CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

They [women] believe that they are human beings first and women later.... It means taking responsibility into your own hands and being capable of making your own decisions. It is that spark of courage in a woman that marks her to be a winner. (Neelam Mathews "The Psychological Aspect" 9)

Man and Woman should enjoy natural and inalienable rights without any restrictions. Man does it. But woman is denied that. Man limits woman's sphere of activities. Different standards are being adopted in the treatment of man and woman. Society turns out to be male-oriented. Women are dominated by men and this male-dominance leads to victimization of women in every phase of their lives. Consequently, the women question is raised. Feminists claim that they are human beings first and women only next. They fight against discrimination and demand equal status for women in society. With their human concern, they endeavour to enhance the quality of human life by stressing on the need for a thorough understanding between the sexes. In this
sense, feminists, whose field of study is man-woman relationship, become humanists. The theory of new humanism emphasizes the view that woman should not be treated as a sex-object, undertaking a passive role without any sense of individual identity but as equal to man. In recent times, many women writers have stressed the need for an individual identity to women in their works of art. In this context, what Shyam M. Asnani has observed on the works of Nayantara Sahgal can be well applied to the works of all the feminist writers:

... one can easily discern a happy blend of two sensitivities -- the sensitivity of an artist and the sensitivity of a humanist. ("Portrayal of Man-Woman Relationship in the Novels of Nayantara Sahgal" 151)

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is one such feminist writer. As a humanist, she is trying to improve the status of women in society, and as a feminist, she takes up the job of a satirist. Her ironical treatment of characters makes her satire mild and gentle. At times, it becomes sharp and powerful, depending on the intensity of the theme. The author does not hesitate to portray whatever she has observed in India. In fact, her observant eye never fails to grasp even a minor aspect of life in India.
She captures the existing social system in India. This verisimilitude earns her the status of a natural satirist. She is one of the women writers, who excels in writing domestic fiction. It is true that, as Shirley Foster observes,

*Discussion of appropriate subject-matter for women writers was closely linked to the notion that there were certain innately feminine characteristics which found best expression in romantic and domestic fiction.* (2)

Critics feel that Jhabvala's handling of domestic themes and situations "tend to be tritely repetitive" ("Outsider with Unusual Insight" 118). But repetition implies only re-interpretation and concentration. And re-interpretation gains a new insight into the subject-matter. Further, as Ramlal Agarwal remarks,

*Mrs Jhabvala is not afraid of being repetitive. It is for this reason that she has been able to describe the domestic and social life of Indians as no other writer writing in English has ever done.* ("Outsider with Unusual Insight" 118)
Those who accuse her of repetition have failed to notice the variations given to the same old themes. For Jhabvala, man-woman relationship is the favourite theme, which proves to be a misalliance where woman is always at a disadvantage. The early novels depict the helplessness of women in a domestic atmosphere where passive tolerance is the only way out. One also finds her women educated and employed but this does not in anyway better her predicament. Marriage as an institution has been a failure. The reasons only vary, depending on the types of marriage one witnesses. In an arranged marriage the girl does not have much choice. In a love marriage, the girl is still more at a disadvantage because she has already antagonized the society. If it is an inter-religious or trans-cultural marriage the helplessness and the degree of misalliance is more acute. Hence, though the theme of helplessness of women is repetitive, the treatment of it varies as the author progresses. This progress is related to her widening of perspective which is the real concern of this thesis.

Jhabvala skilfully delineates women's predicament in social, cultural and spiritual spheres -- both in the microcosmic level and the macrocosmic level. In all these fields, Jhabvala portrays how the victimhood is consigned solely to women. The women characters of Jhabvala strive hard to
fulfil their genuine ambitions and desires, but they find themselves only falling into a state of despair. They are overpowered and exploited by the male-dominated society.

Jhabvala, in her early novels, pictures the sufferings of women due to traditionalized social system in India. The author also presents the impact of westernization on post-Independence Indian women. She satirizes their sophistication and modernity, which they relate to emancipation. Added to these, her skilful third person omniscient narration exposes the real condition of Indian women who still consider marriage as the only means of escape from parental home. This state of living is well observed by Shantha Krishnaswamy:

Marriage in the Indian context being a sacrament, every Indian woman looks upon it as the only suitable career open to her. Amidst all the paraphernalia of modesty and chastity, she trains herself to be a fit object for her man's pleasure. (359)

To Whom She Will and The Nature of Passion portray the predicament of young women in wealthy Indian families. Amrita and Nimmi grow with great expectations and ambitions in life. Though they are provided with college education, it
is given with much regret. Mothers of these daughters who seem to be broad-minded outside home, do exercise their power over them. They encourage their daughters to have their hair cut short and be modern. But they do not wish to send them to any job, lest they should choose their partners in their working place. In To Whom She Will, Amrita is allowed to work in a radio-station. But when she falls in love with Hari, her colleague, the immediate reaction of her mother is to stop her from going to job. Nimmi, in The Nature of Passion is also over-ruled by the members of the women's quarter. Education is blamed when Nimmi chooses her partner. Parents feel that the reputation of their family would get damaged when their daughters opt for choice marriage. Hence, in India choice-marriage is discouraged and denied. But at the sametime, arranged marriages are celebrated with sheer ostentation. In The Nature of Passion, Lalaji plans his grand-daughter's marriage even at her birth. Nimmi's marriage is also expected to be one of a grand ceremony. Whereas, the upper-middle class people or the rich people, as in To Whom She Will and The Nature of Passion lavishly spend money on such occasions to exhibit their status, the lower-class people -- like Sumi in Get Ready For Battle -- suffer because of such established customs. Jhabvala satirizes such grand wedding ceremonies and also seems to suggest that the Indian social system
needs to be saved from spending a lot of money for such celebrations, including the demands of dowry. Contemporary women like Jenny Shetty express a similar view:

The biggest social change I would like to make, if I were in charge, would be to abolish ostentatious weddings. Why spend crores of rupees on a ceremony? ("If I had the power" 13)

Jhabvala has voiced against the contemporary problem in India only to bring about an awareness of the impact of old-fashioned traditional customs. In the early novels, Jhabvala also handles the conflict between traditional values and modern aspirations. But ultimately the younger generation is forced to surrender to the traditional customs by the older generation. If the first two novels deal with the sufferings of aspiring young women, The Householder portrays the predicament of Indu, caught in the arranged marriage system. As a feminist, Jhabvala here advocates the need for coordination among the married couples. Jhabvala has artistically presented the ego-clash between husband and wife. In this novel, Jhabvala has also attempted a positive approach to marriage. She pictures Prem obeying faithfully his mother and at the same time imposing his male-dominated will on his wife. But towards the end of the novel, Jhabvala
makes Prem understand and respect the feelings of Indu and consider her wishes. This reconciliation is the result of compromise and adjustment without which married life would not be peaceful.

In *Get Ready For Battle*, Jhabvala again takes up the women problem and treats two aspects simultaneously -- one woman's renunciation from marital life to become a social worker and another woman's, a widow's, attainment of social recognition through remarriage. All the same, Jhabvala is also aware of the manipulation of a man who possesses a widow in private, but never concedes to marry her in public, for fear of losing his social image. She attacks this male-dominated spirit. The realistic portrayal of the scene, in which the widow, Kusum, begs Gulzari Lal to acknowledge her as his wife in public, evokes much sympathy.

Through her early novels, Jhabvala exposes the condition of Indian women which is one of dependence. Women suffer from this dependence on man and this is also added to their economic dependency. They fail to assert their individuality, despite their eligibility and capability to work and live independently. In this context, one cannot but agree with Shantha Krishnaswamy who feels that the Indian women have to go a long way to achieve self-sufficiency
which is well declared by Virginia Woolf:

Food, house and clothing are mine forever. Therefore, not merely do effort and labour cease, but also hatred and bitterness. I need not hate any man. I need not flatter any man; he has nothing to give me... Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation. (qtd. in Shantha Krishnaswamy 359)

By presenting the society as it is and then by contrasting it with how it ought to be, Jhabvala exposes the shortcomings of Indian social system and how it restricts women. Her social perspective of women's problem gets widened to an international extent when Jabvala studies the problems of women caught in cultural dichotomy.

As a Polish-German, having married an Indian architect, Jhabvala has experienced the conflicting forces of cultural behaviour. With this personal experience, Jhabvala authentically deals with the East-West theme. In these expatriate novels, the problems of women become two-fold. They have to put up not only with the difficulty of adjusting themselves with a new cultural environment but also with the male-chauvinistic attitude of their husbands.
With the help of irony, Jhabvala wonderfully handles their problems. The theme of appearance and reality helps her to expose the sufferings of women realistically.

In *Esmond in India*, the theme of appearance and reality is handled very well. Gulab and Esmond are attracted towards each other not by genuine love but by infatuation. Esmond, who initially appears to Gulab as a man who respects woman's feelings, remains only as a hard-hearted cruel husband in reality. Esmond, who appears to love India and its culture fails to adjust with his real Indian wife. Only after their marriage, do they realize that how food and custom bring disharmony to their life. Jhabvala's handling of the sufferings of women in the cultural context reveals her first hand knowledge and experience of the two cultures -- the East and the West. Her employment of satire -- a light kind of Horatian satire and an implicit Juvenalian kind of satire -- gains significance in this novel. Her female awareness forces her to criticize Esmond's calling Gulab an 'animal' and at the same time, her experience of Indian culture makes her present Gulab as passive in the face of such harassment. With her inherited European culture, Jhabvala satirizes Esmond's hypocrisy and weaknesses. Joanne Tompkins aptly sums up Jhabvala's employment of satire.
linking it with her experience:

The double level satire, the mild Horatian and the more implicit and bitter Juvenalian animal, parallels Jhabvala's two levels of experience in India. As a European, even one who has been to the bottom of the Indian wheel of fortune countless times, she sees India with Western eyes, and there is likely an element of her story in Esmond's hatred of the country. As the wife of an Indian she lived in the midst of middle-class Indian society, close enough that she could see the workings of that society, but forever an outsider, who can criticize it with some degree of objectivity. ("Universal Satire or Eurocentrism?" 34-35)

The irony behind the marriage between Esmond and Gulab is that they find themselves happy and cheerful when they are not together. Esmond feels happy in the company of Betty or Shakuntala and Gulab finds herself in good spirits when Esmond is thankfully absent from home. Their cultural differences do affect the upbringing of their son, Ravi. The incompatibility between Esmond and Gulab seen in the
bringing up of Ravi is sharply focused. If Esmond shouts at Gulab for having given Ravi oily foods, Gulab would stuff him with Indian sweets and food in Esmond's absence. Finally, their estrangement would symbolize only the impossibility of a harmonious cultural marriage.

But, in *A Backward Place* Jhabvala tries to present a cultural compromise in marriage at the expense of a woman's sacrifices and sufferings. In this novel, though Jhabvala handles the same cultural theme, she changes the species, only to highlight the variation of the theme. Her feminine consciousness presents Judy as a sensible western girl married to a lazy, dreamy and extravagant Indian youth. Judy almost becomes an Indian girl in her patience and tolerance. Through this novel, Jhabvala presents the problems of expatriate women, who are determined to live in India. The three women -- Judy, Etta and Clarissa -- have come to India under one pretext or another and they reflect Jhabvala's experience as expressed in her essay "Myself in India". And Haydn Moore Williams' observation becomes significant at this juncture:

The choice of women in this context reflects Jhabvala's sex, but also expatriate women are likely to arrive in India as permanent
residents, as wives or lovers of Indian men. 
("Jhabvala's Career as a Novelist" 8)

All these women suffer and they "achieve some success -- but only by compromise or surrender to the inevitable" (Jhabvala's Career as a Novelist 8). Judy, who expects India to be a place of peace, ironically, finds India backward and poor. Though Judy is seen as the bread-winner of the family and also intelligent in planning family budgets, she is finally forced by her husband to settle in Bombay only to fear a risky, uncertain future. Like Judy, Etta also comes to India on her choice marriage and after many divorces and marriages she becomes restless and lonely. Unlike them, Clarissa dedicates her life to the cause of Indian spirituality.

In **Heat and Dust**, Jhabvala has presented yet another dimension of cross-cultural tension, where two women are caught in a similar dilemma. The narrator of the novel identifies herself with Olivia, the unfaithful wife of her grand-father. The narrator adopts a journal form to have "some record of my early impressions"(2) of India and simultaneously, tells the story of Olivia. In this novel, Jhabvala brings out the sufferings and tortures of western women, who indulge in secret liaisons. She also attacks the
Indian superstitious beliefs which even affect the rational minded people. As a feminist, Jhabvala presents in this novel the consequences of too much of freedom, which is bereft of peace of mind, happiness, loyalty and morality.

With her matured perspective, Jhabvala enters into the next phase of her literary career -- the spiritual arena. India is generally considered as a land of spirituality. But Indian spirituality, as Jhabvala finds, is only abused by its preachers and practitioners. She comes to know through her visits and reports that the Swamijis prove themselves to be hypocrites and charlatans. She examines how western girls seek the guidance of these Swamijis only to be victimized. This reality makes her satirize more vehemently the pseudo-gurus. Hence, her later novels present the sufferings and conflicts of the young western girls at the hands of false spiritual gurus.

A New Dominion can be bracketed for the employment of Jhabvala's new narrative technique where "the point of view", as Ramlal Agarwal observes, "is multiple" (Ruth Prawer Jhabvala 69) and the multiplicity is achieved through third person narrative, Raymond's letters to his mother and Lee's inner monologues In A New Dominion, Jhabvala portrays how the
three western girls -- Lee, Margaret and Evie -- travel to India for a spiritual cause. Like Clarissa, they denounce marriage, thereby they attempt to prove that marriage is not the only kind of life open to women. But, these three women pitifully fall victims to the manipulation of a false guru, who symbolizes the male-order. Again, escape or solution seems impossible. While in *A New Dominion*, Jhabvala satirizes the Indian pseudo-spirituality, in *In Search of Love and Beauty*, she widens her range of satire. In this novel, she criticizes the international spiritual frauds. Leo Kellerman is pleasure-loving and selfish. Regi, Louise, Marietta and Natasha become his helpless victims. In her next novel *Three Continents*, through her first-person narrative technique, Jhabvala presents how religion is politicalized and corrupted, and how young people are cunningly exploited under the guise of spirituality. Though this book consumes too many pages, the length of the book is aptly justified by Jhabvala:

> With this I just went on and on. I had to move from place to place, I had to develop each place and the changing of relations. There are rather a lot of characters -- I couldn't just drop one. It's quite a lot to carry over all
Jhabvala's discussion of the problems of women in the international level does reveal her as an international feminist, who sincerely endeavours to uplift the status of women in society. Jhabvala's humanistic concern and sympathetic attitude towards women are revealed, while dealing with displaced women whether in the Indian milieu or in the international context. The lack of security as well as freedom in the male-dominated society isolates them, either physically or psychologically from the society. Displacement due to cultural dichotomy is a post-colonial crisis. It is true that expatriation often leads Jhabvala's women to displacement. While delineating these "displaced characters" (Haydn M. Williams "Reactions to Entrapment" 68), Jhabvala evolves as a post-modernist writer, whose chief aim is to present the insecurity of human beings in this world.

In the early Indian novels of Jhabvala young women are compelled to follow the inescapable traditional codes. Hence, having failed to achieve their needed rights, they feel isolated and recede into silence. Her later novels
which deal with the cultural problems picture the displacement and isolation of women. The western girls arrive in India either on marital bond or on spiritual pursuits. Judy, who has experienced a distressed and lonely life in London, hopes for a peaceful and comfortable life in India. But her life becomes difficult. Her husband's recklessness upsets her. Her attempts to make her life secure end futile. She feels utterly displaced when she is forced to follow her husband to Bombay. On the other hand, Clarissa's commitment to spirituality makes her desperately seek a home in India. She knows that she can never return to England unless her spiritual quest is fulfilled. Contrasted with Judy and Clarissa, Etta is less committed in her stay in India. She regrets the loss of her glamorous appeal. Etta's predicament is well described by Haydn M. Williams:

Deserted by her lover she unsuccessfully attempts to commit suicide. Finally she surrenders to living with Clarissa in a flat, isolated from the heat and dust, isolated from India as far as this can be achieved inside India, still hoping for a possible but unlikely rescue at the hands of a new lover who might be induced to finance her return to Europe. ("Jhabvala's Career as a Novelist" 9)
The displacement of women evokes much sympathy in *A New Dominion*. The three girls claim individuality by rejecting traditional marital bonds. Bored by the materialistic west, they long to have spiritual solace. Hence, they undertake a spiritual journey to India. But the bogus Indian guru exploits them even to the core. Margaret's victimhood proves to be fatal. Lee and Evie are hypnotized by the swamiji and they feel that they have lost their way in spiritual quest. Thus, they suffer from their final displacement, which seems inescapable.

Displacement, as a universal predicament becomes a dominant aspect in her recent novels *In Search of Love and Beauty* and *Three Continents*. Louise, Regi, Marietta and Natasha are German refugees. They are already displaced in America. They seek Leo Kellermann for spiritual comforts only to escape from their tension due to expatriation. But their acquaintance with Leo only leads them to their final frustration. They remain ignorant of Leo's parasitic motives. Initially, Leo appears to them as a man possessing the power and glory of God and they fail to read his selfish exploiting nature. Consequently, they are victimized. Here, Jhabvala is involved in, what Linda Hutcheon explains, the paradox of the post-modern: "[t]he ex-centric, the off-center: the ineluctably identified with the center it
it desires but is denied" (A Poetics of Postmodernism 60).
The women in this novel desire spirituality only to bring
meaning to their displaced life. But, at the end, they are
besieged by the final displacement which is undesired.

Again, the paradox is found in Jhabvala's recent novel,
Three Continents. Harriet and Michael are displaced ever
from their childhood because of their divorced parents. To add meaning to their life, they indulge themselves in the activities of the Fourth World Movement. But they are cunningly trapped by the Rawul and Crishi. Michael is murdered and Harriet is made to surrender to the inevitable final emptiness. Added to this, their wealth is ruthlessly disinherited by the Rawul's group. The paradox is much sharper in this novel, evoking pity and sympathy. As Jennifer Livett remarks, these novels

... reveal her [Jhabvala] to have arrived by her own idiosyncratic route at the ex-centric centre of post-modernist concerns. ("Propinquity and Distance" 77)

It is a fact that Jhabvala's chief concern is with women's problems and displacement and with this she has made a landmark on the literary field as a post-modern woman writer, writing specially for the cause of women.
Jhabvala's technical virtuosity demands appreciation. In the early novels, her satire is characterized by her ironic vision. In the later novels, Jhabvala employs flash-back technique, parallelism and symbolism -- the major influences from the film world. Her early novels deal with private life, love and marriage. She also ironically comments on hypocrisy, snobbery and the impact of westernization and sophistication. In these novels, she employs the simple narrative method, taking up the role of an omniscient narrator. Her objectivity enhances the irony and satire behind the narration. This aspect is highlighted by Haydn M. Williams:

There is irony and some satire achieved in this non-intrusive way -- with some skill. Jhabvala is obviously, without her having to say so, on the side of honesty and sincerity, of aims, and of decency against corruption, hypocrisy, and greed. But she beats no political, social, or religious drum. So she portrays hypocrisy, snobbery, deceit -- in the India of Independence and freedom, where Gandhi is honoured like a god but his ideals are largely ignored. ("Jhabvala's Career as a Novelist" 3)
Her later novels which deal with the cultural conflict expose the gap between appearance and reality. Gulab, Judy, Olivia are all victims of illusion. In the spiritual context, irony becomes more poignant and explicit. Her ironic treatment of the subject reveals the beastly qualities of the bogus gurus. For instance, in *A New Dominion*, Jhabvala's description of the activities of the Swamiji reveals the hypocritical nature of the gurus and the impending disaster awaiting the three western girls:

Of course it was he who inspired them... and invited them to call after him -- 'Rama!' he sang, 'Gopala! Hari! Krishna!' in his melodious, smiling voice and then who could resist following him and also calling out those sweet names and being filled with the savour of them.... But slowly, as the days passed, cunningly, he enticed them out of themselves. To each of them it appeared and became clear beyond doubt with each successive meeting that he was concentrating only on her.

(*A New Dominion* 82-83)

Similarly, irony as the chief instrument dominates the
narration of *Heat and Dust*. As Yasmine Gooneratne observes:

The matter-of-fact simplicity of the narrator's diction, entirely natural to her temperament and essential to her purpose in recreating the story of Olivia, creates an ironic instrument of remarkable flexibility. ("Irony as an Instrument of Social and Self Analysis" 72)

Jhabvala, in this novel, to effectively treat two plots simultaneously adopts the flash back technique -- in order to compare and contrast the events of 1923, that of Olivia with the events of 1970, that of the narrator. And the handling of the technique of flashback, as Yasmine rightly points out, "provides an ironic double-view" ("Irony as an Instrument" 73) of the thematic exploration.

Jhabvala's use of irony is noteworthy in her recent novels too. One can cite her picturing a Western guru and an Indian guru in *In Search of Love and Beauty* and *Three Continents* respectively. Harriet, the narrator in *Three Continents*, ironically describes an old Indian guru thus:

A blind had been lowered over the only window, so it was dark in there, but Babaji glowed on
the wall: Perhaps it was his bright-orange robe that made him luminous, or was it his burning eyes? I guess he was the usual kind of Indian guru, and if you believed in him you could see a mystical light in those eyes, and if you didn't, it was just cunning and cleverness. (196)

Thus, with her clever use of irony, Jhabvala has been able to satirize the hypocrisy and shortcomings of both the Indian society as well as the Western society.

Her ironical and satirical treatment of her subjects are made effective by her symbolic presentation. Her symbolism does add to the meaning and sophistication of her works. In addition, her titles of almost all books carry symbolic significance, highlighting the theme. The titles of her early novels, To Whom She Will and Get Ready For Battle reveal Jhabvala's feminist spirit. Esmond in India, A Backward Place and Heat and Dust symbolize the discomfort and the uncongenial atmosphere provided by India to the westerners. The title, A New Dominion is, as Shyam M. Asnani observes in his article "Jhabvala's Novels: A Thematic Study":

... itself a metaphor, a symbol for India's changing social and political reality, a
country promising the much-needed succour to the tormented souls of the West, but most of the seekers are disillusioned and frustrated at the end. (Critical Response to Indian English Novel 90)

Though flashback and parallelism are prominent technical aspects of the novel Heat and Dust, it also lends itself to a study of semiotics. Harinder K. Sohi attempts at a semiotic analysis of the novel:

Architecturally, Heat and Dust is a well-constructed book, closely knit in design. The semiotic structure of the novel is constituted around the two key symbols of "heat" and "dust", conceptually opposed to the "rains" that come towards the end of the novel. With these two key symbols, Ruth Jhabvala explores the conceptual relations between manifestly, diverse phenomena so that a coherent image of the Indian social reality emerges like a figure in the carpet with the progression of the narrative. (Ruth Jhabvala's Heat and Dust 39)

The scene in which the Nawab and Olivia have physical
relationship is symbolically presented. Both the Nawab and Olivia rest under a tree, where their relationship is suggested through the significance of the Husband's Wedding Day.

In *A New Dominion*, the sky, the cloud, the dust, the earth become symbols picturing the chaotic atmosphere matched well with Lee's disturbed inner mind. The night, on which Lee has her bitter experience with the swamiji, looks strange:

It was a strange night. There was a full moon but it wasn't bright, it was dimmed-out and pale like the pale shreds of cloud floating across it. The sky was all torn up by these clouds shifting and sailing rather fast as if they were being driven and making everything up there look very disturbed; and on the earth it was disturbed too with little hot winds blowing through the air and blowing up puffs of dust that skimmed the ground and rose and whirled around in spirals and then sank back again. The dust got into my hair and teeth and nostrils as I crossed the open space round which all the hutments are grouped.(196-197)

Further, Lee's crying is identified with the Jackal's
howling:

Now a pack of jackals began to howl, and I joined them, though not very loud but again in the same whimper I had heard coming from myself in his hutment; only now it wasn't so much in pain as in rage and disgust. (199)

In Three Continents, 'Propinquity' -- the name of the twins' estate house -- becomes a symbol in emphasizing the twir relationship and attachment between Harriet and Michael.

Jhabvala's treatment of similar themes pave way for a comparative and a contrastive study of her novels. In To Whom She Will and The Nature of Passion, she portrays how the modern aspiring girls are subdued by their conservative family members. These novels, with their similar themes -- of tradition and modernity -- suggest that whether mothers are emancipated or traditional, the upbringing of their daughters remains the same. For, both Amrita and Nimmi, in spite of their modern outlook, are made to follow tradition. Similarly, the theme of cultural conflict forms the nucleus of the novels -- Esmond in India and A Backward Place -- except for the change of species, only to highlight the other side of the problem. In these novels, whether Western or Indian, the women alone suffer.
In *A New Dominion* and *In Search of Love and Beauty* plots are same. But, only the milieu is changed. Both these novels portray the victimization of three women in their spiritual quest. While *A New Dominion* presents women's suffering in the Indian spiritual context, *In Search of Love and Beauty* deals with it in the international context -- in American milieu. Jhabvala's use of repeated themes in the early novels leads to the technique of parallelism, which is well executed in the novel, *Heat and Dust*. "Parallelism", as W.H. Hudson states,

is a familiar element in the composition of plot, especially in the form of the reduplication of motives. An excellent effect is often obtained when the central idea of one part of the action reappears in another part of it and each is thus made to illustrate and reinforce the other. (An Introduction to the Study of Literature 217)

It is for this purpose that Jhabvala employs the technique of parallelism in her novel, *Heat and Dust*. This novel carries parallel incidents, one is the story of Olivia and another is the story of the narrator, who is the step-granddaughter of Olivia. Both these stories have parallel
incidents and situations. As K.P.K. Menon remarks,

Mrs. Jhabvala enforces the parallelism also by making her heroines do almost identical things in successive sections of the novel. ("Parallel Plots in Heat and Dust" 48)

For instance, parallelism is found in the depiction of the two heroines' visit to the graveyard of the Europeans in Satipur. Both the heroines react almost identically on seeing the grave of a young lieutenant -- E.A. Edwards. After reading the inscription on the grave: "As a soldier ever ready where Duty called him, a dutiful son, a kind and indulgent Father but most conspicuous in the endearing character of Husband..." (105), they similarly identify rather ironically the character of the dead man with Douglas and Inder Lal respectively: "Just like you" (105) says Olivia to Douglas and "Like You" (141) the narrator to Inder Lal. The juxtaposition of the activities of the two women, their actions, reactions, views, tastes, decisions reveals both the similarity and the dissimilarity between them. The employment of parallelism is reinforced when Jhabvala presents a similar situation in which both the heroines become victims on the 'Husband's Wedding Day' by the Nawab and Inder Lal respectively (66, 137). The major contrast is
that while Olivia aborts her pregnancy, the narrator is bol
eough to carry the baby. The technique of parallelism i
well-supported by the film technique -- flash back. Both th
stories move forward and backward in time, covering th
incidents of 1920s and 1970s. At this juncture, th
influence of film-writing on Jhabvala's fiction needs to be
mentioned.

Jhabvala's association with the film-industry -- writing
scripts for the films -- has made a tremendous impact on her
personality and on her novels and short stories. In an
interview, she admits the influence of film on her by
signifying two aspects:

... Actually there have been two main
influences from film. The first is a personal
one. The films allowed me to travel a lot more
and meet a great many more people of all
different types. You must have noticed that my
early books were all set in Delhi but later on
I do branch out and travel. That is entirely
due to film. That's the personal influence.
The other is technical. I went a lot into the
editing room so I know how you cut a film...
I've been doing the same things with the last
two novels, [A New Dominion and Heat and Dust], especially with the very last one which I cut about. I wrote it rather differently from the others. I wrote great blocks of present time and then great blocks of 1923. Then afterwards I cut them up and put them together to set each other off. So I have learnt a lot technically from film (Anna and Peterson "Heat and Dust: Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's Experience of India" 377).

Thus, Jhabvala's writings exhibit her acquaintance with the film industry. She does not discuss just one particular character or trait. Instead, she writes about many characters in order to arrive at one character. All the same, a few types repeat themselves and this is because, as she admits, "...I use one character and split that character up. I have certain leading figures in my life and I seem to use them again and again, presenting different facets of their personality so one person can play the role of fifty" (Anna and Peterson 375). Indeed, as Yasmine Gooneratne observes, this appears to be the result of her association with the film industry:

It seems very likely that a good many of the personalities of her acquaintance that splits
up in this way are the actors and actresses with whom she has worked for so many years, and observed in their interpretation of her own creations and those of other screen writers. (Silence, Exile and Cunning 271)

Actors and actresses become models for Jhabvala's fictional characters. For instance, Shashi Kapoor, who acted the role of Prem in The Householder, Jennifer Kendal, who acted in "Bombay Talkies" and Nadira, who acted in "The Guru" have greatly influenced Jhabvala. This view is strengthened by Yasmine Gooneratne's observation:

It is likely that the cinematic personality of Shashi Kapoor 'reappears' in Ruth Jhabvala's fiction, not only in the story "A Star and Two Girls", but as Kishan Kumar in A Backward Place, as Gopi in A New Dominion and even, perhaps, as the 'devastatingly handsome' Nawab of Khatm in Heat and Dust. Jennifer Kendal appears, similarly, to have experienced several fictional reincarnations, as Etta in A Backward Place, as the narrator in "An Experience of India", and possibly, too, as Olivia Rivers in Heat and Dust. Nadira can be glimpsed again and again in the fiction, most
notably as Asha in *A New Dominion*. (Silence, Exile and Cunning 272)

No doubt, writing scripts for films has developed Jhabvala's artistic talents. It has helped her to determine the scope of theme, subject and the characters and to determine the focus of the subject. Even in the narration, Jhabvala adopts the shorter dialogue, which is suited for films, in order to focus the problem -- which can also be identified with the cut away technique of the film. This cut away technique is used in the novel by shifting the scene immediately to relieve tension. For instance, in *A Backward Place*, the scene in which Etta insults Bal at the Hochstadt's picnic is abruptly shifted to another scene in which two minor characters, namely, Jaykar and Sudhir, are focused(140-141). This technique is well-adopted in *Heat and Dust* by changing the scenes from 1923 to 1970, consecutively throughout the novel. Further, the characters' interior monologues are well-expressed through the subjective camera technique. Lee's inner monologues in *A New Dominion* can be cited as examples -- "I don't know why I don't like Banubai more..."(202). The symbolic presentation of the outer atmosphere which reflects Lee's inner sufferings is also a cinematic technique. Both *A New Dominion* and *Heat and Dust* are chiefly noted for its symbolic presentation and
cinematic techniques. Thus Jhabvala's writings reveal the influence of the film-world on her. Though she has written as many screen-plays as novels, it is the world of the novel, as she says, that she belongs to:

Everyone has heard about how films corrupt writers. I have always taken this corruption to mean the reducing of one's talent for the sake of money and easy living. Now I realise that the temptation is different and that it lies in the escape that films offer. The escape is from a prison imposed by one's own temperament. 'The world of silence, exile and cunning' is bleak and demanding. One seems to be always alone and usually in the dark. But films fling open doors to arenas where there is noise and lights and where clowns are tumbling about. It is fun to tumble about with them for a while. Only, afterwards to go back where one belongs... that's not always so easy. ("Writing for films" 27)

In all the three literary forms -- novel, short story and screen-play -- one can find Jhabvala's treatment of almost similar subjects -- the domestic Indian scene with its problems, cultural interaction and spiritual conflicts.
Added to the influence from film industry, Jhabvala is also influenced by her literary predecessor, E.M. Forster. Though Jhabvala has had a first hand knowledge and experience of India, critics feel that Forster has influenced her in the artistic presentation of India. She has acknowledged that she has read E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, as literature. Hence even from her early novels to her later novel, *Heat and Dust*, one could find echoes from Forster. In *Esmond in India*, she makes a reference to Forster's *A Passage to India*:

>'And on your right' declaimed Esmond, 'you will see the historic spot where Mr.E.M. Forster first met Miss Adela Quested while she sat taking notes for her social science class'.(119)

Through this reference it is assumed that all the visitors of India might have read Forster's *A Passage to India*. Western critics also suggest that no western writer other than Forster has revealed India in its true colour. But Indian critics like Ramlal Agarwal argue that Jhabvala provides a more accurate picture of India than Forster. This may be because of her keen observation of and her long stay in India, for about twenty-five years. Forster, on the other
hand, has spent only a year and a few months in India. In fact, as Ramlal Agarwal observes,

Obviously, Jhabvala is more concerned about a variety of problems of India than Forster was and she handles them with the skill of a consummate artist who almost makes us forget his medium. ("Forster, Jhabvala and Readers" 26)

Richard Cronin too expresses a similar view. He feels that, "Heat and Dust implies that Forster, Ackerly, and their like got India wrong; they were deflected from it by their literary sophistication" ("The Hill of Devi and Heat and Dust" 144). But Jhabvala does not attempt to dismiss Forster's view of India. As Ralph Crane puts it:

Rather, she responds to his novel, and in doing so pays him the compliment of acknowledging the tremendous influence of his seminal work. ("A Forsterian Connection" 52–53)

Jhabvala's writings echo Forsterian style in description, characterization and also the tripartite structure of the novel -- as in A New Dominion and Three Continents. For,
instance, the opening of *A Backward Place*, where Jhabvala describes the view from Etta's balcony, recalls the opening paragraphs of *A Passage to India*. In her later novels like *A New Dominion* and *Heat and Dust*, the Forsterian influence is more predominant. V.S. Pritchett well establishes the similarity between the characters of Forster and Jhabvala in *A New Dominion*:

Forster's and Mrs. Jhabvala's characters are matched. Raymond, the sensitive, spinsterly English aesthete and inquirer, is another Fielding plus unconscious homosexuality; his Indian friend, the ingenuous and ludicrous student Gopi, is in some ways a budding, ill-educated, up-to-date version of Dr. Aziz. ("Ruth Prawer Jhabvala: Snares and Delusions" 106)

One could list the parallel incidents that run between *A New Dominion* and *A Passage to India*. Like Aziz having tea with Fielding and Fielding later visiting Aziz's house, Gopi has tea with Raymond and later Raymond visits Gopi's house and shares tea. The central figures of both the novels, Lee and Adela Quested, share a similar experience of India in their wish to see the real India.

Likewise, the characters of *Heat and Dust* also resemble
Forsterian characters. One could notice obvious parallels between Olivia Rivers and Adela Quested, between Douglas Rivers and Ronny Heaslop. Both the men are magistrates and well-regarded by their superiors and the British people. Nawab and Aziz can be seen similar in their respective relationships with Olivia and Adela. Further, Chaman Nahal in his essay, "Cross-Cultural Tensions" finds a similar "precisely stated thesis" (65) in Heat and Dust and A Passage to India. Ralph Crane finds yet another interesting interconnection between these two novels. He feels that Jhabvala has attempted in Heat and Dust to compare Forster's India of the early 1920s and her India of the 1970s:

There are two parallel yet distinct stories in Heat and Dust, the earlier of the two is set in the India of 1923, the India of a still-secure British Raj and princely states, the later story, set in the 1970s (1982 in the film) is about a modern, independent India....

But Ruth Jhabvala does not only compare two Indias in Heat and Dust; she again responds to Forster's novel quite deliberately, setting the earlier of her stories in the early 1920s, the period, I believe, which must be accepted as
that of Forster's novel. ("A Forsterian Connection" 57)

Thus, while reading these two later novels of Jhabvala, -- *A New Dominion* and *Heat and Dust* -- readers are constantly reminded of *A Passage to India*, for they exhibit an explicit Forsterian influence. And Ralph Crane finds this similarity only as an aspect of Post-Modernism:

In both *A New Dominion* and *Heat and Dust*, by responding to *A Passage to India*, Jhabvala is deliberately making her readers think about another work and is exhibiting her postmodernist interest in the effect of text on life, an interest in intertextuality which is further emphasised by the juxtaposition of the two stories in *Heat and Dust*. ("A Forsterian Connection" 62)

Likewise, Jhabvala's early novels share some of the common traits with Jane Austen's works as well. Like Jane Austen, Jhabvala concentrates on a few families with a lot of domestic details. Atma Ram Sharma finds that Jhabvala's preoccupation with "the same sort of society and her ironic detachment" (Rev. of *Heat and Dust* 154) is similar to Jane Austen's. But while Jane Austen chiefly portrays the
courtship period, where her heroines think and act, Jhabvala concentrates more on marriage, where her heroines happen to shatter their hopes and individuality. Jane Austen's treatment of women's problems exposes her limited range of experience, whereas Jhabvala's handling of the problems of women in different contexts reveals her wide range of experience. Both the authors do not fail to expose hypocrisy and snobbery in the society and both are similar in presenting the social issues through their vivid descriptions and minute details.

If her early novels can be compared to Jane Austen's, her later novels can be compared to Anton Chekhov's. Jhabvala seems to have employed Chekhovian style in her characterization making her characters like Lee, Olivia and Marietta suffer from instability. As Ramlal Agarwal observes,

In her later works, she writes in the Chekhovian manner about people who are skimming the surface of society leading futile lives and longing which eludes them. ("Outsider with Unusual Insight" 121)

Regarding the influence of Chekhov on her works, Jhabvala
admits thus:

In my later ones I've been mostly compared to Russian writers. Chekhov, for example. Again I feel not because of any similarity between us -- how could there be! I wish it were so, even by thousandth of a fraction -- but because one deals with similar societies. Present-day India does seem to have a lot in common, socially and economically, with 19th century Russia. Especially the well-to-do middle classes, anquished with boredom, that Turgenev and Chekhov were always writing about. (Ramlal Agarwal, "An Interview with Jhabvala" 112)

Thus, Jhabvala has consciously or unconsciously reflected in her writings the influence of her literary pioneers. As she concedes,

I haven't consciously modelled myself on anyone. Unconsciously (or does one say subconsciously?) more or less on every writer I have loved and admired. Any writer who has deeply thrilled me -- and there have been many, many -- has as it were entered into me; and so
Still recently, Jhabvala is also compared with Margaret Laurence, a Canadian writer. Like Margaret Laurence's fiction, Jhabvala's fiction is dominated by women characters. Both Laurence and Jhabvala picture the problems of women arising out of cultural conflict. These women become displaced in their quest for identity and security. In Laurence's novels, it is women who go out and work, and they also happen to face several problems outside home. In this aspect, Laurence almost tries to picture the inversion of Donne's compass conceit, where woman is compared to the fixed foot. Jhabvala's women, like Judy, are also employed and are capable of taking the entire responsibilities of the family. But, as Kaveri Bose remarks,

Unlike Laurence, Jhabvala is more of a satirist. She exposes the foibles and weaknesses and prejudices of her English characters, at the same time, acknowledging the problems of those who come to India. (206)

Further, while Laurence's writing revolves around her fictional place -- Manawaka, Jhabvala does write about real
places, especially in and around Delhi, events and people as she has observed.

Jhabvala also shares with the Indian women novelists -- Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and Shashi Deshpande -- the themes like tradition and modernity, East-West encounter, love and marriage. The generation-gap between parents and children amounts to the conflict between tradition and modernity which is well presented by Jhabvala. She also reflects the problems that women confront in their marital life as portrayed by Shashi Deshpande. Most of Kamala Markandaya's women are passive, and are forced to lead the traditional role of *Pativrata*, worshipping their husbands as Gods. Jhabvala, in her novel *Esmond in India*, has emphasized how these conservative women are deprived of individuality and how their innocence is taken for ignorance by the male-dominated society. Anita Desai's women seek either isolation or commit suicide only to escape from the sufferings of marital life. She probes deep into the women's psyche and presents the women's problem from a psychological perspective. On the contrary, Shashi Deshpande and Ruth Jhabvala become pragmatists in presenting the problems of women from a sociological perspective. The heroines of Jhabvala and Deshpande come forward to renounce marriage.
They realize how marital life besieges them and encourages slavery. To them, "no marriage is ideal" (Three Continents 171) and all marriages prove to be misalliances. Hence, they decide to escape from marriage. In this respect, Jhabvala and Shashi Deshpande reflect the traits of radical feminism. In fact, what these women want is, as well-pointed out by Deshpande, to

...sleep peacefully the night through. To wake up without pain. To go through tomorrow without apprehension. Not to think, not to dream. Just to live. (The Dark Holds No Terrors 23)

Most of the modern women writers reveal the traits of liberal and moderate feminism in their works and so is Ruth Jhabvala. While stressing the need for education, employment and individuality for women in her early novels, Jhabvala exposes the traits of liberal and moderate feminism. Thus, the growth of the feminist -- from liberal to radical -- in Jhabvala is well-established through her works.

As a feminist, Jhabvala has an unusual insight into the problems of women. She presents realistically how women fail in their attempt to live as they ought to be. She neither exaggerates any problem nor tries to offer any solution.
The final victimization of women in spite of their constant protest against male-chauvinism exposes only the existing condition of women in society. For, emancipation of women is prevalent only in theory and in words. In fact, emancipation is far away from reality. This is what Jhabvala tries to emphasize. Unlike other women writers like Margaret Laurence, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, Ruth Jhabvala does not limit the arena of women's struggle. She studies the condition of women "From Purdah to Parliament" (A Stronger Climate 45). It is true that while presenting women's issues at different contexts -- social, cultural and spiritual -- Jhabvala does reveal only the universal condition of victimization of women.

Undoubtedly, a recent survey of women's life proves that they are still in the clutches of men. This is well-observed by Kamala Kumar:

The process of emancipation from age-old male domination in woman's life and social restrictions imposed on her from time to time while elevating her from domestic chores has been speeded up. But despite all these changes woman's position has not totally improved. Male domination still persists on to haunt a
woman's life from both inside and outside the home. ("Working women and the Family" 48)

In contemporary India, various Women's Movements constantly struggle to improve the status of women in society, and claim individual freedom for women. But still women like Taslima Nasreen, the Bangladesh poet and novelist are condemned for their voices and actions against Islamic codes. Taslima's novel, Lajja is considered a violation of Islam, and she has been kept under house-arrest. Feminists have rejected such treatment and harassment meted out to women.

Jhabvala, as a feminist has been constantly writing against women suppression and social restrictions. She satirizes the male-chauvinistic attitude of the society towards the suffering half of humanity from a feminist perspective. By focussing on feminist issues, Jhabvala attempts only to bring about an awareness of the existing condition of women thereby aiming at the betterment of the society.

What is significant is, she does all this with an artistic touch. Her minute observation of the world around -- thank to her unbiased observation -- results in great works of art. As great art should be, her novels are a blend of for
and content. Jhabvala, the feminist as satirist, makes a scathing attack on the corrupt society -- which systematically ill-treats women. The significant aspect is that all her satire is implicit. Though all the characters and incidents are taken from life, Jhabvala fictionalises them so naturally that the characters become life-like and her books become history without foot-notes. In essence, all great art should become that. And Jhabvala's fiction, this researcher is confident, will stand the test of time, for their sociological significance, historic perception and finally for their artistic achievement.

There is scope for further research on Jhabvala on the lines of comparative nature or inter-disciplinary. Feminism in India -- as prevalent and as fictionalised -- is a feasible topic of study in comparison with Feminism in the West. Such studies centering on Feminist writers like Jhabvala will be highly rewarding.