This chapter surveys the technical skill that has gone into making of the literary creations of Wharton and Sivasankari.

The triangular motif is employed repeatedly in Wharton's novels where the relationships between the sexes result largely in terms of a fight to possess a man or a woman. Often a situation or a conflict is created as one flees from his or her partner in life, lured by another lover feels torn between the two, John Amherst, the husband of Bessy admires Justine Brent, who goes to enormous lengths to cement the relationship between the husband and wife, atleast till Bessy's death in *The Fruit of the Tree*. Fanny de Malrive is torn between her husband and Durham in *Madame de Treymes*.

In *Sancturay*, it is Dick's mother and his sweetheart, Mrs. Verney, who are locked in a struggle for the possession of Dick's love.

Mr. Royall, Charity's guardian and Harney claim an almost equal relationship with her in *Summer*. It is a still more awkward situation in *The Mother's Recompense* as Chris the protagonist in the work, appears first as the lover of Kate, Anne's mother and later falls for the daughter. Newland Archer is in an unenviable situation, having to pay equal attention to May Welland, in the capacity of her husband on
the one hand, and to Ellen Olenska on the other, as her faithful lawyer in *The Age of Innocence*. Also, Lewis Tarrant and Halo compete for the position of Vance's wife in *Hudson River Bracketed* and its sequel, *Gods Arrive* respectively. In certain extraordinary cases, two triangles are presented as in *The Reef* in which Darrow, in a way possesses Anna Leath as well as Sophy. Ethan Frome, after having married Zeena, falls in love with Mattie, despite the fact that he is her caretaker and guardian in *Ethan Frome*.

It is interesting to note that the triangular motif is distorted beyond recognizable form in some of Wharton's works. For instance, Joyce Wheater in *The Children* and Undine in *The Custom of the Country* are held as objects of ridicule as they are endlessly discontented, running after one man after another, even after marriage. Lily, in *The House of Mirth*, on the contrary, is a character ending up, evoking considerable sympathy, as no one claims her for his wife though four men stake their claim for her love at last.

Synonyms or variants of 'self' recur in almost all her novels, perhaps indicative of the writer's prooccupation with individualism and alienation depending on the context. Compound words like "self-esteem" (T.C., 21); "self-governing" (T.C., 29); "self-important" (T.C., 92); "self-sufficing" (T.C., 102); "self-effecting" (C.C., 658); "selfishness" (T.C., 220); (C.C., 658); "self-abasement" (T.C., 221); "self-engrossed" (T.C., 232); "self-assertiveness"
"self-derision" (T.C., 313); "self-reliant activity (C.C., 624); "self-possession" (C.C., 643); "self complacency" (C.C., 646); "self-searching" (C.C., 659); "self-abasement" (A.I., 1051); "self-flagellation" (T.T.6); "self-abandonment" (M.D.T., 216; C.C. 46); "self-controlled" (F.T., 120); "self-deception" (T.C., 267); "self-conscious" (T.C., 225); "self-sacrifice" (T.C., 270); "self-revelation" (M.D.T., 157); "self-esteem" (M.D.T., 268); "self-distrust" (T.T.16); "self-confidence" (C.C., 640); "self colloquy" (T.R., 472); "self-sufficient" (T.R., 539); "self-command" (F.T., 11, T.R. 581); "self-preservation" (F.T., 157); "self-deception" (F.T., 120, 217); "self-love (F.T., 228); "self-indulgence" (F.T., 156); "self-exposure" (F.T. 254); "self-posses" (F.T., 275, 331); "self-assertion" (F.T., 335); "self-denial" (F.T., 247, F.T., 318); "self-consciousness" (F.T., 408; 461); "self-betrayal" (F.T., 422); are some of the instances that can be cited here. Such compound words are used not less than twenty times in most of Wharton's novels and more than fifty times in The Fruit of the Tree alone. Perhaps they are also suggestive of Wharton's marathon strife to establish her 'self' as an individual echoing the independance and distinctness of her perception and the words of isolation she saw surrounding the fellow-individuals of her times. Further, there is also a ring of existentialist's sense of alienation, about these compounds consisting of 'self', suggestive of 'angst' and existentialist ennui.
Wharton's novels present two kinds of female characters, in her novels, the first being, the conventional, 'flat type' for she remains throughout, only as a pliable submissive colourless character, whereas, in sharp relief, the other turns out to be the rebellious, developing character, constituting the round type. The latter is brought to light by the former, who primarily serves as a foil. While the 'flat' character invariably earns the reputation of a good woman in society, the round character ends up rejected, condemned, ostracized as an outcast. For instance, in *The Age of Innocence*,

he (Newland Archer) had long since discovered that May's only use of the liberty she supposed herself to possess would be to lay it on the altar of her wifely adoration -- whatever happened, he knew she would always be loyal, gallant and unresentful. (170).

On the contrary "when he thought of Ellen Olenska, it was abstractly, serenely, as one might think of some imaginary beloved in a book or a picture; she had become the composite vision, faint and tenuous as it was, had kept him from thinking of other women"(1291). Here is the cynical view of Wharton concerning society's acceptance of marriage as a dull duty. In fact, the whole story in this work revolves round such a society. Similarly, in *The Reef* we find, Anna Leath to be a 'flat' character:

she was reserved, she was shy even, was what the shallow and effusive would call "cold" she was like a picture so hung that it can be seen only at a certain angle - an
angle known to no one but its possessor. He was thinking of her look when she had questioned him about his meeting with Owen at the theatre, less of her words than of her look, the reddening of her cheek, the deepening of the strained line between her brows, the way her eyes sought shelter and then turned and drew on him. Pride and passion were in the conflict - magnificent qualities in a wife.

In sharp contrast, Sophy Viner is described in the following manner: "she was distinguished from the daughters of wealth by her avowed acquaintance with the real business of living ---- " (369). In both the novels, cited above, the energetic unconventional woman is left alone, neglected by society. Halo's active involvement and participation in what Vance reads, is contrasted with the attitude of his wife, Laura. Lou, who sits simply puzzled by the queer words the actors use and the length of their speeches, stealing covert glances, as what is going on becomes too incomprehensible for her and "between the acts, she sat silent, brimming with a happy excitement, her hands closed in her husband, as if that contract were the only clue to life ---" (251). Similarly Justine Brent strikes a sharp contrast to Bessy, "as her quick hand and eye were always in waiting --- prompt to interpret and execute them without any exertion of her own ----. Justine though grateful and anxious to show her gratitude ---- made no pretence of
effacing herself" (219 & 220). As we have already seen above, 
Anna Leath, serves as a foil to 'round' character, Sophy Viner, 
"the kind of girl in whom certain people would instantly have 
recognized the histrionic gift ----- with her changing face and 
flexible fancies, seemed destined to work in life itself" (381).

Wharton emerges as a great votary for visual, aural, 
olfactory and tactile imagery from Nature in her fictional 
creations. There is copious use of metaphors and similes, in the 
language employed by Wharton, which lend charm to her 
descriptions, involving Nature : Darrow "has to hew his way 
through a jungle of engagements" (T.R., 356); and he "need not 
plunge into the fury of waves outside the harbour" (T.R., 357), 
"Shadows of clouds on a stream" (T.R., 478); "Anna'a face was 
like a shallow - petalled rose, under the flying clouds of her 
excitement" (T.R., 363); "it was no longer a shallow flower 
cup" (T.R., 363); Sophy's face was like "a field of daisies in a 
summer breeze" (T.R., 366); her lock of hair danced like "the 
flit of a brown wing over flowers" (T.R., 372); "black bird's 
song throbbed like a fountain" (T.R., 543); "the girl like a 
snapped branch" (T.R., 558); "the girl's ardour swept like a 
wind" (T.R., 575); "a traveller on a giddy path between a cliff 
and a precipice" (T.R., 598); his passion swept over her "like a 
wind that shakes the roof of the forest without reaching its 
still glades or rippling its hidden pools" (T.R., 413); "silences 
were fertile as rainclouds" (T.T., 155); "Glennard found himself
in the case of a seafarer, who closing his eyes at nightfall on a scene he thinks to put leagues behind him" (T.T., 111); "Stephen's investments flowering like his garden ---- and a golden harvest awaited his sickle" (T.T., 55); "fountains of laughter" (T.C., 36); "like a rose unfurling another petal" (T.C., 39); "money pouring out like water" (T.C., 53); "Boundelmonte dragging Joyce through mire" (T.C., 54); "like a last curl of mist, swallowed up in the blue behind the peaks" (T.C., 82); "poor pale flower of compassion" (T.C., 114); "rocked like a boat in a sea "M.D.T., 247); "in a labyrinth of foreign intrigue" (M.D.T., 189); "shrivel into ashes" (B.S. 249) "cinders in his mouth" (A.T., 1126); "children playing in a graveyard" (A.I., 1179); "the rare butterfly that the least motion might drive off on startled wings, but that might gather a flock about it, if it were left undisturbed" (A.T., 1207); as cool as a cucumber" (A.I., 1255); "prey -laden monster on to its lair " (A.I., 1241); "the sun treading the earth like a vintager" (C.C., 694); "Undine found herself astray in a new labyrinth of social distinctions" (C.C., 684); "as smooth as rose leaves" (C.C., 714); "ripple on smooth water before the coming of the wind" (C.C., 744); and "notices that give warning of a bad hill or a level railway - crossing" (C.C., 728); are some of the examples that can be cited in this context. Nature thus remains for Edith Wharton the primary source of inspiration with regard to her use of varied and striking images in her works.
Similarly, images of 'light' and 'dark' abound in Wharton's works. To quote some instances, "a pale decorative design to the confused richness of a summer landscape" (T.R., 369); "unnatural whiteness of flowers forced in the dark" (T.R., 371); "false lights of a magician's palace" (T.R., 375); "like a light carried rapidly behind a curtained window" (T.R., 389); "flashed strange lights into the shadowy corners of his consciousness" (T.R., 461); "out of that dark vision, light was to come" (san., 111); "veil in golden haze" (san., 102); "white radiance" (san., 161); "a shadow darkening" (M.D.T., 131); "glimpses of dark feudal" (M.D.T., 175); "vanish in the blaze" (M.D.T., 193); "moon swooped down on the black landscape" (C.C., 721); "fled ghosts before light" (C.C., 344); "flowers take a warmer colour in the rays of sunset" (C.C., 772); and "as if a cloud had parted, shedding a ray of her lost youth on her" (T.C., 978). These images suggest Wharton's lively interest in painting. They are pronouncedly indicative of her association with the theatre too. Wharton seems to have had a definite taste for horticulture and she must have enjoyed the play of chiaroscuro of sunlight over a landscape in the different times of the day, different seasons of the year. Surely, she was a lover of sunsets.

Presence of insects, animals and birds too can be detected in Wharton: "he had the sick-feeling with which a powerless looker-on sees the torture of an animal" (T.C., 46); "with the skill of a clever rider putting a horse at a five-barred gate"
(T.C., 38); "She had always been like a canary in a window facing north" (T.C., 39); "like a tireless animal waiting for its prey" (T.C., 233); "like birds on little sunlit waves" (T.C., 346); "squirmed like a snail out of its shell" (T.C., 148); "like a leech" (C.C., 579); "so complete an ass" (G.M., 90); "we are born parasites" (G.M., 111); "as thick as mosquitoes" (C.C., 873); "she lay in his hold as quivering as a frightened bird" (T.C., 307); "such talk was as tedious as the buzzing of gnats" (T.T., 72); and "charming little inquisitive animal" (M.D.T., 180). Most of these images do bear witness to Wharton's special or minute observation of the animal kingdom, though it is obvious she was a lover of horses and enjoyed horse-riding.

There are frequent references to the imagery of the room in Wharton's fiction. The following are just some of the examples "groping about in a huge dark lumber - room" (T.T., 29); "like beautiful pictures on the wall of a quiet room" (T.T., 226); "the words dismissed him like a closed door" (T.T., 24); "reserve implies merely the looking of empty rooms" and "Miss Trent's reticence was to Glennard like the closed door to the sanctuary" (T.T., 29); "brightly lit room uncurtained from a darkness full of hostile watches" (T.T., 21); "like a blue bottle that starts hanging about the room after you're sure you had driven it out of the window" (T.C., 225); "the door knob which yielded hospitably" (T.C., 110); "a light behind a curtained window" (T.R., 389); "Being with them again was like getting
home after a long and precarious journey" (T.C., 245); "captive in a windowless palace" (san., 93); "meshes closer" (san., 111); "first bars of the overture" (san., 140); "going at night into a room where there's always a light" (A.I., 1153); “as open to inspection at a shop-window” (C.C., 726) and “like a wall opaque, impenetrable” (T.C., 231); Such examples clearly indicate Wharton's own moods and feelings, having lived a life, mostly indoors. They also bring in associations of the architecture of the aristocracy of the times, and on rare occasions, a phobia in respect of small insects.

Further, the titles chosen by Wharton for her works, are often suggestive, meaningful and at times, metaphorical. Plainly meaningful are the titles like The Mother's Recompense, whereas Touchstone and Sanctuary are metaphorical. The first work is on the penance made by a mother for what she has secretly done earlier, by accepting her own former lover as her son-in-law. Touchstone is about Alexá Trent, the real 'touchstone' who reveals the ugly nature of her husband, who is mean enough to sell secretly the letters of his former love. Sanctuary proves the mother to be a veritable sanctuary to her son, as she prevents him from committing a gross mistake, by setting right, the wrong done by her predecessors. The House of Mirth is a title derived from the Bible (ECC., 7:4) in which Lily, who continues her life in a house of mirth ends up in a house of misery justifying its associations with
the tone of Ecclesiastes. Similarly, The Fruit of the Tree is suggestive of the forbidden fruit in the prelapsarian Eden, to be enjoyed by none other than Mrs. Bessy Westmore and Cecily, her daughter, themselves being the sole rightful inheritors to the property of Westmore. The title Gods Arrive is highly satirical, as these gods here, come and go.

The names assigned by Wharton to her characters are often symbolic or at times, satirical. For example, Sophy is an American name derived from the Greek word, meaning 'wisdom'. Sophy Viner in The Reef wisely keeps herself at a safe distance from the lustful Durham and, when the occasion demands it, she cleverly thwarts his plan to marry Anna, as he has all along endeavoured to stop her from marrying the man of her choice, namely Owen. Susy, on the other hand, is an American name derived from the Hebrew for 'Lily'. In The Glimpses of the Moon Susy is used satirically, as she is thoroughly corrupt. In the first year of her married life she tries finding out ways and means to survive at the expenses of others. Quite opposed to her is the Lily in The House of Mirth who struggles hard for her bare survival till her last breath. The name of 'Ann' has been derived from the Greek 'Hannah' and 'Anne' derived from the Hebrew, both meaning 'grace'. Ann Eliza in Bunner Sisters proves to be gracious even to the point of giving up the man she loves for her sister's sake. So is Anna Leath in The Reef, who exhibits her grace in
bringing about a marriage between Owen, her step son and Sophy, her daughter's governess. Fanny in Madame de Treymes, as her name implies is an ideal woman, who sticks on to her son and abides by her familial rule, even prepared for sacrificing her love for his sake. "Judith" is a derivation from the Hebrew word meaning "Jewish woman" even as we find in Judith, a 'girl - mother' tending six of her brothers and sisters. Evelyn and Ellen are only variants forms of "Helen" meaning 'bright.' Ellen Olenska in The Age of Innocence emerges as the only bright speck among all the ignorant women in her society. Quite contrary, is Evelyn in Bunner Sisters whose name has associations with brightness, meets with nothing but suffering in life. Similarly Kate, comes from the Russian "Ekaterine" and the Greek derivative "Katheros" meaning "clean and pure" yet Kate figuring in Wharton's The Mother's Recompense is nothing but unclean and impure.

The accuracy of sartorial and personal details in the description of the younger Bunner Sisters is indicative of Wharton's skill in word-painting:

She was a little taller than her elder, had a more pronounced nose, but a weaker slope of mouth and chin. She still permitted herself the frivolity of waving her pale hair and its tight little ridges, stiff as the tresses of an Assyrian statue, were flattened under a dotted veil, which ended at the tip of her cold - reddened nose. In her scant jacket
and skirt of black cashmere, she looked singularly nipped and faded (228).

The description of the girl here suggests in subtle terms her ambition, possible levity and poverty.

The Children presents with scrupulous accuracy Mrs. Wheteer, in all her beauty and opulence:

looking younger than ever in her white yachting skirt and jersey, with her golden thatch, tossed by the breeze, fell into the prettiest maternal poses as her own progeny --- (179).

Wharton's descriptive art with regard to her portrait of women and their costumes is indicative often of their inner character as well as the culture of their respective sociological milieux.

On the contrary, while depicting men in her fiction, Wharton tends to pay a closer attention to their physiognomy and physique in general rather than their clothes. While describing Lawrance Lefferts in The Age of Innocence she writes,

to look at him from the slant of his bald forehead and the curve of his beautiful fair moustache, to the long-patent leather feet at the other end of his bean and elegant person (102).

With regard to Mr. Sillerton Jackson in the same novel, Wharton says,

his narrow hollow temples and under his soft thatch of silver hair, a register of most of the scandals and
mysteries that had shouldered under the unruffled surface of New York society (1022).

In The Custom of the Country Mr. Spragg is grey-bearded and somewhat stooping with the slack figure of the sedentary man, who would be stout, if not dyspeptic, and his cautious grey eyes with pouch-like underlids had straight black brows like his daughter's. His thin hair was worn a little too long over his coat collar and a Masonic emblem dangled from the heavy gold chain which crossed his crumpled waistcoat (630).

Wharton's description of Delane is suggestive of her innate penchant for imaginatively capturing men in her art, in lucid physical terms bordering on the sensual:

Delane rode thus heavily yet mightily in his red and black shirt and white breeches, his head standing out like a bronze against the turf, I whimsically recalled the figure of Guldoniccio de Foligno, the famous mercenary riding at a slow powerful pace across the fortressed fresco of the Town Hall of Science. Why a New York banker of excessive weight and more than middle age jogging on a pony across a long Island polo field, should have reminded me of a marital figure on an armoured war-horse, I find it hard to explain (501).
In this episode the physical energy of Delane, is emphasized through not only the association of the horse but also the military figure recalled from history.

Wharton has a definite eye for the architecture of buildings. In fact, her relish in the descriptions of buildings has rendered her art particularly representative of the age in which she lived. This can be illustrated from a passage from Bunner Sisters:

The house of which Bunner sisters had annexed the basement was a private building with a brick front, green shutters on weak hinges and a dress maker's sign in the window above the shop. On each side of its modest three stories, stood higher buildings with fronts of brown stone, cracked and blistered, cast-iron balconies and cat-haunted grass-patches behind twisted railings (BVS. 225).

The style of Wharton's description of characters is predominantly suggestive of their latent character. Wharton also evinces a keen interest in describing the costumes of her characters, wherever it suits her artistic design.

In The Age of Innocence, Madame Nilsson, is realistically pictured: "in white cashmere slashed with pale blue satin, a reticule dangling from a blue girdle and large yellow braids, carefully disposed on each side of her muslin chemisette. (1019)."

Wharton's eyes do not miss a single sartorial detail here. The following portrait, is another such example:
a slim young woman with brown hair growing in close curls about her temples held in place by a narrow band of diamonds. The suggestion of this head dress --- was carried out in the cut of the dark blue velvet gown --- caught up under her bosom by a girdle with a large old-fashioned clasp. (1021)

Wharton's alertness to capture the colour and texture of costumes of her characters lends them a vivid air of realism. Her characters bring before us like Chaucer's pilgrims, the fashion of the age to which they belong as they are described along with the costumes in all their vivid colours. For instance, "Archer's mother pursed her lips under the lace veil that hung from her grey velvet bonnet trimmed with frosted grapes" (1045). Mrs. Welland's "large pink face was appropriately solemn, and her plum coloured satin with pale blue side-panels and blue ostrich plumes in a small satin bonnet" (1160). May Welland is presented "in her white dress, with a pale green ribbon about the waist and a wreath of ivy on her hat" (1182).

While the first paragraph cited below describes a busy street where the common people do their business by day, the passage following it has all the pomp, colour and grandeur associated with the aristocratic architecture. In the following instances, Wharton explicitly associates the habitations of her characters with not only their lifestyle but also the class of their inhabitants:
These three houses fairly exemplified the general character of the street, which, as it stretched eastward, rapidly fell from shabbiness to squalor, with an increasing frequency of projecting sign-boards and of swinging doors that softly shut or opened at the touch --- The middle of the street was full of irregular depressions, well adopted to retain the long swirls of dust and straw and paper, that the wind drove up and down its sad untended length toward the end of the day, when traffic had been active, the fissured pavement formed a mosaic of coloured handbills, lids of tomato-cans, old shoes, cigar stumps and banana skins, cemented together by a layer of mud or veiled in a powdering of dust. (B.S.226).

and

The Beaufort house was one that New Yorkers were proud to show to foreigners, especially on the night of the annual ball. The Beauforts had been among the first people in New York, to own their own red velvet carpet, and have it rolled down the steps by their own footmen --- The house had been boldly planned with a ball-room, so that, instead of squeezing through a narrow passage to get to it ---- one marched solemnly down a vista of enfiladed drawing rooms (the sea-green, the crimson) seeing from afar the many-candled lustres reflected in the polished
parquetry and beyond the depths of a conservatory where camellias and tree-ferns arched their costly foliage over seats of black and gold bamboos (A.1., 1032).

Wharton being a great lover of horticulture indulges herself often in detailed description of flowergardens as in The Age of Innocence:

symmetrical mounts of woolly green moss bounded by croquet hoops, formed the base of shrubs, shaped like orange trees but studded with large pink and red roses. Gigantic pansies considerably larger than the roses and closely resembling the floral pen-wipers made by female parishioners for fashionable clergymen, sprang for the most beneath the rose-trees and here and there, a dais grafted on a rose-branch flowered with a luxuriance - (1019).

It is interesting to note that in the above passage Wharton is able to insert a rather ironic sociologic observation, without sacrificing in the least, the beauty of the luxuriance of the plant arrangement.

The following passage brings out in subtle turns the harmony of a couple of lovers with their surroundings and the landscape suggesting the harmony of their microcosm a macrocosm.

May had just been for a row on the river, and the sun that rattled the little waves with gold seemed to have caught her in its meshes across the warm brown of...
cheek, her blown hair glittered like silver wire, and her eyes too looked lighter, almost pale in her youthful limpidity. As she walked beside Archer, with her long swinging gait, her face wore the vacant serenity of a young marble athlete. To Archer's strained nerves, the vision was as soothing as the sight of the blue sky and the lazy river. They sat down on a bench under the trees and he put his arms about her and kissed her. It was like drinking at a cold spring with the sun on it (1127).

It is the deliberate metaphoric suggestiveness of the limpidity and flux of the river with the woman and the protective solidity and assurance of the bank, with the lover, that bring out a picture of superb idyllic love here.

Certain passages from Wharton's novels depict the typical fads and fashions of her age. For example, a remark such as only one fact disturbed her (Undine) there was a hint of too much fulness in the curves of her neck and in the spring of her hips. She was tall enough to carry off a little extre weight, but excessive slimness was the fashion (636),

points out how women of her times too had been preoccupied with questions related to "slimming". There is a reference also to women "recurling their hair with the aid of the gas burner" (A.I., 1032), which was again a fashion of the day.
Wearing spectacles was another craze of the age, especially among the men: "Mr. Spragg hooked his glasses to his waistcoat" (C.C. 648) as for fashionable pastimes, men of the age indulge themselves in all types of races. Thurber Van Degen Peter Van Degan's father, indulge, themselves in motor races and horse races and he is referred to as the captor of Blue Ribbons of horse shows, of Gold cups at Motor Races, the owner of winning race horses and "crack sloops", the supreme exponent in short, of those crowning arts that made all life seem stale and unprofitable outside the magic ring of the society column (C.C., 654).

Theatre - going too was very common. Archer's family meet Ellen Olenska in the theatre, in The Age of Innocence:

in all the boxes, cross - currents of movement had set in, groups were coalescing and breaking up, fans waving and heads twinkling. black coats emerging among white shoulders late comers dropping their furs and laces in the red penumbra background. (C.C. 661).

Undine "being intently observed from the neighbouring box met the bulging stare of Peter Van Degan" (662) are such illustrations for popular social entertainments of the age from The Custom of the Country.

French words and at sometimes Latin terms are interspersed in order to adorn and embellish her style of language. Some of the examples are: "Baiser Dejendu, sweet, but Nouveau Pecke" (I.C. 159) - forbidden kiss, pleasant but a new sin.
"L'assition, made moiselle?" (T.C., 329) - the bill, Miss;
"Nouveau Luxe" (T.C., 332) - New luxury; "Allons, Madame, Plaisante" (M.R., 20) - well, Madam, joke; "train de vie" (F.T., 217) - lifestyle; "Saneta simplicitaz" (F.T., 199) - holy simplicity; "Tant mieux" (F.T., 210) - so much, the better; "La Uraie moral se moque de la morale" (F.T. 532) - Real morality laughs at morality; "jeune fille a marier" (H.M. 72) - a young girl to be married; "Si seatement je pouvais choisir leurs" (C.C. 881) - If only I could choose their lovers; "Le petite r'est Uarment pas trop mal" (C.C. 951) - The little girl is beautiful but really or not too bad; "first premier" (C.C. 952). - first prime minister; "double entendre" (A.I. 1032) etc.

There are gripping moments of sensational confrontation in Wharton as illustrated by the following episodes presented through descriptive passages and dialogues. In The House of Mirth, Augustus Trenor approaches Lily Bart with the desire of an aggressive, forbidding animal. His savage impatience, confidence and restlessness and Lily Bart's delicate sensibility, sense of honour and vulnerability are all conveyed, through the following episode: Trenor had pushed a chair between herself and the door.

He threw himself in it and leaned back, looking up at her.
"I'd tell you what I want. I want to know just where you and I stand. Hang it, the man who pays for the dinner is generally allowed to have a seat at table"

She flamed with anger and abasement and the sickening need of having to conciliate where she longed to be humble. "I don't know what you mean --- but you must see, Gus, that I can't stay here talking to you at this hour ---- "

"Gad, you go to men's houses, fast enough in broad daylight --- strikes me you're always so deuced careful of appearances".

"If you have brought me here to say insulting things," she began.

Trenor laughed "Don't talk stage-rot, --- you got reckless --- thought you could turn me inside out, and chuck me in the gutter like an empty purse"

His touch was a shock to her drowning consciousness ---- Trenor's face darkened to rage; her recoil of abhorrence had called out the primitive man in him (153-155).

In the following incident cited from The Touchstone Wharton presents the agony of Stephen Glennard, a lover who finds his woman so irresistibly sensual, imperious by aloof and
still desirable, going through the different moments of intense jealousy and unbridgeable anxiety:

He caught sight of her reflection in the mirror. She was looking at him. He kissed and their eyes met. He moved across the room.

There's something that I want to say to you he began. She held his gaze but her colour deepened. He noticed again with a jealous pang, how her beauty had gained in warmth and meaning. It was as though, a transparent cup had been filled with wine. ---- (146).

In the following episode from Sanctuary, Wharton succeeds considerably in communicating the ineffable depths of maternal feelings of a woman towards her son, through brief intermissions of choked silence. Here, the mother comes rushing in, responding to the helpless call of her son and the fellow finds in her a world of security which only a mother can provide:

"Dick!" She said, Dick!" and he sprang up staring with dazed eyes.

"You've come - you've come --- " he said stretching his hands to her and all at once, she held him in her breast as in a shelter.
"You wanted me?" She whispered

"I had you, dear? he said ----- Neither spoke for awhile; then he raised his head and looked at her, "I suppose you know what has been happening to me," he said ---- (161-162)

The Reef presents Sophy Viner and Darrow living out their sweetbrief moments of illicit love in a romantic world of their own. Darrow's words point out his heart's desire: "why should our good time be over?" he asked "Why shouldn't it last a little longer?" she looked up, her lips parted in surprise, but before she could speak he went on, "I want you to stay with me --- I want you, just for a few days It's not always May and Paris - why not make the most of them now? --- (399 - 400)

The following is an instance where a person is metaphorically identified in terms of space, where the mystical solidity and reliability of a farmer is conveyed through the rugged features of a rich, pastoral landscape:

Mr. Raycie was a monumental man. His extent in height, width and thickness was so nearly the same that which ever way he was turned, one had an almost equally broad view of him and every inch of that mighty circumference
was so exquisitely cared for, that to farmer's eye he might have suggested a great agricultural estate of which not an acre is untilled. (612)

Wharton is an artist par excellence where it concerns the use of poetic metaphors to suggest the areas of feelings and experiences which are difficult to communicate. The following are just some examples cited from Wharton's work to prove this point: "her imagination flew back and forth spinning luminous webs of feelings" (T.R., 435), suggesting hopeful expectations "each moment was like a miser's bag stretched to bursting with pure gold denoting a much trees and feeling (T.R., 481); "with a face, washed of bitterness" (T.R., 600); "they faced each other guardedly, apprehensively as if something fragile and precious which they had been carrying together had slipped between their fingers and been broken. (T.C. 222), a sudden realization of the loss of an intimate relationship; "when she spoke her large eyes became as empty as a medicine and her lips moved just enough to let out a flat - edge of voice" (T.C., 154), an expression devoid of feelings; "all were strands woven into the very pile of the carpet he trod on his way up the stairs" (Twi., 69), the stepping stones for a self-absorbed ambitious person; "it (time) stretched away into infinity endless road in a nightmare; if gaped before her like the slippery sides of an abyss"(T.C.135).
Wharton’s fictional world abounds in imagery from the world of painting. In *The Reef*, “Sophy had brushed in this outline of her career with rapid strokes and in a tone of fatalism, oddly untinged by bitterness” (368); “the car’s head-lights, while they climbed the mountain, had kept on painting pictures on the darkness” (H.R.B., 101) and “the cold red of sunset behind winter hills; the flight of cloud flocks over slopes of golden stubble; or the intensely blue shadow of hemlocks on sunlit sorrow... it looks just as if it was painted “ (O. N.Y., 392).

Wharton’s profound interest in horticulture can be sensed from the following description of a garden of flowers in *Gods Arrive*. It is interesting to see how Wharton finds a certain interconnection between the nature around and the mind within:

She paused in her work and looked attentively at one of the flowers. How exquisitely imagined, how subtly wrought! What patient and elaborate artifice had gone the inventing of its transient loveliness!

Not so long ago, she had scattered seed in little boxes and later, dibble in hand, had moved each tiny plant, to its own place. Other seeds she had sown in the beds, in even furrows and watched the plants sprout through the light soil. Between them now, under their spreading foliage, the brown leaves of the spring bulbs were decaying and turning into mould. Season followed season in blossom and decline; the fresh leaf drooped and fell, the young face of the
flower withered and grew old, the endless function unrolled its cruel symbolism. . . She knew well enough what the caterpillars symbolised too; the mean cares, the gnawing anxieties that crawl over the fair face of life. She stood up and stamped vindicatively on a writhing green body. Then there were the seeds that failed and the young shoots, the slugs devoured. . . To the general rhythm of rise and fall, the heart might have adapted itself; but the accidental ravages, snail tracks, caterpillar slime, the disenchantment and failure (G.A.305).

The symbol employed here explicitly reveal how Vance's creative activity is symbolised through exquisite imagery from horiticulture.

Wharton does not seem to have enjoyed life much. The following instances seem to indicate that life in Wharton's eyes is dull and monotonous, and almost a drudgery. "Life to be differed with is exasperating; and to be agreed with monotonous" (G.M :69) "life at Eaglewood was much of a prison (H.R.B. 80). "life tasted like cinders on his lips" (H.R.B. 214); "life was not always such a baffled business" (H.R.B. 298); "life's such a perplexity and a waste" (H.R.B. 556); "life is a mere canvas for the embroideries of Poet and Painter "(Tk.R. 412); "life she leads is morbid, unnatural" (A.I. 1180); "life is difficult and perplexing" (A.I. 1110) "life was like a walk through a classified museum" (T.R: 418) and "life is too short" (H.M. 140). Regardless of characters, such occasions give rise to sweeping, often gloomy, generalizations.
Wharton’s references to religion shows that she is not an emotionally devoted votary of any sect of Christianity. Undine in The Custom of the Country “had violent reactions of militant protestantism, during which she talked of immoral Popes and persecuting Jesuits” (888); whereas Evelina in Bunner Sisters is a convert to Catholicism, for she narrates:

Mrs. Hochmuller was a Catholic; so when I was rick, she got the doctor to send me to a Roman Catholic hospital and the sisters was (sic) so good to me there and the priest used to come and talk to me; and the things he said, kept me from going crezy (307).

In Old New York Mr. Raycie expresses his discontentment towards the various sects of Christianity.

“What is there to frighten a good Episcopalian in what we call the Continental Sunday?” . . . No puling Methodist or atheistical Unitarians at my table tonight, that I’m aware of. Nor will I offend the ladies of my household . . . that they have lent an ear to the Baptist ranter in the chapel at the foot of our lane. . . What’s all this flutter about the Papists? Far be it from me to approve of their heathenish doctrines. . . (378). Bessy’s religious practice in The Fruit of the Tree “had been purely mechanical: her faith had never been associated with the graver moments of her life and the apparition of a clerical figure at her bedside would portend not consolation but calamity” (403).
Cynthia Griffin Wolff quotes Wharton's own words:

No picture of myself would be more than a profile, if it failed to
give some account of the teeming visions which ever since my
childhood... have incessantly peopled my inner world and then she
continues, A vision must be hampered into shape. It is perhaps the
germ of a fiction, but it is not yet a fiction. A vision is a primitive
expression of self; a fiction is the creation of an independent world
that starts apart from self (1977, 453).

Wharton frequently uses the motif of the eye as a metaphor.

For instance, in The Fruit of the Tree, exchange of love between Amherst
and Mrs. Westmore is expressed thus:

their eyes met and both smiled... He was subject to the unobservant
man's acute flashes of vision, and Mrs. Westmore's beauty was like a
blinding light abruptly turned on eyes subdued to obscurity" (42).

While describing Mrs. Westmore's fear, "A fear still shone on
her eyes" (200) "the discolouration he carried in his eye made the mill
village seem more than commonly colourless" (96) and "remove his
presence from Westmore and the whole industrial problem became to her as
non-existent as star-dust to the naked eye" (119). Very pathetically, Bessy
"looked up into his eyes through a mist of penitence and admiration" as "a
wife must of necessity see with her husband's eyes" (314). In The House
of Mirth, Lily's character of pardoning even her worst enemy is described
in the following manner; "she had indeed a quick vision of returning the
packet to Bertha Dorset and of the opportunities the resolution offered; but
this thought lit up abysses from which she shrank
back ashamed" (110); In another context, the mutual emotional appeal between two souls is depicted as follows: "he had a faint glimpse of what other sufferings might mean and. . ., she perceived, an almost simultaneous perception of the way in which her particular misfortunes might serve him" (259); and Lily’s "mind shrank from the glaze of thought as instinctively as eyes contract in a blaze of light - darkness, darkness was what she must have at any cost" (340). Judith’s "quaint vision of their[sic] all living in a house, somewhere in the country" (T.C., 247) puts in a nutshell, the story itself. In The Age of Innocence, Ellen’s pitiable plight is expressed thus: "in the law’s eyes and the world’s, on a par with her abominable husband “she is an outcaste. The strange exaltation of his mood brought on one of Ethan’s rare fits of boastfulness,” I can measure distance to a hair’s breadth” to which Mattie murmurs: “I always say you’ve got the surest eye” (356).

Wharton’s use of Biblical imagery on the whole, shows she was familiar with most of the well-known portions of the scriptures and that she was not fired with any special enthusiasm to employ the Biblical imagery in any inventive manner. In The Glimpses of the Moon, Mrs. Melrose, talking about a work of art, says, “when one comes upon a great work of art as St. Paul did . . . the scales from his eyes fell” (147). Archer in The Age of Innocence, seems at first, in full agreement with Mr. Letterblair’s view, but later finds his words to be those of a “selfish, well-fed, supremely indifferent old man. It suddenly became the Pharisaic
voice of a society, wholly absorbed in barricading itself against the unpleasant" (1094). In *The Children*, Martin Boyne, is wonderstruck by the numerous hands and legs at the dinner-table: "he had not imagined that seven could be so many. The miracle of the loaves and fishes seemed as nothing, to the sudden multiplication of arms, legs and lungs about that rural supper table" (179). Thinking of how Miss Lorburn's old house attracted people, Vance is surprised, in *Hudson River Bracketed*, how "he had lived among people... who nevertheless took old houses for granted... seemed in fact to live with one foot in the grave of the past like the people pushing back their tombstones in a queer still sculpture of the Last Judgement" (95). In *Old New York* having had to face his infuriated father alone, Lewis feels "more like a David without a pebble" (399).

Wharton's philosophy of life that money cannot take one to Heaven, is reflected in *The House of Mirth*, through Lily: "you will marry some one very rich, and it's as hard for rich people to get into the kingdom of Heaven" (72).

Wharton's works are also replete with most of the familiar imagery from popular literature, English and ancient Greek. In *God's Arrive* "Vance was known as the Scholar Gypsy" (45). Anna and Darrow in *The Reef* seemed "like the ghostly lovers of the Grecian Urn, forever pursuing, without ever clasping each other" (371). Undine's excessive indulgence in sex, brings to Wharton's mind an image from the classics: "she rose Venus-like above its folds" (C.C.680). Similarly, Margaret
Aubyn is described "the Venus of Milo" (T.T., 6). In The Age of Innocence, Archer is reminded of Cupid, as he sees a "grizzled Newfoundland dozing before the door seemed as ineffectual a guardian as the arrowless Cupid" (1193). Other instances include, "such response as it evoked was remote and Ariel-like" (C.C., 721); "there is always a Narcissus element in youth" (C.C., 725) and Mrs. Melrose "lay sunk as a wan Nereid in a midnight sea" (G.M., 146) in a black velvet divan.

The metaphoric language that Wharton uses adds not only a visual charm to her works but also enhances their aesthetic quality in general. When Zeena sends Mattie away, against Ethan's wish, "it seemed to Ethan that his heart was bound with every tick of the clock" (E.F., 348). Once again, while describing the happiness of Ethan and Mattie when they are together, Wharton comments: "all their intercourse had been made up of just such inarticulate flashes, when they seemed to come suddenly upon happiness as if they had surprised a butterfly into winter woods" (E.F., 352). Judith's "mouth became a flame, her eyes fountains of laughter, her thin frail body, a quiver of light" (T.C., 36) and "Beyond the close-knit ground of his life, there had hung for years the mirage of Rose Sellars but that mirage was now the phantom of a phantom" (T.C., 270-271). Charity "in her fagged and floating mind only one sensation had the weight of reality... But for it, she would have felt as rootless as the whiffs of thistle down the wind blew past her" (Su., 187).
Nature imagery is at times, carefully chosen by Wharton, to suit the mood of a particular character or characters. To cite a few examples, in *The Glimpses of the Moon*, Nick is much perturbed in mind due to the obsession of securing a place in Susy's heart. The description goes thus:

The noises of a hot summer night . . . would have kept the most carefree from slumber: but though Nick lay awake, he did not notice them, for the tumult in his brain was more deafening. Dawn brought a negative relief and out of sheer uneasiness, he dropped into a heavy sleep. When he woke, it was nearly noon and from his window, he saw the well-known outline of the Ibis, standing up dark against the glitter of the harbour (130).

When Susy is burdened with financial problems, at the point of her reunion with Nick, Wharton describes:

it was cruel to have it (financial problem) rear its hated head even through the bursting boughs of her new spring; but there it was, the perpetual serpent in her Eden, to be bribed, fed, sent to sleep with such scraps as she could beg, borrow or steal for it. And she supposed it was the price that fate means her to pay for her blessedness (355).

In *The House of Mirth* Lily suffers from an inner anguish, an is unable to face Selden, as she owes 9000 pounds to Trenor:
The sky was dusty and overcast and as Lily and Selden, moved toward the deserted gardens, spurs of warm rain blew fitfully against their faces. They walked on in silence . . . till the deeper shades of the gardens received them.(228)

This is a clear example of pathetic fallacy as the feelings of Lily are attributed to Nature itself as if nature bemoans her plight.

Setting plays a vital role in Wharton's work at times. For example, Starkfield in Ethan Frome is suggestive of barrenness as Ethan is. Lockwood, the narrator of the story comments: "his loneliness was not merely the result of his personal plight. . . but had in it . . . the profound accumulated cold of many Starkfield winters" (282). Even his saw-mill looks "exanimate enough with its idle wheel, looming above the black stream" . . . and the orchard is "of starved apple - trees" and beyond the icy orchard lay a field or two "their boundaries lost under drifts" (284). Words "icy" "winter" "snow" - all are suggestive of the barrenness, and the loneliness of Ethan and his wife, as only coldness exists between them due to the slovenliness in their attitude towards life. Ethan is "struggling under the burden of his barren farm and failing saw - mill" (305).

Wharton's use of the pickle dish implies sexual connection, according to Kenneth Bernard: "The red pickle dish is Zeena's most prized possession. She received it as a wedding gift but she never uses it. . . The dish has only ceremonial, not functional use" (48).
The sexual connotations here are obvious. For example, Zeena never gets to discover an affair in the making between Ethan and Mattie, nor does she ever say anything, except for one hint, not followed up, that reveals such knowledge. When Zeena is gone for a day, Mattie, significantly, brings down and uses the pickle dish in serving Ethan's supper. The dish is broken and Ethan plans to glue it together. Of course, the dish can never be the same. This kind of violation is irrevocable. Zeena does not discover that the dish is broken, until she gets, again significantly, a heartburn, the powders for which she keeps on the same private shelf as the pickle dish, a symbolic recognition of the fact that Mattie has usurped her place, broken her marriage and given a 'heartburn' to Zeena.

Wharton's works often end ironically. In *Hudson River Bracketed*, Vance's ladylove, Halo Spear, is expected to marry him, but the end, disproves it. In *Gods Arrive* too, she is no longer his ladylove, but his caretaker. In *Ethan Frome*, Zeena's husband, Ethan, hates being her husband, but ironically, we find him lovingly cared for by Zeena, as she would, a child. Lily in *The House of Mirth*, a member of the aristocratic family, enjoying the income of her aunt, at the beginning of the novel, becomes penniless at the end as Evelina does in *Bunner Sisters*. The reader of *Madame de Treymes* looks very much forward to Fanny's marriage which is nullified, at the end. So many preparations have been made by Dick and his mother towards his winning a contest, but ironically,
they do not participate in it at all. In *The Reef*, marriage between Darrow and Anna; and Owen and Sophy are guessed at, but they turn out otherwise; as none of the marriages takes place.

Wharton’s anti-Semitism becomes explicit in the following descriptions of Simon Rosedale in *The House of Mirth*: “Plump rosy man of the blond Jewish type” ; “race’s accuracy in the appraisal of values”; “business astuteness which characterizes his race”; “little Jew” (14,16 & 17)etc.

Caricatures also occur in Wharton: “large girl with flat surface and no highlights as reliable as roast mutton; countenance had no more modelling than a face painted on a toy balloon” (H.M. 49) and “large eyes became as empty as a medium; and her lips moved just enough to let out a flat knife edge of voice “ (T.C., 154).

The triangular situational motif occurring in Sivasankari, is of a fairly different kind to that in Wharton. In Sivasankari’s works, the pattern of two women pining for one man repeats itself pointing out perhaps the demand for a bridegroom in his marriage market in India as the number of women exceeds the number of men in India. Of these two men, one who is relatively the ‘stranger’ behaves more gently, nobly and understandingly, than if she happens to be a sister or step sister. In *Natkal* Lucia helps Visali in times of dire need though she happens to be her husband’s second wife. In *Tavam*, Gayathri does not fight for her
right over Sudhakar, when Charu marries her lover. In *Kaṭaiciyil* neither Devaki nor Palaniammal seems to pick up quarrels, when their husband easily keeps swaying from one to the other. In *Oru Ciṅkam Muyal Ākiratu*, Lavanya thinks it wise to leave Ram, her husband with Menaka. In *Kāḷān* Chitra considers it justifiable, when Shankar starts moving closely with Anuradha. So is Linda’s behaviour towards Susheela in *Orrai Paravai*. In *Mūkanāṅkayiru*, Chandra, leaves Moorthy in the lurch, by making him marry, the lady of his choice. On the contrary in *Aṭi Māṭukal Parvathy* and *Meenakshi*, though they are sisters, stand as rivals, over their respective claims on Natarajan. In *Veṭkkam Keṭṭavarkal*, Sundari is jealous of her step-sister’s life of ease and hence, steps into her married life. In *Natiyin Veṭattoṭu* Kamali deals tactfully with her husband, instead of making much ado of his illicit contact with another woman, and thus wins Murali’s heart in the end. The only exception to this, is the case of Kamali, who often nags her husband for his admiration for Shanthakumari, his cousin and demeans the latter, to the maximum and also loses him in the end in *Tiru Caṅku Corkkam*.

Sivasankari portrays two types of women characters in her novels: one is a docile, submissive, traditional type and the other is fashionable, modern and unconventional. As, is the case with Wharton, Sivasankari’s men, though they marry traditional women, are more attracted towards the less traditional women. Unlike Wharton, who never permits a marriage between any man and an unconventional woman, unless his wife
were dead, Sivasankari freely allows her men to remar· such women. Sivasankari's women too do not usually cry over spilt milk, but they do find a way out of such a hellish experience, in order that they may have a reasonably happy, though lonely life. Marriage, according to her, may be important to a woman's life, but it is not the be-all and end-all of her existence.

Speaking in comparative terms, Sivasankari is perhaps exposed to a wider scope of life experiences than Edith Wharton. The former's fictional works do not confine themselves to mere man-woman relationship, but rather includes a much more extended range of socio-political concerns that pertain to the experiences of a wider variety of readers of both the sexes, belonging to a more multifarious sociological milieu. The 'Stoff' of her novels, reflects such a variety. The novel Kutti deals with the need for care for the aged; Palañkal, with the yawning gulf between generations and Amma Pilis, Enakkäka, with the subtleties in banking transactions.

Most of Sivasankari's titles are metaphorical. Ati Maṭukal compares the ill-treated, women, to cows for slaughter. Ituvum Tāj Mahāl Tān is a tribute to the steadfast love of a man for a woman, that remains unabated even after a passage of thirty years. Cutta Maṇ portrays the romantic relationship of Yamuna and Ramanan that remains warm and flexible as long as they remain single but turns brittle, like burnt sand, as soon as they marry. Paccoonikal shows how Masilamoni and his brother
change their colours, from moment to moment, under altered conditions, as chameleons do.

**Vērillāta Maraṅkaṭ** presents lovers belonging to different religions and castes, opting for marriage which ultimately collapses like uprooted trees. **Nantu** describes the insidious and indirect manner in which cancer preys on the body of a patient, like a crab makes an oblique entry into its hole; **Mūkkanaṅkayiru** presents how at long last a wife manages to find a way to tame her wayward husband, bent on sowing wild oats, as one controls a rebellious heifer, with the help of a noose. **Kāḷan** dwells on the inveterate incest, which is on the verge of ruining a happy married life, like a fungus spoils a healthy organism. In **Kinaṛru Tavaḷaikaṭ**, the members of an entire family, with the exception of only one, are depicted as utterly ignorant as frogs in the well, with regard to the phenomenon of sex determination. **Orṟai Paravaṇi** metaphorically reflects the deliberately chosen course of life on the part of a determined woman, **Kappal Paravaṇi** shows how a woman, like a sea gull taking a brief respite in a ship, has a short-lived affair with a married man. **Tulla Muṭiyātta Pulli Māṇi** presents the misery of a girl, deprived of her charm, due to leucoderma, that leaves indelible spots on her skin, as on the hide of a spotted deer. **Oru Cīṅkaṭ Muyal Ākiṟatū** presents a protagonist, regarded as a complete master of passions, eventually proving himself to be a mere vulnerable mortal even as the king of beasts, turns into a rabbit.
Of all the titles in Sivasankari, two stand distinguished, namely *Ovar-Tōs*, the only English title chosen by her and the other, a literal translation of the English maxim, 'on the other side of the mountain' rendered in Tamil as *Malaiyin Aṭutta Pakkam*. Some other titles are self explanatory. *Mella Mella* depicts an invalid, whose condition turns by and by from bad to worse, both in physical and moral terms. In *Pōka Pōka*, the woman protagonist, who is first unable to detect any love in her husband, discerns it in course of time. *Tirī Caṅku Corkkam* (In Unstable Haven) presents the wrong choice made by a woman, who ends up with no one standing by her in her hour of trial.

*_Ayiram Kālattup Payir* speaks of marriage in terms of a longstanding, endearing bond, capable of lasting for ages. *Nappāsai* depicts the greed of a man being outwitted by another and eventually getting deprived of all his hoardings. *Veṭkkam Keṭṭavarkal* presents some characters who are hell-bent on their own survival, without the least trace of compunction in them. *Pālaṅkal* speaks of the yawning divide between different generations of characters, who are ultimately bridged together through a woman.

*Kattirukkirēn* (I am Waiting), *Kōlai kal* (Cowards), *Nātkal* (47 days), *Ammā, Pilis Enakkāka* (Mummy, Please for my Sake), *Innorutti+ Innorutti* (Another Yet Another), *Ini Tōṭarātu* (This will not continue), *Tān Tan Cukam* (Self, One's Own Comfort), *Ērikkaṭiyil Cila*
Kanavukal (Dreams Under the Lake), Oru Manitanin Katai (A Man’s Story) Tirvu (Resolution), Kan Ketta Piraku (Having gone Blind) are all titles conveying literal meanings.

Sivasankari employs titles that are rhetorical, such as En(why?), Etarkāka (wherefore?) and Kātal Enptu Etu Varai (How far can Love Last?) As they remain unanswered, till this day. She also enjoys using Tamil proverbs for her titles. Arril Oru Kāl Cērril Oru Kāl (One Foot in the River, Another on the Mud), Mutal Kōnal (First Lapse), recalling the proverb which implies failure at the first step is indicative of final defeat. Similarly the title Karrulla Potēr (While the Wind Blows) refers to the Tamil Proverb, which means ‘Exploit the wind direction, while sweeping. The first half of the Tamil Proverb, Valartta Katā (The pet Goat) is a title which anticipates its compliment and means ‘The pet he-goat charging at your own chest’. Man Kutiraikal (Horses of clay) is only a part of the proverb, which asks, ‘Can you cross a river trusting a horse of clay?. Ruci Kanta Pūnai invites associations of a Tamil proverb which says ‘The cat that has had its taste cannot desist itself from the food. Titles like Curā Mīnkal (Sharks) and Vānattu Nilā (The Moon in the sky) are symbolic.

There are detectable passages in Sivasankari’s fictional works that admirably capture not only the beauty of nature around, but also
highlight the fact that Nature empathizes with human minds. In *Nantu* she describes a beach in the following manner:

An enormous tide, dashing at high speed came crushing towards the shore almost menacing with the words, “I shall drown you all!” but it slowed down before it would reach another twenty feet, subsided and suddenly collapsed into froth and foam as it slowly reached down the shore... A crab, protruding its head from somewhere, frisking here and there, and as if the red-shelled creature had lost something, buried itself instantly in sand showing just its incisors from a new hole... It appeared as if it had vanished with the wave! A deceptive crab that was hiding itself within a mere three square feet area and suddenly and triumphantly seemed blowing its own trumpet. (3)

Though the above passage seems to be a mere description of the world outside, it seems to extend in metaphoric terms to the suddenness, insidiousness and the inexorability of the dangerous disease of cancer that is about to snuff out the life of the helpless protagonist in the novel. In *Vānattu Nīlā* a feature of the natural landscape is inextricably coloured by the charm, a woman casts over her lover’s mind:

Two days had gone by since full moon, and the delayed moonlight made the waves gleam like silver and crabs were playing hide-and-seek as if someone were constantly chasing them. Yet the breeze that
soothed the body failed to comfort Sandhanam as his mind could not help mulling over, cogitating,

Malini
that hip
that visage
that womanliness
that beauty
that charm...

It became almost irresistible for him, to caress and embrace her then and there(54).

Here we can perceive, an instance of the haunting quality reflected in Sivasankari's description of a landscape. There are occasions when Sivasankari, stands aloof from her characters, maintaining scrupulously, an ironic distance. In the following lines from Vettkam Kettavarkal Sundari is dressing up.

Sundari was engrossed in making herself up before the mirror. She combed her hair in such a way as to hide her high forehead, curling her hair round her ears, in the manner she had seen in respect of several heroines in movies. She was now daubing powder all over her face almost as liberally as if she were whitewashing a black wall... (her mother) is dancing, thinking to herself as if Brahma himself had sent for her from heaven. Why doesn't it strike her that all these are about to fall apart,
unsuitable they all are, from her ugly face? After all she has already grown plump like a cow, ... [50 + 51].

In the above passage the first half is a description of an event and the latter half projects the thoughts running in the mind of Bhuvana, which in a sense, reflects the ideas of the author herself.

Sivasankari’s eyes do not miss a single occasion to capture the beauty of Nature in words. For instance, in Oru Manitanin Katai she writes:

The sprawling ground, lying wide open and green as far as eyes could see; the row of trees that extended in a natural barrier; the trams that crawled close past them without any sense of hurry. ... what a charming scene here, unravelling itself, in dirty Calcutta ... a veritable little, beauty spot that existed, surpassing all expectations, under a thickly clouded sky (45).

Often, Sivasankari’s characters are assigned the same characteristics that their very names suggest. Durga, the fearsome goddess of revenge is aptly given in Poy, as she cannot bear injustice at the hands of her husband who has married another woman. She pays Giri tit for tat by taking her sons, straight to America where he lives now and after causing sufficient embarrassment for him there, returns home. In Vilai, Min Mini (Glow Worm) is a glamorous character, attracting men to their
doom in dark as a prostitute. Maya (Illusion) in *Curā Mīnkal* hankers after a life of fantasy with men, whom she comes across in her profession, utterly neglecting her loving husband. Chitra (Picture) in *Mālaiyin Atutta Pakkam* is as lovely as a picture who deserts the family of her parents for her husband’s sake. Yamuna (A Great River) in *Cutṭa Man* explains how she yearns to be a river that can naturally absorb all kinds of changes, and if, she cannot be a large river, she can at least be a small stream that ripples along, the plants on the banks. In *Mella Mella*, Ahila (Universe) is the Universal Woman, whose tender care, enables her invalid husband, to resume his normal, healthy life. Shantha (Peace) is an apostle in *Mālaiyial Pūkkum Malarkal*, and a reassuring source of consolation to a distressed man, who has lost his wife. As for Bhooma in *Neruṇći Mul*, she is vividly described by Sivasankari herself:

The heroine is Bhooma. She is the Mother Teresa of Tamilnadu. She is the pet daughter of a Gandhian. She is as service-oriented as her father and she assists her mother... and is neglected by her own children; she turns a sanyasi and devotes herself to the rehabilitation of the aged (1).

Janani in *Karunai Kolai* is named so, as she is almost reborn as she enters into a ‘coma stage’ for more than ten months.
Sivansankari's diction covers a wide range indicative of her interests, including medicine and surgery, bordering on the prose style of a science fiction.

In *Nantu* she traces the etymological origin of the name cancer as follows:

Cancer... cancer that spreads. In Latin, the word means 'crab'. They have aptly named it; as the crab pierces a hole in sand, so does the disease spread all over the body... and slowly kills the person, once it spreads to the brain, causing the loss of eye sight and power of speech (192 - 240).

Bhuvana is very much interested in her practical classes. In the Zoology lab, Bhuvana is much involved in dissection. She listens carefully as to how they dissect the frog with the help of a scalpel and how the digestive system of the frog gets displayed, by having small pieces of films underneath the system, to serve as foils" (6).

She describes some of the early symptoms of a tumour in *Pōka*. The doctor saw the temperature, using his stethoscope; "checked his B.P. and pinched his legs... If tumour developed in the spinal chord, it might cause paralysis" (188). Sivasankari goes on to suggest the same need for consulting a neuro-physician under such circumstances.
In *kīnarrut Tavālaikal* Sivasankari talks at length on the issue of sex discrimination.

A woman who has the capacity to give birth to a child, does not still have the ability of a man to decide the sex of her would-be child, as it is the man who contributes the right number of chromosomes.\(^{(113)}\)


It may not matter, if the wife has the positive and the man, the negative. If immediate treatment is not given by injecting an anti R.H.T., as soon as a baby is born with a R.H. sign opposite to that of the mother, it can face imminent death. \(^{(50+51)}\)

In *Vālarta Kātā*, the diagnosis of obstruction in the fallopian tube is given in detail:

It was clearly evident that there was an obstruction in Raji’s fallopian tube, as there was a little noise of the wind that passed through her womb..... there was almost no pain, in her shoulders .... all these were signs of sterility in Raji. \(^{(104)}\)

The crude mode for abortion adopted in villages is recounted in *Pālankal*: “sesame well soaked in sugar syrup or jaggery, frankincense kept within a coconut for four days that irritates the mouth and the stomach, causing in it a burning sensation” \(^{(V)}\).

Sivasankari talks through Gowri about donation of internal organs of her body in *Mālaiyil Pūkkum Malarkal*
My eyes after my death should be donated either to a child, young boy or a student, so that he or she may have a bright future. . . by donating one's skin one can have the pride of having saved a desperate person struggling for life due to the fatal boils caused by fire. (130)

The superstitions of the age in which Sivasankari lives, are depicted in several of her creations. In Ammā Pillai we find the mother with the help of her maid servant takes the sand, stamped by those who visit her house, with a view to protecting her son from the 'evil eye' of the others, making the child sit, and spit thrice, on the sand in her hand and twirling it around the child three times and then tying a black thread around the hip of the child. Harvest in India is celebrated with the "whitewashing of all places, distribution of new clothes, and cleaning of houses, by getting rid of the old things, replacing them by new ones and by hanging an arch of mango leaves at the threshold" (30). Marriages are arranged by comparing the zodiac signs (38) of the partners, using their horoscopes. "The 'will' of God at a given moment is found out by throwing white hemlock flowers after performing certain rites and rituals before the statue of Murugan, the God of Youth" (52).

Curā Mīnkal and Kappal Paravai speak of family planning. Maya's parents are satisfied with two children, as the slogan goes, "a boy for the sake of property; and a girl for our own desire". The novel also
points out "how the incentive offered by the government is not enough to motivate people towards family planning" (18 & 19).

Sivasankari resorts to the use transliterated English words in her work, on and off. Lucia, a foreigner in 47 Nātkāl gives her piece of advice to Visali in English (the words are transliterated by the writer in the novel): "Does it pain very much? You should be so homesick, dear... everything will be allright. Please, try to understand. Relax, Visali, I understand your feelings" and then tells Kumar, "Please get her a cup of hot milk" (130). Similarly, the hostess of the aeroplane, in which Visali’s brother is travelling, asks him, “Drinks for you, Sir?... Coffee or any other drink?...”(246). The passages above are in English. Some Indians too have a tendency to use them in certain contexts. A heated argument ensues between a father and his daughter, over her boyfriend. Then she bursts out; “Stop that daddy... I love him... he loves me... I don’t care, even if you do not understand us”. The father too concludes thus, “That’s enough... I don’t agree... O.K. you should not see Visu, or speak to him... I mean it” (P.P., 96 + 97).

Bhuvana’s daughter, admires her mother thus: “You are so young... yet so dignified” (V.K., 114). In Mālaiyīl Pūkkum Malākkāl, Balaji, is, using English while addressing Shanthi. “I’m helpless... and I want to admit one more thing... I’m sorry Shanthi... please do understand... I’m tired “ (25). English is commonly the medium of
expression among the elite and the literate of the Indian society. As the
dialect of the present generation is mostly in English, Sivasankari uses that
in Palañkal "Mom - you know something .... our gang is planning to go to
Haridwar by trekking and later do some mountain climbing this holiday"
(322 - 324).

Hindi, the national language of India, is used by the hero's
father in the transliterated form again: "kahan sei agai ussai keho ti us
londiyei kho leisei challei jayai, nahi to ei Shathi nahi ho ta", meaning,
"This marriage will not take place, if you do not leave this place at once,
with this immoral woman" (105). Translated passages of foreign words
and Hindi words follow immediately to facilitate the reading of her novels.

Certain phrases and proverbial sayings add spice to
Sivasankari's use of language: "Life cycle has changed in the manner of an
oxen, tethered to a grinding stone" (K.T., 20); "What man is he, if he sits
idle, as a doll of clay?" (K.T., 30). “He, who was a pillar to his family
and a Banyan tree to society had now fallen" (K.T., 38) ; headache is
described as the peck of a woodpecker in the head." “(T.C.,113); "the tail
followed the knife “ (Na., 5); “the son jumps eighteen feet, if the father
clears eight" ; “(V.N., 55); “the bottlegourd in the manuscript, useless
for cooking” (K.E.E., 6) are a few illustrations in this regard.

Sivasankari is remarkable in her use of dialect, which varies,
according to a person's capacity. The dialect of an educated person is not
the same as that of an uneducated person. Brahminical dialect is used, when it concerns Brahmin community, a special community in India.

Sivasankari is a rational thinker who views some of the Hindu rituals in the light of modern science. She explains everyone of our age-old customs from scientific point of view. For example, men sing Bhajans and women decorate houses with “Rangoli” as ozone increases largely during the month of Markali (December - January). This is why they are kept outdoors early in the morning.

Thus a study of the craftsmanship of Wharton and Sivasankari shows that Wharton as a writer of fiction is fired by essentially poetic imagination, which makes her resort to the use of a poetic diction and metaphor, whenever the occasion demands it. Sivasankari’s art, on the other hand, shows that she has a very wide range of interests like medicine, surgery and science which enhance considerably the charm of her fictional world that she presents. Both artists are great admirers of nature and landscape and we find in them an empathetic, macrocosmic reflection of human feelings.