EXPLORING THE FACETS OF GLOBALISATION: A READING OF THE SELECT WORKS OF HARI KUNZRU, ZADIE SMITH, MONICA ALI AND CHETAN BHAGAT

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Kottayam

By

JISHA JOHN

Department of English

St Teresa's College

Kochi- 682011

Kerala

Supervisor

DR. V. NITHYANANTHA BHAT

Research Centre in English

Mar Athanasius College

Kothamangalam- 686666

Kerala

May 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation "Exploring the Facets of Globalisation: A Reading of the Select Works of Hari Kunzru, Zadie Smith, Monica Ali and Chetan Bhagat" is the record of bona fide research work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. V. Nithyanantha Bhat, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

Jisha John

Jisha John
Department of English
St Teresa's College
Kochi-682011
Kerala

Kothamangalam
06-05-2015

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the dissertation "Exploring the Facets of Globalisation: A Reading of the Select Works of Hari Kunzru, Zadie Smith, Monica Ali and Chetan Bhagat" by Jisha John is a record of bona fide research work carried out by her under my guidance and supervision and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title or recognition.

Dr. V. Nithyanantha Bhat
Research Supervisor
Research Centre in English
Mar Athanasius College
Kothamangalam – 686666
Kerala

Kothamangalam
06-05-2015

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the book *Introduction to Modern Languages and Literatures* (2007), Dorris Sommer begins the opening essay, entitled "Language, Culture and Society" thus:

> To listen to the world now is to wake up from a romantic enchantment whose spell cast human subjects into vessels of one language, made language seem almost identical to nation, and made nation practically indistinguishable from state. . . . But today, *home* means not a here but a there, somewhere else, a loss for migrant parents and a lack for the children. . . . By now, strangeness is the norm in big cities worldwide, where urban life is recovering the heterogeneous and dynamic qualities that once defined the medieval metropolis. (3)

The answer to what has broken the spell of the romantic enchantment of one home, one nation and one language is the thrust of "globalization, (the) push of peoples from poor countries to richer ones and the pull of market logic beyond national economies into regional and even broader arrangements" (3).

Sommer goes on to say that beyond markets and economies, the push and pull of globalisation has also produced a reshuffling of the cultural map of languages and literatures. The rapid emergence of globalisation and transnationalism as pervasive and persuasive fields in literary studies explains the renewed significance of migration, multiculturalism, diasporas and borders

as a cross departmental field of inquiry in the study of current literatures and languages. As Sommer observes, countries and national cultures are interlocked by a web of markets and migrant workers and they "depend on news and books written in one place, published in another and marketed to a world of readers" (4).

The relationship between globalisation and literature can be studied only by considering the manifold dynamics of the term "globalisation" that fit in with any one way or few ways of conceptualising and demonstrating globalisation. This is important mainly because the term "globalisation" has found its way into literary studies only recently. It has shouldered its way alongside other far more familiar terms like "postmodernism" and "postcolonialism." The currency of "globalisation" has developed largely outside literature and literary studies though now it has spun out of control to impinge everywhere even upon literature and literary studies. "Globalisation" has become one of the extraordinarily protean terms of our time which seems to be increasingly felt everywhere. In it the absolute embrace of the core word, the "globe" itself struggles against the modification of the suffix, the process marked by "–isation". A wide variety of possibilities slip through that slight disjuncture between the absolute and the potential: the possibility of active globe making, discernment of global teleology, mediation between the local and the global, references to resources, labour, and markets and so on. These possibilities are given representation in literature which reflects the various strands of everyday social life that are symptomatic of globalisation.

They often deal with protagonists caught in the machine of multinational business and global political processes, placed in the cosmopolitan spaces of global cities or moving freely across national or cultural boundaries. A close examination of these works reveals the enormity and flux of globalisation within their forms and recording of language.

While exploring the manifestation of globalisation in literature it is imperative to investigate the different ways in which literary studies have evoked globalisation. One of the prominent ways in which literary studies have engaged globalisation is by way of thematic representation. Closely related to the thematic reflection of globalisation, one can discern how certain literary texts and their interpretations validate or negate conceptual positions taken by social, political or economic theorists about globalisation. Another platform for scholars seeking to develop a discussion on globalisation and literary studies is an examination of the nexus between globalisation and familiar fields of literary studies like postcolonialism and multicultural studies where accommodation could be found between terms and formulations like “culture” and “identity”. Some scholarly attention can also be devoted to the industries which enforce and mediate the production, distribution and consumption of literature across the global market. These publishing industries which are engaged in the buying and selling of books worldwide are currently subject to the nuances of the processes of globalisation just like any other industrial sector in the current scenario. The repercussions of this impact are invariably reflected in literary works which provide scope for much critical enquiry.

To meaningfully examine the relationship between globalisation and literature we have to consider the nuances of the term "globalisation" and its diversified meanings which demarcate a space-time within which the study can be done. In *The Limits of Globalization: Cases and Arguments,* Richard Kilminster traces the first appearance of the term "globalisation" in the Webster Dictionary in 1961 and the Oxford English Dictionary supplement in 1972. It gradually entered academic parlance in a decisive manner in the late 1970s and early 80s mainly by thrusting on "international" or "world" or "universal" processes and systems. Most of these initial academic evocations came from North American locations. Though the term itself was not used, Marshal McLuhan's observations on technological developments in communication and media mentioned in his work, *The Guttenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) seemed to set the tone especially in observations such as: "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of the global village" (36). The desire of US business leaders and management gurus to extend US Business interests and exploitation of resources and labour to a global domain gradually distanced itself from the specific contexts in which it was initially associated and began gesturing itself towards an increasingly acontextual world condition. The impetus for this was to a certain extent given direction by left-wing intellectuals in the 1970s who associated a growing consolidation of global economic processes and markets with advances in capitalism. The devising of the lending system through the World Bank and IMF whereby loans to poor countries were made conditional

on extensive infrastructural changes often with unpopular effects made the concept of globalisation more and more decontextualised. These coincided with expressions of disaffection with single party politics and centralised economic arrangements in a number of communist countries. With the symbolic end of the cold war (marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989), the term "globalisation" really came into its own. It became coherent with the vocabulary of activists and NGOs and impinged upon establishment, mass media and academic usage at an exponential speed.

Sorting through some of the competing definitions of globalisation will be of much help before investigating the transnational reach of literary studies in the wake of globalisation. The search for a single definition of the word is a painstaking exercise since most meanings of globalisation imply large scale changes, imposing challenges to the social, economic and political life across the globe. As an economic term it suggests the acceleration of the interconnectedness of the global economy. In political parlance it denotes a global rather than national context in which the territorial state is less important. The core macro descriptors of the current era are network, knowledge and information where the main linkages are between the various technological factors including information and communication technologies, modes of operating as organisations, groups or individuals in the economy and polity and the transcendence of diverse social boundaries. Globalisation also invokes themes of cultural convergence as a result of media and economic interconnections and the possibilities of cyberspace. Contemporary changes are

viewed with scepticism by those who seek to maintain national control. Cultural nationalists are wary of the spread of English as the *lingua franca* of international business and communication and of the American popular culture subverting national cultures. The environmentalists often view globalisation as a combination of economic and political changes that reduce the possibility of a single state government intervention in case of any environmentally destructive behaviour of the multinational corporations. The globalisation debate also highlights other competing political and social discourses on social change including terrorism, war and the emergence of an increasing level of international migrations. Globalisation thus becomes a multilayered phenomenon which profoundly challenges our understanding of such central concerns as security, collective choice, political affiliation, citizenship, legality, democracy and justice. The various definitions about globalisation convey the enormity of its geographical and disciplinary border crossings and areas of application and research. But it should be noted that in spite of such clear definitions elaborating globalisation coherently, a kind of anxiety about the term "globalisation" is often found. The term seems to possess an autonomous momentum, an uncontrollable currency, which careful systematisation and analysis of its connotations fail to cover wholly. This tension is noted by almost all the critics and theorists of globalisation. Martin Albrow in his work *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity* shares this anxiety when he says:

> The term ‘globalization’ binds the syntax of the global and its derivations into a ramifying set of meanings. They are thus effectively entwined in an unfolding story over time. It conveys a widespread sense of transformation of the world. But this tendency to blanket coverage should in itself indicate how unlikely it is to have a precise analytical set of reference points. (86)

In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas L. Friedman comments on the forces that are globalising the world at the end of the twentieth century and their impact on the environment, economics, politics, and culture:

> I define globalization this way: it is the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before—in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations, and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is enabling the world to reach into individuals, corporations, and nation-states farther, faster, deeper than ever before. . . . The driving idea behind globalization is free-market capitalism—the more you let market forces rule and the more you open your economy to free trade and competition, the more efficient and flourishing your economy will be. Globalization means the spread of free-market capitalism to virtually every country in the world. Globalization also has its own set of economic rules—

> rules that revolve around opening, deregulating and privatizing your economy. (9)

While historically tracing the phenomenon of globalisation, one encounters the issue of whether globalisation is something new or not. If we consider globalisation as the result of a complex set of intercultural encounters accentuated by historical shifts in travel, communication, exploration, trade and commerce, it will appear as the extension of complex relationships with a long history within and outside the West. However, if one considers the phenomenal changes occurring in the economic, cultural and political realms facilitated by the dramatic explosion of new technologies of communication, globalisation will appear as a contemporary, Western, postmodern and postnational phenomenon.

Roland Robertson, seems to support the first argument when he observes that globalisation has a long history which undoubtedly predates modernity and evolves mostly since fifteenth century. He distinguishes five stages in this history: a germinal period, which runs from 1400 to 1750, an incipient phase, beginning in 1750 and lasting until 1875, a take-off phase (1875-1925), a struggle for hegemony (1925-69), and finally a stage he labels uncertainty, running from 1969 to the present. In his hugely popular book, *The World Is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman distinguishes three dominant eras of globalisation. The first era, which he names as "Globalization 1.0," is all about "countries and muscles" and "lasted from 1492—when Columbus set sail, opening trade between the Old World and the New World—until around 1800.

The second great era, "Globalization 2.0," lasted roughly from 1800 to 2000, interrupted by the Great Depression and World Wars I and II. Here the main dynamism for pushing the global integration forward is equated with the impact of multinational companies. "Globalization 3.0," starts from 2000:

> Globalization 3.0 is shrinking the world from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the playing field at the same time. And while the dynamic force in Globalization 1.0 was countries globalising and the dynamic force in Globalization 2.0 was companies globalizing, the dynamic force in Globalization 3.0—the force that gives it its unique character—is the newfound power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally. (10)

Arjun Appadurai has a different view, when he propounds that globalisation represents a historical rupture aided by new developments in media forms, financial domains and ideologies. Appadurai's notion of globalisation is about the speed, immediacy and convergence and disjunction characterised by a set of global flows expressed using the metaphor of landscapes: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. For Appadurai, these "scapes" denote an alternative spatial rendering of the present, one that is not fixed, but amorphous and flowing in different directions taking diverse shapes. In his work *Modernity at Large*: *Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Appadurai argues:

> The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be

> understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even that might account for multiple centers and peripheries). Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of surpluses and deficits (as in traditional models of balance of trade), or of consumers and producers (as in neo-Marxist theories of development). The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorise. (32-33)

Anthony Giddens links globalisation specifically to modernity and argues that the highly industrialised, rationalised and commodified nation-states in the twentieth century facilitated the movement of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across time and space. In *The Consequences of Modernity*, Giddens represents globalisation as the "intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa" (64).

If Giddens suggests a narrower link between modernity and globalisation, Harvey goes further and links globalisation inextricably to postmodernity and observes that mechanisation and technology increasingly diminish the constraints space puts on time. The growing sophistication of transport has accelerated the collapse of boundaries and borders facilitating economic and cultural globalisation. These developments have immensely

accelerated with the proliferation of electronic means of communication enabling instantaneous contact and allowing commercial transactions that cover the globe ignoring national boundaries. The new technologies and more so the internet have collapsed the discontinuity between time and space in radically unprecedented ways. Describing the immeasurable pace of myriad global flows today, the media critic Henry Jenkins talks about “convergence culture” in his book by the same name and enumerates how it represents a rupture from earlier forms as it describes technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates within our culture:

> Some common ideas referenced by the term include the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, the search for new structures of media financing that fall at the interstices between old and new media, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kind of entertainment experiences they want. Perhaps more broadly, media convergence refers to a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them. Convergence is understood here as an ongoing process or series of intersections between different media systems, not a fixed relationship. (282)

According to Thomas Friedman, in the globalisation system one will find both clashes of civilisation and the homogenisation of civilisations, environmental disasters and amazing environmental rescues, both the triumph

of liberal, free-market capitalism and a backlash against it. It is the inexorable integration of markets, nation states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before—in a way that enables individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before. This process of globalisation also produces a powerful backlash from those left behind by the new system. The driving idea behind globalisation is free-market capitalism that revolves around opening, deregulating and privatisation of the economy in order to make it more competitive and attractive to foreign investment.

Globalisation has its own defining technologies: computerisation, miniaturisation, digitisation, satellite communications, fibre optics and the internet, which reinforce its defining perspective of integration. It also has its own demographic pattern—a rapid acceleration of the movement of people from rural areas and agricultural lifestyles to urban areas and urban lifestyles more intimately linked with global fashion, food, markets, and entertainment trends.

Globalisation has its own defining system of power. According to Friedman the globalisation system is built around three balances which overlap and affect one another. The first is the traditional balance between nation-states. In the globalisation system, the United States is now considered as the dominant superpower and all other nations are subordinate to it to one degree or another. The second balance in the globalisation system is between nation states and global markets. These global markets are made up of millions of

investors moving money around the world with the click of a mouse. Their attitudes and actions can have a huge impact on the nation-states today, even to the point of triggering the downfall of governments. The third balance is the balance between individuals and nation-states. Because globalisation has brought down many of the walls that limited the movement and reach of people, and because it has simultaneously wired the world into networks, it gives more power to individuals to influence both markets and nation-states than at any time in history. Individuals can increasingly act on the world stage directly, unmediated by a state. The relevant market today is the planet earth and the global integration of technology, finance, trade and information in a way that influences wages, interest rates, living standards, culture, job opportunities, wars and weather patterns all over the world.

Through these negotiations "globalisation" has become one of the thickly connotative words in our vocabulary. The term is now deployed in relation to other equally abstract terms such as "local", "regional", "nation-state", "transnational", "glocal", "globalist" and so on. Through continuous shifts, redefinitions, accruals of meanings and rhetorical play, "globalisation" can be related meaningfully with regard to almost any kind of issue: the "globalisation of culture", the "globalisation of labour", the "globalisation of crime", the "globalisation of surveillance", the "globalisation of entertainment" and even the "globalisation of terrorism". According to Norman Fairclough as expounded in his work *Language and Globalization:*

> We cannot get away from the fact that although 'globalization' is a set of changes which are actually happening in the world (though what the set includes is actually controversial), it is also a *word* which has quite recently become prominent in the ways in which such changes are represented. But this is a simplification because the word "globalization" is used in various senses with more complex discourses, which are partly characterised by distinctive vocabularies in which "globalization" is related in particular (and differing) ways from other 'keywords' such as 'modernization', 'democracy', 'markets', 'free trade', 'flexibility', 'liberalization', 'security', 'terrorism', 'culture', 'cosmopolitanism' . . . as well as forms of narrative, forms of argumentation and so forth. (4)

It should be noted that although economic and cultural dimensions of globalisation are intertwined, the prime impetus for the development of economic globalisation was the rapid acceleration of trade and capital across national boundaries as a result of the increased modernisation of technologies of transport and communication. As Joseph Stiglitz observes in his work *Globalization and Its Discontents*:

> What is this phenomenon of globalization that has been subject, at the same time, to such vilification and such praise? Fundamentally, it is the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by the

> enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people across borders. (9)

Although Stiglitz has many a time proved his skills at analysing economic globalisation, he also acknowledges the fact that while the thrust is mainly given to the economic dimension, it encompasses the cultural aspects too. “Finance and trade ministers,” he writes, “view globalization as largely an economic phenomenon; but to many in the developing world it is far more than that” (247). As the study of globalisation gradually started branching out from an initial narrow interest in the economic domain towards an interest as a cultural phenomenon, it entailed a reciprocal relationship between the economic and the cultural realms.

Since the phenomenal rise of critical theory in the 1970s, nothing has profoundly affected and reshaped literary and cultural studies more than its embrace of transnationalism. It has creatively complicated nationalist paradigms, transformed the nature of location of study and also lavished attention on liminality and Border Studies. Although globalisation was the major force behind this transformation, it is to be noted that the political and social movements outside the literary arena and the theoretical developments within it which took place in the 1960s were also responsible for this development. In the US, movements such as the civil rights movement, women’s movement and the gay and lesbian rights movement brought a revolution in perception which ushered in a range of issues to be considered by

cultural theorists and literary scholars. The new movements dramatically reconfigured the boundaries of traditional practices and soon found way into the curriculum of literature departments which started encouraging voluminous research on works by women writers, African American, Latino, Native American and Asian American writers. Gay, lesbian and queer literatures were actively taken up for scholarly pursuits during the phase. The primacy of national literatures took a beating with the arrival of postcolonial literatures on the scene, extending the framework for studying literature beyond the Eurocentric models of analysis. Within academic circles there arose a seismic shift from a critical rubric based on sameness to one based on difference. The movement from the theories of structuralism to Derridean deconstruction and the theories of Michael Foucault with the thrust on the representation of difference in literature began to systematically complicate scholarship in languages and literatures. The dominant paradigm for assessing what counted as "literature" began to change as literary scholars began to shift their attention from narrow aesthetic concerns to social, political, cultural and even anthropological domains. The teaching and learning of literature became more and more complicated as the older, unitary, ahistorical and universalising pattern for literary studies developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries collapsed under the massive impact of a wide range of new experiences and identities.

By the mid 1970s the unitary models which defined literary studies in English in wholly national terms such as "British" and "American" had become complicated in extraordinarily rich ways. In the case of American studies, a

dramatic change took place as the unitary model of study used by the narrow cannon of American writers to express "Americanness" towards the early twentieth century gave in to the pressures of assimilation. New fields of study which included the texts by writers of Asian, African, Native, Mexican and Latin American descent played a major role in the transnationalisation of American literature. In the West, postcolonial studies emerged as one of the major forces which undermined the Eurocentric approach of literary studies, subjecting the European literary tradition to novel critiques that phenomenally transformed the traditional critical discourse. The shift from sameness to difference which gave prominence to alternative histories called for critical engagement with texts written by various multicultural writers. The postcolonial period characterised by displacement, mass migrations and global mobility is central to the history of globalisation as it effected a phenomenal transformation of both the students and the professors of European and American academic institutions. As a result of large scale migrations to Europe and the US, there emerged a new generation of students and professors, scholars and critics ever dedicated to broadening the contours of literary studies, and with it the identities, histories and the myriad experiences that came along. The unitary and universalising model of literary studies became tremendously influenced by the study of minority, liminal and multicultural studies even before the academy started talking and discussing the concepts of globalisation. It should be noted that globalisation becomes a crucial force in the transnationalisation of literary studies since it is very much linked to the

kind of changes ushered in by postcolonial, multicultural and minority studies. Economic and cultural globalisation have both worked to dramatically accelerate mobility and produce the kind of demographic changes which have enabled the transnationalising of literary studies. The opening of the US and the Western academic institutions to minority and multicultural scholars, the transformation of the scholarly wards into the domain of professors of premier universities and the multifarious ways in which they could upturn the established critical canons were responsible for the transformation of hitherto national enterprises into increasingly transnational practices. The transnationalisation of literary studies was accentuated by the attention given to the porousness of national borders, cross-cultural and postnational experiences. As Paul Jay observes in *Global Matters*: *The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*:

> Globalization has thus played an important part in the transnationalizing of literary studies, but it is not the singular cause of this dramatic change. Rather the forces of economic and cultural globalization outside of the academy, and the development of theories and practices for its study *inside* the academy, have dramatically accelerated a longer history of change. While popular public discussion of globalization can be dated from the publication in June 2000 of Thomas L. Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, globalization had already become a popular topic among academics in a number of

> fields, where, since the early 1990s, scholars in economics, political science, sociology, film and communication, and cultural and literary studies had been writing about its effects. By the time Friedman published his book, the study of globalization had already migrated from departments of economy and political science through sociology departments and cultural studies programs into the field of literary studies. What started out as a relatively narrow field dedicated to tracking the rise of an increasingly global network of economic relations dominated by transnational corporations had steadily evolved into a globalized field of cultural studies, as scholars and critics in a range of the humanities and the social sciences came to recognize that commodities, currencies, and cultures are inseparable, that the globalization of economies brings with it the globalization of cultures, and that, indeed, it is nearly impossible to figure out where economic globalization stops and cultural globalization begins. (23)

This remarkable transition is making its impact felt on universities as the nature and scope of academic disciplines in humanities in general and literary studies in particular are undergoing rapid changes. With the contemporary shift from national parameters to global ones, the proliferation of electronic media and communication channels capable of transmitting information instantaneously across national boundaries and the growing influence wielded

by giant multinational corporations, the concept of university is going through a profound reorientation. While the premodern university had a national mission to establish by upholding the national culture, the university today is becoming a different academic institution, one that is not essentially linked to the destiny of nation of its origin by virtue of its role as the protector and disseminator of national culture. As economic globalisation brings with it the relative depreciation of the concept of nation-state, the university today is undergoing a dramatic transformation, a reorientation away from serving the demands of the nation towards meeting the needs of transnational corporations.

> The Enlightenment had played a pivotal role in the establishment of the modern university which was responsible for the inculcation of character, moral values, aesthetic concerns and philosophic critique. Matthew Arnold saw literature as central to the development of culture in the modern university which was transparently nationalist. In the United States, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman had profoundly expressed the need for a national literature long before it got incorporated into the curricula of American universities and the academic circles. The aesthetic and ideological consensus was forged by focusing on a limited set of works and their themes as against the predominant preoccupation with difference in ways that undermine cultural homogeneity encouraged in the study of national literatures. With the rapid acceleration of the forces of globalisation there was a phenomenal increase in the interest in difference, in the study of

> transnational literatures. As the production of literature in English outside the US and Great Britain increased, the nation-state model of study appeared out of sync with the current circumstances. Thus English was becoming defined less by a nation than by a language as transnational and cosmopolitan forces began to take charge as revealed in the works of prominent writers like Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcot, Zadie Smith, Arundhati Roy, Monica Ali, Hari Kunzru, Nadine Gordimer or by a host of lesser-known writers from diasporic communities around the world from Africa and Europe to the Carribean and North America. This is the reason why English literature produced today is difficult to understand without contextualising it and recognising its relationship to the transnational histories connected to the forces of globalisation.

While exploring the nuances of globalisation and its nexus with literature over the years it is worthwhile to discuss the contributions of the perspectives surrounding postmodernism and postcolonialism in tracing the convergence of literary and sociological discourse in relation to globalisation. In his work *Globalization and Literature*, Suman Gupta observes that postmodernism enabled literary studies to engage apparently all dimensions of the contemporary social world including globalisation. Postmodernism refers to the registering of an experience of living in the contemporary world or the experience of contemporary social experience. Registering the new in postmodernism in the 1970s and the 1980s involved marking the global impact

of information technologies and new media and the perception that the boundaries between high and low or dominant and marginal forms are becoming porous entailing a pronounced feeling of fragmentation and disconnectedness. As Gupta observes, the philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard felt that contemporary life is characterised by "such a proliferation of informations, of signs and images, of ways of reporting and talking about and representing and branding things, that the experience of everyday life has been withdrawn from any possible perception of reality" (98). All things we consume by way of images, signs and messages represent the allusions to the real. Baudrillard's postmodernist subsuming of society within simulacra and away from apprehensions of reality is considered as the condition of a capitalist consumer society. In his work, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, geographer David Harvey's study of postmodernism begins thus:

> The most startling fact about postmodernism: its total acceptance of the ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity . . . postmodernism responds to the fact of that in a very particular way. It does not try to transcend it, counteract it, or even to define the 'eternal and immutable' elements within it. Postmodernism swims, even wallows, in the fragmentary and the chaotic currents of change as if that is all there is. (44)

In theorising postmodernism, disciplines of knowledge gradually seem to dissolve into each other; there is an erosion of social stratifications; notions

of margin and centre, dominant and minority get relativised; the stabilities of identity pertaining to race, gender, sexuality and religion get contested by evolving hybridities, interfaces and interstices. Postmodern theory manifests a field of engagement in terms of a continuum in which interpenetrations and relativities are manifested. According to Gupta, various kinds of continua-based approaches to postmodernism are available. Language is one such continuum reflected in Derrida's deconstructionist method which comes with the theory that a close examination of the surface of language reveals slipperiness or contradictions in texts and discourses. Appadurai's "-scapes" for understanding globalised cultural flows are also in a continua mould.

It is noticeable that postmodern theory seeps out of geopolitical boundaries more often than not and spreads across the boundaryless continua which can extend to everything and anything pertaining to the contemporary world at large, the globe. It is at this juncture that postmodern theory bears close affinity with globalisation theory. Since continua such as language, text, discourse and "-scapes" are conventionally associated with cultural products and forms, the postmodernist perception of the world has become an extension of cultural discernment containing aspects of the world with a cultural gaze.

The institutionalisation of postmodernist theory in literary studies departments took place initially and the reckonings of literature with social, economic, political and cultural processes pertaining to that which are now understood as globalisation happened under the rubric of literary postmodernism. Although there were a lot of disciplinary resistances between

postmodernist literary theory and sociologically oriented globalisation studies, the possible convergences of literary and sociological studies are predicated on literary studies' amenability to postmodernism. After going through the anxieties of disciplinary lenses, in contemplating globalisation, eventually, sociologists have found postmodernism with its literary and cultural baggage, to be immensely useful. A year before Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* appeared, Mike Featherstone's *Undoing Culture* (1995) attempted to explore the nuances of postmodernism and postcolonialism to inform his understanding of globalisation:

> From the point of view of postmodernism, modernism has been seen as entailing a quest to impose notions of unity and universality of thought and the world. In effect its mission is to impose order on disorder, to tame the frontier. Yet with the shifting global balance of power away from the West, with more voices talking back to the West, there is a strong sense that modernism will not be universalised. This is because modernism is seen as both a Western project and as the West's projection of its values on to the world. . . . Instead of the confident sense that one is able to construct theory and map the world from the secure place of the centre, which is usually seen as higher and more advanced in symbolic and actual terms, postmodernism and postcolonialism present theory as mobile, or as constituted from an eccentric site, somewhere on the boundary. The movement of

> people from the global boundary to the centre is coupled with a displacement of theory to the boundary, with a weakening of authority. (10)

Along with the notion of voices "talking back to the West", Featherstone's observation brings us to another predominant theory of literary studies, postcolonialism; a discussion of its connection with globalisation seems relevant in this context.

The historical nature of globalisation cannot be considered without tracing its connection with the histories of colonisation and postcolonialism and it can be observed that the last few years have in fact created a spirited debate about the strategic relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation. Some critics argue that postcolonialism as a politicised area of study is threatened by the generalised studies pertaining to globalisation and that globalisation studies represent the newest phase of colonial domination by the West and postcolonial nations and academic fields connected with subaltern studies are threatened by the growing hegemony of neo-colonialism in the form of economic, cultural and academic globalisation. But on the other side there are critics trying to accommodate postcolonial studies to the upcoming field of globalisation studies which provides a new rubric for the transnational study of literature often confined to narrow textualism and culturalism of the domain of postcolonial studies.

Critics who point out the tensions between postcolonialism and globalisation have a number of arguments to put forth. Postcolonialism is

viewed as an intellectual effort in managing the aftermath of the colonial past while globalisation theory has mainly addressed the effects of the geosynchronous communication technologies and transcontinental mobility along with the triumph of the world economy over national ones. In his work *Global Matters*, Paul Jay puts forth a series of questions pertaining to the tumultuous relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation:

> On the one hand, it is not that difficult to see how the histories of colonization, decolonization, and postcolonialism are integral to the history of globalization, and that for this reason the two processes or epochs ought to be studied in interconnected ways. But how can globalization studies contribute to the project of postcolonial studies when globalization itself is now a central threat to the postcolonial nation-state? And after all isn't postcolonialism grounded in resistance to, and autonomy from, the kind of colonization the forces of globalization represent? Doesn't globalization, as a historical, political, economic and cultural force, threaten the distinct political structures and cultural identities of postcolonial nation-states that are deeply committed to the process of recovering and enriching forms of cultural expression nearly obliterated by colonization? Don't we have to have to take seriously the argument that globalization is fundamentally a homogenizing force, one that inexorably spreads Western foods, fashions, music, patterns of consumption and

> values wherever capital expansion and the media go, laying waste to local forms of identity and cultural expression? (48)

Jay himself acknowledges that these are difficult questions to answer especially for academics who are interested in postcolonial literatures and yet also fascinated by the processes of globalisation and the hybrid cultural forms created by it. A careful and nuanced approach which strikes a balance between the polarities of celebration of multiculturalism and hybridity on the one hand and resistances in the form of religious fundamentalisms on the other hand are needed concerning the relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation. A fetish of purity and stasis ignores the fact that all cultures around the world have evolved syncretically over the ages, while making a fetish of hybridity alone runs the risk of renouncing tradition.

The transformation in literary studies ushered in by the combined effects of deconstructionist, postmodernist, feminist and postcolonial theories accelerated by the forces of globalisation has been a controversial one. There has been much criticism against the dominance of theory and the politicisation of literary criticism. Eminent critics like Edward Said and Masao Miyoshi have vociferously complained about the intellectual fragmentation often created by the weak and uncoordinated efforts to branch out into new subdisciplines and reorganised programmes. The nuances of critical theory pertaining to the dramatic transfigurations which have happened in the theories about literary language, interpretation, textuality, authorship and reading since the 1960s have produced the kind of transformative effect on literary studies mainly

because of the impact of globalisation. Edward Said in "Globalizing Literary Study" observes that "economic and political globalisation . . . since the end of the cold war has been the enveloping context in which literary studies are undertaken" and goes on to observe:

> The gradual emergence in the humanities of confused and fragmented paradigms of research, such as those available through the new fields of postcolonial, ethnic, and other particularistic or identity-based study, reflects the eclipse of the old authoritative, Eurocentric models and the new ascendancy of a globalized, postmodern consciousness from which, as Benita Parry and others have argued, the gravity of history has been excised. (66)

In his view the end of Eurocentrism simply left us with a hodge-podge of critical approaches and in our hurry to celebrate multiculturalism which many people who struggle in the real world of ethnic conflict, class division and male chauvinism find difficult to subscribe to, we have failed to pay heed to the negative side of globalisation. The fear is about literary studies coming to be dominated by a single super power, the dominating US. Viewed from this perspective globalisation is nothing but neo-colonialism and as postnational literary criticism attaches itself more towards globalisation there is a potential risk of the Other getting subjugated to its own paradigms. Under globalisation, the rich and variegated corpus of English literature has every chance of getting subordinated to the interests of the dominant superpower. According to Masao

Miyoshi, the autonomy of research in universities is today compromised by academic capitalism that supports the requirements of global capitalism. The notion of "multiplicity" and "difference" endorses economic globalisation which creates marginalisation. According to this view, the study of "ethnic literatures" in the context of globalisation leads to hopeless fragmentation. However, Paul Jay in *Global Matters* offers a counter view:

> In the first place there is nothing new about "fragmentation" in literary studies. Fragmentation actually has a long history in literary studies and is integral to its development. Whether we consider the steady fragmentation in English of the "canon" from British texts to British and American texts to "global English," or from texts authored by white men to texts authored by women and minority writers, or whether we consider the historical proliferation of critical approaches ranging from philology, historicism, New Criticism, structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, New Historicism, post colonialism, ecocriticism and the like, we see a discipline that has been constantly fragmenting and then reforming itself. In literary studies, as in most other academic disciplines, "coherence" and "fragmentation" are interdependent. (29)

In the case of migrant writers, their imagination often seeps out of the constraints of their spatially located themes. It is often evident that the imagination of their readers too goes beyond national boundaries, transcending

restrictive spheres. As Suman Gupta observes in *Globalization and Literature*, literary texts, authors and readers are in a way uncontainable; they travel without warning in unpredictable ways. In this context, embracing globalisation into the realm of literature unsurprisingly appears predeterminedly imbricated.

The nuances of exploiting and conceptualising a literary text are invariably crucial aspects of literature's relationship with the process of globalisation. Literature's traversing of boundaries through various levels of testing and probing through the latter half of the twentieth century becomes pertinent in this context. Literary textuality is often reconsidered placing in context the ideological and social environments in ways that expound the preoccupations of sociologists, economists and political theorists engaged in globalisation studies. Literary studies and globalisation studies have fed off and into each other in multiple ways especially in the last two decades of the twentieth century mostly in investigating the concepts of culture and identity.

Globalisation has released a powerful space of self expression against dominant regimes, especially in the contemporary arts. Arjun Appadurai attempts to understand globalisation through a juxtaposition of the metaphor of the landscape which he calls ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes. His main argument is that under globalised conditions growing disjunctures between the various "scapes" are manifested and can be perceived because of transnational movements and

deterritorialisation of cultural flows. In his work *Modernity at Large*: *Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, he expands his ideas:

> At the epicentre of current debates in and about culture, many diverse streams flow into a single, rather turbulent river of many poststructuralisms. . . . In this postblur blur, it is crucial to note that the high ground has been seized by English literature (as a discipline) in particular and literary studies in general. This is the nexus where the word *theory*, a rather prosaic term in many fields for many centuries, suddenly took on a sexy ring of a trend. For the anthropology in the United States today, what is most striking about the last decade in the academy is the hijack of culture by literary studies. . . . Social scientists look on with bewilderment as their colleagues in English and comparative literature talk (and fight) about matters that, until as recently as fifteen years ago, would have seemed about as relevant to English departments as, say, quantum mechanics. . . . The subject matter of cultural studies could roughly be taken as the relationship between the word and the world. I understand these two terms in their widest sense, so that *word* can encompass all forms of textualised expression and *word* can mean anything from means of production and the globalization of life-worlds to the globalized relations of cultural reproduction discussed here. (51)

The nexus between globalisation and culture attempts to understand how cultural processes which have been homogenised at a global level can have local variations which are capable of disrupting the homogenising global forces. The concept of identity has been pivotal in each of these perspectives at two different levels. On the one level, importance has been given to the manner in which globalisation facilitates the possibility of transcultural or cosmopolitan identities which move across social and cultural boundaries with much ease and are ascribable to a global elite. On the other hand much attention has been devoted to the manner in which the non-elite local marginalised identities react to the processes of globalisation or cohere into social movements of protest which become a globalisation from below or alternative globalisation.

Arjun Appadurai resists the idea that the proliferation of Western styles, products and tastes unleashed by the forces of globalisation extinguishes cultural differences and that economic globalisation is invariably an uneven and oppressive process. Rejecting the idea that globalisation is always synonymous with westernisation, he insists in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*:

> There is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectively, and, in general agency. . . . T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humour and resistance. (17)

For Appadurai, the dissemination of Western culture provides a context for “action” rather than “escape”. The local appropriation and transformation of Western cultural forms counter the forces of homogenisation since different societies appropriate the materials differently.

While probing the impact of globalisation on literature, the roles and functions of literary institutions like publishers, distributors, bookstores under the influence of the new media dominated by the monopoly of conglomerates are worth investigating. The publishing industry dominated by giant multinational corporations are currently the key players in English language publishing with their companies based in Germany, France and Australia as well as Britain and America. In the globalised scenario, several weeks before the publication of the work, the promotional campaign hits the media in the form of full length TV shows and radio programmes. The general perception is that these methods, more than published reviews, heighten the word-of-mouth factor. In different ways these promotional media outlets add to the readers being part of meet-the-author culture exceedingly prevalent in the twenty-first century along with book signings and readings in book stores. The proliferation of “reading clubs” and “reading groups” have led to the coming out of the “literary” from the academic circles to the household encouraged by mediatisation in the form of celebrity TV discussion shows like the Oprah Winfrey show in America and the Richard and Judy Book Club in Britain.

In the Indian context too globalisation has ushered in significant expansion especially since the 1990s. This expansion has taken place in a visible way both with regard to Indian writing in English and translations into

English from literature in Indian vernacular languages. Although there is a strong presence of multinational publishers competing along with the independents in the Indian publishing market, this happy coexistence hasn't yet turned into the spree of mergers and acquisitions evident in the US or the UK but that is expected to happen in due course possibly in the near future.

Contemporary global conditions have created a profound impact on the novels produced in the beginning of the twenty first century. In *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction*, Peter Boxall observes that there is a new phase emerging in the history of what we sometimes call "world fiction" and this is driven significantly by the forces of globalisation which have brought in rapid transformations which are manifested in imagining national and postnational identities under contemporary global conditions:

> There has been since the turn of the century, a burgeoning of novels which narrate what have been called 'hyphenated identities', subject positions which emerge from the failure of the distinction between separate nation states. From the writings of Black and Asian British novelists such as Zadie Smith, Monica Ali . . . the fiction of the new century has been involved in the shaping of what might be thought of as a new kind of global consciousness and a new experience of life after the decline of national sovereignty. (168)

Most of the early thinkers of the twentieth century always viewed globalisation with suspicion as a process closely linked to the practices of

colonialism, but the writers of the latter half could realise that a growing engagement with global spaces offered them a virgin territory that was very much liberating. Along with expositions of explorations and oppressions, new fluid, hybrid and negotiated identities emerged providing new forms of cultural translations which allowed the subaltern voices to speak. A new critical period had dawned which aimed at understanding how postcolonial historicities could get reinterpreted under global conditions. The publishing industry also changed with corporate sponsorship and mass media conglomerates sparking literary debates about the need for literary prizes and book festivals.

It can be observed that in this age of accelerating globalisation, literary studies have remarkably made a transition from scholarly pursuits and critical paradigms rooted in the nation to the study of difference and diversity within newly transnationalised areas of study. Contemporary literary studies are more focused on transnational spaces marked by hybrid identities with differences in subjectivities related to race, gender, class and sexual orientation, where the predominant focus remains on how culture and its practices are transfigured in subaltern zones and luminal spaces that transgress states and nations. The various nuances and travels of the term “globalisation” enable several methodological decisions as far as the structure of this study is concerned.

However, it is imperative that this study on globalisation and literature should be focussed around certain lines of thought in order to prevent any danger of being set adrift. As already observed, “globalisation” tends to spill outside any chronological frame and exploring the relationship between

globalisation and literary studies over a vast historical frame may tend to result in a delimited chronological field. Consequently, this study largely focusses on the last two decades of the twentieth century and thereafter wherein the term "globalisation" goes through the nuances briefly mentioned above. By confining to the period and observing the shifting nuances of the term and its repercussions on literature the aim is to have an enveloping historical and contextual awareness in which literary studies can be undertaken.

The study attempts to draw the relationship between globalisation and literature by critically analysing the various concepts of globalisation and its manifestation in the select novels chosen for study. To explore the extent to which key issues in globalisation studies have profoundly affected the study of literature, a range of twenty first century novels produced by a group of writers with transnational concerns are dealt with. By focusing on Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center*, critical discussions on a variety of issues pertaining to the economic, social, cultural and technological forces unleashed by globalisation are dealt with in the course of the study. The aim is neither to celebrate nor condemn globalisation, but to explore ways in which it might be possible to read contemporary works of fiction in ways that provide an understanding of its discourses. An attempt has also been made to explore the theoretical and critical issues that are related to the transnational turn in literary studies including the phenomenal changes which have occurred in the

publishing industry which are linked to the developments effected by globalisation.

Chapter two of the study titled "Transgressing Borders: Perspectives on Globalisation and the Immigrants of London" is a reading of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and focusses on the dramatic transformation of the British society as a consequence of globalisation and the resultant migration of large numbers of people from the once peripheral colonies to the former centre, London, the global city. As Smith depicts in *White Teeth*, as a result of transcultural interpenetration, the notion of British culture as an essentialist and organic one has undergone a drastic change in the direction of greater flexibility and the notion of "purity" has gradually given way to tolerance and acceptance of multiculturalism.

Zadie Smith was born to a Black Jamaican mother and a White English father in 1975 in northwest London and studied in local state schools including Hampstead Comprehensive, a secondary school which serves as a model for Glenard Oak which figures in her novel *White Teeth.* The place which she grew up—the radically mixed working-class London borough of Brent with its communities of Willesden Green, Cricklewood and Kilburn—provides the back-drop to *White Teeth*, a sprawling saga of several generations who travel to and from Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Italy, Jamaica and Scandinavia, but eventually congregate in the street of Smith's London.

After leaving school, Smith became the first member of her family to join university, securing a place at King's College, Cambridge for degree in

English Literature which provided her with an intense training in literary education. Her short stories began to appear in university magazines including the May Anthologies (collections of Oxford and Cambridge student writing) in the three years she was at the University of Cambridge from which she later graduated securing the first position. Although she entertained ambitions of becoming a journalist, she had to think otherwise when a publisher approached her after reading her work in the May Anthologies. She realised the need for having a literary agent and so after starting work on the novel that would become *White Teeth*, she approached The Wylie Agency, an international group representing a high-profile literary clientele including Salman Rushdie, Martin Amis and Philip Roth, who took her as her client and she started writing the first chapters of the novel. Smith's publishers decided to sell her novel even before it was completed and after a heated auction for the rights, Hamish Hamilton emerged triumphant. Because of the huge advance deal, Smith's youth and her ethnic origins, *White Teeth* attracted immense media attention even before it had even been completely written. Sections of the novel made its way into the 1999 issues of *Granta* and the *New Yorker*; Salman Rushdie having read an advance copy of the novel provided an immensely positive endorsement of the book. When the novel was eventually published in 2000, it received widespread media coverage and a host of literary prizes including the Whitbread First Novel Award, the Commonwealth Writers Best First Book Prize, the *Guardian* First Book Prize, James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction, W H Smith Book Award for New Talent, the inaugural fiction prize of

the International Ebook awards for works converted from print into electronic form and a secure and long-lived place in the bestseller lists. In the months following its publication *White Teeth* became a huge critical and commercial success. The novel's foreign rights have been sold in numerous territories around the world and television rights were won by Company Pictures shortly after the publication of the book.

The cultural diversity portrayed in *White Teeth* gives rise to a wide variety of mixings and blends which result in harmonious co-existence as opposed to expected violent encounters. As a result of the economic and political situations triggered by the forces of contemporary globalisation, the various characters from diverse cultural backgrounds find themselves in London, a common ground where their present and immediate past are played out in a comic mode of exhilarated frenzy. The notion of tolerance is particularly relevant in the context of today's globalised society where there is a coexistence of diverse identities. Owing to the process of globalisation, the influence of the former colonised cultures on the imperial centre has been found strong and lasting resulting in a marked change of outlook towards a more inclusive perspective. As Brah observes in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*: "[In] the diaspora space called "England", for example, African-Caribbean, Irish, Asian, Jewish and other diasporas intersect among themselves as well as with the entity constructed as "Englishness", thoroughly re-inscribing it in the process" (209). The interconnection between the diverse ethnic groups has given rise to a multi-cultural conglomerate where mutual

influence effaces hierarchical positions of dominance. On close analysis, *White Teeth* expounds the idea that a coherent core is no longer valid in a world of ethnic mixing which dissolves traditional dichotomous concepts in terms of multipolarity of references.

Born in 1967, in Dhaka, Bangladesh to a Bengali father and an English mother, Monica Ali migrated to England in 1971 where she still continues to live with her husband and kids. She has a degree in PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) from Wadham College, Oxford University. In 2003, she was named one of *Granta's* Best Young British novelists for her debut novel *Brick Lane* which won generous accolades for the sensitive portrayal of a young Bangladeshi woman's life in London. Her technical assurance and inborn generosity which resulted in a serious work with weight, purpose and passion were hailed by critics across the Atlantic. The novel was shortlisted for the 2003 Man Booker Prize for Fiction and made into a film released in 2007. Her second work *Alentejo Blue* set in Portugal was published in 2006 and her third *In the Kitchen*, in 2009. Her latest novel is *Untold Story* (2011). More than Ali's subsequent works which have been more varied in their critical success, it was her debut novel *Brick Lane* which made her an overnight success. Like her contemporary Zadie Smith, even before completing her work she was signed up by her publisher who had seen only the five chapters of her first draft.

Brick Lane chronicles the struggle of a young Bangladeshi woman named Nazneen who tries to escape the condition of double invisibility consigned by sexism and racism. What makes the novel relevant in the current

context of globalisation is its bold representation of migration which is at the centre of many contemporary social and political debates. Since we are living through the greatest era of mass displacement in the history of mankind, along with the crumbling of walls ushered in by globalisation, a host of issues including the rights of people and security concerns have taken centre stage especially since 9/11 and 7/7 which have triggered global crises. Two of the major issues pertaining to globalisation including the presence of informal labour and exploitation of the migrant population within the fortress of Europe, and the threat of religious fundamentalism emerge as prominent tropes imputing gravity and seriousness to the novel. By empathetically portraying the plight of women migrants represented by Nazneen, Ali offers a broader public discourse which highlights the insecurities created by globalisation which particularly render women invisible as their double jeopardy pertaining to their race and gender are further precipitated by economic insecurity. The novel, however, is significant on account of the manner in which the text approaches the lives of the women migrants who try out various survival strategies independent of the men in their families which make them see light at the end of their arduous journey. The gradual internal transformation of Nazneen who makes a foray into the garment industry along with its epistolary subplot chronicling the life of her sister Hasina in Bangladesh offers suggestive insights into the feminisation of labour across both ends of the international division of labour. It is not by blatant resistance but by capitalising on the opportunities offered by globalisation that the women migrants find sustenance

and survival in their displaced situation. The narrative of upward mobility depicted in the progress of Nazneen's life in London leads her to liberation from a state of paralysis.

Both *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane* seem to echo the fact that we live in a confusing world with intersecting systems of meaning, crisscrossed cultures and fragmented identities. The trajectories and circuits of exchange have become more complicated as a result of phenomenal border crossings of people, commodities and identities to such an extent that the conventional notion of nation-states and consistent subjectivities of dominant centres and distant margins seem no longer viable. Without riding on the rhetoric that the world has become a level playing field as a result of economic interdependence, technological interconnectedness and cultural linkages, the novels articulate the fact that the strategies of individuals or groups can defend themselves against the negative effects of the processes of globalisation by taking advantage of the new possibilities offered by these processes. While Smith foregrounds the value of heterogeneity, border crossings and a tolerant attitude in the encounter with the other in a globalised world, Ali seems to voice the idea that liberation can be attained by accessing the benefits offered by the economic system of global capitalism in a country where one has the power to choose. The image of the immigrant woman's self-assertion illuminates the possibility for self-transformation and empowerment even in the most inimical conditions.

The concept of "Globalised Islam" which refers to the way in which the relationship of Muslims to Islam is reshaped by globalisation, westernisation

and the impact of living as a minority figures as a prominent trope in both *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*. The deterritorialisation of Islam and the emergent religiosity of the immigrant Islamic minority shaped by Western norms and standards have resulted in "neofundamentalism"—a concept propounded by the Islamic social theorist Olivier Roy—gaining ground among the rootless Muslim youth in London, especially the second and third generation Muslims. Muslims throughout history have experienced various forms of globalisation through travel, pilgrimage and so on but this pre-modern globalisation was connected with an attempt to revive, through the medium of Arabic, a common Muslim culture. Contemporary globalisation for the immigrant Muslim community is a mass phenomenon where the deterritorialisation experience calls for a reflection on what it means to be a Muslim living in a minority and the problem of reconciling the self with religion in a globalised landscape calls for new forms of religiosity. Both the novels reveal how globalisation has affected Islam in the West by depicting neo-brotherhoods headed by modern gurus who exploit the latest media techniques, especially the internet. The brotherhoods have an active public presence, using current public-relations techniques such as multiple websites, printed media and television. Neo-brotherhoods target individuals who no longer have roots in primary communities and live in purely non-spiritual environments. The novels depict how in Europe neofundamentalism attracts second-generation Muslims who have broken with the pristine culture of their parents but are not integrated into Western society. According to Roy, neofundamentalism valorises the

uprootedness of uprooted people. By pretending to ignore the cultural context and by providing a code of conduct that functions in a similar manner in any part of the world, neofundamentalism is a perfect tool of globalisation.

With its thrust on technology, the greatest impact on our lives in the twenty first century, the third chapter, "Globalisation and Technology" attempts to explore how the internet emerges as a tool of globalisation, exacerbating both connection and disjunture as exemplified in Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* and Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center.* While Kunzru's *Transmission* focuses on the implications of living in a technologically connected globalised order, Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* focuses on the Indian Business Process Outsourcing Industry and the impact created by the multinational corporations on the Indian workers.

British Indian novelist Hari Kunzru arrived on the literary scene with his critically acclaimed novel *The Impressionist* (2004). His second novel *Transmission* was published in 2004. His subsequent literary works include *Noise* (2005), a collection of short stories and the novels *My Revolutions* (2007) and *Gods Without Men* (2011) and a novella *Memory Palace* (2013). He has won a host of awards including Betty Task Award (2002) and Somerset Maugham Award for *The Impressionist*, and "Granta Best of Young British Novelists" (2003). In 2005 his novel *Transmission* won the "New York Times Notable Book of the Year" award. His short stories and essays have appeared in various publications including *The New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *Guardian* and *London Review of Books.*

Kunzru's novel *Transmission* is about the movement of ideas, information and above all people in a viciously competitive world characterised by the influx of cutting-edge technology, brand marketing, outsourcing, venture capitalists and Bollywood cinema. It is a lively portrayal of an increasingly globalised technocracy that blends the world's cultures even as it further isolates individuals. The novel unfolds the tale of havoc wrecked on global society by a computer virus unleashed by a young Indian software programmer, Arjun Mehta, who is drawn into this act when his tenuous, exploitative job with a Silicon Valley antivirus company comes under threat. It explores the disruption of everyone's daily routines and depicts how no one escapes the devastation created by the impact of uncontrollable technological forces be it businessmen, refugees or international movie stars.

Indian author Chetan Bhagat has seven books to his credit including six novels: *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The Three Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *Half-Girlfriend* (2014) and the non-fiction *What Young India Wants* (2012). Bhagat's books have remained best sellers since their release which prompted *The New York Times* to call him the biggest selling English language novelist in India's history. Four of his six novels have been adapted into successful Bollywood films and the others are expected to fall in line very soon. Bhagat is an IIT and IIM graduate and an ex-international investment banker who is also a motivational speaker who actively works for the youth and national

development and also writes columns for several English and Hindi newspapers.

Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* is widely regarded as a novel which heralded a startling thematic shift in Indian-English fiction, which addressed the complexities and doldrums of life within a globalised India of liberalised markets, business process outsourcing, neutralised English and increasingly troubled identities. The novel articulates the concerns of young India on the path of globalisation, by foregrounding the call centre as a microcosm of the phenomenal transformations in labour and cultural identities which globalisation entails. The novel which provides an ambivalent account of the outsourcing business seems to lay bare the fact that in the process of attaining disposable income what is compromised in one's own identity which gets caught in the clutches of virulent materialism leading to a betrayal of the Indian social idealist tradition.

A common trope in both the novels is the deployment of the narrative of terror by using the internet as a tool for social protest against the global capitalist forces. Both the novels resort to cyberterrorism as a preferred form of retalisation in a globalised context. Cyberterrorism refers to any premeditated, politically motivated attack against information, computer systems and programmes which results in violence against non-combatant targets by clandestine agents. In *Transmission*, although the protagonist envisions a small scale protest, the technological tool he uses catapults the act into an event of mammoth scale with repercussions across the globe. If *Transmission* uses

cyberterror as a means of protesting against the insecurities of the global order by an Indian immigrant in the US, *One Night @ the Call Center* uses e-terror in the context of the Business Process Outsourcing Industry in India, an off-shoot of technological globalisation; both have as their target American multinational corporations symbolic of the hegemonic and exploitative global capitalistic forces.

Chapter four, "Globalisation, the Publishing Industry and Aspects of Language" explores the growing importance of the global publishing industry, the influence of mass media, the dynamics of the marketing of books and the relevance of the English language in communication in this era of rapid acceleration of economic, cultural and political forces across the globe. The phenomenal changes in information and communication technologies and the proliferation of new media have immensely expanded the possibilities for overcoming distance in communication, enabling instant communication over unlimited distances at little cost which is regarded as the most crucial element of contemporary globalisation. Literary texts, literary authors and literary readers are today considered as industrial products, all subject to the exigencies of publishing markets and circulations, all caught in the matrix of literature and literary studies. These industrial sectors overlap significantly as the publishing industry, media industry and the academic sector work with distinct economic rationales and preferences that have a strong bearing on the creation of authors, texts and readers. As an outcome of the phenomenal changes ushered in by globalisation in the last few decades, literature has become increasingly

commercialised and the autonomous literary space has been penetrated by the logic of commerce aided by the profit driven rationale of global capitalism. The global developments in the international publishing scenario have had its repercussions in India also. The English-language publishing industry in India which focused predominantly on academic books and text books and only in a narrow way on works of literature has expanded significantly since 1990 owing to the rise in economic growth, increasing affluence and access to English education. However, as Suman Gupta observes in *Globalisation and Literature*, the Indian publishing scenario cannot be directly equated with the global developments since the realities in the Indian literary publishing industry present certain interesting characteristics including a significant shift from "serious literature" to "mass market literature". Chetan Bhagat's novels are enormously popular best-sellers in India. Even the global publishers in India aim at by keeping all the facets of book circulation including authoring, editing, designing, marketing and retailing within India. But it is to be noted that the globalisation of the publishing industry has also in a paradoxical fashion resulted in the containment of a certain type of literary production and consumption; international mass-market books like the Harry Potter series or Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* were marketed and consumed in India as successfully as anywhere else.

The last part of the chapter focuses on the impact of globalisation on the English language and an investigation has been done on the manifestation of the three conceptualisations of language namely "Global English", "World

Englishes" and "Lingua Franca English" in the chosen works. Global English is regarded by theorists as a threat to linguistic diversity and highlight the issues pertaining to the global spread of American English across the world by way of the political, economic and ideological domination of the US facilitated by the dominant American owned media and communication systems. World Englishes refer to those Englishes like Indian English, Korean English and Japanese English which are a result of British and American colonialism excluding the Englishes of the White settler colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Lingua Franca English pertains to the language of users who employ English as a common denominator for verbal expression.

The concluding chapter sums up the findings of the preceding chapters. The analysis of these particular texts provides not just an insight into the wider patterns of contemporary English fiction, but, more importantly, ways of knowing and interpreting contemporary culture's relationships with, and responses to globalisation and its various facets. The process of interpreting the manifestation of these patterns in contemporary literature provides a way of developing significant critical insight into relationships that connect the dynamics of contemporary culture with the wider contexts of globalisation. Works of fiction analysed here use literature as the cue for discussions pertaining to the connections that come under the globalisation debate including the representation of ethnicity, identity, consumption, consumerism, issues related to the wired world and the impact and consequences of migration. Alongside discussions of this kind are readings that identify the

continuities that tie the selected works' concern for globalising consumer culture with contemporary English literature's enduring preoccupation with business, economics and the market. The analysis of the works also generates a unique way of knowing and understanding the dynamics that define the relationship between literature, the publishing industry and the marketing of literary works in the globalised scenario. The attempt made is to explore the debates around globalisation in terms that open up the works of recent fiction chosen and, at the same time use the interpretation of contemporary literature and culture to develop critical perspectives on the understandings that inform those debates. The recognition of these connections not only helps provide a context for the understanding of contemporary narratives but also raises important discussions about the ways in which the globalisation debate is understood.

Chapter II

Transgressing Borders: Perspectives on Globalisation and the Immigrants of London

In the essay "The Globalization of Fiction/The Fiction of Globalization" which appeared in the special issue of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2001), Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman observes:

> This special issue seeks to understand a . . . fundamental entanglement between literature and the phenomena most commonly associated with globalization—transculturation, the various forms (from cultural to economic) and periods (from the time of Columbus to the present) to imperialism and colonialism, the violent and uneven impact of socio-cultural and economic systems on one another as they came into contact, the eclipse of traditional ways of life, the temporal (modernisation) and spatial (nationalism-internationalism-transnationalism) demands of European modernity, the global spread of capitalism and Western liberalism, and so on. To address this is to think not just about how globalization is reflected thematically in fiction, for example, but also about literature's role in the narrative construction of the numerous discourses or 'fictions' of globalization. One of the first things to realize about globalization is that its significance can only be grasped through its realisation in a variety of narrative forms, spanning the range from accounts

> of the triumphalist coming-into-being of global democracy to laments about the end of nature; literature no doubt has a role to play in how we produce these often contradictory narratives about globalization. (604)

The observation makes a move in the direction the present chapter hopes to take towards understanding the "fundamental entanglement" between globalisation and literature. As the writers have noted, "globalisation" as a term connoting a cluster of concepts, has been located predominantly in the field of social sciences and until recently relatively neglected in the humanities disciplines, especially literature and art. The true significance of globalisation in literature "can only be grasped through its realisation in a variety of narrative forms," in "the narrative construction of the numerous discourses or 'fictions' of globalization." By focusing on its narrativisations, its discourses and its fictions, a link between globalisation and literature can be discerned. Literary scholars who have begun to suggest the path literary criticism may take in this direction are of the view that the fictions of globalisation should engage in a literary discourse quite different from the factual assessments of the material, technological and social processes undertaken by the economists, sociologists and political scientists.

Globalisation has been predominantly associated with spatially extended forms of production, the rapid mobility of capital, information and goods, the deterritorialisation of culture, the transnational reach of global media networks, in short, the coming together of a host of factors which make the world seem

more open and interconnected. Yet, globalisation is also linked to polarisation, marginalisation and complex forms of bondage and displacement. While there is a growing awareness of the phenomenal changes that globalisation entails, there is little consensus on the precise form it takes. Some scholars view it as a contemporary phenomenon related to the rise of transnational corporations, global financial institutions and proliferating forms of entertainment that swiftly leap across national boundaries while others see it as a historical phenomenon running back to at least the sixteenth century, incorporating the histories of colonisation, decolonisation and postcolonialism in its fold. Some see globalisation largely in economic and political terms while others see it largely in terms of cultural theory. There are critics who consider it as a force that benefits all while other see it as an oppressive homogenising force which facilitates neocolonialism and new forms of agencies.

By focusing on two twenty first century novels by migrant writers—Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003)—the aim of the chapter is to examine how literary works examine the ways in which the social, cultural and economic forces unleashed by globalisation are represented in the chosen contemporary literary texts. By exploring issues related to displacement, migration, labour and mobility heightened by globalisation and combining them with the effects produced by colonialism and postcoloniality, the texts transform the scope of the national literatures to which they belong by imagining the global character of modern experience, deterritorialisation of contemporary culture and the hybrid identities they

produce. Although the predominant focus in the chapter is on the last three decades of the twentieth century during which the major events of the novels unfold, aspects of colonialism and postcolonialism pertaining to a much earlier period are also commented upon. The concept of homogenisation of cultures which globalisation supposedly entails is contested as there is no culture which can be seen as pure and autonomous. Furthermore, in the study, the concept of the centre-periphery model which sees power, commodities and influence flowing from the urban centres of the West to the peripheral regions of the developing world is challenged since it can be observed that globalisation provides ground for transformation, back and forth flows of people and cultural forms like music, film, food and fashion which are seldom characterised by rigidity.

Globalisation is perceived as a powerful phenomenon and it is difficult for any country to escape its grip and Britain is certainly no different. Indeed it could be said that Britain provided the impetus for globalisation as a result of the industrial revolution, pursuit of free trade, technological advances and the reach of the empire. The most significant impact of globalisation on the British society has certainly been immigration. In the 1950s and 1960s, as a result of the booming of the British economy, immigrants from South Asia and the West Indies were encouraged to fill up some of the job vacancies that were available. Many of these immigrants settled down and made England their home so that their children would be born and raised in Britain. They had also brought along with them their cultures, traditions and experiences which were to influence

Britain tremendously. Britain is now considered a multicultural society that embraces people from different backgrounds though the level of tolerance in accepting them may vary. Globalisation and the consequences of immigration have exposed the British society to a variety of cultural experiences by way of the food they eat, music they listen to, the films they watch and obviously fashion. As a consequence, a dramatic transformation has occurred in the British society on account of multicultural contact and racial intermixing resulting in bitter conflicts and violent resistances to hybridity. Finding new definitions of subjectivity and identity has emerged as one of the challenges to be tackled in the study of contemporary writing in the global era. The concept of national identity has undergone tremendous changes on account of the rapidity of mutual influences and transcultural intersections.

The city of London has emerged as a global city, a cosmopolitan centre which has become the hub of multiple migratory movements, deterritorialisation of cultural communities and multiple loyalties of diasporas. While the city has become a global control centre for decision making, capital accumulation and financial services, it has also exacerbated the precarious nature of cultural differences by creating greater insecurity in the workplace and newer forms of racism. The cultural impact of globalisation has posed a threat to traditional Muslim codes and paradoxically, globalisation has stimulated new forms of exclusivism and violent forms of fundamentalism. However, the contradictory and variable trajectories of globalisation need not

lead to a series of catastrophic cultural collisions; they may pave way for fresh possibilities of interconnections and mutual exchanges.

In the world of literature this trend is reflected in the fact that most of the exemplary contemporary writers in English trace their origin to the immigrant population and their work invariably bears the imprint of their multicultural identity. These writers have produced a new literary subgenre in which the essentialist notion of British culture has given way to greater flexibility and the obsession with purity has paved way for tolerance and acceptability as the necessary prerequisites for the multicultural experience. This new subgenre was favourably received and critically acclaimed in the literary circles so much so that both Zadie Smith and Monica Ali were offered contracts with huge advances before they had written more than a few chapters of the novels.

The advent of contemporary globalisation has affected critical studies which are undergoing a fundamental reorientation resulting in the replacement of a unitary and universalising model of literary studies with one focussed on difference and influenced by the rise of minority and multicultural studies which pay attention to the porousness of borders and to cross-cultural and transnational experiences.

Widely acknowledged for its brilliant satire and deft portrayal of the multicultural London metropolis, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) is a tragicomic generational saga celebrating London's globalised urbanism. By projecting London as a multicultural contact zone, Smith reflects on the

transnational comprehensions of same-other and order-disorder negotiations which form the major components of the globalisation discourse. The narrative's metaphoric representations focus on networks of interaction and an enmeshed coexistence of diverse elements and people. Personal and collective identities are traced in the novel by the repeated narrative and linguistic play with mess thereby encouraging the reader to go beyond views. By offering a close reading of a multilayered cultural and ancestoral history, *White Teeth* offers broader perspectives on the complex and intertwined global-local nuances of the present day.

Zadie Smith's novel represents a recent subgenre in which children of mixed white and non-white immigrant parents represent London that is populated by a bewildering mix of cultures, traditions, languages, religions and previous nationalities. Another notable addition to this genre has been Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003). Both the novelists celebrate the increasingly multicultural nature of London's inhabitants. Both writers differ from their postcolonial predecessors who could still remember their countries of origin and who remained ambivalent about their identity and allegiances. Their attitude towards multiculturalism in today's globalised scenario is based on the concept of an integrated society where people are equal under the law and experience some shared values. Instead of defending the right to be different which breeds exclusivity, they are concerned about the right to be equal. Smith and Ali present protagonists who bring their ethnic heritage along with them, participating freely in the British mainstream society rather than defining

themselves by their ethnic and cultural difference from their white fellow citizens.

White Teeth is set in contemporary turn-of-the-century London and explores the effects of mobility linked to accelerating globalisation on the Western metropole. As opposed to some other works which reinforce the distinction between core and periphery by referring to the balance of power which flows from industrialised Western centres, Smith's novel deconstructs this central binary. In the novel we find that the imperial machinery of colonisation has gone into reverse. The mobility of the coloniser has become the mobility of the colonised and it is used to retrace the journey of those who conquered their ancestors. In the novel we find that the descendents of those dislocated by colonial conquest have relocated to London, the very centre of colonial power and it is Englishness, not indigeneity, which is at stake.

By exploring the effects of globalisation linked to colonialism, *White Teeth* deals with issues pertaining to cultural and personal identity. Smith foregrounds multiculturalism and a redefined form of fundamentalism as the two main cultural responses that have emerged in Britain and uses them as a way to manage the challenges produced by globalisation, especially its tendency towards homogenisation. In the novel the depiction of fundamentalism as a reaction against Western imperialism, on closer analysis takes on a different, newer form which Olivier Roy, one of the reputed contemporary writers on Islamism today terms "neofundamentalism". Neofundamentalism is a product of globalised Islam brought about by the deterritorialisation of the religion in a globalised world.

British multiculturalism is fundamentally a product of colonisation and de-colonisation and multicultural London is a product of these forces, the result of a complex historical process rooted in the colonisation of South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean; the disruptive transformation of indigenous, slave, and Anglo identities; the construction of new postcolonial identities in the wake of independence; and, finally of migrations from formerly colonised countries to the urban colonial metropolis. *White Teeth* focuses on the construction of postcolonial subjectivities among its South Asian and Carribean characters in London, but is also interested in how all the complex forces it explores have remade Englishness, not just the Englishness of its Anglo characters, but the Englishness of its South Asian and Caribbean characters as well. As such Smith's novel transcends the categories of "British" or "postcolonial" fiction. It surely draws from these two traditions, it has its roots in the curious mix of Asian and Caribbean cultural forms that have emerged in London and elsewhere since the late 1980s. Smith's post-postcolonial orientation is placed in the cultural politics of the last two decades of the twentieth century, where her novel takes place.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown captures Smith's turn-of-the-century multicultural London in a *New York Times* article:

> This emerging London is sharp and cosmopolitan. It is where many of the young love Fun-Da-Mental, a multiracial group of musicians led by the devout Muslim Aki Navaz, who emerges rap with Sufi and hip-hop music. Or Asian Dub Foundation, with

> young British Bangladeshi's mixing hard lyrics with yielding, soft harmonies. Both of these pop groups are aggressively demanding of their right to this city. Their songs are raw and real; they rail against racism, exclusion and all inherited categories and celebrate instead the essential hybridity of their own lives. (25 June 2000)

It is this newly emergent mixed group of ethnic minorities who have transformed British culture in a way that is beginning to redefine the very essence of what it means to be a migrant community in the global city of London.

The complexity and sophistication of Smith's novel stems from its sustained engagement with the effects of globalisation and the discourse of multiculturalism, but it is also rooted in its historical sweep from the British slave trade in the Caribbean and the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion in India through World War II, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, and controversies about stem cell research and its focus on two generations of three different families. It casts a wide net in every way: historical, philosophical, sociological and political and gets at the core of what is going on in London, the contemporary globalised metropole.

White Teeth is the story of three families from three different cultural backgrounds, the English-Jamaican Jones' the Bangladeshi Iqbals and the Jewish Chalfens, set in the last three decades of the twentieth century, in Willesden, a multicultural suburb in North London where the novelist herself

lives. Smith also exposes the identity of the Bowden family, Jamaican immigrants of African origin who have settled in London by exploring the lives of four generations of women: Ambrose Bowden, a slave (who is impregnated by a White man); her daughter, Hortense, who migrates to Britain; Hortense's daughter Clara; and finally Clara's daughter Irie. The presence of the South Asian diaspora is established through a Bengali family, the Iqbals. Samad Iqbal who joins the British army to fight in World War II migrates to London with his wife Alsana in 1972, where they raise identical twin boys Magid and Millat. Smith presents the Iqbals as a family trying to come to terms with the disruptive effects of migration, modernisation and secularisation on conflicting models of identity held by Samad, Alsana and their young sons. The Bowden and the Iqbal families in the novel become enmeshed in the lives of two Anglo families, the Jones' and the Chalfens. Samad Iqbal becomes acquainted with Archie Jones when they serve together in World War II, and they subsequently become close friends after the Iqbals move to London. At the same time immediately after the novel opens, Archie Jones meets and marries Clara Bowden. Their daughter Irie, becomes a close friend of the Iqbal twins, who later become involved with the white upper middle class family of Marcus and Joyce Chalfen through their friendship with their son Joshua. It is from Irie's perspective that the last passages of the novel are narrated and it is she who metaphorically transcends the past and connects the three families. Having got physically intimate with both twins, Magid and Millat, on the same day, she is therefore never able to tell who the biological father of her daughter is and it is

Joshua, the oldest son of the Chalfens who finally fulfils the role of a father to her to the child. Structuring her story across generations and through the intersecting lives of families from disparate parts of Britain's former empire, Smith puts in play a set of relationships carefully calibrated to explore how the histories of colonisation and globalisation have rerouted and disrupted genealogical and cultural roots both for her immigrant and her Anglo characters. In this way Smith historicises the politics of contemporary British multiculturalism by linking them to the histories of colonialism and finally to new forms of scientific and religious fundamentalism evoking a trajectory exemplifying the globalisation process. Smith has deftly portrayed a medley of characters constantly engaged in manipulations, negotiations and prolonged quests to assure themselves a control over issues of identity in the randomness they are caught in. But in spite of the probing, planning and questioning done by the characters, in the novel, it is the randomness which defeats order and emerges as the controlling ideology in the globalised new millennium of the United Kingdom. The phrase "past tense, future perfect" which recurs throughout the novel can be taken as a metaphor for diverse multiculturalism in which there are inescapable conflicts and constantly overlapping ebbs and flows and also a vision of a shared future beyond differences. The title "White Teeth" is symbolic of both personal and collective memory—of the novel's four sections, the first three have a chapter on "root canals"— a device which reminds us that we are all same under the skin. In *White Teeth*, Smith proves herself as a typical transcultural writer of the millennium by embracing the

distorted nonlinearity of irregularly enmeshed geographical and historical signifiers and subsequent personal and social relations moving from one ancestral account to the other.

Right at the outset of the novel itself the reader encounters the globalised scenario of London populated by a startling mix of cultures. One of the protagonists, the Englishman Archie Jones is rescued from a suicide attempt by the Hindu assistant of a Muslim butcher. Archie takes this extreme step on account of having divorced his Italian wife who has a Spanish help and we also come to understand that his best friend is Samad Iqbal, a Bangladeshi with whom he regularly plays poker at an Irish pool house run by Arabs. This only serves to be the beginning of a complex mesh of intercultural connections that make clear cut divisions impossible.

Although the plot of *White Teeth* is loosely organised around Archie Jones, it is Samad Iqbal who initially carries the weight of Smith's analysis of multiculturalism in turn-of-the-century London. In *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*, Paul Jay observes:

> Samad's paradoxical experiences as a Bengali Muslim fighting to defend the British crown in World War II, his agonised responses to the forces of assimilation in London, and his struggle to reconnect his twin sons with a Bengali identity, culture and religious perspective that he believes the West has corrupted are all central to Smith's larger ambitions in the novel. Samad is particularly important because through him Smith

> focuses on a set of transitional forces shaping contemporary globalization, and in a way historicises their processes. Moreover, by juxtaposing the Iqbals' experiences with those of the Jamaican Bowdens, Smith underscores the globalised nature of empire's structures and effects. For all of their differences, the Iqbals and the Bowdens suffer through the same kind of historical experiences, and in contemporary London their children confront many of the same challenges: how to imaginatively construct English identities that are both rooted in and routed through the complex histories of their families and the nations that produced them. (159-160)

The phenomenon of globalisation which made a huge impact towards the end of the twentieth century has a tremendous impact on the lives of the characters of the novel. In the novel Samad Miah is deeply affected by postnational settings, i.e. reduction in time and space. He lives in the British society which has given itself in to an intense time-space compression, a society so much given over to speed, motion and technological fixes. The reduction in time and space due to the transnational changes effected by globalisation, particularly the adaptation of liberal doctrines especially western scientific, political and ideological values are ignored by Samad who later pays a heavy price. The British society's plunge into the maelstrom of ephemerality provokes in Samad, an explosion of opposite sentiments and tendencies. He conjures up an imagined romantic glorification of Bangladesh where religious

and traditional values have been maintained over decades and he contrasts this with the spiritual and moral decay which characterise the Western society in which he lives.

The global forces of science and technology, Samad is unaware of affects Magid who becomes a representative of post-national scientific values, which are closer to the value systems of western enlightenment than the traditions of Bangladesh or Islam. The impact of globalisation de-traditionalises Magid undermining the influence from Bangladesh, where he is sent by Samad to alter his personality by making him a typical traditional Bangladeshi Muslim. The return of Magid from Bangladesh as a young man more westernised than the true westerner shatters Samad whose attempt to re-kindle his own identity through the re-education of Magid in authentic Islamic values fails.

The shrinkage of the world accentuated by the forces of globalisation results in the influx of western values into Samad's ideal native land which threatens his notions of identification with Bangladesh, i.e. religious traditions, purity and morality. Samad's longing for Bangladesh with all its pristine traditional glory is a reaction against the influence which western culture has on the second generation Bangladeshi immigrants in England. Magid's western influence threatens to distort Samad's vision of an Islamic Bangladeshi value system which he wanted to identify with.

Samad uses religion as a tool of resistance and also as a means of moulding his sons. For avenging the loss of his original culture he creates a

monstrous schism in his family by sending Magid to Bangladesh to be raised hopefully as a traditional, God-fearing son which results in the alienation of his wife. It is ironic that Magid who is sent away to imbibe the good ways of religion returns home convinced about the virtues of an enlightened scientific rationality and a peculiarly traditional Englishness. In contrast Millat who remains in England becomes a religious fanatic.

Thomas Friedman in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, considers globalisation as the dominant international system which has replaced the Cold War system after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Cold War phase had its own system of power: the balance between the United States and the U.S.S.R. It had its own rules: in foreign affairs, neither superpower would encroach on the other's sphere of influence; in economics, less developed countries would focus on nurturing their own national industries, communist countries on autarky and Western economies on regulated trade. It had its own dominant ideas: the clash between communism and capitalism, as well as détente, nonalignment and perestroika. The cold war also had its demographic trends: the movement of people from east to west was largely frozen by the iron curtain but the movement from south to north was a more steady flow. The world was a space divided into the communist camp, the western camp and the neutral camp and everyone's country was one of them. The Cold War's defining technologies were nuclear weapons and the second industrial revolution was dominant, but for many people in developing countries the hammer and the sickle were still relevant tools. Taken together the Cold War

system influenced domestic politics, commerce and foreign affairs of virtually every country in the world.

Today's era of globalisation is an international system, with its own unique attributes, which contrast sharply with those of the Cold War. The Cold War system was characterised by one over-arching feature—division. The world was divided-up with its own threats and opportunities. Appropriately, this Cold War system was symbolised by a single word: the *wall*—the Berlin Wall. The fall of the Berlin Wall is regarded as an epoch making moment in history which ushered in the contemporary wave of globalisation which predominantly has the overarching feature of integration. The world today has become an increasingly interwoven place characterised by a single word: the *web*. So in the broadest sense we have gone from a system built around division and walls to a system increasingly built around integration and webs.

According to Padmaja Challakere, the fall of the Berlin Wall has had a tremendous rhetorical yield in recent years. By Friedman's reckoning, the great age of globalisation and unregulated democracy began on 11/9 with the collapse of the Berlin wall. Nicholas Royle, author of the novel *Counterparts* likens the Berlin Wall to a symptom of incommensurability and sees it as an externalisation of already nascent barriers. According to him, the Wall makes concrete an already existing gap in what had been closely correlated and twinned. Wherever walls are put up, they produce interlocked twins who had been separated and kept in neighbouring houses and raised according to different sets of rules as a social experiment. The building of the Berlin Wall,

as a host of historians have reminded us, was linked to the containment and displacement of Germany's Nazi past. In Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* the metaphor of the separated twins could be analysed from the perspective of the fall of the Berlin Wall which offers a ready template for a market based neo-liberal cosmopolitanism which runs parallel to the discourse of globalisation. In the novel, the metaphor of the fall of the Wall is employed to examine what ironies, anxieties and incompatibilities are contained within the literary representation. Such an examination is instructive not only for what it reveals about the key conjunctures between neoliberalism and literary culture but also for what it reveals about the power of the novel to reinforce ideologically dominant values. Reading the prominent figurations surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall renders visible the discourse surrounding globalisation.

White Teeth is an exemplary successful novel that writes a post-Berlin Wall terrain of human relations. The fictional world of the novel is trendily multicultural; here we find different ethnic groups speaking the most current street argot; here the possibilities of cultural refashioning are potentially infinite; here ethnic and cultural binaries are playfully unsettled. The novel also grapples with significant historical crises of modernity: colonialism, inequality, war and the global thrust of capitalism. However, the aesthetic mode in which the novel deals with the serious, opens it on to the flatness of TV, where characterisation is co-extensive with superficial externalities such as style, looks, dress and speech modes. The figure of the Berlin Wall emerges here, as in Friedmanian market speak, as a *tabula rasa* floating strangely free from its

troubled past while at the same time emerging as a symbolic divide erected by people like Samad Iqbal, the novel's much-too-Muslim protagonist.

However, it is to be noted that the novel manifests much irony when it hints at the interesting link between Samad Iqbal's increasing attachment to Islam and his idealisation of his Hindu great grandfather, Mangal Pandey. The dynamism of the narrative shows that Iqbal's Muslimness is not simply religious-cultural intransigence or the refusal of modernity but represents his interesting identification with an ambiguously famous historical figure, the failed Hindu revolutionary. Mangal Pandey, a sepoy in the service of the British East India Company, is famous for firing the first shot of the Indian independence movement in 1857. The irony is that the first shot of the Indian independence movement was a failed gun-shot that went wide and got Mangal Pandey hanged for sedition, and it was the hanging of Mangal Pandey which gave a revolutionary form to the 1857 movement. Like Mangal Pandey, Samad Iqbal, a waiter in a restaurant in Soho, wants very much to seize the moment against the grim tally of bad tips and sleepless nights serving racist customers. Samad wants to adopt Pandey as the name-of-the-father but this is a father whose legitimacy is in doubt. History has not been completely in favour of Mangal Pandey. Under pressure of the sudden news that their planned mutiny had been leaked to the officers, his gun-shot failed, and the mutiny was suppressed before it could become one. So Mangal Pandey is and is not (at one and the same time) the name-of-the-father of the Indian independence movement. For Samad, Mangal Pandey is an unrecognised tragic hero through

whose failure the Indian independence movement speaks. But here the reader is able to discern the complexity of the relation between Samad Iqbal and Mangal Pandey because Samad's hero-worship of Mangal Pandey and his embrace of Islam are framed within a generalised global eclecticism. Samad's Muslimness obtrudes upon us as a familiar cliché, as nothing other than churlish anti-Westernism. It is no wonder that he literally blows up in front of us as a charmingly out-of-date parent who tries to erect a Berlin Wall between his twin sons. Here one notes that in contrast with the utopian dismantling of the Berlin Wall in the modern era, Berlin Walls are being rebuilt by people like Samad Iqbal.

As the family watches the fall of the Berlin Wall on TV during a stormy winter night, the news anchor, speaking over the image of the human chain on both sides of the wall, declares that "the twenty-eight-mile long scar—the ugliest symbol of a died world, East and West has no meaning anymore" (208). Samad is unable to see the fall of the Wall as a historical ground for optimism, for which he is mocked by Alsana and the boys. This sets the scene for Samad's anxiety about the future of his sons, Magid and Millat, in Britain. Since he can only afford to send one of his sons to Bangladesh, his fatherly responsibility, as he imagines it, is to decide which one of his sons, in his terms, can he lead to the gate in the wall. After watching the fall of the Wall on TV, Samad erects a Berlin Wall between his sons, but the outcome of this act is far beyond his expectation. At the end of the novel Samad finds out that Magid, the son he had sent to Bangladesh to be raised as a devout Muslim, returns to

London Godless and westernised and with a full purchase on English while Millat, the son who stays behind in London, turns into a Muslim Asian-styled gangster.

In *White Teeth* we find the novelist addressing the portrayal of radical Islam. As mentioned in Olivier Roy's work *Globalised Islam*, Islamic neofundamentalism is brought into play as a global phenomenon. Smith parodies the discourse of fundamentalism and highlights the ironies of Islam's contemporary reinvention which Olivier Roy alludes as an unwitting complicity, both with secularism and the postmodern cult of the self. For Olivier Roy, one of the distinguished commentators of the Muslim community, neofundamentalism is a contemporary form of Islam that is essentially a diasporic phenomenon and a product of contemporary globalisation than of the Islamic past. Using two international languages (English and Arabic), travelling internationally by air, studying and working in foreign countries and profusely using the internet and cellular phones, these radicals consider themselves as Muslims and not as citizens of a particular country. In *White Teeth* globalised Islam can be read as a new form which is a reaction to contemporary sociological transformations rather than the projection of the permanence of the values of Islam.

In the novel, Smith's radical Islamic activist Millat is initially an ultra cool teenager who loves to party, indulges in drugs and alcohol and seduces white women. Millat, who is raised in London undergoes a radical change when he joins KEVIN (The Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic

Nation), an extremist Islamic outfit. However, his transition into an activist who grows a beard and prays five times a day reflects a widespread phenomenon prevailing in contemporary Britain, that of rebellion against their parents' generation trying hard to accommodate themselves into the cultural milieu of the British society. The wish to belong, which stems from a feeling of in-betweenness, of being caught between the culture of their parents' homelands which they have never seen and the English cultural landscape where they are never accepted have often prompted them to disclose some kind of identity peculiar to themselves alone. In the novel Millat is depicted as "neither one thing nor the other, this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali; he lived for the in between, he lived up to his middle name, *Zulfikar*, the clashing of two swords" (302-303).

The process of globalisation has resulted in the deterritorialisation of Islam which has affected millions of Muslims especially in Britain. Through increased migration and population flows more and more Muslims today live in non Muslim societies as minorities. What becomes evident is that the recently settled Muslims have to reinvent what makes them Muslim since the common defining denominator of this community is a mere reference to Islam, with no common linguistic or cultural heritage. In this context Olivier Roy refers to globalised Islam as a way in which the relationship of Muslims to Islam is shaped by the forces of globalisation and the impact of living as a minority in the West. His observation is that although the basic tenets and pillars of faith are consistent with the learned traditions of theological knowledge of Islam, in

the contemporary globalised scenario, the believers refer to the corpus of the Islamic religion to explain their behaviours in a context where religion has lost its social authority. While analysing the contemporary forms of religiosity among the Muslim youth in the West, Roy observes a specific form of fundamentalism rapidly emerging which he terms "neofundamentalism". This new phenomenon gaining ground among the second and the third generation Muslim immigrants is a radical movement striving to establish an imaginary "ummah" or Muslim community transcending notions of ethnic culture and territory. Living as a minority means experiencing Islam only as a religion unsupported by social authority and therefore fulfilling religious obligations depend on the goodwill of the believer and not on any external cultural pressure or a state's legal system. The problem of reconciling the self with religion in a globalised context calls for new forms of religiosity manifested in what Roy calls neofundamentalism.

In *White Teeth*, Millat, the ultra-cool teenager with good looks and street emerges as a classic recruit for neofundamentalism—a socially marginalised youth seeking an identity and a space for himself in a country which offers no acceptance:

> He knew that he, Millat was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives . . . that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. (202)

According to Olivier Roy, neofundamentalism is both a product and an agent of globalisation because it embodies an overt process of deculturation. It rejects the anthropological notion of culture as an integrated system of socially acquired values, beliefs and rules of conduct. Globalisation is considered as a good opportunity to rebuild the Muslim community on a purely religious basis by promoting the decontextualisation of religious practices.

Neofundamentalism can be regarded as a movement adapted to one of the basic facets of globalisation: that of turning human behaviour into patterns of consumption and communication delinked from any particular culture.

Millat is drawn to the radical Islamic movement by his friend Hifan, a new entrant to the group. Smith deftly lays bare a double voiced discourse where the pious discourse of the Islamic neofundamentalists is juxtaposed with the cool urban street speak of globalised youth culture:

> ‘Look at the suit . . . Gangster stylee!’ Millat ran a finger down Hifan’s lapel, and Hifan, against his better instinct, beamed with pleasure. ‘Seriously, Hifan, man, you look wicked. Crisp.’
>
> ‘Yeah?’
>
> ‘Better than that stuff you used to go around in back when we used to hang, eh? Back in them Kilburn days. ‘Member when we went to Bradford and – ’
>
> Hifan remembered himself. Reassumed his previous face of pious determination. ‘I am afraid I don’t remember the Kilburn days, brother. I did things in ignorance then. That was a different

person.'

'Yeah,' said Millat sheepishly. 'Course.'

Millat gave Hifan a joshing punch on the shoulder, in response to which Hifan stood still as a gate post.

'So: there's a fucking spiritual war going on—that's fucking-crazy! About time—we need to make our mark in this bloody country. What was the name again, of your lot?

'I am from the Kilburn branch of the Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic -Nation,' said Hifan proudly.

Irie inhaled *'Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation*,' repeated Millat impressed. 'That's a wicked name. It's got a wicked kung-fu kick-arse sound to it.'

Irie frowned 'KEVIN?'

'We are aware,' said Hifan solemnly, . . . 'that we have an acronym problem.'

'Just a bit.'

'But the name is Allah's and it cannot be changed … but to continue with what I was saying: Millat my friend, you could be head of the Cricklewood branch –

'*Mill*.'

'You could have what I have, instead of this terrible confusion you are in, instead of this reliance on a drug specifically imported

> by governments to *subdue* the black and Asian community, to lessen out powers.' (254–255)

In the novel, Millat and Hifan's religion fits into the neofundamentalist mode since it is a religion divorced from their parents' cultural legacy revealing a lack of faith in pristine cultures. Millat who is an ardent fan of Martin Scorsese's film *Goodfellas* is attracted to this new Islam not by any Koranic influences, but by the signifiers of the "gangster cool" image as an icon of youth culture. Millat absorbs and interprets Hifan's Islamic messages through the prism of Western popular culture. The formal male suit worn by Hifan has two different signifieds or two connotative meanings. While for Millat it stands for the authority and machismo of the Hollywood gangster hero and for Hifan it stands for the authority and charisma of a religious ascetic, its historical genesis and origins lie in the culture of the European upper classes of the seventeenth century. Since neofundamentalism is not founded on any tradition but is a movement reconstructing in the West, it borrows different elements to be incorporated in the daily life of a true Muslim either from an imagined tradition like the Pakistani "salwar" and "kameez" whose origin has more to do with the Roman "camisa" or from Western sources which includes scarfs, raincoats and suits for men. Neofundamentalism echoes tenets of cultural globalisation where the social significance of products depends on the meaning bestowed on them by the consumers.

Neofundamentalism is part of a global trend where religiosity or the self expression of personal faith gets upper hand over religion, a coherent corpus of

dogmas collectively held by the legitimate holders of knowledge. Millat's macho Islam colludes with his Hollywood fantasies thus reinforcing the notion of individualisation of religion much in tune with the cult of the self in the globalised era.

In the new context religion is no longer preached through institutions but is experienced by an inward looking community of believers. As revealed in the novel, anyone, even a newly recruited member like Millat can become a leader. Immediately after joining he is offered the headship of a sub community of believers, the sub-suburban Cricklewood branch of KEVIN. Millat is advised by Hifan to target Western imperialism as opposed to Western religion (Christianity).

When we trace its nineteenth century origins, Anglophone Carribean literature has been deeply embedded in a British literary arena with both its geography and sensibility located in Britain. However, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* reverses this process by making her novel British in material, characters and locale with a distinctively Carribean sensibility.

The Carribean has long been a prime location for investigating the process if cultural intermixing. As the site for one of the earliest cycles of globalisation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, various critics and theorists have under diverse cultural jargons like transculturalism, creolisation and cross-cultural imagination have identified it as a crucible within which a new conception of identity is being created. In *White Teeth*, Smith foregrounds the notion of the global Carribean by embracing the contours of the city of

London to portray how the Carribean culture has become a central part of the culture of the city.

White Teeth depicts London as a contact zone for cultures from across the world. Mary Louise Pratt describes contact zones as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths are lived across the globe today" (4). *White Teeth* unearths the historical processes which have made London a contact zone and expounds the nature of such a contact. Cultural theorists have propounded several theories to explain the notion of cultural transformation which include "acculturation" where the immigrants simply take on the culture of the new country and "transculturation" which is similar to the reproductive process where the offspring carries something of both parents but is different from each of them. While the former theory does not find much favour with contemporary Carribean realities, the latter takes on a different term called "hybridisation" which transcends the simple fusion of two cultures and generates new structures and new practices. Smith in the novel explores the notion of hybridity by exploring the biological notions of "offspring", "cultural diversity", and "genetic engineering" which actually figure in the second half of the work. Smith examines the various routes created by the contact zone and probes what happens when Carribean people and culture go to London and when London in a way becomes Carribean. The novel distorts the traditional notions of Englishness and in the process reveals an anti-essentialist agenda

which lays bare the ramifications and outcomes of cultural mixing and of the diverse possibilities of the globalised world where purity becomes impossible.

The novel depicts a Carribeanised London cityscape coloured by successive waves of immigration:

> The 52 bus goes two ways. From the Willesden kaleidoscope, one can catch it west like the children; through Kensal Rise, to Portobello, to Knightsbridge and watch the many colours shade off into the bright white lights of town; or you can get it East as Samad did; Willesden, Dollis Hill, Harlesden, and watch it with dread (if you are fearful like Samad, if all you have learnt from the city is to cross the road at the sight of dark-skinned men) as white fades to yellow fades to brown and then Harlesden clock comes into view standing like Queen Victoria's Statue in Kingston—a tall stone surrounded by Black. (142)

Here Harlesden Square is transformed into Jamaica and Kingston into the heart of London. The change brought out in the cultural milieu is highlighted through the reference to the "many colours" in London. The streets of London are depicted as cultural amalgams where one can get fourteen types of dal, where O'Connells pool house is "neither Irish nor a pool house" (159). What is so Carribean about London is not only the presence of Carribean culture grafted onto its British host, but the predominance of complex linkages and mixed traditions which constitute the Carribean Black Atlantic identity.

In the novel the younger generation epitomises the confluence of mixed traditions. The youth culture provides much of the energy of the novel revealed predominantly through the characterisation of Magid and Irie which is in contrast to the rigid views of the older generation. The novel's real revolution occurs at the level of language, especially the language spoken by the youth. Their language encompasses a wide variety of influences. Irie speaks a language with pronounced Jamaican vocabulary but reveals an influence which goes beyond ethnicity. Millat while arguing with a ticket-man peppers his speech with words from different languages including Jamaican, Bengali, Gujarathi and English. This reveals the impossibility of linguistic purity in a globalised world.

The fact that also Millat and his so-called Raggastani "crew" use elements of patois in their everyday communication without having a Caribbean background points to a socio-linguistic phenomenon which Christian Mair describes in *Language, Code, and Symbol: The Changing Roles of Jamaican Creole in Diaspora Communities*, as follows:

> The first development that helped the survival of Jamaican Creole outside the Caribbean, particularly in Britain, was its transformation from a community language shared by Jamaicans to what has been called British Black English . . . an optional additional symbolic code available to all members of the Afro-Caribbean community . . . and, most importantly, the British-born descendants of the original immigrants, who—while usually solid

> native speakers of the socially appropriate vernacular of their home region in Britain—have continued to cultivate a somewhat simplified version of Jamaican Creole as a means of asserting a separate group identity. (232- 233)

Mair further observes that the language which the Black British started using initially started to spread out relatively quickly among certain White and Asian youths who were inspired by their admiration for Black "pop" music. Elements of Creole were borrowed by this group who used it as a means to strengthen their group identity separating them from the middle class mainstream. This is exactly what adolescent Millat and his friends do in *White Teeth*:

> Millat's Crew looked like trouble. And . . . they were of a breed: *Raggastani*. . . . Raggastanis spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati, and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing: Allah *featured*, . . . Kung Fu and the works of Bruce Lee were also central to the philosophy; added to this was a smattering of Black Power (as embodied by the album *Fear of a Black Planet*, Public Enemy). (200)

The primary aim of the group was to appear "cool" and to gain some form of acceptance with the system of adolescent groupings and also for gaining some form of protection and a feeling of security. When they wear traditional dress they get messed up but when they speak this particular

language no one dares to confront them "because they looked like trouble. They looked like trouble in stereo" (200).

In the novel it becomes evident that while the older generation prefers the stasis of cultural familiarity, for the transcultural younger generation, self becomes a series of overlappings and displacements. The city of London offers them an indeterminate space of intersecting particulars: "It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune" (281). To the second generation immigrants the past signifies nothing more than the indeterminacy of the future. Causal rationale and achievable finalities remain nonexistent and while relations are not impossible, they are random and ambiguous and not based solely on the exclusivity principle. This identity remains open to both global and local perspectives. London becomes a space for negotiation where solidarity is expressed across differences as Smith depicts humorously in the act of trading and smoking cigarettes:

> Everyone at Glenard Oak was at work: they were Babelians of every conceivable class and colour . . . 67 different faiths, 123 different languages . . . And everybody, everybody smoking fags, fags, fags . . . celebrating their power to bring people together across cultures and faiths, but mostly just smoking them—*gis a fag, spare us a fag*. (252)

The spatial reach and density of transnational interconnectedness weave complex networks of relations among communities which define the world order today. These overlapping and interacting networks define an evolving process, put constraints on and empowers communities and are reflected in all social domains. Recognising the interconnectedness of networks Zadie Sith herself has observed that the writers who are going to succeed in today's complex world are those who have the kind of complexity to match the complexity of this world.

The English Archie and the Bangladeshi Samad are very much aware of the hierarchical distinctions between them in terms of the colonial equation but they find ways to overcome it and build a relationship based on mutual understanding and respect. A telling example of this is the way they collaborated while being Army comrades in Bulgaria in 1945:

> . . . it was awkward, an Indian telling an Englishman what to do – but somehow the quietness of it, the manliness of it, got them over it. It was during this time that Archie learnt the true power of do-it-yourself, how it uses a hammer and nails to replace nouns and adjectives, how it allows men to communicate. (80).

Athough it is difficult to evade the burden of deeply entrenched socio-cultural prejudices, there is also a possibility of overcoming the burden of prejudice and achieving the process of transculturation through effective contact. Even in the case of the other characters also this becomes evident. Alsana, in the novel harbours discriminatory feelings towards other ethnic

groups but when it comes to actual personal encounters, she finds convincing reasons to get along and even find some of the others commendable. Clara is unprejudiced enough to become a partner of an inter-racial matrimony and the Chalfens have no qualms in having close interactions with both the Bengali Iqbal twins and the half West Indian Irie Jones. Millat's and Hussein-Ishmael's (a victim of serious physical attacks and robbery three times a year) reasons for becoming members of the Islamic extremist group KEVIN are as spurious and laughable as that of Shiva:

> Well, in fact Shiva had joined KEVIN for three reasons. First, because he was sick of the stick that comes with being the only Hindu in a Bengali Muslim restaurant. Secondly, because being Head of Internal Security for KEVIN beat the hell out of being second waiter at the Palace. And thirdly for the women. (429)

More than a platform to express a deep commitment to a pressing cause, the organisation becomes a place to get together and satisfy superficial personal needs. The urge to sacrifice their own security and comfort for a common need is nonexistent as exemplified in the attitude of "Hussein-Ishmael, who, despite his desire to wreak violence upon somebody, *anybody*, had his shop to think about" (428).

The emerging trend in today's world is to recognise globalisation not as an ideal for a single world community but for its pluralising and particularising effect. Arjun Appadurai, in his influential essay "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" (1990) disregards the universalising nature of

globalisation and stresses the concept of interactivity which considers both the global and local processes, where homogenisation and heterogeneity feed on and reinforce each other. In today's glocal scenario, the search for certainties gets thwarted by the hybridity of "the triumphant universal and resiliently particular" (43). What emerges as contemporary today is a transnational contact zone characterised by perpetual rupture and the constant shifting of identities. What emerges is a distorting order devoid of an essentialised centre literally celebrated by Zadie Smith in *White Teeth.* In an interview with Kathleen O'Grady, which appeared in *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*, Zadie Smith comments: "The reason Irie gets to the centre of the book is not really about her, but about a certain idea of indeterminacy which is in a lot of writing of my generation of my peers, about the centre always being slightly displaced and there are a whole myriad of reasons for that" (106). While Millat struggles with the legacy of his father's war with himself and the need to mediate between the Western and Eastern roots/routes of his identity, Irie Jones, Archie's daughter, undertakes a parallel journey into her own Jamaican past. Unlike religion which becomes the deciding factor in the case of Millat, in Irie's case, race and class assume significance. It becomes evident that her identity like Millat's is also the result of the history of British colonialism and the contemporary accelerating forces of globalisation including the metropolitan imperative to be "multicultural". When she is presented initially, she is self-conscious about her race and longs to fade into the white middle class. Her body is divided between the two different identities she has inherited

from her parents. She becomes obsessed with losing weight and gets hair extensions to transform her kinky hair into long and straight reddish black hair. Along with her self-consciousness about race, an increasing awareness about class also shapes her identity. She identifies Englishness not only in terms of whiteness, but also in terms of a vaguely defined middle class status. Her preoccupation with middle class Englishness develops when she gets involved along with Magid and Millat, with the family of one of their friends, the Chalfens. Marcus Chalfen is a brilliant and illustrious scientist working on stem cell research, while his wife Joyce is a successful pop horticultural writer. She begins to work for Marcus Chalfen, organising his files, and when she comes across the Chalfen family tree which she feels is meticulously ordered, she compares it with the chaotic randomness of her own family, the Jamaican Bowdens. It is her encounter with the Chalfens which makes her attempt to understand her own Englishness. She has a rift with her mother Clara when she moves in with her grandmother Hortense. By weaving Irie's story along with Samad's and Millat's experiences in terms of the quest for identity, Zadie Smith underscores the link between the Iqbal and the Bowden families and reveals how British, South Asian and Carribean roots become entangled through colonisation and migration. While spending time in the Bowden household, Irie comes across old letters and pictures of her grandmother's Jamaican past. While probing further she encounters a new past rooted in a place "Columbus called St Jago but the Arawaks stubbornly renamed Xaymaca, the name lasting longer than they did. . . . She laid claim to the

past—her version of the past—aggressively, as if retrieving misdirected mail" (343). This understanding relocates her identity in such a way that suddenly marginalises the English soil of her birth. Suddenly her homeland becomes to her an "imaginary homeland" and in the wake of all her realisations, Irie wants to neither take up "Englishness" nor her Jamaican identity. Instead she yearns for a neutral space beyond the historical confines of identity she has been so caught up. While the Iqbals and the Joneses argue with one another, Irie bursts her pent up frustrations. She talks about normal families who just live their lives quietly, free of the cultural and historical conflicts that seem to determine their lives:

> What a peaceful existence. What a joy their lives must be. They open a door and all they've got behind it is a bathroom or a living room. Just neutral spaces. And not this endless maze of present rooms and past rooms and the things said in them years ago and everybody's historical shit all over the place. They're not constantly making the same old mistakes. They're not always hearing the same old shit . . . who they are and what they should be, what they were and what they will be. (440)

Irie yearns for a neutral space to avoid the pitfalls and divisiveness of identity politics. However, before Irie could express her desire about a neutral space, Smith has already made it clear in an earlier passage that such places are illusory. Smith suggests that faith, land, ownership, theft and blood all play significant roles in the identities Irie grapples with but those cannot be wipped

off but must be reintegrated in a subjectivity that is not neutral or indifferent but different. As Paul Jay expresses in *Global Matters*:

> Samad cannot be Bengali or English in any traditional sense, nor can Millat or Magid; and Irie is not Jamaican, and her Englishness will be different than the Chalfens', her father's, and Samad Iqbals'. While Englishness has always been shaped by transnational forces, the combined effects of the history of colonialism and those of contemporary forms of globalisation, Smith shows, have forged new identities vastly different than older ones. (169)

Smith presents multiplicity, hybridity and syncretic cultural forms which foreground randomness along with a variety of pseudo-purist notions like Samad's obsession with purity, Hortense Bowden's attachment to Jehova's Witness and the scientific theories of Marcus Chalfen which expound the idea that reality is ordered by a discoverable design. Marcus Chalfen's stem cell research is aimed at producing a "futuremouse" whose genetic programme he controls; he hopes to re-engineer the mouse's genome and programme every step of its development like reproduction and life expectancy.

The novel's same-other, chance-choice dialogue recognises the interconnectedness which characterises the contemporary globalised society. Smith seems to delineate the idea that there is no culture or identity which can be regarded as pure and uncorrupted. Whether it is the Bowdens with their roots in Africa and colonial Jamaica, or the Iqbals with their tangled roots in

Bengal, intertwined in the history of migration and mongrelisation or the Chalfens and the Joneses whose "Englishness" is also an output of colonialism; there are no cultures that are not the products of global social and economic forces reshaping human subjectivities. As Arjun Appadurai observes in his essay "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", the search for certainties is repeatedly frustrated by the fluidity and hybridity of the transitory world. The global cultural system is ridden with ironies and resistances. Endings are transformed into new beginnings as demonstrated in the novel as evidenced in Archie's leap from a near suicidal attempt to a new lease of life, the accidental release of the "Future Mouse" and Irie's fatherless daughter. Irie's child is the product of her sexual relations with both identical twins within a short time thereby obscuring paternity altogether signifying connection and discrepancy and emphasising the complex network of human identity. As Paul Jay comments in *Global Matters*:

> In linking the fate of its characters to the long history of globalisation Smith also complicates one of the central tenets of globalization theory, the idea that globalization is characterised by a one-way flow of cash and cultural commodities from the core to the periphery. The binary is thoroughly upended in *White Teeth.* Smith's London is postcolonial, perhaps even post-postcolonial. . . . The core has become the periphery, and it has done so in a way that reminds us there has always been a fluid relationship between the metropolis of the colonizer and the

> world of the colonized. The commodities and cultural flows characteristic of this relationship are circular and mutually transformative. The irony of the metropolitan world Smith explores in *White Teeth* is that colonization has come full circle and has begun to produce a counter or critical cosmopolitanism. (174-75)

If the process of globalisation has been accused of homogenisation and privileging of the West, what becomes evident in Zadie Smith's approach is the tendency to seek alternative modes of knowledge connected with diversity in ethnic, cultural or gender inscription. The novel evinces a sense of liberation from various hegemonic practices like the centrality of the masculine role and the consciousness of the white man as the principal originator of meaning. Cultural identity is conceptualised not in terms of violent encounters but by a plethora of mixings and blends which result in harmonious coexistence. In the novel although we find characters who are fatalists and others who believe in choice, the novel predominantly opposes the condition of the irrevocable and the predetermined. Certainly one of the metanarratives of the novel is linked to science which is identified with the English ethnic group, the Chalfens. Upholding the belief in reason as the vehicle of truth and control over the forces of the environment for the greater progress of humanity, the Chalfens adhere to their conviction of applying logic to life for attaining perfectability of the human race. As intellectual elites, inheritors of the Enlightemment philosophy and creators of the welfare state, the Chalfens take on an extremist

position which is humously depicted by Smith in the novel: “there’s no point being reasonable with him because he thinks he *owns* reasonableness. How do you deal with people like that?” (347). The Chalfens’ trust in science is so absolute that Marcus Chalfen’s act of creation using the tool of genetic engineering is equated by his wife Joyce as that of God. Their stong conviction urges them to believe that chance can be ruled out by ascertaining absolute control over matter. While the Chalfens (except their son Joshua) and Magid, their ardent follower adhere to the extreme scientific view, Hortense, Samad and Millat too are extreme in their own peculiar way pertaining to the religious metanarrative of divine fate. They take strong objection to Marcus Chalfen’s “Future Mouse” project aimed at creating an ultimate scientific victory through genetic engineering. As Samad observes:

> Marcus Chalfen has no *right.* No right to do as he does. It is not his business. It is God’s business. If you meddle with a creature, the very *nature* of a creature, even if it is a mouse, you walk into the arena that is God’s: creation. You infer that the wonder of God’s creation can be improved upon. It cannot. Marcus Chalfen *presumes*. He expects to be worshipped when the only thing in the universe that warrants worship is Allah. (390)

The confrontation between these two opposing views brings all the major characters together to converge in the last chapters of the novel. The metanarrative of extremism fails; chance plays a part in the denouement; there is no closure or definite resolution suggested and the readers are left to confront

an unexpected, paradoxical uncertain globalised scenario characterised by freedom and fluidity.

Samad's mistaken notion that Archie killed Dr Sick, the Nazi doctor during the war had constituted the catalyst of their friendship, consequently launching the storyline. As the lie is disclosed in the narrative ending, it highlights several startling revelations: the revival of Dr Sick, Future Mouse's escape into life in vivo and Irie's many-fathered child. The unpredictability of events lay bare an illogical logic perpetually throwing the subject off course. Individuals are left with having to make sense of life which erupts in same and other, continuous and disrupted dynamics.

As Claire Squires mentions in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth,* it is to be observed that although *White Teeth* and its author have come to be considered "as representative, illustrating themes and concerns of contemporary Britsh society . . . of the zeitgeist, a new multicultural, multicolored Britain. . . . Yet *White Teeth* itself is cautious of such easy definitions" (81-82). In the final scene of the novel which takes place at the Perret Institute, Smith's satire on the vacuous signifiers of branding lays bare the importance of bearing in mind the humanity of individuals, their long drawn out histories and how they fit into the spaces of the world:

> . . . people can finally give the answers required when a space is being designed, or when something is being rebranded, a room/furniture/Britain (that was the brief: a new British room, a space for Britain, Britishness, space of Britain, British industrial

> space cultural space); they know what is meant when asked how matt chrome makes them feel; and they know what is meant by national identity? symbols? paintings? Maps? Music? Air-conditioning? Smiling black children or smiling Chinese children or [tick the box]/ world music/ shag or pile/ tile or floorboards? plants? running water?
>
> They know what they want, especially those who've lived this century, forced from one space to another like Mr De Winter (ne` Wojciech), renamed, rebranded, the answer to every questionnaire nothing nothing space please just space nothing please nothing space. (443)

The significance of *White Teeth* lies in its celebration of the attempts of ordinary people, the triumph of heterogeneity which to the dissemination of power from the former centres to the peripheries erasing inequity and highlighting the positive aspects of postmodernity. The central message of *White Teeth* is that at all costs we should avoid the basic error of confusing the significance of the term "fundamental" with that of the word "fundamentalism" as the quotations that head the section entitled "Magid, Millat and Marcus" well illustrate (354). The value of fundamental human experience should never be placed at the service of any system of ideas which might arrogate the power to rule supreme.

Among the South Asian British women writers, Monica Ali is a prominent writer who has emerged in the past decade. Even before the

publication of her debut novel *Brick Lane*, Ali was already named by Granta as one of the twenty "Best Young British Writers" based on the draft of her manuscript. Since completion the novel has been produced in more than twenty countries and entered the short list of the Man Booker Prize. The novel depicts the travails of a Bangladeshi immigrant woman and portrays the area of Brick Lane as a segregated space for the underprivileged, among which the Bangladeshi immigrant community is by far the largest group.

The novel focuses on the protagonist Nazneen, a first generation immigrant from Bangladesh who moves to London immediately after her marriage. Born prematurely in a rural village in Bangladesh and left to her own fate by her mother because of poverty and also because of her gender, Nazneen resigns herself to her own pitiable plight and gives her consent while in her late adolescence to marry a much older man Chanu, who takes her to England where he hopes to build his future. Living in London's impoverished East End, Nazneen suffers extreme isolation which often besets women condemned to domestic servitude. Able to say just two things "sorry" and "thank you" in English, Nazneen spends her initial days in London cleaning the flat in which she lives and cooking food having no human contact during day time except the sight of a mysterious tattooed elderly lady blankly staring out of her building window. This situation seems blatantly contrastive for Nazneen who has spent eighteen years in a socially cohesive rural village in Bangladesh never having felt a moment alone till arriving in London. The condescending attitude of her husband Chanu exacerbates her predicament and his insufferable

pompousness, pretentious didacticism and staunch insistence on keeping other Bangladeshis at arm's length since they are uneducated, completely alienates Nazneen both from the Whites as well as the immigrants. In spite of Chanu's constant injunctions, Nazneen gradually finds herself drawn into the female immigrant society of her neighbourhood especially because of the inspiring ways of her anti-conformist friend Razia and begins to learn more about ways of domestic non-cooperation. Nazneen's defiance of Chanu exacerbates when he refuses to help her sister Hasina who flees from her husband's home in Bangladesh unable to stand domestic violence. She gradually breaks free from her husband and the confines of tradition by joining the Bangladeshi women of her neighbourhood who are engaged in homeworking for the local garment industry. Her inadequate relationship with her husband is compensated by her brief relationship with Karim, an Islamic activist who introduces her to the nuances of local politics. The novel moves to a climax as secular and Islamic community leaders engage in a mass riot on *Brick Lane* which traps her young daughters who are rescued as Nazneen breaks into the police cordon forcefully. As the novel ends, unable to fulfil his dreams, Chanu returns to Bangladesh without Nazneen and his two daughters; Nazneen maintains good contact with him having ended her relationship with Karim.

Unlike V. S. Naipaul, for whom finding the "centre" has been an important part of his journey as a writer, Ali has engaged herself with the reverse process, that is, finding the "periphery". If the centre is where the fixed identity is located, Ali embraces the fluid, heterogeneous, "otherness" as a

mixed-raced writer. The novel *Brick Lane* addresses the problems of immigrants and their predicaments, reflecting the problems of the most recent flow of immigrants into Britain. It deals with the lives of permanent immigrants, who, in the age of globalisation have crossed borders from the poor countries of the Third World to make a living. Ali introduces Tower Hamlet, the area where the Bangladeshi immigrants live as embodied in darkness: "Most of the flats that closed the three sides of a square had net curtains and life behind was all shapes and shadows"(8). As Jane Hiddleson persuasively argues in "Shapes and Shadows: (Un)veiling the Immigrants in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*," Ali has daringly attempted to give form to the hazy figures behind the surface of persistent stereotypes and misconceptions. The global network of informal labour in the age of globalisation is revealed through Ali's representation of contemporary London. In Ali's novel, London is depicted as the great metropolis, which has attracted millions from the underprivileged nations of the world. London, is portrayed as multicultural and transnational with the global flow of people. It fits into the category of a global city, whose economy largely relies on multinational corporations and major immigrant flows.

As Saskia Sassen observes in *The Global City*, immigrants are "disproportionately concentrated in large, central cities and in low-wage jobs and casual labour markets" (306). In the novel the home becomes the site where the fallout of globalisation is manifested as exemplified by the council flat of the protagonist. Nazneen, like many other Bangladeshi migrant women

in Tower Hamlets, joins the garment manufacturing industry and takes up sewing at home. Unable to reap the benefits of the organised global world economy outside, these women remain informal, hidden and unregulated, adding whatever they can to the family income. The novel depicts how personal freedom for a woman is gained by sharing work and personal experiences with similar women and not by open rebellion. The economic system of global capitalism is accepted because liberation can be gained through a personal politics of gendered liberation in a country where one has the power to choose. In Dhaka, her sister is also able to choose but the price is poverty and dependence on unreliable and exploitative men.

The ambiguous nature of globalisation which simultaneously empowers and exploits female workers is exposed by Ali in the novel. Through the story of Nazneen in Britain and the epistolary narrative of her sister in Dhaka, Ali portrays the ambiguity at both sides of the international labour market. Although the garment industry which caters to a global clientele offers immense scope for self-empowerment to women, it can also paradoxically plunge them into an abyss of female exploitation.

In her work *The Power to Choose*, Naila Kabir makes a fascinating study of how women workers at two geographic poles of the global garment industry view their lives and work. She observes that in the context of the globalised labour market, the conditions and the motives behind the Bangladeshi women's decision to enter the labour market in London varies significantly from that of their counterparts in Bangladesh. The existence of a

state guaranteed social safety net in London calls for a different decision making environment from that prevailing in Dhaka. Even when a household did not have employed members, it could still manage its basic needs for food, clothing and shelter through various forms of state assistance like income support, housing benefit, child benefits and subsidised health and education. As a result the decision to enter the labour market by the migrant Bangladeshi women in London was not motivated by basic survival imperatives which were the motivating factors for the women in Dhaka. The motivations for the women's home working activities were the desire to save, to increase their purchasing power, to improve their family's standard of living and to buy things for their children.

In the novel Nazneen opens up to the world around her inspite of several setbacks in the nascent stage including the death of her infant son and a disillusioned husband who becomes embittered after his hopes of gaining promotion in a racist institutional setup is thwarted. Her exposure to resistant female models which are crucial in letting herself slip away from patriarchal male authority is comically presented by the author in the scene where herself and Chanu make an unannounced visit to Mr Azad's house. Although Mr Azad, admired by Chanu for his academic credentials and financial success as a medical practitioner earnestly maintains immense traditional propriety in public life, his personal life is far from it as the couple find out when they arrive without prior notice. Azad's wife is a beer swilling, cigarette smoking, foul mouthed, highly opinionated, and fiercely independent woman who takes the

selective appropriation of British culture and femininity to an extreme, cutting Chanu off in the midst of a lecture about the tragedy of culture clash for the young by saying that he's talking crap:

> "Why do you make it so complicated?" Said the doctor's wife. "Assimilation this, alienation that! Let me tell you a few simple facts. Fact: we live in a Western society. Fact: our children will act more and more like Westerners. Fact: that's no bad thing. My daughter is free to come and go. Do I wish I had enjoyed myself like her when I was young? Yes!" . . . "Listen, when I'm in Bangladesh I put on a sari and cover my head and all that. But here I go out to work. I work with white girls and I'm just one of them. If I want to come home and eat curry, that's my business. Some women spend ten, twenty years here and they sit in the kitchen grinding spices all day and learn only two words of English." (116-117)

In *Brick Lane* the business of garment making, which itself forms part of the sprawling fashion industry, is first introduced to Nazneen by Razia, her neighbour and friend in London. Caught in the domestic sphere, Razia finds the garment industry a source of income and a means of overcoming her personal struggles and conflicts. As she painfully reveals to Nazneen, her husband "works all day and night. He keeps me locked up inside. If I get a job he will kill me . . . The children are at school. What am I supposed to do all day? Gossip and more gossip . . ." (127). And Razia further goes on to add: "The

children ask for things. Everything they see they want. And I don't have money. Jorina can get me a sewing job, but my husband will come to the factory and slaughter me like a lamb" (127). Razia becomes the representative of thousands of migrant Bangladeshi women migrants who are trapped in the confines of patriarchal constraints. Razia fights against all odds including the stiff resistance of the members of her community who are against women taking up jobs. When Nazneen informs Razia that Mrs Islam is spreading the rumour that Jorina has brought shame on her family by joining the garment factory, Razia replies in defiance: "Is that what Mrs Islam says? Let her say what she likes. It will not stop me . . . Will the community feed me? Will it buy footballs for my son? Let the community say what it will. I say *this* to the community" (97). Razia's rebellion becomes visually obvious when she changes her sari for a pair of trousers and a sweatshirt with a large Union Jack printed on the front.

Another reason why the women preferred to work at home is related to the lack of perceived human capital, education and linguistic skills. The inability to communicate fluently with people outside their community was a major obstacle for women which prevented them from finding outside employment. In the novel, Razia attempts to transfer the fruits of her community education classes to Nazneen who had to practise filling forms about one hundred times a day. She takes a decade and a half (the entire time she was in London before plunging into the garment business) to glean the English vocabulary in bits and starts. She learns it from various sources:

> The television, the brief exchanges at the few non-Bengali shops she entered, the dentist, the doctor, teachers at the girls' schools. But it was the girls who taught her. Without lessons, text-books or Razia's "key phrases." Their method was simple: they demanded to be understood. (204)

Nazneen is one of those women who takes up homework on practical grounds with the support of her husband who becomes the middle man, the only option he has after failing to get a secure job good enough to repay the mounting debts.

> Chanu brought home holdalls of buttonless shirts, carrier bags of unlined dresses . . . He counted them out and he counted them back in. Every couple of days he went for new loads. He performed a kind of rudimentary quality control, tugging at zips and twiddling collars while probing his cheeks with his tongue. Chanu totted up the earnings and collected them. He was the middleman, a role which he viewed as Official and in which he exerted himself. For a couple of weeks he puzzled feverishly over calculations, trying to work out the most profitable type of garment assignment, the highest-margin operation. But he had to take what was available and the calculations were themselves a low-margin endeavour. Then he had time to supervise in earnest and he made himself available at her elbow, handling thread,

> passing scissors, dispensing advice, making tea, folding garments. "All you have to do", he said, is "sit there." (219)

According to Naila Kabir, men's intervention in the home working process had the effect of blurring women's entitlements to the income from their efforts. Rather than an activity solely undertaken by women, it became a sequentially shared labour process between women and men within the household so that the proceeds from the work could also be shared. Men were often the first recipients of women's pay packet since they were the ones who picked up the garments first from the factory. However, the women generally gave very little value to their own earning power and defined their roles in conventionally domestic terms. The majority of the Bangladeshi women in London were of the view that women's capacity to earn was critical to the respect that they received within their families. In the novel Chanu is all praise for Nazneen as he gives her the first test batch of garments to be hemmed. He beams at her thoroughly confident about making good money out of the business and proudly exclaims to his daughters: "Your mother is doing everything possible to facilitate our dream through the old and honourable craft of tailoring" (220). Chanu who works as the middleman for Nazneen for two months quits the job as he becomes a taximan at Kempton Kars, hoping to make the home fund prosper.

Norman Fairclough in his work *Language and Globalisation* speaks about "globalisation from below" while referring to the strategies of individuals or groups in specific places defending against the negative processes of

globalisation or taking advantage of new opportunities offered by these possibilities. Globalisation makes possible new resources for local action as evident in the attempts made by the working class towards self-organisation facilitating coalitions and alliances between places, groups and organisations on a local scale and those on a macro or global scale. In *Brick Lane*, the socially and economically excluded immigrant women develop their own social capital and social networks to survive and their survival strategies are a response to the appalling conditions they find themselves in including unemployment as a large-scale effect of economic globalisation and re-structuring which they have no control over. The strategy of survival includes, as Fairclough observes: "a strategy of adaptation and accommodation to the realities of unemployment, which includes accepting and taking on the theme of "flexibility from the neo-liberal economic discourse and appropriating it within a . . . reasonable strategy for getting work" (125).

In the novel Nazneen's life in London is contrasted with the perilous experiences of her sister Hasina who migrates from Bangladesh's rural Mymensingh to the capital city Dhaka where she undergoes the rigours of the economy of feminised industrial labour. Hasina's experiences are conveyed through a series of letters addressed to Nazneen. The epistolary subplot signifies the extent to which transnational social networks are very much a part of the lives of women who migrate from their homelands. These letters also reveal the atrocities and exploitation women suffer across borders as part of the informal labour rapidly spreading across the globe.

As observed by Naila Kabir, women from poor rural households in Bangladesh migrated to the cities in response to a greater perceived likelyhood of employment in the urban economy. In a county where internal migration has largely been a male phenomenon, the increase in independent female migration was often not recognised by official circles. As a consequence of globalisation and the unleashing of market forces, the export oriented garment industry made its presence felt in the late 1970s and gathered momentum in the 1980s. As a consequence thousands of women were drawn into jobs in the new factories dramatically changing the profile of female labour participation in the country.

Although women's entry into factory employment in the wake of a newly globalised economy represented a radical departure from the long established norms of female seclusion in Bangladesh, the repercussions it evoked were not favourable to them. Women workers had to deal with unwelcome attentions of the men which ranged from leering, suggestive comments and abusive catcalls to more direct sexual overtures. Women who came home late at night could be picked up by the police and automatically labelled as prostitutes. For these women who had made a foray into the public domain, encounters of such sorts served as a constant reminder that they were transgressing the "male" space and consequently laid themselves open to any harassment by any passing male. The societal view was that the women who worked in the garment industry were of loose moral character and even the epithet "garment girls" assumed a pejorative meaning with the public discourse. Religious meetings were frequently organised within the vicinity of

the factories during which various mullahs used loudspeakers to denounce the behaviour of the "bold" women unaccompanied by any male guardian. In the novel Haseena becomes the victim of an irate crowd of male chanters led by a local mullah who attack female factory workers as whores. For the women workers in Bangladesh, the biggest problem in the workplace was not the oppressive nature of labour but the constant negotiations and adjustments they have to make in accordance with the requirements of a patriarchal and insensitive society. Lack of job security, maternal and childcare rights and protection from sexual harassment were the constant woes the women had to encounter. Hasina is sexually exploited by her landlord and disowned by even her female companions who victimise her for her corruptive influence over them. After suffering successive failed marriages and much sexual disgrace she is finally saved by Lovely, the wife of a rich industrialist who employs her in her house as an act of charity. However, towards the close of the epistolary subplot we understand that Hasina elopes with Lovely's cook, an act which Nazneen observes was undertaken because of her refusal to give up inspite of several trying circumstances.

Hasina's isolation in Britain can be contrasted with the solidarity found by Nazneen in London. By drawing a parallel between two opposing positions of women in the global informal labour market, Ali seems to voice the fact that although globalisation has led to unprecedented forms of exploitation, it has also empowered women like Nazneen with novel forms of awakened consciousness and the will to survive amidst odds by capitalising on the

opportunities available. The sub plot also provides the social matrix for forging a nexus between women across borders and bringing a new awareness about the global conditions which the transnational feminist activists consider as a model for global sisterhood.

The feminisation of migration which is now a growing trend was largely overlooked in early literature. The stereotypical image of the migrant as the male figure was the prevailing figure reflected in the mass migrations to the industrial centres of the west in the post-war period. However, in the context of globalisation with its more turbulent and dispersed paths of movement, this image has little resonance. Saskia Sassen has observed that women have been directly affected by the process of globalisation as wage-labourers increasingly incorporated into the work force.

The Bangladeshi diaspora in London depicted in *Brick Lane* is torn between static and parochial tradition and a modern mobile dynamism offered by the global city. Nazneen's husband Chanu is representative of the first group and so are most of the Brick Lane community as it is first depicted in the novel. According to Chanu, the other residents of the community "all stick together because they come from the same district . . . they think they are back in the village" . . . peasants. Illiterate. Uneducated. Close-minded. Without ambition" (20). During her initial days in London, even Nazneen had felt this sense of inertia that nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. The sense of immobility creates physical and spatial constraints for the diasporic community as evident in Nazneen's life when she started her life with Chanu. Although,

for instance, she longs to visit the tattoo lady, whose appearance fascinates her, she is too frightened to do so partly on account of her own inertia and also on account of Chanu's lack of encouragement. Chanu experiences spacial constraint in London and becomes a victiom of Going Home Syndrome as Dr Azad cynically observes: "they will never save enough to go back . . . Every year they think, just one more year. But whatever they save, it's never enough" (24).

However, towards the close of the novel it becomes evident that some change has occurred in certain members of the community, significantly in the life of Nazneen who refuses to go back to Bangladesh like Chanu. She comes out of her passivity and fear and more importantly discovers her agency and her capacity for upward social mobility in a globalised world. Razia joins Nazneen in starting a new company "Fusion Fashions" which offers the possibility of selling a traditional kameez paired with a Western-style salwaar to a white woman (430). This endeavour allows both the women greater independence as they no longer had to depend on middlemen like Chanu or Karim; from invisible migrant wives of the periphery, they become ambitious, confident and upwardly mobile businesswomen on their own.

Nazneen's new found freedom widens her horizons, extending beyond spatial and physical confines. At the beginning of the novel Nazneen is fascinated by the television image of the ice skaters' apparent freedom of movement, a glaring contrast to her own sense of immobility:

> The couple broke apart. They fled from each other and no sooner had they fled than they sought each other out. Every move they made was urgent, intense, a declaration. Thw woman raised one leg and rested her boot (Nazneen saw the thin blade for the first time) on the other thigh, making a triangular flag of her legs, and spun around until she would surely fall but didn't. She did not slow down. She stopped dead and flung her arms above her head with a look so triumphant that you knew she had conquered everything: her body, the laws of nature, and the heart of the tight-suited man who slid over on his knees, vowing to lay down his life for her. (29)

Towards the close of the novel we find Nazneen dancing wildly to a pop song, traversing London on a metro to meet her lover and boldly navigates a riot zone to save her daughters, all made possible by the mobility in her freedom to move beyond restricting confines.

In the context of globalisation, another concept related to migrancy in Britain is the transformation in contemporary Islam resulting in new forms of religiosity. Muslims throughout history have experienced various forms of globalisation through travel, pilgrimage and so on but this pre-modern globalisation was connected with an attempt to revive, through the medium of Arabic, a common Muslim culture although it was an elite phenomenon. Contemporary globalisation for the immigrant Muslim community is a mass phenomenon where the deterritorialisation experience calls for a reflection on

what it means to be a Muslim living in a minority.The concept of "neofundamentalism" already discussed earlier in the chapter with reference to *White Teeth* finds a parallel in *Brick Lane* as well.

The basic tenets of neofundamentalism—individuation, the quest for self-realisation, the rethinking of Islam outside the framework of a given culture and the recasting of the Muslim ummah (community of believers) in non-territorial terms can be viewed as resulting from the impact of globalisation on Islam. As a mode of survival in the globalised world, neofundamentalism calls for a return to the basic tenets of Islam. One might wonder why "neofundamentalism" has "neo" as its affix since the call for a return to the basic Islamic tenets is not new. Rejection of sectarian affiliations in favour of a strict return to the Koran has been a perennial feature of fundamentalism. But as Roy points out, in neofundamentalism, there are some new elements that make a difference. The deterritotialisation experience is the central concept and neofundamentalism significantly addresses westernisation that lies at the core and no longer at the frontiers of Islam. The dilution of the pristine culture where religion was embedded in a given society, the absence of religious authorities who could define the norms of Islam and the impossibility of any form of legal, social or cultural coercion can be reflected in the new religiosity created by neofundamentalism.

In the novel, Nazneen's lover Karim is a second generation Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant who acts as a middleman bringing clothes to Nazneen for repair from his uncle's garment factory. Ali depicts him as a young man with

revolutionary dreams who strives to direct the immigrant Muslim youth towards strict Islamic traditions. He is the charismatic leader of the revolutionary Islamic group, "Bengal Tigers", which aims at protecting Muslim rights and culture and supporting the global "ummah". The name of the group is chosen merely because the members feel that it is a powerful name and does not relate to anything Bengali. Karim can be regarded as the product of globalised Islam, the neofundamentalist, who shocks Nazneen when they first meet at her house: "It was a strange thing and it took her some time to realize it. When he spoke in Bengali he stammered. In English he found his voice and it gave him no trouble" (222).

Since neofundamentalism is based on reconstruction, it has to borrow from different elements to rebuild the life of a true Muslim. They neofundamentalists may resort to traditional sources (for example, the turban or the salwar kameez, whose origin had more to do with the Roman camisa) or from western sources (raincoat and gloves). Dressed casually in jeans and shirt with sleeves rolled up and white trainers and sporting a phone at his hip from a black leather holster, Karim looks every bit a westerner, quite unlike what one expects a revolutionary Islamic leader to look like.

In this sense, neofundamentalism according to Olivier Roy accords with the modern makeshift cultural patchwork where the social life of things depend only on the meaning bestowed on them by consumers. The religious market thus becomes part of the global market. In *Brick Lane*, the members of the Islamic revolutionary outfit, "Bengal Tigers" strike Nazneen as adhering to a

dress code adaptable to any culture as is evident in the first meeting she participates: “A small man with a scabrous-looking beard grinned at her. He was drowning in a white panjabi pajama and he had a skullcap in his hands . . . She allowed herself to look around. Mostly young men in jeans and trainers, a few kurtas, a handful of girls in hijab” (252).

Neofundamentalism is both a product and an agent of globalisation since it embodies in itself an explicit process of deculturation. It looks at globalisation as a good opportunity to rebuid the Muslim community on a purely religious basis. In this sense it is perfectly adapted to a basic dimension of contemporary globalisation: that of turning human behaviour into codes, patterns of consumption and communication delinked from any specific culture. Neofundamentalists reject what they call “asabiya” (identification with a sub community, a tribe, a nation, a race or ethnic group). At the meeting of the “Bengal Tigers”, Karim says: “The meeting is open to all Muslims . . . Every brother and every sister wherever they come from” (253).

While traditional fundamentalists are at a loss how to deal with deculturation, neofundamentalists consider deculturation as a positive factor that permits the decontextualisation of Islam. Religion is considered as a decontextualised set of norms adaptable to any society since it has severed links with a given culture and allows people to live in a deterritorialised community that includes any believer. In the novel the “Bengal Tigers” include a black man passionate about bhangra music and a rock musician who prefers the sound system to attract the crowd. According to Karim:

> If you wanted to be cool you had to be something else—a bit white, a bit black, a bit something. Even when it all took off, bhangra and all that, it was Punjabi, Pakistani, giving it the attitude. It weren't us, was it? If you wanted to be cool, you just couldn't be yourself. (281)

In Britain neofundamentalism has attracted the second generation Muslims who have broken with the pristine culture of their parents but do not feel integrated into the Western society although they have mastered its language and consumption habits. Karim rejects phone calls from his father who wants his revolutionary son to stay out of trouble. He believes that his father is too much of a pacifist who had spent twenty five years as a bus conductor in London, getting called all the names, having a tooth knocked out and taking all the cheek from kids. The only reward earned by his father was the nervous disorder because of which he had to make an early retirement. Karim tells Nazneen that his father's religion was nothing but the pills he had to consume to retain normalcy.

One of the greatest disseminators of globalisation, technology, plays a pivotal role in taking across the neofundamentalist docrine. Mobile phones and the internet are preferred by preachers to address the largest possible audience, transcending ethnic divides and targeting the new generation of Western born Muslims. Karim gets the salaat alert reminding him of prayer time on his phone. He believes that the internet is the place where things really got radical. He keeps abreast of the teachings from the Koran and gets religious quotes

from Islamic websites. Since religion is a strict code of explicit and objective norms of conduct, the neofundamentalists resort to any media explaining what should be done and what is forbidden. Karim keeps a magazine titled "Are You a Good Muslim? Twenty Ways to Tell".

Despite their shared commitment to the true tenets of Islam, the neofundamentalists are divided on the role of the spiritual leader. One faction of neofundamentalists states that the spiritual leader should be obeyed blindly irrespective of whether he is learned enough to preach or not while the others are vehemently against this stand. In *Brick Lane* Ali brings forth the former as is evident in the election of the spiritual leader:

> ''Wait. Wait. One more election, Spiritual leader." He jumped off the stage, dragged an old man from his seat and pushed him onto the platform. Nazneen saw that the old man was wearing flat, open toed sandals with a white plastic flower on the heel strap: women's shoes. And she knew that the imam had only recently been imported. He kept wetting his lips and smiling. He had not the slightest idea what was going on. He was duly elected. (258)

In the novel, the religious identity of the community is depicted as getting involved in tensed negotiations between a Bengali diasporic cultural space and a global Muslim religious space. The aftermath of 9/11 portrays Karim and the Bengal Tigers confronting the Islamophobe Lion Hearts who fear cultural contamination, but the novel finally exposes the futility of divisive politics and reductive binaries.

Ali's *Brick Lane* seems to echo the novelist's observation that the globalised world offers women the unprecedented advantage of giving them chances to revalue their positions in a hybrid environment. Learnt and shared patterns of behaviour which have evolved through centuries of oppression predispose women to become mediators in circumstances of conflict. Their inherent capacity for flexibility and adaptation offers to them a mode of survival in a world marked by heterogeneity, where tolerance emerges as the prerequisite for peaceful coexistence. By weaving a subplot which provides insights regarding the feminisation work at both ends of the international division of labour, Ali adopts a transnational purview.

The last sentences of the book are very descriptive of Nazneen's new beginning: "To get on the ice physically—it hardly seemed to matter. In her mind she was already there. She said, 'But you can't skate in a sari.' Razia was already lacing her boots. 'This is England,' she said. 'You can do whatever you like' " (541). Nazneen seems to automatically embrace the new opportunities and options that open up to her in terms of economic independence and a general sense of well being as a woman.

What emerges in both the novels chosen for study is that the creation of a singular and uniform construction of a particular culture within the boundaries of the nation is untenable. The process of globalisation has vehemently challenged the early sociological paradigms of society which stressed the notion of an organic and integrated system. The interconnections between various economic and political systems and the increased mobility of

people have made more visible, the complexity of change, the permeability of boundaries and the fluidities of identities. Much of the misconception about either autonomy or dependency of culture is promoted by the existing image of globalisation as a restless shark which is on a merciless path of destruction. The major thrust of the debate on the relationship between globalisation and culture is centred around the question of whether the non-western practices and concepts will be destroyed by the dominant western global forms. As both the novels indicate, contemporary culture cannot be mapped against the co-ordinates of the centre-periphery grid of political economy. This model presupposes that power is concentrated on the centre and is dispersed concentrically. The idealised notion of the centre also fixates the direction of change whereby advances are consolidated in the centre and disseminated outwardly in a linear way. The base-superstructure models which provided the twin axioms of the earlier theories of culture, where the periphery is perpetually condemned to experience a belated modernity is strongly resisted by many third world critics. The notion of polar domination or a linear progression of culture fails to account for the relationship between the global and the local, which is also framed by the histories of colonialism, where cultural markers between classes have become more diffuse and complex and the decoupling of the local and the global becomes an impossibility as global migration intensifies. The dynamics of cultural transmission in today's globalised world cannot ignore the juxtaposition of multiple perspectives and the criss-crossing links between different orders. The fear that the global

empowerment of a specific order will lead to the homogenisation of all cultural systems cannot hold because of the infinity of practices and negotiations within which cultural creativity, political expediency, spatial distribution and economic necessity are mutually intertwined. The continual reabsorption or enfolding of the past in the present, the foreign in the familiar, the self in the other has a rolling, hybridising effect which results in newer confrontations and deeper levels of meaning.

Chapter III

Globalisation and Technology

Ever since Roland Robertson's definition of globalisation, expressed in *Globalisation: Social Theory and Global Culture* as "the compression of the world and the intensification of a consciousness of the world as a whole," (8), critical research on the increasing tightening of a global web of social interaction and interdependence has proliferated phenomenally. The increased global consciousness characterised by intense connectivity is caused mainly by the developments in technology, heightened communications, global markets and information flows. In *Globalisation and Culture*, Tomilson approaches the subject by considering the world's new "complex connectivity" and increasing "global-spatial proximity" which dramatically confound our experiential sense of the "undeniable, stubbornly enduring physical distance between places and people in the world" (1-4). As Tomilson further observes, the paradigmatic experience of global modernity for most people is that of staying in one place but experiencing the displacement that global modernity brings to them.

The heightened global consciousness experienced today could not have been possible without the advancement in technology which has enabled swifter communication and enhanced dissemination of information around the globe. Besides the technologies facilitating faster and cheaper air travel and the global media conglomerates that effectively make use of the radio, newspapers and television, arguably the greatest impact on our daily life in the twenty-first century is the internet. Contributing significantly to the time-space

compression, the internet crosses time zones and transcends geography through its placelessness which allows it to be anywhere anytime. Although global spaces and people are brought together, the notion of universalism which denotes equality emerges problematic as there is disjuncture, global multiplicity and difference despite the heightened interconnectivity.

While probing the manifestation of globalisation in literature what emerges is that the representation's possibly greatest challenge lies in the poignant depiction of a new era in both creative and critical thought. The task is to venture beyond horizons bound by nations into the world at large and understand the domestic and the global weaving pervasive patterns of human circumstance and experience.

While surveying contemporary works of fiction which thematise the concept of globalisation, we can find a juxtaposition of two worlds, the world of globalised business, high end marketing, consumer culture and political decision making on the one hand and innumerable sub worlds of the powerless and the disenfranchised inhabiting the other. The privileged world comprising an elevated sphere has at its lower end, a hopeless world of economic entrapment and while the privileged have a vivid view of the whole world and are capable of deftly averting their gaze, the disenfranchised are doomed to watch the powerful penetrating their local experience. By focusing on Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* and Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center*, the present chapter foregrounds connectivity and marginalisation as key concepts in exploring the interpenetration of the global and the local and depicts how

despite their evident susceptibility to global trends, the marginalised continue to assert themselves, disrupting globalisation's surge. In both the novels, the internet emerges as a tool of globalisation, exacerbating both connection and disjuncture. While *Transmission* foregrounds the implications of living in a globalised world, *One Night @ the Call Center* focuses on the Indian Business Process Outsourcing industry and reveals how giant multinational companies take advantage of the newly industrialising economies and how workers become embroiled with temporal transformations and trade-offs. An attempt is made to examine the impact of global market liberalisation on women which demonstrates that the consequences can be both empowering and constraining. However, both the works seem to arrive at a consensus in the face of the incomprehensible and unmanageable globalising forces, by deploying the narrative of terror by using the internet as a tool for social protest.

Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* published in 2004 explores "the social construction of the self through the media networks of the worldwide web, Bollywood, and the brand marketing of consumer lifestyles" (Robinson 282), while manifesting a "profound meditation on the problems of transcultural and transnational movements of people, capital and ideas" (Brock 379). The plot of the novel revolves around three people, Arjun Mehta, an Indian IT programmer, the English businessman Guy Swift and Bollywood star Leela Zahir. The lives of the three people get intertwined with the transmission of a computer virus unleashed by Arjun Mehta.

In the novel Kunzru depicts how post-industrial production alters the terrain of the nation. The novel documents how new technologies, through the instruments of media and networking both enable and disable the global flow of information and people. *Transmission* is set across a wide range of locations from India, California and London to the Scottish Highlands and even cyberspace. The novel chronicles the life of Arjun Mehta, a software programmer from India who lands in the Silicon Valley in search of the great American dream. But the company in which he works ends up being a digital sweatshop and after several harrowing months he gets a job as a virus testing assistant with Virugenix in Redmond. But things get worse when Arjun's job gets threatened as he becomes a victim of corporate downsizing. His life is distraught because back in India his family thinks that he is wealthy and immensely successful, a picture totally different from what he goes through in his actual life. In a bid to get back his job with Virugenix, a global computer security firm, he decides to create business for his employer by concocting a computer virus so sinister that only he could be able to find a cure and thus make him an indispensable employee. He unleashes Leela, the virus named after his favourite Bollywood starlet Leela Zahir, which wreaks huge havoc around the world, illustrating one of the dangers of global interconnectivity. The virus unleashed by Arjun is a deadly instrument capable of devastating networked computers across the globe with a ferocity that even the creator does not anticipate. The virus moves across the globe and shuts down power, water supply, misroutes trains and planes, scrambles bank account information,

closes businesses and countries. The novel lays bare the enormity of the impact of the greatest mutating force of this century: Information Technology. It reveals how everything in the globe is enmeshed in the invisible circuitry of one another, a virtual community where electronic impulses move at lightning speed in borderless interdependence. What lies beneath this surface is a disturbing tale of misery of men and women who cross international borders only to become pawns in the game of labour arbitrage. Arjun Mehta becomes a representative of thousands of Indian engineers of his generation body shopped to the US to become cyber coolies. *Transmission* is a story of how people get tossed around by global forces working far beyond their control or even comprehension. The global reach of Mehta's action exposes the vulnerability of contemporary humankind unable to find security or protection by personal or national measures which could have prevented such an action. In its final pages the protagonist is caught in a global Wanted Man chase and we lose sight of him as he becomes untraceable, as if he had made his escape through a thin partitioning into another world, when occasionally during a lapse of real world concentration, he rematerialises as a fleeting promise of subaltern resistance.

The majority of locations in *Transmission*—from India's urban industrial estates, office complexes and state-of-the-art apartment blocks to California's city highways and industrial parks and London's luxury penthouses and glitzy towers and cosmopolitan business suites—fit Marc Aug`e's category of the "non-place", the kind of purely functional space, typical of the super modern world which cannot be defined as relational or

historical or concerned with identity. Mark Aug`e, in his work *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, remarks:

> The new towns produced by technicist and voluntarist urbanization projects have often been criticized for failing to offer 'places for living,' equivalent to those produced by an older, slower history: where individual itineraries can intersect and mingle, where a few words are exchanged and solitudes momentarily forgotten, on the church steps, in front of the town hall, at the café counter or in the baker's doorway: the rather lazy rhythm and talkative mood that still characterize Sunday mornings in contemporary provincial France. (66-67)

Our immediate real-life world has in certain cases become so regulated, prescribed and alienated that as Kunzru notes in the novel, "anyone on foot in suburban California is (perceived as) one of four things: poor, foreign, mentally ill or jogging" (37). Those who were speeding by in their SUVs looked more cosmological than human, "gleaming projectiles that dopplered past . . . in a rush of noise and dioxins, as alien and indifferent as stars" (37). Even a place like the Scottish Highlands, renowned for its local splendour, is shown to bring about no genuine cultural exchange, but appears only as the carefully cordoned-off backdrop for the shooting of a scene in a Bollywood movie, into which its cultural identity is worked as a quaintly decorative, momentary distraction. Wherever Kunzru's novel transports us exposes the same globalised scenario governed by questions of marketability, the hustle and

bustle of public relations, the cult of celebrity status and a ceaseless scramble for advertising and commercial spaces. These pursuits are granted centre-stage priority over the dull quotidian struggle for human dignity or basic economic survival. While Arjun Mehta waits for a job call from his employer, he decides to discover America and find the specificities immensely absorbing:

> Inside a sepulchral Safeway the air-conditioning played icy breath on his neck as he padded down aisles where the produce was lit like a film set and sprinklers sprayed cricket-ball-sized tomatoes with a fine mist of water. In every parking lot men and women dressed in pastel lycra's and cottons pushed staggering cubic volumes of merchandise towards their cars—and what cars! Mythical chariots gleaming with window tint and metallic paint, vehicles built to transport whole clans, entire communities, from one place to another. The first time he saw an RV he actually forgot to breathe. (40)

Transmission depicts humanity on the brink of absorption into the man-made artifice of the virtual, at once abstract, make-believe, and relentless in its impact on real life. Life itself gets marginalised as connectivity takes over actual experience of community by defining people's virtual on-screen interaction, be it mediated by mainstream cinema, computer games or the internet. In this context life not only mirrors or imitates virtuality, but gets eclipsed and drowned by it. When Arjun finally gets a job at Virugenix, the global computer security specialist which he considers a miracle he

immediately understands that his social life is limited. Most of the members of his team were not gregarious creatures. Most people did their own things and other people left them to get on with it:

> Everyone left their phones on voicemail and most wore headsets while they worked, creating a private sonic space that was, according to custom, violated only in an emergency. Interaction was via e-mail, even if the participants occupied neighbouring cubicles. This made sense to Arjun. Personal space is valuable. . . . Interrupting someone to talk to them is a way of pushing your query to the top of their stack. It overrides someone's access controls and objectively lessens their functionality, which was close to an engineering definition of rudeness as he felt he was ever likely to come. (55)

The novel categorically projects the two contrastive divisions of humanity—so common in globalisation studies and postcolonial theory—into the rich and the privileged, on the one hand, and the utterly disposed on the other. In the novel, Kunzru depicts Guy Swift as the representative of a new hot shot breed of young cosmopolitan entrepreneurs, who runs *Tomorrow*, an international advertising and PR agency in the city. He is thirty three years old, UK citizen, paper millionaire and proud holder of platinum status on three different frequent flyer programmes. His busy jet-setting globalised lifestyle makes him on-the-pulse cosmopolitan and he displays immense brilliance in "convincing people to channel their emotions, relationships and sense of self

through the purchase of products and services" (116). He believes that the future is happening today and in today's fast moving future the worst place to do business is the past and strives to add value by surfing the wave of innovation. He feels that people like him don't lose: "*We* were on top because we were better adapted to the environment of the global city. We took chances and made opportunities for our selves. We knew how to network, how to manipulate the flows of money and information to produce **Results**" (207). As his work for PEBA (Kunzru's dystopian projection of a Pan European Border Agency) signals, Guy cannot conceive of the world as mutually permeable or inextricably interdependent. Instead he continues to subscribe to a national imperialist outlook, even if the nation-cum-empire in question is now that of a United Europe or, in Guy's formulation, Club Europa—the world's VIP room. As Castells observes, the information elite's interior aesthetic nurtures a sense of detachment from the social world and indeed prefers the effect of in vitro where there is absolute calm, a heavenly sense of floating free of the cares of the world which is evidenced in its Olympic sized swimming pool, its gymnasium, saunas and solaria, its float tanks, tennis courts, bowling alley and innovative Hopi Indian meditation space, a white padded room into which speakers pipe the natural sounds of the American South-West. Guy's work on behalf of PEBA enables Kunzru to expose the fortress mentality of contemporary European Union politics, a politics predicated on exclusion. Europe simply becomes yet another business venture, a self professed corporate giant oblivious to how the different parts of the world are mutually

embedded in each other, a network that remains dangerously vulnerable to subaltern—or terrorist— contagion. Guy's politics, and that of people like him, is defined not by attempts to redesign or recast the global body politic, but by regularly fitting it with new glamorous attire. History is reduced to a mere flurry of swiftly manufactured and equally swiftly discarded surfaces:

> The whole look and feel of immigration, customs, border police—all these things are so old fashioned at the moment. The uniforms! My God, it's like some twentieth-century bad dream. If you could make it more *funky*, instantly it would be so much better, more acceptable to modern people. All the protest they get, all the negativity, most of it is about the *feel* of these things. People don't give a shit about power, not really, not if it looks cool. (247)

Guy's world is one in which other human beings are reduced to mere conveniences, pliant ancillaries with no desires of their own. Notably Guy perceives a flight attendant who is waiting on him as "just a tool, the uniformed probe-head of the large corporate machine in which he was enmeshed" (12). This reflects exactly the kind of commodification and radical eclipse of humanity that Arjun rebels in *Transmission.*

In the novel globalisation is revealed to be an all encompassing force because absolutely nobody on the planet is inured to the appeal of its catalogues of desire and logo-imprinted shopping bags of branded dreams. Though literally travelling in different planes and in opposite directions—Guy

Swift playing Terris on his laptop in air-conditioned business class while 30,000 feet below him Arjun Mehta daydreams among a throng of people on a dilapidated Third World bus—the lives of both men also run parallel to each other, if by no means perfectly in tandem. Both Arjun and Guy have their eyes fixed on the future. The ideas they have themselves are thoroughly globalised in the sense that both of them are prepared to give in to total cultural deracination and self-estrangement from any specific locality, which is the price one allegedly pays for global mobility.

Arjun stands as the representative of labour practices commonly known as body-shopping where firms obtain US visas for Indian IT workers for hiring them out to companies based in the United States. The practice of body-shopping complements the practice of call centre offshoring by taking employees from low income to high income economies ensuring a reduction in cost of employment to the firm which hires their labour. Body-shopping which is considered as one of the undesirable consequences of globalisation results in objectifying and reducing workers to components in the production circle with absolutely no regard for their welfare. The migrant workers are paid less, have no job security and face the constant threat of losing entitlement to remain in the US. Arjun who initially inhabits an in-between space as an ambitious engineering graduate who is allured by the American dream soon finds himself swiftly degraded to the status of a second class citizen, a highly skilled, yet entirely disenfranchised serf. His arrival in the US is not into a world of global and cosmopolitan inclusivity but is into a world where he is much constrained

by his epidermal corporeality which threatens difference. His first anniversary in the US finds him sharing a ramshackle house with two indistinguishable programmers, in a lower income area backed on to an electricity substation with a giant humming transformer. His neighbours were a group of Samoans wearing big tattoos who spent their days fixing their cars and having loud explosive arguments. An enormous number of dogs "lay slavering on the sidewalk outside his door in a litter of oily engine parts, forty-ounce beer bottles and shit" (45). Arjun started having trouble sleeping, and as a result of the stress he developed eczema in his hands. Databodies, his employer charged the companies he worked for twice or even three times what they paid him, and still deducted money from his pay for rent, legal and administrative fees. He had made no money or gained anything since coming to the US, except having a new and harder picture of the world:

> So see the walking man, going to the store again. Instant coffee. Breakfast cereal plastic wrapped bread, 10 per cent polystyrene, 90 per cent air. See the man trudge along the margin of a wide road, a man who suspects either that he is shrinking or that this landscape is actually expanding in front of him, stretching itself out ahead of his weary feet. He has worked for only three and a half months out of twelve. He has been given credit and had it withdrawn. He knows what lies above him, the sublime mobility of those who travel without ever touching the ground. He has glimpsed what lies below, the other mobility, the forced motion

> of the shopping cart pushers, the collectors of cardboard boxes. At least in India the street people can lie down for a while before being moved on. (45-46)

Arjun is the victim of an exploitative recruitment agency that specialises in luring young Indian professionals to the USA, where they are hired out as cheap disposable labour before being deported home, humiliated and penniless. After working for months getting a lower pay, fewer rights and a degraded status compared to his co-workers, Mehta eventually finds employment in Virugenix, a firm specialising in anti-virus security. However his situation does not dramatically improve and he still continues to be known among his colleagues to be one holding of those slave visas, being paid a fraction of what it would cost for the company to hire an American engineer. When Virugenix tries to downsize, Arjun Mehta becomes the first one on the redundancy list since he is a subcontracted foreign worker.

Arjun's tenacity and resourcefulness enable him to forge for himself a possible way out of this vicious circle of economic commodification and systematised invisibility. Displaying an immense desire to survive amidst hostility, Arjun emerges as an exotic subaltern who not only aquires passable proficiency in speaking the language of his oppressors, but avails himself of the right to have his own say, however momentarily, by inserting a disruptive counter-code of his own making, shutting the entire systems of connectivity across the world. Arjun makes a final effort to stick to his firm by unleashing a computer virus, hoping that he would soon be called back to find a solution for

halting the spread of the lethal virus . However things do not turn around the way he wants to and instead happen way beyond control. Within no time the Leela virus gets transmitted via emails as a little pixilated dancer with a "radiant 21 year old smile" (3). In the novel, cyber virulence is taken to a new level when the lives of all the major characters including the protagonist Arjun Mehta, Leela Zahir, a Bollywood starlet and Guy Swift are intertwined by the chief dramatic agent, a computer virus, the impelling force behind a major technological fallout with global repercussions.

In his essay "Prophylaxis and Virulence" included in his collection, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, Jean Baudrillard anticipates a similar situation when he observes that human beings have become eminently vulnerable to technology. All hyper-integrated systems create their own internal virulence, and when the saturation point is reached such systems go through alteration and undergo self-destruction. When virulence takes hold of a network and resolves itself into a combinatorial system of elements, internal proliferation takes place which results in ramified systems. In the novel the mutated variants of the virus spread as a horde by their power of metamorphosis. The Leela viruses elude scanners, begin to use encryption to hide themselves, taking on new forms at will and never staying the same long enough to be recognised:

> There were versions of her that broke completely with the past, that were targeted at the complex operating systems used by business and universities, at the stripped down ones designed for

> cell phone handsets and personal organizers. So many Leelas. So many girls with the same face. (108)

According to Baudrillard, "software networks have become the preferred field of operations of electronic viruses" (64). The mildest of cyber viruses "whether it vitiates the Pentagon's memory banks or merely erases a shower of online Christmas messages has the potential to destabilise all data contained in information systems" (66). This extreme phenomena is destined to become more extreme still as the systems become more complicated and hyper-connected making it effectively impossible to eliminate all weaknesses. The density of networks of interdependence makes the consequences far reaching and disastrous. Kunzru seems to voice this idea when he estimates the enormity of the trail of violence created by the Leela viruses:

> How many did she infect? Thousands? tens, hundreds of thousands? Impossible to count. Experts have estimated her damage to global business at almost 50 billion US dollars, mostly in human and machine downtime, but financial calculation doesn't capture the chaos of those days. (3-4)

In the novel Kunzru suggests that at the boundaries of any complex event unity starts to break down. The global catastrophe created by the variant forms of the Leela virus is indeed devastating. Across America, people start to look with suspicion at the computers on their desks. These machines which had always terrorised them in small ways by crashing, hanging and demanding meaningless upgrades are now revealed to harbour something more sinister,

something with an agenda. Alarms are raised at various US government offices, power plants, dams and military offices. In Honduras, the virus is suspected of blowing light bulbs in the Ministry of the Interior. In Bihar, the police confiscate pirated copies of Leela Zahir films which are believed to be spreading disease.

The Leela virus, a creation of the protagonist Arjun Mehta aimed at unsettling and pressurising his employer to get back his job, unwittingly becomes a Frankensteinian monster far outreaching the grasp of its creator. The extent and the scale of its disaster impel terrorist groups to claim responsibility:

> Maoist revolutionaries in Chiapas sent a fax to a Mexico city newspaper announcing that Leela was the latest step in the campaign to cripple the infrastructure of global capitalism. A Lithuanian hacking group called the Red Hand Gang revealed that they had concocted it to demonstrate their superiority to their rivals, the Riga-based HacktiKons. (148)

As it rampages through the strongholds of global capitalism, Arjun's super-virus spreads like a new form of advertising, not only promoting Bollywood cinema and Leels's celebrity in particular but also, more significantly alerting the world to an increasingly arresting Third World presence that will no longer be confined to the margins.

Transmission explores how new technologies are capable of both enabling and disrupting the global flow of information and populations. Arjun Mehta's virus originally named Leela01 goes on a rampage devastating

networked computers with such an intense ferocity that even its originator cannot fathom. The old certainties about the protection of the individual by personal and national measures come to no avail in this context.

The autotelic, auto-generative and autodidactical mode of operation of the Leela virus reminds us of Fredrick Jameson's observation linking the movements of late capitalism to a virus with the echo that unfettered capitalism may indeed carry a fatal disease and bear within itself the elements of its own destruction. Resisting the forces of global media and capital by self protection and self preservation is futile as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest in *Empire* that the age of globalisation is the age of contamination. Since the internet becomes the operating force in the globalised order, the possibility of unleashing terror also remains.

In the novel one can discern how the concept of a single notion of centre is displaced by several interconnected financial and informational networks for co-ordination, standardisation and transmission. New territorial configurations located in and around metropolitan areas emerge as technopoles builing the information economy. In today's globalised economy, global cities serve as command posts enlarging and executing the faster and vaster global mechanisms.

As Janet Abu-Lughod observes in "Global City Formation in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles: An Historical Perspective":

> Contemporary scholars, trying to define the "global city", imply that it is a relatively new phenomenon that has been generated *de*

> *novo* in the present period by the development of an all-encompassing world system—variously termed late capitalism, post industrialism, the informational age and so on. Among the hallmarks of this new global city are presumed to be an expansion of the market via the internationalization of commerce, a revolution in the technologies of transport and communications, the extensive transnational movement of capital and labor, a paradoxical decentralization of production to peripheral regions accompanied by a centralization in the core of control over economic activities, and hence the increased importance of business services, particularly evident in the growth of the so called FIRE economic sector—finance, insurance and real estate. Accompanying these changes, and often thought to result from them, is a presumed new bifurcation of the class structure within the global city and increase segregation of the poor from the rich. (43)

In the novel, both Arjun Mehta and his sister Priti embody the generation of those drawn to metropolitan centres because they believe that it is in the city that they can access global culture. Considering India's acceptance of the outsourcing of business and telemarketing as hallmarks of modernity, Priti embarks on her professional journey as a call centre operator in New Delhi, detaching herself from the suburbs and embracing the cosmopolitan

world. While convincing her parents about how coveted her new job is Priti proudly explains:

> I'll receive training in Australian language and culture. We all have to be proficient in vernacular slang and accent, and keep day-to-day items of trivia at our fingertips. . . . Sporting scores. Weather. The names of TV celebrities. It adds value by helping build customer trust and empathy. As operators, we even have to take on new Australian identities. (17)

While Priti grabs the opportunity provided by India's burgeoning telecommunications industry by staying in New Delhi, Arjun renounces India's confused and de'classe' rush to rebuild its spaces around an ICT service economy and aims to migrate to the US. He wants to escape from the disordered immediacy of New Delhi and enter a domain that is navigable, comprehensible and transcendentally pure:

> When you write code you are in control. You construct a world from principles, drawing up the axioms that govern it, setting in motion the engines of generation and decay. Even in a computer environment designed by someone else you can relax, safe in the knowledge that you are engaged with a system that runs according to potentially knowable rules. From this perspective the real world possesses that paradoxical quality of not feeling real enough. Surely, of all things, reality ought to be transparent,

> logical. You should be able to unscrew the fascia and view the circuitry inside. (98)

It is to be noted that Kunzru refuses to suggest that the uncertainty of the unencoded present is transcended by technology and instead reveals a dynamic in which pure code and the real disjunctively enable and interrupt each other. While tracing Arjun Mehta's trajectory, what becomes evident is the reconfiguration of race, ethnicity and global belonging ushered in by the ICT revolution of the 1990s. Access to new technologies which seemed to offer new modes of social coherence and the possibility of classless inclusivity does not prove redemptive in Mehta's case.

India's emergence as a global player in the economy towards the beginning of the 1990s came as a surprise to many since until that period the policy followed in the nation was that of the closed market economy although it was and continues to be the largest democracy in the world. The currency crisis of 1991 forced the Indian government to use most of the country's gold reserves as a collateral for an IMF loan and led to economic deregulation and reduction of import tariffs. These changes were instrumental in attracting investment by transnational companies which realised the potential of the Indian population that was educated, English speaking and technologically skilled. Developments in telecommunication, fibre optics and satellite communication made internet based communication and transfer of data possible paving the way for outsourcing to India.

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) has emerged as India's sunshine sector and the country is now one of the prominent electronic housekeepers to the world, engaging a host of business activities for the multinational companies of the world. The firms here handle multiple jobs of foreign companies including responding to credit card enquiries, preparation of invoices, pay rolls, cheques, daily accounts, medical transcriptions and processing applications. Today India is one of the most sought after destinations for any country that wants to outsource its business. According to the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), outsourcing centres in India employ 2,00,000 workers and have the potential to generate direct employment for one million workers in the next five years. The major reasons behind India's success in the BPO sector include abundant, skilled focus on quality standards, the ability to offer 24x7 services and a proactive and positive policy environment which encourages investment and simplifies rules and procedures.

Chetan Bhagat made his literary debut in 2004 with the bestseller *Five Point Someone*, a sensitive exploration of the darker side of one of India's most prestigious engineering institutes. In the novel, Bhagat, who himself is an alumnus of two of India's premier institutions, IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad, gives us an insider's information of the traumatic world of three IIT students who try desperately to survive amidst a much demanding world made miserable by their measly GPA (Grade Point Average) scores.

His second novel, *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005) replicated the success of his debut by becoming the national best seller of 2005. Tapping into the *zeitgeist* of the twenty first century India, teeming with millions of young, vibrant techno-savvy youth, the novel *One Night @ the Call Center* depicts the call centre as symbolic of the newly globalised economy. While traditional India sleeps, a dynamic young cohort of highly skilled articulate professionals works through the night functioning on the US time faking their Indian names with American aliases, pretending familiarity with a culture they have never actually experienced, earning salaries that were undreamt of by their elders and enjoying a lifestyle that is a cocktail of premature affluence and Americanisation transferred to an Indian setting. The novel tells the story of six colleagues at a Delhi call centre on one dramatic night when their lives fall apart and their existential crises are resolved literally through divine intervention (a phone call from God). The shedding of barriers and the establishment of a globalised world have enabled the struggling masses to have a share of the "American pie", but at a heavy price. The sprawling Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and the Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) sectors and the booming call centres are seen as sweatshops that soak up the talents and energies of young Indians wasting their time catering to the petty demands of American customers instead of serving their country. The unreasonable demands of the American customers are laid bare in the novel when an instructor teaches call centre trainees the formula "10 = 35":

"Remember a 35 year old American's brain and IQ is the same as a 10 year old

Indian's . . . Americans are dumb, just accept it; I don't want anyone losing their cool during the calls" (46). The novel depicts the portrait of young India driven by market orientation, rooted in the culture of consumption and disillusioned with global capitalism's promise that consumer culture is India's economic salvation.

Cities and the urban zones are at the core of the development strategy of globalisation. They are the grounds where all the factors conducive for globalisation can handily come together and show results. In order to attain socio-economic and politico-cultural integration of the world's population, well developed cities are the demand of the time. Bhagat's fictions reflect the scenes happening in the globalising cities in India. In his *One Night @ the Call Center* we come across fast growing city structures like Gurgaon (Haryana), where massive apartments and commercial malls are under construction, where people feel that they are moving through the maze of construction sites. Here there are long and broad highways, making journey easier. A number of efforts to remove infrastructural constraints in order to facilitate the process of globalisation are underway. The BPO industry makes itself felt in Bhagat's Gurgaon as the plot unfolds in a BPO, the Connexions Call Centre. People travel all the way from their homes in Delhi over to Gurgaon, because it offers jobs to them. Here the calls of the customers in America are answered, and the ball is kept rolling in America and down here in India. Virtually the economy of two countries seems to have integrated at a point. Gurgaon keeps awake 24/7. It is a picture of a reality that almost all the metropolitans and the cities

on the way to follow in the footsteps, keep up likewise. In the 1990s Fortune 500 companies in the United States began moving customer service jobs to India because of the availability of an English speaking population who could be paid lower wages that those paid to the workers in the U.S. Statistics show that around five lakh people work in this industry which is one of the fastest growing sectors in India. In a society in which until the recent past women's entry into the job field entailed a loss of respectability, the presence of a large number of women in the industry reveals that the call centre employment has become an exemplar of social change. Opening up of the economy to global changes have posed critical challenges to the notion of female dependency. The image of the assertive and confident new woman marks the arrival of a gender friendly global market where women construct oppositional narratives of freedom from patriarchal norms and challenge the gender ideologies of the society. Although the call centre employment of women has brought a transformation in the society what needs to be investigated is whether an increased level of independence and empowerment have effected major changes in their household and in the gender roles they perform. Due to the difference in time between India and the west especially the US, one of the primary requirements for employment in transnational call centres is working the night shift. Physical and temporal mobility become vital for those who seek to work in this industry. Chetan Bhagat's novel *One Night @ the Call Center* focuses on a range of interconnected issues pertaining to the experience of the women workers of the Indian call centre industry. The important concerns

addressed in the novel relate to the spatial and temporal barriers that women face in the household and society as a result of B.P.O. employment, how the night shift recodifies women's physical and temporal mobility and also how the call centre employment contribute to their social and economic mobility. The underlying issue is whether women continue to face strict regimes of surveillance and control of their physical and temporal mobility despite increased income and education, and what this tells us about power and dominance in a given society.

One Night @ the Call Center explores the lives of six employees: Radhika, Esha, Priyanka, Vroom, Military Uncle and Shyam, of the Western Appliances Strategic Group of the Connexions call centre in Gurgaon on a particular eventful night. The prologue sets up the novel as a story told to the author by a fellow passenger on an overnight train to Delhi. The narrator Shyam Mehra goes through a bad phase in both his career and his personal life as he is denied an eligible promotion and learns his ex-girlfriend and current officemate Priyanka has agreed to an arranged marriage with a man highly placed with Microsoft in Seattle. Another friend and colleague, Vroom, hates his job and their boss, but stays because of the money. Radhika is a character who experiences turmoil in her marital life and falls into depression when she is out of her drugs. Esha who has got ambitions beyond the confines of the call centre feels guilty about what she has done in pursuit of her dream of being a model. Military Uncle is the final member of the group of six collegues who faces rejection from his own family on account of issues of adjustment. To

make matters worse, they come to know that the company they work for has decided to lay off workers in the pretext of downsizing. The crisis is finally resolved after divine intervention when they get a call from God.

The growth of the call centre industry in India has brought with it a dramatic shift in women's access to night shift jobs. Previously night shift opportunities for women in the urban domain were considered primarily in the fields of prostitution, bar dancing, medicine and the hotel industry. In the words of Shyam, the narrator of the novel: "India has a billion people, but at night, ninety nine percent of them are fast asleep. This land then belongs to a chosen few: truck drivers, late shift workers, doctors, hotel staff and call center agents. We the nocturnal rule the roads and the country" (175). For the security of its employees and also as an incentive for joining the industry, call centres transport their workers to and from the office. Providing transport is also a means to deflect the perception that call centres are nothing more than IT sweat shops where cyber-coolies work the night away. As the novel *One Night @ the Call Center* opens, we find the employees of the Connexions call centre caught in the rush hour of coming out of their homes on time to reach their work destination by 10.00 p.m. The Qualis provided by their company promptly ferrets from door to door, fetching all the team members for the night shift.

In terms of the connection between the globalisation of technology and the feminisation of labour there is an argument that computerisation benefits women because it de-emphasises physical skills and thus women become an important part of a labour force that demands people skills and knowledge

work. From this reading it is expected that the gendered aspects of the call centre industry would remain the same as it traverses the globe. The gendered narratives which explain why women are well suited for this job combined with the idea that technological globalisation allows the United States to off-shore its demand for "emotional labour" arguably makes the Indian women the preferred labour pool for this position. In 2002, Indian call centre women workers were referred to in the *India Today* magazine as "housekeepers to the world" (18 November 2002). Four years later, *Time* magazine depicted the Indian call centre employee, wearing a bindi and wedding jewels as a sparkly, traditional woman ready to enter the workplace and *serve* the global economy. The underlying themes of these images are marriage, tradition and servitude. Women are constructed as bodily sites of marriage or merger between the East and the West. They are presented as recepients of Western development—technology, jobs and money—who at the same time keep to tradition and culture. Put another way, these women don't forget where they belong, they keep to their place. In the novel, Radhika, the only married woman in the group comes running towards the call centre staff pick-up vehicle holding the ends of her shawl in her hand realising that she is late by six minutes. She apologises a dozen times before the other employees in the Qualis could say anything and goes on to add: "nothing. Almond milk for mom-in-law. Took longer to crush the almonds" (17). When she mentions with a tone of guilt that this is the least she could do for her aged mother-in-law before coming out out for the night shift, Shyam shrugs and in a sarcastic note observes: "Yeah, right. . . . Just that

and cooking three meals a day and household chores and working all night and . . .” (17). Radhika is described as a girl who looks pretty inspite of the dark circles around her eyes and a sleep-deprived face. Beneath her shawl she wears a sari, as saris were all she could wear in her in-laws’ house. This was an entirely different apparel compared to the jeans and skirts she used to prefer before marriage. She becomes the voice of the typical educated Indian middle class woman who is both techno-savy and traditional, capable of juggling her western job requirements and her duties as a conventional daughter-in-law.

The economic mobility which results from the call centre employment is certainly the key driving force being women joining this industry. The concept of “fast money” becomes crucial in the context of consumerism, which is an off-shoot of the forces of globalisation. The relatively high income associated with call centre employment is a windfall for eighteen to twenty-five year-olds who are fluent in English. However, it should be noted that call centre employment should not be looked at just as a primary source of quick money. This belief often disguises the various other factors which draw women to the call centre industry and limits our understanding of how women experience earning their own money. Indeed, women join the industry for myriad reasons such as family survival, escaping the chains of immobility, changing their spending and saving habits, gaining capital to start their own business or to pursue their academics, and embracing the single life.

Dependence of women to maintain the economic livelihood of their families and communities is represented as the “feminisation of survival”.

Despite the rhetoric of the call centre income as an agent fuelling the emergence of a consumer class, it should be noted that for many women, call centre employment provides the means to take care of their families and protect them from an economic disaster. Radhika who is her parents' only girl wants to have the call centre job desperately since she has to contribute to her family income after marriage. After her marriage with Anuj, her college mate she moves into his joint family comprising Anuj's ultra-traditional parents. Amidst rumours that the call centre she works with will collapse she terrifyingly remarks: "I need this job. Anuj and I need to save" (18). Like Radhika, Piyanka too feels that having enough money and saving it is essential and agrees to Vroom's observation that the reason why the Americans have a say in this world is because they have cash and the first thing to get therefore is money. Priyanka also has a dream she cherishes fondly, a desire for opening a nursery school: "Well that's why we slog at night. I could have done my B. Ed right after college. But I wanted to save some money first. Can't open my dream nursery school without cash. So until then it is two hundred calls a night, night after night" (43).

The call centre industry is often viewed as one with a "a globalising mission" that frees single women from the immobilising regimes and narratives of traditional society. Women employed in call centres are comparatively free from the restrictive traditional patterns of familial control, especially that imposed over daughters. Financial independence a large extent makes them assertive and independent in their outlook, lifestyle and choices. The call centre

job provides an opportunity for escaping the confines of the family for women who looked for a legitimate reason to get out of the house at night. Priyanka finds fault with her mother who is accused of often giving her the raw deal when it comes to the question of freedom:

> She had different rules for me and my brother. And that began to bother me. She would comment on everything I wore, everywhere I went, whereas my brother . . . she would never say anything to him. I tried to explain it to her, but she just became more irritating, and by the time I reached college, I couldn't wait to get away from her. (97)

For women who work in call centres, their employment can become a source of anxiety for their parents; it draws from the belief that women who work the night shift and earn their own money are too bold and lack family values which do not bode well for their marital worth. Priyanka's mother is depicted as one whose sole aim is to get her daughter married off to someone "settled" in life and she is elated when she finds her a suitable groom in the U.S. and is keen on marrying her off within a single month. She breaks down when Priyanka asks her for some more time to get to know her future husband. She asks her daughter: "So why can't you agree for next month for everyone's happiness? Can't a mother beg her daughter for this" (125)? Priyanka feels frustrated and says in a desperate tone: "They brought me up for twenty five years and now they can't wait more than twenty-five days to get rid of me. What is with these people-am I such a burden" (125).

Consumerism in India's major cities gained momentum in the mid-1990s but exploded in the twenty-first century. For women whose income is not necessary for family survival have plenty of choice to shop without feeling guilty. The liberalisation of the Indian economy has flooded the market with brand name fashions that were previously accessible only to those who travel or had connections abroad. The relatively high salary from call centre employment allows some women workers to indulge in conspicuous consumption but is not a pervasive trend. In the novel Esha is the only one among the females who is brand conscious and goes designer. Esha moves to Delhi from Chandigarh against her parents' wishes to become a model and during the day she approaches modelling agencies for getting assignments. However, nothing big comes her way and she stays in the call centre industry to earn a regular income. According to Shyam:

> Esha dresses better on an average day than I ever did in my whole life. Her sleeveless coffee-coloured top perfectly contrasted with her skirt. She wore chunky brown ear-rings that looked edible and her lipstick was a thick cocoa, as if she had just kissed a bowl of chocolate sauce. Her eyes had at least one of these things—mascara, eyeliner and/or eye-shadow (I can't tell bur Priyanka told me they are all different things). (19)

Esha also comes out as a character who does not mind the hard work involved in the call centre work and feels that call centres are useful. When

Vroom rants that the Americans are using the Indians who are sacrificing an entire generation to service their call centres, Esha remarks:

> C'mon Vroom . . . You know how hard it is to make fifteen grand a month outside. And here we are, sitting in an air-conditioned office, talking on the phone, collecting our pay and going home. And is the same for hundreds and thousands of young people. What's wrong with that? (186).

Vroom takes a strong objection to the fact that their rights and dignity are trampled upon by the Americans and even likens the de-humanising night job at the call centre to prostitution when he says that every night he allows the Americans to have their way with him just for the sake of money and security. It should be noted that Vroom himself is not immune from the lure of materialism: he leaves his job at a newspaper to join the call-centre because the latter pays him good salary which he can splurge: "I like pizza. I love it. I like jeans, mobiles and pizza. I earn, I eat, I buy shit, and I die" (191).This throws light on the new materialistic culture mirroring American consumerism which require considerable disposable income which the call centre job provides although it is tantamount to a betrayal of the nation-state and its anti-consumerist social idealist founders. The newly materialistic culture also entails a distortion of Indianness and a squelching of Indian identity brought about by the renaming practices of the call-centre. The cultural homogenisation theory of globalisation is reflected in the valorisation of Americanised English language.

The notion of identity becomes problematic as the employees have to invoke identities consistent with the clients' cultural expectations and marked their identities with certain linguistic choices and practices. In the novel everyone speaks with a different accent while working at the Western Appliances Strategic Desk which sounds different from the way they speak in the Qualis. The employees are trained to mimic the American accent which according to the narrator is definitely a challenge for a person raised in India. Shyam becomes Sam, Vroom (Varun) becomes Victor and Radhika turns into Regina. Shyam is deeply affected by this process of self effacement that he passively relinquishes all control over his identity: "American tongues have trouble saying my real name and prefer Sam. If you want you too can give me another name too. I really don't care" (11).

In the process of getting global, the forms of harassment women suffer also undergo change as seen in the case of call centre women employees who face abuse over the phone, a mandatory professional requirement which cannot be avoided. While checking on the agents' etiquette Shyam connects to Esha's (agent Eliza Singer) line and hears the conversation between Esha and a caller from the United States:

> Yes sir I sound like your daughter?
>
> Oh thank you.
>
> So what is wrong with the vaccum cleaner? She was saying.
>
> 'Your voice is so soothing', the caller said.
>
> Thank you sir. So, the vaccum cleaner…?
>
> Esha's tone was perfect-just the right mix of politeness and firmness. (36)

Although the call centre industry provides relatively high wages and great office facilities it is often perceived that call centre employment promotes moral decay and sexual impropriety. The global nature of the industry brings new ideas of romance to India's younger generation. The argument is women who work in call centres are capable of "sexscape" that women who work in nine-to-five jobs do not encounter. In the novel besides Radhika who is married and Military Uncle who is a senior citizen, all the others Shyam and Radhika and Vroom and Esha are romantically linked to each other at one point or the other in their lives. The tension involved in a workplace where young men and women work side by side becomes evident in Shyam's observation: "I saw Vroom stare at Esha. It is never easy to work for guys with a hot girl in office. I mean, what are you supposed to do? Ignore their sexiness and stare at the computer? Sorry, I don't think men were designed to do that" (51-52). Vroom makes of the little privacy offered by the dining room of their call centre to ask Esha out on a date while Shyam and Priyanka make love in the confined space of the company cab. Given the relative lack of access to private spaces for sexual encounters, the use of semi-public spaces—be it empty workstations in the bay or a company shuttle—reflects how space is strategically deployed to serve individual desires.

The ambience in organisations have changed in the last few years as a result of the increased demands from the globalisation of the economy. Call centres often become high pressure work environments characterised by routinisation, computer based monitoring and intensive performance targets

which lead to stress and burnout. According to Priyanka: "I gain weight so fast . . . specially with my lifestyle. I hardly get time to exercise. On top of that, I just sit and work in a confined space" (87). Working round the clock during the day as a dutiful wife and in the night as a call centre worker, Radhika falls head on into crisis when she understands that her husband has an extra-marital affair with a "modern" type of a girl. She seeks refuge in anti-depressants: "It's legal addiction. I can't live without it and yes, it is really bad for you. But it is still better than having to face my life" (179). Priyanka and Esha have no qualms in frequenting discotheques or getting drunk to de-stress. Esha feels that she needs her drink to wash down the one thousand calls she makes a week. The threat to job security becomes one of the major hazards faced by the workers. While the men find it easier to vent their anger by being verbally abusive, the women are expected to retain their composure despite all odds. In the novel Priyanka has to raise her voice to drive home the point to the men that they are facing a crisis which is worse than what the men folk were going through. When Vroom remarks that Priyanka does not have to care much about losing her job since she was getting married she becomes animated:

> You think this is easy? Radhika found out that her husband is cheating on her. This when she works for him and her family day and night. And Esha can't get a fair break unless she sleeps past creepy men. But they are not breaking monitors and shouting curses . . . just because we don't make a noise doesn't mean it is easy. (171)

What can be gauged from this is an ambivalent refection of the impact of globalisation on women. Although women are able to make use of the emergence of the opportunities of globalised labour by gaining access to spaces which were traditionally forbidden, there is no linear path towards emancipation because of the diversity in women's experiences that exists on a broad spectrum from entrapment to liberation. Night shift labour cannot be regarded as a revolutionary turn that thoroughly reshapes women's lives. Instead it can be seen that women have capitalised on technological advancements by re-codifying their mobility in ways that allow them to deal with societal pressures. By rejecting the various elements of tradition, the women on the one hand hold up the ideals of the West as a symbol of a lifestyle in terms of their clothing, partying, lifestyle and sexual behaviour. But it should be noted that towards the close of the novel, when they are caught in a deep crisis they come to the realisation that it is not an outright rejection of tradition that brings success and peace but a reformulation of how tradition could coexist with the globalising realities of contemporary India.

With the rapid transformation of labour practices in capitalist systems under the impact of globalisation and information technologies, there has arisen a proliferation of terms to describe the commonly experienced yet largely undocumented transformations within working life. Studies have pointed out a number of relatively stable features of this kind of work: a preponderance of temporary, intermittent and precarious jobs; long hours and bulimic patterns of working; the collapse or erasure of the boundaries between work and play; poor

pay; high levels of mobility; an attitudinal mindset that is a blend of bohemianism and entrepreneurialism; informal work environments and distinctive forms of sociality; and profound experiences of insecurity and anxiety about finding work, earning enough money and keeping up in the rapidly changing fields.

In the Information Technology sector, one of the central concerns pertaining to labour is connected to the concept of "time". The periodic pay raise or comparatively safer working conditions do not compensate for the immense desire of the workers to create, to look forward to something new, to reclaim time for their own creative ends. The rise of globally extended forms of sovereignty has led to the radical recasting of labour practices and its concomitant practices of negotiation and arbitration. The workers find themselves in a state of precariousness, unable to plan their time, perpetually being on calls while their life and time are dependent on external forces beyond their control. This extends beyond the world of work to encompass familial and social aspects and often end up putting a hold on affable social relations. The anxiety resulting from the financialisation of daily life adds to the precariousness consuming a lot of time, energy impacting affective relations. The various uncertainties defining contemporary life are visible in the instances of inter-connection between the work of immigrants packaging computer parts or cleaning offices and that of BPO employees in call centres or software development firms. What emerges is a common expressive capacity predicated on the dual conditions of exploitation and uncertainty.

In *One Night @ the Call Center*, the characters aspire for something better and creative than the situation they find themselves in. In *Transmission* Kunzru comically depicts the emergence of a global class system based on freedom of movement. At the top end there is a kind of friction free first-class lounge belonging to an elite segment in which every hotel room looks more or less much the same, and has the same ten things in the mini-bar, the world that the character Guy Swift, the young CEO of his own branding company, is in. At the bottom end there are people like Arjun Mehta, who is a precarious worker in the sense that he is an outsourced worker who doesn't have the benefits and job security an IT professional aspires to have. He is highly mobile and has enough skills to get himself from one place to the other, but he is not high enough up the echelons of power to be in control of his destiny. It brings us back to the logic of the market, and especially the financialisation of almost everything. As global capital looks at new sources of value it has to bust open things that were previously unavailable to it. It requires a workforce that is highly mobile, highly motivated and that will flow towards whatever site, and configure itself in whatever way is useful to the controllers of capital. Arjun thus becomes a victim of the unfettered capitalistic forces unleashed by the globalised market.

The forces of globalisation accentuated by the rapid surge in communication and technology have crated feelings of insecurity stemming from a range of sources including global terrorism, environmental hazards and even the repercussions created by the volatility of the global markets. Judith

Butler in her work *Precarious Life* (2004), observes that precarious is an ontological and existential category that describes the common, but unevenly distributed, fragility of human corporeal existence. A condition made manifest in the U.S. by the events of 9/11, this fundamental and pre-individual vulnerability is subject to radical denial in the discourses and practices of global security. And she seeks in the recognition of this precariousness an ethical encounter that is essential to the constitution of vulnerability and interdependence as preconditions for the "human".

A pivotal point in Butler's argument is the proposition that recognition of precariousness entails not simply an extrapolation from an understanding of one's own precariousness to an understanding of another's precarious life but an understanding of "the precariousness of the Other". Butler's focus is on the relationality of human lives and brings in notions of dependency and ethical responsibility. Her theorisation of precariousness impinges on fundamental ontological questions and, to this extent, it brings to the forefront some of the actions and arguments surrounding philosophically engaged encounters with notions such as creativity, contingency, and relation. Butler's recognition of precariousness which signify the workings of contemporary networked economies and labour markets emerges as one of immense relevance. The need for human society to foster inherent creative potentialities and the necessity of having labour markets that promote flexibility and community relations offer valuable ethical insights which are urgently called for in today's capitalist global order.

While comparing the two novels chosen for study in the present chapter, Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* and Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center*, both published in successive years, what can be discerned is the presence of terror as a prominent trope. Both the novels depict terror in the context of the global pattern of exploited labour. As Liam Connell observes, in both the novels, terrorism is used as a discourse of dissent to unravel the structures of power in a globalised economy. Both Kunzru and Bhagat use prominent characters who resort to acts of terrorism as a means of resisting the forces which seem to threaten their means of survival. However, the depiction of terror takes different forms in both the novels. Kunzru depicts terrorism as an act of sabotaging the technological surge brought about by globalisation by thwarting the global connectivity nexus, while Bhagat projects it as a part of India's national struggle against the hegemonic economic power of the US. Unlike Kunzru who envisages a disruptive revolution within the power structure, Bhagat seems to suggest a relocation of power within the global capitalist structure.

Resorting to cyberterrorism as a means of resistence is an emerging trend in the contemporary globalised scenario. Cyberterrorism is the use of computer networks to destroy the nation's strategic infrastructures such as transportation, energy and government operations which create disruptions in the social, political, economic and even the psychological fabric of the nation. There are various reasons why cyberterrorism is a preferred form of retaliation in the globalised context. As opposed to traditional forms of terrorism which

make use of weapons, cyberterrorism is perpetrated by using just a computer and online networks where the identity of the perpetrator is more difficult to recognise. Traditional forms of terrorism need trained people who could be identified while in cyberterrorism, the perpetrator who just needs minimum training can exist anonymously using fake names and can possibly remain without showing his face. In a networked society the target of cyberterrorists is extremely broad as it can disrupt computer networks in several places at the same time since it is capable of influencing many people using the media. For the cyberterrorists the global media is the most powerful tool which can create terror by spreading and scattering fear.

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, Jean Baudrillard wrote a paper published in *Le Monde* which was later developed into a challenging work *The Spirit of Terrorism* in which he argued that the assaults on the World Trade Center and Pentagon represent a new form of terrorism where the terrorists have taken over all the weapons of the dominant power with the aim of disrupting it. In Baudrillard's view the terrorists used computer networks, airplanes and the media associated with the Western societies to produce a spectacle of terror. They were capable of assaulting the very system of globalisation by vehemently suggesting the possibility of potential terrorist attacks anytime and anywhere. In the context of the attack on the twin towers Baudrillard observes:

> The more concentrated the system becomes globally, ultimately forming one single network, the more it becomes vulnerable at a

> single point (already a single little Filipino hacker had managed from the dark recesses of his portable computer, to launch the 'I love you' virus, which circled the globe devastating entire networks). When global power monopolizes the situation to this extent, when there is such a formidable condensation of all functions in the technocratic machinery, and when no alternative form of thinking is allowed, what other way is there but a *terroristic situational transfer*? It was the system itself which created the objective conditions for this brutal retaliation. (8-9)

In *Transmission*, Mehta, the emigrated Indian software programmer unleashes a series of computer viruses onto the global communications network from Washington, the corridor of global power in an attempt to save his job at Virugenix, the US based computer security company which was about to terminate his job. By using the weapons of the dominant power, he creates a global catastrophe the consequences of which become immeasurable. Technology which is regarded as the quintessence of globalisation is also revealed to be capable of imposing the threat of otherness since it is used as a weapon to attack the very institutions of globalisation.

As Mehta is branded a global terrorist by the US administration, the novelist employs a tacit critique of the language used by the top brass to convey the terror. In the novel the US presidential spokesperson responds to the question of whether the country was under attack by arguing:

> Any attempt to compromise or mitigate our ability to function effectively in terms of our critical infrastructure, whether that be in the realm of telecommunications, energy, banking and finance, water facilitation, government operational activity thresholds or services, must be viewed as taking place within a framework strongly suggestive of deliberate negativization, threat or hostile intent. (146)

It is obvious that Kunzru has ironically imitated the jargons of the administrative bureaucracy especially with words such as "negativization" to bring out the effect of parody.

In *Post 9/11 South Asian Diasporic Fiction: Uncanny Terror*, Pel Chen Liao explores the interwoven relationship between terrorism and immigration post 9/11 and focuses on how the crossing of borders affects the immune system of Western democracy. He observes that in *Transmission*, Kunzru has used virus as a metaphor in the discourse of cultural globalisation travelling from biomedicine and computing to political and sociocultural fields. In the novel the biological virus converges with the technological one and enables us to reflect on the bodily significations surrounding the image of the computer virus and the opposition between fluid movement and border controls over cyberspace.

On the surface Kunzru's novel seems to suggest that Marshal Mcluhan's vision of the world as a global village is fast becoming a reality in the age of globalisation. All the major characters of the novel belong to the

wired generation amply making use of network services such as the World Wide Web, instant messaging, e-mail and file sharing systems. The novel also shows that in the internet based information age many people are employed in the various sectors of the information processing industry such as banking, telecommunications, TV, radio as well as computing. The major characters of the novel are those holding jobs related to information processing: Arjun Mehta is a computer programmer, Leela, based on whose name Arjun unleashes the virus is a movie star and Guy Swift is the CEO of an international marketing industry. However, if Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* uses terror as a means to counter the uncertainties associated with the globalised world order, Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* uses e-terror in the context of the Indian Business Process Outsourcing industry, an off shoot of technological globalisation, and its nexus with the United States. The call centre workers work in an industry which caters to the welfare of the US citizens and although their true passions are quite different they take the night shift and distort their identities by taking on the American accent, always striving at being extra polite and obliging to their American clientele only because of the financial benefits it entailed. When they face the threat of losing their jobs the only option before them to desperately save themselves is to generate a massive increase in call numbers from the US which convince their higher authorities in the US to hold back downsizing as it looks for generating new income. Their jobs are saved by convincing the US clients of Western Computers which outsources its business to the Indian Call Centre that terrorists have attacked

the US with a computer virus capable of wreaking havoc on the entire US economy. In order to save themselves from the enormity of this attack, the US customers are encouraged to activate an inbuilt testing script within Microsoft Word which results in the software generating pages of the text. As a means of checking and notifying the authorities about the move made by the virus, the clients are asked to repeatedly call the helpline to be attended by the Indian Call Centre agents. Thus by keeping up a steady influx of frantic calls from the US, they manage to create enough revenue for their employer thereby preventing any move towards downsizing.

Although the use of terror as a mode of resisting figures as a prominent trope in Kunzru's *Transmission* also, the treatment is different. In Bhagat's novel the notion of Indian nationalism is evoked with regard to the relationship between India and the United States. While instructing his fellow team mates about how to save their jobs Vroom makes a comparison between the modern call centre agents and their predecessors of "two generations ago" who "got this country free" (226). The concept of Indian nationalism is also metaphorically linked to the narrator's romantic relationship with Priyanka. After the former couple Shyam and Priyanka part ways, their reconciliation is imperilled by the latter's impending marriage to the NRI Ganesh, a Lexus driving Microsoft employee in the United States. The relationship of Priyanka and Ganesh, the dishonest NRI in due course of time becomes a metonym for India's engagement with foreign capital which could prove treacherous. Ganesh is soon exposed as an impostor who has made use of a retouched

photograph with an unflattering bald spot removed in order to secure an Indian bride. Ganesh who stands for the fantasy of the US finds comparison in Sunny Sreenivasan depicted by Kunzru in *Transmission*.

In the novel Bhagat draws a parallel between the hegemonic nature of the US policies and the behaviour of the Indian managerial elites and corporate heads. While watching the CNN reports of the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, Vroom likens the US military action to the imperious behaviour of the call centre manager Bakshi and describes the whole world being run by a bad stupid-evil boss. Likewise the US employment practices in the globalised era of off-shoring businesses is represented as demeaning and inequitable. Vroom complains about the Americans tossing their loose change at Indian workers and bemoans:

> We get paid well, fifteen thousand a month . . . that is almost twelve dollars a day. Wow I make as much a day as a US burger boy makes in two hours. Not bad for my college degree. Not bad at all . . . nearly double what I made as a journalist anyway. (92)

In the novel Vroom is depicted as the most vociferous anti-American, a crusader who has lost his job as a journalist for raising his voice against the corruption in Indian politics. Terrorism here is therefore used to serve a broader political function as well since it is used as a method to secure greater reform that will stimulate the need for Indian expertise and innovation for national purposes.

In *Transmission*, Kunzru uses the internet as a tool for social protest and just as the Leela virus transmitted across the globe, new ideas could also get propagated. In the novel Arjun is considered both as a terrorist and a celebrity, an outlaw and a genius:

> The hope that the genius hacker might be a revolutionary was so strong in certain quarters that it has survived the revelation that the Leela papers were the creation of a group of a Bologna-based radicals, who had appropriated Mehta's name as a gesture and invited anyone else who wished to use it to do the same. In recent times, "Arjun Mehta" has authored statements on the food industry and the World Trade Organization. His Virugenix employee identification photo . . . has been screenprinted onto T-shirts with humorous anticapitalist slogans. (272)

Although Arjun initially aims at protesting on a small scale, the outcome of his act has a global reach. The unanticipated result can be viewed as the condition of our times, the result of uncontrollable forces operating in a globalised world. In *Transmission* hacking emerges as a mode of resistence; its inarticulable and unreadable status is seen to threaten the monopolising of information. The hacker remains a shadowy figure whose impact is immeasurable and unforeseen. The social function and political exigency of hacking are precarious since it works beyond the scope of official control systems and the logic of the information economy and what emerges is a refusal of representation. In the novel, this refusal manifests itself in several

ways. The media fails in capturing the Leela virus' origin and intention: "The press wanted . . . to know the worst. Was it emanating from a rogue state? Had any government departments been affected?" (146). The US political administration is baffled at the face of Leela's inscrutable properties which result in various levels of incomprehension:

> The Colorado state government sent a message to Washington, asking whether it had reason to believe the country was under cyber attack. Washington replied in the negative, but, after hurried consultations . . . the denial was rescinded, and the President's spokesman . . . described the administration's assessment of the situation as 'pending'. (145)

Mehta is not the one identified by the law enforcing organisations as the schemer who intended the social and economic disasters unleashed by Leela; he too is incapable of figuring out the consequences or morphology of the virus. Mehta's virus becomes the most recent info weapon of the globalised era that possesses unreadable metamorphic properties capable of obviating the counter measures brought to bear against it with ease. Leela takes on new forms at will, never staying stable long enough to be scanned and recognized "and opens up vertiginous and troubling possibilities" (148). This kind of reconfiguration means that its scope and reach cannot be determined, even by Mehta. "Actions . . . have been ascribed to Leela, and hence to him, for which he could not possibly be responsible" (147).

In *Transmission*, the virus interrupts not just the information economy, but knowledge itself. Although one of Kunzru's characters notes that the unknown should be abolished, in the novel it is indeed the unknown that persists against attempts to abolish a noise free informationalism. Simultaneously asserting and denying resistant drives, the Leela virus induces a caesura in knowledge, a rupture manifested in *Transmission's* description of "Greyday"—the name given to the period when "there was the most noise in the global system" (257).

> Greyday names a moment of maximal uncertainity, a time of peaking doubt. We have records of events which may not have taken place. Other events took place but left no record. All that can be said with honesty is that afterwards there were absences, gaps which have never been filled. (258)

The most obvious example of this information loss is evidenced in Mehta's disappearance at the end of the novel; he slips silently out of sight invisible both to the law that would prosecute him and the countercultural organisations waiting impatiently to recruit him. Mehta becomes nonrepresentational as he evades the law and the nuances of cybercriminality.

Prominent sociologist Zygmund Bauman, in his hugely popular work *Liquid Times* (2006), discusses some of the issues which can be considered as the inevitable consequences of globalisation which include the problem of surplus human beings who have nowhere to go in a world which is too full, the irreconcilable inequalities between the rich and the poor and the problem of

individual and collective security in such a scenario. The global elite like Guy Swift in *Transmission* are upwardly mobile, constantly on the lookout for investment opportunities thereby creating an unstable world. People like Arjun Mehta of the novel who have no control over the world live in perpetual anxiety, fear and suspicion exacerbated by the feeling of insecurity and thereby develop strategies to encounter the dangerous world always striving to marginalise them. Bauman feels that the instabilities caused by global capitalism often lead to crime, organised violence and various forms of terrorism that remind us of the frailties of the global world which seem to adopt greater levels of intolerance towards the desperate. According to Bauman, ours is an era of instantaneity and in the current world "trustworthy calculations are increasingly difficult to make, while foolproof prognoses are all but imaginable: most if not all variables in the equations are unknown, whereas no estimates of their future trends can be treated as fully and truly reliable" (1–2).

In his book *Liquid Fear* (2006), Bauman observes that when global forces are in operation controlling all aspects, the world gets threatened by the flux of "liquidity" and this situation unleashes the element of fear. In the novel, the individual fear of Mehta results in the propagation of the virus while collective fear is evident in the attitude of the American society towards him characterised by a fear of chaos, disruption and breakdown of set rules and patterns. As the novel draws a parallel between terrorism and migration, it can be read as a response to post 9/11 paranoia. In *Transmission*, the extreme measures undertaken by the US government lay bare the inherent fears of the American society:

> They were calling him [Arjun] a terrorist, which meant that he would probably just join the ranks of the disappeared, the kneeling figures in the orange suits against whom anything was justified, to whom anything could legitimately be done. It was the revenge of the uncontrollable world. He had tried to act but instead had made himself a nonperson. (148)

The 9/11 attacks crystallised the vulnerability of America as it explicitly made clear that the threat to its security came not from huge armies or great powers but from terrorists and weak or failed states.

To conclude we can observe that both *Transmission* and *One Night @ the Call Center* highlight the effects of polarisation in the globalised world, its uncertainties and the notion that security and stability which are highly desirable can prove illusory. However, in the globalised world, the possibilities of acts of resistance are wider thanks to new technology and media. The internet emerges as a tool for social protest, penetrating various locales around the world, transforming the consciousness of people and acting as a medium of social change.

Chapter IV

Globalisation, the Publishing Industry and Aspects of Language

In her essay "An Introduction: Uncommon Genealogies", Gauri Viswanathan asks: "Precisely where is English literature produced?" in the context of the transformation of English studies in the wake of postcolonial theory (22). Her answer—not only "in England, of course"—focuses on the genealogy of the discipline, its development within the British Empire and other dominions outside England through the education of the colonial subjects and the efforts of people such as "Jews, Dissenters and Catholics" (23). She asks us to consider that the location of literature depends not only on the places where books are written but also on the places where they are classified and given social purpose. Today we would like to ask several other questions as well: Where is English literature read? Who counts as a producer (writers, but also editors, printers, designers, publishers, translators, reviewers)? And how has the global circulation of English literature shaped its strategies and forms of appearance? These questions turn from production to circulation and reinvigorates and reframes Homi K. Bhabha's claim that disciplinary models of comparison and distinction will have to be tested by new ways of understanding community. Literary studies will have to examine the global writing of books, in addition to their classification, design, publication, translation, anthologising and reception across multiple geographies. Books are no longer expected to exist in a single literary system, but in several literary

systems through various practices of world circulation. A study on the relationship between globalisation and literature will not be complete without examining the impact of the globalisation of the publishing industry on literature.

Roland Barthes's famous assertion in 1968 of the "death of the author" was effectively a postmodernist apprehension of texts as sites of writing, or rather of "multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation" (148). As Suman Gupta observes in *Globalisation and Literature*, there is a different kind of "death of the author" evident in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century which is relevant in the study of literature and globalisation. This has to do a lot with the social condition in which there are a lot of slippages between the authors and their texts and the audiences, interfered by the pervasiveness of the audio-visually centred media and the immediacy with which global realities permeate through these. The fictional authors are today trapped in a world where all kinds of literary producers and products compete alongside media producers and their audio-visual products which reconstitute the social sense of the world and mould consumer expectations; the audio-visually centred consuming consciousness is capable of defeating and erasing the authors. Suman Gupta notes:

> . . . the kind of literary death of the author . . . has something to do with the place of literature in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century socio-cultural *marketplace*. I choose the

> word ‘marketplace’ here advisedly. The defeat of the author described above is redolent with the oppression of a particular historically contingent consuming culture, with modes of production and selling and buying of culture with the kind of consciousness that is both moulded and catered for by cultural industries, in late twentieth century global capitalism. Fictionally here the ideals of literature and authorship give way to the thrust of cultural technologies and commodifications that marks the theory and practice of late twentieth-century globalisation. (156)

The globalisation of the publishing industry and the exploitation of global markets in relation to literature and literary studies is an enormous subject, still in the process of opening up as far as literary studies is concerned. The present chapter attempts to draw attention to the growing importance of literary production and literary marketing in the context of globalisation. The commercial consciousness which underlies the motives of the global publishing industry and the mechanics of the market are explored while keeping in focus the works chosen for study. What emerges is the growing importance of literary markets in the pursuit of literature and increasingly in the pursuit of literary studies in the twenty-first century.

It becomes evident that one of the most significant and crucial aspects of the relationship between globalisation and literature lies in the intersection of production and consumption, the dynamics of publishing and the mechanics of the marketplace. Since there is an overarching nexus between the publishing

industry and the media, before exploring the nuances of the publishing industry in the context of globalisation, an attempt has been made to examine the influence of mass media on the processes of globalisation. An attempt is also made to highlight the relevance of the English language as a tool for communication in this era of rapid acceleration of economic, cultural and political forces across the globe.

When we take a look at the publishing landscape today what becomes evident is that the book publishing industry is primarily owned and controlled by giant media corporations which control publishing operations, marketing strategies and also manage competition. They provide the infrastructure which enable huge changes in production and also act as custodians of news, information, knowledge and entertainment about the world in general. They are the major sources of views and ideas lending credibility for the powers that be contributing significantly to the dissemination of the globalist discourse. The wide distribution of electronic capabilities which produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations and film-production studios) which now cater to a large number of private and public interests world over and the images of the world created by this media are termed "mediascapes" by the social theorist Arjun Appadurai in his pioneering work *Modernity at Large*: *Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. The images produced are diverse and manifold depending on their mode, hardware, audiences and the interests of those who own and control them. What is significant about mediascapes is that they provide large and complex

repertoires of images to viewers throughout the globe in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are intricately mixed. The viewers around the world experience the media as a complex and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens and billboards of myriad types. According to Appadurai, the lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they view are blurred, "so that the farther away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world" (35). The different media are not only direct sources of new images depicting the possibilities of life but also function as semiotic diacritics of great power which inflect the social life with the nuances of the metropolitan world. Mediascapes are image-centered, narrative-based accounts of reality which provide a new force to the imagination in social life today. Until recently social life was largely inertial and traditions provided a finite set of possibilities while fantasy and imagination were residual practices confined to specific domains, persons or practices. However, in the past two decades with the large-scale deterritorialisation of persons, images and ideas have taken on a new force as people around the globe see their lives through the prisms offered by the mass media in all their multitudinous forms.

The mass media plays a significant part in the constitution and dissemination of new discourses, narratives, ideas and values. As Norman

Fairclough observes in his work *Language and Globalization*, people's social experience in today's globalised world is a complex combination of "mediated" and "unmediated" experiences in which each shapes and influences the response of the other (97). The writer expounds the concept of "mediation" which deals with overcoming distance in communication, communicating with distant others. It is associated with the concept of "space-time" and its re-embedding in new contexts in the sense that communication with distant others is no longer subject to the delays emerging from the need to physically transport symbolic forms (printed material). The unprecedented changes in information and communication technologies and the rapid proliferation of new media have greatly expanded the possibilities for overcoming distance in communication, resulting in instant communication over unlimited distances at little cost which is considered as the most crucial element of contemporary globalisation. The concept of "mediation" also involves the notion of communication through a medium which affects the nature of communication and intervenes in its process.

An important facet of contemporary globalisation is the globalisation of new media heightened by the rapid dissemination of modern information and communication technologies including television, video, internet and mobile telephones, although there are still persistent inequalities between urban and rural areas and between the rich and the poor. The global communications industry dominated by powerful trans-national corporations has contributed immensely to the dissemination of globalist discourse, claims and attitudes

more often by forging close alliances with the different sectors of the government including the public relations industry and other agencies. Although independent newspapers and publishing houses still exist, the role of the media as "fourth-estate" catering to public service is being progressively undermined by the dominant international presence of transnational corporations with vested interests. The contents of the media addressed to an increasingly global audience produce globalised representations and meanings around particular events. In the case of the television coverage of news and issues pertaining to current affairs, in varying degrees, a pattern of selective visibility and invisibility reflect these international influences. The emergence of a global dimension to media content is blatantly evident in the case of news items which top the international agenda such as the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, or the "tsunami" of 2004 or the major international political events such as the Iraq war or the most recent crisis in Palestine.

In *Language and Globalization*, Norman Fairclough focuses on the contribution of media and mediation with regard to their role in the construction of a global public while discussing the mediation of the suffering of distant others in natural disasters, major accidents, wars and so forth, particularly with the example of the coverage of the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. Mediation has been seen on the one hand as making a positive contribution to globalisation through its capacity to give immediacy to the lives, problems and sufferings of distant others, thus enabling

a better understanding of others and a greater empathy with them, and on the other hand as having the negative effect of turning people into mere spectators of the lives of others with whom they have no personal relationship. The lives of distant others are mediated in different ways producing multiple effects and disaster news is one of the main forms in which distant others find representation because some disaster news stories become global stories which address global audiences and also have the potential to create a mobilising effect in many countries be it mobilising emergency economic and medical aid or building up political pressure for action. Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* depicts the media coverage of 9/11, viewed by a Bengali immigrant family in London:

> Chanu slammed through the door as if he would take off its hinges. This man, who would not sit if he could lie, would not stand if he could lean, moved faster than Nasneen had ever before witnessed.
>
> "Quick. Be quick!" he shouts. "Put on the television." He rages around the room for the remote control, passing the television several times. Eventually, he switches it on by pressing the button below the screen. "Oh God," he says. "The world has gone mad."
>
> Nazneen glances over at the screen. The television shows a tall building against a blue sky. . . . A thick bundle of black smoke is hanging outside the tower. It looks too heavy to hang there. An aeroplane comes in slow motion from the corner of the screen. It appears to be flying at the level of the buildings.

> "Oh God shouts Chanu. . . . The television has enslaved him. He rocks around in a state of fearful excitement.
>
> The aeroplane comes in. The television shows it again and again. . . .The scene switches. "The Pentagon," says Chanu. " Do you know what it is? It's the *Pentagon*." The plane comes again and again. Nazneen and Chanu fall under its spell.
>
> Now they see smoke: a pillar of smoke collapsing. Nazneen and Chanu rise. They stay on their feet as they watch it a second, a third time. The image is at once mesmerising and impenetrable; the more it plays the more obscure it becomes until Nazneen feels she must shake herself out of a trance. (396-398)

In this context it can be argued that the way these events were mediated to audiences globally has evoked a certain kind of sympathetic orientation towards suffering. A wave of horror pervaded all over the world at the attacks and it was certainly the mediation of the event created massive global public opinions expressing profound sympathy with the victims inflected with a sense that the Americans "had it coming" (Fairclough 115). As opposed to most news reports aired shortly after the occurrences, this segment belonged to the "breaking news" category, signifying events instantaneously caught on camera and transmitted across the world as they unfolded. Although the nature of events was clear enough what was not immediately clear for the global viewership was how to interpret or attach meanings to the ghastly visuals of such a mammoth catastrophe. As Fairclough observes there was a "void of

meaning" (116), a sense of hyper-reality created while watching a film. As Fairclough goes on to observe, the "void of meaning" was filled by an emerging narrative of the events which was soon built up by American government officials in which four features can be identified:

> First, it represents events as a 'national tragedy' for the USA, and the USA as the primary victim of 'terrorism'. Second, it represents the attacks as an 'act of war', rather than for example a crime against humanity. Third, the attacks are represented in a way which establishes intertextual relations with other events in US history, and with a set of myths which have a powerful resonance for Americans: the Second World War and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the Cold War, America's historical role in the struggle for civilization and against barbarism, and the narrative of America as spreading freedom and democracy across the globe, 'freedom' understood as economic and not just political freedom ('free trade') and linked to 'globalisation' in the globalist sense. Fourth, the narrative suppresses alternative accounts of the events, especially those which see them as a rebuff to the inequities of American foreign policy. (116)

The extended global mediation of the events of 9/11 has resulted in bringing the world community together in response to human sufferings on a mammoth scale and has also provided a platform for a political narrative of

these occurrences, building international support at various levels for a “war on terror”. The event has in fact become a global narrative addressed to a global audience. But the hijacking of the humanitarian response of the global community for national political purposes as exemplified in the president’s claim that America was targeted because it represents the brightest beacon of freedom and opportunity in the world, which was aired internationally after the event, is a reminder that global mediation is dependent on a global communications industry which is strongly interwoven with the interests of the globally powerful. The mediation of the events of 9/11 highlights the fact that global news does not simply constitute a humanitarian, value based global order, but signifies relations of power, especially global hegemonic power which seeks to transform international politics into a confrontation between right and wrong, good and evil, right and left ideologies, between unfettered neo-liberalism and global political positions based on social justice and equality. The 9/11 attack was by its very nature and execution a morally indefensible and an indiscriminate act of terrorism but it became an epoch-changing one because of its self-conscious representation by the global media.

According to Rita Raley as observed in her essay “eEmpires”, the linking of new technologies with imperialism and the concept of the Empire which she designates “eEmpire”, suggests a convergence of electronics and commerce, marked by the elimination of geographical boundaries for the client base where global sales and marketing are made possible in highly improbable spaces by the extension of information and communication networks. The

Electronic Empire signifies not just the convergence of global business and communication but also the integration of technologies synchronising the myriad modes of consumption as in the convergence of e-mail, shopping and infotainment. The Electronic Empire undoubtedly signifies the control of distribution and regulation of content by a few powerful transnational corporations. However, in the light of the currently prevailing scenario in the field of communication and technology, keeping in mind the historical meaning of imperialism what becomes evident is that the old imperial paradigm is no longer applicable as the notion of territorial conquest has given way to a global networked information society. The notion of a single centre has become meaningless; instead there are several centres or nodes within interconnected financial and informational networks for the coordination and transmission of messages globally. The centres often battle for control within the network which embodies internal contest and multiplicity. The Electronic Empire signifies the convergence of global capitalism heavily banking on entrepreneurial zones and high-tech corridors incorporating the entire global realm within its expanding frontiers.

Following an aggressive series of mergers and acquisitions, the number of top global media companies began to drop from fifty to five since 1980. CBS, Disney, News Corp, Bertelsmann and Time Warner are today the largest multinational media corporations holding the largest number of shares. The power these corporate oligarchies, earning turnovers of billions of dollars, wield over the book publishing industry is tremendous. CBS owns Parmount Pictures, MTV and Nikelodeon and controls the publishing house Simon and

Schuster. Disney which owns Walt Disney Pictures, Pixar, Touchstone Films, and Buena Vista, has control over the publishing companies Disney, Hyperion and ESPN Books. News Corp owned by the media baron Rupert Murdoch runs Fox Film, 20th Century Fox and the channel National Geographic owns Harper Collins in the domain of publishing. Bertelsmann controls Random House and Time Warner which owns Warner Bros. Pictures and the channels HBO, Cartoon Network, Cinemax and CNN, are responsible for the publication of over fifty magazines including *Sports Illustrated*, *Time* and *People*. The major driving forces behind this process of consolidation have been the need to increase the size and penetration of consumer markets, achieve control of existing and upcoming distribution channels, exploit copyright internationally, and achieve economies of scale and also to exploit the value chain through media under common ownership, ultimately aiming at attaining growth. Besides this there are a number of factors which indicate that the business of global publishing is likely to undergo structural changes in the coming years. The emerging trends in electronic publishing, digital printing and e-learning have already impacted the academic, educational, scientific, technical and medical sectors in a significant way. The process is summarised by John Feather in *Communicating Knowledge: Publishing in the 21st Century*:

> Since about 1950, there has been an almost continuous process of takeovers and mergers in the American publishing industry. Where historic names survived, they often did so only as parts of larger organisations. This was the driver of significant cultural change within the industry in the United States itself, but was

> also a significant factor in the growing internationalization of publishing throughout the world. . . .The creation of conglomerate publishing industries, however, was only one aspect of the multi-faceted process. These companies were competing with each other on a global scale. Since the early 1980s, therefore, the vast global market for books in English has seen intensive competition between British and American publishers. . . . From the late 1980s onwards, the publishing conglomerates became transnational and the multinational corporations. There are now key players in English language publishing whose holding companies are based in Germany, France and Australia as well as Britain and America. The publication of books, like their distribution and sale, has become a truly international business. (21-22)

The economic logic of these developments coincides with trends that are discerned in almost all productive industries and had evoked polarised discussions and divisions between approbatory and denunciatory perspectives much as globalisation in general has. The profit-driven rationale to which multinational corporations subscribe has meant that the consolidation of all publishing, including literary publishing, has resulted in a corresponding narrowing down of the kinds of literature that are made widely accessible and of the kinds of literary innovation and experimentation that are now likely to reach the reading public. Andre` Schiffrin, who was the managing director of

the publishing house Pantheon for thirty years, gives a personal account of the globalisation of the publishing industry in *The Business of Books* (2000). Some of the points he makes are relevant to the prospects of literature:

> For much of the twentieth century, trade publishing as a whole was seen as a break-even operation. Profit would come when books reached a broader audience through book clubs or paperback sales. If this was true of nonfiction, it was doubly true of literature. Most first novels were expected to lose money. Nonetheless, there have always been publishers who regard publishing new novelists as an important part of their overall output. New ideas and new authors take time to catch on. It might be years before a writer finds an audience large enough to justify the costs of publishing her book. Even in the long run the market cannot be an appropriate judge of an idea's value, as is obvious from hundreds, indeed thousands of great books that have never made money. Thus the new approach—deciding to publish only those books that can be counted on for an immediate profit—automatically eliminates a vast number of important works from catalogues. (104)

Schiffrin goes on to demonstrate how this drive for profits has changed practices across the book industry, in the manner in which editors and agents work and retailing is structured. Literary canons are arguably no longer being determined as much by dominant class interests embedded in cultural institutions and academia as by processes of controlling the production,

marketing and circulation of books at a well-orchestrated global level. It seems plausible that this orchestration incorporates cultural institutions and academia themselves, with profound effects on concepts of literary value and public perceptions of literary status, and simply in the very constitution of reading habits. These developments are reformulating access to literary texts through a form of tacit market censorship. Certain texts simply do not have the opportunity to surface for the gauging of informed readerships; certain books are pre-framed in a manner that makes them unavoidably visible before they are read in any meaningful fashion; and certain sorts are pushed on readers in so concerted and predetermined a fashion by their pricing, design and publicity that their readerships are circumscribed in advance. These factors in turn structure literary studies, which are dependent on markets and also determine what is made visible and available for literary pedagogy and research. Thus the globalisation of the book industry works around and manipulates literature.

John Feather also observes in *Communicating Knowledge: Publishing in the 21st Century*:

> Publishing and language are symbolically connected. . . . The more readers there are, the larger the total market, and the greater likelihood of a viable number of potential readers even for the most specialized literature. This in turn makes such languages attractive to those who, while not being native speakers themselves, seek an audience among those who read the language. Since the middle of the twentieth century this has

> increasingly meant, in practice, one thing only: that more and more authors, especially of academic and professional books, write in English regardless of where they are in the world, or what language they use in their daily lives. . . . British and American companies are not the only publishers who benefit from the dominance of English. There is a significant trade in the publication of English books in India, for example, where it is the largest of more than a dozen publishing languages, and there are publishing industries in all the major English speaking countries such as Australia, South Africa and Canada. But the world's largest book market, defined by language, is very largely supplied by the two countries which have the largest number of native English speakers, the United Kingdom and the United States. (18)

Over the last two decades the British publishing industry has undergone a rapid transition with a rise in sales and a strong reading culture. However, this seemingly bright picture of the marketplace is compromised by being controlled by an oligopolistic group of conglomerate publishers and retailers, beset by questions of equality of access to the market and disrupted by triumph of hype created by the unfettered capitalistic market. The business background to this is the extensive structural change that the publishing industry had undergone in recent years on account of the deregulation of the economy facilitated by globalisation. The opening of the financial markets in the 1980s

meant that a rapid series of mergers and acquisitions were possible. The resulting conglomeration dramatically changed the patterns of economic ownership of publishing. Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were many small independently owned, often family run publishing companies. These companies were then subsumed into multinational multimedia groups including Bertelsmann, News Corporation and Pearson which largely have control over the marketplace today. Whereas in 1970, 27 out of 43 London publishing houses were independent companies, in the very next decade there was a remarkable shift towards corporate consolidation as there was a merger among the "seven sisters" of the industry: HarperCollins, Hodder Headline, Macmillan, Penguin, Random House, Reed Consumer Books and Transworld. This trend continues with the recent Penguin/Random House merger in 2012. The changing dynamics of trade in the publishing industry has motivated such a move as it made much more economic sense for one established publishing house to merge with another well-known publishing house as it offered more opportunities to explore, and a bigger share in the market ensuring better profits.

Alongside this conglomeration of publishers there has also been a consolidation in the retail market. Independent book selling has diminished, with only very focused, diminished or niche book selling continuing with any degree of success. Thus there is a homogenisation in the marketplace in terms of retailing as well as production with the advent of global capitalism.

One of the implications of this type of conglomeration is that publishers now have access to huge funding which was unimaginable a couple of decades ago. This has made possible soaring increases in advances and a concomitant rise in marketing spend. This has led to a concentration of resources since not all books are financed hugely and this concentration has invariably resulted in increasing competition both between companies and within companies since the editors of the same company compete for marketable projects and for the company's marketing funds.

Today literary texts, authors and readers are considered as industrial products, all subject to the exigencies of publishing markets and circulations, all trapped in the matrix of literature and literary studies. These industrial sectors overlap significantly at various points as the publishing industry, media industry and the academic sector work with clear cut economic rationales that have a strong bearing on the creation of authors, texts and even readers. In the globalised scenario, literary interpretations are no longer the result of the encounters between critics and texts but are the products of the various strategies employed by the different reading communities. These readers come together on social media like the Facebook or Twitter, form virtual or real communities, join book clubs, coffee table discussions and book reviews, participate in literary festivals, or engage in public readings at book shops. What is noteworthy in this context is that the giant multinational corporations, media conglomerates and those connected to public relations, advertising, films, art, music, celebrities or even those associated with consumer products

with global branding are capable of producing such reader communities. Reading spaces are shaped by classifying readers as niche markets and more often than not reading is turned into a lifestyle indicator. Even the publishers' catalogues and the stacks in book shops get tailor made to grab the attention of the target buyers. Global coffee vending chains provide spaces in book shops and media celebrities endorse literary works for their fan followings (for example through the book clubs of Richard and Judy, the UK television breakfast show hosts and the US chat show host Oprah Winfrey). This goes to reveal complex entanglements involving writers, texts and readers which do not happen spontaneously but are manufactured. In the words of Suman Gupta as observed in *Globalization and Literature*:

> The degrees to which authors' public images and appearances and statements are now engineered by corporate entities and their agents (literary agents, publishers, media persons, advertisers, product designers and commodity pushers of various sorts working in collaboration) to appeal to certain readers and their expectations is an as yet under-explored area. This process of manufacturing authors according to market contexts is, obviously coeval with manufacturing readers. The production of one is in some sense the production of the other, and both unravel in ways that are unregistered *within* literature and literary studies and yet surely influence the pursuit of both not just in material ways but at textual and interpretative levels too. (167)

An aspect closely connected to this process which has a bearing on literature and the literary processes is the one concerning literary prizes. Literary prizes sometimes seem to have become brand investments by multinational corporations; the Man Booker, Costa and Orange prizes are often considered as modes of endorsing brands through literary association. Even the controversies and scandals which are associated with these prizes (such as authors refusing to accept the prizes) are revealed to be part of a newer cultural game in which the authors get incorporated into the market logic of prizes and the various aspects connected.

In his essay "Winning the Culture Game, Prizes, Awards and the Rules of Art", James F. English observes:

> While the Booker is possibly the most talked-about of high cultural prizes, the relationships to criticism, scandal and the field of journalism are largely unexceptional. . . . Indeed, we find other prizes more and more often being compared to the Booker, usually in order to suggest the 'Bookerization' of the whole cultural prize phenomenon. So that when a 'scandal' or 'row' breaks out in connection with some literary or arts prize these days, those who attack and denigrate or . . . embarrass the prize are less likely to be perceived as acting within the long tradition of sincere animosity between artists and bourgeois consecrations–artistic freedom fighters on the old model of art versus money–and more likely to be seen as players in a newer

> cultural game whose 'rules' and 'sides' are more obscure and of which the Booker happens to be the best known and hence the most generic instance. (118-19)

According to English, in the twenty first century no gesture by an author is possible which is not enmeshed into the logic of awarding of prizes and that logic operates irrespective of the content of the works or the stance of the author whom it seeks to encourage. English further extends his theory about the market logic of literary prizes by critically examining the industrial processes underlying and promoting literary prizes in his critically popular book *The Economy of Prestige* (2005).

Another significant area where globalisation impinges on literature is that of intellectual property regulation. The Berne Convention of 1886 and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) had fixed the regulation of rights of authors and publishers at a global level based on the policy of uniform regulation. It has been widely criticised that the manner in which the copyright law has tried to fix authors and texts in a rational and legally valid discourse is through means which have little to do with the prerogatives of literature and literary studies. It is often revealed that as the book publishing industry gets increasingly globalised, the international regulation of intellectual property rights adheres strongly to such globalisation and integration. This aspect of intellectual property regulation is often seen as producing the same effect as that of the global market-driven publishing industry. The rules governing intellectual property often facilitate the global

commodification of human intellectual and artistic creativity. As the global market systems exceedingly control cultural activities the production and selling of books are undertaken mostly for their market value. It is often evident that as commodification increases globally, the concentration of copyright ownership in the hands of the global cultural industries increases. The undermining of democratic practices by market power which produces homogenous practices has the potential of thwarting national and ethnic autonomy which increases inequalities among people and nations.

After Prime Minister Tony Blair's "Cool Britanica" rebranding of Britain, where culture and commerce collided, a new age was marked for many reviewers and literary critics by the anticipated emergence of the writer-in-the-making, Zadie Smith. Her novel *White Teeth's* publication in the UK was heralded by a huge level of pre-publication publicity, with the media unfolding details regarding her advance deal, flashing her profiles and including an extract in *Granta.* The author of *White Teeth* was first noticed globally in 1997 when she was offered an unheard-of advance, rumoured to be £250,000, for her work-in-progress and excerpts of *White Teeth* began to appear in 1999 in the *New Yorker*. Such hype was considered dangerous by some critics and when her novel came in 2000, there were plenty of envious critics to pronounce her book dead on arrival, as they had done to so many precocious talents in the past. But *White Teeth* was exhilaratingly and distinctively new and it instantly garnered fresh appeal.

With worldwide sales of more than 2 million, *White Teeth* won success that was sustained by a new global market. The effect was almost instantaneous. In London, Sydney, Delhi and New York, publishers were now on the alert for "the next Zadie Smith" and fixed their gaze on a new generation of writers—Hari Kunzru, Monica Ali, Kiran Desai, Peter Ho Davies and Ali Smith among them—who would replace Ackroyd, Rushdie, Swift and Seth. One of the earliest critical commentaries on *White Teeth* was made by Salman Rushdie, whose positive remarks set the agenda for the book's reception. His commentary was included in the jacket copy and was incorporated into the marketing of the novel.

James F. English and John Frow observe in their essay "Literary Authorship and Celebrity Culture" published in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*:

> Zadie Smith, whose autograph becomes valuable after the smash success of her first novel, writes a second novel about a man who collects and trades autographs of the famous; a friend of hers, on whom this character is partly modelled and to whom the novel is dedicated, attends her book launch, where he finds his own autograph in demand among Smith's autograph hunting fans. Writers like these—and one could add Helen Fielding, Nick Hornby, J. K. Rowling, Arundhati Roy, Will Self, Jeanette Winterson, and a handful of others—are not simply successful or acclaimed novelists; they are *celebrity novelists*, novelists whose

> public personae, whose "personalities," whose "real-life" stories have become objects of special fascination and intense scrutiny, effectively dominating the reception of their work. And their celebrity, predicated as it is on images and narratives in the media, has increasingly become an object of fervent media attention in its own right, serving as a major nodal point for discussion and debate about the condition of British literature. (39-40)

Bruce King in *The Internationalization of English Literature* describes Smith's *White Teeth* as an amusing novel about the new multicultural London that had come about during the past fifty years; it had larger-than-life, cartoonish characters, large billboard themes, and the caricatured ethnic English and improbable events featured in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. According to King while parodying stereotypes, Smith's aim is to break down the racial categories and representations of victims and complicities that dominate interpretation of the 'postcolonial'. The novel celebrates a new globality that in other ways was the theme of such novelists as Rushdie and such British theorists as Paul Gilroy and Homi Bhaba, and which had been noticed by Stuart Hall.

As part of a well orchestrated campaign, Smith's publisher was overtly engaged in a slick commercial process of publicity lubricated by author access which displaced the more euphemistic process that once characterised publishers. Smith's literary presence was shaped in conjunction with the

media, exemplified by Stephanie Merritt who identifies in a particularly brash fashion Smith's cultural significance in her interview's suggestive opening line: "She's young, black, British—and the first publishing sensation of the new millennium" which appeared in Britain's leading Sunday newspaper, the *Observer*. Merritt describes Smith and her novel in the by-line: "At 24 she is already being compared to the likes of Salman Rushdie." The journalist further adds: "The hype began in the autumn of 1997. Zadie Smith was 21 and just down from Cambridge when her first novel was sold on a mere 80 pages for an advance rumoured to be in the region of 250,000 pounds" (16 January 2000). Smith was being manufactured in a specific fashion first seen in the United States, as described by Joe Moran in *Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America* (2000). The increasing importance of publicity in promoting authors as "personalities" is therefore a symptom of the continuing integration of literary production into the entertainment industry, making authors and books part of the cultural pervasiveness of celebrity as a market mechanism of monopoly capitalism. Like many others Merritt was enjoined in such a process, resulting in Smith becoming culturally significant, without ever having completed a novel. She was celebrated precisely for her youth, ethnicity, intelligence in the celebrity driven market-oriented culture where beauty, youth and talent were highly saleable assets. As Joe Moran says typically this elaborate process may evoke "superior talent or even genius, free of external determination" (9). But it could also result from a late capitalist phase of a process what Moran calls the well-established "phenomenon of literary

celebrity" (1), creating what he describes as "charismatic illusion" (5). Smith's initial media presence was sustained, intense and part of print and television culture's compulsion to create, sustain and finally undermine media-driven celebrity.

A clear example of how Zadie Smith's physical appearance was deftly used by the media as a tool for global saleability is illustrated by the two different pictures of the author used on different editions of *White Teeth*. The Afro hair style and the complexion which evinced a mixed racial identity as found on the first Hamish Hamilton hardback edition of *White Teeth* disappeared without a trace on the second picture depicted on the Penguin paperback edition of 2001 to pave way for an evened out Asian look. The cynical marketing motives in the globalised era become pronounced in the depiction of the same person representing two apparently interchangeable racial identities.

The intensified focus on the form and figure of the celebrity writer in cultural life is often attributed to the transformation which has happened in the global economic scenario. In the world of academic scholarship, literary artists have come to be dominated by commercial interests where the thrust is on the ubiquity of the commodity form. With the growing commodification of fields such as music, film, literature, dance, theatre, sport, television and the internet, the global entertainment market is bent on synergising the marketing devices of publicity and promotion. In the case of the literary celebrity, the literary practices (reading, writing, criticism) are increasingly superseded by

heightened media conglomeration, sophisticated and conscious brand management and expanding intellectual property rights making it more of a corporate affair. The British literary field is today a complex system with different kinds of players: writers, critics, judges, journalists, sponsors, journalists, booksellers, book-club organisers, radio and TV producers and readers. As a result of the massive changes brought about by globalisation in the last few decades, literature has become more commercial and the autonomous literary space has been penetrated by the logic of commerce. It should be accepted that the literary field has become multidimensional and the agents involved in literary production, not of just books but of literary value, have come to act strategically in terms of cultural value. This does not essentially point out to a homogenising tendency but an increasing complexity about the way in which literary value is produced and circulated. Even if it points at a net gain for commercial interests, we should not fail to account for the immense openings and opportunities that celebrity authors provide for other interests to advance.

Moran suggests that around 80 per cent of books produced annually are failures, those receiving full promotional treatment largely being chosen by those managing sales. Creating such a high profile requires a very specific image identity responding to and reaffirming the zeitgeist. Smith's youth, gender, ethnicity and intellectual and cultural credibility explain the eagerness of the marketing machine, a major tool in the globalisation process. Smith's life was transformed as her first novel proved seminal. Smith became part of a

phenomenon, creating a strong brand image dependent on publicity processes very akin to those producing music celebrities such as the Spice Girls or celebrity singers on a plethora of reality television shows offering apparent stardom. With increasing rapidity, in each new generation publishers use the "rags to riches" motif to create new stars.

According to Claire Squires, the intensification of marketing activity globally is therefore one of the most prevalent trends of recent publishing history. The role of the author in promotional activity has also increased, bringing about a celebritisation of authorship. Authors give readings in bookshops, appear at literary festivals, are the bases of features in lifestyle sections of newspapers, and are involved with a whole range of promotional activities, which might be termed the promotional circuit of publishing. For many writers, published or otherwise, it is something of which they can only dream. For those who have achieved a level of promotional activity, it is the creator of their literary celebrity. Joe Moran comments on the ubiquity of writers, noting that an excess of publicity can be the cause of anxiety among cultural commentators who adversely compare the hype of the promotional circuit to a system of judgement based on perceived cultural value. In a system of valuation by the market, youth, looks and good connections seem to get prioritised over the writing itself.

Many commentators highlighted Smith's mixed race, the reported "double-first" in English from Cambridge, her striking good looks and her youth. Despite Smith's well-publicised reservations, ironically her first novel's

very success has meant international celebrity status and for much of the media she became a cultural icon. Paradoxically towards the end of a century whose last half was characterised in the West by relative affluence, influenced by several decades where intellectual culture had been shaped by identity politics, in the 1990s, the liberal intelligentsia developed a new consensus, an obsession with personal victimhood and a notion of trauma. Smith transcended these coordinates of abjection, becoming a symbol of multicultural hope and positivity. Through her image the idea of a reborn nation could be articulated. Raphael Dalleo in "Colonisation in Reverse: *White Teeth* as a Caribbean Novel" lauds Smith's efforts in representing "the Global Carribean" (95). She combines variously the new ongoing radicality of gender (a young woman in the public domain) with the traditional (bookishness, Cambridge and literariness). Add immense financial rewards to her youthful literary success and her meteoric rise begins to acquire the status of an urban myth. Her presence also permeated newspapers across North America and the world, her image attaining iconicity, becoming marketable in terms of both literal and cultural capital, as the first quintessentially British twenty first century writer. In a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) interview later transcribed, Smith positions *White Teeth*'s immense success as part of a millennial zeitgeist as end-of-the-century books catch people in an end-of-the-century mood. The possibility of a community which involved so many different people and could be workable was a very optimistic idea. That moment was more about

transition, renewal and rebirth ushered in by the new wave forces of globalisation.

The prevailing note of the reception of *White Teeth* was one of praise. In her work *Zadie Smith's White Teeth*, Claire Squires observes:

> For Caryll Phillips in the *Observer*, *White Teeth* was "restless and wonderfully poised" and "audaciously assured". Melissa Denes in the *Dalily Telegraph* thought it "bounding, vibrant, richly imagined and thoroughly engaging." Lissa Allardice in the London *Evening Standard* termed it "an ambitious first novel, . . . she pulls . . . off magnificently". For Maya Jaggi in the *Guardian* it was a "serio-comic novel of great verve and distinction." Annie Chisholm went on in her review to call it "a strikingly clever and funny book with a passion for language and for the rich tragic-comedy of life . . . outstanding." Hugo Barnacle viewed it as a "fluent, observant, deeply amiable novel." Ali Smith's paen saw it as "a book so readable and good-hearted [with] a vision . . . so clever and encompassing . . . a book full of admirable energy and salvaged joie de vivre, a truly epic, shining piece of life." The US reviews continued the cavalcade of praise for *White Teeth*. The *New York Times*'s reviewer, Michiko Kakutani, described it as "a novel that announces the debut of a preternaturally gifted new writer—a writer who at the age of 24 demonstrates both an instinctive story

> telling talent and a fully fashioned voice that's street-smart and learned, sassy and philosophical all at the same time. (70-71)

Yet despite the overwhelmingly positive critical reception of *White Teeth*, there also arose some voices of dissent. Tobias A. Wachinger in *Posing In-between: Postcolonial Englishness and the Commodification of Hybridity (2003)* doubted specifically whether Smith really offers a radical or fresh perspective, saying:

> But a look at the way Smith has been publicised and mediatised as 'young, black, British' writer sensation (*The Observer*) indicates the machinery of the market recuperation of a certain type of 'in-between' fiction is well lubricated. This fashioning by the metropolitan cultural industries that have turned *White Teeth* into the latest 'hot' commodity from multicultural London (complete with Rushdie's appraisal on the cover blurb), however, would not have been possible without Smith's novel's own stressing of its undeniably multicultural sweep. (194-95)

If Wachinger situated Smith's work as implicated in the globalised marketing of fiction, part product, part celebrity culture some other critics found fault with her language for its all too fast relentlessness. A few other critics were preoccupied with the question of influence and allegiance. Some compared her characterisation to that of Martin Amis; Thackeray, Sterne and Khureishi were also invoked. According to Suhkdev Sandhu as observed in *Times Literary Supplement*:

> A belief in contingency, the tricky messiness of our lives, aligns *White Teeth* with a novel such as *The Satanic Verses.* And in her fascination with the unholy metropolis, the trans-histories and cross-continentalising of its inhabitants, as well as her alertness to the uses of the past, Smith's writing has a good deal in common with Rushdie's. (21 January 2000).

Certain events subsequent to the novel's publication also served to shift its initial reception and reading. The events of 9/11, the Madrid and London bombings, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, precisely "the newly dark lights of the age," which James Wood refers to in "Tell Me How Does it Feel?," allowed people a space for reflection, considering both the magnitude of historical events and their capacity to be brutish, not entirely rational and yet palpably material in their destructive effects. These refuse the local, extend like ripples far beyond the physical or psychic damage of those closely involved. In "This is How it Feels to Me," Smith responds to Wood's critical attack upon her by first accepting that his term hysterical realism was a "painfully accurate term for novels like *White Teeth*, and continues by both referring to the tenor of the times and reminding him of her acceptance of certain of his objections to certain kinds of contemporary fiction:

> These are historical times; any novel that aims at hysteria will now be effortlessly outstripped—this was Wood's point, and I'm with him on it. I have agreed with him several times before, in public and in private, but I appreciate that he feared I needed

> extra warning; that I might be sitting in my Kilburn bunker planning some 700-page generational saga set on an incorporated McDonald's island north of Tonga. Actually, I am sitting here in my pants, looking at a blank screen, finding nothing funny, scared out of my mind like everybody else, smoking a family-sized pouch of Golden Virginia. (*The Guardian* 24 December 2010).

According to Philip Tew as observed in *Zadie Smith* (2010), in her work Smith stresses that trauma is not culturally imbued, but can be shared empathetically. Certain realities transcend difference even though interpreted at an individual level, which permeates her fiction. In the novel the architectonics are interwoven with a plethora of action, dialogue and memory, creating a historiography of both personal and cultural identity, through which Smith creates a phenomenology of tribulations of identity and the self in a highly complex, constantly changing globalised milieu. In myriad, apparently ephemeral details, Smith mixes symbolism with eclectic realism, social coordinates transformed by compulsiveness and repetition, creating an obsessional mimesis of life's unfolding.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* created a lot of sensation even before the novelist had completed her work on account of its status as being the first novel to record extensively, the life of the Bangladeshi British and hence likely to reach a worldwide audience. Her publisher Doubleday created quite a stir by signing her up after seeing only the first five chapters of the book's first draft.

Her literary acumen got acknowledged and her publisher's faith in her was reiterated when she was included in Granta's 2003 decadal list of "Twenty Best Young British Novelists"; earlier lists had included the likes of Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi. The launch of the novel happened amid much fanfare at Terrace Bar on the eponymous street in the heart of London's Banglatown on 2 June 2003. Monica Ali's depiction of multicultural London received excellent reviews which were published in prime magazines and newspapers and the author became the recipient of a number of literary prizes. The book was shortlisted for the Booker prize for fiction in 2003. The publication of the novel catapulted Ali to international fame as she became an instant sensation in the White publishing industry.

Though the immediate success of the novel was the result of the curiosity it created about the Bangladeshi British inhabiting the eponymous lane, there were other reasons attributed by certain critics regarding the huge publicity created by the novel. One criticism which came out strongly was that the book's success could also be attributed to the British cultural establishment's attempt to create an icon to represent the sizeable Bangladeshi community in the United Kingdom. The novel was considered as a metaphor that embodied the intricate politics of the hegemonic publishing conglomerates of the West along with the powerful US-UK review machine (of *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*).

Although Monica Ali received immense attention in the UK circle, which was in fact phenomenal, she also had to face stiff disapproval from a

large section of the Bangladeshi community of Britain whose lives she had portrayed in the work. The Greater Sylhet Development and Welfare Council vehemently criticised Ali for projecting the Bangladeshis as "economic migrants" who were largely unrefined and ignorant. The Council took objection to Ali's reference to them as uneducated Sylhetis who jumped out of the ships and landed in Britain with lice in their hair. They questioned the cultural literacy of Ali who was half Bangladeshi half British and global in every other sense and asked how the writer could authentically depict the Bangladeshi community in London. Although Monica Ali was born in Dhaka, she left the war-torn city and migrated to Britain with her English mother in 1971 when she was barely four years old. Though she was fluent in Bengali as a young kid she claimed to have lost her language while growing up in Bolton. Thus Ali began to be perceived by many critics as being remote from the linguistic, emotive and cultural reality of either Brick Lane or Bangladesh.

Ali was vehemently criticised for her skin-deep understanding of Bangladeshi culture and both her book and the movie it was later adapted into created major protests in London's Brick Lane in 2006. The furious protestors regarded both the book and the movie as recorded pieces of material ridden with slander and misconstrued realities about their community which were major assaults on their dignity. The protests drew a lot of media attention almost to the extent of the sensationalism which was created by Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* so much so that the screening of the film scheduled for the London Film Festival had to be scrapped on 29 October 2007.

Diasporic writing resorts to a chutnified narrativisation of the *desi* culture as Rushdie might say; the "ethnic trap" serves as "exotica" and such a plot "encashes on the marketability of the homeland" (Mishra 284). These narratives become creative elaborations of the pre-existing white stereotypes of Eastern idiosyncrasies and fetishised symbols of Eastern culture. According to critics, this ensures their entry voluntarily or unconsciously into the hegemonic niche market of the West, which thrives on the commodification of the exoticised oriental archived in fiction that reinforces the Westerner's impression of the East. The success of such novels in the international book market is seen to be driven by the profit oriented publishing industry which encashes on their saleability quotient in tune with the hard selling consumer culture of global capitalism. The narrativisation of the *desh* serves as "exotica" cashing in on the marketability of the homeland. Those who argue that the commodification of the exoticised Oriental is essential for the thriving of the hegemonic niche market in the West often turn to the status of Ali's subsequent publications. Her second novel *Alentejo Blue*, a loosely woven collection of stories set in the fictional village of Marmarrosa, a rural region of Portugal called Alentejo where Ali had spent her holidays with her husband, presents a range of characters and situations cutting across age and gender. However, the novel failed to repeat the dream run of the best selling *Brick Lane.* This is attributed to Ali's ambitious foray into the predominantly "white" landscape of Alentejo where she was not licenced to enter. Her third novel *In the Kitchen* turns to contemporary London where the focus is on the British chef Gabriel

Lightfoot. Although this novel deals with subplots involving migration and racial issues, she is assumed to have trespassed the home turf. Her latest venture, *Untold Story* (2011) explores the life of a princess bearing close resemblance to Diana, the Princess of Wales. The fact that this work too never came close to the phenomenal reach of her debut venture prompted critics to cast her as being in the shadow of *Brick Lane*, successful only while adhering to a code of conduct, the "rightful" track of writing.

When we come to the Indian scenario, we find that India which once had a traditionally small English language publishing industry which focused primarily on academic books and textbooks and some literary works, has expanded in a significant fashion since 1990. This expansion has taken place with regard to both Indian literary writing in English and translations into English from literature in Indian languages. The reasons attributed to this transition are various. The success of some Indian authors writing in English in international markets such as Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy has drawn attention for the possibilities for literary production that exist in India. Though the English language reading population in India was negligible, the publishers were always aware of its potential market in future years. In the early twenty-first century this number was ambitiously estimated to be as large as 200 million. However, the relatively low consumer power of Indians had meant that English language publishing in India could not be banked on as a profitable business. With the deregulation of the economy in 1999, the rise of economic growth and the increasing affluence

of the relevant section of the population at the turn of the century, this perception changed. Towards the end of the twentieth century and early in the twenty-first, therefore, the number of publishers within India who were publishing literary books in English for the Indian market (especially original fiction and translations) had increased many times, in terms of both independent firms (such as Ravi Dayal, Zubaan, Rupa, Katha, Roli, IndiaInk, Stree, Srishti) and of international publishing conglomerates and, later, multinational corporations with bases in India (notably Penguin, HarperCollins, Random House, Hachette Livre). However, this growing number of independent and multinational corporations in India hasn't yet turned to the mammoth scale of mergers and acquisitions which was evident in the United States and the United Kindom in the 1980s and 1990s but could be expected to happen in due course. International business interest has already been evidenced by the drawing up of market profiles, such as by Rob Francis for the UK Publishers' Association (2003 updated in 2008) and Khullar Management for American Businesses (1999). Despite the nascent reforms in retailing and the library sectors and the poor regulation of piracy and black markets, it is clearly felt that the Indian book publishing market, especially in English and including the literary, presents extraordinary promise and immense opportunities.

The global developments in the publishing business has certainly affected the Indian market but it is interesting to note that this phenomenon in literary production and consumption has brought in certain complex and

contradictory characteristics. A diversification in the categories and genres of literature has occurred in the Indian publishing market, where Indian "commercial fiction" has become the principal category. As noted by Suman Gupta, commercial fiction is emphatically characterised by market performance rather than their intrinsic features, putative generic features, themes or stylistic devices. The Indian commercial fiction in English which circulates predominantly within the country can be reasonably distinguished from "literary fiction" which has a larger-than-Indian presence. Neither are however, mutually impervious or exclusive categories. Both make pre-eminent sense in terms of appealing to specific sorts of readership, and being designed, publicised, circulated and discussed or disregarded accordingly. Generally, literary fiction has greater international visibility, though that is not always the case and sometimes even recipients of the Sahitya Academy awards do not go too far beyond the Indian market. But the success of literary fiction is gauged by their presence in the Anglo-American market and its concordant critical attention and cultural currency. What is considered as Indian commercial fiction is consumed predominantly within India and is seen to display a kind of Indianness Indians appreciate and can easily relate to.

Commentaries on Indian fiction in English that dwell exclusively on literary fiction establish a canon which functions as a repository of literariness. Included in this canon are Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Tharoor, Anita Nair, Vikram Chandra, Kiran Desai, Mukul Kesavan, Arvind Adiga and so on. Though the list is in no

particular order, the progenitor of the group is considered generally as Salman Rushdie and the novel which set this phase rolling is *Midnight's Children* (1981).

The burgeoning Indian commercial fiction claims to come with an alternative-to-academic authority with an appeal to the reading market rather than studied critical understanding. Literary fiction is primarily ensconsed in scholarly forums, while commercial fiction is confined to mass media forums. While the former caters to the nuances of postcoloniality and literary history, the latter gestures towards globalisation and market penetration. In the case of commercial fiction, publishing professionals partake of a great degree of authorship when they speak as authors of a great field of commercial production and reception. While academic experts place Salman Rushdie as progenitor of contemporary literary fiction in English, the publishing experts consider Chetan Bhagat the same for commercial fiction.

A 2007 report in *The Hindustan Times* observed: "Why did we stop looking down on commercial writing? The answer, say publishers, can be found in two words: Chetan Bhagat" (Gulab 2007). And similarly an article from *The Telegraph* (Calcutta) noted: "It's not as if Indian writers never penned commercial fiction before. . . . But this never developed into a body of work. That has changed ever since best selling author Chetan Bhagat hit the scene" (Dua 2009).

Bhagat's role as the progenitor of Indian commercial fiction is widely acknowledged although there were other contenders like Shobha De (*Socialite*

Evenings 1989) and Anurag Mathur (*The Inscrutable Americans* 1991). However, it was Bhagat's claim to fame with *Five Point Someone* (2004), which typified the king of production and circulation which the Indian publishing market had wanted. It should be noted that it was the phenomenal sales of Bhagat's novels which put the Indian commercial fiction industry into perspective. *Five Point Someone* (2004) reportedly sold 7,00,000 copies by 2008. Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* (2008) had a first print of 2,00,000 copies. When we consider English fictional works in India, this more or less equalled only by hugely successful international bestsellers. In 2005, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, reportedly sold over 1,00,000 copies the first day and in 2007, around 2,40,000 copies of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* were pre-ordered in India before release. Considering Rowling's novels which were expensive, Bhagat's novels were produced at an affordable price. According to Bhagat's publishers Rupa, their other successful works sell around 50,000 copies maximum. However, the success in the Indian market of Bhagat's first novel was not replicated internationally as it did not find a co-publication deal abroad. But as a result of a media driven awareness of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in Britain and America, Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center*, did find an international audience and was co-published by Transworld Publishers (UK) and Ballantine Books (USA) in 2007. Besides this, internet vendors like Amazon USA and Amazon UK, have consistently shown modest sales rankings for both. It should be noted that Bhagat's novels have captured

international mass media attention on account of the huge sales of his novels. *The Guardian* had referred to him as the biggest selling writer in English and according to *Observer*: "For (Indian) people (of the outsourcing generation) there is only one author: Chetan Bhagat" (McCrum 2013). According to a *New York Times* article: "Mr Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth or Arundhati Roy, but he has authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian youth facing the choices and frustrations that come with the prospect of growing wealth" (Greenlees 2008). Critics point out that India's growing affluence and its strong presence in a globalised world have contributed much to the Chetan Bhagat "phenomenon".

Considering the Indian publishing scene, on-the-ground realities in literary production and consumption present certain interesting characteristics. Insofar as the publication of literature in English, there is a drive for producing original literary works of sufficient diversity from "serious literature" to all kinds of "mass market literature" from within India, targeting consumers primarily within India. Publishers in India focusing on literary production in English seem bent on diversifying popular literary production by Indian authors for Indian readers, in keeping with the profit-driven motive of the literary market in the UK and the United States. A 2007 report in the *Hindustan Times* observed:

> Over the last year or so, V. Karthika, editor in chief at Harper Collins India, has actively sought writers to write the kind of books that Indian writers haven't written in English so far, or at

> least not in volumes. She's looked for writers who'll do chick lit, who'll do thrillers, who'll do contemporary urban stories, who'll write for young adults . . . in short, writers who write the kind of books that the majority of us like to read. Books that are not highbrow, that tell a good story without necessarily probing the murky depths of human experience, that entertain and are simply a damn good read. She's succeeded at least to the extent that, in the space of one year, Harper Collins India has 50 new books to offer the reading public on a wide variety of subjects. A greater variety than Indian writing in English has ever had at one time before. (Gulab 2007)

It seems that the extension of the global book industry into India is functioning now by containing the Indian market, by developing book circulation including the various elements required like authoring, editing, designing, distributing, marketing and retailing within India. It seems quite paradoxical that globalisation of the publishing industry can result in the containment of a certain variety of literary production following the lines of international mass market books like the Harry Potter series or Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), which were marketed and sold in India as successfully as anywhere in the world. Today customising Indian literary products for Indian readers seems to be in vogue regarding these developments. It is cited that along with the economic prospects of the publishing industry, the changing socio-economic scenario accelerated by globalisation also has

contributed to this. It is noteworthy to consider Claudia Kramatschek's commentary on the popularity of Chetan Bhagat's novels:

> Many Indian authors—especially younger ones—will tell you that they experience a certain pressure, strengthened by internationally active publishers, to act as cultural ambassadors. In other words, either to turn out 'spice and curry' in the form of easily-digestible novels of the exotic variety, or else elucidations of 'Indianness' as such. But a younger generation of authors now appears to have emerged in the English-language literary sector whose common development manifests a kind of caesura. All are between 25 and 35 years of age—a fact which in and of itself represents a minor revolution in a country where the aura of the senior writer has always shaped the literary canon. All came of age in an India where access to the wider world was available via mouse click, and all feel at home within the most divergent cultures—and they play with this intercultural network in their literary work as well. At the same time, nonetheless, they are rooted in India to an astonishing degree, and they write about this sense of connection in new and innovative—and at times surprising—ways. A marked turn toward localism is observable, meaning toward the micro cosmos of one's own lived world, to the history of the individual towns where these authors lead their lives. In literary terms, this return is associated with an opening

> toward genre literature and toward what might be referred to as the small form.(Kramatschek 2010)

The English speaking middle class youth of India with their global awareness have found the works like Bhagat's immensely appealing on account of their ability to relate to them.

There are other ways too in which the globalisation of the publishing industry seems to open up unexpected possibilities in India. The likelihood of the homogenisation of culture has been one of the consistent fears about the globalisation process especially the misgivings about the survival of vernaculars and minority indigenous linguistic cultures before the relentless expansion of global languages such as English. This is a particularly crucial and sensitive issue in the Indian multicultural and multilingual context more than any other nation. However, it should be noted that the gradual infiltration of the global publishing industry into the Indian literature markets seems to bring some revitalisation of publishing in Indian languages too. Sarah Brouillette, in her article "South Asian Literature and Global Publishing" observes:

> Transnational firms now commit to publishing the same vernacular languages they were once engaged in marginalising, as they recognise that English is not the only globalizable South Asian language. The structures of production and circulation that exist within the dominant Western publishing market, having so readily incorporated South Asian writing in English, may well

> treat vernacular works in much the same fashion. Such texts serve a myriad of functions: they can be exported to or locally produced for communities of South Asians living either in the region or abroad, or sold to those who are more competent or comfortable in the vernacular as well as those who want to maintain the alternative cultural cache that comes with continued support for one's 'mother tongue'. A celebrated and romanticised localism is just as marketable as an ostensibly delocalised cosmopolitan English language writing. This is something that the transnational companies operating in South Asia are now beginning to realise, and there is little doubt that they will quickly absorb and expand the existing markets of vernacular literatures, establishing those new rules for the game, from lower price points to more lavish marketing, that will make it hard for the many existing smaller firms to compete. (37)

The international publishers who publish the great bulk of commercial fiction in India like Penguin India, Harper Collins India, and Hatchet India and so on are engaged in moulding and exploiting Indian products and consumers primarily within the Indian market in order to optimise profits. They try to tap into the internal cycle of production and consumption, rather than make the Indian products a global commodity. The Indian publishing market is considered as a gigantic niche market enterprise by the multinational players. Along with the international corporations, the independent publishers also

thrive sometimes but more often than not the independent publishers try to make co-publication deals with the international publishers within the country. Suman Gupta observes in “Indian Commercial Fiction in English, the Publishing Industry, and Youth Culture”:

> More importantly, a global template of commercial fiction production and circulation has been imported and adapted for the Indian market. To begin with, this has to do with the structure of “genre fiction” in terms of which production and circulation of Indian commercial fiction in English is now routinely mediated: the above-noted proliferation of science fiction, detective fiction, chick lit, science fiction, fantasy, graphic novels, campus novels, etc, replicates categorisation and packaging and marketing practices which have been tried and tested over a considerable period in the UK, the US, and elsewhere. This entire structure has been imported wholesale into the Indian publishing industry and book market within a compressed period of a couple of decades. The precise ways in which this structure has been adapted (rather than simply mimicked) for Indian consumers, is matter for considered research and analysis.(49)

While the globalisation of the Indian publishing industry progresses along these lines, the curious thing to observe is the fact that Indian texts are systematically designed within an emphatically contained national sphere which articulates a circulatory matrix comprising Indians talking to Indians in

a closed space in the most international of languages. Here the local practice serves the global publishing industry; the local product is instrumentalised for structural globalisation for the benefits of multinational publishing houses. When we analyse how this localisation is caught in the web of the global template, what emerges is the fact that English, the most globalised of world languages is itself the site for the localisation of Indian commercial fiction. Since the opening up of the Indian economy to the international market in the early 1990s, there has been a thorough revaluation of "standard" English as cultural capital. The rising number of users of Indian English has made the distinctiveness of the language use as a repository of claims and anxieties about national identity than prior to the 1990s. One of the reasons behind the success of Indian commercial fiction in English is undoubtedly the use of a distinctively Indian idiom or homegrown English, the language of Indian college campuses and call centre cubicles. If we scrutinise the Indian English usages in fiction we find regionally varied enunciations, code-switchings, syntax transfers from other languages, idiomatic Indianisms and so on.

The peculiar usages of Indian commercial fiction can be gauged only in terms of its familiarised relationship with the subcontinent of India. Since the prime focus of these works is the Indian internal market, the writers tend to overlook undue explanations and overt demonstrations evident in the way literary fiction with the international audience as the target predominantly works. In Chaudhury's words: "As the Indian novel in English, assisted by India's rising profile inglobal affairs, finds an audience wherever English is

spoken, it often seems to sacrifice the particularities of Indian experience for a watered-down idiom that can speak to readers across the globe" (96).

The fiction of Chetan Bhagat and similar writers approach the language as if it is habitual within the locale it describes without resorting to exoticisms or grandiose narrations and make the reader feel that the language is "native" to the Indians portrayed.

The fact that within three days of the novel's release 50,000 copies comprising its initial print got sold out stirred a lot of enthusiasm among the multinational English language publishing houses—Penguin, Hachette and Harper Collins—which are eager to capitalise on the trend expecting to access a flood of readers expected to become the largest English reading group in any country in the next decade. International publishers are keen on setting up offices in India as India is on a course to become the world's most lucrative market for English books, but it is no longer the traditional English authors who get preference. While authors like Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy have won international acclaim, the Indian mass readership find their literary style inaccessible. Many Indian authors are today trying to emulate Bhagat's success, writing in simple English, depicting fast paced narratives peppered with humour with the thrust on the pulse of the urban Indian life. According to the writer himself, India is witnessing rapid changed in the economic sphere and there is a concomitant shift in values too that it is the connect he has established with the youth audience comprising a third of the Indian population which patronises his writing. Book sales demonstrate that young urban Indians

with more disposable income than ever before are eager to devour books that will improve their English and help them to succeed in college campuses and also find a foothold in the globalised offices of corporate India.

In *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (2010), Berthold Schoene observes that the novel, even though still mostly single-authored, has not been able to escape consumer-led mass production, and in this respect the British publishing conventions no longer greatly differ from the global, that is, the US Standard. As James English and John Frow discover, the 'blockbuster' paradigm that first emerged in American based publishing houses during the 1970s, and the corresponding emphasis both on short-term profits and on a thoroughly rationalised business plan even for what we think of as high-cultural production, are seen as propelling a global shift in literary life toward the kind of polarised, winner-take-all economy that characterises American society in general.

Rather than browsing more eclectically and compiling their own lists informed by their own expert criteria, many literary scholars seem now very happy to allow their reading and research choices exclusively to be determined not only by a popular cannon that is always already pre-selected by publishers, but also by titles that are projected in the media, awarded prizes decided on largely by celebrity juries. The texts and authors that find their way into university curricula, that are critiqued and widely written about, are now often identical with those that feature on chat shows and televised book quizzes. The names of Zadie Smith, Monica Ali are virtually everywhere; "their literary

peers, meanwhile, struggle even harder simply to get their works into print" (English and Frow 42). This trend seems exacerbated by a ceaseless popular craving for the next new thing, causing the market to be inundated by an ever-growing number of debut novels by Creative Writing graduates commissioned by literary agents while still in the process of being written. These novels look for a pan-global community, by transporting the English novel beyond the usual post-imperial frontiers to the non-English-speaking world. This trend is considered by some critics as a growing Anglophone parochialism which contrives to hide its shortcomings by feverishly highlighting its cultural hegemony. The common assumption is that anything of global interest or import is available in English, or about to be translated.

While discussing the nuances of globalisation and literature today, the role played by the new media, especially the internet and the world wide web emerges as an important aspect. The role of the author transcends the traditional sense as he/she is capable of adding audio-visual and/or pictorial elements on account of the internet's technical spectrum. Unlike the printed book, the text on the web can be altered, continuously modified and updated and therefore the author loses the unequivocal ownership of his/her text as the web offers the participants who change, modify and complete the texts an opportunity to become its co-authors.

The digital media require new skills from the readers as they should be aware of how to navigate the different spheres in order to get the relevant information required. The hypertexts also require a different way of reading

than reading printed books in the conventional sense which involved only linear reading in the traditional tactile mode. Digital media offer scope for structural reading since texts are electronically linked to other texts and on account of this networked structure the reader is prompted to examine these structures in their entirety including cross references and any other additional information. The new media have certainly contributed to the democratisation of literary production as the decentralisation of the literary system results in an interplay between the various social groups involved. The text and its producer become decentralised entities not belonging to any particular nation. Literature in the digital world is accessed by the netizens who are travellers in the digital space who access literature which is a conglomeration of diverse cultural symbols hurtling through space without discernable centres rooted in any particular nation or culture.

While putting thrust on the digital world it is imperative to comment on the global revolution in the literary market ushered in during the dotcom boom heralded by Amazon (launched in 1995), the most visible symbol of change effecting a marriage between the 600-year-old printed book and the high-tech world of online selling. The pace of growth of Amazon was initially slow but very soon picked by momentum in leaps and bounds. In 1996, Amazon sold just $16m worth of books to 180,000 customers. By 2007, sales had soared to $3.58bn in 200 countries. On one single day, 10 December 2007, Amazon customers ordered 5.4 million items. Across the English-speaking world, Amazon effected one simple thing, with profound consequences: it united the

market. Previously, new editions of books had been confined to territories like North America, Australasia or Britain. Now books could be accessed by and sold to customers across the world. Where once books travelled from the publisher's warehouse to the consumer at an agonizingly slow pace, now two or three days, was the norm. Almost as revolutionary, Amazon, and its imitators, put the customer first. As a consequence of the online market new writers who found a readership in the global marketplace began to command substantial advances. By the end of the 1990s, a new generation of market-savvy literary entrepreneurs was beginning to emerge. The unprecedented upsurge in book trade heralded by the globalisation of technology was now bestowing extraordinary riches on the privileged and talented writers.

With the rapid developments in the information related technologies, traditional patterns of communication built on national and institutional patterns seem obsolete. In this era of rapid acceleration of economic, cultural and political forces across the globe, the relevance of language in global communication is of prime significance. As English emerges globally as the language of decision making of governments, multinational corporations, organisations and consumers, a host of issues pertaining to its role in the new world order crop up. Critics who profess the hegemony of the English language are of the view that the whole world will eventually speak English and this will essentially accentuate the economic and cultural ascendency of the native-speaking nations. This perspective is challenged by those who use English as

their second language and have appropriated it as their own, giving it their own identities and cultural significations.

Globalisation has undoubtedly garnered much scholarly attention since the overarching presence of the multilayered phenomenon began to be increasingly felt towards the latter part of the twentieth century. Although a huge amount of attention is paid to its sociological, cultural, political and ideological dimensions of globalisation and various theories have been developed along these lines, the issues of language pertaining to globalisation have not evinced much interest in recent times. The fact that the implications of the global consolidation of the book industry has a bearing on the global spread of English in the late twentieth and the twenty first century is observed by John Feather in *Communicating Knowledge: Publishing in the 21st Century* thus:

> Publishing and language are symbolically connected. . . . The more readers there are, the larger the total market, and the greater likelihood of a viable number of potential readers even for the most specialized literature. This in turn makes such languages attractive to those who, while not being native speakers themselves, seek an audience among those who read the language. Since the middle of the twentieth century this has increasingly meant, in practice, one thing only: write in English regardless of where they are in the world, or what language they use in their daily lives. . . . British and American companies are not the only publishers who benefit from the dominance of

> English. There is a significant trade in the publication of English books in India, for example, where it is the largest of more than a dozen publishing languages, and there are publishing industries in all the major English speaking countries such as Australia, South Africa and Canada. But the world's largest book market, defined by language is very largely supplied by the two countries which have the largest number of native English speakers, the United Kingdom and the United States. (18)

Allan James in his article "Theorising English and Globalisation", published in *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies,* observes that globalisation employs explicitly or implicitly a conceptual trichotomy of "global", "local" and "glocal" (Robertson 1992) to capture the correlates of particular processes of change. While the global stands for the forces of homogenisation and the local for the forces of heterogenisation, the glocal represents the forces of hybridisation, which is a process of the interplay between the global and the local. While the globalists focus on the hegemonic nature of English which leads to the extinction of languages in various parts of the globe, the localists focus on the diverse forms of English that have been emerging since the colonial period, the glocalists celebrate the linguistic dynamics of English emerging from the confluence of global and local forces as evident in the translingual and transcultural forces worldwide. The three linguistic approaches find substantiation in the various theories propounded by their propounders: the globalist model of Phillipson (1992), the localist model

of Schneider (2006) and the glocalist model of Pennycook (2007) who has analysed the transcultural confluence of the global and the local with respect to Anglophone hip-hop subculture.

These thoughts bear a close parallel to the formulations in mainstream globalisation theories which lay bare the trichotomy of the global, local and glocal. These theorists can be broadly classified into three diverse schools of thought : the hyperglobalisers, the sceptics and the transformationalists. The hyperglobalisers are of the view that contemporary globalisation charts a new era in which people are increasingly subject to the nuances of the marketplace, the sceptics consider globalisation as essentially a myth that strives to conceal the segmented international economy that is divided into regional blocks in which national governments remain powerful whereas the transformationalists focus on the unprecedented change that globalisation has brought about in the interconnected contemporary world.

The three different schools define cultural globalisation in their own different ways. As Held and Archibugi summarise: “hyperglobalisers” “describe or predict the homogenisation of the world under the auspices of American popular culture or Western consumerism in general”; “sceptics” “point to the thinness and ersatz quality of global cultures by comparison with national cultures and to the persistent, indeed increasing, importance of cultural differences and conflicts along the geopolitical faultlines of the world’s major civilizations”; and “transformationalists” “describe the intermingling of

cultures and peoples as generating cultural hybrids and new global cultural networks" (327).

It can be clearly observed that the linguistc conceptualisation of globalisation by the "globalists", "localists" and "glocalists" referred to seem to be paralleled in the positions respectively, of the "hyperglobalisers", "sceptics" and the "transformationalists" of the social sciences. While the linguistic theories of the "globalists" and the social science theories of the "hyperglobalisers" consider globalisation as a homogenising force, the linguistic theories of the "localists" and the social science theories of the "sceptics" regard globalisation as a heterogenising force and the lingusistc theories of the "glocalists" and the social science theories of the "tranformationalists" view globalisation as a force responsible for the creation of hybridity. As a consequence of the various socio-linguistic theories emerging from across the globe a diverse array of terminology is used to designate the emerging language(s) as, "International English(es)", "New English(es)" or, more specifically, "Global English(es)", "World English(es)", "Lingua Franca English(es) and so on. In the context of heterogenisation and hybridisation, the sociolinguistic processes of "indigenisation" / "nativisation", and "creolisation" have been invoked to capture the dynamics of structural change in the language, respectively.

Considering English as a globalising language, Pennycook in his article "English as a Language Always in Translation" published in *European Journal of English Studies*, focuses on some of the more obvious sociolinguistic

consequences pertaining to homogenisation, heterogenisation and hybridisation while referring to the establishment of what he calls "language fortresses" by way of protecting linguistic diversity (in Europe) against the centripetal linguistic forces—and by implication, the hegemonic and homogenising effects—of English. Along with that he draws our attention to the "local foci" of regional and national, largely postcolonial Englishes worldwide which are cultivated to uphold and celebrate the centrifugal—and heterogenising—forces of anglophone linguistic diversity. He also addresses the concept of "English as a lingua franca" reinforcing the concept of "glocal hybridisation" (36-40).

The extent to which the three conceptualisations of globalisation are manifested linguistically in the novels chosen for study is worth exploring. Borrowing from Pennycook, the homogenising concept of English evidenced in the creation of "language fortresses" is termed "Global English" which takes the perspective of the globalists in linguistic theory; the heterogenising concept is called "World Englishes" which pertains to the "localists" in linguistic theory and transformationalist concept is named "Lingua Franca English" which highlights "linguistic glocalism."

Global English theorists perceive English as a threat to linguistic diversity and highlight the issues pertaining to the global spread of American English across the world by way of the political, economic and ideological domination of the US transmitted by the dominant American owned media and communication systems. In Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*, the travails of a way laid third world migrant wallowing in the US in search of a job is deftly

captured by the author in a language that exposes the dominant and ubiquitous presence of American superiority. Before leaving home, Arjun imagines a stereotypical fantasy of America as the land of hard work and opportunity in the global idiom of technologised play: "Silicon Valley . . . so exciting that like Lara Croft you had to rappel down a cliff-face to get in. One up. Player Mehta, proceed" (22). However, the reality of Arjun's life in America is far less transparently negotiable, both in economic terms and in cultural ones. He finds himself without work for long stretches of time, sharing a house with three other non-resident Indian information technology workers and experimenting in what Kunzru describes as American "linguistic glamour. Examples: when he watched TV, it was the 'tube,' when he thought of his parents, he didn't think of them as his parents, but as 'the folks back home.' The others did it too; little experiments with slang, tentative new accents" (39). Through these "experiments" in language—which he condenses into the list-like one-line paragraph "The folks. The bench. Man, good" (39)—Kunzru depicts Arjun and his housemates as out of place within the uneven systems of language produced by global telecommunications. Global telecommunications brings them into the linguistic, cultural, and economic sphere of the United States, but it is also the very force that makes them outsiders within that sphere. The attitude of racial superiority exuded by the American lady Sherry L. Parks, Personnel Liaison Manager of Databodies, the US company in which Arjun hopes to work to live the American dream is evident right at the outset as she spots "her fixed grin of distaste" while collecting Arjun from the airport: " 'Hello, Vee-jay, hello

Sahleem, hello Row-heet', twittered Sherry, her mouth stretched into what Arjun would later hear the others call her 'Mother Teresa among the lepers' smile . . . he felt embarrassed and looked down at the floor" (39).

The concept of Global English can be used to refer to the concept of neoliberal economics which champions globalism perpetuated by the US capitalistic forces "disseminated worldwide by a powerful phalanx of social forces located chiefly in the global North, consisting of corporate managers, executives of large transnational corporations, corporate lobbyists, journalists and public-relations specialists, intellectuals writing to a large public audience, state bureaucrats, and politicians" (Steger 94–95). Linguistically the discourse of globalism as a vehicle of globalisation is evidenced in the commodification of language in the economisation of conversational public talk. In *Transmission*, Arjun gets to know that he has become a prey of corporate downsizing when he loses his job at Virugenix, a global US anti-virus software company which deputes Jennifer Johanssen, a professional whose job is to break the news to the distraught victims sacked from their jobs. The conversational strategies employed by Johanssen lay bare the agenda of the global MNC the profit making motive of which surpasses all humanitarian concerns:

> 'Good afternoon Mr Mehta,' she said. Thanks for your promptitude. My name is Jennifer Johanssen, and I'm a deputy director of personnel here at Virugenix. Head office asked me to come down and facilitate today's employee encounters. Mr Grant

has briefed me on your performance. I know he rates your contribution to the anti-virus research team very highly.' . . . 'In your time here,' the aloe-vera voice intoned, 'you have added quality and value.' Then it spoke for a while about compassion. The room felt cold. Maybe I'm getting sick, thought Arjun, palpitating the glands on the side of his neck. The voice talked about reversals of fortune and minimizing negative outcomes. It talked about the executive team's strong desire to lead by demonstrating fiscal responsibility at all levels. . . . 'It is only because we believe that all our employees, even those on freelance consultancy contracts, should benefit from harmonious termination experiences that my presence here was mandated at all. Mr Mehta, I hold a diploma in severance-scenario planning. I assure you that this encounter has been designed to be as painless for you as possible.' . . . 'Mr Mehta, as I understand there are no indicators of short-term recovery. It's a sector-wide trend. This is what our public-relations team has been trying to underline to investors. It's not Virugenix, it's across the board. And Mr Mehta, that's the take-home for you too. You shouldn't see this as a personal failure. You're a valuable individual with a lot to offer. It is just that Virugenix can no longer offer you a context for your self-development.' (91-93)

Global English in a sense highlights the spread of English as an international language that realises autonomous registers and specialist communication which transports and realises new discourses and new meanings conveying newer representations of the globalised world order either through existing vocabulary with new meanings or new vocabulary altogether. Whether we consider it as representing the US subcultural values or manifesting hard core economic and business interests in personal, public and social life, it is to be observed that the language is characterised by semiotic repertoires which espouse the significant relevance of the texts produced within the domains of the worlds created.

The immense success of *Chetan Bhagat's One Night @ the Call Center*, which falls under the category of call-centre literature, often regarded as a sub-division of what Amitava Kumar calls "World Bank Literature" with its concerns about globalisation, international finance and economic growth, owes much to the way in which the English language is employed in a straightforward, casual, "unliterary style" peppered occasionally with Hindi usages. Published exclusively in the paper back form with an attractive cover bearing illustrations in vibrant colours, the novel seems tailor-made for the English speaking Indian digiterati who prefer entertainment value to cerebral probing. The central characters of the novel work in a transcultural hybrid work space in which they are asked to neutralise their accents which is tantamount to adopting American accents and taking up westernised names. In his prologue to his famous work, *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha observes:

> There is a kind of global cosmopolitanism, widely influential now, that configures the planet as a concentric world of national societies extending to global villages. It is a cosmopolitanism of relative prosperity and privilege founded on ideas of progress that are complicit with neo-liberal forms of governance, and free-market forces of competition. Such a concept of global 'development' has faith in the virtually boundless powers of technological innovation and global communications. It has certainly made useful interventions into stagnant, state-controlled economies and polities and has kick-started many societies which were mired in bureaucratic corruption, inefficiency and nepotism. Global cosmopolitans of this ilk frequently inhabit 'imagined communities' that consist of silicon valleys and software campuses; although, increasingly they have to face up to the carceral world of call-centres, and the sweat-shops of outsourcing. A global cosmopolitanism of this sort readily celebrates a world of plural cultures and peoples located at the periphery, so long as they produce healthy profit margins within metropolitan societies. (xiv)

In the novel the benefits of globalisation come with a price which result in the thwarting of Indian identities as American English is glorified. At the time of joining, the call-centre employees are asked to attend pronunciation classes and are given phonetics handbooks to eliminate their regional influences and become more comprehensible to the American native speakers

of English. Bhagat seems to critique the call-centre's rule that workers use an Americanised form of English in which linguistic traces of their Indian origins are scrubbed away including the pan-Indian blurring between /w/ and /v/ sounds in speech. Shyam who is sometimes compelled to work as one of the call centre's reluctant accent trainers lays bare some of the problems of imitating the American accent: "You might think the Americans and their language are straightforward, but each letter can be pronounced several different ways. I'll give you just one example: T. With this letter Americans have four different sounds. T can be silent, so 'internet' becomes 'innernet' and 'advantage' becomes 'advannage' " (38).

"World Englishes" is a term conventionally employed in sociolinguistic literature to denote that Englishes which have developed as a result of British and American colonialism often excluding the Englishes of the White settler colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. World Englishes can be specified geographically (Indian English) or regionally (South Asian English) which can undergo local codification. World Englishes also refer to the different types of Englishes around the world like "Japanese English", "Chinese English", "Korean English" which are scattered around the world but which have not developed out of the classical period of British colonialism. It is observed that the existence and development of these various types old and new have been extensively facilitated by the process of globalisation. The proliferation of World Englishes is regarded by the "localists" among the linguistic theorists and the "sceptics" of the social sciences as Anglophone-heterogenisation which is taken as a positive outcome

of globalisation. World Englishes are considered as indigenised and nativised Englishes which promote a healthy Anglophone glossodiversity showing national or regional affiliation which functionally serve as languages in their own right.

In the novel, linguistic borrowing from Hindi at several crucial moments is evident especially in the flash-back scenes involving Shyam. Words such as *didi* (60), meaning "sister", *salwar kameez and dupatta* (225), used to denote forms of clothing, *paranthas* and *chai* (37-38), food and drink and the titles of Bollywood songs *Mahi Ve* and *Dil Chahata Hai* (115,122) are used, but the linguistic hybridity created by the Hinglish usages drifts slowly into the monolingual English form as he gets enmeshed in the requirements of the call centre job. The *dhaba* (165) which is the English equivalent of a truck shop is depicted as bearing a greater emotional appeal than the five star hotel.

Lingua Franca English refers to the language of users who choose to employ English as a common denominator for verbal expression. From the perspective of globalisation, the phenomenon gels well with the "transformationalist" perspective embodying a manifestation of linguistic "glocalism" which involves a local appropriation of the global language. The language features words, grammatical features and discourse conventions from different languages and English varieties that speakers bring to the interaction in the communicative process.

The global interconnectedness accentuated by the transnational flow of people in the post cold-war era has certainly altered the traditional notions of

"nation" and "culture". In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, Arjun Appadurai comments on the intensity of the global flow of migrants and the breaking down of national boundaries: "Carried in the repertoires of increasingly mobile populations of refugees, tourists, guest workers, transnational intellectuals, scientists, and illegal aliens, it is increasingly unrestrained by ideas of spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty" (161). The interconnection between the global and the local offers new paradigms for the study of contemporary culture and the English language in particular as social meanings get contested and subverted in interesting ways. The interface between the global and the local foregrounds new spaces of globalised cultural formation breaking down the old categories. The relevance of English as global language emerges in this context while the growing concern over the nativisation of English still persists. However, the linguistic theories pertaining to globalisation propounded by the "glocalists" vouch for a re-examination of the theory of nativisation in the context of the heightened global-local interactions happening today. As David Crystal observes, English is now so widely established that it cannot be thought of as owned exclusively by any single nation. The global spread of the different varieties of English entails diversification, but its unity paradoxically connects all these varieties to form a global linguistic circuit. In this context, the earlier dominant opposition between the centre and the periphery which accorded the hegemonic status to the centre is brought into question. Braj Kachru links English with cultural pluralism when he observes:

> English has 'multiple identities' in its international and intranational functions. . . . We must recognize the linguistic, cultural and pragmatic implications of various types of pluralism: That pluralism has now become an integral part of the English language and literatures written in English in various parts of the non-Western world. The traditional presuppositions and ethnocentric approaches need revaluation. In the international contexts, English represents a repertoire of cultures, not a monolithic culture. (Quoted from McArthur 64)

In *White Teeth*, Alsana echoes this concept as she observes: "You go back and back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale!"(236).

The teenagers of *White Teeth* who hail from different families and different countries of origin nevertheless have common idioms and registers and even accents: " '*Cha*, man! Believe, I don´t *want* to tax dat crap,' said Millat with the Jamaican accent that all kids, whatever their nationality, used to express scorn" (167). The younger generation of the novel, although born and raised in England prefer foreign accents and registers more often as a matter of trend setting or in order to be in vogue with the latest fashion. The mixing up of various slang expressions can be deliberately done as a counter reaction to the white racist homogenising forces. The conversation between Millat Iqbal, the second-generation Bengali immigrant (who arrives with his urban street gang

Raggastani) and the English ticket man at the King Cross's railway station is noteworthy in this context:

> Millat spread his legs like Elvis and slapped his wallet down on the counter.'One for Bradford, yeah?'
>
> The ticket man put his tired face close up to the glass. 'Are you asking me, young man, or telling me?'
>
> 'I just say, yeah? One for Brandfard, yeah? You got some problem, yeah? Speaka da English? This is King's Cross, yeah? One for Bradford, innit?' . . .
>
> 'That'll be seventy-five pounds, then, please.'
>
> This was met with displeasure by Millat and Millat's Crew.
>
> 'You what? Takin' liberties! Seventy—*chaaa*, man. That's *moody*. I aint payin' no seventy-five pounds!'
>
> 'Well, I am afraid that's the price. Maybe next time you mug some poor old lady,' said the ticket man […], you could stop in here first *before* you go to the jewellery store.'
>
> 'Liberties!' squealed Hifan.
>
> 'He's cussin' you, yeah?' confirmed Ranil.
>
> 'You better tell 'im," warned Rajik. . . .
>
> The Crew, on cue: '*Somokami!*'. (199)

The narrator pertinently explicates the linguistic nuances employed: "a strange mix" of Jamaican patois ("*chaaa*, man"), Bengali ("*Somokami!*"), Cockney ("Takin' liberties . . . he's cussin' you"), and Standard English (199).

Jamaican and Bengali are used to imply a type of coalition and group identification in response to white racism which is revealed later in the text when the narrator of the novel introduces the readers to the methodology behind the *Raggastani*. Millat and his group employ this linguistic mixture after they perceive three separate injustices: the first, when the ticket man disapproves of Millat's approach ('Are you asking me, young man, or telling me?'); the second, when the ticket man asks for the seventy-five pounds; and the third, when he looks pointedly at the chunky gold that fell from Millat's ears, wrists, fingers, and from around his neck and accuses him of thievery and of spending his money in all the wrong places. In the novel we find plenty of instances in which Smith has masterfully employed the technique of linguistic assortment using Cockney and Creole, Bengali and the King's English.

The creation of a new ethnic identity by assorting linguistic elements of other cultures is exemplified in the functioning of Millat's group *Raggastani*, which the narrator describes as a cultural mongrel:

> Raggastanis spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing: Allah *featured*, but more as a collective of big brother than a supreme being, a hard-as-fuck *geezer* who would fight in their corner if necessary; Kung Fu and the works of Bruce Lee were also central to the philosophy; added to this was a smattering of Black Power (as embodied by the album *Fear of a Black Planet*, Public Enemy);

> but mainly their mission was to put the invincible back in Indian, the Bad-aaaass back in Bengali, the P-Funk back in Pakistani. (200)

It is to be noted that while the younger generation is keen on employing linguistic inflections, their parents are engaged in a struggle to acquire standard English spoken by the dominant class and some of them in fact are able to speak better English than most English as Samad observes in *White Teeth*: "What kind of a phrase is this: "So what?" Is that English? That is not English. Only the immigrants can speak Queen's English these days" (157).

However, it should be observed that any manifestation of English in an international function is likely to show the evidence of all three varieties and sets of choices. Global English represents language use within specific communities, sub-cultures, business talk and professional communication, at least originally. In World Englishes, the dialects attain predominance, since they function as nationality and convey the geographical identities of the members they designate. As for Lingua Franca English, the functional aspects of communication including vocabulary and grammatical choices emerge as crucial.

To conclude the discussion, it can be noted that as Indian novelist Shashi Deshpande observes, there are certain passwords to the world of literary globality or certain formulations for a literary text in qualifying to get the etiquette of the global. The essentials include, the selection of a language which a large number of readers can read, quite expectedly English and also the explanations presented by the writers about the context of their texts which

should include just enough of the unfamiliar to make it exotic is also required. However, having access to Western agents and publishers owned by giant media conglomerates seem extremely important since only big publishers can sell books on a global scale and only the agents are aware of the demands of the publishers. Finally, the most essential factor in the context of globalisation is marketing, which as Deshpande observes quite critically, has evolved in such a way that nowadays books are sold in the same way as consumer goods.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The world has been a conglomeration of large-scale interactions for many centuries, yet, today's world involves interactions of a new order and intensity. Sustained cultural transactions across the globe have usually involved long-distance journey of commodities and travellers and few will deny the fact that given the huge problems of time, space and limited technologies, dealings and exchanges between socially and spatially separated groups would have been bridged at great costs and sustained over time only with great effort. In the past few centuries at some point, the nature of this gravitational field changed, accelerated by technology transfers and scientific inventions. The revolution of print capitalism and the cultural dialogues unleashed by it were only modest precursors to the world of today, for in the past century, and more so from the latter half of the twentieth, there has been a veritable transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions in terms of their intensity and impact creating transcontinental flows and networks of activity, interaction and exercise of power. These ideas cohere broadly with processes understood as related to globalisation which binds the syntax of the global into a ramifying set of meanings.

If globalisation refers to the profound and unprecedented changes happening in the economic, social, political and cultural contemporary world and has many things in its hold including literature, one can observe diverse manifestations of globalisation within literature and literary studies by way of

thematic representations and manifestations through various literary forms. Literature and literary studies have evolved into a platform for evoking and analysing the multifarious concepts within the domain of globalisation. By delving into some of the key concerns of globalisation as manifested in select literary works, the study has focussed on providing critical insights regarding aspects of contemporary culture and society. The study has also delineated aspects of the transnational character of literature that push beyond national boundaries to engage the global character of contemporary experience and the identities they produce.

One of the major findings of the study is that in the globalised world of today, marked as it is by mass migrations, the old notions of identity—monolithic, unique, nationalist, fundamentalist and exclusive—are no longer sufficient; identity is forged not from unavoidable situational forces, but from the free choices of ever-changing fluid realities. The heightened acceleration of mobility owing to the technological advances made in transport and electronic means of communication has enabled large scale flows of people from developing countries to economically advanced regions possible. Regarded as a land of immense opportunity, London has become a chosen destination for people from the Commonwealth where English identity counts as one of the many identities to be negotiated. In *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith discards holistic or homogenous concepts of national identities in favour of transgressive global urban identities fighting for spaces in today's diverse socio-cultural milieu of London and the challenge today is to find feasible means to live amidst

difference. Although Smith's characters attempt to search, manipulate and negotiate in order to control notions of identity, eventually randomness and chaos of humanity defeat absolute controls as evidenced in the case of both the native and the immigrant characters as the novel stages its fidelity to the optimistic spirit of neoliberal cosmopolitanism. In the novel, the incisions made by conflict and violence are avoided; in the place of conflict, there is juxtaposition of contrasting images; in the place of dissent, there is consensus and while class boundaries and economic disenfranchisement emerge as subjects, they appear flat. The language of the working class emerges as the new form assumed by the narrative absence of a sustained articulated discourse about class distinctions and economic inequality. There are no identities or cultures in the novel that are not the products of global economic and social forces that are continually reshaping human subjectivity and the social structures that sustain them whether we consider the Bowdens with their roots in Africa and colonial Jamaica, the Iqbals with their roots in the tangled history of migration in Bengal or the Chalfens and the Joneses whose "Englishness" is also a complex product of British colonialism. As the events get played out in the last three decades of the twentieth century in the metropolitan city, London that is paradoxically being colonised by its postcolonial subjects fuelled by the interrelated histories of colonisation and globalisation, Smith distorts one of the central tenets of globalisation theory, the notion that globalisation is characterised by a unilateral flow of wealth and cultural commodities from the core to the periphery. As the binary gets reversed, the novel seems to

foreground the nature of the fluid relationship between the metropolis of the coloniser and the world of the colonised

Another conclusion drawn from the study is that the globalised world provides unprecedented opportunities to women as the contemporary scenario demands flexible adaptation and tolerance in the struggle for peaceful adaptation. By focusing on the concept of upward mobility with the thrust on women's informal labour in the global market, Monica Ali lends visibility to the female migrants of Britain within the wider cultural discourse which results in the formation of agency and upward class mobility in her novel *Brick Lane*. In the novel we discern that the protagonist Nazneen is able to find her space and establish foot-hold in multicultural London devoid of male support as she strives to explore the richness of possibilities offered by the globalised world. Nazneen teams up with her friend Razia to form a women's collective that caters to orders from designer clothing boutiques around London. Although such endeavours are regarded as exploitative for the workers, Nazneen and Razia are able to negotiate the terms of their work to their employers rather than being submissive to the ethnic male entrepreneurs who control the sweatshop market. Ali's novel offers the possibility of self-transformation and empowerment for women through solidarity. Living in a metropolis Nazneen is able to intervene to aid her sister Hasina who lives in Bangladesh and is a victim of sexual exploitation and though Nazneen is not able to go at length to reach out to her sister, she is still able to arrive at an awareness and counter the forms of exploitation she is expected to suffer. The denouement of all the three

major plots of the novel—her affair with Karim, the potential return to Bangladesh planned by Chanu and the extraction of the debt incurred by Chanu by the villainous Mrs. Islam—involves Nazneen straightening out her problems through her own agency. She not only tells Karim, her lover, that she cannot marry him, but also musters courage to inform her husband Chanu that she is not accompanying him to Bangladesh. Nazneen stands up to the money lender, Mrs Islam's attempts to extort endless interest payments from her family and even bravely stands up to the vandalism of Islam's sons and the consequent ignominy she has to face. The novel concludes with the depiction of a self-authoring female community comprising Nazneen, her two daughters and her honest friend Razia who are about to go ice-skating, a sport Nazneen had watched with awe on television during her initial days in London. Nazneen's evolution from a passive object of historical forces to being in a position of control is made possible as she overcomes her submissiveness and forges her own space by capitalizing on the opportunities for growth in London's globalised economy. She finds liberation as she rejects the forces of fatalism and gains a new confidence as she becomes the owner of the means of production, when she starts a clothing company with Razia and becomes a competitive player in a market economy. We discern that identity is not a stable fixed essence restricted to the connection to a homeland in the globalised era.

Living as a minority in a global city entails experiencing Islam only as a religion devoid of support by social authority and reconciling the self with religion in a globalised context calls for new forms of religiosity as manifested

in both the novels. In both *White Teeth* and *Brick Lane*, the concept of "neofundamentalism", a product of contemporary globalisation emerges as a common trope. As Olivier Roy observes, the basic tenets of neofundamentalism—individuation, the search for self-actualisation, rethinking of Islam outside the framework of a given culture and the recasting of believers in non-territorial terms are the result of the impact of globalisation on Islam. Millat in *White Teeth* and Karim in *Brick Lane* are second generation Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants with revolutionary dreams who have broken with the pristine culture of their parents but do not feel wanted by the Western society although they have mastered its language and consumption habits.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an act of the communal imagination. Anderson concedes that in the eighteenth century when the novel was just getting itself fashioned, the nation must have appeared unmanageable in its scope and diversity. In contrast to this situation, today with the kind of communication technologies and information resources, our access to the world at large is effortlessly facilitated and is evident that the novel itself has begun to adapt and renew itself by imagining the world instead of the nation. To understand globalisation is to pay attention to the various modalities of connectivity that comes from the networking of social relations across time-space, causing distant events and powers to penetrate our local experience. It is to understand how someone loses his job as a result of corporate downsizing decisions made at a company across the globe or how the

very sense of cultural belonging gets transfigured by the intrusion of global media into our everyday lives.

The study of Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* has resulted in the understanding that digital technologies create an interconnected space that blurs the lines of distinction between nations, cultures and races, all of which are both empowered and made vulnerable by those same technologies. The novel shows how global interconnectedness makes contemporary society subject to external forces incomprehensible and beyond control. *Transmission* foregrounds a computer virus as a technological structure capable of mass destruction invoking the invisible and often unreadable operations of global data circulation. The study reveals how the state of defencelessness, uncertainty and vulnerability created by global free markets which cannot be controlled by man is a major threat to personal security. By combining the seemingly unconnected plots of the Indian software programmer Arjun Mehta, British entrepreneur Guy Swift and Bollywood starlet Leela Zahir, the novel lays bare one of the central facets of globalisation that, we all are connected although we may not realise this fact. The most remote places and the most distant people may have influence on each other and what we do locally can have a global impact. The polarization of the globalised world is represented in the schism between the portrayal of Arjun, a third world immigrant who is excluded from the patterns of production and consumption and Guy Swift who can "swiftly" move anytime and anywhere across the globe with sufficient means to cover his expenses.

Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* reflects the changing urban landscape in globalising India. The exponentially growing cities and urban zones along with their concomitant global factors affecting the lifestyles, dreams, passions and attitudes of today's youth are depicted through the lives of six call centre employees. The study has arrived at the finding that although women empowerment is one of the positive outcomes of globalisation, consumerism, erosion of values, job insecurity in the wake of heightened capitalism, stress, anxiety and fear are some of the negative off-shoots associated with it.

Another significant finding of the study is the understanding of the role played by the new media in the globalised wired world where possibilities of resistance are wider due to the presence of technology as exemplified in both *One Night @ the Call Centre* and *Transmission*. The novels employ "terror" as a strategy to defend the privileges fight against the inequalities of the existing economic and power relations within the contemporary global economy. *Transmission* shows how computer hacking is employed by a disenfranchised Indian immigrant worker against an economically powerful nation such as the United States. *One Night @ the Call Center* also employs the idea of electronic terrorism as a strategy to sabotage the global hegemony of American capitalism wrecking havoc on the third world workers across the international division of labour.

It should be observed that along with the connection between globalisation and literature which appears at the level of textual analysis, there

is a concrete relation between globalisation and literature which works around and manipulates literature from outside by the globalisation of the publishing industry. A major finding of the study is linked to the presence of commercial forces which underlie the writing, publishing and retailing of fiction which are a predominant global presence today than ever before. The most prolifically discussed development in the publishing industry in the late twentieth century impacted by the process of globalisation, is the phenomenal transition of the industry from being a stronghold of a large number of independent and largely nationally based firms to becoming dominated by a limited number of multinational media corporations. The media today has an overarching presence in the contemporary literary scene and one of the prevailing trends of recent publishing history is the intensification of the marketing activity driven by media on a global scale. The increasing commodification of the literary field and other domains including music, video, film, sport, dance, theatre and the internet and their unification in a vast global "entertainment" market have become powerfully synergistic devices of publicity and promotion. Intensified media conglomeration and increasingly sophisticated brand management makes authorship a corporate affair. The role of the author in the promotional venture has invariably given rise to the celebritisation of authorship. Authors giving readings in bookshops and being constantly present at literary festivals and lifestyle sections of newspapers have resulted in a system of valuation by the market where youth, good looks and international connections seem to be prerequisites for success. The drive for profits has changed the practices across

the book industry, in the manner in which editors and agents work and retailing is structured. Coming to the Indian scenario, there has been a palpable shift from "serious literature" to "mass market literature" targeting consumers from within India. Thus popular fictional works by Indian authors especially Chetan Bhagat are enormously successful bestsellers in India. The globalisation of the publishing industry has resulted in the containment of a certain variety of literary production (both the international mass-market books like The Harry Potter series or *The Da Vinci Code* could be marketed and consumed as successfully as anywhere else) as well as the indigenisation of Indian English writing and Indian literature in translations. The study reveals that literary canons which were determined by academia and dominant class interests embedded in cultural institutions are exceedingly dependent upon the processes controlling the production, marketing and circulation of books at a well orchestrated global level.

On probing the impact of globalisation on the English language and investigating the depiction of the three conceptualisations of language namely "Global English", "World Englishes" and "Lingua Franca English" in the works chosen, it can be concluded that any manifestation of English in an international function is likely to reveal the evidence of all three varieties and sets of choices. Global English represents language use within specific communities, sub-cultures, business talk and professional communication. In World Englishes, the dialects attain predominance, since they function as nationality markers and convey the geographical identities of the members they

designate. As for Lingua Franca English, the functional aspects of communication including vocabulary and grammatical choices emerge as crucial.

In this era, to globalise or not is not the question. Rather, we should be able to view this as a process which impacts the entire humanity which should be turned to our advantage so that it benefits all. The first step is to imagine ourselves, first and foremost as members of humanity in all its vulnerable, precariously exposed planetarity. This is where the role of literature and the novel in particular, comes to the fore, breaking up myths of self-containment in order to enable us to have another look at ourselves and acknowledge our actual position within the world, which is simultaneously aspirational and free, finite and framed. Globalisation puts into question, the notion of community, how we connect to one another, starting with the most intimate levels of everyday existence (our lives as family members and friends) via our communal neighbourhoods right up to the abstract heights of the nation and the globe as a whole. We should be wary about a host of seemingly workable global management plans like neo-liberalism or religious fundamentalism, because these are prone to totalisation, either disenfranchising and subsuming the individual or recklessly fetishising the self at the expense of society. What is required is not an improbable global synthesis or its denial but a middle path treading cautiously in the interstices of affirmation and negation. We should be able to accept humanity's multitudinous and vast differences which are its inalienable traits. As Jessica Berman observes in *Modernist Fiction,*

Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community, in order to build a viable, cosmopolitan future for the world as a whole, we must learn "to imagine a political realm where incomplete communication or disagreement over shared values is the norm, and where translation is always fraught with difficulty" (201-2).

The greatest cosmopolitical challenge is to conceive a global politics which circumvents the dangers of both totalisation and disintegration by radically recasting the relationship between self and other. We have to accept that communal responsibility, sharing and compassion are not second nature to us: they *are* our nature. Although we may not be family exactly, we are always society. If we attempt to ignore, ostracise or even exterminate our fellow beings, the injury we inflict as well as the ensuing trauma, will invariably be our own. It is imperative that we take a closer look at the warped post-Enlightenment conception of subjectivity and alterity, which lies at the root of much of the contemporary world-political conflicts. We need to abstain for good from globalisation's agglomerative practices of segregation, partitioning and self-enclosure.

Instead of oscillating between pure moments of utopian opposition and lame complicity and co-option, the process of interrogating the oppositions that inform representations rooted in either utopianism or pessimism furthers the understanding of contemporary culture's critical potential. Foregrounding an understanding of globalisation as a complex and multi-layered phenomenon, the study has examined the ways in which humanity engages in fluid and multi-

dimensional negotiations, which are not just characteristic of contemporary culture, but a central part of its creative process, a process that offers a privileged insight into the ways in which it might be possible to find expression in the changing climate of the globalising world.

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