

A Comparative Study of the feminist Portrayal of Rosie in Narayan's *The Guide* and Ila in Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

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Declaration

I, Sadia Yasmeen, affirm that I had spent enough time adequately reviewing the research paper guidelines set by the Department of English held at Daffodil International University. I am committed to being bound by all the policy's particulars, complete rules, and regulations. My original scholarly contribution to English literature is a thesis titled "A Comparative Research of the Feminist Portrayal between Rosie in Narayan's *The Guide* and Ila in Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. During my research, I have carefully examined all relevant resources and adequately cited and mentioned each one.

The research paper was conducted during the spring 2024 semester under the supervision of Ms. Fatema Begum Laboni, Assistant Professor in the Department of English. The project significantly contributed to my English Honours degree. I endorse that this document, or any part of it, has never been submitted to anything similar, for scholarship, other degree, publication, or others. I guarantee that the text of this particular piece is the result of my efforts.

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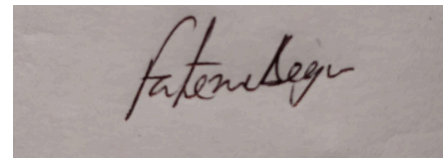


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Certification of the Academic Supervisor

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “A Comparative Study of the Feminist Portrayal of Rosie in R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* and Ila in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* submitted by Sadia Yasmeen (202-10-2312) of Summer 2020 has been reviewed and accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English. Sadia Yasmeen has shown commendable dedication and scholarly insight in her research.



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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to bring forth a comparative analysis of the portrayal of female characters, Rosie of R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) and Ila of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988). Based on comparative literature and feminist theories, the study goes up to the norms and complexities of gender issues in South Asian literature with two different decades and settings. It looks at the similarity and differences between Rosie and Ila as they attempt to attain independence and authority over their own lives. This research focuses on investigating, from a feminist point of view, the factors that arise from external situations and affect the goal of identifying the persistent and evolving problems women have to overcome in order to achieve self-determination and empowerment. While a broader investigation could have been done using theories of postcolonialism, postmodernism, capitalism, and psychology, this study specifically focuses on the feminist perspective.

Keywords: Rosie, Ila, feminist, gender, patriarchy, female.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

This research compares two significant novels by prominent South Asian writers to study the depiction of female characters from different eras. The two books are *The Guide* by R.K. Narayan, published in 1958, and *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh, published in 1988. Although many female characters are brought to life in both works, the research attempts to compare and contrast the characters of Rosie from *The Guide* and Ila from *The Shadow Lines* instead as representatives of females of their time. While a broader analysis could include postcolonialism, postmodernism, psychology, etc., this research will only focus on feminist theories to explore the changes in these characters. The study will also utilise the theory of comparative literature to compare these two characters. This paper is about how South Asian writers, specifically Indian male writers, present women in their stories, and it examines the details of their representation in the changing socio-cultural context.

Rosie, the central character of RK Narayan's story, initially gets introduced as a suppressed woman who finds her way out of the clutches of patriarchy, leading to the discovery of her artistic ability in early post-colonial society. By contrast, in Ila, Ghosh portrays her character as uncompromising and fist-fighting for freedom in a post-modern world. These two novels show that postcolonialism has affected the position of women in South Asian society. This juxtaposition focuses on the inner lives of the two central women and how colonialism ultimately influences their social status. This research focuses on the transformations in social structure and reveals the gender roles and women's identifications, bringing feminism to the centre of the global scene.

1.1. Background and Context:

South Asian English literature is vibrant, and R. K. Narayan occupies a part of it, where his novels portray the life of India with something eternal alongside wit and humour. Simultaneously with Narayan, other writers widely known in those days greatly influenced the world of literature as distinct works of art weaning from their mothers for their reputation. Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain symbolises feminist ideology with her novel "Sultana's Dream" (1905), which is about a

utopian society where women are in charge. In his 1916 drama "Chaturanga", Rabindranath Tagore depicts the relations in the culture of colonial India, choosing the most lyrical style with the highest insight into human life. Moreover, Raja Rammohun Roy, as one of the frontrunners of the Bengal Renaissance, imparted widely on society reform through his influential English writings and overcoming linguistic differences. Though primarily known for his contributions to Indian languages like Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit, Rammohan Roy penned notable English works such as "A Defence of Hindu Theism" (1820), "The Precepts of Jesus: *The Guide to Peace and Happiness* (1820), and "Remarks on Settlement in India by Europeans" (1823). In such a diverse literary realm, Narayan's works tower above the rest as a manifestation of his unparalleled art, persuading readers to enter the labyrinth of India's society and take a peek at the intricacies that it hides within.

This comparative study takes us on a journey where we will uncover women's representation across ages, seeing their characterisation through the lines of *The Guide* (1958) by Narayan together with those in another classic novel, *The Shadow Lines* (1988) by Amitav Ghosh. Through a close reading of Rosie and Ila's roles, desires, and opportunities in their respective fights against gendered norms, we hope to clarify how concepts of womanhood and gender matter have evolved in South Asian literature.

RK Narayan is one of the well-known figures in early Indian literature in English. Protecting the flavour of the female characters, he represents the courageous women who are outspoken about social concerns, fight for equality, express their personality, and hence gain independence despite the harsh societal norms. In this story, R. K. Narayan projects one of his most attractive characters, who represents an innocent child, alongside the relentless acquisitions. She is a descendant of the temple dancers, but Rosie goes against what society expects from her; she does not drop out of school. Instead, she continued her education and earned a postgraduate degree in Economics. Devadasi women were especially restricted, and control over their lives was very limited. Her character is to be admired because she displayed a great boldness and firmness of purpose, which was unusual for that time.

The Devadasis have a dual—and sometimes controversial—position since they are the objects of rituals and oral historical traditions in Modern Indian society. The Sanskrit words "God's

servant," which both make up the word Devadasi, hint that it would be a wrong assumption that a Devadasi is born out of pity. This was a difficult and honourable job in which the dedicated women served their Gods through music, dance and other religious rituals in a Hindu temple. The dharma or sampradaya, by definition, had a supreme status, and Devadasis were said to be their spiritual divinities and, because of this, were believed to have the power of being mediators in community issues during the time. On the other hand, after this period, the devadasi tradition was associated with various social and cultural factors that resulted in many of their exploits. Frequently, the reverse was true, with the Devadasis getting stigmatised, the victim of economic exploitation and sexual servitude. They spent all their mental, physical and emotional resources on worshipping a god. Still, they did not receive any sense of humanity and dignity as they were same-sex and entertainment turning into commodities for the rich.

Nevertheless, it was later enmeshed into the social and cultural norms that were violating it and pushing it to the sidelines. Unfortunately, there often was a taboo on Devdasis associated with societal scorn, economic oppression and sexual servitude. Their devotion to the deity sometimes covered up the real troubles in their lives, where they were just like prostitutes or entertainment for rich people.

The process by which traditional Devadasi institutions were eroded can be associated with colonial British rule, which regarded them as immoral and then sought to abolish them. Acts and legislations like the Madras Devadasis Prevention of Dedication Act of 1947 and the Bombay Devadasi Protection Act of 1934 did set the stage for the eradication of this custom; however, they ignored the root causes that made people turn to this practice.

Despite her Devadasi background of being a low-caste family, Rosie's mother manages to marry her to Marco, a man who is a wealthy bachelor and a scholar by position. In this relationship, Rosie's worth is diminished by her physical looks, and she is supposed to do her duty as a faithful wife without any complaints. Then, she is degraded to an object, and the man with whom she is involved uses her only for his pleasure. However, R.K Narayan's superior portrayal of Rosie's battle for the afterlife is brought forth by the fact that she goes from being a victim by the two males, who are defying the norms of society, to being an independent lady who is setting herself free from the shackles of norms of the society.

The bustling tapestry of South Asian English literature has an increasingly recognisable face named Amitav Ghosh, and each of his stories brings out the deeper issues hidden behind historical, cultural, or identity discourses. While Ghosh's magnificent works were captivating the public eye, there arose a whole number of writers in the process who brought a new casting of colours to the literary world, already lively with its hues. "The God of Small Things" (1997) by Arundhati Roy investigates the difficulties of family relationships and hierarchies of power, while Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss" (2006) shows the intricate network these two notions form. "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" (2007) by Mohsin Hamid takes on a unique way to explore the twisted intricacies of identity and belonging in the times of 9/11, and "Home Fire" (2017) by Kamila Shamsie brilliantly mirrors the problem of radicalisation and citizenship. It is the way Jhumpa Lahiri describes the life of immigrants, and that sense of specialness in "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999), likewise full of care and understanding, is very clear. The futuristic South Asian authors tend to do this through their works by introducing a good human understanding and social development changes as well.

Amitav Ghosh, an Indian-born writer, uses complex narrative techniques in his novels to get to the heart of the matter of national and individual identities and focuses on the people of India and Southeast Asia. The prominent novel *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh is woven of silk thread that intertwines the themes of identity, emigration, and cultural dissonance, and the character of Ila represents the deeper and more complex psychology of the second generation of exile. Ila's character in the storyline reveals a tragic life of people who find themselves in the middle of two worlds as they try to reconcile with their personal past and deal with the current reality. She stands as the image of the post-modern condition, and her character represents the deep influence of cultural displacement and the resultant identity crisis that characterises her life. The peculiarity of her journey is that she moves through various foreign cultures and cultures of the country she lives in, India, which makes her experience a spiritual effect of psychology and the release of post-colonial and post-modern influences.

1.2 Limitations of the Study:

The comparison, in this case, concerns two novels, *The Guide* and *The Shadow Lines*, which cannot be considered truly representative literary works of women's image across all times or literary pieces. The study mainly looks into the representation of women in the novels that are considered to be embedded within particular cultures and regions. This can incite doubt regarding the extent to which the findings can be applied in broader cultural or historical contexts. Besides, this study focuses on two characters, Rosie from *The Guide* and Ila from *The Shadow Lines*, although there are a lot of other female characters in the texts. The study is narrowed down to only these specific characters from both books, followed by the analysis, and the remaining female characters are excluded from the study area. Finally, this study solely examines the feminist perspective, limiting the exploration of other influential factors like postcolonialism, postmodernism, and capitalism.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How do the characters of Rosie and Ila reveal the gender dynamics and societal norms of their respective eras?
2. What similarities and differences between Rosie and Ila reflect the societal contexts of 1950s and 1980s South Asian culture?

1.4 Research Objectives:

1. To analyse the characteristics of Rosie and Ila in R.K. Narayan's and Amitav Ghosh's novels through a feminist perspective.
2. To compare and contrast Rosie and Ila as reflections of the evolving societal contexts of 1950s and 1980s South Asian culture, examining how the socio-cultural environments portrayed in each text illustrate these changes over time.

1.5. Significance of the Study

One of the most discussed aspects of RK Narayan's *The Guide* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is the portrayal of their female characters and the way it influenced the use of gender roles and agency in each novel, respectively. However, there is a scarcity of research that compares the

representation of female characters in these two seminal works. With each writer performing an individual examination of his female characters, however, the lack of comparative research makes it difficult to understand how the characters are presented differently or similarly by male authors from different decades and distinct cultural environments. The central objective of this research is to overcome the lacuna present in this area by carrying out a comparative study of the gender depictions in the two characters, Rosie and Ila. This should bring out the evolutionary state of gender representation in South Asian literature during the post-colonial era. The aim of this study is to comprehend the intricacies of gender portrayal and narrative agency through the juxtaposition of these two female characters in a feminist theory framework, and by doing this study, the nuances of these two female characters across different temporal and cultural landscapes will be unravelled. Through this lens, it hopes to expose new perspectives on women's identity reconstruction in South Asian literature.

Chapter 2

Literature review

The way women are portrayed in literature is a very complicated and multidimensional area of study that has been explored and examined by many experts from different fields. In this literature review, the researcher will delve into the portrayal of women across different eras, examining their roles, agency, and societal constructs as depicted in two seminal works: *The Guide* of R. K. Narayan and *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh. The study looks at the comparative character analysis of Rosie and Ila and has shown how they are depicted in the context of broader socio-cultural, feminist, psychological, post-colonial, and post-modern perspectives." The authority scholars in the historiography of women in literature grant the practice of examining artistic images of women to uncover hierarchical structures, societal attitudes, and cultural changes, cements the relevance of this investigation. By analysing the literature review, which is a study of studies and research, and searching for research gaps and theoretical underpinnings, the author will be able to contextualise the analysis. Many various theoretical approaches, namely feminism, psychology, postcolonialism, and postmodernism, may be applied to understand the complexity of women's representation in literature through different lenses to reveal the gender positions, stereotypes, agency and intersectionality patterns. With regard to the navigation of this literature review, it is essential to recognise that this field is full of many great scholarly contributions, the only aim being to join the existing body of knowledge with other efforts that will invariably help to gain a deepened understanding of the evolution of the representation of women in literature across various historical, cultural, and ideological contexts.

2.1 Related Studies

The role that women play in stories provide a mirror through which the audience can discern the characters of their society like gender issues, cultural changes and social norms. In the works of R. K. Narayan *The Guide* and Amitav Ghosh *The Shadow Lines* written in different eras and genres, the depiction of female characters gives us indications of patriarchal structures, post-colonial legacies and the roles of women in society.

In the work by R. K. Narayan, *The Guide*, Rosie is a major character who portrays, in a very clear way, the complex nature of the modern Indian woman who is trying to be in charge of her life despite the many restrictions of society. The underlying meaning of Dr. Ashok Kumar's insight can be seen in terms of Rosie's major role in the novel as a figure representing the desire for autonomy in the narrative. This female character shows different positions of women's experiences in the novel through her interactions with Raju's mother and Velan's sister (Kumar, 2015).

Raising the point of Uday Trivedi's discussion, we can say that Rosie is, in fact, a woman who commands the thoughts of other people to chart her personal course in earnest. Trivedi speaks highly of Rosie's firmness and dedication. Uday Trivedi writes about Rosie:

She is presented as a woman who can rise above the humdrum and has the strength to be true to herself. In her, the ideals are redefined. Social castigation is not necessarily justified. Nor is it the end of the world. (136)

Lakshmi Holmstrom also examined Rosie's internal struggles and the conflict between her own happiness and social norms. Holmstrom depicts Rosie as a dancer who is unhappy being just a housewife, and this perfectly illustrates the conflict between an individual dream and social norms. Holmstrom asserts,

It is, in fact, when she attempts to move outside her caste and into respectable society that Rosie's position becomes ambiguous. The things pull against her role as a wife: her need for passion and her need to dance, both symbolised in the snake, the snake dance. (68)

Scholars contrasting the patriarchal themes in R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* write that the patriarchal structure was toppled during colonialism and the post-colonial era as women abused their status. Gulnaz Fatma's analysis of the patriarchal structures as sociological constructions that are passed down from one generation to the other can be considered a basis for understanding the dynamics of power and submission in the novel. Gulnaz Fatma says that "patriarchy is the result of sociological constructions that are passed down from generation to generation." (Fatma 20).

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The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh explores the issues of diaspora, nationalism, and cultural dislocation through characters like Tha'mma and Ila. Meenakshi Mukherjee says, "perceived as a challenge to be overcome through the use of imagination and desire until space gets dissolved" (Mukherjee 256). Furthermore, Franz Fanon's concepts throw light on the influence of colonisation on identity and thus help to explain Ila's disconnection from her cultural heritage ("The Wretched of the Earth"). Thus, this literature review presents a very sophisticated knowledge that forms the basis of the research on diasporic subjects in *The Shadow Lines* and the literature of postcolonialism.

The character of Ila in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is set up in a broader quantity against post-colonial concepts and diasporic literature. Through Trivedi's observation of "shadow lines" in South Asia, the location and nature of boundaries are brought to light, along with shared histories among countries like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. This has impacted Ila's outlook and its cultural inclusiveness (Trivedi 188). In addition, the criticism of Fanon's gender inequality portrayal, which is problematically attached to Ila's character, makes the themes of desire and colonial hegemony to be highlighted (Leach 90). Following the South Asian diaspora literature (Maxey), the romantic relationships between characters who are national, racial, or cultural insiders and the outsiders, including those of Ila with the narrator and Nick, are long-lasting. Moreover, the comparison of Ila with Piya from Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" reveals the consequences of Ila's otherness, which greatly influence her desires and interactions in the story (Ghosh, "The Hungry Tide"). The character of Jethamoshai is another proof of the family and cultural context of Ila, and at the same time, it is a symbol of the legacy of Partition and the conflict within the family (5 Author). Technical connections between Ila's character and Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" link her character to the wider discourse about trauma and staying impact; that is why we can find out more about her feelings and motives.

Therefore, these nuances, together with their interpretation, help us better understand the persona of Ila within the thematic scope of diaspora, identity, and trauma in *The Shadow Lines*.

2.2 Research gap:

Previous studies on the rendering of female characters in *The Guide* and *The Shadow Lines* have widely explored themes like personal autonomy, cultural dynamics, and post-colonial identity with a deep focus. Kumar, Trivedi, and Holmstrom are the scholars who have given many insights into the complex way in which these two women are portrayed in their specific socio-cultural contexts. Likewise, writers like Fatma, Walby, Mukherjee, Walia, Biyani, etc., go on to analyse patriarchy as well as diasporic identities as a result of post-colonial dynamics in these novels.

There is an abundance of research on the themes and characters of individual novels and novellas investigated, but there seems to exist a gap in systematic research on a comparative study of the female characters from different times, such as Rosie from *The Guide* and Ila from *The Shadow Lines*. Even though the studies that were done before have had a great impact on the interpretation of these characters in their own stories, there is a lack of comparative studies that show how these characters are the same and how they are different in the context of the changes in the society and the culture and the literary movements that occurred over a period of time.

This work will, therefore, tackle this window to look into the phenomenon of gender difference as depicted in the characterisation of both Rosie and Ila. The method of analysis will follow the different ideologies of feminism. Through the comparison of the two female characters from different decades, the research aims to shed light on the transformations of women and gender dynamics in literature. The study will outline important issues, such as culture's impact on literature and techniques used by Narayan and Ghosh to grasp the complexity of women's portrayal in the twentieth century. By this comparative method, the study wants to add to the knowledge of the transformations in the views and roles of women in Indian literature during the mid-20th to the late 20th century.

2.3 Theoretical Studies:

2.3.1 Comparative Literature:

In order to understand why comparative literature is necessary to grasp feminism in different periods, we must first go back to 1948, when Matthew Arnold coined the word "comparative literature" in English for the first time. He defines this expression as follows: "Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literatures" This "connection" proves useful when comparing novels written within the same culture but different periods because such a comparison would reveal the ways in which female characters and feminist issues are depicted as changing in response to societal and historical transitions.

According to Siddharth Desai,

We often seek to reference or compare new stuff we read to something else. Human nature is like that. The concepts in the two texts are contrasted. This is the rationale for Arnold's statement in the definition of comparative literature that "everywhere there is connection." (38)

Comparing two things always looks for commonalities between them. The goal of comparisons is to find commonalities between two texts, societies, literary works, etc. This method becomes particularly effective when analysing topics that relate to the problems of feminism. In this way, by looking at the issue of feminism within a culture and comparing these works that were produced in different time periods, we can gain insight into the changes in the perception of feminism as a concept.

When analysing the phenomenon of the shift in South Asian feminism through the comparative literature approach focusing on *The Guide* and *The Shadow Lines*, one obtains the set of values that form a more extended and solid framework of analysis. Through an analysis of the characters of Rosie and Ila, it is possible to outline the evolution of women's role in society and historical influences on the views of feminism in the particular area.

2.3.2 "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House": Audre Lorde:

Audre Lorde's essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," found in her collection *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984), is a poignant critique of the contradictions of feminism today and a culture-change opportunity for a feminist movement that embraces radical thinking. The paper is focused on highlighting the obstacles that a lot of traditional methods and frameworks show to real liberation and emphasising that cross-sectionality and diversity are the keys to freedom. "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Lorde 1984). This sentence reflects the central doctrine of Lorde's saying that by using tools developed by a patriarchal society, women won't achieve their true freedom. Moreover, these tools can hardly achieve long-term and profound success.

The focal idea of Lorde's essay is acknowledging and showing respect for the fact that women are different and why no two women are alike. She criticises the feminist movement for often omitting the viewpoints and experiences of women of colour, lesbians and other communities of marginalised individuals. By promoting unity, which doesn't disregard these differences and favouring togetherness over solidarity, the only change that makes a fundamental difference can be achieved. "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic" (Lorde, 1984).

Here, the author advances a method that does not tolerate differences but rather a system that encompasses differences. She believes that diversity can act as a propeller for new innovations and social movements. It is this perception that makes diversity an engine that can drive meaningful social change.

Finally, it is Lorde's plea to the readers to look to the techniques that originate from and are based on the life stories of the oppressed population. She underlines that these innovative approaches should be aimed at deconstructing rather than just operating inside these new systems of power. "Only within a patriarchal structure is maternity the only social power open to women" (Lorde, 1984).

These critiques reveal how the roles and power of women have been associated with society's fixed structures, ranging from most traditional to women's movements. Lorde challenges mismatched views instead and sees us build a new horizon that no empire could ever want to surge.

The excluded population forms a valuable source of critical knowledge on the social divisions ordinary people can not fully understand and witness differently from them. These actors, whether chosen or not, play the two roles, as resistance and transformation strategies are affected by their views.

"Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women... know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures" (Lorde, 1984).

This is to show how people at the margins of society can still demonstrate their positive attributes such as resiliency and power. Lorde brings out the one fact that their resistance will be effective only if they build on their fighting skills and commonness and evolve to counter oppression.

2.3.3 "The Second Sex": Simone de Beauvoir:

Simone de Beauvoir, in "The Second Sex," comes up with the idea that womanhood is built socially and, thus, it is oppressed in a very big way since history has shown this to be true. Beauvoir's main work is a study of different themes centred on the lives of women, such as their societal rank and the emotional dimension of female sexuality. Mainly, the essence of hers lies in the phenomenon of "the Other," which has been the way in which women were seen as being inferior to men for ages.

One of Beauvoir's primary arguments is that women have been taught their entire lives that they belong in the kitchen and are superior simply because they are female. As a result, these beliefs have caused them to feel self-conscious and have entirely destroyed the notion of being independent. She writes, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 1949, p.

267), which means that the woman is not her gender, but the way she grows up and she changes from time to time, so the woman can be seen like a fluid and a variable role and identity.

Besides, in her writing, she looked into the ways how women's bodies have been used by men to identify and control them, thus depriving them of agency and autonomy over their own lives. She thoroughly analyses the societal expectations that are burdened on women to carry out traditional roles of wife and mother, which in turn limits women's potential and thus, subjugates them.

Beauvoir is the one who is fighting for women's right to be free; she is asking for a complete overhaul of the way men and women behave and the tearing down of the society that keeps men in power. She tells us the significance of women having their own lives, asserting their agency and autonomy, then stating,

"No woman should be authorised to stay at home to raise her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one" (Beauvoir 786).

2.3.4 “Margin to Center”: Bell Hooks

Bell Hooks, in her major books, explores the intersectional approach to feminist theory, which is the experience and the struggle of marginalised women. "Feminist Theory: "Margin to Center" is a continuation of Hooks' intersectional perspective, promoting a feminist theory which gives precedence to the experience of marginalised women. She claims that mainstream feminism has mostly been controlled by white, middle-class people, and thus, the issues of women of colour, working-class women, and others who are not so well-represented were not taken into account. Hooks contends that "Feminist politics aims to end domination, to free us to be who we are—to live lives where we love justice, where we can live in peace" (Hooks 29). Hook's ideology is centred on the experiences of underprivileged women, and it calls for a more inclusive and transformative feminist praxis while simultaneously challenging oppressive systems.

Hooks is in favor for a revolutionary feminism whose ultimate goal is the reconstruction of the society, as women are just believed to be integrated into the prevailing patriarchal structure. She

contends that it is only through the demolition of not only the patriarchal but also the capitalist and imperial systems, that true emancipation can come about.

"Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels... as well as a commitment to reorganising society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires." (Hooks 24)

The vision of women's liberation is not limited only to issues that concern women; rather, it involves a wider approach that puts forward the deprivation and exploitation of all.

2.3.5 “Gender Trouble”: Judith Butler:

Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity is a post-modern approach to gender that has been widely studied and incorporated into the academic and social spheres, providing an alternative perspective to the traditional approaches to gender.

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, articulated in her influential work "Gender Trouble: "Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, contradicts the usual notion of gender as a natural and innate group. Butler reasons that gender is not an innate thing but is rather produced and reproduced through the repetition of certain actions and behaviours. According to her, gender is performative, which means that its very essence is determined by the actions that appear to embody it. In "Gender Trouble," Butler states:

"Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being." (33).

This quote emphasises Butler's claim that gender identity is not a sincere reflection of the inner self but rather a set of performances that satisfy social norms and expectations. Gender performativity is the ongoing repetition of actions which correspond to the cultural codes of femininity or masculinity.

The theory of Butler focuses on social norms and conventions as the factors that influence the formation of gender identities. She argues: "Gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be." (Butler 25) In this text, Butler presents the notion that gender is created through the actions and behaviours of individuals and consequently, gender identity is established and strengthened. The performative aspect of gender denotes that identities are not necessarily fixed or predetermined but are rather dependent on the situation and changeable.

2.3.6 “The Feminine Mystique”: Betty Friedan:

In her very influential book, "The Feminine Mystique," the author, Betty Friedan, " presents a close study of the society-wide demands on women after World War II. Friedan named the phrase "the feminine mystique" as the general idea that women could only be full of life through the house and family roles, which usually caused the women to be unhappy and unfulfilled. "The feminine mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity." (Friedan 59) This quotation proves how Friedan criticised the society in which the women had to conform to the rule of being wives and mothers and, thus, did not allow themselves to be happy and achieve their goals.

Friedan's theory focuses on the importance of women's ability to realise their own dreams and to be intellectually alive, not being bound by traditional gender roles. The lady requests a rethinking of social norms and requirements regarding women's roles and capacities. Friedan denies the belief that the main role of women is to take care of house chores; rather, she supports the idea of women's freedom and the ability to make choices.

Chapter: 3

Method and Procedure

3.1 Methodology:

This study examines the portrayal of feminism in two books through close reading and textual analysis. It includes literary and academic articles and incorporates major theories such as Bell Hooks' "From Margin to Center," which underlines intersectionality; Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" which elaborates on the concept of femininity; and Judith Butler's "Gender Trouble" which discusses the performativity of gender. These theories will assist the writer in analysing all aspects of feminism in the two books.

These theories will be useful in examining the feminism-related topics in the two books. Thoughts and methods from comparative literature shown by Mathew Arnold will also be used in this study's discussion to compare and contrast the various ways the characters are portrayed.

3.2 Procedures:

The steps followed by this research are:

1. The steps followed by this research are:
2. Examining the two chosen texts.
3. Observing critical viewpoints of the characters in order to clarify the discussion.
4. Analysing the two chosen texts thematically using feminist theories such as "Margin to Center" by Bell Hooks, "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir, and "Gender Trouble" by Judith Butler. Navigating the growth of Rosie and Ila in their respective eras.
5. Examining the similarities and differences among the characters in the chosen texts using the rules of comparative literature shown by Mathew Arnold.
6. Presenting the findings.
7. Using MLA format while creating the reference.

Chapter 4

Discussion and Analysis

The chapter will delve into the feminist dimensions experienced by two intriguing characters: The female characters are Rosie from R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) and Ila from Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988). This chapter delves into the problems that these women have to experience in patriarchal societies, thus, revealing the social forces that mould their lives. The scholar will carry out a comparative research of Rosie and Ila, considering the development of feminist themes over the course of twenty years. Through the research of their stories, the researcher is looking for both the changes and the unchanging things in the life of the women during this time. The researcher will figure out whether these characters, even though they are facing the problems, find a way to make their own identities. In doing this, the researcher will capture what Rosie and Ila are, but at the same time the researcher will be able to see the whole concept of the girls' depiction of gender norms and their struggle against the patriarchal society.

4.1 Assertion of power in Power in *The Guide*

In *The Guide*, you can find descriptions of what women in the 50's looked through the character of Rosie. The patriarchy of the society was more on the harsh side than today. For instance, females had no power and authority over themselves and totally relied on male figures in their lives. As Rosie is a girl of Devadasi background, she has no control over decision-making and has to obey her husband at all costs. She tries her best to be Marco's ideal housewife, even though he shows no interest in or appreciation for her efforts. "Rosie went on like a good wife, saying, ,I hope there is food to eat, and everything is okay."(Narayan 99) Rosie allows Marco to dominate her which feeds to the existing patriarchal norms.

"If observed carefully, one finds that the submissiveness of women and their act of giving themselves away to be controlled in the hands of the males is equally responsible for empowering the already existing system of patriarchal dominance." (Saikia, 11)

It is clear that Rossie's personal interests are neglected by Marco. When Rosie shares her enthusiasm about watching a king cobra dancing to the music of flute, Marco is disgusted and says, "If it interests you, you can make your own arrangements. Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake—your interests are morbid." (Narayan 49)

He doesn't love Rosie and only marries her so that he has someone to look after him. When he praises Joseph because he does all the work silently, and it feels as if he isn't even there, it shows that this is how he expects Rosie to be. "Oh, perfect, perfect!" he cried. That Joseph is a wonderful man. I don't see him, I don't hear him, but he does everything for me at the right time." (Narayan 99) Marco's enthusiasm about Joseph indicates his expectation of Rosie to be invisible and do all the menial jobs for him and not fuss about her passion or dream. When Raju enters Rosie's life, she finds another male figure to rely on. Raju's continuous compliments and encouragement to work on her dancing career make Rosie grow weak towards him. When Marco leaves Rosie, she goes straight to Raju for his support.

It appears that Marco is less interested in his wife, who is a living representation of those images, and more fascinated in the sculptures on the walls and stones of caves. He is drawn to things that are decaying and dead, but not to things that are alive, laughing, and dreaming.

In his tale, Raju remembers how Rosie longs to savour the little, everyday pleasures. "She liked to loaf in the market, eat in a crowded hotel, wander about, see a cinema—these common pleasures seemed to have been beyond her reach all these days." (Narayan, 84)

Their marriage was obviously in danger. Dev states,

"If Rosie is driven to the arms of a stranger, it is partly not her fault. Had he considered the basic needs of the woman he takes for a wife. He has offered insult to the womanhood and in turn womanhood in Rosie raise its hood to leave 'fangs marks' on him". (2)

As a result, Rosie chooses to live with Raju, a different guy, and divorce her lawful husband. Even in modern India, these kinds of relationships are not highly promoted, so in 1958, Rosie or perhaps more accurately, Narayan had the guts to pursue them. It is the nation of the myths of Sita and Savitri, which Narayan has included into this book.

Additionally, excellent wives grant their husbands forgiveness for all of their transgressions and offer agnipariksha as evidence of their physical cleanliness. However, Rosie offers an alternative.

Rosie allows Raju to make all the decisions for her. She bears all the criticism and insults because Raju is by her side. Raju advises her to change her name as the name Rosie is not so sophisticated. Rosie doesn't fight to keep her name but agrees. Raju comes up with the name Nalini, and she accepts, which shows Raju has full authority over her. He created this new persona for her and from this stage the world will know her as Nalini. “we arrived at ,Nalini,’ a name that could have significance, poetry, and universality, and yet be short and easily remembered.” (Narayan 139).

Though Rosie gains popularity over time, Raju manages all the financial things and selects where Rosie can or cannot perform. He always takes a VIP seat in the front row and says Nalini cannot perform if she doesn't see him. “unless I sat there Nalini would be unable to perform. She needed my inspiring presence.” (Narayan 143). Most of the time, Rosie has yet to learn where they are going or her performance schedule. Raju maintains everything Rosie does, from dance practice sessions to resting time. Thus, he creates his authority over Rosie in every step she takes.

In charge of Rosie's personal and professional life, Raju signs many official papers on Rosie's behalf. So, when a letter comes from Rosie's husband, Marco, saying that he has some of her possessions and would like to return them and wants her signature, Raju signs them without Rosie's permission. This foolishness of Raju makes him end up in jail for signature forgery. However, Rosie's transformation is visible in the novel from this stage. She bails Raju from jail and takes over her own life. Raju starts feeling insecure when he sees Rosie do her job without help. She wants to know where all her earned money is, but Raju has lost the money to gambling, buying expensive liquor, and entertaining elite-class people. When Raju finally enters prison, Rosie works hard, pays for the lawyer, and looks after the household. “Nalini worked harder than ever to keep the lawyer as well as our household going.” (Narayan 179)

However, as Rosie's story comes to a close, we witness a gradual but noticeable change in her. She quietly accepts Raju's punishment after learning of his transgression. “I'll do it to save you

from jail. But once it's over, leave me once for all; that's all I ask. Forget me. Leave me to live or die, as I choose; that's all." (Narayan 176) She realises her self-worth and wants to leave Raju for good.

She finally takes over all the tasks in her own hands and does them flawlessly after being dependent on men her entire life. "She swallowed her own words and went through her engagements, shepherding the musicians herself, with Mani's help, making all the railway arrangements, and so forth." (Narayan 176) Furthermore, she begins pursuing her genuine artistic purpose following the verdict and Raju's departure. She is shown as growing stronger and stronger in order to realise her dream of turning into a genuine artist as opposed to a performing robot.

Finally, she leaves town and settles in Madras, caring for herself. Raju often sees Rosie's photos in the newspaper as she keeps growing as a star and cannot help but feel jealous of her growing success without him. "Her empire was expanding rather than shrinking. It filled me with gall that she should go on without me." (Narayan, 182). Rosie becomes independent as a single woman as she focuses on herself rather than making her partner happy. Rosie has portrayed a very powerful persona. She is capable of escaping the grasp of patriarchy. She disobeys the unjust social norms that attempt to constrain her and her work. Above all, she uses her art to create her own identity.

4.2 Patriarchy in *The Guide*

In the novel, RK Narayan clearly portrayed how harsh the patriarchy was in the 50s of South Asian society. From the beginning of Rosie's appearance, it is visible that Marco doesn't prioritise Rosie's interests. Rosie is with Marco as a showpiece, doing nothing. Marco stays busy with his work, so he doesn't show notice in Rosie's interests. She has a passion for dancing, but her husband insults her art of dancing saying, "An acrobat on a trapeze goes on doing the same thing all his life; well, your dance is like that. What is there intelligent or creative in it?" (Narayan 115). Though she feels insulted, she can't do anything but cry herself to sleep now and then. When Rosie tries to bond with him by showing curiosity in his work, he insults her by saying she could never understand his job. He ignores Rosie when he learns about her affair with

Raju without trying to listen or sort things out. “But I followed him, day after day, like a dog—waiting on his grace. He ignored me totally.” (Narayan 118) Though she possesses a strong sense of independence, assertiveness, love of her work, and education, yet she is unable to overcome the patriarchal hegemony. Despite everything, one aspect of her is fundamentally traditional. She never truly respects her own Devdasi clan, to start, and she always accepts what is said about them in public with composure. “we are viewed as public women. We are not considered respectable; we are not considered civilised.” (Narayan 64) As a highly educated woman, she ought to have made an effort to change how her clan is perceived in society or raised awareness of the unjust Devdasi system. Gayatri Chakroborty Spivak has actually accused Narayan of making Rosie the protagonist of a sentimental tragicomedy instead of using her predicament to highlight the flaws in the Devdasi system. (3)

Rosie's background is a significant and governing factor in her existence. Her early status as a Devdasi has haunted her and shaped her behaviour throughout her life. She marries Marco, and despite all of his transgressions, she is nevertheless thankful to him for erasing the stigma associated with her family's devadasi heritage. Rosie's willingness to prepare meals for her husband and Raju at the Peak House during their better days and "be the last to eat like a good housewife" can be interpreted as her joy in leading a routine life at home, an experience that is generally denied to the Devdasis despite being rather normal for many women. She will never get over her unsuccessful marriage because of her appreciation to an unworthy Marco for marrying her despite her upbringing. Narayan claims in his autobiography "My Days" that Rosie's unique socioeconomic upbringing is the cause of her complex personality and self-contradictory choices. (6) About this Sen states that- " Under no circumstances except as a temple dancer who has gained an entry into conventional social life, could there have been Rosie's unusual blend of rare independence and creativity with deep conservation and veneration for tradition."(Sen,60)(7)

Rosie's Devdasi family background has a negative effect on her status in society. Her husband and others poorly treat her in society for having a Devdasi family. Rosie's mother had to marry Rosie to Marco to make her get rid of her shameful background. Rosie married Marco, but her passion for dancing didn't end. But Marco forbids her from speaking of dancing as he is also ashamed of her cast. All of Rosie's efforts to impress Marco go in vain, as he will not allow her

to dance and be an idle housewife. Later in the novel, Rosie faces insults from others like Raju's mother and uncle for her background and is referred to as "Shaithan" or devil by the people of the society for practising dance. Raju's mother remarks as she learns about Rosie's interest in snake dancing, "A serpent girl! Be careful." (Narayan 167)

People, including Raju's mother, uncle, and friend Gaffur, blame Rosie for Raju's downfall. He loses his shop at the railway station for being too involved with Rosie, but nobody sees that it is his choice, too. "It's not he who has ruined you, but the saithan inside, which makes you talk like this." (Narayan 122) This is a typical patriarchal system in which women are always blamed first without clear judgment. When Raju ends up in prison, Raju's mother blames Rosie for that, too. "Now are you satisfied with what you have done to him?" (Narayan 183)

4.3 Relationship and sexuality in *The Guide*

Rosie's relationship with her husband is cold and loveless. She is a passionate, fun-loving girl who fails to interact with her emotionless husband. Her fun personality is hidden behind the cold treatment of her husband until she meets Raju. Her personality transforms in Raju's presence, revealing her inner child. She finds comfort in Raju's warm and loving words of affirmation. "I could honestly declare while I watched her perform, my mind was free, for once, from all carnal thoughts. I viewed her as pure abstraction." (Narayan 98) However, her relationship with Raju is also complicated because she is married. Though she is not happily married, it is forbidden for a South Asian woman to leave her husband for another man. She regrets having an extramarital affair and feels ashamed to have done such a thing. She repeatedly tries to be an idle housewife and impress her husband. She chooses to stay with her husband, but finally, when the truth comes out about her affair with Raju, Marco leaves her. "But you are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone who flatters your antics. That's all. I don't, don't want you here, but if you are going to be here, don't talk. That is all." (Narayan 119)

Rosie carries the weight of her broken marriage with every moment of her life. Initially, it appears that Rosie holds incredibly traditional beliefs regarding the role of women in society and the marriage bond. She feels grateful to Marco all the time for marrying her in despite her past.

"After all, after all, he is my husband." (Narayan 158) She continues to feel a deep sense of shame for betraying his confidence. "I realized I had committed an enormous sin." (Narayan 117) So, it becomes clear that Rosie is torn between her commitment to dancing and the cultural standards and ideals that society has placed on her. One could even argue that Narayan's patriarchal hypocrisy is what led to Rosie. However, as I've already said, in order to comprehend Rosie and her reluctance, one must consider the several problems that are connected to her.

Even after leaving her marriage, Rosie clings to the routines that define her as a wife. Household chores like mopping the house and cooking aren't chores; they are threads of her identity, the "womanly duties" she refuses to let go of. "we don't need a cook moping around the house. I must not lose touch with my womanly duties" (Naraya, 145). According to Betty Friedan, "The feminine mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity." (Friedan 59) Friedan's "feminine mystique" refers to the idea that women are supposed to be happy with the position that they have been given, which is being a wife and a housekeeper. Rosie's endurance of her household duties, even if she is away from her husband, is the proof of this mystique. Her identity is so strongly connected with her housework role that she is afraid of losing a sense of self if she gives up these tasks. Friedan criticises this paradigm for being a trap which confines women in limited roles and thus, it hinders them from having their proper personal and professional fulfilment.

In Rosie's situation, she is trying her best to be independent, but the internalised belief that her worth is connected to her "womanly duties" is still a challenge for her. This is a clear example of how the feminine mystique is still influential on women's identities and how the societal expectations can be so overpowering that they often limit women's perception of themselves and Rosie's problem is an example of how hard it is to break free from these fixed roles and become oneself outside the areas of the typical femininity.

In *The Guide* by R. K. Narayan Rosie's character is shown through Raju's objectifying gaze, thus the male control and male desire are the main factors that shape the situation. The words of Raju about Rosie's beauty and his obsessive thoughts about her turn out to be the portrayal of Rosie as an object of desire. He confesses. "I was obsessed with thoughts of Rosie. I reveled in memories of the hours I had spent with her last or in anticipation of what I'd be doing next." (Narayan, 90)

Raju's point of view shows Rosie as a thing that he wants to own, for instance the fact that he is looking at her in such a way that is only focused on her body. "Whenever I watched her sway her figure, if there was no one about, I constantly interrupted her performance, although I was supposed to watch her from an art critic's point of view." (Narayan 128) Raju describes his perception of Rosie as a person made of attractive body parts. His jealousy of Rosie's husband therefore, is another evidence of his possessive attitude, where Rosie turns into a prize to be won by the man, instead of being considered as an autonomous person with her own agency. "She allowed me to make love to her, of course, but she was also beginning to show excessive consideration for her husband on the hill." (Narayan 93)

When Rosie is finally in Raju's possession, he keeps on using her to dominate her body and sexuality thus, showing his power over her. Arunima Saikia in her essay mentions that "Raju asserts patriarchal control over her body, sexuality, rights and liberty, exploiting Rosie's cultural and sexual value to the fullest." (Saikia, 14) This story is the case of the exploitation of Rosie's culture and femininity to meet Raju's wants, therefore, shows the objectification of women in patriarchal systems.

Rosie carries the weight of her broken marriage with every moment of her life. Initially, Rosie holds incredibly traditional beliefs regarding the role of women in society and the marriage bond. She always feels grateful to Marco for marrying her despite her past. "After all, after all, he is my husband." (Narayan 158) Using feminist ideology, Rosie's grateful and obligatory feeling toward Marco can be seen as the text of Simone de Beauvoir's "the Other" concept. According to De Beauvoir, "a woman is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1949), which explains that society determines how a woman is defined as a woman about men. Rosie's stereotypical traditional views and her respect for Marco are the signs of this type of relationship, where her self-worth and identity are based on her husband's approval and acceptance.

4.4 Other women's attitude towards Rosie

In South Asian society, women are not only looked down upon by the male figures of their lives but also by female figures. It is expected that a woman will understand another woman's

sorrows, but in South Asian culture, women don't want another woman to grow and be successful. In *The Guide*, besides the patriarchal backlash of the male characters, Rosie's character faces prejudice from another female figure, Raju's mother. However, at their first encounter, Raju's mother is amazed at Rosie's educated background and independence. She gradually becomes bitter toward her as she learns that her husband has left her and her growing relationship with Raju. She insists Rosie return to her husband and asks for his forgiveness. "Why can't she go to her husband and fall at his feet?" (Narayan 121)

She tells her stories about how a wife should act around her husband. "whenever she spoke to Rosie, and filled the time with anecdotes about husbands: good husbands, mad husbands, reasonable husbands, unreasonable ones, savage ones, slightly deranged ones, moody ones, and so on and so forth; but it was always the wife, by her doggedness, perseverance, and patience, that brought him round." (Narayan 121) This is clear proof of the social pressure that women are bound to put up with and control their husband's behaviour, no matter how challenging or ridiculous it might be. The anecdotes Raju's mother shares with Rosie about how she teaches her the idea that it's the woman's responsibility to fix and maintain the marriage. This point of view keeps the idea that women must be all the time patient and able to adapt, whoever they are, to their husbands' needs and whims. In this respect Beauvoir claims "No woman should be authorised to stay at home to raise her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one" (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 786). This proves that the society has already internalised the idea that women are to be submissive and the responsibility of their wives is to be the maintenance of the household and supporting their husbands no matter what, even if it is to their detriment. This is a manifestation of what de Beauvoir criticises: a social structure that not only puts the woman's choice in constraints but also forces them to be in the stereotypical roles which are considered to be "feminine jobs".

Thus, Rosie's battle, in this way, is a representation of the larger problem which is the mix of the societal norms and the internalised misogyny that are together keeping women in the submissive roles. These well-embedded ideas are the reasons why women are not able to be free by themselves and seek to be self-actualized. n must learn how to face and deal with their husband's behaviours, no matter how tough or irrational they might be. The tales Raju's mother tells Rosie

verify the notion that the wife is the one who always has to take care of the marriage and fix things in it. This view boosts the idea that women should be always patient and adaptable, therefore, they must mould themselves according to their husbands' needs and whims.

4.5 Power and Individuality in *The Shadow Lines*

In *The Shadow Lines*, Amitav Ghosh shows how women were portrayed in South Asian culture in the 1980s through the character of Ila. Ila's character is a complex one as she challenges societal norms and gender roles. She preaches for her freedom and denies the Indian cultural stigma. Her daring personality peeks through her actions as she is not afraid to say what's in her mind. "What do you mean 'girls'? I'll do what I bloody well want, when I want and where." (Ghosh 97) This is the very thing it strikes exactly as a definite proof of her defiance against the social norms. The term "girls" is usually identified as the representation of weakness and passivity while females are denied the. Ila's strong denial of this term signals her unacceptance of being boxed in by the society's norms. In her revolutionary book *The Second Sex* (1949) Simone de Beauvoir studies the issue of why women are usually regarded as "The Other", which is to say that they are defined by men. Ila's demand for self-determination in opposition to the patriarchy and her thirst for independence are in harmony with Beauvoir's theory regarding women being the "subjects" of their lives.

Ila's character in *The Shadow Lines* is a paradoxical one, which makes the reader curious about her. The view is not easily categorised as either completely traditional or totally westernised; she still poses quite some challenges to the conventional South Asian gender roles but at the same time she is also influenced by postmodern and westernised ideas. This is especially seen in her use of vulgar words, as can be seen from the quotation, "Mere vagina-envy, she said, laughing, and I tried to keep my face impassive as though I was accustomed to girls who used words like that." (Ghosh 21) The narrator is surprised to hear it from her as it is not normal for a South Asian girl to use these kinds of words so casually. Ila's use of profanity can be seen as a rejection of the societal norms of a woman's speech. Judith Butler in her *Gender Trouble* (1990) explains about "gender performativity" Butler states, "There is no gender pre-existing the self"

(Butler, 1990) Gender is not a fixed identity but a role that we play in order to conform to the social norms. The way Ila breaks the stereotype that a woman can only speak in a certain way is by using the language which is usually associated with masculinity. This act of rebellion to the rules of the society is in line with the feminist views on the dominance of the patriarchal society.

Nevertheless, Ila's ease with slang, which made the narrator who was raised in a more conservative culture, also indicates the tendency of the girl to be far from her South Asian origin. Her acquaintance with Western ideas, particularly sexuality, might be the reason for her to change to a more liberal way of thinking. This creates doubts as to whether her rebellion is actually a sincere endeavor to make her own way in life or just a copy of another set of cultural norms. In Ila's imaginary tale, she explains that Nick saved Magda from Denise:

"Go on, Nick Price said to Denise. Go on, get out of here. Denise made a face and scabbled to her feet. When she was gone, Nick Price knelt down beside Magda and wiped her face with the sleeve of his shirt. He helped her to her feet and put a sweet in her mouth and, taking her hand in his, he said: Come on, I'll take you home now." (83).

She makes up this story to cope with the racism and discrimination opposed to her. Kaul states. "This scenario is dictated by Ila's life abroad, in particular by her need to compensate for her experience of racism in England." (Kaul 129) Ila, as a migrated citizen, is usually subject to racism from her peers. Her future lover Nick is also ashamed of her and doesn't want to be seen with her: "But I think Nick didn't want to be seen with Ila. Ila didn't have any friends in school" (Ghosh 83). She was continuously bullied, and Nick didn't try to help her when he could. "I know that Nick didn't stop to help Ila. He ran all the way back." (Ghosh 83). Although Ila really likes Nick, he is not comfortable with her hanging around him, so Ila imagines a situation where Nick helps Magda (imaginary character) out of Denise. This artificiality shows that she is trying to feel the attention and defending, which is totally opposite of her unjust treatment and the racism she is under, and this is the way she is coping with her isolation and mistreatment.

While showing the narrator the yearbooks from her school, Ila points out the prettiest girls and claims they are her friends. Still, the narrator realises she is lying as there are no pictures of her with them: "But somehow, though Ila could tell me everything about those parties and dances,

what she said and what she did and what she wore, she herself was always unaccountably absent in the pictures." (Ghosh 25). The fact that Ila always follows the crowd is a proof of her effort to create a social identity that she doesn't have in real life. She would like to be included in the popular group, but her absence from the photos makes her claims false and shows her extreme feeling of social exclusion and longing for belonging.

She shows a handsome boy's photo and says that he is her boyfriend: "He's my boyfriend. But a few pages later, in their class photograph, there he was, right in the foreground, in the centre of the front row, grinning, broad-shouldered, a head taller than anyone else, with his arms thrown around the shoulders of two laughing blonde girls." (25).

Ila needs to demonstrate that she is the happy and perfect girl, but in truth, she is the abused one for her race and the one who doesn't belong. Her lies about her relationships and friendships expose her feelings of loneliness and the need for acceptance, and the huge difference between her stories and reality shows the conflicts in the situation and the influence of the class they are in.

Ila makes up stories and creates a character named Magda, the most pretty and famous girl in school. Through Magda, she lives in an imaginary, happy world. She escapes reality and finds peace in her imaginary world: "You couldn't blame them for staring: they'd never seen anyone as beautiful as Magda." (Ghosh 80). The birth of Magda enables Ila to get the social recognition and love she has been striving for virtually.

Ila's lavish upbringing has made her materialistic, as evidenced by her desire to visit the Grand Hotel solely because it is the "poshest place in the city": "But why do you want to go to the Grand Hotel? said Robi. Because it's the poshest place in the city, of course, said Ila, tipping her head back. Isn't that the best possible reason?" (Ghosh 90). This need for the best and most lavish ways of living shows her materialistic nature and her connection of status and the worth with money and exclusivity. Her fascination with luxury signifies a profound part of her personality which makes her identity and validation from material possessions and high-status locales.

Ila's view on luxury and her opposition to conventional cultural norms are consistent with feminist theories that deal with the connection between consumerism, gender, and social expectations. Through Ila's quest for luxury experiences and material wealth, one can see a type of femininity empowerment through consumption that is often examined in feminist critiques of capitalist societies.

Besides, Ila's lifestyle preferences sometimes push her into clashes with cultural norms, especially those which she thinks are too restrictive for her. She wants to go to the expensive places and drink alcohol and when her attempts are thwarted, she becomes defensive and blames Indian culture for its conservative rules, especially those that are intended to govern the behavior of women. Her frustration is palpable when she declares that these cultural constraints are the reason, she hates Indian culture and prefers to live in London:

“Do you see now why I've chosen to live in London? Do you see? It's only because I want to be free. Free of what? I said. Free of you! she shouted back. Free of your bloody culture and free of all of you.” (98).

This strong reaction is an evidence of her strong feeling of being limited by the society and therefore, she wants to be free and autonomous which is not possible in Indian society.

Ila's criticism of Indian culture and her refusal to obey social norms are in line with the feminist cultural theory which is about the necessity of challenging and surpassing the patriarchal constraints on the behaviour and autonomy of women. The idea of being free of cultural norms and the will to be the individual as much as possible are the most important themes in feminist discourses that support women's rights and gender equality. Bell Hooks asserts the necessity of the rejection of cultural norms that restrict women's freedom and self-expression, and promotes instead the transformative approach that will enable women to make their own identities and lives as they want to.

Ila's resistance to racism and social exclusion makes her more and more the person she was and therefore, her relationship with her cultural identity becomes more complicated. As a migrated citizen, she is faced with discrimination and no acceptance, which probably, the alienation and the rejection of her heritage is increased. She tries to be a part of the Western lifestyle in order to

get rid of the discrimination and limitations that she faces and to feel accepted in a society that she believes to be more accepting and free.

Ila has her way of thinking and isn't afraid to show it to others. As the narrator notes, she is not interested in historical significance. She sees historical buildings as broken pieces of buildings that have no value: "Ila looked at the window again, with mild interest, shrugged, and said: Looks like any musty old office now, doesn't it?" (Ghosh 34). This behaviour shows her general point of view, in which the past is insignificant. For Ila, the present moment is everything. To Ila, current events are more significant than historical contexts, and this focus on the present provides her with a sense of immediacy and sensation. Her reactions and memories are fleeting, as seen when she talks about her last lover: "whereas with her, when she spoke of her last lover's legs, the words had nothing to do with an excitement stored in her senses, but were just a string of words that she would remember while they sounded funny and then forget as completely as she had the lover and his legs" (Ghosh 33). This fleeting engagement with her experiences underscores her disconnection from deeper emotional or historical significance, highlighting a superficial engagement with life. Ila's attitude can be seen as a coping mechanism shaped by her experiences and struggles. Her lack of interest in the past might stem from the trauma of her racial and social isolation. She is attracted to the present life, not the past life and this view of her life influences her communication and her understanding of the world around her.

This way of seeing enables her to have and manipulate her own story in the moment while being free from the historical context. This creates a self-contained reality where she can exist without the constraints imposed by history or society's expectations.

Ila is a strong character, she is the one who has confidence and is self-reliant and the emotional distance and pragmatism that are visible in her decisions and the way she deals with others are proof that she is the one who has it. At this point when the narrator told her that she felt the same way to her, instead of being freed by the emotion or the complications, she tackled it pragmatically by apologising and moving on to the case of Nick. The fact that she never lets her emotions interfere with her relationship with others and she is always there for her friends, even when there is a conflict of interest, shows her capacity to strictly set the limits and control her commitments. Her response underscores her resilience in the face of emotional entanglements:

She backed up, looked at me and then ran into my arms and hugged me. “She stepped back to look at me and then she ran into my arms and hugged me. You poor man, she said. Her voice was full of pity. You poor, poor man.”(Ghosh 123)

This time shows my Ila's ability to feel for others without getting emotionally involved, thus showing her ability to deal with the intricacies of the interpersonal relationships with steadiness and firmness. Ila's redirection of her attention to supporting Nick, her boyfriend, further exemplifies her pragmatic approach to relationships and emotional situations: “I’ve got to go now, for a bit, she said, her voice light with relief. I’m going up to have a chat with Nick; he’s very upset.” (Ghosh 121) This kind of action demonstrates that Ila is decisive about maintaining her present relationship and has the ability to provide for a partner's emotional needs no matter the possibility of feelings being quite complex along these new interactions.

4.6 Patriarchy in *The Shadow Lines*

The chapter of conflict between Ila and Robi regarding night clubs, is used as a metaphor to question bigger issues of gender role, controlling and cultural conflict in the book. From the looks of Robi’s shock and disapproval of Ila’s plan to night clubbing, in spite of his own drinking habits, it can be inferred he is trying to portray double standards, arising from gender roles and societal expectations. “Drink! In a place like that?”(Ghosh 90) It promotes outdated assumptions about women's behaviour and how improper it is in particular situations.

Despite Robi's attempts to restrict her behaviour, Ila's insistence on attending the nightclub is a reflection of her yearning for independence and self-determination: “Please, Robi-kaku, she said. Please, just this once. If you don’t like it, we’ll leave. I promise.”(Ghosh 90) This conflict draws a line that vividly illustrates the confrontation between the patriarchal world of Robi, with his traditional gender role and protective approach, and Ila's, the more modern world that supports women autonomy.

The subsequent incident where Robi forbids Ila from dancing further exemplifies the dynamics of male dominance and control: “I think you should sit down, for you’re not going to dance

either.”(Ghosh 95) When Robi attempts to stop Ila from acting in defiance of the gender stereotypes she wants to set by upholding women's roles and advancing societal values of propriety and modesty, he represents the deep-seated patriarchal attitudes that make efforts to control the actions of women.

Because Ila is a rebellious girl, she tries to defy by appealing to some strangers for dancing. Ila's defiance in response to Robi's restrictions on her behaviour represents a rejection of traditional gender roles and an assertion of her autonomy: “He caught hold of the neck of Ila’s blouse with one hand and wrenched her away from the businessman. Then he opened the palm of his hand and planted it squarely in the middle of the man’s chest. Arching his shoulder back, he swivelled, suddenly, with so much force that the man staggered back for a good five feet or so, taking his chair with him.”(Ghosh 96) These events display that Robi's physical strength is used to dictate Ila's actions which manifests the tragic results of such actions to the gender rules within the story

Though he clearly makes a scene himself, afterwards he scolds Ila for behaving badly. “You shouldn’t have done what you did. You ought to know that; girls don’t behave like that here.”(Ghosh 97) Here, she bears the entire blame. Despite the fact that Robi was the one who incited Ila's rage and then utilised violence to worsen the situation, Ila is still held accountable, exemplifying the norm in patriarchal society.

Another instance of female condemnation occurs when Nick tells his grandmother Ila's account of being harassed by racists in a foreign nation. Rather than expressing sympathy or understanding for Ila's situation, the grandmother blames Ila and her family, saying that they are to blame for the abuse Ila endured: I don’t blame the boy. It was Ila’s fault. It was her own fault, and Maya’s fault and the fault of that half-witted mother of hers. It was bound to happen: anyone can see that. She has no right to be there. She doesn’t belong there.(Ghosh 85) It just means that society is set in a way that women should put themselves into activities that they were originally meant to do and also avoid those that will expose them to harm, and sadly enough, this has a tendency to victim-blame the girls and let the perpetrators get away with their wrong deeds.

The role of the grandmother reveals prevailing patriarchal dictates that attribute superiority of male dominance to female identification and impose obligation of security and safety to women

themselves. Nick's inaction and the blames ascribed on Ila deserve an adequate defence, and she becomes a victim of the old structure, remaining blamed for the actions of others, with the society having the authority to limit her freedom.

4.7 Relationship and sexuality in *The Shadow Lines*

The character of Ila is represented as someone who is expressionless and strong, but it is discovered that she is internal, with feelings of helplessness and emotional dependency, when she is being challenged by the betrayal in her marriage to Nick. The infidelity that Nick confesses to her at the early stage of their marriage deals a deadly blow to Ila's pride and shatters the very basis of trust within their relationship. She curses her fate. "Despite myself, I began to laugh. Oh, sad little Ila, I said. Your sins have finally come home to roost."(Ghosh 207) When she confronts Nick about it he takes it normally and asserts that it is a source of enjoyment for him. "He said he just likes a bit of variety; it's his way of travelling."(Ghosh 20) Despite the hurt and disappointment, she finds herself unable to break away from Nick, demonstrating a sense of emotional reliance on him. "I wouldn't leave him if he moved a whole bloody massage parlour from Bangkok into the house. He knows that perfectly well; he knows I love him so much I could never leave him."(Ghosh 208)

One significant aspect of Ila's character is her struggle with identity, particularly as a second-generation immigrant navigating the complexities of cultural assimilation and belonging. Growing up in a migrated citizen family, she grapples with an ongoing identity crisis, seeking validation and acceptance in the Western society where she resides. Being with Nick, who represents a connection to the Western world she aspires to be a part of, fulfills a deep-seated desire for belonging and acceptance. Her acceptance of her fate in staying with Nick despite his betrayal reflects her resignation to the circumstances of her life. Despite the emotional turmoil and inner conflict she may experience, she chooses to prioritise her desire for belonging over confronting the painful reality of her marriage. This decision highlights the internal struggle between her emotional needs and her desire for societal acceptance and validation. However, despite her usual emotional resilience, Ila's vulnerability becomes apparent when she confronts

Nick's infidelity. This betrayal challenges her emotionally, revealing a side of her that is not entirely immune to the impact of personal betrayal and heartbreak.

Despite her outward appearance of strength, she grapples with feelings of hurt and betrayal, which ultimately lead her to devise her own form of retribution against her unfaithful husband.

Do you know? Nick's had another of his ideas. He's trying to get my father to buy him a partnership in a warehousing business.”(Ghosh 208) She asserts her dominance over him as he is taking favours from her father which makes Nick feel ashamed which was Ila's way of revenge. Nick's face crumpled, and he looked down at the carpet, hanging his head.(209)

Furthermore, Ila's tendency to defend Nick and downplay the seriousness of his infidelity to the narrator underscores her inclination to protect her emotional dependencies and maintain the facade of strength and stability in her marriage. By minimising the gravity of the situation and projecting an image of normalcy, she attempts to shield herself from further emotional turmoil and preserve the illusion of the life she desires.

You mustn't pay any attention to what I said the other day, she said in a rush. I wanted to tell you that. I was just overwrought, and it made me suspicious. Nick wouldn't dream of doing anything that might upset me, really, believe me. You mustn't believe a word I said. I made it all up. That's what I did, I made it all up. That's the truth of it. I talked him later, and he showed me how silly I was being. It's all fine now. We need a little holiday, that's all.(274)

She pretends that Nick loves her and tries to undo the accusation she put on Nick to go on with her marital life. It is depressing as she never got the love she always wanted. Almond states,

“It is a sadness prompting reflection on one of the melancholy truths of *The Shadow Lines*: that it is a book in which no-one seems to get what they want, filled with characters forever running after things that elude them.” (93)

In the novel, Ila's character is subjected to the male gaze, which is a term used to describe the way in which women are often portrayed and viewed from a male perspective, reducing them to

objects of desire rather than fully realised individuals. This is evident in the narrator's description of Ila's beauty, particularly when she is undressing in front of him.

At that moment, draped in a towel, from her armpits to her thighs, her weight resting on one leg, her skin shimmering like soft, dark silk, she seemed to belong to a wholly different species of being from the women my friends and I had visited – more perfect than any human form could possibly be. (Ghosh 122)

The narrator's description of Ila's beauty emphasises a sense of otherness, comparing her to something from "another species." This language exoticizes Ila and objectifies her, reducing her to a mere object of fascination and desire rather than recognizing her as a multifaceted individual with her own agency and autonomy. By framing Ila's beauty through the lens of the male gaze, the narrator reduces her to a passive object to be looked at and desired, reinforcing traditional gender roles and power dynamics where women are positioned as objects of male desire. This objectification strips Ila of her humanity and agency, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and perpetuating unequal power dynamics between men and women.

4.8 Other women's attitude towards Ila

While in *The Shadow Lines*, Ila's character presents the reality of conflicting gender dynamics in society. One of the ways women in the different social spheres identify one another is through the negative judgement of other women. Ila's grandmother, even while her own independence embodies the traditional attitudes which oppose Ila's ambitions of autonomy. This can be clearly seen with the grandmother's consuming criticism of Ila's aim for overseas prosperity, only seeing her as a money-grubber rather than one in search of more a personal pursuit of progress. "Shall I tell you what Ila's gone there for? she said. She was shivering now, her eyes burning in her face. "She's gone there because she's greedy; she's gone there for money." (Ghosh 87) This clearly indicates that there is a general trend to discredit and criticise women who try to define their own life path, often projecting a negative image on them.

The grandmother can be evaluated within the female psychology that deeply analyses the internalised misogyny and the ways women hold and support patriarchal conventions. As theorised by Simone de Beauvoir in her book "The Second Sex," women tend to internalise the society's messages and stereotypes, and thus may sometimes unconsciously reinforce the same biases even against other women. The grandmother's condemnation of Ila's character, accusing her of seeking material possessions, underscores this internalised bias:

“It’s not just money, my grandmother cried. It’s things: it’s all the things money can buy—fridges like the one Mrs Sen’s son-in-law brought back from America, with two doors and a spout that drops ice-cubes into your glass; colour TVs and cars, calculators and cameras, all those things you can’t get here.” (87)

In addition, the grandma subjecting Ila with this most unholy title of "whore" because she wants to live wild and do whatever she feels like doing goes against the feminist beliefs of autonomy and self-determination. The sentence, 'It's not freedom she wants She wants to be left alone to do as she pleases; that's all that any whore would want. She'll find it easily enough over there; that's what those places have to offer. But that is not what it means to be free' (Ghosh 98).

shows a belief that a personal freedom that a woman wants is inherently dysfunctional. This aligns to the idea of gender performativity by Judith Butler, which describes norms of society dictate and judge behaviours according to gender, where deviations to it face censure and moral judgement.

“Ila's journey reveals that she is the one who bears the heaviest burden of other people's expectations on herself, as the intellectual observation suggests, *The Shadow Lines* represents Ila as bearing most heavily the burden of other people's expectations” (Kaul 131) Her struggle for independence is not an easy one as everybody around her is trying to bring her back to the orbit, reflecting the above mentioned issues of gender inequality and women’s inability to resist the power. This evident lack of support from other female characters, mostly from traditional sources like the grandmother, poses the struggles women encounter in the societies that don’t credit them for their accomplishments.

The grandmother's exhibition of prejudice and harsh judgments are all what a system with a rigid society and one that does not condone women who try to leave deliberately confines them in. In her criticism of Ila's wishes and ambitions, the grandmother is upholding those patriarchal values that restrict women's freedom and make them submit to patriarchal authority.

4.9 Comparative Analysis of Rosie and Ila

The analysis of two female characters, Rosie from R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) and Ila from Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988), brings to the surface the vivid picture of resistance that is beautifully displayed in South Asia literature. In spite of the two decades difference, both characters fight the same thing – a patriarchal society and their stories show the similarities and differences in the lives of women as they move about in a world that is changing.

At the core of both stories resides an equal energy for the pursuit of self-assurance. Sadly, Rosie has no love in her marriage to be disapproved of by her Devadasi identity in the society while dancing gives an her avenue to speak herself out emotionally. Her choice to leave her husband and go after her dream is a daring act of defiance using which she undermines the existing norms that bind women to the domestic sphere only. In the same way, Ila boldly redefines what women can do and duties they must perform. This goes a step further as she confronts the daily racism and other forms of negative fair treatment. Even though the peculiarity of their situations is the middle of the line there is the detrimental social disapproval from the societal quarters about their scenarios that emphasises the poignancy of patriarchal systems of control over the lives of women. Further, both are inclined that women are wrongly blamed for the mistakes of men; Rosie for Raju's downfall and Ila for the harassment she experiences. This confirms once more – the tendency to put on the female characteristics instead of the male ones to blame.

In spite of the existence of these similarities, the social and cultural realms where those battles take place are not the same, which results in different representations. Rosie's story plays in the backwardness of the 50's decade. Her sacrificial Devadasi dancer role spent more on the prejudice level giving another tier to forage through. In contrast to that Ila worked in the more upper thought environment of the 1980s when globalisation already had some influence. Coming

as she does from an Indian traditional background, she, however, must contend with the reality of racism in addition to culture conflicts that come with being abroad. The difference of time and place allows shaping their rebelliousness in a different way. Rosie's rebelling is a personal and meditative type of an exploration, reflecting mainly on herself through dance. Ila's turmoil is more tangible and intricate as she confronts not only Indian social standards but also the biases that Western norms embedded into our own understanding of Indian femininity. It symbolises an increase in global awareness and a quest for self-determination in a world that is more interconnected than ever.

Moreover, the way their encounters with men unfold expose a diversity in terms of relationships they have with men. Rosie is guided by men, her holding on to Marco changes to leaning on to Raju. At last, independence awakes in her. Ila is not that reliant on males. Her independence statement is entirely her own. This tendency could be a subsequent step towards the development of the greater self-confidence of women. The societal influence ranges from expecting women in particular professional domains to dedicating their prime years in parenting. The most commonly faced hurdle is a set of rules that are prohibitive for women or the public's bias against Rosie being a Devadasi. Ila's struggles, on the other hand, are more multifaceted and involve overcoming racial barriers in addition to the clashing desires of her family unit between the Indian culture and the Western society she lives in.

Although the books are set 20 years apart, nevertheless both show that the strain of patriarchy will not disappear so easily and keep limiting women's freedom. Nevertheless, when taking a closer look there are few signs of revolution. Ila has an option of being a somewhat more liberal internationalist and a participant of a globalised liberal market while Rosie does not. It suggests that the progress is rather slow and definitely measured while women are still seeking for more development even if the road appears quite hard.

Raising the curtain on the female characters' evolution in South Asian literature lend the novels their original outlook. Their tales touch not merely the personal, but also universal experience in the all-encompassing net of women's freedom. Society's pressures are being overcome, though slowly. Different contexts viewed across these two decades gives a glimpse of a close future when women are allowed to determine their own lives full of independence and autonomy.

Chapter 5

Finding and discussion

This section shall summarise the studies findings while using works and theories of the established feminist scholars. In the study, the application of comparative analysis allows to explore the socio-cultural contexts of the periods reflected in the chosen works. In ‘The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House’ Audre Lorde analyses how oppressed groups are unable to use the patriarchal rules in the attempt to bring about the change they want and need. In her masterpiece “The Second Sex”, Simone de Beauvoir outlines the critique of women’s oppression and the creation of the feminine. The argument that Bell Hooks advances in her “From Margin to Center” has to do with the notion of intersectionality and how marginalisation plays out in the context of feminism. According to Judith Butler’s book “Gender Trouble” gender is not a stable realm of identities but has performative dimensions. In “The Feminine Mystique,” Betty Friedan dials into the representation of women as domesticated beings and how such role erases their possibilities. In light of this comparative analysis, how social cultural factors shape and are shaped by people over time is established, the relevance of these theory in making sense of gender and feminist struggles is demonstrated. Thus, Mathew Arnold’s comparative literature approach helps align these theories with the other literary pieces to better understand the historical and cultural context in which they were created.

5.1 Key Findings:

Presentation of Female Characters and Insight into Gender Dynamics and Social Norms RK Narayan and Amitav Ghosh present the female characters Rosie and Ila in ways that are reflective of the gender dynamics and social norms of their time. The characterization of Rosie from Narayan's *The Guide* manifests the difficulties women underwent during those 1950’s South Asian society of India. Although she is endowed with obvious talents and adequate knowledge, Rosie, coming from a Devadasi background, is still bound by patriarchal constraints. Her path from being ignored by her husband to then depending on Raju to do anything speaks volume about the woman's vulnerability during the time. Betty Friedan's conception of the "feminine mystique," in which women find their ultimate fulfilment in the roles of wives and

mothers, is echoed by the main character's growing dependency on male figures and continued adherence to traditional feminine roles, even as she becomes a famous dancer. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity also details Rosie's struggle with these fixed roles, all while bell hooks' theory of marginalisation accentuates the institutional prejudice she suffers from due to her low social class. On the other hand, Amitav Ghosh's character Ila represents the effects of globalisation on people in the 1980s as portrayed in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. Through Ila's defiance of the norms such bearing traditional gender typical roles and her quest for independence through the use of creative daydreams she could signify a rebellion against patriarchal norms. In the midst of the challenges, Ila's progress reflects the wider struggles that women face in dealing with racism abroad and disrespect in their home country. Her character refutes Friedan's mystique and Butler's performativity yet still experiences exclusion and bias toward her. While her external determination presents independence, its underlying emotional insecurity during betrayal by the unfaithful husband indicates that patriarchal constraints are an ongoing struggle. And it echoes Audre Lorde's statement that employing the patriarchal tools won't bring down patriarchy. Both Rosie and Ila end up in the middle of the suppressive and manipulative patriarchy during which the societies of the fifties and eighties are doing the best to promote this concept. The role of Rosie during the 1950s serves as a powerful illustration of a woman who is limited by conventional roles, dreaming of a better life for herself yet perpetually constrained by the control of adult males. Her struggles show the conditioning patterns of the time when women had to adhere to the set gender roles, which she cannot fully escape. Ila signifies the impact of globalisation and westernisation on women in South Asia in the 1980s. This woman's determination to go against the grain of conventional gender norms and her adamant demand for liberty is indicative of a crucial transition compared to Rosie's era. But, it could be interpreted as a paradox, when she accepted her husband's cheating for the new life western society offered her, without their community norms, she was even more trapped and this time it was not western culture but another form of dependency and emotional weakness. In this study there is one intricate factor uncovered in which other female characters are usually conservative as they make efforts to feminise Rosie and Ila to fit in these traditional roles. This is an example of the fact that patriarchy is everywhere, and even women can turn out to be agents that form the same societal norms which oppose them.

5.2 Scope for further research:

Studying other female characters in the selected novels on a broader scale could help reveal a deeper understanding of how women are portrayed in their works and the dynamics of growing feminism in them. Beyond that, women characters portrayed in these novels through the lenses of postcolonialism and postmodernism would be greatly highlighted.

Interdisciplinary methods such as applying sociology, psychology, and gender studies will modify the understanding of the characters in relation to status, ethnicity, and gender, as it comes across in the characters of Rosie and Ila. A third promising avenue could be the current reception of the fleeting figures by readers and critics, which could unveil the shifting of public opinions towards female role conversion on time.

Lastly, a longitudinal research study that would explore the progression of feminist themes in South Asian literature from the mid-20th century to today could give a historical outlook on women's role in literature and society. Through this research, we can contribute to a more expansive portrayal of diversity and the multi-layered aspect of feminism depicted by South Asian literature.

5.3 Conclusion:

Rosie and Ila, even though they had lived in different eras, remain to be female warriors against the oppression of patriarchy. Rosie's freedom from male dominion, however, comes through an arduous process and in contrast to Ila's who gains her independence at the price of having a demeaning relationship with her husband. In addition, both female characters are harshly condemned by the society, consisting not only men, but also other women, which advocates implications about the ingrained gender norms in patriarchal society. However, while Rosie enables herself to part from the male dominance, Ila's acceptance of her husband's infidelity in order to comply with the Western concept shows the complexity and contradictions of the way to women's sovereignty and the ongoing power of patriarchal structures even in different generations.

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