Chapter 5
Chapter 5
Narrative Discourse

"There may be a network of voices at different levels, each presenting a distinct mode of consciousness"  
- Roger Fowler

5.1. Focus

The uniqueness of narrative process and discourse structure of TLS necessitates this chapter. Hence a study is attempted within the limits applying the linguistic aspects put forth by Leech and Short, Roger Fowler and Shlomith Rimmon Kenan. This chapter focuses on the narrative techniques of I-narrator.

5.2. Narrative Process

Like Virginia Woolf's novels, the narrative process, in TLS, takes place from the point of view of Jaya, the main character and narrator. Jaya plays the main role in the novel in which she is the narrator and in the words of Rimmon Kenan such narrator is called "auto-diegetic narrator" (2002:97). It is also found that she plays her role in different ways, like participant in a dialogue, addressee of an event and so on. Though "any one novel does not necessarily make use of all the theoretical distinctions available to it in terms of its discourse structure" (Leech and Short, 1984:264), Jaya narrates the story and in her narration, she uses irony and different levels and relations of narration. The mind style of the narrator is revealed in all the narrative situations.

Chatman comes up with a diagrammatic representation of the levels of narration as suggested by W. Booth (qtd in. Narrative Fiction, 2002:87):

Commenting on the 'narrative levels', Leech and Short suggest that, like many other Linguists, there need not be a differentiation between real author and implied author, and
real reader and implied reader. Both real author and implied author can be treated the same and similarly real reader and implied reader. This view point can be taken positively as the ‘reader’, ‘author’, ‘implied reader’ and ‘implied author’ cannot be defined in a concrete manner, demarcating their boundaries of activities. Hence in the present study, ‘implied author’ and ‘implied reader’ are used in both sense.

**TLS** has one major Narrator, named, Jaya. She narrates the whole story and controls some of the minor narrations of other characters. She attempts to narrate her story objectively, though she finds it difficult and she reveals the same in the beginning of the novel in the following lines:

> I’m writing of us. Of Mohan and me. And I know this - you can never be the heroine of your own story. Self-revelation is a cruel process. The real picture, the real ‘you’ never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you really look. Ten different mirrors show you ten different faces (1).

However she makes her desire known that she wants to narrate the story of ‘Jaya, the character, from the point of view of ‘Jaya, the narrator’ as she is ‘Jaya, the author’ of the story. The following supposition sentences of elliptical structure reveal her mind: “Perhaps it is wrong to write from the inside. Perhaps what I have to do is see myself, us, from a distance”(2). The narrator, further, says:

> ... there have been times when I’ve had this queer sensation of being detached and distant from my own self. Times when I’ve been able to separate two distinct strands - my experience, and my awareness of that experience (2).

The following rhetorical questions throws more light on the narrative technique applied in the novel:

1. *Can I do this with our story?*
2. *Do I have the necessary ruthlessness?*(2)

The questions can be understood in the following ways. The explanations are given within brackets.

1(a). Can I (Narrator) do this with our (‘Mohan and I’) story?
1(b). Can I (Jaya) do this with our story? (as though asking the implied reader)
1(c). Can I (Jaya) do this with our story? (as though asking herself)

2(a). Do I (Author) have the necessary ruthlessness (to narrate the story objectively)?
2(b). Do I (Jaya) have the necessary ruthlessness (to narrate the story objectively)?
2(c). Do I (Narrator) have the necessary ruthlessness (to narrate the story objectively)?

All the comments given in parenthesis are based on the reference foregrounded from the text. In the text, Jaya mentions ‘Mohan and I’ sixteen times on significant occasions, uses approximately 30.5% of total questions in the Narrative and considers herself of playing the double role as ‘Jaya, the individual’ and ‘Suhasini, the housewife’. Her narrative finally merges these two characters into one, that is, Jaya, after killing ‘Suhasini’, ‘the other image of Jaya’, along with Mohan towards the end of the novel (121). The number of word items (both content and function words) used in the text is 6925 words approximately without repetition and, the total number of words, including repetition, is 71578.

In addition, the table below shows the I-narrator’s dominance in the use of pronouns and proper nouns. This comparison is made after separating the dialogues from the narrative passages. This comparison makes certain truths very obvious. The pronouns “I” and “he” are almost equally used with 67.46% and 68.39% respectively. Her ‘thought life’ is also affected by three significant persons in her life. It is shown in her frequent reference to her husband Mohan (88.45%), dead insane cousin Kusum (88.1%) and her dead Appa (88.3%). The mention of hidden friendship with Kamat is also averaged at 66.67%
5.3. Discourse Structure

Discourse structure in the novel has a unique expression as the I-narrator is also a complicated character. Besides there are conversations reported by the narrator. Short narrations by Mohan, Kamat and Mukta are also reported by the narrator. There is also another voice within the novel narrating some of the events. Jaya, the protagonist, plays the role of Suhasini and the same is also reported by the narrator. With this information, it may be possible to draw the discourse structure and it looks like the one given below:
The above diagram reveals the possible levels in which the communication process takes place in the novel. The implication reveals that the narrator talks to someone who appears to exist all through the novel and also it is obvious that she talks to herself. Jaya, the character also narrates minor events and hence she may be included in 'Addresser 5' list. As suggested by Leech and Short, novels can have at the minimum three levels of discourse structure embedded one inside another. There is no maximum limit prescribed nor deviations discouraged. For, each novel has its own distinct narrative structure. Thus the above structure reveals the situation in the present novel.
5.4. Temporal Relations:

Since narration deals with events, it has temporal relations with events. These temporal relations, as suggested by Genette are of four kinds and they are as follows (qtd. Narrative Fiction, 2002: 90&91):

1. Ulterior Narration – narrating past events using past tense
2. Anterior Narration – prophetic, predictive narration using future and present tense
3. Reporting – narrating simultaneously with action
4. Intercalated Narration – narrative letters giving the details of past and anticipating future events.

TLS uses the first three kinds of temporal relations. The narration starts in present tense and ends in present tense and in between makes use of past tense for the major part with a minimal use of future tense. Example are drawn from the text to highlight only 'Anterior Narration' and 'Reporting' only. The I-narrator, Jaya gives a background to her plan of narration and implies that the reader is expected to fall in line with her narration of events, which may or may not be possible, considering the complications in the narrative technique used. She also tries to convince the readers by expressing her objectivity in narration. She ends the prelude with the following:

_I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan. I have two children and I did not let a third live._

_Maybe this is enough to start off with. I can take off from here (2)._  

The above passage shows the position from where the narration is going to begin. She uses the verbal phrases 'start off' and 'take off' to dramatize the swift movement in her narration. The modals 'may' implying 'probability' and 'can' implying the 'ability' of the narrator to build on the 'limited information' given. It gives a clear background to the story and obviously appears to be the 'implied author' expressing the same.
5.4.1. Anterior Narration

The novel has certain predictive narrations which have contextual significance in the novel. The following are some of the examples:

Example 1:

Jaya is frightened of the future in the absence of Mohan and predicts that she will be left alone. The modal ‘will’ denotes ‘definiteness’, the characteristic of prediction.

And now, I thought, it will happen to me too. I will meet Mohan somewhere some day and he will pass me by, his face blank and closed up (142).

Example 2:

Jaya makes predictions in the following passage using past tense, though she implies future.

Life would go on for us as before, punctuated by dreary quarrels, the children's successes and failures, their estrangement from each other, from us, our resentment and bitterness, old age for us, perhaps widowhood for me - this was our future. Nothing else was possible for people like us (4&5).

Example 3:

The following passage reveals irony in the narration. It uses mythology and elliptical expressions to make it more effective.

...and Cassandra-like I saw her future in an instant - marriage, a drunkard for a husband, children, more children, poverty, ill health, cruelty, work, more work... (163)

5.4.2. Reporting

The following events are reported by the narrator for verbalizing the actions of the persons involved in the novel. The narrator shows herself the III-Narrator and it is shown in the first line: “I can see those two now...” (7)

Example 1:

The narrator is also involved in the below mentioned event, not as narrator but as character, and hence dialogues are included to make the narration appear real. The ‘woman’
is identified as Jaya only by considering her remarks on another woman referred to here. Almost every sentence has the reference to some form of ‘I’ pronoun. Along with the event, emotions are also revealed in the narration:

*I can see those two now, as one sees other people, their existence confined to that one moment, the man climbing gingerly, almost on tiptoe, the woman walking with the steadiness of familiarity, the dirt and ugliness obviously for her a normal part of the surroundings. On the landing the man stops. ‘God,’ he says, his voice crisp and authoritative, ‘why doesn’t someone clean up this place?’ The woman turns, looks at him and his expression changes. He seems to wilt. They resume climbing. A woman descending the stairs, a huge garbage bin balanced nonchalantly on her head, looks at them curiously, stops and smiles. The man gives her a blank stare as if affronted by that smile, but it is not for him, it is for his companion, who smiles back. The man goes on and waits with a scarcely controlled impatience before the closed door of a flat, while the two women converse.

'Poor Nayana,' the woman says when she joins him, 'pregnant again. Have you ever seen her not pregnant? Her mother-in-law was just the same.'

The man’s face has the blankness of indifference.

'The keys?' he says, holding out his hand.

But the woman, ignoring that importunate hand – it becomes that as he continues to hold it out - takes some keys out of her bag and unlocks the door. Still ignoring him she enters the flat. He continues to stand there for a moment, the hand held out. It now looks like a supplicatory gesture. And then abruptly he follows her in, closing the door firmly behind him (7&8).

In the above reporting of event, Jaya projects herself and Mohan as Man and Woman and introduces one more character, named Nayana. The direct speech of all the three is also included. As Jaya, the narrator, wants to reveal the ‘assertiveness’ gained by Jaya, the character, she carefully distances herself from narrating it in her own past tense and brings in ‘present tense’ to make the readers review the situation for themselves. Jaya addresses herself in the third person. The contrast between the man and woman is narrated through the expression of contradictory statements of emotions, like, ‘man climbing gingerly’, ‘woman walking with the steadiness of familiarity’, his voice crisp and authoritative’ ‘The woman ... looks at him’, ‘He seems to wilt’, ‘it (smile) is not for him, it is for his companion’, ‘.man’s face has the blankness of indifference’, ‘woman, ignoring that importunate hand’, ‘still ignoring him’, he continues to stand’, ‘... looks like a supplicatory gesture (his hand
The uniqueness of this 'reporting' depends on the gradual revelation of the mental process of both man and woman. A man and a woman are climbing the steps to go to their house upstairs and at the same time another woman is climbing downstairs. Emotions and thoughts are revealed through the frequent use of modalities. While referring to the man, the narrator uses adverbials, adjectival, and infinitives like 'gingerly', 'authoritative', 'expression', 'to wilt', 'scarcely controlled impatience', 'blankness', 'indifference' and 'supplicatory gesture' and while referring to the woman, the narrator uses similar grammatical items but with different modalities: 'steadiness', 'familiarity' 'turns', 'looks at', 'smiles' 'ignoring' and 'still ignoring'. Before 'They resume climbing', the man and woman show one type of mental process, and after this sentence, they both show a different type of mental process. Before this the man's voice was commanding, but after that his 'importunate hand' is simply rejected. There are only two simple sentences are used: 'He seems to wilt' and 'They resume climbing', but both of them have infinitive and gerund ending respectively. The passage shows the 'transitional mind style' of Jaya and Mohan. It also makes a revelation of 'detached narrative technique' of the Narrator.

Example 2:

A dream is reported in pages 85 and 86 of the novel, in which again two characters, a man and a woman, and their activities are reported in present tense and future tense. The narrator here is I-narrator. The names of the characters are not mentioned in the following reporting situation. The passage also has a reference to some unknown girls.

At first we are walking together. Then he goes on ahead and I am left behind. I am unperturbed and go on at my own pace, walking now between rows of houses, so close to one another that there is a slight sense of claustrophobia. For some reason, I have to pass through a house, but it is impossible for me to climb the flight of stairs that leads to the house. As I struggle, a girl comes to me. She is not surprised by my presence; on the contrary, she accepts it as if she had expected me. She helps me up, but suddenly when I am in the house it comes upon me with a sense of shock that I am alone, that I have been left behind, I will never be able to find him now. The realisation that I am lost overwhelms me. Worse - I do not know where I am, where I have to go and how I can find him. The disorientation is total.
The girl has helped me into a room and I find myself surrounded by a number of young girls. They are all smiling, and the thought comes to me... they are on my side. But none of them can help me. I am utterly helpless and really ill now. I lie down, stiff as a corpse, and the faces around me change from curiosity to sympathy. The girls talk in low tones among themselves, discussing my predicament, while I continue to lie there, paralysed, aphasic. Suddenly, he is there in the room. He comes straight to me through the girls. I am up in a moment, my illness, my helplessness quite gone. I run to him.

'Come,' he says, 'we have to hurry. The taxi is waiting. If we don't hurry, it will go away.'

'Where is it?'

'It's waiting near the Portuguese Church. Hurry up.'

But as I run after him, I realise that it is too late anyway, we will never be able to make it, we will never be able to get away, it is all my fault, all my fault...(85&86)

The man and the woman are walking together and they get separated from each other and then come back together only to miss something. The woman accuses herself for the fault finally. Reference is made to pronouns 'I', 'we', 'he' and 'they'. In this event, the man and woman respond to each other finally. The man uses first person plural. However the conversation among the girls is narrated from 1-narrator's point of view. The woman in her narrative uses first person singular, though she begins and ends with plural form. This shows that the woman is conscious of herself and considers herself responsible for the changes in the situations. Again the narrative focuses on 'transitional mental process' as it is revealed in her use of pronouns. The man and woman start together and then the woman is left behind. However the woman is 'unperturbed', but finally she is perturbed and it is shown in the final repetitions: 'we will never be able to make it, we will never be able to get away, all my fault, all my fault'(86). The passage also reveals the confused state of mind of the narrator as it is shown in the content words like, 'struggle' (verb), 'shock' (noun), 'disorientation' (noun), 'utterly (adverb) helpless' (adjective) 'predicament' (noun). The mind set is again revealed through the sentence with elliptical structure: "Worse – I do not know where I am, where I have to go and how I can find him"'(86). She is also shown sick
in her body which is symbolic of her mental sickness, as they are found in the lexical words like 'claustrophobia' (noun), 'paralysed' (adjective), 'ill' (noun), 'aphasic' (adjective) and 'illness' (noun). She also uses negativism in her selection of sentences to show her pessimism: 'it is impossible for me ...', 'I struggle...', 'I am alone... I will never be able to ...', 'I am lost...', 'I do not know...' and 'we will never be able to ...'. The modal 'will' is used significantly in the sentences: 'I will never be able to find him now. We will never be able to make it, we will never be able to get away'. She uses three levels of expression to reveal the 'definiteness of the inability' of the speaker. She starts with 'her inability' by using 'I' and then their inability by using the plural form 'we'. She uses repetition of modal 'will' as well as 'able' three times with a negative 'never' attached to them. This is a typical style of narrative found in TLS. Finally towards the end, the narrative swiftly changes from 'I' to 'we' and then to 'my', exposing the 'subjectivity' of the reporting discourse. Thus the dream is reported with specific lexical selections and sentence structure.

5.5. Irony

It is always through 'irony' that the author enters the scene secretly and communicates a significant truth of the society to the reader. It is relevant here to quote Leech and Short to define irony. They say irony is:

... a double significance which arises from the contrast in values associated with two different points of view. So defined, irony is a wideranging phenomenon which can be manifested in a single sentence, or may extend over a whole novel. The most usual kind is that which involves a contrast between a point of view stated or implied in some part of the fiction and the assumed point of view of the author, and hence the reader (1984:278).

TLS is filled with irony as it deals with 'life in Indian context'. The life of Jaya itself is an ironical symbol of a woman who is constantly conscious of her role in the family as 'wife' and 'mother' and her position in the society as an 'Individual'. She vehemently criticizes the follies of human relationship and for this purpose irony is used.
5.5.1. Societal Aspects:

The following selected passages from the novel exposes the real condition of the society.

Example I

The following ironical narration makes a revelation of the living condition of middle-class people:

A trail of garbage on the soiled cement stairs, cigarette butts, scraps of paper, bits of vegetable peel. And red stains - squirts of paan-stained spit - on the wall, macabrely brightening up the dinginess (7).

Example II

The comparison of significant Biblical allusion, 'the animals in Noah's Ark', to the 'monotonous routine' of special events in middle-class families reveals the follies of pretensions:

It had been this same quality of deceit that had made me conceal my amusement that day when our guests had come in - like the animals in Noah's Ark, I had thought - two by two, all of them with the same smiles, the same remarks (169).

Example III

The following passage is an extreme case of ironical overtone in the social system which views different people in different ways. The metaphorical reference to "dog" and its "barking" makes a stringent attack on the social system. The sentence "They bark at us as if we're dogs" reveals secretly the reference made on the so called upper class people and their posh life:

If you speak to the doctor there, they will look after him better, they will give him special care. Otherwise no one cares, no one is bothered about poor patients, they won't even tell us anything if we ask them. They bark at us as if we're dogs.' (160)
Example IV

The following passage reveals another aspect of human life. Jaya speaks the following with rhetorical questions after meeting a doctor who is her brother's friend. The irony lies in her remarks about husband and the fragile 'protecting wall' the husbands are said to create in Indian society. She ridicules such belief in her narrative, another example of "secret communion between author and reader" (Leech and Short, 1984:276). The following is an example of the follies attached to "sheltering tree" by juxtaposing the positive negative aspects and also the irony in 'looking after something/somebody so that you may be looked after by that something/somebody':

'With your husband, of course' - what did he mean by that? Was it impossible for me to relate to the world without Mohan? A husband is like a sheltering tree...Vanitamami, did you, without knowing it, speak the most profound truth I'm destined to hear in my life? What would he have done if I'd told him Mohan has left me? How would he have looked at me then? With pity? Contempt? Or, most frightening thought, without that barrier Mohan had raised between me and other men? (167)

5.5.2. Life and Living:

The passages given below share some of the secrets of the follies of human life and the way in which life is lived.

Example I

The following passage reveals the critical mind of a daughter (Jaya) about her father's remark. Two contradictory views of the same are juxtaposed here:

*Appa never had any doubts, he often told us, about the fact that victory would come, nor about whose victory it was going to be* (15).

Example II

The narrator explains the possible danger within the house but indirectly and that adds to the beauty of irony in the following passage. There is also a metaphorical reference
to ‘crow’ in the passage to reveal the possibility of even ‘weak person’ entering the house
(Previous reference to ‘Crow and Sparrow’ in Chapter 3 may be recalled here):

Close the doors, stay in and you’re safe. But what happened when everyone went out and you were left alone inside? Why hadn’t they told me that it wasn’t the poor drenched crow standing on the doorstep who posed the danger? Why hadn’t they warned me that the threat, the hazard, lay inside? (139)

Example III

The ugly reference to the following comparison makes the irony rude in tone:

It was Appa who had told us about village women who, if surprised in their early morning squatting behind a bush or a tree, quickly whisked their saris over their faces.

'And never mind if their bottoms are exposed,' Appa had laughed. 'As long as the intruder doesn’t know whose bottom it is, they feel safe.'

Mohan and I had been like those women (51).

Example IV

The following passage reveals the folly of relationship between husband and wife.

She ridicules the husband and wife relationship:

In the daytime his voice would follow me about. 'Jaya, Jaya,' he would call out over and over again. In the dark, he would hold me close and say, ‘I didn’t mean it, you know I didn’t.’ He would make love to me and ask me at the end of it - 'Have I hurt you?' 'No,' I would reply and we would go on as before. The two of us growing gently, graciously, affectionately old together - the images filled me with pleasure (127)

5.5.3. Family Situation

Family situations in the present context have more ironical reference and a selected few are mentioned below:

Example I

The following passages reveals the irony behind her description of the tragedy that struck their undisturbed family life.

But finally it came to me after all, my own special disaster; it came like a prize packet, neatly tied with coloured ribbons, a gift to me from my husband(4)
Example II

The following example reveals the reality in the family ironically. In her imagination everything seems to be beautiful and when she tries to find it, she finds only the negative aspect of life.

*We smiled, we laughed; I, the mother, served them with 'love and care'; Mohan, the head of the family, smiled indulgently, and the children were lively and playful. A visual - yes it had to be only that; for I could not find the words to match the picture. When I tried, what came through was our normal dinnertime conversation – the scum of hostility floating to the top, marring a placid, clean surface.*

Example III

Here Jaya refers to the situation that prompted her marriage with Mohan in a lighter vein, but in an ironical way:

*So it was Appa whom I had to thank for Mohan. It was Appa who had sent all his three children to an English school, a 'convent school...'*

Example IV

Jaya ironically presents the position of housewives in Indian families.

**Conditioned Behaviour:**

*These women of Mohan's family were right, I had decided. I would pattern myself after them. That way lay well - if not happiness, at least the consciousness of doing right, freedom from guilt.*

**Foolishness of a Housewife**

*And so, when something was not done well, or on time, a button missing, or a meal cooked badly, or too delayed, I had cringed in guilt. And when I had been praised for anything, I'd been so ridiculously pleased, 'I almost wag my tail, like a dog that's been patted by its master...'*

**Hollow Relationship**

*Years later, long after I had given up all these exercises, the thought had come to me: it was ridiculous, he would have slept with me faithfully twice a week whether I creamed my face or not, whether I brushed my hair a hundred times or not, whether I wanted him to or not -yes, there had been that too.*
Desperation of a Housewife

It was a relief to be alone. I’d always treasured my hours of solitude without Mohan and the children. Mohan’s constant presence, since we came here, had become a burden to me (68).

Folly of Dedication

And I had meant it; wasn’t he my profession, my career, my means of livelihood? Not to know him was to admit that I had failed at my job. But why then did the idea of his anxiety not occur to me this time? Was I slipping, losing the clue to him? Or was it that, not caring, I was not as finely tuned to his moods as I had been? (74)

Reviling the Relationship

'The relation of man to woman is the most natural of one person to another.'
Natural? There’s only treachery, only deceit, only betrayal (158).

5.6. Shared Values

A novel can have “embedded hierarchy of discourse” (Leech and Short, 1984:276) as it is found in TLS. In these levels of discourse, people involved may also coexist but with their own distinctive nature. It is also possible that author, narrator, character and reader share values among themselves which are strikingly similar. The main character, Jaya, is projected in the following capacities:

The idea of contradiction between ‘different’ levels of discourse and thereby indirectly sharing values with implied reader/reader are identified in TLS. In the words of Booth it is called “value contrast” (qtd. Leech and Short, 1984:277). Jaya tries to say something and
her inner consciousness says something else, while the society and the family members say yet another thing. She appears to suffer from 'split personality and split society'. In this way on certain occasion her narrative process gets disturbed. It is due to the social expectation and the narrator's deviation from social system. However the levels of discourse are carefully maintained for the proper flow of communication. The lexical selection and the extended explanation do not allow the reader to deviate from the main narration.

5.6.1. Value Contrast

The following examples reveal the different levels of participation in value contrast and the correctives provided. This list is selective, revealing the different attitudes of characters. Major part of correctives is made by the I-Narrator in the novel and this exposes the "interlocutor-consciousness" or "implied reader-consciousness" of the "narrator" and "implied author" respectively.

Example I:

Mohan saw strength in the suffering of his mother and Jaya, as a woman finds her a humble, suffering woman.

_He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair. I saw a despair so great that it would not voice itself. I saw a struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon. Silence and surrender (36)._

Example II:

Mohan was not able to understand Jaya's creative writing and considered her writing as a revelation of their personal life. But Jaya sees her writing objectively. In the narrative she quotes from what Mohan said and continues her narration to make the value contrast more effective and lively.

_I had realised it then, even in the state I had been in, that he had not been angry, but hurt; he had looked as if I had wounded him._

_"How can you reveal us, how can you reveal our lives to the world in this way?"_
I had known then that it hadn't mattered to Mohan that I had written a good story, a story about a couple, a man who could not reach out to his wife except through her body. For Mohan it had mattered that people might think the couple was us, that the man was him. To Mohan, I had been no writer, only an exhibitionist (144).

Example III:

The following is the contradictory point of view about understanding women, presented in an elliptical sentence.

I'm a woman and I can understand her better; he's a man and he can't. (37).

Example IV:

The narrator reveals the confused realization of motherhood and the contradictions in understanding. In the following passage, the narrator contradicts with the society:

It seemed amazing that I knew so little, almost nothing, about my son. Whatever had given me the damn fool idea that once I became a mother I would know my children through and through, instinctively? Yes, this was what they had told me: you become a mother, and everything follows naturally and inevitably - love, wisdom, understanding and nobility. But now I felt as helpless to deal with this despairing boy as I had with the floppy-headed, vulnerable infant I had brought back from the hospital. I had the same fearful sense of being unable to cope, the same certainty of being a failure (173).

Example V:

In the following passage, the narrator contradicts with the 'dead Karl Marx' and makes it loud:

'The relation of man to woman is the most natural of one person to another.'

Karl Marx - yes, Karl Marx it was who'd said that. Natural? When we are for ever hurting, for ever wronging each other? Natural? When we're for ever resenting our need of each other? How wrong you were about this, Mr. Marx, prophetically right though you may have been about so much else (132)

5.6.2. Narrative Contradiction

It is noted in TLS that I-narrator herself changes the point of view immediately after expressing one view as though prompted by 'interlocutor' or 'implied reader'. This may be the right way to reveal the truth objectively and make the readers draw conclusions.
Example I:

The narrator reveals her confused state of mind and her inability in stating what it she wanted.

*I was frantic for them to go away, to leave me before I lost control and clung to Mukta crying out - don't go, Mukta, don't leave me alone.* Suddenly the coming of the night filled me with terror. *I couldn't bear the thought of being alone. I want to be alone, I want to be by myself, I'd often thought, frantic with all the demands made on me. I want solitude now, not when I'm old and frightened of being alone, I'd thought. Now, here I was alone and...* (181)

Example II:

This is with reference to her reaction after the death of Kamat. She saw him dead but she could not react to it openly because of the fear of society. She reveals her mental contradiction in the following lines:

That night, while having dinner, I had thought, someone I know is dead, I saw him dead. And I had been detached from that woman who had seen him remote from that experience.

But later, in the bathroom preparing for bed, the tears had cascaded over. It had been like a sudden haemorrhage. The racking sobs had torn me apart as I had tried to contain them. I had stayed there, crouching on the floor, my head resting on the toilet seat, my chest hurting, my throat raw and painful, until it was over (157&158).

Example III:

While talking to Mukta, she realizes the contradiction within herself and presents exactly the same way the realization comes to her.

'Mohan didn't know... he knew nothing...I never told him... No,' I said, at once firm, and sure, 'it was not because of Mohan.'

Stumbling over the words, I suddenly realised - it was not Mohan but marriage that had made me circumspect (187).

Example IV:

In the following passage, there appears to be a voice interfering, asking her to correct herself. It is revealed in the form of a rhetorical question.
But Kusum was nuts. Thank God, Kusum, you're nuts, I had thought complacently; because you're nuts, I know I'm not, I know I'm sane.

How could I be sure of that any more? Without Kusum, my sanity seemed suspect. Why, even Kusum had never admitted that there was anything wrong with her (126).

Example V:

This passage is the continuation of the previous one. But here the narrator reveals another aspect of the narrative contradiction. It is revealed in her own words: “I had to stop this’. She is disturbed in her mind having two contradictory ideas.

Yes, now that I thought of it, it was quite clear that it could not be 'poor Kusum' at all. Hadn't she taken the biggest decision of all, the only decision that mattered in life - whether to live or to die? It could not possibly be 'poor Kusum', it was poor Jaya.

I had to stop this, I had to get a grip on myself. None of this made sense, none of it was true. Mohan had not left me he would be back (127)

Example VI:

Contradiction of husband and wife relationship is revealed. The first three sentences start with the article ‘a’ and the second sentence does not have a verb. All the three sentences deviate from grammatical structure of sentences. The use of deictic ‘this’ and short verbless sentences like ‘a couple with two children’, ‘A man’ and ‘A woman’ add significance to the contradiction:

A man and a woman married for seventeen years. A couple with two children. A family somewhat like the one caught and preserved for posterity by the advertising visuals I so loved. But the reality was only this. We were two persons. A man. A woman (8).

Example VII:

The following example reveals the core of the theme of the novel and the significant aspect of the mind of the narrator

Two bullocks yoked together - that was how I saw the two of us the day we came here, Mohan and I. Now I reject that image. It's wrong. If I think of us in that way, I condemn myself to a lifetime of disbelief in ourselves. I've always thought - there's only one life, no chance of a reprieve, no second chances. But in this life itself there are so many crossroads, so many choices (191&192).
Example VIII:

Jaya appears to change her views and come out with contradictory statements. This happens to her as she goes through changes in her 'thought life'. It is revealed in the following sets of expressions she makes during two different occasions.

*Times when I've been able to separate two distinct strands - my experience, and my awareness of that experience* (2).

*I cannot distance myself from us and what happened to us, however much I would like to do so* (8).

5.7. Foregrounding of Unusual Sentence Structure

A brief study is made on the sentence structure with special reference to unusual sentence constructions and combination of lexical items.

5.7.1. Impersonal Passive

In certain narrative prepositional phrases which are in other words called agents are omitted. These are considered unusual, but significant for a literary work. Finding of such significance may be done using linguistic aspects of sentences. It is said that impersonal passive constructions are used in technical writing where agent need not be mentioned. It is also used when the agent is considered insignificant or obvious to the reader. Here the I-narrator uses every passive for the present context in a unique way. It can be found that modalities are used as main verbs to reveal the mental process of the speaker. In such cases agent may not be required since the agent may be the speaker himself/herself. It is also found that the agent is omitted in places where agent is significant. The passives found are given below:

Example I:

'Your face is like your name,' Kamat had said to me. And *I had been fascinated* (1).
Example II:

But nothing had stirred in me when I had heard the story from Mohan. I had been disinterested. Indifferent (5).

Example III:

With that I was defeated (19).
She's scared(107)

Example IV: It is used for cohesive function as a link between two paragraphs.

I had been resentful and hurt when I had heard this.

And yet I should have been prepared (41).

Example V:

 Appropriately linking with the previous sentence. The passive can be understood only by reading the previous sentence.

I couldn't get through when I tried to ring you up. It was engaged (85).

Example VI:

The previous sentence or the following sentence does not give any clue of the agent in this example. Even the paragraph does not give any details. The details may be traced from the previous paragraph. The deictic 'this' reveals the elliptic nature of the sentence.

But I had not said this to Mohan. I had been ashamed. It had sounded too pretentious, as if I had been taking something that was after all only a hobby too seriously (144).

Example VII:

In the following sentence, double past perfect are combined together, which is unusual in sentence structure.

And, looking at his stricken face, I had been convinced I had done him wrong(144)
5.7.2. Title of the Fiction

The title of the text *TLS* also adds meaning to the mind style of characters. The three elements found in the title are as follows:

- **That** – Demonstrative Adjective (abstract meaning)
- **Long** – Adjective (abstract meaning)
- **Silence** – Noun (abstract meaning)

The title tells about the “lengthy silence of some moments and not any specific moment”. The title itself is abstract in a sense that all the three elements have abstract connotations. Silence is an abstract word. ‘Long’ does not specify the length and hence it is abstract. The deictic ‘That’ does not identify anything exactly and it requires contextual information. In this way the abstract nature of ‘silence’ is intensified. Thus the title is made impressive.

5.7.3. Tense Forms: Unusual Past Perfect Structure

*TLS* has more number of simple and short sentences. The style appears to be plain and simple. But at the same time, the following sentences reveal a different aspect of the mind style of the speaker. In total 286 clauses, with past perfect continuous construction, are found in the text. These constructions are used by the I-narrator. The grammatical rule says that the perfect should be used for the action completed before another action began. The second action is supposed to assume only simple past tense. Lynn M. Berk says that the action “starts in the past and continues up until another moment in the past…. Novels and short stories are often written in the past tense. In this context, events that precede those being described in the story line are usually related in past perfect” (1999:112). Jaya, who is disturbed mentally by the haunting of past events, confuses her sentence construction. It is noted that she has not used many ‘had been’ construction in her dialogues. Mohan uses two sentences with past perfect continuous in the passive form. No any other character uses these sentence construction. Jaya, as I-narrator uses two past perfect clauses together. A few
example are given below, wherein past perfect and past perfect continuous structure are used by Jaya, violating the grammar rule:

And, if there had been no reason why I should have married Mohan, there had been no reason not to marry him either. (93)

'I had been unable to speak, fumbling for the words at first, but soon they had come.' (154)

'I would have laughed if I had been able to stop crying.' (117)

Ai had been furious when I had agreed. (94)

And after I had heard the story I realised that his smile, as he had pointed out the house to me, had been for the boy who had been invited there for a meal out of charity. (87)

And I had been detached from that woman who had seen him remote from that experience. (157)

And it had been just a coincidence, though it had helped, that just then Mohan had propelled me into that other kind of writing. (148)

And when he had finally woken up, crying; hungry, he had been unable to get at the milk. (173)

And when I had been praised for anything, I'd been so ridiculously pleased, 'I almost wag my tail, like a dog that's been patted by its master,' I had told Kamat. (84)

And when Rahul was born, my first question, even before I had come wholly out of the anaesthesia, had been - is he fair. (120)

And, according to Ai, only after all this had been revealed had Vanitamami discovered a special affinity between herself and her husband's brother. (44)

And, looking at his stricken face, I had been convinced I had done him wrong. (144)

At last the questions had ceased and there had been silence. (141)

At this point, as I had been narrating this story to Mohan, Mohan had smiled. (143)

Bite on your pain, don't let it escape, don't let it cry out - yes, it had been Appa who had said that to us when we had got hurt. (129)

But all that they had said had been, 'Where have you been?' (191)

But now, here, in this place, when he began to speak of the boy he had been, I saw something new in him (without perfect tense). (33)
When Mohan had come back from his official trip and I had lied to him, there had been no guilt even then.

5.7.4. Use of Connectives

The sentence connective 'and' is used 1286 (1.8%) times in the novel by the narrator as well as characters. Moreover the deviation in the frequent use of 'and then' (63 times) and 'and so' (31 times) shows the L1 interference in the narration. In sentences 'and then' is used sixty three times and among those sentences, thirty six times the sentence begins with 'and then'. This shows the mind of the narrator that she is desperate to link her thoughts and make them more cohesive. Some of the examples are given below:

Example:

In the following example, the narrator connects the first paragraph with the second one here with 'and so' and tries to connect the second sentence of the second paragraph with the first sentence. The narrator seems to be very conscious of the cohesiveness as she discusses the mind set of a housewife which is significant to the theme of the novel

These women of Mohan's family were right, I had decided. I would pattern myself after them. That way lay well - if not happiness, at least the consciousness of doing right, freedom from guilt.

And so, when something was not done well, or on time, a button missing, or a meal cooked badly, or too delayed, I had cringed in guilt. And when I had been praised for anything, I'd been so ridiculously pleased, 'I almost wag my tail, like a dog that's been patted by its master,' I had told Kamat

Some of the sentences beginning with 'and then' and 'and so' are given below:

The beginning of 'And so'

And so I resisted (1).

And so there they were, on the road, letting everyone see what they were reduced to (6).

And so the story goes on, the foolish credulous crow standing out there in the rain, begging to be let in, while Sister Sparrow spins out her excuses (16).

And so she had gone home to die (21).
And so she had died, not of drowning, but of a broken neck (22).

And so with Kusum's madness I became aware of my own blessed sanity (24).

And so there was nothing at all for me to do once I had made some lunch (28).

And so you have to keep the tree alive and flourishing, even if you have to water it with deceit and lies (32).

And so (32).

And so it was mine (42).

The beginning 'And then'

And then the blankness, the empty space - how large Ai's forehead was, how white and bony - that was widowhood (139).

And then I had seen Mohan smiling, talking to someone animatedly, looking triumphant, as if to be inside the barrier was somehow for him the apogee of his life (142).

And then it was all done and with the returning silence the truth came to me (145).

And then abruptly he follows her in, closing the door firmly behind him (8).

And then, as if he had been waiting in the dark recesses of my mind to materialise at this moment, I had remembered Nair (10).

And then I knew that ghosts are not, as I had imagined, always other people; the ghost most fearful to confront is the ghost of one's old self (13).

And then this man I can remember how his gift of casual, physical contact had amazed me (15).

And then I realised that I'd forgotten how the story ended (16).

And then, deliberately - I could see the effort he made - he steered away from that thought (19).

And then, curiously, a day or two after Mohan and I came here, I noticed those ghostly rectangles appearing again through all the coats of paint we had slapped on the walls (46).

5.7.5. Use of 'as if'

The following sentences have 'as if' beginning which appears to be a habit to this particular narrator. She also changes the sentence structure to make it simple and direct, to make it understandable to common people.
As if Kusum was a raving maniac, out to destroy my children, instead of being a poor, frightened, defeated woman, whose urge for destruction had been turned inwards (elliptical)(20)

As if the carpenter had driven in, generously and at random, nails that sprang out to punish your skin, your clothes, your hair (elliptical)(26)

As if other women don’t have heavy periods (elliptical)(39)

As if Makarandmama was gently, unobtrusively, coming back to his old home (elliptical)(46)

As if he had not heard my feebly reassuring murmur, he burst out, 'It's not fair' (sentence structure changed)(58)

As if such a thing is possible (elliptical)(69)

As if there is such a thing as one self, intact and whole, waiting to be discovered (elliptical)(69)

As if we can’t understand (elliptical)(105)

As if I was seeing the two of us over and over again (elliptical)(142)

As if he'd realised my feelings, he'd gone on, 'You want to use my address for your mail' (sentence structure changed)(146)

As if women's experiences are of interest only to women (elliptical)(147)

As if nothing had happened (elliptical)(151)

As if none of it had happened (elliptical)(151)

As if it had been waiting for this, a crow landed on the window with a frightening flap of its wings and cawed harshly at me (sentence structure changed)(171)

As if I've put my head down and looked at the world from between my legs (elliptical)(189)

5.7.6. Use of ‘Mohan and I’

The repetition of ‘Mohan and I’ has been found in the novel consistently. It reveals a specific point that by reiterating the ‘togetherness’ of the husband and wife, the narrator wants to reveal the contrast between ‘what is happening outwardly’ and ‘what is happening inwardly’ (within one’s mind). Though it appears to the society that they are together and doing everything together, they are different and they are just ‘man’ and ‘woman’. The
exploitation of sentence construction, especially the inclusion of ‘Mohan and I’ in various positions of the sentence, reveals the kind of emphasis the narrator is making on the situation. She uses III person + I person for both positive and negative situations.

*The evening after we came here, Mohan and I, to this Dadar flat - is it only ten days since then.* (3)

*No, that's not wholly true, it was Mohan and I, both of us together, who wanted these things.* (25)

*I only know that when we came here, Mohan and I, I had a queer sense of homecoming.* (25)

*And yet, as Mohan and I sat together in an uneasy silence, the vision of ajji's room came to me with a vividness that hurt.* (27)

*When Mohan and I had visited her - our normal routine visit during our annual stay in Saptagiri - her mother-in-law had shrugged heavily and said, 'God knows what's wrong with her.* (39)

*And then Mohan and I came here from Lohanagar.* (44)

*And then, curiously, a day or two after Mohan and I came here, I noticed those ghostly rectangles appearing again through all the coats of paint we had slapped on the walls.* (46)

*Mohan and I had been like those women.* (51)

*The tramp of the mill workers' feet as they went to work, as they came back from it, these sounds had been missing since we came here, Mohan and I.* (56)

*Now, once again, as we lay in silence, Mohan and I, whispers drifted to me through the window.* (56)

*Mohan and I dutifully passed on the reproach to our children.* (71)

*Both Mohan and I grew up in Saptagiri, but our memories make them two entirely different worlds.* (87)

*We had gone there for lunch, Mohan and I, on one of our visits to Saptagiri, when Mohan, suddenly halting by Savitri-ataya's gate, had said with a smile, 'It was here.* (87)

*And Mohan and I are in Dadar.* (110)

*No, that was not right, either, we had killed her between us, Mohan and I.* (121)

*Two bullocks yoked together - that was how I saw the two of us the day we came here, Mohan and I.* (191)
5.7.7. Use of Verbless sentences

There are innumerable verbless sentences, one-word sentences and short sentences in the form of phrases or expressions used in the novel. These instances reveal the casual and informal way of speaking without caring for grammatical correctness. Jaya, being incoherent in her thinking, displays the same characteristic in her expression. A few examples are given below:

*His father not here, his mother forgiving, what has he to worry about?* (189)

*One son dead, the other running away, and not even a grandson; who'll cremate us when we're dead?* (182&183)

*And then lovemaking, a silent, wordless love-making* (85)

*A couple with two children* (8).

*Away from shame and disgrace* (10).

*A peaceful and colourful death* (10).

5.7.8. Authorial Tone

Some of the passages are given below only to highlight the consciousness of the I-narrator which falls in line with the intentions of the creative work and the narrator's efforts to establish herself as an objective reporter of events.

*Nilima's apologetic, guilty tone grated on me. Why did she regard my writing with such awe? When Nilima talked of writers – and, poor girl, she considered me one – her iconoclasm gave way, her judgement, so ruthless and incisive otherwise, faltered* (68)

*But for me, now that I had abandoned 'Seeta', there was nothing; or, if there was, I had to search for it. Was that the reason why I was sitting here with the diaries of so many years about me? Looking through these diaries, I realized, was like going backwards. As I burrowed through the facts, what I found was the woman who had once lived here. Mohan's wife. Rahul's and Rati's mother. Not myself* (69)
5.7.9. Unusual Shift

The narrator, after having started narrating the meeting with the missionary woman, suddenly changes her tone and starts talking with the missionary in her imagination. The passage given below reveals the disturbance in her mind. She shifts from ‘little mad woman’ to ‘you had come ... desert you too... you began...’, to show the distracted mind of the narrator.

Poor little mad woman who could not even remember from where you had come, did they all desert you too, so that you began going around trying to find someone to share your dream of eternal happiness, of everlasting life? (145)

5.7.10. Longest Sentences

The following sentences are the longest sentences in the novel and they are used by I-narrator. These sentences are mentioned here for a specific linguistic value of revealing the mind of the narrator through the language use.

I was free, after years, of all those monsters that had ruled my life, gadgets that had to be kept in order, the glassware that had to sparkle, the furniture and curios that had to be kept spotless and dust-free, and those clothes, God, all those never-ending piles of clothes that had to be washed and ironed, so that they could be worn and washed and ironed once again. (25) (word length 4.246377)

In the second sentence, the beautiful description of the early November morning is disturbed by the recurrent image of household works and makes her stop the description
abruptly and so the sentence is incomplete. Moreover the sentence does not have the main verb and the whole sentence appears poetical if it is written down like a poem, as mentioned below:

The crisp November early morning air, the smell of kerosene from the sigree kept out in the yard, the crackling sounds as the coals ignited, the sparks flying up, the scouring sounds as the servant woman scrubbed the night's vessels with ash and mud, the hissing sound she made from between her teeth as she scrubbed them, and Vanitamami herself, with a tray of puja things in her hands. (31) (word length 4.492754)

The above sentence is split into following lines/phrases to show that the narrator has tried to describe an 'early morning' in a poetic manner.

The crisp November early morning air,
The smell of kerosene from the sigree kept out in the yard,
The crackling sounds as the coals ignited,
The sparks flying up,
The scouring sounds
As the servant woman scrubbed the night's vessels with ash and mud,
The hissing sound she made from between her teeth as she scrubbed them,
And Vanitamami herself, with a tray of puja things in her hands.

The following 70 - word sentence has an effective metaphorical reference to 'vehicles without the body built up'. In her present mind set, wherein she is without her husband and children, she thinks of her life as a vehicle (In Indian context, lorry) without body. Each vehicle goes separately as a skeleton. Here the 'skeletal' refers to 'lifeless body'. 'Totally unaware' refers to the situation in the family. The collocation 'chilly isolation' reveals the reality. Comma is the only punctuation used in this sentence.

All that I could see instead, even with my eyes closed, was a stark, nightmarish picture of an eerie caravan of skeletal vehicles, a caravan we had seen on the highway one early morning, each vehicle driven by a silent, masked, hooded figure, each driver looking straight ahead, each totally unaware, it seemed, of the vehicle ahead of him or the one behind, each vehicle moving in a chilly isolation. (171&172) (word length 4.557143)

The following 79 - word sentence makes a gradual shift from present perfect tense into simple present and then into simple past very casually without breaking the sentence,
and notably with the use of punctuation marks. She uses ‘quite unlike’ to make the shift from present into past.

*The wondrous alchemy of Dilip has transformed even his dead mother so that she looks positive and confident in the picture, quite unlike the woman I remember, sitting with a baby on her outstretched legs, looking up at us in vague surprise when we entered, though, according to Vanitamami, it was 'our poor Venu' who had invited us; in fact, from Vanitamami's words it seemed that 'poor Venu' would be quite heartbroken if we didn't go to her house* (23). (word length 4506329)

The following 80-word sentence uses a parenthesis and her typical style of ‘repetition’ of a particular sentence construction as she begins every clause with ‘it was Vanitamami who...’ The sentence within parenthesis refers to a different person. The I-narrator seems to be unaware of the ending of sentences and speaks as though nothing has ended.

*It was Vanitamami who made the tea on the Primus, pumping it fiercely and vigorously, never noticing that it was burning lopsidedly (it was Dilip of course who unclogged the burner with a pin and set the stove right); it was Vanitamami who served out the eats on separate dishes for us, stuff she'd got in clandestinely herself a day before; it was Vanitamami who chivvied the children away from the room in which we sat in an isolated dignity* (70). (word length 4475)

5.7.11. Participant Relation and Mind Style

The narrator uses the innovation of expressing emotions and feelings through bodily parts and thereby reveals a distinct mind style. Leech and Short explain this linguistic choice with an example from Christopher Isherwood. They say, “One important aspect of mind style is that of participant relations in the clause”. (1984:189). They again say, “… use of a bodily part instead of a person as an actor in a clause is a fairly common device for suggesting that the part of the body involved acts of its own accord. This changes the way in which we ascribe motivation for acts...” (1984:190). This technique is used by Deshpande
in this context wherein the indirect reference helps the narrator to avoid embarrassment. The following are some of the examples:

I hesitated only once, when I came upon a shoe, the inside of it filled with an unhealthy growth of fungus. My fingers twitched with horror. Finally I pushed it with my foot outside the door, leaving it there for Nayana to carry away (13).

The springs squeaked as he turned over, a compact and cautious movement that brought him closer to me. His arm lay across my chest. It felt heavy, I could not breathe. Gently I lifted it. He mumbled something, and then his eyes were suddenly open, staring into mine (18).

When she sat near him, he clutched at her sari, and if she moved away, he whimpered, the eyes making desperate attempts, it seemed, to follow her (29).

I was collecting my books when suddenly the thump of her hands as she beat out the bhakries came to a stop (37).

And then, as I watched, she began hitting herself on the face. Her hands were all floury, and wet too, and her face soon became white and floury. Soon there were red patches as she went on and on hurting herself. I tried to stop her, I tried to stop her screams, I tried to hold her hands, but I could do nothing. Her hands were like... steel. At last her hands slowed down and I could hold them. She began to cry (38).

I lay awake the whole night, my body tensed with the effort of listening for footsteps, for the doorbell to ring. But the night passed in silence, and it was with relief that I got out of bed and went to the balcony when the sounds outside told me the day had begun (182).

Relief and happiness flooded me, only to be wrenched painfully out of me as I woke up to find myself alone, the pillow by my side an unwrinkled blank, my face wet with tears, my hands painfully clenched (128).

... my head resting on the toilet seat, my chest hurting, my throat raw and painful, until it was over (158).

The following two examples reveal the uniqueness of using 'emotions' in the place of human action as though emotions themselves act on their own.

That laughter had finished off Suhasini as far as I was concerned. She'd never really existed anyway; nobody had ever called me by that name, not even Mohan (15).

His looks, his thoughts followed me about. As I was chatting with Nayana, I could feel him thinking... how can she? Doesn't she know how it is with me? Doesn't she care?
And again and again his voice called out to me... Jaya, Jaya (28&29).
5.8. I-narrator and Abnormal Mind

Here some of the instances from the novel are highlighted to show the unusual way in which the mind brings out the reality. The elliptical structure and more number of modalities make the following passages impressive. The significant features of the following passages are language use and objective description of abnormal mind. The mind style of Jaya is disrupted by the dormant fears and the present failure. She appears abnormal in her thinking and the same is pictured in the following examples:

Longing for disaster:

I remember now how often I had sighed for a catastrophe, a disaster, no, not a personal one, but anything to shake us out of our dull grooves. (The eight-planet configuration, which they had said presaged a disaster, had roused my hopes once.) Why was it, I had often wondered, that wars always took place in other countries, tidal waves and earthquakes occurred in far-off, unknown places, that murder, adultery and heroism had their places in other people's lives, never in ours? The very words disaster, wrongdoing, retribution seemed wholly irrelevant to our lives (4).

Those cosy, smiling, happy families in their gleaming homes spelt sheer poetry to me. For me, they were the fairy tales in which people 'live happily ever after' (3).

They will store this story in their subconscious, their unconscious or whatever, and eventually they will become that damnably, insufferably priggish sparrow looking after their homes, their babies... and to hell with the rest of the world (17).

Imbalanced Mind

I could feel her anguish, her fears, her despair. They seeped into me drop by drop, until I felt myself burdened with them. The day I heard she was sick, I felt relief. It was like hearing of someone's death. Your own life, your living, becomes a vital truth you're suddenly conscious of. And so with Kusum's madness I became aware of my own blessed sanity. Thank God, Kusum, you're nuts, I had thought; because you're that, I know I'm balanced, normal and sane.

Suddenly it occurs to me - as long as Kusum was there, I had known clearly who I was; it had been Kusum who had shown me out to be who I was. I was not-Kusum. Now, with Kusum dead...? (23&4)
Unusual Mind viewing ‘Waiting’

And above and beyond this, there had been for me that other waiting... waiting fearfully for disaster, for a catastrophe. I always had this feeling - that if I've escaped it today, it's still there round the corner waiting for me; the locked door, the empty house, the messenger of doom bringing news of death. With Mohan's confession, I was actually relieved. Here it was at last - my disaster. No more waiting, no more apprehension, no more fears (30).

Personal experience influences her thinking and expression

Where was it I had read an account of how baby girls were done to death a century or so back? They were, I had read in horror, buried alive, crushed to death in the room they were born in; and immediately after that, a fire was lit on the spot - to purify the place, they said. Perhaps it was to ensure death.

All those agonies... for days I had been unable to get it out of my mind. But now I wondered whether it wasn't more merciful, that swift ending of the agony once and for all, than this prolonging of it for years and years (53).

Imaginary Mind of Pessimism

It seemed like a distant dream, the time when I had lived in a constant panic that he would die. I had clung to him at night, feeling with relief the warmth of his body, stroking his chest, letting my palms move with his even deep breaths. The thought of living without him had twisted my insides. His death had seemed to me the final catastrophe. The very idea of his dying had made me feel so bereft that tears had flowed effortlessly down my cheeks. If he had been a little late coming home, I had been sure he was dead. By the time he returned, I had, in my imagination, shaped my life to a desolate widowhood.

The strength of my feelings for him had both shamed and terrified me. I had never confessed my frenetic emotions to him. It had seemed like a disease, a disability I had to hide from everyone (96&97).

Disorientation in Mind Expressed

Time to go to sleep. Time to close the story books. And they lived happily ever after. I lay on my bed in the dark, waiting for Mohan to come home. Waiting for Mohan to come home - how often I'd done it since we got married. But this was different.

'He won't come now, he must be dead somewhere.' Rahul had said this.... 'Raam naam satya hai, Raam naam satya hai.' Somebody was dead, they were taking the person away.... I had been Sister Sparrow then. Close the doors, stay inside and you're safe.

Somewhere a radio was blaring out a film song... 'Come back, my love, come back to me.' 'But Mohan was not my love, he had never been that.... 'Mummy, Mummy' - somewhere I could hear a child's cries, somewhere a cooker was hissing angrily, but none of these sounds was real, they had nothing to do with me....'I'm alone, I must talk to someone, I'll go upstairs and talk to Kamat'...The thought died the moment it was born. And now the sense of confusion, of turmoil, towards which I had been
rushing headlong, met me with brutal force. I could feel myself gasping, drowning in the darkness, the wild, flailing, panic-stricken movements that I was making taking me lower and lower into the vortex. I switched on the radio and turned frantically from station to station. Music, film music, a talk, screeching sounds...I came floundering out of the depths, thinking - am I going crazy like Kusum? Kusum - as if the thought of her had been an Open Sesame, I found myself engulfed by the ghost of Kusum, welcoming me to the category of unwanted wives, deserted wives, claiming me joyfully at last as a companion. I could not escape her any more: there was nowhere I could go, nowhere else she could go either. Here we were together at last - Jaya and Kusum. How hatefully they had clubbed our names together when we went to (124&125).

5.9. Conclusion

The I-narrator, Jaya, who is also a participating character, narrates her story, permitting the characters involved in her story to speak for themselves occasionally. However as it is seen the major part of narrative concentrates on the development of the personality and attitude of Jaya and the process in which the mental development takes place. The narrative style is altered according to the need of the situation and thereby the 'transitional introspective mind style' is revealed. The study shows that I-narrator has proved herself objective in her narration, even in narrating her own conflicts within her mind.