CHAPTER – III

NARRATIVE SYLE

3.1 Plot

In fiction, a plot is all the events in a story, particularly rendered towards the achievement of some particular artistic or emotional effect. In other words, it's what mostly happened in the story. Such as the mood, characters, setting, and conflicts which occur in a story.

3.1.1 Structure

Plot has structure, at several and different levels and forms or just one level.

3.1.2 Cause and Effect

At the smallest level, the plot consists in an action and a reaction, or cause and effect. This is made by the author, about what happens to any person in the story. This can have an effect or not on the character. (Bickham 1993)
3.1.3 Scene and Sequel

At mid-level, plot is structured in scenes and sequels, with scenes providing drama and sequels providing an aftermath. (Bickham 1993)

3.1.4 Beginning, Middle and End

The larger structure of plot is often divided into three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. Which is sometimes constructed as initiation, climax and anti-climax.

3.1.5 Story arc

Plot is often schematically represented as an arc reflecting the rising action described in the following phases:

3.1.5.1 Exposition – the story's first incident and introduction of the characters and setting.

3.1.5.2 Conflict or Problem – goal which the main character, or other characters, of the story has to achieve.

3.1.5.3 Complication or Rising action – obstacles with which the main character has to cope and the accompanying growing tension.

3.1.5.4 Climax – highest point of interest of the story.
3.1.5.5 Resolution – what happens to the character after overcoming all obstacles and reaching his goal, or failing to achieve the desired result and not reaching his goal.

3.1.5.6 Conclusion – the end result of the plot.

3.1.6 Subplot

In addition to the main plot, a story may have one or more subplots. The main plot is sometimes called the A-Plot while a subplot may be referred to as the B-Plot.

3.1.7 Suspension of Disbelief

Suspension of disbelief is the reader's temporary acceptance of story elements as believable, regardless of how implausible they may seem in real life.

3.1.8 Forms

Plots have been developed in a wide range of genres and forms; tragedy, comedy, romance, satire, poem, short stories and novel.

The term plot-driven is sometimes used to describe fiction in which a preconceived storyline is the main thrust, with the characters'
behavior being moulded by this inevitable sequence of events. Plot-driven is regarded as being the opposite of character-driven, in which the character is the main focus of the work.

### 3.1.9 History

According to Aristotle's Poetics (Italaialibri;net), a plot is 'the arrangement of incidents' that (ideally) each follow plausibly from the other. The plot is like the pencil outline that guides the painter's brush, and as such can be distinguished from the story or narrative that is framed by the plot. When a plot is like the pencil outline, the story is comparable to the finished painting. An example of the type of plot which follows these sorts of lines is the linear plot of development to be discerned within the pages of a Bildungsroman novel. Aristotle notes that a string of unconnected speeches, no matter how well-exhausted, will not have as much emotional impact as a series of tightly connected speeches delivered by perfect speakers.

Aristotle used the term mythos to denote plot. In literature, mythos is a traditional or recurrent narrative theme or plot structure. The description is deceptively simple, because the actions are performed by particular characters in a work and are the means by which they exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities.
The concept of plot and the associated concept of construction of plot, emplotment, has developed considerably since Aristotle (Italialibri.net) made these insightful observations. The episodic narrative tradition which Aristotle indicates has systematically been subverted over the intervening years, to the extent that the concept of beginning, middle, end are merely regarded as a conventional device.

This is particularly true in the cinematic tradition, in which the folding and reversal of episodic narrative is now commonplace. Moreover, many writers and film directors, particularly those with a proclivity for the Modernist or other subsequent and derivative movements which emerged during or after the early 20th century, seem more concerned that plot is an encumbrance to their artistic medium than an assistance. Avant-garde novelist and critic Giorgio Manganelli said, 'Personally, I'm interested in books that have a theme rather than a plot; which is not possible, or is excessively tough, to summarize'.

3.1.10 Plot of Historical Events

Epistemological historian, (Paul Veyne 1971) applies the concept to real-life events, defining plot as 'the fabric of history', a system of interconnected historical facts,

'Facts do not exist in isolation, in the sense that the fabric of history is what we shall call a plot, a very human and not very
'scientific' mixture of material causes, aims, and chances—a slice of life, in short, that the historian cuts as he wills and in which facts have their objective connections and relative importance. The word plot has the advantage of reminding us that what the historian studies is as human as a play or a novel. Then, what are the facts worthy of rousing the interest of the historian? All depends on the plot chosen; a fact is interesting or uninteresting. In history as in the theater, to show everything is impossible—not because it would require too many pages, but because there is no elementary historical fact, no event worthy at all. If one ceases to see events in their plots, one is sucked into the abyss of the infinitesimal'. (Ibid)

3.2 First Person Narrative

First-person narrative is a literary technique in which the story is narrated by one character, who explicitly refers to him or herself in the first person, that is, using words and phrases involving "I" (referred to as the first-person singular) and "we" (referred to as the first-person plural).

The intensity of such confessional intimacy can be striking. First-person narratives can appear in several forms: interior monologue, as in Dostoevsky's, 'Notes from Underground'; dramatic monologue, as in 'Albert Camus', 'The Fall'; or explicitly, as in Mark
Twain's, 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn'.

Since the narrator is within the story, he or she may not have knowledge of all the events. For this reason, first-person narrative is often used for detective fiction, so that the reader and narrator uncover the case together. One traditional approach in this form of fiction is for the main detective's principal assistant, the 'watson', to be the narrator, this derives from the character of Dr Watson in Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes' stories.

First-person plural narrators tell the story using 'we', that is, no individual speaker is identified; the narrator is a member of a group that acts as a unit. The first-person-plural point of view occurs rarely but can be used effectively, sometimes as a means to increase the concentration on the character or characters the story is about. Examples: William Faulkner in 'A Rose for Emily' (Faulkner was an avid experimenter in using unusual points of view, Frederik Pohl in 'Man Plus', and more recently, Jeffrey Eugenides in his novel 'The Virgin Suicides' and Joshua Ferris in 'Then We Came To The End'.

First-person narrators can also be multiple, as in Akutagawa's 'In a Grove' (the source for the movie Rashomon) and Faulkner's
The first-person narrator may be the principal character or one who closely observes the principal character (eg. Emily Brontë's 'Wuthering Heights' or F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby', each narrated by a minor character). These can be distinguished as 'first person major' or 'first person minor' points of view.

First-person narrative can tend towards a stream of consciousness, as in Marcel Proust's 'In Search of Lost Time'. The whole of the narrative can itself be presented as a false document, such as a diary, in which the narrator makes explicit reference to the fact that he/she is writing or telling a story, such as in Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'. In between telling a story, narrators may be more or less conscious of themselves as telling a story, and their reasons for telling it and the audience that they believe they are addressing also vary wildly. In extreme cases, a frame story presents the narrator as a character in an outside story who begins to tell his own story.

First person narrators are often unreliable narrators since a narrator might be impaired (as in The Last Film of Emile Vico by Thomas Gavin), lie (as in the The Book of the New Sun series by Gene Wolfe), or manipulate his or her own memories intentionally or
not (as in The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro). Henry James discusses his concerns about the romantic privilege of the 'first person' in his preface to The Ambassadors, calling it 'the darkest abyss of romance.'

Perhaps the most convoluted example of a mixed media kind of point of view is Joseph Conrad's novelette 'Heart of Darkness', which has a double framework: an unidentified narrator describes (in first person plural) Marlow, the protagonist, telling his own story in the first person. Thus we have a 'we' introducing a 'he' who talks about 'I'.

3.3 Dialogue in Fiction

Dialogue in fiction is a verbal exchange between two or more characters. If there is only one character, who is talking to himself in his mind, it is known as interior monologue.

3.3.1 Purpose of Dialogue

Dialogue in a piece of writing such as a short story or a novel should have a purpose.

Break up narrative - The writer can use dialogue to balance out the other elements of fiction such as description.
Advance the plot - What characters discuss can ultimately change the course of the story.

Develop conflict - Arguing characters creates conflict; dialogue can also build tension.

Present information - Dialogue can be used as an alternative to exposition; instead of being fed dry facts, the reader will enjoy learning the background of the story.

Develop character - Dialogue can reveal the personality, age, intelligence and experience of a character.

3.3.2 As You Know, Bob Dialogue

While giving readers information through dialogue can be an excellent way to slide in necessary information, writers can also attempt to give information through implausible dialogue. Most commonly, this occurs in the form of 'As You Know, Bob dialogue'. This consists of characters giving each other - without motivation - long lectures about things the other characters know but the reader does not. Other problems include:
Introducing characters who do not know something for no plausible reason;

Introducing characters whose ignorance is plausible, but whose presence, along with the other characters' desire to explain, is not.

Despite the name As You Know, Bob, the actual problem is that the conversation is not motivated. As in real life, people do lecture, and in fact, hector other people about things they already know. It is possible to put this information into the story if the character is given a reason to lecture. Even when dealing with ignorant characters, some reason is needed for the explanation.

3.3.3 Character Change

Demonstrating character change through dialogue can be a weak method. A character who declares, ‘I've learned my lesson now!’ or ‘I've changed, really I have!’ is no more plausible in fiction than in real life.

Comic writers may put the words in the character's mouth, only to show by action that the character has, in fact, not changed.
Effective demonstration of character change in dialogue requires that the character not declaim on the change, but demonstrate it by saying something that he would not have before; for example: a formerly selfish character apologizing; a formerly dictatorial character asking instead of demanding; a formerly timid character telling an unpleasant truth to someone who will take it badly; and a formerly hostile person invoking his former enemy to do something with him.

3.4 Narrative

A narrative is a concept, composed and delivered in any medium, which describes a sequence or real or unreal events. It derives from the Latin verb narrarre, which means ‘to recount’ and is related to the adjective gnarus, meaning ‘knowing’ or skilled, (Ultimately derived from the Proto Indo European) root ghnu, ‘to know’. The word ‘story may be used as a synonym of narrative’, but can also be used to refer to the sequence of events described in a narrative.

3.4.1 Conceptual Issues

Semiotics begins with the individual building blocks of meaning called signs and studies the way in which signs are combined into codes to transmit messages. This is a part of general communication systems using both verbal and non verbal elements, creating a discourse with different modalities and forms. Roman Jackobson (1985) argues that literature does not exist as a separate...
entity. He and many other semioticians prefer the view that all texts, whether spoken or written, are the same except that some authors encode their texts with distinctive literacy qualities that distinguish them from other forms of discourse. Nevertheless, there is a clear trend to address literary narrative forms as separable from other forms. This is first seen in Russian Formalism through Victor Shklovsky’s analysis of the relationship between composition and style, and in the work of Vladimir Prop who analysed the plots used in traditional folktales and identified distinct functional components. This trend continues in the work of the Prague School and of French scholar’s such as Claude Levi Strauss and Roland Barthes (1971). It leads to a structural analysis of narrative and an increasingly influential body of modern work that raises important epistemological questions. What is text? What is its role in the contextual culture? How is it manifested as art, cinema, theatre, or literature? How are poetry, short stories and novels of different genres?

3.5 Literary Theory

General purpose in semiotics and literary theory, a narrative is a story or part of a story. It may be spoken, written or imagined, and it will have one or more points of view representing some or all of the participants or observers. In stories told verbally, there is a person telling the story, a narrator whom the audience can see and hear, and who adds layers of meaning to the text nonverbally. The narrator also has the opportunity to monitor the audience’s response to the story and
to modify the manner of the telling to clarify content or enhance listener interest. This is distinguishable from the written form in which the author must gauge the readers likely reactions when they are decoding the text and make a final choice of words in the hope of achieving the desired response.

Whatever the form, the content may concern real world people and events. This is termed personal experience narrative. When the content is fictional, different conventions apply. The text is projecting a narrative voice, but the narrator is ontologically distant, i.e., he belongs to an invented or imaginary world, and not the real world. The narrator may be one of the characters in the story. Roland Barthes (1971) describes such characters as paper beings and fiction comprises their narratives of personal experience as created by the author. When their thoughts are included, this is termed internal focalization, i.e., when each character’s mind focuses on a particular event, the text reflects his or her reactions.

In written forms, the reader hears the narrator’s voice both through the choice of content and style (the author can encode voices for different emotions and situations, and the voice can either be overt or covert), and through clues that reveal the narrator’s beliefs, values, and ideological stance, as well as the author’s attitude towards people, events and things. It is customary to distinguish a first person from a third person narrative (Gerard Genette uses the terms homodiegetic
and heterodiegetic narrative respectively). A homodiegetic narrator describes his or her personal and subjective experiences as a character in the story. Such a narrator cannot know anything more about what goes on in the minds of any of the other characters than is revealed through their actions, whereas a heterodiegetic narrator describes the experiences of the characters who do appear in the story and if the story's events are seen through the eyes of a third person internal focaliser, this is termed a figural narrative. In some stories, the author may be overtly omniscient, and both employ multiple points of view and comment directly on events as they occur.

3.6 Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm

Outside the mainstream of semiotics, Walter Fisher (1984) has offered a comprehensive theory known as the Narrative paradigm. This involves the claims that rather than organizing data as facts in logical relationships, most people retain their everyday information as anecdotal narratives with characters, plots, motivations, and actions, and that, at its broadest level, all communication is a form of storytelling.

3.7 Other Specific Applications

Narrative Poetry is poetry that tells a story.

Narrative film is film which used filmed reality to tell a story, often as a feature film.
Narrative history is a genre of factual historical writing that uses chronology as its framework.

Narrative environment is a contested term that has been used for techniques of architectural or exhibition design in which stories are told in space and also for the virtual environments in which computer games are played and which are invented by the computer game authors.

Interrelated language means which serves a definite aim in communication. A functional style should be regarded as the product of a certain concrete task set by the sender of the message. Functional styles appear mainly in the literary standard of the language. These represent varieties of the abstract invariant and can deviate from the invariant, even breaking away with it.

Every functional style of language is marked by a specific use of language means, thus establishing its own norms which, however, are subordinated to the norm invariant and which do not violate the general notion of the literary norm. The writers of the given period in the development of the literary language contribute greatly to establishing the system of norms of their period. It is worth noting that the investigations of language norms at a given period are to great
extent maintained on works of men of letters. Selection, or deliberate choice of language, and the ways the chosen elements are the main distinctive features of individual style.

Individual style is a unique combination of language units, expressive means and stylistic devices peculiar to a given writer, which makes that writer’s works or even utterances easily recognizable. (Galperin, p.17) Naturally, the individual style of a writer will never be entirely independent of the literary norms and canons of the given period. But the adaptations of these canons will always be peculiar and therefore distinguishable. Individual style is based on a thorough knowledge of the contemporary language and allows certain justifiable deviations from the rigorous norms.

All men of letters have a peculiar individual manner of using language means to achieve the effect they desire. Writers choose language means deliberately. This process should be distinguished from language peculiarities which appear in everyday speech of this or that particular individual (idiolect).
3.8 Neutral Style, Colloquial Style and Bookish Style

The term “neutral style” is used mostly to denote the background for realizing stylistic peculiarities of stylistically coloured elements. Neutral style is characterized by the absence of stylistic colouring and by the possibility to be used in any communicative situation. This style is deliberately simplified.

If neutral style serves any situation of communication, colloquial style serves situations of spontaneous everyday communication (casual, non-formal) Bookish style corresponds to public speech (non-casual, formal). This division does not coincide with the division into spoken and written languages because colloquial style can be used in fiction, bookish style can be represented for documentations. Oratorical style exists in the oral form only. At the same time one should remember that colloquial speech which we meet in fiction has undergone some transformations: The writer usually compresses linguistic information choosing the typical and avoiding the accidental.

Colloquial style is divided into upper colloquial, common colloquial and lower colloquial. The latter two have their own peculiar features connected with region, gender and age of the speaker.
Bookish style embraces scientific, official, publicistic (newspaper), oratorical, and poetic styles.

There are no strict boundaries separating one FS from another. The oratorical style has much in common with a publicistic one. The publicistic newspaper style is close to the colloquial style. But if we consider this problem it will be evident that we are dealing with the combination of different FS in the speech of a given individual because each FS is characterized by certain parameters concerning vocabulary and syntax.

3.9 The Belles – Lettres Style

The Belles - Lettres Style is a generic term for the three substyles: the language of poetry; emotive prose (the language of fiction); the language of the drama. Each of these substyles has certain common features, and each of them enjoys some individuality. The common features of the substyles are the following:

The asthetico-cognitive function (a function which aims at the cognitive process, which secures the gradual unfolding of the idea to the reader and at the same time calls forth a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction which a reader experiences because he is able to penetrate into the author’s idea and to form his own conclusions)
Definite linguistic features;

Genuine, not trite, imagery, achieved by purely linguistic devices.

The use of words in different meanings, greatly influenced by the lexical environment.

A vocabulary which will reflect to a certain degree the author’s personal evaluation of things or phenomena.

A peculiar individual section of vocabulary and syntax.

The introduction of the typical features of colloquial language to a full degree (drama), to a lesser degree (in prose), to slight degree (poetry).

The Belles – Letter style is individual in essence. This is one of its most distinctive properties.

The language of poetry is characterized by its orderly form, which is based mainly on the rhythmic and phonetic arrangement of
the utterances. The rhythmic aspect calls forth syntactic and semantic peculiarities. There are certain restrictions which result in brevity of expression, epigram-like utterances and fresh, unexpected imagery. Syntactically this brevity is shown in elliptical sentences, in detached constructions, in inversion, etc.

Emotive prose shares the same common features, but these features are correlated differently than in poetry. The imagery is not so rich as in poetry. The percentage of words with contextual meaning is not so high. Emotive prose features the combination of the literary variant of the language, both in words and in syntax, with the colloquial variant. But the colloquial language in the belles-lettres style is not a simple reproduction of the natural speech, it has undergone changes introduced by the writer and has been made 'literature like.' In emotive prose there are always two forms of communication present — monologue (the writer's speech) and dialogue (the speech of the characters). Emotive prose allows the use of elements from other styles as well. But all passages written in other styles may be viewed only as interpolations and not as constituents of the style.

Language of the drama is entirely dialogue. The author's is almost entirely excluded except for the playwright's remarks and stage directions. But the language of the characters is not the exact reproduction of the norms of colloquial language. Any variety of the
belles – letters style will use the norms of the literary language of the given period. The language of plays is always stylized, it strives to retain the modus of literary English.

3.10 Publicistic Style

The publicistic style of language became a separate style in the middle of the 18th century. Unlike other styles, it has two spoken varieties, namely the oratorical substyle and the radio and TV commentary. The other two substyles are the essay (moral, philosophical, literary) and journalistic articles (political, social, economic). The general aim of publicistic style is to influence the public opinion, to convince the reader or the listener that the interpretation given by the writer or the speaker is the only correct one and to cause him to accept the expressed point of view.

Publicistic style is characterized by coherent and logical syntactical structure, with an expanded system of connectives and careful paragraphing. Its emotional appeal is achieved by the use of words with the emotive meaning but the stylistic devices are not fresh or genuine. The individual element is not very evident. Publicistic style is also characterized by the brevity of expression, sometimes it becomes a leading feature.
The oratorical style is the oral subdivision of the publicistic style. Direct contact with the listeners permits a combination of the syntactical, lexical and phonetic peculiarities of both the written and spoken varieties of language. The typical features of this style are: direct address to the audience, sometimes contractions; the use of colloquial words. The Synecdoche- a figurine of speech in which a part represents the whole or used verse, employed in the oratorical style are determined by the conditions of communication. As the audience rely only on memory, the speaker often resorts to repetitions to enable his listeners to follow him and to retain the main points of his speech. The speaker often use simile and metaphor, but these are generally traditional, because genuine synecdoche's may be difficult to grasp.

The essay is rather a series of personal and witty comments than a finished argument or a conclusive examination of the matter. The most characteristic language features of the essay are namely brevity of expression; the use of the first person singular; a rather expanded use of connectives; the abundant use of emotive words; the use of similes and sustained metaphors.

The language is journalistic articles is defined by the character of newspaper, magazine, as well as subjects chosen. Literary reviews stand closer to essays.
3.11 Newspaper Style

English newspaper writing dates from the 17th century. The first of any regular English newspapers was the weekly news which first appeared in May, 1622. The early English newspaper was principally a vehicle of information. Commentary found its way into the newspapers later. But as far back as the middle of the 18th century the British newspaper was very much like what it is today, carrying foreign and domestic news, advertisements, announcements and articles containing comments.

Not all the printed materials found in newspapers comes under newspaper style, only materials which perform the function of informing the reader and providing him with an evaluation of information published can be regarded as belonging to newspaper style. English newspaper style can be defined as a system of interrelated lexical, phraseological and grammatical means which is perceived by the community as a separate linguistic unity that serves the purpose of informing and instructing the reader. Information in the English newspaper is conveyed through the medium of:

- Brief news items;
- Press reports;
- Articles purely informational in character;
- Advertisements and announcements;
The newspaper also seeks to influence public opinion on political and other matters. Elements of appraisal may be observed in the very selection and way of presentation of news, in the use of specific vocabulary, casting some doubt on the facts recorded, and avoids responsibility. The principle vehicle of interpretation and appraisal is the newspaper article and the editorial in particular. Editorial is a leading article which is characterized by a subjective handling of facts. This purpose defines the choice of language elements which are mostly emotionally coloured.

Newspaper style has its specific vocabulary features and is characterized by an extensive use of:

Special political and economic terms (president, election)

Non-term political vocabulary (nation, crisis, agreement, member);

Newspaper clichés (pressing problem, danger of war, pillars of society);

Abbreviations (NATO, EEC);

Neologisms.
3.12 The Style of Official Documents

The style of official documents are represented by the following substyles or variants:

The language of business documents;

The language of legal documents;

The language of diplomacy;

The language of military documents;

Like other styles of language, this style has a definite communicative aim and its own system of interrelated language and stylistic means. The main aim of this types of communication is to state the conditions binding two parties and to reach agreement between two contracting parties. The most general function of the style of official documents predetermines the peculiarities of the style. The most striking features is a special system of clichés, terms and set expressions by which each sub-style can be easily recognized. Thus in finance we find terms like extra revenue, liability. In diplomacy such phrases as high contracting parties, memorandum, to ratify an agreement are found. In legal language, examples are to deal with a case, a body of judges.

All these varieties use abbreviations, conventional symbols and contractions, for example, M.P. (Member of Parliament) Ltd.,
Abbreviations are especially abundant in military documents. They are used not only as conventional symbols, but also as signs of military code. Another feature of the style is the use of words in their logical dictionary meaning. There is no room here for the realization of any other meaning here.

3.13 Melancholic Narrative Technique of Seth

3.13.1 Seth’s Indulgence in Exploring Western Music

Continents converage in the literary works of Vikram Seth. In his twenties his stay for ten years at Stanford in California has resulted in a Californian novel, ‘The Golden Gate’ (1986). After traveling over England and California he returned to India where living in his parental house, he indulged in writing ‘The Suitable Boy’ (1993) which has been acclaimed as a family saga and inevitably it has been rendered with the exotic vibrations. ‘An Equal Music’ (1999) storms the world for he does not pose to write as a third world writer but places himself quite comfortably in the mainstream of English fiction and his central character is not only white and English but a musician too, a second violin in the Maggiore quartet. Seth indulges in exploring the classical music of the western world, which evokes the cultural achievement of the nation. Tackling another genre a biography with a memoir, ‘Two Lives’ (2005) has once again struck a note of singularity. It is ‘strung across continents, the world war and the Lolocaut’ (113). Seth (2005) and this touching story of Shanthi Behari Seth, Seth’s great uncle and his wife, a jewish German Henny
with whom he has been an inmate, turns the leaves of their past. Tim Adams writes ‘The curiosity they inspired in him then grew over the years into the kind of obsession that fuels his writing’ (5) Seth (2005). Countries thus emerge and sprawl across. Lives in its bare and spectacular move run through.

Seth says ‘shaken about the globe, we live our fractured lives’ which seem to be a poignant pointer to the creation of characters. The comment that ‘An Equal Music’ is a mysterious boo and so he responds, ‘He is a northerner’ he goes first to Vienna, and finally finds himself in London. My experiences are quite different, also I suppose my rather late immersion in western music. I had heard symphonies, copras, but I had no real personal experience of anything like how a string quartet makes music. That it was so compelling for me, so fascinating, so tantalising’ (115) Seth (2005). Thus casting aside all doubts he has ventured into it and finds it an ineffable experience. That sets the motive for his writing of the novel. If it is a story of music, it is also a story of love. Other vital issues like industrialization too permeate the narrative but move on the periphery. Susan Hosking pinpoints that ‘The assumption that Art and Love are incompatible, and worse, mutually destructive is clearly apparent’ (101) Seth (2005). As the novel progresses, the reader begins to question whether these two find forces, love and music, which have ennobling effect, set the narrator at liberation and make him reach towards the heights that he could have. Without much ostentation it surfaces clearly that the narrator is in a welter of melancholy.
Melancholy is a kind of mental illness. Burton mentions that it is an inbred malady in every one of us and speaks of two special forms namely love melancholy and religious melancholy. Melancholy is, to use the modern term, depression. Depression causes a person to be in low spirit. It is an antithesis of joy. In other words, a kind of incurable sadness hangs on the person. A person afflicted by depression can experience a swing of moods. Depressive levels and the accompanying symptoms vary.

3.13.2 Attitudinal Narration

At the very outset, Michael Holmes, the narrator is ashamed of his ‘bitterness’. When a young woman at Etienne’s tells him that he is a happy man, he ‘stare[s] at her with such incredulity’ (4) Seth (1999). If he hums a song, it is his profession that signifies his habit and that music for him does not kindle the perennial spring of joy. The book’s three opening paragraphs, ‘strike a melancholy and decidedly minor chord that is to be sustained with variations, throughout’. ‘We find ourselves trapped in an unhappy narrator subjected to his frailties, moods and bad judgement., Michael is prone to melancholy, driven by an aesthetic sensibility, and alternately self-absorbed and self-doubting’. Traversing back in time, ten years ago, he recalls an incident and is still uncertain if he was in error and with a string of questions he makes us perceive that the ‘loss’ which he inherited then, is not near ‘retrieving’. He is in a compulsive habit of returning repeatedly to that phase of life and nurturing the word.
The cause of depression can vary from physical, mental, emotional to spiritual. If the physique is depleted of energy due to stress or overwork it can make a person feel low. Sick people invariably get depressed. A major cause can be rejection. Michael’s parents have a cherished dream of sending their only son to university that he could have a profession that would attain them social status. But as a young boy he goes against their wish when he firmly expresses his choice of going to a music college in Manchester. They perceive that his option to be a violinist does not seems to be very promising and it will not get him a ‘blooming pension’. He turns down their suggestion of doing music at university so that he gets a mandatory grant’ Stanley Holme is bewildered and aggrieved. His father’s eyes flash fire. The dire consequence of his decision-making at that stage meets with his parents, ‘incomprehension’ and the withdrawal of support’. Above all, the constant ringing voice is that he has ‘betrayed what [have] been for them real sacrifices’. Auntie Joan, a sort of irritant peacemaker, is one who interceded for their reconciliation and it has taken years for them to digest that bitter truth. Even when they are pushed together, for a while, after his mother’s death, it is clear, though his father does not vocalize it, that by turning his back on her dream, he has deprived her of a happiness’ and thereby the accusation hangs luminously around him.

It signifies that he has met with a kind of an intrusive rejection. Neither the son nor the parents fall in line. They cannot approve of his desire to become a musician. Neither did he try to appease them by
any means. On the contrary, he has embraced his desire determinedly and scrambled his way through right from the start. It begins at a pivotal point of his life. Getting a substantial grant neither from parental lineage nor from the official line implies the sort of hardship he would have endured in the training time. In addition to the tightening grip, the justifiable charge leveled against him gets him into complicated mire. The corollary accompanying guilt drags him down and unfortunately he has not taken any step to free himself from the corrosive guilt complex. A passive consciousness of it actively surrounds him and an indifferent negligence pervades his life. It has engendered a complex attitude of an acceptance and at the same time denial of his responsibility. He appears to let it go by but all the same it recurs vividly and enacts itself vivaciously in his inner theatre that keeps him aloof which becomes an easy door to indulge in it with all privacy possible.

Stanley Holme attends his son's first recital in Manchester. He arrives there out of compulsion because Mrs.Formby has to 'virtually bundle him into her car' when he rebels against it at the last moment. He is there 'but grudgingly and suspiciously'. When the applause of the urbane world, which is almost a far above the social background, arises when Michael finishes his musical performance, the father feels proud of him. However, their prediction that he would not be able to come up in life and have an unfailing constant monetary background remains true, in fact, too harshly. He manages only to have a hand to mouth existence. The continuous threat of parting away
with his Formby, hangs around him and more so, his profession. He has insufficient supply of income to pay for it or to procure another. His destination is all the time precarious and suspended in unfavourable and blighting circumstances. It is also necessary to draw attention on his father’s undue attachment to the cat zsa-zsa in his old age. It testifies conspicuously to Michael’s failure towards his parents and their hope on him tumbling down. Stanley Holme has not been able to get over the death of his wife and his widowed sister Joan, knowing that he would not survive the loneliness, moves in and takes care of him.

3.13.3 Interpersonal Narration

In the next stage, after his training in the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, to his ‘disbelieving joy’ Carl Kali invites him ‘to study with him in Vienna as an older student outside the regular curriculum’. As the parents design a different path for him and he jostles against it, Kali too thinks of a ‘solo career’ but Michael cannot bear to accept what others think of and plan for him. He spend time on chamber music and Kali does not approve of it. Both are disillusioned with each other. Kali dares to point out the defect in Michael and confront him saying that ‘you are very self-willed’. After this brief encounter Michael leaves Vienna, surprisingly never even considers the pleas of his lady love Julia McNicholl. As an introvert, he analyses and gets into the bitter truths of himself and his interpersonal relationship. He ruminates thus: ‘Carl Kali’ that old man, that stubborn magician, brutal and full of suffocating energy did not,
unaided, drive me from Vienna. It was as much my younger self, unyielding, unwilling to exchange a mentor for a dictator, or to sidle past a collision’. Carl Kail with his strong personality, comes alive as a strict disciplinarian’ because of his ardent love for music. Michael’s strong self too stands opposed to him. It is ostensibly evident that he faces rejection again in his life not because others exploit him as a victim or tend to hate him but because he is too stubborn to yield to any cause that means his welfare. In contrast to his attitude, they manifest a caring love towards him and envision a bright future for him.

His impulsive decision to leave Vienna causes a break in his career. He loses the rare training from a musician of fame only to end up as a fugitive in London. He rationalizes his failure in the concert that kail will him to fail, Of course, the presence of Kall among the audience and the enforcing will cannot have so much of a disastrous effect on him for he has an equally strong will power. He thinks that he ‘could have learned more from him if he had swallowed [his] sense of self. He weighs the advantages and disadvantages he has had. Besides gaining the adept skill of playing, he meets Julia but also loses her and is adrift now. His mind churns on all these thoughts for a letter has triggered it. Kall attends a musical programme at Stockholm, and writes to congratulate him for playing well. All along Kall has insisted on Michael to sustain and he did it. It only serves as a lead for Kall to make amendments for the past occurrence and asserts that ‘the past is past’ and hopes that ‘the gain will outlast the damage’. Kall has the
simplicity to write to appreciate and to apologise. He is modest in acknowledging the gain he rendered to the learners in his profession. In contrast to the magnanimous spirit of Kali, Michael thinks ‘let him die, his time has come, I cannot reply. Why should he foist on me this responsibility for absolution?’. Once again, his self does not allow him to humble himself and his rancour has to rage through. His unwillingness to forgive fetters his self further. His resistance to reconciliation remains rampant. Even when he writes it is ‘An Awkward Letter’ and immediately he thinks of him as a mocker.

Julia’s analysis of his character, though annoys him, is highly perceptive. If only Michael has mustered up his courage to face facts, he could have gained to overcome certain in-bred hurdles and directed his course of life in the path of achievement and fulfillment. He hates such reflection of himself. Julia assesses him ‘you just can’t stand authority Michael, in any form’… ‘you hero-worship, but you cannot stand authority. And God save your heroes if they turn out to have feet of clay’ (190) (Seth, 1999). Authority in any form whether it be father or master he has to turn against them. His rebellious nature bursts forth to the extent of damaging his own prospective. His inflexibility does not allow him to weigh the net result of his action. He cannot have a far-fetched vision and nothing can coerce him from his decision, not even the ladylove. As a result, he can only say, ‘I cannot bear to be in the company of other, but when I am alone, I am sick with memory’ (50) Seth (1999). It is a typical symptom of depressive nature to be alone. Instead of living in reality, he lives in the past and
remorse clouds his mind and saddens him further. Recalling the past incidents in their afresh from, he seems to be caught up in those affairs. Frantically he clings to them to dismiss them in an irritant way for a while.

3.13.4 Psychological Narration

Rejection, in a mutual manner, casts its shadow both on Michael and Julia. When he realizes that he is ‘unlearning’ and unravelling’ under Kall, he does not prolong his stay but instantly leaves Vienna. Leaving Vienna implies his brutal attack on his romantic life with Julia. His callous act of deserting her reflects on his selfwilled behaviour. Julia has accepted him wholeheartedly and loved him truly but his silence for months has left destructive effect on her. When he communicates to her months later she says ‘After I’d slowly gone to pieces’ and ‘she speaks from a surveying distance, almost beyond the memory of hurt or anger’ (109) Seth (1999). She has formed him almost and rendered refined aesthetic taste which he hurts down and tramples upon love that Julia’s father Dr.McNicholl, his courtesy giving out, gives a summarizing statement ‘For God’s sake Michael, haven’t you hurt her enough, Seth (1999) (31) and puts down the receiver, Julia experiences traumatic rejection but manages to come out of its dithering. Michael lives with the loss, which he himself has caused. When he chances to see her in a bus and fails to reach her he sits down under the arrows of Eros and weeps. The two layers of glass of the buses separate them and made communication almost impossible and he compares the incident to ‘a prison visit by a
loved one after many years’ (44) Seth (1999). Definitely so far, he has imprisoned himself in love rejection. Michael, unfortunately has even been unaware of his intensity of love for Julia when he decides to leave Vienna, rather wills to break his training under Kall. Once he has felt emphoric to take lessons under him. But now he feels restricted and cleaves himself away from the constricting atmosphere. But it is Vienna that offered him a world of love and acceptance that he unmindfully throws off and later loves to be in the pool of mourning ever the loss of his love.

A brief reunion with Julia in London, Seth contrives, renders a sustaining aura of romantic life in the text. Classical music enact a melting of opposites like sensuousness and rigour, lightness and depth and Seth opts for a different line. He analyses; “Despite a rather insipid adulterous triangle and the presence of standard potboiler elements – the young instrumentalist (Julia) struck down with a mysterious illness that will cut short a glittering career, the sudden cancellation that forces an unlocked – for replacement to step in, episodes of fugue on the podium – Seth chooses the opposite path’ (30) Seth (1999). When the adultery goes triangle almost scot-free in Vienna and Venice, Julia’s compunction pulls her out of it. Julia is deeply aware of her responsibility as a mother towards her son Luke, and the betrayal she imposes upon the fidelity of her husband, Hansen, who stood by her and comforted her to come up especially in her traumatic of her physical illness-an auto-immune disease of the inner ear. At the same time Michael interposes ‘why, when music is slipping
away from her, has she chosen to re-involve her life with mine? Am I for her a static mark, a reversion to the days when music was for her an imagined days when music was for her an actual sense not merely an imagined beauty?' (156) Seth (1999). It recurs that he can view it only from the angle of selfish motive forgetting that he experiences the peak of happiness when he is with her. The compelling question is about his genuineness towards her. It clearly indicates his insensitiveness and lack of understanding of Julia. Their brief togetherness has established the impossibility of their flirtive romance and the loss becomes final.

Two different angles divulge in the context of Michael’s life in Vienna. First he draws the difference between Julia and himself and that discourse throws light on his character. During those years in Manchester she has been his ‘best teacher’. He justifies by attributing it to the fact that Julia has the privilege of growing up in an unreachable different world from his, ‘where art and literature and music are absorbed without effort or explanation’. Even about music he has ‘learned more from her than anyone else, for what (he) learned from her (he) was not taught’. One of the bases of her confidence is her faith in God to whom she turns from time to time ‘when thankful or when troubled’. But it is ‘opaque’ to him, She has an ‘acuity, gentleness’ that he is alien to. He pictures thus: ‘perhaps what she saw in me was a corresponding strangeness – a volatility, a sense of resistance, of skepticism, roughness, impulsiveness, even, at times of dark panic, almost brainsickness’ (81) Seth (1999). The contrast is
evidential and he is the opposite of all that she is graciously endowed with. His unpredictable moods, irrational behaviour and fluctuating stances seem to be overruled by his panic, brainsickness. It has swayed him no matter however benevolent could be the situation. Almost an ideal world is in its formation for him with Julia. The fruits that he has reaped outweigh the stiffing condition yet he topples everything. He never arises out of the debris he has caused.

The second aspect is the relationship between the master and the student and different outlook Julia and Michael have on the very same situation. His third finger giving difficulty he is unable to play and Kall reacts 'with fury and impatience'. He says my anxieties reflected my fecklessness' and analyses. 'It was a slit one of the potential diamonds on his [Carl's] crown was proving itself to be merely carbon, convertible to its ideal form only under intense and continuous pressure. He applied it, and I crumbled' (81/82) Seth (1999) Julia coaxes him into courage. She insists on him to see, what he had first seen in Carl, 'someone whose playing went deeper and farther than his virtuosity whose music conveyed nobility of spirit in every phrase' (82) Seth (1999). She advises that he should not leave on bad terms with his teacher. But against this perspective, he looks upon her defence of Carl as 'an unbearable betrayal' (82). It is worse than his because he does not expect understanding from him. Carl has wasted his dream upon him. If tapping the potential is misread as pressure, the conflict is sure to become disastrous. When the far-above ideal reach of the master is twisted into inflexibility of the man, the
fault lies not with the achiever, Kall. Julia has persuaded him to stay on in Vienna, if not for any other noble cause, at least for the sake of their love but no such ennobling force can deter him from his determination. After all these, it is rather too surprising and also unbelievable when he says that he is 'irreparable imprinted with the die of someone else's being' (166) Seth (1999). Perhaps his impulsiveness makes him look back and live in regrets.

Depression is a natural consequence of losses. Loss of loved ones can cause inconsolable sadness. Michael's father loses his work and therefore the purpose of living and falls 'ill with a series of bronchial ailments. His mother has exhausted herself trying to nurse him, to earn a living working as a dinner lady in a school, and to fight the case' (27) Seth (1999). Suddenly she dies of a stroke. Julia's decision to part forever leaves a void in him. Soon after this unbearable loss, Michael hears of Mrs. Formby's death. He never makes it to visit her in the hospital nor to attend her funeral. Mrs. Formby passing away brings in another impending doom and at anytime he has to part away with the violin, which has been generously lent by Mrs. Formby. He loves it and it responds to him. His attachment to it is sensuous. He cannot imagine it lying 'unplayed, unloved, unspeaking in a cupboard for years' (56) Seth (1999). He has spent more time with it than with any living soul, and confesses that he has loved it more than he can say. Though he prepares himself to inherit another loss, that of the violin, Mrs. Formby has been too thoughtful that in her deathbed writes that she cannot 'bear to imagine
played by you for so many years’. It is an unimaginable boon that comes on his way. He is filled not with relief but disbelief’ (361) Seth (1999). Though her nephew Cedric Glover intervenes to reclaim it, he fails and Michael through Mr. Varms gets assured to enjoy the violin. He communicates to Mrs. Formby, though she cannot read that his life has ‘shelved towards desolation’ (366) Seth (1999) and wishes to know to whom he should deliver it when he is to die. His life has been coursing its way towards desperation and desolation.

Causes do vary with regard to the source of unhappiness. Condemnation springing from external or internal aura can be another major depressive force. Sadness, as we know, is an emotional symptom of depression. Michael’s desire to escape his past is largely responsible for his present psychological state of mind’ says Mala Pandurang (158). Michael, a butcher’s son hails from Rochdale, in the industrial north of England. Tim Parks analyses that Seth carefully avoids politics in handling Michael’s provincial boyhood but points out Rochdale as ‘Home of the industrial revolution, the north of England has a long and spirited tradition in socially engaged fiction’. Seth intertwines the history of the town with the family to present them as victims. The shop and family home appropriated for industrial purpose now replaced by carpark has shattered the family. His father could not continue his butcher’s job. ‘Where Stanley Holme, butcher, once practiced his trade there is now only asphalt. It is a carpark’. (28) Seth (1999).
When Michael goes there he is ‘afraid of the descent of unpeaceful thoughts’. The music center smashed, he looks upon it as a ‘town with its heart torn out’. Due to the government’s failure of fund, it loses its work and wealth. Theatres get closed and literary societies disappear. With all these destructive changes he asks himself by what right do I mourn for it so angrily now?’ (72) Seth (1999). It is in the same place he has been happy as a boy. He has gone to the open countryside and enjoyed the silence.

People in London smile on hearing that he comes from Rochdale. He feels puzzled but not resentful at their attitude ‘Indeed, if there is any object of resentment here, perhaps it should be the town itself. But what happened to us could have happened anywhere, I suppose’. The general attitude of people towards his place remains derisive. This condemnation towards that place, naturally meted out to its inhabitants, he faces apart from his family’s personal loss and the neighbourhood’s degradation. He mourns ‘The town which had been the home of the co-operative movement lost its sense of community’. Tim Parks’ remark that ‘the town of Rochdale, a declining industrial satellite on the edge of the Manchester conurbation, the kind of place that tends to be the butt of dismissive jokes in sophisticated south’ gives us an insider’s view of the place and the contrast is crucial. Shirley Chew poses another query, ‘Given his professions of love, are his betrayals of Julia, the sophisticated, well-to-do-daughter of an Oxford don, to be explained in terms of his sense of inferiority as a Northener, the product of a shop – keeping family background, the
life of a musician-struggling to make ends meet'. It affirms that the background hangs on him and intervenes in his life. In every aspect, including music, Julia has taught him. If, Julia loves him, he feels unworthy and questions how could all his negative qualities been attractive and throws light 'she must have felt how much I needed her when I sank increasingly into depression'. Indeed, how could ever Julia put up with all his depressive fits and tantrums? However, the locale of the narrator remains significant. Giti Chandra notes correctly, 'Intense and passionate the landscape which the song cycle conjures up and inhabit us are locked in it own memories of solitariness and movement towards death'(30) Seth (1999) London, Vienna and Venice arise with their well – known contours but as R.K.Kaul points out that the novel 'moves in a historical vacuum'(22) Seth (1999). But the emotional density attached to certain places cannot be denied.

3.13.5 Melancholic Narration

Neil T. and Joanne Anderson spell out that depression is categorized as either bipolar or unipolar. A bipolar or manic-depressive illness has two poles namely manic moods and depressed moods. They list several symptoms related with the manic moods and to mention a few racing ideas and thoughts, poor judgement, extreme euphoria, impulsivity, irritability, insensitive or irritating behaviour. Psychotic thinking is also possible. They conclude that it is typically a recurrent or episodic disorder. Unipolar depression is a continuous low level with no episodes of mania (32-35) Seth (1999). Many people suffering from bipolar depression see suicide as the way out.
Michael has an 'inane fidelity fixated' on Julia and with Julia's arrival in his life he feels the past wrong can be set right but he never attempts it even. Several meetings between Michael and Julia go on in a peripheral level. Michael of course plays a cautious role at least for a time being. 'Falling back in love with her .... is inexpensive (136) for him but for Julia with her husband and son, Luke, it could be costly. Roopali Gupta Praises 'Julia, inspite of her conflicting loyalties, is as powerless as is Michael to resist sinking into the tangled beauty of their love'. Nevertheless they sink and she pulls herself out of it but Michael even hopes that she can have two husbands. Practising in London and going to Vienna soon he assesses the situation thus; 'It is a swirl and jarring joy, this sensation of my two worlds coming together' (185) Seth (1999). Back in Vienna he fears Carl might be in the audience disproving his dexterity. Going for a long walk he sounds irrational. 'Memory and despair close in on of intolerable pressure, followed by relaxation almost elation'. Living with Julia he does not want to 'taint such sporadic joy' and lifts a drink even to 'the spirit of fugitive love'. He does not want a thought to intervene to check their 'ecstasy'. But when Julia talks of Luke he feels 'a sudden surge of resentment' towards him. They both confirm that it is a miracle for them to be together. He reads Julia's letter to her husband and expression of love, immediately he feels ill and says, 'I feel like a thief who has entered a house to find in it goods stolen from his own' and to her utter shock in 'the bitterness of [his] passion' bites her on the side of her neck, on her shoulders and on her arms. He does not cease and says 'my tongue is as my teeth' and she cries out ..... 'a horrible sound of rage and hurt and disbelief and violation. The swing from
euphoria to illness, lovemaking to violence establishes that he is a case of bipolar depression.

‘There is no love which cannot become destructive, excessive passions destroy’ and with Michael ‘there can be no friendship with her, only violent passion. In a funk with life he also quits the string quartet, destroying years of friendship, hard work and the possibility of a break through to fame and financial success, as the quartet has an offer from a major recording company’. His tendency borders on irrational action and cares not for the damage he causes not only to himself but also to others. He cares not for the quartet’s hard effort and its long-waited hope for a rise into the musical world. His world has shrunk into such a mopic condition that he cannot even consider the hardship of the music group who are so generous and reinvite him to give him a footing in life. Instead of taking a stock of his destructive deeds, he fails to think about it for a fleeting second and he is ‘eaten by futile pity’ and makes ‘too much of much’. He goes to the extent of choosing ‘let me live in a zone where hope is not a word’ even at a time when Julia has taken days to be with him. Impulsively he draws his own conclusion which never get corrected and one such view is ‘why should I come to terms with the whole world? It is brutal place’. He smugly tells himself ‘there is nothing to build on. It has taken time, for hope has well-cased germs’ In spite of the quartet assuring that it is his home and all of them in their own way have caused problems, he does not pay heed to it. ‘The claustrophobic
musical relationships are in fact used as metaphors for what is after all claustrophobic love’. His obsession with it endangers him.

Decreased involvement in meaningful activities is certainly a withdrawal symptom from life. Michael has gone into an inactive world. His lack of interest in life and lack of commitment to follow through depict his depressed state. He suffers initial insomnia. In his desperation he contacts a call girl, Tricia and spends the night with her. His somatic complaint, another symptom of depression has bewildered the group. Julia takes him out shopping for his birthday and there he collapses. During the musical performance ‘applause rings out for the Trout’ but aided by Julia he makes for the corridor and Julia gently coaxes him to play. All the musicians are out to encourage him and help him for they cannot let down the person who organized the programme as well as the audience. Julia plays and leads him on to follow. ‘The haze drifts apart into a moment of terror’ (242) Seth (1999) and when the music is on the stand he asks for it as he cannot see it. Julia who is growing deaf never causes the least bit of ruffle but he suffers from blakout, a mild word perhaps but it becomes an obsession with him. A pandemonium erupts and subsides with his sudden illness. Julia’s insightful handling enables him to go on the stage. The programme after the panic stricken interval starts again.

Analysing the melancholic attack. Freud specifies that the striking feature is the way super-ego treats ego. Super–ego or
conscience becomes over-severe and reproaches for past actions and threatens with the direst punishments. Collecting accusations it makes a condemnatory judgement. After sometime when the moral fuss is over, the super – ego is silent. The ego begins to enjoy all that a man can till the next attack occurs. He also informs that in some forms of disease something contrary takes places in the interval. The ego begins to celebrate and is in a blissful sate of intoxication to the extent that it will look as if the super ego, has lost its strength over the ego. Michael after leaving Vienna has failed to assess his own life, the background, his love for music and the cause for the loss and in ever brooding state, he goes about for ten years. Reasons and justifications course through as he muses over. When he gets into the quartet he mutes his will and enjoys the bliss of music. With Julia’s intimacy retrieved the super ego has no place in his life. In fact it sees Julia’s tortured ambivalence but continues to long for inseparable union and looks for unalloyed joy. However, when that favourable wind has stopped, he slinks back. Then he seems to be in deeper mire than before and he has shut hope out. Nicholas spice makes an incisive observation, ‘Michael is back where he was at the beginning nursing the pain of recapitulated loss, mooching about Bayswater’ (15). He contemplates of death and then going back to Rochdale with which he did not want to have any tie earlier.

Exploiting people to satisfy his craving is just another episode of subjecting his conscience to his desire. Virginie is his student. He teaches a group of worse students for his survival. She is younger.
to him by fifteen years. He is deeply aware that he does not intend to share the rest of his life with her. But since he has begun a kind of life with her, he continues. Virginie consents to it and wants it and so he goes along with it, ‘through lust and loneliness.... Laziness and lack of focus’ (6). When Julia comes in his life he has no room for it. He does not contact her but before that he frequently visits her and lives with her. Virginie comes to know of his renewed relationship with Julia and speaks out her heart that she hates English people for he has a heart like ‘cement’ and demands him to be reasonable. She has lived in hope but now her voice ‘veering between tears and anger’ curses him and explicitly states that she does not want to see him again. Michael accepts that he behaves ‘dreadfully’ and indulgently speaks ‘I never thought I was using her when I was with her. It was an arrangement I thought she was content with. But now I can see us becoming strangers...’ (165) Seth (1999). He has been so accustomed to live a justful life without any misgiving. He presumes to use her but to center his attention on her satisfaction. He disregards the dignity of a being but takes a person for granted. He never attempts to make any amendment for the wronged person. After an analysis, which makes him feel at ease and gives room for justification, he proceeds to fulfill his desire.

Melancholic attack comes not after a long interim, even in the midst of exhilarating moment. Julia ‘holds him as if she could never bear to let [him] desert her again’ and they make love not with tenderness but with ecstasy born of starvation’. Her nearness and the
scent of her body ‘drive [him] into a frenzy’ (137) Seth (1999). Even in the midst of such intimacy and couching in love, the next minute the introvert speaks in him that there are things that disturb him that he cannot ‘reconcile’. ‘But just the thought of what has happened burns through these light, unsettled mists’. The last phrase catches a concrete image to denote his permanent state. His mind is ever cloudy and he never settles on/down anything. Being unsettled marks his style of life. His superego asserts no force on him. It has become so weak that he experiences no qualm nor moral scruples when he experiences bliss. On the other hand, he possesses no conscience that guides him and distinguishes between good and bad, moral and immoral activities. For Julia, he thinks, of adultery and sin and wonders how she moves between these two worlds and unwaveringly asserts ‘But Julia cannot accept all this brimstone: gentle herself she must believe in an understanding God. All this is foreign to me, incomprehensible even’ (169). The two stand juxtaposed. Superego has been subjugated and his desire dominates him.

Desires occupy such prominent place in human life and at times desires enslave a human being that he finds it difficult to release himself out of certain bondages that he has consciously/unconsciously woven around his life so cautiously and sometimes even out of perversion. Consequential effect is that he finds himself trapped. In Michael’s affair with Julia, ‘Important likes are missing in the emotional logic of Michael’s behaviour towards Julia’. The contention
is that it is his desire that propels him in certain way. He reads a lot about the world of the deaf and appears to feel acutely for her. But when Julia goes back on her promise of playing the Art of fugue only for him, he resorts to violence and tears off the notes that she has painfully prepared for him for a birthday. When he lets the other musicians down Piers spurts out 'you 're a selfish bastard' and Michael repeats it during the course of conversation that he is a 'selfish self-centered bastard' (375) Seth (1999). All along, he seems to justify what he has branded himself.

In such an elegant style the central character and narrator meanders through London which is inhospitable and unwelcoming, Ghosts of musicians haunt Vienna and Venice that carry a romantic glow for him. Rochdale emerges with the streets murdered and guttered into slums. Much against his will, he wants to attend the musical performance, ‘The concert by the deaf pianist at Wigmore Hall’. It is Billy who sacrifices and gives his ticket. When Julia plays ‘It is a beauty beyond imagining - clear, lovely, inexorable .... It is an equal music’ (380) Seth (1999). Seth gives a neat ending almost bringing in an eternal note. The divine quality heightened, along with its prelude from Donne sounds, a bit incongruous for human imperfections. Michael, of course, is consoled and it sustains him temporarily.
‘Depression made me brutal’. After making such a confession with regards to Julia Michael analyses that his link with Carl has also started ‘almost like love’ (299) Seth (1999) and his manic depressiveness breaks everything he begins to establish a relationship with Nicholas Spice draws factual parallels between Michael and himself, with regards to a childhood in the North of England, an early fixation on classical music, time spent studying music at an Austrian academy’. He comments ‘The self portrait of Michael as a lonely man, blocked in his development by his attachment to his own depressive states is the main imaginative achievement of ‘An Equal Music’. If as Neil Anderson says, ‘Depression is an ache in the soul that crushes the spirit’ it has pervaded his being with despair and hopelessness. His spirit cannot enervate his being for first and foremost. He never believes in his spirit-being and has no faith in the Supreme being or God. Golden opportunities are brutally thrown off by him. Finally he ends up playing a dogfood jingle. His passion for melody muddles up and he throttles his raving to guard chamber music and he becomes a melancholy medley.