Chapter VI

Conclusion
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A glance at the twenty first century world scenario exhibits a transition from Modernist thinking and values to Postmodernist thinking and values. Today one has to deal with emergent forms of culture, global economy, new form of politics and identity. Since Postmodernism represents a de-centered concept of the universe in which individual artistic systems are not treated as isolated creations, much of the focus in the Postmodern literature is on inter-textuality, the relationship between one text/system and another or re-location of one text/system in relation to others within the interwoven fabric of literary history. If Postmodernism in art is visible through the epistemological and aesthetic strands, with its move towards non-referential, non-linear, abstract forms and the collapse of categories, in science Postmodernist stance is reflected through negation of its own metanarrative ‘reductionism’. Another striking feature is, Postmodernism in literature overlapped with Poststructuralism and challenged the very notions of ‘single author’, meaning or text by positing multiplicities, openers, rhizomes, reproduction and anti-totality, thus proposed experimentation, innovation, freedom and simulation. Postmodernism believes that language creates reality but since language changes and word-meanings vary, what is ‘real’ for one group of people may not be real for another. Postmodernism relies heavily on fragmentation, paradox, and questionable narratives. The Postmodern world is shaped by pluralism, democracy, religious freedom, consumerism, mobility and increasing access to news and entertainment.
Since artistic creation and appreciation are the twin tendencies which go together, Postmodern literary theory has also assumed a new form where one sees how meaning emerges in all cultural practices which include all art forms; films, literature, sports, fashion, architecture etc.

The emergence of Systems Thinking and Systems Philosophy in 1950s pronouncing the Aristotelian notion of ‘a whole is more than the sum of its parts’ corresponded with the Postmodernist rejection of “reductionism” and its skepticism about static grand-meta narratives.

Literary systems which are today broadly recognized as cultural systems are complex systems with dynamic network of complexity with complex components. Emergence is central to the theories of integrative levels and of complex systems. The notions of emergence, complexity and Postmodernism are inextricably tied together.

The present study, employing the technique of ‘sampling’ has presented an analysis of literary-cultural systems representing various genres of literature from the perspective of Systems Theory. An in-depth exploration of diverse literary and cultural systems highlights that irrespective of their genre, they exhibit systems properties such as indivisibility, hierarchy, emergence, openness, evolution, invisible entanglement etc. The study establishes them as narrative systems which are complex and exhibit emergent properties. They not only embody systems properties but also interact with other systems such as sociological, economic, political, historical, psychological, scientific, esoteric etc. For instance the dramatic system *Arcadia* is a beautiful illustration of the interaction among literature, science and psychology. It is a delineation of Chaos theory in a literary style. It shows the fusion of scientific temperament and artistic sensibility, intellect and emotion, intuition and reason, physical and metaphysical,
imagination and reason, fact and fiction. Stoppard adds a new dimension to science and also literature by demonstrating that scientific theories like ‘Chaos’ has applications outside science. There are several evidences of how computer art today has become more realistic through the use of chaos and fractals. There have also been evidences of how music can be created using fractals as well. For instance, using the Lorenz attractor, Diana S. Dabby, a graduate student in Electrical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has created variations of musical themes.¹ By associating the musical notes of a piece of music like Bach’s Prelude in C with the x coordinates of the Lorenz attractor, and running a computer program, she has created variations of the theme of the song. Most musicians who hear the new sounds believe that the variations are very musical and creative. In the realm of literature, Stoppard’s fictional dramatic system can be taken as a pioneering attempt.

From a close reading of the poetic systems *The Waste Land* and *The Bhagavadgita*, the dramatic systems *Waiting for Godot* and *Arcadia*, the fictional systems *The Razor’s Edge* and *A Suitable Boy*, cultural system –*Slumdog Millionaire*, we deduce that they are complex, but relatively more complex than other literary and cultural systems, thus lie at the high end of the complexity scale. On the basis of the critical study of these systems within the framework of Systems Theory and their emergent behaviour, the present research places them at the high end of the complexity scale due to their subjectivity, reader dependency and contextuality. They exhibit complexity at syntactic as well as semantic levels. *The Bhagavadgita* with its metaphysicality; plethora of themes, *The Waste Land*, ‘a perpetual metaphor of complexity’ with its symbolism, incoherent style, multiple themes, *Waiting for Godot*, an unresolved

dramatic enigma; with its discursive logic, subversion of traditional dramatic conventions, depiction of absurdity through ‘absurd’, *Arcadia*—a psycho-scientific dramatic system, *The Razor’s Edge* with its conflicting values, the magisterial socio-cultural fictional system—*A Suitable Boy* with its multiple themes illustrate how an emergent property of a system is one that is not a property of any component of that system, but is still a feature of the system as a whole.

Literary theory today is associated with cultural theory which is widening the horizon of literary study, helping us relate literature to other disciplines easily. The study establishes *Slumdog Millionaire* as a complex cultural film system, a ‘Trauma Narrative’, a “Human Rights Narrative” when placed within the framework of ‘Systems’ perspective it reveals several emergent thematic tonalities and makes us realize how it is a fictional film system which has universal relevance and not a mere mockery of the Indian sub-continent.

On exploring the ‘micro-macro effect’ in all these systems what emerges is that the properties, behaviours, structures / patterns that are situated at a higher macro level arise from the interactions at the lower micro-level of the system. The analyzed dramatic, fictional, poetic and cultural system (film) possess surface structure and deeper structure. Here a reference can be made to phenomenology and its application in literature by scholars like Wolfgang Iser which would be quite interesting and pertinent. Iser believes that two polarities operate in any literary system—‘Written-Unwritten, Real- Virtual, Artistic- Aesthetic, Abstract – Concrete’. His explanation of the process of concretization, referring to the emergence of meaning from the “unwritten part” of the text/system is somewhat akin to the concept of emergence, integral to complex systems. In most of the multidimensional literary systems the linguistic- textual
structures only serve as means to capture the ‘transcendental signified’ which lies outside the structure and the reader’s never ending quest continues.

The analysis of the major poetic, dramatic, fictional and film systems in the study illustrates, supports and authenticates the Postmodernist skepticism of the grand narratives, its denial of reductionism, inadequacy and indeterminacy of language to explore the reality. When Jean Jacques Derrida enunciated his concept of centered system in his seminal essay “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences”, which shook the very foundation of western philosophy, he probably wanted to acquaint the philosophers and theoreticians with the existence of the complex systems where the concept of a centre does not work. Literary systems belong to this taxonomy. Centre appears to be a part of the system, yet it is outside. The poetic system The Waste Land, the dramatic systems Waiting for Godot and Arcadia perfectly illustrate, as has been shown in the chapters through their emergent behavior, that Saussurian concept of each sign possessing a signifier does not function successfully every time. The emergent properties of these literary systems not only startle us but also prove that each sign has multiple signifiers and there is a sliding gap between the signifier and the signified. For instance the emergent meaning of the dramatic system Waiting for Godot is quite serious, though the actions of the characters seem quite comical and absurd. The emergent meaning is man’s inability in the present age to find a coherent system of meaning, order or purpose to understand our existence and make it meaningful.

The study puts forth Systems Theory as a viable solution to tackle this baffling complexity inherent in literary systems through its analysis of some representative major literary systems.
within the framework of Generalized Physical systems Theory and Graph theoretic Field Modelling. It denies the viewpoint which believes that no theory can capture and concretize the complex and enigmatic nature of literature. What is required is not the renunciation of our quest for meaning, rather adopting holistic approach which would enable us perceive diverse thematic and structural properties embedded in literary systems.

There is no doubt that today literary theory seems an assemblage of elements borrowed from Linguistics, Psychiatry, Semiotics, Structuralism, Poststructuralism and many other disciplines. Literary scholars witness a paradigm shift with theory replacing appreciation by valuing a text more for what can be read into it than any literary quality it possesses.

The bewildering variety of theories certainly provide ample opportunity to scholars to explore various dimensions of a literary discourse, still critics/readers find it difficult to capture the “literariness” of literature as most of the current theories segregate the four co-ordinates of art criticism: ‘text, reader, author and universe’. Reductionism, one of the powerful tools of science, has crept into literary study, which is certainly contributing in yielding a detailed knowledge of isolated events or components but leaves out of consideration large interconnections which might be decisive for the understanding of the text/system. Such fragmented knowledge certainly brings about specialization and generates a multiple limited range theories such as Textual criticism, Biographical, Psychological, Historical, Sociological, Feminism, Marxism and many more, which apply to a small domain of multi-dimensional, complex system but says nothing of the rest.
Plato, in his Republic writes, “when a beautiful soul harmonizes with the beautiful form and the two are cast in one mould, that will be the fairest of sights”. Aristotle also expressed his firm conviction that ‘the whole is more than the sum of its parts’. The nucleus of literature lies in holism. According to Revered Professor Prem Saran Satsangi, “the problems of the real world” and also socio-economic and literary systems “call for integrative holistic thinking which systems approach with its transdisciplinary concepts would seem to provide.”

Systems Thinking is integrative in which one selects from a wide range of approaches, methods and tools depending on the type of system, its purpose, nature of the inquiry and the specific problem situation. System Science, which is called “Meta-discipline” has an ideology of inclusion, unlike literary theories which are tied to specific ideology. In the analysis and interpretation of literature coherence, precision and objectivity are of great importance. Literary criticism is a science as well as an art. In this regard also Systems Science provides a broader framework to incorporate both literary and scientific features.

Terry Eagleton believed that no theory is pure literary theory and most of them have limitations as they can be applied only to some specific systems. Generalized Physical Systems theory, one of the major developments in Systems Science, in the words of Rev. Professor P.S. Satsangi, “can be applied to a large variety of linear/non-linear, lumped/distributed parameter,

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continuous/discrete time, static/dynamic, deterministic/stochastic, crisp/fuzzy, physical/conceptual, fictional and esoteric (intuitive) systems.

One of the hallmarks of the present study is the application of “Physical Systems Theory” and sometimes in conjunction with Quantum Field Graph Modelling to generate Field Graph Models to transform the reading and interpretative process into process of concretization. The Waste Land, Waiting for Godot, Arcadia, Razor’s Edge, A Suitable Boy and Slumdog Millionaire have been analyzed by several critics taking into consideration the thematic, symbolic patterns, plot structure, characters, narrative techniques etc. but most of the interpretations are derivative. The multi-dimensional, dynamic, open, non-linear literary systems with their context-dependent complexity have always been an unresolved mystery. The study is a maiden attempt in the literary arena. By using “Physical systems theory” and “Quantum Field Modeling” with multi-dimensional relationships (force fields) duly complemented by contextual explanatory notes the essence of the fictional, dramatic, poetic and film systems has been captured and presented through graphs (FGMs) in a vivid and descriptive manner.

The study is also a novel attempt in the field of literary-cultural studies in its use of the technique of cognitive mapping to present the complex plot of the dramatic system Arcadia and the fictional film system Slumdog Millionaire in which two time lines present and past run parallelly. Cognitive mapping is a technique which has developed over a period of time and through its application has demonstrated its use for operational researchers working on a

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variety of different tasks. Generally it helps structure messy and complex data for problem solving. It is used in several fields but in the field of literary studies it has yet to gain recognition. Cognitive map also known as mental map, cognitive model, or mental model is a type of mental processing by which an individual can acquire, code, store, recall, and decode information. The term cognitive map has been coined by Edward Tolman. Cognitive maps have been studied and used in various fields, such as psychology, education, archaeology, planning, geography, cartography, architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, management but in the field of literature due to its subjective character scholars hesitate to experiment with such techniques. Cognitive mapping of *Arcadia* and *Slumdog Millionaire* attempted in the study prove that emotional sensibility, vital to literature and intellectual coherence can co-exist. Application of ‘Interpretive Structural Modelling’ and ‘Nominal Group Technique’ in the interpretation of *Slumdog Millionaire* is also a novel attempt in the film studies or rather cultural studies. There are several film theories such as Apparatus theory, Auteur theory, Feminist film theory, Formalist film theory, Marxist film theory, Psychoanalytical film theory, Screen theory and Structuralist film theory which are used and applied extensively by film critics and theorists, but the application of Interpretive Structural Modelling and Cognitive mapping for the analysis of a films in general and the fictional film system *Slumdog Millionaire* certainly opens new frontiers of research in the fields of cultural and literary studies.

Aristotle in *Poetics* said that literature is superior to history and philosophy as it is governed by the ‘laws of probability and possibility’, thus literary systems are also ‘probabilistic systems’ and ‘Quantum Systems’. In this light Physical Systems Theory when blended with Quantum Field
Modelling certainly generates fresh and deep insights into literary texts. Literature is interaction, the “text-context” relationship is vital to the understanding of literature. The study is also pioneering attempt in applying the principle of Quantum superposition in the interpretation of the famous esoteric and aesthetic system The Bhagavadgita and the dramatic system Waiting for Godot.

The analysis of a variety of literary and cultural systems reveals that the large number of characters, events and their complex inter-relationships will no longer create problem as Generalized Physical Systems Theory allows one to blend scientific precision with literary sensibility. The age old conflict between the form and the context, the intention of the writer and the perception of the reader, emotion and the rational can be brought to systemic conclusion or end. Thus giving some respite to literary theorists, trapped in ‘theory wars’. Physical Systems theory, with its fundamental axiom and three fundamental postulates: Component Postulate, System Postulate and Interconnection Postulate, encourages analysis-synthesis approach, thus making the study a holistic blend of subjective, objective, systematic and rational. It enables one to study the complementary pair of system variables: force variable and propensity/ context variable.

Rev. Prof. P. S. Satsangi, highlighting the advantages of Systems theory, writes in his “Systems Movement: Autobiographical Retrospectives”:

One of the real values of the Systems theory derives from the fact that it is possible to view a system as a set of interconnected sub systems of lesser complexity
properly selected, structured, parameterized and validated such that the subsystems of one interconnected system can serve as a building block in modeling other systems. It is through this mechanism that modeling efforts are cumulative—the results of one study carry over to the next study—and Systems Approach derives its flexibility of application.5

The application of Physical Systems theory, Interpretive Structural Modelling and Nominal Group Technique also reveal that Physical Systems Theory is superior to Warfield’s Interpretive Structural Modelling and Nominal Group Technique as it enables one to study the complementary pair of system variables: force variable and propensity/context variable. ISM and NGT on the other hand help in analyzing the force variable only. Literary systems are multidimensional systems with multiple force fields. Physical Systems theory provides a broader framework to incorporate the subjective and objective dimensions of literature through Field Graph Models (FGM) complemented with the contextual features.

‘Physical Systems Theory’ can be taken as a ‘unified theory of literature’ as it has the potential of incorporating the tenets of Formalism, Reader-Response theory, Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, Structuralism etc. and can take us beyond by establishing ‘inter-textuality’, the essence of Postmodernist thinking in general and Systems thinking in particular.

Consciousness Studies also forms a significant part of the present research to strengthen and promote collaborative research between philosophy, psychology and literature, through

consciousness studies at the locus. The study establishes these systems as not only literary, cultural narratives but also narratives of consciousness. Taking modern Depth psychoanalytic model which also intersects with Transpersonal psychology, Bhagavadgita which is both an aesthetic and esoteric system has been looked upon as a narrative of eternal consciousness and analyzed.

One of the novel research endeavours of the study is its exploration of consciousness from scientific (physical/material) as well as cognitive and spiritual dimensions. ‘Spiritual Intelligence’ has emerged as a breakthrough in Transpersonal psychology and as a pioneering attempt, the study employs most recently developed four factor model of Spiritual intelligence by psychologist David Brian King for the analysis of Bhagavadgita. Taking the central theme of Gita as ‘Arjuna’s Spiritual voyage towards higher spiritual consciousness’ various levels of consciousness have been mapped out using David Hawkins’s paradigm of levels of consciousness.

When most of the scholars and critics are grappling with the structural problems with reference to The Waste Land, keeping in view the Postmodern spirit of experimentation, innovation and the close relation between literature and consciousness, the current research maps out ‘Altered States of Consciousness’ in the poetic system The Waste land. This psychohermeneutical perspective provides an entirely new angle to look at the poetic system.

In Waiting for Godot, the dramatic system, the juxtaposition of a series of poetic images, which substitute for a conventional plot, results for the audience in a series of epiphanies related to the nature of experience itself. These series of images induce flashes of consciousness in the
audience. Psychologists observe that consciousness is of two types—temporal and trans-temporal. The dramatic system functions as a vehicle to transport the audience from temporal to trans-temporal consciousness. The present study asserts that the dramatic system appears to be a ‘dark play’ but it is a dark play ‘full of Light’. In its pessimism also there is optimism as it shows the audience that religious consciousness, God consciousness can only make their absurd lives meaningful. An analysis of the fictional system *The Razor’s Edge* from the perspective of consciousness exhibits the way to achieve higher spiritual consciousness.

Another significant feature of the present research endeavour has been to acquaint researchers engaged in consciousness studies with Super-Consciousness, Absolute Truth and Ultimate Reality with reference to Oriental Religion of saints (Radhasoami faith). This adds not only an entirely new dimension to literary hermeneutics but also adds significant dimension to consciousness studies. In adherence to the holistic systemic epistemology the study puts *vedantic* consciousness, Highest spiritual consciousness as revealed in Radhasoami Faith and other psychological perspectives on Transcendental consciousness and also scientific perception of consciousness within a very comprehensive –comparative apparatus to enable one comprehend the Highest level of consciousness revealed in the Oriental Religion of Saints (Radhasoami faith) and also ways of achieving it.

The research not only applies systems theory for the interpretation of literary texts but it also attempts to celebrate the Tagorian concept of ‘world –literature –world community’. Encouraging cross-fertilization of cultures and traditions, the research takes within its purview literary and cultural systems representing diverse cultures of various nations to explore the universals of literary study. If Gita tells man the way to achieve higher consciousness by
surrendering before the Will of God, *The Waste Land*, though not an esoteric system, tells man to develop unflinching faith in God and pray with humility and sincerity to Supreme God to fertilize the ‘spiritually arid modern waste land’. French dramatist exposes the absurd life of modern man and appeals to wait, praying sincerely, for God’s grace as only this can provide meaning to his existence. Maugham expresses his grief over the growing materialism and presents Hindu *Advaita* philosophy as one of the ways to revive spirituality and achieve higher spiritual consciousness. Thus the systemic design of the research endeavour also proves that the entire universe is one system and we are all parts of this larger system. T.S. Eliot openly acknowledged the influence of Gita on him. In this context the following lines of Rudyard Kipling acquire special significance:

> Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,  
> Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat;  
> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
> When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth.⁶

Plato in *The Republic* said that literature gives meaning to our lives and purges our souls, but literature can perform such lofty and noble function only when one adopts a holistic view of literature. Accumulation of bits of knowledge will not give meaning to write chunks of experience and does nothing to fill the present existential vacuum.

Thus, it can be said that systems designing and modelling is relevant in the field of literature also as it creates a sense of interdependency across all systems levels. In an age of continuous and intensified change application of such new methods will certainly open new vistas for further research in literature. Concomitant with this systems approach is the emergent theme of consciousness at its broad triple hierarchies of physical/material plane, mental/ cognitive domain and purely spiritual region in ascending order both in cosmic macrocosm and human microcosm.