CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter is an attempt at summarising the various chapters and situating them in the broader context of the research undertaken and within the space of the thesis. However, the effort here has not been to simplify the inferences thus obtained and homogenise them into a solution/s solutions. The idea was to analyse and comprehend the dynamics of the problem that comic strip as a genre offers at multiple levels of cultural production and cultural dissemination, translation, perpetuation of cultural biases and stances et al and also to propose, from the ensuing complexity of research and theorisation that this so called 'non-serious' and 'pop' genre entails, that comic strip is actually 'serious' if 'seriousness' is to be defined in terms of complexity and ability to generate multilayered denotations and connotations. This further led to a subversion of the grand literary canon and the necessity for relocation of comic strip genre within it. This research has attempted to counter and resist the politics of inclusion and exclusion that had placed this genre as peripheral due to its apparent 'non-seriousness' of appearance and children's literature structure and categorisation. Moreover, this thesis has examined the divide between the global and local strips in terms of the existing hierarchy. As a result it has been substantiated that the strips that are written in purely vernacular languages are almost never translated while the global strips are translated and circulated in many vernacular languages. This one way non-reciprocative movement from the global to the local is largely determined by social, economic, political and market forces as well as power structures that produce all forms of cultural phenomena and determine the mainstream/marginal position.

In the foregoing chapters of the thesis it has been substantiated that Comic strip is a cultural production and it disseminates culture. In the process it creates a hegemony where the central majority culture is dominant and the marginal minority cultures are attributed subordinate status. Comic strip through its text-image combination reinforces dominant cultural stances as tools of hegemonisation process. The pictorial sign anchors the intended meaning of the text and at the same time grounds the text in a specific socio-cultural milieu. Therefore comic strip resists total translation of itself into another language. It was also inferred during the study that image/illustration and also colour (in case of coloured strips) as sign/code plays a significant role in interpreting a text where image/illustration or colour has been used, thus highlighting how reading a text becomes participative process through the writer-illustrator's and reader's act of reading and decoding. Both picture/image/illustration and colours belong
to the sphere of visual rhetoric and thus has an impact on 'reading' that is itself a creative activity, and not 'reading just words'.

In Chapter I, it was attempted to prove that comic strip disseminates culture or more particularly the intended meaning (with cultural biases at work) more effectively as a tool of dominant ideology all the more since it is visual media. Pictures have always been a mode of better understanding. Therefore a comparison has been drawn between comic strip and early visual arts such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, Japanese emaki, pre-Colombian Central American manuscripts and Bayuex tapestry as well as Kalighat Patochitra, Rajputana and Madhubani paintings and Bengal School of painting in order to rewrite the history of comic strip from the perspective of technicality of drawing and painting and also to establish the fact that comics/comic strip are effective means of communication between the addressee. The hypothesis of this research undertaken was to examine comic strip as a mode of cultural production and cultural dissemination. Therefore, the effect of market forces on comic strip in general and vernacular (Bengali in this research) comic strip in particular was analysed in details and clearly discerned. In case of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comics/comic strip it has been investigated that they, as cultural product, are in consonance with the dominant power structure. The interview with the writer-illustrator of these two strips discussed and theorised with inferences in details in Chapter IV, substantiates the view that the hidden ideology working beneath the surface meaning of the texts includes patriarchal bias, market concern and more importantly dominant Bengali-majority consciousness. This hypothesis has also been proved by the detailed study of the background and history of comic strip/comics in general, both global and local. Right from the beginning, it has been observed in the course of this research, comics have reflected a certain socio-political attitude as well as ideological biases of the creators. There are also abundant examples of stereotyping Asian, African, women characters and others as well as shown in this research and the thesis. These have been examined in the light of hegemonising and marginalising process of dominant ideological structures.

The two vernacular comic strip/comics Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda were the praxis for case study. Another local comicstrip of Tripura Senapati Ray Kachag has been analysed in Chapter III viewing its creation as a movement from oral to written and therefore, creating a space for comprehending processes of alternate history writing as opposed to canonical historical discourses. It has been proved that in case of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda the dominant majority culture is being marketed through the lexical (Bengali language) and the visual (illustration of characters and events with the essence of Bengali culture space in setting, costume etc.). The thesis has related Roland Barthes' 'relay' and 'anchorage' text and has substantiated the point that while Barthes treats anchorage text as a linguistic message accompanying any image, curiously and interestingly the illustration or image of comic strip/comics performs the same function of anchorage text as specified by Barthes. Although Barthes has catalogued anchorage as linguistic message that anchors the meaning of the text, in comic
strip analysis the thesis has proved through semiotic investigation that image itself is the anchorage text as it anchors the meaning of the relay text encoding all culture specific stances of the source culture and providing the reader with definitive pictorial codes. Hence, the image with its definitive shapes, sizes and colours as well as its representation of culture specific details leave almost no scope for the reader/viewer to move away from the intended meanings.

The thesis has also interrogated the fact that comic strip/comics are categorised as low/pop/children's literature overlooking the serious connotations that they generate. In Chapter I 'Introduction', it has been analysed that the logic for the nomenclature of this literary genre cannot be definitely ascertained. This research vindicates comic strips' claim to serious study because of the multilayered connotations it generates as well as the theoretical postulations that offer themselves for application in comic strip praxis. To define comic strip/comics and limit it into any single definition is not possible because of the continuous innovation and change in its form and technique. It has been proved through an analysis into the evolutionary pattern of comic strip in various stages that the form rather than the content is focused in defining comic strip or comics as there are many sub-genres as action comics, comics with serious storyline, and those based on mythology and history etc. It is therefore established that comics/comic strip are taken as a genre that tells a story through sequential art. The pictures/images and words are arranged to narrate a story or dramatise an idea. It has been also analysed in the course of this research that comic strip has undergone often drastic change in content because of a certain evolutionary pattern. Every 'text' or 'product' reflects the context in which it is produced. The change that has occurred in case of Comic strip/comics is born out of the necessity and the consequence of a complex social milieu. The serious storylines have gradually replaced the comic association. Another pictorial narrative of such kind is the graphic novel that has blurred the comic association in nomenclature. Satire has replaced comic in many Indian graphic novels as is seen in Sarnath Banerjee's *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* discussed at length in this thesis.

The thesis has proved through a thorough analysis and investigation that apart from being a material only for children, comic strip is a potent tool for disseminating culture. Comic strip have reflected the political and socio-cultural attitude of their writers and readers. There are abundant examples of stereotyping or negative codification in comics/comic strip as tools for dominant indoctrination. The thesis has also discussed how dominant patriarchal ideology gets reflected in the projection of women characters. They are either stereotyped as low, meek, timid, help-seeking, quarrelsome, less intelligent than male or their body is highlighted in the depiction making them an object only meant to be gazed and consumed. The former proposition has been proved by analysing *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* comics and the later by analysing recent Indian comics on 'superheroine' theme. The rise of the superheroine genre in Indian comics has been discussed probing into how such comics series are perpetuating a process of commodification of femininity. In comic series like *Devi, Snakewoman*, and
Bombay, women characters are projected as highly erotic. The treatment has been done with an eye towards a greater market reach and an expanding reader space. The visual image of women in comics/comic strip thus tend to homogenise and reduce women into a monolithic dimension and in the process hegemonise them as a tools perpetuating patriarchal ideology.

The axiomatic point of this thesis was to situate and analyse comic strip as a mode cultural production and dissemination. Therefore the concept of culture has been discussed in all its dimensions in this thesis. The thesis has utilised cultural studies as an academic discipline that encompasses many literary theories blurring the boundaries between high culture and low culture. It concentrates on how a particular phenomenon relates to the matter of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class and gender. The thesis has investigated the way comic strip as a part of popular culture establishes a link between dominant ideology/ideological position and those who internalise and perpetuate it. Comic strip/comics in particular and any text in general is a cultivated outcome of a culture that affirms to dominant ideological position by means of disseminating symbols, icons, signs, image of that culture. The same thing is seen happening in case of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comics. These two comics with their text-image combination impart dominant Bengali majority ideology where the identity of a resident from Bihar or Orissa dislocated from his local space and relocated in the space of the dominant Bengali culture, is attributed a subordinate status. The thesis has substantiated the point by discussion of many panels and figures that confirm the hypothesis. The vernacular comics thus create a central-marginal hierarchy within its own ambit. The Amar Chitra Katha comic series in India was an outcome/necessity to counter Western comic domination, but as discussed in this thesis, it created a homogenous Hindu space within it.

The thesis has proved that the process of representation plays an important role in culture or any kind of cultural production. Although Saussure has used the concept of sign in the context of linguistics, the latter developments of theories such as semiotics considers any communicative system as signs. Culture studies also considers 'text' as an all inclusive label. Therefore this thesis has investigated into the relationship between sign, signifying systems, representation and making of social types and stereotypes as parts of hegemonisation process. It has been proved through the analysis that the crude selected signs used to construct stereotypes usually represent the values, attitudes, behavior of the concerned source culture, thus enabling certain generalisations. Thus the role of a person from Orissa as cook or a person from Bihar as a doorman apt at wrestling or as a labourer as represented in Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comic strip is built around a common notion about their cultures. They do not express any sense or awareness of individuality, diversity and difference between members of the represented group or community which is essential from the human psychological point of view, and hence attribute an almost non-human status to them. This point is strengthened by examining the interview of the writer-illustrator who commented that they have been stereotyped in this way because they were
seen or shown this way. What is reflected in the process is the dominant power structure operating often unconsciously towards legitimisation and naturalisation. Thus the representation in particular and the context of comics/ comic strip in general are both the product and the producer of cultural hegemonisation. The thesis therefore, has examined various representations in films, print media or audio-visual media as case studies. It has investigated how the 'other' culture is given a secondary status by reductionist tendency of the writer -illustrator. The South Indians are referred to as 'Madrasi'. Members of the Gorkha community are always portrayed as chowkidars/ security guards. This research has proved that the tendency of socially and economically privileged mainstream to enforce their ideology on the marginal is at play in the visual media and is also more effective through visual media because of the image-text representation that can thus be conveniently de-codified and internalised.

This research has defied and denied the very hegemonic construct of considering comic strip as subordinate to standard literature. It deserves serious study. It differs from what can be called the illustrated version of standard literature and is an integrated art form that gives equal importance to narrative and illustration. Pictures do not just depict the story, but are an integral part of the telling. The thesis draws an association between one line drawings of Kalighat Patochitra or Madhubani paintings with that of illustrations of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda . The illustrations are different from realistic paintings of comics such as Amar Chitra Katha, Spiderman, Superman etc. These strips have an advantage versus disadvantage duality with respect to drawing. Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda enjoy more privilege and creates a space of their own both in respect to form and content. This has been substantiated by the comment of writer-illustrator Narayan Debnath. He claims to be the pioneer in Bengali comic strip and did not follow any art form to draw his own comics. Thus Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda Comic strip are much more imaginative and present a naturalness and reality of their own. While analysing the three kinds of art form-realistic, cartoony and abstract following McCloud's model, it has been investigated/examined that comics genre is not possible by using abstract art form as it can hinder the easy communication necessary for comic strip/comic. The cartoony style of Nante Fante or Handa Bhonda creates a type of communication that facilitates conveyance of message from sender to receiver. It does not involve any such communication that creates a sense of reality and therefore has not attempted to approximate reality in their presentation of characters or background. David Carrier in his book Aesthetics of Comics relates comic to art history. Ultimately Carrier's analysis of comics shows why this popular art is worthy of philosophical study and proves that a better understanding of comics will help us understand better the history of art. One of the objectives of this research was to extend comic strip history to antiquity based on similarity of technique and stylisation with other traditions and schools of paintings. This research has pointed out the similarities of comics with Indian cave paintings etc. Thus it can be easily substantiated that the illustration in comic strip can not be a determiner of categorisation as a low/pop literature devoid of seriousness. The concept of line
drawing communicating an immediate message as a part of popular or mass culture is also a feature that connects Kalighat Patochitra to comic strip intent beside sharing similarities of line drawing and colour filling. However, the thesis has questioned the mode of representation of otherness in comic strip/ comic or any visual art or media, thereby proving that visual representation serves an ideological purpose and this tendency has prevailed in the cultural history of human civilisation.

The functionalities of signs or codes in generating meaning out of a comic strip has been analysed and investigated in the thesis through the formulation and application of theoretical framework. *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* comic strip/comics have been examined by applying theories such as semiotics, feminism, reader-response criticism, etc. It has been proved that comic strip/comics employs two different type of signs/codes viz. pictorial and verbal and is therefore more embedded in a specific socio-cultural context and effectively disseminates the same. *Nante Fante* or *Handa Bhonda* comics/ comic strip conform to the notion of ‘text’ from the perspective of semiotic analysis. It is an assemblage of signs constructed and interpreted with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and a particular medium of communication. These texts are constructed with archetypal comic strip iconography and communicated through a particular language and medium shared by both the sender (here writer-illustrator) and receiver (here reader). The semiotic analysis of the comics/ Comic strip has correlated it with Saussure's distinction of langue and parole. The comic strip/comics creator has a langue of codes/sign in the form of image-text combination that is a socio-cultural construct and is the common denominator of a given society. This is accepted and established as an index of codes corresponding to a determinable set of responses. The image/illustration as code can not be de-contextualised as it is based on the necessary condition of the writer-illustrator's interaction with the socio-cultural context. The generation of meaning through image-text combination of Comic strip/comics has been discussed in the thesis by using the concepts of theorists such as Saussure, Jacobson, Pierce and Barthes. It has been substantiated that the production and interpretation of texts depends upon the existence of codes or conventions for communication. Codes provide a framework within which signs make sense i.e the status of a sign is granted if it functions within a code. Reading of *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* Comic strip/comics thus involve relating it to codes. Interpreting the conventional meaning of the sign used in these strips needs familiarity with appropriate sets of conventions that are culture specific. This thesis has shown that such comic strip texts are culture specific and employs certain codes to understand (by decoding) the visual image-text relation and hidden cultural significance that they entail. Codes are interpretative frameworks and knowledge of codes is used by both producers and interpreters of text. The semiotic analysis of *Nante Fante*'s cover page has substantiated the fact that employment or non-employment of codes determines the categorisation of even the genre of a text. The exclusion of comic strip from the grand literary canon has been proved as the result of the non-employment of codes of serious literature such as dedication page, content, index that such text includes.
The non-employment of scholarly apparatuses as well as the employment of pictorial representations such as illustrations et al. is one of the factors that determines the categorisation of the text/genre as non-serious/pop/low/children's literature instead of serious subject matter or serious connotations fit apparently for serious literature. These codes thus employed are generally meant to ensure greater marketability of the product. The encoding or decoding of any text requires comprehension of the cultural or social set up in which the text operates. *Nante Fante* or *Handa Bhonda* operates in Bengal cultural space. The knowledge employed to generate meaning or intended meaning in such texts include social and cultural knowledge, knowledge of the medium and the genre (textual knowledge) and the relation between them. The dress, language, custom, manners, behavior of a person from dominant group (here Bengali) serve as codes operative in his particular image representation or illustration in the panels of the comicstrip. The employment of such codes however relegates the genre of comic strip to a marginal, non-serious category as fit for children's literature. It has been proved through analysis that employing these codes the receiver/interpreter of dominant culture would definitely subordinate a character of different culture such as 'Oriya' cook or 'Punjabi' or 'Bihari' doorman. It has also been substantiated that as the sender and receiver share the same codebook comprising of the dress, food habits, customs etc. the characters shown initially create and reinforce the source cultural nuances. *Handa Bhonda* and *Nante Fante* thus attempt to create a microcosmic Bengal by stimulating Bengali cultural space that revolves around certain values, attitudes, beliefs that are supported and represented while others are suppressed.

The thesis has investigated and examined the way in which comic strip genre reinforce the myth of Bengal as an culturally empowered space. The analysis of Foucault's postulation about power relation shows how Bengal for mainly political and economic reason created its own episteme. It maintains its own regime of truth. In Bengali psyche the cultural bias is deep rooted and reflects itself in representation in different texts and genre. The Bengali culture takes the role of interpretative community. Thus when a panel in *Nante Fante* images a person from Orissa as cook, it signifies subordination but the denotation it imparts is accepted as natural and normal. An analysis of linguistic and pictorial codes in a panel in *Nante Fante* has proved how the image of the cook and his language differentiates his identity at the connotative level. The connotation is the second order/level of signification. These are determined by codes to which the interpreter has access. Thus the image of the cook with his “tiki”, “gamcha” and broken language is decodified as a person from some other marginal culture (not Bengali) and is presented as subordinate, loyal and ruled. The connotative level of sign thus anchors the intended meaning.

The thesis has also incorporated Roland Barthes concept of myth and proved that *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* thus creates two types of myth-Bengali as superior and the friendship between males as natural. The myth generated here points out and notifies the superiority of Bengal as a cultural space by reinforcing the image of the 'other' as marginal. The interesting point about such a myth is that it naturalises the concept that it presents while in actuality, it is imposed or constructed. The
thesis has also investigated how hegemonisation functions through various connotative frameworks. The image as well as colour are both visual rhetoric and therefore have a penetrative quality. In colour series of *Nante Fante*, the cook is given dark complexion in comparison to the characters belonging to majority culture. This visual rhetoric along with his language (i.e linguistic, pictorial and colour code) has created a dividing line between 'centre' and 'periphery'). Thus beneath the apparent mould it generates a hierarchy formation. The codification creates a myth that goes without saying and conceals the ideological function of signs and codes. The thesis has substantiated that *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* comic strip reflect a patriarchal bias in depicting female characters. The interview with Mr. Narayan Debnath which has been discussed in details in Chapter IV shows that the writer-illustrator allocates subordinate status to women in conforming to the dominant ideological structure of society as well as the publishing industry. In *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* comics female characters are of little importance. Nante and Fante live in a Boys Hostel and therefore automatically exclude female presence from that space. Moreover, the anchorage text of comics reinforces the patriarchal bias working behind the depiction of female in these strips. The illustration is emphatic in communicating and correlating the identity of such characters based on the knowledge and experience of such representation in print or visual media. The gender specific and culturally constructed role which is assigned in these strips implies that women inspite of being a part of the center, are marginalised because of the lack of dominant position. The analysis of panels proves that every women/female presence is given a gender specific role such as embroidery, cooking, quarrelling with servants etc. and entry/presence is only because of the progression of plots. Thus it both homogenises and hegemonises women presences at the same time. The codification process of comics/ comic strip such as *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* is actually a means through which a text is constructed. But the particular decodification process necessitates the analysis of how a reader/audience is constructed and in the process constructs the text. Therefore, this thesis has analysed reader-response theory and substantiated the fact that the 'gaps' in a text (comic strip) is filled by reader. These gaps and indeterminate elements trigger the process of varied de-codification of the same text. The analysis in this thesis has proved that in case of *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* the target audience belonging to the Hindu Majority are the implied reader and is controlled by the author or producer of such texts. The text is the site of participation for both the creator and the consumer.

The thesis has substantiated through various examples and illustrations that *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* are culture specific and context specific texts and the suppression of 'personal' would lead to a failure in the expected reception of such texts that is focusing at 'local' rather than universal or general category. The negative codification or stereotyping is embedded in popular media and literary texts produced in the space and the bias is embedded in our psyche. Thus the consumption is regulated by naturalising or legitimising such tendencies. The visual quality (pictorial code) of comic
strip ensures the total transfer of the response from the author to the reader. The research has proved that comic strip illustrations are iconic signs and therefore has the highest modality. The iconic sign with the signifier produces the signified. The comic strip has a modality of its own and presents a generic realism. In making sense of the 'text' (here Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comics) the interpreter makes modality judgements drawing on this knowledge of the world and the medium. The response of a child on the cartoon he watches shows that the status or meaning he accords to them is constrained and drawn on by his knowledge of his world and the particular medium (the interview has been incorporated in chapter II). The response on female characters Shizuka in Doraemon or much complex Vibisana in Ramayana: The legend of Prince Ram is coloured by his perception oriented through experience of other such representations and his understanding of the world at large. Thus the thesis has probed into the importance of perpetual codes in constructing reality. Along with the discussion on implied reader or specifically the target reader, the thesis has substantiated the view that searching only for authorial intent in text restricts a text's potential to generate different meanings. Although the moment of encoding could have an intention by virtue of which the de-codification process may be different for different readers. The research undertaken is an example of oppositional or counter-hegemonic reading that questions, resists and even negates and subverts the dominant reading strategy. What has been proved in this way is that all types of reading is active in encoding and are not merely sending or receiving messages. In case of comic strip, the illustrations can convey the signified or the concept even if the reader does not know the language.

The thesis has proved that the selection or choice of a particular sign (here image, character, culture) over other indicates the ideology operating beneath it. The paradigmatic analysis undertaken in the thesis has investigated and substantiated that 'reality' is projected and constructed and we, as members of that culture play a role in constructing it. The thesis has thus analysed the cultural association of texts and why a particular image is chosen. The analysis of absences in a text has been proved as 'constructed' for specific purpose. The investigation by commutation test has revealed that a particular sign chosen from a paradigmatic set is not a matter of chance, but of choice or preference. This preference is structured by the culture in which it is produced. Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comic strip reinforce preferences thus generated through their image and text combination. The commutation test of the panels has proved that the representation in cultural texts play a very important role in gender construction. Any replacement in the context seems awkward because the perpetual representation naturalises and legitimizes gender stereotyping. Similarly the projection of Bengalis as superior to 'others' as a reality in Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda comic strip is a construct and is constructed through the choice or preferences of Bengalis as centre and this choice is done on the basis of majority and minority paradigm of the existing hierarchy. The interchange of the roles of superintendent and the cook will definitely seem awkward in the Bengali cultural space. The thesis has proved that paradigmatic
relations imply a content structured by dominant ideology. Even the narrative itself has content. Thus the analysis of syntagmatic relation in comic strip reveals that a narrative is such an automatic choice of representing events that it seems unproblematic and natural. The normal structure of comic strip reinforces a preferred reading. The syntagmatic analysis of a story from *Handa Bhonda* has proved that cultures chose to represent themselves in their story. The story has a narrative closure. It conforms to a balance-misdeed leads to punishment. The story thus suffices the need of the target audience through its fun element but projects the adult self of the writer-illustrator in accordance with the dominant moral code of society. The psyche of the writer as well as the culture is reflected here. It is an unconscious assimilation and dissemination of the deep rooted social code of which the writer is a part, although he has denied any moral purpose behind the creation of his strips/comics in his personal interview incorporated in this thesis. Thus the thesis has proved through such analysis of paradigmatic, syntagmatic, coding, decoding, denotation and connotation and myth, etc that comic strip is a cultural product and it disseminates the manners, customs, values and norms of that culture.

Translation is a complex process of inter-cultural communication. It always runs the risk of losing the self-culture or source culture. The thesis has placed comic strip translation in the broader context of inter-cultural communication. It has examined that illustration in comic strip facilitates as well as resists translation in a strange paradoxicality. The illustrations (pictorial codes) convey and communicate what the linguistic message (linguistic code) fails to convey thereby facilitating the translation process. At the same time it resists the source text and source culture from being translated/lost in the target culture as it grounds the text in a specific socio-cultural milieu. The thesis has interrogated the way a translation is prompted by demands of the readers space and market forces. The interrogation led to the investigation into factors such as language hierarchy, hegemonic and cultural dominance of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). The language codification and pictorial codification in comic strip in the form of illustration and familiar comic strip iconography remains valid and meaningful across cultural boundaries and divides. Therefore it can counter the irreducible indeterminacy of language due to which the linguistic translation always remains an approximation. In comic strip translation the illustration remains as it is thereby facilitating the translation process. The trans-culturation is denied as the illustration grounds the text in a specific socio-cultural milieu. The thesis has proved that the specific details of the socio-cultural background of Bengal such as dress, mannerism, customs, behavior, food items etc reflected through illustration in *Nante Fante* Bengali version does not get translated in the English version of *Nante Fante*. It has been substantiated through the analysis of and comparison between the Bengali and the English translation that dramatic/cinematic technique of comic strip facilitates the translation process when there is an incompatability of language in the two texts. The dramatic progression of plots through action and characters can convey message and meaning even if the linguistic part is omitted. Thus it has been substantiated that the bi-cultural understanding that the translator needs while translation,
comes easily in case of comic strip translation through illustration.

The thesis has incorporated Jason's view on his own translation of a novel to comic strip to point out the restrains a linguistic text poses in translation process. Jason has translated the novel into wordless comics and according to him this helps in retaining the details and specificities of the novel. This leaves much for the readers to understand. The fact thus proves that illustration is effective in disseminating cultural and even textual details. It resists the translation of the total text by retaining the authorial intention. The analysis of *Nante Fante's* translation in English has proved that illustration compensates the impossibility of rendering perfect equivalence in a foreign language. Incorporating Susan Bassnett's notion on textual grid that has been defined as patterns of expectation interiorised by the members of a given society, the thesis has interrogated the way the English translation of purely vernacular Bengali strips cater to the demand and expectation of the target reader. The textual grid can create a problem in translation process as it might not suffice the demand of the target readers. The thesis has analysed the concept of cultural capital following Susan Bassnett and proved that the English translation of *Nante Fante* is an attempt to reach the 'right circle' of society. The translation of purely vernacular strip to English thus proves the supremacy of English language even in the Bengali socio-cultural background. The translation of *Nante Fante* in English was started with a purpose to acquaint the Bengali children with their culture, but ironically through a foreign language. However, comparative study done primarily on the basis of dissemination of source culture has proved that inspite of the functional language and cultural hierarchy the illustration in comic strip retains the cultural flavour of the source text and source culture. The comment of the publishers of the translated version of such texts as *Nante Fante, Thakurmar Jhuli* etal indicates that the process will be helpful in acquainting the English reading Bengali children with their own culture. Thus it is a inter-lingual translation that attempts to reach a global reader space through the global language English. The thesis has substantiated that the enlargement of panels is less a textual necessity than a marketing strategy to give the target text a look of those as *Tintin, Asterix,* etc. This also indicates the attempt to gain larger readership as the cheap paper quality and lack of style has also been stated as reason for which the Bengali comic book industry suffers (as analysed in details in chapter III). Thus the thesis has been able to substantiate that translation is not only an academic agenda, but it takes some extra-textual factors in consideration too. The thesis has examined that these extra-textual factors involve cultural dissemination and thereby acceptance of the source text by the target culture revealing the complexities of power negotiation in translation process. Historical evidences reflect that translation is primarily a necessity either to understand or to be understood by other cultures. But it has been proved in the course of analysis that a translation is attempted considering the popularity of the text, the value of it as cultural product, market relation in the target culture, the prospect of acceptability in the alien culture, and making the target text as a tool for political expansion and imparting ideological indoctrination. In Chapter III, the thesis has investigated Fukuzawa Yukichi's
Sekai Kunizukishi following Akiku Uchiyama's essay on translation as representation and how it represents "other" (here Africa) in the target text making it the tool for ideological indoctrination. It represents Africa as a dark centre and Europe as an enlightened one, thereby projecting the latter as Japan’s goal. Thus it has been proved that translation always involves an ideology.

Translation is the communication of cultural knowledge and therefore in its positive aspect helps in evolution of literature and society and more importantly enhances cross-cultural understanding. This theoretical postulation or hypothesis led to the analysis of method or process of translation between corresponding languages of two cultures. The thesis has investigated this in the light of the concepts - foreignising and domestication of translation. It has proved that foreignising in translation moves the reader of the target culture towards that of the author i.e source culture. This can counter the supremacy and the dominance of English language. Nante Fante translation in English can counter this dominance because of its illustrative quality even if it shows a certain indifference to the Bengali linguistic element very often. This translation actually attempts at larger readership as this research shows, but the illustration resists total submission to global language and its hegemonic intent and thus disseminates the source culture even in the target text. The thesis has proved through the analysis and comparison of Nante Fante Bengali version and Nante Fante English version that the process tries to move to the direction of the reader (domestication) in such instances where 'guy' and 'its a pudding man' are used. But the comic strip illustration and the iconography provide the cultural contexts that counter the problem in linguistic translation. The thesis has substantiated that the supplementary information required for compensating the gap between two languages is given by the illustration of comic strip. A detailed analysis of and comparison between Nante Fante La-jabab and its translated version Nante Fante Unmatched has justified the hypothesis that illustration facilitates as well as resists translation of Comic strip. The comic strip iconography remain valid for all culture and communicates expression such as stars for pain, bulb as the origination of idea, etc. It is therefore much expressive than the linguistic text. The sound image in the speech bubble registers itself as a visual element and is therefore very effective in conveying the sense. One such example is "oh, aah" in the speech bubble attributed to the Superintendent lying in bed due to severe stomach ache. Another instance has been incorporated in the thesis to analyse what may be referred to as invisibility of the translator which makes the translation process more fluent. The dramatic progression of plots in Nante Fante is so expressive that it can convey the message even if the linguistic part is omitted.

The thesis has theorised the process of translation. It can operate from two perspectives— to bridge the gap between two culture making the source text and corresponding culture more visible to the target culture or to avoid any such intention and gain a larger reader's space in the target culture, an attempt led more from publishing and profit factor than cultural one. The thesis has also taken into consideration inter-semiotic translation along with inter-linguistic translation. The concept of text has a
much larger area in the post-modern sense of the term and therefore an understanding on the context in which it is embedded is significant. Translation offers an ideal experimenting ground for such analysis as it can examine how the techniques and tools and the cultural contexts influence translation and the responses involved. The thesis has discussed the creation of Senapati Ray Kachag as a translation of form or trans-genre translation and how it disseminates tribal cultural nuances. The translation is from oral history to popular literature form—from oral to written. The creator of Senapati Ray Kachag, Alak Dasgupta inspite of being a part of mainstream Bengali majority culture retains the culture specificity of ethnic tribal culture of Tripura through the use of footnotes and illustrations. Therefore it has been substantiated that the retention of source culture depends on the intention of the translator. The thesis has incorporated the detailed analysis of Senapati Ray Kachag substantiating how it disseminates tribal culture in the written translated form. It has also examined the complex narrative of Ray Kachag as a blending of fact and fiction, history and myth. Therefore the thesis has differentiated it from the conventional transition/translation of oral narrative to written form. It gives less scope for imagination and is an instance of non-canonical history writing because conventional and canonical history writing such as Rajmala never presents the chivalrous Reang hero at the centre. Senapati Ray Kachag in translation from oral to written comic strip mode gives scope of performativeness through image and verbal dialogue and is thereby much effective in disseminating the cultural traces. The translation therefore resists the tribal culture from losing itself in Bengali language. Thus it has been substantiated that illustration of comic strip does justice to both the source text and the target text keeping in view the fact that target text must be oriented towards assumed knowledge that the target community has. The translator here acts as trans-mediator in the process of inter-cultural communication giving an authentic and unbiased view through illustration. The illustration of Nante Fante in the translated version is a case showing how it retains the authorial intention. The “Thakur” is translated as cook which is his original professional identity. It makes his identity explicit to the readers. His subordinate position becomes visible (through his illustration) and ‘audible’ in his verbal dialogue in speech bubble (through the active participation of the reader) in the translated version. The analysis of the translation of culture specific food items in Nante Fante Unmatched reveals indifference on the part of the translator. The condensation in translating food items reduces the sensibility associated with source culture. The thesis has observed that considering the purpose behind translation of Nante Fante in English (to acquaint English reading Bengali children with their own culture), the translator could have retained the terms through footnotes or by more careful translation. But the illustration of rural Bengal with houses
made of mud, etc compensates this lack. The thesis has also substantiated that the illustration in *Nante Fante* translation retains not only the cultural and textual space but also its temporal design. The time frame depicted might have been lost in typographical text. The illustration of the dress of the Superintendent as well as other characters, food items etc resists translation of a distinct timeframe and an intended era from being lost in translation.

The thesis has examined the translation of format such as enlargement of panels as well as the paper quality in *Nante Fante* translation as a preliminary norm in translation process that determines what gets and what does not get translated. The change in font type size and layout format is an extra-textual necessity meant not for inter-cultural communication but to tap larger readership. Thus it has been proved that any product and especially translated production is a cultural phenomenon involving many complex aspects. Therefore it takes into consideration whether all the references in the source culture should be accepted positively in the target culture and text or not. The translation of *The Adventures of Tintin - The Crab with the Golden Claw* into Bengali proves this point. In *Kankra Rahasya*, the Bengali version of the adventure, the linguistic part where Captain Haddock refers to the people of Arab as barbaric is omitted as it would go against the sentiments of occidental Bengali culture and language. It is politically correct to silence the racist abuse in translation even if it is not a perfect translation. It has been examined as a shift in hierarchy between author and translator as the latter enjoys a privilege to modify or even omit a part of the source text. The thesis has also examined how the inconsistency between the illustration pertaining to source culture and the linguistic element of the target text can create an ambiguity in meaning, but it does not erase the nuances of the source text altogether.

The thesis has investigated how because of political and sentimental issues some of the elements of Donald Duck comics had been omitted. A rewriting or trans-genre rewriting can make a substantial contribution to cultural studies. K. M. Sheriff's concept incorporated in the thesis proves that given the cultural context the translation of a film modifies characters or decides how a cultural context influences the perception regarding a particular character. Thus the analysis on translation proves that it is more or less affected by cultural, social as well as political and ideological indoctrination. At this point the thesis raises queries about global, local and universal. Translation is a necessity in such cases when a local or marginal culture needs to be heard in a global space. This space is again an ideological construct and is determined by political and economic factors. The very fact that in comic strip a local culture can be 'heard' (visualised) more fully has been substantiated by the analysis of the local strip *Senapati Ray Kachag*, which is a translation from unheard oral narrative to visual, written and printed form.

The thesis has also analysed and examined *Spiderman: India* as an instance of reverse globalisation. The Head of the Gotham Entertainment Group calls it a ‘trans-creation’ where a local boy will deal with local problems. The analysis on animation series of *Nante Fante* substantiates that the genre specificity of animation, its sound, speech, movement and audio-visual quality provide an
extra dimension to the image text synergy of comic strip genre and cultural nuances are realised at a higher level. The examination on diamesic shift in translation from comic strip format to animation make it clear that animation deals with a shift from written code to oral code, from non-phonic still image to phonic verbal movable image, and from visual to audio-visual, etc. By investigation into the intersemiotic translation it has been proved that the codes and conventions of both these genres is involved in translation and make a culture specific text. The concept of paralanguage consists of phonic and non-phonic, prosodic, intonational determiners and more importantly kinesics and proxemics. All these are culturally constructed as is language itself. Analysis of translation from comic strip to animation has proved that the animation form explicitly states culture specificity and the construction of a hierarchy between the centre and the margin through paralanguage of kinesics and proxemics thus disseminating culture. Thus it has been substantiated that comic strip as a cultural product both in its form and in translation disseminates the source culture in which it is localised and contextualised.

The hypothesis that comic strip as a cultural product creates a space and disseminates the same has been substantiated through the comprehensive interview of writer-illustrator of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda, Sri Narayan Debnath. The interview with Narayan Debnath, the writer-illustrator of Nante Fante and Handa Bhonda validates the hypothesis of this research. His unconscious perpetuation of Bengali cultural supremacy at the cost of negative stereotyping of the 'others' viz. residents of Bihar and Orissa in his comic strip as well as his acceptance of the patriarchal bias at work in the Bengali publishing industry which he perpetuates by making his comics 'male centred' are cases in point. When questioned about the peculiarly non-existent and non-real Bengali language that he makes his 'other', characters speak in the script (that correspond to the relay text), he drew analogy from the 'Bangal' version of Bengali spoken by the East Bengal community in Kolkata of which he is a part. According to him, this made them vulnerable to ridicule. The irony is that he reacts against such intra-cultural prejudices but subscribes to the same in his depiction of inter-cultural relations. Moreover his lack of proper knowledge about the life, language and culture of the 'other' whom he negatively codifies in his comic strip leads him to subscribe to a nonexistent language 'Bihari', which is nowhere to be found in Bihar. His awareness of the market forces at play in shaping literary outputs evident in his decision not to join Ananda Mela of Anada Bazaar group also validates the other assumptions made about extra-literary determiners involved in production of comic strip, their consumption and dissemination of the cultural stances encoded in them.

This led to the analysis of the representation of East-Bengal characters in the West Bengal cultural space. This analysis has proved that both the inter-cultural (as in the case of assigning persons of Orissa, Bihar a subordinate status) or intra-cultural (in case of differentiating and ridiculing a person from East-Bengal as "Bangal" or assigning inferiority due to difference in accent) prejudices create a hierarchy between the privileged 'self' and the less privileged 'other'. The thesis has substantiated that
the very construct of Bengal as cultural space is not monolithic but dualistic in structure, and this duality is generated from a sense of geographical divide and feeling of difference which is very often exaggerated. This has in turn created two cultural identities - 'Ghoti' (West-Bengal) and 'Bangal' (East-Bengal). The thesis has investigated that the prosperity of Kolkata as centre was because of its favourable geographical space and economic facilities that it enjoyed as the former capital of British ruled India. On the other hand East Bengal (now Bangladesh) had to undergo partition, forced migration and refugee status as well struggle for their liberation and even their own language from the clutches of Pakistan. The fact that the writer-illustrator Narayan Debnath has constructed a Bengali space in his comic strip with the commingling of language and image instead of his reiteration on his 'Bangal' identity is a case in point as it tends to highlight how the displacement or dislocation from one's own place creates a duality of existence. The thesis has investigated and analysed the representation of "Bangal" characters in the cultural texts of West Bengal to prove that such representation is an attempt at creating a hierarchy between the 'self' (here West Bengal) and 'other' (East-Bengal). The Ghoti-Bangal conflict has asserted itself in the football field typified in the club rivalry of Mohun Bagan and East Bengal. The characterisation of Bhanu Bandopadhyay in the Bengali films substantiates the fact that the Ghoti cultural space degrades a character from East Bengal and ridicules his Bengali accent as well as his identity.

The language hierarchy is the result of the construction of cultural hierarchy. This hypothesis has been substantiated by the analysis of the preference of Kolkata-Bangla as a standard by the people of East Bengal settled in Agartala. East Bengal-Bangla (with close affinities to Agartala-Bangla) was marginalised simply because it did not enjoy economic, political and cultural limelight. And hence when refugees migrated to this side of the border, they carried a language legacy that was already subordinated to Kolkata-Bangla. Economics thus had a major role to play in determining the status of the Bangla spoken in East Bengal (with its clear affinity to Agartala-Bangla) vis-à-vis Kolkata-Bangla.

The thesis has streamlined the inferences obtained from the interview towards the hypothesis of this doctoral research that comic strip as a cultural product disseminates the message and nuances of the dominant culture. The inferences thus obtained from the questions relating to carelessly illustrated women characters has proved that the writer-illustrator is more careful about gender portrayal than their biological sexuality. The interview substantiates the hypothesis that a text as cultural production creates a hegemony by assigning subordinate status to a character from other cultures. The writer-illustrator in the course of the interview not only accepts it but also legitimises and naturalises the depiction of such characters on the ground of social reality although he himself is aware of the ridicule he faced because of his East-Bengal identity in the West Bengal. According to Narayan Debnath, the translation of Nante Fante in English is initiated on the part of the publisher as it would increase the circulation of the strips. This validates the hypothesis that translation process is governed and determined by market forces at work. Thus it is deduced that the concern for marketability on the part of the
translator or the publisher avoids the larger issues of trans-culturation involved and the need to preserve the source culture of the ST from getting lost. The thesis has substantiated through the inferences obtained from the reply of the interviewee himself that illustration and dynamic plot and dramatic structure of comic strip facilitates translation process. The implicit/explicit hierarchy between the writer and illustrator, or more specifically between canonical literary text (as high literature) and comic strip (as low/pop/children literature) has been focused in the comment of the writer-illustrator of *Nante Fante* and *Handa Bhonda* when he said about the comparative lack of respect for the comic strip illustrator. It also reinforces the idea that comic strip or text-image combination can convey meaning more conveniently than traditional linguistic text thereby deconstructing the hierarchy between serious literature and comic strip as popular/low/non serious literature.

The thesis has also substantiated through suitable instances such as illustrated theoretical texts on cultural studies, semiotics, linguistic, anthropology, etc that comic strip is a potent and effective pedagogical tool. It works here as a space where the concept of serious and non-serious (that is attributed to comic strip because of its pictorial quality) merge and provide emphasis on Comic strip as an emerging field of study. The formulation of hypothesis, investigation and analysis in the foregoing chapters have substantiated the fact that there is a necessity to include comic strip in the literary canon as well as in academic study and research. This perspective indicates the relevance of such an approach in the interdisciplinary and multidimensional perspectives. Within the constraints and limitations of this doctoral research undertaken including paucity of available material (critical and secondary) the thesis has attempted to analyse, vindicate and substantiate the hypothesis and provide a synthesis of the inferences thus drawn. However, with all humility, this research can at best claim to add a new perspective to this already existing field of knowledge. The vastness of this genre and field deserves further exhaustive research. Any claim to exhaustiveness of this research is also categorically denied.