Abstract

The present thesis entitled *Biography as Fiction: A Postmodern Reading of Amos Oz’ Select Fiction* is an elaborate literary analysis on the Jewish culture, politics and history with reference to Amos Oz’ writings. Amos Oz, an Israeli writer, novelist, journalist and is a prominent advocate of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Oz’ writings are set either on a Kibbutz or in Jerusalem including hallucinations and fears. His fictional characters are drawn between political forces and conflicts of personal motives, which include their own aspiration and societal reality, absurd impulses and obsessions, and need for stability.

Oz’ writings are the expression of his lived and shared experiences as a Jerusalemite Jew. Evidently, his works are set in Jerusalem and its suburbs and he deals with Jewish characters. The central themes of his fiction are predominantly loneliness of individuals, and sense of rootlessness. There has always been a constant tension between the inner life, mystical yearning and outer reality. Besides, Oz exhibits universal emotions of love, longing, fear and ambition along with the tensions of ethical dilemmas, depicting the existential condition of man caught up in the cataclysmic events in Jewish history. The entire study elaborates on the fragmentation of the individual’s self and the metaphorical perception of Jew as wanderer.

The basic patterns and paradigms that have been found embedded in Oz’ fiction are analysed in detail. Oz’ works, both fiction and non-fiction, are identified as the fictional representation of his own personal and political biography. His ideologies have facets of existentialism and shades of postmodernism. Oz’ works are studied as biofiction, that tells stories based on the socio-political and religious issues that pertain to Jerusalem and Jews.
The researcher explores the role of time and space in the life of Jews as an existential construct. The literary analysis of time and space as a unified aspect facilitate the study to be chronotopic. An elaborate study based on time and space of Jerusalem, stipulates the necessity for a detailed examination on Jewish religion, culture, politics and personal elements. The obligatory need for examining the text from spatial and historical perspective, in relevance with Oz’ texts bring out the importance of space and time in the life of Jews. An in-depth analysis on the emotions of Oz’ fictional characters are made. The existential struggle has led the characters to choose a route for existing in the chaotic and confused world. The discussions are validated with the arguments of existential philosophers. While choosing to live their life, the characters in Oz’ fiction become chokers, social misfits, escapists or endurers.

In establishing Oz as an existential postmodernist, the researcher has elaborated on the postmodern techniques that Oz has incorporated in his narration. His texts are examined to authenticate the dominance of postmodern techniques, such as, fragmentation, collapse of cultural hierarchy, intertextuality, and fascination for images. Oz’ works are also established to be historiographic metafiction due to the handling of the place, Jerusalem and Jews. The final chapter establishes Amos Oz as an existential postmodern writer. The concluding chapter sums up the arguments made in the preceding chapters. It also lists out the findings of the research and elucidates the further research scope in Oz’ writings.