He himself is a follower of Buddhist beliefs.

The moral weight of *The Sea, The Sea* rests on James; he, like Tallis in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, is the saint, though, unlike Tallis, he does not have to battle against a truly demonic figure and his powers of goodness appear to embrace magic. On his last visit to Charles at Shruff End he seems to pave the way for his own death, not only by clearing up all earthly misunderstandings, but also by hinting at the ‘journey’ he is about to take. It is on this final visit that the most serious discussion in the novel on the question of goodness and of religion takes place... The last achievement is the absolute surrender of magic itself, the end of what you call superstition (Spear 98).²⁴

Thus, it is apt to say that Murdoch has clearly attempted to draw a contrasting view about ethics and morals through depicting the two main characters – Charles and James Arrowby. The rest of the characters are neutral towards their approach of morals, ethics and religion. The themes of morals, love, obsession and nostalgia are very intricately interwoven together in the novel.

6.2 Love and Obsession

Love is a strong feeling and emotion. It is a profound affection, benevolent concern or care for other people or human beings simply for their well-being. As per ancient Greek philosophers, there are six forms of love viz., familial love, friendly love or platonic love, romantic love, self-love, guest love and divine love. The modern and postmodern authors deal with new emerging varieties of love like unrequited love, infatuated love, obsessive love and so on and so forth. The *Dictionary of Psychology* defines love as:

1. a strong feeling of attachment for a specific person, usually with a sexual component,
2. a sentiment whose dominant characteristic is a strong feeling of affection; exemplified by love of one's country,
3. the libidinal or erotic instincts that seek object gratification,
4. (Watson) with fear and rage, one of the three inherent, or primary, emotions,
5. in religious writings, a spiritual, mystical quality that unites the individual to a divine being (235).²⁵

The emotion of love is considered both as positive and negative in nature. The positive aspect of love is represented through its virtues including kindness, compassion, affection, care and concern, unselfishness, honesty, loyalty, trust and hope for well-being of other. Contrary to

this, the negative aspect of the love is reflected through the vices like moral flaw, selfishness, egoism, dishonesty, and often a negative feeling that tends to make people manic, obsessive and even provokes them to harm self as well as others.

In the novel, Charles's cousin James tries to make him understand that, he is being delusional and his appearance as a broken-hearted lover is another role that he has acquired to console himself from the emptiness and void of his spiritual life.

The novel is about love and about love seen in the perspective of good and evil. The Hartley of Charles imagination represents the only purely unselfish love he has known, a spiritual love without carnal possession; through his memory of this love, Charles is striving to return to innocence, to wipe out the evil and corruption that has intervened and to become morally 'Good' again (Spear 96).²⁶

One of Charles's former lovers, Rosina, also tries to make him understand that his love for Hartley is not actually love but a mere infatuation and an obsession. She says, "his desire for her was made of jealousy, resentment, anger, not love" (SS 527).

Love plays a major role in the novel. There are various forms of love but they all are too tangled and thus, it becomes interesting to study the philosophy behind them as depicted by Murdoch. The relationship between Hartley and Charles is one-sided. Hartley likes Charles as a friend and therefore, rejects him when they were young. "Hartley made a permanent metaphysical crisis of my life by refusing me for moral reasons. Did this lead me to make immorality my mask?" (SS 90). It is clear that at the young age, the beauty of Hartley attracts Charles but after many years in spite of her being old and unattractive, his obsession towards her makes him to force her to restart their love-affair. The love of Lizzie and Rosina is genuine and

they try to win back Charles out of pure love. Lizzie's action of sending Charles frequent letters is a sign of her care and concern for Charles. Rosina, though, deeply loves Charles but fails to understand his needs. In the novel, Murdoch again "examines the compulsions of marriage; Ben and Hartley hardly appear to have a happy marriage life but they feel bound to each other and the marriage between Peregrine and Rosina which Charles destroys is restored when Rosina realizes that Peregrine was willing to kill Charles for her sake" (Spear 99-100).²⁷

The only character in the novel who is morally and ethically good, yet does not desire for anyone is James. He is good to everyone in the novel. His mystical and sudden death and disappearance is quite shocking for the readers. After his death, Charles come to the realization that there was really nothing ill between them and it was his own delusions of mind. Charles realizes that his whole life he believed that Hartley is his first love but he was wrong and says, "Yes of course I was in love with my own youth. Aunt Estelle? Not really. Who is one's first love?" (SS 538).

Obsession is an ill and negative feeling that makes a person to do immoral and harmful acts. It is a compulsive and irrational preoccupation. An unhealthy fixation on an object, thing, habit or even on a person. *Dictionary of Psychology* defines obsession as, "a persistent and often irrational idea that may be accompanied by a compulsion to carry out an act" (274).²⁸ According to the *Macmillan English Dictionary*, obsession is "an emotional state in which someone or something is so important to you that you are always thinking about them, in a way that seems extreme to other people" (976).²⁹

In the context of the select novel, the alteration of tenses is a significant narrative device, for it reinforces Charles's apparent inability to distinguish the past from the present. His

retirement into what he purports to intend to be peaceful obscurity develops into a period of obsession, during which he attempts to relive a schoolboy romance with Hartley Smith, the now-ageing object of his adolescent dream world (Spear 92-93).³⁰

The character of Charles seems to be highly obsessive with his own self. Due to his obsessive nature, he wanders in between the past and the present, which tends to make him crave for nostalgic moments. He blames Hartley for his own shortcomings. His love is not for Lizzie, Clement or Hartley but rather an obsession for self. The one of the main reasons behind a person being obsessive is unstable or abusive childhood and it may develop abnormal patterns of attachment in future. It is evident in the novel that Charles childhood was not normal as there was an endless turf and competition between James and him.

Charles obsession is clearly reflected through his writing pattern and way of living. “The opening page suggests Charles’s obsession with what and how he is to write, the vocabulary constantly emphasizing his deliberations:

I had written the above, destined to be the opening paragraph of my memoirs...I spoke of a memoir. Is that what this chronicle will prove to be? Time will show. At this moment, a page old, it feels more like a diary than a memoir...now the main events of my life are over and there is to be nothing but ‘recollection in tranquility’ (SS 1-2).

His obsession is also reflected in his way of living and via his profession of being a director, playwright and occasionally an actor. Charles finds excessive pleasure in organizing and cleaning things which is a reflection of his obsessive nature. He says, “I have been cleaning and tidying up the house. What an extraordinary satisfaction there is in cleaning things!” (SS 34). The novel is symbolic and Murdoch depicts her love for Shakespeare through the character of Charles Arrowby.

He is highly obsessed with Shakespeare, his life and his plays. He thinks of starting his own autobiography and writes: “I was born at Stratford-upon-Avon. or to be exact, near it, or to be more exact, in the Forest of Arden. I grew up in leafy central England, as far as it is possible to be in this island from the sea. I did not *see* the sea until I was fourteen. Of course I owe my whole life to Shakespeare” (SS 30).

His obsession with his profession and being a theatre artist is also reflected in his views:

The theatre is a place of obsession. It is not a soft dreamland. Unemployment, poverty, disappointment, racking indecision (take this now and miss that later) grind reality into one’s face; and, as in family life, one soon learns the narrow limitations of the human soul. Yet obsession is what it is all about. All good dramatists and directors and most (not all) good actors are obsessed men. Only geniuses like Shakespeare conceal the fact, or rather change it into something spiritual. And obsession drives to hard work. I myself have always worked like a demon. My mother’s training made me a compulsive worker (SS 37).

Charles’s self-obsessed nature makes him to think himself as Prospero and often his cousin James as Ariel due to his mystical powers.

His isolation in his house beside the sea can be equated with the ageing Prospero’s isolation on his magic island at a time in his life preparatory to scores being settled and past redeemed. Like Prospero, too, Charles, embarks on the tale of his past life, though at greater length and to the reader as audience. Yet his isolation is incomplete, for, far more quickly than in Prospero’s case in *The Tempest*, his past follows him in the shape of old lovers, his theatre friends, and his cousin James (Spear 93-94).³¹

Unlike, Prospero's magic, Charles magic is not mystical but materialistic as he used it for meeting his own ends and to win admiration, praise and to lure women.

Later, in the novel, Charles obsession is also seen towards his past lover Hartley. He becomes obsessed with reviving their past relationship without even taking consideration into the feelings of Hartley. Hartley living in an emotional abusive marriage with Ben thinks of ending her marriage but later decides to give it one more change. Their adopted son, Titus, runs away from them seeing the family tensions. Charles, in his obsession of having her, abducts her and shuts her in his house in order to isolate her from the outside world. She suffers a psychotic break and requests Charles to let her go.

Thus, the sub-chapter concludes that despite in being various relationships with women, Charles remained obsessed with his self only. His self-obsessive and solipsistic nature cease him to ultimately relish the true emotion of love. His idea about love and marriage makes him more self-centered and selfish. "All attachments are vulnerable and finally impermanent, and the best love would be unpossessive....James gives the authoritative verdict, when in his last interview, still weaning Charles of his obsession, he predicts his recovery (Conradi 247)³²:

You've built a cage of needs and installed her in an empty space in the middle. The strong feelings are all round her – vanity, revenge, your love for your youth – they are not focused on her, they don't touch her. She seems to be their prisoner, but you don't harm her at all. You are using her image, a doll, a simulacrum, it is an exorcism. Soon you will start to see her as a wicked enchantress. Then you will have nothing to do except forgive her and that will be within your capacity (SS 475).

6.3 Self-Delusion and Nostalgia

The word ‘self’ implies “who you are and what you think and feel, especially the conscious feeling of being separate and different from other people” (1286).³³ Delusion is “an idea or belief that is not true; a mental condition in which you believe things that are not true” (368).³⁴ The *Dictionary of Psychology* states, delusion is “a false belief that cannot be modified by reasoning or demonstration of the facts” (110).³⁵ It is a false belief that is resistant to confrontation with actual facts. It is a state of being deluded or misled by false self-belief or error in belief. Thus, Self-Delusion is the state of “allowing yourself to believe good things about yourself that are not true” (1287).³⁶ Self-delusion is the action of deluding oneself and failing to recognize the reality. It is similar to the idea of appearance versus reality, where an individual fail to reach to the reality and wanders in between the false and deceptive projections of own mind.

Self-delusion is also known as self-deception which is “a process of denying or rationalizing away the relevance, significance, or importance of opposing evidence and logical argument. Self-deception involves convincing oneself of a truth (or lack of truth) so that one does not reveal any self-knowledge of the deception” (“Self-deception”).³⁷ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines self-delusion as, “the act of deluding oneself or the state of being deluded by oneself especially concerning one's true nature, abilities, feelings, etc.”³⁸ *Collins Dictionary* states, “Self-delusion is the state of having a false idea about yourself or the situation you are in.”³⁹

Nostalgia is longing for home or familiar surroundings. It is a bittersweet yearning for the things of the past, a sort of reminiscence. The *Macmillan English Dictionary* defines nostalgia as, “thoughts about happy times in your past, often mixed with the wish to be back in the past” (965).⁴⁰

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, nostalgia is the “pleasure and sadness that is caused by remembering something from the past and wishing that you could experience it again.”⁴¹

In the novel, the central character of Charles is often seen in a state of delusion. Though, he decides to retire and live in a lonely house by himself, it becomes a difficult task for him. After few days living in the Shruff End, which literally means ‘black’, he declares the house as being haunted and eerie. He says:

This is the first house which I have owned and the first genuine solitude which I have inhabited. Is this not I wanted? Of course the house is full of little creaking straining noises, even on a windless night, any elderly house is, and draughts blow through it from gappy window-frames and ill-fitting doors. So it is that I can imagine, as I lie in bed at night, that I hear soft footsteps in the attics above me or that the bead curtain on the landing is quietly clicking because someone has passed furtively through it (SS 20).

Charles also claims of seeing “a monster rising from the waves” (SS 20). He writes, “Out of a perfectly calm sea, at a distance of perhaps a quarter of a mile (or less), I saw an immense creature break the surface and arch itself upward” (SS 20-21). It was like “a kind of crested snake’s head, green-eyed, the mouth opening to show teeth and a pink interior...in a moment the whole thing collapsed...and had vanished” (SS 21).

The psychic world of Charles Arrowby is shattered by his own inclination towards his past memories. His habit of mixing memory with desire brings chaos in his life. Though, living far from everything and every relationship, he is passionately attached to the sweet memories of his childhood and especially to the memories of his parents. For him, it becomes highly tough and difficult to detach himself from his memories and it often makes him nostalgic and wanting to re-

live his past memories. His recollections of memory of his father, mother, grandparents, his adolescent love life, his past love affairs are very frequently visible in the novel. His childhood memories with James, Uncle Abel and Aunt Estelle constitutes a very significant part of his life. The most effective nostalgic memory of Charles is of his adolescence love affair with Hartley which offers him a sort of escapism and hope to re-live his innocence.

Charles is more than simply an obsessive crypto-paranoiac and thus the readers empathize with him because of his nostalgia. “The deliberately offhand way in which Charles constantly refers to James makes us realize not only the extent to which he is really obsessed by James’s life but also his self-absorption which leads to his lack of understanding of the spiritual and mystic qualities of his cousin” (Spear 97).⁴² Charles often becomes nostalgic about his relations with James, “When I was young I could never decide whether James was real and I was unreal, or vice versa. Somehow, it was clear we could not both be real; one of us must inhabit the world of shadows. James always had a sort of beastly invulnerability” (SS 62). While remembering James, Charles becomes nostalgic:

As a small child, James was an uncanny path-finder and one seriously attempted to learn to fly. He is more than catalogue of eccentricities but is certainly equipped with various small science, or stigmata, of his spiritual status. James offers us, as well as his creator, a certain quizzical humorous pleasure...Charles feels cheated by James, who always seems to be withholding himself (Conradi 240).⁴³

Charles’ habit of self-delusion and wandering into the nostalgic moments of his past life often ends up in making him far away from reality. “Just as Murdoch’s characters often misuse art and their own creative impulses, they frequently fall in love suddenly and violently, an experience

that produces a state of delusion and neurotic obsession” (Nasrullah).⁴⁴ For instance, the rivalry and conflict between Charles and James is deeply rooted in Charles’ brain. Towards the end of the novel, Charles realized that it was his self-delusion that became the cause of breach of trust in his relationship with James.

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CHAPTER – 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 An Overview of Previous Chapters

7.2 Major Findings

7.3 Future Scope of the Study

CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION

7.1 An Overview of Previous Chapters

According to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*,

Postmodernity is said to be a culture of fragmentary sensations, eclectic nostalgia, disposable simulacra, and promiscuous superficiality, in which the traditionally valued qualities of depth, coherence, meaning, originality, and authenticity are evacuated or dissolved amid the random swirl of empty signals (Baldick 201).

A novel has a huge canvas to paint. It has plethora of characters holding their own individual aura, personality and attitude pictured after fixing the canvas in accordance with the plot of novel. The novel offers the readers a pleasure of reading either in public or private, suggests a new meaning to life or an opportunity to create something on their own. The term 'Postmodernism' is quite interesting but at the same time bewildering as well. The reason being that on one hand it follows few aspects of modernism but on the other hand it negates modernism by stating it as irrational.

The term 'postmodernism' was initially used in 1947 to describe a contemporary western world in crisis, when people struggled to make sense of a century characterized by conflict and mass genocide, leading to the questioning of traditional moral values and beliefs. The post-modern period is greatly influenced by the critical theories such as post-structuralism, Existentialism,

Nihilism, Psycho-analysis, Apocalyptic theory, Surrealism, Deconstruction etc. The common themes and techniques of postmodern period are the use of Irony, Playfulness, Black humor; Intertextuality, Pastiche, Metafiction, Fabulation, Poiumena, Historiographic metafiction, Temporal distortion, Magic realism, Technoculture and hyperreality; Paranoia, Maximalism, Minimalism and Fragmentation.

The post-war years witnessed the emergence of women novelists and among them Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch have a distinct place in terms of their contribution towards literature. Their works reflects elements of both modernism and postmodernism. The present research study takes an account of the select novels of both the novelists highlighting their postmodernist perspectives and postmodern writing techniques incorporated by them. The select novels of Muriel Spark are *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *Memento Mori*, whereas, the select novels of Iris Murdoch are *Under the Net*, *The Bell* and *The Sea, The Sea*.

However, it is very important to mention that few research studies have been attempted to explore the different aspects of postmodernism in the novels especially authored by women novelists, therefore, the present research study has been taken as to study the select works of these British women novelists representing postmodernist themes and perspectives. In order to deal with such an immense domain of research, the present research study is divided into seven chapters

The first chapter, Introduction, is basically introductory in nature and is further divided into three sub-chapters. It covers a brief outline sketch of English novels. It discusses the origin of novel as a genre of literary writing, and how it achieved wide popularity during Victorian era and the later years. It highlights the major English novels and their authors. It includes a brief history of English novel beginning from Elizabethan age till its apex in the Victorian era. It also highlights

the status of novel as a genre in the contemporary times. This chapter also explains the concept of Modernism and Postmodernism in detail. It covers briefly the modern period, its features and major writers. Further, it covers in detail the beginning of postmodern era, major thinkers and writers, postmodern writing style as well as theories propounded by thinkers and philosophers. The chapter also covers the brief biographical sketch of the select novelists and their significant contribution to the world of Literature.

The second chapter, Emotional Intensity: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, explores emotional intensity in Muriel Spark's select novel. This chapter is also further divided into three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter analyses human nature and emotions with reference to the major characters in the select novel. The second sub-chapter unfolds psychological significance of characters in the novel and lastly, the third sub-chapter presents intricacies of human relationships in the select novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. This chapter discusses the role and importance of human nature and emotions in an individual's life. Human nature and emotions are the basic traits that constitutes the overall personality of an individual. The title Emotional Intensity is also being discussed and the role played by the human emotions in the lives of the characters in the novel is studied. The varied and dynamic human nature as well as the character traits have also been discussed. It also highlights the psychological significance in relation with the development of psyche of the characters in the novel. The intricacies in human relationship is also been discussed which is the result of the human psyche and emotional intensity which differs from person to person.

The third chapter, Existential Pursuit: *Memento Mori*, covers the concept of existentialism. The chapter is further divided into three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter covers the concept of fear and death as perceived by the characters in the novel. The second sub-chapter discusses the

complexities and uncertainties of human life and the last sub-chapter explains the modern versus old value system. This chapter discusses the concept of existentialism and existential crisis that occurs in human mind.

The fourth chapter, Vices and Virtues: *Under the Net*, discusses the concept of appearance and reality, shows significance of silence, symbols and images and explores philosophy of Solipsism. It discusses the concept of Appearances and Reality and how it is reflected in the select novel through the actions of the characters. The select novel is rich in use of imagery and is highly symbolic. The treatment of silence as an emotion is used vigorously in the novel. Lastly, Iris Murdoch being a philosopher-novelist highlights the issue of egotism and self-centeredness i.e. the philosophy of solipsism through the protagonist of the novel – Jake Donahue.

The fifth chapter, Conflicting Conditions: *The Bell* presents a critical study on conflicting conditions in Iris Murdoch's *The Bell*. This chapter is very helpful in developing a critical understanding of religious and spiritual pathways, gender binary issues and challenges and emergence of new relationships as well. The chapter unfolds the religious and spiritual pathways as dealt in the select novel. The novel covers the desire of the characters to attain and follow the pathway to spiritual life. The novel also deals with the gender non-binary issues especially of homosexual relationships.

The sixth chapter, *Moral Vision: The Sea, The Sea*, discusses moral vision and is further divided into three sub-chapters. It covers thematic aspects related to ethics and morality, love and obsession and self-delusion and nostalgia in the select novel. Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea* is highly philosophical and thus covers the concepts of ethics and morality in detail.

7.2 Major Findings

The present study is very helpful in understanding the concepts, theories and the dominant characteristics related to postmodernism. It throws light on the perceptions of the select women novelists and analyzes the influence of the postmodern views in their novels. This research work brings forth the postmodernist concerns and perspectives post World War II as well as its impact on the contemporary period and literary outcome. The present study explores and analyzes the notions of postmodernism. Both the chosen British women novelists, Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch are quite remarkable and have contributed new insights, thoughts and produced good number of works in the field of literature. Therefore, the present study takes an account of the select works of both the novelists highlighting their postmodernist perspectives and techniques incorporated by them.

The research study covers all the core objectives that were proposed. It covers the conception of the age of postmodernism and its thoughts, views and philosophy. The impact and influence of the postmodernist thoughts is clearly reflected through the novels of the age. The research study also discusses the major postmodernist thinkers and their theories in brief. Both the select novelists reflect postmodernist perspectives through the subject matter and the writing style. The application of intertextuality and other postmodernist writing style and theme is clearly visible in their writings. The main findings of the research study are as:

- The postmodern novel depicts the problems faced due to the dislocations caused by war, anguish and horrors of the holocaust, the anxieties of atomic age and also encompasses the use of magical realism, metafiction, and the graphic novel.

- The select novels represent postmodernist perspectives and postmodernist issues in a very bold manner. The leading characters of the select novels represent post-war situations and their impact on their personal and professional life.
- The select novels represent the concepts of intertextuality and metafiction as there are a number of references found in the select novels from other texts and literary works.
- The protagonists whether male or female appear to be real-life like and are in search of their identity and desire to explore their existence in the society. The characters of the select novel represent position of the modern man in the emerging scenario. They are not stereotyped/conventional or stock characters but they are earthly.
- The major as well as minor characters mark their significance in the development of the plot of the select novels. They represent change and accepts it and try to accommodate themselves in the changing scenario. Even in the changing scenario they do not like to lose their identity, freedom, individuality, rights and moreover, their skills and ability.
- The characters are the product of post-war period and hence are not very much positive towards life rather they are loose, obsessive, anxious, confused and even some of them want to get rid of the cycle of life by committing suicide or desire to renounce the world.
- The study reveals that despite living amidst all the luxuries and amenities of materialistic world, they find solace and peace in simple and natural living. They are very close to the world of spirituality.

- The characters are not stubborn or rigid but they are flexible. They are not whimsical or erratic but rather apply logic and are rational in their approach. They are not skeptic but have courage to ask questions and clarify their doubts.

7.3 Future Scope of the Study

The concept of postmodernism is so vast and its impact is magnanimous that it cannot be covered in any single research. There are various dimensions which are related to literary works produced during this particular period. The present research study has its focus on postmodernist perspectives especially in the select novels of Muriel Spark and Iris Murdoch. The future research study can be undertaken on drawing a comparative study of both these authors or they can be compared with any other Indian English Novelists or any other European, American or Canadian novelists. Moreover, future studies can be done on Women Predicament, Human Relationships, Existential Pursuit, Moral Goodness, Emergence of Modern Women and her Quest, Psychological and Philosophical Impact on Contemporary Society, Humanism and Liberalism, Text and its understanding, Intertextuality and its Application etc. are some of the issues that can be taken as subjects for future study. Even modern novelists like as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Erich Maria Remarque, William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and their select novels can be chosen for future study in this context. The postmodern novelists such as Thomas Berger, Richard Brautigan, Don DeLillo, William Gaddis, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Peter Ackroyd, Angela Carter, Susan Sontag, Salman Rushdie, and Umberto Eco can also be chosen for future study in this context to study the age and changing writing pattern of the contemporary scenario. Along with postmodernism, other concepts such as New Materialism, Post-humanism, Critical Realism, Digi-modernism, Meta-

modernism, Performatism, Post-digitalism, Trans-Postmodernism, Post-Millennialism, Marxism after Postmodernism and Transnationality can also be studied.

Thus, it is evident that this research area is very relevant in future and has potential and broad future scope to be carried out further. In literature, after the age of modernism, the beginning of postmodernism arrived accompanying chaos and debate. Therefore, it is important to understand the age and conception of postmodernism in order to assess the post or the coming age in literature. The ideas of postmodernism carry a different approach and outlook and often is condemned by many critics. Various critics believe that the age has not arrived and flourished fully, whereas, others have the idea that the age of postmodern age is already dead. Thus, in order to study the contemporary age of literature, it is essential to have an understanding of the age of postmodernism. Thus, this research study can be taken further in multiple ways and there are still a number of areas which are unexplored and require keen observation and attention. This research study will be highly beneficial for the students and researchers in the field of literature and especially postmodernism and critical theories. Thus, there are several ways in which this study can be helpful for future study in this context.

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**Understanding the Text: An Intertextual Reading of Muriel Spark's
*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie***

Muskan Solanki¹

Research Scholar

Naveen K. Mehta, Ph.D.,²

Associate Professor

Department of English

School of Language, Literature and Arts

Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies

Academic Campus, Barla, Raisen, (M.P.), India

Email: muskan.http@gmail.com^{1/} nknmehta@gmail.com²

Abstract

*Intertextuality may appear as a modern term, but the conception of its idea has existed since time immemorial. It marks its significance in the postmodern age. Postmodernism denotes a period post World War II, i.e. mid to late twentieth century; a movement in the realm of art, architecture, literature, philosophy, and criticism. Coined by Julia Kristeva, the term intertextuality indicates that a text cannot exist in isolation and reflects the influence of other literary texts. A text displays glimpses of the past texts by making direct references or allusions. In this context, the present research paper discusses the concept of intertextuality as a literary theory and explores the elements of intertextuality along with allusions and references incorporated by Muriel Spark in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. It reveals that the idea of intertextual reading enables the readers to conceive the detailed analysis and thereby help them to interpret the text.*

Keywords: postmodern, intertextuality, allusion, author, text, reader, interpretation.

Introduction

Postmodern literature encompasses all the literary outputs written post the Second World War, exhibiting writing traits such as pastiche, metafiction, intertextuality, fragmentation, magic realism, fabulation, and paranoia. Thus, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the writing techniques of the age. It is a common practice among avid readers to establish a connection between the multifaceted aspects of any reading text, and at the same time to connect the text with other texts that the reader has read previously. The association built using acquired knowledge between multiple texts guides the readers to develop a deep understanding of the text.

Intertextuality aims at forming a new relationship between a text and a reader. The author employs excerpts from other literary works that the reader can conceive a new meaning out of it. Intertextuality, therefore, disseminates a fresh flavor of interpretation to the original text through the reference made to other classical texts. It has rendered the readers with a degree of free interpretation of the work.

Kristeva's Theory of Intertextuality

The idea of intertextuality dominates the postmodern age of writing. Julia Kristeva (1941) is considered the originator of the theory of intertextuality. She is a Bulgarian-born French philosopher and theorist of language and literature. The most important of Kristeva's early essays is the study of Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, which influenced Kristeva's introduction of the term intertextuality as a concept. Derived from the Latin term *intertexto*, intertextuality implies 'intermingle while weaving.' Officially, Kristeva used the term in two of her essays entitled *Word, Dialogue and Novel* in 1966 and *The Bounded Text* in 1967.

"Intertextuality, in its broadest sense, is a poststructuralist, deconstructionist and postmodernist theory that changed the concept of text, recognizing it as an intertext owing to the interrelations between texts and texts' absorptions of other texts" (Zengin 300).

Intertextuality denotes the inter-relationship and the interdependence of literary texts with the works of the past. Therefore, the reader's self-learned and previously gained knowledge, experience, and cultural formation act as determining intertexts. According to *The Dictionary of Critical Theory*,

intertextuality is essentially a mosaic of references to or quotations from other texts; a text is not a closed system and does not exist in isolation. It is always involved in a dialogue with other texts. It is not simply a matter of influences which pass from one author to another, but of the multiple and complex relations that exist between texts in both synchronic and diachronic terms. 'Influence' is simply one mode of intertextuality. (204)

A text establishes various connections with other literary texts of the past belonging to a diverse subject area. "Any text is the absorption and transformation of another. Intertextuality denotes a transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others" (Cuddon 367). "Transposition" is a Freudian term, here Kristeva "is pointing not merely to the way texts echo each other but to the way that discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another – so that meanings in one kind of discourse are overlaid with meanings from another kind of discourse" (367). It is a type of "new articulation."

Kristeva synthesizes elements from a heterogeneous group of thinkers as Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes to formulate her theory on intertextuality. Like any influential idea, intertextuality has undergone constant changes, and theorists have come up with multiple interpretations of it. Many other theorists such as Umberto Eco, Jacques Derrida, Harold Bloom, Michael Riffaterre and Gérard Genette fabricated it and added new dimensions to the understanding of this theory.

Intertextuality is a literary device inflicted by intertextual figures such as quotations, allusions, calque, translations, references, pastiche and parody. It is further divided into two categories - referential and typological intertextuality. Referential intertextuality refers to the use of fragments in the texts and typological intertextuality signifies the use of pattern and structure in typical texts. "Allusion is a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (Abrams and Harpham 12). It involves direct reference of a character or quoting a line from another text. It can be derived from multiple sources – biblical, historical, mythical and literary.

Intertextuality and the intertextual relations between two or more texts operate at three levels. The levels of intertextuality depend upon various factors – the intention of the writer, the significance of the reference and the prior knowledge and memory of the reader. These are obligatory, optional and accidental. Obligatory intertextuality is a deliberate/intentional effort on the part of the writer. Optional intertextuality is not mandatory and has a lesser impact on the interpretation of the text. The prime objective of using optional intertextuality is to pay respect or to provide due credit to the original writers. Accidental intertextuality occurs when a writer has no deliberate intention of making any intertextual reference and allusion, but it happens when a reader may bring out similarities in two different texts.

Intertextuality in Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

Muriel Spark (1918-1961) is among the leading modern British writers of the twentieth century, remembered for her sheer excellence and originality. Her literary output is remarkable; her early novels received modest success but, with *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, she attained fame and glory at the International platform. There are various literary references, allusions and biblical quotations in the novel. It carries latent meaning, which exemplifies the interpretation of the text.

In the novel, direct allusions are made twice to the lyrical ballad *The Lady of Shalott* by Lord Alfred Tennyson. The lines have been taken from parts III and IV of the poem. Firstly, during Miss Brodie's lecture, where, Sandy recites the lines from Tennyson's poem. She is famous for her vowel sounds that enrapture Miss Brodie.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,

She looked down to Camelot. (PMJB 7)

Secondly, Miss Brodie recites these lines to her class before dismissing them. Sandy listens to Miss Brodie attentively. "She is never bored as she has to lead a double life of her own in order to never be bored" (PMJB 21).

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott. (PMJB 21)

Sandy inquires to herself, "By what means did your Ladyship write these words?" The Lady replies that it was done with a pot of paint which had been left behind by 'some heedless member of the Unemployed.' Sandy expects something better says, "Alas, and in all that rain!" *The Lady of Shalott* illustrates the solitude and isolation of a woman living an imprisoned life in a tower. She is unable to live her life freely because of a curse, as she is

unaware of the effects of it. Sandy too resembles the life of Lady of Shalott, as she also leads a double life under the influence of Miss Brodie. Sandy desires to live independently, but she is constantly being deprived of independence on account of Miss Brodie's callous attitude. The Lady of Shalott is an integral part of Sandy's fantasy life. She imagines Lady of Shalott placing her hands on her and whispering words into her ears. The incorporation of these lines also reflects upon the future life of Sandy, when she converts herself as a nun and joins a strict religious order and remains isolated. Like Lady of Shalott living in 'four grey towers' on a 'silent isle', she too leads a secluded life.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness." (PMJB 12) These are the opening lines of John Keats's ode '*To Autumn*.' Miss Brodie narrates these lines during her lecture. She is a progressive teacher, who is not confined to the curriculum. During her class, she shares her love life with the girls. She tells them about her lover Hugh Carruthers to whom she was engaged. He dies at the young age of twenty-two during the First World War. Ode to *Autumn* is among the last major works written by Keats, soon after which he meets an immature death. By alluding to Keats's Ode, Miss Brodie compares the death of her beloved Hugh who, 'fell like an autumn leaf' at a very tender age to the early death of Keats. The opening lines suggest that Autumn is a season that represents change is inevitable. Change is constant whether it is for good or bad. It is a calm season, but quite thoughtless in the changes it brings. Similarly, the autumn season brings a sea-change in the life of Miss Brodie who loses her loved one and accepts it with calmness. The ode itself laments the death, the change that takes place and the transient nature of life. Meanwhile, the setting of the novel depicts the autumn season.

The novel represents the duality of life through the characters of Miss Brodie and Sandy Stranger. Sandy Stranger, one of the girls of Brodie set, faces duality in life. From an early age, to avoid the dull routines of her life, she engages in imaginary conversations with literary characters such as Lady Shalott, Alan Breck Stewart from Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped*, Mr Rochester from Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*. She is the confidante of Brodie – closest to her and her spy. Sandy loves Miss Brodie but develops hatred towards Brodie's teachings and ideologies. She tries to please her till a certain age but towards the end, betrays her teacher. Stranger, her surname, acts as a clue because, throughout the novel, she remains secretive and mysterious to Miss Brodie. Sandy's internal struggle to subdue the incessant polarity in life through escaping from the unpleasant realities to her pleasing world of imagination is evident in the novel through various events in the story.

For instance, when the school's heating system fails due to which all other students depart for their respective homes, Miss Brodie decides to take her set for a long walk to the old parts of Edinburgh. Sandy accompanies Mary Macgregor. She has been reading Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* for a long time. During the walk, to flee from the current reality, she starts having her imaginary conversation with Alan Breck Stewart. The character of Alan is striking and appealing to her. Alan in Stevenson's novel has a heroic role. He is a 'dashing rogue', young adventurer and a skilled swordsman. He is a loyal Catholic. Alan teaches David about survival and gives him a new perspective on the often scorned Highlanders. He is clever but calmly assesses the situation and accordingly reacts to it. He is the most intriguing character in *Kidnapped* and the one who most contributes to its adventurous nature. From his first appearance to the last, he remains an entertaining and

essential aspect of the book. Similarly, Sandy also plays an integral part in the novel. Somehow, the character of Alan resembles Miss Brodie. Sandy makes a comparison between the fictional hero and her teacher. Alan has a profound influence over David Balfour. Precisely, Miss Brodie also has a life-changing impact on her set. In Sandy's imagination, Alan Breck asks her to take a message on his behalf to which she replies, "I shall never fail you, Alan Breck. Never." (PMJB 29) However, towards the end, she fails and betrays Miss Brodie. Later, Sandy also writes an invitation to Alan Breck and imagines having a moment full of passion and love.

Sandy's other fictional fantasies often point out her own desire to indulge in sexual relations. Sandy done with Alan Breck changes her liking towards the character of Mr Edward Fairfax Rochester, the Byronic hero of Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*. Sandy compares the face of Miss Gaunt to the housekeeper in *Jane Eyre*. (PMJB 58-59) In the novel, Jane is plain-looking in her appearance. She is passionate, determined and holds strong will. She also yearns for freedom and independence. She is ten at the beginning of the novel, and nineteen or twenty at the end of the main narrative. Similarly, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* also reflects the characteristics of Bildungsroman as it covers the story of six ten-year-old girls from their childhood to adolescence stage. Like Jane Eyre, Sandy is also an unattractive girl with her 'small piggy eyes.' Rochester marries Jane irrespective of her looks. Likewise, Teddy Lloyd, the art teacher rejects Rose Stanley 'famous for sex' to have an affair with Sandy, whom he calls "the ugliest little thing I've ever seen in my life." (PMJB 102) As the novel progresses, Sandy leaves the idea of fantasizing about all the heroes of fiction and 'falls in love with the unseen policewoman who questions jenny.' (PMJB 67) Later, when she attains maturity, she stops her imaginary conversations but leads a life of a divided personality.

Another allusion has been taken from James Hogg's poem *Bonnie Kilmeny*. Miss Brodie uses veiled allusions and expressions to discuss sex with her set. She says about her warrior lover "he was a pure man." (PMJB 38) She also describes it to her class 'Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.' She further adds, "Which is to say, she did not go to the glen in order to mix with men." These lines appear twice in the first stanza of the poem. By narrating these lines, she intends to show her beloved Hugh's pureness and fidelity. In the poem, Bonnie Kilmeny is portrayed as a fair maiden and a 'virgin in her prime.' She is a sinless virgin, free of stain in mind and body. Similarly, Miss Brodie tries to show herself pure in mind and body. It is her earnest desire to remain virtuous and other-worldly like Kilmeny. Though, her secret relationship with Mr Gordon Lowther, the music teacher is known to everyone.

Like the lines from Keats, which are constant reminders of death and the transient nature of life and time. Miss Brodie again recites the lines from Robert Burns's song 'My Nanie's Awa' before her class as:

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay (PMJB 47)

This unfolds the unfulfilled love of Miss Brodie with her lost love, Hugh Carruthers and her unconsummated love with Mr Teddy Lloyd. The character portrayal of Hugh represents the character of Burns, as both displays, the same likings and background and even attain an untimely death.

In the novel, Spark uses Biblical quotations and references from the King James Bible to present a contrast between the thoughts and actions of the characters. “O where Shall I find a virtuous woman, for her price is above rubies.” (PMJB 6) This is Proverb 31:10 from King Lemuel’s Lesson of Chastity. It enlists the requirements for a woman to have true virtues. Being a teacher, Miss Brodie is expected to impart value-based education to her pupils. She occasionally follows lessons from the Bible but most of the time, she manipulates her set to take control over their lives. This makes her far away from being regarded as a virtuous woman.

Apart from literary allusions and references, the novelist also refers to traditional folk songs and ballads in the novel. It is represented through the character of Mr Lowther, a music teacher, who sings as:

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
 Why the de’il dinna ye march *forward* in order?
 March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
 All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border. (PMJB 87)

These are the lines of poetry by Sir Walter Scott. The McCalmans, a folk song trio from Scotland also used this poem to display their fascination with the folk tradition of Scotland. The song is a part of their music album titled *Scots Abroad* released in 2006.

Similarly, Mr Lowther sings a song that he dedicates to Miss Brodie at the supper:

O mother, mother, make my bed,
 O make it soft and narrow,
 For my true love died for me today.

I’ll die for him tomorrow. (PMJB 88)

The lines have been taken from a traditional Scottish ballad ‘*Barbara Allen*.’ It shows how a beautiful maid named Barbara Allen denies the love of a dying man and later on she dies of grief. The song of Mr Lowther also indicates that he loves Miss Brodie unconditionally but she rejects his love for someone else. The novel also has quotations from Psalms and hymns like ‘*All people that on earth do dwell*’, of William Kethe, a Scottish Psalter.

The novel is full of allusions and direct references to renowned figures from the field of science, literature, art and historical events. It represents both types of intertextualities, viz. obligatory and optional. The story refers to political figures like Benito Mussolini, Stanley Baldwin, Adolf Hitler and famous painters like Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto and Vincent van Gogh. Spark, being a Scott, deliberately mentions Scottish writers and historians such as James Hogg, Robert Burns, R. L. Stevenson, David Hume, James Boswell, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle. The novel also refers to historical events like the Battle of Flodden, the Spanish Civil War, the Scottish Nationalist Movement and World War I.

Concluding Remarks

Intertextuality promotes the idea that creating and analyzing a text is not an activity to be carried out in isolation but can be a shared activity. In the light of this statement, the present study finds out that Muriel Spark’s *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* successfully establishes a new form of communication between the reader and the text. It helps the readers to interpret the text with great liberty. It facilitates the readers to interpret the original text and texts of all kinds as referred to within the original text. It is a creative element that

brings a new dimension to existing work. The novel represents elements of intertextuality in true spirit. Spark incorporates multiple intertextual elements from other classical texts to enhance the reading experience of the readers. It enables them to comprehend the multi-layered meanings embedded in the main plot.

Thus, the present research concludes that intertextuality is an author's borrowing from another piece of work to enhance the reading experience and analysis for the reader by transforming and adding the essence of the borrowed work. Spark's artistic and skillful application of the technique of intertextuality in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* enhances the meaning of the text and challenges the readers to look out for the multiple interpretations of the text.

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प्रबंध-संपादक

श्री सुधीर कुमार तिवारी

Reflection of Artistic Thoughts and Moral Vision in Iris Murdoch's *Under The Net*: A Critical Discourse

Dr. Naveen K. Mehta*

Muskan Solanki **

Abstract:- Jean Iris Murdoch is an eminent female novelist and thinker of twentieth-century British Literature. Through her first published novel entitled *Under The Net* (1954), Murdoch attempts to serve a solipsistic flavor to readers via picaresque adventure. The novel focuses primarily on the egotistic and self-centered nature of humans. Being a philosopher, she tries to free people trapped in their own troubles and tussles of life. She advocates that moral values, goodness and virtues are of prime importance in life. The present paper aims at exploring the reflection of artistic thoughts and moral vision in the novel *Under The Net* by Iris Murdoch. Besides, the paper also tries to highlight the novelist's vision through examining various themes and narrative techniques in the novel.

Keywords: solipsism, moral vision, artistic thoughts, goodness, virtues.

Introduction :- Jean Iris Murdoch is a well-known twentieth-century novelist and philosopher of Britain. Her writings fall in the era of the post-war period i.e. the era post World War II. The period implies the Postmodernist period in British Literature. Postmodernism refers to the cultural and literary phenomenon that emerged after modernism in the field of architecture, music, literature and criticism. It is somehow a rejection of the modernist ways of thinking and the 'post' in postmodernism suggests a 'next phase' after modernism. Early postmodernism emerged around the late 1950s and early 1960s in America, but a full-fledged movement appeared in the 1980s dominantly by French thinkers, philosophers and sociologists.

The basic structure of postmodernism was established by two noteworthy figures, namely, James Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard, whose seminal works *The Postmodern Condition* and *Simulations* respectively provided a theoretical framework. Besides, other writers such as Frederick Jameson, Ihab Hassan, Linda Hutcheon, Michel Foucault, Terry Eagleton and Martin Heidegger also contributed to postmodern thought.

Postmodernism has had deeply affected literature and literary theory. It incorporates the use of writing techniques such as metafiction, intertextuality, pastiche, magic realism, fragmentation, hyperreality and so on. The renowned postmodernist writers are Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch, John Fowles, William Golding, Martin Amis, Doris Lessing, Angela Carter, Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon and the like. Iris Murdoch is the most influential writer globally, who contributed new insight and vision in the realm of philosophy and metaphysics. She set out her own thoughts and radically different views, challenging the chaos and upheavals of that time Britain. The present research paper strives to explore and discuss Murdoch's artistic thoughts and views on morality and goodness reflected in her novel *Under The Net*, by taking into consideration the dominant themes, narrative technique and style of the novel.

*Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, School of Language, Literature and Arts, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Academic Campus, Sanchi, Raisen, MP.

**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, School of Language, Literature and Arts, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Academic Campus, Sanchi, Raisen, MP.

Iris Murdoch as a Novelist :- Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) is one of the most acclaimed and influential writers of the twentieth century. She started writing at a very young age. She is reckoned as a post-war novelist of Britain. Her literary output is quite significant and of great importance to literature. Her first published novel *Under The Net* appeared in 1954 and since then as per Richard Todd remarks, “she has emerged not only as one of the most productive and influential British novelists of her generation but, equally important, as a powerfully intellectual and original theorist of fiction (13).” She is a realist writer of fiction and has clear views and expertise over her form of writing. She is highly inspired by the writings of Shakespeare, who she has described as the ‘patron saint’ of novelists.

Her novels are deeply psychological as well as depicts the philosophy of her mind. Following the war, she studied and embraced the philosophy of Sartre and his existentialism. Though she drifted her interest from that and later, derived her inspiration from the philosophers and novelists such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Simone Weil and Raymond Queneau. Her writing career is divided into a number of phases and stages as per her writing style from post-war existentialist fiction to her own philosophy as a novelist.

She writes with great depth and variety and produced nearly twenty-six novels including *The Bell* (1958), *The Severed Head* (1961), *The Black Prince* (1973), *The Sea, The Sea* (1978) and so on. She tried her hands in almost every genre and form of writing ranging from writing novels to plays, collection of poetry, short stories and essays and criticism on philosophy. She is considered as Britain’s leading moral philosopher as Todd remarks, “which resulted from a habit of reading and thought displaying a carefully cultivated, historically aware, and genuinely international literary sensibility (14).”

A Critical Analysis of the Plot :- Murdoch’s first work – *Under The Net* (1954) is a novel of ideas and thoughts, reflecting a world of confused and self-centered characters having a solipsistic view of life. Murdoch suggests that there is more to life than just being selfish and egotist. The novel is rich in its topographic description and landscape. It provides beautiful imagery to its readers. The novel revolves around the adventures of James Donahue (Jake), a male protagonist and the narrator of the story. Cheryl K. Bove describes Jake as a “failed artist and picaresque hero (36).” The novel is hailed as one of Murdoch’s best works by critics. The characters in the novel are in the endless struggle to organize and shape their life. Jake, a man in his thirties is a talented but lazy man, who does little work and struggles to survive by translating works of a French author. After experiencing a series of bizarre events, towards the end, he finally realizes and resolves his inner conflicts, decides to settle down and get a job. He finally believes that he is smart and capable as others have also pointed out. He shifts his fragmentary life to an ordered and structured life. “Murdoch expresses the spiritual sublimation and self-evolution brought about by the dynamic and spiritual power that people should have (Liu, 1985).” Murdoch’s moral vision is depicted through the character of Jake, becoming a virtuous man and leaving his vices. The other characters such as Finn, Hugo, Anna, Sadie, Madge and so on appear as a consequence and in relation to the actions taken up by Jake. All the characters are somehow connected with Jake and his past life. Hugo Belfounder and Dev Gellman represent the philosophical range of characters. The novel is rich in its subject matter dealing with moral goodness and artistic thoughts.

Thematic Concerns :- The theme of Unrequited Love is quite dominant in the novel. It shows one-sided and often unreciprocated love affairs between characters. Inspired by Shakespearian drama such as *As You Like It*, the novel weaves an interesting chain of love among characters. Love, at times, acts as a motivational force for the characters and sometimes, withdraws the character from achieving their desired goal. Jake, who likes to live an individualistic life and clear of relationships, falls in love with a former lover again, Miss Anna Quentin. Anna, who was

infatuated with Jake, instead falls in love with Hugo. Hugo, being a contemplative character, impresses Anna through his intellectual talks. Hugo, on the other hand, finds Anna's sister, Sadie Quentin more intelligent, bold and becomes obsessed with her. Sadie, being left aloof, searches for safety and protection in Jake.

The theme of silence is very effectively assimilated and implemented in the novel. The word silence is used exhaustively in the novel but implying a different meaning altogether at different utterances. The emotion of silence or the 'Shanta rasa' implies a state of peace and tranquility of internal self, where the individual can unite with the divine and self. The silence has various forms as per the situation's demands. In the novel, Jake publishes a single book entitled *The Silencer*, based on his friend, Hugo's thoughts and ideology. Hugo suggests in the novel that the language is incapable of expressing the deepest and significant views. Hugo remarks, "the language just won't let you present it as it really was." (UTN, 70) He further adds, "the whole language is a machine for making falsehoods." (UTN, 71) Here, Hugo reflects the philosophy of Wittgenstein, from whom Murdoch was greatly influenced. The use of Mime Theater in the novel is also a sign of silence, as in mime the actors do not speak rather use facial cues and expressions to transmit their thoughts and similarly audience is also not allowed to applause. Jake's companion, Finn is pictured as a shy and silent character, humble and self-effacing, who barely speaks and takes second place. The character of Mister Mars is quite unique, being a canine, he too rarely barks and chooses to stay silent. Jake, who is a translator and wishes to write his own original work, is unable to communicate his ideas.

Murdoch incorporates the use of the first-person narrative in the novel, who is a rogue named Jake. Murdoch uses a male voice and perspective as the character of Jake is quite unpredictable and spontaneous. It also helps the readers to dive deep into the psyche of Jake, his thoughts and his perception of the world. The Setting always plays a highlighting role in the novels of Iris Murdoch. Murdoch always stresses on describing the surrounding places and country in the novel. The reader is offered with each and every minuscule detail from where the character belongs or is situated; whether the place is London or Paris. In the novel, Murdoch mentions the names of streets as well so that the reader can get familiar with the places. The names of rivers, pubs, coffee houses, neighborhoods and so on are mentioned.

Concluding Remarks :- Murdoch presents her novel *Under The Net* in a form of a great quest and pursuit. The events in the novel are set with utmost sincerity by the novelist. Every action taken by the character leads him/her to a consequence following other events in their lives. It is a chain of reactions and consequences, set in a thoughtful chronology of events by Murdoch. From the beginning, the protagonist Jake along with his friend Finn is in search of a place to live. Their quest for home leads them to find a home, Jake encountering her first love Anna and later the plot diverts to the story of an old book and lost transcript. Later, Jake decides to confront his old friend, Hugo. The writing style of Murdoch is quite engaging as the reader is tossed between the suspense and unanswered questions till the culmination point of the novel. The writing style of Murdoch, thus, is quite realistic as it is the philosophy of life that a person surely pays for his actions and faces the repercussions accordingly. The happenings in Jake's life are the consequences of his own actions. Murdoch aptly plots a chain of love affairs among the characters. Reflecting on the notion that the characters are so engrossed in their own thoughts and views that they negate and fail to accept their own true feelings. Here, the self-centered notion of characters is being criticized, as they fail to understand the self, which Murdoch regards as the prime goodness in the human being.

The silence is very intriguing in the novel and makes readers curious at times. Jake as the narrator only provides the narration but is unable to communicate his true ideas. He publishes a book but remains skeptical as the ideas in the book were not originally his and rather copied from

Hugo. He thinks of publishing his work but it is only towards the end when he is finally being challenged by an event, where the original author receives an award and as a result, Jake decides to break the silence and pen down his thoughts. Hugo makes a remark in the novel, “For most of us, for almost all of us, truth can be attained, if at all, only in silence.”

Therefore, Murdoch’s novel reflects on artistic ideas and thoughts concerning philosophy, propagating moral values and providing a moral vision to enlighten the self and soul of the readers. She is a realist and offers her readers a true sense of human life. In Murdoch’s writing, “the theme of goodness often appears. Only through fighting the confusion and self-evolution, can we reach the “good” situation. Her works are extremely philosophical and strive to propose a rescue strategy for social morality and social contradictions (Chen, J. and Gao, J.,39-43).”

Murdoch is deeply influenced by the Picture Theory of Language (Gale Group, 1983) proposed by Wittgenstein. The novel is also full of symbolism and even the ‘net’ in the title is symbolic of the web created by words and language, that may entangle an individual without asserting the power to decipher and read the implicit meanings that language imparts. She questions her readers to think how to use language to describe the complexities of the world and reach the constructive truth. “Under the Net is Murdoch’s first novel, but it contains profound artistic thoughts and moral philosophical meaning (Yin, 1999).”

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad-431004

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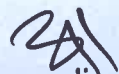
Muriel Spark's 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie: A discussion'


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