THE NOVELS OF HILARY MANTEL:
A THEMATIC STUDY

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Abstract of the Study

Hilary Mantel (b. 1952-) is considered representative of the post-World War II British fiction writers. Her ten novels (including Man Booker Prize winner (2009), *Wolf Hall*) range from the darkly imaginative thriller to historical novels. She is post-modern British novelist. Though her novels reflect the comic element, she is by nature a serious novelist stating the moral vision. All her novels depict her view of life – to some extent optimistic and mostly pessimistic. Her life provides subject matter and themes for her works. But this reflection does not make her works purely autobiographical. Some real experiences also provide themes for her works. Her interest in history and historical events and characters enables great works like *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992) and *Wolf Hall* (2009). All the novels reflect varied themes.

Born in Glossop on July 6, 1952, the oldest of three children of Irish Catholic immigrant parents. She was sent to a convent school in 1970 at Cheshire. She was brought up in a unconventional family. The sudden replacement of her father by one Jack without official marriage and divorce made her feel it an end of her childhood. After graduating, she studied Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science and received her law degree from the University of Sheffield in 1973. After university education she worked briefly as a social worker in a geriatric hospital. Here she developed interest in writing. This experiences while working in the hospital made her scenes in *Every Day Is Mother’s Day & Vacant Possession* live.

Mantel went to Botswana in 1977 and stayed there up to 1982. In 1982, they moved to Saudi Arabia and stayed there up to 1986. Both of these settings provided material for Mantel’s later novels. She returned to the UK in 1986, after one year of publication of her first novel, *Every Day Is Mother’s Day* (1985). She worked as film critic for the *Spectator* in the late 1980s and wrote several short stories and reviews to periodicals like *London Magazine, London Review of Books* and *Literary Review*.


These novels, though, won several prizes and awards; Mantel has not been included among the prominent contemporary women writers. Mantel has written ten novels with a variety of themes as marital and family life, ghosts, impact of social and political policies, alienation and repression of women, inequalities of class, race and gender; historical novels based on the French Revolution; religion and redemption. She shows a unique sensibility combining compassion and black humour.

The thrust of this study was the thematic study of Hilary Mantel’s novels as it has been mentioned by many reviewers and critics that there is great variety with regard to themes in the writings of Hilary Mantel and it is quite difficult pigeonholing her in one of the traditions of British literature. Moreover, she displays her varied interests through her writings. Thus there is only one thing that can relate all her works that is her handling of various themes. She presents the multiple themes without restricting herself in one of the genre of the novel. She has tried her hand from domestic novel to the historical novels.

*The present study is focused on the following points:*
I) Hilary Mantel’s life and works and thematic in general.

II) The themes mostly occur: childhood, family and family life, isolation, mystery, religion and culture contributing the basic theme of ‘transformation’

III) Major themes restricted to some novels.

IV) Sub-themes in the novels.

V) The reflection of all the themes culminating to the basic theme of transformation through characterization mostly.

VI) Multi-thematization in the novels.

The first chapter, ‘Introduction’ being an introductory has two sections: the first section presents a brief biographical sketch of Hilary Mantel. The section contains her life in which her childhood and her illness playing vital role in adopting the career as a writer; her literary output. The second section discusses the thematic approach on the basis of the various definitions of theme and themes in the novels of Mantel; and the literary and philosophical influences on her writing. The section discusses the theoretical aspects of the multiple themes.

The Second chapter, ‘Thematic Interpretation of Mantel’s Novels of Early Phase(I)’ deals with the thematic analysis of the first four novels broadly divided on the basis of the early writing representing the early phase of her writing. The four novels in question are: Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985); Vacant Possession (1986); Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988); Fludd (1989). Through these novels she tries to explore the themes like childhood, family relations, mystery, alchemy, social identity, revenge, culture and transformation.

The third chapter, ‘The Middle Phase (II)’ consists of the analysis of Mantel’s middle phase of her writing which covers the novels written a decade 1990 to 2000. These novels also show the multi-thematic handling of the writer. This phase also has four of her novels covering a decade. They are: A Place of Greater Safety (1992); A Change of Climate (1994); An Experiment in Love (1995); The Giant O’Brien (1998). These novels also reflect the themes like childhood, family and family relations, conspiracy, violence, sex and morality, apartheid, ambition, poverty, greed, sacrifice, myth criticism of social and political system and transformation.

The fourth chapter, ‘The Latest Phase (III)’ covers the thematic analysis of the novels of her latest phase that means within the first decade of the 21st century. This phase has two novels. They are: Beyond Black (2005); The Wolf Hall (2009). Mantel deals with childhood, family and family relations, conspiracy, supernaturalism, religion, culture, sex, conspiracy, criticism of social and political systems, marriage and transformation. Her recently published novel, Bring up the Bodies (2012) has been not included in this study but the synopsis of it is given.

The fifth chapter, ‘Conclusions’ covers Mantel’s comparison with her contemporary and some women writers with regard to their thematic handling. It takes a stock of the analysis done in previous chapters to evaluate her contribution to English novel as a contemporary novelist and her skill in handling multiple themes contributing to the theme of transformation in all her novels.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I 1.1 Introduction

Hilary Mantel was born in Glossop, Derbyshire on 6th July 1952 to Irish Catholic immigrant parents. She is one of the contemporary British novelists who has written ten novels and two works of non-fiction and has contributed many literary magazines with her critical essays. Her literary career starts with the publication of Every Day is Mother’s Day in 1985 and till 2009 she has produced ten novels with variety of themes at regular intervals. She has written 10 novels; one Memoir; and a collection of short stories. Her novels include Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985); Vacant Possession (1986); Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988); Fludd (1989); A Place of Greater Safety (1992); A Change of Climate (1994); An Experiment in Love (1995); The Giant O’Brien (1998); Beyond Black (2005); and the Man Booker Prize winner, Wolf Hall (2009). Her autobiographical work, Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir was published in 2003. In the same year, she published a collection of short stories, Learning to Talk: Short Stories.

She has dealt with a variety of themes through her novels that makes difficult to defining or pigeonholing her. Her fiction has not been paid much attention to till she received the prestigious Man-Booker Prize in October 2009 for her latest novel, Wolf Hall (2009) which is based on the life of Thomas Cromwell.

These novels, though, won several prizes and awards; Mantel has not been included among the prominent contemporary women writers. Mantel’s handling of multiplicity of themes and the study of it poses a real challenge. The thematic study of all her novels might help us to understand Mantel’s handling of themes in the form of the prominent and subsidiary themes to interprete Mantel as a contemporary woman novelist and her place among the contemporary novelists.

I 1.2 Hilary Mantel: Biographical details

Hilary Mantel’s biographical details include Mantel’s life; her literary output; and the honours and awards she received for her works.

I 1.2.1: Mantel’s Life

Hilary Mantel (b. 1952-) was born in Glossop on July 6, 1952, the oldest of three children of Irish Catholic immigrant parents. Mantel’s life can be given thought to in terms of her childhood, her early marriage, her illness, her stay in Africa and Saudi Arabia, her adoption of writing career and her journey up to the Booker Prize Winner writer.

Her childhood is spent within three households: 56 and 58 Bankbottom and 20 Brosscroft. At her age six or seven, her father, Henry was replaced by one Jack without official marriage or divorce. They moved to another house where Hilary spent seven years (1963-70) but with a rage in her mind for her stepfather. She was sent to a convent school in 1970 at Cheshire. She felt it an end of her childhood. Hereafter she had no contact with her father, Henry. But she received information about him through a letter she received on September 16, 2003, by her stepsister, Christine. She learnt that Henry was in army, visited...
Africa and India even, sincere in his work, died of cancer in 1997. Through Christine, she also learnt about his watching her on TV in 1990 at Booker Prize dinner. Henry had no parentage of any children of his stepfamily which he joined in 1971, living near Manchester.

While living with Jack, Hilary’s mother gave birth to two sons. Hilary remembers one brother, Ian but doesn’t remember christening other brother. From the convent school when the school wanted Hilary to be transferred to one Manchester school, her mother protested and kept Hilary in the same school. Due to her illness the doctor used to call her ‘Miss Neverwell’ and in school she was exempted from PE and sports. She states, “My convent years left me a legacy: a nervous politeness, an appearance of feminine timidity.”( Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir, 2004 : 138)

After graduating, she studied Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science and received her law degree from the University of Sheffield in 1973. While studying Law at London School of Economics she fell in love with Gerald McEwan. She wanted to be a barrister but due to lack of funds and her love affair with Gerald McEwan made her move to Sheffield University. Here they had to marry at her 20 because no one would give on rent a flat to unmarried couples. In her twenties, she started suffering by a painful and misdiagnosed illness. She used to have shooting pains in her legs and abdomen. The doctors diagnosed it as a psychosomatic problem. When visited psychiatrist he gave strong drugs which worsened her physical condition. Due to misdiagnosis, she was treated with some anti-psychotic drugs that resulted into further complications to make her incapable of giving birth to a child at 27 of her age. At this stage, she used to go to library and collect the details within 1789-94 of the French Revolution which she used while writing A Place of Greater Safety in Botswana.

After university education she worked briefly as a social worker in a geriatric hospital. Here she developed interest in writing. This experience made her scenes in Every Day Is Mother’s Day & Vacant Possession live.

Mantel married twice to the same man in her life. She accompanied her husband to Botswana, Africa in 1977 and stayed there up to 1982. Here she again had the unbearable pain that dragged her to a library. Here she went through the medical books to understand the symptoms. She found Endometriosis as an illness, matching her symptoms. In 1979, she underwent a hysterectomy, a type of castration.

In 1982, they moved to Saudi Arabia and stayed there up to 1986. Both of these settings provided material for her later novels. She returned to the UK in 1986, after one year of publication of her first novel, Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985). She had a question in her mind – ‘Who was I at all?’ In course of time she became plump due to the prescriptions of hormones. Thus writing became a necessity or urge as Mantel states:

I am not writing to solicit any special sympathy…. I am writing in order to take charge of my childhood and my childlessness; and in order to locate myself, not within a body, then in the narrow space between one letter and the next, between the lines where the ghosts of meaning are. (GUG:222)

To get rid of the distress and to involve herself, Mantel adopted career as a creative writer. She writes, ‘Sometimes I feel that each morning it is necessary to write myself into being.’ (GUG: 222)
As Mantel’s illness made her adopt the career as the creative writer, she doesn’t call herself a ‘natural storyteller.’ The preparation for A Place of Greater Safety was in vogue from her university days. Her jottings of references of the French Revolution enabled her to start with this historical novel. In Botswana she completed the novel sent it to the publisher but was rejected and partially lost. But without losing her courage, she attempted her first novel, Every Day is Mother’s Day which was published in 1985 and was followed by its sequel, Vacant Possession in 1986. Though her literary career officially starts in 1985, it was started really earlier in late 80s.

In 2009 she received the Man Booker Prize for her historical fiction, Wolf Hall. Earlier, she was shortlisted for Booker, but could not get it. After having got this prize, Mantel became known to the world. There are only reviews by critics or the readers and no comprehensive book length study done of her novels. From 2009 there are comprehensive interviews on Wolf Hall and her other books. Through these interviews Mantel’s literary, social and individual views are revealed to make interpretation of her works easier.

She worked as film critic for the Spectator from 1987 to 1990 and during this period she also has contributed writing columns, several short stories and critical reviews to periodicals like London Magazine, London Review of Books and Literary Review. She has worked as a Member of Public Lending Right Advisory Committee between 1997 and 2003. From 2006 onwards she has worked as visiting Professor at Sheffield Hallam University. She also works as the Patron of Endometnosis SHE test.

I 1.2.2: Hilary Mantel: Literary Output

Hilary Mantel (b. 1952-) is one of the living British contemporary women novelists. She is post-War II novelist, but has not commented on the warfare, though in her novels we find some references reflecting the British social system or some contemporary events. She has many ups and downs in her personal life that reflects in her literary career as well. Mantel’s literary career comprises of the 10 novels; one Memoir; and a collection of short stories; film reviews, reviews of other literary works by her contemporary writers. The novels are: Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985); Vacant Possession (1986); Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988); Fludd (1989); A Place of Greater Safety (1992); A Change of Climate (1994); An Experiment in Love (1995); The Giant O’Brien (1998); Beyond Black (2005); and the Man Booker Prize winner, Wolf Hall (2009).

Her contribution in non-fiction is her autobiographical work, Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir was published in 2003. In the same year, she published a collection of short stories, Learning to Talk: Short Stories and her regular contribution to London Book of Review and others.

Her literary career starts with the publication of Every Day is Mother’s Day in 1985 and till 2009 she has produced ten novels with variety of themes at regular intervals. She has dealt with a variety of themes through her novels that makes difficult to defining or pigeonholing her. Her fiction has not been paid much attention to till she received the prestigious Man-Booker Prize in October 2009 for her latest novel, Wolf Hall (2009). The novel is based on the life of Thomas Cromwell.

Mantel’s first novel, Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985) (EDMD hereafter) depicts the abnormal relationship between Muriel Axon, a mentally retarded girl and Evelyn Axon, her
mother. Muriel’s pregnancy with unidentified parentage of the child created a great problem. Moreover, Muriel is mentally retarded that adds to the trouble of her mother. Their story is supported by the love affair between Colin Sidney and Isabel Field, the social worker helping Muriel to learn something to live in the society.

Vacant Possession (1986) (VP hereafter) is a sequel to Every Day Is Mother’s Day. It picks up the story ten years later. After the death of Evelyn at the end of Every Day Is Mother’s Day, Muriel is institutionalized. In Vacant Possession, Muriel emerges and reappears in the lives of the characters from Every Day Is Mother’s Day. She takes revenge on the characters inflicted wounds on to her. Mantel artistically brings out very minute details & the relationship between every event, character etc. of the two novels.

Mantel’s next novel Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988) (EMGS hereafter) is a political novel based on her experience of living in Saudi Arabia. Frances Shore, a cartographer joins Andrews, her engineer husband at Jeddah. She gets bored and starts peering into the closed and vacant flats upstairs. In course of time, she realizes the acts of human right abuse and extreme restrictions in the lives of Saudi women. Here she reflects the alienation and repression of Western women in particular in a fundamental society like Saudi.

Mantel in her novel, Fludd (1989) presents the transformation on religious background. It is set in a village, Fetherhoughton in the North of England in 1956. Father Angwin has lost faith in religion. Bishop informs him that a curate is about to appear to work out Bishop’s modernization plans. Fludd (the central character named after the 17th Century alchemist Robert Fludd) appears one evening. They take him as the curate. Fludd starts transforming them. He creates confusion among nuns; seducing sister Philomena; compelling Father Angwin self-assessment. Fludd remains unmoved during this transformation process.

Mantel’s novel, A Place of Greater Safety (1992) (PGS hereafter) is a historical novel based on the French Revolution and moves round the central characters – Danton, Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins, the revolutionary leaders. It presents the early lives, their days in early Revolution and their eventual deaths on the guillotine. Though she published this novel in 1992, it would have been her first novel as she has written MS of this novel in her earlier days of writing.

A Change of Climate (1994) (CC hereafter) is a novel based on Mantel’s stay in Botswana where she lived for five years. The story revolves around a couple – Ralph Eldred and Anna Eldred. The narrative oscillates between 1960s in South Africa and 1980s East Anglia. The South African Government interrogates the couple accusing activists against apartheid. They are sent Bechuanaland (now Botswana) where happens an incident that creates a great impact on their further life as missionaries. This tragic incident has not been mentioned anywhere. They want to forget it but as luck would have it, the Eldreds face evils but never get away from their principles.

Mantel’s An experiment in Love (1995) (EIL hereafter) is a novel depicting the rivalry between two poor Catholic girls, Carmel and Karina, They compete as school girls and later as students at London University for moral and academic mind who sees a photograph of Julianne Lipcott with her star patient in a newspaper. The novel depicts the complicated, interdependent bonds among them. All the very different characters come together incidentally. The experiment is finally proves a failure and to a shocking conclusion.

Mantel in her eighth novel, The Giant O’Brien (1998) (GO hereafter) returns to the historical novel and depicts the story of Charles O’Brien, who leaves his home in Ireland to
make his fortune as a sideshow attraction in London. The setting is Ireland and London in 1780s. Here Joe Vance exhibits the giant to earn money along with his band including Claffey, Pybus and others. At first the people crowd to see giant but afterwards the popularity declines. In course of time they meet the most ambitious John Hunter, the anatomist. He wants to include the skeleton of giant to his specimen collection. At the end of the novel, we find deteriorating condition of giant and John Hunter adding giant to his specimen.

Mantel in *Beyond Black* (2005) (BB hereafter) presents the protagonist, Alison Hart, as a medium. Alison holds psychic meetings in which she calls forth happy spirits who want to communicate with their ‘earthside’ survivors. She does it on the basis of the logic and the psychology of the clients or the spectators because of similarity in human grief. Alison uses some spirit guide like, Morris, a ghost who more or less lives with her. He plays some mischief with others during psychic meetings of Alison. Morris is called ‘airside’ and Collete manages the shows. The novel has many contemporary references like Princess Diana’s death etc.

Mantel published her latest novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009) (WH hereafter) and achieved the most prestigious Man Booker Prize for it. The novel is based on the transformation of Cromwell from a son of blacksmith to the omnipotent ruler. It is a historical novel after *A Place of Greater Safety* set on the background of the French Revolution.

Besides these novels, Mantel has written *Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir* in 2003 which is an autobiography; and a short story collection *Learning to Talk: Short Stories* in 2003. According to her the memoir becomes the base of the novels thereafter giving a first hand knowledge about her family, her education, her marriage, her illness and her afterlife. It has five parts: ‘A Second Home’, ‘Now Geoffrey Don’t Torment Her’, ‘The Secret Garden’, ‘Smile’, and ‘Show Your Workings’ followed by ‘Afterlife’ covering her life story from her childhood upto her moving in to her Disneyland Villa in 2000.

**I 1.2.3: The Honours and Awards Mantel Received**

Hilary Mantel with her diversified themes in her ten novels including her recently published novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009) has received many prestigious awards. In her literary career, she had won various prizes like:

- Shiva Naipul Memorial Prize (1987) for an article about Jeddah.
- The Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize; the Cheltenham Prize; and the Southern Arts Literature Prize for her novel *Fludd* (1989).
- Fellow of Royal Society of Literature 1990; Vice President 2010.
- Sunday Express Book of the Year Award for *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992).
- Hawthornden Prize for *An Experiment in Love* (1996).
- Mind Book of the Year Prize 2004.
- Hon. DLitt, University of Sheffield 2005.
- Yorkshire Post Fiction Prize 2006.
Her novel *Beyond Black* (2005) has been shortlisted for a 2006 Commonwealth Writers Prize and for the 2006 Orange Prize for Fiction.

Received Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2006 Birthday Honours.


Received the most prestigious Man Booker Prize (2009) and Sir Walter Scott prize (2009) for *Wolf Hall* (2009).

Hon. Doctorate University of Sheffield Hallam University, 2009.

Hon. Doctorate University of Derby, 2010.

National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award 2010.

UK Author of the Year Galaxy National Book Award 2010.


She is the third woman novelist to receive Hawthornden Prize in the history of English literature of 90 years.

I 1.3 Review of Literature

Though there is scarcely any comprehensive study of the works by Hilary Mantel, there are some articles, reviews in some magazines, journals, periodicals in a scattered manner. For instance, her biographical details are found in *Contemporary Authors*, Vol. 125 (310-1). The articles on her works are brought together in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol.144 (208-244). We also come across some individual entries as contemporary writer by Rennison (2005, 2009) and others.

As Mantel’s literary career starts from 1985 with the publication of her first novel, *Every Day is Mother’s Day*, the criticism starts from the very year in the form of reviews. Mostly these reviews are of the individual works. Some critics dealt with her works in general and some compared with the works of other novelists.

To mention a few: The ironic juxtaposition of suburban housing estates, obnoxious children, etc. and the hideous and murderous conclusion of *Every Day is mother’s Day* (1985) has been emphasized in “Roasting Them” (Hawtree, 1985). *Every Day is mother’s Day* (1985) has been called gloomier and the world in it claustrophobic while comparing with Patricia Angadi’s *The Governess* in “Unhappy Families” (Waugh, 1985). In “You Bet Your Life” (Walters, 1988) Mantel’s narrative technique and the skillful use of thriller technique used in *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* has been praised. *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* has been reviewed as an elegant and disturbing account of the changes due to alienation in “Bosphorescence” (Barnes, 1988). The controlled atmosphere of *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* by Hilary Mantel has been focused in “The Mysterious Affair at Jeddah” (Brookner, 1988). The contrast between the intelligence of heroine and the world of Islam in *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* has been stated while calling it robust and an enviable failure but praising the strong sense of infinitely alien subject in “Baffling Boxed-In” (Mars-Jones, 1988). *Fludd* by Mantel has been reviewed both funny and moving in the review “Ecclesiastical Auras” (Duguid, 1989). While comparing Mantel’s *Fludd* with Elaine
Feinstein’s *All You Need*, *Fludd* has been called a quaint and lovely novel in “More than Just Making Do” (Gerrard,1989).

“Falling for Desmoulins” (Furbank,1992) analyses *A Place of Greater Safety* as historical novel that takes the figures to the central focus and aspires to reinterpret them. In “Justice and Terror” (Coward, 1992) Mantel’s portrayal of women and inventive narrative style has been stated as her real strengths. “Three Precocious Pals” (Saynor, 1992) points out the slow spread of corruption and opportunism leaving the other two in the past tense by Robespierre. “Citizen’s Band” (Morton, 1992) praises Mantel’s ability to put the lives of these three great revolutionaries of the French Revolution in an accomplished outline which is near-impossible. “The French Revolution as Fiction” (Spivey, 1992) places *A Place of Greater Safety* within the context of other based on the French Revolution – Simon Schama’s *Citizens*; Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of two Cities*; and Anthony Trollope’s early novel, *La Vendee*. A review, S “Two Doors; Which One Will You Open?” (Kellaway, 1994) provides an overview of Mantel’s life and works and speaks of the two doors in her story: one opens on calamity and other on hope. The insight and wit of Mantel’s *A Change of Climate* has been appreciated in “Fossils and Fundamentalists” (Kemp, 1994). An article, “Very Cold Norfolk, Very Hot Africa” (Brookner, 1994) delineates the major themes of *A Change of Climate*: good and evil. “A Form of Showing Off” (Vaux, 1994) offers a stylistic and thematic overview of *A Change of Climate* and is called it ‘a morality tale without a moral’. In “Bothered by God” (Cooke, 1995) compares *An Experiment in Love* with Muriel Spark’s parables for satiric elements and David Lodge’s study of Catholic dilemma in *How Far Can You Go*. “Not Nice Girls” (O’Faolain, 1995) speaks about the similarities between *An Experiment in Love* and Muriel Spark’s *A Girl of Slender Means*. “We Have Stood Apart Studiously” (Brookner, 1995) explores Mantel’s portrayal of women in *An Experiment in Love*. “The Little Woman Inside” (Birch, 1995) treats Mantel as the representative of post World War II British generation of authors. Mantel’s novels are compared with that of Graham Greene while reviewing *An Experiment in Love* in “All About Evil” (Annan, 1996) and is stated that both of them understand the original sin and are interested in redemption. “Culture Shocks” (Prose, 1997) praises the narrative strategies of Mantel in *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* and *A Change of Climate*. Sybil S Steinberg in a review (1997) praises Mantel’s presentation of family matters with an element of suspense in *A Change of Climate*. “The Searchers” (Innes, 1997) states various themes like blend of dark and light, show-working analysis of the human condition in *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* and *A Change of Climate*; societal evils like British class system in *An Experiment in Love*; malevolent interplay between personality and public events in *A Place of Greater Safety*; Colonialism in *A Change of Climate*. “Critics’ Choices for Christmas” (Baumann, 1997) reviews Mantel’s *Fludd* and *An Experiment in Love* and praises her narrative style. The review of The Giant *O’Brien* “See for Yourself” (Nokes, 1998) praises a weary and off-balance quality of the novel. “For Strong Stomachs Only” (Waugh, 1998) praises Mantel’s storytelling ability in *The Giant O’Brien*. *The Giant O’Brien* has been discussed as historical fiction in “Freak Anatomist” (Mullan, 1998). “Hilary Mantel: The Novelist in Action” (Richardson, 1998) takes an overview of Mantel’s life and career. In “To the Pith of London’s Heart” (Bayley, 1998) Mantel’s historical imagination and narrative style has been compared to Sir Walter Scott, Jonathan Swift, and Peter Ackroyd. “The Next Big Thing” (Kendrick, 1998) presents the difference between the dreamy world of giant and the over –realistic world of Dr. Hunter. “A One-Woman Wrecking Crew” (Harrison, 2000) opines that Mantel’s *Every Day is Mother’s Day* as a black comedy can be surpassed only by its sequel, *Vacant Possession*. 
Sybil S. Steinberg (2000) states in a review that Mantel proves her prose stylist and a storyteller and expert in threading quirky characterization with black humour and a somewhat macabre imagination through Every Day is Mother’s Day; and calls Vacant Possession (2000) a haunting sequel with start to finish surprise revelations. “Holy Terror” (O’Conner, 2000) calls Fludd comic but mysterious. “Medical Marathon Runner” (Hastings, 2003) speaks about Mantel’s autobiography, Giving Up the Ghost as “an attempt to seize the copyright in myself” resulting into a bleak and frequently very funny. The works of Mantel are treated nonetheless as an invitation to accompany her vital ghosts in “Unsuited to Everything” (Clendinnen, 2003). In “Little Miss Neverwell Triumphs” (Lodge. 2004) Mantel’s skill of handling variety of forms: comic, fantastic, soberly realistic, contemporary and historical has been praised. “HILARY MANTEL:’ To Write Myself Into Being” (Simon, 2004) presents recurring themes like the nature of evil and the vulnerability of the outsider, & the connection between a woman’s identity & her body. “Devil’s Work” (Acocella, 2005) states the presence of devils and in absence of these devils the presence of shocking evil pervades Mantel’s novels. According to Acocella Eschatology crossed with comedy is Mantel’s literary property. “Fat and Thin” (Craig, 2005) assesses Mantel’s novel, Beyond Black (2005) on the basis of two characters: Alison Hart as fat and Colette as thin, and calls the public séance hideously funny. “Creepshow” (Dederer, 2005) calls Beyond Black as spooky, smart and deep. “Demons Revealed” (Rafferty, 2005) calls Beyond Black a dark, dark book but at heart it’s a celebration of the joys of saying exactly what’s on your evil little mind.

Mantel also has been interviewed personally. Some interviews are included in the question – answer format at the end of her novels. After receiving the Man Booker, she came in lime light. To mention a few interviews among them are: ‘Hilary Mantel: The exorcist’ by Marianne Brace (10 May 2003); Romona Koval also interviews Mantel and speaks about Beyond Black (2005); ‘Hilary Mantel’s ghosts’ by Joan Acocella (July 25, 2005).

Mantel might have been interviewed earlier, but her winning of the Man-Booker Prize increased the number of her interviews. The researcher is aware of the limitations and thus mentions only some of them within the year 2009. The dates of interview are proof in themselves of her increasing popularity: Interview: Hilary Mantel (The Times, April 25, 2009); ‘Hilary Mantel interview: King's Counsel’ by David Robinson (02 May 2009); ‘Hilary Mantel goes from Booker outsider to favourite in 48 hours’ is by David Batty written in.guardian.co.uk (2 August 2009); ‘I accumulated an anger that would rip a roof off’ by Aida Edemariam (The Guardian, 12 September 2009); Sarah O’Reilly talks to Hilary Mantel, (25 Sep 2009); ‘Cromwell Unshadowed, Razor Sharp’ by Janet Maslin (October 4, 2009); ‘Hilary Mantel: health or the Man Booker Prize? I’d take health’ by Jasper Rees (08 Oct 2009); ‘Tudor Tales’ by Joan Acocella (October 19, 2009); ‘Interview: Hilary Mantel’, by Lucie Boase (05/11/2009); In Scottish Review of Books, Volume 5, Issue 4, November 10, 2009, Mantel talks to Colin Waters about Catholicism, child abuse and clairvoyance. ‘Booker Prize-Winning Writer Hilary Mantel’ by Elizabeth Gregory (Nov 21, 2009). WH has also been reviewed and being reviewed by many readers, critics, scholars and so on.

As there is no comprehensive study of her novels done, the researcher thinks it is high time to study her works reflecting variety of themes at doctoral level.

I 1.4 Aims and Objectives
The aim of the present research work is to study, identify, discuss, analyse and to interprete various themes prevalent in the novels of Hilary Mantel and try to place her in the tradition of British Contemporary novelists.

a. To study the ten novels by Hilary Mantel keeping in mind the recurring themes mentioned by the critics and scholars.

b. To identify the secondary themes.

d. To discuss these themes to bring out the theme of ‘transformation’.

e. To discuss variety of themes given by the critics and scholars.

f. To analyze the essential aspects of novel with regard to the themes mentioned.

g. To analyse the works in relation to the theme of ‘transformation’.

h. To interprete the variety of themes along with theme of ‘transformation / transubstantiation.’

1.5 Hypotheses:

Hilary Mantel is considered representative of the post-World War II British fiction writers. Her ten novels (including Man Booker Prize winner (2009), Wolf Hall) range from the darkly imaginative thriller to historical novels. She is post-modern British novelist. Though her novels reflect the comic element, she is by nature a serious novelist stating the moral vision. All her novels depict her view of life – to some extent optimistic and mostly pessimistic. Her life provides subject matter and themes for her works. But this reflection does not make her works purely autobiographical. Some real experiences also provide themes for her works. Her interest in history and historical events and characters enables great works like A Place of Greater Safety (1992) and Wolf Hall (2009). All the novels reflect varied themes.

Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985) and Vacant Possession (1986) deal with Muriel Axon’s imprisoned life and her release after ten years to reappear in the lives of the characters from the former novel. Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988) is a mystery story loosely based on Mantel’s stay in Saudi Arabia. Fludd (1990) states the arrival of Fludd, the reincarnation of a Sixteenth Century scholar, who is taken as a curate and has come for transforming the Fetherhoughton village and the Church. A Place of Greater Safety (1992) is a historical novel set during the French Revolution. It presents the stories of early lives of three major revolutionaries – Camille Desmoulins, Georges – Jacques Danton and Maximillien Robespiere. A Change of Climate (1994) is inspired by Mantel’s time spent in South Africa describing the effects of Apartheid on the Eldred family. An Experiment in Love (1995) describes an experiment as a failure to bring three girls from three different classes through hostel life. The Giant O’Brien (1998) depicts the story of an Eighteen Century Irish Giant, Charles O’Brien, and his being the specimen of the collection of human oddities by the famous anatomist, Dr. Hunter. Mantel after attempting her autobiographical Giving up Ghost: a Memoir (2003) turns to her eighth novel, Beyond Black (2005). Beyond Black (2005) is a story of three protagonists who are an unholy trinity – Alison Hart, a very plump and professional medium who communicates between the souls of the dead and their living relatives through stage shows; Colette, her stick-thin business manager; and Morris, her spectral guide to the spirit world or “air-side”.

Mantel published her latest novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009) and achieved the most prestigious Man Booker Prize for it. The novel is based on the transformation of Cromwell from a son of blacksmith to the omnipotent ruler. It is a historical novel after *A Place of Greater Safety* set on the background of the French Revolution.

I 1.6 Justification and Need of the Present Research

Hilary Mantel (b. 1952-) is one of the living British contemporary women novelists. Mantel’s literary career starts with the publication of *Every Day is Mother’s Day* in 1985 and till 2009 she has produced ten novels with variety of themes at regular intervals. She has dealt with a variety of themes through her novels that makes difficult to defining or pigeonholing her. Her fiction has not been paid much attention to till she received the prestigious Man-Booker Prize in October 2009 for her latest novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009) which is based on the life of Thomas Cromwell.

As it has been mentioned by many reviewers and critics that there is great variety with regard to themes in the writings of Hilary Mantel and it is quite difficult pigeonholing her in one of the traditions of British literature. Moreover, she displays her varied interests through her writings. Thus there is only one thing that can relate all her works that is her handling of various themes. Therefore it is an interesting and challenging task to examining her works thematically. But the researcher is aware of the limitations. The writer in question is a living and prolific writer. The works of hers and the criticism in relation to the works might pour in abundantly. So the researcher wants to delimit the study to her ten (10) novels including her Man Booker Prize winning novel, *Wolf Hall* (2009).

The work of Hilary Mantel has attracted many a readers and critics as it has been in the review of literature. She has received many awards for her novels. For instance, she is the third novelist to receive the prestigious Hawthornden Prize for *An Experiment in Love* (1995) in its history of 80 years. Yet she has not been paid attention considerably. As Mantel is a living writer, her literary career has been flourished within the last 26 years and might flourish in coming years. Her recently published *Wolf Hall* (2009) is a proof in itself. Alike, the critical estimate of her novels is still pouring in and might pour in. However, it may not be an exaggeration to claim that the time has come to study her novels at doctoral level. It is necessary to have a critical, analytical and interpretative study of all her novels. Her skillful handling of variety of themes also necessitates the thematic study of her novels. It might prove useful for the students, researchers and also to the readers of literary works as a comprehensive study of her novels.

I 1.7 Methodology

The methodology includes the methodology used; the chapter-wise outline; and the chapter-wise plan.

I 1.7.1 Methodology Used

The data collected would be in the form of the primary and secondary sources. In Primary sources, we have Hilary Mantel’s ten novels and two more works including her autobiographical work, *Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir*. The secondary sources consist of the
reviews, articles, interviews of the writer published in various journals, magazines and books. The authentic information through internet would be used in secondary sources.

The proposed research work would depend upon the use of primary sources (the original works by the writer in question), secondary sources (as mentioned above). These works would be read, analysed and interpreted critically in terms of thematic study.

As the study is thematic and every novel reflects multiple themes, the analysis has been done strategically after stating the themes in every novel sequentially as prominent and secondary while analysing the novel after giving a brief summary of the novel. As Clarisse (Feb. 4, 2011) states while differentiating theme and plot that “Theme is the heart or essence of the story. Usually, the theme will be clearer on the resolution or the end part of the story. But other literary works states the theme on the introduction part. Others may refer it as the message of the story or the lessons that you have learned in the story. One common way for authors to express a theme is through the main character.”

Thus the novels will be interpreted on the basis of these points in general stating themes in particular.

**I 1.7.2 Chapter wise Outline**

The chapter-wise outline has been given as follows:

Chapter I, ‘Introduction’ deals with the biographical survey of the writer, Hilary Mantel. It also involves the ten novels by Hilary Mantel and the main and secondary themes and states briefly about the thematic approach. The chapter also focusses review of literature and the other aspects related to research like justification, methodology, aims and objectives and the chapter scheme.


Chapter IV, ‘The Latest Phase (III)’ will contain the analysis of the two novels - *Beyond Black* (2005); and *The Wolf Hall* (2009) – using the aspects mentioned earlier.

Chapter V, ‘Conclusions’ covers the conclusions drawn by the researcher covering three main points - A rigorous comparison between themes of Hilary Mantel’s works and that of the themes in the works of some of her prominent contemporaries; an overall impact of her themes; and her (Mantel’s) specific contribution to the use of themes.

This chapter will be followed by ‘bibliography’.

**I 1.7.3: Chapter-wise plan**

The chapter wise plan is as follows:

**An Outline of the Proposed Research Work**
The Novels of Hilary Mantel: A Thematic Study

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Thematic Interpretations of Mantel’s novels of the Early Phase (I)

1. Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985)
2. Vacant Possession (1986)

Chapter III: The Novels of Middle Phase (II)

1. A Place of Greater Safety (1992)

Chapter IV: The Novels of Latest Phase (III)

2. The Wolf Hall (2009)

Chapter V: Conclusions

1. A rigorous comparison between themes of Hilary Mantel’s works and that of the themes in the works of some of her prominent contemporaries
2. An overall impact of her themes
3. Her (Mantel’s) specific contribution to the use of themes

Bibliography

II

II 1.1 Thematic Approach

The thematic approach includes some definitions of ‘theme’ as an aspect of novel; themes handled by Mantel in her novels. Along with the thematic discussions, it also includes Mantel’s inspiration and literary and philosophical influences on her; and any biographical or autobiographical relation in her handling of the themes.

II 1.1.1 Theme as an Aspect of Novel

As the study relates to the thematic analysis of Hilary Mantel’s novels, ‘theme’ and ‘thematic’ should be defined to know the basis of interpretation. At the outset, we will deal with the etymology of the terms ‘theme’, ‘motif’ etc.

The etymology of theme and the definition of motif in Oxford English Dictionary as stated in The Return of Thematic Criticism edited by Werner Sollors (1993: Harvard University Press, p.1) is as follows:
Etymology of Theme: Greek *thema* proposition, from *tithenai*, put, set, place, lay down. “The subject of discourse, discussion, conversation, meditation, or composition; a topic.”

Motif: Low Latin *motivus*, from *movere*, motum, to move; sb. Old French *motif*, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian *motivo*. “In literary composition: a type of incident, a particular situation, an ethical problem, or the like, which may be treated in a work of imagination; also in Folklore, a recurrent character, event, situation or theme”.

Theme and motif are changed into literary treatment of a great variety of themes. **Thematics** is simply considered ‘old’ and hopelessly outmoded so discussions of literary ‘treatments of’ themes tend to call themselves by other names. Few Americanists seem to understand or define their work in the context of thematics. Literary texts may be asked questions relating to historical, social, or cultural themes.

After having stated the etymology of ‘theme’ and ‘motif’ now it becomes necessary to refer to the definitions of the given concepts from various dictionaries to understand its aspects. Most of the definitions given in various dictionaries and opinions given by some critics and scholars emphasize theme as the subject; or main or important idea that appears several times in the work or works along with other secondary ideas.

Some of them are the definitions as follows: *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (Hornby A.S. ed. 1989(4th ed.) OUP, Calcutta, p. 1329) defines ‘theme’ as ‘subject of a talk or a piece of writing or a person’s thought or topic’; and ‘thematic’ as ‘of or related to a theme’. *The New International Webster’s Pocket Dictionary* (2001: CBS Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, India) defines ‘theme’ as ‘a main subject or topic, as of a poem, novel, play, speech etc.’ (p.583) *Compact Oxford Reference Dictionary* edited by Catherine Soanes (2001: OUP, p.868) defines ‘theme’ as ‘a subject on which a person speaks, writes or thinks’ and ‘an idea that is often repeated in a work of art or literature’. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Judy Pearsall ed. 1998: Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.1921) defines ‘theme’ as ‘the subject of a talk, a piece of writing, a person’s thoughts or an exhibition’ and ‘an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature’. It defines ‘thematic’ as ‘having or relating to subjects or a particular subject’. In the dictionary, we also come across the words ‘thematize’ and ‘thematics’ which are defined as ‘present or select (a subject) as a theme’ and ‘a body of topics for study or discussion’ respectively.

Chris Baldick in his *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2008: 3rd ed., OUP, pp.333-4) defines ‘theme’ as:

A salient abstract idea that emerge from a literary work’s treatment of its subject-matter; or a topic recurring in a number of literary works. While the subject of a work is described concretely in terms of its action – (e.g. ‘the adventures of a newcomer in the big city’), its theme or themes will be described in more abstract terms (e.g. love, war, revenge, betrayal, fate etc.). The theme of a work may be announced explicitly, but more often it emerges indirectly through the recurrence of ‘motifs’.

The definition focuses the abstract ideas and recurrence of motifs. The ‘motif’ has been defined in the same dictionary as:
a situation, incident, idea, image, or character-type that is found in many different literary works, folktales, or myths; or any element of a work that is elaborated into a general theme. The fever that purges away a character’s false identity is a recurrent motif in Victorian fiction; and in European lyric poetry the *ubi sunt* motif and the *carpe diem* motif are commonly found. Where an image, incident, or other element is repeated significantly within a single work, it is more commonly referred to as a ‘leitmotif’. (Baldick, pp.215-6).

‘*leitmotif*’ is defined as ‘a frequently repeated phrase, image, symbol or situation in a literary work, the recurrence of which usually indicates or supports a ‘theme’. (Baldick, p.185) The definition by Baldick mentions the term ‘theme’ with ‘motif’ and ‘*leitmotif*’. There also appear the terms like *ubi sunt* (Latin, meaning: Where are ----?); and *carpe diem* (meaning: seize the day) as the most frequent themes of literary works.

Theme has been defined in *Handbook of Literary Terms, Literature, Language*, 

*Theory* by X.J.Kennedy et.al. (2005: Pearson, Longman Inc., p.153) as The prevailing topic or issue conspicuously running through a literary work. A short didactic work like a fable may have a single obvious theme, but longer works can contain multiple themes. The theme is an abstraction from the work.

Ashok Throat et. al. in *A Sprectum of Literary Criticism* (2001F.P., repr.2008: Frank Bros. & Co., New Delhi, p.273) define ‘*motif*’ as a ‘basic, recurring idea or theme, in a work of art’; and ‘theme of a work of art is a longer idea or concept dealt with’.

A.J. Sebastian and N.D.R. Chandra define ‘*theme*’ in *Literary Terms in Fiction and Prose* (Delhi: Authorpress, 2004, pp.231-2) as:

the central idea of a literary work with its subject matter, concerns and pre-occupations. It unifies and controls the whole work. Through it the author commends on the subject matter and the various issues and shares his ideas with the readers. A theme is related to the organic unity of the whole work. In some works meant for pure entertainment like adventure stories or detective novels, the theme may not be so clearly defined. Sometimes theme presented by the writer may not be in accordance with the beliefs of the reader. However, it presents another point of view to the reader in a world of free ideas. The reader should be careful to avoid confusing the theme of the work with its subject matter. At times the title of a work can be indicative of its theme.

The definition given by Sebastian and Chandra speaks about the central idea as a controlling and uniting power for the whole work; they also speak of other points of idea i.e. sub themes or multiplicity of themes but advise not to confuse the subject matter with that of ideas.

thoughts or an exhibition’ and ‘an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature’. It defines ‘thematic’ as ‘having or relating to subjects or a particular subject’. In the dictionary, we also come across the words ‘thematize’ and ‘thematics’ which are defined as ‘present or select (a subject) as a theme’ and ‘a body of topics for study or discussion’ respectively.

Jacob Abraham in his A Handbook of Literary Terms (1998: Kalyani Publishers, Ludhiana) states ‘theme’ as “the term applied to a thesis or doctrine which and imaginative work is supposed to convey to the reader”.

Twin Hag in his Dictionary of Literary Terms (2003: Rajat Publications, New Delhi) states ‘theme’ as a common thread or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a literary work. A theme is a thought or idea the author presents to the reader that may be deep, difficult to understand, or even moralistic. Generally, a theme has to be extracted as the reader explores the passages of work. The author utilizes the characters, plot and other literary devices to assist the reader in this endeavour…. In truly great works of literature the author intertwines the theme throughout the work and the full impact is slowly realized as the reader processes the text. The ability to recognize a theme is important because it allows the reader to understand part of author’s purpose in writing the book.

Dianne Doubtfire in the first chapter ‘Theme’ of her book, The Craft of Novel Writing (1981) states some of her views and states some aspects of themes and thematics. The chapter starts with Lawrence Durrell’s epigrammatic statement: “The theme of art is the theme of life itself”. The statement indicates how inseparable life from art and theme of life that from theme of art. She calls ‘theme’ as the basis of the book; and the subject of the novel and can be expressed in one word, or at least in one sentence. Further she says that due to the constant change of scene and atmosphere it becomes difficult to formulate a theme. The writers should search for the quality of ‘eternal truth’ that underlies every contemporary situation. According to her the strongest themes are ageless, classless and universal.

Roy Johnson in Studying Fiction (1992: Manchester University Press, Manchester) states theme as ‘the underlying topic or issue, as distinct from the overt subject, with which a work deals’ (p.9) further he discusses it as ‘a theme is the central, or underlying, or dominating idea in a literary work”. (p.71) and in glossary he calls the idea ‘often abstract concept which is made concrete through characters and action’. (p.212)

Tomashevsky (Sollors, p.11) defines ‘theme’ (what is talked about) as the unity of the meanings of the separate elements of the work. One may speak of the theme of the whole work and of the themes of its separate parts. Every work written in a meaningful language has a theme. (Boris Tomashevsky, “Thematics” (1925), trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis) Mikhail Bakhtin (Sollors, p.11) thinks that the forms of the whole, i.e., the genre forms, essentially determine the theme. Cleanth Brooks et. al. (Sollors, p.16) in An Approach to Literature (1975) states that “the story is theme, and the theme, story”.

‘Theme’ as stated in Great Soviet Encyclopedia (1976) is as follows:

an artistic theme does not exist outside of an artistic image or, in particular, outside of a plot structure, even though it is more accessible
than other components of an artistic work. Therefore, the theme cannot be treated as if it were circumscribed by a single meaning. Every work tends to have a multiplicity of themes. A theme exists in images, causing different works on one common theme. (Sollors, pp.16-7)

Murray Krieger in his *The Thematic underside of Recent Theory* (1983) states: “thematizing is not bad, that it is inevitable .. it is better confronted than denied in one’s own work and attacked in others”. (Sollors, p.18)

According to Menachem Brinker, (Sollors, p.22 & 37) theme is the principle (or locus) of a possible grouping of texts and its most common function is to aid in describing and interpreting the work or a group of works. He feels it difficult to set up a definite criterion for identification of all the themes of a fictional work.

Claude Bremond in his article “Concept and Theme” (Sollors pp.46-59) speaks of thematization of a concept. According to him thematization consists of an indefinite series of variations on a theme by organizing into a hierarchy of metathemes (most abstract and general wording), themes and subthemes (several more concrete and particular wordings).

Gerorge Steiner (Sollors pp.299-300) thinks that literature is by essence thematic and it can only operate in an echo chamber of motifs. He further states that the theme and motif are the weave of intertextuality and exist only by recognition these days. He regrets that the allusions and implicit motifs are inaccessible. He calls the thematic presences as the instrument of economy.

Most of the definitions of ‘theme’ given above focus the main subject or idea of a book etc. But along with the main subject or idea, there are some subjects those are of equal importance. Thus a literary work may have one main or central theme and many sub-themes. The definition also refers to speech, art exhibition or discussion but neglects the secondary themes. Some of the definitions treat theme and motif as complementary. The definitions given relate it to literary works stating it a subject matter or a unifying idea. It also refers to musical ideas or an essay and linguistically the root word after removing all affixes. The views above mentioned state in one way or other the importance of the thematization of the concepts, implicit in a literary work that helps interpreting and analyzing the works of literature.

The novels of Hilary Mantel also have variety of themes and need thematization for its better understanding. Most of her critical assessment states the difficulty in pigeonholing her writing in a literary tradition but grouping her works using the thematic basis will make it easier. Her autobiographical elements and biographical details also will provide an aid for the study of her novels.

As the study is thematic and every novel reflects multiple themes, the researcher thinks of stating the themes in every novel sequentially as prominent and secondary while analysing the novel after giving a synopsis of the novel in brief. As the theme is the essence of the story, it emerges out of the main character, plot, setting, moral and such elements.

II 1.1.2 Themes in Hilary Mantel’s Novels

In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 144, Mantel has been assessed as a darkly imaginative storyteller. Her novels range from suspense thrillers to black humour and to
historical fiction. Her focus is on family life, isolation, the nature of time, feminism, religion, the consequences of political and social system. Thus she deals with diversified themes through her novels. The researcher thinks the following themes also contribute to her novels along with the themes mentioned by critics and reviewers.

Childhood:

Christina Torren in her concept of ‘childhood’ (Kuper and Kuper 1996) writes, “For most periods of history and for most children in the world, Childhood is not ideally cosy, protected, playful, and free from adult responsibilities.” She thinks the idea of childhood is historically and culturally variable. Philippe Aries (1962 [1960]) states that in Europe the childhood marked as a distinctive stage of life only in the 13th century. It changed in 17th century with the rise of the notions of the family and of the school and again in 19th century. The modern world is ‘obsessed by the physical, moral and sexual problems of childhood.’ Sigmund Freud focuses on sexual identification and the development of conscience while understanding childhood and children’s growth into adults. Psychologically, childhood is stressed as the active and transformative developmental process.

In anthropology and sociology the child was regarded as a more or less passive receiver of ideas of the society members. Further the understanding of childhood emerged as a different approach. According to this approach children differentiate themselves from their parents and become a means of cultural continuity and cultural change.

The reflection of childhood might trace long back in literature as from the very emergence of the mankind and infant, there might be a tendency to listen to the stories. The form might have been different till the development of the accepted language. We generally take it from the Decameron by Boccaccio in 14th century; or Jataka tales. In a brief survey of English novel we see childhood memories have been remarkably used as theme in David Copperfield, Tom Jones to present children’s literature.

Mantel writes in her memoir, “The story of my own childhood is a complicated sentence that I am always trying to finish, to finish and put behind me. It resists finishing, and partly this is because words are not enough; my early world was synaesthetic, and I am haunted by the ghosts of my own sense impressions, which re-emerge when I try to write, and shiver between the lines”. (p.23) Mantel’s characters also remember their childhood in their adolescent period to make them happy or unhappy which enables the readers to understand the past of these characters and help the development of the action of the novel. Thus in most of her novels, we see ‘childhood’ a recurring theme.

Family and Family Relations:

Graham Allan in his concept of ‘family’ (Kuper and Kuper 1996) speaks about two stands of meaning: first, as a subset of an individual’s kinship universe which means those who are linked by blood and marriage to us; and secondly, as a virtual synonym of household where kinship linkages remains important where shared housekeeping and a common domestic economy is implicit.

In this modern world, the family and family life are getting more complex due to some undefined relationships. There is an increase in the incidents of break up of marriages, divorce, re-marriages, live-in-relationships etc. that culminates into some social problems like
unknown parenthood, step–parents, step-siblings, half-siblings loosening the bond of affinity in the family and family relations.

Mantel in her real life has experienced this estrangement in family and the familial relations which we come across in her memoir. Thus her novels depict theme of family and familial relations.

**Alienation / Isolation / Loneliness**

Graham Lock while stating the concept of ‘alienation’ (in German *Entfremdung*) (Kuper and Kuper 1996) refers to estrangement – psychological (Hegel); sociological (Feuerbach); or philosophical- anthropological (Marx). This estrangement the researcher thinks synonymous to isolation or loneliness.

Mantel’s works reflect such estrangement among the characters, families, and among the human beings who can physically, emotionally be separated due to internal or external forces.

**Supernaturalism**

According to the meaning of the Webster dictionary, word supernatural can be defined as: ‘of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible observable universe; *esp*: of or relating to God or a god, demigod, spirit, or devil’; it also states the meaning as ‘departing from what is usual or normal esp. so as to appear to transcend the laws of nature’ or ‘attributed to an invisible agent (as a ghost or spirit)’.

Mantel tells in one of the interviews with Sarah O’Reilly, ‘In virtually all my books there’s a slight edge of the supernatural, and a preoccupation with what is hidden, what may be in the locked room.’

The above definitions include the overall themes in the novels of Hilary Mantel. Some novels show characters with supernatural powers; some have existence of ghosts and some settings are haunted. Thus supernaturalness is one of the themes of Mantel’s novels.

**Alchemy**

In one of the interviews, Mantel herself has said that all her novels have a theme of personal alchemy. If we see the dictionary meaning of ‘alchemy’ it reflects three aspects:

1: a medieval chemical science and speculative philosophy aiming to achieve the transmutation of the base metals into gold, the discovery of a universal cure for disease, and the discovery of a means of indefinitely prolonging life.

2: a power or process of transforming something common into something special. Mantel perhaps uses all the layers of alchemy in her novels through her characters, setting, imagery, symbolism and messages.

**Mystery**

*The Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2007 [1998]) defines ‘mystery’ as ‘secret, hidden, or inexplicable matter.’ (p.541) Hilary Mantel’s novel reflect this theme mostly through her
characters, settings etc. In her Memoir, she writes, ‘...after I was six or seven concealment became my habit.’ (p.71) This element of concealment provides mysterious and enigmatic background to her works. She also states her views about it in an interview with Sarah O’Reilily that her books have ‘a preoccupation with what is hidden, what may be in the locked room. The locked room may be part of the psyche; it may be the part of the imagination that one doesn’t dare enter.’ Mantel uses it in most of her works.

Revenge

The dictionary meaning relates the word ‘revenge’ to the ‘satisfaction by deliberately inflicting injury in return for injury inflicted on oneself.’ Thus the definition reveals the strong mental and physical state of a person or personality who is ready to inflict fatal injuries deliberately in exchange. Mantel’s VP has revenge as one of the prominent themes. Muriel who has suffered the injuries in EDMD emerges after ten years to take revenge on the characters she feels responsible and takes every measure to be successful in her task.

Religion

Maurice Bloch (Kuper and Kuper, p.732) while discussing ‘religion and ritual’ states that the anthropologists face a great problem in defining what kind of phenomena is called ‘religious’ and ‘where religion begins or where it ends.’ There are special places for it and there are special persons for it. It also is difficult to distinguishing between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ as mostly religion involves the belief in supernatural forces. Mantel’s idea of God is different as she writes in her Memoir that He is not a magician & should not be treated in that way; should not be asked to after things and fix things, like some plumber or carpenter – I had; come to my own understanding of grace, the seeping channel between a person & the God inside them. (p.105). Mantel’s some works have ‘religious’ themes reflecting the religious diversities according the country and persons practicing them.

Culture:

Gloria Goodwin Raheja (Kuper and Kuper, p. 157) while stating the concept of ‘culture’ states that the cultural anthropologist, Franz Boas focused on the particularities of different ways of life rather than upon broad comparison and generalization, and demonstrated that race and culture are not coterminous. Bosnian anthropology states culture as a particularized, patterned and shared of categories and assumptions that focus upon the meanings rather than the functions of social and cultural practices. She also speaks of Edward Said’s argument that the western descriptions of other cultures of colonized countries represent as static and unchanging and unable to transform their own societies. Bosnian and structural definitions of culture involve assumptions about the degree to which culture is shared within a given community, and the degree to which cultural assumptions are part of everyday taken-for-granted and unquestioned common sense. John Storey (Kuper and Kuper, p. 159) refers to Raymond Williams’ definition as ‘a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group.’

As Mantel is a child of the Catholic immigrant family, she respects the Catholic principles but the works of her have a kind of cultural conflict. She tries to reveal these differences through her characters of the novels.
Loss:

The word ‘loss’ suggests the act or process of losing which means taking away from one by accident, carelessness, misfortune, death etc. It might be personal or social or both that depends upon the nature of loss. The literary works generally reveal the loss through the plot, character, symbolism and setting even. Such theme is mostly presented through the characters suffering from their loss and the changes we can experience through them. Mantel through her novels presents the theme. The researcher thinks that in some novels it is prominent affecting the action of the novel and in some novels it is less prominent.

Social Identity:

Rupert Brown (Kuper and Kuper, pp.789-0) refers to G.H.Mead’s (1977) emphasizing person’s self-definition in relation to others and Tajfel’s (1978) ‘social identity’ theory of casual linking between social identity needs and various intergroup behaviour. Mantel’s characters in some of her novels prominently reflect this theme of social identity, where they can’t isolate themselves from the society and the social practices being practiced. Most of the time, these practices are socially and politically motivated to create the dilemma for the character.

Transformation / Transubstantiation:

In an interview with Sarah O’Reilly (2009), Mantel speaks of her bringing up in a Catholic family and in the years of forming imagination, she came across the idea of transubstantiation which suggests changing of one thing into another thing in a moment, keeping its appearance the same. It also suggests the idea that the reality that we see with our eyes is not the real world but the reality is something beyond the appearance. This kind of change can be seen in most of her novels, mostly through her characters, who are the agents to convey her theme of transformation / transubstantiation.

Her literary career may be divided into three phases broadly: The First Phase from the year she published her first novel i.e. from 1985 to 1990 that covers her four novels – Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985); Vacant Possession (1986); Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988); and Fludd (1989). The Second Phase which is called ‘Middle Phase’ covers the period 1990 to 2000 and shows her literary output as A Place of greater Safety (1992); A Change of Climate (1994); An Experiment in Love (1995); and The Giant O’Brien (1998). The final or the ‘Latest Phase’ covers the period 2000 onwards. This period covers two novels: Beyond Black (2005); and Wolf Hall (2009). This is not a division with certain criteria but it is purely logical and chronological one.

Mantel’s novels reflect the variety of themes like childhood memories, family life, Isolation, existence of ghosts, supernatural power, religion and culture, mystery and revenge, loss; and transubstantiation, as Mantel puts it are some other themes in her novels. Many critics have praised Mantel for her handling of varied themes and also themes related to the historical events.

The common themes through all her novels are about the domestic, social, and individual life. In the domestic aspect, we can have the family lives of the characters and their
familial relations – mother-daughter; father-daughter; husband-wife etc. In social themes we can see the friendship, social relations of the characters etc. The individual lives of the characters reflect their individual characters, and mental conflicts.

As Mantel has mentioned in one of the interviews that ‘transformation / transubstantiation’ is basic theme reflected in her works. This transformation may be studied in terms of Physical, Social, Cultural, Religious, and Psychological transformations in terms of the aspects of the novels that reveal the theme or the said themes prominently.

II 1.2: Mantel’s Inspiration

Her inspiration may be studied on the basis of the source of her inspiration; literary and philosophical influences on her works.

II 1.2.1: Source of Inspiration

Though it is said that Mantel developed interest in writing after university education when she worked briefly as a social worker in a geriatric hospital, it is her illness that made her adopt the creative writing as a profession. She had a question in her mind – ‘Who was I at all?’ In course of time she faced a problem of obesity due to the prescriptions of hormones. Thinking of the disease ‘Endometriosis’ she was unable to adopt any career except creative writing. It becomes a necessity or urge as Mantel states:

I am not writing to solicit any special sympathy…. I am writing in order to take charge of my childhood and my childlessness; and in order to locate myself, not within a body, then in the narrow space between one letter and the next, between the lines where the ghosts of meaning are. (Giving Up the Ghost, A Memoir, p.222)

Mantel in her childhood loves the magic slate but when she learnt that even after wiping it out one can watch the traces of the things written on it she states: “There is a place, a gap, a hiatus between the hatching words, flinching and raw; and those that are ready to take their place in the world, words that are ready to stand up and fight”. (GUG, p.70) She thinks the writing i.e. the words if find their place they become living spirit to fight.

Mantel advises the people who want to write not to show one’s work before it is ready. She feels by having an idea one can’t write a story till a point of time which is uncertain. She speaks of her hesitation in starting her narrative: “For a long time I felt as if someone else were writing my life. I seemed able to create or interprete characters in fiction, but not able to create or interprete myself. - - - The book of me was indeed being written by other people: by my parents, by the child I once was, and by my own unborn children, stretching out their ghost fingers to grab the pen.” (GUG, p.70) As it is done in her mind, in her mid-life she thinks she has been instructed to implement on it.

Mantel adopted career as a creative writer to get rid of the distress and to involve herself in some work. She writes:

Sometimes I feel that each morning it is necessary to write myself into being – even if the writing is aimless doodling that no one will ever read, or the diary that no one can see till I’m dead. When you stop writing you find that’s all you are, a spine, a row of rattling vertebrae,
dried out like an old quill pen. (Giving up the Ghost, A Memoir p.222-3)

Though Mantel calls it a necessity, we get a literary prolific career of 26 odd years by Mantel with an output of ten novels, a memoir, a short-story collection and many more literary reviews. Thus this necessity turns into an urge to identify and to be alive; and to locate her ‘self’ through her works.

II 1.2.2: Literary and Philosophical Influences on Mantel

Mantel’s every novel is one way or other has been the outcome of the difficulties she experienced in her life may it be her ill-health; the separation of her parents; her shifting to various places while learning; her marriage; her stays abroad; her unborn children as ghosts and her love for history. Mostly it is her illness and the solitude forced on her became the source of her writing.

If we think about the literary influences, Mantel in her Memoir mentions her favourite book as R.L. Stevenson’s *Kidnapped*, a story about a boy leaving home and can’t go back as if ‘kidnapped’ and admits that we use the pattern often. She remembers the opening lines by heart and is shivered with it. As she quotes: ‘I will begin the story of my adventures with a certain morning early in the month of June, the year of grace 1751, when I took the key for the last time out of the door of my father’s house.’ (GUG, p.247) She likes both the characters – David Balfour and Alan Breck but identifies herself with David whom she wants to be at home. She admits influence of Stevenson.

She has read some books in her childhood like The Complete Works of Shakespeare, *Treasure Island* and *Jane Eyre*. Of which she recommends Jane Eyre for every woman writer as she feels that “you are reading a story about yourself”. (GUG, p.246)

Some critics like Auberon Waugh find influence of Muriel Spark and Evelyn Waugh on her writing which she denies in one of the interviews (SRB interview, 2009) saying “it never occurred to me that I was influenced by Muriel Spark”. She also says that Waugh she discovered in her adulthood and due to difficulty in accessing books, till 14 she was allowed a ticket to library, she couldn’t nurture her reading. As she is not from a bookish family she seems uninfluenced by one of the specific writers.

While studying the philosophy of her life and writing we have to think over her religious and family background. Her family is the Catholic immigrants from Ireland to Hadfield, for working in textile factories. Her moving from one place to another, she takes as an opportunity to learn, as she writes, ‘I am learning, always learning. To take someone’s picture, you move away from them. When you have finished, you move back.’ (GUG, p.28) She presents characters like the pictures she has painted from a distance but passionately.

She has experienced the society divided into the Protestants and the Catholics. She doesn’t find the Catholicism very glamourous as she experienced it in working class. Hilary’s mother gives the job to one Muriel as she is badly in need of it and has to suffer which reflects the element of sacrifice one of the principles of any religion. It used to start from changing the school by the friends to make realize the difference which really doesn’t exist in religious teachings and the knowledge.

She reminds that the Christians are given the model of a man dying in extreme agony to offer psychic support and prayers depicting the stages of Christ’s Passion. She also feels
that Catholic life is lived in the shadow of happy death and staunch belief in religion. Thus some of her characters are shown as the student studying Christianity or in a nunnery. She also admits that some of her characters are real ones.

At 5, she used to be a priest and; listens to confessions etc. and likes studying the priesthood (GUG, p.98). She calls herself ‘spiritually ambitious and wanted an unspotted soul, a soul edged with light, like a clean but open window’. (GUG, p.99) Her ‘idea of God is different not a magician & should not be treated in that way; should not be asked to after things and fix things, like some plumber or carpenter’. (GUG, p.105)

Mantel wanted to be a barrister but her poverty, illness and her womanhood became a great obstacle as she writes: ‘By the time I was twenty I was living in a slum house in Sheffield. I had a husband and no money…….. I had a pain which I could not explain.’ (GUG, p.155) and ‘I wanted to be a barrister. How was I to do this? The facts of life passed in on me. I was female. Northern and poor……I was in love.’ (GUG, p.157) But it is this illness that made her suffer in her thirties and left childless compelled her to accept ‘writing’ as her full time career. She calls herself a person with torn personality and writes, ““There are other people who, like me, have had the roots of their personality torn up. You need to find yourself, in the maze of social expectation, the thickets of memory——” (p.222)

Mantel’s 25-year literary journey from a domestic novel to the Booker-Prize Winning novelist is an outcome of her ill-health and the roots of her torn-up personality developing her urge to find herself which is really awesome and reflecting her fighting spirit and learning desire throughout her life.
CHAPTER II

THEMATIC INTERPRETATION OF MANTEL’S

NOVELS OF EARLY PHASE (I)

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter I, we have taken an overview of Hilary Mantel’s biographical details and the various definitions of ‘theme’ and ‘thematics’. These definitions expose theme as a subject matter, unifying ideas or recurring ideas of the literary work. We also have the concept of multiplicity of themes means the main theme with many sub-themes used to create an overall impact.

Hilary Mantel (1952-) reflects this multiplicity or variety of themes through all her novels that makes difficult pigeonholing her works and herself in one and only literary tradition but the researcher thinks that there are some recurring or unifying themes present in her works. They can be listed as given: childhood; family life and relations; isolation; existence of ghosts or spirits/ supernaturalness; religion and culture; revenge and mystery; a very common theme to all her works is transformation/transubstantiation.

As the various definitions of a theme or themes show it an abstraction and it could be concretized differently by different people according to their attitude, it cannot be discussed in vacuum. To deal with the themes of any literary work it becomes necessary to study or discuss it in terms of the concrete elements through which the literary work exists. The thematic study of the novels is possible through the study of the elements or aspects of novel: structure (plot); technique (narrative etc.); character; setting; imagery; and symbolism and other elements.

While distinguishing Mantel’s works the division may be done as the works of early phase, middle phase and the latest phase. This distinction is logical based and done according to the period of publication. The present chapter discusses her four novels published between 1985 and 1990. These novels are Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985); Vacant Possession (1986); Eight Months on Ghazzah Street (1988); and Fludd (1989). These novels will be discussed on the basis of the recurring themes mentioned above.

2.2 Thematic Interpretation of Mantel’s Novels of Early Phase

The part covers thematic interpretation of the first four novels chronologically. These novels are interpreted sequentially within two parts each. The first part covers the summary of every novel in question and the second part presents thematic analysis of the novels.

I:2.2: Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985)

I:2.2.1: Summary of Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985)

Mantel in her first published novel, Every Day Is Mother’s Day narrates a story of a caring mother, Evelyn Axon and her mentally retarded daughter, Muriel Axon who is pregnant of unknown parentage. The novel starts with the problem of Muriel’s pregnancy. Evelyn has to hide this from the neighbourhood and the social workers. Meanwhile Isabel Field comes to enquire about Muriel’s absence at Day Care Centre. Isabel and Colin meet each other in a writing class and have an illicit affair and decide to marry. Colin is the brother of Florence.
Sidney, the neighbour of the Axons. Colin declines to marry Isabel as his wife is pregnant and can’t be divorced. Isabel being disappointed stops social work. Isabel loses the file of Muriel which is recovered by Colin from Frank O’Dawyer, his boss in a party.

Meanwhile Muriel gives birth to a child. Evelyn successfully hides it from the society and neighbours. She also convinces Muriel to drown the baby in the canal. Isabel, who is suspicious of Muriel’s appearance tries to visit the Axon House and is closed in a store room forcibly by Evelyn. Colin comes to rescue Isabel and Evelyn gets blow while resisting him. Evelyn dies and Muriel who is mentally retarded becomes orphan and has been institutionalized. The Axon house becomes vacant that provides the setting for the sequel of Every Day is Mother’s Day, Mantel’s second novel, Vacant Possession (1986).

I:2.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985)

I:2.2.2.1 Childhood Memories

Christina Torren in her concept of “childhood” (Kuper and Kuper 1996) writes, “For most periods of history and for most children in the world, Childhood is not ideally cosy, protected, playful, and free from adult responsibilities.” She thinks the idea of childhood is historically and culturally variable. Psychologically, childhood is stressed as the active and transformative developmental process.

Every Day is Mother’s Day (1985) the title itself suggests the childhood as the word ‘mother’ in it reveals the mother-child relationship. The novel depicts the early childhood of Muriel and also of Evelyn which is pathetic and compelling them to accept some unlike decisions. The childhood of Muriel is revealed through the case study of the community workers. Evelyn reminds her childhood and helplessness in marrying Clifford Axon. Muriel experiences a great blow because of the death of her father at her age 6.

Hereafter Evelyn becomes her caretaker, in other words, both father and mother. It causes a natural shock to Muriel and makes her childhood miserable to turn her into a mentally retarded child. For Muriel it is a great comfort that she has Evelyn, a typical caretaker to take care of and tries to protect her from all the social evils. In case of Evelyn the situation is different altogether as her mother after the death of her father forces herself into isolation.

Evelyn experiences the death of her father of influenza when she was 6. There was no provision of any sort due to his carelessness about policies, family etc. Moreover, a woman asks compensation and claimed two children from Blaise. The house was sold and her mother and Evelyn were taken by Aunt Norah. Evelyn calls this stay unhappy as before. Her mother died when she was 17. Aunt Norah asks her to make her own way. After three weeks she meets Clifford Axon, a shipping clerk and accepts him as the husband. She learns about his sexual deviations etc. after their marriage to make her more unhappy. About her childhood the narrator says, “When Evelyn thought of her childhood, it seemed to have taken place in another century”. (p.118)

I:2.2.2.2: Family Life and Relations

Graham Allan in his concept of ‘family’ (Kuper and Kuper 1996) speaks about two stands of meaning: first, as a subset of an individual’s kinship universe which means those who are linked by blood and marriage to us; and secondly, as a virtual synonym of household where
kinship linkages remains important where shared housekeeping and a common domestic economy is implicit.

In this modern world, the family and family life are getting more complex due to some undefined relationships. There is an increase in the incidents of break up of marriages, divorce, re-marriages, live-in-relationships etc. that culminates into some social problems like unknown parenthood, step –parents, step-siblings, half-siblings loosening the bond of affinity in the family and family relations.

In every novel of Mantel, we come across the minute description of the family, familial life, and also every good and evil aspect of the household things. Steinberg (2000) calls EDMD a ‘peculiar dynamics of the mother–daughter relationship’. It has two neighbouring families, the Axon family and the Sidney family, physical neighbours but mentally estranged ones.

The Axon family is mysterious and tries to avoid the public contact due to Evelyn’s over-precautious nature as a typical caretaker mother of a mentally retarded daughter, Muriel, whom Harriet Waugh (1985) calls madness and badness personified in the form of an elderly widow and her retarded daughter. Despite these precautions, Muriel is pregnant and it becomes inevitable for Evelyn to hide her from public and especially from her neighbours and the social workers of the Day Care Centre. These problems disturb their normal family life.

Mrs. Sidney and her daughter, Florence, are in the neighbouring. Mrs. Sidney comes to Evelyn to know about her husband recently died, whether in heaven or hell. Evelyn tells her that he is in an unspeakable hell. Their familial relations are not good. Evelyn wants to hide the untoward pregnancy of Muriel. Therefore she mostly tries to avoid them, even at the time of Christmas. Thus the relations in the family and neighbourhood are estranged. Colin and Sylvia are not directly related to the Axon family till at the end of the novel, Colin rushes to rescue Miss Isabel Field who has been to inquire about Muriel and been locked in the store room by Evelyn being angry with her. The family relations come to standstill as Evelyn dies and Muriel gets institutionalized. With the death of Evelyn the Axon family becomes nowhere and nobody thinks about them due to their estranged relations. They are neglected to that extent that even after ten years, when Muriel emerges to revenge nobody can think of this possibility.

I:2.2.2.3: Isolation/ Loneliness/ Alienation

Graham Lock while stating the concept of ‘alienation’ (in German Entfremdung) (Kuper and Kuper 1996) refers to estrangement – psychological (Hegel); sociological (Feuerbach); or philosophical- anthropological (Marx). This estrangement the researcher thinks synonymous to isolation or loneliness.

Mantel’s works reflect such estrangement among the characters, families, and the human beings who can physically, emotionally be separated due to internal or external forces. Every Day Is Mother’s Day (1985) also presents the isolation/loneliness/alienated selves. This isolation is forced by the society or by the characters themselves or by their physical or mental disability. The Axon family is an example of this isolation. After the death of Muriel’s father in 1946, Evelyn alienates herself. Even when Clifford was alive, Evelyn has been alienated due to his illicit behaviour. Muriel’s mentally retarded nature and her unwanted pregnancy adds to her troubles. Evelyn has not only to hide Muriel’s physical and
mental disability but her pregnancy which is quite difficult when the neighbours are too curious and social workers are visiting Muriel frequently. To our surprise or luck of the Axons, Evelyn succeeds in hiding it. She not only hides it but makes it drown after the birth of the child.

Among Sidneys, Mrs. Sidney experiences isolation after the death of her husband. Florence, her unmarried daughter lives with her in the neighbourhood of the Axons. Though Colin and Sylvia are happy married couple shown, they also experience alienated unknowingly due to the extra marital affair between Colin and Isabel Field. They are about to be separated when Colin learns about the pregnancy of Sylvia and their separation turns into the separation of Colin and Isabel. Isabel who tries to seek companion in Colin remains isolated.

I:2.2.2.4 Existence of Ghosts/Supernatural Powers

_Every Day Is Mother’s Day_ (1985) reveals a recurring theme of the existence of ghosts/supernatural powers altogether. Here the setting i.e. the Axon House and the characters play a very significant role to convey this theme.

The Axon House has been described as:

The Axons’ house stood on a corner. There was a little gate let in between the rhododendrons. No weeds pushed up between the stones of the path. And this was odd, because you would not have thought of Evelyn Axon as a keen gardener. There was stained glass in the door of the porch, venous crimson and the storm-dull blue of August skies. (p.9)

Christopher Hawtree (1985) states the house as ‘a place which appears to contain ghostly presences: “it was here, a little removed yet concurrent; each day some limb of the supernatural reached out to pluck you by the clothes”. Barbara love (2000) also calls the Axon House ‘a rundown and possibly haunted, Victorian house taking center stage’.

When Florence visits the Axon House to give the Christmas pie, she writes:

She (Florence) had never been in the Axons’ house. Her mother, she knew, had sometimes visited. The most remarkable thing was the quality of furniture, each heavy and unpolished piece pushed up against the next, jostling for space on a mud-coloured carpet; surely, Florence thought, carpets are not woven in any such shade. The upholstery of the suite was greasy and worn, the wallpaper yellow with age. What a way to live, Florence thought; creating a slum, here in this neighbourhood. (p.111)

When Evelyn dies at the end of the novel, Florence comes to see whether Isabel is rescued or not says, ‘I always knew something dreadful would happen in this house’, and adds, ‘I’ve always hated this house since I was a child’. (p.203)

Mrs. Sidney visits Evelyn after Mr. Sidney’s death to talk to her husband as Evelyn supposed to have supernatural power to communicate with the dead ones. Evelyn leans forward, clasping her hands together, tears flowing down and tells Mrs. Sidney that her husband Arthur has been roasting in some unspeakable hell. Evelyn is also aware of people thinking her like aeroplane or a cruise liner and ‘each day some limb of the supernatural reached out to
pluck you by the clothes’. (p.14) So she decides to give up this practice as it is making her ill and she is anxious about Muriel if anything happens to her.

Muriel’s appearance is ghostly as her mother says in her pregnancy that her child should not be dead because she thinks, ‘It was more than the house could contain. A ghost carrying a ghost’. (p.79)

After having given birth to the child, Muriel gets convinced by Evelyn that it is not a real baby but might be a changeling. She tells Muriel, ‘You can’t say it’s human’ … pointing out the strange ears, the wrinkled skin, lifting the flaccid limbs and letting them drop, and adds, ‘It cries all the time’. (p.188) Evelyn further tells her ‘to give thought to getting the real one back’ (p.188) for which she asks Muriel ‘to find some water, a river or something. Float it along. …. I’m not saying it always works. There’s a risk.’ (p.189) Muriel makes up her mind for the real baby in exchange with the changeling at a water source. Both of them implement on the thought and the child is drowned in the canal to lessen the burden on the mind of a caretaker mother.

The behaviour of Muriel and Evelyn is enigmatic and both are treated ‘mad’ by the neighbours and the community workers even. Isabel Field, the community worker, experiences their madness and haunted nature of the house at the time of being locked by Evelyn.

I:2.2.2.5: Religion and Culture

*Every Day is Mother’s Day* (1985) presents some aspects of religion and culture also. There are some references of the celebration of Christmas and exchange of Christmas gifts being exchanged among the neighbours as well as the references of Muriel along with her mother attending the Sunday prayer.

Both male and female characters depict respect and disrespect toward the cultural and moral values. Evelyn respects the culture and moral values so she tries her level best to hide the pregnancy of Muriel. Florence, Mrs. Sidney, Sylvia also practice the culture but Isabel Field flouts these values due to her illicit affair with Colin.

Philip Field, Clifford Axon are presented as the characters with loose moral; Clifford’s preying on little girls drives Evelyn crazy and Philip Field who doesn’t feel any awkwardness to enjoy sex with any woman irrespective of status, age turns Isabel mad. Colin who enjoys sex with Isabel and has decided to marry her giving divorce to Sylvia, changes his decision when learns about Sylvia’s pregnancy, realizing his responsibility and respecting the cultural and moral values. Colin also shows humane quality when he opposes his opportunist head of the department, Frank O’Dawyer and virtually fights to get back the file of Isabel Field though he has ended up with her.

I:2.2.2.6: Mystery

Mantel in this novel reflects mystery through the characters, setting, imagery etc. As Harriet Waugh (1985) states, ‘The rooms of house threaten. Things gibber in the wainscoting. Her half-witted daughter has secrets – she can write, for instance, but Evelyn does not know this. Strange, hateful messages are found in unlikely places. She is also pregnant.’ At the outset, the lives of the Axon family are mystery in itself. It is presented through the house they own,
the way they live, and Muriel’s pregnancy of unknown parentage. Evelyn uses the cardigan to hide her pregnancy increase the mysterious shade in the novel. The community workers are not allowed by Evelyn in the house. She is reluctant to cooperate with them. According to Sybil S. Steinberg (2000), her practicing the art of séance is mysterious. When Mrs. Sidney comes for such a séance session to talk to her late husband she suspects her daughter responsible for the increasing visits of the social workers. So when Florence brings the Christmas pie and inquires about Muriel, Evelyn calls her ‘odious and interfering woman.’ (p.111) She practices the art of séance which is mysterious She wants to hide the pregnancy and even the child birth. Therefore she doesn’t take the bottle of the milk and diapers from the chemists nearby but goes to a distant chemist shop so she could answer least embarrassing questions and can avoid the details of the patient etc. The element of mystery is due to the concealment that has been mentioned by Mantel in her memoir, ‘… after I was six or seven concealment became my habit’. (p. 71)

The theme of ‘revenge’ has not been dealt with directly but it paves the way for this prominent theme in Mantel’s second novel, Vacant Possession (1986), the sequel to Every Day is Mother’s Day.

I:2.2.2.7: Transformation/Transubstantiation

In one of the interviews Mantel mentions the common theme as ‘transformation’ which really is brought out through various themes explained and interpreted as above. In part two of Giving up the Ghost: A Memoir Mantel writes, “All of us can change. All of us can change for the better, at any point. I believe this, but what is certainly true is that we can be made foreign to ourselves, suddenly, by illness, accident, misadventure, or hormonal caprice.” (p.54)

The change she mentions is for the betterment and at any point of time to make us foreign to ourselves due to some external forces. Every Day is Mother’s Day is not an exception to the presentation of such a change. The kind of transformation can be seen in every aspect of novel. The central character, Muriel, changes unknowingly from a mentally retarded girl to a pregnant lady and poses a great problem before her orthodox mother. This change proves physical for Muriel on the other hand; it is a kind of anxiety for Evelyn.

Evelyn is a wife of a careless husband and a mother of Muriel, a mentally retarded daughter who is pregnant mysteriously. It brings great change in the lives of both of them and the other characters related to them. The community workers change and hand over the case to another social worker. This change proves useful for Evelyn who wants to hide Muriel’s pregnancy.

The last community worker who handles the case is Miss Isabel Field, a young lady fed up of father’s lewd nature, wants to seek peace and a man loving her in the form of Colin Sidney. According to Harriet Waugh (1985) ‘she (Isabel) has her own problems – a drunken father and a depressing affair with a depressed married schoolmaster (Colin).’ The change in her life is positive as Colin is ready to marry her leaving his wife, Sylvia. Sylvia’s life is about to change to a greater extent but Sylvia’s pregnancy again changes the situation and Colin decides not to divorce her. The decision changes her optimism into pessimism increasing her drinking habit. Within this period, she loses Muriel’s file and doesn’t turn up to the Axon House which helps Evelyn to hide her pregnancy successfully.
Muriel’s child has been transformed from human to a changeling as Evelyn wants to get rid of it. Muriel who wants a child becomes ready to make the baby sink only because she wants to get a human child back in exchange of the changeling. Evelyn succeeds in changing her mind for her benefit and makes her drown the baby in the canal.

We see the atmosphere and the characters are changing frequently. Evelyn, who is a caring mother, neglects sending Muriel to school or to community centre to improve. Muriel, who pretends to be an obedient daughter, at the end of the novel, opposes her while Colin releases Isabel and blows her to meet her death. Evelyn’s death changes Muriel’s life to institutionalization to the hospital that leads to the development of action and disguise of Muriel as Lizzie Blank and Mrs. Wilmot to plan a strategic revenge on some characters in VP.

II:2.2: Vacant Possession (1986)

II:2.2.1: Summary of Vacant Possession (1986)

Vacant Possession (1986) depicts the atmosphere of EDMD after 10 years. Muriel who is institutionalized gets opportunity to be free due to the closure of the Institution where she had found the friends like Emmanuel Crisp, Sholto etc. Muriel decides to take revenge of the people who she thinks culprit in EDMD. She deliberately disguises herself as Lizzie Blank, Mrs. Wilmot to kill the persons who have exploited her retarded nature. The novel is full of coincidence.

Colin and Sylvia now occupy 2, Buckingham Avenue, the Axon House vacant after Evelyn’s death at the end of EDMD. Colin’s daughter, Suzanne is pregnant and it is learnt that the person is none other than Jim Ryan, Isabel’s husband. Jim declines to marry her and the difficulties are mounted due to the obstinacy of Suzanne who wants to give birth to this child. Muriel who visits the Axon House accepts the job of housemaid with a changed name of a murderer lady Lizzie Blank. She works as a maid servant with Sidney family. All the efforts to convince Suzanne not to give birth to this illegitimate child prove in vain. Suzanne gives birth to the child and within some days leaves the house and stays alone with her child and calls Lizzie sometimes for baby seating.

Muriel’s another disguise; Mrs. Wilmot works in the hospital where Philip Field and Mrs. Sidney are patients. In course of time she succeeds in her purpose of revenge. Colin and Sylvia decide to shift to a new house and while on the way new house Sylvia and Isabel who are acquainted in canal clean-up expedition, are killed by Mr. Kowalski to save old Mrs. Wilmot. Muriel, who gets the box of the skeleton of her drowned child, goes to 2, Buckingham Avenue and finds the house vacant. She moves all around and puts the bones together to make a skeleton to wait for a human body in exchange of a changeling. The novel ends with Colin’s waiting for Sylvia in the new house, but ‘it was quite dark’ suggesting no hope to have a new start.

II:2.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of Vacant Possession (1986)

II:2.2.2.1: Revenge

Being the sequel to Every Day is Mother’s Day, Vacant Possession presents the story after ten years with the same characters except Evelyn, Muriel’s dead mother and Muriel
leaving the asylum with an intention to have vengeance which she calls comeuppance on some characters in her mind. When Crisp asks about her future plans, Muriel answers that she is not an animal. She doesn’t want to adopt common profession but thinks of being a ‘monumental mason.’ Further she says, “I won’t always need to be three people. It’s only till I give them their comeuppance … all those people that were in my life. Mr. Colin Sidney and Mrs. Sylvia Sidney, and Miss Florence Sidney, and Miss Isabel Field.” (p.72)

Richard Rayner reviews in Los Angeles Times of 29-8-2010 about Muriel’s revenge:

Once she sets her mind on vengeance, there can really be only one winner, and the novel zooms toward an orgy of murder that Mantel renders with hilarious, scary glee. Maybe Mantel’s making a feminist point, but some-thing wider is going on too. Her fiction tells us that the individual always matters, and there’s no end to specific weirdness of the individual.

To reach to the Sidneys she disguises herself as Lizzie Blank, the name she has adopted from the names of three murderers: Lizzie Borden, Ruth Ellis, and Constance Kent. She doesn’t remember the name ‘Borden’, so she takes it as ‘Blank’. Thus revenge becomes the central and prominent theme of the novel. Muriel’s revenge evolves around 2, Buckingham Avenue i.e. the Axon House wherefrom she got vacated after her mother’s death and is possessed now by Colin Sidney.

To work out her revenge, she hides her identity and disguises herself as ‘Lizzie Blank’ and ‘Mrs. Wilmot’. Mrs. Wilmot is a nurse going to get retired. Therefore, Muriel decides to disguise as ‘Mrs. Wilmot.’ She takes revenge on Philip Field who has made her turn into a woman from an innocent girl untimely. Mrs. Sidney has been murdered being the mother of Colin and Florence. Colin is indirectly responsible for her mother’s death and her institutionalization and now possesses the Axon House; Florence is perhaps responsible for the growing surveillance of the social workers. Mrs. Sidney also has understood that Lizzie Blank and Mrs. Wilmot are no two persons and Muriel doesn’t want her real identity be exposed. She also beats Clyde to death when he tries to sexually assault her. Kowalski who takes her to be a prostitute also gets beaten by her. She also helps Suzanne to separate her from her parents with an intention of revenge on Colin who has separated Muriel from her mother, though accidentally.

II:2.2.2.2: Mystery

The element of mystery is a must and is the demand of the story. The title of the novel, ‘Vacant Possession’ is antithetical and mysterious as the possession, if vacant, is of no use. The phrase is used for the Axon House which becomes vacant due to Evelyn’s death and is possessed at present by Colin and his family and to make it vacant is Muriel’s sole aim. To get it done, Muriel adopts two mysterious personalities: one is of Mrs. Wilmot and other is of Lizzie Blank.

The mystery starts with her names – Lizzie Blank working as a maid servant in Colin’s house and Mrs. Wilmot working as a sweeper in the hospital. There is a chance to get her identity revealed as Mrs. Sidney, who is in hospital, recognizes Muriel in disguise. As she wants to expose Muriel, Muriel murders her.
Colin speaks about some mysterious elements, “Why I found teeth in my front garden”. (p.189) Even Kowalski has no idea of Muriel being Mrs. Wilmot for whom he murders Sylvia and Isabel Field. – Evelyn convinces Muriel about the concept of changeling and replacing and getting a human child in exchange of the changeling.

Her disguise remains mystery as Sylvia, who is happy to get into a new house and Isabel Field, who is pregnant are killed by Mr. K. Colin who is indirectly responsible for her mother’s death is really bereft by Sylvia’s and Isabel’s death; he doesn’t understand wherefrom they are speaking and what happened to them and why? The mysterious element makes Steinberg (2000) call VP ‘the haunting sequel to Mantel’s Every Day Is Mother’s Day’.

II:2.2.2.3: Family Life and Relations

The novel presents the family life of the Sidneys and the Fields as the Axons have disappeared from the scene. Muriel, who has been institutionalized after the death of her mother, gets Sholto, Crisp and others as the well-wishers and are ready to help her in every situation. She doesn’t enjoy the family and familial relations that might weaken her purpose of living and returning after ten years.

Colin and Sylvia who are the owners of the Axon House presently experience the estranged family relations not due to Isabel Field but due to her husband, Jimmy Ryan by whom Suzanne is pregnant and is determined to give birth to this baby on her own. Suzanne’s problem pervades the family. Isabel who is distressed due to her husband’s illicit behaviour now suffers from her husband’s illicit behaviour and drinks heavily. Once she reveals her desire to see her father dead as Philip Field sexually exploits even the nurses of the hospital. Mrs. Sidney also has been in the same hospital in critical condition. Her stay in the hospital is welcomed by her family members but when her condition improves and there is possibility of her returning to the house, Florence and Sylvia are reluctant to get her home and to nurse her. When Mrs. Wilmot shoulders her responsibility, Sylvia and Florence become happy.

Colin and Sylvia being the parents of Suzanne, Claire, Alistair have lost their familial bonds. No child is ready to compromise and to understand one another sensibly. This loss of affinity reflects in Suzanne’s love affair and her untoward pregnancy that stirs the atmosphere of the Sidneys. Suzanne begets a female child but declines to hand it over to Colin and Sylvia as she doesn’t believe in them whereas she believes in Lizzie and calls her for baby-seating. Even parents have to take the address of Suzanne from Lizzie. Nobody treats any family member selflessly.

On the contrary, the people befriended at asylum exhibit the familial relations and are ready to help each other at every point of time. Mr. K kills Sylvia and Isabel for Mrs. Wilmot which reflects the relations developed by Muriel in the society.

II:2.2.2.4: Isolation/ Loneliness/ Alienation

The isolation starts with the title itself, Vacant Possession that suggests the emptiness and nothingness. The phrase is a kind of antithesis suggesting the nothingness in possessing such a thing. The persons who possess the vacant things are alienated or isolated naturally from the concrete world.
The characters of the novel experience the isolation forced or self-inflicted one. Muriel isolates herself with an intention to take revenge. She isolates herself as Mrs. Wilmot with Mr. K and exposes her real self in the company of her asylum friends, Sholto, Crisp etc. In EDMD, she has been isolated due to her pregnancy and by her mother’s attitude while in VP she isolates herself skilfully with a certain intention. We come across her intention of revenge and comeuppance for certain characters in EDMD and occurs in the novel many a times.

Suzanne isolates herself due to her obstinate nature and her decision to give birth to an illegitimate child against her parent’s will. She shifts herself after giving birth to the child and separates herself from her family and Jim Ryan, the real father of the child who deceives her. Isabel Field experiences the isolation due to her broken love-affair with Colin and due to misbehaviour of the present spouse, Jim Ryan and her overdrinking and also due to father’s performing illicit acts on any opposite sex.

Colin and Sylvia are estranged from their other children due to anxiety for Suzanne. Suzanne who has isolated herself doesn’t give her address to her parents but asks them to collect from Lizzie Blank. Florence who lives with her mother for long is no more ready to nurse her in her illness and old age.

II:2.2.2.5: Childhood Memories

The major theme revolves around Muriel’s remembrance of her childhood and her caretaker mother, Evelyn. When Muriel returns to All Asia Emporium where she lives with Immanuel Crisp, remembers her mother’s treatment from her childhood and also in her pregnancy. She also remembers her father’s funeral when she was 6 year-old.

Muriel remembers the past life: mother’s waiting by gate when Muriel goes to school; not allowing her out of the house in the mornings; locking Muriel in the bedroom and hiding her shoes. She remembers herself as an “object of remark.”(p.31) She watches the other children playing from the bars of window. She used to lick iron bars. Her mother tells her about streets that –‘The streets, Mother said, were dangerous for a growing girl. There were attacks, impregnations, thefts.’ (p.32) One day one social worker, Mr. Hutchinson comes and asks Evelyn to send Muriel to Community centres. Muriel reminds, ‘A few months passed, and the results of freedom were visible. Mother kept her at home again.” (p.33) It is also stated:

Talking about the past upset her (Muriel): the cold and discomfort, mother’s bullying, the lack of proper food, the musty unlit rooms inside the house, and the screen of dark trees outside. Buckingham Avenue was so silent you could here the dust move, and Mother’s dying thoughts rustle through her skull; Christmas 1974, mice in the kitchen cupboards, two seasonal envelops coming through the door. Miss Florence Sidney, their neighbour, came with a plate full of warm mince pies. Muriel was shut up; their fragrances, wafting up the staircase, made her jaws ache. Mother put Miss Sidney in her place. She forced raw whisky on her, bawled out “Merry Christmas,” and booted her out in short order. One of Miss Sidney’s pies leaped from the plate as she scurried down the hall, and smashed and opened itself on the dusty parquer floor. Muriel came down; she put her finger into its streaming golden insides and tasted it. Evelyn shooed her off,
pushed her into the back room. She told her to let it lie. Next day it was gone. (pp. 33-4)

II: 2.2.2.6: Transformation/Transubstantiation

Mantel in her interview has stated transformation or transubstantiation a recurring theme as she believes in change at any point of time. The central character, Muriel who is shown mentally retarded in the previous novel changes herself after ten years in asylum to a clever, skillful conspirator and disguiser. She manages to perform Mrs. Wilmot, a sweeper at the hospital and Lizzie Blank, the house maid working at the Sidneys without getting suspected. Her journey from a dependent on mother to a murderer revenging on certain characters is awesome.

After having got the skeleton of the baby she is happy and becomes optimistic of getting the child in exchange of the changeling. Though it sounds a fantasy, Mantel shows this transformation rather convincingly. Merle Rubin (31-3-2000: Wall St. Journal) reviews “Yet while Ms. Mantel is unsparing in depicting the folly and perversity of “ordinary” people, she does not pretend that they are more dangerous than the lunatics.”

Some other characters reveal such change. Colin and Sylvia, who at first are not in position to bear the news of Suzanne’s pregnancy, accept it as inevitable and on account of forgiveness to their daughter’s mistake. Sylvia and Isabel eventually come together as social workers. This change proves transitory as they both die at the hands of Mr. K.

The novel opens with Muriel and her mates leaving the asylum and are anxious of getting the shelter. They get accommodated as per availability but have no purpose for living except Muriel. Muriel’s life changes from uncertain to certain as she gets back the house and also the skeleton of the changeling which has been purpose of her living. But her transformation proves fatal to the persons involved in her mother’s death and her life in asylum directly or indirectly. Colin who remains all alone is the real victim of her planned revenge as he has nothing at his hand to live his life.

As EDMD and VP are in a way a novel and a sequel of it, we see the same characters and incidents interrelated. Some unanswered questions in EDMD may get clarified in VP. Mantel gives very minute details and back references to make the readers understand the crisis in EDMD and tries to relate the events in VP very convincingly bringing out Muriel’s transformation from a mentally retarded girl to a clever and skilful disguiser to plot revenge of her mother’s accidental death.

III: 2.2 Eight months on Ghazzah Street (1988)

III: 2.2.1: Summary of Eight months on Ghazzah Street (1988)

Eight months on Ghazzah Street (1988) is based on Mantel’s real experience of her stay in Saudi Arabia. The narrator, Frances Shore, cartographer by profession joins her engineer husband, Andrew, who works at Jeddah with Turadup. From the very arrival, Frances experiences the secondary treatment given to women. On the flight, she learns about some restrictions and rules which she feels ridiculous and violating the human rights. The flat where they stay is engirdled to cut off the contact with the outer world. Frances develops friendship with her neighbours, Yasmin and Samira living in the same apartment. There is
one empty flat that arouses curiosity in the mind of Frances. She tries to find out the reality. Yasmin’s husband, Raji and Samira’s husband, Abdul Nasr create suspicion in the mind of Frances. She finds many doubtful things but doesn’t get clarified. Yasmin tells about her sorrow. Frances also gets foul treatment on the hooligans which she neglects.

Meanwhile there is burglary in their flat which happens after the incident of Frances getting wounded while blocking the way of the veiled man coming down from the empty flat. The action of the novel reaches at its climax when Fairfax finds dead after leaving Andrew’s flat early in the morning after getting beaten by unidentified men. His telephone message, to leave the flat, creates a panic in the mind of Andrew and Frances. Andrew, Frances, Eric and Hasan try to find out the dead body of Fairfax. They don’t get any co-operation from the government machinery; instead they are suspected and treated very badly.

They go to enquire at Sarabia Hotel where Fairfax has booked a lodge. The staff is not ready to inform about anything. Luckily they meet Raji and he makes the manager speak by bribing. While leaving the hotel premises, Frances catches the sight of Abdul Nasr, the Egyptian and to her surprise, Yasmin. Due to road blocks, they return late to Dunroamin to receive call from Eric asking Frances to send Andrew at 7 am at the site and then to the airport to make arrangement to send the body. He also informs her that somebody shoot from car Raji and his friend Major Zulficar, killing the Major on the spot and Raji escaping with a brush. He requests her not to involve in any matter.

They go to the hospital and identify the body of Fairfax here Frances learns from Eric that Yasmin caught at airport while going to Amman without the permission by husband for journey. Eric asks them to live with them that night by packing the material. Due to torrential rain they cannot leave the place. She tries to contact her neighbours but fails. Next morning the police come, take away the boxes but neglecting at her. When she knocks Yasmin’s door, Shams tells her everything finished. Then Raji leaves Kingdom with Shams, Mother, and his son, Selim.

Frances visits all the flats including the empty flat left open by the police to fulfill her suppressed desire. Andrew and Frances also leave the place to get into new house outside the town with full sunlight and freeway through every window to experience their free life.

III:2.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of Eight months on Ghazzah Street (1988)

III:2.2.2.1: Isolation/ Loneliness/ Alienation

Hugh Barnes in his review “Bosphorescence” (Observer, May 1, 1988: 43) asserts that ‘Mantel has written an elegant and disturbing account of the changes wrought by alienation’. The theme of ‘alienation/ isolation/ loneliness’ reflects from Frances Shore’s journey to Jeddah. She was asked to keep away some things from her fellow passenger. She arrives to Dunromain to get herself locked by Andrew going out. The wall around all the windows and doors give her impression that she has been as if imprisoned. When she wants to go on the road the hooligans serve the vulgar comments. Her neighbours, Yasmin and Samira don’t come to parapet even to have fresh air. Frances writes,

No one ever stands and chats in Ghazzah street. Neighbours know each other by sight, from glimpses on balconies and rooftops; the women speak by phone. (p.32)
The female should remain inside the houses, cook, serve the male and should not interfere with any of the business. Thus Frances who is a free woman feels lonely to that extent that the cockroaches she finds in the kitchen also make her happy being a company. When one of the cockroaches was killed she becomes sad. When Andrew takes her out and returns in the apartment she feels – ‘…with the closing the metal gate, she has a dream closed’ (p.60) When they enter into the flat she feels as if ‘entered into the dark cold silence of the apartment.’(p.61) Andrew brings down the wall in the doorway to hall. Frances feels a prisoner released and can walk in the street; go out in the hall; to flat roof even. Frances has the neighbours around but she is lonely. At the end of the novel, when they move to Terrex plot, though neighbourless she feels non-alienated. ‘She looks through the glass, windows and finds free way everywhere.’ (p.299)

The novel has been narrated in the diary form; the diary Frances Shore used to write. It symbolizes her urge to express herself in one form or other. Frances is unable to convey all the happenings to her husband and can’t behave freely due to social restrictions. Thus she gives vent to her emotions through her diary-writing. Her diary-writing represents her isolated/alienated self. She questions this alienation forced on the women but Samira and Yasmin plead for it. They call this alienation not forced but out of reverence to women. Using the veil also they relate to the respect and not the restriction.

III:2.2.2:2 Religion and Culture

As the novel has the setting in one of the Islamic countries, where there is shariya rules, people visiting from other countries will experience a great difference. Though all the religions have the ‘welfare of Mankind’ at its core, the implementation and some changes are due to social and other external forces. The social system is based on the religious teachings and thus to supervise it there are religious police. They watch if there is any kind of violation of the sharia rules. The novel has a number of references of such incidents of the crimes and the punishments that can be called cruelty. The women should cover their body otherwise they are painted green on the exposed parts. They punish the men and women committing adultery by lashes and death penalty by stone pelting. On the contrary, Frances who is Christian feels these practices misinterpretation of religion. Her questions make Yasmin and Samira silent yet they go on pleading some customs or rituals.

With regard to culture, there is a great difference between the Islamic and the Western culture. Though Samira and Yasmin are educated from British Universities, they support the restrictions on women by the religion. They are curious about the free culture of Britain and other European countries but praise the culture in Islamic countries that doesn’t allow women especially free and equal treatment.

III:2.2.2:3: Social System

The Saudi Social system has been given vent to in Parson’s words when he goes to introduce Andrew to Deputy Minister and he feels neglected, Parsons says,

Never forget, Andrew, that as individuals we are very unimportant in the Saudi scheme of things. We are here only for sufferance. They do need Western experts, but of course they are very rich and proud
people and it goes against the grain to admit that they need anyone. 
(p.41)

There are many references of the political instability due to violence and whims of Royal families. Some of them are: when Turadup and company came to Saudi Arabia ‘in late 1974, a few months before King Faisal was shot by his nephew.’ (p.52) While stating the reason why the white people don’t participate in any of the social activities there is a reference of ‘the fabled party in 1951, when young Prince Mishari, 18th surviving son of the great King Abdul Aziz, turned up in a drunken rage, sprayed all the guests with bullets and murdered the British Counsul.’ (p.56)

The Saudi Social System has very strict rules against corruption, adultery, man- woman relationships etc. but the implementation of them is lawless. To bribe is a serious crime but there are characters like Hasan specially bribes the lower ups. No body knows who bribes higher ups. The crimes are punished; the news flashes of the punishments but not of the crime. For Adultery if proved, the couple is stoned in the public place to death. The man-woman equality not accepted and that becomes the rage of a British lady migrated from Europe.

Frances Shore when writes letter to her mother she criticizes the state of Saudi Arabia but at the same time, she regrets about losing the glorious past: Saudi Arabia has been spoiled by its wealth, that before the oil there was a golden age when everyone lived in tents and was simple and religious and kind to old people. (p.79)

In Saudi Arabia, a woman should not go alone at public places. She should be accompanied with the driver or her husband. If she were caught with a person other than her husband, she would be punished. She should take journey with the permission of her husband. Adam Mars-Jones in his mixed review calls Fraces Shore’s intelligence and the world of Islam as ‘opposed principles’. He calls her trapped in her particularity and convinced of its irrelevance. And further writes:

Islam makes no pretences of treating women with equality and allows no place for female perceptions. When Frances shops with Andrew, shop-keepers treat her as if she is invisible and inaudible, though her husband has a shape and voice. When she goes in the street, drivers gesture her to cross in front of them, then accelerate. Newspapers like the Saudi Gazette print not problem of pages, but pages of the instruction on how women should please their husbands, so that problems never arise. (“Baffling Boxed-In”, in Times Literary Supplement, May 20, 1988: 552)

There is a very strict rule against adultery that results into other arrangements for the influential political personalities. Charlotte Innes states:

Though all Mantel’s novels illumine societal evils – be it the British class system in An Experiment in Love, the malevolent interplay between personality and public events in A Place of Greater Safety or colonialism in A Change of Climate – Eight Months on Ghazzah Street is perhaps Mantel’s most overtly political work. Her outrage against a
society that virtually imprisons women, mutilates thieves, stones adulterers and disappears over-curious intruders is palpable. (14-9-1997: Los Angeles Times)

Some of the rules seem to be done out of the whims and fancies of the implementers. At any time the traffic is stopped and the police start the check. It is for the women with persons other than her husband. Frances when goes along with Andrew, Parsons for identification of the body of Fairfax, the guard asks them to bring four Muslim men, no testimony by women. The offices or institutions close for prayers. At one point while discussing about the capital punishment, Frances informs that it is given in England only for murders and not for adultery. Then Samira and Yasmin tell her that this punishment is given by Allah, if you are not caught raid-handed you keep it secret to do good in future then Allah forgives you. Frances then says that it is not a religion but law enforcement.

III:2.2.2.4: Mystery

Rubin (1997) states, “Eight Months on Ghazzah Street is a taughtly written tale of suspense that makes brilliant use of monotony and claustrophobia to heighten the heroine’s growing sense of danger.” The comment speaks of suspense and claustrophobia synonymous to the key word ‘mystery’ in case of the Saudi system. Every person suspects other one.

Anita Brookner praises Mantel’s skill in maintaining the mystery throughout the novel. Devotees of Hilary Mantel’s earlier novels will be surprised by this one (Eight Months on Ghazzah Street) a horror story with an atmosphere as strange as that of a detective story, but a detective story that fails to tie up the loose ends. Clues abound and plots are plotted, but explanations are lacking. Before the last page has been reached one is fiercely uncom-fortahle, as if one had been trapped inside a complete delusional system. And the characteristic of delusional systems is that their logic is extreme but inaccessible to those on the outside. A peculiar fear emanates from this narrative: I dread to think what it did to the writer herself. After having provided details Brookener states about Mantel’s control over the novel: This tightness of control is perhaps the novel’s eeriest feature. That and the nightmare of a city bristling with vacant lots, screaming tyres, cats with their fur torn away, and the ever-present penalties. The overriding boredom leeches away emotion, and this pervades the authorial voice, which is even and slightly monotonous. But the sheer fact of sustaining the mystery to the very end is brilliantly carried out. (May 14,1988: Spectator, Vol.260, No.8340, p.43)

We come across the element of mystery through the setting of the novel. Dunromain, apartment where Frances Shore and Andrew Shore reside, has two neighbours in other flats but there is also an empty flat creating a mysterious environment. Andrew neglects it as he is busy with his work. But Frances who is all the time in the flat becomes curious about the empty flat and the sound of sobbing coming out of it. There is a rumour that the empty flat is used by the close relative of the minister to meet his mistress. Frances has heard the sobbing sound or the sound of opening and closing the door. No person speaks about such things in Saudi Arabia. Frances also gets wounded when she tries to block the way of a veiled
personality coming out of the empty flat though all the persons tell her not to get involved in such matters.

While looking down the rooftop, she finds a crate in the balcony of the empty flat. When she speaks about this to Andrew, the crate is moved away and the balcony is swept clean. Frances has many questions about the crate and its content and its moving away.

Frances or nobody knows the profession of Raji or Abdul Nasr. The maids working in their houses don’t know English, as Sham is from Srilanka and Sarsaparila from Indonesia. Once while going out, Sarsaparila shows her shoulder where there is carved ‘Elizabeth.’ When Frances hears sound of the door of the empty flat, she tries to look from the landing of the staircase and finds Sarsaparila returning from the empty flat. Thus Sarsaparila’s name carved and behaviour have mysterious shades. Yasmin who speaks to Frances about many a things but her attempt to leave the country and Raji remains a mystery. Her catching sight at the Sarabia Hotel premises with Egyptian and Abdul Nasr and attack on Raji can’t be taken as an accident. It creates mysterious atmosphere about Yasmin.

The climax of the mystery reaches at its peak with the arrival of Fairfax. He arrives books the lodging at Hotel Sabaria and comes to dine with Andrew and Frances. After the dinner, they go to sleep and Fairfax lies on the sofa. At 3.00 a.m. they find Fairfax beaten and is moaning. Though Frances asks him questions about the wound, attacker, and about his visiting the rooftop, he remains silent. On the very next day, Andrew gets the news of his accidental death. Beforehand he receives a phone message from Fairfax about leaving the apartment as he has seen persons taking down the dead body of a person. Nobody is ready to speak about the cause of the death and the whereabouts of the dead body of Fairfax.

III:2.2.2:5: Family Life and Relations

Once Frances writes in her diary, ‘There is nothing like family life to keep you going in this place.” (p.42) Her views are the experience revealed through the words. The family is a type of social institution based on the notion of mutual understanding and co-operation. The base of this institution has been weak and deteriorating.

The husband-wife relationship has been exposed through two Muslim couples: Raji and Yasmin and Abdul Nasr and Samira; and three English couples: Frances and Andrew; Daphne and Eric Parsons; and Marion and Russel. Yasmin and Samira are always inside the apartment and have to look after the household affairs but they aren’t free to take any decision. Their place in the society is none other than an object. In the last part of the novel, the step taken by Yasmin reflects the suffocation of the family relations. When Raji leaves the place, he also has no regret over the decision of Yasmin. Samira though educated has no strength and rebel nature like that of Yasmin. The relationship between Raji-Yasmin and Abdul Nasr-Samira is not trusted and is like Master-slave.

Among the English couples Frances and Andrew whom Yasmin calls lucky as they can eat together suggests what kind of relations might be between Frances and Andrew and at the same time the relations between Raji and Yasmin. Frances is rebellious and curious caring for the family and family relations. Marion is more rebellious but thoughtless and thus her family relations are at stake and Russel has to send her back to England when he learns about Jeff Pollard and Marion’s untoward intimacy. Eric and Daphne like Frances and Andrew respect
each other to respect their husband-wife relationship. Many a times Frances involves in the local problems but Andrew without getting angry with her, tries to solve the problem.

One of the unique family relationships is between Yasmin and her mother-in-law as this relationship is shown only between these two. Earlier, Yasmin, Samira and Frances used to mix up with each other but from the very day of the arrival of mother-in-law, Yasmin has restrictions on very thing. She has to cook everyday for at least ten to fifteen persons as mother-in-law invites her guests everyday. She complains about the Selim’s feeble body and blames Yasmin for not feeding him well and time to time and goes on feeding him forcibly that makes Yasmin anxious. Her life is not of a wife or daughter-in-law but of a housemaid. Frances finds her sometimes on the rooftop in her abaya perhaps waiting for somebody.

III:2.2.2:6: Man-Woman Status / Gender Discrimination

The novel, EMGS, presents the problem of equality of sexes in Saudi social system. There is no equal status for women who are treated inferior to men in every aspect. This treatment has not only been accepted by the women of Islamic religion but has been supported. The women from other religions can’t accept and adjust with it. The women can’t have education as it is prohibited. Samira also refers to the riots on this issue.

The women can’t walk on the road or travel unless they have a male companion mostly the husband or the immediate relative. The religious police make a traffic jam to search for such couples and punish them with lashes etc. Andrew once is worried about Jeff and Marion who come to party, being no husband and wife. Frances who attempts to be on road in leisure has to face the foul comments by the Saudi boy who drives the car by her. It happens twice with Frances in the novel but Daphne Parsons tells her not to protest. She tells Frances they don’t want female alone on road.

A married woman should not travel without the permission of her husband. Marion narrates such incidents of foreigners who are caught and punished. Sometimes such foreigner females are caught and sexually assaulted under the guise of religious police. Yasmin who is caught at the airport has no permission by husband to travel alone.

When Frances goes to purchase painkillers in a shop the chemist behaves as if he has nobody in front of him and communicates with Andrew who is at the back of Frances. The house owner also comes to the flat; he goes across the flat neglecting Frances’ presence. The guard at the hospital tells them that the testimony by female is not valid. Thus the incidents give an impression of the inferiority of women to men.

The women get divorced by the men very easily. The men can re-marry that lady if he wishes. If a lady gets divorced, she loses all her rights on her husband and every relation and property etc.

III:2.2.2:7: Transformation/Transubstantiation

EMGS presents the change or transformation among some of the characters. Frances who is a woman of free thoughts arrives at Jeddah and tries to rebel against the rules and restrictions in Saudi social system. Within her stay she surrenders some of her principles. At first she calls Andrew’s saying Insallah a kind of defeated mentality utters the word Insallah while conversing with the landlord. It reflects the change in Frances’ character. The activities
happening around her compel her to change her attitude. At first she is very much interested to know the secret of the sobbing sound in the empty flat which continues throughout the novel to get calm after supervising the empty flat after the police make it empty again. While living with the neighbours she feels a kind of suspicion and fear. After getting shifted to new house surrounded by hundred units but empty, she feels safe and calm though she is all alone after Andrew’s going for a job, accompanied by a guard only. She finds freeway everywhere when looks out. This change really marks the character of Frances.

Andrew, who is irritated by the treatment given to him by the minister, gradually calms down and handles every critical situation very carefully. It is his treatment that settles Frances and assures her safety.

Marion, Russell’s wife, reveals a great change but not a better one. Being busy Russell can’t spare time for her to travel or to go to the parties. It results into her intimacy with Jeff Pollard. It increases to that extent that Russell has to decide to send her back to Britain.

A remarkable transformation is shown in Yasmin, a Pakistani lady, Frances’ next door neighbour. Throghout the novel, there is no sign of her rebellious nature. To one’s surprise we see at the end of the novel, Yasmin attempting to leave Saudi Arabia all alone leaving her husband, son and other family members. She is caught by the police at the airport.

EMGS being an account of Frances Shore’s stay in Jeddah with her husband, Andrew, reflects the social and political system that practices gender discrimination which is problematic for the Western people visiting Jeddah. Frances’s curiosity also creates problem for them. As usual Mantel leaves some unanswered questions but tries to clarify the doubts of Frances to some extent by making her visit the empty rooms upstairs. Mantel also is successful in revealing Frances’s transformation: from being sad and lonely among a crowd due to different social and political practices to be happy though all alone but watching freeway unrestrictedly.

**IV:2.2 Fludd (1989)**

**IV:2.2.1: Summary of Fludd (1989)**


Bishop informs him that a curate is about to appear to work out Bishop’s modernization plans. Fludd (the central character named after the 17th Century alchemist Robert Fludd) appears one evening. From the very moment of arrival, he influences Miss Dempsey who welcomes him. He tells them that he has come to transform them. They take him as the curate. At first he tours the parish. His tour influences the people of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton. Children start imitating the priesthood and people gather in good numbers for confession. Fludd starts transforming them. He breaks the rivalries among them to make them understand the form of humanity.

Fludd learns about a stain on Sister Philomena’s family and sympathizes with her. He takes up the statues and is helped by Father Angwin, Sister Philomena, Miss Dempsey. After this event when Bishop comes, Fludd disappears but before going away, he has given an address of the hotel to Sister Philomena and has asked to see him there. It’s an impossible thing to leave the nunnery which is made possible through the help of Sister Anthony, Polycarp, Cyril...
and Ignatius Loyola. Mother Perpetua who tries to catch her, is mysteriously burnt. Fludd meets Philomena and seduces her.

Fludd does these things in an unconventional way by creating confusion among nuns; seducing sister Philomena; compelling Father Angwin self-assessment. Fludd remains unmoved during this transformation process.

**IV:2.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of *Fludd* (1989)**

**IV:2.2.2.1: Alchemy**

Alchemy is the prime theme of Mantel’s works, as she states in one of the interviews. As the central character of the novel *Fludd* is an alchemist posing as a curate changes the desolate lives of a nun and a priest. Father Angwin who has lost the faith in religion has been transformed by Fludd. He makes up Father’s mind to bury the statues in the church premises. He has the power that any person coming in his contact gets under his influence. He has been described as Miss Dempsey opens the door and sees him first: “a tall, dim shaped, dark cloak, holes for mouth and eyes, a hat pulled over brow, with a doctor’s bag.” (p.) While listening to the dialogue between curate and father, Dempsey’s impression is that ‘Fludd is not a sycophant, but some innocent that the Bishop wished to ruin?’ (p.47)

Father Fludd decides to tour the parish. Angwin provides a map to him as a guidance. He finds a group of wild looking children neglected by the ambulance driver. In upstreet, he finds women who are widows due to council House Riots. Then he meets another group of children dressed in schooldresses. When enquired, about school, prayers etc. and get the answer about the belief in God as ‘atheists’. Netherhoughton shows some signs of alchemy in the form of dilapidated inns. He gives courtesy calls to nuns in the convent. He asks about the origin of the badblood between the nuns and Father Angwin. The business of Fludd has been stated as ‘the nigredo, a process of blackening, of corruption, of mortification, of break down – the albedo, whitening’. (p.104) It suggests Fludd might use his alchemy as a purifying process. The students start imitating the ‘priesthood’ who believe themselves ‘atheist’. Fludd thinks the alchemical change is based on the principle of science and art:

> Everything that is going to be purified must first be corrupted’. Everything that is to be put together must first be taken apart, everything that is to be made whole must first be broken into its constituent parts, its heat, its cold-ness, its dryness, its moisture. Base matter imprisons spirit, the gross fetters the subtle; every passion must be anatomized, every whim submit to mortar and pestle, everyt desire be ground and ground until its essence appears. After separation, drying out, moistening, dissolving, coagulating, fermenting, comes purification, recombination: the creation of substance that the world has until now never beheld. This is the opus contra naturem, this is the spagyric art; this is the Alchymical Wedding. (pp.79)

His influence can be seen on Sister Philomena whose real name is Roisin O’Halloran. When she first meets Fludd she has no idea that he will transform her life totally. In course of discussion, she reveals the sorrow she feels about her sister and her aunt. Fludd cleverly
entraps her and creates a desire in her mind to get rid of the rules and restrictions of the nunnery.

Fludd’s influence can be seen on the villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton as they gather for the prayers in good numbers. They also try to conciliate their conflicts to be one on religious issues. When he leaves at the time of Bishop’s arrival, Father thinks him sorcerer’s apprentice and accepts the divine power that he makes human saying, ‘Oh, Fludd, he thought, you sorcerer’s apprentice, you’ve gone and got it wrong this time. You’ve worked a miracle in reverse. You’ve doused the celestial fire, you’ve taken the divine and made it merely human, you’ve exchanged the spirit for damp, warm flesh.’ (pp.158-9)

His alchemy can be seen when there is about to happen something unfavourable to Fludd’s intention. It is seen when Mother Perpetua attempts to catch eloping Sister Philomena. She watches something coming very near to her in the form of fire and a white dressed figure that she is well-acquainted to and has been described – “She stopped and stared, eyes popping. It was a figure she knew; yet subject to change, to a transformation that froze her blood ‘Oh, horrible’ said Mother Purpit: caught half-way over the final stile.” (pp.159-60) It results into Mother Perpetua getting burnt and Philomena succeeds in eloping. The handkerchief that Philomena finds at the fence of the railway platform is found at the hotel where Fludd keeps the gold. Mother Perpetua’s burning is caused by kind of chemical reaction. Therefore Bishop says, “I feel there must have been some chemical reaction that caused it” and Angwin says, “The devil is a great chemist.” (p.173)

At the hotel room, Sister Philomena who has such idea of sin not to put off clothes ritually, puts off her clothes and lies on the bed as desired by Fludd. After having the sexual enjoyment which is nonetheless a sin for a nun, finds it a kind of alchemical change and gains the confidence. When on the next day, Fludd bereaves her and leaves her, she finds a chit containing a message ‘the gold is yours. You will find it in the drawer’. (p.179) She finds the torn handkerchief and when tries to empty it there are coins. It’s a form of alchemy. Though she misses him thereafter, she confidently spends her life on the basis of the experience she had.

IV:2.2.2.2: Religion and Culture

Mantel writes, “The whole of a Catholic life is lived in the shadow of the happy death”. (GUG P.207) Fludd has a religious theme at its core. The story revolves around the religious persons like Bishop, Father, Curate, and nuns and the Church being the religious place. The villagers of imaginary villages of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton also contribute to the action of the novel. As Lindsay Duguid points out:

*Fludd* is a novel about Roman Catholicism which is in the tradition of Muriel Spark rather than David Lodge. Serious without being pious, satirical without trivial, and always forgiving. It describes the religion of Fetherhoughton, a windswept Northern town whose hideous stone terraces are caught between mill and moor. Fetherhoughton’s deformed Irish Catholicism, which puts an emphasis on abstinence and sin is better suited to un-compromising nature of its citizens than the more florid manifestations of the Church of Rome.
It is then pointed:

The rites observed there have all but lost touch with Christianity. The grim women, banded together as Children of Mary in order to enjoy “strong tea, parlour games, and character assassination,” relish the conviction that their Protestant neighbours will burn in Hell. They have turned the name of the Head of the nearby convent from Mother Perpetua to the more suitably curt “Purpit” and, in their rendering, the words of the saccharine hymns become pure gibberish. Father Angwin, their parish priest, a man who has lost faith in God but not in whisky, is doubtful of the bishop’s plans to drag his inarticulate parishioners into the 1960s with the Vernacular Mass: “I can well-understand if you think Latin’s too good for them. But the problem I have here is their little grasp of the English language, do you see.” (“Ecclesiastical Auras,” in Times Literary Supplement, September 8, 1989:968)

Father Angwin who is a priest whose duty is to develop faith in God has himself lost it for last twenty years. Thus he cannot work properly as a religious personality. To change this situation, the Bishop sends a curate. At the time, there comes one person whom Father and nuns misunderstand as the curate and welcome him on the premises of the church. Fludd tries to convince Father Angwin that “Common sense has nothing to do with religion, and personal opinion has nothing to do with sin.” (p.50) He also tells Father Angwin, “Faith is like a wall, a big, blank, brick wall. One day, some fool comes with a hairpin, and chooses some inch of it, and begins to scrape away at the mortar. When the first dust flies up, the wall falls down.” (pp.51-2) Fludd prays for Father Angwin and finds ignorance and misapprehension as the cause of Angwin’s dilemma. Though church is the symbol of the religion, it has been described as ‘stale bridegroom.’ When Father Angwin calls the tobacconist from Netherhoughton as the devil, Fludd advises him to look at the true nature of the things.

As per the instructions of Bishop, Father Angwin has removed the statues of the gods and goddesses. Miss Dempsey describes walking in church premises where statues are buried as ‘It’s like walking on the dead.’ (p.79) Fludd after his arrival to the Church decides to dig up the statues and reinstate them and he is helped by Father, Miss Dempsey, Sister Philomena and some others.

The religious authorities like priest, nuns are presented being non-religious. Some nuns believe in strict observation of the religious rules but some don’t. The villagers also have lost the due respect for place of religion and things related to religion.

The element of ‘culture’ is indirectly related to the inheritance, religious nature and relation to the past. The religious personalities believe in cultural inheritance or preservation. They try to preserve it through their sermons, preaching etc. To pose an example, they observe strict rules and rituals and try to create the religious belief and a kind of sublime culture. Their sacrifice, sublimity, dedication, virtues and social service make the society indebted to religion and culture. The novel reflects the characters of such a kind. They are in nunnery or convent sacrificing their youth, the so-called worldly desires to serve the community. Yet they are the human beings with all the virtue and vices and may fall prey to the worldly and perishable things.
Being the religious authorities the people expect from them highest and flawless cultural values. When Sister Philomena is out with Fludd for some more time, Mother Perpetua rebukes her and when finds purity in her eyes, forgives her. Sister Philomena informs about her sister Kathleen, a nun, who was given a work to accompany another nun to other place. She tires of it and to avoid the inconvenience arrives to their church in a lorry. Though not committed any immoral or adulterous act, she has been expelled from nunnery. It results into her turning to a bad profession like Aunt Dymphna.

The idea of culture reflects through the small actions of the nuns and their practicing them. Even one sister cannot undress herself before another fellow sister to avoid the vicious and illicit thoughts. Sister Philomena decides to go away with Fludd and when undresses herself to put on another dress – “In disrobing before Sister Anthony she had committed, she felt sure, ten or a dozen sins against holy modesty. Even to take off your clothes when you were by yourself could be a sin against holy modesty, if you didn’t do it the right way.”

IV:2.2.2.3: Supernaturalness

As Fludd deals with the alchemy and the religion at its centre, it also focuses on the supernatural power or supernaturalness it has. The Church is the concrete symbol of this supernaturalness and the practitioners of the Christianity are the followers. The Church of Fetherhoughton, St. Thomas Acquina Church, is a Roman Catholic Church not visited by Protestants and has some statues of the saints, Goddesses etc. They represent the supernatural power they had. If we try to seek information about the statues, we get information about their supernatural power. For instance, St. Dunston Statue which has tongs and when devil tried to tempt him, the saint seized his nose with red hot pincers; Appolonia has pliers, and is patron saint of dentists, the Romans pulled her teeth out; St. Agatha is a poor Christian soul, carrying her breast on a dish, Patron saint of bell founder blesses bread in a dish on 5th February; St. Barthomew clutched the knife with which he had been flayed; St. Cecilia with a portable organ, a virgin; St. Theresa has the little flower glowered from beneath her wreath of roses; Michael the Archangel scales in which saint weighs human souls, with bare, muscled and claw-like foot; and Four Church Fathers: 1.St. Gregory with Papal tiara; 2. St. Augustine holding a heart pierced with an arrow (Bishop of Hippo): 3. St. Jerome with his little lion; and 4. St. Ambrose with his hive.

The statues of these great patron saints are asked to be buried by the Bishop and the order is obeyed by Father Angwin. Father Fludd arrives as the curate and takes initiative to dig up and reinstate these statues. The burial and digging up the statues suggests the dilemma a theist experiences. Father Angwin faces this dilemma to be an atheist till a man with supernatural power, Fludd arrives. The saints have the magical and mystic power to make them supernatural. It is God that offers such superhuman qualities to the earthly creatures. People believe in supernaturalness if miracles take place. Fludd possesses this power to influence them. He succeeds in changing the atmosphere of village and creating the religious atmosphere among the villagers.

IV:2.2.2.4: Mystery

Fludd is an alchemist that represents the mystery in itself. The character of Fludd is based on the 17th Century alchemist Robert Fludd. Nobody knows wherefrom he came and his intention in his coming over to Fetherhoughton. He says every time that “I have come to
transform you, transformation is my business.” (p.55) But nobody knows what kind of transformation or whose transformation he refers to. This element of mystery pervades the novel. His identity is hidden; his impulse behind his arrival is enigmatic. When Sister Philomena asks him why he became priest, he calls himself a person who cannot complete the education to get the qualifications to be a surgeon, but yet studying the mankind. Further he tells her that he also has forgotten his former trade: ‘nigredo, a process of blackening, of corruption, of mortification, of break down’, and ‘a process, albedo, a whitening’. (p.106) When somebody asks him about his past, he asks them to ‘murder the past’.

Father Angwin when visits Fludd’s room it is filled with incense and he has been wearing an old-fashioned nightshirt. Father Angwin thinks Fludd ‘bishop, bishop, we had no discussion of the bishop last night. His name was not even mentioned. If Fludd is a spy, I am ruined; but would any spy sleep so soundly?’ (p.56) His dealing with Father and the nuns needs interpretation. The church and the statues are enigmatic. The way he disappears is mysterious; the way he seduces Philomena is also a mysterious; and his being called ‘doctor’ by the hotel staff and his leaving her all alone in the hotel seems mysterious.

IV:2.2.2.5: Childhood Memories

The characters in Fludd remember their childhood most of the time. Among them we have the minor characters mostly as the major and authoritative characters have much to speak about the present and future, but the minor characters like nuns and others have nothing to speak except the past, as there happens nothing special in their lives. Whatever happens is in the life of Sister Philomena who reminds the sordid past in the lives of her sister and her aunt. When Father Angwin finishes the work of burial of all the statues, he goes to church along with Sister Philomena and finds the church bigger, Philomena remembers the death of her Aunt Dymphna who lives a non-restricted life.

Her conversation with Fludd makes her remember the childhood of Kathleen and herself. She tells Fludd about her mother’s insistence to join the convent by the daughters as she wanted be pointed by other people after Mass on Sunday and praising her sacrifice with the comment: “Oh, could you credit that woman’s sacrifice, all her daughters given to religion.” (p.97) She also informs him that in Ireland ‘one priest in a family equals three or four nuns’. (p.97) As they don’t have a brother, their mother wants to accept all her daughters the convent life. Philomena comes there by accident as she remembers her sister, Kathleen (Sister Finbar in convent) when novice has been given a work to accompany other Sister Josephine (50). After reaching safe, Kathleen has been escorted by one Sister Gertrude; then again Gertrude by Finbar. Finbar’s escort is then Sister Mary Bernard. Bernard returns escorted by Finbar but Bernard bolts the door onto her to leave Finbar alone. Inevitably, she returns in a lorry to the convent escorted by a lorry-driver and is expelled from the convent who then adopts the way Aunt Dymphna of drinking and going to dances. It culminated in her coming to convent. She calls this childhood memories a ‘stigmata’. (p.100) She also informs about her seeing a devil when she was seven years old, breathing outside her bedroom, a beast coming once only. (p.109)

IV:2.2.2.6: Loss
*Fludd*, reflects the theme of loss: individual and social. Fludd says, “Every possession is a loss, but equally, every loss is a possession.” (p.166) The individual loss is revealed through the characters – Father Angwin, Sister Philomena. The social loss is related to the villages and villagers; and the familial loss of Sister Philomena.

Father Angwin experiences the loss of faith in religion which is an individual but being the priest of the church influences the society and his loss becomes social one. He is unable to create confidences among the villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton, resulting into less attendance at church prayers. The school children also don’t find the attending of the prayers at church or the sermons interesting. This loss is greater than the personal loss of Father Angwin.

On the other hand, sister Philomena’s loss is individual but is limited to her. “Every possession is a loss”, Fludd said. “But equally, every loss is a possession.” (p.166) Sister Philomena goes along with Fludd under the influence, leaving the nunnery. From the very entrance in the nunnery, she has accepted the nun’s dress and has abandoned the regular drapery. When she goes to the hotel and enjoys sex with him, due to her religious attitude she first feels it a loss. On the next day, she wants to have new clothes and cosmetics but at one point, she feels that she already has new clothes that with the loss of virginity she has put another skin. People say, ‘loss’. She reflected, but they do not know what innocence is like. Innocence is a bleeding wound without a bandage, a wound that opens with every casual knock from casual passers-by. Experience is armour; and she felt already clad.” (p.167) Her comment suggests that she at one point of time feels it loss but in other way she feels it an experience as an armour.

**IV:2.2.2.7: Transformation/Transubstantiation**

The novel Fludd depicts the theme of transformation very remarkably. The central character, Fludd, declares, “I have come to transform you, transformation is my business.”(p.55) He starts with his very work of transformation when he enters the presbytery and is experienced by Miss Dempsey who opens the door. When she tells him, ‘I’ll draw the bolts. It’s time. Quite late. You’ll not be wanting to go out again tonight’, he answers, ‘I won’t want to go out again. I’ve come to stay.’ (p.43) Miss Dempsey feels:

> Deep within her, behind her cardigan and her blouse and her petticoat trimmed with scratchy nylon lace, behind her interlock vest and freckled skin, Miss Dempsey sensed a slow movement, a tiny spiral shift of matter, as if, at the very moment the curate spoke, a change had occurred: a change so minute as to baffle description, but rippling out, in its effect, to infinity.

In later years, when she talked about it she would always say, *Did you ever see a pile of pennies pushed over? Did you ever see a house of cards fall down?* And whomever she spoke to would look at her, comprehension strained; she could not find the words for that sliding, slipping, tripping sensation that she felt through her entire body. (p.43)

The villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton also are transformed from atheists to theists. The schoolchildren who tend to be the non-believers have been imitating the biblical stories and fables and attending the church prayers. This can be treated as the social
transformation. But the villagers need this transformation because the person who can transform them has himself lost his faith in religion. It means Father Angwin should first be transformed as the theist. Fludd helps him by answering some of his basic questions.

When Philomena wants to leave the nunnery Sister Anthony helps her to change her appearance. She is strict but confident enough about her transforming ability that she assures Philly that ‘I’ll transform you out of all recognition.’ (p.149) though she calls her ‘filthy thing’; ‘ingrate mechanism’. Philomena wants to have this change as she says:

But I can never come back, she thought. I know nothing excepts farms, convents, my mother’s house. No convent in the world will take me in, after this afternoon. Even a farmer would show me the door; a Catholic farmer, that is. My mother would spit out at me across the street. Even my sister Kathleen wouldn’t give me the time of the day.” (149-50)

In the works of transformation there are conditions of success. The art requires the whole man and besides the alembics and retorts, the furnace and the charcoal, there must be knowledge and faith, gentle speech and good works. And then when all of these are brought together, there must be one further thing, guarantors of all the rest: there must be silence.” (p.178)

Fludd reflects the transformation of the people who believe in him and are willing to have it. Among them we have Father Angwin, villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton, and lastly Sister Philomena. The transformation of Father Angwin and the villagers’ seems from oblivion to clarity; and from spiritual to materialistic; and for Mother Perpetua proves fatal. The transformation of Roisin O’Halloran to Sister Philomena and from Sister Philomena to Roisin again through Fludd has been presented very effectively. Her being nun is a sort of replacement as her sister gets withdrawn from the nunnery and Roisin accepts it unwillingly to satisfy her mother and perhaps is thinking of sneaking out from this forced profession. Fludd kindles the desire of being free in Philomena to fulfill his lust and succeeds and transforms Philomena from a nun to a commoner again using his alchemical skill.

Nicci Gerrard’s view might properly end the discussion as she calls:

* * *

Fludd is a quaint and lovely novel, thick with images and angry jubilant Characters who defy the authority of a finger-wagging God and his “pork-Butcher” bishop and choose mystery and unholy expectations. It doesn’t only believe in miracles; it believes in happy endings. (“More than Just Just Making Do,” in New Statesman & Society, Vol. 85, September 15, 1989:34)
CHAPTER III

Middle Phase (II)

3.1 Introduction

Hilary Mantel (1952-) reflects multiplicity or variety of themes through all her novels that makes difficult pigeonholing her works and herself in one and only literary tradition but the researcher thinks that there are some recurring or unifying themes present in her works. They can be listed as given: childhood; family life and relations; isolation; existence of ghosts or spirits/ super naturalness ; religion and culture; revenge and mystery; the prominent sub-themes are also discussed if any in the novels being interpreted to lead to a very common theme to all her works is transformation/ transubstantiation.

While distinguishing her works the researcher has used a division as the works of early phase, middle phase and the latest phase. This distinction is logical based and done according to the period of publication. In Chapter II, we have discussed thematic interpretation of Hilary Mantel’s four novels in her first phase that we approximately counted from the publication of her first novel i.e. 1985 up to the end of the decade i.e. 1990.

In the Middle Phase we would deal with the thematic interpretation of her novels published within the decade i.e. 1991 to 2000. . The present chapter discusses her four novels published between 1991 and 2000. These novels are A Place of Greater Safety (1992); A Change of Climate (1994); An Experiment in Love (1995); The Giant O’Brien (1998). These novels will be discussed on the basis of the recurring themes mentioned above. We also have the concept of multiplicity of themes which means the main theme with many sub-themes used, to create an overall impact.

3.2 Thematic Interpretations of the Novels of Middle Phase:

I:3.2 A Place of Greater Safety (1992)

I:3.2.1: Summary of A Place of Greater Safety (1992)

Mantel’s novel, A Place of Greater Safety (1992) (PGS hereafter) is a historical novel based on the French Revolution and moves round the central characters – Danton, Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins, the revolutionary leaders. It presents the early lives, their days in early Revolution and their eventual deaths on the guillotine. Though she published this novel in 1992, it would have been her first novel as she has written MS of this novel in her earlier days of writing. A Place of Greater Safety (1992) has received Sunday Express Award of the Year 1992. Tina Aleman (Commonweal, 2000) calls it loaded with
intrigue, historical detail, and Mantel’s particular brand of dark humour. Because of the clarity in the last paragraph of author’s note she calls her writer unmatched. Nigel Spivey (Spectator, 1992) states, “I remain impressed by the bravery of Hilary Mantel in this enterprise. Best of times or worst of times, they were saturated with events and personalities: to isolate a trio just about enables a novelist to keep under a thousand pages, but nevertheless means that a reader unfamiliar with the Revolution will have trouble keeping up with the rapid changes of scene and personage.’ Brian Morton (New statesman & Society, 1992) praises the novel as ‘an accomplished job of a near-impossible outline’.

The novel has been divided into five parts depicting their lives from childhood, adulthood, their being revolutionaries and then the rulers enjoying the power that leads them to the unwilling deaths. The first part comprising of three chapters deals with the introduction of the three revolutionaries: Camille Desmoulins, Maximillien Robespierre and Georges-Jacques Danton with regard to their childhood; and Louis XVI coming to throne after the death of Louis XV after catching small pox; and moving to Paris for business and studies. It has also reference to Danton’s enjoying sex with Francoise Jullie. The second part divided within seven chapters deals with their overall development as the leaders, lawyers, pamphleteers and like. This part also narrates the love affairs that change their lives. At the end of this part, we come to know about Camille being famous through his speech at Bastille. The third part with four chapters speaks of the influence of the Queen on the ruling and the principles of the Revolution. The fourth part comprising of five chapters has covered the days of Revolution and the sufferings of not only the proletariats but also of the royal family and the family members of the revolutionaries and the aftermaths of the real Revolution. The fifth part with thirteen chapters running 328 pages of 748 pages describes the working of the National Convention under the leadership of Danton, Robespierre supported by Camille, Fabre and others. It describes the conspiracies; the killings of the King and queen and other suspects on guillotine; the wars wedged against England, Belgium, Spain and others; and Robespierre’s merciless killings of his friends Danton and Camille and people executing Robespierre in the ‘reign of Terror’.

I:3.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of A Place of Greater Safety (1992)

I:3.2.2.1: Early Childhood

PGS in its first part presents the early childhood and the family history as well as their paving way for the future development. Three heroes of the Revolution are presented sequentially like: Camille Desmoulin; Georges-Jacques Danton; and Maximilien Robespierre. Spivey (Spectator, 1992) feels that ‘their early lives in provincial France do not
seem packed with radical promise’ and it seems true as she says, ‘These three made careers out of the French Revolution’.

Camille is a son of the great lawyer, Maitre Desmoulin and Madeline. He has a stutter in his speech and is called by his father ‘monster’. (p.34) His father wants him to shoulder the responsibility of the office but Camille’s stutter is an obstacle to fulfill his dream. Camille remembers his childhood when Danton plans the news of Camille’s mother’s death to get time to address the audience and sympathize with him at the time of their trial. The plan of Danton works, at Rue Marat, 9.30 a.m Camille cries over the news of his mother’s death and blames his father for not informing him in the last meeting mother’s condition. He questions father’s unsatisfied and unfulfilled nature saying,

I’ve spent my whole life trying to please him, and I’ve never succeeded, and I’ve never given up. Here I am, Father, I am ten years old, I can read Aristophanes as my sisters read nursery rhymes. Yes, but why did God give us a child with speech impediment? Look, Father, I have passed every examination known to man – are you pleased? Yes, but when will you make some money? See, Father, you know that revolution you’ve been talking about for twenty years? I’ve just started it. Oh yes, very nice- but not quite what we had in mind for you, and what will the neighbours say? (714)

Georges-Jacques Danton is the son of a clerk to one of the local courts, M. Danton who dies at the age 40, leaving four daughters and one son. The children go wild and in spite of M. Camus, M. Danton’s brother-in-law’s efforts remain uncontrollable. Danton is savage and unnecessarily large. Mme. Danton marries a merchant Jean Recordain, when Georges was 10. He has faced many incidents in his life due to his wild nature. His childhood has been narrated as given,

When he(Danton) was ten years old his mother married again. He was John Recordain, a merchant from the town; he was a widower, with one (quiet) boy to bring up. ..Georges went to school, a small local affair. …One day he was walked on by a herd of pigs. Cuts and bruises resulted, antoher scar or two hidden by his thick wiry hair. (8)

In one incident in his 11, he collapses suddenly for three days and lays as the corpse, his family plans to bury him opening his father’s grave beside his father but he wakes up on fourth day.

A year passed. One day he collapsed suddenly, with a burning fever, chattering teeth…. The priest came. He gave him the last rites. But the
A boy failed to die that night. Three days later he still clung to a comatose half-life….On the fourth day he sat up, recognized his family. On the fifth day he cracked jokes and demanded food in quantity. (8-9)

Danton has been wounded in a bullfight and gets a scar on his face. It has been stated as,—while her (Anne Madeleine) son’s remains were manhandled across the fields. A farm labourer carried his heavy body in his arms; she could see how his knees bent under the deadweight. …There was blood everywhere…It went all over the floor. She cast around for something—a blanket, a clean cloth—on which to lay the corpse of her only son….When his cheek touched the cold tiles of the floor, the child moaned softly; only then did she realize he wasn’t dead. (7) Danton, with many obstacles, feels his childhood ‘extraordinarily happy’. (9)

Maximilien Robespierre is son of Jacqueline Carraut and Francois de Robespierre, born in 1757. Jacqueline dies giving birth to Augustin. Grandfather Carraut takes away Maximilien and Augustin and sends Maximilien at 10 to Louis le Grand school where he develops himself as a scholarship boy. In this school the children have a Principal Father Proyart who has a prejudice against children like Maximillien, Camille. But when Father poignard d’Eptheinlove takes the charge, he tries to judge the children’s potential and allows them in the year 1774 to decide what to be done: whether to enter the world of public acts and public attitudes and Camille and Maximillien decide to enter into the public activities to be the great revolutionaries of the world history.

Being the Mount of the Convention, Robespierre finishes with the trial of his best friends, Camille and Danton and implements the death sentence to both of them. After this moment, he feels himself lonely and remembers his childhood. Robespierre remembers his mother weaving patterns and it was the gaps that were important, the spaces between the threads which made the pattern and not the threads themselves. It sounds symbolic as all the revolutionaries including Camille, Danton and himself make a pattern of Revolution. After their deaths, Robespierre is like a thread that cannot make a pattern. At the Committee table he reminds the childhood. (747)

There are least remarkable references to the childhood memories of some minor characters as given: Brissot’s childhood memories are not good enough as he says, “I had a hard time, …. My father died, and shortly afterwards my mother became violently insane.” p.237 Gabrielle remembers Georges’ nature to flout the authority as it has been told by Pare in school, Danton is called ‘anti-superior’. (248). The misery, poverty and the disturbed
familial bonds affect the early childhood of the heroes in question that inculcates among them their livelihood.

I:3.2.2.2: Family Life and Relations

Though PGS is a novel based on the French Revolution, it reflects the family life and relations of the main characters: Camille, Danton and Robespierre and their immediate relatives and others. We also learn about the domestic life of the King and Queen also. Camille Desmoulin’s life has been described from his 3rd year and Maitre Desmoulin’s desire to be of help within 20 years to him in his old age. Camille’s stutter is a sort of obstacle in his career as an advocate. On Camille’s 16th birthday, his father said, “I sometimes think that I have got on my hands a depraved little monster with no feelings and no sense”. (p.34) Camille also is in Robespierre’s school. Here he gets very lengthy letters from his family that reveals his family cares for him and his progress.

Camille’s family is rich but as Camille has the defect of the stutter in his speech, his father has been disappointed. Due to his stutter he cannot shoulder the responsibility of his father’s legal practice which is his father’s expectation. He enters into the Revolution and suddenly becomes the star of the Revolution. He regrets his achievements are not appreciated by his father. In course of time and ill-luck, Camille has been declared as counter-revolutionary and anti-Republic, his father sends a letter to Fouquier (742) stating his confidence in Camille’s not going away from the republic principles and expresses himself proud of being father of Camille. This may be treated as a great solace to Camille who thinks his life and achievements are unnoticed by his family.

Camille’s affair with Adele Duplessis might lead him to trouble so he makes affair to Lucile, Claude and Adele’s daughter and marries her. Lucile believes in freedom and takes liberty to enjoy sex with some men. Though their family life is not good, they love each other most. When there is arrest warrant against Lucile, Camille though imprisoned, reacts with a cry of horror, ‘They are going to murder my wife.’ (740) Lucile also tries to do everything she can to release Camille from Guillotine.

Georges-Jacques Danton is the son of a clerk to one of the local courts. After the death of M. Danton at the age 40 leaving four daughters and one son behind, M. Camus, M. Danton’s brother-in-law tries to create discipline among the children but in vain. Danton is savage and unnecessarily large, gets wounded in a bullfight and gets a scar on his face and comes to senses after some time. Mme. Danton marries a merchant Jean Recordain, when Georges was 10. Thus we find Danton’s family life and relations are disturbed and the children go uncontrollable after the death of their father. In his 11th year, Georges-Jacques
collapses suddenly and lies as the corpse for three days. When the preparation for funeral is done on fourth day he wakes up. At 14, Danton’s stepfather moves to the city of Troyes to leave them alone.

Maximilien Robespierre is the son of Jacqueline Carraut and Francois Robespierre. He bears five children in six years to Jacqueline who dies while giving birth to Augustin. Francois, on the very day goes out and spends the night with a woman (p.14) Grandfather Carraut takes away Maximilien and Augustin; Unmarried Aunt Eulalie and Aunt Henriette take the little girls (p.14) In 1768, Francois returns to Arras after two years, when he wants to see the children, grandfather does not allow.

Maximilien Robespierre has been away from his family and family relations from the very day he involves himself with Revolution. He has been sheltered by the Duplays in his illness. Thus he lives with the carpenter and his daughters, tries to not to get seduced. But he falls prey to the intense sexual desire of Eléonore Dulay. He doesn’t marry Eleonore, but she decides to be the widow Robespierre throughout her life. Robespierre though has been deprived of his family, he finds the good and caring family relations in the form of the Duplays who also unite Max’s brother and sister in their house. When there is the question of Babette’s witness against Danton of rape, the Duplay make Max remember their relations to keep Babette away from the trial, he is unmoved. It suggests that Max respects his duty more as the Chief of Convention than that of a family member.

The family life of these three great revolutionaries also is not free from the illicit affairs. Georges-Jacques first finds a friend to bed with and then marries Gabrielle and is always involved in relation with the maids in court and not only keeps an eye even on Lucile or Francois but enjoys sex with Lucile by threatening her to disturb her family life. After the death of Gabrielle, Danton by threatening the dire consequences to her parents marries Louise, a fifteen-year-old girl who has promised to take care of Gabrielle’s children out of humanity. While marrying her, Danton tells Max that “I mean I must have a home—I must have a wife, my children around me, my house running smoothly” which creates an impression in the words of Max, “I (Max) thought you (Danton) valued family life.” (570) He enjoys sex with Lucile though Camille is present in his studies. Danton also has raped Babette, Eleonore’s pregnant sister and says “he wanted to show me (Babette) how much better it could be with a man who had experience with women than with some high-minded Robespierist virgin.” And also says “Your sister Eleonore is not so moral. She knows just what we republicans want.” 707

Thus Danton’s family life is full of adultery. Yet he has affinity bonds with his sisters and he visits the village often and has decided to cultivate the farms after the Revolution
business is over. He remembers Gabrielle after the trial and at the moment they are being taken to guillotine and raises his hands for absolution to her and to the Almighty.

Even the family life of the King, other courtiers is lascivious and reflects the licentiousness spread in France. After the fall of Bastille, a man comes and tries to kiss Gabrielle. Lucile faces a very derogatory act of spitting in her face by a man on the street.

The family life of some minor characters is also shown as licentious and disturbed. Among them we have virtuous Roland and his wife, Manon Roland who enjoys sex with many persons and declares herself a lady born to get pleasure of life keeping her only daughter, Eudora (12) away from the family and is not ready to call her though Roland wants the daughter to be with them. Manon Roland leaves her husband and also leaves home when she learns about Roland to be put on trial by the Convention. The suspects when sentenced to death, most of the people remember their families and family members. Fabre thinks himself dying; Philippeaux can’t sleep that night and feels paralysed with the thought of his 3-year-old son. Mantel, even while dealing with a historical event like the French Revolution, touches a very delicate aspect of the family life and relations of the characters which mostly remains untouched in history very effectively.

I:3.2.2.3: Ambition Turning Vicious

The Second part of PGS begins with a quote from Jean-Marie Herault de Sechelles’ essay, “The Theory of Ambition”:

“We make great progress only at those times when we become melancholy-at those times when, discontented with the real world, we are forced to make for ourselves one more bearable.”

The second part also starts with a chapter entitled after this essay.

The Third part of PGS also begins with a quote from Jean-Marie Herault de Sechelles’ essay, “The Theory of Ambition”:

“Tell many people that your reputation is great; they will repeat it, and these repetitions will make your reputation.” “I want to live quickly…”

Both these quotations suggest one should be sad and least complacent to achieve something and also publicizing for creating reputation. PGS though revolves around the real historical facts of the French Revolution; it has at its centre Camille, Danton, and Robespierre, the great revolutionaries. Their development from their early lives to be the stalwarts has been presented in detail and it reflects the ambition of these characters not only affecting and changing their individual personalities but also affecting and changing the
society and nation. The nation’s character is also decided due to the ambitious nature of the characters. The characters in question establish themselves as the leaders and turn down the King’s tyrannous rule and are in the driver’s seat. It is a kind of change the people want to have. The King and the Queen are put under surveillance and the revolutionaries become the governing authority. After having the authority they turn vicious gradually. The King’s rule is tyrannous but the revolutionaries turned rulers, Danton, Robespierre, Camille and the others like Marat prove more tyrannical and the reign turns ‘the Reign of Terror’.

Their ambitious nature is really responsible for their progress but Robespierre who once denounces the bloodshed and was deadly against it turns a ‘slaughterer’ putting the people on guillotine suspecting them traitors. Robespierre’s patient and unpredictable nature is revealed in one of the dialogues between Petion and Danton who comment like – ‘He’s never had a moment of wrath. I was wrong to say he must be going mad. You could lock him up in a dungeon for fifty years and he wouldn’t go mad. He’s got everything he needs inside his head.’ (p.449) He doesn’t spare his friend and the person who has made him chief of it i.e. Georges-Jacques Danton who speaks against his manner to put people on guillotine. He also has put Camille, his school-mate and the staunch supporter, on guillotine. The Reign of Terror’ comes to an end with the execution of Robespierre’s death-sentence. All the friends being the participants of the Revolution have a noble aim to free the nation from the tyrannical rule of the King but they want to have materialistic and individual prosperity. Camille’s father wants him to be a famous lawyer and run his office but Camille after the Revolution turns personal assistant to the Minister of Justice, Danton and now runs the nation. Danton who has many ups and downs in his life turns to be the leader and now the ruler being the Chief Executive fulfilling his ambition. Robespierre who was a scholarship boy and wants to be a scholar, now has got an opportunity to be the chief adviser of Danton, the Minister of Law and Justice. In course of time, Robespierre becomes the Chief of the Convention deciding the life and death of thousands of the people in the Revolution.

There are some minor characters like Saint-Just, Fouquier-Tinville who enter the Committees of the Convention but with an ambition to finish up Camille, Fabre, Lacroix, Phillipeaux and Danton. They succeed in their vicious desires shattering the belief for them in the mind of Robespierre and guillotine all those treating them counter-revolutionary.

Duke Philippe’s ambition has been kindled through some courtiers to be the ruler that fails after the Revolution and he has to remain Philippe Egalite on the mercy of the revolutionary leaders. The Royal family is also on the mercy of the revolutionary leaders and volunteers, hiding to get out of the palace to a safer place.
I:3.2.2.4: Criticism of Social System

As PGS is the fictitious account of the French Revolution in the form of novel, it becomes inevitable to have criticism of social and political system as well. The social and political system is the Kingship. Though in myths and legends, the charitable and sacrificial Kingship we come across, the Kingship at the time of the French Revolution is tyrannical, helpless and ruler without governing authority.

The King Louis XV dies of small pox and the new King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette become the new rulers. The King supervises the prices of the loaves of bread everyday as it is the sensitive and delicate issue for the nation as well as society and the supply of bread is monitored by the Government. As the harvest was failing from 1770s, the price of bread has been rising from 6 – 8 sous to 11 to 14 sous but the wages did not raise. To control the financial crisis the King brings three Comptroller-Generals: Turgot, who abolishes of the feudal right called Corvee, a system of forced labour on roads and bridges and also brings the nobility under the property tax in Jan. 1776 and has been dismissed in May1776. Necker is made Minister of Finance afterwards who suggests the way of borrowing being an optimist but in May 1781, anti-Protestant made him come down. As the debt and deficit are the words familiar to French Economy, M. Calonne, the Comptroller General borrower like Necker has been brought in Aug. 1786. He comes with package of proposed reforms like nobles, clergy, commons must pay the land tax; free trade, abolition of internal customs duty; and to end Corvee that the King agrees to. He also has to leave due to the planning of the Queen and her men. M. Calonne insisted on to breakout this cycle and states that the things have never been this bad before. When d’Anton arrives in France, France has a new Comptroller General, M. Joly de Fleury who taxes 10% on foodstuff to add to the plight of the poor.

Every person participating in the Revolution thinks that after Revolution every thing will be all right, and the new ruling authority would not announce more tax etc. But after Revolution, Danton announces a tax and makes it pass and asks the Convention to collect it the very next day imitating the tax people in Russia give. Thus the persons who show the Kingship is at fault for their social and individual misery can’t restrict it to improve their social status even after their getting into the power. On the contrary, the life of the people turns more miserable and faisl to create the system for the people’s welfare.

The King and the Queen share separate interests to have the plotting against each other instead the plans of the social welfare and are unaware of the plight of the proletariats. The society suffers for the whims and fancies of the kingship. The society wants to have the Revolution to have Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. But even after the Revolution, the people
have to suffer the new Rulers and the Reign of Terror. The Committees for Peace, Public Safety or Justice work for making rules to catch more and more suspects for guillotine. There are references of 200000 people caught and are waiting for trial as suspects.

Maximilien Robespierre who has been offered the post of the Personal Assistant to Danton, the Minister of Justice, denies it and within a shorter period he becomes the Chief of the Convention. He turns so vicious that the person who trembles after giving a death sentence in his first judgment, signs many death sentences not even leaving his friends. He is not ready to have a pistol as he is afraid of bloodshed, being the Chief of National Convention, he pleads the deaths of innocents on guillotine.

I:3.2.2.5: Sexuality and Morality

PGS presents the cultural and moral aspects of France during the French Revolution. The culture is governed partially by the courtly manners and partially by the social needs. Though the French culture is lascivious and free in particular, one wishes it to be moral. The characters including the three revolutionaries as central characters also reflect their immoral cult except Maximilien Robespierre who restricts himself to bed with Eleonore, though many women get attracted to him sexually. So some persons make fun of the dictum: ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’ saying ‘Liberty, Gaiety and Democracy’.

PGS contains many references reflecting the sexuality and pre-marital sex that creates family problems. Maximilien Robespierre’s mother, Jacqueline Carraut gets pregnant before marriage and marries in Robespierre family. When Jacqueline dies giving birth to Augustin, Francois Robespierre beds with a woman on the same night and leaves the house leaving these five children within six years as a burden on to their grandparents. Robespierre who is named as the Incorruptible lives a moral and stainless life. He doesn’t enjoy sex though surrounded by ladies. Even in the Duplay house, he avoids the girls in his room but Eleonore with her intense desire makes him surrender to her.

Camille who is from well-to-do family has been inclined to enjoyment with women and engages himself in affair with Annette Duplessis, the wife of Claude Duplessis, a middle-aged woman. When learns about the punishment in this affair, exchanges his love to her daughters, Adele and Lucile. Lucile turns to be his wife though she has watched her mother and Camille making love. She not only watches the lovemaking but when Annette opposes her marrying Camille, blackmails her to be affirmative. Lucile by nature enjoys sex for pleasure with the courtiers like Freron, Dillon and at last with Danton, Camille’s best friend. Camille’s father once also asks him about his relation with Perrin thinking him a gay.
Camille’s ill-behaviour has been witnessed when he goes to see Max to plead himself. Max is angry as Camille has criticized him through his pamphlets and denies the visit. While returning Camille Camille kisses Eleonore and cups her breasts “In the open doorway he (Camille) turned suddenly: pulled her (Eleonore) towards him, slipped a hand under her breast and kissed her on the lips. Two of the workmen stood and watched them. “Poor you,” Camille said. He pushed her gently back against the wall. Watching him go, she put the back of her hand against her lips. For the next few hours she could feel the phantom pressure of his cupped hand beneath her breast, and she kept it in her guilty thoughts that she had never really had a lover.” 672

Camille has experienced the rape as a sexual act in a different way at the time of the delivery of Lucile. He is anxious and goes to Robespierre as Annette advises him to be in free air but Max is out for at least 2-3 hours and asks him to be in his room waiting for the news of baby. Camille being reluctant to go down for speaking Eleonore and Mrs. Duplay stops in the room of Max. At the same time, Elisabeth Duplay, the youngest daughter comes and wants to have a word with him and suddenly starts laughing. She speaks about Max’s impressions for Camille. She deviates from this conversation to his wife’s pregnancy and then opens her hair; tries to withdraw her clothes to seduce him. Camille is not ready for this forced sexual fulfillment. He tries to avoid her, but she stands in a window with her disheveled hair to be looked at by to people working under. Camille is troubled with this stance. He tries to send her down but she is firm to have sex. Mrs. Duplay and Maurice come upstairs and without getting angry with Camille informs about his wife and his new-born son. Camille is relieved and thinks Elisabeth (Babette) is a practicing rapist.

Danton enjoys sex with Fracoise Julie in his beginning years. Danton who delivers speech at the Charpentier’s hotel, afterwards becomes a famous orator and the leader. Being a womanizer, he has been accepted by Gabrielle as her husband and son-in-law by the Charpentier. He calls him faithful to Gabrielle but picks up the drawbacks like her downtrodden nature. He speaks of his affairs with Mrs. Elliot, Grace, Agnes (Dukes’ ladies) (344) Even in courts, he has many maids enjoying sex with him.He also thinks the same about Lucile. (347) After Gabrielle giving birth to child, Danton thinks he can develop relations with Lucile by 1792, when he be Deputy Public Prosecutor. In the end we find Lucile has been threatened and compelled to be his bed-mate.

Louise Gely, after the death of Gabrielle, discusses about the arrangements of the children and informs him that she likes to take care of them for the promise she has given to Gabrielle. This fifteen-year old girl tells him about the restrictions her parents have done not to be alone with him, suggests the loose moral of people like Danton. Danton accuses Camille’s illicit nature to ‘deflower’ (p.497) the young girl coming in his contact alone. In
another incident when Danton returns from Belgium and begs to Louise for a hide to have sound sleep, she directly condemns his immoral behaviour and asks, “If you loved her, Citizen Danton, why did you spend your nights in other women’s beds?” and Danton to her honest and innocent question answers with guilt the reasons as “Lust. Policy. Self-aggrandizement.” (p.536) and also admits, “I have never understood women.” (p.537) After the death of Gabrielle, when Robespierre discusses him about his marriage with 15-year-old Louise, Danton says, “I can’t help getting married. I must have women.” (570)

Babette whom Camille describes as a ‘practicing rapist’ (386) accuses Danton raping her: “Babette was five or six months pregnant, round and flushed and pretty. She was only a few months older than Danton’s little child bride.” (705) She has been to Sevres in autumn has gone to stay with Citizeness Panis, wife of a Paris Deputy, Etienne Panis and goes to see Louise but doesn’t find her but Danton alone who rapes her and says “he wanted to show me (Babette) how much better it could be with a man who had experience with women than with some high-minded Robespierrist virgin.” And also says “Your sister Eleonore is not so moral. She knows just what we republicans want.” (707)

Lucile’s mother, Annette Duplessis has been in love with Camille as Claude Duplessis is of her father’s age and her sexual desire is not fulfilled. Annette opposes when the soldiers come to arrest Claude and molest her domestic staff.

Manon Roland is the wife of Inspector of Manufacturer. Her brothers and sisters all died. At ten of her age, they left her alone in the workshop and a boy of fifteen in an evening tries to sexually assault her. She runs away and starts avoiding to him in workshop. The boy everyday eats with them but tries to seduce her, once she is saved by her mother’s arrival. But one day he finds her alone and has sexual act forcibly. Her mother complains the Church authority but due to bad reputation they ask her to be silent – after her mother’s death, the boy meets her married and says, “I hope you don’t still blame me. I did you no harm.” (p.325)

I:3.2.2.6: Conspiracy and Violence

PGS has the base of the French Revolution which is world’s one of the greatest Revolutions influencing not only the social and political but every aspect of mankind. The Revolution is full of conspiracies and violence to end up with the power play among the previously and presently established revolutionaries, courtiers, and the members of the National Convention. Any social or political movement may be full of conspiracies and violence. The French Revolution is an account of such conspiracies and violence. Louise Gely, a 15-year old friend of Gabrielle, after Danton’s return from Belgium rebukes and
expresses angrily the discharging of the duties of the great men like him, “Most of you discharge your public duties by beginning to drink at nine o’clock in the morning and spend your day plotting how you can stab each other in the back and make off with each other’s wives.” (p.537) The comment of hers reflects the extent of conspiracy and its effect on the new generation.

The list of conspiracies might be unending throughout the period of the Revolution or any social movement but we have to stick to the references of it as given in PGS. The chapter ‘Conspirators’ in Fifth part presents a brief account of conspiracies and conspirators. The conspiracies start with the formation of the National Convention and the responsibility to be the Minister of Justice that is accepted by Danton but not by Robespierre as he wants to be the centre of power behind curtain. Camille accepts the secondary post of the Personal Assistant to Robespierre. It is now duty of the Convention to fight against Brissotins and the other suspects.

The Revolution as a conspiracy has been supported by the countries like England and Austria. The Queen is from Austria so there are some Austrian interests in Revolution whereas England also wants to have advantage of the chaotic political and social insecure situation. Mirabeau backbites Lafayette to the queen and compares him with Cromwell. There are references to all the nations keeping an eye on the happenings in France to make profit out as it among them Austria, Vienna, Berlin, Poland, Belgium, Turkey, Russia, Sweden. P.268 Camille learns that the money for revolutions comes from the King of England. Mrs. Elliot was the Prince of Wale’s mistress before being the mistress of Duke Philippe brought her to France. His mistress at present is Agnes de Buffon and her brothers, Elliot’s brothers-in-Law, Gilbert and Hugh manage the things.

The Revolution inevitably shows the element of violence. In the spring of 1775, widespread rioting but was silenced by the promise of the king, but on the road they looted the Left Bank. There were 162 prosecutions, 2 looters were hanged in the Place de Greve, on May 11, 3 p.m. (27)

Lucile’s reading of the crucifixion of Queen Maria Stuart and her actual execution has been narrated. (74-5) Mr. Necker takes office again and negotiates loan from abroad and through his advising ‘the Parlements reinstated price of bread raised by two sous.’ There are references of mob being violent on Aug 29; soldiers opened fire in a mob of 600; killing 7 to8 people and many injured; mob burning down effigy of Mr. Barentin, the Minister of Justice. (75) At the time of contesting elections, Danton comments on Camille’s love for violence saying, “I know you, you want violence, you’ve got a taste for it.” (138) Gabrielle Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau’s domestic life as full of violence has been narrated. (139)
In another incident at Titonville, in one of the meetings, M. Reveillon the owner of
factory with 350 workers, expresses his views for the welfare of the commons and expresses
the need to cut the wages to cut the prices. But employees take his proposal otherwise. M.
Hanriot, another manufacturer of Salt peter works seconds the proposal which is the cause of
the agitation where they burn the effigies of Hanriot and Reveillon. In some days the agitators
get crowded for demonstrations when the Duke and the Duchess arrive, they give way to the
Duke but not to the Duchess to go through. The administration uses force and the
demonstrators go violent to culminate into the emergence of riots, leaving behind 300 corpses
in the street. (149-2)

Du Lounay’s killing reflects the uncertain violent nature of mob. Du Lounay, a
civilian is the governor of the Bastille who surrenders before the mob and tries to stab himself
but was prevented. The mob manhandles him and wants to finish him as he kicks Desnot, an
unemployed cook in a fit of anger to get killed by people mercilessly. (197)

The ex-minister Foulon remarks, “if the people were hungry they would eat grass”
that agitates the audience to march on July 22 at Place de Greve. Foulon and Berthier, his
son-in-law have been tortured, hanged and beheaded. Both the heads are brought together and
are asked to meet each other. The demonstrators squeeze the blood and drink it that reflects
the extreme cruelty of the mob. (209-10)

The reference to the Lynchings (210-1) that involves hanging somebody without the
prosecution under one’s decision at Paris/ at Versailles reflect greater violence and in a way
slaughter. While discussing about the lynchings, Dr. Marat supports the lynchings as
acceptable and asks Camille to write, “The necessity is to kill people, and to cut off their
heads,” (212) Camille’s pamphlet gives rise to the riots. There are some references like mob
running inside the palace and one woman screaming and asking for ‘the queen’s liver for a
fricasse’. (227)

The incident of killing of the princess de Lamballe is really brutal in which the mob
brutally rapes and murders the Princess de Lamballe at La Force prison. Her internal organs
are torn out and struck on pikes. After having cut off her head, the mob forcibly curls and
dresses the Princesse’s pretty fair hair. After having marched towards the Temple, where the
Capet family locked up the mob hoists her head to the imprisoned members and asks them to
say ‘hallo to your (their) friend’. (p.446) The references to the violence after the Revolution
are the killings on guillotine of the revolutionaries by the revolutionaries out of conspiracies
and has nothing to do with the welfare of people.

I:3.2.2.7: Transformation/Transubstantiation
PGS being an enormous picture gallery of the human beings directly or indirectly related to the great event in the World History, the French Revolution, it presents in its limit a wide range of characters and their transformation. As Mantel writes about the early lives of three revolutionaries, Camille, Danton and Maximilien Robespierre, it presents their development from their childhood to the revolutionaries. When men become famous and the part of history, we can have ample documentation records available that can be used for presenting them as the historical figures but it is difficult for the historical novelist to imagine the unrecorded history to compose the dialogues and the incidents which exist in the form of passing remarks. Mantel writes about their childhood which might not be documented in detail that might be a challenge for her which she has handled very efficiently.

In case of Geoges-Jacques, Maitre Vinot recommends d’Anton, University of Rheims for obtaining degree then he becomes advocate of the Parlement of Paris. M. Charpentier and Gabrielle think Danton, with powerful, cultured and resonant voice and fluent Italian, ‘a man with future’ (p.53) which proves right. His transformation from a wild child to the authoritative Minister of Justice of French Republic has been presented very effectively by Mantel. Danton who experiences a great loss in the form of her wife’s death needs badly women and family and decides to marry Louise Gely (15) who has promised Gabrielle to look after her children. He discusses with Mme. Gely on this issue and threatens them if not decided positively. But when Louise interferes and asks him to marry officially, he goes to priest and tries to get the absolution. He not only decides to marry her, but decides to transfer his property in her name. He also has changed his stance on putting the queen on trial which according to Camille is an idea given by Louise that Robespierre doesn’t accept. His

Camille Desmoulin, son of Maitre Desmoulin and Madeleine, should shoulder the responsibility of his father’s business but is called ‘little monster with no feelings and no sense’ (p.34) and has a stutter in speech becomes an advocate and a good speaker. Morton (New Statesman & Society, 1992) says, ‘in Desmulins she (Mantel) has found her most convincingly ambiguous advocate’. P. N. Furbank (London Review of Books, 1992) expresses Mantel’s falling for Desmoulins ‘The novel has a chosen “hero”, in the old-fashioned sense, seems to be Camille Desmoulins’. Desmoulin’s performances, though on losing side in the court, attract many students and others. Being sentimental, waives fees for the poor that Danton doesn’t like this treatment to the cases. Camille is not ready to rob the clients as he regrets over the social problem that people can’t afford the lawyers’ fees and are incapable to run the case. He is about to visit a client, who is to be hanged the next day. In November 1787, Camille while sitting in Café du Foy informs about the activities in the court while saying these things his stutter has been stopped that transforms him a revolutionary leader. After the Revolution, when he sends a letter in capacity of the personal assistant to
Minister of Justice to his father and waits for the reply eagerly from Guise, his child-like sentiments are seen. By nature he is cool but likes violence. His transformation from a sentimental advocate to a great revolutionary pleading the massacres of innocent people is really unpredictable.

Robespierre who is the classmate of Camille known as ‘scholarship boy’ excels in legal practice due to his dedication to work. Robespierre’s talent has been praised by one French Journalist in a case of lighting conductor set by M. de Vissery of Saint-Omer. Robespierre pleads it connecting it to its scientific importance and wins. In the first year of profession, he had fifteen cases and only after 4 months he gets part-time judicial position. He has been appointed as a judge and cannot sleep that night. At 10 a.m., he is reluctant to go to court and emotional for the sentence through judge also thinks of resignation. Robespierre’s after having given a death sentence, can’t even walk and needs support. (p.89) Max writing revolutionary ideas about the social, professional aspect, every morning he prays for happening something good.

Robespierre always followed by women, keeps himself away from seduction and also sets an example of an ‘Incorruptible’ person though has much opportunities to be corrupt in business of Revolution. Such an emotional person declares and pleads the death sentence for the safety of state.

The transformation of the three major revolutionary figures is itself a history and not fiction. But the presentation of this historical reality is a challenge and it becomes more challenging to bring it out with such great figures. Mantel has done it convincingly through multiple themes mentioned and has provided enough space for the transformation of Camille, Danton and Robespierre to make the novel rather bulky and with a huge picture gallery.

II:3.2: A Change of Climate (1994)

II:3.2.1: Summary of A Change of Climate (1994)

Mantel’s A Change of Climate (1994) is a novel based on Mantel’s stay in Botswana where she lived for five years. The story revolves around a couple – Ralph Eldred and Anna Eldred. Ralph and Emma Eldred are the children of Matthew Eldred, who works for a charitable trust. Ralph’s uncle, James works as a missionary and supervises a hostel. When Anna and Ralph get married, uncle James tells them about a job of a teacher for Anna and of administrator for Ralph at Dar in an educational institute. As they both believe in missionary principles, once on James’ request and non-availability of the job at Dar, they decide to go to Elim, South Africa. Here they try to be the part of their culture and try to solve the problems with humanitarian point of view. In course of time, people come to them for help. They start
attending the social functions and start participating in the social activities, to get acquainted to the ANC leaders, which is a kind of anti-government activity. The South African Government interrogates the couple accusing activists against apartheid. They are sent Bechuanaland (now Botswana) from the prison where they are kept and are not allowed to visit Elim or to collect their paraphernalia. Anna who is pregnant, gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl. Here Matthew, their son of the twins, is abducted and they didn’t find his body even. It creates a great impact on their further life as missionaries. This tragic incident has not been discussed anywhere. After their return to England, they live a sound life which again is disturbed by an illicit affair of Ralph with Mrs. Amy Glasse whose daughter loves Ralph’s son, Julian. In the concluding part of the novel, the crisis gets to the height of Anna and Ralph’s leaving each other. As he is about to leave the premises, he finds a living creature crawling in the garden full of mud. Forgetting the contradiction, Ralph asks Anna to take it in to make it live. Anna and Ralph both go out and find the creature is Melanie, who is lost and has been hospitalized. Thus the Eldreds face evils but never get away from their principles. Mantel portrays the injustice, miseries and complexities of the apartheid system. The novel depicts the lives of two missionaries and the way they handle hardship in their lives.

II:3.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of A Change of Climate (1994)

II:3.2.2.1: Childhood Memories

The novel mostly presents the childhood memories of Ralph Eldred, Emma Eldred. It also has some passing references to the past of some minor characters like Melanie. The Eldred family is from Brecklands. Ralph when 15, wanted to join army, but when he visits his aunt at Yorkshire develops interest in collecting the fossils at seaside. His aunt asks him to go out in fresh air and he takes the bus and goes to the seaside tries to enjoy in his way. “He had picked up a fossil: a ridged, grey-green curl, glassy and damp like a descending wave”. (p.37) He is unaware of the thing he has got, but a woman comes and tells him about the value of the thing he has got. She calls it a ‘Gryphaea’ and its ‘hundred and fifty million-year-old’ ancestry and calls it ‘ancestor of oysters’. (p.37) A man is amused with his curious questions, praises his luck and informs it as ‘a devil’s toenail’. Peter Kemp (The Times Literary Supplement, 1994) calls this fossil ‘a symbol of the evil that has clawed hideously at the lives of two good people and remained petrifyingly lodged in their past.’ He keeps it in his suitcase and shows it to Emma while playing Bible games. After a year he insists on his parents to send him to Yorkshire where he finds a master who encourages him to collect the fossils and to settle the quarrels. He keeps his collection in the cardboard boxes which he wants to take along with him while leaving the house at the end of the novel. His mother calls
Ralph a ‘collector’ and Emma ‘a modern miss.’ (p.42) Ralph doesn’t allow her to take the fossil to the school.

Ralph remembers his life at 3, when he visits the outskirts of Swaffham the church and the pictures of Pedlar of Swaffham and the dog shown by his grandfather. He also remembers Emma’s playing Bible games for deciding whether to adopt the medical field or other field.

Kit (Catherine) remembers her childhood when all the children are gathered in vacation. She remembers ‘the feeling of heat’ (p.176) of a nurse, Felicia who used to carry her on her back. She also remembers Joan, a visitor who cuts her wrists in the kitchen when Kit was ten and she bandages that wound. Kit also remembers after this incident, the lady takes her things and leaves.

There is also a reference to Julian’s childhood as Ralph and Anna get anxious about Julian as from childhood, he was unable to do somethings, students used to call him spastic, his writing is slow, problem in tying the shoelace, ties etc., not normal in drawing. Ralph tries to create interest in geology, but he also neglected the fossils collected.

Ralph and Anna invite the homeless and houseless children to their house for vacation. These children also have their memories. One of the children is Melanie who gets bullied at school that results into playing truant and gets in with the gang of older girls who take her shoplifting. After three months, she has been sent back home to find “her parents had sold her record player and her records, and they’d give away the toys she’d had as a baby, and her clothes”. (p.276-7) In such a mental state she finds some of her clothes and toys in the dustbin near her flat. She really begs to get them back in the neighbourhood. When she turns up penniless in London, but with the dustbin bag, she is brought to the hostel. The incidents have made her violent and she becomes drug-addict and wounds herself with the sharp things.

II:3.2.2.2: Family Life and Relations

A Change of Climate presents family life and the relations in all favourable and adverse situations. The story revolves around the Eldred family; the Palmer family; and the Glasse family. All these families are related to each other by one way or other.

In the Eldred family we have Matthew and Dorcas Eldred with their son, Ralph and daughter, Emma; and Matthew’s brother, James. Ralph marries Anna and they have four children, Kit, Julian, Rebecca and Robin. Through Emma Eldred, the Eldreds are illegitimately related to the Palmers as Emma is the mistress of Felix Palmer. Kit continues
that relation with Daniel, Felix’s son. The Glasse family is related to the Eldreds through Sandra’s relation with Julian and also Ralph’s extra-marital relations with Amy, Sandra’s mother.

Ralph experiences a kind of partial treatment from his parents. Matthew is not ready to educate Ralph as he has no interest to learn anything and also due to Emma’s medical education. Dorcas surrenders before Matthew and doesn’t support Ralph. Ralph becomes angry for this treatment and dreams of ‘killing the father’; and reveals ‘going away from you (father)’ (p.249) as the reason for accepting the job in Africa. The family relations are estranged due to Ralph’s father. But Matthew wants to establish a place for Ralph in near future on the Waltsan Charitable Trust.

James on the other hand sometime makes Ralph shoulder the responsibility of the hostel. As Ralph has seen the real nature of the hostellers, he doesn’t want to accept it as a full time profession. Ralph and Anna have been promised by James a job of school teacher and administer at Dar for them. But when they get in as family the jobs are not available and they have to accept the offer to go to Africa. The novel depicts the family life of Ralph and Anna in Africa and then in England supported by Palmer and Glasse families.

As Mantel’s women characters reveal strength in adverse conditions and their every possible effort to keep the family intact, we see Anna, Ginny and Amy also reflect the same strength. It is Anna who takes initiative to go to South Africa and accepts the life style, even the imprisonment, adverse conditions in child bearing and also the abduction of her child as she has accepted their forcible departure to Bechuannaland. Despite her ill health she gives birth to her children and tries to make them human beings.

Ginny tolerates extra-marital affair with Emma throughout her life but doesn’t complain and brings up Daniel her son as a renowned architect in the society. Amy whose husband has been absconding never gets defeated while bringing up Sandra and imbibes in her virtues and working culture.

In Africa, at Elim Ralph and Anna start working for the betterment of the society. They have some servants like Lucy Moyo, Rosinah, Dearie, Clara, Jakob, Koos and Luke. In course of time Ralph and Anna try to mix with them which creates problem in their family life and makes it miserable. The Government wants them to serve the people but doesn’t want them to fight for their rights.

When they are migrated forcibly to Mosadinyana a mission house in Botswana, there also are the assistants like Salome, Enock, and Felicia. Anna’s pregnancy and the anxiety for safe delivery pervade the family life. Anna and Ralph can’t go to Pretoria or Johannesburg and has to take a country hospital for the child birth. The Dutchman who helps them can’t
reach in time to the hospital. To their surprise, Anna gives birth to twins a girl and a boy, Catherine (Kit) and Matthew.

Despite the injustice with them, they start working with the same zeal: teaching the children; holding prayers and trying to solve their medical and other problems. As the things are going on well, Anna finds Enoch, stealing the household and selling it; Salome stealing the food, sugar etc. Once when Felicia complains about Enoch’s stealing her skirt and selling it, Anna can’t stand it and rebukes him and calls ‘stupid’. Anna is unaware of the effect of that so-called abuse but Salome makes her aware of it and foretells his leaving of the job. Thus he leaves the job and on that stormy night, attacks Ralph and Anna to take away the small child, Matthew, leaving Kit behind. In Dawn, Felicia also is left with no trace behind. Ralph and Anna’s family life is battered with this dreadful incident of abduction.

The family shifts to England and settles in the Red House. Here Anna gives birth to Julian, Rebecca and Robin trying to forget the missing son, Matthew. Her health conditions are deteriorating and Emma being the doctor asks Ralph to be careful about pregnancy. This culminates into Ralph’s getting attracted towards Mrs. Amy Glasse who is rather young and charming whom he goes to see with regard to Julian and Sandra’s love-affair. He not only gets involved but enjoys sex with her and visits her frequently in absence of Julian and Sandra.

The parental relations are estranged between Ralph and Julian, a child which is ‘homesick’ earlier. Sandra tries to mend it on her behalf when Sandra and Julian discuss about their love and also about the relations of Ralph and Amy while walking. Sandra advises him to leave the home and live with them so he can avoid Anna and Ralph is with them already. But while proposing this, she takes him to a church and shows him an inscription by the parents for a girl died:

In Memory of Mrs Theaophila Thurlow, Daughter of the
Reverend Mr Thos Thurlow
Rector of the Worthams in
Suffolk, descended of the
Thurlows of Burnham ulpe
She departed this life 18th of
June 1723 aged 24 years.
And Frances Hibgame her Niece,
Daughter of Iohn and Catherine
Hibgame of Burnham Norton, who
Died 19th of December 1736 aged
10 yeares, 5 months, 2 weekes and 1 day. (p.280)

Sandra exemplifies it as the love of the parents for their children and also tells him not to speak with his parents cruelly.

Not only Sandra, but her mother, Amy advises Ralph when he meets her for the first time and discuss the problem of Julian. He asks Ralph, “Aren’t you (Ralph) close to your children?” and expresses herself, “I think that parents ought to take care of their children, and that children ought to take care of their parents. That’s the main thing that’s what comes first.” (p.155)

The Eldred family is disturbed due to Ralph’s extra-marital affair i.e. Ralph involving with Mrs. Amy Glasse, mother of his son’s girlfriend. When Anna witnesses herself she decides to break up with Ralph and gives him ultimatum to leave the home. In her disturbed condition she visits Ginny Palmer at Blakeny and realizes the distress and the sorrow of a woman whose husband has a mistress. Earlier she feels Felix has done injustice with Emma but now feels it otherwise. Ralph decides to leave the house to go to stay with Emma to honour the decision of Anna and to soothe her. It is a great contrast to see Ralph who works for homeless in Norwich, finds himself homeless.

Due to visitors like Melanie, the family life of the Eldreds gets disturbed; the children are unwilling to share their bedrooms and personal things but when they are informed about Melanie’s life story, they are sympathetic and helping with her. The crisis at the end of the novel is also due to Melanie who wears Rebecca’s pink T-shirt and is not ready to go for shopping. When goes to shopping, is lost and creates a problem before Anna and Kit. Anna comes to know Ralph’s affair due to police who visit Amy’s house. After having supported in each and every difficult moment, Anna and Ralph are going to separate from each other. The situation is irreversible till Melanie who is in the hospital elopes and comes crawling to them. Unintentionally Ralph requests Anna to take Melanie in and both of them forgetting their estranged relations run towards her.

II:3.2.2.3: Apartheid

The definition of the word ‘apartheid’ is ‘a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on ground of race especially in South Africa’. (Illustrated Oxford Dictionary, 2006, 2007: Penguin India Ltd., p.46)
Ralph and Anna who join the Mission House with a very sublime view get acquainted to the concept of apartheid after Ralph’s meeting Archbishop. Archbishop informs about James’ arrival with him before 7 years with money and men and built churches, schools, hospitals, clubs etc. Ralph is not ready to believe the presence of ‘apartheid’ that archbishop calls ‘separateness’. (p.73) Archbishop makes him aware of the ‘Bantu Education Act’: a measure by the Local Government to curb the education developed by Christian missionaries. Ralph thinks, ‘education is progress’ and it should not be controlled by such laws. Archbishop speaks of non-European educationist, Dr. Verwoerd, who removes Mathematics (p.74) to start a new kind of education described as ‘an education to create coolies and houseboys and fodder for the mines.’ (p.75) As the local Government is the supreme authority, the missionaries call themselves ‘rabbit before cobra’. Archbishop tells Mrs. Eldred, ‘although you are a trained teacher, you will find yourself engaged in amusing children rather than teaching them’ (p.75) due to this new education system.

Archbishop informs about Elim, a place with more than 50000 population and is to be knocked down by the apartheid like Sophiatown, to make them return to their tribal areas. Archbishop advises him “to relate his work to God, work on scale of eternity” (p.76) Archbishop refers to ‘feeble secular humanism’ and ‘Christian faith’ as ‘the charter of man’s greatness’. (p.77)

Anna and Ralph take the meaning of Archbishop’s saying as they are inexperienced and apprehensive. He advises them three things: 1. Try not to despise your opponents; try not to hate them; 2. Try not to break the law; and 3. When write to home, ask people not to have a hasty judgment. (p.78) Throughout their stay in South Africa they experience the ‘separateness’ practiced at all levels in the society. First few days, they visit every house and are welcomed and see poverty-stricken families. Ralph and Anna try to work for them. Ralph goes to office and Anna goes to nursery school of 150 children. After seven they were sent to schools of Two and half hour education, to remain children unobserved after school hours. Anna starts ‘play-group’ for these children to keep them under observation. But at the end of the day, the children haven’t been taken away due to sudden illness or arrest of the parents. Thus Ralph comes in contact with police for relieving them. Though Ralph feels it a social work, the African Government thinks it breaking and encouragement to break the law. Uncle James has asked through letters not ‘to encourage people to break the law’; ‘not required to be a hero or a martyr’. (p.87)

As the bus fare has been raised, Ralph used to take the people from Elim to Pretoria in his van out of compassion only to save their job permits in city but unknowingly he is a man challenging the apartheid being practiced as a social system. The policemen used to abuse him ‘communist’; ‘kaffirboetie’, black man’s brother’;
and in one incident the policeman spitting on the road as he is cultured otherwise he would have spit in the face of Ralph. (p.103)

On the day of public meeting or the day of baton charge, the people are in queue to ask for water, blankets, tea etc. to Koos. Rosinah tells about the baton charge chasing the young women and beating them on their breasts. On the next day, again there is a police charge on a mob in a ground, a mile away from the Flower Street gathered to decide the strategy for bus boycott, Ralph goes on the spot. On the request of Lucy Moyo he calls all the nearby police stations but was not responded. Koos not ready to involve in this movement. After the baton charge, the Eldreds are invited to houses not invited before in Elim, and they also are visited by many people. Among them they have ANC local leaders, a black journalist from Drum that irritates the police. Any act of the Africans may be treated unlawful that can be understood with the comment of a handsome boy: ‘I can tell you Mrs. Eldred, it is hardly possible for an African to live and breathe and be on the right side of the law.’ (p.106) In one of the raids, Luke has been arrested for trading human flesh and Koos beaten and called ‘White kaffir’. (p.114)

II:3.2.2.4: Religion and Culture

Though CC presents the story and the atmosphere based on Mantel’s stay in Botswana, she has stated the references and other details as fictional. But the characters the religious and cultural aspects for instance, Ralph Eldred and Emma are children of Mr. Matthew Eldred. He is a staunch believer of Christianity and is against Darwinism. He is related to a Waltisan Trust that works for the spread of Christianity and the education for poor and such social service. Ralph’s uncle, James works as a missionary in South Africa. Matthew wants Ralph to join his business that needs to be a theist. When Ralph expresses his willingness to join university, his mother tries to convince him by saying, ‘But your abilities, Ralph, are not for you to enjoy – they are given to you to use for the Christian community.’ (p.47) Anita Brookener states that CC deals with the subject of good and evil and the Eldreds are the people who accept suffering out of their Christian beliefs. Brookener (Spectator, 1994) calls the Eldreds:

They are good people: being good is their profession. Ralph works for a charitable trust set up by his father. There is a mission house in the East End which caters for the drunk, the homeless, the confused and the frankly disturbed. There is also a great deal of work to be done in Africa, of which more later.
Ralph is interested in Geology and the evolution of human being. Ralph thinks that ‘It isn’t God who’s diminished by Darwin’s theory, it’s man. Man isn’t any Lord of the universe. He’s just a part of the general scheme of things. But there is a scheme of things, and you can put God at the top of it if you like.’ (p.49) Yet he asserts that ‘You can still believe that Man has a unique place in creation. You can still believe that Man has a special dignity. Only Man is rational. Only Man is an intellectual animal.’

Emma has accepted Freud’s opinion: “religion is a universal obsessional neurosis” (p.56) and no question of her, being theist. Accidentally Ralph and Anna move to Elim as missionaries and the action of the novel moves on the basis of this missionary principle. While working with the poverty-stricken people, Ralph forms his theory that reflects thinking religion differently: “…Don’t despise these little things; they add up. A tiny series of actions, of small duties well performed, eventually does some good in world.” (p.120)

Thus there is a great difference between the religious views of every character that poses various situations before them and examines their changing or unchanging religious nature. Matthew wants to earn his living and at the same time wants to do the social work. James does it without thinking of his self and the same is true with Ralph and Anna. James whom Ralph thinks, ‘a clergyman’ and ‘has no life of his own’ (p.59) is really has sacrificed his life to that extent that even after returning from the court James starts working for preparing the meal of the day. He has also made Ralph realize that not the enthusiasm but patience is needed for missionary work.

For Ralph and Anna who accept the job of Mission House out of necessity, it is ‘a leap into the dark’ and they try to live and respond according to the situation. Thus we see the reflection of religious theme in CC.

As the Eldreds migrate from one country to other, there appears a cultural difference to reflect the theme of culture. The London life reflects the advancement whereas African life has been described as poverty-stricken and badly in need of support for even smaller needs. When they are at Cape Town station, they find children begging; at Johannesburg, black men with silk suits, white farmers with shirts tight. At midnight some unknown people start hailing stones to hotel windows for five minutes that shows poverty and hooliganism. As the people are illiterate they are orthodox and superstitious: a country boy, Jakob, who has falling sickness, if he falls down, the illiterate people throw stones at him to drive the devil out. (p.82) All the workers have bad-luck stories and are treated as the symbols of the vices: assistant to Jakob who spends the day listlessly and if given clothes, sells them treated as a symbol of wretchedness (p.82); Rosinah’s assistant, Dearie, a walking outrage (p.84); Clara, a washerman and cleaner, a symbol of emptiness (p.84).
Due to apartheid there is a great difference in the state of living of the black and the white people and also cultural difference. The black due to poverty and illiteracy lag behind in every field and thus need to be sympathized with. Moreover, The Government deprives them of quality education by developing the acts like ‘Bantu Education Act’. They have to earn their living through manual labour and have to rely on white people for work. The white, on the other hand, thinking them superior exploit the blacks, taking undue advantage of their illiteracy and poverty-stricken condition. Some white people in the form of missionaries like Ralph and Anna help the black. It reflects their sacrificial and helpful nature. It reflects the culture nurtured among them from their childhood. Taking into consideration some illicit affairs CC has Anna Vaux (London Review of Books, 1994) thinks it ‘a morality tale without moral’.

Anna is the daughter of Martin and Betty, the grocer, whose paying attention to the rich customers and giving them everything on credit but asking cash for the poor and needy develops anger in the mind of Anna. That reveals the culture of her parents and herself. Though she has not seen a black man till she goes to Elim, she adjusts with the work and works for their welfare.

Sandra and Amy Glasse reflect the work culture. In spite of the offer by Daniel to buy the property and giving enough money for their comfortable living, they decline the offer not to deprive themselves from their work. Amy tells Ralph ‘Sandra and me, we don’t mind hard work, nobody could say that. But we prefer to keep each other company at home.’ (p.156) She further informs him about their nature of work: housecleaning, selling vegetables etc. which Ralph admires.

II:3.2.2.5: Social and Political System

CC presents the social and political system in both the countries. Mantel presents the pluses and minuses of the systems. Matthew Eldred wants to establish a Walstan Charitable Trust for social welfare and also to have advantage of his family by creating a post of paid administrator for Ralph. James who manages the hostel has to tolerate the whims and fancies of the police and other officials and also the social pressure. Ralph who works as the manager in absence of James gets fade up of sleeping in Director’s office on holding bed; calls at midnight to admit the sick patients; taking away all the things by people along with them and collecting week’s bedding stained with vomit and semen on Sunday night and making them washed and stainless on Wednesday. He becomes aware of the customs etc. of the welfare officer and policemen.
The society has been divided clearly on racial discrimination as apartheid is being practiced. The blacks are being oppressed and denied human rights. The black people want to rebel and fight for justice but are suppressed by some rules and the government machinery. ‘The Bantu Education Act’ is an example in itself of such an act for depriving the blacks from the quality education. Anna has to wait for the parents of the children to take the children back but they are imprisoned or in hospitals due to the charges leveled against them. Ralph and Anna has to try to release them from Police stations. Thus they come in contact with the Government machinery through their sublime attitude to help the oppressed.

It is not only the poor and black are done injustice with, but Ralph and Anna who unknowingly help them are also treated as the enemy of the Government. They have to pay heavy price of it by going to prison and then getting deported to an interior part like Mosadinyana in Bechuanaland. The behaviour of the Police officials is harsh and inhuman.

The police officials who take them away, is only due to the visits of ANC leaders to the Mission House after helping the protestors. The help extended to the poor and needy is taken as an anti-national and anti-government activity encouraging breaking of law. According to them Ralph and Anna encourage the blacks to break the laws. Being no criminals, Ralph and Anna are kept in separate lock ups and treated like criminals till there comes the envoy from London. The Government prohibits even their traveling across the country and deport them to Bechuannaland without letting them return to Elim.

The other characters like Sandra and Amy are also victim to the Social system that does not allow them to be vendours and have to face difficulties in business. Melanie also represents the victim of the social system. A school-girl committed a crime unknowingly has been treated by the society as mad one and her emotional world is made fun of which turns her into a patient of psychological disorder. Even her parents are involved in her victimization.

II:3.2.2.6: Isolation / Alienation

CC like other Mantel’s novel reflects the theme of Isolation or alienation. This isolation may be forced or willing. Ralph and Anna experience the isolation at first willingly and later forcibly. Ralph who is treated whimsically by his father, seeks pleasure in helping his uncle James sometimes but unwilling to take missionary job forever. He along with Anna thinks of accepting the job of a teacher at Dar- es-Salam. Meanwhile there is no vacancy and Ralph and Anna have to decide whether to accept the job in Africa. It is not Ralph but Anna who has not seen a black person, accepts it and leaves for Africa. Thus they accept the isolation willingly for the first time. Their over-involvement or their dutiful nature compels them to accept the forced isolation later at Mosadinyana. Anna who might have returned to
London after that incident yet she decides to go to Mosadinyana even in her pregnancy. After having returned to London, Ralph due to Anna’s illness has been isolated that results his illicit affair with Mrs. Amy Glasse who also is living an isolated life with her only daughter, Sandra.

Theme of isolation has been constantly given vent to through most of the characters in CC. Among them we have Emma who becomes mistress of Felix Palmer to be isolated from her family, and society forcing it also on to Felix’s wife, Ginny, which is understood by Anna when she visits Blackeney. Ralph’s uncle, James experiences the isolation willingly whereas Ralph accepts it unwillingly.

There are many references of such a forced isolation on the minor characters like the workers working with them at Mission House. A special reference may be of Melanie, whose isolation is an outcome of her innocence and bullying of the older schoolmates and unfortunately of her parent’s non-emotional behaviour.

II:3.2.2.7: Transubstantiation / Transformation

As Mantel believes in change CC is not an exception to it. Being a fictitious account of the Eldreds, it sounds realistic reflecting Mantel’s observation in her stay in Botswana. The social and psychological transformation is conveyed through the characters, setting and other elements.

The setting changes from England to South Africa and to Bechuannaland. Every setting contributes in a way change the Eldreds individually, socially and psychologically. The change of setting is in terms of the jobs accepted by Ralph and Anna. The setting changes from one country to another. In South Africa, they work as the missionaries and manage the Mission House rather dutifully in comparison with the earlier missionaries. The social and geographical changes are considerable. The social practice of apartheid is totally new to cope up with. Geographically it is rich but not advanced like England. Thus the life of Ralph and Anna has been transformed to a greater extent. Unknowingly, he sympathizes with the black, poor; a missionary mistaken by the government as supporter and friend of the breakers of law. Their activities, their meetings are secretly watched to transform a dutiful missionary couple into a criminal and to imprison under suspicion. Ralph and Anna experience a great shock when they are not allowed to travel across the country and to return to Elim. The treatment by the police also hurts their delicacy of thought about the service to mankind.

We see a greater change in their life at Botswana. Anna is pregnant and has no comfort she needs. The Mission House is not well-built. They are reluctant to visit the people.
They can’t visit the hospitals at Johannesburg or Pretoria due to the Government ban. Anna has to rely upon a country hospital with meager facilities. Even in such an adverse condition she gives birth to a twin, Matthew and Catherine.

The servants steal the household things so that there are conflicts and the mental strain to solve them. It is the quarrel between the servants that culminates into the untoward incident that changes the total life of Anna and Ralph. This quarrel is between Enock and Felicia, who accuses Enock of stealing her skirt and selling it. Anna who is fade up of their quarrels rebukes Enock calling him ‘stupid’. It also changes Enock’s life that he leaves the work and becomes revengeful; wounds Ralph and Anna and take away the little Matthew and bereaves them of their offspring throughout their life.

The changes that occur are experienced by Ralph and Anna jointly in South Africa and Botswana. After having returned to England Ralph gets involved with his social work limiting Anna to household affairs. Due to her illness, Ralph gets attracted towards Mrs. Amy Glasse compelling Ralph to lie with Anna which is a greater change and loss of faith she experiences. It makes her decide to leave the home to go to Blackeney to stay with Ginny Palmer. This stay also changes her attitude towards life that makes her return home. After having returned home, she practices her changed attitude with Ralph who according to her has been immoral relating himself to Amy. Anna who is strong and decisive enough to take the firm decision, has changed to be a vulnerable woman leaving her home and breaking her relations with Ralph and others. It’s fortunate that this transubstantiation proves transitory to divert her attitude from pessimistic to optimistic.

Ralph accepting his mistake decides to leave home allows Anna to live with their children as they need her most. He finds himself guilty of taking for granted Anna agreed to his every act or decision and decides not to fasten on to her the decisions with regard to inviting the orphans etc. Till he packs his bags, Anna doesn’t oppose him. But when he is about to leave the house with two bags, they find a creature creeping smeared with mud towards them. They identify that creature as Melanie eloped from the hospital, an orphan badly in need of the care, love and affinity that can be offered to her only by Anna and Ralph both. Looking at her situation, Ralph who has just decided not to compel Anna to bind to his decisions and also not to suggest taking any decision runs to Melanie to take her in the house. Anna, who is on no speaking terms with Ralph, instinctively runs along with him and they both bring Melanie to the house. It reflects the transformation of Ralph and Anna as a missionary couple imbibed the true principles of Christianity of service to the mankind is service to God.
III:3.2: An Experiment in Love (1995)

III:3.2.1: Summary of An Experiment in Love (1995)

Mantel’s An Experiment in Love (1995) is a novel depicting the rivalry between two poor Catholic girls, Carmel and Karina. They compete as school girls and later as students at London University for moral and academic mind. In the beginning of the novel, Carmel remembers their schooldays seeing a photograph of Julianne Lipcott with her star patient in a newspaper. The novel depicts the complicated, interdependent bonds among them. All the very different characters come together incidentally. The experiment is finally proves a failure and to a shocking conclusion. It reflects the events in the lives of three school-friends: Carmel Macbain, Karina, and Juliette Lipcott, their family backgrounds, their school life, their life at the hostel, their sex-life and the fire at hostel causing the death of a girl, Lynette. Mantel gives a realistic touch to it through her references to some contemporary event in England. The novel has won the prestigious Howthornden Prize in 1996. Mantel is the third woman writer to get this prize in the history of English Literature. Shigukeni (Shigukeni.files.wordpress.com/2010/10: 4 Oct 2010) calls EIL is ‘a wonderfully open, important, tough book. There are far more aspects to it than I was able to mention, as for example its treatment of politics and of religion, as well as of issues like marriage, knowledge and learning’.

III:3.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of An Experiment in Love (1995)

III:3.2.2.1: Childhood Memories

The characters in EIL, Carmel, Julianne and Karina are childhood friends and Mantel presents their journey from schooldays to university days through Carmel as the 1st person narrator. Carmel and Karina are school friends and rivals unknowingly. Their friendship from childhood goes through many transitions. There is question of nationality of Karina. Carmel speaks about their houses on Kurzon Street that Carmel’s parents purchased on and Karina’s parents could not purchase the house. From their school days, Karina and Carmel as bosom friends but there is a great difference between Karina and Carmel’s dresses. Carmel’s mother, when takes her to school, she asks her to sit beside a girl with clean head. She doesn’t want Carmel to sit near Karina but as Carmel has no friend and finds a chair empty next to Karina and accommodates herself in the chair. Mother always tries to make Carmel look different. Carmel remembers the dresses of Karina and herself and tying of her hair at night that she describes ‘mummyfying hair’ (p.48)

Carmel remembers three reasons for accompanying Karina: first for her odd-looking outfit; secondly her mother thinks it a must; and thirdly for restitution. Carmel remembers an
incident at age four, Carmel throws Karina’s toy, a truck and a fat doll sitting in the lorry, in rain. Karina, with tears in her eyes as proceeds Carmel, Carmel has tears in her eyes but Karina comes and puts her hand on her shoulder soothing her. When Carmel tells about her hitting by Karina, her mother teaches her a song criticizing Karina but asks her to keep it with her. Carmel and Karina are friendly to that extent that she thinks that they might have been called lesbians in present age (p.36)

Carmel once goes to Karina’s house in the morning and finds Karina’s mother preparing her and at the same time feeding her the ham sandwich and banana that Karina is eating ‘like some greedy animal’ but Carmel observes her mother ‘looked hungry, and as if all the food in the world could never be enough.’ (p.47) Carmel after school follows Karina who is alone and knits, builds up fire to drink tea with bread, makes a potato pie, roasting a piece of meat etc. even at nine of her age which Carmel is not allowed to. Carmel is told by Karina that she will not be strong unless she eats and informs of her operation of tonsils.

Carmel reminds her parents quarreling on her appearing for the Holy Redeemer and imagines herself like Susan Millington after one year. Carmel speaks of the changed behaviour of the classmates as they come to know that Karina and Carmel are appearing for the Holy Redeemer examination and their appearing for the examination in reality and their mother’s behaviour and also the questions attempted and their possible answers. Carmel remembers mother of Karina and her mother go on purchasing the things necessary for the Holy Redeemer. Carmel’s mother is so much caring that she asks Carmel on 11th September to go to bed early, as on 12th September, she is going be the Holy Redeemer. Carmel remembers her life in convent school and learning within 4 Years; Karina’s bringing snacks in her bag; her meeting with Niall at town’s central library Carmel’s self analysis; her losing virginity at 13 or 14; estrangement with Karina and great change in Karina at 12 and Karina at 17. Carmel finds her mother knocking the door of Karina and requesting her to let her in and learns from Karina that Karina’s mother has been suffering from ‘wasting disease’. Carmel finds Karina at bus stop with boys smoking and allowing them to lounge in her vicinity. (p.150) As Carmel and Karina are bosom friends and have equal state of living, there is a certain kind of rivalry that results in narration of their childhood memories, in comparison with her childhood memories with other schoolmates.

When Carmel faints on the stairs between B and C floor of the Tonbridge Hall, Karina helps her as she used to return early on Wednesday. This incident makes Carmel remember her childhood. Even at the time of fire in Tonbridge Hall, Karina takes her away and makes her sit under a tree and Carmel thinks it a shower of dew i.e. of friendship.
III:3.2.2.2: Family Life and Relations

Though EIL present the story of three girls and their school and university life, it inevitably narrates about the family life of not only the three girls but also of the other girls staying with them at Tonbridge Hall and the other characters like Niall.

Carmel is the only child of elderly parents from a cotton town in a decaying state. Her father is a clerk and her mother according to her a quarrelsome, dogmatic and shrewd. Her parents used to utter some places in quarrels which they might have visited during the job but is stable at Curzon Street purchasing a house at 500 pounds which is impossible for Karina’s parents. Carmel’s mother is very much caring and alert of the future of her daughter. She takes every decision with regard to her education, her admission to schools, her being the Holy Redeemer and father has a little say in this regard.

Carmel asks for permission to stay at Niall’s house that her mother dislikes and declines her proposal but Carmel stays with Niall at his house in Christmas. Carmel and Karina face problems of sufficient food in their childhood and at university level, they have the same problem due to meager funds. Even after her father’s promotion, Carmel is unable to pay the dues of the hostels before term end and mother is not ready to give thought to her demands. Carmel turns anorexic and falls on staircase with fatigue. At this time Karina helps her not as a friend but like a family member. At the end of the novel, Carmel who is living a happy family life reminds the flashback and the contradiction between the present cozy life and the thrilling and adjusting university life nonetheless than the family life.

Karina has mixed nationalities yet she asserts herself as English. Her parents both work in mills and have not been able to purchase the house at Curzon Street as 500 pounds is not affordable sum for them. Carmel thinks Karina’s parents Polish, Ukrainians, Estonian or else due to their rudimentary English used in their family. She thinks them silent, shapeless people. Due to their different shifts Karina has become responsible about her household duties that are not allowed to Carmel by her mother. Karina thus has become courageous. Karina who from her childhood has suffered of poverty turns to be glutton that gets reflected even at her university stay.

Julianne is from a well-to-do family, a daughter of a doctor and a sister of three brothers. She has her school education from a private preparatory school. She also wants to be in medical profession. She helps every girl and doesn’t reveal the problems in her family and in course of time the friends learn about the scattered family.

Some of her friends like Lynette, Sue don’t disclose their private lives. But every girl wants to get marry to have babies and happy with their family life. They get seduced with this desire but are most of the times deceived by the boys and grown-up men who take it as a
game or play. All it happens due to their disturbed family life and their estranged family relations.

When Sue learns about her pregnancy, she is worried and feels that her parents will be angry and will chuck her out. Her boyfriend, Roger, as usual denies the responsibility and the girls decide to terminate the child which is the responsibility of her parents. Lynette offers the money and all the girls behaving like her family members take care of her during her pre and post-abortion state. Claire who is a Catholic and thinks sex before marriage a sin has a problem to go for weekends as her parents are divorced. Though all her friends live a free life, we find Claire practicing a restricted life based on Catholic principles. At the time of fire, Lynette dies which hurts Claire as a warden to that extent that she doesn’t return to hostel.

Thus the families of all the friends and their relations are not on good terms. Most of the girls try to seek pleasure not with the family members but with their boyfriends and make these relations more estranged.

III:3.2.2.3: Religion and Culture

EIL presents the theme of religion and culture through the idea of ‘Holy Redeemer’ and the girls being compelled by their parents to be the ‘Holy Redeemer’ like Susan Millington. It also brings out the general principle in the world that the parents dream a nice and dignified future for their children. Though they have not achieved it in their lives, they hope their children to fulfill them. The theme also reflects through some references of the Catholic life and the doctrines in it.

Carmel once wakes up from her sleep after hearing their quarrelsome discussions and mother discloses their desire to make her appear for the Holy Redeemer. Carmel has an impression about it from Sister Basil as pious and difficult to befit into it due to one’s likes. Carmel has seen Susan Millington going to Holy Redeemer, a dignified education reflecting the scholarship. The scholarship is the Eleven Plus and the boys failing in it miss the chance of their bright future and girls failing go to St. Theresa’s Pennyworth Brow learning domestic science. At Holy Redeemer, they have opportunity to learn Latin, Greek, Physics and Chemistry.

When Carmel informs it to her friends they make fun of her and also make her aware of the difficulties in it. She reminds some Deadly Sins: Envy, Vengeance, Murder and Sodomy; Oppression of the Poor, and Defrauding the Labourer of his Wages; and the cardinal virtues: Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. (p.65) Yet at the Christmas Eve, Carmel imagines herself in Holy Redeemer’s dress after one year.
On the day of entrance examination of the Holy Redeemer, the discussion of the girls reflect their false ideas of religion: Karina tells Carmel that Carmel’s mother will be burnt in hell for calling Sister Basil an old nanny goat but if repent no burning in hell; or wearing lipstick as a sin. The measurement of girls’ skirt are taken every week; footwear of approved type etc. The behaviour of the Holy Redeemer girls has been restricted by strict rules like if any girl steps out of line, she will be put up at the morning assembly to apologize to Mother Superior before the whole school and the staff, both nuns and lay teachers. As practice of religion offers a kind of social prestige, the parents want their children to fulfill their unfulfilled desires by practicing the religion. Therefore the girls in EIL are compelled by their parents to be Holy Redeemer, they also dream of being the Holy Redeemer facing the ostracizing of them by other girls in the school taking them ‘different’.

EIL presents the work culture and the culture controlled by the religion. The girls coming to school and to the university are mostly from working class and have respect for religion and their culture. In course of time there is a change in their behaviour and they go on living life without any restrictions to enjoy sex by violating the restrictions imposed on them at Tonbridge Hall.

III:3.2.2.4: Sex Life

In EIL Mantel depicts the sex life of all the girls along with Carmel, Karina, and Julianne. Carmel being the narrator narrates these experiences in detail as if first-hand ones. Mantel doesn’t take liberty to hide the experiences of Carmel as the narrator. The sex life narrated in EIL is sex enjoyed as a pre-mature and as a novel experience by the girls away from the homes. The sex life is secret one and has been a thrilling experience and unsafe, posing a great problem for themselves creating a threat to their lives and falling prey to the faithless love of their boyfriends.

Mantel speaks of three complex things at Tonbridge Hall: first, miniskirts fell out of favour; the second thing open the fire door so to avoid any calamity but these doors are closed away to keep away the boyfrind yet the boys used to spend the nights and are hidden inside the wardrobes; and the third thing, Carmel informs her parents that she will spend Christmas at Niall’s house.

As the men educate women on their plans and think at eighteen or nineteen the girls to get high marks, but the bodies now demand Sex, homes, babies etc. Though girls want to enjoy this novel experience in their teen age, they are afraid of being pregnant; some are happy for not being pregnant even after enjoying sex. They use contraceptive pills; but some girls unfortunately get pregnant and have to suffer the aftermaths. Most of the girls, except
Claire, enjoy sex that Claire avoids as a sin to have it before marriage but Carmel thinks sex before marriage a test drive.

Carmel enjoys sex with Niall and admits that she loses the virginity at 13-14. Carmel as the narrator narrates it as: ‘May be the act of love came too late. As a career move, I should have lost my burdensome virginity at thirteen or fourteen, when there would have been no question of a lasting attachment and no desire for one. I shook when I removed my clothes and I cried after it was done, not out of pain or disappointment but out of an up-rush of muddling emotion which twenty-four hours later I was ready to call love.’ (p.145) She calls herself old in enjoying sex every Friday and Saturday regularly, like the husband and wife and says, ‘We walked about before each other naked, as if we were the fount and origin of the world.’ (p.157) Niall wants to marry her and asks her to stay in their house at Christmas. Their relationship also breaks up.

Karina’s enjoying sex has not been referred directly but through the discussions of Carmel and Julianne. Once, Carmel has seen Karina standing among the boys smoking and allowing them to lounge in her vicinity. Carmel and Julianne think Karina fulfilling her sex desire from outside and has not been choosy about the partner.

Sue enjoys sex with Roger and becomes pregnant, finds him unfaithful and decides to abort the child. She calls her parents ‘livid’ and wants to do it secretly. Lynette offers her money and Sue has been relieved of her burden. The girls especially Julianne (Julianne being the medical student) takes care of her. Lynette tells very frankly that she fulfills her sexual desires through Harrow. Julianne has two boyfriends and wants Carmel not to stick to Niall only but Carmel doesn’t want to make her sex life an experiment.

The characters in EIL are the school and college girls coming together incidentally in hostel and live a kind of unrestricted life in absence of their parents; face the challenges of life and try to solve them secretly with the help of their friends. The conflict in EIL mainly arises on account of the girls’ enjoying sex out of curiosity like Sue.

III:3.2.2.5: Criticism of Social System

EIL presents the school and college life of mainly of three girls: Carmel, Karina and Julianne. While presenting it, Mantel points out criticism of some social aspects like the bad condition of the working class due to the closure of the mills causing problems not only to the workers but to their offspring with regard to their education and other necessities. The parents of both the girls want their girls to become the Holy Redeemer feeling drapery and other things with regard to it rather expensive. While purchasing the things for the Holy Redeemer, there is a reference to Lady Diana which is a current one.
Carmel and Karina being the daughters of the mill workers face the problem with fulfilling their fundamental needs: food, clothing and shelter. Throughout the novel we see Carmel and Karina struggling to get them fulfilled. Carmel is fortunate enough to have a house that Karina can’t have. Both face the problem with food from their childhood to college days it is the same case with that of clothes. Carmel deliberately starves to be anorexic and turns faint in Tonbridge Hall after returning from college. When Lynette asks Julianne about the reasons, the reasons listed as: twisted religiosity, poverty, sexual disturbance, inheritance, zinc deficiency that reflect the failure of the social system.

Julianne being the doctor’s daughter enjoys all the facilities but other girls cannot have such facilities due to social inequality and the policies of the government. There are some political references like inflation in Margaret Thatcher’s reign. There is also reference to decimalization of currency in February and reactions on it.

The social restrictions on the girls give rise to their rebellious acts. Some restrictions are with regard to their life style that makes them think of joining the Women’s Liberation Group.

III:3.2.2.6: Isolation

Alike other novels, Mantel depicts the theme of ‘isolation’ in EIL. The isolation as we have seen is willing or imposed by someone or somebody. The girls who are the characters in EIL, are the only child in most of the cases except Julianne who has three brothers. Naturally every girl faces isolation from her family and thus always in need of a friend or somebody, may it be mother, schoolmates or boyfriends to get rid of the isolation.

Carmel has her friends Karina and Julianne as she reminds it after looking Karina’s name in the list of admission and instead of accepting Karina as a roommate accepts Julianne as roommate to isolate Karina. Karina who has been facing domestic problems has been isolated from her childhood as both her parents go to work in mills. Julianne goes home and brings the homemade eatables etc. but one day she returns with a grim face revealing the isolation she is going to experience.

Sue, Lynette and other girls face isolation as they are in hostel. Their enjoying sex creates the problem and imposes on them the isolation. Carmel after Niall’s leaving has been isolated and neglects her health.

At Tonbridge Hall, the girls admit and get the roommates but for their benefits they ask their roommates to accommodate them into another rooms which a girl like, Claire doesn’t like but Julianne spend weekends out of the hostel to allow Carmel and Niall solitude.
Lynette doesn’t ask others about their relations and doesn’t say anything about her personal life to keep it isolated.

Even the characters like karina’s mother experiences isolation due to ‘wasting disease’ and can’t recognize Carmel’s mother. Lynette’s death in the fire isolates her from her friends from hostel and her parents. At the end, we see Carmel is at the breakfast table reading news paper and the house she dwells in has been separated by the pine trees symbolizes the separation from the past.

III:3.2.2.7: Transubstantiation/Transformation

As Mantel’s novels reflect the theme of transformation, EIL presents the transformation of the characters from the schooldays to college days and then the married life of two characters: Carmel and Julianne. Some girls are shown transformed at a point of time and their change proves short-living or these characters are not fully developed to reflect the theme of transformation.

As EIL deals mainly with the lives of Carmel, Karina and Julianne, we may think of the changes in the lives of these characters and some others affecting their transformation. Carmel and Karina who belong to working class and want to be the Holy Redeemer can’t fulfill it. In their College days they enjoy violating the social, moral and religious restrictions to be observed by the Holy Redeemer.

Carmel and her friends enjoy sex by deceiving the hostel authority in their hostel stay; use contraceptives to avoid unwanted pregnancy; if failed, try to solve their problems without understanding the consequences. Though this change suggests the positive and maturing attitude it may have some negative aspects and leading to some immature decisions. Carmel’s decision to stay at Niall’s house for Christmas; Carmel’s curtailing her intake of food turns her into anorexic that can be harmful.

Karina who face the financial and food problems from her childhood faces the same problem in her college life. She eats macaroni when becomes hungry or eats the eatables she gets at hand on the hostel. She also enjoys sex but there is no direct reference of her enjoying it but once Carmel comments that Karina has a life hidden from Carmel. Some incidents reveal her emotional and non-emotional nature. From the childhood she has been closely connected to Carmel and not with Julianne. Carmel’s in a way denying her as a roommate creates the change in Karina. The change in Karina from twelve to seventeen has been present in detail stating about her physical appearance. At twelve she looks like matronly little girl with her blonde hair shining, her dimpled and pinkly scrubbled cheeks. At seventeen, she turns to be dark, forceful, strong and sulky with brown hair, thickened and
muddy skin and has frowns showing disapproval of the world. Carmel’s watching Karina at
the bus-stop smoking cigarette and allowing the bus-station boys to lounge in her vicinity.

At the fire incident, to possess the fox-fur of Lynette Karina doesn’t unlock the door
so Lynette also can be escaped. Carmel watches the key in her pocket but Karina doesn’t
allow her to reveal it. Lynette dies and Carmel gets disappointed and collapses at the feet of
Karina. Here Karina reveals totally changed attitude and takes Carmel under the shadow of a
tree away from the fire under the shower of dew i.e. shower of friendship.

Julianne has not faced the problem of hunger as she is rich; no problem of isolation as
she has three brothers; no problem that Carmel and Karina face in their lives. Though they
have schooling from different schools, their friendship in Tonbridge Hall is unique. After a
long interval Carmel watches Julianne’s photograph with a famous star, and the past comes to
her eyes as if it were happened recently and is fresh.

Lynette and other girls also change within their hostel stay due to their enjoying the
life at university after strict school days. Mantel goes to the root cause of this change and
states:

They (men) educated them (women) on the male plan; they put them
into schools with mottoes and school songs and muddy team games,
they made them wear collars and ties...Women were forced to imitate
men, and bound not to succeed at it (p.164) ... Our schools kept from
us, for as long as they could, the dangerous, disruptive, upsetting
knowledge of our own female nature.

But we were released from the collars and ties now. All at once it
happened, Without preparation or warning, in the course of a day...
We were eighteen, Nineteen; we wanted high marks, because that was
what we were trained to get. We were trained to defer gratification, to
pamper and exercise and flaunt our mental powers, but now our bodies
were registering their demand . We’d had sex; sex bred the desire for
its consequences. The little women inside were looking out through
our eyes and waving to the world. (p.165)

Mantel presents the innate desires of transformation from little woman to adult on the
basis of the education they have got and calling themselves unprepared for. So further she
states: ‘We wanted homes. Houses of our own. Babies, even: the Milky drool of saliva to
replace the smooth flow of in. We did not speak of it, but each corridor of Tonbridge Hall
seethed with fertility-panic.’ (p.165) Thus the suppressed desires of the girls emerge as they
get isolated and away from the homes. The physical changes due to the physical pleasures
create fear in the mind of the girls and may prove fatal but nobody loses one’s life in pregnancy or during abortion but Lynette’s death in fire seems very tragic. No person wants to witness such transformation in experiments of love.

**IV:3.2: The Giant O’Brien (1998)**

**IV:3.2.1: Summary of The Giant O’Brien (1998)**

Mantel in her eighth novel, *The Giant O’Brien* (1998) (GO hereafter) returns to the historical novel and depicts the story of Charles O’Brien, who leaves his home in Ireland to make his fortune as a sideshow attraction in London. The setting is Ireland and London in 1780s. Here Joe Vance exhibits the giant to earn money along with his band including Claffey, Pybus and others. At first the people crowd to see giant but afterwards the popularity declines. In course of time they meet Bride Claskey, Bitch Mary and the most ambitious John Hunter, the anatomist. He wants to include the skeleton of giant to his specimen collection. Meanwhile Vance steals the money bag of giant. The giant now is helpless and is ready to sign the contract for a sum of his corpse to John Hunter, an anatomist, wants to add the giant to his collection of human oddities. At the end of the novel, we find deteriorating condition of giant and John Hunter adding giant to his specimen. Contradictorily his friends are enjoying the food and drink by selling his corpse. The novel presents a tragedy of an innocent, emotional giant. It reveals the conventions of Gothic fiction. David Nokes (TLS, 1998) thinks ‘Mantel blends fact and fiction, running together the stories of these two historical figures, the Giant and Mr. Hunter.’ John Mullan (London Review of Books, 1998) regards GO as historical fiction.

Mary Kaiser (World Literature Today, Fall/1999) reviews that ‘Mantel interweaves these elements with great ingenuity, and creates a very coherent world for the novel, but in the end, it falls short of any profound insight into the characters or the period instead, The Giant O’Brien becomes another of Mantel’s very clever Gothic tales based on historical realities.’

**IV:3.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of The Giant O’Brien (1998)**

**IV:3.2.2.1: Innocence and Betrayal**

Mantel in her eighth novel, *The Giant O’Brien* (1998) (GO hereafter) returns to the historical novel and depicts the story of Charles O’Brien, who leaves his home in Ireland to make his fortune as a sideshow attraction in London. The setting is Ireland and London in 1780s. It presents the conflict between the human virtue and vice. The ‘innocence’ is a virtue...
and ‘betrayal’ a vice. Mantel conveys theme of innocence through her main character Giant and betrayal through his friends and others. The giant is innocent and remains innocent preserving his innocence even in adverse situations. It is his innocence that he thinks of earning money for his starving fellows and decides to move to London with Joe Vance as an agent. He believes his every word and leaves Ireland with his band consisting Francis Claffey, Jankin, Pybus. Taking Joe as an agent and arranger of everything, the giant tolerates inconvenience and adjusts with it. Being an innocent he takes the people coming in his contact as innocent ones. His blind belief breaks when these people betray him. Among them he has not the strangers like Joe Vance, Slig and John Hunter but his close friends like Claffey, Jankin and Pybus.

He meets Bitch Mary and Bride Caskey who work for them but face the tragic deaths at the hands of his friends. It is heinous that without paying attention to the resistance by giant, they hand over the corpse of Bride to Hunter to get the money and enjoy afterwards. Joe and Claffey also make fun of her helping Mary and her innocence saying that Bride Caskey has no expression of innocence as she wants to fatten Mary a year till she gets an expression that suits her better for flesh trade.

Joe who becomes frustrated for not getting the good collection from giant’s exhibition at last steals the bag with nearly 700 pounds betraying the giant. The betrayal on part of Joe hurts innocent giant resulting into his deterioration of health. As Teresa Waugh (Spectator, 1998) states:

Initially Vance and O’Brien encounter considerable success in London; they make money and begin to live with a degree of comfort. They eat green peas and strawberries and the giant washes with Castile soap, but before long things start to go awry; he begins to grow again and to sicken. Hunter comes to see him, and the two form a bond which leads to the un-folding of a particularly gruesome denouement.

Joe and his friends who go to fetch him the medicine to Hunter return bargaining his death and corpse wishing his death and not his recovery now. His ill-health and his arriving death turn into a business of raising the price of corpse of giant from 100 guineas to 500 pounds at the end. It’s a great contradiction that the friends who are brought by the giant to survive along with him, now not only survive but enjoy drinks and sex on the money they get in exchange of his corpse. Thus he doesn’t make them survive while he is living but even after his death.

IV:3.2.2.2: Use and Misuse of gifts
GO presents an eternal theme of the gifts used and misused by the human beings. In the novel, we only have exception of Giant who uses the gift of being tall and story-telling for the betterment of the people around him more and less for himself. He could have lived in Ireland as a giant and a conversationalist, thinks of earning money for the better living of his friends. Walter Kendrick (New York Times Book Review, 1998) says, ‘O’Brien is a curiosity, and Hunter’s curiosity is ravenous’. The curiosity on both the parts is a gift but one uses it and one misuses it. As giant cannot earn money due to famine in Ireland, he decides to move to London. After going to London, though he earns money and puts the money in pillow, he wants to use it for restoring the Mulroney’s tavern. On the other hand, Joe wants to earn money by exhibiting the abnormality of the giant; and Claffey and others want to enjoy over the money he gets. They are like parasites and they prove it throughout the novel through their excessive involvement in drinks and sex. Under the influence of the wine they not only rape Bride Caskey but murder her.

John Hunter and his brother Wullie (Williams) are great researchers in anatomy and have excelled in it as the surgeons teaching the medical students this skill practically, but they who know the human body internally with every minute detail, lack the human mind and emotions. William who takes his brother James, a student of theology has been treated with such inhumanity that he is reduced to a corpse when John and Dolly receive him. James has to sleep on a bench among the obnoxious smell of corpses in the dissection room and doesn’t treat him like a brother but a servant. When his health deteriorates, William sends him to John and Dolly. William has lost his senses to that extent that he copulates with the corpse imbibed of his beloved, Martha, till it turns into skeleton.

John who has spent his life in the company of nature is well-built and goes to assist his brother, Wullie, not as a brother but a stout gravedigger and a guard of the corpses from dissection room. John has a gift of grasping anything in a short span of time. Within three months of his stay at university, he proves himself an expert anatomist replacing his highly experienced brother, Wullie. He delivers the practical skills of getting the corpses to his students and speaks of dos and don’ts of gravedigging. He dissects the human beings but at the same time is eager to learn the anatomical features of animals and to develop a specimen gallery of human and inhuman oddities.

Joe Vance has been described a smart man with black whiskers and honest blue eyes, agent and impresario who has left the district over the last ten years and has skill of arranging sea voyages. He has a gifted and impressive personality which he uses for marrying many wives. Giant believes in his skill and hands himself to Joe for exhibition and has to repent.
afterwards. The minor characters like animal trainers also train the animals and deceive people.

IV:3.2.2.3: Greed: A Means to End

GO conveys the theme of greed from the very beginning of the novel through most of her characters except giant. O’Connor who has 2-3 cows and to save them he ties them inside the hut and adjusts himself anyway. When giant if he gets 4-10 cows, what his reaction would be, and O’Connor becomes happy but giant makes him realize that the increased number of cows will drive the people out. Giant wants to earn money not for him but for the survival of the others. Giant is eager to be appreciated his height and storytelling whereas others are greedy of the money and all the comforts Joe Vance promises. When they get it they misuse it, but when they don’t get it they are angry with Joe.

Joe is greedy of money and popularity. He also cannot tolerate the downfall in his collection and exhibited object. From the very day coming to London, he avoids giant’s open exhibition not to affect the popularity. When he notices decrease in popularity, he starts searching other exhibitory like Patrick O’Brien, the Sapient Pig etc. His greed raises to that extent that he steals the money bag of giant to leave them all in trouble.

Among giant’s friend, Pybus is a boy, Jankin and Claffey are adults. They get greedier when they start getting the money and comfort and get involved in evil practices like drink and sex. John realizing their weak points asks Howison to treat them with drinks and dinner at Hotel Crown on Wynch Street. Thus they fall prey to these incentives to lose their rustic innocence betraying their friend, giant. After meeting Constantine Claffey and Slig their greed is unlimited and morally unbound. After giant’s death they once find the Toby, the sapient pig and run after it as they know it can be exhibited and they can earn money.

William’s greed is in the form of ambition to be a great surgeon. He wants to offer a corpse to each student studying at medical college. To fulfill it, he collects the corpses by hook or crook. To avoid the loss, he makes his brother James sleep in the dissection room culminating his greed in his brother’s ill-health and death.

Hunter’s greed is for the human oddities. He wants to add every human oddity as the specimen of his gallery and is ready to pay said amount for that. But Hunter’s greed of knowledge reflects through his specimens of some animals, John pays for the corpse at the rate of by inch, for first foot, one shilling and nine pence per inch thereafter. He advises the students not to be greedy to steal the grave clothes.
Hunter wants a savage or a dwarf or a giant for dissection and feels regretted for not getting hold of the corpses of Eskimos but has dissected cock, pig, gibbon. In his specimen, he has skull of a European man, An Australian aborigine, a young chimpanzee, a macaque monkey, a crocodile and a dog. He has ordered for dissection bear from Greenland and desires to dissect whale, a tame but not old lion and a foal of camel. He is greedy to have giant in his specimen but not an end in itself which is reflected through his desire to gain knowledge:

‘I want a crow’s nest, and a magpie’s nest, and the branches of the tree they are set in. I cannot get a large porpoise for love or money. I want some eels and they must not come from a fishmonger, but straight from the river. I had three hedgehogs, and all have died. I want some ostrich eggs. And a bittern, to hear it boom, and learn how it makes that noise. I want knowledge. I want time.’ (GO, pp.208-9)

The sentence ‘I want knowledge. I want time’ (p.209) reflects his greed for knowledge and at the same time the ‘time’ i.e. the life span to get the knowledge.

IV:3.2.2.4: Sacrifice: A Sublime Shade of Life

‘Sacrifice’ is one of the sublime aspects of the human personality. It also is reflected in GO through the major and minor characters even. The giant reflects as the greatest symbol of the sacrifice. His sacrifice is important as it is not forced one but it is accepted without thinking of his future but the future of others. On the background of their betrayal, his sacrifice rates him at the highest place. Kendrick (New York Times Book Review, 1998) calls ‘O’Brien’s way is the ancient Irish one, and like him, it is dying. Hunter’s is a rudimentary form of the scientific way that will sweep the old stories aside and replace them with experiment and calculation.’ O’Brien will sacrifice but Hunter will make others sacrifice.

The giant can live even in famine-struck Ireland by doing any kind of work or using his story-telling skill. But he thinks of using his height for earning money for the better state of living along with his friend. Here he sacrifices his life and death for his friends who are not worthy of it. He sacrifices his freedom at the hands of agent, Joe Vance, and when he elopes stealing his money, Claffey governs his life. His life remains not of his own, to move from one part of the country to the other as per their accord, can’t enjoy fresh air for Joe’s fear of decreasing the popularity due to open exhibition. All of them go out, enjoy and inform about the things they have seen and enjoyed. Giant, who is lover of Nature has been cut off from the Nature and natural things that results into his ill-health. Thus he also has sacrificed his
health and by signing a compact sacrifices his corpse to earn money for his friends. It sounds very tragic that Slig, Claffey and others intimate his deteriorating health to Hunter and with every moment of his getting near death increase the price of his corpse.

Bride Caskey exemplifies sacrifice among minor characters. Claffey calls her ‘whore-monger’ (p.107) and prohibits Mary to see her as tips of her fingers are creeping with disease, brings the Cyprian Wash-balls to keep her hands white. But Mary calls the ‘Bride’ her mother who has saved her from the ruin. She says, “Bride took me to a shelter and gave me bread and a blanket, and she and the blind man, who is called Ferris, brought me to London together.” (p.112) Bride has taken some debt from Kane, a Derry man, her landlord. As giant and his band is moving from the Spring Gardens to Picaddily, they want to take Mary with them but Mary wants to clear the debt on her. Mary promises them to be there within some days. As she doesn’t come, they go out searching her. After some days they find Mary in a destitute condition, money lost, clothes ragged. Claffey and others take Bride Caskey responsible for Mary’s condition and murder her after raping her very cruelly. Her corpse also is not buried but sold for money to Hunter. She is murdered for no fault of her own but for being sympathetic and saving Mary from ruin. Ferris, though blind, takes an oath of taking revenge of the murderer of Claskey that sounds impossible due to his blindness. Yet his feelings suggest Bride’s honest and selfless and sacrificial nature to help Mary. When Mary watches Bride being raped by Claffey who wants to take revenge on Bride for Mary’s destitute condition, she protests by hitting Pybus on his penis that he draws out after her invocation to have sex. It reveals Mary in reality also respects Bride and her sacrifice for her.

John Hunter’s sacrifice is of different kind and proves gaining knowledge. He wants to expand his gallery of specimen and shift it to a central place like Leicester Square and is ready to sacrifice to get fame and little money. He imagines his going bankrupt; wife leaving him; deserting by friends but is ready to sacrifice them in exchange of his obsession the Pagan object, giant’s skeleton being the part of his gallery.

IV:3.2.2.5: Poverty Exposed

The action of the novel, GO, proceeds due to the poverty the characters both in Ireland and England experience. Thus theme of poverty pervades Go. It is the poverty that make them decide to migrate from famine-affected Ireland to England. This condition is revealed through a rhetorical question: ‘But now that all Ireland is coming down to ruin together, how will giants thrive?’ (p.4) According to them O’Connor is the wealthy man who has a house and cows but the thatched roof built by his granddad forty years before of this house needs repair but impossible for O’Connor.
When they leave Ireland and are in a town, a woman comes with a belief that giants can heal. She wants giant to her three-year old son. She tells him ‘for three years I have never eaten my fill, neither has he.’ (p.13) She has no family members and the boy has eaten some poisonous herb as she says, ‘they live on green plants, just as in my grandfather’s time men ate grass and dock. The children have found something that poisons them.’ (p.15)

John Hunter is one of the ten siblings who died due to the rotten lungs and rotten lungs which is out of starvation. The Hunter live in a farmhouse and John who is the tenth and last child doesn’t find place at fire and is kicked out into the yard. When his siblings die, he finds room but no education due to poverty. At the age six, he has to collect the scarecrows and other things from the meadow. Therefore he calls himself neither rich nor poor. He has experienced poverty in his family.

Alike Bride Caskey, Bitch Mary represents the poverty and its effects. She comes to London and about to be deceived but is saved by Bride and Ferris. She takes refuge with Kane, the landlord with food and a penny everyday as wages. When giant and his friends arrive there she looks after them and Claffey gets involved with her. They migrate from one place to another for the shows of giant and Claffey wants to take Mary with them and it makes them realize her poor condition. Though she knows that she cannot free herself unless she pays the debt of Kane, she promises them to see them at Picaddily. But Mary who has collected her wages from Kane and might be on the way to Picaddily is found shivering with cold in November and penniless. Bitch Mary tells her story:

They have left me the exact time till I was hungry beyond bearing. Another few hours, and I would have been beyond it, God’s mercy would have numbed me. I was reduced to meekness and weeping by that hunger, it was agony in itself, but I knew from experience it is a pain which passes. Yet, one may have a piece of knowledge, and be unable to act on it. They plucked me out of the cellar at the very moment when my strength was lowest and my need greatest. (p.135)

Mary at square, has no clothes yet she finds a woman in the carriage asking her to follow to get six pence and breakfast. Being hungry for three days, she musters all her strength and runs after the carriage and reaches at the place. Here she is given one penny and after her head slammed, hair sheared off to prepare milady’s wig, the people giving her six pence keep with them five pence being Englishmen and asks her to be glad as they haven’t put down her teeth. Mary asks Pybus to wipe out the blood from her legs. She is asked to work by Vance in such a condition and to get a shawl and skirt the next day. At cellar, giant,
Claffey, and Jankin with no money find Bitch Mary pregnant as she now sells her body and reveals her desire to bear twenty children to protest this system.

John Hunter gets many paupers for providing samples for his experiments for a penny or six to eight pence. They also are ready to work as ‘gini-pig’ for any experiment for money but Hunte being firm in his principles experiments on himself. His purchasing of corpse also reflects the poverty in society.

The setting of GO moves within three provinces: Ireland, England and Scotland in 1780s revealing the extreme poverty in the provinces and their struggle to survive and the rich people taking undue advantage and making fun of the poor. We also see the poor helping the poor to survive on the other hand the rich are exploiting the poor and neglecting the existence of the poor.

IV:3.2.2.6: Use of Myth

GO is a story of a giant who is a story-teller. Thus the myth starts from the word ‘giant’ itself. The world is very much fond of such human oddities like giant, dwarfs, fairies or any other sub or supernatural object. GO reflects the story of eighteenth century giant, Charles O’Brien. Through giant’s stories we come across many myths: In the story ‘Wild Hunt’ we have meeting of a dead on their nightly walk led by a ghostly king on a ghostly horse, through lion-haunted forest to Edible House. For the poor people both house and edible things are myths. The giant mixes the tales like bliss and blood; the roof of gingerbread; wolf with a sweet tooth; the white-skinned, well-fleshed woman turning to bone with a man’s caress; lake where gold pieces bob drowning all who fish them.

The giant tells some stories like the Earl of Desmond’s wedding night, how St. Declan swallowed a pirate, keeping the dying child due to poisonous herb eaten on his knee that dies on the lap of its mother.

In the stellar, on a young girl’s request giant tells the story of a young, pretty woman with light foot, walking alone on road at night to her cousin at Galway with her 6-month baby. When emerges at a crossroad is caught in dilemma, which way shall she go? She thinks of spending the night there and wait for some traveler or person and thinks of protecting herself with her long hair covering her body so that she could remain unmolested. As she remembers some people speak of the myths about fairies, goes on to hear sound of a horse and meets a little man with red woolen cap who asks her to come along with her and requests her to feed her milk to a baby whose mother is dead. He promises to give her a gold coin from his leather bag. To get the coin for feeding the milk to a motherless child she agrees and starts walking along with her child. When she gets tired of walking she is informed about the
child as the son of the King and the man offers her a potion that relieves her of fatigue and goes on to find a yellow baby. She has been promised of every comfort and seven gold coins here. When she starts breast feeding the baby, she finds that the baby has a tooth and it sucks the blood, she faints, when gets awake finds her on meadows. The giant tells it as a real story happened with his cousin two years back on way to Galway.

The blind man, Ferris also sings ballad on Hannah Dague, a wild girl who stole a watch on St. Patrick’s Day, when hangman comes to noose her, she knocks him clean out of cart but hanged anyway. All the stories by the giant and Ferris reflect the extreme poverty and scarcity of food due to famine.

Giant does not like to tell stories about dwarfs yet he tells the story of dwarfs with duck feet for ‘the lesson about believing that things may be invisible but still exist.’ (p.144) Pybus and Jankin also tell the stories explaining dwarfs to Slig: Pybus speaks of a dwarf of size of a child of seven, with skin colour of earth as they live in the earth, hair black when young, cloaks are black or red, and wear long smocks to hide their duck feet; some disguise their hairy ears with hats. They can change a lump of coal to a precious jewel. (p.143) Their art of tending cattle is narrated through a legend of a man with seven cows that become invisible cows, he used to milk them, feed them, and afterwards they have seven calves.

Jankin tells another dwarf story of a servant girl, shivering in cold and is afraid of wolves and bears in the forest, comes to a little cottage to seek shelter. The cottage is of seven dwarfs. She finds it warm and requests for food and shelter. They ask her to choose one of them to bed with and she chooses the eldest. In the morning the eggseller woman finds the girl waking up naked from the bed of the dwarfs. She condemns her act and at night brings villagers to destroy the world of the dwarfs and make her elope into the darkness of the forest.

The giant’s telling the tale of Tannikin Skinker is also situational. He tells it when Constantine Claffey comes with a news of Mr. Goss’s Sapient Pig, Toby and Joe starts to hire it exhibition due to the decreasing popularity of giant. Tannikin Skinner who is born in town on river Rhine suffers of a curse: ‘Hog by disposition thou art, and thy child shall have hog written on her face’ (p.153) because of her mother’s chasing off an old beggar woman who asks for alms. The child has animal nose and bristles. Her parents have to keep her away but they tutor her well to make her proficient. They find the lady and ask her to withdraw the curse which she was unwilling to do. She only tells a remedy to get Tannikin married by a person and loved even with her deformity to restore to her human appearance. Being a wealthy family it tries to search for such a person but failed to find out her such a husband. In course of time her parents die and she has to remain all alone behind the shutters, peeping out
to see the river run; the change in fashions and like. When her old servant dies no one to care and serve her or to read a sermon etc. She has to live a long life in humility and solitude. Giant with an oddity thinks that he might get the same treatment from his friends and society like the dwarfs or like Tannikin to live in solitude.

IV:3.2.2.7: Transformation/ Transubstantiation

As Mantel’s every novel presents the theme of ‘transformation’, GO is not an exception. As it is a historical novel depicting the background in 1860s, Mantel tries to bridge the past with the present. She presents the journey of a story-teller Irish Giant changing into a specimen of a gallery of Scottish anatomist, John Hunter in London. Mantel has very effectively characterized the giant and his friends, John Hunter and other characters. While depicting their characters, she involves with their transformed traits, or personalities.

The giant’s transformation from a giant to skeleton is tragic and is because of the greed and betrayal of his friends. His strength diminishes due to his locking himself up away from nature and fresh air. He has been brought to England in winter but in the beginning there is no money collected lacking publicity. After distributing the handbills, in summer giant gets money and people like to see him. He becomes wealthy but it is beneficial to his friends and agent, Joe Vance. All the characters change but giant doesn’t reveal change from his humanitarian principles. He denounces the buying and selling of corpses and doesn’t agree to give Bride’s corpse to Hunter, but signs a compact of handing over his corpse to John Hunter only for the benefit of his friends, turned selfish of their comforts and enjoyment. Joe Vance who has shown him the dream of being wealthy and living a cozy life, at last steals money and bereaves the giant and all but in reality as giant thinks ‘he (Joe Vance) thefted his own vision.’ (p.192) Thus giant’s transformation starts with poverty to wealth and ends up with death in poverty again to benefit his friends being wealthy to be more selfish.

John Hunter’s transformation from a boy enjoying the nature to a ruthless anatomist has been revealed in GO. After the death of his brother, James, who accompanies Wullie and wants to be the surgeon, returns death pale. Wullie’s transubstantiation is horrifying. He has kept the corpse of his beloved, Martha, imbibed for four years and enjoys intercourse with the dead every night. He has lost the senses to that extent that he does it when James earlier and John later are sleeping on one of benches in that dissection room to witness it.

Wullie, who wants to go to South and is in need of a stout man to guard his corpses and laboratory. Dolly sends John to assist Wullie and John gets a chance to learn anatomy and a chance to visit university for two months. With his grasping and observing capacity, he
becomes an expert lecturer and a renowned anatomist eager to learn novel things. Wullie’s health deteriorates and John treats him in the same way that he (Wullie) has treated James. John teaches every practical thing to his students that he has learnt in his journey from a gravedigger to the surgeon. John takes over William’s laboratory at Jermyn street and desires to expand it. Throughout the novel John remains curious and doesn’t lose his intense desire to seek knowledge. He succeeds in enriching his specimen gallery by adding the giant’s skeleton to it at the end.

Along with major characters, minor characters also reveal the transformation. Among them we have his must include his friends who in poverty are sharing happiness and sorrows at every stage. They think about each other’s living happy with the things: food, money and warmth even available in their hands. Giant when decides to move to London for the betterment of himself and his friends. It doesn’t happen with his friends as they start thinking of themselves as individuals. They forget the basic thing that the comfort of the happiness they are getting is due to giant and they should look after giant. They use money to go to hotels, bars and even for sex. They also fight with Englishmen and Jews under the influence of wine. Their behaviour reveals a great change as they meet Constantine Claffey, Francis Claffey’s brother and Slig the stellar owner. Francis, Jankin, and Pybus reflect a transformation from emotional and faithful friends to non-emotional and selfish people lost their humanity. In other words, they reveal change from virtuous to vicious.

Bitch Mary and Bride Caskey reveal change in their characters. Bitch Mary is saved by Bride and Ferris from the flesh trade but are unable to save her as bride gets bitten to death by Claffey under suspicion of ruining Mary. Mary who is sheltered by Kane and gets wages to look after the visitors leaves the place to follow giant and his band to Picaddily becomes destitute and penniless. She is found many a times waiting for customers by the giant. When giant tells her that Claffey would have married her if she had no debt, Mary earnestly answers him that she has cleared her debt. It shows she also wants to have a kind of stable family life but has no option now except selling her body and being pregnant.

The novel ends on a note of transformation: John who adds the skeleton of giant to his gallery, yet wants to have variety of animals to dissect to get knowledge and a very important thing i.e. time. The narrator comments on it, ‘And time wants you, John. You will become a grain of wheat. You will be changed to a pool of water. To a worm, a fly. And a wind will blow the fly away.’ (p.209)

Kendrik (New York Times Book Review, 1998) looks at it from a different point of view and states:
At the end, Mantel seems eager to dismiss her own creation. By 1937, we’re told, Joshua Reynolds’s portrait of the real Hunter had hopelessly faded; it was “progressing towards extinction” then and must have it by now. “You will become a grain of wheat,” Hunter is told in the novel’s last lines. “You will be changed to a pool of water. To a worm, a fly. And a wind will blow the fly away.” But, thanks to Mantel’s own unnerving achievement, the reader of “The Giant O’Brien” will not shake off John Hunter so easily.

Thus the novel ends on Hunter’s desire to get the new specimens and knowledge but predicting Hunter’s transformation from one thing to the other.

*   *   *

Chapter IV

The Latest Phase (III)

4.1 Introduction

Hilary Mantel (1952-) reflects multiplicity or variety of themes through all her novels that makes difficult pigeonholing her works and herself in one and only literary tradition but the researcher thinks that there are some recurring or unifying themes present in her works. They can be listed as given: childhood; family life and relations; isolation; existence of ghosts or spirits/ supernaturalness ; religion and culture; revenge and mystery; the prominent sub-themes are also discussed if any in the novels being interpreted to lead to a very common theme to all her works is transformation/ transubstantiation.

While distinguishing her works the researcher has used a division as the works of early phase, middle phase and the latest phase. This distinction is logical based and done according to the period of publication. In Chapter II, the discussion of thematic interpretation of Hilary Mantel’s four novels in her first phase that we approximately counted from the publication of her first novel i.e. 1985 up to the end of the decade i.e. 1990 has been done.

In Chapter III, the thematic interpretation of her four novels published within the decade i.e. 1991 to 2000 has been done. The present Chapter IV discusses her two novels published between 2001 and 2010. These novels are Beyond Black (2005); and The Wolf Hall (2009). These novels will be discussed using the strategy used as the summary of the novel followed by its thematic interpretation on the basis of the recurring themes mentioned above. We also have the concept of multiplicity of themes means the main theme with many sub-themes used to create an overall impact.

4.2 Thematic Interpretations of the Novels of Later Phase:

I:4.2 Beyond Black (2005)

I:4.2.1: Summary of Beyond Black (2005)

Beyond Black (2005) is a story of Alison Hart who works as a medium between the ‘airside’ that is the world of spirits and the ‘earth-side’ that is the world of people. Alison has been assisted by Colette who works as her manager. She has joined Al when she comes to watch her spirit show and Alison identifies her for one of the messages.

After having taken charge as the manager, Colette tries to understand the performer and the clients. She tries to establish Alison as a professional and a responsible citizen. From the very joining, Colette has to experience the disappointment of Alison’s spirit guide, Morris, who doesn’t like Colette and complains about it. Morris plays many mischiefs within the show, on the journey and also at the stay at hotel and at home. Alison and Colette decide to purchase new flat and start searching the house and get one at Admiral Drive. Both are worried of the Morris’ bringing his spirit-friends that might create problem as no person in the neighbourhood and the sales girl even haven’t any knowledge about Alison’s profession.

Morris leaves to change the lives of both the women. Alison sleeps sound and Colette can plan the business well but Al thinks need of any spirit-guide. Meanwhile she comes
across a man working in the lawn called Mart, tortured by the hooligans and also by the police, takes him as a younger brother and gives him shelter but Colette drives him out. Due to the changed nature of the psychic show on TV, there are some false practices involved that create the difficulties before the earlier performers like Alison, Mandy and like. The previous art and aesthetic of the profession are totally lost. In one of the shows of such kind Mrs. Etchells dies and all of them go to attend her funeral where Alison tries to get some whereabouts of her past and birth certificate.

After having returned to Collingwood, she finds Morris and all spirits in the open space and she argues with him and learns some details about some past events which she has failed to interpret. All of a sudden, she learns about Mart in the shed when Michelle, her neighbor, complains about seeing him there. Colette being angry tries to call him out of shed but he doesn’t respond as he has hanged himself. Alison is sad facing the formalities of investigation when Colette decides to leave her and goes along with Gavin unmoved. Alison has to face all the aftermaths all alone. After her return, she learns about some secrets of her life and at the end of the novel she tries to start new life with the new spirits.

I:4.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of Beyond Black (2005)

I:4.2.2.1: Supernaturalism

*BB* depicts the world of spirits that is the supernatural world. The novel has many references of such spirit-guides. Alison has been helped by Morris, her spirit guide. The subject that Mantel deals with is related to supernatural creatures: mostly ghosts and the spirits that the earth-side like Alison comes across. The references of the spirits like Morris and all others give us impression of supernatural. The novelist describes their appearances, their past life, and their present state that helps us reveal some questions in the mind of the readers.

Messages from the dead arrive at random. You don’t want them and you can’t send them back. The dead won’t be coaxed and they won’t be coerced. But the public has paid its money and it wants results. (1)

The spirits are referred throughout the novel are: Gloria, Mrs. MacGibbet, Morris Warren, Keith Capstick, Donnie Aitkenside, Bob Fox, Pickey Pete, Maureen Harrison and like. All these spirits have been helping to the psychics while performing the shows. Gloria works as the maid at Alison’s house and assists Emmeline Cheetam. Mrs. McGibbet informs Alison about Gloria that, ‘Gloria is a cheap hoor’ (107) and also refers to her performing the immoral acts only for chocolates. After Mrs. Etchells’ death when Alison rings her mother she hears her mother ordering Gloria to prepare something to eat but Alison knows that Gloria is dead before thirty years.

At the age of five Alison sees the little lady and learns how the dead could be helpful and sweet. The little lady is Mrs. McGibbet and being a spirit speaks of her dead son, Brendan, but tells Alison that she doesn’t want to come between a little girl i.e. Alison Hart and her mother, Emmeline Cheetam. Mrs. McGibbet informs Alison about Gloria that, ‘Gloria is a cheap hoor’ (107) and also refers to her performing the immoral acts only for chocolates. After Mrs. Etchells’ death when Alison rings her mother she hears her mother ordering Gloria to prepare something to eat but Alison knows that Gloria is dead before thirty years.

At the age of five Alison sees the little lady and learns how the dead could be helpful and sweet. The little lady is Mrs. McGibbet and being a spirit speaks of her dead son, Brendan, but tells Alison that she doesn’t want to come between a little girl i.e. Alison Hart and her mother, Emmeline Cheetam. Mrs. McGibbet informs Alison about one incident in the life of her son, Brendan, who likes the circus much and joins the circus as a box boy and is cut into pieces by MacArthur and does not get her appeal entertained by police or the authorities. Mrs. McGibbet has been referred to as ‘the little lady’ and is always enquiring about another spirit, Maureen Harrison. The search of the little lady comes to an end and they not only meet
but enjoy the company with Alison to end up on a positive note and with Alison’s awareness that the living people may make you unhappy on the other hand spirits trouble you but also may live amicably.

The spirits are described with their regular apparel, their special features to try to be the part of the ‘earth-side’. Their good and bad nature also remains but one or other spirit can upgrade itself to higher level by doing the good action. But as Alison tells the spirits are unaware of the time and space dimension and are unable to exalt them. The spirits like Morris are unwilling to leave the house of Aldershot as at Collingwood there are no fissures or the old furniture to stay and play mischief on. Mantel writes about the liking of the places where the fiends would be attracted:

The Fiends would be attracted to any site where there’s diggings, workings, companies of men going about men’s business, where there’s smoking, betting and swearing; where there are vans running around and trenches dug where you could conceal things. (355)

After having hanged, Mart also becomes one with them and Alison feels it an end of her good action. Though supernatural creatures, they share all the mortal feelings like jealousy, greed, lust, revengeful nature etc. Morris’ rushing to men or women lavatory; his speaking of the money the other spirits owe to him; or killing Mart as he tries to trespass his private place or jealousy for Colette who shares the flat with Alison reflect the various mortal feelings of the spirits.

Through the conversation of spirits or through Colette’s recordings, the novelist tries to inform about the information of the past and the present to make Alison remember the past she has forgotten and is in a sense unclear. Their quarrels reflect the acts good or evil they have performed previously to affect somebody’s life. They respect some of the spirits and sneer at some of them. The new-comer spirit has been tortured and will be treated as the worker to obey all the orders of the senior ones. In course of discussion they deny her parentage but all the spirits in question reveal respect for a man called Nick, who they think Alison’s father.

I:4.2.2.2: Mystery

The title ‘Beyond Black’ (BB) is itself reveals an element of mystery. The science states the theory of creation of the ‘Universe’ out of abyss. A human being experiences both light and darkness in his life in the form of ‘day and night’. He can see everything clear in the daylight but believes that the darkness is mysterious; and bears many secrets comprising a different world. To explore this world beyond is always an intense desire of every human-being. The title suggests the same passion.

BB presents an element of mystery as the story deals with the spiritual world and the central figure, Alison Hart works as a medium between the ‘earth-side’ i. e. the common people and ‘air-side’ the form of spirit-guide, Morris. Alison’s life itself is a mystery. She doesn’t know the name of her father and her mother also is unable to tell it to her. Throughout her life she tries to find her father and guesses the persons who save her and in her mother’s life previously. At one moment, when Alison pursues her she asks her to find among the six fellows used to visit her but also clarifies that some of them used to come with blanket over their heads. She sympathizes with Mart who has a mother and a few step-fathers
for the same reason. The business she has adopted is also mysterious and is related to the other world which is mysterious and is a matter of attraction for every individual including theists, atheists, scholars, philosophers etc.

As man believes the Nature Almighty, he also believes that it affects our life in one way or the other and is always anxious about his or her fortune. As the concept of fortune is mysterious so does the fortune-telling. BB has many references to such techniques and knowledge unexplored yet: it has references of fortune-telling with ‘tarot cards’; ‘palmistry’ fortune telling on the basis of the lines and the signs on ‘palm’; using ‘almanac’; ‘vastushastra’ studying the effects of the ‘vastu’ (building) on the life of the man who resides or constructs it. There is also reference of the Chinese ‘feng shui’ complimentary to ‘vastushastra’.

The psychics in one way or other use one of the mysterious techniques to attract the clients. Earlier it might be a sublime work to guide the person who is troubled and tortured but Mantel criticizes the modern form turned as the profession and the greed to earn money out of it. ‘The hen parties’ that Silvana organizes to break the relationship to torture the person on other side is a heinous form presented and criticized. Mandy and six others organize the psychic show sharing twenty minutes each presents the growing professionalism and the influence of the sponsors to change the form and earning more money out of it.

In such a psychic show Mrs. Etchells collapses on the stage and is serious and dies. In her unconscious state she speaks of some mysterious things about Alison, her past and the spirits present. Alison while listening to the records, understands that the spirits have threatened Mrs. Etchells and their talk about sharing her property not only by her spirit guide, Pikey Pete but by all is disgusting as well as mysterious.

From the childhood Alison hears one voice of a spirit in her attic enquiring about another spirit. Alison getting aware of her listening to the spirits and using them is a kind of gift by Mrs. Etchells. She calls herself Alison’s grandmother and tells Alison that her son, Derek is her father which Emmeline denies to reflect mystery again.

Alison has many unanswered questions that are mysterious. For instance: her real father; her real age; the visitors to her mother in her childhood; who kept her bleeding on newspaper; who she has punished and like. Mantel is in habit of leaving some unanswered questions to her readers, but in BB she tries to reveal some mysteries mentioned above by using the technique of recording Colette uses to record Alison’s experience. Sometimes Colette used to run the tape recorder to record the first-hand information from Alison. Alison also speaks some secrets unknowingly and some dialogues of the spirits also are recorded to reveal the mystery.

Though Colette is a girl Alison asks to join and shares a flat to expel Morris, Alison’s little, dwarf spooky guide from her life and tries to get rid of her problems, her relationship with her husband is a kind of mystery. Her ignorance of his personal mobile number or his relationship with Zoe seem mysterious as even after seven years when Colette goes and watches the flat and her bedroom and wardrobe, there is no sign of Zoe’s belongings. Colette suspects if there is any girl called Zoe in real and Gavin accepts that nobody within seven years of her leaving shares the flat with this name but it is his imagination.

As the theme of the novel is the relationship between the common people i. e. ‘earth-side’ and spirits i. e. ‘air-side’, it is mysterious in itself. The behavior of the psychics and their treatment to the spirit-guides is also mysterious.
I:4.2.2.3: Contemporariness and Professionalism

*BB* depicts the world of spirits that is the supernatural world. Though the idea is metaphysical, there are some references to the contemporary world and events that bridge these two worlds. The most popular contemporary events like Lady Diana’s death; 9/11 terrorist attack; economic policy of Margaret Thatcher and many others reflect a sense of contemporariness. There are also some modern problems of environment, TV shows and the problems of youth in the new Millennium expressed. The construction of buildings at the Admiral Drive has created a threat for environment. It has also reference to the nuclear explosion making the land barren and is symbolized with the existence of white worms.

Alison hears the news of Lady Diana’s death (1st July 1961 – 31st August 1997) in the first week of September. Al asks for hot milk and two Paracetamols to tolerate the shock as she says, ‘things happen fast, in the lawless country between life and death’. (146) She calls Mandy and asks about going to the funeral. Morris speaks ill of Diana and compares with roll of carpet that shows his low level thinking. It is a new era and new world opened in her life before new millennium with the references of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee, the burning of the Twin Towers etc (9/11 incident).

The advertising has not been in vogue till Colette comes to live with Alison. She imagines Alison to be advertised as, ‘Alison, psychic since birth. Private consultations. Professional and caring. Relationships, business, health. Spiritual guidance.’ (143) Alison is happy with telephone consultation but Colette asks about videophones and also suggests the stages ‘before’ and ‘after’ as in cosmetic surgery in advertisement. Her asking about the ad of sex-advice and ‘lesbian anal fun’ etc. also reflects the sense of contemporariness.

Colette learns about the details of the sudden death of the famous people and waiting of their fans-in-spirit for them with regard to Lady Diana’s death. Alison offers many references of the famous people dying and attracting spirit-impostors like Elvis, Lennon, Glenn Miller, Napoleon, Cleopatra and others. Colette now understands that:

> Al hadn’t been quite straight with her in those first few weeks. There wasn’t necessary tie-up between what she said on the platform and the true state of affairs. Uncomfortable truths were smoothed over, before Al let them out to the public; when she conveyed soothing messages, Colette saw, they came not from the medium but from the saleswoman, from the part of her that saw the value in pleasing people. (151)

Yet she now thinks that Al needs a modern communication system: a project manager or conference organizer.

Their driving north to reach in time at Diana’s funeral; their standing on the bridge to watch Diana’s coffin; Colette’s remembering her photographs with Dodi in bikini before a fortnight are the references reflecting the contemporariness of the events and their importance in a novel dealing with the spirits of the dead ones. At one point of time, Alison refers to Diana’s soul as a mother conveying her love to her sons.

The search of the flats by Al and Colette and their visiting Admiral Drive which they theme all developments nautically the house types: the Collingwood, the Frobisher, the Beatty, the Mountbatten, the Rodney and the Hawkyns. It reflects the growing trend of construction business which is a contemporary reference. Suzi, the saleswoman, is the paid
servant and the representative of the contemporary world where people use their skill in exchange with money and some perks.

The destruction of the nature for the construction business: cutting the huge trees; the hustle and bustle of the huge machineries like JCBs etc.; Mart’s coming to Collingwood as a contract labour; a flat in Wexham sold at the asking price by the first customer and Colette’s flat at Whiton remain unsold even after reducing the price are some contemporary examples.

Mart’s introduction in the novel focuses some of the problem of the contemporary world like the problems of the orphans; torturing them by the hooligans to fulfill their interests; torturing them by the police taking them the paedophiles and threatening them to exile. Mart and his friend Pinto do not get an opportunity to improve or any security from the police but they have to live as the refugee at one place or another hiding them from the public places. Alison tries to help him but unfortunately he falls victim to the vicious spirits. The formalities of the police; the behaviour and the treatment of the neighbours; and the estranged behavior of Colette to leave Alison when she is in dire need of help also reflect some examples of the contemporary world where communication is faster but people are not reachable.

If Alison relates the bridge between the past and the present, Colette represents the present, contemporary and practical world. She wants to leave the untoward past with Gavin and practically accepts Alison’s offer to be her manager, takes some good steps like settling the income tax; advertising Alison’s psychic shows; sharing a flat etc. but is all the time relates her to past. Her sense of contemporariness and practical nature may be seen when she leaves Alison after seven years of living together to go back to her untrustworthy husband without ever touching any corner in the mind of her stay with Alison. Thus she represents the opportunistic side of the contemporary world against Alison’s constant advice to her to do something good to exalt in this as well as in the spiritual world.

Though Alison calls herself ‘a professional psychic, not some sort of magic act’ (9), she and all the other psychics perform the public shows but they are unaware of the government rules or some obligations with regard to tax etc. They are ignorant of the advertising techniques and also the real worth of their shows. Colette visits the psychic fair and gets identified by Alison as a lady with problem with marriage. In the very second visit Alison offers her a job to work as the manager which Colette accepts and really does make over of Alison’s business.

First of all she completes all the government formalities like tax-paying and then the advertising. The advertising leads to a good response as she wants to pose her as a fortune-teller but Alison is not ready to do it.

Alison who Colette wants to pose as ‘fortune-teller’ rejects this idea as it is not accepted being deceit. She plainly tells Colette that she can teach her tarot cards but one should use intuition to interprete them. Being the medium, Alison performs the psychic shows and tries to convey the messages to the persons with problems and desirous of meeting their dear departed. The concept to speak to the soul of the departed through a medium like Alison is itself mysterious. Alison has not been professional throughout her life as Colette thinks. Though Colette wants her to be professional; to make her write a book on the ‘spirit-world’ and recording her views for the book; Alison’s feeling nothing perhaps, after getting published Merlyn’s book first; and reluctant to accept the invitation to participate the show represent her non-professional nature.
In the present world, the professionalism is nothing but making profit out of any action or business you are in. May this profession be related to the living or dead ones. Alison has not inculcated this spirit of professionalism in her otherwise she might not have accepted a lady like Colette as her manager; not permitted and helped Mart to live in the shed to get involved in the police action; might have earned money by hook or crook deceiving people.

Her involvement with Mrs. Etchells also reveals her non-professional but emotional attachment. In her miserable childhood, Mrs. Etchells treats Alison as her grand-daughter and Alison maintains this relation throughout her life. When she calls her mother asking her to be present at the funeral of Mrs. Ethcells, her mother makes fun of her taking Mrs. Etchells as her grandmother and Derek as her father. Her mother represents the complete professionalism in this incident and in her real life.

Mantel has shown not only the worldly characters professional but the other-worldly characters also professional. Mrs. Etchell’s death is a planned murder as her spirit-guide should not enjoy all her personal property; Mart’s murder is due to his trespassing Morris’s province and to appoint other new spirit as worker obeying their orders; Morris’s leaving Alison after her coming to Collingwood; their debate over the forlorn spirit of Pikey Pete after the death of Mrs. Ethcells are some examples of the professionalism in the other-world.

I:4.2.2.4: Childhood

Like other novels, BB deals with the childhood memories of the major and minor characters. Alison Hart’s childhood is miserable and she has to live with it throughout her life. She remembers the childhood in fractions and tries to figure it out and interprete it as a whole. Her childhood may be divided into her life in the house and her schooldays. Her mother, Emmanuel Cheetam, has at the end of the life of Mrs. Etchells been described by her as ‘prostitute’ and also talks of her interest in different kinds of blokes that takes her to a circus to enjoy sex with dwarfs. There is no certain information of her date of birth or a birth certificate so she cannot understand what her real age is. It is shown by Mantel by using the expressions like, ‘I was seven, eight, nine or ten …‘ while describing the events in her life. The people who visit her mother keep an eye on her but she is saved by a spirit like Mrs. MacGibbet and also tells her about the things happened like her mother’s visiting her room and drawing money from her purse etc.

Al remembers the childhood “she never had any money after school for burgers or chocolate, her mum keeping her short in case she used the money to get on a bus and run away.” (6) In her school-days, she has no swimming-suit so she has to swim on knickers and so sent back. She also gets molested by Mr. Naysmith, her teacher who sits near her, squeezes her knee and touches her private parts and when she complains to the school authority, she is suspended from the school. Al remembers the childhood experience of police and is afraid of uniform – remembers police shouting ‘Mrs. Emmanuel Cheetam’ for her mother. As she does not like the name ‘Cheetam’ so she adopts name ‘Hart’.

The most horrifying incident Al tries to recall but does not remember as the link has been broken by Colette which is narrated as:

I feel I was kept in a shed. I feel I was chased there, that I ran in the shed for refuge and hiding place, I feel I was then knocked to the floor, because in the shed someone was waiting for me, a dark shape rising
up from the corner, and as I didn’t have my scissors on me the time I couldn’t even snip him. I feel that, soon afterwards, I was temporarily inconvenienced by someone putting a lock on the door; and I lay bleeding, alone, on newspapers, in the dark. (317)

Mandy always asks Alison whether she was drunk while choosing the spirit-guide like Morris, and Alison’s reason is it is due to her childhood mistake. It reveals the problems of her childhood. From her childhood she has fallen prey to the mischief of Morris in her real life as well as in psychic world. On the way home from school, he used to seize her and cup her breast that she has to surrender and after being the spirit-guide even his behaviour is not good but troublesome in case of other psychics or even to Alison or Colette.

Alison’s childhood is full of questions and with ifs and buts that makes her choose it whether wrong or right that troubles her throughout her life. Due to her acceptance of the same she becomes a stoic that Colette does not like. She wants Alison to be non-complacent that might take her to the highest post in the psychic world.

I:4.2.2.5: Isolation

BB also suggests the theme of isolation from its title, Beyond Black. The world the novelist refers to is the other-world or the world beyond the human, materialistic world. As the world she talks of is meta-physical, the isolation becomes part parcel of the same.

Mantel presents this isolation through some of her characters and through some incidents: Alison and her mother, Colette and Gavin, Morris and the spirits, Mart, the neighbours at Admiral Drive, her psychic friends. The isolation is sometimes forced and sometimes it is accepted by them.

Alison’s isolation is due to her profession as a psychic and in the childhood it is due to the precautious nature of her mother to prevent her from her customers. The room and the attic she uses as her possession in her mother’s house is a kind of imprisonment. She has no freedom to spend the childhood like the common children. She is always mused with the spirit of little lady and her caring nature.

She is the medium working between the ‘air-side’ and the ‘earth-side’ which is not a profession socially validated and coming under the Income Tax. Here she is accompanied by her spirit-guide, Morris who is mischievous. Due to his mischief Alison has to remain isolated and alert. In one of the shows she meets Colette, who is an alienated self in her life though married to Gavin, and accepts Alison’s offer to be the manager and becomes the partner of her for seven years to lessen her grief of isolation. Alison offers her freedom to decide for her business planning etc. which leads to sharing a flat at Collingwood. The flat symbolizes isolation once again where we are surrounded by the houses but nobody is to share the happiness or sorrow. Alison though accompanied by Colette has the same feeling as she always thinks of her past. This isolation leads her to do some ‘good action’ and feels Mart’s forced isolation is a good opportunity for her to exalt herself. She starts helping Mart by allowing him into her shed as a shelter, gives food and a good treatment. He is feeling better as the neighbourhood starts complaining about his whereabouts that reflects their possessive but non-helping nature. Colette has already warned about him and is not ready to shoulder any responsibility with regard to Mart.
Alison’s mother, Emmeline though enjoys illicit relations with a number of persons experiences isolated at the end of her life. She has treated her daughter in a way to justify Alison’s treatment to her.

Colette’s isolation is due to her untrustworthy husband and their loss of belief in marital relationship. Their believing and respecting each other’s privacy leads them to this isolation and their estranged relations. They live separately for seven years and get united as per their will to make Alison isolated. Colette finds to her surprise not only Colette but Gavin also has lived within these years all alone though has pretended to have a model, Zoe as the paying guest.

Mrs. Etchells who is supposed to be the old and experienced psychic and has to marry a policeman accepts staying in a row house with her spirit-guide, Pikey Pete. After her death, other psychics visit reveals her miserable isolation.

Alison’s other psychic friends find a remedy to overcome the isolation and its disadvantages by forming the joint psychic programme offering each twenty minutes. It represents their urge to find a kind of comradeship at least to make them relieved of their isolation. Alison once experiences this show and is reluctant to be the part of it. She decides after the Mart experience to be linked with the spirits rather than that of the living persons like Colette, her mother and her psychic friends.

Mart’s isolation is socially enforced isolation. He who was a worker along with his friend, Pinto has been tortured by a band of youngsters and also by the police as a paedophile. He is helped to overcome this isolation by Alison that is hampered by the people at Admiral Drive and the spirits even. The society, in other words, kills him keeping him isolated and the spirits relieve him through this situation to make him join them in other-world. It very clearly suggests the difference between the features of the human world and the other-world.

I:4.2.2.6: Family and Family Life

Alike all novels, Mantel presents the family and family life of the characters as well as spirits. Mostly the family and family life of Alison, Colette along with Emmeline, Mrs. Etchells are disturbed in comparison with the lives of the spirits the then earth-side. Alison’s family is not limited or cannot be restricted as a common family of parents and a daughter within. Her mother is a prostitute causing a great problem of identification of her real father.

Alison being an unwanted child of a prostitute, one can imagine the miserable life of her. She has to lock herself up in the attic when there are men coming to her mother and she is unaware of their intentions and is totally unaware of the danger to her life. As her mother does not know the importance of the school and the school activities and does not feel education important, neglects to provide even ordinary and essential facilities to Alison. She cannot get the swimming suit, cannot attend the classes of RE in proper time to make her stand out of the class. Moreover, the man like Morris tries to seduce her; molest her on the way home. She also has got used to such acts she comes across. Thus her family life is no less than an orphan due to estranged mother-daughter relationship that compels her to change her name not after her mother but to some other name. She informs her mother that she is going to change her name from ‘Cheetham’ to ‘Hart’ due to her unwillingness to carry forward the untoward family life.

The family life of Colette and Gavin has also been sad as they share a flat being the husband and wife but have no belief in each other. Gavin has not given her his personal
mobile number so that after her leaving the house, or in case if the relationship is broken, she might not communicate unless Gavin wants to. It makes Colette attend the psychic show to know about her future. Incidentally she has been located by Alison and Colette has been given proposal to work with her. Colette accepts the offer and for next seven years till her getting away from Alison, tries to set up her as professional.

Despite the disturbed family life, Colette always thinks of Gavin which Alison points out several times. Gavin calling her and taking permission to accept a model, Zoe as a paying-guest cum partner is accepted by her. His curtailing the monthly installment due to economic constraints is also accepted. After seven years she again remembers Gavin and Gavin takes her home. Though she searches for any sign of Zoe’s existence in the flat, she does not find any to start with their family life again.

I:4.2.2.7: Transformation

*BB* presents the transformation of the human world as well as the world beyond. The human beings live with all virtues and vices as the ‘earth-side’ but as soon as they pass away they take a form of spirit to get transformed to ‘air-side’. This transformation is but natural and the spirits can work as the spirit-guides for the psychics who use them and try to earn their living and also try to solve some problems of ‘earth-side’.

Alison, though the central figure in the novel, shows a kind development which cannot place her in a total round character but round-cum-flat character. As she has been involved with both the worlds, the action involved is concerned with the characters in both the worlds simultaneously. Alison as a school-girl goes to school but leaves it unfinished due to her mother’s negligence and due to lack of the proper attention. She has been tortured by Morris on the way to school and mother is not ready to look after her. Meanwhile Mrs. Etchells sympathizes with her and she becomes a psychic accepting a spirit-guide like Morris that troubles her in future.

With the entry of Colette, Alison’s life gets transforms to a professional but this change proves transitory as they live together for seven years and there develops difference of opinions with regard to Mart’s shelter. Colette leaves her and the transformation in her life even comes to an end. Alison tries to be helpful towards Mart, an orphan, which is not accepted by society to allow the change. At last she accepts it as the course of life and is accompanied by two spirits revealing disbelief in the human world and the world ‘Beyond Black’.

II:4.2 Wolf Hall (2009)

II:4.2.1: Summary of Wolf Hall (2009)

*Wolf Hall* (2009) is Hilary Mantel’s the Man Booker Prize winner novel presenting the England in Tudor Period under the rule of Henry VIII. Henry, after the death of his brother Arthur, the King, has to marry to Catherine but Henry wants to marry a girl of his choice which is not possible unless the kingship is allowed by the religious authority from the Church of Rome. The King has been waiting for annulment of marriage for twenty years, when lost patience challenges the religious authority and declares himself the Head of Country and Religion also. He has been helped by Thomas Cromwell who was in service of the Cardinal Thomas Wolsey but in course of time gains significant posts in court and
becomes the Master Secretary. WH presents the journey of a blacksmith’s son to the omnipotent ruler. It has been presented in a unique narrative style by Mantel as she uses present tense to narrate the historical events, within six parts. The first part presents the family background of Thomas Cromwell at Stepany and at Austin Friars; and his relations with Cardinal who has lost the favour of Henry. In the second part the raids on Cardinal’s property are done and he has to leave the house and move to Tower. It also presents the mythical and mysterious history of Britain; and how Cardinal has been tortured to get the Great Seal back. In the third part with the skillful nature Cromwell becomes beloved to all till he becomes the Councilor of the King. In the fourth part, Cromwell becomes closer to both Anne and Henry to make others jealous and makes up king’s mind and supports the king to marry Anne secretly. Before marriage, Anne demands many things and the king fulfils. In the fifth part, Anne officially becomes the queen but not accepted by the Pope and believers of the Roman Church. Anne starts taking revenge who has opposed her. Cromwell very skillfully makes king appoint the people he wants to on higher post. The last (sixth) part very effectively brings out the king’s helplessness before Anne and finishes with the death of Thomas More.

The special feature of the novel is Mantel’s use of present tense for narrating historical fiction and the effective use of pronouns with clarity of expression.

II:4.2.2: Thematic Interpretation of Wolf Hall (2009)

II:4.2.2.1: Childhood

Alike other novel, WH also has childhood memories playing a vital role in the development of the characters and development of action of the novel. Not only have the childhood memories of major characters but of minor characters also been presented. WH presents Thomas Cromwell and King Henry being sad remembering their childhood. The only contrast if Cromwell feels sad for his unhappy childhood while the king becomes sad for his lost happy childhood. Queen Catherine remembers her glorious childhood many a times.

The beginning of the novel reveals Thomas’s miserable childhood where Walter, his father fully drunk beating Thomas, his son mercilessly. The narration on the first page of the novel makes us aware of a father’s cruelty beating only son instead loving him:

Felled, dazed, silent, he has fallen; knocked full length on the cobbles of the yard. His head turns sideways; his eyes are turned towards the gate, as if someone might arrive to help him out. One blow, properly placed, could kill him now.

Blood from the gash on his head – which was his father’s first effort – is trickling across his face. Add to this, his left eye is blinded; but if he squints sideways, with his right eye he can see that the stitching of his father’s boot is unraveling. The twine has sprung clear of the leather, and a hard knot in it has caught his eyebrow and opened another cut.

‘So now get up!’ Walter is roaring down at him, working out where to kick him next. He lifts his head an inch or two, and moves forward, on his belly, trying to do it without exposing his hands, on which Walter
enjoys stamping “What are you, an eel?” his parent asks. He trots backwards, gathers pace, and aims another kick. (p.3)

Kat is very anxious about the future of Thomas. Morgan, Kat’s husband, sympathizes with Tom and thinks it better for Tom to leave the house instead of getting beaten and tolerating it.

Thomas, who also thinks it a proper solution, leaves the house and goes to France. He works to keep his life going on. He learns the Three Card Game, helps the lowlanders in relieving their goods indicating the reasonable amount of bribe etc. This life makes him aware of the good and bad side of the life. But his sole desire was to join the army to be a soldier. When he finds Gregory sleeping remembers his childhood stating:

He understands his need to sleep; he never got much sleep himself, with Walter stamping around, and after he ran away he was always on the ship, or on the road, and then he found himself in an army. (37)

When he visits Hatfield, he remembers his childhood and tells it to Gregory, ‘When I was nine or ten my uncle John used to pack me in a provisions cart with the best cheeses and the pies, in case anybody tried to steal them when we stopped’. (549)

Thomas remembers how he learnt counting of loaves to make himself useful in the kitchen:

When he was a little boy and his uncle John was a cook for the great man, he used to run away to Lambeth to the Palace, because the chances of getting fed were better. … //Other children than he made themselves useful in the kitchen by fetching and carrying, … His uncle John measured the loaves and if they were not just right they were tossed into a basket for the lower household…. Into the great hall would go the meats and the cheeses, the sugared fruits and the spiced wafers, to the archbishop’s table – he was not a cardinal then. When the scrapings and remnants came back they were divided up. First choice to the kitchen staff. Then to the almshouse and the hospital, the beggars at the gate. What wasn’t fit for them would go down the line to the children and the pigs. (112-3)

Cromwell thus remembers his childhood and feels it responsible for his future development.

Even there is reference of King Henry remembering his childhood days after coming to visit Cromwell in his illness remembers his father and grandmother:

I lived at the palace at Eltham, I had a fool called Goose. When I was seven the Cornish rebels came up, led by a giant, do you remember that? My father sent me to the Tower to keep me safe. I said, let me out, I want to fight! I wasn’t frightened of a giant from the west, but I was frightened of my grandmother Margaret Beaufort, because her face was like a death’s head, and her grip on my wrist was like a skeleton’s grip. (618)

WH is a vast picture gallery and has references also of the childhood of minor characters.
II:4.2.2.2: Religion Versus Kingship

WH presents the question of king’s marriage risen due to the oppose of the religious authority as the king wants to annul his marriage sanctioned by the Pope and wants to marry the woman of his like. The king is the staunch believer in the religious authority cannot discard the verdict and wishes to do it with the acceptance of the Pope. But within twenty years the king fails to convince his stand that Queen Catherine was no virgin when married to him. It has resulted into his psyche towards discarding not only the verdict but the authority itself.

At first Cardinal opposes the king’s marriage to Anne but afterwards tries his level best to plead him in the Papal court but fails. His failure stuns the king to ruin Cardinal to a humiliating dismissal from the post of the Lord Chancellor and his death on the way to meet the king. The King being angry raids his property, takes over the Colleges established and the riches and also bereaves him of the great Seal of England, the authority symbol. He has been taken to tower falls ill and on the advice of Stephen Gardiner the Master Secretary the king sends him to the North. Cromwell very craftily, sends his nephew and Rafe with Cardinal to make his journey comfortable. But on 1 November 1530, a commission for Cardinal’s arrest is given to Harry Percy, the young Earl of Northumberland who arrives at Cawood to arrest him. Cardinal has been taken to Pontefract Castle, Doncaster, Sheffield Park, the home of the Earl of Shrewsbury. At Talbot house he falls ill. On 26th November the Constable of Towers arrive with 24 guards to escort him to south and he comes to Leicester Abbey. Three days later Cardinal dies. (p. 260) Alike king, Anne also is angry with Cardinal and has misunderstood his efforts. She many a times says that she wants to see the cardinal dead.

The king makes Sir Thomas More the Lord Chancellor but More is the staunch supporter of the Roman church. He is not ready to legitimize the marriage of the King and Anne and also is not trying to convince the religious authority. The king is impressed with the knowledge of Sir Thomas More and is not in favour to treat him badly though Anne wants. More gets imprisoned and the death sentence for not accepting the act of Supremacy and due to his silence over the Holy Maid case. Till the end, Cromwell asks him to take an oath to be loyal to the English Church he denounces it and gets the death sentence. The King with the advice of all his councilors and well-wishers makes Stephen Cranmer the Lord Chancellor.

The tyranny of religious authorities are described to reflect the dark side of it. For instance, Thomas Hitton, a priest was burned taken up by Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, as a smuggler of Tyndale’s scriptures. (298) When the heretics are taken, the Lord Chancellor stands by the Tower while the torture is applied. He uses the whip, the manacles, and the torment-frame called ‘Skeffington’s Daughter’, a portable device, into which a man is folded, knees to chest, with a hoop of iron across his back; by means of a screw, the hoop is tightened until his ribs crack but not suffocate, as he should not lose the things he know. Later two dinner guests die. John Petyt imprisoned for getting a copy of Tyndale’s scriptures. When More asks to forgive him and says that he has not done any harm, Riche interrupts him and makes him remember the misuse of power:

You do nobody harm? What about Bainham, you remember Bainham?
You forfeited his goods, committed his poor wife to prison, saw him racked with your own eyes, you locked him in Bishop Stokesley’s cellar, you had him back at your own house two days chained upright
to a post, you sent him again to Stokesley, saw him beaten and abused for a week, and still your spite was not exhausted: you sent him back to the Tower and had him racked again, so that finally his body was so broken that they had to carry him in a chair when they took him to Smithfield to be burned alive. And you say, Thomas More, that you do no harm? (629)

There is also a reference of tyranny of religious authority as Loller’s death witnessed by Cromwell when he runs away at nine of his age. Loller believes in ‘God on the altar is a piece of bread’ (353) which is taken as blasphemy to burn her alive. It has been a dark side of religion Thomas witnessed. It is Thomas who advises the king to take over the monasteries that have been wealthy and being parallel centers of power challenging the kingship.

Anne plays a very significant role in ‘reformation’. Jerome de Groot (2010:70) writes:

Henry VIII took control of the Church from Rome in order that he might divorce his wife, Katherine of Aragon, and marry Boleyn; she failed to provide an heir and he tired of her, after which circumstances and conspiracy led to her trial and execution as a witch. Boleyn’s life is sensational and also historically important. She was a key player in the Reformation, arguably the first woman to demand to be considered equal to a man, the first female commoner to be made a peer by direct creation and to hold a title in her own right (suo jure) rather than through marriage, the mother of Elizabeth I, lover of a famous king, and wife executed by her husband after he falsely accused her of adultery, incest and witchcraft.

Cromwell tries his level best to balance the religious authority till the cardinal’s death and also by negotiating Chapuys, the Emperor’s man about the annulment of the king’s marriage. Cromwell decides to work with Parliament and sure to break up Bishops. Though Sir Thomas More says in the reign of King John when England was placed under an interdict by the Pope, the cattle didn’t breed, the corn ceased to ripen, the grass stopped growing and birds fell out of the air. But if that starts to happens,’ he smiles, ‘I’m sure we can reverse our policy’. (350)

The Pope is not ready to accept this breaking up of Henry’s marriage and the main problem lies here for Henry’s challenging the religious authority. But the king declares the act of Supremacy and establishes himself the Supreme Authority of the English Church. Now there is a reversal of situation and the people believing in the Roman Church are asked to take oath to be loyal and if not given death sentence. The case of the Holy Maid, Elizabeth Barton and allies is in a way religious fraud, her prophecies, her meeting Mary Magdalene and speaking to dead is all fake and planned by her spiritual masters like Bishop Bockil and others. Sir Thomas More has not examined the reality and rationality being the Lord Chancellor to be charged disloyal. All his family except Meg takes an oath to save them but More accepts death for his prestige among the European scholars. The King asks them to take an oath when denied given death sentence.

Thus practicing any religion proves fatal for some persons and prosperity for some persons, reflecting the religion playing a vital role in the development of the action of WH.
II:4.2.2.3: Marriage

The theme of marriage plays a very significant role in WH as the action of the novel revolves around the annulment of one marriage and legitimization of another marriage of Henry VIII. As a king he may have annulled the marriage or might have enjoyed other marriage but he wants all these should be done legally and with the Papal agreement. If Henry VIII has not produced the male heir legally, there may be the possibility of the Civil war. To fulfill this desire, Henry VIII married six women: Catherine of Aragon (the mother of the future queen Mary I), Anne Boleyn (the mother of the future queen Elizabeth I), Jane Seymour (the mother of Henry’s successor, Edward VI), Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 5: 840) It has been a very long period of twenty years he has been waiting for the positive result that reflects his belief in religious authority and his patience but challenges it when his patience is lost.

After having married secretly in January 1533 after declaration of the separation of the English Church, in May 1533, newly appointed archbishop, Thomas Cranmer in a trial annuls the marriage with Catherine. But the Pope Clement being the Emperor’s prisoner in 1527-8 dares resist Charles (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 5: 841) and is not ready to accept the marriage:

The Pope now says his marriage to Anne is void. He will excommunicate him if he does not return to Katherine. Christendom will slough him off, body and soul, and his subjects will rise up and eject him, into ignominy, exile; no Christian hearth will shelter him, and when he dies his corpse will be dug with animal bones into a common pit. (480)

The Pope reprimands the king who is said to have two bodies: the first within the limits of his physical being and the second is his princely double, free-floating, untethered, weightless. ‘His princely double makes laws. One fights, one prays for peace.’ (480)

Catherine who does not want the marriage to be annulled plays her every card till Cromwell convinces her benefit if she allows the king to marry the woman of his like. He promises her to make her daughter, Mary princess and offer Catherine a fixed sum and the Royal favour.

Anne Boleyn who the king wants to marry has also been eager to the Queen of England which is impossible unless she officially marries the king. She also feels the uncertainty and anxiety about the marriage. As their secret marriage is fixed, there develops another complication, One Harry Percy claims that he has secretly married Anne and she is his legal wife who the King cannot marry. It is Cromwell again who makes up Harry’s mind to discard his claim. In a public mass where the king wants to get the public agreement to his marriage, a nun, Elizabeth Barton, arrives and foretells the ruin of the kingdom if he marries Anne.

Within this period she keeps an eye on the happenings in and out of the court, the people who support her and people who oppose the marriage. The persons helping their secret marriage get benefitted one way or other and the opponents a torture or death after her being the Queen of England in reality.
Thomas Cromwell marries Elizabeth Wykys, a widow in exchange with making the dying business of the Wykys prosper against the will of his father. His father wants him to marry a girl who brings fortune and dowry to them and is angry with this marriage. Thomas sees his father after one year of his marriage. He loves his wife so much that he does not even think of re-marriage though many people suggest him to do so after her untimely death of plague.

On the contrary, Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor has a woman in the house before the funeral of his wife. To one’s surprise he is in love with his daughter and marries her. The lusty More and patient Cromwell are really two contradictory characters with regard to the theme of marriage in WH.

Mary Boleyn, Anne’s sister is married to Carey but she has been love making to the King as Anne cannot marry him officially. She always is anxious about her future and tries to seduce Thomas Cromwell even. Anne when becomes the queen, she proposes the marriage of Mary and Richard Cromwell (Williams earlier) but Mary marries secretly to William Strafford to live a very common life. Richard marries Frances; Alice marries Thomas Rotherham; Jo is going to marry John ap Rice; Rafe has married Helen Barre secretly; Lucy Petyt marries John Parnell.

Anne arranges the marriage of the King’s son the Duke of Richmond to Norfolk’s daughter Mary for the glorification of the Howards and to stop Henry marrying his bastard. (517) Thus marriage is one of the major themes treated as the power politics in WH.

II:4.2.2.4: Conspiracy

Being the historical novel WH has been directly related to the conspiracies in the court and in the Royal family. The first victim of this conspiracy is none other than Cromwell’s godfather, Cardinal Wolsey. In the first part of the novel, the palace of Wolsey is seen raided and in a very derogatory way he has been asked to vacate the place and to hand over the Great Seal of England. He has been sent to the Tower which is a place of torture. This humiliation of Wolsey gives rise to conspiracies in the mind of Thomas Cromwell. He decides to take revenge on the conspirators who are powerful and he and Wolsey comparatively weak.

He deliberately moves closer to the King so that he can do the things more easily. They decide to send the Cardinal to the North, Cromwell without accompanying sends Rafe and Richard with him and gets his news everyday and tries to make his stay comfortable. He manages to fetch the news of the miserable life the Cardinal spends but in fact, he is arranging feasts everyday and is moving towards the coronation of the York Church. Meanwhile he is asked to see the king, this journey proves fatal and Cardinal dies. Cromwell plans revenge against the persons involved in this decision. Among them he wants to lessen the importance are Stephen Gardiner, Duke of Norfolk and Duke of Suffolk, Henry Norris, Harry Percy and some others.

At one point of time, being the councilor he puts before the House of Commons a bill to suspend the payment of annates to Rome, he suggests a division of the House so that the king learns who is for him and who is against. He does it very cleverly. When he gets closer the king, he very trickily vacates Stephen Gardiner from his Manor house in name of Lady Anne, in a way revenging Stephen Gardiner vacating Hampton House for Anne from Wolsey.
The opponents of Cromwell plan to discard any legislation or reform when put before them. Cromwell and Gardiner draft proposals, discuss it with the king to prove Cromwell’s proposal more practical and efficient. He outwitting every person in conspiracy perhaps makes him listen from Henry, ‘I keep you, Master Cromwell, because you are as cunning as a bag of serpents. But do not be a viper in my bosom. You know my decision. Execute it.’ (631)

Though he outwits his opponents, he is benefactor for his friends: he makes Latimer, bishop; Thomas Audley, the Speaker; Thomas Cranmer, the Lord Chancellor and like. When the king asks him whether he wants the post of Audley or Cranmer, he denies not to bereave them from their posts.

II:4.2.2.5: Ambition

Ambitious person can progress but over-ambitious has to face the ruin. WH moves around Cromwell’s ambitious progress from a blacksmith’s son to the Councillor and to the ruler. Stuart Kelly in her review (Scotland on Sunday, 3/5/2009) praises:

Mantel’s triumph is to take a figure associated with ambition, scheming and avarice and transform him into a sympathetic, humane and supremely modern man. (…) It is a novel about power, both political and supernatural, in which Cromwell manipulates the invisible web of profit just as disgruntled priests conjure up expedient prophets.

From his childhood, he goes to court and finds his uncle as a cook and the officials engaged in feast. The boys stand there to get the loaf of bread. Thomas helps his uncle and as it has been said, ‘make yourself useful’, he proves himself useful by remembering the people, the cooking material used with his astonishing memory. Obviously he gets closer to the persons than that of the other children.

After having eloped from the house, he within twelve years learns the skills useful to earn livelihood in an adverse condition. His learning first proves useful to the Wykys to be confident and he gets the widow daughter, Elizabeth Wykys as wife, to be stable in life. After one year, he returns home and is busy with Cardinal’s service. He comes in contact of the Royal family and other officials being the loyal assistant to the Cardinal. The problem of Henry and the Papal authority involves him in the Royal matters during and after the fall of Wolsey. In an interview (The SRB Interview: 19 Nov. 2009), Mantel calls Cromwell ‘self-made man’ and also states,

With Cromwell there wasn’t an obvious path. Usually people from poor back-grounds, in the England of that time, they needed to go into the Church to find patrons and advance in the world. Cromwell didn’t choose that path and I don’t think it was even open to him. If you take Wolsey as an example, Although he was, as they always say, a butcher’s son, his father was reasonably Affluent – he kept an inn as well as his business – so he sent his boy to Oxford At 14. Wolsey was taking the regular path. Cromwell didn’t, and his career was more – how would you say? – it had to be hewn out of circumstances.
His progress is remarkable on the background of his disordered family and no education. He reveals his philosophy of life when Chapuys tries to get information about his origin from him, he keeps mum and avoids explaining.

But it is no use to justify yourself. It is no good to explain. It is weak to be anecdotal. It is wise to conceal the past even if there is nothing to conceal. A man’s power is in the half-light, in the half-seen movements of his hand and the unguessed-at-expression of his face. It is absence of the fact that frightens people: the gap you open, into which they pour their fears, fantasies, desires. (359)

Even when Stephen insults him asking about his post and calls him ‘nothing’, he does not retort but gets the post of the Keeper of the Jewel House (359) on 14 April 1532 and answers him. Harry Percy’s bad treatment to Wolsey instigates him but in course of time he compels him to take debt and says, ‘I think one day I will have that earldom off him.’ (382) He proves himself true by being the Earl of Essex. He believes in action and not the speech.

The persons whom he calls ‘his Lord’ send him a buck everyday and his cook Thurston is confused what to be done of this gift every day. Cromwell used to give bread and beer to the persons standing at the gate. He who has to live a life of orphan for more than twelve years has sympathy for the poor.

Queen Katherine always insults him as a blacksmith’s son and also criticizes making him a Councilor to make the legislations. He does not reveal any reaction but he and Mr. Audley who she criticizes are the persons to notify her migration along with her daughter vacating the palace and making way for the marriage of Anne and Henry. When King learns about her stand not to get out of the way easily, Cromwell visits her as an envoy of the king and convinces her benefits like Mary getting the place of Princess and Katherine getting a good sum and gets a promise to do what the king wishes.

Alice More when comes to visit More, she sarcastically remarks:

My husband used to say, lock Cromwell in a deep dungeon in the morning, and when you come back that night he’ll be sitting on a plush cushion eating larks’ tongues, and all the gaolers will owe him money.

(605)

Thus Cromwell progresses from a common man to the ‘Vicegerent in Spirituals’ due to his ambitious nature.

II:4.2.2.6: Family and Family Life

WH though revolves around the problem of marriage of Henry VIII and Lady Anne, it indirectly deals with the family and family life of the King who heads the nation. Henry marries his brother's widow but has been unable to produce the male heir. The marriage is performed as per the consent of the Roman Church. Due to this disturbed family life the king is always trying to get divorce or annulment of marriage with Katherine for last twenty years. Meanwhile he develops love towards Anne Boleyn and wants to marry her legally with the permission of the Pope. No negotiations or pleading succeeds in getting it to make the king’s family life more disturbed. He has to marry Anne secretly and has to take her to his brother, public for their approval. Many a times king becomes gloomy to think of the uncertainty of the marriage and his family life.
The central character, Cromwell also has a disturbed family life first due to his father’s drunken nature as he gets beaten and has to leave the house at nine of his age and to live all alone out of London as an orphan. Secondly his family life gets disturbed as his wife, Liz; his daughters, Anne and Grace die of plague. His sister Kat and her husband, Morgan Williams also die a sudden death. Cromwell has to look after her children, Richard and Walter. Richard accepts his name and promises him to keep it life-long. But Cromwell is not ready for remarriage. Though he has been asked by Cardinal, Henry, Anne, More and others, he denies the thought of remarriage. In an interview (SRB Interview: 10 Nov.2009), Mantel tells about his disturbed family life:

We don’t know Where Thomas Cromwell got his education. I don’t think, again, his family were very poor, but they were a disordered family. We know nothing of his mother at all. Walter, his father, a blacksmith and a brewer, was always in the local courts for offences of drunkenness and violence. If it wasn’t for his court record we wouldn’t know anything about the Cromwell family.

She further speaks about the making of Cromwell reflecting his character and also the adverse conditions he has faced:

Thomas Cromwell was a much more extroverted, go-getting character, and I think violence was part of the circumstances of his early life; with a father like Walter, it would be. And he had been a soldier, a mercenary. It was a weapon within its armoury. I think it was something he took for granted. (…) Cromwell, I imagine, saw violence as being more inextricably knitted into the world.

As he has experienced the loss of the disturbed family, he tries to keep his family intact looking after every need the members of family want. His looking after Rafe, Richard, Gregory, Alice and Johanne reflects his domesticity. Sometimes he feels John coughs but does not die, if he dies, he can marry Johanne, whose appearance is similar to Liz.

When the King arranges him Manor house, Cromwell asks Thurston to be comfortable as he will have many servants. When the King comes to dine after seeing him in illness, he is asked by his family members to offer incentive to the kitchen for their excellent arrangement.

II:4.2.2.7: Transformation

WH presents the transformation of the central character, Thomas Cromwell and also of some other characters and the religion. At first the change in the life of his patron, p.54-6): Cardinal may be seen. The Cardinal is bereaved of his post and is sent to the Tower, a place of punishment after having raided the Hampton House. When he gets into barge, he finds people with flags, afterwards learns that the people are shouting threats, Cardinal collapses and goes on talking about the works of welfare he has done:

Do they hate me so much? What have I done but promote their trades and show them my goodwill? Have I sown hatred? No. Persecuted none. Sought remedies every year when wheat was scarce. When the apprentices rioted, begged the king on my knees with tears in my eyes to spare the offenders, while they stood garlanded with the nooses that were to hang them. (54)
Cavendish tries to console by saying, ‘The multitude is always desirous of a change. They never see a great man set up but they must pull him down – for the novelty of the thing.’ (54) While Cavendish, Cromwell and Cardinal discuss about the kingship or ruling of English people and changing them, Cavendish states, ‘One dog sated with meat is replaced by a hungrier dog who bites nearer the bone. Out goes the man grown fat with honour, and in comes a hungry and a lean man.’ (55) Within the river-journey, the dim figures on the barge are taken as ‘allegory of Fortune’; Cardinal as ‘Decayed Magnificence’; Cavendish, ‘a Virtuous Councillor; George a ‘tempter’; and Stephen Gardiner ‘hungry and lean and has been promoted to the place of King’s private secretary’. Cardinal weeps to see this change but Cavendish consoles,’ fortune is inconstant, fickle and mutable….’ (56)

There is a great change when they get out on the bank of the river. There is only one horse for a person who has not gone out within 20 years without procession. Earlier, Cardinal’s stable is supposed to be a matter of envy for many noblemen. Cardinal has a fool, Patch-Master Sexton. Cromwell helps the Cardinal to ride on the horseback and finds Harry Norris, King’s best friend, the groom of the stool, the man who hands the diaper cloth (p.57) comes and tells Cardinal that he has been commanded by the king to ride after His grace (Cardinal) and hand over a ring that Cardinal knows. (57) Cardinal falls on the ground and takes the ring and thanks Norris but regrets that he cannot send any valuable gifts to the king. Cardinal gives a chain to Norris and requests him to commend him to the king. Cromwell asks Norris to give the things back to Cardinal. Cardinal falls down from the mule, asks Patch to go with Norris but Patch denies to do so and cries to keep him with the him.

Cardinal comes to Esher long after neglecting it from building of Hampton Court, Cavendish and others try to create comfort at this place. Thomas wants to take some measures to erect financial support to Cardinal who Cardinal has brought up like an orphan. The Dukes treat him badly to get the Great Seal of England. He is sent to North even in his illness when the king asks him to see him Cardinal moves towards the king’s camp, but dies on the way. After his death, the law students, perform a play showing Cardinal as an evil person. Queen Anne also enjoys a performance A Dissent of Cardinal.

Cromwell, who is a son of blacksmith and a brewer, does not get formal education but learns the ways of practical life to succeed that Cardinal though his godfather is unaware of. No doubt it is his service to Cardinal brings him in contact with the Royal problem. He proves himself through his work: His legal practice is thriving; able to lend money on interest; arrange bigger loans on international market as a broker; indebted to a number of noble men; gives accurate survey of land values, crop yield, water supply etc., can settle the commercial disputes. The people call him ‘an ingenius man’, ‘has the whole of the New Testament by heart’, and so on. (91) He is useful for his uncle John in kitchen; and also for Duke Norfolk by suggesting him the remedy on his dog’s blindness who invites Cromwell to make his wife understand his problem. These strengths prove significant in his transformation.

His great capacity to tolerate the humiliation without explaining his stand but acting to transform makes him a great personality who is visited by the king himself in illness. The King makes him ‘Councillor’ (282) and offers him power to make legislation with Speaker Audley. When Stephen Gardiner questions his presence in the court without capacity, he is given the post of ‘Keeper of the Jewel House’ (359) that makes him learn the King’s income and outgoings. At one point of time, he is made ‘Master Secretary’(472) replacing Stephen Gardiner, his great enemy to be the highest authority to take decision for the state affairs. The
highest post he gets is ‘Vicegerent in Spirituals’, the King’s deputy in Church affairs (608) getting the power to examine any Church to keep it going or close it. His achievement is remarkable on the background of the loss of his young family and of Wolsey.

Cromwell also plays a vital role in establishing the English Church under the Supremacy of King Henry VIII by challenging the highest religious authority of the Roman Church. He brings to light the fraudulent religious practices done by the Holy Maid and allies. He brings the act of Supremacy and asks to take oath to the persons who are the supporters of the Roman Church in favour of the New Testament. The Holy maid and some get death sentence for not taking the oath. Sir Thomas More remains obstinate to get the death sentence but his family takes the oath to be loyal to the act of Supremacy. Cromwell and Lady Anne are the key factors in ‘Reformation’. They make the king establish a separate religious authority by challenging the Papal authority that he believes in from his childhood.

Mantel has succeeded in bringing out the theme of transformation through her major and minor characters even.

III: 4.1. Synopsis of Bring Up the Bodies
The sequel to the Man Booker-winning Wolf Hall.

‘My boy Thomas, give him a dirty look and he’ll gouge your eye out. Trip him, and he’ll cut off your leg,’ says Walter Cromwell in the year 1500. ‘But if you don’t cut across him he’s a very gentleman. And he’ll stand anyone a drink.’

By 1535 Thomas Cromwell, the blacksmith’s son, is far from his humble origins. Chief Minister to Henry VIII, his fortunes have risen with those of Anne Boleyn, Henry’s second wife, for whose sake Henry has broken with Rome and created his own church. But Henry’s actions have forced England into dangerous isolation, and Anne has failed to do what she promised: bear a son to secure the Tudor line. When Henry visits Wolf Hall, Cromwell watches as Henry falls in love with the silent, plain Jane Seymour. The minister sees what is at stake: not just the king’s pleasure, but the safety of the nation. As he eases a way through the sexual politics of the court, its miasma of gossip, he must negotiate a ‘truth’ that will satisfy Henry and secure his own career. But neither minister nor king will emerge undamaged from the bloody theatre of Anne’s final days.

In Bring up the Bodies, sequel to the Man Booker Prize-winning Wolf Hall, Hilary Mantel explores one of the most mystifying and frightening episodes in English history: the destruction of Anne Boleyn. This new novel is a speaking picture, an audacious vision of Tudor England that sheds its light on the modern world. It is the work of one of our great writers at the height of her powers.
Chapter V

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

Hilary Mantel is one of the living contemporary British women novelists. She has started her literary career from 1985 with the publication of Every Day is Mother’s Day and has published her tenth novel The Wolf Hall in 2009; a memoir; and a short-story collection.

She is the prolific writer writing within the wide range from the domestic novels to historical novels. All her novels have varied themes and have a wide range of subjects. She along with her love for historical novels, has also dealt with the social themes through her travelogues; state-of-the-nation novel etc. The chapter is divided into three parts: in General Estimate as author along with author’s views there is comparison between some male and female novelists (from 18th century to contemporary); in Mantel’s Thematic Handling, her handling of main and sub-themes in her ten novels is discussed; in concluding part along with ‘Transformation as Basic Theme’ the scope of further research is mentioned.

5.2 General Estimate as an Author:

Hilary Mantel (1952) is one of the living British women novelists with 11 novels, one Memoir, and a short-story collection and has reviewed a number of books, films etc. From the beginning of her literary career till today she has expressed her views through her writings as well as through the interviews.

She has been influenced in early literary period by Evelyn Waugh and Muriel Spark that she denies later. So far as the period to which she belongs to is post-World War II living British woman novelist. Her literary career is an inevitable unhealthy physical condition to keep herself engaged. She has kept herself engaged in fiction, non-fiction and being film, book reviewer for Spectator, London Book Review, New York Times Book Review to express her views of her own and on other works. Through her works she has tried her hand at variety of themes making her pigeon-holing difficult.

In her life, she is rebellious enough to take the decision to marry in her college days and has lived in poverty as a result of it. In her interview with Anna Murphy to the Telegraph she talks about her ill-health, childlessness and her views about sex.

She credits her ill health with getting her to write in the first place saying, 'My options were closing off, because the things I felt I might do, I clearly wasn’t going to be able to do. I was still without diagnosis, but I knew something was wrong with me. I felt really marginalised, and that what I needed was a project under my control’ and feels, 'Illness forces you to the wall, so the stance of the writer is forced on you.’ About illness she further has stated, 'You can’t get away from dire health, but you may as well get some use out of it. It is not a question of making sense of suffering, because nothing does make sense of it. It is a question of not… sinking into it. It is talking back to whatever hurts, whether that is physical or psychological, so that it doesn’t submerge you.’

It resulted into her enforced infertility after the removal of her ovaries when she was in her late twenties to make her childless. Mantel thinks the shape of the loss keeps changing as first surgery made her glad to be alive. The childlessness was obviously an intellectual
fact, but the truth was she wasn’t ready to have children at that stage. She strongly feels for her childlessness in her mid-thirties and thinks that age proper to have children. She feels a woman should have right to choose to have children. She feels sad to look at the different phases her friends are going through as mother, grandmother etc.

She has some thought-provoking views on women and fertility in general. She says, 'I think there is this breed of women for whom society’s timetable is completely wrong. We were being educated well into our twenties, an age when some of us wanted to become mothers, probably little bits of all of us. Some, like me… you know, I was perfectly capable of setting up a home when I was 14, and if, say, it had been ordered differently, I might have thought, “Now is the time to have a couple of children, and when I am 30 I will go back and I’ll get my PhD.’ But society isn’t yet ordered with that kind of flexibility, and is incredibly hypocritical about teenage sex, teenage mothers and so on. 'Having sex and having babies is what young women are about,’ Mantel thinks, 'And their instincts are suppressed in the interests of society’s timetable.’ She blames the women who are after their careers and become sad in late thirties for not observing the life’s timetable and feels men’s lives have set the timetable.

Mantel refers to herself as 'this huge furnace, using everything, good or bad, somehow digesting life into some other form’, and it would appear her Booker Prize experiences have given her plenty of fuel for the new book. She is happy to win the Booker Prize but is angry the hypocrisy of the people. She states,

You would think I would be too old to be shocked by the hypocrisy of the world, but the number of people who oozed up to me was incredible, people who I know hate my work and hate me, and haven’t been reluctant to say so in print or on air. And then I think, “You fat fool! Do you think I don’t know?” And then you realise what a gigantic game we are all playing.

In short, Mantel has been writing ‘important’ books for decades, but it is only with Wolf Hall that this has been widely recognised. She is both amused and angry about the injustice. 'It is deeply annoying to be damned with faint praise for your lively depictions of your own sex, and for your handle on domesticity’. The fiction reviewer of Economist in his “Wise and Witty Words” (Vol. 349, Iss. 8098: 12/12/98) expresses the same regret about the omission of The Giant O’Brien from Booker Prize list and states,

In 1782, a pioneering Scottish surgeon and anatomist named John Hunter meets an enormous Irishman in London and resolves to acquire his body for research. The book deals with complex moral and philosophical issues and is written with lyrical elegance, pace, restraint, wit and compassionate wisdom. Better than anything on the Booker Prize list. A bad omission by judges.

She thinks every person has private life and it may be reflected in the works and is difficult in fiction to describe the characters without the reference of their private lives. Her book Giving up the Ghosts reflects her ability to work on-stage and off-stage that she has learnt at an unusually early age. She is on the side of revealing the reality and not denying it.

She is aware of her weakness and says, 'Not a day goes by without me getting some insight into the past’ and a writer involving in past cannot say, “My character is this and my character is that. This is my habit, this is what I am like.” That is no good for a writer. You
have got to be absolutely fluid. You have to become everything your material demands of you. You have to be mutable. You have to be constantly ready to change shape.’ Shape-shifting, both literal and metaphorical, that is transformation/ transubstantiation is a theme throughout Mantel’s writing, and indeed her life.

Mantel as a historical novelist has been a good choice in the tradition of Sir Walter Scott and others. She also has received Sir Walter Scott award for Wolf Hall. But some scholars like David Coward (TLS, August 28, 1992) praise her innovative handling of historical details and her strengths as historical novelist; P.N. Furbank (LRB, August 20, 1992) calls PGS the historical novel after applying the criteria of Henry James; Brian Morton (New Statesman & Society, September 4,1992) praises PGS as ‘an accomplished job of a near-impossible outline’; but James Seymour (Observer, August 30,1992) criticizes Mantel’s ‘let-us-now-domesticate-famous-men approach’ and calls this novel as ‘an unfortunate gap between history-writing and fiction-writing’. GO has also been placed in historical fiction by John Mullan (LRB, October 1, 1998). WH has won the Booker Prize to offer her a public acclaim as historical novelist. Recently published sequel in the trilogy of WH, Bring up the Bodies also depicts the omnipotent rule of Anne as the Queen of England till she gets beheaded. Jerome de Groot (2010:67) refers Alison Light’s (1989:60) views ‘historical fiction has been one of the major forms of women’s writing in the second half of the twentieth century’. Groot also refers to Wallace (2005:3) who feels women’s historical novel developed ‘from the hybrid potentialities of the Gothic novel rather than the rationality of Scott’. According to Groot (2010:76 ) during the nineteenth century novels about the Tudor period were more interested in the broader religious and political issues. Anne Boleyn is the favourite of all romantic heroines as Irene Goodman (2005:15) referred in Groot (2010: 70) her story has ‘sex, adultery, pregnancy, scandal, divorce, royalty, glitterati, religious quarrels, and larger-than-life personalities’. So there are a number of novels written about her. Mantel’s Wolf Hall and Bring up the Bodies are about the Tudor period to fetch her the Booker Prize for WH.

5.3 Mantel and her Contemporaries:

Being a woman novelist she may be compared with the major women novelists. After the eighteenth century novel of Fielding, Richardson, Defoe and Smollette, there came a trend of novel of sensibility in which we have Gothic romances of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe’s (1764-1823) The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794); Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1817). It is followed by the novel in the romantic era with the novelists like Maria Edgeworth (1767-1840) publishing Castle Rackrent and a major figure Jane Austen (1775-1817) and her novels: Sense and Sensibility; Pride and Prejudice; Northanger Abbey; Mansfield Park; Emma; Persuasion – limited to circumstances and experiences of her life, by her sex, and by her own choice.

Mantel as an established historical novelist needs inevitable mention of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), the father of the historical novel in English language. His work includes: Waverly (1814); Guy Mannering (1815); The Heart of Midlothian (1818); The Bride of Lammermoor (1818); Ivanhoe (1819); Kenilworth (1821); Queen Durward (1823); Redgauntlet (1824) – that covers a fairly wide range and three centuries of English, Scottish and European history.
Among Victorian novelists among Charles Dickens there are some women novelists like Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) brought social reforms through her novels: Mary Barton (1848) and North and South (1865). The Bronte Sisters: Charlotte Bronte wrote The Professor, Jane Eyre, Shirley and Villette; Emily wrote Wuthering Heights; and Anne wrote Agnes Grey, and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall – through the novels offered a note of romantic imagination and passion to the English novel. George Eliot (1819-1880), the psychological novelist bridges the old novel and the new, by writing her great novels: Adam Bede, Silas Maner, Middlemarch, Romola, Mill on the Floss etc.

In the twentieth century Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) wrote stream-of-consciousness novels: Jacob’s Room; Mrs. Dolloway; To the Lighthouse; and The Waves. Dorothy Richardson influenced the women novelists by presenting feminine psychology in her novel Pointed Roofs (1915). Elizabeth Bowen is a follower of Virginia Woolf and wrote The Head of the Day and Last September.

Iris Murdoch (b. 1919) is a novelist and philosopher. Her novel, The Sea, The Sea (1978) won the Booker Prize. Her themes are about complicated and sophisticated sexual relationships. She portrays 20th century middle-class and intellectual life shows acute observation as well as a wealth of invention, and invasion of recognized fictional genres.

The novelists after the World War II are mainly Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, C.P. Snow, Joyce Carey and Ivy-Compton Burnett. Ivy-Compton Burnett wrote domestic novels and has a supreme place among the women novelists of the second quarter of the century.

Being a living woman novelist needs comparison with her cotemporary male and female novelists to bring out her place and significance as the writer as individual and the contributor to the novel. The contemporary novelists are taken into consideration with their birth year and their beginning of the literary career as well as their works.

Iain Banks (b.1954) born in Fife studied in Stirling University moved to London in the late 1970s. While working as the computer programmer, he published The Wasp Factory (1984). He has contributed in science fiction through his ‘culture’ series – Consider Phlebas (1987), The Player of Games (1988), The Use of Weapons (1990), Look to Windward (2000) and others. He is an old-fashioned story-teller with well-crafted plots; characters alienated and disturbed individuals with contemporary touch.

William Boyd (b.1952) was born in Ghana, where his father was a doctor. He is the most versatile and engaging novelists of his generation, who combines consistent readability with intelligence, imagination and a willingness to take risks through his first novel, A Good Man in Africa (1981) suggests following the footsteps of Evelyn Waugh and Kingsley Amis. His other novels, An Ice-Cream War (1982); Stars and Bars (1984); The New Confessions (1987); Brazzaville Beach (1990); The Blue Afternoon (1993); Armadillo (1998); Any Human Heart (2002).

Louis De Bernieres (b.1954) is born in London and studied at Manchester University. He is a magic realist contributing a trilogy – The War of Don Emmanuel’s Nether Parts; Senor Vivo and the Coca Lord; and The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman, set in an imaginary South American republic. He also has Captain Corelli’s Mandolin (1994); Red Dog (2001); Birds Without Wings (2004). His novels show the ability to integrate emotionally compelling stories of the lives of individuals into a sweeping picture of the larger, impersonal forces of history.
Robert Edric (b.1956) is one of the finest and most adventurous writer of historical fiction of his generation. Robert Edric is the pseudonym of Gary Edric Armitage, born in Sheffield and read Geography at Hull University. His first novel, Winter Garden (1985) won the James Tait Black Prize. His other works include: A New Ice Age (1986); A Lunar Eclipse (1989); The Broken Lands (1992); The Earth Made of Glass (1994); Elysium (1995); In Desolate Heaven (1997); The Book of the Heathen (2000); Peacetime (2002); Cradle Song (2003). His novels deal directly or indirectly with the impact and consequences of colonialism, sometimes brutal and uncomprehending attempts by Westerners to impose their own beliefs and values on societies alien to them.

Sebastian Faulks (b. 1953), born in Newbury and educated at Cambridge and has worked briefly as teacher and then became a journalist as literary editor for Independent in 1986 and assistant editor of the Sunday Independent. war novelist. His first novel, A Trick of the Light (1984); and other works include: The Girl at the Lion d’Or (1989); Birdsong (1993); A Fool’s Alphabet (1992); Charlotte Gray (1998); On Green Dolphin Street (2001). Faulks uses the background of First and Second World War in his novels. His famous novel is Birdsong.

Tibor Fisher’s (b.1959) was born after three years to Hungarian parents taken refuge in Britain in 1956. He studied modern languages at Cambridge and then worked as a journalist. His first novel, Under the Frog (1992) takes its title from a Hungarian saying, To ‘under the Frog’s arse down a coal mine’ means, as one might guess, to be at a low point in one’s life. Then he wrote novels like – The Thought Gang (1994); The Collector Collector (1997); Voyage to the End of the Room (2003); and a volume of short stories, Don’t Read This Book If You’re Stupid (2000).


Nick Hornby (1957- ) is adept and funny in portraying the emotional confusions and immaturities of white-middle-class urban man. He read English at Cambridge, and then worked as a teacher and journalist. His first book Fever Pitch (1992) is an autobiographical account of his obsession of football in general and Arsenal F C in particular. In 1995, he published High Fidelity is about Rob, music owner’s slow, backsliding journey towards a distant, beckoning maturity. About a Boy (1998) is about fatherhood. His third novel, How to be Good (2001) with a woman narrator begins to touch on some of the most fundamental questions about what is to be human and to relate to others. He has attempted the domestic fiction mostly.

Kazuo Ishiguro (b. 1954 -) was born in Japan and brought up in England to reflect two nationalities in his works. His works are A Pale View of Hills (1982) and An Artist of the Floating World (1986) are enigmatic, poetic studies of individual Japanese trying to come to
terms with the realities of the nation’s recent past; and *The Remains of the Day* (1989); *The Unconsololed* (1995); and *When we were Orphans* (2000).

*The Remains of the Day* (1989), his Booker Prize winning third novel portraying a journey of a Butler, Stevens, who has wasted the best opportunities that life has offered him. *When We Were Orphans* (2000) is the story of another protagonist, Christopher Banks, caught in between two worlds. *The Unconsololed* (1995) is a massive novel which begins as the story of a celebrated pianist arriving in an unnamed European city to give a concert and has a sequence of surreal encounters between the pianist, Ryder, and a host of characters.

Hanif Kureishi (b. 1954) was born in Bromley to Pakistani father and English mother and after having studied Philosophy took a variety of jobs. He also has attempted pornographic writing under the pseudonym Antonia French. His first play was staged in 1976. Later he worked as a screenplay writer for *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* and *London Kills Me*. His first novel is *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) has much to say about issues of gender, and the ways in which these relate to questions of race and ethnicity. *The Buddha of Suburbia* is in many ways a characteristic example of contemporary British fiction; it reflects the diversity of late- 20th-century life and refers to some of the key social and cultural changes of the period, leaving it open to a multiplicity of potential critical readings,….(in General Introduction of *Key Concepts in Contemporary Literature* by Steve Padley; 2006: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.xiii-xiv) His other works are *The Black Album* (1990); *Intimacy* (1998); *Gabriel’s Gift* (2001); Through his works he depicts the contemporary social manners and clashing generations by using urban magic realism.


Timothy Mo (b.1950 - ) was born in Hong Kong in 1950 to English mother and Chinese father and family moved to England when he was 10. He has worked as a Journalist for Times Education Supplement, New Statesman, and Boxing News. His works are as follows: *The Monkey King* (1978); *Sour Sweet* (1982); *An Insular Possession* (1986); *The Redundancy of Courage* (1991); *Brownnut on Breadfruit Bouleant* (1995); *Renegade or Halo2* (1999). *The Redundancy of Courage*, shortlisted for Booker Prize in 1991 is the pivotal novel that chronicles the guerrilla struggle in a fictionalized East Timor.

Michele Roberts (b.1949) was born in 1949 raised as a Catholic and has convent schooling. Two of her most successful novels are imaginative reworkings of Biblical stories. *The Wild Girl* (1984) is based on a fifth gospel written by Mary Magdalene is found in Provence. She retells the story of Christ and his passion and sexual relationship between them. *The Book of Mrs. Noah* (1987) has a central character, a woman visiting Venice, enters a fantasy world, Mrs. Noah, in charge of Ark. *Impossible Saints* (1997) presents the life of and imaginary saint, St. Josephine, struggling with her own desires.
Roberts has often herself adept at ranging through the centuries in her fiction and using the real lives of genuine historical characters as the jumping off points for her own narratives. *In the Red Kitchen* (1990) may be compared with Mantel’s *Beyond Black* is a collage of overlapping and intertwining stories that move back and forth between ancient Egypt and the present day. At its heart is a 19th century medium Flora Milk (based on the real Victorian Spiritualist Florence Cook) who challenges the ‘rationality’ of scientific explanations of her communications with the dead and acts as the means through which the earlier story about an Egyptian Queen-cum-Scribe, and the modern story are linked.

Roberts herself, as writer, emerges as the medium as Mantel shows Alison Hart in BB through which lost Voices can be heard again. She performs similar acts of imaginative resuscitation in *Fair Exchange* (1999) and *The Looking Glass* (2000). *Fair Exchange* has a peasant woman in early 19th century France is asking absolution from the sins of sexual passions acknowledged and unacknowledged. It has hidden histories of guilt and deceit that are slowly revealed in the narrative. Geneviere Delange, one of the narrators, of *The Looking Glass* (2000) shown taking pleasure in the brioche she has made and finding evocative memories aroused by such simple things as a ‘motted blue coffee pot’ and the painted surfaces of her room. The plot centres on Geneviere’s loss of innocence and the interrelationships. Her two novels, *Daughters of the House* (1992), shortlisted for the Booker Prize, is the story of two cousins weaving its way through a complex plot towards a revelation of the ties that bind Leonie and Therese together. *The Mistress Class* (2003) also looks at two very different women whose familial connection yokes them together in a symbiosis which they may resent but which they can never break. She has been often described as feminist novelist. Her novels deal with themes that can be seen as ‘feminist’ female sexuality, the narrow bounds within which male society can limit femininity. She presents religion’s definition of womanhood and the often troubling bonds that link mothers and daughters. Like Mantel she also resists easy pigeonholing.

Kate Atkinson (1951) was born in New York and did a variety of jobs from university tutor to home help. Her *Behind the Secret Scenes at the Museum* (1995) won the Whitebread Book of the Year Award. In *Emotionally Weired* (2000) Effie and Nora in their ancestral house on an island off the coast of Scotland who tell each other the stories. Atkinson has originality and individual style with quirky, tightly plotted novels, people with eccentric characters and laced with darkly comic wit; family sagas with a difference, funny chronicles of secrets kept and secrets eventually revealed.

Jane Rogers (b.1952) was born in London and educated at Cambridge to become English teacher. Her first novels have been published in the early 1980s and won immediate critical acclaim and attention. Her second novel, *The Living Image* (1984) won the Somerset Maugham Award in 1985. She has written seven novels of these two historical novels, *Mr Wroe’s Virgins* (1991) and *Promised Lands* (1995) are most impressive. She reveals the maturity and ability to use intelligent prose to explore the histories and self-discoveries of her characters.

Helen Dunmore (b. 1952) was born in Beverley, Yorkshire. After having studied English at York University she taught in Finland and began her literary career as poet. She published her first novel, *Zennor in Darkness* (1993); followed by her Orange prize winning novel, *A Spell of Winter* (1995) echoes the tradition of English Gothic fiction. Her next novel, *Talking to the Dead* (1996) is a mystery like a crime novel studying the complexities
of family life and the secrets if revealed may shape and destroy lives. *The Siege* (2001) she blends the formal inventiveness and poetic prose to be a good novelist.

Jeanette Winterson (b. 1959) was born in Manchester and was adopted by a evangelical Pentecostal Christian couple and tried to nurture in her the religious spirit. At the age of sixteen Jeanette has her first Lesbian relationship and so she was rejected by her family and the church. Her first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) is autobiographical. Then published *Boating for Beginners* (1985) a comic book with picture. Her *The Passion* (1987) is a historical novel depicting a love affair between Henri, chicken chef to Napoleon and a Venetian woman, Vilanelle. She again uses seventeenth-century England in her *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). According to Winterson, “The point of fiction is not to mirror real life but to set out from it” and she remains faithful to her saying from the first to *Lighthousekeeping* (2004).

The themes and the subjects most of her contemporary novelists deal with are romantic, adventurous, criminal, gothic, historical, black comedies, gay and lesbian, domestic, colonial, magic realism and war topics. But Mantel tries her hands from domestic to historical fiction with the same ease and thus makes it difficult to place her in one of the literary traditions. She may be placed among the post- World War II living British contemporary women novelists as an important novelist using multiplicity of theme in her novels.

5.4 Mantel’s Thematic Handling

Thematic study of the novels of Hilary Mantel reveals some general and some special themes to mention. Her memoir, *Giving up the Ghosts* and the secondary sources like the articles on her; by her and ‘interviews’ help studying the themes and her development as a writer. The analysis of these themes is done in a way to the prominent theme followed by the sub-themes in the novels in question culminating into a certain common theme for all her novels. The multiplicity of themes need delimiting the analysis of the themes to a certain number from prominent to less prominent themes in every novel forming a kind of ‘thematic catalogue’.

The themes that the novelist has dealt with very often in all her novels are enlisted one by one and the sub-themes occurring in one or more novels are listed later. The discrimination is done on the basis of the analysis done earlier.

5.4.1 Themes mostly occurred:

While analysis and interpretation the following themes occur in most of her novels. They are: Childhood; Family Life and Relations; Isolation; Religion and Culture and Mystery. They are expressed very effectively through her unique and skilful thematic handling of the themes:

5.4.1.1 Childhood :

Childhood or childhood memories play very significant role in most of the novels of Hilary Mantel. In most cases the childhood memories are not good enough but have influenced the later life of the major characters and minor characters also. It also reflects the autobiographical element in some of the characters and some events.
EDMD describes the childhood memories of Muriel in particular giving rise to the development of action in its sequel VP. The novelist refers to the childhood memories of other characters like her mother, Evelyn, Florence, Isabel for better understanding of Muriel’s character. Muriel, being a mentally retarded daughter of an old woman, faces many problems that a disable child suffers. The Community Care Centres and other systems try to rehabilitate her but her mother and she are reluctant and thus the situation does not change to lessen the chances of her improvement. It leads to the development of the action of the novel.

VP is a kind of childhood nostalgia on account of Muriel’s revenge under the disguise of Lizzie Blank and Mrs. Wilmot who remember the treatment the characters in EDMD given to her. At the moment of the revenge, she remembers the misbehaviour of them may he be Philip, Mrs. Sidney, or Colin. The answers to some childhood puzzles in the life of Muriel are also revealed.

EMGS has some passing references of the childhood of the characters mostly related to their religious teaching and forming the opinions of them on the basis of it. Yet the religious and moral teaching reflects in their development. Even after learning at London, Yasmin and her neighbouring women praise the orthodox behaviour of their husbands and the restrictions on women imposed.

Fludd inevitably depicts some childhood references in the life of sister Philomena and some other nuns. Being a nun they have to leave behind all those good and bad moments of their childhood to accept the restricted religious life of the nunnery. Perhaps it is Philomena’s unfulfilled childhood desires that are kindled by Fludd to seduce her and make her execute elopement which is rather difficult for any girl accepted nunnery.

PGS predominantly moves around the early childhood and its impact on the great revolutionaries of the French Revolution: Camille Desmoulins, Georges-Jacques Danton, and Maximillien Robespierre. Mostly their unhappy childhood, father’s great expectation and non-belief, relatives and neighbours healing or destroying their psyche are some of the factors affecting their further life.

CC depicts very predominantly imbining the religious, moral, and cultural values in childhood among the Eldreds that they do not move away from even in some ordeals. The childhood memories of Melanie move the readers and the way she has been treated by Ralph and Anna results into her return with the same innocence to them.

EIL has been narrated by Carmel Macbain in flashbacks remembering her childhood and adolescence in further life. Carmel and Karina as schoolmates; their mother’s ambitions to make them religious leader like Suzzane and then advocate; their unwilling rivalry and Karina’s handling every situation even in childhood Carmel remembers which is a shaping force of their lives.

BB moves around Alison’s search of some unanswered questions from her childhood that is bleak. The profession that she has accepted at present is only due to her childhood life. Her search of her real father and attempt to interprete mother’s profession become the sole aim of her life.

WH presents the development of Thomas Cromwell irrespective of all the impediments is nothing but the culmination of his uncommon childhood. Due to his father’s drunken and beating nature, he leaves the house and lives out of England for 12 years which work as the shaping force in his further life. His learning of different languages, waiting for
action till the proper moment and decisive nature are all the gifts of his childhood that leads him from a blacksmith’s son to the omnipotent administrator.

5.4.1.2 Family and Family Life:

In all the works of Mantel, family and family life have prime importance with regard to the development of characters and action if any as there happens a little in her novels. Influence of disturbed family life of the parents and later herself may be seen in this thematic handling.

EDMD and VP have some real-life names of the characters that she knows in her childhood reflect influence. The family life of Evelyn and Muriel; Colin and Sylvia; Isabel and John in EDMD and Mr. K’s disturbed life are the examples of the presence of this theme.

The families and family lives may it be of a migrated person like Andrew Shore, or the native people like Abdul Nasr or Raji are one way or other influenced by the religious, political and social restraints. Being the natives Nasr and Raji oppress the women and they tolerate these things reticently. It is Frances who gets her family as well as herself disturbed for the happenings in and around the apartment. Her attempts to overcome the fear also are in vain to disturb her more to end up this tension with her visit to the empty flat upstairs at the end.

PGS depicts the family and family lives of Camille, Danton and Robespierre that has many ups and downs with regard to Camille and Danton’s adulterous life style, except Robespierre’s loyalty towards Eleonore Duplay. Camille has affair with Annette Duplessis and marries her daughter, Lucile who has illicit affairs with some persons including Camille’s best friend, Danton. Danton’s family life has been disturbed with Gabrielle’s death but he then marries Louise Gely forcibly and gets prosecuted for raping Babette. Louise tolerates his extra-marital relations for peaceful family life. Robespierre has relations with Eleonore but he does not marry her yet she spends her life after his death as his widow while Louise marries after Danton’s death to Claude Dupin to be the baroness of the Empire.

CC depicts the Eldred’s affectionate family life and also broken affinity bonds in it. The break-up starts with the abduction of the male child of the twins. Yet they continue to trust their husband-wife relations to support each other in such a disastrous situation. Mantel has very skillfully presented it through the incidents of her begetting a child; facing the ban; their imprisonment and like. These adverse conditions strengthen their family bonds more which gets shattered when Anna understands the illicit affair of Ralph with Mrs. Amy Glasse and is about to break the relations that Ralph also accepts on account of guilt. As he is about to leave the house Melanie who has been lost appears to unite them and restore their disturbed family life.

EIL narrates the lives of three female characters and thus presents mainly the family and family life of them and also of the other girls living in the hostel. Carmel and Karina are in reality not rivals but mother of Carmel holds this spirit of rivalry and tries to nurture it in Carmel as they live a better life than Karina’s. In hostel, Karina cannot share room with Carmel as she already chooses a rich girl, Julianne her partner. Mantel reveals the family lives and relations of most of the girls on account of which they seek pleasure by enjoying the risky sex life secretly. All the girls, poor or rich have disturbed and unsatisfied family lives.
BB presents mainly the family lives of two major characters, Alison Hart (earlier Cheetam) and Colette, her manager. Alison’s family life has been disturbed as an unwanted child and being a child of prostitute and has been prohibited entry to hall and mother’s room. No freedom of any sort and no knowledge of real father. She tries to seek pleasure in company of Mrs. Etchells who allots her a spirit-guide Morris and she starts with the psychic shows. In the psychic shows, she comes across many disturbed family lives in Margaret Thatcher’s ruling period. Diana’s death when she was with Dodi reveals the same story. Colette’s family life is disturbed due to distrust between Gavin and Colette as husband-wife which they cannot remove to strengthen the marriage tie-ups. Though Mantel has presented the spirit-world, she has tried to relate it to the urge of meeting the near and dear departed due to the disturbed family life and relations.

WH presents the family life and relations of many more characters as a picture gallery. Mantel mainly speaks of the disturbed family lives of the King and the related ones and family life of Thomas Cromwell who in spite of his disturbed family life is cool and calm The King’s legal marriage has set a problem in his family life for last twenty years. Henry within this period has tolerated this uncertainty of marriage. He wants to marry Anne Boleyn and he has been married to Katherine his brother, Arthur’s wife after his death which he has to do out of royal practice and religious authority does not permit King’s will to marry Anne. It has made his family life miserable.

Thomas Cromwell’s family life has been disturbed due to his father’s drunkard nature and later due to the death of his wife, Liz. His daughters, Anne and Grace also die of plague. His sister, Kat and her husband, Morgan Williams die to leave two sons, Richard and Walter to look after. The relief from his disturbed family life is his links with Wolsey and the scholars he has been sponsoring; persons who are almost family members, Rafe Saddler, Aunt Mercy and Richard Williams (now Cromwell) to support his only son Gregory. Though asked to remarry Thomas does not give thought to it.

There is also reference to Thomas More’s family life, whose first wife dies and there is second in home before the funeral. It sounds contradictory on Thomas’s not thinking of remarriage after Liz’s death. He faces the disturbed family life but is not at all unhappy with regard to the death of the wife like Cromwell.

Queen Katherine being Arthur’s first wife marries Henry, his younger brother after Arthur’s death. Henry wants to marry Anne Boleyn and trying to get validity from the religious authority for twenty years. Thus the king and both the women are unsatisfied and disturbed due to uncertainty in their family life.

The theme of family and family life is less prominent in ‘Fludd’ and ‘The Giant O’Brien’, yet it presents sad and miserable family life of nuns in Fludd; and of the working women like Bride Caskey and others in GO.

5.4.1.3 Isolation

Isolation or alienation or loneliness has been one of the major themes of Mantel’s novels. The isolation is imposed sometimes by an individual, or social or political system or accepted as an alienation out of fear or some kind of inevitability.

EDMD presents both mother and daughter, Evelyn and Muriel Axon get isolated at first due to Muriel’s mental ill-health and later to her unidentified pregnancy. Evelyn first
does it out of care but later she accepts it as social obligation. She wants to hide it from her neighbours and the social community workers like Isabel who suspects it and comes to Axon House. Evelyn out of anger tries to isolate her that culminates into Evelyn’s death to make Muriel orphan and motherless to get institutionalized.

VP being the sequel continues the theme of isolation on account of Muriel’s living isolated and disguised planning the revenge very skillfully. Her isolation helps her for the disguises of Mrs. Wilmot and Lizzie Blank to succeed in her task which is significant for the development of action.

EMGS describes the isolation and alienation of the Shores due to migration. At first Frances does not realize it but in course of time and her stay, she realizes it and tries to rebel against the socio-religious restraints on women in Saudi Arabia. She tries to seek company of her neighbours but they are interested more in the western culture and not in the idea of women’s lib etc. She develops curiosity about the activities going on in an empty flat upstairs that symbolizes the isolation and alienation of somebody oppressed. It affects her mental health and recovers from it when watches the flat individually and leave the apartment to live at a free inhabitat in the same country.

Fludd narrates isolation of the religious personalities from the common world. Father Angwin, the nuns represent the religious personae but the villagers of Fetherhoughton or Netherhoughton represent the common world. The religious personae are earlier the part of the world of common and accept the isolation in the religious world willingly to get isolated from the world of common. It closes their entry to the common world to cause a great problem. Sister Philomena seduced by Fludd has no choice except elopement which is not a socially validated return from the religious world to the world of commons but a humiliating one from a restricted to lascivious world.

PGS reveals isolation of a revolutionary from a civil world. A common person gains a position in revolution or any social movement to isolate from his relations. His being a public figure makes him lose his ‘private life’ to suffer isolation. Camille, Danton, and Maximillien also suffer the isolated as a public figure and later due to life-threat and imprisonment. It has also been used as the tool of torture for making revolutionary tamed in case of Anne Theroigne, or Camille even.

CC presents the Eldred family isolated to one of the areas of Africa on account of a mission. Being missionaries, they move to this area and start services by using their skills to overcome the problem of isolation from the native place, country and family. The incident of abduction of their son estranges their relations to isolate them from social self to individual self. The isolation is the result of social obligation and also accepted as the reality. Emma Eldred isolates herself from her family due to her marriage to Felix Palmer, a married man. Though shown isolated for Ralph’s illicit affair with Amy Glasse, Ralph and Anna get united on a positive note at the end of the novel.

The hostel life represents isolation on the part of the students willing or imposed by his family. The presentation of hostel life in EIL is the presentation of Carmel, Karina, Julianne and other girls. The life is restricted and has a room for rebel as the girls are teenage girls, their adventures with sex life lead them to further isolation. The isolation in such case is willing and for enjoyment of sex. When there develop complications as in case of the girls they get alienated on them own and unwilling to discuss it. The girls try to help their best at
such level to get the friend out of trouble. The isolation in EIL is special one because a girl is isolated yet is getting trained in a social life.

Isolation in GO is peculiarly in case of giant. Giant is gifted with abnormal physical structure that isolates him naturally from other people. Moreover, he has been given a skill of story-telling. It lessens his isolation. Starved when they migrate to town, they are crowded but isolated individuals. His exhibition and their greed to earn more money makes him more isolated from his friends and society, which is isolation at living stage. Giant has been isolated even after his death by his friends who hand over his carcass to Dr. Hunter who makes him a piece of exhibition in the form of skeleton.

Alison Hart’s isolation has been presented in three stages in BB. In the beginning of the novel she has got the manager Colette to relieve her from isolation. Alison remembers her isolation in home itself enforced by mother to keep Alison away from her trade which is the first stage. In the second stage is her adulthood when Alison accepts the profession of psychic shows and isolates herself as a demand of an hour and due to troublesome Morris. Colette’s presence makes her life somewhat pleasant but in third stage Alison again becomes isolated as Colette leaves her and Alison has to turn to the spirit world for companionship.

WH presents the isolation of typical type as in PGS. PGS presents the crisis of the French Revolution while WH presents the problem of Tudor dynasty and emergence of Thomas Cromwell. Henry VIII who wants to marry the woman of his like has been declined by the religious authority of Rome. It leads him to isolation of a unique kind. He is married to Katherine, his brother’s wife but wants to marry Anne Boleyn and thus for 20 years spending in isolation hoping to discard this marriage. Katherine faces the same kind of isolation.

Cardinal’s isolation from a very pompous palace to tower is due to kings disfavouring. His isolation is made somewhat tolerable due to Cromwell’s efforts and accompaniment of some loyal ones. The isolation brings cardinal very adverse condition.

Thomas Cromwell at first experiences isolation and gets alienated from his family for 12 years due to his father’s drunken and violent nature. After return to Austin friars, Liz’s death isolates him; both his daughters and his sister and brother-in-law die of plague to add to his isolation and grief. In political career, he has been isolated being a loyal servant of cardinal. With his skill and decisive nature, he overcomes this political isolation to be a Council Secretary.

5.4.1.4 Religion And Culture

Being a child of immigrant catholic family, ‘religion and culture’ seems prominent in case of mantel’s thematic handling. The elements of religion and culture play an important role in creating the characters and the developments of action. In some novels it has been the prominent and in some novels it has been peripheral.

The element of religion and culture are peripheral in EDMD as they are referred only in case of Muriel’s religious class in school, her attending Sunday prayer and some incidents of celebrations of Christmas etc. keeping away deliberately from neighbours and society revel obviously no remarkable cultural incidents or references in the life of the Axons. VP also has some passing references of the Sydney or Isabel Field celebrating Christmas; exchanging some Christmas pies, etc.
Religious and cultural aspects are of prime importance in EMGS. A lady from England experiences a totally different religion and culture in migrated land. In European countries there are no such religious restrictions on man-woman equality or other kind. In Islamic countries, they observe *shariyat* law which is the law based the religious, Holy Book, the people in other countries might feel these as an aggravation on their personal freedom or life style, but one has to obey the national law may it be religious or public. Frances Shore suffers as she takes time to accommodate to this way of life. She tries to oppose these restrictions but is unable as an individual. Some restrictions are opposed within themselves but there are ‘religious soldiers’ observing the violation of any kind to punish the opponent. EMGS revolves around the religion and culture of Islamic and European countries and the characters practicing them.

PGS based on French Revolution bears less religious references as revolution itself is crusade for the revolutionaries. Except some courtly French manners there are no more cultural references.

CC has at its base religious and cultural aspects. The Eldred family has been engaged in missionary activities for a long period. Ralph and Anna also have been engaged in it as their duty without any grumble. They are bound to all the religious and cultural bindings. As they move from England to South Africa, they experience the cultural and social difference so that they face obstacles in their missionary activities. But as they have been imbued with this religious spirit and culture, the faith in religion does not shatter through the ordeals like the abduction of the son; ban on them; imprisonment and like, they go through very calmly on the basis of this belief.

Fludd has been a religious novel depicting the deterioration of the religious faith among the religious personalities like father Angwin, nuns, & the villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton; till curate appears and reinstates the faith and culture among them. Fludd’s entry as a curate is constructive for the religious personalities but as an alchemist it proves destructive for sister Philomena who loses her virginity and nunner also.

EIL has the religious and cultural aspects presented through the religious learning in schools and colleges. Carmel rivals with Susan who teases her for not being liable for religious learning. There is a competition among the families to join the school of religious learning though they cannot afford it.

The girls adopt free culture in their hostel lives. They violate the restraints on them and try to behave as they please. It is only because of the difference between their family cultural atmosphere and the hostel life. Some of them get spoilt and some of them try to keep themselves away from it.

Through the story-telling, in GO, giant tries to nurture the religious faith and culture. He works a bridge between the ancient and modern religious and cultural world. His friends in village respect him for it. When he and his friends come to the town, the deterioration of religion and culture is so sordid that his friends also fall prey to it and giant a man of principle becomes an obstacle for them. The cultural gap gets so widened that giant has to die and hang as a show-piece in the picture-gallery of Dr. Hunter.

BB depicts the profession accepted by Alison and her psychic masters as the world within the religious world. The spirit world is a concept from religious world and Alison tries to relate it to human world. Through the shows she in a way nurtures the religious faith (some may call it blind faith) and the culture.
The cultural deterioration also may be seen when a person becomes impatient to listen to his dead ones with whom he has no dialogue within their living period. She also tries not only the follies in the human world but with that of spirit world. Morris torturing others and like her neighbours and Colette do not allow her to shelter Mart, an orphan, presents cultural thinking of the modern world.

WH presents religious conflict between the king Henry VIII and the religious authority, the Pope Clement of Rome. Thus the theme of religion is prominent and has been presented as power play.

As the story relates to the court of Henry VIII, the royal culture is always presented full of pomp; the world of religious personalities and their good and evil culture has also been depicted. Cardinal Wolsey’s world is full of compassion, helping and constructive on the other hand Sir Thomas More’s is full of cruelty, opportunism and pomp. Thomas Cromwell, being Wolsey’s man, is compassionate but does not tolerate injustice and takes revenge on the persons who have tortured Cardinal.

Through the kings problem of marriage, the religious authority has been challenged through Cromwell, and by hook or crook, he succeeds in making king’s wish fulfilled. Wolsey sent to tower, the treatment given to him, the compulsion of journey and his death; taking over the property of the colleges, etc is a kind of power play between the religious authority and the members of royal family.

5.4.1.5 Mystery:

Mystery is also one of the major themes of most of her novels. The mystery has been presented through the character, action & setting even

In EDMD, the axon house symbolizes mystery Evelyn and Muriel’s stay in the house is rather mysterious for the neighbors. Muriel’s getting pregnant is also mysterious for her mother and for the community workers even. The mysteries remain unanswered but mantel tries to reveal the answers to them in the sequel VP. In VP, Muriel’s sanity is mystery. She turns to be clever enough to disguise if two personalities of Mrs.Wilmot and lizzie blank to avenge the culprits in EDMD. She murders or takes revenge in a very planned manner of them.

EMGS revolves around mysterious atmosphere of the empty flat upstairs. Frances shore from the very day of arriving in the apartment experiences the mystery in the neighbourhood and the social treatment. It pervades her life and gets disturbed till the having the apartment.

Fludd in a mysterious character that arrives of a sudden to Fetherhoughton whom Father Angwin takes as curate. Nobody understands the intention of his arrival but his mysterious behavior brings up some constructive changes to nurture the religious faith that is deteriorating. the mystery has been solved when with his power of alchemy he seduces sister Philomena and make her elope from nunnery.

PGS being the historical novel in based on real documents having less or no room for any element of mystery.

CC has a mystery unanswered till the end of novel. The Eldred family has been involved in missionary activities. Ralph and Anna experience in south Africa one mysterious
incident that is a great blow which they don’t utter throughout their life. It pervades their lives and in a way live estranged life. Mantel has handled the element of mystery so skillfully that the readers feel eagerness to understand it and get it revealed through Anna’s writing the names of the members of family in the prayer book.

EIL has no major theme as mystery. The hostel life of the girls is itself mysterious. Moreover, the girls enjoying freedom at every level may develop mysterious atmosphere. Their enjoying sex at hostel, their decisions to help somebody out of unwanted pregnancy; death of Lynette in the fire are mysterious.

GO presents mystery in the form of Giant O’Brien’s character and Dr. Hunter’s collection of oddities. Making of the carcass available and the ways adopted to get the carcass out of coffin are narrated at length. The business of getting the carcasses is mysterious.

BB has an inevitable element of mystery as the world Mantel presents is the otherworld i.e. superhuman world. The mankind has been constantly trying to unreveal the mystery behind the spirit world. Alison & other psychics using the spirit guides develop a kind of bridge between the human world (known to spirit world unknown/ mysterious).

WH being a historical account of Henry VIII setting up his marriage with Anne Boleyn holds no mysterious element. The mystery lies only with the claims of virginity on Katherine’s part that Henry does not accept.

5.4.2 Prominent themes but occurring in some Novels:

Along with the above major themes that occur in most of Mantel’s novels, there are some themes she uses in one or two novels. For instance, ‘Revenge’ taken by Muriel after institutionalization is the major theme in VP; ‘Alchemy’ is major theme in Fludd that mesmerizes all the other characters; ‘Innocence and Betrayal’ on account of giant and his friends; ‘Use and Misuse of Gifts’ on account of Giant it is proper use while Dr. Hunter misuses his talent; ‘Greed: a means to an end’ is true with Giant’s friends and the sponsor and ‘sacrifice’ is obviously glorifies Giant thought defeated in the battle of his living, are major themes in GO. ‘Supernaturalism’ is major theme of BB as Alison Hart calls herself medium to communicate the ‘air-side’. These themes are discussed preferably while interpreting the novels.

5.4.3 Sub-themes used in the Novels:

As a skillful and crafty handler of a variety of themes, Mantel presents a number of themes. EDMD has ‘existence of ghosts’ in the Axon House and then in the form of ‘changeling’ has been presented as the secondary theme whereas VP reflects most of the major themes. EMGS has two themes ‘social system’ which tortures Frances Shore; and ‘gender-discrimination’ culminating out of social system has also been presented. Fludd has ‘supernaturalness’ of the religious people in comparison with common people; and ‘loss’ that a religious person might not even think of like ‘loss of virginity’ of Philomena or Father Angwin’s loss of ‘religious faith’. PGS presents some themes like ‘Ambition turning vicious’ in adulthood; ‘Criticism of Social System’ as the background of the French Revolution; ‘sexuality and morality’ of the three revolutionaries and the common people also contributes to the effective presentation of the theme; and ‘conspiracy and violence’ as the part of
revolution and the power game. In CC she handles the theme of ‘apartheid’ that eventually becomes responsible for the Eldred family’s sorrow; and ‘social and political system’ affects their life and brings the change in their psyche. EIL depicts ‘sex life’ of the girls in hostel and the problems faced due to it; ‘criticism of social system’ is done with some passing references of Thatcherite England. GO presents totally different themes. GO presents ‘Poverty’ that fetches them to London; and ‘Use of Myth’ which is the part of giant’s storytelling. BB presents ‘contemporariness’ of the globalized world and ‘professionalism’ to be adopted by Alison that Colette wishes. WH depicts ‘marriage’ as one of the major sub-themes along with ‘Ambition’ as a theme natural to all the persons related to Royal family as everybody wants to be near and be powerful and wealthy, not an exception to the character of Thomas Cromwell and others; ‘Conspiracy’ has been presented as an inevitable part of the Royal family.

5.4.4 Transformation: the Basic Theme

Mantel’s belief in ‘transformation’ may be seen throughout her works. Though she handles a variety of themes, these themes contribute to theme of ‘transformation’. All the themes mentioned in the earlier discussion: childhood; family and family life; isolation; religion and culture and mystery influence the characters and the action of the novel to contribute one way or other to the theme of ‘transformation’. Some major themes that are limited to some novels like: revenge; alchemy; supernaturalism; innocence and betrayal seem pivotal to bring to terms the theme of ‘transformation’. The sub-themes mentioned later in every novel: supernaturalness; social system; gender discrimination; loss; ambition; sexuality and morality; conspiracy; violence; sex life; poverty; political system; use of myth; apartheid; contemporariness and professionalism also play a significant role in bringing out the theme of ‘transformation’.

In an interview, (The SRB Interview: 10 Nov. 2009) she states her views on it: ‘I’m fascinated by the question of whether people can really change. I’m optimistic. I maintain that they can change at any point and make themselves over.’ In the same interview she puts it like: ‘Sometimes you put your characters into extreme situations and they might have their beliefs stripped away, and that is a moment of transformation.’

In EDMD, the central character, Muriel, changes unknowingly from a mentally retarded girl to a pregnant lady and poses a great problem before her orthodox mother. This change proves physical for Muriel on the other hand; it is a kind of anxiety for Evelyn. Miss Isabel Field, a young lady fed up of father’s lewd nature, wants to seek peace and a man loving her in the form of Colin Sidney. The change in her life is positive as Colin is ready to marry her leaving his wife, Sylvia. Sylvia’s life is about to change to a greater extent but Sylvia’s pregnancy again changes the situation and Colin decides not to divorce her. The decision changes her optimism into pessimism increasing her drinking habit.

Muriel who is shown mentally retarded in EDMD changes herself after ten years in asylum to a clever, skillful conspirator and disguiser in VP. Her journey from a dependent on mother to a murderer revenging on certain characters is awesome. Muriel’s life changes from uncertain to certain as she gets back the house and also the skeleton of the changeling which has been purpose of her living. But her transformation proves fatal to the persons involved in her mother’s death and her life in asylum directly or indirectly.

Mantel very convincingly brings out Muriel’s transformation from a mentally retarded girl to a clever and skilful disguiser to plot revenge of her mother’s accidental death.
In EMGS the transformation of Frances Shore and Yasmin is remarkable: Frances’s transformation: from being sad and lonely among a crowd due to different social and political practices to be happy though all alone but watching freeway unrestrictedly and Yasmin, who does not reveal any rebel throughout the novel, at the end of the novel is caught by the police at the air-port leaving her husband and son.

*Fludd* reflects the transformation of the people who believe in him and are willing to have it. The persons involved are Father Angwin, villagers of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton, and lastly Sister Philomena. The transformation of Father Angwin and the villagers’ seems from oblivion to clarity; and from spiritual to materialistic; but for Mother Perpetua it proves fatal. The transformation of Roisin O’Halloran to Sister Philomena and from Sister Philomena to Roisin through Fludd has been presented very effectively.

PGS being an enormous picture gallery of the human beings directly or indirectly related to the great event in the World History, the French Revolution, it presents in its limit a wide range of characters and their transformation. Camille, Danton and Maximilien Robespierre’s development from their childhood to the revolutionaries has been presented by Mantel. Danton’s transformation from a wild child to the authoritative Minister of Justice of French Republic; Camille’s unpredictable transformation from a sentimental advocate to a great revolutionary pleading the massacres of innocent people; and a very emotional judge who faints after giving a death sentence declares mercilessly death for thousands as the transformed Robespierre have been presented very effectively.

The social and psychological transformation in CC is conveyed through the characters, setting and other elements. The setting changes from England to South Africa and to Bechuanaland. Every setting contributes in a way change the Eldreds individually, socially and psychologically. Anna, who is on no speaking terms with Ralph, instinctively runs along with him and they both bring Melanie to the house. It reflects the transformation of Ralph and Anna as a missionary couple imbibed the true principles of Christianity of service to the mankind is service to God. Their transformation might have been compared to England’s transformation as there is one reference transformation of England: “England transforms itself under the geologist’s eye” (CC: 41) and Ralph is a geologist.

EIL presents the transformation of the characters from the schooldays to college days and then the married life of two characters: Carmel and Julienne. Some girls are shown transformed at a point of time and their change proves short-living or these characters are not fully developed to reflect the theme of transformation. The suppressed desires of the girls emerge as they get isolated and away from the homes. The physical changes due to the physical pleasures create fear in the mind of the girls and may prove fatal but nobody loses one’s life in pregnancy or during abortion but Lynette’s death in fire seems very tragic. No person wants to witness such transformation in experiments of love.

The giant’s transformation in GO, from a giant to skeleton is tragic and from poverty to wealth and death in poverty again to benefit his friends being wealthy seems more tragic as it is because of the greed and betrayal of his friends. John Hunter’s transformation from a boy enjoying the nature to a ruthless anatomist has been revealed in GO. The novel ends on a note of transformation: John who adds the skeleton of giant to his gallery, yet wants to have variety of animals to dissect to get knowledge and a very important thing i.e. time. The narrator comments on it, ‘And time wants you, John. You will become a grain of wheat. You will be changed to a pool of water. To a worm, a fly. And a wind will blow the fly away.’
Thus the novel ends on Hunter’s desire to get the new specimens and knowledge but predicting Hunter’s transformation from one thing to the other.

BB mainly has two characters reflecting the transformation. Alison Cheetam accepting the name of Alison Hart is the first change. Her accepting the profession of psychic to be alone but accepting Colette’s company and try to be more professional is her next stage. In her third stage, she tries to be good to Mart to get involved with the police action and again a great change occurs. Colette who has been with her for seven years leaving her husband, within no time leaves Alison and goes to her husband. BB also reveals the transformation of both of them.

As it has been said, WH presents the transformation of Thomas Cromwell, a son of blacksmith to a ruler is real indeed. Thomas a child eloped at nine due to the beating of drunkard father returns after twelve years with wife, Liz. Being a loyal servant to Cardinal Wolsey, he gets involved in the Royal business getting close to the king with his skills and deriving solution to any problem. The King makes him first ‘Councillor’ (282); then he is made ‘Keeper of the Jewel House’ (359); then he replaces Stephen Gardiner as ‘Master Secretary’(472); and at one point the king asks him which post he wants to have, giving him the highest post ‘Vicegerent in Spirituals’, King’s deputy in Church affairs.(608) The transformation she shows is astonishing and convincing.

To conclude the themes may main, or sub-themes, they contribute to the basic theme of ‘transformation’ or Mantel’s belief that all of us can change. The researcher has restricted the discussion to her ten novels only. The recently published novel, *Bring up the Bodies* (2012) has not been included for some inevitable reasons. Her handling of multiple themes makes her pigeonholing difficult. We may call her important living contemporary British woman novelist of post-World War II generation attempting her hand from domestic to historical novels.

The researcher does not claim that the themes discussed in the foregoing chapters do full justice to the great variety of issues Mantel touches upon in her fiction. The thesis is only a modest attempt to deal with the thematic richness and complexity of fiction of Mantel. There is room for further research with a number of aspects of Mantel's fiction like her inventive narrative style; Mantel as the historical novelist; the critical study of her novels; the use of myth; autobiographical influence on her works and like.

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